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*‘Vagabundu e vagamundu’: The Classic  
Modern Ambition of Geography  
Anatomized and Grammaticalized*

**Keywords:** *nature, nurture, geography anatomized, geography grammaticalized, identitary chronotope*

**Abstract:** *Embedded in the modernity discourse ‘with a difference’, the nature – nurture binomial allows of a sui generis conjugation with the colonial discovery discourse in Classic Modernity. While Early Modernity pushed the boundaries of the (Old) World westwards, the second phase of Euro-Atlantic empowerment completed the colonial narrative with its Eastern half, thus resulting in ‘geography anatomized and grammaticalized’ according to the alphabet of power. Travel narratives and historical accounts referring to the New World took note of nature ‘over there’ in at times blatant contrast with the hic et nunc of accredited notions. People, animals, plants by the side of rocks, stones, waters and the like were put to the test of mother nature’s rules. Likewise, man-made values, practices and objects – that other nature we currently call culture – were ‘set right’!*

*This paper is based on two case studies - Thomas Salmon’s Modern History or, the Present State of All Nations (1739) and Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri’s Giro del Mondo (1700) - as cultural vagabondage/vagamondage illustrating the current mentality in the travel literature of the day. It means to evince forms of (m)othering cultural institutions and identitary chronotopes in context.*

‘Enough of Greece and Rome. Th’ exhausted store  
Of either nation now can charm no more.

On eagle wings the poet of to-night  
Soars for fresh virtues to the source of light,  
To China’s eastern realms, and boldly bears  
Confucius’ morals to Britannia’s ears.’  
Arthur Murphy, *The Orphan of China* (1759)

‘Pour donner au public un peu [du] neuf qu’il demande toujours,  
[on] a été forcé de mettre sur la scène l’ancienne chevalerie, le  
contraste des mahométans et des chrétiens, celui des Américains et  
des Espagnols, celui des Chinois et des Tartares. (...) On hasarde  
aujourd’hui le tableau contrasté des anciens Scythes et des anciens  
Persans, qui peut-être est la peinture de quelques nations  
modernes.’ Voltaire, *Les Scythes*, Préface de l’Édition de Paris (1767)

‘... perhaps if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance  
of the age to which [the] story [of Lear] is referred, it will appear not

so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of domination on such conditions, would yet be credible, if told of a pretty prince of Guinea or Madagascar. (...) [Shakespeare] commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, English and foreign.' Dr. Johnson's note to King Lear, *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, Accurately Printed from the Text of Mr. Malone's Edition, (1786)

In 1759 the Irish actor and playwright Arthur Murphy signed an adaptation of what Voltaire had committed to paper in 1755 as *L'Orphelin de la Chine*. This latter dramatic text was itself an adaptation of the thirteenth-century Chinese work *The Orphan of Zhao* attributed to Ji Junxiang, an upholder of Confucianism. Under Voltaire's quill the revenge kernel of the Chinese source had been supplanted and a love story inserted instead. The French polymath made a point of cultivating an atmosphere of morality and wisdom, of loyalty and respect, in order to "bring Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears." He also showed his dislike of the classic unities being ignored for the sake of rationally unacceptable stories. But what he minded most was the display of violence and barbarous struggle for supremacy, insufferable in an age of enlightened thinking as his. Murphy had admitted that the Greco-Roman legacy had grown into an otiose presence in mid-century Western culture. It was time a move on the *map of the mind* had been made and fresh territories been explored such as the Far East. About one and a half decade on, Voltaire, his inspirer, readily picked up the *cultural translation* issue and carried on along similar lines. To brutal force he opposed chivalrous reverence and he provided a *moral geography* based on ethical manicheism: there were the forces of good and those of evil. Muslim vs. Christian, American vs. Spanish and Tartar vs. Chinese were the ethnic illustrations of the said grid. To top the contrast, Voltaire saw in the ancient Scythian vs. Persian opposition a mere anticipation of his own present.

To the physical map as instrument of discovery, inspection and eventually of empowerment was added a mental map equipped with convenient categories, items and coordinates. To the *alphabet of the world* culled from the Book of Nature – the modern adaptation of the Book of God – was adjoined an *alphabet of culture* with helpful deictic concepts at its basis: *here/there, now/then, us/them*. Voltaire produced *L'Orphelin de la Chine* in 1755, the historic year in which the Marquis of Pombal launched his campaign to turn Lisbon into a modern city, after a devastating earthquake. Plans submitted to the Portuguese Prime Minister's attention unfalteringly pointed in the same direction: rationality, precision, discipline. It was felt that modern Western superiority should legitimate itself by scientific rigour.

Not unlike this thought Dr. Johnson, the celebrated supporter of accuracy and orderliness at the very root of any alphabet, namely in language. Published in the same year 1755, *A Dictionary of the English Language* upheld precision of expression and conceptual clarity as the sine qua non condition of communication among humans. To the first lexicographer of British cultural history the improvements worked by *culture* on at times erratic *nature* were of the order of law.

Whoever did not abide by order-instilling rules was to be put down a peg or two. Like Voltaire, Johnson was little pleased with the liberties taken by Shakespeare in matters of, to his classic taste, crucial importance: the unities of time, place and action. No wonder he declared his alarm at the great Will mixing customs of various places and times. No wonder, too, he saw the barbarity of Lear's times utterly out of place (sic) in his civilized age. The "then" of ferocious clashes could only be associated with the "there" of non-Western realms such as Guinea or Madagascar. "They" were definitely hopelessly inferior to "us." They needed civilizing. The matchless Will was *corrected* with the help of *cultural prostheses* of the adaptation type: his plays were arranged to suit highlife expectations, pruned of bawdy vocabulary, modified in terms of plot and denouement, adjusted to sound in accord with the requirements of the "here" and the "now" and of the "us" taking account of them.

The encounter with the Asian Other "here" and "there," *chez nous* as well as *chez eux* was considerably more complex than such pairs of opposites. It is to be presumed that such a demotic author as Shakespeare would have sounded the voice of public opinion in his "Romantic" ramblings space- and time-wise. Likewise, Murphy glibly doffed the classic attire, to don the exotic Oriental garb. New *customs* ushered in by new *costumes* required of audiences in Europe a reclaiming of views. Called upon to whisper new sense into Britannia's ears, and mind, Confucius was to send a political ambassador to the Far West, within years of the Irish adaptation of the French orphan story stemming from Chinese sources. Goldsmith's "citizen of the world" struck the note rather of Shakespeare's fantasies than of Johnson's pedantic taxonomies.

Indeed, a closer look at our mottoes will unveil telling nuances. Thus, chivalry might be "ours," and militate for the good cause of the Christian faith, but it did so with no little investment of violent action. The Chinese might be weird, yet extremely well-organized, with an acute sense of hierarchy, *and* possible to convert to the "true" religion of the world, something that Western missionaries had been thoroughly doing for quite some time. They might be weird, truly, but were nothing like those dreadful Tartars. The latter had better been called "Tartars," as in *Tartarus*, devilish as they were perceived to be (Nieuhof 1668, Kaplan 2002, Goffman 2002), for putting to shame even the "grand" Turk, the scourge of Europe. Voltaire's Eurocentric list unfolded to dovetail with more traditional views: it might be that the Scythians had been regarded as rough and barbarous since Herodotus, but then what had the Persians looked like "under Western eyes?" The latter

"claimed Asia for their own," yet appear as "quasi-Greek," if seen from Scythia (Hartog 36, 46). Their hybrid nature, the Eurasian quality found dwelling in their constitution, we will see at work in impressions left by two late seventeenth-century travellers: the Calabrian adventurer Francesco Giovanni Gemelli Careri (1651-1725), *Fig. 1*, and the Scottish historical and geographical writer Thomas Salmon (1679-1767), both featuring now in collections of Classic Modern travel books.



The axiological load of deixis surfaces like an oil film in a pot full of water. Emulated or in the original, Voltaire, like Johnson, brought to the fore an “ethnocentric and culturocentric perspective” (Maccarone 86). Deep into the eighteenth century judgements and prejudgements formulated in the classical antiquity and bequeathed to the Middle Ages still inhabited the European mind, if put to the therapeutic exercise of relativism after the Renaissance experience. In downright Montaignian terms, *The New Geographical and Historical Grammar*, published in its twelfth edition as *The New Geographic Grammar* (London, 1772), drove the case home:

I have met with people as polite, ingenious and humane, whom we have been taught to look upon as *cannibals*, as ever I conversed with in Europe; and from my own experience, am convinced, that human nature is every-where the same, allowances being made for unavoidable *prejudices*, occasioned by *custom*, education, and savage principle instilled into many in their infancy, by ignorant, *superstitious*, or designing men about them [...]; nothing has contributed more to render the world barbarous, than their having been taught from their cradles, that every nation almost but their own are barbarians; they first imagine the people of distant nations to be *monsters of cruelty and barbarity*, and then prepare to invade and extirpate them [...]

**Figure 1 Giovanni  
Francesco Gemelli Careri  
(1651-1725)**

(vii). (emphasis added)

We can read such observations from our own critical perspective. Postcolonial and Subaltern Studies in recent decades have, in effect, only further substantiated an attitude forming already in crusade times. Encountering the Other, an eye-opening experience producing an increased awareness of doubleness in oneself, is now currently considered in terms of cultural translation, whether as liquidation, assimilation, or acculturation. Especially is acculturation a loop between the “I” and the “you.” It is a space of otherness where *cultural deixis* operates at the level of physical or symbolic persons, a space putting identity to serious tests. In the process, a relation of transitiveness establishes whose eventual result is comparative gauging and the recognition of *cultural relativism*. Where Aristotle recalls Herodotus remarking that fire burns the same everywhere in this world<sup>24</sup>, while people cook food differently, Todorov is ready to conclude: “Barbarians are those who believe that the others, those around them, are barbarians (5).” In his 1994 “Afterword” to *Orientalism*, Said fends himself against charges of anti-Westernism and of violation of Islam and Arab values by embracing the

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24 Herodotus’s “omnivorous curiosity,” in typological contrast with Thucydides’s “sharply political and analytical focus (Kelley 500)” is as a rule associated in the literature with the deep roots of what we now call cultural history, and intellectual history, for which long periods, as well as geographic specificity are of no little consequence. The organizing principle entailed by history after the first, and more so, second, wave of great geographic discoveries, dovetails with the encyclopaedic view of culture. The space-time interconnectedness in historical evaluations is a recurrent conjunction, with “historical temporality” walking away from “natural temporality” as constitutive of the “ontological category” called humanity (White x). No wonder *timing* history goes in tandem with *spacing* concepts.

pervasive anti-essentialism of “historical experience [...] which continues of course in ‘West’ and ‘East’ together (352).”

Concurrently, researches in Civilizational Studies have evinced complexes of Western views and their ensuing moral exceptionalism, in the face of global interdependency. The Arabic, Persian, and Turkish contribution to elaborating a cosmopolitan Islamic culture, like the role played by China, India, South and South-East Asia, the Balkans, and the Maghreb are seen as unfairly underestimated. Mongol invasions in Western Asia, for instance, and the parallel rise of Western Europe as a gunpowder civilization paving the way to modernity have attracted critical attention (Hodgson 1993). A number of reconsiderations of the “classic” cultural-civilizational divides have shed light on comparatively obscure or ignored corners. Reiterated dislocations of the “mainstream” vs. “East” or “Orient” tendency are responsible for the taxonomic chart featuring Europe in the centre of the stage of history. The traditional view focused on successive translations from Babylon to Greece and on to Rome, with its further extension (in)to North-Western Europe. It stemmed from the inherited image of the *οικουμένη*, carried on with Rome as the mistress of the civilized world, brought in the fall of Rome episode and successive attempts to restore its fame. It considered further reconstructions of its myth in modern history, all the way to modern Western hegemony and “technicalism (Hodgson 42-60)”<sup>25</sup>.

In 1693 Patrick Gordon sent to the print *A Geography Anatomized*. In the tradition of *cultural anatomies* of which Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* is the one example jumping to mind, this work was a thorough analysis. Its object was “the whole body of modern geography,” as its lengthy title maintained. It advocated geographic learning by resort to “a new, plain and easie method” whereby any person interested in matters of the kind would amass significant knowledge of the continents, island, peninsulas, mountains, seas, rivers and lakes, as well as of the towns and other divisions of the world. Its focus was not merely *natural geography*, rather its counterpart, or else *cultural geography* stirred equal curiosity, the author deemed. For which reason he warned his readers that to the air, soil and water conditions inspected he thought it apposite to add an investigation of the “commodities, manners, government, religion” in all those countries of the world “to which is subjoin’d the present state of European plantations in the East and

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<sup>25</sup> The emergence of “the new socio-cultural sciences (ethnology, folklore, sociology, political science) in about the year 1800” is currently seen as world-openness and the curiosity cultivated by the modern inquisitive mind, whereas traditionally *curiosity* – whether space- or time-geared – was deemed a vice rather than virtue of humanity. Searching and researching nature via direct observation, by conversing with the locals/natives, or by indirectly exploring significant phenomena results in knowledge being deposited in memory. One of their crucial benefits is making travellers aware of “their own capacities and limits,” as, during their travelling they “also explore themselves” and as homecomers are “expected to have changed (Stagl 2, 12).” The undissociable link between curiosity and ambition and their moral indictment come to an end in Early into Classic Modernity. Curiosity thus becomes “a passion that turns the inquirer into either a savior or a monster, for both trample the *conventions of nature, culture and society*,” and his “behavioral or physical traits [...] seem to violate accepted norms of use (Benedict 3).”

West Indies.” Most importantly, Gordon’s book carried the missionary message as “a reasonable proposal for the propagation of the blessed gospel in all pagan countries.” Where *nature*, in other words, was found deficient by having been populated with the wrong people, *culture* would improve on things and accomplish the needed civilizing protocols. Recent discoveries were illustrated with maps, yet the central objective was that of supplying a geography for European consumption all through, from its ingredients to its manner of evaluating *cultural(ized) nature*. It was a *geography anatomized* under Western eyes.

As it happens, in 1693 Gemelli Careri started his spectacular journey to China across Russia and Central Asia, to eventually complete a “*giro del mondo*,” with breath-taking episodes in the Far East reminding the reader of Marco Polo’s adventures. His observations came out in 1699-1700 as *Giro del mondo*, “In Napoli: nella Stamperia di Giuseppe Roselli.” This exciting collection of globe-trotting experiences became the subject of challenging travelling itself. It was published in English in 1704 as *A Voyage Round the World*, and, eventually, by common writer-editor confusion in pre-classic-modernity times, it was received in Western circles as the work of “Mr. Salmon.” Its French version, from the Italian, was launched in 1719 as *Voyage du tour du monde*. Circulated in the two leading languages of the Enlightenment, it wedged its way into Prévost’s selection of *Voyages imaginaires* in the Béranger Collection, Amsterdam, 1787-9, after it had enjoyed some popularity in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1794 it returned to Italy, in Italian, translated from the French! This strange fate was shared by its Portuguese version, as I was able to find out at the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, which holds a copy of the *Historia moderna ou estado prezente de todos os paizes e povos do mundo natural, politico e moral... escrita em inglez P. M. Salmon; traduzida em francez, hollandes, toscano e italiano e agora novamente em portugues*. The library note estimates its publication “depois de 1736.” It is to be presumed that copies of the relatively widely circulated English version were available in London at the same time as Tindal’s rendition in English of Dimitrie Cantemir’s *Incrementa atque decrementa Aulae Ohtomanicae* (1734-5), on sale in the Latin original in 1724-5. There is a sense of belatedness hanging about the Portuguese translation, rather hard to ignore in a culture that had provided hugely celebrated voyagers on the seas of the world. These three works provided valuable information about places relatively distant from Western seats of civilization which engaged then, as they do now, in a telling cultural relationship with Europe.

As we read in the 1739 English edition of Gemelli Careri’s text preserved at the Bodleian Library, this “modern history” describes “the present state of all nations” with reference to their “respective situations, persons, habits, buildings, manners, laws, and customs, religion and policy, arts and sciences, trades, manufacture and husbandry,” being, we are warned, “the most complete and correct system of *geography* and *modern history* extant in any language.” Its *chronotopic* exhaustiveness should not surprise. Similar publications of the time betray the same ambition of offering the world on display, a thing more than apparent in Careri’s Latin motto meant to promote his Ulyssean drive: “*Satius est mundum peragrare quam ipsummet possidere.*” A map by Herman Moll is attached to this compendious tome by “Mr. Salomon” featuring Europe with the following prominent entities:

Great Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Turkey. It also contains a less distinctly individualized area called Turkey in Europe: Crim and Little Tartary, Bessarabia, Bulgaria, Romania “or Thrace,” Greece, Macedonia and Albania. Asia is a conglomerate flanked by two huge chunks, Russia and China, with Tartary, Persia, Arabia, Mogul, and India in between, and Iapon and New Holland its easternmost extreme. Africa is the sum total of – in the author’s vision and spelling – Marocco, Barbary, Biledul, Negroland, Guinea, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Abissinia. North America is North Britain, Canada, Louisiana, Mexico, California, and New Spain.

Careri’s personal evolution from the judiciary to the military career, from *le noir* to *le rouge*, his journeys under the dual sign of *war and peace* are worth our own analytical look. They point to his pendulum-swing observations of *le bon sauvage* and *le mauvais sauvage* at work<sup>26</sup> and show their author as “*spettatore nel teatro del mondo*,” as well as “*vagabundu e vagamundu* (Maccarone 36).” Here is a thorough observer with a trenchant classification of human nature into “*i bianchi*” and “*i negri*,” the former unconditionally the masters of the latter. Here is somebody clinging to *fact* as much as possible, with rare compromises dictated by the necessity to resort to previous narratives, somebody with an “*amor guerriero*” turn of mind and preference for city life, for “the” City. All of this places on the forestage a Westerner engaged in typical exploration work, sensitive to, and proud of, *European superiority*, casting himself as *cultural interpreter*, laying down a *poetics of alterity*.

His accounts deliver a self-reproduced “Western image of the Orient (Cardini 189)” with landmarks easy to spot anywhere between Tavernier’s description of the seraglio, of 1675, and Galland’s translation of the *Arabian Nights* in 1704, halting in Thévenot’s Levant, of 1687, within years of Gemelli Careri’s own peregrinations. Writing up a history and geography of central and far away Asia, they both narrate an “Asia” beyond the “mental barrier” raised by the Christian Occident populated by the “people of God,” to keep them clear of the “monstrous races” of sexual depravity, physical deformity and libidinous drives of the Infidel Orient (Kabbani 5, 21). Their Asia is “the continent of ‘slavery,’ that is, of civilizations once of considerable achievement but now atrophied under despotic systems of government (Marshall 3).” It is a colossal expanse of wilderness with Tartary in the middle still believed to be part of ancient Scythia, the home of the Goths who then migrated to Europe. Such myth-making brought Northern Europeans and Tatars together in a *deserto dei tartari* haunted by the ghosts of Genghis Khan and Timur. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, fabulations on Dimitrie Cantemir’s descent could end up in the Mongol stock of Timur Khan!

Careri explores a forceful *in-betweenness* on his way to the country of “the wise and the learned,” where “paternalistic order” keeps the cosmic make-up in

<sup>26</sup> On the Enlightenment categorization of the monstrous in relation to the domestic, Meyer (1975) offers an excellent study in the light of Linnean schemes typical of the age. *Homo nocturnus* and *homo diurnus* elaborated by a mental geography with roots in ancient “*cosmographies merveilleuses* (35)” are part and parcel of what Voltaire called “*des nécessités nouvelles*” with reference to the colonial conquests of the age (307).

place (Rousseau & Porter 198). As in heaven, so on earth. Already the first Jesuits in China had embarked upon establishing parallelisms between the Chinese emperors and Old and New Testament figures. This politically-infused view of Western figuralism – the celebrated *figuram implere* topos worked out by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo – is also a favourite Dominican strategy. A concordance is provided in the year of grace 1700 in which contemporary Chinese and ancient Graeco-Roman ceremonies are seen as raw material for the civilizing mission of Christian Europe. If the pagan idolatry of pre-Christian times in the West could be saved in the name of God “our Father,” well then, Chinese idolatry can certainly undergo the same civilizing process. It is all a matter of “justifier, approuver et tolérer (Nöel 92),” a providential bet being at stake: by a versatile translation move demographic growth in Christendom can be made to read in terms of qualitative superiority for Christianity.

In the Portuguese version of 1736 the translator of the Italian translation of the *Giro* is careful to praise “a diligência de M. Salmõn,” in the Prologue. Following the English original, he promptly notices, he will start in the Orient with China, “segundo o Curso do Sol,” to gradually pass leftwards to “Paizes Occidentais.” But reaching China implies traversing the gigantic midland between Europe and Asia peopled by those impossible people always comfortably called *Scythians*, inhabitants of cold areas, and therefore “ignorant creatures” to the sun-tanned Greeks (Hartog 14). As the Russians to the West, so the Tartars to the Russians. As Christian Orthodoxy lying between the two Antichrists, the Pope and Mohammed<sup>27</sup>, so Rome between the Goths and the Christians. Likewise, Islam between the West and the East, and Mongols between the Russians and the Tibetans. Of the immense expanse between Spain and China controlled by Islam between the seventh and the fourteenth century, “Barbary,” or else Mongol and Tartar lands, is further controlled between Russia and China. *Pax mongolica* gives the outlines of order till the fourteenth century, rearranging the balance of power in Eastern Europe, Persia and the Near East, with Russians used for their own purpose and China subdued in several phases. “It was thus the Mongols who first introduced

<sup>27</sup> In connection with the ardent question of the New Rome, Franco Cardini (133) mentions the incredible offer by the Pope in Rome, soon after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, that the Sultan be considered greater than Christian monarchs, just because enthroned and governing from the seat called Istanbul “the City,” the way classic Rome had been “the” City of/and the World (*urbs et orbs*). To this end, in 1461, the Pope sent the “grand Turk” an *epistola excitatoria* in which he showed his readiness and willingness to declare the Sultan the successor of the Emperors of Rome, and a new Constantine in Constantine’s polis, if the latter would be baptized by the Pope in Rome. For the Infidel, this remained a proposal not worth the paper on which it was written, but other *ententes* did work in the course of time, e.g. the Russian-Turkish alliance in the Balkans, the Turkish-Russian-Persian one in the Caucasus, the French-Russian-Turkish one in Istanbul. With particular reference to the Balkans, Jelavich (ix) looks at the puzzle of borderlines between the big powers (Austria, Ottoman Turkey, and Russia), continents (Europe and Asia), religions (Christianity and Islam), and types of cultures (urban and rural). The complicated mosaic of cultural identity always makes room for some problematic centre claimed by either extreme and consequently positively and negatively valorized.

the Chinese and Russians to each other (Clubb 6).” The *median position* occupied by “Barbary” and “Tartary” is again of the *Scythian* type estimated by Voltaire as still at work in the modern world. With Russia succeeding to Rome and Byzantium as the Third Rome and China closing in as the power of the Secret City, the old dream of the *centre of the world* is dreamt again. Moscow claims divine legitimacy and flawless orthodoxy, just like the “Oriental Middle Kingdom which assumed that the occupant of the Dragon Throne at Peking was the legitimate ruler of mankind (Clubb 8).”

The *amphibious* nature of Scythians remains exemplary at the beginning of classic modernity. If Russians are Scythians, therefore *barbarians* in the face of the West, they are, at once, refreshers of relations in the East, just like the ancient barbarians in the Roman Empire. Geography is anatomized and grammaticalized according to their *alphabet of power* and the hugely important piece on the chess table that China is makes the re-reading of the “history of prejudice” a normal effect, “the neighbor [being] both the cause and object of our distress (Lane 3, 6).”

Careri travels in possession of maps and fairly minute descriptions of matters Chinese culled from written sources. He takes them for granted only to be accused by Jesuits of having merely copied previous documents and not been an eye-witness to what he narrates. He is shocked by the colossal size of the country, by the swarming crowds in the big cities, bigger than any in Europe, and the closed city being more than literal reality. The closed city is a syndrome, materialized as wardsmen appointed to keep an eye on visitors night and day, or rising as a hindrance when they hope to get to see the Emperor. Careri is particularly impressed by the *last* emperor topos enacted in the struggle between the Chinese and Tartars for the throne. Especially does he halt to comment on India, Persia and Tartary bowing to the Chinese as the oracles of the world, the “chosen people” and “law-givers of mankind (Salmon 1736: 30).” He spares no effort to praise the technological progress of the West and unveil the overall immobility of the Far East “Kingdom of Heaven.” He goes in rhapsodies over the Great Wall, surprisingly finds Chinese writing the easiest in the world, and takes pleasure in comparing their romances to “our” *Amadis*, *Orlando*, and *Don Quixote*. In 1826, let us remember, Goethe tells Eckermann that Chinese novels are more exciting than the routine Western narratives of the day.

The 1736 *Historia moderna ou estado prezente de todos os paizes e povos do mundo natural, politico e moral...* printed in Lisbon raises a further editorial and, consequently cultural brow in the overall evaluation of travels and travel literature in Classic Modernity. As the typically copious title extends on line after line, we read that it was *Escrita en Inglez P. M. Salmon*. The Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa presents the researcher with an impressively fat tome binding together Salmon’s text, indeed, but this covers pages 1 to 155. From page 159 to page 325 we bend over *Giro do Mundo. Volume primeiro. Da China* by Giovanni Francesco Careri Gemelli in Portuguese, after the 1719 Italian edition *Giro del Mondo del dottor D. Gio. Francesco Careri*, Venezia: Presso G. Malachin.

Let us now return to our other writer-traveller. Thomas Salmon, the hijacker of auctorial identity/ies, at the face of it, proves to be a victim of Classic Modernity geography *grammaticalized* and *anatomized* so as to please a curious readership.

The Scottish historical and geographical author and onetime coffeehouse owner was also an avid traveller. He spent lengthy periods of time in Europe and elsewhere and signed books recording nature and culture as he experienced them during his cultural explorations. Mention needs to be made of his *Modern History or the Present State of all Nations* (1739), *A New Geographical and Historical Grammar* (1749), and *The Universal Traveller* (1752). Salmon's work spawned imitations across Europe: German, Dutch, French books of a similar nature appeared within years of his publications reaching readers across the Continent. An Italian equivalent developed into a comprehensive coverage of the Italian states, with special focus on Venice, the description of this latter place emulating and downright copying Careri's text.

Illustrated "with cuts and maps" by Herman Moll, *Modern History: or the Present State of all Nations* comprised descriptions with reference to their "respective situations, persons, habits, buildings, manners, laws, and customs, religion and policy, arts and sciences, trades, manufacture and husbandry," being "the most complete and correct system of geography and modern history extant in any language," as the flyleaf boasted. Here is chronotopic exhaustiveness featuring the continents in/as their most prominent entities, that is, as metonymic geography for the modern reader and traveller.



**Figure 2** The scientific three graces, *Voyage du Tour du Monde* (1719)

At the crossroads of traditional and new, or else, scientific views of geography visited with a curious eye, Moll's maps accompany Salmon's text with a fascinating mix of anthropological-ethnographic, and allegorical, figures underneath abstract scientific images, combining nature as humans, animals, and plants with culture as arms, tools, and instruments (Fig. 2). A modern scientific mythology resorting to precision and logical calculations was assuming shape under George III, the distinguished intellectual monarch and supporter of all kinds of discoveries, from purely botanical or zoological ones to culturally spectacular and scientifically pragmatic ones. In a *Map of the World* of about the same time as Salmon's *Modern History*, Thomas Jefferys, 'Geographer to King George III' depicted allegorical figures endowed with scientific instruments engaged in professional business. Not otherwise did *Accadimenti nel Levante narrati nel Compendio dell'Antica e Moderna Istoria della Repubblica di Venezia di Tommaso Salmon Scozzese. Stampato in Venezia da Giambattista Albrizzi nel 1754*. Salmon's *Modern History* excelled in images of *grammaticalized nature* as habits or apparel, whether of Old World or New World inhabitants.

*A New Geographical and Historical Grammar* took the arts and sciences one step further in a felicitous marriage of views: precision and distraction cooperated in addressing the inquiring type of reader. Salmon's book was not only a "new geographical and historical grammar." It made a point of assuring its readers that the geographical part contained was "truly modern," as it advertised its *entertaining and instructive study of geography*. What did it mean by this Classic

Modern regurgitation of the ancient *utile dulci* precept? It provided “an account of the air, soil, produce, traffic, curiosities, arms, religion, language, universities, bishoprics, manners, customs, habits and coins, in use in the several kingdoms and states described.”



**Figure 3 Medallion portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte, Thomas Salmon, *A New Geographical and Historical Grammar***

Medallion portraits of King George III, the Mecena of the arts, sciences and discovery travels, and Queen Charlotte (*Fig. 3*) were surrounded by images of allegorized nature showing British ships out at sea, a Britannia figure and putti served by scientific instruments: a sextant, a globe, compasses, and telescopes. These had certainly been used to eventually produce maps of New England, Africa, Asia, England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Austrian, French, and Dutch Netherlands, China, Hungary and Turkey in Europe, or Italy, for that matter, the kind modern people have normally used until fairly recently. As they must have been resorted to for the production of architecturally accurate images of Italian cities as we see them in albums of current use now.

When Marco Polo first spent hours on end with the then Great Khan of the place, he was astounded, as we know, by Kubla's wisdom and tolerance, neither of which he found upon his return to Venice and his tragic end at the hands of the Genoese. Legend has it that, asked by the “perfect alchemist Khan (Grousset 237)” why he kept fabulating about places visited on his way to Cathay, but never spoke of his own native city, Polo replied promptly that he had been speaking *only* of his native Venice. Travelling round one's room or from the sill of one's own library window remains a topos of the human race's adventures into the unknown. This, like its contrary, the known, dwells at our heart. Cultural deixis, if properly nuanced, can teach us the “here” and the “there” can become interchangeable from where we are, as can the “I” and the “you” involved in cultural assessments. It is this dynamics that turns *nature* into *nurture* and provides us with the food of *cultural identity*.

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