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## PSYCHOANALYTICAL GEOGRAPHY

The constructing principles of ancient cartography were for most of the time non-mimetic and non-empirical, so that the maps build on their basis had a most fantastic shape. We could safely call this kind of non-realistic geography – symbolic geography. In this paper, I focus on the psychological projections that shaped the form of pre-modern maps. The main epistemological instrument for such an approach is offered by Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian analytical psychology. In "psychoanalytical geography", Freudian schemes of interpretation (the oral, anal and genital stages of evolution) are put to work for explaining the complex mechanisms of identification and transference at work in ancient cartography.

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### **Key Words:**

Psychoanalytical Geography; Ancient, Medieval and Pre-modern Cartography; Freudian psychoanalysis; Simon Magus; Antoine de La Sale; Thomas Stretzer.

What is symbolic geography? What is the difference between "symbolic" and "real" geography? Isn't any "real" geography, in a certain way, a "symbolic" geography? And, finally, does such a thing as "real" geography really exist?

In order to go on with my paper, I would like to make a brief point on this distinction. First of all, we have to keep in mind the very plain observation that geography is a representation of space, and not space itself. People who work to construe a visual image of the ambient and geographical space are geographers, while people who deal directly with geographical space, such as barrage-constructors or swamp-drainers, are not. This means that, in a broad sense, all geography is symbolic. In order to represent space, geographers make use of icons and symbols, graphical schemes and representational devices. All geography is symbolic in respect to the space it tries to represent, in the same way that all language is symbolic in respect to the things denominated by its words. Geography is symbolic in a linguistic sense; it is a system of signs that parallels a system of natural and artificial objects.

This means that, if we still want to use the current distinction between "real" and "symbolic" geography, we have to look for the differences that exist not between geographical reality and geographical representation, but between different ways of geographical representation. The distinction between "real" and "symbolic" geography resides in the principles that organize the geographical representation of space. Each geographer agrees with his learned or wider public on a set of shared presuppositions that permit him to construct his map and have it assessed, validated or rejected.

"Real" or realistic geography is the geographical representation that tries to reproduce the outer space most accurately. It depends on a

mimetic principle. Its main criterion is positive observation and empirical verification. Of course, it still has to make use of icons and symbols in order to represent on a sheet of paper the complexity of the real space out there, but it is assumed that one can safely use a map in order to orientate her or himself in the real geographical world. The upper limit to which “realist” geographical representation could aspire is to become an accurate “perception” of the world. This actually tends to become true in satellite images of parts of the globe, which are a kind of geographical perception of the world by an electronic extension of the human eye.

Now, although in the common opinion “real” geography would seem to be the most obvious, and the only conceivable form of geography, a short survey of the history of cartography, from early antiquity to the late eighteenth century, shows that previous geographers relied on a very distinct set of principles for constructing, assessing and validating their maps. Pre-modern cartography, with the partial exception of, perhaps, the geography of late Antiquity (like Ptolemy’s) and of the medieval “portolans”, was dependent on what Fernand Denis<sup>1</sup> and Carolly Erickson<sup>2</sup> have referred to as “enchanted thinking” (“pensée enchantée”). The “magic vision” is a system of representation which does not make use of the distinctions between the real and the imaginary, the natural and the supernatural, the inherited tradition and the empirical verification.

In order to validate the geographical truth and to obtain scholar credibility, “enchanted” geography utilized a set of criteria that have meanwhile been discarded by modern geography, such as: non-mitigated respect towards authoritative sources; subordination to a revealed, supposedly divine, model; geometrical and esthetical harmony; apprehension of the world through a system of qualitative categories; utilization of a language based mainly on symbols and analogies; *horror vacui*, and so on and so forth. This refined cognitive device created, throughout human history, a series of maps and mappaemundi where holy geography, as described by the classical myths, the Bible and patristic writing, overruled empirical geography and obliged factual data to fit into the greater theological model of the world. The so-called T-O maps of the Middle Ages, for example, are a geographical “correlative” of the sacred scenarios of the Bible and of the sacred history of humanity as conceived by Christian religion.

A historical survey of the discipline shows that the criterion of empirical measurement and verification became predominant only in the last two centuries or so, and that in pre-modern cartography it actually played a secondary or insignificant role. Antiquity, the Middle Ages and even early Modernity (up to the end of the eighteenth century) relied on a completely different cluster of principles for setting down the image of the world and had a different standard for assessing the credibility of these cartographical images. It has been proved that alchemy or astrology were not some kind of pre-modern chemistry and astronomy, that they were

based on a distinct set of axioms compared to those of modern science. The same is true for ancient, medieval and early modern geography in comparison to contemporary geography. The *mappaemundi* of the classical and the Christian civilizations differ from ours not only in terms of the amplitude, the richness and the accuracy of the data, but, most importantly, through the principles that organize the mental representation of space.

The constructing principles of ancient cartography were for most of the time non-mimetic and non-empirical, so that the maps build on their basis had a most fantastic shape. We could safely call this kind of non-realistic geography – symbolic geography. I have tried elsewhere to isolate the main non-empirical principles at work in symbolic geography<sup>3</sup>. In a brief survey, I would group these principles, depending on their nature, as follows: anthropological (circular representation of the world, depending on some psycho-kinetic patterns<sup>4</sup>); magical (consecration of the observer vantage point of view as a protecting *omphalos*, or navel of the world<sup>5</sup>); mythological and theological (organization of the space according to a sacred triangulation<sup>6</sup>); geometrical (introduction of mathematical metrics of the space<sup>7</sup>); esthetical (harmony and equilibrium of the *mappaemundi*); axiological (hierarchical valorization of the centre and of the periphery); epistemological (regressive organization of the data from the known to the unknown); psychological; and, finally, ideological.

Starting with Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism*, contemporary postcolonial and cultural studies have exposed the ideological rationales that presided over modern geography. Using postmodern deconstruction, scholars have been able to highlight the stereotypes that lie behind the imaginary construction of the frontiers between continents, civilizations and countries. To be sure, most of these clichés spring from and feed on unconscious phantasms and unquestioned pre-conceptions. However, it is inappropriate to claim that they completely lack any kind of self-awareness. It seems rather that individuals and collectivities producing these images have a certain consciousness of their logical and empirical falsity, but prefer to deny or to repress this knowledge. Using hostile stereotypes implies an inner split between a rational and moral conscience, which is inhibited or suspended, and an irrational and compulsory aggressive motivation, which exploits these stereotypes in order to justify itself. This sophisticated device of self manipulation could be safely defined as "*mauvaise conscience*".

Nonetheless, ideological manipulation is only one, perhaps the most enduring and long-lasting one, of the non-empirical principles that, throughout the history of geography, have interfered with the cartographical representation of the world. In this paper, I would like to focus on the psychological projections that shaped the form of pre-modern maps.

The main epistemological instrument for such an approach is offered by psychoanalysis and analytical psychology. As the different branches of psychoanalysis spread from clinical psychology to cultural and humanistic studies, they engendered several disciplines such as psycho-critics, myth-analysis, psychohistory, etc. In a similar way, it is possible to conceive of psycho-geography, a discipline in which psychological schemes of interpretation are put to work for explaining the complex mechanisms of identification and transference at work in ancient cartography. However, as the term psycho-geography has been already coined and used with a different meaning by Guy Debord and the “situationist” group<sup>8</sup>, instead of psychogeography I will use (not without regret) the term “psychoanalytical geography”.

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The starting point for such an approach could be an observation made by psychoanalysts concerned with early childhood like Melanie Klein, Françoise Dolto or Maud Manoni<sup>9</sup>. The newborn child manifests its first cognitive drives through suckling and touching the body of its mother. It progressively begins to acknowledge and to know itself by delimitating its body from the body of the mother. The contact with the mother is the first exploration by the child of the outer world. While he or she grows, the child will amplify his/her cognitive compulsion to larger spaces, such as the bed, the room, or the house. Finally, the original representation of space through the body of the mother will expand to a global vision of the world. The child will continue to construe his/her identity by exploring the physical spaces of the ambient nature through the same subliminal schemes he/she utilized for acknowledging his/her mother. Children who for various reasons did not benefit from breast-feeding, or were deprived of maternal pampering and caresses, are more likely, as Françoise Dolto has shown, to try to complete this need by a compulsory urge to travel. Geographical space is used in these cases as a kind of psychological mirror which enables the person to elaborate his/her image of the self.

In a remarkable essay on the evolution of geography during the Renaissance, Tom Conley claims that the rise of the science of cartography at that epoch was, together with the genre of autobiography and with narrative in general, a symptom and a means for the formation of modern man as a subject. Literary prose writing and the geographical depiction of the world constituted a “theatricalization of the self, which acquired a consciousness of its autonomy through modes of positioning that are developed into both textual and gridded representations of reality”<sup>10</sup>. Both these genres, which large-scale use of printing propelled to the very front edge of the Renaissance movement, made possible a peculiar mode of self-comprehension. Recent history appears to be the history of “our own struggles to disentangle ourselves from the vital, narcissistic illusion that

the world begins with our birth and expands through our perception of it”<sup>11</sup>. In Tom Conley’s view, authors, doctors, scientists and cartographers of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries appear to have been writing or mapping out the totality of their own self, in an effort paralleling the work of a mother in a self-contained act of fertilization, pregnancy, labor, and giving birth. Travel narrative and mapping the world concealed a psychological urge of self-generation, which is responsible for the birth of the subject and of subjectivity in early modern Europe.

Exploration and initiation travels represent a modality of acknowledging oneself through external, geographically projected images. The real or the armchair traveler develops his or her perception of the self on the routes and itineraries of the mappaemundi. The railroads of psychogenesis constitute a layer that underlies the geometrical framework of the maps. Psychoanalysis could bring into light the psychological patterns that constitute what I would call a “blueprint” of the geographical imagination. Powerful psychological schemes, such as the stages of the evolution of the libido, as defined by Freud, the oral, the anal, and the genital, can be proved to underlie the evolution of cartography. In the next few pages, I will try to gather some samples of geographical fantasies which embody this psychoanalytical scheme.

Until the discoveries of the Renaissance, ancient and medieval maps had a circular shape. The T-O maps of the Middle Ages represented the inhabited world, the *oikoumene* (that is, Europe, Asia and Africa), as a disk surrounded by the external circular Ocean (See Figure 1).



Figure 1: Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, sixth century.

Taking into account what has been said about the psychological patterns or layers of the mappaemundi, we should not be surprised that the T-O maps sometimes had an anthropomorphic aspect. The famous Ebstorf map, drawn about 1240 and unfortunately destroyed in a bombing during the Second World War, presented the orb of the earth as the body of Christ (See Figure 2).



Figure 2: *The Ebstorf Map, 1240.*

As these maps generally observe an eastward orientation (that is, the Orient is at the top of the design, the West at the lower end, and the North and the South respectively to the left and the right extremities of the orb), the sacred body of God has its head to the East, its legs to the West and its arms, in a crucified posture, to the North and the South. The religious allegorical parallelism between the body of God and the body of the world is perfect. This Christian metaphor (to be found in the much more popular image of the Church as the body of Christ) draws on the Stoic and Neoplatonic concepts of the cosmic organism and feeds the Renaissance idea of the correspondence between the micro- and the macro-universe. It graphically highlights the dogma that God embraces the world, that He is

the beginning and the end, that Christ is the Logos and the Soter, the One through whom the world was created and redeemed.

The metaphysical symbolism of the couple Creator / creature is thus inextricably linked to the psychoanalytical symbolism of the body image. This implies that traveling on the mappamundi is a kind of corporeal exploration. And, just as for the human being life came through the umbilicus that connected him to his mother in the womb, the center or the navel of the world (the Golgotha of the crucifixion) is the place through which humanity received a new life from its Creator. If the *oikoumene* is the body of Christ, its centre, Jerusalem, is the umbilicus of God. In the rabbinic tradition, "the Almighty created the world as an embryo. The same as the embryo grows starting from its umbilicus, God began the creation of the world from its umbilicus and amplified it in all directions"<sup>12</sup>. Working on the symbolic images of the center, Mircea Eliade gathered an extensive file on the "embryological" fantasies of old mythical cosmographies<sup>13</sup>.

Exploring the roads of the globe or the lines of the map is the equivalent of an imaginary quest for the anatomical origins of the human being. During the last two millennia, all major religious pilgrimages, individual or collective, targeted Jerusalem as their final point. We could say that the Christian theology of the Holy City was nurtured by fantasies about the return to the womb. In a sound book about what he calls "la relation d'inconnu", Guy Rosolato has argued that individuals organize their relationship to the world at large, to the unknown, taking the navel as a secured vantage point<sup>14</sup>. In Rosolato's view, the navel is a "corporeal" place where the relation of the unknown receives its first physical trace; it is a place that enables individuals to identify themselves through images of loss and appendage; and it represents a kind of gape indispensable for the constitution of the sense of time and space. Having Jerusalem at the navel of the cosmic body implied for the Christian civilization that its compulsory comprehension of the world was organized on a circular and radial grid whose centre was consecrated by the sacred story of the New Testament.

In Tom Conley's view, the literary and the geographical pilgrimages to Jerusalem express an urge of auto-construction and self-totalization, backed up by the maternal and / or paternal *imago* that underlies the maps<sup>15</sup>. Actually, it is worth noting that the Christian vision of the world is a highly male one. The patriarchal organization of the Jewish society had apparently banished female deities and priests from myth and ritual. As the heir of this imaginary organization of gender, Christianity developed a theology based on unconscious reveries of parthenogenesis. To be reborn through and in Christ is an essentially masculine birth, where womanhood has no role to play. Through the navel of the cosmic body of Christ, which is imagined as a subterranean gap beneath the Golgotha, humanity was delivered from the underground Hell of damnation to the celestial Kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, if female mythological images were foreclosed from orthodox imagination, they were recovered by alternative and heretical religious systems that purposefully utilized the material of ancient Near East religions. This is the case of many of the Gnostic sects of late Antiquity that resorted to a polemical and reverse rereading of the sacred Jewish texts and rediscovered, through this inversion, the ancient cult of the Great Goddess, which had been suppressed by the priests of Yahweh<sup>16</sup>. Simon Magus, a contemporary of the apostles, considered to be the first Gnostic, seems to have imagined the biblical creation of man in terms of female gestation. In the hostile rendering of his conception (his genuine teachings and writings are lost) offered by Saint Hippolytus in *Philosophumena* or *Refutation of all Heresies* (II, 22-23), Simon Magus appears to have conceived the Garden of Eden as a womb, and vice versa. "Moses, says Simon, has given allegorically to the womb the name Paradise, if we ought to rely on his statement. If God forms man in his mother womb – that is, in Paradise – as I have said, then let the womb be Paradise and the after-birth Eden, 'a river flowing forth from Eden, from the purpose of irrigating Paradise'. This river is the navel. This, he says, is divided into four branches; for on either side of the navel are played two arteries, which serve as conduits for breath, and two veins, which serve as channels for blood."<sup>17</sup> In this anatomical allegory of the Mosaic Genesis it is quite easy to recognize the image of Mater Gaia, the Mother Goddess of the ancient oriental and Mediterranean mythologies.

The Great Mother is a mythological image that received special interest from psychologists such as C. G. Jung<sup>18</sup> and E. Neumann<sup>19</sup> and myth-analysts such as Carl Kerényi<sup>20</sup> and Mircea Eliade<sup>21</sup>. The central psychological concept of their approach is the "*regressus ad uterum*". As it is well known, in opposition to Freud, Jung conceived psychological regression as a regenerative and creative process that allows individuals to reconnect themselves to the sources of primitive unconscious life, to the libido, to the original self of the embryo. Jung analyzes the dangerous voyage of the prototypal hero as an initiation journey to the Great Goddess, the mother of all beings, in order to be reborn anew, from the mortal to the immortal condition<sup>22</sup>. The male creation myth of Christianity has its female counterpart in the alternative Gnostic tradition analyzed by Jung and its disciples. The image of the uterine paradise has a long series of sequels, it would suffice here to mention the image of incubation inside the cone of a volcano acted out by Michel Tournier in *Vendredi ou Les limbes du Pacifique*.

It is interesting to note that, maybe reacting unconsciously to such identifications of the paradise with a woman's womb, medieval Christianity displaced Eden from its central location to a peripheral site of the mappaemundi. The geographical information given by Genesis 2 on the location of the Terrestrial Paradise was very poor: all we find out about Eden is that it situated *mikedem*, "towards the East". The fathers of the



Church freely interpreted *mikedem* as signifying either *apo archés, ek protes, a principio*, at the beginning (hence the deduction that the biblical text wanted to say that God created the Paradise before the rest of the world), or *contra orientem, ad orientem*, towards the Orient (the rising sun suggesting the beginning both of time and of space)<sup>23</sup>. The second interpretation prevailed, most of the fathers accepting the idea that Eden is to be situated in the far-eastern location of the mappamundi, at the point from where the creation of the world started. We have this concept plainly explained by Peter Comestor: Terrestrial Paradise was created « *a principio, id est a prima orbis parte. [...] Sed a principio, idem est quod ad orientem* »<sup>24</sup>.

Starting with Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, who coined the T-O pattern of medieval maps, in medieval cartography Eden was situated in the higher-end of the *orbis*, in the cardinal point of the Orient. This means that, when the *oikoumene* was allegorically read as the body of the Christ, Terrestrial Paradise corresponded to the head of God. On the already cited Ebstorf map, near the head of Christ, the cartographer represented in a cartouche the garden of God, with Adam and Eve under the apple tree eating the forbidden fruit. In a psychoanalytical or psycho-geographical reading, this suggests a dislocation of Eden from the womb position to the oral position. It is as if Christian cartographers unconsciously wanted to destroy the association of the garden of God with the pagan image of the Great Goddess and to relocate it to a sexually neutral position, corresponding to the first fixation of the libido in Freud's progredient scheme of evolution. The original sin is thus graphically associated with a kind of oral prohibition, a kind of vegetal totemic proscription.

The two sacred points of the Christian maps, Jerusalem and the Terrestrial Paradise, were then situated on the symbolic radius that went from the navel or the center to the head or the Eastern extremity of the world. Indeed, in all medieval narratives of pilgrimages and adventure travels, undertaken by real or fictitious monks and missionaries, knights and merchants, the two points are inextricably twined. Those who want to go back to the Garden of Eden, closed after the original sin of Adam, have to pass firstly by Jerusalem, where Christ redeemed the corrupted human nature. So, in a psycho-geographical approach, the radius from Jerusalem to Eden, from the navel to the head of the cosmic Christ, marks the progression from womb nutrition (sustenance of the embryo through the umbilicus) to the oral nutrition of the newly born child (through the mouth).

The next stage in Freud's scheme would then be the anal one. To find its geographical correlative we have to go down the map to the western hemicycle, under Jerusalem, in Europe. In a theological interpretation, this descendent course is the railroad taken by Adam and Eve when they were expelled from the garden and came to populate the known world. It is, symbolically, also the digestive course of the eaten apple that, through a

complicated evolution, became from a lovely comestible fruit a defiled residuum. This digestive anatomical track corresponds thus to man's theological journey from purity to corruption, from immortality to damnation, from Paradise to Hell.

I find a geographical equivalent for the anal position in the writings of Antoine de La Sale, a fifteenth-century author who wrote several educative and pleasant books for his Italian and French protectors. In *The Paradise of Queen Sibyl*, he gathered several written and oral sources on the so-called cave of the Sibyl, a magic grotto in south Italy. As with all the encyclopedic treatises of the period, La Sale is eager to encompass the totality of traditional science and so he starts by giving a panoramic view of the entire world. As in the Ebstorf map, La Sale's world-vision is also anthropomorphic, the terrestrial orb being conceived as a cosmic body. On this human map, the cave of Queen Sibyl is the counterpart of the Terrestrial Paradise.

The magic grotto is obviously a pagan topic, in which the Greek-Latin tradition of incubation and initiation caves (such as that of the archaic Greek prophet Trophonios) is combined with the Celtic and Germanic mythologies of the underground fairy kingdoms reachable through magic crevices and wells. When Christianity inherited these themes, it satanized them, identifying the underground otherworld with Hell and its inhabitants with demons and damned people. This means that Queen Sibyl and her suite is a fairy gentry interpreted by Christian authors as people who underwent some kind of damnation. Since Europe, from Italy to Ireland, was populated with many such remnants of heathen religions, Antoine de La Sale developed an anatomical metaphor of the world, in which the Terrestrial Paradise corresponds to the head and the mouth of the cosmic body, while the European magic caves represent the bowels and the anus. "Hell, he says, is situated at the end of the body formed by the earth, in a place where all the dirt, the garbage and the stench of the four elements gather together. It is there that inhabit the enemies of God, who were damned to live, because of their pride, in the bottom of Hell"<sup>25</sup>. More exactly, in La Sale's view, there are in Europe two openings to the infernal bowels. One is the Purgatory of Saint Patrick in Ireland; the other is represented by the volcanic islands of Stromboli and Vulcano, between Italy and Sicily. And these gates to Hell correspond symbolically to the anus of the cosmic body.

Finally, after the oral and the anal positions, the third stage of Freud's scheme, the genital, also makes its appearance on the fantastic maps of early modernity. I would like to exemplify this with an eighteenth-century extraordinary journey written by Thomas Stretzer, *A New Description of Merryland*<sup>26</sup>. The story, combining wit irony and pornography, respects all the discursive protocols of the voyage diaries and utopian travels of the epoch. The author claims to be, if not the discoverer, then an assiduous traveler to the happy country of Merryland. In respect to this land, he

wonders why, although "the old Academics, Peripatetics, and Stoics, were tolerably well acquainted" with it, it is not marked by modern geographers on their maps. Merryland is thus set in the pattern of the utopian island, difficult if not impossible to locate on the *mappaemundi*. And indeed Stretzer proceeds with a description that imitates Thomas More's *Utopia* and its later sequels.

The anatomical allegory becomes soon evident: "Merryland [...] is situated in a law part of the continent, bounded on the upper side, or to the northward, by the little mountain called MNSVNRS, on the East and West by Coxasin and Coxadext, and on the South or lower part it lies open to the Terra-Firma". More to the North there are "two other pleasant little mountains, called BBY [...]; on the top of each is a fine fountain, that yields a very wholesome liquor much esteemed, especially by the younger sort of people". "Merryland is well water'd by a river, which takes its rise from a large reservoir or lake in the neighborhood called VSCA, and discharges itself with a most impetuous current and fearful cataract towards the Terra-Firma near the entry of the great Gulph". And the psychogeographical exploration continues with the description of the "spacious CANAL" that runs through the middle of the country, of the forts called LBA, of the metropolis called CLTRS, of the fortresses called NMPH, of the great Treasury or Store-House called UTRS, or of the land called HMN, "about which there have been great controversies and disputes among the learned, some denying there ever was such a place". Needless to say, in the end, that the name of this brave explorer of the kingdom of Merryland is Roger Phfuquewell. Obviously, this is a libertine variation on the theme of the land of Cockayne, seen not as an alimentary paradise (that is, as an oral fantasy), but as a sexual "Paradise of pleasure, and Garden of delight".

So it seems that the main, cardinal points of the premodern maps correspond to some kind of projection of the Freudian topical positions, umbilical, oral, anal and genital. The journeys on the fantastic *mappaemundi* are, subliminally, an exploration of the human body image. Each of these psycho-geographical points has inspired a corpus of texts describing various types of initiation travels and extraordinary voyages.

The quest of the Terrestrial Paradise situated in the extreme Orient began in the literature deriving from the fathers living in the Egyptian desert, such as Saint Macarios and his disciples, by the end of the fourth century. It was imposed, in a sequel from the eighth century called *Iter ad Paradisum* (*The voyage to Paradise*), onto the saga of Alexander the Great's expeditions through Asia. And it became the final destination of the fictitious or even real travelers to the Orient during and after the *pax mongolica*, from Odoric de Pordenone and Marco Polo to Jean Mandeville and Jean Witte de Hesse<sup>27</sup>.

The imaginary descent to the infernal bowels of the Western hemisphere was fostered by the emergence, during the eighth and the

ninth centuries, of the Celtic Irish mythology into Latin literature. The Purgatory of Saint Patrick, situated in Northern Ireland, inspired a host of knights and adventurers seeking fame or redemption, from England to Hungary, from Spain to Iceland<sup>28</sup>. By the end of the Middle Ages, Antoine de La Sale, with his *Paradise of Queen Sibyl*, is symptomatic for the renascent interest in the magic caves, as those of Visignano and Norcia in Italy or of Toledo, Seville and Salamanca in Spain, whose ancient rituals of incubation and divination fully nurtured the fantasy of the Renaissance magi.

Finally, the initiation travels acquired a sexual aspect in the early modern genre of the extraordinary and utopian voyages. In some of these texts, the sexual imagination is still ambiguous, like in Thomas Artus' *Isle des Hermaphrodites* (1605) or in Gabriel de Foigny's *Les Aventures de Jacques Sadeur ou La Terre australe connue* (1676). The fantasy of female sexuality is still repressed, likened to the masculine image of the Amazons, in works like *Les femmes militaires* de Louis-Rustaing de Saint-Jory (1735) or *La nouvelle colonie ou La ligue des femmes* by Marivaux. But as the libertine mentality made its way into the European culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sexual reveries began to haunt writers such as Paul Tallemant with his *Voyage de l'Isle d'Amour* (1663) and Gabriel François Coyer with its *Découverte de l'Isle Frivole* (1751), culminating with Bougainville's discovery of the "Island of Venus" in the Tahiti.

Instead of a final conclusion, I would like to point out that these samples and corpuses of psycho-geographical travels make their appearance in some kind of order or progression throughout the two thousand years of the European Christian culture. Simon Magus and Gnostic reveries of paradise as a maternal womb cover the beginning of the first millennium. Fantastic travels to the Eastern paradise, situated in the "head" of the cosmic Christ, develop in the second part of the first millennium and in the first centuries of the second. Descents to magical and purgatorial caves make the subject of narratives from the Irish eighth and ninth centuries up to the late Renaissance literature. Imaginary voyages to sexual utopias become possible in the early modernity up to the Enlightenment.

It would then be appealing to see in this historical disposition of the narrative quests a kind of Freudian progression of the European culture from libidinal childhood to adulthood, through the umbilical, oral, anal and genital stages. Nevertheless I fear this kind of amplification or generalization of individual psychogenesis to the collective mind remains hazardous and unsustainable even for a most committed psychoanalyst.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "C'était une époque féconde en erreurs, sans doute, mais c'était une époque où les esprits, pleins d'énergie et de grâce, créaient sans cesse des merveilles nouvelles, qui agrandissaient le domaine de la poésie, si elles bornaient quelques fois le monde réel. Ce temps des étranges déceptions était celui des beaux rêves, des fantaisies magnifiques, des fictions immortelles". Ferdinand Denis, *Préface* to

the volume *Le monde enchanté. Cosmographie et histoire naturelle fantastiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris: A. Fournier libraire-éditeur, 1843), II.

<sup>2</sup> Carolly Erickson, *The Medieval Vision. Essays in History and Perception* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1976), 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> See Corin Braga "Mappemondes fantasmatisques. Principes non-empiriques qui régissent l'imaginaire cartographique", in *Caetele Echinox (Echinox Journal)*, 5 (2003): 32-72.

<sup>4</sup> See Gilbert Durand, *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire* (Paris-Bruxelles-Montréal: Bordas, 1969), *Introduction* and *passim*; Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 211.

<sup>5</sup> See Mircea Eliade, *Images et symboles. Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> See André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le geste et la parole*, vol. II *La mémoire et les rythmes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1988), 162.

<sup>7</sup> See Abel Rey, *La science dans l'Antiquité*, vol. II, *La jeunesse de la science grecque* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1933), 188-189; Charles Mugler, *Deux thèmes de la cosmologie grecque: Devenir cyclique et pluralité des mondes* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1953), 20.

<sup>8</sup> See Guy-Ernest Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography", in *Les Lèvres Nues*, no. 6, 1955. The situationists or the psychogeographers try to apprehend the "precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals". For an introduction to the topic, see Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*, London, Pocket Essentials, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> See Françoise Dolto, *Au jeu du désir. Essais cliniques* (Paris: Seuil, 1981); Françoise Dolto, *Séminaire de psychanalyse d'enfants II* (Paris: Seuil, 1985); Maud Mannoni, *L'enfant, sa "maladie" et les autres* (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

<sup>10</sup> Tom Conley, *The Self-Made Map. Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Conley, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Apud Arent Jean Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1916).

<sup>13</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1964).

<sup>14</sup> Guy Rosolato, *La relation d'inconnu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> Conley, 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Ioan Petru Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis. Gnostic Mythology from Early Christianity to Modern Nihilism* (San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> Apud Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), 43.

<sup>18</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

<sup>19</sup> Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1955.

<sup>20</sup> Carl Gustav Jung & Carl Kerényi, *Copilul divin, Fecioara divină (Introducere în esența mitologiei)*, (Timișoara: Amarcord, 1994); Carl Kerényi, *Eleusis. Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

<sup>21</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*.

<sup>22</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (New York: Harper, 1962).

<sup>23</sup> Venerabilis Beda, *Quaestiones super Genesim*, in Jean-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina* (Paris, 1841), vol. 93, col. 267-268.

<sup>24</sup> Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica*, XIII, in Jean-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus*, vol. 198, col. 1075.

<sup>25</sup> Antoine de La Sale, *L'Excursion aux îles Lipari*, in *Le Paradis de la reine Sibylle*, Préface de Daniel Poiron, Traduction et postface de Francine Mora-Lebrun (Paris: Stock, 1983), 66.

<sup>26</sup> An. [Thomas Stretzer], *A New Description of Merryland, Containing, A Topographical, Geographical, and Natural History of that Country* (Bath, Printed and sold by J. Leak there, and by E. Curll, at Pope's Hean Rose-street Covent-Garden, 1741).

<sup>27</sup> See Corin Braga, *Le paradis interdit au Moyen Age. La quête manquée de l'Eden oriental* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), Chapter 4.

<sup>28</sup> See Michael Haren & Yolande de Pontfarcy, *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory. Lough Derg and the European Tradition* (Enniskillen: Clogher Historical Society, 1988).