

Reading Montesquieu's Voyage d'Italie as Travel Literature

Don Desserud

*The fact is, Montesquieu wished to travel
...Marquis d'Argenson, 1736.*

Montesquieu as a travel writer

Montesquieu is not well known as a travel writer. Nevertheless, travel is a pervasive subject in his works. His *Lettres persanes*,¹ informed by travellers' accounts of their journeys to the Ottoman Empire, is itself an example of fictional travel writing. Indeed, it could be argued that Montesquieu's use of this literary form to comment on and criticise eighteenth-century French society helped create a sub-genre of travel literature, in which the traveller takes the role of the satirical commentator. Montesquieu writes that after the *Lettres persanes* became popular, booksellers would stop anyone they thought might have a literary bent and implore, "Monsieur, je vous prie, faites-moi des *Lettres persanes*." In fitting with Montesquieu's own subtle sense of satire, he even pokes fun at his own use of travel literature by having a well-read Parisien, who studied precisely the travel works that Montesquieu had studied, argue with Usbek over details of Usbek's own country. In defence, Usbek tries to describe his own country, but "à peine lui eus-je dit quatre mots, qu'il me donna deux démentis, fondés sur l'autorité de MM. Tavernier et Chardin."²

In his most influential work, *De l'Esprit des lois*, Montesquieu made extensive use of travellers'³ accounts of Turkey, Greece, China, Spain, Holland, Italy (particularly the aristocratic republics such as Venice), and the Americas.⁴ *De l'Esprit des lois* also reflects Montesquieu's European travels,⁵ his own version of the 'Grand Tour'⁶ which he undertook through Italy and England in 1729-1731. There is no doubt that these travels were influential in the

development of the writer's thought; many of Montesquieu's readers have gone so far as to argue that the voyage changed the writer profoundly, producing an epiphany that turned a somewhat naive classicist into a modern, sceptical social scientist.⁷ Montesquieu himself identified this period of his life as the time in which he discovered the principles which allowed him to write *De l'Esprit des lois*. Writing in 1748, he explained: "quand j'ai découvert mes principes, tout ce que je cherchais est venu à moi; et, dans le cours de vingt années, j'ai vu mon ouvrage commencer, croître, s'avancer et finir."⁸

Purposes of Montesquieu's voyage

There is evidence that Montesquieu's purpose in taking this trip, in addition to the more obvious and grander goals of understanding the differences amongst nations and the spirit of their laws, was to learn about practical politics: it seems that he fancied a diplomatic career and hoped to use his experiences to further this ambition.⁹ He almost overplayed his hand. The French *chargé d'affaires* in Milan, Leblond,¹⁰ was rather suspicious of Montesquieu at his arrival, and sent to Paris for instructions. He wrote that Montesquieu pretended to be nothing more than a tourist, but that he was far too curious.¹¹ The minister replied, saying that his suspicions were unwarranted, for "le président de Montesquieu ... est un homme de lettres qui a beaucoup d'esprit et de savoir et qui voyage comme il l'a dit par curiosité" (Desgraves 1986, 192; Shackleton 1961, 92).

As one would expect of an author of Montesquieu's stature,¹² he kept a detailed travel diary on this journey. The journal we now read as the *Voyage d'Italie*¹³ was first published in 1894-1896 from a manuscript, kept by the writer's family,¹⁴ that recounts his travels through Europe (though not England).¹⁵ This manuscript was not the original diary (i.e., the one he carried with him), but a copy made by two of Montesquieu's secretaries, the majority being recopied in 1749, immediately after the publication of

De l'Esprit des lois.¹⁶ Furthermore, the manuscript itself consists of notes which were compiled chronologically by the editors of the 1894-96 edition (Fort Harris, 71-4).

Travel Diary or Memoir?

It appears that the copyists were faithful to the original manuscript (or rather, notebooks), and perhaps were even recording Montesquieu's own dictation¹⁷ of the original notes he made on his travels. The re-copied manuscript reveals that Montesquieu supervised the transcription and made minor corrections. But it is still difficult to determine to what extent. For example, Montesquieu records in *Voyage*: "On y voit la petite ville de Lavinium (voir si ce n'est pas Lanuvium)."¹⁸ Then several paragraphs later, we find this note for a correction: "Dans ce que j'ai écrit sur mon voyage de Palestrina il faut mettre *Lanuvium*, au lieu de *Villa* ou *Cita-Lavinia*" (Seuil 289; Caillois I, 754; Masson II, 1186).¹⁹ On the one hand, the previous reference is not, or no longer, to "*Villa* ou *Cita-Lavinia*"; and on the other hand, if the manuscript was corrected and amended throughout, one would hardly retain these instructions in the revised text.²⁰ Nevertheless, Fort Harris argues that Montesquieu made corrections and additions long after the voyage was over: "Bien des passages du journal sont, en effet, postérieurs aux voyages et nous en avons la preuve dans le texte même" (73). Harris points out that Montesquieu uses the 'imperfect' tense in many places in the journal. Still, she acknowledges that the printed text "est bien fidèle au manuscrit, et est probable que les secrétaires n'ont fait là que recopier consciencieusement ce que Montesquieu lui-même avait écrit" (74).²¹

Montesquieu's purpose in writing the diary

Whether or not Montesquieu intended this diary to be published, perhaps as an autobiographical travelogue, we cannot say. That he had it copied in his later years indicates that he considered it of value. And he did write, a year

before his death, that he intended to put the diary in order (Fort Harris, 69). But Montesquieu had many things recopied and put in order. Studying his papers reveals that he employed copyists much as a modern scholar would use a photocopier: Pamphlets, articles from newspapers, letters, all were carefully recopied for future use, perhaps for posterity, more likely for himself. In any case, it is worth recalling the words of Andrew Hassam, who explains that while a private diary might be “ostensibly ... written for the diarist’s eyes alone,” nevertheless, that it is narrated at all “presuppose[s] an addressee, a figure to whom the work is addressed. And since one cannot *not* imply an addressee, it is beside the point here whether or not [the diarist] intended his work to be read by others.” What matters, concludes Hassam, is that the diarist “suddenly finds himself narrating to a reader” (37).

What we can assume is that Montesquieu kept this journal for a specific purpose, and that he intended to make use of the observations he made in later works. He wrote to Berwick while on route (15th Sept. 1728) mentioning a ‘grand chapitre’ discussing Venice, which he had composed for him.²² And Madame de Lambert,²³ writing somewhat optimistically in Genoa (“Je ne sçais pas, Monsieur, si ma lettre vous trouvera encore à Gênes, car il me semble que vous allez de pays en pays”), reveals that her *salon* was already anticipating the writer’s reports.²⁴ Upon his return, Montesquieu did indeed discuss his travels and how his observations related to his theory of the spirit of laws in the Paris salons.²⁵

The diary in context

Is Montesquieu’s diary typical of travel diaries and journals of his time? Fort Harris argues that it is not: “D’abord les notes de Montesquieu ne ressemblent guère au modèle du genre qu’est par exemple le journal de Gibbon, régulièrement tenu et donnant, avec la date, sa moisson de faits journaliers” (71).²⁶ Peter Conroy takes this further:

while *Voyage* can and should be read and classified as an early example of Grand Tour travel literature, Montesquieu is nevertheless writing something unique. Montesquieu, according to Conroy, records his experiences as they happen, “in the near present, simultaneously with the experience, and not in a distant, retrospective past of subsequent reflection. ... He does not subordinate one experience to another; each supplements the other. ... This conscious effort to add, to juxtapose material and not to reconcile variations is ... very close to the rhetorical figure of parataxis.” However, Conroy points out, Montesquieu’s text is not completely without order. After having recorded his experiences, he then, at times, attempts to re-order what he saw, and to put things into perspective. This is what Conroy calls syntaxis, rearranging experience in order to understand it (Conroy 1995, 303, 308).²⁷

Clearly, this insightfulness and ability to synthesize diverse observations and phenomena is unique to Montesquieu’s genius. Nevertheless, *Voyage* does display certain conventional forms. If what Montesquieu had to say about the mores and manners, commerce and politics, geography and culture of the various places he visited was, arguably, far more profound than that of his contemporaries, he was nevertheless following the standard formula for recording one’s travels in early eighteenth-century travel literature. Addison’s *Remarks*, for example, were criticised for failing to inquire into “the Constitutions, the Laws, the Policies, the Leagues, the Commerce, and Genius of those Countries and Cities.”²⁸ This criticism, levelled in 1706, could only be made were it assumed that travel reports were meant to do just this, as, of course, the reports we have in Montesquieu’s *Voyage* do.

Without denying his point that *Voyage* is unique in its own way, Conroy’s description of the work still places it firmly within the genre of eighteenth-century travel literature. According to Batten, one convention of travel literature of the period was to combine observation with reflection, the

first referring to specific descriptions of things seen, the second to, “the philosophical, aesthetic, moral, or political thoughts these sights occasioned” (82). Furthermore, Batten describes the minimal “narrative ordering of details” as essential to travel literature of this time. “The presence of at least a minimal narrative was one of the necessary attributes of the genre” (36). Personal information “simply orders the descriptions, interjects entertainment, and establishes the traveller’s character as an accurate, truthful, and perceptive observer” (116). As travel literature developed over the eighteenth century, narration became more and more intrusive. But travel books in the early part of the century, when Montesquieu was composing his own, contained “only the barest hint of a narrative sequence”(47). Within this minimalist framework, travel writers followed the logical convention of making observations followed by reflections (82), “in which the reflections seem to derive naturally, by means of an association of ideas, from the observations” (116).

‘On the road’

Conroy also argues that this method of recording notes, then later providing some elaboration, reflects the fact the this is a diary written “on the road.” At certain times, explains Conroy, Montesquieu “chose not to subordinate and coordinate.” By so doing, he could record experiences and information, much of which would be eventually “distilled into later works.” As Conroy puts it: “This is not the time for analysis and digestion; it is the time to grab and swallow the experiences before him.” Conroy argues that the diary reflects a “day-to-day recording of often haphazard experiences in the random order of their occurrence, this text emphasizes the present moment and captures a real sense of immediacy,” rather than the “distant memories edited at leisure by a traveller returned home” (302).²⁹

Conroy’s analysis goes far in explaining the disjointed nature³⁰ of Montesquieu’s *Voyage*. However, while the text

certainly provides a sense of immediacy, it is important to remember that travel diaries are not video cameras, nor are they tape-recorders³¹: whether they are written ‘on the road,’ or years later in a study, they do not record events immediately as they happen, but as Andrew Hassam argues, at “moments of stasis, moments when the traveller can actually put pen to paper” (33). Even the most immediate of reflections in a diary are (necessarily) the product of some later reflection, of specific choices about what to record and what not to record. Or, to place the question again in the context of Conroy’s analysis, both Montesquieu’s use of the immediate and the subsequent (or both his use of parataxis and syntax) contain elements of reflection and of narrative order.

Rational travel

More specifically, Montesquieu’s *Voyage* can be seen as an example of what has been called ‘Apodemik,’ referring to “‘rational travel,’ a technique of keeping a travel journal, of observation and analysis.”

This method was based on the widely popular ‘reductive-compositive’ method of Peter Ramus. The Ramian method asserted that all certain knowledge began with the ‘apparent’ and the ‘evident’ -- with observation. Whatever was to be known should first be described as a whole and then reduced to its parts, which would then be reduced to their parts, described, and catalogued. (Leed, 186)³²

Montesquieu’s method of observation follows precisely this method, as he explains in this note: *Pensées* “Quand j’arrive dans une ville, je vais toujours sur le plus haut clocher ou la plus haute tour, pour voir le tout ensemble, avant de voir les parties; et, en la quittant, je fais de même, pour fixer mes idées” (Seuil 259-260; Caillois I, 671; Masson II, 1102).³³

This leads Montesquieu into a cultural and moral relativism which he rarely violates. Writing in his just prior to leaving on his Grand Tour, Montesquieu explains: “Quand j’ai voyagé dans les pays étrangers, je m’y suis attaché comme au mien propre; j’ai pris part à leur fortune, et j’aurais souhaité qu’ils fussent dans un état florissant” (P213).³⁴ While in Rimini, he expands on this notion of cultural relativism:

Il me semble que les mœurs et les coutumes des nations qui ne sont pas contraires à la morale ne peuvent pas être jugées les unes meilleures que les autres. Car par quelle règle jugerait-on? Elles n’ont pas de commune mesure, excepté que chaque nation fait la règle de ses mœurs propres et, sur elle, juge toutes les autres. (Seuil 293; Caillois I, 767; Masson II, 1199)³⁵

That said, it would be a mistake to expect his diary to contain much more than flashes of insight, or hints of great ideas and analyses to come (although they contain several such surprises).³⁶

Sceptical cheerfulness

Since he does not speak much of himself, it is difficult to sense from Montesquieu’s diaries whether or not his travel experiences had any profound effect upon his world view. Fort Harris describes him as keeping “toujours une certaine réserve; ou bien, s’il parle de lui, ce n’est pas sans une certaine gêne.” This may be due to Montesquieu’s scientific bent: he is making notes and observations as would an objective observer. But we must be careful not to read too much into this, for according to Batten (speaking of Addison’s *Remarks*), this was, again, “a clearly defined convention of eighteenth-century travel literature: a travel writer must not talk about himself” (Batten, 13 ff).³⁷

Indeed, Montesquieu scholars who have examined

Voyage have noted his ever-present good humour, and what Fort Harris describes as a “certain imagination and a certain spontaneousness” which was, nevertheless, typically ‘Montesquieuan,’ that is to say, “controlled.”³⁸ The most striking tone of *Voyage* is sceptical cheerfulness (Guyon). Montesquieu’s contemporaries seemed to have recognized this as well. His friend Jean le Rond d’Alembert, himself a man of letters and Diderot’s assistant on the *Encyclopédie*, there published a eulogy to Montesquieu after his death in 1755, in which he comments on the latter’s travels:

Comme il n’avait rien examiné ni avec la prévention d’un enthousiaste. Ni avec l’austérité d’un cynique, il n’avait remporté de ses voyages ni un dédain outrageant pour les étrangers, ni un mépris encore plus déplacé pour son propre pays. Il résultait de ses observations, que l’Allemagne était faite pour y voyager, l’Italie pour y séjourner, l’Angleterre pour y penser, la France pour y vivre. (Seuil 24)

Narrative Style

Montesquieu’s *Voyage* begins in a traditional travel-diary, narrative style: “Le 12 août, nous partîmes de Gratz. J’étais avec M. le chevalier Jacob, avec lequel j’arrivai à Venise le 16 du même mois” (Seuil 215; Caillois I, 544; Masson II, 977). Again, like other travel diaries of this time, Montesquieu describes throughout his diary his means of travel, the distance between towns and posts, and the condition of the roads. He also describes the weather, climate, agriculture of the surrounding countryside, geography, river systems, and economic conditions. In the various cities, he describes (and analyses) the architecture, city infrastructure (drainage, roads, streets, etc.) politics and economics. He also writes about the social and academic circles in which he moved. Upon leaving a city, Montesquieu would often make a list of the people he met

there. Many of these were quite notable indeed, for example, the son of the Pretender James III (Bonnie Prince Charles), the King of Naples, and the infamous John Law. He is less faithful about recording the name of fellow scholars, although he does on occasion,³⁹ the abbé Antonio Conti being perhaps the most significant example (Shackleton 1961, 106). Jacob Vernet, who would eventually supervise the publication of *De l'Esprit des lois*, stayed at the same hotel as Montesquieu and was with him at the canonization of John Nepomucene. But while Vernet noted Montesquieu's presence, Montesquieu makes no mention of him (Shackleton 1961, 103).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Montesquieu travelled and was regarded as a visiting scholar, not just a visiting nobleman. Robert Shackleton quotes a "French Monk" writing from Rome in 1729: "Monsieur de Montesquieu de Bordeaux se distingue ici par son brillant. C'est un homme de belles-lettres" (Shackleton 1961, 102).⁴¹

The diary also contains private⁴² memoranda to the author. Perhaps the aforementioned lists of notables were reminders for future reference, or even for an anticipated revision prior to the publication of the diary. Other notes, equally private, are just as significant. As Andrew Hassam argues in a different context, "the first-person pronoun relates to two selves, the present subject which writes (the subject of the *énonciation*) and the subject which is written about (the subject of the *énoncé*). In autobiography, this division is commonly represented as the present self writing about the past self. In the diary, because of its so-called non-retrospective form of narration and its emphasis on the time of narration, this scheme has been amended. Here the argument is that the telescoping of the autobiographical past into the writing present has the effect of similarly telescoping the two selves into one subject position" (36).

We find several such examples in *Voyage*. In Venice, Montesquieu wrote: "Augmentation de la liberté des femmes depuis quinze à vingt ans" (Seuil 223; Caillois I, 568; Masson II, 1001). In Florence he recorded this reminder:

“Différence des richesses qui viennent d’avarice, d’avec celles qui viennent par les autres voies chez les peuples riches” (Seuil 252; Caillois I, 650; Masson II, 1082). At these points, Montesquieu is not speculating on what these differences between types of wealth might be, on how and to what extent women have seen their liberty increase over the past fifteen to twenty years, or what the consequences of this have been.⁴³ He merely records this as a reminder of something he wants to consider. And think about it he does, at least in the case of the cause of wealth, for this latter observation will become central to his analysis of the England and commerce described in *De l’Esprit des lois*.⁴⁴ We find a fuller elaboration of this same idea some pages later in the diary:

Il y a bien de la différence de la richesse des Italiens, amassée par une avarice de cinq ou six générations, ou cette richesse des grands pays, qui vient en un jour, et dont on fait usage; au lieu que l’autre ne sert de rien pour les arts : car le même esprit qui fait que l’on a amassé fait qu’on conserve. (Seuil 258; Caillois I, 666; Masson II, 1098)

These memoranda, then, while private, are clearly of profound importance to the reader who wishes to see the development of Montesquieu’s thought through his diary. Equally important, perhaps, are reminders such as this one, written in Venice: “Acheter à Naples : Principi[i] d’una nuova Scienza, di Joan-Baptista Vico, Napoli.” Did Montesquieu meet Vico while in Italy? This is, at least, clear evidence that he had certainly heard of him. Again, surely Montesquieu wrote this note only to remind himself (his future self?) of something he wished to do. But given the importance of a possible connection between Vico and Montesquieu, this note, although it may seem trivial, is anything but.⁴⁵

Measurements and Aesthetics

Voyage also attempts to be a work of aesthetics (Ehrard 1965, Dargan). The moment when Montesquieu sees the paintings of Raphael is perhaps the only instance in the entire diary where he expresses some strong emotion: “Primo, les Loges de Raphael, ouvrage divin et admirable! Quelle correction de dessin! Quelle beauté! Quel naturel! Ce n’est point de la peinture, c’est la nature même ... Enfin il semble que Dieu se sert de la main de Raphael pour créer.”⁴⁶ Otherwise, however, Montesquieu’s studies of the great masterpieces he viewed are exact and detailed, indeed to the point of empiricism. He measures the proportions of height and width of figures, assesses the colours in terms of their brightness, and discusses how some figures in paintings seem to have a sense of movement while others are more static. His analysis of architecture is equally detailed and precise, and again concentrates primarily on the engineering aspects of construction. Montesquieu evidently spent considerable time seeking to understand Italian art and architecture; his descriptions and analysis of these masterpieces may indeed constitute the single dominant subject of his *Voyage*.⁴⁷

With regards to other art forms, however, he is less precise. While he writes that “j’ai bien pris goût à ces opéra,” he fails to mention the name of any that he attended. Nor does he describe their music. He mentions the major singers of the season, noting for example that the great Faustina, whom he did not appear to have seen, was the ‘premier actress’ in Italy. He describes a singer he did see, whom he refers to as “La Turcotta”, as second to Faustina. But even in this case, he prefaces this remark by saying that this is what he was told.⁴⁸ He seems more interested in recording the banter in which he engaged after or during performances (at intermission, perhaps), than what took place on the stage. At one point, he jokingly offers to lend his testicles to a castrato who is unhappy with his singing performance: “A un castrato che cantava male, dicevo: ‘Mi

farei rendere testicoli miei.’” Montesquieu is more concerned by what he believes to be a corruption of aesthetics on stage through the excessive use of dance. In a critique which would ring true to many modern observers of ballet (or perhaps of figure-skating), Montesquieu complains that dance in the opera has been reduced to how high the dancer can jump; in other words, to athletic spectacle, rather than aesthetic beauty. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Montesquieu spent too much time trying to appreciate the music. Writing to the abbé Conti, he explains why he enjoys opera: “J’ai été à l’Opéra qui est très charmant parce qu’on y joue, mange, fait des visites et qu’on ne l’entend point.”⁴⁹

Anecdotal Evidence

Much of what Montesquieu relates in this diary is information given to him by others, most notably by the well-known adventurer, Claude Alexandre comte de Bonneval,⁵⁰ with whom Montesquieu spent considerable time in Venice (his annotation to his list of people he met in Venice remarks that he and Bonneval were hardly ever apart). Montesquieu rarely comments on these second-hand anecdotes, even when they seem patently ridiculous, like the story told by Admiral Deichmann about the Faeroe Island sheep. (These miserable sheep remain so long under the snow that they are forced to eat each other’s wool, emerging in the Spring already shorn and with bellies filled with fleece.) But sometimes he does express his scepticism. On several occasions, he begins his story with a note such as this: “Il faudrait examiner si ce que dit M. de Bonneval est vrai ...” When the vice-counsel of France tells him that “il se cueillait dans le marquisat 36 000 barils d’huile,” he adds, “ce que j’ai peine à croire” (Seuil 244; Caillois I, 628; Masson II, 1059). By having someone else tell the story, Montesquieu is also recapturing the rhetorical effect of his *Lettres persanes*, in which the author is shielded from any potential criticism of his remarks by the fact the stories told are not his own, but someone else’s. Consider the potential

dangers of this rather scatological tale: “Bonneval m’a dit avoir vu M. de Vendôme recevoir le Dauphin, Monseigneur, en sa chaise percée: «Monseigneur, si je me lève, je vous empuantirai; si je reste, je perds le respect. — Restez, dit le Dauphin, et, pour vous donner le temps de vous torcher le c[ul]... je vais passer de là.»” (Seuil 222; Caillois I, 564; Masson II, 996-997).

Rhetorical techniques

Non sequiturs abound in *Voyage*, some unintentionally (perhaps) amusing. For example, Montesquieu does not seem to have enjoyed being lectured by the infamous creator of the ‘Mississippi System’, the Scottish financier John Law. Law was in Venice while Montesquieu was there, the system having collapsed just a few years earlier. Although Montesquieu had lampooned Law in his *Lettres persanes*,⁵¹ the latter took great pleasure in explaining to his famous visitor how his ‘Système’ had been set up. Montesquieu records Law’s explanation at great length, but interjects in the middle, “Il n’y a que les fous qui soient mis à l’Inquisition à Venise” (Seuil 225; Caillois I, 572; Masson II, 1005).⁵²

Now, the rhetorical effect of this *non sequitur* is to create in the mind of the reader an image of Montesquieu, listening patiently while Law attempts to exonerate himself, becoming distracted and considering the fools who found themselves under the gaze of the State Inquisitors.⁵³ The passage reads very much as if this happened in real time, although the thoughts must have come to Montesquieu at the very least a few moments later, when he had an opportunity to put pen to paper. This idea of subsequent reflection is furthered by his assessment of John Law, which ends with a witticism: “C’est un homme captieux, qui a du raisonnement, et dont toute la force est de tâcher de tourner votre réponse contre vous, en y trouvant quelque inconvénient; d’ailleurs, plus amoureux de ses idées que de son argent.” This must have been a piercing sally, had Montesquieu used it during the

conversation. We cannot know whether or not he did, since all we have is Montesquieu's later reflection on the event.⁵⁴

A similar, and perhaps more significant example, is found when Montesquieu relates an anecdote about Arnaud de Silhouette, the father of the more infamous Étienne. The senior Silhouette wished to visit the Duke of Parma who was at his country estate and was seeing no one. Silhouette tried to impress the Duke's staff in the hope that this would gain him an audience. They asked him his title. "Il dit qu'il était «conseiller-secrétaire du Roi, maison et couronne de France et de ses finances». Ce titre parut si respectable au Duc qu'il lui fit dit qu'il n'était pas en état de le recevoir, mais que, s'il voulait absolument le voir, il irait à Parme, recevoir sa visite. Je fis remarquer audit M. Silhouette la bonté du Roi, qui rend si brillant aux yeux des étrangers le premier pas que l'on fait dans la noblesse" (Seuil 301; Caillois I, 789; Masson II, 1221).⁵⁵

Again, we have a brilliant putdown, one which furthermore displays Montesquieu as someone quite willing to derive some satisfaction from the embarrassment of a commoner (or more accurately, a powerful bureaucrat) aspiring to the ranks of the nobility.

Ethnography and Irony

This ironic tone is found throughout *Voyage*. When confronted with local superstition, in particular the cult of saints and their relics pervasive in Italy, however, Montesquieu displays a more gentle scepticism. He is shown "plusieurs très gros morceaux" of the 'true Cross', 'many' thorns of the crown Christ was forced to wear at His crucifixion, vials containing the blood of Christ ("il m'a paru que la couleur rouge qu'on avait donnée paraissait à travers"), the Gospel according to Saint Mark in the original handwriting of the author (but unfortunately turned to dust), and a finger from Saint Christopher, "qui aurait été digne de la main d'un géant."

Still, Montesquieu is not ready to commit heresy. Again,

the sense of dialogue between himself and another, perhaps his conscience, perhaps posterity, is evident in his observations. Some commentators have remarked on his detachment throughout this voyage, comparing his aloofness to that of the perfect Enlightenment figure of the objective observer, a precursor for the model of the modern disinterested anthropologist.⁵⁶ A striking example of this is found in his explanation for the liquefaction of the blood of Saint January.⁵⁷ Montesquieu witnessed this miracle on the 30th April 1729. As would befit a *philosophe*, he is suspicious of what he sees, and records that “je crois avoir vu que cette liquéfaction s’est faite.”

... je crois que c’est précisément un thermomètre; que ce sang ou cette liqueur, qui vient d’un lieu frais, entrant dans un lieu échauffé par la multitude du peuple et un grand nombre de bougies, doit se liquéfier. ... De plus, le prêtre tient le reliquaire de ses deux mains; ce qui échauffe le métal. (Seuil 279; Caillois I, 727; Masson II, 1159)

Montesquieu then comments on the social importance that this miracle has on the “esprit du peuple.” If it does not occur, there is great public mourning and consternation. There are also political implications. The Neapolitans say that when Philip V comes to Naples, the miracle does not take place. This, of course, is taken as a sign of “la perte qu’il fit de ce royaume.”

Later (in the diary), Montesquieu reflects on this phenomenon, and also on his own analysis. He begins by declaring straight out that he does not believe the miracle to be the result of deceitfulness, nor that anything is mixed with the blood. Furthermore, “ce que je croirais plutôt, c’est que le Clergé est de bonne foi; mais c’est un thermomètre.” The relic, he notes, is grasped by the priest in both hands, which heats it. Candles are put very close to it, ostensibly so that

the faithful can see it better. And the continual kissing of the relic would also cause it to be heated. But the priests aren't being dishonest. They are simply duped themselves: "Je crois donc que les ecclésiastiques sont la dupe eux-mêmes" (Seuil 280; Caillois I, 730; Masson II, 1162) Montesquieu's ethnography here is most apparent. The priests have repeatedly witnessed this phenomenon, and believe it to be a true miracle. More importantly, they need to believe it, for they require this miracle to reassure the people. So, through trial and error, they have constructed a ceremony which works:

Le besoin qu'ils ont eu du miracle pour consoler le peuple a fait qu'ils ont cherché à examiner ce qui réussissait mieux pour faire le miracle au Saint ; ils ont établis des cérémonies qu'ils ont crues les plus agréables au Saint. Ces cérémonies une fois établies ne se changent plus: ainsi, lorsque le prêtre tient le reliquaire, un acolyte suit toujours avec une chandelle; ainsi il y a le même nombre de bougies sur l'autel; et c'est toujours le même lieu où le sang se met, lorsqu'on ne l'expose pas. On a donc cherché d'abord à faire le miracle, et ensuite on a continué à observer les mêmes moyens, dont on s'est servi. (Ibid)

But then Montesquieu takes two steps backwards. The first step acknowledges that in matters of faith, scientific explanation misses the point: it is the veneration of the Saint that is important, not the physical cause of the phenomenon. The second step is to acknowledge that, of course, even this is merely conjecture: "peut-être y a-t-il un véritable miracle."

At other times, Montesquieu's irony is more biting. The Venetians, he writes, are "le meilleur peuple du monde." They have no need to post guards at their *spectacles*, and fights never break out. As for religion, Montesquieu has never seen so many devotees and such little devotion. They

are so devoted to going to church, that even a gentleman keeping a prostitute would not dream of missing Mass, “et ne croyez pas que les courtisanes aillent gêter leurs affaires dans les église.” As for ‘secret deliberations,’ Venice is in such a state of decadence that there are no secrets to keep (Seuil 216; Caillois I, 546; Masson II, 979).

However, Montesquieu’s tone is not always ironic. At times, the criticisms are blunt and unforgiving: “Les républiques d’Italie ne sont que de misérables aristocraties, que ne subsistent que par la pitié qu’on leur accorde, et où les nobles, sans aucun sentiment de grandeur et de gloire, n’ont d’autre ambition que de maintenir leur oisiveté et leurs prérogatives.” (Seuil 275, Caillois I, 715; Masson II, 1146).⁵⁸ These types of criticisms are peppered throughout *Voyage*. Peppered, because they are neither frequent nor do they do any more than spice his account.

Technical and scientific descriptions

Finally, perhaps the most striking feature of Montesquieu’s *Voyage* is his use of technical and scientific description and analysis. Batten quotes Samuel Johnson, who in turn describes eighteenth-century travel literature as “Science ... connected with Events” (46). And here *Voyage* provides a perfect example: he describes and comments upon Roman road-building (as demonstrated by the Appian Way with its culverts and multi-layered construction), harbour-dredging techniques in Venice, and even soap making in Savone, which he adds as an afterthought, having just described the architecture of the tower of Pisa. He tries to find an explanation for the strange phenomenon of the Grotte du Chien (the Cave of the Dog), so called because while humans experience little effect from walking through the cave, dogs, closer to the ground and therefore forced to breathe in the sulphurous fumes, will “tomber de faiblesse, et l’haleine lui manque, comme ne pouvant respirer.” He attempts to understand and account for the annual spread of influenza and other infectious diseases (*intempérie*).⁵⁹ It is,

then, as a reasoning individual, an *homme d'esprit*,⁶⁰ that Montesquieu travelled Europe — or as what Eric Leed calls the philosopher-traveller (63).

Conclusion

The marquis d'Argenson, in an essay written soon after Montesquieu's return to France, compared the writer with Fontanelle and Henault, both of whom were, like Montesquieu, members of the *Académie française*.⁶¹ He describes hearing Montesquieu discuss his travels, and how he was using these experiences to compose his treatise on the spirit of laws. We do not, comments the marquis, know the whole extent of the observations Montesquieu made, but we do know, he adds, that since his return Montesquieu was preparing to publish his *magnus opus*, on the spirit of the laws. D'Argenson acknowledges that Montesquieu had acquired vast knowledge in his travels, but, he predicts, will not succeed in writing such a book, the book we want.⁶²

The fact is, d'Argenson said, Montesquieu wished to travel. Perhaps d'Argenson's prediction was not fulfilled: he did give us the book we wanted. *De l'Esprit des lois*, with all its faults and internal inconsistencies, is still a work of genius that pushes its reader to consider and reconsider the inter-connectivity of things, people, places and events. "Je ne traite point les lois, mais de l'esprit des lois," Montesquieu wrote in Book I (iii) of *De l'Esprit des lois*, "et que cet esprit consiste dans les divers rapports que les lois peuvent avoir avec diverse chose." Montesquieu describes *De l'Esprit des lois* as an 'enfant né sans mère.'⁶³ Surely, though, its mother was the writer's *Grand Tour*, if not his *Voyage*.

Notes

1. Montesquieu's sources for the *Lettres persanes* were from several writers, notably the travel writings of Jean Chardin (1686), J.-B. Tavernier (1676), François Bernier (1699), Thévenot (1663), Olearius (1659) Mme d'Aulnoy (1691), and Dampier (1711). See Adams 1983:115-6, Van Roosbroeck, Crisafulli and Behdad. Another early example of Montesquieu's fictional travel literature could be the *Voyage à Paphos*. This work, however, is generally regarded as spurious. See O'Reilly. See also Desgraves (1999) for a list of the travel books found in Montesquieu's library ["Itineraria," 337-340], and Desgraves (1998) [# 8. *Geographica*. Tome II, Ms. 2507 (28- 30).]

2. *Lettres persanes*, 72. On Montesquieu's influence, see Douthwaite.

3. At least one traveller was to make use of *De l'Esprit des lois* as his guide: Writing to Thomas Wharton of his copy of *De l'Esprit des lois*, Robert Wharton explained: "I am going into different nations differently governed. This is the only book to enable me to judge of, and profit by seeing their governments." (13 June 1775), quoted in Black, 183.

4. The standard work discussing Montesquieu's use of travel literature in the composition of *De l'Esprit des lois* is Dodds. Weil (1952) supplements and corrects Dodds. See also Young (1978). For other studies of Montesquieu's use of travel sources, see: Trevor-Roper, Hülling, Felice, Barrière (1952), Weil (1938), Carrithers (1991), and Firpo.

5. See Shackleton, 1961:19-20, 90. Montesquieu's entire voyage lasted from 1728 through until 1732. Italy (August 1728 - July 1729) and England (October 1729 - April 1731) were the longest episodes. Montesquieu also visited Germany, Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands.

6. "No man understands Livy and Caesar like him who hath made exactly the *Grand Tour* of France and the *Giro* of Italy." Richard Lassels is credited with being the first person to use the phrase the 'Grand Tour' in print, in his *An Italian*

Voyage, or a Compleat Journey through Italy (1679). See Trease, 1. The term 'Grand Tour' is sometimes applied to all eighteenth-century travels of members of the nobility and the academies, primarily through Italy, but also France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. It is now more commonly applied to young travellers from England; indeed, some authors insist the term "the Grand Tour" only be applied to such pedagogical, aristocratic and English experiences (Redford, 14). In France, this phenomenon is referred to as the more geographically explicit '*Voyage d'Italie*'. I have not chosen this term to refer to Montesquieu's travels, for the simple reason that this is too close to the title of Montesquieu's travel diary itself, as cited by many of his commentators (see note below). So while referring to Montesquieu's 'Grand Tour' might be somewhat inaccurate, it will, I hope, avoid causing confusion about whether I am referring to his journey or his diary, *Voyage*.

The literature on the English Grand Tour and, to a lesser extent, the French *Voyage d'Italie*, is extensive, and is cited throughout this paper. For an overview, however, see Black, 1985. On the phenomenon of the *Voyage d'Italie*, see Chevallier, 1984.

7. Eluggero Pii summarizes these assessments: "Les biographes et les spécialistes de Montesquieu s'accordent sur la période des voyages qu'il fit de 1728 à 1731 pour localiser ce passage d'une attitude littéraire à une attitude «scientifique»." Pii, 26. See also Van Den Abbeele. The following are representative: Werner Stark argues that these travels convinced Montesquieu to abandon Cartesianism in favour of Baconianism. For Paul Meyer, it was as a result of the travels that Montesquieu gave up the harsh 'Machiavellianism' of his youth and became more moralistic. Robert Shackleton (1961) claims that the writer abandoned classical republicanism and became, in the parlance of the eighteenth century, a 'modern'. Nannerl Keohane, on the other hand, argues that "Montesquieu cast in his lot with the

Ancients against the Moderns; and he never reversed himself.” His travels through Europe, then, simply confirmed his distaste for modernism, and in particular for commerce. Montesquieu’s travel notebooks reveal that he was “vitriolic in his scorn for the Dutch passion for commerce.” Keohane, 1980, 414, 419. See also Fort Harris, Granpré Molière (24-27), Roddier, Dédéyan, Fletcher, Janet, Dedieu 1971 [1909], esp. ch. V, “Le Voyage de Montesquieu en Angleterre;” Aron, 17, and Starobinski.

8. Préface, *De l’Esprit des lois*.

9. Montesquieu wrote to Richelieu (Louis François Armand de Vignerot du Plessis, Duc de) from Vienna requesting such a post. From London, he also wrote to Chauvelin (Germain Louis, French Foreign Minister 1727-37) requesting the same. Montesquieu argued his case by pointing out that he had been living in foreign countries for the last two years: “En cas que vous me jugiez propre à y remplir quelque place honorable, vous ne pouvez jeter les yeux sur personne qui ait plus d’envie de faire son devoir de servir le Roi & de mériter votre estime & votre protection. On est aisément porté, Monseigneur, à chercher à servir sous un ministre tel que vous.” Montesquieu’s request generated an official report on his worthiness. See B[aldensperger]. For Montesquieu’s correspondences, see Montesquieu à Chauvelin, 12 fev. 1729-30, v.s. [23 fev.], Montesquieu à l’abbé d’Olivet, 10 mai 1728, Montesquieu à Richelieu, mai 1728, Montesquieu à Berwick, 2 juil. 1728. See also Guyon.

10. Montesquieu’s *Voyage* sometimes refers to Leblond as Le Blanc. There were three Leblond brothers, each a French consul; one in Milan, one in Venice and one in Rome. See Fort Harris, 86, and her note 6.

11. Clearly Montesquieu was much more than a mere tourist; it is, however, important to note that he was travelling very much as a tourist; visiting sites familiar to him from his studies, he was served by guidebooks, and travelled in the

company of familiar people who knew Italy well. On the importance of this kind of travel, see Leed, 138 ff.

12. That we 'expect' such an analysis from the author of *De l'Esprit des lois*, is, of course, a crucial factor in determining how we read this diary. Surely it is an overstatement to argue that we would not be interested in the diary were it *not* written by Montesquieu. Yet it may be impossible for the student of Montesquieu, well versed in his later works, to avoid reading later theories and observations into the diaries. I suppose, finally, that it is worth debating whether this really matters or not.

13. The available editions of Montesquieu's *Voyage* are listed separately in the bibliography. Page numbers will refer to the three most common editions, all found in different collections of Montesquieu's complete works. The *Société Montesquieu*, through the Voltaire Foundation, is publishing a new critical edition of *Voyage*, but unfortunately this edition is not presently available. The author of the present paper is working on a critical edition and English translation of *Voyage*, which to my knowledge will be the first time the diary is available in English. The only other translation I am aware of is in Italian, Macchia and Colesanti, hereafter cited as *Viaggio*.

14. They were published by Montesquieu's descendant, the baron Albert de Montesquieu, as the *Voyages de Montesquieu*. Fort Harris explains: "Ses héritiers directs, craignant de nuire à sa gloire, se sont bien gardés de livrer au public des écrits auxquelles il n'avait pas, lui-même, donné leur forme définitive. C'est donc seulement en 1894 et 1896, sous l'égide de la Société des bibliophiles de Guyenne, que ces notes ont été publiées pour la première fois." Fort Harris, 69. See also A. Masson's introduction to the *Voyages* in Masson II, 'VI. Les Voyages', p. xcii. The manuscript of the *Voyage en Italie, en Allemagne et en Hollande* is in the Bibliothèque central de Mériadeck (*Bibliothèque de Bordeaux*), Ms. 2133, I et II. For manuscript information, see Courtney, 1998, and

Desgraves, 1999.

15. Montesquieu also kept a diary of the second part of his voyage, his stay in England (1729-1731). This diary has been lost, and probably destroyed. Montesquieu's grandson, Joseph-Cyrille sent his cousin Charles-Louis a "vast collection of manuscripts," of which one should have been (according to the catalogue) his grandfather's *Voyage en Angleterre*. These were to have been sent back to Bordeaux, but the manuscript of Montesquieu's voyage in England was not amongst those received. The speculation is that they were destroyed. See Shackleton, 1961, 117-8.

16. Shackleton gives this as secretary "q", responsible for 7/8ths of the transcription, and the remaining 1/8th in 1753 by secretary "s". See Shackleton, 1955a. We do have some holographic examples of Montesquieu's diaries: A manuscript entitled "Florence" on the museums and churches of Florence, is entirely written in Montesquieu's hand, and has been dated as having been written in 1728. See A. Masson, "Introduction," *Les Voyages*, Masson II, xcii. For a detailed analysis of the different handwriting styles in the *Voyages*, see Fort Harris, 74-75.

17. A. Masson writes: "mais cette copie semble être la reproduction fidèle des notes prises au jour le jour vingt ans plus tôt, car on y trouve les gaucheries & les incorrections d'une rédaction hâtive." (Masson II, xcii.) Shackleton (1949) described Montesquieu's secretaries: "The nature of the extracts and of the occasional personal comments leaves one in no doubt about the way Montesquieu used his secretaries. They were amanuenses who took down notes from his diction."

18. The editors of *Viaggio* have corrected this to: *Lavinio* and *Lanuvio* respectively (248).

19. *Viaggio* have corrected this to *Civita Lavinia* (250). References are to the three most accessible editions of Montesquieu's works, listed in the bibliography following.

20. An equally plausible explanation is that this is still a faithful and uncorrected copy; Montesquieu remembered that

he had written a reminder to verify the correct spelling for Lavunium, and upon doing so, recorded the correction, only in the second instance forgetting exactly what error he had made in the first place.

21. For discussion of foreknowledge and diaries, see Kuhn-Osius.

22. Montesquieu à Berwick, 15 septembre 1728.

23. Anne-Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, Marquise de Lambert (1647-1733). It was in her *salon* that Montesquieu was introduced to Parisian society.

24. "... mais dites-moi, je vous prie, si de voyager contribue beaucoup au bonheur & à la perfection? En reviendrez-vous plus sage & plus heureux?" Mme de Lambert à Montesquieu, ce 10e Dec, 1728.

25. D'Argenson, 149. [*Loisirs d'un ministre*, t. II, p.65.] See also Carcassonne, 105; and Derathé, "Le Dossier de l'Oeuvre," *De l'Esprit des lois*, ed. Robert Derathé, 535.

26. See also Desgraves, 1994, 123.

27. Jonathan Rée makes a similar distinction when discussing private diaries: "... there is no scope for the autobiographer's wisdom-after-the-event; there is no distinction between the present 'I' and the past 'I,' for the dominant time of a diarist's thoughts is discursive, not historic; it is the fugitive present of their own inscription." Hassam continues: "The 'pure diary' here is a commentary on thoughts and events as they occur, and the writing itself is held to be present unto its thinking self. It is a small step from this mode of narration to a stream-of-consciousness technique in which the whole notion that the commentary us being written is dropped; we move, in short, to what Lorna Martens has termed the fictive 'quasi-diary,' a periodic form of narration characterized by a combination of present-tense forms both appropriate and inappropriate diary" (Hassam, 36).

28. The criticism of Addison comes from *A Table of All the Accurate Remarks and New Discoveries, in ... Mr. Addison's Book of Travels* (1706). See Batten, 14. By the

time Montesquieu set out on his Grand Tour in 1728, such analysis had already become expected: Thomas Tickel, writing in the 1721 edition of Addison's collected works, cautioned readers not to expect "an account, in a common way, of the customs and policies of the several governments in Italy, reflexions upon the genius of the people, a map of their provinces, or a measure of their buildings." Quoted in Batten, 126-7 (note 11).

29. See also Conroy 1992.

30. As several commentators have pointed out, "The text remains a collection of disconnected fragments, often repetitious and even capable of such chronological illogicalities as his arrival in Heidelberg on August 26, 1729 and departure the day before." Van Den Abbeele, 71.

31. Even cameras, however, record images that are then 'developed' (both literally and figuratively) later. Jean Cocteau described the advantages of using a camera while travelling: "It is a method I advocate. Either live with things or just glance at them. I hardly look. I record. I load my camera obscura. I will develop the image at home" (20), quoted in Leed, 61.

32. Leed refers us to Ong.

33. See Van Den Abbeele for an analysis of this passage, as well as the double-meaning of 'pour fixer mes idées.'

34. Shackleton explains that Montesquieu's *Pensées* written after his return from his Grand Tour, begin with number 251. *Pensée* 213, which contains forty-six reflections on, probably, Montesquieu's own character, begins with the prefatory remark: "Une personne de ma connaissance disait." The first draft read: "Il faut que je rende grâce à mon bon génie de ce que je suis né très heureux." The device of couching these remarks in something someone else said is characteristic of Montesquieu's rhetorical style.

35. Montesquieu wrote in his *Notes sur l'Angleterre*: "Quand je vais dans un pays, je n'examine pas s'il y a de bonnes lois, mais si on exécute celles qui y sont, car il y a de bonnes lois partout" (Caillois I, 879). In his *Essai sur les*

causes, written after his *Voyage* but before *De l'Esprit des lois*, he wrote: "Les voyages donnent aussi une très grande étendue à l'esprit: on sort du cercle des préjugés de son pays, et l'on n'est guère propre à se charger de ceux des étrangers" (Caillois II, 63).

36. As Fort Harris has written, "Différente des autres pays traversés avec plus ou moins de hâte, différente de l'Angleterre ... l'Italie a exercé sur son visiteur une influence à première vue moins nette, en réalité plus intime, plus profonde, et qui reste en partie à préciser" (69).

37. This is not to say that Montesquieu wasn't at times overwhelmed (see reference to Raphael below). With a few exceptions, however, Montesquieu's tone in his *Voyage* is one of detachment.

38. Fort Harris writes: "Le journal de voyages se présente donc avec une certaine fantaisie et une certaine spontanéité, une fantaisie intéressante à découvrir, une spontanéité à la Montesquieu, c'est-à-dire contrôlée, même dans des notes qui n'étaient destinées à être lues que par lui" (75). See also Desgraves 1994, 123.

39. "Les principaux savants d'Italie de mon temps étaient Mgr. Bianchini, qui mourut à Rome; le Père Galliani; à Venise, l'abbé Conti; à Verone, le marquis Mafféi, qui a fait la Mérope et bien d'autres livres; à Bologne, M. Manfredi et autres professeurs: entre autres, un professeur pour la philosophie naturelle, qui se nomme (je crois) Monti; à Modène, M. Muratori; à Turin, le Père Roma et l'abbé Lama; à Milan, la comtesse Borromeo; à Naples, le conseiller Grimaldi. Je les ai tous vus, excepté Manfredi et Bianchini. Plus, il y a le marquis Orsi, Bolognais, à Modène." (Seuil 298; Caillois I, 781; Masson II, 1213).

40. The indexer to the Seuil edition of the *Oeuvres complètes* suggests that Montesquieu's reference to *le chevalier Jacob* (with whom he travelled from Gratz to Venice) is the same person as Jacob Vernet. But the latter is more likely Hildebrand Jacob, the poet and son of Sir John Jacob of Bromley. See Ingamells, 548-9. For Vernet's travels, and

meetings with Montesquieu, see Gargett.

41. P. Barrière, 1956, however, claims that Montesquieu travelled, not as an “homme de lettres,” but as a “grande seigneur et en mondain”(62).

42. Of course, the entire question of what is private and what is not, or whether anything written down can truly be private, has been well discussed. I won't even attempt to repeat the debate or try to do justice to the extensive bibliography that it has produced.

43. Earlier (in the diary), Montesquieu speculates that the increase in freedom for women was responsible for a drop in the numbers of women who chose to cloister themselves. “Depuis que les femmes sont devenues plus libres, les couvents, où étaient la joie et les plaisirs, sont devenus déserts. Le dérèglement des femmes du monde a mis la réforme chez celles qui y avaient renoncé. Il y a encore des religieuses qui ne s'étaient faites telles que par amour pour le plaisir; leur vieillesse seule les console” (Seuil 218; Caillois I, 554; Masson II, 987).

44. See Hirschman, part. pp 60 ff. for Montesquieu's use of the commerce thesis. On Montesquieu and the rights of women see Hanley.

45. Robert Shackleton speculates on a possible meeting of Vico and Montesquieu, through their mutual acquaintance, Antonio Conti, while Montesquieu was in Venice. Shackleton, 1961, 114- 6. See also Folkierski.

46. This, explains Peter Conroy, is the “great moment on anyone's Grand Tour... Here is the revelation, the epiphany ... Here is the shock not just of the new but of Italy and its artistic legacy.”(302)

47. As well as the subject of his manuscript, “Florence,” which as explained above is one of the only full-length autographical manuscripts we have of his travels. “Florence” begins with a tour of the “Galerie du Grand-Duc,” so named because what we today call the Galleria Degli Uffizi, or the Uffizi Gallery, was built at the behest of the grand duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici as offices in 1559.

Significantly, one of the books Montesquieu purchased just prior to his grand tour was a book on Italian architecture: *Cours d'architecture qui comprend les ordres de Vignole avec qui comprend les ordres de Vignole avec des commentaires, les figures et descriptions de ses plus beaux bâtiments et de ceux de Michel-Ange* by d'Aviler (1691, n.e. 1710). Others included *Ristretto delle cose più notabile della città di Firenze*. The detail of Montesquieu's study of art and architecture precludes treating it justly within the confines of this paper. For a complete account, see Ehrard 1965. See also Desgraves 1994, 126-7, and Fort Harris, 103 (nt. 23), for discussion of the books Montesquieu purchased prior to his Grand Tour.

48. Montesquieu is referring to Maria Giustina Turcotti (b. Florence, c. 1700 - d. after 1763). See Weaver (371) and Holmes.

49. Montesquieu à l'abbé Conti, 29 sept. 1728. On Montesquieu and opera, see Waddicor 1975. See also Lagrave.

50. On Bonneval as travel writer and adventure, see Wilding. See also Adams 1983, 158-9, and Adams 1962, 8, 12.

51. Law, who would die in Venice on the 21st March 1729, just a few months after Montesquieu met with him. See the *Lettres persanes*, CXXXII, CXXXVIII, and CXLVI. For a critical account of their meeting (in which Montesquieu comes off badly), see Murphy 1997, 324.

52. Montesquieu records that in Rimini he purchased Law's *Balance of Commerce between England and France*.

53. Three State Inquisitors reported to Venice's ruling body, the Council of Ten. Their duties were to ferret out "plots and conspiracies against the government while also keeping a close watch on the activities of the Doge [the Venetian Head of State] to ensure that he attempted no augmentation of [his] executive powers." Carrithers, 250.

54. Fort Harris argues that: "Ce n'est donc pas la sympathie, mais la curiosité qui l'a poussé à écouter Law défendre son

système” (91, nt. 21).

55. Fort Harris points out that this anecdote was added to the manuscript later, and notes some problems with the dating. See Fort Harris, 183, note 24.

56. See Douthwaite. An interesting approach to this question of detachment is that of Catharine MacKinnon, who sees this as a typically “male epistemological stance.” Quoted in Douthwaite, 468-9.

57. As Fort Harris points out, Montesquieu’s attempt to understand this phenomenon within the context of its believers (rather than as a cynical outsider) was quite different from the dismissive accounts of his contemporaries. See Fort Harris, 160-2, note 17. For a modern scientific account of this phenomenon, see Garlaschelli, Ramaccini, and Sala.

58. For a subtle discussion of just what Montesquieu’s attitudes were towards the Venetian aristocratic republic, before and after his voyage, see Carrithers, 264.

59. See Gross, 205, for description of the cyclical pattern of infectious diseases in Rome in the eighteenth century.

60. See Vernière, 17, and Starobinski.

61. Bernard le Bovier, Sieur de Fontenelle (1657-1757). Charles-Jean François Hénault (1685-1770). Montesquieu, d’Argenson, Fontenelle and Hénault were also members of the *Club de l’Entresol* (although Montesquieu’s membership has been inferred rather than proven). In any case, the *Club de l’Entresol* had been disbanded in 1731, the year Montesquieu returned from England.

62. D’Argenson, 149.

63. *Prolem sine matre creatam*. Montesquieu’s own explanation for his epigraph, as explained to Mme. Necker, was: “Pour faire de grands ouvrages, deux choses sont utiles: in père et une mère, le génie et la liberté... Mon ouvrage a manqué de cette dernière.”

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