The extraordinary voyage in French literature before 1700

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1. Definition

The term *Extraordinary Voyage* is used in the present study to designate a novel of the following type: A fictitious narrative purporting to be the veritable account of a real voyage made by one or more Europeans to an existent but little known country—or to several such countries—together with a description of the happy condition of society there found, and a supplementary account of the travelers’ return to Europe.

By the terms of this definition the *Extraordinary Voyage* is an imaginary one. But even within the restrictions of a limited literary period, it would be futile to attempt to cover intensively so broad and varied a field as that of *Imaginary Voyages* in general. It is necessary to exclude from consideration accounts of travel by land only, of travel in familiar European countries, of voyages to other planets, of voyages made in dreams, by witchcraft, by charms, or other supernatural means. As the *Extraordinary Voyage* is an imaginary one—a novel—the term will not include accounts of voyages actually made, although these accounts may contain many or all of the characteristics of the *Extraordinary Voyage* barring that of a voyage made in the imagination rather than in reality.

The term *Extraordinary Voyage* is then merely a label, convenient for purposes of classification. It implies, not of itself, but because it has been so defined here, the limitations which have been arbitrarily assigned to it. It is perhaps unfortunate that the terminology of literary history does not furnish a word which would imply the limitations above defined. The fact remains that there is no fitting term at present in use, so that limitation by definition becomes necessary. The reason for choosing the word “extraordinary” rather than any other is that the title *Voyages extraordinaires* has already been applied to this category by M. Gustave Lanson in designating the group of novels whose treatment is undertaken here. [1] The main distinction between the *Extraordinary Voyage* as a type, and (for example) the *Utopia* of More or the *Voyages* of Cyrano de Bergerac, lies in the realistic treatment of the *Extraordinary Voyage*. The same distinction is found between the *Extraordinary Voyage* and the political satire of anagram names, or between the *Extraordinary Voyage* and the affected voyages in the lands of Love so common in the 17th century in France. It is precisely by the authenticated realism of their setting that the *Extraordinary Voyages* carried weight as works of religious, social, or political criticism.

2. Purpose of the Present Study

It is intended in this study to treat the *Extraordinary Voyages* before 1700 both as individual productions and as a group of novels. The first attempts in the direction of this type of novel will be studied in the early part of the 17th century. In addition to considering the philosophical and Utopian content of each, the three complete novels of the type published before 1700 will be treated as novels, and the sources of realism in each will be traced to accounts of real voyages of earlier date.
3. The Place of the Extraordinary Voyage

M. Lanson has considered the *Extraordinary Voyage* as a manifestation of the rationalistic spirit in the 17th and early 18th centuries of French literature. [2] The philosophic novel is one of many forms of literature made use of by M. Lanson in order to trace the development of rationalistic thinking in France. These novels are adduced by him as proof that the “esprit philosophique” of the 18th Century was not the consequence of reasoning *a priori*, but rather the result of new and concrete examples brought to the attention of men trained in rationalistic thought. It would be vain to comment on, or to attempt to resume here a study of the scope of this work of M. Lanson. What is of importance with regard to the present study is, that M. Lanson has treated the *Extraordinary Voyage* as a manifestation of a particular school of thought rather than as a type of novel. [3]

The first to call attention to this group of novels was M. André lichtenberger, in *Le Socialisme au xviie siècle*. [4] His interest, as would appear from the title of his work, is largely connected with the theory of property in novels of this type.

M. Gilbert Chinard, now of the Johns Hopkins University, in a study of very wide scope [5] has considered the same type of novel as an example of the exotic influences in France during the 17th and 18th centuries. [6] To M. Chinard the chief interest of these novels is, of course, the fact of their “exotic” nature, although he points out the philosophic content of each on the basis of M. Lanson’s previous work, which is referred to by him and at least in one instance quoted.

It has often been said that the ideas developed by great authors are theirs only in the sense that through their genius of expression these authors have given them lasting form. The precursors of these great formulations are forgotten with a rapidity which is surprising, even though it may be just.

Until the recent studies of the three scholars just cited, the men whose writings are to be considered here were, with one exception, forgotten and unknown. Works of imagination, based on rationalistic processes of thought and involving criticism of existing conditions, had heretofore seemed to the average scholar to belong almost of necessity to the 18th century of French literature. In the 17th century, the imaginative work of Cyrano de Bergerac, and the popularized science of Fontenelle appeared, as it were, rather lost and out of place. With the work of scholars since the appearance of Lichtenberger’s *Le Socialisme an XVIIIe siècle* has come the realization that the “philosophic” spirit, generally associated with the 18th century of French Literature, has its roots in the years before 1700, and that *Télémaque* (1699) is not a sporadic manifestation without predecessors.

The present study is concerned chiefly with the development of one generic form, and with the particular analysis of three specific novels, of the type:

*La Terre australe connue* of Gabriel Foigny, 1676;  
*L’Histoire des Sèvarambes* of Denis Vairasse d’Alais, 1677-79;  
*Les Aventures de Télémaque* of Fénélon, 1699.

It is not contended that the works of Foigny, Vairasse, and their equally obscure predecessors are of an importance approaching that of the works of Fénélon, De Foe, Rousseau, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, and other famous writers of later centuries. Were it not for these men of greater genius in later years, the work of investigation contemplated here would be without justification. It is easy to believe, however, that these precursors of the great figures are worthy of study, and that they are perhaps more worthy of study than are those mediocre spirits of the 18th century who basked in the reflected glory of contemporary genius.
Because of their resemblances and contrasts to the great writers of their time, such minor authors as Tiphaigne de la Roche, Guillard de Beaurieu, the abbé Dulaurens, Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, Rétif de la Bretonne, and many others, have been taken from their quiet shelves, dusted, and found to present a certain interest. Perhaps less apology is required for studying here those rationalistic writers of imaginative voyages who drew for their realistic setting on published accounts of actual voyages of the 17th century and on accounts of ancient civilizations, and who placed in this setting imaginary and uncorrupted peoples for the purpose of preaching criticism of the France now generally studied in Racine, Bossuet, and Mme. de la Fayette.

The extraordinary voyage in French literature

Descriptions of Real Voyages

1. Illustrated Cosmographies.
2. Realism in some accounts of Voyages after 1600.
3. Interest in Accounts of Voyages.

1. Illustrated Cosmographies

Widespread interest in geography in the Middle Ages is evidenced by “cosmographies” of the type of the Image du Monde. These fantastic cosmographies, such as that of Mattre Gossonin were followed, in the closing years of the 16th century, by a cosmography in the modern sense of the word. In this, and in subsequent collections of accounts of voyages in the 17th century, it is possible to trace a growing interest on the part of the public in descriptions of far-off lands, and an increasing amount of realism in the accounts of voyages published. The cosmography of the father and sons De Bry was published from 1590 to 1635. It is generally divided into the Long Voyages and the Short Voyages (Grands et Petits Voyages). One part deals with the history of the discovery of America, the other part with an account of the discovery of the East Indies. The father and two sons who published this voluminous collection were engravers by trade, and resorted to the history of discovery and exploration in five continents as a means of utilizing and displaying their undoubted skill in the art of illustration. The many volumes, containing accounts of voyages, shipwrecks, explorations, descriptions of fauna and flora, tables of Latin and Indian languages, are fertile in maps. But their illustrations — hundreds of engravings of all sorts — are even more interesting. There are battles, and ceremonies of state ; there are plants and flowers ; there are beasts such as never were on land or sea : the sea-cow with horns, the unicorn, the two-headed monsters, the giant bird the Ruk, — these and many more superstitions, generally characterized as of the Middle Ages, survive into the 17th century in this cosmography. The juxtaposition of the text and the engravings gives these latter (which were to the engravers perhaps only the continuation of a tradition) a curiously life-like quality. If the printing of Marco Polo’s travels in Latin and their later translation into other languages had stirred the imaginations of many readers during the 16th century, these illustrated accounts of exploration in Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the two Americas supplied an additional stimulus to the eye. All the strange and grotesque animals to the contrary notwithstanding, the minute description of costumes, idols, plants, and vermin of the DeBry collection must have brought a realism to the far places of the earth for the European reader.
2. Realism in Some Accounts of Voyages after 1600

The realism of the engravings of the De Bry collection is a feature which becomes even more striking in accounts of voyages after 1600. It is not intended in the short space of this chapter to treat extensively the realistic element in accounts of Voyages in the 17th century in France. Perhaps no better idea of the minute descriptions of commonplace objects in accounts of far lands can be obtained than that which comes from reading M. Chinard’s work on Du Tertre as a predecessor of Rousseau. [12] It is intended here merely to point out some of the elements of realism in accounts of Voyages that have not been mentioned by M. Chinard.

First through the illustrations and the text of collections like that of De Bry, then through other accounts of voyages in later years, the far places of the earth came to be more than a hazy dream to the readers in 17th century France. By definite maps, even though these were grossly inaccurate, by meticulous descriptions of animals, birds, insects, plants, and fruits, the far lands became in some measure real to those who stayed at home.

At Douai in 1605 appeared a large quarto volume which continues the tradition of the earlier works of the engravers De Bry. This is the :

*Histoire universelle des Indes Orientales et Occidentales, par Cornille Wytfliet et Ant. M. ADOUA Y, aux despens de François Fabri, 1605.*

There are two very complete maps of the *Terre Auetrale* (pp. 67 and 70) filling the entire Antarctic region, approaching the Cape of Good Hope, including the Tierra del Fuego and thereby approaching the mainland of South America. In the neighborhood of Java, this tremendous Antarctic land appears further north than the tropic of Capricorn. One of these maps is circular, with the South Pole at the center. The text of this book is, however, impersonal and uninteresting.

Another and a better known book of travel is that of Jean Mocquet, *Garde du Cabinet des singularitez du Roy*. These voyages appeared at Paris in 1616, and 1617, at Rouen in 1645, in 1665 and in many translations, among them the fairly common 1696 edition at London. The title of the 1617 edition is :

*Voyages en Afrique, Asie, Indes Ortentales & Occidentales faits par Jean Mocquet, Garde du Cabinet des singularitez du Roy, aux Tuileries. Paris, chez Jean de la Heuqueville, MDCXVII.*

M. Chinard [13] has called attention at length to the strong exotic flavor of this rare story of adventure, and to the interest of Mocquet in plants, flowers and animals. M. Henri Jouan has also made a charming sketch of the man Mocquet as reflected in his writings. [14] Aside from the author’s convincing style, and his descriptions of ships, pirates, strange peoples, hunger, thirst and misfortune, there are other interesting elements in the book. After the first part, there are illustrations of camels with cloven hoofs, like those of cows, and with tails like those of horses. At the end of *Livre 2* are eight startling illustrations (in the same manner though not so well executed as those of De Bry) depicting cannibalism, Brazilian native dances and warfare. Arms and legs of victims are seen roasting over a fire, while the natives sit in the foreground, gnawing on human limbs. In *Livre 3* there are descriptions of Christian martyrs, and a striking account of a dog protected by a lion from other lions (p. 187). This real interest in animals, apparent throughout the book, is strikingly modern. Another, and perhaps a still more noteworthy trait, is Mocquet’s appreciation of inanimate nature. In *Livre 4* the author’s departure from a port in Brittany is sketched in with one stroke of the brush : *Ce fut un matin & par une grande tourmente* (p. 214). The minute realistic descriptions of the manners and customs of strange peoples in Mocquet’s Voyages has been mentioned by M. Chinard.
Engravings of fruits, trees, vegetables, pottery as well as maps, are found in many collections of voyages in the 17th century before 1675. Perhaps as abundant as any collection in these illustrations is the *Recueil de Voyages* of Justel:

*Recueil de divers Voyages faits en Afrique et en l’Amérique qui n’ont point esté encore publiez, Paris, chez Louis Billaine, MDCLXXIV.*

It is curious to note in this book a long discussion on the unicorn (pp. 220-223), under the title *De la fameuse Licorne, des lieux où elle est nourrie & comme elle est formée.* Side by side with it are minute descriptions of plants and vegetables common in the West Indies, Africa and elsewhere.

Typical in a way of books of travel in the early 17th century in France is an account of a voyage to the East Indies, which appeared in a small 12mo volume at Paris in 1645. [15] The *Privilège du Roi* is of February 5th, 1645. Although the title does not give the name of the author, the privilège reads in part, “Il est permis à C. D. B. S. D. L. G. d’imprimer, ou faire imprimer.”

Two things make this small volume, not mentioned previously to my knowledge, worthy of notice: its realism, and interest in the exotic. The author takes an interest in religious matters when they are exotic, for one reads (p. 3) of a negro prince, *Ce Prince se disoit Chrestien, & nous monstra une Chapelle & un Crucifix . . . pour marque de sa pieté . . . Ils vont rmds, & ont plusieurs femmes, quoy que Chrestiens.*

Realism with regard to savages is found in descriptions of the natives at the Cape of Good Hope. The women are *laides & ont si peu de nez, qu’elles sont fort comme des singesses & tous ces sauvages puans comme des boucs, viuans sans Dieu, sans Boy & sans Loy ...* (p. 5).

The island of Formosa is called *la belle des belles* (p. 46), and eulogized. There is a prince (p. 70) who *a pris le Christianisme en telle hayne, qu’il a fait mourir iusques à des Princes de son sang.* Different races of different religions living together cause some comment (p. 81) : *Comme toute sorte de peuples trafiquent en cette ville il y a aussi de toutes sortes de Religions, fors la Chrestienne, & toutefois ceux mesme qui adorent un seul Dieu, n’ont aucune regle.* Here is religious freedom.

Mention is made (p. 82) of *plusieurs sortes de Mahometans, quelques uns ont des Chapelets & d’autres font le signe de la Croix.*

Most of the book is filled with accounts of guard-duty, insurrection of natives, battles between the Dutch and the Portuguese, reports of gold, silver, spices, and stories of piracy. There is realism in this also. We find, for instance (p. 23), one very distinguished Chinese admiral and pirate reduced to peddling beer for a living in Formosa.

Minute and careful description of fear-inspiring events is found in accounts of the earthquake in Canada in 1663, as described by Jerome Lallemant in his:

*Relation de ce qui s’est passé de plus remarquable aux Missions des Pères de la Compagnie de Jesus en la Nouvelle France ès années 1662 & 1663.* Paris, chez Cramoisy, 1664.
3. Interest in Accounts of Voyages

These Jesuit reports on Canada were published by Cramoisy at Paris, almost yearly, for a considerable period. For instance:

Relation de ce qui s’est passé en la Nouvelle France en l’année 1639 (Paul LeJeune), Paris, 1640;
es années 1640 & 1641 (Barthélemy Vimont) Paris, 1642;
en l’année 1642 (Barthélemy Vimont) Paris, 1643;
es années 1643 & 1644 (B. Vimont) Paris, 1645;
es années 1644 & 1645 (B. Vimont) Paris, 1646;

In the years 1650 to 1663 these relations were written by Paul Ragueneau; in 1654 and 1655, by François Le Mercier. The two publishers, Sebastien and Gabriel Cramoisy, also published many other relations such as:

Relation de l’establissement des François depuis l’an 1635 en l’isle de la Martinique, etc. (Jacques Bouton), Paris, 1640.

Neither was publication of missionary and colonial reports limited to Paris. After 1650, a great publication of such accounts seems to begin, and throughout France. The Relation de l’establissement d’une colonie française dans la Gardeloupe [16] etc. of Mathias Dupuis Caen 1652, has not been mentioned previously to my knowledge.

In the first ten years of the century a great part of the published voyages were translations such as G. M. Lodewijcks’

Premier livre de la navigation aux Indes Orientales par lea Hollandais, etc. Amsterdam, 1609,
or Diego Bollo de Torres’


The better known Histoire naturelle et morale des Indes, of Acosta, was repeatedly published in translations from the Spanish at the beginning of the century. This publication of translations does not cease later, when many accounts of voyages were being published by Frenchmen. L’Histoire du nouveau monde ou Description des Indes Occidentales, of Joannes de Laet, Leyden, 1640, was followed by other translations from the Dutch.

Accounts of travels by Frenchmen, such as the Description du premier voyage faict aux Indes Orientales par les Français en l’an 1603, of François Martin de Vitré, Paris, 1604, necessarily rare at the beginning of the century, multiply rapidly toward 1650. The Voyages fameux du sieur Vincent Le Blanc (1648) will be examined at length in Chapter III. A less interesting traveler but one far better informed is François de Gouz, sieur de la Boullaye. In his curious book, this traveler shows knowledge of the voyages of Magellan, Drake, Mocquet, and Vincent Le Blanc, among others. For one interested in the extent of publication of accounts of voyages at the time, it is interesting to consult the four unnumbered pages (viz. four pages of criticism of then existing books of travel) following the Au lecteur of:
The achevé d’imprimer of this curious work is of the 8th May, 1653. Here is nothing flamboyant, nothing grossly exaggerated. François de Gouz, Gentilhomme Angevin, is a worldly, cautious sort of traveler, of the general type of the better known travelers who follow in the late 17th Century, such as Tavemier or Bernier. He pokes fun at the gullible Vincent Le Blanc (whose importance is greater than his own for the present study) in the following terms:

Vincent Le Blanc pourroit disputer avec Vlisse de la longueur de ses Voyages, il donne beaucoup d’instruction de l’Afrique aux Geographes modernes & il seroit à desirer qu’il eust sceu les Langues Orientales, afin de rapporter les noms propres des lieux où il a esté. (Pages following Au lecteur.)

Interest in the East Indies, and particular interest in China, is evident in the same period following 1650. It is generally contended that the East held no appreciable interest for French readers until the last quarter of the 17th century. The publication of the following works would seem, perhaps, to modify this conclusion:

Marucci, Giovanni, Relation de ce qui s’est passé dans les Indes Orientales en ses trois provinces de Goa, de Malabar, du Japon, de la Chine & d’autres pays (tr. from Italian), Paris, chez Cramoisy, 1661.
Sanson, Nicolas (d’Abbeville), l’Asie en plusieurs cartes nouvelles ... en divers traités de géographie et d’histoire, Paris, 1662.
Martini, M. Histoire de la guerre des Tartares contre la Chine (tr. from the Latin), Douai, 1654.

In the light of this extensive publication of accounts of voyages, of missions, of foreign wars, other civilizations and religions, it is only natural to assume the existence of a very considerable interest in such accounts before 1660, in France. This interest has been referred to both by M. Martino (particularly after 1660) in L’Orient dans la littérature française au xvii et au xviiie siècle, and by M. Chinard in dealing with America. With the exception of the works of François Martin de Vitré (1604), of Jean Mocquet (1616), and the translations of Acosta (1598, 1600, etc.), none of the editions cited in this chapter have been referred to by either M. Martino or M. Chinard. [17] It is therefore probable that this interest in far lands, in France before 1660, an interest whose study was initiated by these two scholars, was even greater than M. Martino or M. Chinard suspected. There is still much to be done before a complete bibliography of published voyages in the 17th century in France will be available, and it is the purpose of the present writer to contribute to the still incomplete list rather than to criticize in any way the greater work of the pioneers in this field.

There is record in 1663, of this interest in published accounts of voyages. It is found in the letters of Chapelain. In a letter dated December 15th, 1663, and addressed to Carrel de Sainte-Garde, [18] Chapelain says:

Nostre nation a changé de goust pour les lectures et, au lieu des romans qui sont tombés avec la Calprenède, les voyages sont venus en crédit et tiennent le haut bout dans la cour et dans la ville.

That this was not a passing fancy in taste is witnessed by the continued publication of voyages after this date, and in ever increasing volume. It is upon this taste for voyages, that the writers of *Extraordinary Voyages* after 1675 depended, in part, for their reception by the public. It was thanks to the popularity of published voyages that the writers of novels with voyage settings gained the attention—and sometimes the credence—of their readers.

There is a didactic content in the *Extraordinary Voyages* whose sources will be investigated in the next chapter. The authors of the *Extraordinary Voyages* were beset by a desire to preach, in somewhat the same way that Plato, More, Bacon, and Campanella had desired to preach.

It would have been not only a thankless but a hopeless task to graft upon the amorous, the adventurous, or the burlesque novel of the 17th century the account of an almost perfect state of society. Creators of ideal commonwealths after 1675 turned for their settings to accounts of real voyages whose popularity with the public was established.

**Imaginary Realms before 1675**

If, as will be seen later, the authors of *Extraordinary Voyages* after 1675 turned to detailed accounts of real voyages for material wherewith to substantiate their novels, it is not so with earlier creators of imaginary realms. The careful documentation of events, of dates, of places that is evident in later works, is distinctly lacking in earlier accounts of imaginary states of society. The development of the realistic setting for the presentation of such ideal commonwealths is a gradual development.

The regions visited by Saint Catherine, for instance or the fabled Island of Saint Brendan are described in a medieval haze of the preternatural. Even Charlemagne and his paladins are travelers of a marvelous, an almost mythical type. It is a far cry from these miraculous lands of the Middle Ages to the imaginary territories of later years, which may only be reached by the shipwreck of a carefully authenticated Dutch or Portuguese merchantman.

Two well-known works of imagination of the 16th century share with their predecessors this lack of circumstantial detail: Thomas More’s *Utopia*, and Rabelais’ *Pantagruel* (in particular livre V). No one was made to believe, by the introduction of circumstantial and convincing details, that More’s delightful fantasy was the description of a veritable country. The *Isle Sonnante* and the *Pays de Lanternois* must probably have seemed fantastic creations to Rabelais’ contemporaries, however they may be regarded by more recent investigators of the subject. In both the works just cited there is, to be sure, a reminiscence of recent discoveries beyond the seas, but this reminiscence is far from showing the detailed and carefully authenticated realism which is subsequently found.

2. *Les Hermaphrodites*, 1605

There appeared in 1605 a satire on the morals of the court of Henri III, which has the form of an imaginary voyage. This is *Les Hermaphrodites* of Thomas Artus. The first edition of this curious book is very rare. [19] Copies do exist, however, both at the British Museum [20] and at the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. [21] The author of this satire, Thomas Artus, sieur d’Embry, [22] wrote also some translations, besides epigrams and predictions in collaboration with other writers. Among these are:
L’histoire de la décadence de l’Empire grec et establissement de celuy des Turcs . . . et des tableaux prophétiques predisans la ruine de la mesme monarchies par Artus Thomas, Paris, 1620.

(The same) : Avec la contintutiian de la mesme histoire juaques à l’an 1612, par T, Artus, Paris, 1650. [23]


Les Hermaphrodites and a Discours de Jacophile à Limne appeared in two parts, in a duodecimo volume, according to the British Museum Catalogue in 1605. Neither of two copies at the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris has name of place or date of publication. The second known edition, however, [25] gives the following information :

on a trouvé . . . que cet ouvrage n’a paru qu’en 1605, qu’on le vendoit à un prix excessif, que le Roy Henri IV se le fit lire, & quoy qu’il le trouvât libre & trop hardi, il ne voulut pourtant pas qu’on recherchât l’Autheur nommé Artus Thomas, (Au lecteur, p. 2.)

The 1697 edition of Bayle’s Dictionnaire, in a note to the Article Salmacis, mentions this book as an ingenious satire on the court of Henri III, but does not give the name of the author.

The interest of the Hermaphrodites of Thomas Artus for the present study lies in the fact that this satire of the France of the late 16th century, published at the beginning of the 17th century, attempts to present a realistic setting, based upon accounts of genuine voyages. The ideal community of More’s Utopia, and the foreign lands visited by Pantagruel, both show the influence of the accounts of discovery. With Thomas Artus, a similar reflection is found in the setting of a satire.

The Hermaphrodites begins with a discussion, among friends, of the new worlds discovered beyond the seas. As an expression of the adventurous spirit of the time, the following brief sentence may be quoted :

la plupart du monde ancien, mesprisant son antiquité, a mieux aymé chercher, au péril de mille vies, quelque nouvelle fortune, que de se contenter de l’ancienne & vivre en repos & tranquillité (p. 1).

One of the friends discussing these matters begins an account of his adventures. The story of these adventures forms the rest of the book. He and a companion start to return to Europe after a long residence aux terres nouvelles descouvertes . . . ayans trouvé un navire marchand qui estoit prest de faire voile, & qui tiroit devers Lisbonne. [26]

There is nothing more definite than this by way of orientation. After a short voyage, storm and shipwreck occur, followed by the miraculous escape of the narrator. These events are without the details that enliven later Voyages of the Extraordinary type. There is, however, a similarity in the arrival, on a strange shore, of a ship-wrecked European. In this story the omission of amplifying details of the shipwreck and subsequent landing detracts from the force of the satire which is to follow. The adventurer and his two surviving comrades have just finished thanking Heaven for their remarkable deliverance, when

nous vismes que la terre sur laquelle nous marchions estoit toute flottante, & qu’elle erroit vagabonde sur ce grand Ocean sans aucune stabilité. Lors saisis de nouvelle frayeur nous ne Sçavions quelle resolution prendre, trouvant le fait tant estrange, qu’à peine pouvions nous adjouster foy à nostre veuë (pp. 4-5).
The resemblance of this vaisseau terrestre . . . par tout si fertile & florissant (p. 5) to the island of St. Brendan, is apparent. It is to be noted however, that the vogue of the floating island, like that of the unicorn, was still fairly great after 1600. [27] There follows a description of the beautiful palace found by the adventurer. The architecture of the building and its grace are particularly astonishing:

Le Marbre, le Jaspe, le Porphire, l’or, & la diversité des émaux estoit ce qu’il y avoit de moindre (p. 5).

With little delay begins the investigation of the inhabitants, their customs and manners. It is a virulent and transparent satire of the court of a French King. For over ninety pages of a duodecimo volume the vanity, over-dress, pettiness, effeminacy, and immorality of the King and his courtiers are discussed and expatiated upon. In all these pages there is no story. The adventurer witnessed the ceremonies, heard the arguments, and read the book of laws of this depraved community. This book of laws, which the adventurer gives in full, is in the form of a royal proclamation. It contains a detailed denial of religion, morality, honesty, common decency, taste, manners, and reason. Let a very limited quotation suffice to show the extent of this perversion of society by royal edict in the Isle des Hermaphrodites:

Permettons ce qu’on apelle perfidie, trahison, & ingratitude, que nous tenons pour sagesse, bonne conduite, & gentillesse d’esprit (p. 68).

This proclamation of vice covers the whole range of human affairs. From hypocrisy to murder, rape and incest, there is no crime that is not permitted, nay promoted.

The hermaphroditism of these people consists in their lack of true manly virtues (no physiological hermaphroditism being mentioned). In the virile eyes of the author the attention of these people to fine raiment, cosmetics, and soft indulgence makes them less than men, and more like women. Along with a condemnation of dandies, fops, and courtiers, there is also a condemnation of sex perversions of which no extended exposition is necessary.

At the end of the book appear some verses Contre les Hermaphrodites, and a Discours du sowerain bien de l’homme. These two “items” are bound to the rest of the story by a simple device. The adventurer who tells the story says that these were given him by a guide, and that he sat down and read them. He simply recounts what he has read. The story itself is ended abruptly by another inartistic expedient. The adventurer tires of talking, and promises to continue his account at some later time. Thus he very simply avoids the necessity for narrating the return of the travelers to Europe.

The Description de l’isle des hermaphrodites is not an Extraordinary Voyage. It is a destructive, satirical criticism of existing conditions, under a transparent cloak. Its interest for the present study lies in its feeble attempt at realism on the basis of current accounts of voyages, and in its being written in French, rather than in Latin. [28]

3. Two Followers of More

Francis Bacon’s Nova Atlantis and Campanella’s Civitas Solis both appeared early in the 17th century. [29] Both are of the general type of the Utopia. It will be recalled that the travelers in Bacon’s Atlantis set forth from Peru for China and Japan, and travel five months with fair but soft winds before reaching their happy destination. In Campanella’s dialogue, it is only the first speech of the Genoese Sea Captain — the first four lines — that deals with the geographical setting, and this is hazy in the extreme. Doubtless “Taprobane” meant even
less to French readers in 1635 than “five months’ travel from Peru.” And but for “Taprobane” the City of the Sun is not oriented. The natural science element of the *Atlantis* as well as the religious ideas of Campanella and those relating to “the preservation of the species” will be discussed in their relation to the work of Foigny, Vairasse, and Fénelon after 1675. It is intended here simply to note the lack of detail to substantiate the statements of Bacon’s and Campanella’s travelers. These philosophers are too intent upon theory; the welding of the spirit of adventure and travel with the spirit of protest against existing evils has not yet taken place. The didactic element is too pronounced in Bacon and Campanella to allow of much interest in the setting.

4. The Legend of the Incas

The numerous translations and editions of the story of the Incas in the 17th century in France are fairly well known. The first translation is of 1633:


Other editions of this translation in French before 1675 are of 1658 and 1672.

The translations of Plato and of Plutarch had brought to France the legend of perfect government, but in a haze of departed glory. The story of the Incas, according to Garcilaso, was an account of a modern and almost perfect state. It was also in some measure the defense of regulation of the affairs of men by a wise and paternal government. In one sense, the idealized community of the Incas was a reproach against existing evils of government and social affairs in Europe. The truth of Garcilaso’s statements has been much questioned in later times, but there is little doubt of their acceptance as being true, at the time of these translations into French. It must have been more forceful and convincing in many ways than the far-off and unsubstantiated account of the *Utopia* of More, or of the *Nova Atlantis* of Bacon. The authenticity of the account is based on the representation that the author was a descendant of the Incas as well as of one of the Spanish conquerors under Pizarro.

The History of the Incas is briefly the account of a succession of kings. The first Inca and his sister-wife imposed their will and their superior minds upon the uncivilized inhabitants whom they found in ancient Peru. Claiming to be descended from the Sun, these two took to themselves the direction of religion as well as of government. Their descendants were the rulers, and later became the oligarchy of the land. Each king and queen of this nation was directly descended from the first Inca and his sister-wife. The succeeding kings subjugated neighboring tribes, built aqueducts for irrigation, and organized the administration of the country. Each ten men had a supervisor responsible to a higher official who in turn was responsible to still another. At the summit of this pyramid was *The Inca*, the monarch and high priest of his people.

By the building of store-houses and by the hoarding of grain in abundant years for distribution in years of dearth, by the regulation of clothing, by the assignment of duties to all men within certain age limits, and by the requirement of a certain minimum of labor for the State on the part of each individual, the paternal form of government supplied the needs of each subject. The kindness and forethought of the kings is epitomized in the following sentence:

*en un mot ils se conduisoient d’une telle manière envers tout le monde, qu’on pouvoit les apeller de bons pères de famille, ou de fidèles oeconomes, plutôt que des Rois.* [31]
Quite as interesting as is this eulogy of the paternal form of government is the Deistic point of view of the initiated among the Incas. The common people worshiped the Sun, and the formal religion of the State was sun-worship. The general faith held also that the soul is immortal, and that the wicked are punished after death (Livre I, ch. vii). Among the kings themselves, who were also the priests and theologians, there is more than sun-worship. The Inca Roca (Livre IV, ch. xvii) is reported to have said that:

toutes les fois qu’il considérait la grandeur, la lumière & la beauté du ciel, il en tirait cette conséquence : qu’il fallait bien que le Pachacamac (c’est ainsi qu’on appelle Dieu) fût un Roi fort puissant, puisqu’il avait une si belle demeure.

The Inca Huayna Capac (Livre IX, eh. x) uses a peculiarly rationalistic argument to prove the existence of an invisible God (the Pachacamac):

ce Soleil, qui est notre Père, doit relever d’un autre Seigneur plus puissant que lui, & par le commandement duquel il fait la course qu’on lui voit faire tous les jours, sans que jamais il s’arrête. Car si le Soleil notre Père étoit souverain Seigneur de toutes les choses d’ici-bas, il y a grande apparence qu’il se reposeroit quelquefois pour son plaisir, puisqu’il n’y a point de nécessite qui le pût contraindre à marcher toujours.

That a people without knowledge either of Europe or of an orthodox revelation should have not only an ideal form of government but a belief in the immortality of the soul and in the existence of an unseen God is the striking report of Garcilaso. That the translations of this work were numerous argues not only that it was well known in France, but conversely that it was a book of great interest to the public. The insistence of Garcilaso upon manual labor and upon tilling the soil is as striking as is his insistence upon the king’s responsibility for the welfare of his people. With the publication of this book there came to French readers an account of an almost perfect state of society in a modern land — a real land — known to exist. [32]

5. The Austral Land

The modern idea of an Austral Land or continent came first to Europe in the *Voyages* of Marco Polo, published in Latin about 1485. In reading Marco Polo, one does not meet the idea of a great continent known, but of a great series of islands visited (Java, Sumatra, etc.), together with rumors of a great continent beyond. The voyage of Gonneville to the coast of South America, and his report of a Terre Australe is fairly well known. [33] This intrepid sailor, Captain Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, brought back from the Southern Hemisphere a native, named Essomérík, the son of a local king. The party was almost lost, through an attack by pirates, just before landing on their return to Europe. Descendants of Essomérík (who was married to a French lady after proper admission to her faith) are traced by De Brosses to the year 1725. One of these descendants of Essomérík, his grandson, was the author of a publication referring to the Austral Land, which is of interest in the present study:
*Mémoires touchant l’établissement d’une mission chrestienne dans le troisième monde autrement appelé la Terre Australe, Méridionale, Antartique, et inconnuë. Dediez à Nostre S. Père le Pape Alexandre VII. Par un Ecclesiastique Origininaire de cette mesme terre.*

These mémoires were published by Gabriel Cramoisy at Paris in December 1663, without the knowledge of the author, the abbé Paulmier, chanoine de Lisieux. An arrangement was made later to the satisfaction of both the author and the publisher, the name of the author being placed on the title page in printing after January 1664. It would seem that there must have been some considerable interest at the time in this publication.
Besides Captain de Gonneville, who wrote his version of the voyage of 1503-1504 early in the 16th century, the voyage of Magellan (1519), of Saavedra (1528), and of Garcia de Loaisa (1525) had been published in Latin by De Bry and others. The fact that these later explorers visited Australasia rather than South America made little difference to the reading public in France in the 17th century. Gonneville himself gave no definite information as to where he had been, and for the average reader of the 17th century in France the Tierra del Fuego and Australia were very much the same thing.

The detailed and substantiated account of the Portuguese Captain Fernando de Queir (or Queiros) of his voyage to Australia (1606) was widely known by 1630, thanks to publication of this account both in De Bry’s *India Orientalis* (Liber X) and in French translation. [34]

Similarly, the voyage to Australia of Captain François Pelsart (1629) was known through the publications of Melchisedech Thévenot. [35] The account of Pelsart is realistic and detailed, but not in any way Utopian. On the contrary, de Queir had claimed many and varied blessings for his newly discovered land. Other accounts of voyages to Australasia, of less importance in the present study, but published in the 17th century before 1675, are those of Willem Schouten (1615) of Jacques l’Hermite (1624), and of Abel Tasman (1642) which may be found either in Thévenot’s collection or in the English *Purchas’ Pilgrimes* or the *Hackluyt Collection*.

With all of these accounts, there had grown up a sort of legend of the “Terre Australe inconnue,” where almost every delight of climate and fertility of the soil might be found. Many French people, missionaries, adventurers, traders, younger sons, and vagabonds had already been to America (largely the Antilles and Canada, although some missionaries and a few explorers to Brazil). The American setting was ideal for works of the imagination with a primary interest in adventure and piracy. [36] This same setting could hardly be used for an imaginary and uncorrupted people having a complete, materialistic civilization. That American Indians had no houses, no canals, practically no agriculture was common knowledge in France toward 1670. The ideal civilization of the Incas was generally known to have perished either before the invasion of Pizarro or at the time of this invasion. There remained, however, the “Terre Australe inconnue,” a vague sort of legend similar in a way to the “Tahiti” legend of a later day. It is in this setting that the first two *Extraordinary Voyages* place their ideal peoples.

[8] *L’Image du monde de Maitre Gossouin*, printed at Lausanne, 1913. (Bibliography under Gossouin.) This work of Gossouin is cited as a type. There is no reason for dealing here with the other cosmographies of the same period.
[9] See Bibliography, *De Bry*.


[17] M. Chinard (*op. cit.* p. 122) does cite the collected *Jesuit Relations*. The original *Relations* published by Cramoisy almost at the rate of one small volume a year during the period 1645-1660 are perhaps even more impressive than the collection of 73 volumes (1610-1791) cited by M. Chinard.


[20] Listed under “Artus.” Cat. no. 1079, b.2.

[21] Listed under “Artus.” Cat. no. Lb 34/806.

[22] By reason of the inversion of “Artus Thomas” for “Thomas Artus,” a confusion has arisen, certain American catalogues listing these works under “Thomas” instead of under “Artus.”

[23] This history was originally written by the Greek scholar Chalcondylas (or Chalcocondylas) of the 15th century, and the French version, with additions of the 17th century, is often listed under “Chalcondylas.”

[24] Subsequent editions of 1615, 1629, 1630, and 1637 would argue a considerable interest in this work.

[25] *Relation de l’isle des Hermaphrodites*, etc. Ches les Heritiers de Herman Demen, Cologne, 1724. It is this more common edition, one copy of which exists at the Widener Library, Harvard University, that is cited in references.

[26] The use of a merchant vessel traveling the well-known route from the Indies as a means of substantiating the story is noteworthy.

[27] See serious criticism of a book dealing with this subject in *Journal des Sçavans* 2 août, 1677.

[28] There are a number of other matters bound with this book in the 1724 edition, one copy of which is at the Widener Library at Harvard University. These would be of interest perhaps to students of intrigue and personal details concerning courtiers under Henri III, but have no bearing on the present study.


[30] “Taprobane,” generally Ceylon, is used in some 17th Century accounts of voyages to mean Java and Sumatra.

[31] Livre V, ch. xi. The edition cited is that of 1737.

[32] There is a desert island story (Vol. I, p. 17) in this book which is worthy of mention. Pedro Serrano is left on a desert island and subsists on turtle meat for a long time. Another castaway joins him, and the two subsist until rescued. The grotesque “realism” of the following description of the man Serrano when rescued is worthy of citation: *la barbe . . . l’incommodoit dans le lit et l’empêchoit de dormir*. This story of Serrano has been mentioned by F. Wackwitz, *Entstehungsgeschichte von Defoes Robinson Crusoe*, Berlin, 1909.


[34] *Requête présenté au Roy d’Espagne par le Capitaine Pierre Ferdinand de Quir, sur la descouverte de la cinquieme partie du monde appelée terre Australe incogneue, etc.*, Paris, 1617.

See *Nouvelles de l’Amérique ou le Mercure Amériquain*, Rouen, 1678 (cited by M. Chinard as an example of interest in adventure, piracy, and abduction). This book consists of three hair-raising *nouvelles* whose detailed attempts at realism are sometimes revolting and sometimes laughable.

The extraordinary voyage in French literature before 1700 (1920)
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