

LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS



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TWENTY-FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON

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Edited by **FREDERICO PEREIRA**

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Travel in life, travel in literature. A chosen exile

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TRIANTAFYLLOS H. KOTOPOULOS*

As it was once said by O. Wilde “a map of the world without the land of Utopia is a worthless map, since it does not include the only land toward which humanity always addresses itself”. Traveling is a notion charged with miscellaneous societal and psychological notions, that contribute to our cultural worldviews and to the manifestations of our personal and collective self. Travelling is connected either with a sense of beginning a new, “shaken off the baggage of the past...standing at the threshold of experience” (Rank, 1959), either with a return to a past identified with a paradisiacal childhood, escaping from the alienating adult-life. In this paper we examine the literary representations of journey, proceeding into a comparative analysis of Greek and American texts not in order to display all kinds of diversities that exist inside the American or the Greek journey literature, but in order to exhibit what the prevailing notions can uncover for Amerikanhood and Greek-hood. And we use those notions as case-studies of what kind of subtexts can be traced within the dominant body of a national literature and society. We conclude that there are significant differences in the notion of the traveler, yet journey maintains its tremendous importance in both cultures and aims to express common patterns of human destiny and perception throughout times.

If, according to Davis (1998), “language becomes the vehicle... to locate our place in the world and to understand the social and political implications of society”, it is equally truth that story telling and literature in general constitute a huge representation of our collective biography.

Northrop Frye identifies the central myth of literature, in its narrative aspect, with the quest myth. He sees the significance of the quest myth “in its vision of the end of social effort, the innocent world of fulfilled desires, the free human society”. Perhaps the most complete form of this utopian vision is found in the combined Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Together they comprise the archetypal story of loss and recovery of the identity and Paradise. Greek mythology has the same general framework. There we also find the story of man’s creation, his relationship to the Gods, and his (hers) loss of the Golden Age. The Paradise and Golden Age myth is recovered in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* or in the myth of Camelot with the establishment of the ideal Kingdom, where a justified life could be accomplished.

All these stories present to us the basic elements of the quest pattern in classic form. So basic is the quest pattern to narrative, that Joseph Campbell, in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, labels

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it the “monomyth”. Campbell’s description is an enlargement on the basic formulae represented in the rites of passage: separation – initiation – discovery – return. The quest of the hero is an *extended search* for something that has been lost or taken away from him, something that ought to have been his birthright. He *encounters fabulous forces* and *wins a decisive victory*. The successful completion of this search reveals to the hero the secret of his *true identity* and enables him to *return* from his mysterious adventure and take his rightful position in society. And to accomplish all that, most of all he *travels!*

The Quest of Travel

The theme of travel constitutes a prominent topic in the literatures of the world, hidden under various names or forms. In inner travelling, in political or personal quest, in migration or return, quester is always “on the road”. It is in the archetypal pattern of the travelling myth – the central myth of the entire literature – that will be the structural framework of our study.

The very meaning of journey brings us in front of fundamental notions such as space, time and culture, being a fruitful framework for intercultural perspectives, as it necessarily carries parameters like similarity and difference, identity and otherness, change and transformation. Through his or hers journeys human can realize that his or her motherland does not form in a fundamental or unchangeable way his identity; neither he or she is connected with a certain type of religious faith. Color, race, nation, religion, political perceptions and ideology, characteristics that can eventually become key-holders in social inclusion or exclusion, can be filtered through the mystical and deep act of travelling. And the traveller can find a way to finally express international common values and perceptions behind their different versions. This way travel could be not just a procedure of spatial transfer but a procedure of a mighty transformation. *We could say that journey consist an identity in constant construction.*

Since the very beginning human kind tried to express its desire for something more it could ever have. And the agony, the pain and the hope that desire produced gave rise to so many personal, political, religious, or even scientific efforts to transform yourself, your era and your society, according to your needs and to the socio-political parameters of your environment. Yet, it was always “there”. Mythology, as an archetypal form of literature, through the reading of Journey myths, tries to ritualize the prominent quest, the new enterprise. Forms of which can be found in the mythology of every culture. Several different myths of Greek origin exist, the most familiar is the story of *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, or Theseus, and so many other, written B.C. to express our evolution till this day.

Journey finds its first textual expression 2500 years ago through the epic *Odyssea* of Homer, a fundamental text of the Western civilization and of the Greek and world literature that, since then, consists an eternal and common prototype and a symbol that transcends time and space. Many significant writers were enchanted by the Homeric journeys, from Dante, bringing Odysseus to Hell, to Kavafis, that personifies to Odysseus the urge of humanity to seek knowledge and experience. We could also mention Joyce’s *Odyssey*, Pound’s *Cantos*, Walcott’s *Homer*, or Kazantzakis’s *Odyssey*. The Homeric adventures function as an archetype in the structure of big, synthetic texts, invested with various sub-texts and perceptions.

Yet reproduction never sieze in literature. Even Hesiod’s story became the source for the later Roman version of the myth told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. Hamilton’s *Mythology* is a good source for the retelling of both versions. You will also find the story of how the world and mankind were created, together with the story of Prometheus, the first hero who travelled to gain the fire from Mighty Gods in favour of humans. Comparisons can be easily found in European, Eskimo, North American Indian, and Chinese mythology. Travelling, then, spring from a very basic human need – not just to find who you really are and your true destiny as mentioned before, but also to give answers to bigger question about life and deat, to “trace” the hidden “reasons why”. In other words, to transform chaos into order. And that constitutes a universal archetype.

Yet, as it was written, one of our objectives will be to proceed into a comparative study, between two of the worlds most prominent literatures: Greek and American, having much more than

Nobel prize winners to offer, and yet prominent Nobel prizes too. But most important, having the privilege, along with other literatures of the world, to express the world view of two different corners of a unique planet. Mediterranean region and North America.

From sea to sea

Apart from mythological and homeric journeys that shaped at a significant extent our collective perception of the Self (even Oedipus was in a journey when met his fate) in Greek literature special place require the ethnological journeys of Herodotus in Greece, Egypt, Asia, South Italy (Kato Italia) and Sicily. He was the first to point that the "other" is the mirror through whom we can trace ourselves (Kapisinski 2007: 349). The forceful traveler that broke the limits of time provinciality is at the same time the travel-comrade of the contemporary man, whom fights against "that" time provinciality. By provinciality we mean the perception of time as just present. After all, the motive underneath journey's urge of historiography's father (Herodotus) is curiosity, the very same reason for the growth of scientific knowledge and even Enlightenment. Herodotus while learns like an enthusiastic child, considers significant in his work the notion of freedom, a fundamental notion in the Greek way of Thinking and world view, and yet a notion fundamental for the journey itself! The outstanding icons that he creates through the ethnographic and geographic information he distributes, make each reader a fellow journey man or woman. It is those qualities that made Willamowitz, the significant philologist of the 20th century, to write that "the world will never cease to read Herodotus stories".

Yet, as two dynamic notions, travelling and Literature constantly evolve. From time to time journey required almost symbolic status. For instance it is impossible to study Romanticism omitting the notion of journey. The very soul of the yearn for journey was to escape reality and the alienations that industrialization and capitalism brought with it, to search for an integrated self into nature, away from the petit bourgeois convictions of European society. And even then Mediterranean was perceived as a lost, forgotten Paradise, carrying an Adam after the *Fall*; broken marbles, a dazzling sea, and wonderful forests. Goethe went to Italy (*Italienische Reise*, 1816-17) Chateaubriand to Greece, Minor Asia, Middle East, Spain, Tynis (*Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, 1811 and *Voyage en Amérique*, 1826), Lamartine to Ottoman Empire (*Voyage en Orient*, 1835) Byron travelled across mediterranean to Constantinople (Istanbul) (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812-1818), and Shelley, with the shine of an expensive utopia in his eyes, went to Italy. Travelling into space became an excuse for travelling into ideas and sentiments and people.

Carrying a variety of subtexts, and characteristics that intervene between a subjective and objective perception of the world, journey texts never stop "growing".

Despite the fact some of the roots of contemporary literature can be traced into the 19th century, journey literature meets an offspring in the 30's, expressing the need to escape from (and denounce a) world between 2 devastating, western centric wars. Indeed, during the first postwar years and the 30's, significant European and American writers (gathering in Paris or other European Metropolis, creating a very special, and unique sense of American nostalgia that can not be integrated in this paper) produced texts where the dual importance of travelling is promoted (subjective and objective). Their hidden question is what traveling means for the traveler and what the traveler means for traveling. Yet in the postwar world a fundamental change evolves, regarding travelling and its transferability. The impressive diminishment of distances (due to traveling technology, like flying) the equally impressive vanishment of the periodical perception, in other words the condensation of the mystical and yet common experience of humanity that travel could offer, happened to an extent that make those offerings inactive.

Since then we don't travel anymore primarily to perceive, to learn. Most of the valuable information are considered as given and are included in touristic books. The true traveling experience lies in the edges of common grounds, where we should find the distinctive nature of examples; in other words to find similarities and contradictions. The majority of writers nowadays produces text about journey. Many discover in the journey literature an intellect form of journalistic paper, others a lyric form of essay, others use it directly as a promotion tool for political agendas.

Further more it is almost impossible to mention writers such as Tony Morrison, Forster, Below, Golding, Mom, Exiperi, Tomas Man etc omitting traveling. Deep down the main question that journey brings equals the question Euripides and T. Williams's heroes face: To stay into a place means eventually to be corrupted despite all your excuses. To get away means never to acquire roots and familial grounds. Yet writers (artists in general) as human beings, live integrated in the society, but their art (writing) is an act of rupture and escape from norms. Their target is moving, to remind Golding's *The Moving Target*, in which a wonderful text about Delphi is exposed, or, as Brontski says "what matters is not what is said but what it follows". Many writers, like Lorca, even if not really "travelling", transformed the places were they were born or lived into archetypal or symbolic spaces of unfulfilled desires or of pure childhood's dreams that were spoiled from the corrupted adulthood. It is in this point where journey experience unifies the world from sea to sea, gaming between memory and its absence that have to do with the living experience itself.

Journey texts and the archetype of journey

The travel myth creates a pattern that tries to capture the multiple rout of individual and collective human action in different eras and in different fields. Despite the complexity of mythical versions, common patterns exist in different cultures. It is these common recurring patterns that Jung (1989) saw as manifestations of what he called "the collective unconscious". Located in our psyche, it is the repository of a shared memory, an inheritance from our common ancestors, and world-views. Hence, our stories are "ritualized events" (Swartzman, 1979) or the public expressions of our private experiences. As Stone (1975) wrote for another occasion "like other collective enterprises, are collective representations: *they represent the arrangements of the society and historical era in which it is carried on*". To fully explore the matter of Archetypes would involve the thorough study of the modern social mythographers: Sir James Frazer, Carl Jung, and Joseph Campbell. Such a study is neither within the scope of this paper nor the reach of our knowledge. However, some attempt will be made to connect their ideas on archetypes. Frazer observed in *The Golden Bough*, (1966) his study of myth, magic, and ritual in primitive society, that there was an unexplainable similarity existed in certain tribal rituals in tribes so separate; no contact had ever taken place. He saw in these ritual patterns man's common imaginative connection to the universe he or she inhabits. Archetypes, for Jung, were forms of intuition, perception, and apprehension, inborn and located in the unconscious. Most commonly, he observed, these archetypes took the form of images, usually in our dreams, and occurred in connection with transitional stages of life, such as birth and death. Jung saw in the appearance of these images in myth stories –images like the Earth as a mother symbol, or the tree of life – factors so basic to human experience that they had to be recorded. Hence, our earliest myth stories are the first public expression of these private experiences. Joseph Campbell, in his *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, sees in the ancient hero-myths the eternal human struggle for identity (the hero-quest myth as "monomyth"). Campbell believes that since myths and religions have always followed the same archetypes, they can not be the exclusive "right" of any particular race, religion, or region. From this point of view journey man or journey woman embodies what Leski (webography) saw as Collective Human in human tragedy, as the Human that transcends his or her country, in order to express the collective soul and the feeling of justice of humanity. Having high hopes for his-her justifications, but having extreme possibilities life to let him-her down. Campbell also contends that in the modern world the ancient heritage of myth is in full decay: The meaning, which the great coordinating mythologies provided in order to be used by groups, has been lost; all meaning is now in the individual. Today, as he argues, similar to Porter criticism on modernity, because of science and technology, communication between consciousness and the unconscious is interrupted. He sees the modern "hero-deed" as the effort to bring light again to "the lost Atlantis of the coordinated souls". In fact, from this point of view, our interest, our search for the hero quester, the traveller, in modern literature, expresses an urge for a travel of itself as a mean to compromise the anxieties of modern times!

The common thread that ties the work of Frazer, Jung, and Campbell together is the idea that we all share recurring patterns of behaviour. It is in Northrop Frye's book on myth and archetypes, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (2000), where a systematic study of these recurring patterns and their relationship to literature exist. These brought the scientific findings of the mythographers to bear on literary criticism. It seems to us that Frye completes the cycle of thought begun with Frazer's observations of basic recurring patterns of ritual behavior. Jung's notion that mythology evolved by the impulse to express these common experiences, possessed by all men in the "collective unconscious", is completed by Frye, who saw in the recurring patterns of imagery in mythology the basis of all literature. It is precisely at that point, where Jung's unconscious archetypal images became consciously, expressed in myth, that Frye begins to evaluate the importance of these images in literature. For Frye archetypes are the recurring patterns of imagery (long distant places, like wastelands or biblical gardens), character types (scapegoats or heroes), events (rites of living, rites of passage), stories (monster-slaying), or themes (good versus evil) that provide the structural principles that give literature its "unity". It is not surprising that literary criticism has already pointed that in fact the topics of literature are limited, (the questions how each and every one of us deals with death, life, love, and power) the forms are numerical.

Archetypes, therefore, are those images that recur often enough in literature to become recognizable as elements of one's own imaginative experience, and yet elements of our collective hidden language and story. Consider, for example, the snake. For us, the snake as something evil or sinister needs no introduction. Classical and Biblical allusions abound. Snake is an archetype carrying the message that worth travelling places (or goals) are not easily reached. Serpents and (by analogy) dragons are constant villains. There is the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Perseus slays both a dragon and the Medusa, whose permanent hairdo is of writhing snakes. A serpent guards the Golden Fleece. St. George saves his people from the dragon. In chapter three of the book of Genesis, God ordains an eternal hatred between reptiles and humans. Even Carl Sagan called his study on the evolution of human intelligence, *The Dragons of Eden*, speculating about the implacable hostility between man and reptile, between man and his fears of liberated knowledge. He wonders whether it is just accidental that the common human sounds used to demand silence or attract attention sound like imitations of hissing snakes. Could it be also that dragons posed a real danger to our protohuman ancestors a few million years ago, and this terror was lodged in what Sagan calls the Repetilian-complex core of our brain, at a point in our development where we shared a common experience with reptiles? In the poems "The Snake", by Emily Dickinson, "Filling Station", by A.M. Klein, and "Snake", by D.H. Lawrence, we can see that the power of the archetype is still as compelling as ever. Yet, one's personal imagination and world view influences the readings. In the first two poems, each poet retains the traditional associations of snakes as evil. On the other hand, Lawrence chooses to reverse the archetypal meanings. He sees the snake as good, and blames the prejudice against them on "the voice of his education" – that is, on the archetype.

Yet, in front of a place gate, having a snake, or a dragon, or a reptile against, (having nature of compromises or power against) we can view the hero as yet another journeyman on the standard path taken by all mythological heroes in their search for identity. To realise that Thoreau's journey in his *Walden Pond*, where he reflects upon the "essential facts of life", and Hemingway's quest in his hunting saga *The Green Hills of Africa* for the "ideal, single perfect shot" share a common narrative pattern, is to begin to see a significance that goes beyond individual works, a significance that searches, through comparisons and controversies, what makes us "one".

Comparative analysis

Heroes and cultural symbols satisfy personal psychological desires, but they also serve larger, societal needs. From the one hand (and schematically speaking) we have the American's *placelessness or rootlessness*, the American sense of (no) belonging (through expansion) vs the Greek sense of intense belonging. In Greece the inventing "we" was based in opposition to the hegemony of Imperial

culture. Yet there was an inner opposition also, between an ideal past and a mediocre present. Despite history, modern Greece could not feed or protect or promote you. It was a country of heavy baggages standing at the end line of the experience. This had also political implications. As Kiberd (1995: 247) notices People are lulled by their leaders to “become drunk with remembrance”, as a way of reconciling people to the mediocrity of the present.

That created a dual literature also, either a literature of intense criticism and ironic perception (in political writers mostly) either of that yearn for the glorious past, through eternal symbols, that were used in many cases as a way of denouncing present, on the contrary with its use from the political agenda. We may find in various subtexts traces of an “Oedipal revolt” against the most “archaic mother”, (Kristeva, 1991): Greece in our case, and view the West (America as its leading country financially and military), as the symbolic father to whom we may address ourselves or transfer ourselves (migration). In Empirikos *The Great Eastern* (1990-1992) for instance, a Freudian (1995) hypersexual boat journey, full of phallic icons and sexual relations (a big scandal in its era) the tremendous hyperoceanic boat “The Great Eastern” travels from Liverpool in the peak of Victorianism to New York, symbolizing among others an attempt to a deep human liberation from family centricism and conservatism (“don’t they know we bring them the plague? as Freud wrote in New York port). And that came in contradiction not only to the Greek, but also to the values of the American society of that era, or at least what many people saw American society could be. For the Greek Nobel prize Winner Poet Od. Elytis that book was made by the material of psychoanalysis and the visions of a poet. All kinds of sexual expression exist (from masturbation to homosexuality, from paedophilia to fetishism etc) and reminding Fourier’s theory that “instincts could lead to a socialistic society”, Elytis called the *Great Eastern* as a political outopia (Elytis 1980: 68).

From the other side, the political reality made Greece, in this retrospect, to be transformed into the magic/mystical land of our childhood that has been transferred in our adult years into the lost space/land of an Eden that was simply never enough, yet an Eden that never loses its charm. Thousand of Greeks migrate to “new worlds” until the late 20th century when this migration wave reverse itself: “I said I ll go far away. Now. Holding whatever in my hand. My bag, my photographic machine, I’ll travel deep within my land, deep within my body to discover my true Self” What I give, what they give to me, and injustice always prevails, Golden air of life...” says Elytis in *The little mariner* (1992). “For Centuries now upon my blue volcanoes”, he writes in the poem “Exit” of the same book, describing that journey in Aegean sea. A sea-Eden that comparing our restricted nature with our unrestricted dreams, exercises a semiotic violence (like Brecht said we could name as violent not the waters of the river but the river shore that restricted them), and corresponds to the psychoanalytic concept of “archaic mother,” the unconscious source of carnage and violence. And yet also source of hope and desperation and Love, and Passion.

That passion has something addressed to a maternal figure in its core. Kazantzakis (2002), marking the conventional beginning of contemporary journey literature in Greece with his book *Travelling* (1926), rumbled throughout Greece in a yearn for “the cry of mother land” or for the “conscience of nature”. He distinguishes the notion of traveler from tourist, both as attitude and world view, urging to find the uniqueness of his land (any land) through the broadening of a world perception that can include all and omitting nothing, apart from fears and convictions. Any kind of place is the world in microscale, and yet unique, with its advantages and disadvantages. Extremities and narcissism, he declares, are human inventions because they are not naturally integrated to a world that is consisting of constant moving. Travel becomes inner, a way to find your secret self in the landscapes and the faces of others.

That otherness inside of a monocultural society is something that burdens the inner dialogue of Greekhood. “Wherever I go Greece hurts me!” wrote the Nobel prize winner Seferis (“With G. S. way” / *Poems*) as a reminding of the constant pain of memory. Greekhood does not seek the bridge, like Krane did, nor the Snake to symbolise travelling dispositions, but the boat to travel into the rough Aegean sea, searching Oedipus steps, like Matthew Arnold in the other Edge of old Europe. Despite contradictory inner proceedings, in the basic parametres, while Greece had to re- invented one and

for all from the past, America could be constantly re-invented from the future. Greek sense of travelling had to carry heavy luggage. The painful presence of an absence (of our glorious past status that contributed into a mediocre or even hard life), and the memory of that idealized country, is symbolized not into a snake as a gate keeper for instance, but into the Aegean sea, objectification of an open journey that leads nowhere but to the journey itself; "The boat that carries me is named Agony 937" ("With G. S. way" / *Poems*) wrote Seferis.

A deep concern in the Greek notion of travelling is the political separation, in which the social power promoted petit bourgeoisism and conservatism as fundamental tools in the naturalisation process of power and identity-construction in the post war Mediterranean, during the cold war period. For instance despite the fact well integrated poets like Elytis and Seferis "travelled" into the ancient waves of Aegean to find the tragic and glorious fate of our kind, and within it, the Greek sense of future through past, more political writers, like Anagnostakis or Ritsos, denounced it to deconstruct Greek sociopolitical status quo. Anagnostakis ("Days of 1969 B. C." *Poems 1941-1971*) puts a tragic smile on the boat (look the lyric above), making its destination to face present and not to hide behind the past, and in that present he finds the concentration camps that were built after the Greek civil war, and the alienation of new order and money that heat Greece in the 50's and 60's: "I cheat, you cheat, we cheat, wherever I travel Greece hurts me as the poet wrote, the Greece of the Greeks"; Ritsos (1981) ironically cries, "Oh yes! Once upon a time they were saying about an Aegean poetry! "Makronisos" (a concentration camp) 500 dead, "Yaros" 1000 disabled! Oh yes! They were saying once about an Aegean poetry!". Yet other symbolisms exist. Those symbolisms are humble in political poets like Ritsos, trying to construct a folk- "pupil's mythology" of contemporary Greece, away from super heroes, to denounce the narcissism of nationalistic order and upper classes. *The smoked saucepan*, symbol of farmer life in a pro-industrial society like Greece and humble voices, are used in order to claim people's voice back.

Schematically speaking (because similarities exist in all literatures) Greek poetry uses the eternal moon, or wise or singing bird to symbolise a philosophical notion of Liberty and inner Wisdom (Interestingly Afroamerican poet Maya Angelou in her *I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings* is one of the Americans that uses similar examples). American poetry uses the deer (a symbol of the Anglosaxon tradition from Byron to Scorsese's film) or even symbols of technological passage like the bridge, or the wild forests. Seferis speaks with the ancient dead, or the eternal moon or the singing bird (in the tragic island of Cyprus) to find answers in difficult human questions, and Elytis seeks eternal in the sun, in his first period of poetical creativity. Yet for those poets Greece, in a variety of examples, remains the cause to search the collective human enterprise and destiny, being the arhaic mother of the planet-earth. A mother that can never feed you (in food and knowledge) enough, (Ritsos, see also Kazan in America America) can never protect you enough, (Anagnostakis) can never ease her and your pains enough (Seferis), but despite all that can still acquire the symbolic status of a tremendous symbol, either through its philosophical darkness (Seferis) either through its natural light (Elytis). Greece is at the same time a heavy burden, a pride and a wound that can not be carried to its extent, but carries the human subject wherever he or she travels.

On the contrary, Wecter wrote for the Traveller of the new world: "America's country is in his understanding: he carries it wherever he goes" (webography). Yet, and despite all that, the American traveler, the hero-quester, is the inheritor of this tradition, with some important differences. American literature contains no hero who has completed his quest and returned to restore the perfect human community. "We have no Odysseus or Aeneas to give final form to the American myth." (webography) As Rank argues, one major cause for the incompleteness of the American myth is the lack of history. Virgil had the advantage of writing at the end of a long period of meaningful history. His *Aeneid* is really a celebration of a goal achieved the end of a long journey which began at Troy and ended with the apotheosis of Augustan Rome. Early American writers had no such historical advantage. That gave a very special sense of belonging and a very special sense of travelling. One major strain of the American tradition sees life and history as just beginning, having no burdens from the past... as the New Jerusalem. "America was perceived... as the original paradise, a second chance for the human race".

R.W.B. Lewis (1955: 208) observes in his *American Adam*, that is an Adam before the fall. An Emersonian figure, “the simple genuine self against the whole world”. This view of the genuine American hero is best represented in the works of Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman. Heroes in their own works, their quests took them into garden-like places where they sought to preserve the vision of America’s and new world’s destiny. Soon, however, time and space, cities modernity and capitalism, brought an end to the vision of innocence and newness. America was moving west, and conflict inevitably arose at the point where the advancing frontier and the wilderness collided. It is from the opposition of civilization and the wilderness that the American hero-quester emerges. What the hero felt when he could no longer retreat into the womb-like world of the Western Frontier, is the feeling of inevitability that compels the hero to face his fate or destiny. And understands his path can not be different from the one the previous voyagers took, from Ulysses to Thoreau. Thus this destiny is transferred into the destiny of human neglect and revengeful disappointment.

Yet comparing the two case studies we can observe that it is not just that in Greece travelling was connected with a notion of past, while in America with a notion of future. It is also that different political manipulation exist, as the overprojection of the past in political-colonised countries like Greece, was not only a way to accept present mediocrity, but even further a way to promote passivity and a certain notion of “citizenship” that denounced journey itself and its questions in a way! This procedure equally promoted an internalization of an “otherness” of the self, according to the standards that have been imposed by the hegemonic cultures, alienating your very relation with the past. A past full of philosophical agonies and an active notion of citizenship, that falsely you claim you wanted to preserve.... This division in Greek soul still marks Greekhood, despite the fact the famous Greek light could always be used (like in Elytis later period) as a return into a fundamental darkness. In Greek case study you could not beginning a new, you had to continue (successfully or not it was and is an extra burden) the road taken literary thousand years ago.

In the Americanhood, this sense of beginning a new gave rise to a new type of traveller. He had shaken off the baggage of the past, and could be seen standing at the threshold of experience, looking hopefully out at the Westward future which lay before him. Characteristic of the new hero is his innocence, identified most readily with, as R.W.B. Lewis observes in his *American Adam*, Adam before the fall. Soon he has to face journey out of paradise. And quest the same old return to an Itaka that is allways less that it should! Refugee becomes his innocence. Refugee from the contemporary, alienating self.

In Greece the refugee was the return to the womb of the symbolic past. Sikelianos travels the hidden path from Athens to Eleysina, searching for religious mysticism of antiquity (like Frazer in *The Golden Brounch*), personified the old psyche of “cosmos” in the forces of nature, like for instance the bear. Of course he is the poet that chooses to translate Whitman in Greek Language, finding the inner connection of brilliant minds and deep souls. *Indeed, Leaves of Grass* (1980, first ed. 1885) tried to capture the scope of the American experience, but Whitman was limited to his age, and, however remarkably he captures the quality of response to that age, his vision was incomplete. Even *The Bridge* (1930), Hart Crane’s epic poem about America, (webography, Nawrocki, 2006) which was a deliberate attempt to complete the American myth, finally fails. His use of the Brooklyn Bridge was the mythic symbol of man’s travelling from one place to another. His quest for unity with the natural world around him lacked the authenticity and scope of a true epic-poem like the *Aeneid*, which provided the inspiration for Crane’s poem. Instead, in a pragmatic culture, the bridge settled back into what it has always been for Americans, an iron passage from Manhattan to Brooklyn and back. Perhaps this limitation says a lot about the eternal failure of each Jew Jerusalem to rescue humanity from our dystopias and miseries.

What is remarkable about the stories of initiation, though, is the feeling of inevitability that compels the hero to face his fate or destiny. Together with the sense of “out there” or a “place entered into”, which characterizes the testing-ground place for the quester, is the correlative sense of “something that must be done”. For the American traveller the choice of whether to enter the wilderness or not becomes a decision of whether to confront reality or not, thus a symbol of a passage

from the neverland of Childhood, that unspoiled era, to the compromises and the dis-honesty of adulthood (Karasavvidou, 1998).

On the other hand a reverse rout exists: Sometimes the inevitability of a journey does not come from a quest to avoid reality in order to find a child-like place of innocence. It comes from some inner compulsion to obey a "law", according to one's own nature – to follow what Abraham Maslow (*Toward a Psychology of Being*) calls our "intrinsic conscience". This compulsion to be true to your own nature, the sense of "calling", is what forces Henderson, in S. Bellow's novel, to follow the Siren-like call (being a connection with Homer's *Odyssey*, archetype): "I want, I want" this inner voice is saying toward a journey to get to know Africa. Thus, what is sacrificed due to knowledge in each of these quest stories is innocence: the unspoiled comfort, protection, ease, and simple pleasures of childhood. Not only because the traveller must separate himself from his/hers every-day place, having initiation as one of the loneliest experiences a human being can undergo. But also because he /she becomes an "adult" through this procedure and the "getting to know" experiences it brings with it.

In all cases, the self-delusion of the journey in literature (and perhaps in life too) is identified with the immemorial age-long-biblical scheme: "Ignorance=Blessedness". That, however, is ablated so harshly from (and by) the real life. The nostalgia of a true, deep place that exists "out there" it is consist by a metaphysical notion for something that slept away, and appears peculiar interests and expressions in each national literature. But equally so, in both Greek and American examples, these attempts have also created different pieces of the "palimsiston", different angles of the same mythology that human kind shares, expressing our eternal journey(s).

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