

**PART 5**

*Foreign Reporting*





## News of Travels, Travelling News: The Mediation of Travel and Exploration in the *Gazette de France* and the *Journal de l'Empire*

Marius Warholm Haugen

The study of an eighteenth-century gazette or an early nineteenth-century French newspaper quickly reveals that the terms ‘voyage’ (‘travel’) and ‘voyager’ (‘to travel’) appear regularly. The news bulletins that constitute a central element of these publications are filled with information about the movements of royals, diplomats and other ‘celebrities’.<sup>1</sup> News from long-distance voyages and expeditions, in the shape of letters from or about travellers, provided the press with intriguing and ‘exotic’ material. Non-fiction travel writing also had a place in the press, notably through reviews and book advertisements. Primarily preoccupied with the transmission of events happening outside of the community of its readers, the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century press entertained an intimate relationship with the notion of travel, to the point where, in the terms of Sylvain Venayre, “le journal est en lui-même voyageur” (“the [newspaper/journal] is in itself a traveller”).<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, non-fiction travel writing was perceived as closely connected to the concept of news, bringing to its readers new knowledge of the places visited. In 1810, the *Journal de l'Empire* wrote of André Michaux’s *Histoire des Arbres forestiers de l’Amérique septentrionale* that it was recommendable to “tous ceux qui, dans la lecture des relations de voyage, cherchent une source de connoissances neuves et solides” (“all those who, in reading travel accounts,

1 The *Journal de Paris* covered Voltaire’s travel to Paris over 15 issues in 1778. Claude Bellanger *et al.*, *Histoire générale de la presse française : 1 : Des origines à 1814* (Paris: PUF, 1969), p. 243.

2 Sylvain Venayre, ‘La presse de voyage’, in Philippe Régnier *et al.* (eds.), *La Civilisation du journal. Histoire culturelle et littéraire de la presse française au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2011), p. 465. All translations are mine. The translation of the French ‘journal’ into English is a complex issue. Already in the eighteenth century, the term ‘journal’ was being used both for newspapers and for periodical reviews. For the history of the term, see Jean Sgard, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un journal à l’époque classique’, in Irène Passeron and Ulla Kölving (eds.), *Sciences, musiques, Lumières: mélanges offerts à Anne-Marie Chouillet* (Ferney-Voltaire: Centre International d’Étude du XVIIIe Siècle, 2002).

look for a source of new and solid knowledge”).<sup>3</sup> As the British *Critical Review* attested in 1759, “travels acquire one great part of their merit from being new”.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, the press treated travel writing as sources and pieces of news; on the other, newspaper reviews propagated a demand for the newsworthiness of travel writing. Notices in the press about new travel book publications contributed to building the expectations of prospective readers. Thus, when newspapers started adopting from other parts of the periodical press the practice of reviewing travel books, this added a new dimension to their transmission of news from and about foreign places. Reviews provided newspapers with a periodical genre that enabled commentaries on the wider world as well as on the domestic book market.

This essay explores different ways in which the French newspaper press mediated travel and exploration. The first part deals with what we might call the ‘live coverage’ of travels, how specific travels became newsworthy events. The second part examines the role of the press in the process of mediating travel experiences into publications. I will show how the press made events out of the ‘travel’ of reports, letters and travelogues on their way to becoming published books. The third part examines the practice of reviewing travel books, showing how newspapers often amplified and rewrote travel accounts. I will look at two titles from the turn of the century: the bi-weekly *Gazette de France* (1631–1792), the official gazette of the Ancien Régime;<sup>5</sup> and the daily *Journal de l’Empire* (1805–1814), the newspaper with the greatest print run during the first French Empire.<sup>6</sup> Studying cases from the French press in the last decade of the Ancien Régime through to the end of the Napoleonic era, we can identify continuity and rupture, as the journalistic mediation of travel developed together

3 *Journal de l’Empire* (hereafter *JE*), 20 October 1810. I have respected the original spelling in all quotes.

4 Quoted from Morris Golden, “Travel Writing in the “Monthly Review” and “Critical Review”, 1756–1775”, *Papers on Language & Literature*, 13:2 (1977), p. 214.

5 In the period in question, the *Gazette de France* had seen its heyday. It experienced a steady decline, in numbers of subscription and revenue, throughout the 1780s. See Gilles Feyel, *L’annonce et la nouvelle: la presse d’information en France sous l’Ancien Régime (1630–1788)* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000), pp. 882–910. The *Gazette* nonetheless remains a case in point for the mediation of travel in the gazette format, in a period where the interest in travel and travel writing was formidable.

6 Bellanger *et al.*, *Histoire générale*, p. 561. The newspaper ran under the title *Journal des Débats* from 1789 to 1805, then as the *Journal des débats, politique et littéraire* from 1814. Here, we concentrate on the nine-year period of the *Journal de l’Empire*.

with the newspaper in a period where the French press underwent important changes.<sup>7</sup>

### Travels into News: The 'live coverage' of the La Pérouse Expedition

As an example of the 'live coverage' of travel and exploration, I will look at how the *Gazette de France* followed the global circumnavigation of the French naval officer and explorer Jean-François de Galaup La Pérouse. This case is especially interesting because of the tragic circumstances surrounding the expedition: La Pérouse and his crew never returned to Europe, but perished, it was discovered much later, in 1788. The *Gazette* covered different stages of the expedition, as well as the subsequent attempts to rescue the vanished explorers and to discover what had happened to them.

Prior to the publication of La Pérouse's journals in 1797, the *Gazette de France* was an important source of information about the expedition, a medium for the public representation of what was not only an official expedition, but also one in which Louis XVI was personally invested.<sup>8</sup> This was the first official French expedition around the globe, an attempt to respond to the exploits of James Cook. The very first mention of La Pérouse's voyage in the *Gazette* highlights its official nature. On 5 June 1785, the readers of the *Gazette* saw La Pérouse at Versailles taking leave of the king.<sup>9</sup> Official as this event might be,

7 A particularly notable change in this context is the shift from bi-weekly and purely informational gazettes, such as the *Gazette de France*, to daily newspapers that combined informational news bulletins and cultural content, such as the *Journal de l'Empire*. This was again the result of important political and material changes taking place: France experienced vast shifts with regard to the liberty of the press and censorship under the different regimes that succeeded one another from the Revolution and onwards. Different attempts at controlling the press through taxation also led to developments in the formats. For an introduction to this topic, see Gilles Feyel, *La presse en France des origines à 1944. Histoire politique et matérielle* (Paris: Ellipses, 2007), pp. 34–64.

8 Dominique Le Brun, *La malédiction Lapérouse* (Paris: Omnibus, 2012), pp. vi–viii.

9 *Gazette de France* (hereafter *GF*), 5 July 1785. "Le 29, le sieur de la Perouse, Capitaine de Vaisseau, commandant de la *Boussole* & l'*Astrolabe*, a eu l'honneur de prendre congé, étant présenté à Sa Majesté par le Maréchal de Castries, Ministre & Secrétaire d'État ayant le département de la Marine". ("On the 29th, M. de la Perouse, Ship Captain, Commander of the *Boussole* & the *Astrolabe*, had the honour of taking leave, having been presented to His Majesty by the Marshall de Castries, Minister & Secretary of State in charge of the ministry of the Navy").

and of personal importance to the king, this news item was not, however, the object of more particular attention in the *Gazette* than other pieces of news. In the conventional format of the gazette, which usually 'levelled' all forms of information, the single sentence that communicates La Pérouse's departure is inserted between the promotion of a functionary and the royal blessing of a wedding.

A modern reader can be struck by the apparently nonchalant manner with which this event was mediated. It is fully in line, however, with how newspapers were composed, and read, during the Ancien Régime: each individual part of the gazette was only a single part of a sequential, on-going conversation; in the terms of Andrew Pettegree, reading an "individual issue of a newspaper would always be like coming into a room in the middle of a conversation; it was hard to pick up the thread, and the terse factual style offered little help".<sup>10</sup> As opposed to pamphlets and journals, which contained cohesive and topical texts, the gazette format was characterised precisely by "la juxtaposition et la non-cohérence des énoncés" ("the juxtaposition and non-coherence of the statements").<sup>11</sup>

When the *Journal de l'Empire* reviewed Jean de Reuilly's *Voyage en Crimée*, a previous article on the same subject six months earlier meant that it could omit certain details, by arguing that they amounted to repetition: "Comme nous avons, il y a cinq ou six mois, tracé la description de ces déserts russes, nous nous croyons dispensés de nous livrer, en ce moment, à de plus grands détails" ("As we have, five or six months ago, painted a picture of these Russian deserts, we believe that we are exempted from going, at this moment, into further details").<sup>12</sup> The example points to how the newspaper presupposed, if only rhetorically, a loyal readership that engaged in sequential reading over long periods of time.

If we are to say something about how the *Gazette* mediated La Pérouse's expedition, we therefore have to look at this mediation over a longer period

10 Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 261.

11 Claude Labrosse and Pierre Réat, 'Le texte de la gazette', in Henri Duranton and Claude Labrosse (eds.), *Les Gazettes européennes de langue française (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 1992; repr. 2015). I have used the epub version of this book, without pagination, and will in the following only refer to the article title.

12 *JE*, 19 May 1806.

of time, as a sequence of issues reporting on the same event. At the moment of his departure, La Pérouse would already have been familiar to the *Gazette*'s readers, since a long excerpt from a letter he sent from Hudson Bay on a previous voyage had been published in a supplement to the paper in October 1782. Then, a little over a year after his departure, the *Gazette* brought news from and of the expedition: "Avec les lettres du Comte de la Peyrouse, il en est arrivé plusieurs écrites par les voyageurs qui l'accompagnent" ("With the letters from the Count de la Peyrouse, there came several written by the travellers who accompany him").<sup>13</sup> This time, the gazette gave more space to the expedition, extracting from the letters a two-paragraph account of the landing at Concepción (in Chile), explaining how they were unable to venture inland because of hostile natives. Printing letters from the La Pérouse expedition, the *Gazette* can be seen to expand its geographical zone of coverage, as it were, bringing its readers in contact with exotic and dangerous places. The members of the expedition are simultaneously news items and news correspondents; in a condensed account, the *Gazette* informs the readers *about* the development of the expedition, but also, *via* its crew members, transmits snippets of insight into the present state of Chile, with its 'savage' and dangerous regions. In a certain way, the travellers appear as roving reporters *avant la lettre*.

The publication of letters from travellers, integrally or as excerpts and paraphrases, was a common feature in the newspaper press, as in other periodicals. This is an important aspect of how the periodical press as a whole contributed to the transmission of knowledge about foreign places and cultures. However, the format of the gazette enabled a different form of mediation of travel, as it was shorter and more fragmented than literary journals, which could print longer excerpts from travellers' letters and embed them into topical articles. The gazettes nonetheless provided, in sequential form, a fragmented narrative on the course of specific travels, where letters from travellers provided the primary material.

This was a form of narrative, though, that presupposed an informed reader already familiar with the subject matter. It was a 'virtual' narrative that had to be actuated by the reader, following the gazette over often quite long periods of time. In the case of long-distance expeditions, the time intervals between the news notices in the gazette were particularly large compared with other kinds of events developing over time. Between the notice of La Pérouse's departure and that of his landing at Concepción, fourteen months had passed.

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13 *GF*, 15 September 1786.

This time interval was a result of the nature of the event itself: not only was the eighteenth-century voyage a slow event, but the conditions of its mediation were also particularly complex, depending on often precarious and unstable means of communication.<sup>14</sup>

As the result of pieces of news that in themselves had to travel long distances, articles and notices of expeditions such as this could lead to the journalist reflecting on the spatial and temporal conditions of transmission that governed this type of reporting, as in the notice on La Pérouse's landing at Concepción:

Il est rare, & peut-être n'y a-t-il pas d'exemple d'avoir des nouvelles aussi fraîches (en quatre mois & demi) de pays aussi éloignés; mais celles-ci sont venues par terre de la Conception à Buenos-Ayres, où elles ont trouvé un Vaisseau prêt à mettre à la voile, qui a eu une courte traversée.

[It is rare, & perhaps there has never been an example before of news so fresh (in four months & a half) from places so far away; but these went by land from Concepción to Buenos-Ayres, where they found a Ship ready to set sail, and which had a short journey.]<sup>15</sup>

The joy expressed by the journalist on the rare and relative velocity of this piece of news from the other side of the globe reveals how such 'live' travel accounts were considered as news, current events to be followed as they developed, albeit under different conditions than would be considered live coverage today, or even than would be the case with contemporary events happening close by. What this also reveals is the complex routes by which travel accounts often travelled on their way to the press. The travel conditions of the report seem to have been favourable in this case, the dispatch having found a relatively quick route back to Europe. The fact that the journalist points this out indicates precisely that the travel of travel news was not easy, and that its success was therefore appreciated.

14 In a letter to Antoine-François Fourcroy, published in the *Annales de Chimie*, Alexander von Humboldt evokes the uncertainty with which letters would travel long distances, expressing fear that some of his shipments from America to France had been intercepted by pirates. Humboldt notes how it was common to make four or five copies of each letter, and to send them via different routes between the continents. *Annales de Chimie*, 19 July 1800.

15 *GF*, 15 September 1786.

The transmission of news from long-distance travellers often passed via correspondents, individuals residing abroad, such as diplomats or merchants, sending dispatches to Paris. In the ‘canonical form’ of the gazettes, as Labrosse and Rétat have termed it, the *Gazette de France* was dominated by news bulletins from correspondents (or copied from other gazettes).<sup>16</sup> The bulletins were ordered under headlines stating their date and provenance. On 8 August 1788, news about La Pérouse’s expedition appeared in the shape of a dispatch from St. Petersburg, where the correspondent retransmitted information coming from Siberia:

On a su ici, par les Gouverneurs de la Sibérie, que le Comte de la Peyrouse étoit arrivé au port d’Avatcha, dans la péninsule de Kamschatka, avec les deux bâtimens à ses ordres; qu’on attendoit, à la fin d’Avril, à Irkouski, une des principales villes de la Sibérie, l’Officier que ce Général devoit dépêcher, par terre, en France.

[It has come to our knowledge, from the Governors of Siberia, that the Count de la Peyrouse had arrived in the port of Avachta, in the Kamchatka peninsula, with two ships under his command; that one expected, at the end of April, in Irkutsk, one of the major cities of Siberia, the Officer that this General were to have sent, by land, towards France.]<sup>17</sup>

What this notice points to is not only the different geographical stages of the information, but also its dependence on a more or less informal network of communication that, apart from certain brief indications (“les Gouverneurs de la Sibérie”), remains hidden from the readers. The notice also expresses the expectation of receiving more news from La Pérouse: “Il y a lieu d’espérer qu’on ne tardera pas à recevoir des détails plus particuliers de l’arrivée du Comte de la Peyrouse au Kamschatka” (“There is reason to hope that we will not wait too long before receiving more specific details on the arrival of the Count de la Peyrouse in Kamchatka”). This rhetoric of expectation serves to create a feeling of participating in ‘live coverage’ of the expedition, to underscore that this was an event followed by the *Gazette* as it developed. Moreover, when the *Gazette*

16 Labrosse and Rétat, ‘Le texte de la gazette’.

17 *GF*, 8 August 1788.

points to, or even reflects upon the conditions of news transmission from the expedition, this adds force to the rhetoric of expectation, turning the circulation of information in itself into a veritable adventure.

Four years later, a notice from the *Gazette* concerning one of the rescue missions after the disappearance of La Pérouse and his crew shows an even greater complexity of transmission:

*Madrid, le 16 août ...* On mande de Cadix, d'après des lettres de Lima, que deux bâtimens François, partis de l'Orient vers la fin de l'année dernière, pour aller à la recherche de M. de la Peyrouse, ont relaché dans l'isle de Chiloé.

[*Madrid, 16 August ...* It is reported from Cadiz, after letters from Lima, that two French vessels, that departed from the East towards the end of last year, to search for M. de La Peyrouse, have landed at the island of Chiloé.]<sup>18</sup>

News of the French vessels had reached the *Gazette* from Madrid, via Cadiz, Lima, and Chiloé. Reflecting, again, the difficult conditions of transmission for this kind of news circulation, notices such as these may also have had another value, an evocative power resulting from the enumeration of more or less distant places. If the early-modern newspaper in general “required frequent recourse to an atlas”, the news from and about distant travels were perhaps particularly evocative, echoing the diversity of the world and contributing to the gradual expansion of the readers’ worldview.<sup>19</sup>

The rhetoric of expectation that we saw accompanying the coverage of La Pérouse’s expedition would soon receive a tone of concern, if not despair. In 1786, the *Gazette* had taken great pleasure in the relative speed with which news of La Pérouse’s expedition arrived back in Europe. And, in June 1787, it pronounced the expedition a success (despite the reported deaths of 21 crew members), and estimated a safe return by the spring of 1788.<sup>20</sup> In 1790, however, the *Gazette* expressed concern and frustration over not having received any more news from La Pérouse and his crew:

18 *Gazette nationale de France*, 1 September 1792. The gazette had added ‘nationale’ to its title in an attempt to turn its coat in the turmoil of the Revolution. Feyel, *L'annonce et la nouvelle*, pp. 908–909.

19 Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, p. 207.

20 *GF*, 12 June 1787.

L'intérêt qu'inspire l'expédition du Comte de la Peyrouse, l'impatience avec laquelle on attend son retour en Europe, & le tems qui s'est écoulé depuis qu'on en a reçu les dernières nouvelles, font rechercher, avec avidité, toutes celles qu'on peut se procurer indirectement. Nous nous empressons de publier celles-ci extraites d'une lettre écrite, le 9 Février, par Sir Joseph Banks, Président de la Société royale de Londres, au sieur Broussonet de l'Académie royale des Sciences.

[The interest that the expedition of the Count de la Peyrouse inspires, the impatience with which one awaits his return to Europe, & the time that has passed since receiving his latest news, have us search, with eagerness, news that we can acquire indirectly. We are hastening to publish these [reports] taken from a letter written on 9 February, by Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society of London, to M. Broussonet of the Académie royale des Sciences.]<sup>21</sup>

In retrospect, this notice has poignancy, as La Pérouse's vessels had been shipwrecked already several months before. The excerpt from Banks's letter, which communicated some of the last signs of life from the expedition, provided information in the form of hearsay that had already passed through several hands:

[J]e saisis avec empressement [Banks writes] les nouvelles que m'en a donné [about la Pérouse], Samedi dernier, le sieur *Berkley*, qui vient de commander, avec le plus grand succès, un vaisseau pour le commerce des pelleteries sur la côte du nord-ouest de l'Amérique. La dernière relâche de ce Capitaine a été à l'*Isle-de-France*, d'où il a mis à la voile l'automne dernière [sic]; peu de tems avant son départ de cette Isle, il y étoit arrivé un vaisseau venant de *Batavia*, dont l'équipage lui avoit dit qu'au mois de Mai dernier, le sieur *de la Peyrouse* y étoit avec ses deux vaisseaux, l'un & l'autre en fort mauvais état, & qu'il étoit occupé à les abattre en carène.

[I eagerly grasp [Banks writes] the news [about la Pérouse] that, last Saturday, M. *Berkley* gave me, who has just been in charge, with the greatest success, of a ship for fur trade to the north-west coast of America. The last port of call of this Captain was the *Isle-de-France* [Mauritius], from where he set sail last autumn; shortly before his arrival at this Island, there had arrived a ship coming from *Batavia*, of which the crew had told him that last May, M. *de la Peyrouse* had been there with his two ships, the one & the other in very bad shape, & that he had been busy repairing the keel.]

21 *GF*, 2 March 1790.

Both the journal's introductory remarks and the excerpt from Banks's letter reflect the concern that had begun to set in with regard to the fate of the expedition. They also reveal the uncertainty of the news report itself, visible through the numerous stages of its travel to France, as well as through Banks's proviso of "si cette nouvelle est exacte" ("if this news is precise"). Furthermore, in line with the periodical practice of copying other publications, the article from the *Gazette* was reprinted in the *Journal de Paris* the following day, adding yet another step to the stages of transmission that this piece of news underwent on its way from Batavia to Paris.

At the same time, this article in the *Gazette* is a particularly clear example of how the press, in its coverage of La Pérouse, mobilised what I have referred to as a rhetoric of expectation. Through the use of terms such as *intérêt*, *impatience*, *avidité*, *empreser*, the article reflects the expectations of the journalist, but probably also works to enhance the readers' desire to receive news from the expedition. As we will see, this rhetorical aspect of travel articles, along with the reflections on the material, spatial, and temporal conditions of transmitting news from long-distance travels, is also an important part of our second category of travel in the newspaper press, namely the coverage (and construction) of travel book publications as events. In its coverage of travel, as well as of the mediation of travel into literature, the newspaper press turned travel and expedition into news, thereby often reflecting how this particular type of news itself circulated, or *travelled*.

### Travels into Print: The Coverage of Travel Book Publications as Events

The publication of a travel book is the result of a complex process of mediation and remediation of the experience of travel. Keighren, Withers, and Bell have termed this 'travels into print', drawing upon I.S. MacLaren's conceptual model describing the different stages of travel writing: the travel experience is mediated into field notes, then into daily journals and draft manuscripts, before resulting in the publication of a book, thereafter often continuing into subsequent editions and translations.<sup>22</sup> The newspaper press intervened in this process in two notable ways. As we will see in the final part of this essay,

22 Innes M. Keighren, Charles W.J. Withers, and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773–1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 18–19. For a complete description of this model, see I.S. MacLaren, 'In consideration of the evolution of explorers and travellers into authors: a model', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 15:3 (2011), p. 227.

the press itself took a role in this process by way of reviewing and rewriting the travel text, adding to it yet another stage of remediation of the travel experience. Also, as we will see in this part, the press reported on different stages of ‘travels into print’, thus constructing travel book publications as events.

Reporting on the development of specific expeditions and travels, the press often voiced expectation of seeing the published results. When the *Gazette* announced, in a news bulletin from London, that James Bruce had presented his Abyssinian Travels to the English monarchs, it first and foremost expressed anticipation: “Cet Ouvrage important est attendu depuis longtems, & sera publié dans la semaine prochaine” (“This important Work has been expected for a long time, & shall be published in the coming week”).<sup>23</sup> As this notice, probably taken from a London newspaper, was referring to the English publication, the *Gazette* added a footnote to announce an upcoming French translation, making the information more relevant to its own readers. Treated as pieces of news, publications were presented as events that merited a place in the informational columns of the gazettes. Original publications, but also translations and new editions of particular travel books, appeared as news, inserted between paragraphs on battles and aristocratic weddings.

Moreover, gazettes and newspapers mediated stories of how travel journals had themselves travelled back to Europe, adding to the expectation of seeing these published. On 18 August 1775, the *Gazette de France* printed an excerpt of a letter from a member of Cook’s second voyage, sent from the Cape of Good Hope in March the same year. The three-paragraph excerpt recounted the last stretches of the expedition, the loss of crew members, encounters with “Savages”, and the shipment back to England of “many rarities just as precious as worthy of curiosity”.<sup>24</sup> The text is immediately followed by a piece of information that stands out, as it is not a part of the excerpt and set in larger type: “Le Capitaine Cook a envoyé du même endroit ses Journaux qui ont été remis aussi-tôt à Sa Majesté” (“Captain Cook has sent from the same place his Journals, which have immediately been given to His Majesty”). To the ‘live coverage’ of travel is here added an element pointing to a particular stage in the ‘travel into print’ of Cook’s voyage, an account of the actual journey of his journals back to England.

The published account of Cook’s first voyage, translated into French in 1774, had been a great success.<sup>25</sup> We can imagine how the extract of a letter from the

23 *GF*, 27 April 1790.

24 *GF*, 18 August 1775. Information seemingly from the same letter had appeared in the *Gazette* on 14 July 1775.

25 The French translation was published as *Relation des voyages entrepris par ordre de Sa Majesté Britannique actuellement régnante* (Paris: Saillant et Nyon and Panckoucke, 1774).

expedition would have built on the expectation among the readership of seeing a publication from the second voyage. Just as the *Gazette* often reflected the conditions of transmission of news about travels, it could also contain traces of the ‘travel’ of documents on their way to publication. The official capacity of Cook’s expedition, which entailed that his journals had been “directly presented to the king”, presented this ‘travel into print’ as a particularly important event.

The same went for the announcement of the publication itself. Only a few months after the *Gazette* had informed its readers about the travel of Cook’s journal back to England, it announced, in another dispatch from London, that it had been published, together with that of Tobias Furneaux, captain of HMS *Adventure*, the vessel accompanying Cook’s *Resolution*:

On vient de publier le journal du voyage du Capitaine Cooke [sic] sur le Vaisseau *la Résolution*, dans les années 1772, 73, 74, 75, avec le dessein de découvrir l’hémisphère méridionale. Ce voyage tend à prouver que la découverte prétendue du Continent entre l’Equateur & le 50<sup>e</sup> degré de latitude méridionale n’a rien eu de réel. On a ajouté à cet Ouvrage le Journal du Capitaine Fourneaux sur le Vaisseau *l’Adventure* en 1772, 73, 74, 75 avec le récit de la séparation des deux Vaisseaux & les événements remarquables arrivés à l’un & à l’autre. Cet Ouvrage contient la description Historique & Géographique des Isles & des Pays découverts par ces deux Capitaines.

[Now is published the travelogue of Captain Cook on the Ship *The Resolution*, in the years of 1772, 73, 74, 75, with the intention of exploring the southern hemisphere. This voyage aims to prove that the presumed discovery of the Continent between the Equator & the 50° latitude south has no truth to it. One has added to this Work the Travelogue of the Captain Fourneaux on the Ship *The Adventure* in 1772, 73, 74, 75 with the account of the separation of the two Ships & the remarkable events that happened to the one and the other. This Work contains the Historical and Geographical descriptions of the Islands and the Lands discovered by these two Captains.]<sup>26</sup>

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The original travel book was ‘ghost-written’ by John Hawkesworth, who had reworked the journals of Cook and of other members of the crew (Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Banks) into one single narrative. See Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 12–13.

26 *GF*, 1 December 1775. French readers had to wait three years, however, for the first volume of the French translation to appear, as *Voyage dans l’hémisphère austral, et autour du monde* (Paris: Hôtel de Thou, 1778).

It is important to bear in mind that this announcement is not an advertisement as such, but a piece of news about what was perceived as a significant event for the progress of knowledge. The *Gazette de France* occasionally advertised books, usually as a list of titles in a smaller, two-column section on the last of its four pages. However, important new publications often appeared in the news bulletins. As a piece of news, this text in the *Gazette* informs the readers about two events: the event of the expedition, its scope with regard to time and place, its primary motivation; and the event of the publication, including a short description of the book's contents. This description gives information about the composition of the book. It also makes a short assessment by indicating how the book transmits the account of "événements remarquables" ("remarkable events").

That a travel book publication was perceived as a newsworthy event can be considered to be the result of two factors: the avid interest of the late eighteenth-century readership in travel writing, and the importance of travels as tools for scientific progress. Important for the advancement of knowledge, the publication of travel accounts could tie in with political concerns. As I.S. MacLaren has argued, the British government used the publication of travelogues from official expeditions as a tool, not only for scientific advancement, but also in the process of 'claiming' parts of the globe:

Unlike the Spanish, for example, who jealously guarded unpublished *their* explorers' narratives of eighteenth-century voyages to the New World's Pacific Coast, the British initiated claims to the portions of the globe that they explored by publishing printed volumes by command of their monarch.<sup>27</sup>

The notices of the shipment of Cook's journals and their subsequent publication could therefore be seen as news items concealing a symbolic, political value. We might ask if the *Gazette's* coverage of this specific 'travel into print' did not interact with the publication in its reflection of an official British policy of global discovery and claim. If the publication of a travel book was a newsworthy event that had a place in the columns of the French 'presse d'information' (the 'informational press'), it was precisely because of the book's symbolic value as a sign of scientific progress, global discovery and expansion. This does not mean that the editors of the *Gazette* were necessarily aware of this value. It could be seen rather as a subtext resulting from the very form of the gazettes, which, due to their composite and polyphonic nature, transmitted "l'écho de

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<sup>27</sup> MacLaren, 'In consideration', pp. 223–224.

voix publiques et officielles multiples" ("the echo of multiple public and official voices"),<sup>28</sup> and could thus, inadvertently, reflect values to which their editors did not necessarily subscribe.

As already mentioned, the official French attempt at replying to Cook's voyages ended in tragedy. The unfortunate La Pérouse was, however, able to send documents back to France on several occasions, the last in January 1788.<sup>29</sup> These documents did not result in a publication until almost a decade later: the National Assembly decided by decree the publication of the journals in 1791, but the advent of the Terror effectively postponed it until 1797. But if French readers had to wait a long time for the publication of La Pérouse's travelogue, as early as 1788 they were able to follow the 'travel' of his documents via the press. The year before, the captain had sent a member of his crew, Jean-Baptiste-Barthélemy de Lesseps, from Siberia to France with a dossier of reports from the expedition. In a supplement to its issue on 28 October 1788, the *Gazette de France* published a short extract from the reports, prefaced by an account of Lesseps's journey. It is safe to presume that, in the wake of the success of Cook's travel books, this 'foretaste' added to the expectations among the *Gazette's* readers of the future event of a publication.

The narrative of Lesseps's journey bringing the documents back is in itself interesting in our context, as a particularly good example of how the travel of documents could be intriguing in its own right. This short narrative, stretching over one and a half columns, accentuates the heroic aspect of Lesseps's exploit:

La jeunesse & le zèle du sieur de Lesseps l'ont soutenu, jusqu'au terme, contre les fatigues & les dangers inséparables d'un voyage de 4000 lieues, à travers des pays peu habités & peu fréquentés.

[The youth and eagerness of M. de Lesseps have carried him, all the way to the destination, against the fatigues and dangers that are inseparable from a journey of 4000 leagues, across countries scarcely inhabited and not much visited.]<sup>30</sup>

Lesseps's itinerary is described closely, with regard to time as well as space, in a kind of micro-travelogue.<sup>31</sup> Specific attention is given to parts of the travel

28 Labrosse and Rétat, 'Le texte de la gazette'.

29 Le Brun, *La malédiction Lapérouse*, pp. XXIII–XXIV.

30 *GF*, 28 October 1788.

31 Lesseps's travelogue was published two years later, as *Journal historique du voyage de M. de Lesseps* (Paris: l'Imprimerie royale, 1790).

that stand out as extraordinary, providing this micro-travelogue with narrative elements beyond the simple places and dates of the itinerary:

Arrivé à l'Isthme, qui joint cette terre au continent, il suivit la côte orientale de la mer de *Pengina*, passa par *Ingiga*; &, après beaucoup de difficultés & de dangers, il parvint, le 5 Mai, à *Okotskoï*. Cette partie de son voyage a été faite sur des traîneaux, tirés ou par des chiens Kamschadales, ou par des rennes, suivant l'usage de chaque pays qu'il a traversé.

[Having arrived at the Isthmus that joins this land to the continent, he followed the eastern coast of the *Pengina* sea, passed by *Ingiga*; &, after many difficulties and dangers, he made it, on 5 May, to *Okotskoï*. This part of his journey has been done on sleighs, pulled either by Kamchatkan dogs or by reindeers, following the customs of each country he travelled through.]

The *Gazette* goes here into details on the conditions of transmission of travel reports, creating a small travel text in its own right, with enough details and episodes to interest readers avid for adventurous accounts. Therefore, 'travels into print' should not only be taken metaphorically, as the description of different stages of the remediation of travel experience; it can also refer to specific parts of these stages that depended on the physical travel of documents back to Europe in order to be published, travels that could in turn become objects of notices, and narratives, in the press. The next stage of this remediation, reviewing, is the topic of the last part of this essay.

### Travels in Reviews: The Amplification and Rewriting of Travel Accounts

It was in reviews that the press could exert perhaps its biggest influence on the public perception of travel. The relationship between travel writing and the press had been increasingly important throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, with a formidable rise in the number of travel book reviews in French periodicals.<sup>32</sup> For a long time, reviews had been an important part of literary journals, but with little or no place in the pre-revolutionary gazettes. The *Gazette de France* not only contained little cultural content, but

32 Yasmine Marcil, *La fureur des voyages. Les récits de voyage dans la presse périodique (1750-1789)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), p. 49.

was also, in its status as 'feuille royale', denied all form of commentary and reflexion.<sup>33</sup> After the French Revolution, the newspaper press began to incorporate cultural content in its columns, to a much larger extent than had been the case in the gazettes of the Ancien Régime or in the revolutionary newspapers. As Gilles Feyel has pointed out, the all-political journalism of the Revolution was, under the Consulate and the First Empire, replaced by a literary newspaper journalism that drew its legitimacy and review practices from the pre-revolutionary literary journals.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, with the strong censorship of the Napoleonic regime, literature, arts and sciences were the only domains where the few remaining newspapers could exert a degree of independence and freedom.<sup>35</sup> The *Journal de l'Empire* in particular devoted extensive space to travel book reviews, where it could include commentary and reflexion that it had to avoid in its news sections.<sup>36</sup>

A review is also an item of news, in the sense that its goal is to transmit to its readers information about a recent publication. In the case of travel writing, it has an additional news function, transmitting new knowledge about places and cultures. This function would, in many cases, become the most important one. Although qualitative assessments of the books were included in the reviews, their main emphasis was more often than not on the transmission of knowledge. In fact, travel book reviews tended to amplify or rewrite the travel text, adding to the many stages of remediation that had already altered the representation of the travel. Thus, the reviews became an integral part of 'travels into print'. Articles stretching over several issues retold travels to the readers, paraphrasing and making extracts from the source texts, as well as reflecting on the knowledge of the places visited that the book brought to the public. To the extent that stylistic judgments were given a place in the reviews, it was usually in quite formulaic terms of *utile dulcis*, bearing on the travel writer's ability to balance truthful observations and descriptions with a pleasurable style.

Taking up this practice of reviewing, the newspaper became, to an even greater extent than the gazette of the Ancien Régime, a medium for travel writing, thus contributing greatly to the rich culture of travel in this period.<sup>37</sup> As

33 Feyel, *L'annonce et la nouvelle*, p. 891.

34 Feyel, *La presse en France*, p. 62.

35 André Cabanis, *La presse sous le Consulat et l'Empire (1799–1814)* (Paris: Société des Études Robespierriennes, 1975), p. 105. See also Feyel, *La presse en France*, p. 62.

36 It should be noted that the *Journal de l'Empire* also covered travel and travel book publications within its news sections, in very much the same way as the *Gazette de France*.

37 For more on the relationship between journalism and the culture of travel, see Daniel Roche, *Les circulations dans l'Europe moderne: XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard/Pluriel, 2011), pp. 106–110.

such, the press could also have the effect of stimulating the curiosity and ‘Wanderlust’ of its readers. A letter from a reader in the *Observateur des spectacles* points to how periodical fragments of travel books gave the urge to travel:

C'est en lisant dans nos gazettes des fragmens d'ouvrages publiés en France, qu'on a conçu l'idée et le désir connaître, par soi-même, une cataracte dont on trouvait de si belles descriptions dans les écrits de MM. Liancourt et Châteaubriand.

[It is reading in our gazettes the fragments of works published in France, that we have come up with the idea and the wish to know, by ourselves, a waterfall of which we found such beautiful descriptions in the texts of MM. Liancourt and Chateaubriand.]<sup>38</sup>

Excerpts and reviews thus appear to have provided the newspaper with a function that it shared with, and borrowed from, the travel book: informing readers about other places and cultures, newspapers, like travel books, could inspire them to go there themselves. In the terms of Sylvain Venayre, the press was both the arrival point and the starting point of travel: accomplished travels put into writing ended up as reviews in the newspapers, which could then inspire new travels.<sup>39</sup>

Elisabeth Hagglund has pointed out that the primary role of the eighteenth-century reviewer – to “giv[e] a reader a sufficient ‘taste’ of a book to enable him to decide whether to purchase it or not” – was often supplemented by a secondary role: “some reviewers of travel chose extracts which they judged would interest their readers, whether or not they eventually acquired the book”.<sup>40</sup> Since the beginning of literary journalism, with Denis de Sallo’s *Journal des sçavans* (1665), an important role of the journals was to save readers the trouble of reading mediocre books by summarising them.<sup>41</sup> When daily newspapers adopted book reviewing, they also took on this role. The *Journal de l'Empire* often spread travel book reviews over two, sometimes three articles,

38 *L'Observateur des spectacles, de la littérature et des arts*, 8 December 1802.

39 Sylvain Venayre, ‘Le voyage, le journal et les journalistes au xixe siècle’, *Le Temps des médias*, 8 (2007), p. 49. Venayre quotes a passage from Adelbert von Chamisso’s *Voyage autour du monde. 1815–1818*, in which the French-Prussian adventurer identifies the cause for his travel urge in reading in a gazette about a Russian expedition towards the North Pole. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

40 Elisabeth Hagglund, ‘Reviews of Travel in the Monthly Review, 1749–1758: An Introductory Survey’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 2 (1998), p. 7.

41 Sgard, ‘Qu’est-ce qu’un journal’, p. 484.

echoing the practices of literary journals. The reviewers could spend an entire first article on creating their own narrative of the places visited, extracting and paraphrasing the source text, and drawing upon other texts dealing with the same places. Comments on the style of the book, or even on the veracity and precision of the travellers' observations, could be reserved for a second article in a subsequent issue, and did at times not even receive any attention at all. In the style assessments that we find at the end of the reviews of the *Journal de l'Empire*, the journalists often give preference to a 'simple' style of writing that avoided unnecessary embellishments and digressions.<sup>42</sup> As in the literary press, *utile dulcis* is still the common schema of the assessments, although with a clear tendency to privilege "connoissances positives" ("positive knowledge") and scientific credibility to literary elegance and entertainment.<sup>43</sup>

The choices made by the journalist of the excerpts to include and the elements to retransmit constitute in and of themselves an interpretation of the travel narrative; the review text appears as a remediated version of the travel account, a rewriting of the source text combined with the reviewer's own knowledge of the places in question. For the two most prolific travel reviewers of the *Journal de l'Empire*, the historian Étienne Jondot and the geographer Conrad Malte-Brun, the review was a tool for taking part in an erudite conversation about a given topic.<sup>44</sup> The newspaper article thus espoused a central aspect of the eighteenth-century travel book: references to precursory travellers were frequently used by travel writers to define their own standing in an on-going discourse on the place visited. Commenting on this discourse as a form of metanarrative, the review also took part in it, retelling the account of its source text in a way that altered the representation of the travel.

The practice of reviewing as rewriting would sometimes be explicitly pointed to. Reviewing Lazzaro Spallanzani's *Viaggi alle due Sicilie*, Étienne Jondot

42 See for example *JE*, 15 February 1807.

43 *JE*, 30 December 1807.

44 Malte-Brun was also the editor of the geographical journal *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, established in 1807. He would occasionally reuse material from his journal in the newspaper, and refer in the latter to pieces in the former. Thus, his reviews in the *Journal de l'Empire* were made a part of a transmedial, scholarly network of books, journals and newspapers. Claude Labrosse has described the form of reading enabled by periodicals as entering precisely into a network, as a reading "mise en réseau". Claude Labrosse, 'Fonctions culturelles du périodique littéraire', in Claude Labrosse and Pierre Rézat, *L'instrument périodique. La fonction de la presse au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1985), p. 60. I would like to argue that this idea of 'network reading' needs to be extended and studied further to include all the various mediums through and between which readers would acquire knowledge on specific topics.

criticises his overly detailed manner of writing, which “ne convient pas à tous les lecteurs” (“does not suit all readers”).<sup>45</sup> Jondot intends to remedy this flaw by giving his representation of the places visited by Spallanzani, nourished by his own classical culture:

Pour rendre ces articles plus intéressans, nous nous servirons des connoissances que nous avons puisées nous-mêmes dans les auteurs de l'antiquité, lesquels ont déployé, dans leurs observations, autant de sagacité que les modernes.

[In order to render these articles more interesting, we will make use of the knowledge that we ourselves have drawn from the ancient authors, who have exerted, in their observations, just as much sagacity as the moderns.]

The article continues with a depiction of the landscape surrounding Etna, where Jondot mobilises his own rhetorical talents in personifying the landscape. This lyrical depiction self-consciously contrasts with Spallanzani's more scholarly account.

In paraphrasing the source text, the journalists could add stylistic elements and value judgements that had little or no place in the original. In the French translation of the German Count Hoffmannsegg's travel to Portugal, there is a description of a gate at the monastery of Bussaco, near Coimbra. The gate catches the attention of the traveller, as it is decorated with skulls and bones:

Plusieurs croix annoncent le voisinage du couvent, et bientôt on arrive à la porte du mur d'enceinte: elle est ornée des images de la mort; des crânes et des ossemens figurés par des pierres noires et blanches incrustées, l'entourent. Après avoir sonné, on est introduit par un frère lai.

[Several crosses signal that we are near the monastery, and soon we arrive at the gate of the bailey: it is decorated with images of death; skulls and bones inlaid with black and white stones surrounds it. After having rung, we are let in by a lay brother.]<sup>46</sup>

This is a rather sober description of “images of death”, which the author makes *en passant* without further reflection. The visit to the monastery is paraphrased

45 *JE*, 1 October 1805.

46 *Voyage en Portugal, fait depuis 1797 jusqu'en 1799, par M. Link et le comte de Hoffmannsegg*, vol. III (Paris: Dentu, Imprimeur-libraire, 1808), p. 97.

by Jondot in his review, where he gives a more elaborate interpretation of the morbid decoration:

Des cranes, des ossemens humains en forment l'affreuse décoration, et peignent d'une manière assez énergique le saint mépris des anachorètes pour cette vie si fugitive et si misérable que partout ailleurs nous égayons d'ornemens aussi frivoles que mensongers.

[Skulls, human bones form the hideous decoration [of the gate], and paint in a rather vigorous manner the holy disdain of the anchorites towards this life so fleeting and miserable, that everywhere else we liven up with decorations as frivolous as they are deceitful.]<sup>47</sup>

These moralistic reflections, which are not found in the source text, point to how Jondot's review is just as much an amplification of the narrative as a review in the modern sense.

The review could also include a political tone with little or no place in the source text. In the second article on Hoffmannsegg's travelogue, Jondot criticises the reflections of the German count on the hierarchical nature of Portuguese society:

*M. de Hoffausegg* [sic] s'élève aussi contre *le démon de la hiérarchie*. Est-ce que M. le comte auroit voulu prêcher la liberté et la fraternité? Nous l'invitons [sic] à enseigner aux paysans de son comté une telle doctrine. Il verra si la prospérité de ses affaires domestiques sera bien plus brillante.

[*M. de Hoffausegg* [sic] also rises up against the *demon of hierarchy*. Was M. the count intending to preach liberty and fraternity? We invite him to teach such a doctrine to the peasants of his own county. He will see whether the prosperity of his domestic affairs becomes more brilliant.]<sup>48</sup>

Accusing Count Hoffmannsegg of hypocrisy, and ironising over the revolutionary associations that his critique evokes, Jondot flags his own political standpoint, thereby revealing just as much about the political situation of imperial France as about Portugal. In newspapers strictly controlled by the Napoleonic regime, the sections for cultural content were the only place for subtly hinting at the ideology of the newspaper. In the terms of André Cabanis, "se moquer

47 *JE*, 15 March 1806.

48 *JE*, 26 March 1806.

d'une tragédie de Voltaire, c'est prendre parti pour la contre-révolution. Rire d'une oraison funèbre de Bossuet, c'est se situer dans la lignée du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" ("To mock a tragedy by Voltaire is to side with the counter-revolution. To laugh at a funeral oration by Bossuet is to place oneself in line with the eighteenth century").<sup>49</sup> For the *Journal de l'Empire*, as a counter-revolutionary newspaper, mocking the traces of 'liberté' and 'fraternité' in Hoffmannsegg's travel meant announcing its own ideological stand.

This did not mean that book reviews were a free zone in which to criticise the regime. Chateaubriand painfully experienced this in 1807, when his attack on Napoleon in a travel book review led to the dismantling of his journal.<sup>50</sup> Other journalists were more cautious. Jondot finishes his review of Hoffmannsegg by praising the maintenance of peace and order, in a way which would not have displeased the imperial authorities:

vraisemblablement les révolutions politiques qui viennent d'ébranler l'Europe, ont fait sentir la nécessité de considérer et de respecter les hommes qui assurent le maintien de l'ordre et le repos des régimes.

[in all likelihood, the political revolutions that have recently shaken Europe have shown the necessity of esteeming and respecting the men who assure the maintenance of order and the peace of regimes.]<sup>51</sup>

On one level, the passage praises the value of Portuguese soldiers, but reads, on another, as a concession to the regime that had restored order to revolutionary France. By mobilising the travel account in a political discourse, such as here, or by referencing, explicitly or implicitly, France's political, economic or cultural situation, a review would also bring forward comparative perspectives, by which the readers could perceive their own place and culture in light of those visited by the travel writer, and re-visited by the journalist. Such perspectives constitute a common feature that the review shares with travel books and the travel writing genre in general; this, then, is a good example of how newspapers

49 Cabanis, *La presse*, p. 105.

50 Jean-Marie Roulin, 'Chateaubriand', in Philippe Régner *et al.* (eds.), *La Civilisation du journal. Histoire culturelle et littéraire de la presse française au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2011), pp. 1108–1109. In a review of Alexandre de Laborde's *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne* in the *Mercure de France* (4 July 1807), Chateaubriand opened his review with an allegory that cast Napoleon as emperor Nero. The regime responded by merging the *Mercure* with another periodical, the *Décade philosophique*.

51 *JE*, 26 March 1806.

drew upon topics and rhetorical devices from other formats, but also of how they appropriated precisely these elements to create a distinct and independent voice. Through comparative perspectives and practices of amplification and rewriting, another dimension is added to the mediation of travel and exploration in the newspaper press: the review format allowed the journalists to build on their own geographical and historical knowledge to construct articles on other places and cultures, as well as to comment on their own. Several decades before the birth of the periodical travel reportage proper, the review allowed the newspaper to become a medium for travel writing in its own right.

We have seen how late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century French gazettes and newspapers were important in transmitting the experience of travel and exploration to the public. The press followed practically all stages of travel, from departure to arrival, often thematising the material conditions that governed the communication of travels. Covering the dramatic travels of travel reports, it also helped construct their publications as events. With the practice of reviewing, the newspaper became a medium for critique, amplification and rewriting of travel narratives. The newspaper press thus appears to stand in a complex and interdependent relationship with the genre of travel writing: a medium for travel writing in its own right, the press is also deeply interwoven with the whole of a literary culture that, at the turn of the century, saw travel writing as one of its most popular genres. Gazettes and newspapers share with the travel book certain defining features, such as the demand for newsworthiness and the interest in the foreign; newspapers as well as travel books were expected to inform readers about the outer world. Travels into news, travels into print, travels in reviews: these different mediations of travel form the picture of a press as an agent with a central role in constructing the public perception of travel and exploration.