Textual Travel Companions: Negotiating Joint-Authored Journeys

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Although travel writers are seldom alone when they travel, and their journeys always entail a certain degree of dependence on others, from the late eighteenth century onwards with the emergence of more subjectivist Romantic travelogues,[1] modern travel writing has been characterised by its constructions of individualism. The recent success of works such as Sylvain Tesson's *The Consolations of the Forest: Alone in a Cabin on the Siberian Taiga*, winner of the 2014 Dolman Best Travel Book Award, and Sarah Marquis's *Wild by Nature: From Siberia to Australia, Three Years Alone in the Wilderness on Foot*, attests to the continued prevalence and popularity of the lone-traveller narrative.[2] Moreover, even if the journeys themselves were not in fact solitary undertakings, their retrospective narratives frequently filter the travel experience through a single lens, with the travel companion represented as a blurred and marginal presence at best.[3] Graham Greene's *Journey without Maps* (1936) offers one of the most prominent examples of such occlusion, with the writer's cousin and co-traveller in Liberia, Barbara Greene, conspicuous by her absence from his narrative.[4] Such widespread solipsistic tendencies and power imbalances led to the call by James Clifford for 'new representational strategies' to allow for the emergence of a 'long list of actors' previously relegated to the margins of travel writing.[5]

Yet although relatively unusual, alternative modes of narration do exist. Co-authored travel narratives constitute an important sub-trend within the genre, which raise salient questions regarding mobility and agency, textual ownership and authorship. Indeed, the study of certain periods and cultures reveals a significant tradition of jointly-authored travel accounts. Kris Lackey has observed a pre-Second World War tradition of 'kintrips' in American nonfiction transcontinental narratives,

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1 See Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London; Routledge, 2011), 117.

2 Sylvain Tesson, *The Consolations of the Forest: Alone in a Cabin on the Siberian Taiga*, trans. Linda Coverdale (London: Penguin, 2013). Sarah Marquis, *Wild by Nature: From Siberia to Australia, Three Years Alone in the Wilderness on Foot* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2016).

3 See Catharine Mee's stimulating discussion of the role of travel companions, 'Accompanying', in *Interpersonal Encounters in Contemporary Travel Writing: French and Italian Perspectives* (London: Anthem, 2014), 127-146.

4 Graham Greene, *Journey without Maps* (London: Heinemann, 1936); cf. Barbara Greene, *Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara and Graham Greene in Liberia* (1936; London: Settle Bendall, 1981).

5 James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25.

frequently undertaken by married couples and often whole families.[6] Margot Irvine notes that whereas contemporary feminist studies prefer to focus on the solitary woman traveller, most nineteenth-century female travellers in fact undertook their journeys as part of a couple.[7] Moreover, numerous twentieth- and twenty-first-century French travel writers embark on *des voyages à deux* [joint journeys] with companions of the same or opposite sex. Indeed, Irvine contends that the sub-genre of the *voyage à deux* is particularly French, and that such dual departures have significant repercussions for the form of the travel narrative produced.[8] In the late twentieth century, Sylvain Tesson's joint exploits with Alexandre Poussin, *On a roulé sur la terre* (1996) and *La marche dans le ciel* (1997), headed bestseller lists in France.[9] Travelogues by Carol Dunlop and Julio Cortázar (*Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*), and by François Maspero with photographers[10] Anaïk Frantz (*Les Passagers du Roissy-Express)* and Klavdij Sluban (*Balkans-Transit*) have been critically acclaimed as offering innovative, alternative approaches to travel and its representation.[11] Indeed, the proliferation of joint-authored travel narratives, in particular by married couples such as Marie-Hélène and Laurent de Cherisey, as well as numerous journeys across the world undertaken as part of a family unit, represent a striking recent trend in French-language travel literature, and suggest a re-emergence of the 'kintrip' in a different cultural context.[12]

Nevertheless, collaborative travel narratives have not often been the object of detailed academic study. This chapter analyses two French joint-authored travelogues written thirty years apart which offer insights into 'the strategies of accommodation, coordination and resistance that are required when two (or more) individuals share a

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6 Kris Lackey, *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 26.

7 Margot Irvine, *Pour suivre un époux: Les récits de voyages des couples au dix-neuvième siècle* (Québec: Éditions Nota bene, 2008), 8.

8 Irvine, *Pour suivre un époux*, 10.

9 Alexandre Poussin and Sylvain Tesson, *On a roulé sur la terre* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1996); *La marche dans le ciel* (Paris: France loisirs, 1997).

10 Amongst the prominent forebearers for these textual/visual partnerships is John Steinbeck and Robert Capa's *Russian Journal* (New York: Viking Press, 1948).

11 Carol Dunlop and Julio Cortázar, *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute*: *ou, un voyage intemporel Paris-Marseille* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983); François Maspero, *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*, photographies d'Anaïk Frantz (Paris: Seuil, 1990); François Maspero, *Balkans-Transit*, photographies de Klavdij Sluban (Paris: Seuil, 1997).

12 Marie-Hélène and Laurent de Cherisey, *Passeurs d'espoir: 1. Une famille à la rencontre des bâtisseurs du XXIe siècle* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 2005).

conventionally unitary space of authorship'.[13] As Charles Forsdick has observed, parallel accounts of shared journeys have hitherto been most frequently analysed in terms of identifying gender differences in travel writing,[14] and it is necessary to widen the field of enquiry and examine writing partnerships by travellers of the same gender, in addition to narratives by LGBTQ and gender-fluid authors. Sara Mills has argued that travel narratives by women tend to be characterised by a 'less authoritarian stance vis-à-vis narrative voice', and this chapter will consider whether Mills's claim can also be applied to travelogues that use collective narrative viewpoints.[15]

The present analysis of two contrasting female literary partnerships explores the ways in which the travellers' relationships are inscribed or erased in their joint-authored work. The travelogues offer divergent approaches to the construction of individual and collective narrative perspectives, with one adopting a multi-vocal approach and the other a fusion model. Nevertheless, the reasons why these writers have come together are not thematised explicitly, meaning that the processes of collaborative writing remain largely hidden in these texts. Lorraine York is critical of the 'fusion' model of analysis that characterised much earlier feminist scholarship in this field, which celebrates and idealises women's collective acts, whilst effectively abolishing questions of individual creative property and authorial difference.[16] My chapter situates these works along the fusion / difference scale identified by York,[17] whilst drawing attention to ways in which they eschew such polarities.

Aux pays des femmes-soldats (1931) [In the Countries of Female Soldiers] by Suzanne de Callias and Blanche Vogt recounts the authors' journey to Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany and Denmark by boat, train and aeroplane in the summer

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13 Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson, 'Contexts and Heterotexts: A Theoretical and Historical Introduction', in *Literary Couplings: Writing Couples, Collaborators, and the Construction of Authorship*, ed. Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 25.

14 Charles Forsdick, 'Peter Fleming and Ella Maillart in China: Travel Writing as Stereoscopic and Polygraphic Form', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13.4 (2009 Dec): 294. For example, Valerie Kennedy emphasises the contrast between the 'masculine' and 'feminine' styles of Graham and Barbara Greene in their respective accounts of their travels in Liberia in the 1930s. Valerie Kennedy, 'Conradian Quest Versus Dubious Adventure: Graham and Barbara Greene in West Africa', *Studies in Travel Writing* 19.1 (2015): 48-65.

15 Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 21.

16 Lorraine York, *Rethinking Women's Collaborative Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 7. 21, 59.

17 Ibid, 134-5.

of 1930.[18] Their travelogue was the sixth to be published in Fasquelle's *Collection Voyageuses de lettres* (1930-1949), a groundbreaking series devoted to female-authored literary travelogues in French, which featured some of the most prominent and prolific authors of 1930s France.[19] *Aux pays des femmes-soldats* is the only joint-authored work contained in the twenty-volume collection, and also the only travelogue to feature a female travel companion. In *Vacances en Iran* (1961) [Holidays in Iran], journalists Caroline Gazaï and Geneviève Gaillet travel in the summer of 1960 in a Citroën 2 CV from France to Iran, where they stay for a period of three months.[20] Their travelogue is one of the few female-authored contributions to the popular 1950s and 1960s subgenre of 2 CV Citroën travel narratives.[21]

Although they undertake shared itineraries initially, by the conclusion of both works the travellers have chosen to continue their journeys separately, and the present chapter considers the ways in which this rupture is reflected in the collective text. Both sets of female travellers selected here encounter comparatively few obstacles during their journeys, although family obligations do curtail Gazaï's stay in Iran (246). For de Callias and Vogt, the only restriction on their ability to travel is the vast amount of bureaucratic paperwork to be completed prior to departure. De Callias and Gaillet in particular were experienced travellers, and the *voyageuses* shared similar journalistic backgrounds. Their profession means that they are perceived as valued visitors, and in the case of Gazaï and Gaillet, their status as Western journalists opens many doors that remained closed to Iranian women.[22] Vogt makes extensive use of the services of foreign ministries and French embassies, which supply her with numerous contacts and guides, whereas Gazaï's familial connections due to her Iranian husband allow her to live amongst and observe Iranian women in the private sphere.[23] In addition to a marked interest in issues concerning women, the travelogues

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18 Suzanne de Callias and Blanche Vogt, *Aux pays des femmes-soldats: Finlande - Esthonie - Danemark – Lithuanie* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1931). All references are to this edition and will be placed in parenthesis in the body of the text.

19 The series is also noted for its publication of Ella Maillart's first travelogue, *Parmi la jeunesse russe* [Among Russian Youth], in 1932.

20 Caroline Gazaï and Geneviève Gaillet, *Vacances en Iran* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1961). All references are to this edition and will be placed in parenthesis in the body of the text.

21 For a discussion of this subgenre, including *Vacances en Iran*, see Charles Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone. Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), 106-33.

22 To take one example, they observe that they are the only representatives of their sex present at a large reception hosted by the Iranian emperor to celebrate Iran's technological progress (175).

23 Caroline Gazaï also co-directed (with Georges Bourdelon and Louis Dalmas) a 1963 travel *reportage* entitled *L'Empire de la rose*, which focused on Iranian women.

under discussion offer incisive portrayals of political change in the 'new Europe' of the early 1930s and the 'new Iran' of the early 1960s.

Aux pays des femmes-soldats

Aux pays des femmes-soldats is a polyphonic travelogue comprised of two alternating *cahiers* [notebooks], by 'Lucienne' on the one hand and 'Claire' on the other. Their journey is undertaken following a meal in the Eiffel Tower restaurant, when the two close friends express their desire to see the 'new Europe', and in particular 'these new nordic republics' (10) with their own eyes.[24] Claire wishes to 'be displaced, see completely new people in new countries' (9), whereas Lucienne wants to 'get a bit of fresh air' (12).[25]

De Callias and Vogt choose to adopt fictional narrative personae in order to provide distinct yet intertwined accounts of their journey together to Finland and then on to Estonia. Nevertheless, this fictionalisation would have been futile as a means of masking their true identities, as it would have been abundantly clear to contemporary readers and reviewers that 'Lucienne' is de Callias, and 'Claire' is Vogt. Suzanne de Callias was renowned as a novelist, whose works (in particular *Jerry* [1923] and *Lucienne et Reinette* [1925]) were notorious for their sympathetic portrayals of homosexuality, and as a feminist journalist and caricaturist. 'Lucienne', like de Callias, has a fluent command of German, and is a caricaturist (55). Blanche Vogt was one of the most prominent and acclaimed French female journalists of the interwar years, writing numerous investigative reports for the newspapers *L'Oeuvre* and *L'Intransigeant*, in which she had a daily column. She was also a popular novelist and the author of numerous fictional works for children. In *Aux pays des femmes-soldats*, 'Claire' undertakes numerous interviews with key political and military figures, and visits several national projects in order to fulfil her journalistic work and thereby finance her journey (103).

The reasons for their invention of fictional personae are not thematised explicitly, and it could be argued that the use of this device has a depersonalising and distancing effect. The only implicit explanation could be found in the fact that Claire's decision to travel also resulted from a desire to escape from her marital

[24] 'ces nouvelles républiques nordiques'. All translations from the French are my own.
[25] 'me transplanter, voir des gens absolument nouveaux dans des pays neufs', 'm'aérer un brin'.

difficulties, which Vogt may not have wished to discuss openly. Claire's statement that 'I have never wanted to escape from Paris so much' is followed by 'melancholy confidences' (8) and ruminations on the incompatibility of men and women by Lucienne.[26] Travel is thereby used as a means to assert individual agency and escape from confining domestic situations, and this freedom extended to the creation of new identities.

Furthermore, the two alternating notebooks function as a highly effective device which allows the very distinctive individual voices of the traveller-narrators to resonate in the text. At the close of the first entry in her notebook, Lucienne writes: 'But it would be unfair for only one of the two travellers to express her point of view. I'll pass my pen to Claire' (13).[27] This desire for equality between the narrative voices is also echoed intermedially in the first of the seven sketches by de Callias included in the travelogue, with the other sketches all portraying 'travellees' encountered during the journey. The first sketch portrays the two travellers sitting side-by-side on a bench, watching a group of female soldiers march past against a backdrop of fir trees. The faces of both travellers are viewed in profile, they have similar bobbed hairstyles, and are of the same height. Both women look up attentively; Lucienne is sketching, and Claire has her hand raised, as if she were pointing out some detail to her companion. The sketch thereby conveys the impression that the two are equal observers, whose joint journey is guided by the same shared aims and desire for similar experiences. Although Claire's account is given significantly more textual space in the travelogue, Lucienne's sketches act as a visual bridge between the *cahiers*, and these drawings, along with Lucienne's more forthright opinions, ensure that Claire's narrative voice is not allowed to dominate.[28]

The two notebooks have strikingly different tones, and the accounts also diverge in their choice of subject matter. A portrayal emerges of the at times fractious yet close relationship between the enthusiastic and good-humoured Claire, and her more melancholic and irritable travel companion Lucienne. Claire seeks out encounters with 'travelees' more readily, and her account contains numerous

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26 'jamais, je n'ai eu autant envie de fuir Paris'; 'de mélancoliques confidences'.

27 'Mais il serait injuste qu'une seule des deux voyageuses exposât son point de vue. Je passe la plume à Claire'.

28 Lucienne's *cahier* only makes up 63 out of the work's 190 pages.

conversations with a wide range of interlocutors.[29] She is assigned the task (by Lucienne) of providing detailed descriptions of the landscapes they visit (69), but as a journalist she is also concerned with 'social investigation' (70), and is not afraid to tackle issues such as the nature of Finnish democracy (111) and the true extent of the communist threat in northern Europe.[30] Claire is more open to new ideas and experiences, and readier to praise the innovations, values and behaviour of 'travellees', for example the honesty, spirit of cooperation and respect for communal laws she encounters in Denmark (170-3). By contrast, Lucienne is far less easily impressed, and the following filmic metaphor describing her stay in Finland suggests her disengagement from her surroundings: 'In the documentary film that we have just lived for three weeks, I find that only Viborg merited a long pause' (77).[31] Although she is strongly critical of national stereotypes (155), Lucienne is also prone to universalising tendencies, and in her descriptions of Helsinki, Tallinn and Riga she insists on pointing out Russian and Germanic influences and continuities rather than recognising national differences. However, although a more reserved figure, she also proves to be an incisive observer of other travellers and of political realities. When visiting Berlin in 1930, she predicts that the mounting economic crisis will trigger a fundamental conflict between the emerging National Socialists and the Weimar Republic.

The travellers' intertwining accounts create a fascinating dialogue about the countries visited, the 'travelees' encountered, and the values they represent. As each voice takes up the narrative thread, it becomes apparent that this dialogue is a conflicting one, as the notebooks portray the palpable tensions and overt disagreements that arise between the travellers. As Rebecca Pope observes in her discussion with Susan Leonardi: 'After all, when our lips speak together, as often as not they disagree'.[32] In *Aux pays des femmes soldats*, on occasion one narrative voice fills in the silences and omissions in the other traveller's account. Claire mischievously informs the reader: 'Lucienne may grumble about the banality of

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29 The term 'travellee' was coined by Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 133.

30 'l'enquête sociale'.

31 'Dans le film documentaire que nous venons de vivre pendant trois semaines, je trouve que seul Viborg méritait une longue pause'.

32 Susan Leonardi and Rebecca Pope, 'Screaming Divas: Collaboration as Feminist Practice', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 13.2 (1994), 259-70.

Helsinki, whose contours all fail to tempt her pencil. However I know that she is not averse to resting her eyes on so many handsome fellows' (33).[33]

The titular female soldiers function as a leitmotif, yet they also constitute the greatest source of conflict between the travellers, and this discord was noted by contemporary reviewers. Callias and Vogt's interest in and disagreement about the *Lottas* extends across several countries and notebook entries. Finland's female auxiliary army, the *Lottas-Svard*, was formed in order to stave off the threat of communism and Russian invasion. Following their meeting with the Finnish head of the *Lottas*,[34] an argument ensues between the travellers: 'Lucienne explodes: "Really Claire, what do you think of all these women who are proud to imitate soldiers? In a world of progress, is it tolerable that a woman helps to kill?' (Claire, 41-2).[35] Whereas Lucienne takes a resolutely pacifist and internationalist stance, Claire attempts to contextualise and understand Finnish militarism, and in her notebook she implies that Lucienne's stance is politically naïve: 'Dear Lucienne, who fervently believes that soldiers are the ones who declare war!' (Claire, 47).[36] The beginning of Lucienne's next *cahier* seems at first glance to suggest a new-found agreement between the two, as she states: 'I agree with Claire about everything she has just written' (55).[37] However, she does not in fact concur here with Claire's views on militarism, but rather on Finnish cleanliness. It is indicative of the travelogue's dialogical qualities that it is precisely this source of unresolved tension between the authors that provides the title of the work.

By contrast to her focus on the gender of the *Lottas*, Lucienne in particular does not explicitly thematise her own identity as a female traveller, nor does she refer to the reactions of those they encounter to herself and Claire. Conversely, Claire is more aware of the impression that she makes on 'travellees', and constructs the travelling self as an exotic other, though the curiosity of 'travellees' is perhaps due more to her inappropriately warm attire in the summer heat of Helsinki than to her

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33 'Lucienne peut maugréer contre la banalité d'Helsinki, dont aucun contour ne tente son crayon. Je sais, moi, qu'elle n'est pas fâchée de reposer ses yeux sur tant de beaux gars'.

34 Perhaps due to linguistic barriers, both travellers have a tendency to judge the female military leaders and politicians they encounter primarily on their appearance and dress; for instance Claire observes that the head of the Finnish *Lottas* 'is not a stylish woman' (37) ['n'est pas une femme coquette'], and describes her uniform in detail.

35 'Lucienne éclate: "Enfin, Claire, comment juges-tu toutes ces femmes orgueilleuses d'imiter des soldats? Est-il tolérable, dans un monde de progrès, qu'une femme aide à tuer?'.

36 'Chère Lucienne, qui croit dur comme canon que ce sont les soldats qui déclarent la guerre!'.

37 'Je suis d'accord avec Claire sur tout ce qu'elle vient d'écrire'.

identity as a female traveller: 'People turn around in the streets in order to look at my fur coat. A half-naked Tahitian woman under her fringed umbrella in a Paris street in January would not have excited more curiosity' (61).[38] Lucienne's greater experience as a solitary female traveller is portrayed as a key difference between the two women. On disembarking at Helsinki, Claire notes that she searches for 'a helping hand for my assembled luggage. Lucienne manages alone and makes the brusque remark: "You can really see that you are used to travelling with a man!"' (25).[39] Claire's reliance on Lucienne as her German-language interpreter quickly becomes an undeniable source of irritation for the latter. Lucienne begins the second entry in her notebook by expressing her admiration for Claire as a 'magnificent travel companion': 'She is pleased with everything; she finds things to be astounded by and admire everywhere. Her journalist's eyes are always searching; she observes the country with all her senses' (27).[40] Yet she swiftly tires of her companion's dependence on her, whilst questioning Claire's ability to cope without her. Lucienne describes how Claire watches her strenuous efforts to make hotel staff in Helsinki speak to her in German: 'The positively schoolgirl sentences that I utter fill my friend with ease; she watches the performance from her seat in the stalls, and believes that this is how it will go on all the time...' (28).[41]

Indeed, the travellers spend an increasing amount of time on separate activities. In Tallinn, Claire notes, not without a sense of annoyance: 'Lucienne has left me again in order to go and sketch some old church. I keep myself busy interviewing female members of parliament and male politicians' (Claire, 85).[42] Around half way through *Aux pays des femmes-soldats* the travellers go their separate ways, exchanging 'heartfelt hugs and kisses, recommendations' (97).[43] It is not stated explicitly whether this separation was planned from the outset. Lucienne travels on alone to Latvia, and after a comparatively brief stay moves on to Berlin, the capital of

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38 'Dans les rues, les gens se retournent pour regarder mon manteau de fourrure. Une Tahitienne à demi nue sous son ombrelle à franges dans une rue de Paris au mois de janvier n'aurait pas plus grand succès de curiosité'.

39 'une main secourable pour mes valises rassemblées. Lucienne se débrouille toute seule, elle me jette: "Comment on voit bien que tu as l'habitude de voyager avec un homme!" '.

40 'magnifique compagne de voyage': 'Elle est contente de tout; elle trouve partout à s'ébaubir et à admirer. Ses yeux de journaliste sont toujours en quête; elle est là qui observe le pays avec tous les sens'.

41 'Des phrases bien scolastiques que je leur débite remplissent d'aise mon amie; elle assiste à la représentation, assise dans un fauteil d'orchestre, et croit que ça va durer tout le temps comme ça...'.

42 'Lucienne m'a encore quittée pour aller dessiner je ne sais quelle vieille église. Moi, je m'occupe de mon côté. Je prends des interviews avec des femmes-députés, des hommes politiques'.

43 'embrassades émues, recommandations'.

Weimar Germany. Claire returns to Finland to carry out interviews, and then travels on to Denmark, before returning to France on the first ever scheduled flight from Copenhagen to Paris. Inevitably, as the notebooks begin to describe solo journeys instead of a shared itinerary, the impression of a continued travel-dialogue decreases, the narration becomes more monological, and the transition between the notebooks more abrupt.

Paradoxically, it is also implied that the travellers' viewpoints come closer together when they are apart. By the end of the work, Claire shares Lucienne's frustration with the limits placed on travellers by bureaucracy: 'I am beginning to understand why Lucienne, who is always on the road, on each return to France disembarks with increased revolutionary tendencies' (185). The travellers keep in touch through letter and telegram. References to this correspondence at the beginning and end of notebook entries conjure up the presence of the absent interlocutor. They also plan to meet for lunch on the day after their separate returns to Paris. The narrative thereby travels full circle. The travelogue ends with the prospect of another shared journey, as Lucienne observes that the next world congress on moral reform is taking place in Moscow: 'This promises to be curious ... Moscow! What if I talked to Claire about it?...' (190).[44] The ellipsis implies an ongoing process and continuing dialogue about travel, and the polyphonic text illustrates ways in which a joint travelogue can accommodate conflicting views.

Vacances en Iran

By contrast, the second work under discussion, *Vacances en Iran*, offers a far more harmonious representation of the shared journey and the process of collective writing, which is narrated for the most part using the merged collective 'nous' [we] form. Geneviève Gaillet and Caroline Gazaï's[45] journey from Paris to Iran in the summer of 1960 began with a casual suggestion by one friend to another: '"Do you want to come to Iran?" // "Iran, why not?"' (7).[46] The first chapter, entitled 'Excursion for beginners', explicitly thematises their identities as *voyageuses* [female travellers], and implies that their journey should be characterised as a feminist undertaking, rather

44 'Ceci promet d'être curieux... Moscou! Si j'en parlais à Claire?...'

45 Biographical information about the authors has not been located to date, therefore all information about the authors and their trip are from the text itself.

46 '"Veux-tu venir en Iran?" // "En Iran, pourquoi pas?"'.

than a classic search for adventure or a desire for displacement (7). Defiantly mocking preconceptions of women as inferior travellers, they assert: 'Setting off on our own to a country where women have no rights, was reason enough for us. We wanted to know if so-called "grand tourism" is an exploit, or if we, as feeble women, could undertake it' (7).[47] Gaillet and Gazaï therefore present themselves as role models from the outset, and in their afterword 'If you want to go', they invite others to follow in their footsteps by providing details of 'everything it's good to know' (259).[48] Their self-portrayal as pioneering female travellers is reinforced by a keen awareness of how the duo are perceived by 'travellees'. As they travel past Samsun in Turkey, they declare that 'men and women watch us more out of curiosity and terror than animosity [...] For them [the sight of] these two free women was certainly an extraordinary spectacle' (25).[49] Unaccompanied by a male chaperone, the *voyageuses* become more conspicuous the further eastwards they travel, noting that the residents of the Turkish town of Eregli 'gaze at us in awe' (20).[50]

In a conscious break with earlier female travellers, such as Isabelle Eberhardt, who chose to wear masculine clothes in order to be less conspicuous, Gaillet and Gazaï endeavour to draw attention to their feminine appearance through their choice of attire: 'We did not want to put on trousers and disguise ourselves as "explorers". Throughout our travels, we were determined to wear clean and chic dresses, which we ironed during breaks in the journey' (25).[51] Elizabeth Hagglund makes the telling observation that although 'travel is often thought of as an escape from home and domesticity [...] travellers – both men and women – spend much of their time in a kind of displaced home-making, creating and re-creating temporary home spaces'.[52] In a contrast to other 2 CV narratives, rather than concentrating their efforts on traversing the greatest amount of terrain in the quickest possible time, the travelogue's attention shifts gradually from portraying reactions to the *voyageuses* to a focus on

47 'Partir seules dans un pays où les femmes n'ont aucun droit, pour nous c'était une raison suffisante. Nous voulions savoir si le «grand tourisme» est un exploit, ou si nous, faibles femmes, pouvions le réaliser'.

48 'Si vous voulez partir'; 'tout ce qu'il est bon de savoir'.

49 'des hommes et des femmes nous regardent avec plus de curiosité et d'effroi que d'animosité [...] C'était certainement pour eux un spectacle extraordinaire que celui de ces deux femmes en liberté'.

50 'nous dévisagent stupéfaits'.

51 'Nous n'avons pas voulu adopter le pantalon et nous déguiser en "exploratrices". Tout au long du parcours, nous avons tenu à porter des robes fraîches et pimpantes, que nous faisions repasser aux étapes'.

52 Elizabeth Hagglund, 'Travel Writing and Domestic Ritual', in *Seuils et traverses: enjeux de l'écriture du voyage*, ed. Jean-Yves Le Disez (Brest: Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, 2002), 89.

intercultural encounters. Rather than the boat or aeroplane, these travellers choose the car not for its speed, but for its slowness, in order to 'handle transitions carefully, and to approach this far-off country gradually in order to understand it better' (8).[53]

Vacances en Iran combines traditional touristic descriptions of the travellers' 'astonishing journey' through a country in the grip of a 'revolution' (97) with keen socio-political observations.[54] On their arrival in Iran, they observe that 'the hurried traveller can only return from this country very disappointed' (42-4), and emphasise the need to 'know how to take your time, and simultaneously adopt the ancestral customs of the inhabitants' (44).[55] This desire for deceleration and interpersonal/intercultural encounters corresponds closely to James Clifford's notion of 'dwelling-in-travelling'.[56] Yet this shift from the space of the journey on the road in their 'winged' 2 CV (36) to a return to a familial, domestic setting and its patriarchal social structures also leads to the protagonists becoming increasingly unobtrusive figures who are much less confident in their identities as *voyageuses*. Gazaï is perceived by her Iranian family-in-law as an object of curiosity, 'this daughter-in-law who came from France all by herself' (190).[57] Iranian patriarchal norms thereby negate the agency of her female travel companion Gaillet as a traveller in her own right. For her part, Gaillet is unwilling to venture on a solo car journey without her travel companion, thus suggesting their interdependence: '"By car, without Caroline? Alone on these deserted roads? Out of the question!" Geneviève had refused point-blank' (206).[58]

Yet the narrators themselves also choose not to thematise their own identities as female travellers following their arrival in Iran. This change is represented and reflected paratextually in the striking contrast between the authors' photographs inside the front and back covers. The front cover photographs are individual studio portraits which depict the beaming authors in close-up, wearing Western 1960s clothes, short hairstyles and make-up. In the back cover photograph (taken by Gaillet in Iran), the

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53 'ménager les transitions, et d'aborder peu à peu ce lointain pays pour mieux le comprendre'. The semantic link here between 'ménager' and 'ménage' reinforces the renewed domestic framework of this journey.

54 'voyage stupéfiant'; 'révolution'.

55 'le voyageur pressé ne peut revenir que très déçu de ces pays'; 'savoir prend son temps, et simultanément adopter les habitudes ancestrales des habitants'.

56 Clifford, *Routes*, 38.

57 'cette belle-fille venue toute seule de France'.

58 '"En voiture, sans Caroline? Seule sur ces routes désertes? Pas question!" Geneviève avait été très catégorique'.

authors are covered by black and floral-print *tchadors* (a full-length cloth outer garment worn by many Iranian women), with one sitting on the side of the road and and the other standing next to their 2 CV. Both women hold their hands up in order to secure their *tchadors,* and offer timid smiles. The accompanying caption states: 'Caroline and Geneviève wore the national *tchador* in order to discover this old civilisation, a country with incredible riches' (n.p.).[59] In contrast to their determination not to disguise their identities as female travellers during their journey from France to Iran, the narrators conform to patriarchal dress codes and don the *tchador*, noting that in places such as the narrow streets of the *vieille ville* of Teheran, 'it is better not to walk alone and dress as a European woman' (64).[60] The 'extraordinary spectacle' of 'these two free women' (25) becomes hidden from view after reaching their destination.

The far more muted portrayal of the dynamics between the travellers, and the emphasis on their interdependence, could be read as a direct result of their choice of narrative perspective. In contrast to *Aux pays des femmes-soldats,* the majority of this joint-authored travelogue takes a more unified and ultimately homogenising fusion approach towards the process of collaborative writing. Most chapters are narrated using the collective 'nous' [we] form, and on a few occasions the narrators refer to themselves in the third person as the protagonists 'Caroline' and 'Geneviève', though their distinctive personalities do not come to the fore. The adoption of these narrative perspectives leads to a more harmonious representation of a shared itinerary, suggesting a far greater element of collaboration than between de Callias and Vogt. Catharine Mee contends that 'the use of "we" for companions brought from home tends […] to efface them from the text. "We" absorbs companions, making them invisible and denying them the separate identity afforded by the third person'.[61] In *Vacances en Iran*, the collective 'nous' minimises any difference of opinion between the travellers, and this united front is deployed to construct a predominantly eulogistic portrayal of their destination and its landscape, social practices and culture. Gazaï in particular is anxious that their travelogue not be construed as critical of Iran: 'If some

59 'Caroline et Geneviève ont revêtu le *tchador* national pour découvrir ce pays de vieille civilisation, aux richesses incroyables'.

60 'il vaut mieux ne pas se promener seule et habillée à l'européenne'.

61 Mee, *Interpersonal Encounters,* 130.

people believe they can detect disparaging remarks in our pages, what can we do? That was not our intention' (31).[62]

Nevertheless, the use of the collective 'nous' is not universal, and it is in the individually narrated passages that a more critical note emerges in both text and images, most notably regarding the treatment of Iranian women. Although for the majority of the travelogue it is not possible to discern which author has written each chapter or section, in a few instances the singular 'je' [I] is used to narrate accounts of separate activities and diverse experiences. Moreover, Gaillet narrates the twelfth, final chapter alone, as she remains in Iran after Gazaï returns to Paris in order to supervise her children's return to school (246). Gaillet also takes the majority of the photographs included in the travelogue (the others being agency images), many of which feature the travellers and their car, and human figures (including numerous women), thereby directing its visual narrative.

The abrupt transition between the travelogue's collective and individual narrative voices is illustrated at the beginning of the ninth chapter: 'One day, all the same, we had to separate for a few days. We still had too many things to see [...] Geneviève went off to discover the "tribes" of the south, whilst Caroline, needed by her family-in-law, headed up north. // As a Western woman, I was going to be suddenly submerged into a universe in which women still only have relatively little freedom' (189).[63] Through her familial connections, Gazaï is able to offer an insider/outsider's perspective on Iranian society, and its women in particular. Married to an Iranian man living in Paris, Gazaï's stay with her family-in-law fuels her desire to 'document the condition of women in the twentieth century, a condition which would be my own if I lived in this country' (194).[64] Impassioned by this question, Gazaï investigates by attending meetings, clubs and women's dinners, and seeking out the president of the *Society for the Awakening of Iranian Women* in Tehran (194). She constructs a polyphony of contrasting male and female perspectives on why so many

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62 'Si certains croient déceler des propos désobligeants dans nos pages, que pouvons-nous ? Tel n'était pas notre dessein'.

63 'Un jour, tout de même, nous dûmes nous séparer pour quelques jours. Nous avions encore trop de choses à voir [...] Geneviève partait à la découverte des « tribus » du sud, pendant que Caroline, réclamée par sa belle-famille, remontait vers le nord. // Occidentale, j'allais brusquement être plongée dans un univers où les femmes ont encore bien peu de liberté'.

64 'me documenter sur la condition de la femme au xxe siècle, condition qui serait la mienne si je vivais dans ce pays'. This probability is underlined when she notices a significant change in her husband's attitude towards her after he joins her in Iran. Unlike in Paris, he forbids her from leaving the house alone, and she is obliged to wear a *tchador* when they go out for the evening (190, 193).

Iranian women still choose to wear the *tchador* despite its abolition in 1933, ranging from protection from sensationalist foreign photographers in search of oriental beauty to a means of hiding poverty (199-202). Gazaï highlights the work of the nascent Iranian feminist movement and its demands for the introduction of civil law and a revision to Koranic law. She chronicles the sweeping changes in the fields of women's literacy and education, women's work outside the home in all professions, and their adaptation to modern life through the acquisition of a driver's licence. However, she also draws attention to persisting inequalities, such as the denial of women's right to vote.

The section entitled 'Femme-objet' [Woman-Object] offers a particularly powerful intermedial dialogue between text (by Gazaï) and image (by Gaillet). Following an interrogation of the practices of repudiation and polygamy in Iran, Gazaï criticises the prevalent treatment of women as commodities: 'Here the woman is all too often an object bought by the man, as the future husband deposits the dowry which will be paid to the family in the event of repudiation. When the object no longer pleases he discards it, chooses another wife or [else] gets rid of it' (202).[65] The accompanying full-page photograph shows a human form covered completely by a black *tchador*, sitting alone on the floor of a busy airport next to the baggage claim area. Men in suits stand around in groups and hurry past the shrouded figure, and a woman wearing a Western-style blouse and floral skirt waits for an arrival in the background. The caption of the photograph proclaims: 'Watch out sir! This little black heap is a woman' (203).[66] In *Vacances en Iran*, the shift towards individualised narrative perspectives allows room for critical dialogues and facilitates the representation of female 'travellees' in particular.

Conclusion

The joint-authored travelogues under discussion in this chapter demonstrate the manifold opportunities afforded by collaborative travel writing, as well as its inherent challenges. By departing from conceptions of travel as an individualistic and solitary undertaking, collaborative travel narratives illuminate and probe the boundaries of the

65 'Ici la femme est encore trop souvent un objet que l'homme s'achète, puisque le futur mari dépose la dot qui sera versée à la famille en cas de répudiation. Lorsque l'objet a cessé de plaire, il le met au rebut, choisit une autre femme ou bien s'en débarrasse'.

66 'Attention monsieur! Ce petit tas noir est une femme'.

relationship between mobility and agency, textual ownership and authorship. Joint-authored travelogues endeavour to negotiate a tricky path between the solipsism of individually-narrated travelogues and the erasure of difference that can result from collective narrative perspectives.

Though de Callias and Vogt's *Aux pays des femmes-soldats* and Gazaï and Gaillet's *Vacances en Iran* may seem at first glance to embody a clear-cut distinction between alternating '*je*/I' and joint '*nous*/we' modes of narration, these dividing lines are not universal, and become more ambiguous as the works progress. On the one hand, the multi-vocal approach deployed by de Callias and Vogt allows each author to retain her distinctive narrative perspective, and functions as a strategy of resistance and assertion of textual ownership. Distinguishing between narrative voices becomes especially significant when the authors are divided by profession and approach, as is the case in *Parallel Worlds*, which recounts anthropologist Alma Gottlieb and writer Philip Graham's journey to Côte d'Ivoire.[67] Conversely, the usual singular authority of the solo traveller's voice is undermined within the text, as the competing alternating 'I' accounts of shared experiences relativise the other's style and point of view. Indeed, it could be suggested that as a result of their conflicting views, the dual narrators of *Aux pays des femmes soldats* choose to maintain their divergent individual interests at the expense of the shared journey, suggesting an incompatibility of co-travelling, but not co-authorship in this case.

In *Vacances en Iran*, Gazaï and Gaillet portray themselves as role models for other female travellers from the outset, yet they mask their female travelling identities and European appearance following their arrival in Iran. Their individual views on their destination become largely submerged and homogenised due to their choice of a collective narrative perspective, and the fusion of their voices functions a strategy of coordination in order to present a unified view of Iran.[68] Nevertheless, on occasion the narrating 'I' is deployed to depict different experiences, and diverse viewpoints enter the work through the interplay between words (by Gazaï) and photographs (by Gaillet). Other travel writers have also sought to avoid the limitations of the 'I/we' binary through formal experimentation, creating travel texts that rely on generic diversity to incorporate multiple viewpoints. The innovative intermediality of W.H.

67 Alma Gottlieb and Philip Graham, *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa* (New York: Crown, 1992).

68 Richard Price and Sally Price's *Equatoria* (New York: Routledge, 1992) provides a further example of a jointly-authored travelogue which chooses to merge the individual authors' accounts.

Auden and Louis MacNeice's travel collage *Letters from Iceland* (1937), and W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood's *Journey to a War* (1939) offered a radical departure from the prevalent monologism of the travel *reportage* of the 1930s.[69] The generic diversity or 'untidiness' of *Journey to a War*, which comprises poems by Auden and a 'travel diary' reworked by Isherwood from both men's diaries and articles written during and after the journey, is inextricably tied to its subject matter of the Sino-Japanese war, as Auden observes: 'War is untidy, inefficient, obscure and largely a matter of chance'.[70]

The fictionalisation of travellers' identities is a further approach used by collaborative authors to foreground the relationship between co-travellers and to allow for the inclusion of multiple narrative perspectives. *Moon Country: Further Reports from Iceland* (1996), by poets Simon Armitage and Glyn Maxwell, was conceived as a self-conscious attempt to follow in the footsteps of Auden and MacNeice. Their homage is particularly evident in their assembling of different genres, from a three-act verse drama to an interview with the Icelandic President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.[71] However, they diverge from their British predecessors by choosing to fictionalise their own identities in the *reportage* sections of the work. While on the one hand they highlight their authorial individuality by ascribing textual ownership in the work's index, conversely they dissimulate their national identities through the invention of the generic Scandinavian-sounding travelling personae Petersson (Armitage) and Jamesson (Maxwell), whose [mis]adventures are narrated in a self-deprecating tone. Simultaneously introducing a distance between author-narrator and traveller, as is also the case in *Aux pays des femmes soldats*, this fictionalisation also serves to disrupt the power dynamics and binaries of the traveller/'travellee' relationship. The ambiguity of this device destabilises what Debbie Lisle has termed the genre's 'authorian sureness'.[72]

Other travel writers have deployed an omniscient narrator and referred to both travellers in the third person in order to foreground the presence of co-travellers and

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69 W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, *Letters from Iceland* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937); W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, *Journey to a War* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).

70 Auden and Isherwood, Journey, 202; see Tim Youngs, 'Auden's Travel Writings', in *The Cambridge Companion to W.H. Auden*, ed. Stan Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76, 78.

71 Simon Armitage and Glyn Maxwell, *Moon Country: Further Reports from Iceland* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

72 Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 271.

'travellees'. In François Maspero's *Roissy-Express*, by portraying the narrator-traveller as a character called 'François', 'the travelling *I* is decentred', thus placing Maspero on an equal footing with his collaborator, the photographer Anaïk Frantz, and facilitating 'the inclusion of other viewpoints, voices and intertexts'.[73] This novelistic approach might seem at odds with the assertion of the traveller's authorial authority, however several more recent collaborative travelogues have been read as postmodern responses to the predominant monologism of travel literature. In his analysis of Stephen Muecke and Paddy Roe's *Reading the Country* (1984), Tim Youngs observes: 'The notion of joint authorship contrasts with the individualistic narration of most travel writing and is a symptom [...] of trends in contemporary literary theory that stress the desirability of multivocality and collaboration'. Youngs argues that the 'collaborative nature of the book is crucial to its politics, as Muecke aims to restore multiple perspectives on the histories of place and travel.[74]

Indeed, didactic, political or ideological aims may often lie behind the decision to narrate in a collective voice. Youngs contends that W.H. Auden's designation of 'hundreds of anonymous Icelanders, farmers, fishermen, busmen, children' as 'the real authors of this book'[75] in his preface to *Letters from Iceland* is 'in keeping with Auden's left-wing politics of the time'.[76] Similarly, in both *Aux pays des femmes-soldats* and *Vacances en Iran*, it is noteworthy that the travelogues are at their most conflictual and dialogical when contentious contemporary socio-political issues such as militarism and gender equality come to the fore. Furthermore, Debbie Lisle draws attention to the transformative potential of co-authored travel texts as a means of deconstructing the authorial function and questioning 'the automatic hierarchy of power between author and other'.[77] Lisle argues that the dual authorship of Julio Cortazar and Carol Dunlop's *Les Autonautes de la cosmoroute* 'unsettles the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" position of the travel writer' and 'provides a model for

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73 Kathryn N. Jones, '*Le voyageur étonné*: François Maspero's Alternative Itineraries', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13:4 (2009): 338.

74 Tim Youngs, 'Making it Move: The Aboriginal in the Whitefella's Artifact', in *Travel Writing, Form and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (New York: Routledge, 2009), 150.

75 Auden and MacNeice, *Letters*, 11.

76 Youngs, 'Auden's Travel Writings', 68.

77 Lisle, *Global Politics*, 271.

how travel writing might be transformed in a context of globalisation, mobility and deterritorialisation'.[78]

Conversely, Bill Ashcroft has questioned the possibility of achieving collaborative subjectivity in travel literature. In his consideration of travel writing as a means of bearing witness, despite noting that in some cases testimony 'speaks for a collective subject', Ashcroft contends that 'collective subjectivity is something to which the travel writing can never bear witness', as it is 'excluded from the experience of trauma'.[79] Yet I would argue that not only is it possible, indeed it is imperative for travel writing to cease perpetuating a stance of splendid isolation. The adoption of dialogical approaches to travel and its narrative reconstruction would facilitate a full acknowledgement of the contribution made by 'travellees' and co-travellers in various guises, and allow the genre to move towards a more accurate and inclusive reflection of the shared 'human landscapes' of many journeys.[80] The exploration of alternative modes of narration should play a prominent role in the current ethical turn in contemporary travel writing, as questions of not only where we travel, but why, how and with whom become increasingly pressing concerns.[81] As 'the fundamental division amongst the inhabitants of our world remains between those who can travel and those who cannot',[82] more collective and collaborative textual dialogues about travel and mobility, their significance, implications and representation need to be held.

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78 Lisle, *Global Politics*, 271.

79 Bill Ashcroft, 'Afterword: Travel and Power', in *Travel Writing, Form and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (New York: Routledge, 2009), 238.

80 The phrase 'human landscapes' is taken from Turkish poet Nâzim Hikmet's poem 'Paysages humains', written in 1941 during his imprisonment in Bursa for disseminating communist propaganda. Nâzim Hikmet, *Paysages humains* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002).

81 See the *Travel and Ethics: Theory and Practice*, ed. Corinne Fowler, Charles Forsdick and Ludmila Kostova (New York: Routledge, 2014).

82 'Reste ce clivage fondamental […] parmi les habitants de notre monde, il y a ceux qui peuvent voyager et ceux qui ne le peuvent pas.' François Maspero, *Transit & Cie* (Paris: Quinzaine Littéraire/Louis Vuitton, 2004), 33.