

*Waldemar Zacharasiewicz*

## Encounters and Representations beyond Borders

One of the major interests of the distinguished philologist, Slovenian scholar Professor Stanonik, whose achievements we commemorate today, were the ties between this region in Central Europe and North America and Great Britain, and so it seems appropriate to reflect on the reality of these connections and the encounters with people and landscapes which were involved, and also the way in which they were perceived and represented in literary texts by North American visitors.

After a brief look at the scholarly approach to this complex phenomenon by practitioners in the subdiscipline of imagology and some remarks on the growth and study of travel literature produced by American writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was of considerable interest to Professor Stanonik, I will consider the pioneer role of Nathaniel P. Willis, who offered accounts of Europe beyond the well-trodden paths and also produced fiction set in this southern part of Central Europe.

For half a century, scholars, especially in comparative literary studies and in the disciplines focusing on the various national literatures in Europe, have analyzed the factors which have shaped the depiction of other societies and their allegedly typical features. The broad interest in travel literature has directed attention to the detailed accounts of the encounters between visitors from abroad, possibly overseas, and the locals in various places visited by them. The critical reading of countless reports has helped to establish the mechanisms which are at work in such encounters and in many reports based upon them. The subdiscipline of comparative literary and cultural studies called Imagology has become an important field of research.<sup>1</sup> Many book publications since the late 1960s, including numerous studies by F. K. Stanzel, Günther Blaicher

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the pioneer study by Hugo Dyserinck (Aix-la-chapelle), "Zum Problem der 'images' and 'mirages' und ihrer Untersuchung im Rahmen der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft," *Arcadia* 1966, 107–20, which initiated a critical look at the presentation of national characters and their alleged typical features and argued that such an analysis was a legitimate task of comparative literature.

and others<sup>2</sup> and a critical survey edited by Joep Leerssen and Manfred Beller,<sup>3</sup> have demonstrated the assumptions and prejudices held by travelers, which they shared with their readers. The insights of social psychology have familiarized concepts such as auto- and hetero-stereotypes, and have provided tools for an understanding of the ascription of certain characteristics—qualities, habits, and features – to individuals allegedly representing national or ethnic types. It has become a commonplace that, generally, visitors judge everything from the perspective of their own culture, and that ethnocentrism is thus a habit of most, if not all, observers. In this respect, the work of imagologists, and I have myself contributed to their effort<sup>4</sup>, is basically a project of the Enlightenment, with its stress on the universality of human nature and the reduction of the differences between individuals and groups all faced with the challenges of human nature.

In this context, I should like to refer briefly to a problem which manifested itself at a conference organized by young scholars of literature and cultural studies which I attended in Vienna a few years ago (in April 2018). More experienced

<sup>2</sup> See among others, F. K. Stanzel's essay "Der literarische Aspekt unserer Vorstellungen vom Charakter fremder Völker," *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 111. Jg. (1974), 63–82, and his more extensive treatment of the issue in the monograph *Europäer: Ein imagologischer Essay*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1997. Earlier Günther Blaicher, Eichstätt, who was later to publish a comprehensive account of the perception and representation of Germany in English / British literature (1992) had convened an interdisciplinary conference on studies of stereotypes and clichés in anglophone literature(s). Its proceedings appeared under the title *Erstarrtes Denken*, Tübingen: Narr, 1987. At the Sorbonne, Daniel-Henri Pageaux also advocated the analysis of literary and cultural images of countries and their people as part of the field of comparative literature: "De l'imagerie culturelle à l'imaginaire," in *Précis de littérature comparée*, Pierre Brunel and Yves Chevrel, eds., Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, 133–161.

<sup>3</sup> The leading voice in the scholarly debate on images of nations, their typology and the evolution of images, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has been that of the Dutch comparatist Joep Leerssen, originally a disciple of Hugo Dyserinck. Cf. among his numerous contributions to imagology his astute, penetrating essay "The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey," *Poetics Today* 21.2 (Summer 2000), 267–92, and his historical survey, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006. Manfred Beller, a comparatist and scholar in German literature joined him in producing the substantial handbook, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. Beller had earlier brought out a collection of essays on the representation of the other in literature in English with the title *L'immagine dell'altro e l'identità nazionale: metodi di ricerca letteraria*, Manfred Beller, ed., Bergamo: Edizione Schena Editore, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my early review of research on the dissemination of stereotypes in literature, published in 1982: "National Stereotypes in Literature in the English Language: A Review of Research," *REAL* 1 (1982), 75–120. Cf. also my monograph *Images of Germany in American Literature*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007, as well as the collection of my pertinent essays in *Imagology Revisited*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.

imagologists were surprised by the inclination of speakers from countries and cultures which had to struggle to emancipate themselves from domination by too powerful neighbors, e.g. in the Baltic countries, to affirm, embrace and articulate positive autostereotypes in their research. While it is understandable that these scholars showed a tendency to adopt such a position, their practice ran counter to the basic project of imagologists. Will this trend be visible in the proceedings of the conference soon to appear in a volume entitled “New Perspectives on Imagology” published by Brill?<sup>5</sup>

During the last few centuries the advances and the progress in means of transportation have facilitated the encounters also of average persons, the tourists, with more or less remote regions and countries, and have permitted personal impressions there. These encounters have, however, not eliminated the human inclination to judge everything from one’s own perspective. Yet studies of travel literature have shown that despite the tendency towards ethnocentrism distant places may also have a positive appeal, and there is, no doubt, also the inclination to romanticize at least some remote places.<sup>6</sup> They seem to offer a more romantic atmosphere and are exempt from the commonplace everyday experience. This fact has also contributed to the popularity of travel literature and the fictional representation of distant / foreign countries. That it was often the different, at times simply the exotic scenery rather than the strange customs in foreign countries which appealed to visitors and their accounts may be granted.

In the itineraries of the sons of noblemen from Britain, for instance, on their Grand Tour, which represents a significant part of anglophone travel literature, there was a clear preference for the privileged countries in the West of Europe:

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<sup>5</sup> My necessarily brief examination of this book *New Perspectives on Imagology*, published in Leiden by Brill in Nov. 2022, ed. by Katharina Edtstadler, Sandra Folie and Gianna Zocco, indicates that the predominantly young contributors, scholars at the beginning of their careers, have approached imagology largely from the angle of anti-colonial positions and are eager to include intersectionality in their analyses. While they originally intended to distance themselves from the alleged Eurocentric basis of imagology and while they give more attention to the images of regions on the margins of Europe and beyond, they show an awareness that in a time of re-emerging nationalisms, populism and xenophobia imagological studies are certainly relevant. They acknowledge in their introduction to the collection of 21 articles the need to be aware of the complex history of this sub-discipline of comparative literature studies, but segments of its evolution are not yet fully recognized in their treatment, even though both Leerssen and Beller have contributed to this volume.

<sup>6</sup> On the ambivalence in the representation of foreign settings and peoples cf. the studies by James Buzard, “A Continent of Pictures: Reflections on the ‘Europe of Nineteenth-Century Tourists,’” *PMLA* 108 (1993), 30–44, and *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to ‘Culture’, 1800–1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, and the observations by William W. Stowe in his monograph *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

France, perhaps the Netherlands, and also Italy are the preferred destinations, even though the religious division of Europe since the Reformation imposed certain restrictions in order to prevent the young travelers from being corrupted by the religious habits of the Papists<sup>7</sup>. The popular Grand Tour was also adopted by the social elite in the British colonies in America and then in the young American Republic until the Napoleonic Wars made transatlantic journeys too dangerous. When peace was restored in 1814–1815, a generation of graduates from American universities and colleges eagerly decided to visit the Old World. The publication of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* with its thorough revision of the presentation of Germany as a backward and crude country helped to change the traditional pattern of the Grand Tour also of American travelers,<sup>8</sup> and the experiences of young American graduates from the New England states and from South Carolina in the universities in Göttingen and Berlin in the north of Germany and in other institutions of higher learning, prompted the inclusion of the countries east of the Rhine in the itineraries of American visitors. The participation of George Ticknor and George Bancroft, Edward Everett and Henry Dwight in the seminar courses in Göttingen and Berlin served as a model for many more in the ensuing decades. Their experiences triggered a revision of the traditional stereotypes of Germans as intellectually and culturally backward and clumsy in comparison with the French, which had major consequences that imagological studies have demonstrated.<sup>9</sup> The discovery of the beauties of the Rhine valley led to the journeys of literally hundreds of thousands of British travelers to this region in the late 1820s and 1830s, and in their wake also to the advent of many American visitors<sup>10</sup>. Among the visitors were also future fiction writers and authors of travel books who discovered the appeal of the German

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. the comprehensive survey of the tradition of such journeys from the angle of sociology in Justin Stagl, *Eine Geschichte der Neugier: Die Kunst des Reisens 1550–1800*, Wien: Böhlau, 2002. The “grand tour” of British travelers was earlier discussed in Geoffrey Trease, *The Grand Tour: A History of the Golden Age of Travel*, London: Heinemann, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> The first study of the reorientation of American graduate students to Germany following the reevaluation of this country was provided in Orie William Long's *Literary Pioneers: Early American Explorers of European Culture* (1935), New York: Russell, 1963.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. my discussion of these American travelers and the impact of their experiences in Central Europe in *Das Deutschlandbild in der amerikanischen Literatur*, Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1998, and in more condensed form in *Images of Germany in American Literature*, Iowa City: University of Iowa P. 2007.

<sup>10</sup> On the new appeal of the Rhine valley and the rapid increase in tourism see the essays in *The Rhine: National Tensions, Romantic Visions*, ed. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, Leiden: Brill, 2017.

landscape, its historical sites and the literature rooted in the region, among them Washington Irving.<sup>11</sup>

Of major importance in this context as a representative of a second generation of American students collecting personal impressions in Germany, was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.<sup>12</sup> Before accepting a professorial position in Harvard, he spent many months in various parts of Europe, which he also then depicted in *Outre-Mer*, a kind of counterpart to Irving's *Sketch Book*. This narrative based on his first grand tour through the Latin countries of Europe between 1826 and 1829 only touched perfunctorily on his return journey through the Habsburg provinces before a final brief month in Dresden and Göttingen. His second journey to Europe mirrored in *Hyperion* (1839) focused on his melancholy experiences along the Rhine, following the death of his wife in Rotterdam, and then on his impressions in Switzerland and in Austria. This semi-autobiographical romance, which was later used almost like a guidebook by American tourists visiting the Rhine valley, also refers to individuals from this part of Central Europe and contains allusions to locations in Carniola. It includes an ostensible interview in St. Wolfgang in the Salzkammergut with an enthusiastic clergyman. "Brother Bernardus's" account of his religious vocation from his childhood in "the land of Krain" has attracted the interest of academics, among them the distinguished scholar whose memory we celebrate today<sup>13</sup>. He has demonstrated the adaptation of the source of this narrative – the work of the Slovenian theologian Andrej Smolnikar, who had been eager to realize his visionary mission in the USA, where he published his autobiographical account *Denkwürdige Ereignisse im Leben* in Boston earlier in 1839.<sup>14</sup> Prof. Stanonik's erudite analysis has also

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<sup>11</sup> He had benefited from his readings of German legends and fairy tales, and transplanted some of these stories to his home region in the Hudson Valley, which he integrated into his *Sketch Book*. In other later collections of sketches and stories he presented, e.g. in *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), Italian settings and scenes and considered integrating some of the material gathered on another journey in 1822 in a sketchbook on Germany, which, however, never materialized. On Irving's response to and use of the landscape and material encountered in his journeys in Central Europe, see my essay "Sketches of a Traveler: Observations on a Dominant Theme in Washington Irving's Work", rptd. in *Imagology Revisited*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010, 191–207.

<sup>12</sup> On Longfellow's travels and temporary residence in Central Europe and their reflection in his literary work, see *Das Deutschlandbild*, 43–46.

<sup>13</sup> For the relevant description of Longfellow's encounter with a clergyman from Carniola in the Salzkammergut, in 'Saint Wolfgang', see *Hyperion*, book iv, chapters vi–vii, in rptd. ed. Fairfield, IA: 1stworldlibrary, 292–302.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Janez Stanonik's essay on "Longfellow and Smolnikar", *Sodobnost* 12 (1964), no. 5, 385–403 and no. 6, 524–542, and *Acta Neophilologica* 1 (1986): 3–36.

traced other borrowings from or references to Smolnikar in the later work of Longfellow, the immensely versatile writer, who very successfully used various verse forms and collected and translated poems reflecting various regions of this part of Europe.

But a true pioneer of references to this specific region and its representation was Longfellow's contemporary Nathaniel P. Willis. While the traditional interest in France and Italy continued to hold the attention of general readers, Willis definitely moved beyond the well-trodden paths and initiated a dramatically increased interest in and demand for descriptions of foreign settings in and on the fringes of Central Europe, and also on the manners and customs there. He had been born in 1806 into a strict Congregational family in Portland, Maine, and had been a student at Yale University until his graduation in 1827.<sup>15</sup> He then gained a reputation as a dandy while working in Boston as a young journalist for the newly founded *American Monthly Magazine*, and afterwards, in Nov. 1831, as a "prodigal son", decided to go abroad as the foreign correspondent of the *New York Mirror*.<sup>16</sup> For several years he reported regularly from Europe, where he acquired both French and Italian. According to the study by Thomas N. Baker he managed to provide his material so successfully that by the 1840s, he could count himself among the nation's highest paid writers and "most influential artists of fashion and feelings."<sup>17</sup>

Willis's contributions to the *New York Mirror* under the heading "First Impressions of Europe" offer very colorful accounts, which were reprinted by many local newspapers and later, in 1835, collected in the three volumes of

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<sup>15</sup> On this highly successful writer in his time see the entry on him by Karen Schramm in *Dictionary of Literary Biography 183: American Travel Writers, 1776–1864*, 2 vols. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997. 183, 332–41, after the not fully reliable monograph by Cortland P. Auser, *Nathaniel Parker Willis*, New York: Twayne, 1969. Schramm and Auser drew on the early biography by Henry A. Beers, *Nathaniel Parker Willis*, Boston / Cambridge MA: Houghton Mifflin / Riverside P. 1885.

<sup>16</sup> His review of Henry Dwight's detailed account of Northern Germany for the *American Monthly Magazine* may have provided some impetus to consider visiting Europe and moving beyond the borders of the traditional *grand tour*. Cf. the recognition of this inspiration also for a livelier description of foreign settings, in Auser, 34ff.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas N. Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Literary Fame*, Oxford UP 1998 /99. The study places Willis in the context of his time and examines his initially very successful reports on European higher society, where he seems to have been lionized, especially in England, but was then also severely blamed for his gossip and indiscreet renditions of private conversations. Beers had already characterized Willis as the "most popular, best paid, and ... most successful magazinist that America had yet seen." (Schramm 339).

*Pencillings by the Way*. His accounts from Paris<sup>18</sup> and London were followed by vignettes of the Italian cities Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice, and of a cruise in the company of American naval officers along the Dalmatian coast. He takes a spontaneous decision in Trieste, which he attributes to the fact that Vienna “was but some 400 miles distant and I might never be so near it again,” to take the *Eilwagen* to travel from Trieste to Vienna,<sup>19</sup> and he presents his observations of his fellow travelers from various national groups and on various stops on the journey<sup>20</sup>.

When they reach the Duchy of Carniola, it appears to him

very unlike Italy and France and very like New-England. Every village has its small white church with a tapering spire. Large manufactories cluster on the water-courses, the small rivers are rapid and deep, the horses large and strong, the barns immense, the crops heavy, the people grave and hard at work and not a pauper by the post together. We are very far north, too, and the climate is like New-England.<sup>21</sup>

Afterwards, the group dines at Laybach, called the capital of Illyria, with a reference to the short-lived Napoleonic political arrangement. Again, the city reminds the traveler “strongly of America. It was like the more retired streets of Portland or Portsmouth.” (309)

While his proficiency in French and Italian enabled him to converse with natives, he is unable to communicate in the languages of Central Europe, and the “Illyrian language” does not find favor in the eyes or ears of the visitor, as he dismisses it as “the most inarticulate succession of sounds I had ever heard.” (309) Equally, he later expresses his disrespect for the tongue of the locals in Styria. “Certainly the German is the most unmusical language of Babel.” (318) Like other travelers from overseas he evinces the arrogance of the uninformed

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<sup>18</sup> His graphic depictions of entertainment at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris during the cholera epidemic include grotesque accounts of eerie extravagant fancy-dress balls, alluding to the epidemic, and anticipating in some fashion Edgar Allan Poe’s “Masque of the Red Death”, vol. 1 of *Pencillings by the Way*, 2f.

<sup>19</sup> Originally recounted in the column “First Impressions of Europe,” the journey undertaken occurred ostensibly in July, the report was publ. in Dec. 1833, as no. 71, in *The New-York Mirror*, vol. 10, 188, rptd. in *Pencillings*, vol. 1, as letter 24, 303f.

<sup>20</sup> His companions are “a merchant from Gratz, a fantastical and poor Hungarian count, a Corfu shopkeeper and an Italian ex-militaire and present apothecary, going to Vienna to marry a lady whom we had never seen.” He travels on, being pestered by the incessant smoking of three disgusting pipes but enjoys a very satisfactory stop at the low door of a German tavern, “a place of cleanliness and an excellent breakfast” (*Pencillings* 305f.)

<sup>21</sup> “First Impressions” no. 71, rptd. in *Pencillings*, vol. 1, 307–309.

ethnocentric, and his interest in and positive response to the foreign landscape does not extend to the languages spoken there, or the diet that is served in inns<sup>22</sup>.

More significant are the impressions collected in the city of Vienna<sup>23</sup> where Willis enters “the splendid Church of Saint-Etienne where a mass was being chanted”; he admits that he had seldom felt “the spirit of a place of worship so strong upon me” before he did some sightseeing in Vienna (*Pencillings* vol. 1, 322, and vol. 2, 1–30).

After his return trip from Vienna to Trieste Willis makes an excursion, which takes him to the grotto at Adelsberg, which is misspelled as Adelsburg. It clearly inspired Willis so that it later figures prominently in his fiction and arguably helped to promote this spectacular cave as a destination on the itinerary of American travelers. As Willis seems to have rewritten and reused his accounts of the stages of his journeys in several books, the details are not totally clear but it seems that he was in the company of the family of the commodore who was his host on a journey on an American frigate round Italy, and later to the Levante.

The account of the visit to the cave in *Pencillings*<sup>24</sup> includes the description of the long hike to the site of the “grotto”, which is entered through an iron gate; accompanied by guides with many torches, the visitor walks (40–41) through impressive natural corridors roofed with stalactites “of a snowy white [which] sparkled brilliantly in the light of the torches.” He is overwhelmed by the “wildness of the scene” (40). “We soon emerged in a vast cavern, whose height, though we had twenty torches, was lost in the darkness. The river rushed dimly below us.” There are further impressions which overwhelm the visitor:

We ... entered a long succession of natural corridors, roofed with stalactites [...] the glittering roofs [and ] fantastic columns lit by the torches of the guides [...] seemed like the brilliant frost-work of a crystaliced cavern of ice. (42).

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<sup>22</sup> When he finally arrives in Graz, though he is impressed by the mountain, “a pyramid in the midst of the broad and level plain”. When he is without his friend, that is the Hungarian count, and cannot order a proper dinner, he receives instead “a huge dish of cabbage cooked in some filthy oil and graced with a piece of beef.” Apparently, he had received his food with pumpkin seed oil, the regional specialty in Styria. *Pencillings*, vol. 1, 313–17.

<sup>23</sup> His sightseeing in the following weeks includes the treasury, the Capuchin monastery with its vault, the Belvedere, the cafés, which are visited by young women without the need to have protection, the Liechtenstein and Schönbrunn palaces. Originally in no. 72 of his columns of *First Impressions of Europe*, publ. Dec. 1833 and Jan. 1834, rptd. reshaped into three letters in *Pencillings*, vol. 2, 1–40f.

<sup>24</sup> The following quotes and detailed references in the main text are from the republished account in *Pencillings*, vol. 2.

The visitors are then led to a magnificent spacious hall “ornamented beyond all art with glittering spars” (43). This cavern is said to be “used once a year on the occasion of a certain Illyrian festa” (43), as it offers ample space for an orchestra and for the preparation of food. “I can imagine nothing more magnificent than such a scene.” (43) The hike leads further past a room like a chapel with a pulpit, and a long gallery to the most beautiful sight:

From the cornice of a long gallery hung a thin translucent sheet of spar, in the graceful and waving folds of a curtain [...] The most singular part of it was the fringe [...] A most delicate rose-tint faded gradually down like the last flush of a sunset through a silken curtain. Had it been a work of art, done in alabaster, and stained with the pencil, it would have been thought admirable. (44)

The tone of the description indicates the deep impression of the spectacular site on Willis, which inspired him to use this setting in a most dramatic way in a long romantic story included in his volume *Romance of Travel, Comprising Tales of Five Lands*. (1840)<sup>25</sup>

In this story, entitled “*The Bandit of Austria*” (*Romance of Travel* 159–223), he also drew on literary modes shaped by exponents of romanticism, and contributed himself to the fashion of narratives about heroic outlaws and famous pirates and their spectacular feats. There is more than a touch of the tradition of Gothic literature, an echo of the popularity of stories of pirates and bandits and of Oriental paraphernalia. One senses a link to Byron’s semi-autobiographical narrative of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and to *Don Juan*, which had captured the imagination of many, including also of Americans, to whom the fates of Byronic heroes appealed.<sup>26</sup> But the tragic atmosphere seems to be diffused in the evolution of the events in this story.

In “*The Bandit of Austria*” the reader is thus entertained by a series of dramatic adventures blending several literary trends.<sup>27</sup> The events in this fairly long story, comprising five chapters, are rendered from the angle of an Englishman

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<sup>25</sup> This collection of stories and travel essays, which was brought out in New York by Colman, was republished in the same year under the title *Loiterings of Travel* in London by Longman. The following quotes are from the New York edition.

<sup>26</sup> That Willis used Byron’s works during his journey to the Levante in 1833 as a kind of Bae-deker, and that his letters were filled with references to Byron has been noted in studies of his career and work, cf. Auser 40.

<sup>27</sup> This story was apparently sufficiently interesting for Continental readers to be included in a German translation of Willis’s short fiction, which appeared with the title *Komische Geschichten von N. Parker Willis* (Leipzig 1857). “Der österreichische Räuber” is included in vol. 2, 39–110.

named Mr. Tyrrell, the first-person narrator, who is accompanied by a handsome 16-year-old valet named Percie, the son of a beautiful seamstress in London.

The story opens with the early-morning arrival of the two in Vienna, and takes them through breathtaking happenings in Vienna on a route from the imperial city through Gratz and Laybach to the residence of a Mynheer Von Krakenpate in Planina, and then to the gorgeously lit grotto of Adelsberg/Postojna, where the climax of the story is reached.

Immediately after his arrival in Vienna, called by the first-person narrator “this Paris of Germany”, Mr. Tyrrell enters the Cathedral of St. Etienne, where the dangerous encounters on the way begin with a challenge to a duel prompted by the gallant interference of Mr. Tyrrell in the Cathedral, where a ravishingly beautiful young lady is accosted by a passionate admirer during her prayers. There is only a brief respite after Tyrrell is, at the last moment, rescued on the following morning in the duel outside the city, to which he had been challenged by his adversary, by the intervention of a stranger, who kills the opponent and then takes the two English individuals to a remarkable old house with a splendid garden with exotic flowers in the center of the city (*Romance of Travel* 167–71). Their host turns out to be Yvain, the husband of the mysterious beautiful female, named Iminild. He had reacted violently to the uncalled-for attentions of her many admirers after having himself eloped with her from the chateau of her strict Hungarian father, Count Ildefert. But Yvain himself is a notorious bandit, who with his band of highwaymen has specialized in stealing the well-guarded steeds from the Emperor’s stables. He has been pursued to his secret residence in the city, and, during this short encounter with the two Englishmen, is surprised and surrounded by “gens-d’armes”, who have traced him to this home, and he is killed. Before his death he entrusts the protection of Iminild to Mr. Tyrrell (184).

But it seems that she does not need protection, as Mr. Tyrrell and Percie, who seems to have fallen violently in love with the young widow, realize soon after being set at liberty themselves after four days of arrest in their hotel, for Iminild is the master of daring disguises, which flabbergast them. On the following stages of their journey towards the Adriatic Sea, her loyal “troop” of highwaymen appear again and again to carry out her instructions. In the city of Graz, which pleases Mr. Tyrrell, as it did the author, because of the citadel on the hill in the center of the city, Iminild, appears disguised as a traveling apprentice from Germany, and insists on promenading with Mr. Tyrrell in a public space, listening to the fine military music there (191–95). Later she changes roles with Tyrrell’s valet Percie, who has to follow them in a regular post coach, masquerading in a petticoat as a girl, named Kunigunde von Krakenpate, while the Countess Iminild herself has taken the part of the valet. She tests Mr. Tyrrell’s

patience and courage by later insisting on “promenading the broad avenues” of Ljubljana/Laybach (200).

The culmination point is reached in the drama when the two English individuals are taken in a carriage drawn by remarkable horses to the rural retreat of Mr. Krakenpate, meet Iminild dressed in an embroidered Albanian costume, and are then led through a secret gate into the grotto of Postojna (205–9). The gorgeous spectacle there surprises the visitors, where a blaze of light from innumerable lamps illuminates extensive caves with stalactites and stalagmites (210–13). After a descent to the banks of a large subterranean river and up a staircase to a richly carpeted platform, a rich banquet served by black slaves has been prepared for them. Later Mr. Tyrrell is shown the treasure hoard acquired by the bandits, in an atmosphere akin to Oriental narratives of *Thousand and One Nights* (216–17).

The reader cannot miss the links to the fashion of sensuous Oriental stories, and might wonder about the closeness of this text to the interest also in countries and provinces adjacent to the Ottoman Empire, and the contemporaneous spread of Orientalism, and examined by Edward Said. One might also ask oneself about the proximity of this text to what Maria Todorova has labelled Balkanism<sup>28</sup>. Considering the fact that the region of Slovenia / Carniola with the caves is very rarely regarded as part of the Balkans, it is rather the Oriental dimension in its Byronic form, which comes out in the fanciful set scene when Percie as the prospective partner of Iminild is suddenly in grave danger as a rival appears.

Another violent and potentially tragic encounter threatens when Tranchcoeur, a famous corsair, and now the jealous rival for Iminild’s hand, arrives in this “robbers’ paradise”. He ventures to kill Percie, in whom he has correctly recognized a new rival for the love of the countess, though he at first desists because of her intervention (218–21). The loyal servants of the countess then wound the assailant, who in a passion has attacked and thrown Percie into the river; but the latter survives and rejoins the young Hungarian countess and his former employer Tyrrell. They return to the house of Mr. Krakenpate and then travel to Venice, where Iminild, who has abandoned her role as the queen of the robbers but retained her treasures, marries Percie, while Mr. Tyrrell, now without his valet, resumes his travels (223).

It is apparent that Willis’s dramatic orchestration of the climax of the story—the theatrical atmosphere in the grotto created in the story – was inspired by his earlier visit, and the verbal echoes of his account in the travel book suggest an elaboration of his experience with borrowings from fashionable oriental tales. The imagologist cannot fail to notice an extensive use of stereotypes

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997.

(slow-moving German postilions, passionate Hungarians and African slaves are among the characters) and of several literary traditions with romantic potential in Willis's story. There is no deeper, complex perception of the culture in the region or a comprehension of the languages spoken there, nor any attempt to do justice to the manifestations of ethnic culture, and thus no great claims can be made for the artistic quality of the story. But Willis as a popular writer seems to have provided a significant example of the contemporary fashion of combining orientalism with traits of the popular representation of piracy in this story, which represents a piece of evidence for the gradual inclusion of settings in Central Europe outside the well-trodden paths.

One might also ask whether his visit and use of the grotto was an isolated fact or whether there were similar contemporary accounts he may have drawn upon. A study of contemporary correspondences offers some hints in this respect in the search for supportive or inspiring material. *The Early Letters of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* contain in a letter from Vienna, written 14 May 1851, a description of a visit to the cave in Postojna.<sup>29</sup> In this letter reference is made to John Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany*,<sup>30</sup> published in London in 1837. This volume, which appeared only a few years before Willis's story and half a decade after his visit to the cave, contains a detailed and appreciative account of the "cave of Adelsberg." It offers concrete advice of how to enter the cave and pays tribute to its glorious subterraneous halls with the stalactites and stalagmites; it also praises the sequence of caves as "the most magnificent of all the temples which nature has built for herself in the region of the night" (289–90).

The spectacular system of caves had also been the object of an entry in another, earlier guidebook, which had brought a good part of Central Europe to the attention of anglophone travelers: John Russell's *Tour in Germany, and some of the Southern Provinces of the Austrian Empire* (1825)<sup>31</sup>, includes in its last chapter of vol. 2 a description of Carniola, with Adelsberg and the Karst figuring as the final pieces. A strong recommendation to include a visit to the sublime spectacle of the caves is provided, and the fairly recent discovery of the true extent of this glorious phenomenon is reported. It also appears that the

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. *The Early Letters of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, to his Sister Louisa, 1850–51*, London, 1925. The relevant letter is on pp. 186–88.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. John Murray, *Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany, being a guide to Bavaria, Austria, Tyrol, Salzburg, Styria & the Austrian and Bavarian Alps*, London, 1837.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. John Russell, *A Tour in Germany, and some of the Southern Provinces of the Austrian Empire, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822, in Two Volumes*, Edinburgh, A. Constable and Co., 1825, vol. 2, 396–405.

tribute to the magnificent natural scene contained in Murray's guidebook is taken verbatim from Russell's extensive description (402)<sup>32</sup>.

Considering the dramatic portrayal of the subterranean encounter and the gorgeous spectacle of the caves in "The Bandit of Austria", one might wonder whether Willis's description may have contributed to advertising the beauties of the grotto. One might speculate whether it was ever used for promoting tourism in Central Europe, which had, as a matter of fact, picked up in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Corroborating evidence for the contemporary appeal of the caves of Postojna is furnished by a popular guide-book dedicated to Italy: George Stillman Hillard's *Six Months in Italy*, was first published in Boston in 1853 and appeared in its 5<sup>th</sup> ed. in 1856. It captures the experiences of its author, a prominent lawyer and associate and friend of Longfellow's, who later served in the Massachusetts legislature, during a *Giro d'Italia*. It is significant that the reflection of his extensive European itinerary, undertaken in 1847, focusses on Italy and excludes two months spent in German-speaking lands, which had meanwhile been described by many American visitors; but it inserts a visit outside Italy,<sup>33</sup> offering a tribute to the spectacular caves of Postojna / Adelsberg. Only then does Hillard continue his description of Italy. This "digression" appears as a clear sign that the site of the Cave of Postojna had come to be an almost obligatory destination in the increasingly popular itineraries beyond the former borders of Grand Tours of Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>32</sup> Russell also refers to an even earlier description of the spectacular grotto, admittedly before the fairly recent discovery of its true extension, in Franz Sartori's book *Neueste Reise durch Östereich ob und unter der Ens, Salzburg ...* 3 vols., Wien: Anton Doll, 1811.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. George Stillman Hillard's *Six Months in Italy*, Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 1856. chapter 2, 18–20.