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This volume brings together papers in English and French from a conference held at the University of Strasbourg in April 2014, involving researchers from several European countries. The ten articles all explore the relationships between travel and text, truth and fiction, reality and its textual representation, studying travel accounts and Utopias from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and spanning the globe, covering Europe, America, Africa, Asia and the Austral land. They all examine the ways in which knowledge and perception were both shaped by and reflected in travel writing at this pivotal period of exploration, expansion and discovery.

The first, introductory, section of the book comprises a preface in English, and an article by Monica Matei-Chesniou, entitled “The Other Ovid: Seventeenth-Century Itineraries of Make-Believe.” Matei-Chesniou analyses various references and allusions to Ovid’s *Epistulae Ex Ponto* and *Tristia*, as well as to his *Metamorphoses* in early modern travel writing. Ovid’s imagery and his descriptions of the area around the Black Sea were recycled by various cosmographers and travellers, such as André Thévet, Martín Cortés de Albacar, William Biddulph, Nicolas de Nicolay, George Sandy, William Lithgow and Thomas Coryate. These examples are used to demonstrate how Ovid’s writing, both overtly fictional and more factual, provided seventeenth-century European travellers with a form of literary legitimacy as well as a means of questioning and criticizing the values of their own societies.

The next section, “Travelling and the Fashioning of Reality,” contains three articles. The first, by Barbara Muller, is entitled “Shakespeare’s Romances and ‘Figures of Transporte’”. It focuses on Shakespeare’s later plays, showing how they are based on “a dialectic game of reality and illusion.” Shakespeare cleverly uses metaphor as a defamiliarising device to lead audiences on incredible journeys to distant, marvellous places, and to depict behaviours and situations that deviate from the norm. The romances thus awaken the imagination, opening audiences’ minds to new alternatives and paradigms. Emma Pauncefort’s study, “Fashioning Englishness through the French Other. The 1719 Edition of Misson’s 1698 *Mémoires et observations faites par un voyageur en Angleterre,*” is based on a case study of Ozell’s 1719 translation of Misson’s text, and demonstrates how English translations of French travel writing affected the processes of analysing and establishing Englishness, reflected in Addison’s *Spectator*.

The third article in this section is Heidi Liedke’s “‘And now is the Time I Want It’: Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* Read as Romantic Ramble *Versus* Ego Trip.” Liedke studies Sterne’s description of a journey towards self-knowledge, prefiguring Romanticism. She assesses the process whereby what is primarily a journey seeking “the realization of idleness” develops into “a performance of individual freedom and even egocentrism.” Analysing the text first from the perspective of the conventional travel account, she then highlights parts of the *Sentimental Journey* that contain far more inward-looking musings, akin to those associated with Romanticism. From a journey through time and space (albeit one whose exact details remain hazy), the text is shown to evolve into an individualistic mouthpiece for an egotist.
“Education and Utopia,” the following section in the volume, also includes three articles, the first by Emilie Jehl on “The Heart’s Travelling Back in The School of the Heart (1647).” Jehl focuses on the motif of travel in Christopher Harvey’s book of emblems, suggesting that the book, “stages a pilgrimage of and to the heart which is also a journey towards God.”

The following article, in French, entitled “Critique et légitimation du voyage dans les utopies narratives, de Platon à Veiras,” by Angélique Pérès, recalls the literary context of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, in which travel literature flourished as a result of the increasing demand by readers for works that were less fanciful and more educational than romances (romans in French) of previous generations. Travel writing, combining the adventurous and the didactic, was also notorious for its somewhat unreliable intertwining of fact and fiction. Pérès demonstrates how the Utopias of Plato, More and Bacon encouraged readers to adopt a cautious, independent approach to the written word, a trope that is also central to Veiras’ Histoire des Sévarambes.

Vincent Grégoire’s article, “La Tempête de Shakespeare. Écho d’un naufrage dans l’archipel des Bermudes,” studies Shakespeare’s romantic comedy from a historical perspective, with particular emphasis on its sources and on Shakespeare’s views regarding English colonial ambitions in America. Grégoire concludes that the playwright’s stance on colonialism can be defined in terms of enlightened absolutism, or what one might call a selective humanism. He also notes that The Tempest contains the first literary portrayal of an ineducable – and therefore inhuman – individual.

The third and final section of the volume, also containing three articles, deals with “Travelling, Trade and Identity.” Anne-Kathrin Marquardt’s article, “‘Bearing the Adventure of the Seas’: Seafaring and the Figure of the Merchant in the Early Modern Imagination,” considers the social status of merchants. Sometimes viewed as immoral usurers, as unpatriotic itinerants, they tried, in their treatises, to portray their activities as those of pilots navigating the seas of adversity, and thus as good Christians submitting to Providence and the will of God, rather than as sinful traders. Marquardt concludes that this metaphor, particularly at a time of economic development and the emergence of what would ultimately become the modern financial system, was in fact merely a convenient narrative allowing merchants to defend themselves against accusations of usury.

Economic issues are also at the heart of the article by Nora Plesske, “‘New Sources of Wealth and New Channels of Commerce’: The Economic Dimensions of Mungo Park’s Travels in the Interior of Africa (1799),” which assesses Park’s travelogue from the perspective of finance and economics. After considering Park’s reliance upon trade and exchange during his travels, Plesske then looks at his accounts and recordings of commercial activities in the area, and more specifically at his attitudes towards the slave trade. Finally, she analyses Park’s influence on colonial projects of exploration and exploitation in Africa, arguing that Park’s writings contain important information pertaining to cultural exchange and the emerging discourse of British imperialism in the nineteenth century. Plesske notes, in conclusion, that Park’s travel writing simultaneously presents economic considerations as vital to his exploration and underlines the need for civilising missions to take place as a means of increasing trading opportunities.

The final article in the volume analyses accounts by two North American merchants, Elkanah Watson and Thomas Handasyd Perkins, who travelled to Europe during the period 1758-1842. Maud Gallet-Guillon begins by examining the ways in which they wrote and rewrote their
experiences, fitting in with or reflecting fluctuations in their personal or external circumstances. The portrayal of their travels to the Old World, at a time when the young American Republic was slowly constructing its own identity, revealed how the two men viewed, and were viewed by, Europeans, and how they might break free from British influence and control, choosing other political and cultural models, most obviously from France. Not unlike the didactic experience of the Grand Tour, the journey to Europe can, it is argued, be seen as a voyage of initiation, with the two merchants travelling to discover their roots, taking on board references and traditions from the Old World, before returning homewards to fulfil their destinies on the American continent.