

REWRITING AND REMEDIATION: THE REVIEWS OF BARTOLOMEO BENINCASA'S *JOURNAL D'UN VOYAGEUR NEUTRE* (1796) IN THE *MONTHLY REVIEW* AND *LA DÉCADE PHILOSOPHIQUE*

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Abstract:

The reviews in the *Monthly Review* and *La Décade philosophique* of Bartolomeo Benincasa's travelogue from revolutionary France, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre* (1796), offer valuable insight into the periodical practice of the travel review. The present article examines the processes of rewriting and remediation at work in these reviews, showing how they were driven by political concerns, but also by different views on the function of the review within the larger framework of the periodicals. The article argues that rewriting and remediation are important analytical tools to be put to use if book reviews are to be better exploited as historical sources. We can thereby acquire a better understanding of the role of the travel review in late-eighteenth-century literary culture, notably of its complexity in transmitting and constructing perceptions of major historical events such as the French Revolution.

Introduction

In 1795, the Italian count Bartolomeo Benincasa (1746-1816), established in England since 1791, made a journey from London to Paris, allegedly to recruit dancers for an English theatrical company. Departing in November and returning home in February 1796, he travelled in a turbulent period, France being in the early months of the Directory. In March or April, Benincasa published a travelogue, in French, through the Piccadilly bookseller Richard White, entitled *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*. The account describes the journey, Benincasa's tasks in Paris – which include almost daily visits to theatres and opera houses –, and his observations and reflexions on the current social and political state of affairs. Immediately after its publication, the travelogue was reviewed in the April issue of the *Monthly Review*, probably by Arthur Aikin (1773-1854).¹ The review is a little under three pages long, placed in an appendix on 'Foreign literature' largely dominated by reviews of French-language

books.² It presents brief extracts from the travelogue, preceded by introductory remarks on the problem of acquiring reliable information from France. Almost a year later, in January 1797, the French periodical *La Décade philosophique* published a longer review, stretching over three issues (no. 11, 12, and 13) and 27 pages, written by Amaury Duval (1760-1838).³ This review presents extensive extracts of the book, punctuated by short assessments.

The present article examines how the British and the French periodical performed rewritings and remediations of the travelogue, to largely *construct* the object they purported to retransmit. I will argue that this (re)construction was driven by political concerns, but also that the differences between the two reviews are revelatory of the different medial functions within each periodical. Both rewriting, the textual transformation of the travelogue, and remediation, the insertion of the transformed text into a larger medial framework, are necessary as analytical terms to account for the complexity of this process, through which British and French readers were given distinctly different representations of Benincasa's travelogue. Through a comparative analysis, we will therefore be able to acquire a better understanding of the textual and medial practices of the travel review, an important periodical genre in eighteenth-century literary culture that has not yet received sufficient attention from modern scholarship.

According to Ann Thomson and Simon Burrows, the 'value of book reviews as an historical source, often underestimated by historians of print culture, is now being increasingly recognised, in particular their significant role in cultural transfer'.⁴ If the value of book reviews has been underestimated in the history of print culture, this has to an even greater extent been the case within the field of eighteenth-century travel writing studies.⁵ Although the influence on the latter from both translation studies and book history has increased in recent years, the *periodical* rewriting and remediation of travel texts largely remain uncharted territory.⁶

Furthermore, literary journalism of the revolutionary period was for a long time neglected because of the interest in the purely political content of the press.⁷ As the present study indicates, however, the reviewing of travelogues constituted a form of literary journalism that was in itself politically charged, in which the act of rewriting often betrays the reviewers' ideological treatment of the primary texts. This does not mean that rewriting and remediation as politically charged processes were exclusive to travel reviews and did not occur in reviews of other genres. But the pretence of the travelogue to provide an eye-witness relation of a certain place at a certain time endowed it with a particular value that the reviewers needed to negotiate in their retransmission of the text, partly turning the reviews

into appropriations of the traveller's gaze. We will notably see how this comes in to play in the reviewers' attitude towards the neutrality promised by the title of Benincasa's book.

Thanks to its reception in both Britain and France, the *Journal d'un voyageur neutre* is of special interest with respect to the topic of cultural transfer: the reviews in the *Monthly Review* and *La Décade philosophique* allow for a transnational comparison that highlights similarities and specificities in the processes of rewriting and remediation proper to the two periodicals in question, both characterized by moderate liberal tendencies: *La Décade*, close to the liberal philosophers named 'les Idéologues', was a strong defender of the republican institutions, but also politically prudent;⁸ the *Monthly Review* was consistently reformist and critical towards the war against France.⁹ The historical context of the *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, the tense geo-political situation during the French revolution and the revolutionary wars, opens up for perspectives on the political potency of travel writing and its reception in the press. Written in French by an Italian nobleman established in London, and reviewed both in England and France, this travelogue invites us to perform an analytical triangulation that gives insight into the function of the travel review as a medium for cultural and political perspectives on revolutionary France.

Assessing and defining the traveller's neutrality

Sign-posted by the title, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, the alleged neutral viewpoint of Benincasa is underlined by the epigraph, taken from Horace's *Epistles*: 'Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra', i.e. 'mistakes were made on both sides of the walls [of Troy]', signifying that there are wrongdoings on both sides. The topic of neutrality is treated very differently by the two reviewers. The English review bases its assessment on the difficulty of acquiring trustworthy and impartial information on the present state of France: 'The accounts hitherto published concerning the internal state of the French republic seem, in general, mere party-works, and, as such, deserving but a small degree of credit' (*Monthly Review*, hereafter *MR*, April 1796, 563, accessed from ProQuest's *British Periodicals*). These contrary and exaggerated representations of the situation are, according to the reviewer, remedied by Benincasa's nuanced account:

Amid this war of opinions, this contrariety of assertions, in which the sanguine wishes of men are substituted for sober judgment and calm investigation, it might be deemed a treasure, indeed, to be in possession of an account of the manners, sentiments, and domestic condition, written by an impartial eye-witness, of that nation of which the eccentricities surprise, and the gigantic energies alarm, the whole of that vast and mighty confederacy which leagued together to impose on it a system of laws, and to crush it into prescribed civilization. (*MR*, 564.)

A 'treasure' of impartial depiction by an 'eye-witness', the account is, however, perceived as somewhat lacking in both depth and comprehensiveness: 'the writer (*le Comte BENINCASA*) appearing to have a full claim to the character of an impartial though not very deep observer, we are glad to see his journal, but should have been more so, had it been more comprehensive' (*MR*, 564). This assessment serves to justify the restrained space given to the review, indicating that three pages were enough to account for the book.

As for Aikin's approval of Benincasa's impartiality, it is distinct from the evaluation made by his French counterpart, who dismisses it: 'On devrait croire, d'après cela, qu'il sera vraiment impartial, *neutre* enfin. C'est ce qui n'est pas. Sa prédilection pour l'Angleterre perce à chaque page; et pourtant l'on s'aperçoit [*sic*] qu'il voudrait ménager la France' (*La Décade philosophique*, hereafter *DP*, no. 11, 20 nivôse, an V ; 9 January 1797, 80, accessed from Gallica.bnf.fr. The page numbers correspond to the volume into which the individual issues are bound.). Although willing to show consideration for France, Benincasa lets, according to Duval, his predilection for England govern the text.

What is particularly revelatory here is that the two reviewers not only *assess* but also *define* the term 'neutral' differently. The English reviewer assesses the neutrality of the account on a line of distinction that goes between the different factions within France and, one might suppose, between their respective supporters in Britain. The French reviewer identifies it in relation to a different line of conflict, where the war between Britain and France constitutes the dominant subtext. Far from being neutral itself, the assessment of the English reviewer is representative of the political stance of the *Monthly Review*, an organ of opposition, critical towards the war, and striving to navigate the internal debate in Britain on how to deal with the revolution.¹⁰ We could also argue that, by approving of Benincasa's neutrality, the *Monthly Review* gives credit to the account, in its extracted, rewritten and remediated version. As for *La Décade philosophique*, its close ties with the ruling Directory¹¹ resulted in a very different take on the traveller's neutrality, leading the reviewer to denounce his Anglophile bias.

Duval went as far as to insinuate that Benincasa had ulterior motives for his travel, describing the alleged motif as a 'prétexte' (*DP*, no. 11, 80). The reviewer expands on this idea further on: 'Je pars de Londres avec l'auguste envoyé de quelque directeur de spectacles (et peut-être aussi de quelque autre *directeur* d'affaires plus importantes) et je ne le quitterai qu'à son retour, près de ses mandataires, queslqu'ils [*sic*] soient' (81). In the political climate of the revolutionary wars, described as one of the 'great xenophobic moments in eighteenth-century French history',¹² and marked by the fear that British spies operated to destabilize an

already vulnerable situation, the reviewer's insinuations are not without a certain tone of conspiracy, contrasting somewhat with the periodical's sustained cosmopolitanism.¹³

The effect of these comments is to politically charge Benincasa's travelogue, by combining an explicit denunciation of the author's Anglo-centric perspective with the insinuation of ulterior motives beyond the mundane task of recruiting dancers. The review thus operates an appropriation of its source text, by imposing on it a specific interpretation, based on the idea of the travel writer as a political agent. By contrast, the English review performs a very different appropriation of the travelogue, by presenting the neutrality of the author as a guarantee for a text that rises above political dispute and factions.

These appropriations, occasioned by the metatextual comments, constitute the first steps in a process of rewriting. By performing an interpretation of the primary text, whereby specific elements of the latter are given preference in order to support this interpretation, the metatexts become acts of rewriting.¹⁴ The commentaries made by Aikin and Duval relied on different interpretations of what Benincasa's alleged neutrality entailed. Especially visible in Duval's review, this interpretation is supported by the selection made in his extracts of the travelogue, the use of which amounts to a different form of rewriting, which I examine in the following.

The Art of the Extract

The eighteenth-century travel review, and literary reviewing in general, was heavily based on the extract. In the French context, the term 'extrait' was often used, not only to indicate renderings of parts of the primary text, but also as a shorthand for the review, with its combination of assessment, text commentary and extracts.¹⁵ This is the case with the review in *La Décade philosophique*, as indicated by its title, 'EXTRAIT D'UN VOYAGE EN FRANCE'. Here, the use of the term 'extrait' points, in addition, to the dominant role of actual extracts in this particular review. In fact, the articles in both *La Décade philosophique* and the *Monthly Review* consist mainly of extracts from Benincasa's travelogue, the reviewers' comments and assessments being limited to a few paragraphs.

The extract played an important role in eighteenth-century English review practice, in which the critical aspect was less important than it would later become through the advent of a new kind of reviewing launched by the *Edinburgh Review*.¹⁶ An important idea behind this 'pre-*Edinburgh*' practice was that readers should be allowed to make their own judgment of the reviewed text. But the practice was also open to abuse, since English reviewers were paid the same amount for the extracts as for original material,¹⁷ and because it allowed editors to easily fill the pages of their journals.¹⁸

Far from being an innocent ‘reproduction’,¹⁹ the extract changes the given text, sometimes radically. After the initial interpretations represented by the metatexts, the extract serves to further perform a rewriting of the travelogue. The extract as a textual practice is based on a series of conscious and unconscious choices, a work of ‘découpage et montage’²⁰ that recontextualizes the primary text. To choose certain passages over others in the retransmission of the text is to perform a hierarchizing of the textual elements, acknowledging that the chosen passages are more important, more pertinent, or more representative than others. We should therefore consider the extract as a form of textual ‘secondarisation’, related to hypertexts and other kinds of metatexts.²¹

It is not only by choosing and leaving out, but also by *altering* textual elements, inadvertently or intentionally, that the extract becomes rewriting. A comparison between Benincasa’s travelogue and the extracts in *La Décade philosophique* reveals that the French reviewer has made numerous stylistic alterations, by changing certain wordings, by adding or removing words for greater clarity, and by altering the syntax. Benincasa’s text bears traces of the unpolished style of the private journal. According to the author himself, the travelogue had undergone minimal editing and was revealing no literary ambition.²² Duval has seemingly sought to remedy this through a stylistic rewriting. A footnote added to his extract partly explains the linguistic alterations by pointing out how certain ‘expressions impropres’ and unusual sentence constructions are due to the fact that it is ‘un étranger qui écrit’, i.e. that French was not Benincasa’s mother tongue (*DP*, 87).

The extracts in the *Monthly Review* are the results of a form of rewriting in yet another sense, as they are translated from French to English, in all likelihood by the reviewer himself. Like the extracts in *La Décade philosophique*, this translation bears traces of stylistic improvement. For example, a phrase describing the dormant potential of Paris – ‘Mais malgré cela tout est prêt à éclore’²³ – becomes, in the English translation, ‘but, under this temporary concealment, lie hidden the seeds of future splendour’ (*MR*, 565). The translation amplifies the inherent meaning of the passage and adds greater grandiloquence to the phrasing, with the result that Paris appears in a more positive light than in the primary text.

In fact, the extracts and translations do not only perform rewritings on a linguistic or stylistic level, but also on the level of content. The extract is primarily based on a principle of subtraction, but the reviewer can also make additions, for reasons of clarity or in order to manipulate the tone or even the message of the text. The English reviewer at one point makes a comment on the translated extract, which he signals by the use of square brackets: ‘No species of luxury, [the Stage excepted] either in men or women, is to be seen’ (*MR*, 565). He thus adds a nuance to the text, which in Benincasa’s original reads: ‘dans ce moment, aucune

espèce de luxe à Paris, ni en hommes, ni en femmes'.²⁴ The use of brackets reveals an intention of intellectual honesty, which does not, however, prevent the reviewer from making other, more significant additions without signalling that they were not a part of the primary text. The following passage – 'Ce qui durera, ce me semble, bien des nées, c'est l'esprit républicain'²⁵ – becomes, in Aikin's translation: 'The *spirit* without the *ferocity* of republicanism will remain' (565). The addition of '*ferocity*', highlighted by means of italics, makes a significant impact on the meaning of the passage, and perhaps reveals the reviewer's eagerness to save the political ideals of the Revolution from the stigma of the Jacobin Terror, thus underlining the ambivalent relationship entertained by the *Monthly Review* with regard to the topic of the Revolution.²⁶

The reviewer can also recontextualize the extracts by framing them in a particular manner. An extract on the vandalizing of Parisian churches is introduced by means of a comparison with the Commonwealth of England: Aikin describes 'the fanatical rage against royalism' in France as 'similar to that which prevailed in England during the parliamentary and military government against popery' (*MR*, 565). He thus denounces the excesses of republicanism, but also historicizes the French Revolution by reminding the reader that similar excesses once took place in Britain. The review appears as an appropriation of the primary text, which resituates the latter into the specifically British political discourse on the Revolution.

As for the French review, if it identifies the traveller's alleged neutrality in the line of conflict between England and France, its extracts are largely in line with that idea: Duval has picked out several passages where Benincasa makes comparisons between the two countries. This distinguishes the article from the English review, which, apart from the allusion to the Commonwealth, includes no such comparisons. But although Duval makes the French-English dichotomy a primary topic of the extract, illustrating his initial assessment of Benincasa's neutrality, we find numerous examples of the reviewer toning down the contrast between the situations in England and France. A particularly interesting case concerns the following passage from Benincasa's travelogue:

On peut dire avec la plus grande vérité que Paris est malade: point de bonnes mines, pâleur d'objets, en tout et partout l'apparence du malheur. Voilà d'ailleurs le premier coup d'œil, en parcourant beaucoup de rues dans le centre de la ville. Le contraste du moment actuel de Paris avec l'état florissant de Londres opulente, pleine de vie et de santé, est d'un frappant, qu'on ne sauroit exprimer. L'illumination parisienne est bien mesquine en comparaison de l'Angloise. En revanche, la construction de Paris annonce la majesté, la solidité, et rappelle l'ancienne richesse.²⁷

In Duval's extract, this passage undergoes a series of alterations, some stylistic, others pertaining to content. Notably, a point of comparison between the situation in Paris and the 'flourishing state' of London has disappeared:

Paris est malade. Point de bonnes mines : pâleur d'objets... Voilà du moins ce que m'a offert le premier coup-d'œil en parcourant beaucoup de rues dans le centre de la ville.... L'illumination parisienne est bien mesquine en comparaison de l'anglaise. En revanche, la construction de Paris annonce la majesté, la solidité, et rappelle l'ancienne richesse. (*DP*, no. 11, 82)

Disappeared also is Benincasa's observation of 'misfortune everywhere and in everything'. In addition, the reference to Paris' state of illness has been toned down, no longer being presented as the 'greatest possible truth'. Certainly, the nature of the extract demands a reduction in the text, and some of the rewritings may be explained by reasons of textual economy. At the same time, this passage is symptomatic of Duval's extracts, where the negative characteristics of Paris are kept (indeed, they are necessary in order to exemplify Duval's overall interpretation of the book), but also muted, possibly not to offend the French readership.

Another example highlights to an even greater degree the political undertones of the rewriting. In an otherwise light-hearted passage on Parisian restaurants, Benincasa makes one observation bearing on the use of revolutionary terminology, to which he adds his own political reflexion on the French people: 'J'ai remarqué que les dames disoient toujours *Monsieur*, et que les garçons de service ne manquoient jamais de dire *Citoyen* : c'est, je crois, parce que tout homme du peuple en France est à présent, pour ainsi dire, un parvenu, et la femme, quand elle peut et veut être aimable, n'a pas besoin de parvenir'.²⁸ Duval chose to include the rest of the passage in his extract, but removed these two sentences. As a result, the extract reads as a purely positive and lively depiction of Parisian life, rounding off with the following *homage* to French culture and customs: 'J'ai diné en homme heureux, et j'ai retrouvé à droite et à gauche le François sociable et liant' (*DP*, no. 11, 83). Thus, the extract appears as a reconstruction of the primary text that clearly influences its political content.

Before the advent of Romanticism led to a strengthening of the importance of literary style in non-fictional travelogues,²⁹ it seems that the critique of travel writing constituted a form of professional reception where ideological concerns were less attached to poetics and more to specific ideas and ideals of society, to a greater degree than in other forms of literary reception. The rewriting of Benincasa's travelogue in the two reviews is not primarily founded in a concern for what travel writing should be, but most certainly betrays the will to represent the political and economic state of France in a particular way.

More precisely, the reviews do not so much show what it was possible to write about a specific topic as they reveal how the reviewer tried to navigate the perceived expectations and potential reactions of his readers. We have already indicated how the article in the *Monthly Review* betrays the periodical's ambivalent attitude to the Revolution. In the case of *La Décade philosophique*, a response to certain reactions towards the review are revelatory of the troubled political waters that the French reviewer had to navigate. Accused of having invented the extracts in order to pass on his own criticisms of the present state of France, Duval was compelled to confirm the authenticity of the travelogue:

Plusieurs personnes, après avoir lu les deux premiers extraits que nous avons donnés du Voyage du comte de Benincasa, ont supposé que ce n'était qu'une fiction ingénieuse à la faveur de laquelle nous avons voulu faire passer quelques observations critiques sur le compte de nos concitoyens. Ces personnes nous ont fait trop d'honneur; M. de Benincasa est un personnage véritable que plusieurs sociétés se souviennent d'avoir vu à Paris l'année dernière; et notre extrait est fait d'après la relation de son Voyage, imprimée à Londres après son retour, chez Richard White, Piccadilly. (*DP*, no. 13, 10 pluviôse, an V; 29 January 1797, 216)

It is not evident what these readers might have reacted to. It might have been anything from the depictions of the royalists maintaining their opulence (*DP*, no. 12, 30 nivôse, an V; 19 January 1797, 155) to more ambiguous depictions of Paris, such as its comparison to 'une ruche d'abeilles industrieuses et de frêlons malfesans' (152). In any case, their reaction speaks to the climate of conspiracy that characterized revolutionary France. While the reviewer suspects Benincasa of being a British agent, his readers accuse him of having created the Italian count as a fictional device for performing his own cultural and political criticism. The reply betrays the political prudence that assured the survival of *La Décade philosophique* through changing regimes.³⁰ At the same time, it testifies to the value of travel writing as eye-witness account and, in particular, to the problem of authenticity that was attached to it.³¹

Overall, the two reviews make use of two distinct *forms* of extracting, partly due to the difference in length. Aikin's short text zooms in on three passages from the travelogue: on the public craze for the theatre in Paris, on the rage against royalism leading to the vandalizing of churches and of statues and busts that symbolize the monarchy, and on the complete disappearance of religion from Parisian society. Duval's 27-pages-long review is able to give a broader set of extracts, seemingly respecting the order of the primary text and its division into journal entries structured according to the dates of the journey.

Although following the (almost) daily entries of Benincasa's journal, Duval has changed the order and the dating of numerous passages, so that, for example, a passage belonging to the entry from 5 *Nivôse* (26 December) in the primary text, is retransmitted under the entry from 1 *Nivôse* (22 December) in the extract. These changes are too numerous

to be unintentional, but a clear motivation is difficult to identify. What is clear, however, is that they amount to a temporal and narrative restructuring of the primary text, creating an entirely new textual object where neither the order of Benincasa's movements and observations, nor the days on which they happened, reflect the original text, or indeed the historical reality. We may ask whether Duval could allow himself to perform such a blatant rewriting of the primary text because the goal of his review was not to lead the readers to Benincasa's book, but rather to replace it, a question concerning the function of the review. In the following, we will look at what functions the rewritten travelogue served within the framework of each periodical, which entails considering the reviews as remediations.

Remediation: the functions of the review

If a review is a form of rewriting, this does not fully account for what happens with the travelogue when treated by the press. Examining these travel reviews as rewritten texts needs to be supplemented by seeing them as remediated artefacts. This allows us to account for what happens on a broader scale, by going from a purely textual analysis to also consider the paratextual, material and medial elements particular to the periodical journal, which differ from the medium the primary text is taken from. The concept of remediation, as defined by Bolter and Grusin, is in this context to be understood as the 'mediation of mediation'; the periodical press performs an act of mediation through which it 'comment[s] on, reproduces, and replaces' other media forms, in this case the monograph.³²

Compared to monograph travelogues, periodicals offered a different set of parameters for transmitting the experience of travel to the reader: periodicity, format, and additional content in each separate number all conditioned the way travel texts were presented and read, in a way distinctly different from what was the case with monographs. These parameters also varied between the different periodicals. A particularly important element in that respect has to do with what function the primary text serves in the secondary text, as well as with the function that the latter occupies within the larger context of the periodical.

The short time-span between the completion of Benincasa's journey, the book's publication, and its appearance in the *Monthly Review* endows both the travelogue and the review with a news function. This impression is strengthened by the way in which the review presents the travelogue as a privileged source of information, provided by an 'impartial eye-witness', from the on-going political situation in France. By subscribing to the neutrality and the impartiality of the observer, the reviewer ascribes a certain authority to this news transmission. Moreover, the choice of extracts further suggests that a main function of this particular review was to retransmit a glimpse into the present state of Paris.

That said, what appeared as a strength of the travelogue, its newsworthiness and current interest, was also perceived by Aikin as a weakness: ‘We wish that we were able to recommend this work to the public as a *complete* domestic history of France: but, from the author’s residence of only two months and a half, and that too entirely in the metropolis, such an expectation would be unreasonable’ (*MR*, 564). There seems to be within this review two competing perceptions of travel writing, a genre that, in eighteenth-century literary culture, was indeed connected both to news and to historiography.³³ These two seemingly opposing concepts were central to the medium of the periodical itself, which was not only a news medium, but also seen as providing the materials of history writing through preservation and compilation, the purveyor of a history of the present.³⁴ Review journals were ‘conceived as instalments of a continuous encyclopaedia, recording the advance of knowledge in every field of human enterprise’.³⁵

The incapacity of Benincasa’s travelogue to provide a domestic history of France was perhaps remedied by the function of the periodical itself, which gathered material from multiple sources to form a larger, composite picture of France. The English review of Benincasa’s travelogue is, in fact, surrounded by numerous other articles pertaining to the French revolution. In this single volume of the *Monthly Review*, nineteen articles deal with France, the French revolution, or the Franco-British conflict. The Benincasa review is immediately preceded by the review of an ‘Eloge Funebre de Louis Seize’, and followed by a review of *De l’État réel de la France*. Similarly to our travelogue, the latter is presented as providing a relatively trustworthy insight into the present state of affairs in France, despite being far from neutral: ‘Of all the late publications of the French royalists which have passed through our hands, this statement appears to us the most rational and the most instructive’ (*MR*, 566). The picture forms of a periodical eager to place itself above and beyond factions, and which prides itself in performing a critical analysis of not only the cultural sphere and the book market, but also the history of the present. As Benincasa’s travelogue is situated in the intersection between news and history writing, it shares a dual functionality with the periodical medium, which is in turn enhanced by its inclusion into the latter.

The news function that the Benincasa review occupies in the *Monthly Review* is also highlighted, as by contrast, with the function that the extracted travel account would serve in the later review of *La Décade philosophique*. For Duval, the account of France appears as already outdated, as far as its newsworthiness is concerned, since the political situation had already changed radically between the early stages of the Directory and the moment of the review:

Il faut être juste. À l'époque où il voyageoit, il était bien difficile qu'il conçût de la France des idées bien avantageuses. Les partis étaient encore dans la plus grande effervescence: les assignats touchaient à leur entière décadence: on manquait de pain à Paris, et dans une grande partie des départemens: enfin, l'on n'osait pas croire à la stabilité du nouveau gouvernement. S'il eût voyagé une année plus tard, ses jugemens auraient été sans doute bien différens. (*DP*, no. 11, 80-81)

We might ask if this is not a defence of the ruling Directory against the increasing attacks coming from the right-wing press in exactly this period.³⁶ What seems clear, in any case, is that the two periodicals perform distinct modes of remediation of Benincasa's travelogue, presenting their respective reviews as serving different functions with regard to the book, the news value of the text being discarded in the French periodical.

In fact, a similar conclusion to that of *La Décade philosophique* was drawn by Benincasa himself at the end of his travelogue. If the readers find his observations to be in contradiction with other travelogues, Benincasa argues, they should take into account the ever-changing climate of revolutionary France: 'En tems d'orage, le Ciel change à tout moment: et le tableau qu'on en a fait, n'a été vrai, qu'un instant'.³⁷ It seems, therefore, that the nature of the topic as well as the temporal distance between the travel and the reviews were determining factors in the remediations that Benincasa's travelogue underwent in the two periodicals. This underlines the dual function of the periodical as both news medium and historical record, suggesting that the unstable political situation depicted in the travelogue reconfigured the balance between the two functions, as well as between the travelogue and the periodical review, the former taking on the ephemeral character of on-going news reporting more than of an authoritative work of lasting literary merit.

The different functions of the two reviews also seem to be closely linked with the availability of the book on the French and English markets. The article in the *Monthly Review* closes with a reference to all the interesting parts of the travelogue that it had to leave out from the extracts, legitimizing these omissions by the fact that the book was easily accessible to English readers: 'We might enlarge farther by extracting the author's account of the *national museum*, the *state of literature*, &c. but the work itself being easily accessible, we shall refer to it those who desire additional information on this interesting subject' (*MR*, 566). The reviewer presupposes that his readers will move on to the primary text, which suggests that the perceived readership was expected to read French. In addition to the news- and history functions, the review and its extracts take on the function of giving a foretaste of the book. For non-French speakers, however, the translated, rewritten, and remediated extracts of the *Monthly Review* remain the sole access to Benincasa's text.

If Benincasa's travelogue was easily available in England (or at least in London), the opposite was the case in France, if we are to believe its French reviewer: 'J'ai extrait de ce *journal* dont il n'y a peut-être que deux ou trois exemplaires à Paris, tout ce qui m'a paru avoir quelque intérêt' (*DP*, no. 11, 81). The article in *La Décade philosophique* therefore appears to be endowed with what we can call a *substitutive* function, by which the review and the extract replace the travel book, by transmitting its most important content to the readers and sparing them the trouble of reading it.³⁸ This function is clearly highlighted by Duval, in a somewhat sarcastic manner: 'Je réduis son livre à quelques pages, et je crois lui rendre service' (*ibid.*). According to Daniel Roche, the extract of the press served as a 'méthode de travail' that gave readers faster access to travelogues.³⁹ The length of the extract in Duval's review supports the idea that this was its primary function, distinguishing his article from that of the *Monthly Review*. That said, the substitutive function was not uncommon in the *Monthly Review* either, with an occurrence appearing in the same volume of April 1796 (*MR*, 562), revealing that different reviews served different functions within the journal, and even within each volume. Considered as remediation, the travel review must therefore be placed in the larger context of what Claude Labrosse calls the 'dispositif du périodique'⁴⁰: the rewriting of the travel experience, itself politically charged, is subjugated to the broader communicational and functional scope of the periodical.

Conclusion

If, as Thomson and Burrows have argued, book reviews have been underestimated as historical sources, this article has shown that, by treating them as such, we need to be aware of their role as agents: reviews *do something* with the books, to the extent of constructing the object being presented to the eyes of the journal readers. This happens on a textual level, in the form of rewriting, and on a medial level, as remediations. Different forces and concerns drive these transformations of the primary object. Political underpinnings lead to very different representations of Benincasa's travelogue in the *Monthly Review* and *La Décade philosophique*, identifiable notably as contentual rewriting. The remediation of the travelogue ties in with the political preoccupations of each journal, but also reveals other considerations, having to do with the functionality of the review within the larger framework of the periodical. The case of Benincasa's *Journal d'un voyageur neutre* and its reception in the English and French press is symptomatic for the political value of late eighteenth-century, and particularly revolutionary, travel writing. To study the periodical rewriting and remediation of the travel genre means to scrutinize this value, but also to show the importance of a media-

historical perspective on eighteenth-century travel writing, without which its role and function in the period's print culture cannot be fully assessed.

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¹ For the attribution, see Nangle, *The Monthly review*. For more on Aikin, see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/226>.

² The articles in this appendix are of various length, usually somewhere between the first-place reviews and the short notices placed in the "Catalogues". On this distinction, see Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh*, 39.

³ For more on Duval, see Boulad-Ayoub, *La Décade philosophique*, 30-31.

⁴ Thomson and Burrows, "Introduction", 10. On the role of the periodical press in the cultural transfer between England and France, see section IV in Andries et al., *Intellectual journeys*, 231-321.

⁵ Notable exceptions are found in the following works: Golden, "Travel Writing"; Hagglund, "Reviews of Travel"; Marcil, "Voyage écrit, voyage vécu; Marcil, *La fureur des voyages*; Roche, *Les circulations dans l'Europe moderne*, 106-10. In addition, Nigel Leask's seminal work, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, makes extensive use of British periodical reviews.

⁶ See, notably, Martin and Pickford, *Travel Narratives in Translation*, and Keighren, Withers, and Bell, *Travels into Print*.

⁷ Burrows, "The cultural politics", 159.

⁸ Boulad-Ayoub, *La Décade philosophique*, 7.

⁹ Andrews, *The British Periodical Press*, 138-151.

¹⁰ See Andrews, *The British Periodical Press*.

¹¹ Boulad-Ayoub, *La Décade philosophique*, 7.

¹² Bell, *The Cult of the Nation*, 44.

¹³ Kitchin, *Un journal "philosophique"*, 4.

¹⁴ See Escola and Rabau, *Littérature seconde*, and Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 11-13.

¹⁵ Marcil, *La fureur des voyages*, 73-74. For an extensive analysis of the 'extrait' in eighteenth-century French review practices, see Léchat, "L'extrait et ses fonctions".

¹⁶ Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh*, 43-44, Hagglund, "Reviews of Travel", 3.

¹⁷ Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh*, 43.

¹⁸ Hagglund, "Reviews of Travel", 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Labrosse, "Du dispositif du périodique", 399.

²¹ Escola and Rabau, *Littérature seconde*, 219-20.

²² Benincasa, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, iii-iv.

²³ Benincasa, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, 32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ For more on this topic, see Kristiansen, "Fighting for Reform", 41-61, and Andrews, *The British Periodical Press*, 138-151.

²⁷ Benincasa, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, 16.

²⁸ Benincasa, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, 22.

²⁹ See Le Huenen, *Le récit de voyage*, 91-103.

³⁰ Bellanger et al., *Histoire generale de la presse*, 536.

³¹ See Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing*, 54-101.

³² Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 55.

³³ On the newsworthiness of travel writing, see Le Huenen, *Le récit de voyage*, 24, and Haugen, "News of Travels", 159-160. On the connection between travel writing and historiography, see Hafid-Martin, *Voyage et connaissance*, 123-141.

³⁴ Nabarra, "La lettre et le journal", 306-07. This also included gazettes and newspapers; see Sgard, "La multiplication des périodiques", 247.

³⁵ Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh*, 36-37.

³⁶ Popkin, *The Right-wing Press*, 9.

³⁷ Benincasa, *Journal d'un voyageur neutre*, 204-05

³⁸ For more on the substitutive function in eighteenth-century reviews, see Léchoy, "L'extrait et ses fonctions", 8-12, and Haugen, "Re-viewing the world", 122-125.

³⁹ Roche, *Les circulations dans l'Europe moderne*, 107.

⁴⁰ Labrosse, "Du dispositif du périodique".