

Collaboration,
Exchange and
Transformation
in Literary and
Cultural Practices

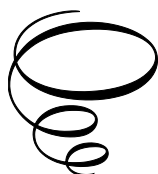
Collaboration, Exchange and Transformation in Literary and Cultural Practices:

Intercultural Conversations

Edited by

Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh

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Collaboration, Exchange and Transformation in Literary
and Cultural Practices: Intercultural Conversations

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Irish writer Doireann Ní Ghríofa uses the beautiful motif of sparrows to explain the transmission and transformation of stories through time and space, explaining that: “As you know, over generations, they absorb the sounds that they hear, the environmental sounds, the noises that punctuate their days, and they’re excellent mimics. They weave those sounds into the text of their songs” (2021).

This book is dedicated to all the dedicated conversationalists, who never stop trying to learn and absorb as much as they can so that they can enrich their own imaginations and narrative voices. In an era in which division and fear are being harnessed by global forces seeking to silence dissent and individuality, it is more important than ever to salute those who seek to engage other perspectives in an intercultural exchange.

A huge thanks to the contributors to the book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading your essays and appreciate the hard work that went into them. I look forward to resuming our collaboration on future occasions.

On a personal note, I dedicate this book most especially to my favourite conversationalists, Eug, Oisín and Meadhbh; and to our cats Anna, Maidhcí and Mobhí, whose demands for affection and food transcend all cultural divisions and remind us of what is really vital for our happiness and well-being.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, and engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards (Theodore Zeldin, *Conversation: How Talk Can Change Our Lives*).

Travelling to other countries and engaging with other cultures has always been a source of inspiration for writers, artists, historians and critical thinkers. Many travellers consciously seek to absorb alternative traditions in order to enrich their own imaginations and narrative voices. Wolfgang Welsch uses the term "transculturality" to suggest the complex interconnections that result from this willingness to absorb other cultures, with writers not simply juggling different identities, but creatively mixing them together to form new, hybridized and polyvalent perspectives (Welsch 1999, 199). Gloria Anzaldúa's definition of the *mestiza* as one who embraces multiplicity, transcending boundaries and developing a "wild tongue", links the crossing of borders with the development of a new language, which can challenge hegemonic ideas about national, racial, gender and sexual identities (Anzaldúa 2012, 205). In theory, immersion in the unfamiliar spaces of another culture should invite a willingness to absorb and cultivate new perspectives, thus expanding one's mind. The difficulty, as Georges Devereux observes, is that the traveller may not succeed in adopting a receptive gaze when confronted with an unfamiliar culture. Rather, the gaze may continue to be structured by the traveller's own preconceptions, resulting in the imposition of meaning on what is observed, a process he describes as "countertransference" (Devereux 2014, xvi).

Theodore Zeldin's definition, quoted above, of the crucial role conversation plays in human society is not related to the information that is exchanged, but rather to the new perspectives that can be gained when the participants open themselves up to the exchange of knowledge. Part of the problem in contemporary society, he suggests, is a lack of real communication. Swamped by technology, human beings are opting out of meaningful interactions with any groups that challenge their entrenched views, with the result that society is becoming increasingly fragmented and

divided (Zeldin 2015). In a 2013 commencement address at Syracuse University, author George Saunders expressed a similar concern. The quality most under-valued in contemporary society, he suggests, is empathy, which he defines as an awareness of other people and an appreciation for their difference. In capitalist societies, this willingness to engage and exchange ideas has been replaced by a narrow form of individualism, predicated on self-centeredness and a withdrawal from community (Saunders 2014). Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh has noted that this widely observed unwillingness to participate fully in society in case one may be forced to cede some of one's fiercely guarded individuality has resulted: "in a significantly diminished social discourse predicated on the silencing of alternative perspectives and consequent limiting of what is permissible for a society to discuss" (Ní Éigeartaigh 2022, 4). In this context, the arts play a vital role in challenging the "discursive closure" (Conroy 2004, 5) that results from this lack of meaningful interaction between different social and cultural groups. By exposing readers to alternative perspectives, literature offers: "the possibility of deliberately displacing our understandings, beliefs and ideals[...]in order to view them afresh" (Conroy 2004, 7).

Many of the essays included in this volume originated in a symposium on "Intercultural Conversations" held in Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland, in April 2024. With the aid of technology, the conversations expanded beyond the physical confines of the lecture space to include presentations from Norway and a number of locations in Spain. What became apparent over the course of the day was that the specific examples of interculturalism examined within each presentation facilitated, in turn, a meta-conversation that spanned across all the papers. The more we listened, the more it became apparent that new cultural connections were being forged as we considered previously unnoticed links between our own particular subject areas. The shifting perspectives we gained as a result are the hallmark of a good conversation, as defined by Zeldin. It is a great pleasure to expand the conversation further through this volume to include contributions from America, Canada and Germany, thus further enriching the cultural connections we can see.

The themes, subjects, geographical locations and time periods covered in the essays are varied. Some of the essays focus on subjects who travel and as a result incorporate new perspectives and traditions into their lives and creative practices. Others reflect on their own complex, multiple identities and strive to develop new languages and value systems through which to express them. Others deliberately disrupt traditions and views of history in order to challenge their own cultural gaze and perspectives. What all the essays have in common is a focus on intercultural conversations,

which we interpret as dialogue and exchange with other cultures that is respectful of difference and open to constructing alternative perspectives, which can resist narrow, monolithic conceptions of history and identity, and instead forge new, exciting and transformational modes of being. Central to the success of this process is a willingness to listen, an embrace of linguistic hybridity and a determination to remain open to the nuances of history. Many of the interactions noted in the essays are modelled on a “call and response” approach, in which subjects, sometimes considerably distanced by time or space, nonetheless engage in conversation with each other, their texts striving for what Choctaw poet LeAnne Howe describes as: “empathy and dialogue between culturally distinctive communities”, who are bonded together through their shared experiences (Howe 2017). Irish poet Doireann Ní Ghríofa reflects on the additional richness gained by every text that is reread and added to: “Whenever we circle back to a work of art, whether it’s a poem, a film, or an album, something that struck us deeply[....]each time you return to it, it has changed, and we have changed in the act of returning” (Naimon 2021). It is with this process of transformation through intercultural conversations that the essays in this collection seek to engage.

The essays in the first section of this book reflect on the impact of travel and immersion in foreign cultures on the artistic imagination. The writers, musicians and practitioners examined in the essays all use their travel experiences to juxtapose what is familiar to them with the exotic, using these creative encounters to refine and even transform their own practice.

Ana Panero-Gómez considers the historical significance and cultural impact of the Grand Tour as a transformative intercultural experience, facilitating the exchange of ideas, customs and practices across nations. The writers examined in her essay reflect on how their travels encouraged the synthesis of different cultural elements, creating transcultural identities. This literary legacy, she argues, exemplifies the power of travel to bridge cultural divides, fostering an understanding that is foundational to intercultural conversations. By engaging with foreign cultures, writers created works that explored the boundaries of identity, history, space and time, leaving a lasting legacy on the literary canon.

Adèle Commins considers the transcultural expression evident in the music of Charles Villiers Stanford, the Irish composer, who spent his professional life in England, and was also deeply influenced by his travels to and interactions with a number of European cultures. This mix of influences, she argues, led to considerable confusion around Stanford’s identity as his transculturality could not be easily defined. Although he left Ireland at a young age, its influence on his music can be seen through both the integration of traditional Irish folk music into his compositional output

and his work as an editor of folk music collections, thus ensuring an exchange of musical ideas among different audiences and across countries. Commins assesses Stanford's incorporation of Irish traditional themes and folk melodies in his compositions, most notably his "Irish" Symphony, suggesting that his music cannot be easily contained within narrow national parameters, but that it is best interpreted as the expression of his Irishness in a transcultural soundworld.

Martina Jauch considers the intercultural conversations between writers, this time through the medium of translation. Her essay focuses on the revolutionary approach to translation forged by German writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and its impact on his Scottish translator, Sir Walter Scott. Both men viewed translation as a way to make previously inaccessible works available to readers, and their success facilitated close cultural links between Germany and Britain during the Romantic period. Their appreciation for each other is evident in their correspondence and they remained, as Jauch demonstrates, intellectual companions and collaborators in their ideas of translation, their concern for authenticity and their views on freedom and justice.

Helen Howley's focus is on translation as a creative practice. The subject of her essay, Irish writer Samuel Beckett, wrote in both English and French, often translating his own works. She argues that Beckett's practice of self-translation was not just a practical decision but was fundamental to his global perspective on language and the creative enterprise. Having to work through the rules of an adopted language meant that Beckett was able to create a linguistic space within which to create. Early critics who addressed the question of Beckett's bilingualism tended to focus on his self-translations to determine the status of the second versions of his work. A key issue in these early studies was whether a translation was secondary to the original work or worth evaluating on its own. Current critical perspectives insist that the texts do not exist in a hierarchy, but that each is incomplete without the other and must be read in the light of their interrelationship and the dynamic possibilities for language to play with meaning and intention that exist within that bilingual space. From this perspective, Howley concludes, Beckett's use of bilingualism is fundamental to his creative enterprise as a way of forging his own unique literary voice.

Kathryn Carter focuses on the practicalities of intercultural communication in her analysis of collections of letters sent between Ireland and British North America in the first half of the 19th century. Although the often vivid and emotional content of these letters might seem to offer the most significant insight into the experiences of 19th century immigrants,

Carter argues that the material conditions for letter writing must also be included as a key element of analysis. Her essay contextualizes immigrant letters within historically-situated transatlantic conversations and the mechanics of colonization, reflecting on the turbulent and transformational period the letter writers had to negotiate, from the practicalities of posting a letter to the process of navigating relationships and new identities in settler spaces.

The final essay in this section is a reflection by two musicians, Daithí Kearney and Frode Hammersland, on their participation in a creative project *Echoes of Erasmus*. Drawing on different musical cultures (Irish and Norwegian), lived experiences, academic training and pedagogical approaches, the project represented an opportunity to explore transcultural musicking through creative practice. A critical part of the project was the inclusion of an original composition by Kearney, entitled “Stord Sunrise”, which was used as a point of departure by the group to explore a soundworld connected to Ireland but which, through improvisation and exploration, reached out beyond the confines of the national to create a truly transcultural piece. Exploring approaches to music education and developing a transcultural pedagogical approach was central to the project, with creativity and collaboration at the heart of the process.

The essays in the second section of the book examine a number of authors and directors, who deliberately set aside their own traditions and ideas in order to look through the eyes of other cultures, developing innovative strategies and perspectives in the process. They demand of their readers a particularly engaged and active type of reading, which challenges inherited meanings and encourages the creation of new insights.

Lane Riggs explores the work of Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros, who alongside a number of other prominent female writers including Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, insists that the discourse on Mexican-American identity needs to move beyond the geographically defined binary to explore the complexities of gender, race and sexuality. Cisneros’ characters reflect the complicated realities of living in a borderland space where cultural, gender and national identities collide. The divisions seen within the characters indicate that cultural identities are seldom simple or static, but are shaped by historical, geographical and personal experiences. Riggs argues that by focusing on these distinctions, Cisneros encourages a broader conversation about how identity is inherited, as well as actively shaped by cultural, historical and social intersections.

Multiple identities are also the focus of Mine Krause’s essay, which explores the work of three novelists, Charmaine Wilkerson, Zadie Smith and Elif Shafak, who are themselves from multicultural backgrounds. Their

novels feature intercultural conversations between characters of various nationalities and with multiple identities. In the novels of all three writers, different identities are creatively mixed together in order to transcend geographical and cultural borders. Krause's essay focuses on two aspects of this intercultural identity formation: the significance of names and the role of language and accents. She concludes that reinventing one's self while crossing borders can create a new language of mutual understanding and thus a harmonious intercultural balance.

The importance of forging a new language and value system in order to challenge monolithic, partial perspectives is the theme of Aoileann Ní Éigeartaigh's essay, which explores Guadeloupean novelist Maryse Condé's imaginative engagement with the legacy of colonial and patriarchal historical metanarratives. Reflecting on the omission of women, in particular black women, from the official histories, Condé returns to the period of the Salem witchtrials in her novel *I, Tituba* to restore her protagonist to her rightful place in history. Her novel draws upon the technique of postmodern metafiction to disrupt patriarchal constructs of history and open up an intercultural conversation in which women's stories can be heard. The narrative, which uses the motif of haunting to transcend the limitations of time and space, expands Tituba's critique to contemporary society, where the black, female voice continues to be underrepresented.

Lisa Wenger Bro's essay also assesses the act of rewriting as a tool of transformation. Examining the revision of traditional fairy stories from both European and African/ Caribbean folklore by Jamaican writer Nalo Hopkinson, she focuses on the theme of biopolitics, which refers to the laws and policies that regulate human bodies and lives, determining which are valued and which are devalued in society. Inserting Black women's bodies and identities into traditionally White stories allows the complex intersections between patriarchal and colonial power structures to be illuminated. Bro argues that Hopkinson's story demonstrates that while there are similarities to White women's experiences, there are experiences unique to Black Caribbean women that are often overlooked. The story explores the impact that the mimicry of colonial ideologies has on identity and valuation, the ways that class and race influence ideas about women, and the impact that the patriarchal and colonial devaluation of Black women, passed down through the decades, continues to have on contemporary Black Caribbean women.

The insertion of contemporary perspectives into older tales and cultures is the subject of Miguel Dávila Vargas-Machuca's essay on *Thermae Romae*, a Japanese comic series written by Mari Yamazaki, which is centered around the role of public baths in the cultures of ancient Rome and

contemporary Japan. The conceit of a Roman bath architect and engineer time-travelling between two cultures, at a vast remove from each other both culturally and chronologically, allows the author to reflect on the unexpected values they have in common, thus initiating an interesting transcultural conversation. Her comic books, and the many adaptations they spawned, suggest myriad connections between past and present, and demonstrate how cultural traditions and artistic creations are revized and enriched as they travel through different creative media.

Intercultural links between Europe and Japan are also explored in Óscar Lapeña's essay, which examines Osamu Tezuka's film *Kureopatora*, the first Japanese film based entirely on an episode from the history of the ancient Mediterranean. The film tells the story of Cleopatra, the last Queen of Egypt, and the loss of her power at the hands of the Romans. What is intriguing about the film, Lapeña explains, is the extent to which it conforms to the hegemonic (and inaccurate) representation of Cleopatra as irrational and sexualized, ignoring her role as political leader. This reductive portrayal was first promoted by Octavian Augustus, in order to justify his conquest of hitherto independent Egypt, and later propagated widely in western cultural texts, from the plays of William Shakespeare to a large number of films, which took advantage of the loosening of censorship in the 1960s and 1970s to eroticize Cleopatra. As Lapeña argues, it is interesting that Tezuka does not use his intercultural engagement with the life of Cleopatra to challenge, in any way, the constructed cinematic persona that has dominated western perspectives since it was first suggested in the propaganda of ancient Rome.

The final two essays in this collection also explore the additional resonances that can emerge when two texts, from different cultures, are placed into an intercultural conversation with each other. What is interesting is that these resonances can emerge even when the authors of the two texts are not themselves involved in the exchange. Luke O'Brien situates two films, Irish film *The Outcasts* (1982) and Korean film *The Hut* (1981), into an intercultural conversation to see whether resonant cultural and thematic parallels can be identified. He argues that, although geographically distant, the environmental and historical overlaps between Ireland and Korea, both in terms of their pre-modern colonial history and their post-colonial development, can at times seem uncanny. The mid-19th century settings of the two films allowed the directors to examine compressed, patriarchal norms wherein deviant women were persecuted; but also to expand this examination to engage with contemporary anxieties about women as Ireland and Korea grappled with modernization in the 1980s. Separated by language and geography, O'Brien argues that these films share an unlikely kinship that, until now, has gone unnoticed. This suggests that an intercultural

approach to texts can illuminate previously unremarked similarities in their worldviews.

The final essay in the collection adopts a similar approach. Antonio Míguez argues that despite their very different origins, English writer J.R.R. Tolkien and Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki, demonstrate many significant similarities in their conceptions of the world. He focuses in particular on the well-known ecological component inherent to Tolkien's work, explaining its origin and literary evolution, and suggests that this can be used as an analogy for the love towards nature evidenced by Miyazaki in his films. These commonalities mean that two seemingly different countries may express in a similar way a sense of anxiety about the impact of industrialization and technology on traditional social values and structures.

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SECTION 1

INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

CHAPTER ONE

FROM JOURNEY TO MASTERPIECE: THE ARTISTIC LEGACY OF THE GRAND TOUR

ANA PANERO-GÓMEZ

The Grand Tour was an educational journey for European aristocrats, particularly British elites, in the 17th and 18th centuries, aimed at cultural and social enrichment. Initially focused on learning and politics, it became a status symbol after the Industrial Revolution. Writers like Michel de Montaigne, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Alexandre Dumas drew inspiration from these travels, blending cultural observations with emotional introspection and influencing European literature. The Grand Tour also intersected with archaeological discoveries like Herculaneum and Pompeii, which inspired Gothic narratives. These stories often depicted male travellers encountering revived female sculptures, symbolizing ancient and exotic-perceived cultures. Authors like Josef von Eichendorff and Prosper Mérimée critiqued the neo-classical revival of Greco-Roman traditions. Other writers, like François-René de Chateaubriand and Wilhelm Jensen, created narratives born from the admiration of the Greco-Roman culture. This essay will examine the historical significance and cultural impact of the Grand Tour as a transformative intercultural experience. It will explore how exposure to diverse cultures, languages and artistic traditions not only educated young aristocrats but also fostered new creative expressions in literature, art and philosophy. By analyzing key examples, this essay will demonstrate how these experiences shaped transcultural narratives and art pieces.

In 1625, Francis Bacon declared that: “Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience” (Bacon, 1625). As he pointed out, travel was already being used as a powerful educational tool for some young people in the 17th century. This was due, in part, to the

Grand Tour, a tour that became fashionable¹ among wealthy families in Europe, mainly among the British upper class. They sent their offspring (primarily boys) to improve their knowledge of other cultures, languages, art and personalities of the time. In this sense, it cannot be said that the Grand Tour was something new: the proposal of travel as an educational tool had already been commonplace among Renaissance artists and humanist intellectuals, who travelled around Italy to soak up classical influences. It is important to note that the Grand Tour was intended not only to educate but also for these young adventurers to begin to create ties with the different families of the European aristocracy with whom they stayed. This became relevant to the European aristocracy of the 17th and 18th centuries to such an extent that it was regarded as a socially recognised *rite de passage*, a definitive passage to adulthood for their young heirs. The term “Grand Tour” appeared for the first time in 1670, on page 26 of the French translation of Richard Lassels’ *The Voyage of Italy (or a Complete Journey Through Italy)*, in which he recommended all “young Noblemen” to undertake the Grand Tour, in order to understand the political, social and economic reality of the world (Lassels 1670, 26).

The length of the trip (which could take months or years) often depended on the family’s financial situation. The Grand Tour was by no means cheap. They set off with a retinue of chamber servants, cooks and religious guides. Nor was it unusual to take a small personal library with them. Most significant was the guardian figure who escorted the young traveller. In British society, these tutors were known colloquially as “bear-leaders”². In addition to being an escort, the bear-leader acted as a tutor, guardian, guide and chaperone for these aristocrats. He was also responsible for the financial control and detailed planning of the trip, including dates, visits, activities, means of transport and accommodation.

The itinerary chosen depended on educational preferences, budget, duration and the fashion of the period. However, some routes became popular, especially among the British aristocracy: they started in the north of France (Calais) towards Paris or in the Netherlands, from where they went to Belgium, and from there, they either visited France or Germany. In

¹ “The historian Gibbon states that at the end of the 18th century there could have been around forty thousand Englishmen in Europe practising the educational Grand Tour, without counting those who were doing it for other reasons. This figure can be perceived as insignificant today, but in those times it was a frankly remarkable quantity” (Muñoz de Escalona, 2005). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Spanish to English are my own.

² Term coined between 1740 and 1750. Source: *bear-leader* (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged. [Last accessed on: 10/09/2024].

any case, whichever route was chosen, Italy was usually the destination country and a must-visit. An alternative route was to travel by ship directly to Italy and then return by land following one of the above-mentioned routes. In the early 19th century, the unstable political situation in France and the literary prestige that the Germany of Goethe and Schiller had gained made the Grand Tour along Germanic routes popular throughout Europe. Some of the most visited German cities were Frankfurt am Main, Weimar, Cologne, Mainz and Baden-Baden.

Despite the financial investment involved, the Grand Tour was not only reserved for the aristocracy. Some patrons and foundations, such as the Royal Society, occasionally helped young people from humble origins make this journey: “The Royal Society Foundation promoted the Grand Tour as an instrument for acquiring new knowledge. Moreover, it recommended publishing information obtained through correspondence or travelogues” (Morales et al. 2017, 109). Indeed, the British crown considered that the education the Grand Tour provided to talented young people was well worth its patronage. However, not all European monarchies took the same view of the Grand Tour. Prince Philip (future King of Spain Philip II, 1527-1598) prohibited such trips and educational stays abroad. Ironically, he had enjoyed a similar migratory experience just a few years before legislating against it. In 1548, at the age of 21, he embarked on a pilgrimage to various European countries that lasted until 1551. One of the main reasons for this journey was that a few months earlier, in 1547, his father, Emperor Charles I, had decided to abdicate. His heir needed to travel to Brussels, where he arrived on April 1st, 1548. For the next six months, Charles and Philip toured the Netherlands, and on their return to Brussels on October 26th, the prince had fulfilled his mission: to visit each of its seventeen provinces and take the oath in its main cities. This experience was primarily a state trip during which Philip perfected his training as a regent and forged links with the most distinguished families of the European aristocracy. In mid-1551, he set out on his return to Spain. He returned to Milan, Genoa and Nice, and on July 12th, he finally docked in the port of Barcelona. From there, Philip wrote to the Duke of Savoy and reported that he had had: “the most perfect voyage that could be desired” (Muñoz de Escalona, 2005).

One might think that after such a pleasant experience, Philip II would support travelling abroad as an educational incentive. Nothing could be further from the truth: a few years later, a Royal Ordinance enacted on November 22nd, 1559, prohibited Castilian³ subjects from being educated at

³ In 1568, the ban was extended to the inhabitants of the Crown of Aragon.

foreign universities⁴. The punishment was not light: whoever broke this law would have his property expropriated and would be banished for life. As decreed in the Royal Ordinance of 22nd November 1559:

It was agreed[...]that henceforth none of our subjects and natives, ecclesiastics and laymen, friars and clerics or any others, may go or leave these Kingdoms to study or teach or learn, or stay or reside in Universities, Studies or Colleges outside these Kingdoms[...]And that the said persons who, contrary to what is contained and ordered in this our letter, go and leave to study as friars or clerics, shall lose and have their temporalities taken from them; and the laymen shall lose or incur the loss of all their goods and perpetual banishment from these Kingdoms (*Royal Ordinance of November 22nd 1559*).

There were two main reasons for this veto. The first was motivated by religious zeal: it was feared that those educated abroad and exposed to other cultures could become advocates of the Protestant Reformation. The second reason was economic: the outlay for these trips was not small. Whatever families spent abroad was not being spent in the Kingdom of Philip II. Moreover, as Spanish universities had fewer students, they also lost much of their economic income. This is outlined in the *Royal Ordinance of 22nd November 1559*:

Many of our subjects[...]leave and go to study and learn in other Universities outside these Kingdoms, as a result of which there is not the number and frequency of students in their Universities and Studies that there should be, and the said Universities are daily decreasing and going bankrupt[...]Moreover, the amount of money taken out and spent outside these Kingdoms for this reason is great, from which the public good of this Kingdom suffers considerable damage and harm.

This cultural isolation made importing new ideas and discoveries developed in other countries into Spain difficult. This educational veto lasted until the beginning of the 18th century, when the House of Bourbon took the Spanish throne.

A century later, the decline of the Grand Tour as an educational experience began. Thanks to the economic impulse derived from the Industrial Revolution, many families in the United Kingdom had access to higher education previously reserved for the aristocracy and the gentry. At the same time, technological advances in transport shortened distances,

⁴ Some universities were left out of this veto: the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and the Universities of Rome, Naples and Bologna.

reduced inconvenience and made travel cheaper. Rail travel became popular and, from 1820, regular shipping lines were established in the English Channel. All these factors contributed to a change in the essence of the Grand Tour. Whereas in previous centuries it had been a custom exclusively for educational and social networking purposes, the Grand Tour had now become a practice of ostentation and entertainment.

Undoubtedly, the Grand Tour had an exceptional impact on the European literary scene. Years before the popularization of this educational custom, Bacon warned young travellers in his essay “Of Travel” (1625):

That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant, I allow well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen, in the country where they go; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises, or discipline, the place yieldeth[...]When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries, where he hath travelled, altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letters, with those of his acquaintance, which are of most worth (Bacon, 1625)

Many artists (painters, writers, sculptors, architects, etc.) captured their own experience of the Grand Tour in their works. Montaigne (1533-1592) travelled through France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy for seventeen months between 1580 and 1581. He recorded his experiences in a text published in 1774, titled *The Journal of Montaigne's Travels in Italy by way of Switzerland and Germany in 1580 and 1581*. The most remarkable aspect of this journal is the perspective with which he describes the places he visits. Far from limiting himself to visual descriptions of landscapes and cities, Montaigne delves into suggestive cultural aspects. Of course, this diary cannot be considered an anthropological text, as there is no “objective distance” that is necessary for this type of observation. However, his account of the social customs, beliefs of various kinds, traditions and fashions of the different places he visits is fascinating. As an example, in one of his passages, he criticises how prisoners in Italy were tortured and executed in public before impassive people.

Incidentally, this same custom would also be described, with grim amazement, by Alexandre Dumas Senior (1802-1870). He began writing his travel diaries after travelling through Switzerland (1832), Italy (1835), Belgium and Germany (1838). A few years later, when Dumas was already an established writer, the French Ministry of Public Instruction invited him to travel to Algeria. He travelled around Spain with his son Alexandre and several friends. In Cadiz, he took the ship *La Veloce* on November 20th, 1846, which took him to Algeria and Tunisia. Based on these experiences,

he wrote *De Paris à Cadix* (1847) and *Le Véloce, ou Tanger, Alger et Tunis* (1848). In addition to these diaries, some of his travel experiences are also reflected in his work *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844). Both Edmond Dantès (a sailor by profession) and other characters in the novel (Abbé Faria, Bertuccio, Fernand Mondego, Pierre and Maximilien Morrel, etc.) are figures transformed and shaped as transcultural characters because of their expeditions and adventures in other countries. Particularly relevant is the case of Albert de Morcef, son of Mercédès Mondego and Fernand Mondego, as he appears in the novel as one of those young Grand Tour travellers.

Another work that deserves to be highlighted for the literary turning point it produced is *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1767) by the Englishman Laurence Sterne. The work was a success from the outset, primarily because of the author's style. Whereas previous travelogues attempted to provide detailed, distant and objective descriptions, Sterne created a text full of personal thoughts and judgements, that is much more emotional and relatable than its predecessors. From that publication onwards, and influenced also by empiricism, a new travel literature emerged: more intimate, more subjective works driven by taste and emotional experiences.

One of the best examples of this new way of experiencing the Grand Tour was that of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Without warning, he left for Italy: "September 4th 1786. At three o'clock in the morning, I left Karlsbad on the sly. Otherwise, they would not have let me leave" (Goethe 1891, 1). Goethe was already a famous writer by then. He was 37 years old and travelled incognito. Taking advantage of his perfect command of Italian, he travelled around Italy for almost two years. There, he refined his love of drawing and continued his education in the natural sciences. His work *Italienische Reise* (*Italian Journey*) was not published until 1816, thirty years after his adventure. The text contains his travel diary entries and many of the letters he sent detailing his experience:

Rome, November 1st, 1786

I have made fleeting visits to Ferrara, Cento, and Bologna, and I have scarcely devoted time to getting to know Florence. The longing to reach Rome was so intense; it increased so much with each passing day that it was no longer possible to stay anywhere. I stopped in Florence for only three hours. But now I am in Rome and at peace, one might even say at ease for the rest of my days.

All the dreams of my youth are now alive before me[...].

Wherever I go, I find something familiar in a new world; everything is new at once and just as I imagined it.

February 21st, 1787

[...]Tomorrow, we leave for Naples. I am thrilled by the new, which I sense to be of ineffable beauty, and I hope to recover in this natural paradise the freedom and pleasure to devote myself, as here in serious Rome, to the study of art (Goethe 1891, 162).

Mary and Percy Shelley's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817) is another of those more subjective literary examples. In it, the protagonists' most intimate emotions and experiences, driven mainly by their desire to develop their sense of taste through travel, are recorded. The text includes Percy Shelley's poem "Mont Blanc" and a diary and four letters by Mary Shelley. The basis of these writings were two journeys by Mary, Percy and Mary's half-sister Claire Clairmont: one across Europe (between July 28th and September 13th, 1814) and another across Lake Geneva in the summer of 1816. On the latter journey, they were joined by the Romantic poet Lord Byron. Byron had undertaken his own Grand Tour between 1809 and 1810. However, the development of the Napoleonic Wars forced him to change his usual route and to visit mainly Mediterranean countries, including Portugal, Spain, Greece and Albania. Byron was attracted by Persian and Ottoman culture and Islam, which he had read about since childhood: "All my poetical feelings begin and end with these countries and the events connected with them", he wrote to Thomas Moore (Letter of 8th March 1816, Marchand 1976, 45).

The historical examples outlined above demonstrate how cross-cultural exposure through the Grand Tour facilitated the exchange of ideas, customs and practices across nations. Through their writings, Montaigne, Goethe, Sterne, Shelley and Byron reflect on how these journeys enabled the synthesis of cultural elements, creating transcultural identities. This literary legacy exemplifies the power of travel to bridge cultural divides, fostering an understanding that is foundational to intercultural conversations.

Another key factor that shaped transcultural creations during the 18th and the 19th centuries were the major archaeological discoveries made at the time. In 1709, the first sculptures of Herculaneum were found. The Duke of Elbeuf ordered their removal. In 1738, the official excavations of Herculaneum began, directed by Roque Joaquín de Alcubierre. Ten years later, in 1748, Alcubierre began excavations at Pompeii, although the city was not identified as such until 1763. Later, in 1871, Heinrich Schliemann and Frank Calvert began excavations at Troy. These archaeological discoveries fascinated scholars, writers and artists for decades.

It was then that a hitherto little-explored narrative fusion took place. The Grand Tour experience and the archaeological finds came together to form an archetypal Gothic plot: a male protagonist, an explorer travelling in *space*

from a northern country to southern Europe (influenced by the Grand Tour routes), falls in love with a classical sculpture that comes to life. The female protagonist—the revived sculpture—is depicted as a *time*-traveller, having lived in classical times (influenced by the archaeological discoveries that took place at the time). The male traveller embodies the known culture and the rational. In contrast, the woman embodies the unknown culture: fascinating, from another time, another place, exotic and potentially dangerous.

In 1848, “Fantôme d’amour” was published as part of François-René de Chateaubriand’s *Mémoires d’Outre-Tombe* (“Phantom of love”, in *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*). Chateaubriand’s narrative was born from the admiration of the Greco-Roman culture. Although it is a short text, barely a page long, it summarises some of the essential characteristics of these stories. Chateaubriand mixes the Roman world (Naples, Messina) and the Greek world (Praxiteles, whose sculptures are remarkable for their grace and sensuality). As in most of these stories, the atmosphere surrounding the characters dissolves and mixes reality and imagination, and a sense of dreaminess pervades the scene:

A young queen would come to me, decked in diamonds and flowers (it was always my sylph); she sought me at midnight, through gardens filled with orange trees, in the galleries of a palace washed by the sea’s waves, on the balmy shores of Naples or Messina[....]she walked, a living statue by Praxiteles, among motionless statues, pale pictures, and silent frescoes whitened by the moon’s rays (Chateaubriand 1852, 35).

Josef von Eichendorff’s approach in *Das Marmorbild* (*The Marble Statue*, 1819) was quite different. Eichendorff, hostile to the neo-classical trend advocated by Winckelmann and Goethe, denounces the cult of antiquity, the worship of the Greco-Roman gods as a heretical—even demonic-idolatry. *Das Marmorbild*’s protagonist, a young German named Florio, arrives in the Italian town of Lucca, where he meets Bianca, a flesh-and-blood young woman who embodies innocence and love: she is the luminous daytime figure. Bianca (literally, “white”) evokes the colour of purity. But Florio is attracted to a sculpture of Venus, described as a nocturnal, diabolical, lunar, fantastic and pagan character. Her whiteness, contrasting to Bianca’s, is that of inert marble, cadaverous pallor, the ghostly. The narrative thus rests on the opposites by which women have traditionally been considered and represented: the girl and the courtesan, the tenderness and the pride, the warmth of the living woman and the coldness of the statue woman. Finally, Florio turns away from the sculpture that alienates him and returns to Bianca’s arms.

In 1837, Prosper Mérimée published *Vénus d'Ille* (*The Venus of Ille*). The novel seems to contain certain autobiographical aspects since Mérimée himself, in addition to being a writer, was a historian and archaeologist. In 1834, he recorded an expedition he undertook as Inspector General of Monuments in the Rousillon region, entitled *L'Inspection des Monuments Historiques*. Three years later, he wrote *Venus d'Ille*, in which he tells the story of an archaeologist who visits the Rousillon in search of ancient and medieval monuments. Staying in the small town of Ille, in the house of Monsieur Peyrehorade, his host showed him a statue he had exhumed a few days earlier from his garden. It was a magnificent bronze from the Roman period, a Venus many villagers consider an evil idol. The statue's pedestal reads "*cave amatem*", which the young archaeologist translates as "Beware of the one who loves you". But then he adds: "Seeing the diabolical aspect of the lady, I would rather believe that the artist wanted to warn the viewer against this terrible beauty. I would translate it thus: 'Be careful if she loves you'" (Mérimée, 1837).

The next day, a few hours before his wedding, Alphonse de Peyrehorade, the host's son, answers a challenge to play a game of ball throwing. To get a better grip on his racket, he takes off the ring he was to give to his wife and places it on the finger of the statue. When the game ends, he forgets the ring and wears another wedding ring for the ceremony. When night falls, the young married man wants to retrieve the precious jewel, but he cannot find it: the statue guards its prey. The terrified Alphonse confesses to the archaeologist: "The finger of the Venus is shrunken, retracted; the Venus has closed her hand. Do you understand me now...? Apparently, she is my wife since I gave her my ring[...]and she does not want to give it back to me" (Mérimée, 1837). In the evening, the young couple retire to the bridal chamber. The following day, Alphonse de Peyrehorade is found dead in his bed, his chest livid, as if an iron circle had squeezed him; his distraught young wife tells how the statue had squeezed her husband in a lethal embrace.

Prosper Mérimée takes up the motif of the revived and evil statue that haunts a man in "Il Viccolo di Madama Lucrezia", a story written in 1846 and published posthumously in the collection *Dernières Nouvelles*. The abbot in this story refers to the following dialogue between the protagonist and Madame de Stralenheim:

-It is not twenty years ago that in Tivoli, an Englishman was strangled by a statue.

-By a statue!-I cried-How was that?

-It was my lord who had made excavations in Tivoli. He had found the statue of an empress, Agrippina, Messalina[...]it doesn't matter. He was so

interested in it that he had it brought to his house, and by dint of looking at it and admiring it, he went mad[....]He called her his wife, his milady, and embraced her, even though she was made of marble. He said that the statue came to life every evening for him. But one morning, they found the milord stiff and dead in his bed. Well, can you believe it? They have found another Englishman who is going to buy this statue. If I were him, I would have turned it into lime (Mérimée, 1873. Quoted and translated from Olmos 1993, 59)

In *La Vie Errante (The Wandering Life, 1890)*, Guy Maupassant gives a first-person account of his journey through Sicily. He describes his encounter with the so-called Venus of Syracuse as follows:

Many people cross continents to go on pilgrimage to some miraculous statue; I have paid my devotion to the Venus of Syracuse. In a traveller's album, I saw a photograph of this sublime marble female, and I fell in love with her as one fell in love with a woman. Perhaps she made me decide to undertake this journey; I talked about her and dreamt of her all the time before I saw her[....]On entering the museum, I saw her at the back of a room, as beautiful as I had imagined her to be (Maupassant, 2010, Ch. IV).

A few decades earlier, in March 1852, Théophile Gautier had published in *La Revue de Paris* the short story "Arria Marcella", in which he tells how Octavien, a young Frenchman, falls in love with a Pompeian girl killed in the eruption of Vesuvius. Octavien had set out on a journey through Italy with some friends. In a Neapolitan Museum, he discovers a volcanic rock that catches his attention: it contains the body of a young woman who had been buried by lava during the tragedy of Pompeii. One night, Octavien walks through the ruins of that city and believes that the city is coming to life again. Its inhabitants, including the girl on the rock, Arria Marcella, walk the streets of the revived Pompeii. He approaches the young woman, and they declare their eternal love. At that moment, Arria Marcella's father appears, who, in a sort of exorcism, brings Octavien back to reality when he shows him that the young woman is now only dust and bones. Octavien wakes up lying on a mosaic next to the Villa of Diomenes, a ruined space. Once again, the archetypes of two opposing women emerge in this story: the unattainable and fatal woman, and the loving wife and caretaker. On his return from his journey, Octavien marries a sweet and loyal girl but fails to forget the ghost of the Pompeian woman: "Octavien will never recover from this shocking experience, not even after returning home and marrying a charming Englishwoman" (Justo 2005, 124).

In 1903, German writer Wilhelm Jensen published *Gradiva: Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück (Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy)*. In this

novel, Jensen tells the story of Norbert Hanold, a young German archaeologist obsessed with the image of a woman in a classical relief of which he has a copy at home⁵. He is struck by her particular way of walking: while the left foot advances, resting entirely on the ground, the right foot stands upright in an almost perfect verticality. Because of this gait, Norbert christens the figure “Gradiva” (“the one who moves forward”), and imagines the whole story of her life. He is convinced that she was a young Pompeian girl who died in the eruption of Vesuvius. He then travels to the buried city in search of her footprints, and there he finds a girl with this same step. On seeing her, he assumes that she is the ghost of Gradiva. He approaches her and they converse several times over three days. It is later discovered that the young woman is, in fact, Zoë Bertgang⁶, a real woman and Norbert’s former childhood sweetheart. Zoë consents to enter his fantasy, pretending to be the ghost he saw in her to get to the source of his obsession and finally get him out of his imaginary world.

Given Gautier’s fame, it is very likely that Jensen was aware of the tale “Arria Marcella”, as elements and themes are repeated in the works of both writers: the male protagonists’ journeys to Italy, how they imagined the woman’s life based on her image in a stone, the young woman killed by Vesuvius and the return to life in Pompeii. Even the fact that the rock with the figure of the girl was in a Neapolitan Museum seems to be echoed in Jensen’s own experience. In a letter to Sigmund Freud, dated May 25th, 1907, Jensen remarked:

The idea for my little “fantasy” originated in the ancient high relief, which made a particularly poetic impression on me[....]For years, I searched in vain for the original in the Museo Nazionale in Naples[....]Perhaps there was a bit of a “fixed idea” in my unfoundedly preconceived opinion that this sculpture must have been in Naples, and I expanded on it until I decided that it represented a Pompeian woman (Freud 1977, 18-23).

Jensen’s novel, full of passages in which dream and reality mingle, attracted Sigmund Freud’s attention to the extent that in 1907 he published an analysis of the work entitled *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens*

⁵ The relief described in the novel, which had obsessed Norbert, is a sculpture that exists beyond the literary text: it is a Roman work, dated to the 2nd century CE, that is a copy of an Attic relief from the 5th century BCE. The female figure represents Aglaurus in a sculptural group depicting the birth of Erictonius, which was located inside the temple of Hephaestion in Athens. This Roman copy of Aglaurus is now on display in the Museo Chiaramonti in the Vatican (Panero Gómez 2013, 170ff).

⁶ As Jensen explains in his novel, “Gradiva” is a direct translation of the German surname “Bertgang” (Jensen 1977, 173)