2 Literature review: Landscape's revenge

Towards the end of his life, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) decided the whole alphabet was in dire need of a sprucing up. Being well versed in matters both artistic and scientific, he proceeded to set out millimetric rules behind the geometry of each Roman majuscule, the instructions encompassing both written theory and illustrated examples. The volume, aptly titled *Of the Just Shaping of Letters*, was published in 1525 as part of his theoretical treatise on applied geometry, in which Dürer – in the true spirit of Renaissance – explored the newly introduced possibilities made available both by the printing press and by recent mathematical breakthroughs.

"In our Germany, most excellent Willibald," – begins the artist, and where one might have expected the caring words of a feverish, dying old man addressing his long-time friend and patron, Dürer instead veers off into a socio-pictorial reproach – "are to be found at the present day many young men of a happy talent for the Art Pictorial, who without any artistic training whatever, but taught only by their daily exercise of it, have run riot like an unpruned tree". Such painters, by relying on their own uneducated whims, ignore that the "sane judgment abhors nothing so much as a picture perpetrated with no technical knowledge, although with plenty of care and diligence". To these unpruned young men Albrecht Dürer offers a redeeming solution: Geometry. "Now the sole reason why painters of this sort are not aware of their own error is that they have not learnt Geometry, without which no one can either be or become an absolute artist; but the blame for this should be laid upon their masters, who themselves are ignorant of this art" (Dürer, 1965, 1).

Not a hint of hypocrisy is to be found in Dürer's reproach. The German master himself, while journeying through Venice some twenty years prior, had sought the necessary – and, by then, pioneering – instruction in the blossoming field of geometry. In one of the many letters sent to the very same Willibald Pirckheimer during his Venetian sojourn, Dürer remarks that he "should like to travel to Bologna to learn the secrets of the art of perspective, which a man there is willing to teach me" (Dürer, 2010, 37).[1]

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1 The identity of the instructor sought out by Dürer is not known, although Andrew Morrall suspects it to have been either Scipione del Ferro (1465–1526) or "the more famous Luca Pacioli [1445–1517], with whom Leonardo had closely worked, illustrating the former's geometrical treatise, *De divina proportione*" (Morrall, 2010, 114). *N.B.* All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. In the interest of length, and with a few exceptions, translations into English are only provided for citations quoted in the body of the text.

Having acquired widespread reputation and renown since an early age, Dürer combined both the financial and the intellectual means that would ultimately place him in the epicenter of the invention of the landscape as a modern phenomenon: its transition from the medieval notion of "an area owned by a lord or inhabited by a particular group of people", to the more modern and less factual usage as "representation of scenery" (Whyte, 2002, 13). The landscape as a modern phenomenon is the progeny of a very unique Italo-Flemish lineage that would reach its peak in the seventeenth century and start fading off in the early eighteenth as the two nations began to drift apart culturally. Dürer, however, was able to travel extensively through Italy and the Low Countries, and thus experience at first hand the burgeoning rapport between these two countries, a snippet of which he registered in his *Memoirs of journeys to Venice and the Low Countries*, written between 1506 and 1521 and published posthumously.[2]

Not only did Dürer seek counsel from Italian masters in the field of design and Euclidian geometry, he also set himself in dialogue with leading Flemish landscape painters such as Joachim Patinir (ca. 1485–1524), a pivotal figure on the usage of perspective in landscape painting. Dürer, adding intensive networking to his already heralded qualities, managed to capture the infancy of landscape representation in both his writings and paintings, despite never having promoted it to the foreground.[3] The landscape was instead used by Dürer as a means of providing further depth to a religious motif, increasing its impact and thus exuding a sense of control and mastery of the overall arrangement.[4]

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2 It should be noted, in passing, that through his diary Dürer reveals himself to be quite the modern traveler, favoring the factual (and sometimes bureaucratically tedious) over the colorful or the religious – a preference that subterraneously informs this entire research.

3 Which does not mean the landscape was to be taken lightly: Pirckheimer notes that Dürer had intended to write about landscape, a project unfortunately stymied by the artist's death (Dürer, 2011, 326–327).

4 Malcolm Andrews discusses at length the philosophical chicken-or-egg conundrum lurking behind the independency of landscape painting by pondering whether the landscape is a genre in itself or a mere setting to what really matters: the human drama – "is landscape representation ever independent of human narrative even if the human presence is removed?" According to Andrews, the discussion regarding the hierarchy of subjects in art divided sixteenth and seventeenth century artists and theorists into two groups: the group of those who understood landscape paintings as "proper" works, and the group of those who did not, seeing in them nothing but *divertissements* (or *parergon*: 'by-work') which told no worthy story whatsoever. Andrews' overarching argument, which shall be resumed later on, goes as far as to posit landscape as periphery: "It has been argued that the German *Landschaft* or *Lantschaft* was not originally a view of nature but rather a geographic area defined by political boundaries. In the late fifteenth century, the land around a town was referred to as its landscape, a meaning that still survives in some places (...). In the topographical view, the environing landscape serves as the natural

Dürer's investment in the idea of artistic mastery – as per his diatribe against the unpruned young painters – was made quite evident by the (mostly) supplementary yet meticulous treatment he gave to landscape. His approach to landscape representation was based on careful observation, a trait that was to become characteristic of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Flemish art. The journals he kept during his journeys through the Low Countries, although primarily concerned with keeping track of his travel expenses and table manners (which gift was given to whom and why), are nonetheless drawn here and there to the pictorial description of a beautiful view.[5] But careful observation was futile without its technical counterpart, without the necessary scientific tools granting the artist complete control over his creation. Hence geometry, and hence also the need for a methodical approach to the work of art: "For even with such great diligence I could hardly accomplish a face in half a year – and the panel has nearly a hundred faces, this not including the garments and the landscape and the thousands of other things that are in it" (Dürer 1872, 29).[6] Due to the "growing emphasis on the design and brushwork of the artist, rather than on the use of expensive materials", as Denis Cosgrove (1984, 87) puts it, the landscape provided the artist an ideal opportunity in which to display his technical and imaginative skills, to prove his virtuosity in front of the canvas. Centuries before it even became an issue within the artistic field, Dürer had already sketched the first incipient lines towards the notion of art as a conscious product. And the representation of landscape played a decisive role in it.

It could be argued that landscape (both in terms of its representation and of its actual trimming and shaping within the confines of a garden or a villa, for instance), given its close affinity to cartography and Euclidian geometry,

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setting for the portrait's main subject, the city; and that environment is understood as being part of the territorial domain of the city. *Landschaft*'s status as periphery to, and setting for, the main subject is analogous to the contemporary status of landscape in relation to the religious subjects of painting" (Andrews, 1999, 28–29; 30; 41).

5 "Middelburg is a good town; it has a very beautiful town hall with a fine tower. There is much art shown in all things here. There are very rich and beautiful stalls in the abbey, and a splendid gallery of stone and a beautiful parish church. The town is excellent for sketching. Zeeland is beautiful and wonderful to see on account of the water, for it stands higher than the land." Or also: "This house lies high, and there is a most beautiful view at which one cannot but wonder. And I think that in all German lands there is not the like of it"; "I paid 1 stiver to be allowed to go up the tower at Antwerp, which is said to be higher than that at Strasburg. From thence I saw the whole town on all sides, which was very pleasant." (Dürer, 2010, 75; 57; 82)

6 Or alternatively: "Herr Georg Tausy hat sich mir von selbst erboten, ich möchte ihm mit dem gleichen Fleisse und in der Grösse dieser Tafel ein Marienbild in einer Landschaft machen..." (Dürer and Briefe, 1872, 35).

was in fact a broader attempt at exerting control over space, and thus an all-out Renaissance illusion (albeit a fertile one). The concept of landscape is intimately connected to the notion of linear perspective as first discussed in Leon Battista Alberti's (1404–1472) *Della Pittura* (1435–6). Although Alberti does not mention the landscape other than within the inventory of all good subjects fit for a painting (or for a *istoria* – "Grandissima opera del pittore sarà l'*istoria*"[7]), Ian Whyte resorts to Alberti's treatise in order to argue that there were

> close links between the landscape idea and the development of linear perspective as a way of controlling space; both were linked to the growing domination of the natural environment associated with the development of capitalism. (…) The illusion of control provided by the new ways of structuring the world through landscape art was often matched by real power and control over farms and estates by artistic patrons. (Whyte, 2002, 56)

Christopher Wood, writing on the legacy of Albrecht Altdorfer (1480–1538) and the origins of landscape, formulates the same transition in more charged tones:

> Landscape in the West was itself a symptom of modern loss, a cultural form that emerged only after humanity's primal relationship to nature had been disrupted by urbanism, commerce and technology. For when mankind still 'belonged' to nature in a simple way, nobody needed to paint a landscape. (Wood, 1993, 25)

Indeed, beyond the virginal and theoretical charms of Euclidian geometry, Italian and Flemish artists were also reacting to tangible economic and urban realities that took place throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the large-scale drainage of both Venice and the Scheldt estuary, the development of commercialized agriculture, the increase in deforestation and water pollution, as well as the rapid growth of urban centers. The increasing amount of peasants seeking a better fate away from their rural backgrounds, combined with the pre-industrial smog and general insanitary conditions of urban agglomerations, "encouraged nostalgia and perhaps a sense of guilt for a past landscape that was being rapidly changed by contemporary commercial enterprise", argues Whyte (2002, 57–62), thus creating a lucrative niche for artists. Landscape paintings became desirable objects in which the artist could compose scenery as to enhance its idyllic nature, relocating monuments and generally dramatizing locations.

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7 "Dirò io quella istoria essere copiosissima in quale a suo luoghi sieno permisti vecchi, giovani, fanciulli, donne, fanciulle, fanciullini, polli, catellini, uccellini, cavalli, pecore, edifici, province, e tutte simili cose." (Alberti, 1973, 68)

This tension between the ideal and the real, the observable and the desirable, is also what fuelled the pastoral tradition. "Pastoral landscapes are not simply idealized representations of nature", writes Louisa Mackenzie (2011, 6), "they are about the human and social dramas that play out in them". Which is not to say, despite the complexity of its socio-cultural mediations, that the pastoral is immune to a high degree of idealization. In fact, the fashion quickly spread and intensified throughout the pre-industrializing nations of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Europe, especially in Britain. In short, the pastoral tradition "celebrated an idealized version of shepherding drawn from Virgil and other Classical authors, provided an escape, mentally and sometimes physically, from the pressures of urban and court life" (Whyte, 2002, 70). Pastoral writers, poets, and painters attempted to counterpoint the greedy and grinding charms of industrial development, but the movement ended up collapsing under the capitalist-by-way-of-Protestantism ideal of '(self-) improvement'.[8] The representation of landscape shifted from idyllic to ideological, as a tool for uniting a growing heterogeneous populace. Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) is a pivotal figure in the re-signification of the landscape and its shifting towards the national, the commercial, and the expansionist – or, as Raymond Williams (1975, 62) brands Defoe's narrative world: "[i]t is a frankly commercial world, with hardly any pastoral tinge". Such traits are abundant in Defoe's *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724–26), as is his emphasis on the idea of the landscape as a cultural construction.

In the first of the thirteen letters that make up the three volumes of *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, Defoe quickly asserts that his business "is not to lay out the geographical situation of places" (Defoe, 1971, 100), as if to warn the reader that he is not interested in what is merely "given" by nature, geography being a contingency humankind cannot overcome. Instead, he'll focus his attention on the improvements and accomplishments carried out on the landscape, a hymn to scientific, economic, and cultural progress. Hence the unending praise to roads, canals, manufactures, Royal Exchanges, well-kept houses, agrarian advances, and the transformation of whale fat into oil for trains (Defoe, 1971, 632). Defoe goes as far as to praise wilderness and the woods for its striking resemblance to a "planted garden as far as the eye can see" (Defoe, 1971, 111).

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8 As Raymond Williams (1975, 22; 35) puts it: "What is much more significant is the internal transformation of just this artificial mode in the direction and in the interest of a new kind of society: that of a developing agrarian capitalism. (...) These celebrations of a feudal or an aristocratic order (...) have been widely used, in an idealist retrospect, as a critique of capitalism. The emphases on obligation, on charity, on the open door to the needy neighbour, are contrasted, in a familiar vein of retrospective radicalism, with the capitalist thrust, the utilitarian reduction of all social relationships to a crude moneyed order".

Nature, in short, should be trod with a gentlemanly five-o'clock distrust: it does invite one in, but one should exercise great self-restrain in its company, making sure beforehand that all necessary precautions were taken and that the environment is "fully prepared to receive". The ideal location of nature should be one "capable of all that is pleasant and delightful in nature, and improved by art to every extreme that Nature is able to produce" (Defoe, 1971, 98–99). The resulting location would still be nature, only an enhanced version of it, Nature with a capital N – a synonym for landscape.

Defoe's view of the landscape as a cultural construction is not without its royal affiliation – the English writer pays tribute to King William and Queen Mary for having "introduced each of them two customs, which by the people's imitating them became the two idols of the town, and indeed of the whole kingdom": the queen introduced the love for calico and chinaware; the king brought in the passion for gardening and painting (Defoe, 1971, 175). The economic progress achieved through commerce and industry – its (positive, by Defoe's account) impact on nature and on the lives of people –, was then culturally matched, and even improved, by the new ways in which landscape could be manipulated and represented. Landscape was no longer an object to be seen, it was – to quote W. J. T. Mitchell (2002, 1) – "a process by which social and subjective identities are formed". And, as processes go, Defoe's understanding of landscape implied an acquired taste that required teaching. Therefore his claims to novelty and superiority:

> But I find none has spoken of what I call the distant glory of all these buildings: There is a beauty in these things at a distance, taking them *en passant*, and in perspective, which few people value, and fewer understand; and yet here they are more truly great, than in all their private beauties whatsoever; Here they reflect beauty, and magnificence upon the whole country, and give a kind of a character to the island of Great Britain in general. The banks of the Sein [sic] are not thus adorned from Paris to Roan [sic], or from Paris to the Loign [sic] above the city: The Danube can show nothing like it above and below Vienna, or the Po above and below Turin; the whole country here shines with a lustre not to be described; Take them in a remote view, the fine seats shine among the trees as jewels shine in a rich coronet; in a near sight they are mere pictures and paintings; at a distance they are all nature, near hand all art; but both in the extremest beauty. (Defoe, 1971, 175)

Defoe's chauvinism exposes a series of eighteenth century landscape-related ideological goals: (1) the vanishing of the pastoral tradition under the weight of development and improvement[9]; (2) the creation of a national and communal

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9 Whence Terry Eagleton's famous blurb on Defoe's oeuvre: "An eighteenth-century reader, raised on a high-minded diet of elegy and pastoral, must have felt stunned on first encountering

identity through a shared landscape[10]; and (3) the pre-eminence of the landscape-as-cultural-construction, or, as Simon Schama (1995, 61) puts it, "landscapes are culture before they are nature – constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock".

The ideological views highlighted by Defoe in *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* had already been prominently featured in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), albeit under a different textual approach. Instead of venturing into a lengthy analysis of the novel, it would be more productive, for the purposes of this literature review, to simply point out the novel's kinship to a range of groundbreaking prose works that also deal with the notion of landscape as nation (or ideology), such as Jonathan Swift's (1667–1745) *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), or Laurence Sterne's (1713–1768) *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1765). In their own way, these works have channeled into literature the relationship between mankind and nature, and have thus contributed, unknowingly, to the inception of a modern quarrel from which neither Walser nor Carvalho are immune, and which this research seeks to explore: the ever recurring debate between nature and culture.

In addition, due to its eclectic and prolific nature, *Robinson Crusoe* has exerted ongoing influence over the centuries on a wide range of theoretical debates, from philosophy to economy, from feminism to post-colonialism. A landscape-relevant example among those is that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), whose writings frequently resort to the figure of *Robinson Crusoe* as the idealized, autonomous man whom one should aspire to become. Robinson – even if *en passant* – is no stranger to *Du Contrat Social* (1762), where he makes a brief guest appearance as master of his own domain, sovereign of his island "as long as he was its only inhabitant" (Rousseau, 2012e, 194) – a quite fitting example to a book that sought to dismiss the misconception that granted monarchs divine right to rule, when in fact a fair society should be guaranteed by undivided, popular sovereignty.

One could do worse than speculate that Rousseau fashioned himself as a Crusoe of sorts, the intimacy being such that the Swiss philosopher and the

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the jagged prose of a Daniel Defoe, with its street-wise populism and delight in the common-place" (Eagleton, 2006, 20).

10 "The naturalization of the land played an important part in creating changed communal identities within a nation that had a high proportion of immigrants. Immigrants were attracted by the prosperity of Amsterdam and the northern Netherlands, by an open market economy with capital being amassed for investment, and by Protestantism. (...) Since there was no monarch to symbolize national identity, the Dutch turned to their land in the creation of a communal identity." (Whyte, 2002, 63)

fictional character were on a first-name basis: always Robinson, never Crusoe. When Rousseau is feeling blue in Paris, he thinks of Robinson[11]; when Rousseau wants to explain his need for solitude and clarify he is mostly an introvert, not a misanthrope, he thinks of Robinson[12]; when Rousseau yearns for some time alone with his dog, he climbs onto a boat and rows into the lake wishing "it were an ocean" and thinks of Robinson.[13]

Beyond politics or autobiography, *Robinson Crusoe*'s influence is most striking in *Émile, ou De l'Éducation* (1762). In it, Rousseau tries to balance the divide between nature and culture, thus continuing the discussion started in *Du Contrat Social* as how to coadunate man's sovereignty with society's intrinsic wretchedness: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man" (Rousseau, 2012b, 2). Although Rousseau opens the book with such a grim sentence, it soon becomes clear that there is no way of escaping from the corrupt reach of society, and therefore the only solution would be to make the best of it by devising, through education, the most unifying rapport between "l'homme civil" and "le corps social": "Good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man, to take his absolute existence from him in order to give him a relative one and transport the I into the common unity, with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole" (Rousseau, 2012b, 8).

In order to accomplish the task, Rousseau advocates "l'éducation naturelle" as a way of rendering a man[14] fit for all human conditions. However, "before daring to undertake the formation of a man, one must have made oneself a man.

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11 "…plus seul au milieu de Paris que Robinson dans son Isle…" (Rousseau, 2012f, 235)

12 "J. J. n'a pas toujours fui les hommes, mais il a toujours aimé la solitude. Il se plaisoit avec les amis qu'il croyoit avoir, mais il se plaisoit encore plus avec lui-même. Il chérissoit leur société; mais il avoit quelquefois besoin de se recueillir, & peut-être eut-il encore mieux aimé vivre toujours seul que toujours avec eux. Son affection pour le roman de Robinson m'a fait juger qu'il ne se fut pas cru si malheureux que lui, confiné dans son Isle déserte. Pour un homme sensible, sans ambition, & sans vanité, il est moins cruel & moins difficile de vivre seul dans un désert que seul parmi ses semblables." (Rousseau, 2012f, 215–216)

13 "Cependant, pour complaire à mon pauvre chien, qui n'aimoit pas autant que moi de si longues stations sur l'eau, je suivois d'ordinaire un but de promenade; c'étoit d'aller débarquer à la petite isle, de m'y promener une heure ou deux, ou de m'étendre au sommet du tertre sur le gazon, pour m'assouvir du plaisir d'admirer ce lac & ses environs, pour examiner & disséquer toutes les herbes qui se trouvoient à ma portée, & pour me bâtir, comme un autre Robinson, une demeure imaginaire dans cette petite isle" (Rousseau, 2012g, 122).

14 The gendered pronoun strikes quite an uncomfortable chord throughout the literature review; it has however been kept unchanged in the interest of textual fidelity, and to further reflect the period's male-centric discourse.

One must find within oneself the example the pupil ought to take for his own", and such example should be inculcated into the child's mind before it develops a conscience of its own: "While the child is still without knowledge, there is time to prepare everything that comes near him in order that only objects suitable for him to see meet his first glances" (Rousseau, 2012b, 120). And who better to shape a child's still unconscious mind than Robinson himself (despite his own paradoxical lack of a proper "éducation naturelle")? Rousseau poses the rhetorical question: "Since we absolutely must have books, there exists one which, to my taste, provides the most felicitous treatise on natural education. (...) What, then, is this marvelous book? Is it Aristotle? Is it Pliny? Is it Buffon? No. It is *Robinson Crusoe*" (Rousseau, 2012b, 309).

The child – Émile – should fashion him or herself as a castaway of sorts, much like Robinson Crusoe, living in a metaphorical deserted island away from all undesired and corrupt influences – until the time comes when Émile, master of his domain, would brave into society with a mindset already made, self-sufficient and sovereign. In the meantime, Émile should busy himself with "his mansion, his goats, his plantations", learning life from life itself and "not from books" – in short, Émile should aspire to be "Robinson himself" (Rousseau, 2012b, 309). As Christie McDonald and Stanley Hoffman shrewdly point out in *Rousseau and Freedom* (2010, 165), this is yet another of *Émile, ou De l'Éducation's* contradictions:

> The tutor claims that he wishes Emile to be immersed in thoughts of Robinson, and even to believe that he is Robinson. This reveals more about Rousseau's methodology of constraint than it does about an ideal of natural education. If Emile truly identifies with Robinson, he may fail to see the most obvious way in which he is nothing like him: Emile is never alone, isolated, or away from the guiding hand of his tutor.

However enticed and fascinated by Robinson he might have been, Rousseau's view of the landscape ultimately differs from Defoe's. Rousseau's understanding and usage of the landscape can be pinpointed to two specific texts: *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* (1782) and *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761). Whereas – *grosso modo* – the former focuses on the botanic (and soon to be Romantic) nature of the landscape, the latter deploys the landscape as a means towards a moralizing tale on the value of autonomy and authenticity. Nonetheless, despite their formal and symbolic differences, a common trait unites both texts, a trait that has its origins – once again – in *Robinson Crusoe*.

In *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Rousseau – somewhat heavy-handedly – conjures nature in order to set the tone of his high-mindedness: for instance, in the dichotomy between "the cliffs of Meillerie, amidst winter and ice, with horrible

chasms in front of me" – representing the temptations of flesh and passion – and Julie's garden, "a secluded spot which is her favorite place to walk and which she calls her Elysium" (Rousseau, 2012c, 319; 109).[15] Saint-Preux (Julie's tutor), lured by the garden's mystery, finally slips into it and is at once "struck by a pleasantly cool sensation which dark shade, bright and lively greenery, flowers scattered on every side, the bubbling of flowing water, and the songs of a thousand birds impressed on [his] imagination at least as much as [his] senses", but, at the same time – and this is an important conceptual frame for this research –, Saint-Preux thought he was looking at the wildest, most solitary place in nature, and it seemed to him that he was the first mortal who ever had set foot in that desert (Rousseau, 2012c, 110). Moreover, despite the garden's Robinson-esque virginity, Saint-Preux cannot avoid remarking that the place is not only "quite close to the house", but also carefully hidden and masked by the "alders and hazelnuts that leave only two narrow passages along the sides" (Rousseau, 2012c, 110). In other words: despite the garden's apparent wilderness, it is in fact surrounded by carefully planned landscape – its wilderness is nothing but a tamed structure.

James Swenson explores this thesis by highlighting the pattern found both in *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* and *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*: man's hand inevitably shapes nature. In *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* Saint-Preux notes the "surprising mixture of wild and cultivated nature revealed throughout the hand of men, where one would have thought they had never penetrated" (Rousseau, 2012b, 69) a theme later revisited in *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire*'s seventh promenade:

> I was alone. I sunk into the crevices of the mountain, going from shrub to shrub, from rock to rock, until I came to a recess so secluded and of a wilderness such as I had never seen before. (…) I compared myself to those great travelers who discover a deserted island and said to myself with complacency: I am doubtless the first mortal who has ever penetrated thus far. (Rousseau, 2012d, 478)

Once again the Robinson-esque imagery: the self-sufficient and fearless traveler, the deserted island… The only problem now being the fact that the island is not so deserted as it first seemed: a nearby noise catches Rousseau's attention, and the philosopher pushes through the bushes to find "a stocking

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15 The dichotomy is also a projection of Saint-Preux's state of mind: "La même chose m'étoit arrivée autrefois à Meillerie en découvrant la maison du baron d'Etange. Le monde n'est jamais divisé pour moi qu'en deux régions: celle où elle est & celle où elle n'est pas" (Rousseau, 2012c, 33).

manufactory" not twenty feet away from where he previously basked in solitude. Rousseau is torn:

> I cannot express the confuse and contradictory agitation which I felt in my heart upon this discovery. My first movement was a sentiment of joy on finding myself once again among humans, where I had imagined myself entirely alone. Quicker than lightning, however, this sentiment, soon yielded to a much more durable feeling of regret, at not being able to escape – even in the burrows of the Alps – from the cruel hands of my fellow men, eager to torment me. (Rousseau, 2012d, 479)

The philosopher concludes – not without a sway of pride – that Switzerland is a garden, the only place on earth endowed with this union between wild nature and human industry, to which Swenson adds: an *English* garden.[16]

Rousseau had, in fact, visited England and its famous gardens in 1766, and he was not all that impressed. He used one of Saint-Preux's letters to Julie (the eleventh) to voice his discontentment regarding the gardens' lack of "culture": "Everything is verdant, fresh, vigorous, and the gardener's hand is not to be seen: nothing belies the idea of a desert Island which came to my mind as I entered, and I see no human footprints. Ah! said Monsieur de Wolmar, that is because we have taken great care to erase them" (Rousseau, 2012c, 121).

Not that Rousseau would dismiss the idea of the landscape as a cultural construction that requires taste in order to be appreciated,[17] but what puzzles him (or Saint-Preux) is rather why should they "take such pains to hide from themselves those they had taken; were it not better to have taken none at all?", to which Julie replies that Saint-Preux shouldn't be "gauging the labor from the effect" before launching into a *Little Prince*-esque remark: "Those who love [nature] and cannot go so far to find her are reduced to doing her violence, forcing her in a way to come and live with them, and all this cannot be done without a modicum of illusion" (Rousseau, 2012c, 122).[18] Whereas Rousseau might have harbored a conflicting view between "wild" and "cultivated" landscapes (although ultimately

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16 "Switzerland is a *jardin anglais*. It appears to be entirely natural but is in fact a pure artifice, its flowers the traditional flowers of rhetoric." (Swenson, 2000, 145)

17 The philosopher writes in *Julie ou La Nouvelle Heloïse* (2012b, 43): "C'est ainsi qu'un peintre, à l'aspect d'un beau paysage ou devant un beau tableau, s'extasie à des objets qui ne sont pas même remarqués d'un spectateur vulgaire".

18 It is worthwhile to recall Julie's famous reply to Saint-Preux's bafflement regarding the Elysée: "Il est vrai, dit-elle, que la nature a tout fait, mais sous ma direction & il n'y a rien là que je n'aie ordonné" (Rousseau, 2012c, 111). As if to convey that the *Elysée* is the garden nature would craft if nature were able to craft gardens – or, alternatively, to posit it as the ideal of 'naturalness' behind the artifice of its creation.

tending to be associated with the former), the England he visited in 1766 was ploughing ahead into Picturesque mode, a strong reaction to the ideal of cultivated land incensed in Defoe's work. The gardens Rousseau visited were already being modeled so as to reflect Picturesque's emphasis on the scenic, a modicum of illusion better conveyed in the dictum that a landscape should be worthy of a painting – or at least resemble one.

As William Gilpin (1724–1804) formulates it in his *Observations of the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales* (1789, 25), "when we introduce a scene on canvas; when the eye is to be confined within the frame of a picture, and can no longer range among the varieties of nature, the aids of art become more important". Gilpin is in fact reinforcing his theory of the Picturesque, a theory he posited in his *Essays on Prints* (1768) and according to which the beauty behind an ideal landscape ought to be agreeable in a picture. Gilpin concedes: "Nature is always great in design. She is an admirable colourist also; and harmonizes tints with infinite variety and beauty: but she is seldom so correct in composition, as to produce an harmonious whole". Thus the artist, by resorting to "the principles of picturesque beauty", adapts and frames the landscape, making it worthy of our sensibility (Gilpin, 1789, 32). Gilpin, whilst traveling through Wales and England (and in a way revealing the extent to which the "modicum of illusion" regarding the landscape might turn into an idyllic denial of the land's foremost military or agricultural purposes), judges fitting to criticize modern fortifications for being "ill calculated for the purposes of landscape", as well as to point out the spots where nature was at its Picturesque best: "Brecknoc is a very romantic place, abounding with broken grounds, torrents, dismantled towers, and ruins of every kind. I have seen few places where a landscape-painter might get a collection of better ideas" (Gilpin, 1789, 92; 91).

Gilpin's model of the Picturesque is informed, on the one hand, by his nostalgic preference for the pastoral over arable improvements,[19] and, on the other, by Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). Digressing on the ambiguous nature of water, for instance, Gilpin comments on both its "slow and solemn pace (...) tranquil, and majestic", as well as on its violence: "all was agitation and uproar; and every

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19 "The banks of the Wye consist almost entirely either of wood or of pasturage; which I mention as a circumstance of peculiar value in landscape. Furrowed-lands and waving corn, however charming in pastoral poetry, are ill-accommodated to painting. The painter never desires the hand of art to touch his grounds. – But if art must stray among them; if it must mark out the limits of property, and turn them to the uses of agriculture, he wishes that these limits may, as much as possible, be concealed; and that the lands they circumscribe may approach as nearly as may be to nature; that is, that they may be pasture. Pasturage not only presents an agreeable surface; but the cattle which graze it add great variety and animation to the scene." (Gilpin, 1789, 44)

steep and every rock stared with wildness and terror" (Gilpin, 1789, 39). Such nerve-shattering dichotomy is what underlines Burke's treatise on the sublime and the beautiful: the two fundamental and conflicting instincts (or passions) of humankind towards propagation and preservation – "The passions belonging to the preservation of the individual turn wholly on pain and danger: those which belong to *generation* have their origin in gratifications and *pleasures*" (Burke, 2010, 37). Gratifying and pleasurable traits – such as smoothness, delicacy, grace, speciousness – were considered beautiful, whereas danger- or pain-inducing experiences – such as darkness, infinity, privation, vastness – were deemed sublime. Whyte (2002, 72) accentuates the influence of Burke's ideas "on landscape aesthetics in Europe and America in the later eighteenth century", influencing "both the Picturesque and Romantic views of landscape". Indeed, Burke's ideas – via both the Picturesque movement and Illuminist attempts at co-opting the new aesthetic categories of the "beautiful" and the "sublime" – played a decisive role in the Romantic placement of nature "at the heart of cultural interest in nineteenth-century Europe" (Whyte, 2002, 103).

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) – to name a paragon of continental Enlightenment –, took the time to rather ironically thank Burke for compiling data on the beautiful and the sublime, but all the while stressing how unequipped Mr. Burke was to properly understand and clarify the mental faculties involved in the phenomenon. Kant went about it swiftly, first commending Burke on being the most important author to adopt this mode of treatment, and then highlighting that "this mode of treatment" – i.e. empirical, psychological observations – pales in comparison to philosophy's mighty scientific nature.[20] An Illuminist to the core, one cannot reproach Kant for resorting to Science in order to overcome Nature.

This research, however, veers less the way of Kant's plight, and more towards Thomas Gray's state of mind. One of Gray's (1716–1771) best known works, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), conjures from the very first stance an imagery heavy in that which six years later Burke would typify as the sublime:

> The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
> The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me. (Gray 1854, 94)

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20 "Man kann mit der jetzt durchgeführten transzendentalen Exposition der ästhetischen Urteile nun auch die physiologische, wie sie ein Burke und viele scharfsinnige Männer unter uns bearbeitet haben, vergleichen, um zu sehen, wohin eine bloß empirische Exposition des Erhabenen und Schönen führe. Burke, der in dieser Art der Behandlung als der vornehmste Verfasser genannt zu werden verdient..." (Kant, 2004, 204)

Gray's poems are oft oriented by a solitary figure strolling through a deserted, desolated landscape, much like Rousseau's *promeneur*, and much like Walser and Carvalho. Encountering but fleeting vestiges of mankind (the ploughman who exits the scene), Gray's introspective wanderer projects his emotions onto the surrounding landscapes, unintentionally opposing Kant's attempts at an analytical analysis of Nature. Instead of typified, rational landscapes, Gray offers emotional ones: the landscape as the manifestation of states of interior emotion.

However interior and solitary the sceneries,[21] the poet's depiction of them is not without its social comforts: be it the possibility of a communal encounter – for instance in the closing stances of Gray's poem, when the solitary wanderer gains a friend (albeit a dead one)[22] –, be it in art's implicit promise of safety: after experiencing the most sublime of landscapes, one may always close the book and return to the social apparatus of civilization. Through a shared range of aesthetic categories which emphasized the emotional rapport between observer and surroundings, both Gray and Gilpin helped to establish a common vocabulary which not only promoted the quest for such interior, sublime experiences, but which also provided the tools for its communication. Whyte (2002, 98) remarks that while Gray "has been considered to be one of the first Picturesque tourists in terms of the vocabulary he used to describe landscape", Gilpin's later writings have definitively "encouraged Picturesque tourism and the appreciation of landscape by middle-class travellers".[23]

In hindsight, the tool provided by a shared Picturesque vocabulary – enhanced by the popularity of the affiliated poets – meant a redefinition of Britain's cultural life: the middle-class was now mobile (both in practical and aesthetical terms). "The eighteenth-century 'discovery of Britain' by educated travellers led to British landscapes being viewed as cultural and aesthetic objects", writes Whyte (2002, 91), and thus equivalent to the aristocratic landscapes seen via Italy and the Alps in the then well-established *Grand Tour*[24] – a *Tour* that thrived on golden-lit,

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[21] Burke's take on the beautiful implies a social silver lining – he can conceive no greater pain than "the total and perpetual exclusion from all society", thus making solitude both painful and sublime (Burke, 2010, 40).

[22] "Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere, / Heav'n did a recompence as largely send; / He gave to mis'ry (all he had) a tear, / He gain'd from heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend." (Gray, , 110)

[23] A further confirmation of Whyte's thesis is provided by John Dixon Hunt (1989, 136): "Gray was, of course, among the pioneers of picturesque travel. It was Gray to whom Gilpin first submitted one of his picturesque tours and Gray who urged publication".

[24] "The Grand Tour involved the wealthy from France, the Low Countries, Germany and Sweden, but it was most strongly associated with the British aristocracy, who supplied by far the greatest number of travellers. The classic route of the British tourist took in France, the Low Countries, the Alps and parts of Germany, but the focus was on Italy and especially Rome, although Venice,

timeless pastoral sceneries (Black, 2003, 51). Due to the massive popularization of Picturesque travel literature towards the end of the eighteenth century, British sceneries became socially and culturally valid both to the middle classes and to the aristocracy. What's more, they were imbued with a sense of "Britishness" that would afterwards reflect on Romanticism's focus on national identities.

The development of Picturesque tourism in Britain was, of course, closely linked to the spread of industrialization and public transportation, to the extent that rare was the landscape unaffected by coal-smudged factories or crisscrossing railways. Not only did these sights interfere physically with the pristine, rural (and by then highly idealized) landscape, they also distanced the traveler from it. Railways, noisy and fast, reduced the landscape to a nineteenth century blur and exposed the odds at which the pace of industrial life and traditional values were – a phenomenon nowadays best typified by David Harvey's (1991) concept of "time-space compression". In response to fume-intensive chimneys and the implicit back-breaking, insanitary labor – and despite the best efforts of engineers and architects in erecting mesmerizing buildings and structures –, artists shunned industrialization and turned their attentions to landscapes threatened with poetic extinction.

With the turn of the century, as an overall feeling of glory was being replaced by utilitarianism, and as the Picturesque movement was turned into fodder for satire – most notably in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818) –, it was left to Romanticism to pick up what may still be salvaged from its predecessor – namely its "more thoughtful (...) historical associations of ruins in the landscape" (Whyte, 2002, 104) –, and to discard the rest: the rigidity of Picturesque tourism, its authoritarian depiction of nature, its residual emphasis on the social. As a result, the sublime was amplified, old social conventions were questioned, the self was brought to the foreground, imagination trumped reason, identity was hidden in nature, authenticity was a must (better be dead than derivative).

Romanticism was born with its back turned to the urban sprawl, its eyes staring off into the horizon – Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818) is its most clichéd example. The painting's ominous composition invites the spectator to partake in the wanderer's view, even to embrace the landscape's murky grandeur at the expense of the wanderer himself, as if signaling that everything can be turned into landscape provided it is seen from enough distance and with the right amount of pathos. Wood argues

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Florence and other Italian cities also attracted attention. In the process, the landscapes of Italy, with their Classical and Renaissance architecture, became accepted as an ideal by the educated landowning elite, and by the artists they patronized." (Whyte, 2002, 89)

(1993, 25) – via Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) – that a landscape painting is only necessary when humankind has lost its oneness with nature: "Landscape painting restored, momentarily, an original participation with nature, or even – in its greatest Romantic apotheoses – re-established contact with the lost sources of the spiritual". Therein lies one of Romanticism's many binary oppositions: the dynamics of loss and redemption through art and nature.

Nature in itself was no longer as interesting (nor as valid) as nature captured through the lens of culture – which made for a rather anxious turn of events. Instead of simply being in nature, the Romantic artist must now prove his spiritual oneness with nature by creating a twice-removed cousin of it and thus digging one extra layer down the rabbit hole that would ultimately collapse when Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) raised a mirror against art's own mirror and cast an image not unlike that of a dog chasing its own tail. Romanticism's brutal quest for originality and authenticity paved the way towards a form of anxiety that reached its peak in the late twentieth century (an anxiety to which we will come back to in due time), a fretful loss of 'naturalness': the landscape that is no longer a landscape, but the confession of an artifice[25] – the artist that knows that the viewer knows that the artist knows. The focus thus shifted from the artwork itself to the process of its creation (or, Romantically speaking: its process of 'geniality', a topic approached in later chapters).

This research does not seek to hold Romanticism accountable for contemporary shortcomings, but rather to observe its lasting influences as they materialize at the two ends of the twentieth century, first in Walser's oeuvre, and then in Carvalho's, and how these authors' depiction of the landscape actualizes Romanticism's belated promise of freedom through nature, as echoed in Schiller's famous words: "They [the children] are what we were; they are what we ought to become once again. We were nature as they, and our culture, by way of reason and freedom, should lead us back to nature".[26] A melancholy freedom, to be sure, in part derived from Rousseau's pessimism, but a freedom nonetheless: the birth of a new individual, one meant to overcome Enlightenment's aristocratic social-political model, as well as its scientific measurements of nature. A freedom that reached both the artistic and the spiritual realms: "artistic" for art was no longer chained to a set of eternal rules, nor the artist a servant to art's edifying purposes, as previously dictated by the ruling Classicism; and "spiritual" given

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25 It bears mentioning that Oswald Spengler fittingly accused Romanticism of being "a sentimental Imitation, not of life, but of an older Imitation" (Spengler, 1945, 197).

26 "Sie sind, was wir waren; sie sind, was wir wieder werden sollen. Wir waren Natur wie sie, und unsere Kultur soll uns, auf dem Wege der Vernunft und der Freiheit, zur Natur zurückführen." (Schiller, 2005, 8)

the organic feeling of oneness provided by the return to nature, the wanderer's homecoming into his constitutive environment.

Among the many readings and interpretations of the Romantic period, this study is drawn to Rüdiger Safranksi's emphasis on the constitutive role of travel at the movement's very core. Safranski's take on Romanticism begins with Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744–1803) sea voyage to France in 1769 – a maritime adventure devoid of an ulterior destination: "A conversion experience, an inner about-face, exactly as Rousseau had felt his great inspiration twenty years earlier under a tree on the road to Vincennes: the rediscovery of genuine Nature beneath the crust of civilization" (Safranski, 2007, 17). Herder's quest for new lands and customs is at the same time a quest for himself: the idea of confronting the alien world becomes a self-confrontation. Safranski's somewhat desolate yet persistent, lonely yet self-sufficient rendering of Romanticism, his emphasis on a sense of dislocation without destination, of an existential quest ever so slightly doomed, contributes quite fittingly to the overall tone of this research, one which seeks to explore notions such as failure, defeatism, marginality, and escapism in Walser's and Carvalho's oeuvres, although ultimately portraying these traits as viable literary values. Moreover, Romanticism's own escapist strategies, as pointed out by some critics,[27] are equally befitting to two authors who are, throughout their oeuvres, constantly trying to bypass Romanticism, but end up succumbing to the weight of its (and their own) contradictions.

Terry Eagleton, in his Marxist retelling of nineteenth century literature, stresses that Romanticism's "creative imagination" should be considered as more than idle escapism from the harsh realities of industrial capitalism: "'Imaginative creation' can be offered as an image of non-alienated labour; the intuitive, transcendental scope of the poetic mind can provide a living criticism of those rationalist or empiricist ideologies enslaved to 'fact'". Literature becomes an ideology deemed to "transform society in the name of those energies and values which art embodies" – or at least in theory (Eagleton, 1996, 17).[28] Eagleton proceeds by

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27 Georges Bataille among them – in *La Littérature et le Mal* (1957), the French writer takes turns between finding faults with Romanticism and researching a variation on the post-Romantic theme of *le poète maudit*: "Le thème de la nature, dont l'opposition pouvait sembler plus radicale, n'offrait lui-même qu'une possibilité d'évasion provisoire (l'amour de la nature est d'ailleurs si susceptible d'accord avec le primat de l'utile, c'est-à-dire du lendemain, qu'il a été le mode de compensation le plus répandu – le plus anodin – des sociétés utilisatrices: rien évidemment de moins dangereux, de moins subversif, à la fin de moins sauvage, que la sauvagerie des rochers)" (Bataille, 1990, 44).

28 As Wood briefly mentions in his work on Altdorfer, materialist thinkers tend to revel in finding bourgeois contradictions left and right, much as Matthias Eberle does with Romanticism, accusing its landscapes of conveying "an urban or bourgeois consciousness of a new distance

pointing out how the blossoming Romantic ideology trips on its own transcendentalism and, instead of engaging with reality, ends up detaching itself from it, losing its place within the very society it sought to transform. The Romantic artist finds refuge in himself, in his own genius, and thus a chasm between "poetic vision and political practice" is revealed, leading both to the rise of transcendental art theories (Kant, Hegel, Schiller) – which posited art as a finality in itself –, and, ultimately, to the artist's deprivation of an apparent social function. Art, inadvertently "liberated" by Romanticism from having an obvious social function – "the writer was no longer a traditional figure in the pay of the court, the church or an aristocratic patron" (Eagleton, 1996, 18) –, experienced, for a brief period of time, a *sui generis* situation.

Art had always been historically saddled by external values – in the service of the Church, of a wealthy patron, of the Monarchy, of instruction and indoctrination – until, for the briefest periods of time (until capitalism and the art market stepped in), it found itself somewhat liberated from constraints: Monet could set his easel in front of a landscape and paint a dozen different versions of it without having to please none other than himself. And so he did, and alongside him several other artists now deemed Impressionists – to whom the landscape was of fundamental importance.

However much Impressionism is nowadays critically acclaimed and admired for its successful maneuver in benefiting from a *sui generis* situation and overcoming disadvantages (an exemplary tale to all underdogs – and a cautionary tale to all critics), it wasn't reinventing art from scratch. Instead, two unambiguous connections to seventeenth and eighteenth century landscape art may be traced back, the first via the collapsible tin paint tube, the second via the English painter John Constable (1776–1837).

It is usually accepted that the industrial development of the collapsible tin paint tube has allowed the Impressionist artist to leave their studios and revel in *plein air* panting, hence getting closer to their subject matter. Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) put it quite directly: "Ce sont les couleurs en tubes si facilement transportables qui nous ont permis de peindre complètement sur nature" (Bonafroux, 2008, 21). This immediate connection with nature was among the great innovations introduced by the Italian pictorial developments following the post-Dürer aftermath – the stage in which landscape was slowly but steadily

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and detachment from the land" (Wood, 1993, 26). Although he doesn't say it, what Wood – or rather Eberle – is getting at is to suggest that Romanticism has mended the Pastoral dichotomy between the rural and the urban by making the landscape a paradoxically urban product as well. To once again quote Bataille (1990, 45): "…sous sa forme consacrée, le romantisme ne fut guère qu'une allure antibourgeoise de l'individualisme bourgeois".

rising to the foreground. Headed by the French painter Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), the habit of sketching in the open air quickly spread among his contemporaries. Richard Rand (2006, 52–53) quotes an early biographer of the artist on his "frequent excursions in the *Campagna* to draw and paint from nature. Claude was especially committed to the practice, both to seek out the motifs for his paintings and as a means of directly recording natural phenomena".

Meanwhile, in Flemish territory, the post-Dürer aftermath led to a surge in the already mentioned Realist landscape painting, which eventually made its way through the Picturesque movement and the Romantic period, whereupon it found Constable, a former Picturesque adept converted to the true faith of Romanticism. Constable attempted to steer clear from Lorrain's easy, mannerist solutions, focusing instead on nature as he saw it (Gombrich 1984, 45). Through his careful handling of color and light, his sense of air and movement, Constable was hand-picking vital elements from the Flemish Realist school that suited his restrained rendition of Romantic art, and that would ultimately influence the Impressionists more than his own British counterparts (Whyte, 2002, 133).

But more than a fertile, constraint-free dialogue, the Impressionists were in fact fighting for their survival, for their place within society. Art's momentary freedom from external values also implied that the artist himself had no legitimate means of sustenance – particularly when their remaining source of income (the portraiture) was suddenly co-opted by the futuristic and potentially soul-snatching charms of photography. Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), in his "Kleine Geschichte der Photographie" (1931), sums it up quite elegantly:

> In retrospect, it was when Daguerre succeeded in fixing the pictures of the *camera obscura* that the painters were left behind by the technician. The real victim of photography, however, was not landscape painting, but the miniature portrait. Things developed so quickly that by 1840 most of the countless miniature painters had become professional photographers, at first merely on the side, then exclusively so. (Benjamin, 1991e, 374)

The genius behind Impressionism – as the tale presses on – lay in finding a way out of such a conundrum: if a photography is *realer* than a painting, then one should make even *less* objective paintings, thus beating photography at its own game:

> According to this view, the painting we look at reflects back at us that of which our eyes will never have their fill. What it contains that fulfills the original desire would be the very same stuff on which the desire continuously feeds. What distinguishes photography from painting is therefore clear, and why there can be no encompassing principle of "creation" applicable to both: to the eyes that will never have their fill of a painting, photography is rather like food for the hungry or drink for the thirsty. (Benjamin, 1991e, 645)

Despite attributing to reproducible media such as photography the downfall of the artistic *Erfahrung*, Benjamin was nevertheless fascinated by it. Benjamin's torn fascination erupts in the opposition between the "Auge" and the "Blick", a struggle, a visual dis-placement, a chasm between what the eye sees and what it *should* see. At stake here was reality, or what constitutes reality – although wrapped in Benjamin's ideational theory of mimesis,[29] a theory which posits – in the likeness of much of Benjamin's *Erfahrung*-bound writings – an identification between the inner and the outer world, between the self and the other. The imitation – or, alternatively, the *similarities* – would then serve as pointers for uncovering meaning in the world. A significant portion of Benjamin's theory relies on psychoanalysis and memories of his childhood, areas of knowledge that shall not be pursued in this research. But the silver lining rings true all the same: there is authority in imitation.

In spite of Benjamin's auratic and reticent fascination *vis-à-vis la photographie*, there was nonetheless an underlying literary mindset spreading throughout the nineteenth century, one infused by photography's descriptive talent and heralding a detachment from the Romantic emphasis on the imaginative and on the self. The mutual recognition was far from immediate: due to photography's "artless" background, most of the then emerging Realist authors found in their best interest to distance themselves from it, despite still equating *vraisemblance*[30] to photography's mimetic illusion – a *vraisemblance* stripped from transcendental functions, but still inserted in the Romantic dichotomy of the superficial versus the deep.[31] As Joachim Küpper (2004, 180) points out, the emerging practice of photography is, in this context, nothing but an example (although a striking one) of an artifact that, although "de-pragmatized", still preserves its authority when rising in imitation.

There is authority in imitation. Ian Watt credits a loosely understood notion of Realism as the common trace linking Defoe, Henry Fielding (1707–1754), and Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), thus making it the invisible force behind the rise of the novel in the West (a notion he then proceeds to analyze and undermine – to

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29 A theory best outlined by Benjamin in "Lehre vom Ähnlichen" (1933) and "Über das mimetische Vermögen" (1933). See Benjamin, 1991e, 204–209 and 210–212, respectively.

30 A discussion regarding the notion of 'Nachprüfbarkeit' in the realm of French realist literature, with an emphasis on Balzac, may be found in Joachim Küpper's *Balzac und der Effet de Réel* (1986, 37): "...im Sinne der Erzeugung einer Illusion von Nachprüfbarkeit, und das heisst in dieser Epoche: von Wissenschaftlichkeit in Bezug auf das, was der Erzähler als das wahre Wesen der Dinge enthüllt".

31 "Der discursive Rahmen, in dem sich die Überbietung der jeweiligen Vorgänger im Hinblick auf das Ziel, die Wirklichkeitsillusionierung, vollzieht, ist immer die romantische Dichotomie von 'Oberfläche' und 'Tiefe'" (Küpper, 1987, 4). See also Küpper, 1986, 3.

an extent). Watt posits that the "usefulness of the word was soon lost in the bitter controversies over the 'low' subjects and allegedly immoral tendencies of Flaubert and his successors". As a result, "Realism" became the mere binary opposition to "Idealism"; to say "Realist characters" was a shortcut to criticizing their (and their authors') lack of moral values. In exchange for clear-cut morals or idealized beauty, the Realist writer proposed a convoluted scientific objectivity that drew attention to an issue specific to the novel: "the problem of the correspondence between the literary work and the reality which it imitates", forcing Watt to resort to the scholastics of medieval realists in an attempt to clarify the question (Watt, 1957, 10–11).[32]

In practical terms, the exchange of morals for objectivity – the much debated *vraisemblance* – finds a sharp definition in Küpper (1986, 31): "The novel no longer defines itself first and foremost by aesthetic or moral qualities, but rather alongside a reality-bound Historiography (...): The expectation is no longer of writing beautifully or morally, but rather: realistically".[33]

The Realist novel proposed a shift from universal, classical truths, to a particular, individual rendition of it.[34] A shift that charged its toll (the capital R in Realism does not come cheap): in quest for fidelity towards observable human experience, the novel abdicated from formal conventions to the point where it became, according to Watt and in comparison to more classical genres, almost "formless" (Watt, 1957, 13). It also displeased those critics who deemed it 'ephemeral', as if literature's sole endeavor was to stand the test of time, like a cryogenically frozen creature unaware of its surroundings.

More than Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880), or even Émile Zola (1840–1902), it is the work of Stendhal (1783–1842) which most resembles Walser's and Carvalho's ambiguous approach to Realism, and thus most informs this research. Stendhal is cast here as the exemplary Realist not because Erich Auerbach (2003, 463) branded him so, calling him the founder of

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32 An issue so convoluted that, after a brief detour through Descartes, Watt already seems to be regretting his decision to go into it: "...the distinctive tenets of realist epistemology, and the controversies associated with them, are for the most part too specialised in nature to have much bearing on literature" (Watt, 1957, 12).

33 Speaking about Balzac specifically, Küpper (1986, 34) adds: "Die moralisierenden Texte befinden sich somit in jeder Hinsicht in einer peripheren Position zum 'plan general' und vermögen schon deshalb zum Gesamtbild der fiktionalen Welt nur wenig beizutragen".

34 And, in doing so, completely obliterating the dying Italo-Flemish cultural enterprise: instead of the "'great and general ideas' of Italian painting", the French Realists preferred the "'literal truth and... minute exactness in the detail of nature modified by accident' of the Dutch school" (Watt, 1957, 17).

"serious realism", nor because his famous mirror is still reflecting,[35] but because he was a Realist in spite of his Romantic vistas, or a Romantic in spite of his Realist soul,[36] an ambiguous, shifting author who, despite favoring a third-person narration, never hid his own first-person self too far from the written page – Stendhal was not, after all, and to put it in Edward Said's (1979, 171) exquisite formulation, a "self-abnegating writer".

Moreover, Stendhal's oeuvre negotiates a transition from "life as it should be" to "life as it is", from the subjunctive to the indicative, eliciting from it a covert darkness that blossoms, equally furtive, in Walser and Carvalho, and which informs, even if inceptively, this book's central thesis.

But most importantly, Stendhal's oeuvre establishes a clear link to the modern perception of the landscape. The French author is responsible for having added one extra word to the already lengthy French lexicon: *touriste*. Having extensively and passionately traveled throughout France and Italy, Stendhal wrote several books on the landscape and on the customs of these regions – amongst which *Mémoires d'un Touriste* (1838). In it, and by means of a narrator that is nothing but a barely disguised *alter ego* of the "not self-abnegating" writer, Stendhal succumbs to the desire of exploring the French countryside one last time before sailing across the Atlantic – and he proposes that, instead of "objectively" crossing the country in search of business opportunities, he should now travel "looking around himself" (Stendhal, 1891, 17). It is an exquisite formulation, one that once stood for all that tourism ever meant: a quest for natural beauty but also – and most importantly – a quest for meaning and self-knowledge.

While searching for meaning and self-knowledge, the Stendhalian tourist does not project himself onto the landscape, as a pureblood Romantic would. Landscape, to Stendhal and to the *corpus* of this book, is not an extension of the characters, but a function of language. Discussing the absence of a corresponding connection between landscape and mood in the work of Balzac, Küpper (1986, 224) underlines that in the Romantic novel the concept of a metaphorical

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35 Stendhal's famous passage in *Le Rouge et le Noir* – "Hé, monsieur, un roman est un miroir qui se promène sur une grande route. Tantôt il reflète à vos yeux l'azur des cieux, tantôt la fange des bourbiers de la route" (Stendhal, 1975, 107) – was at the center of a very contemporary discussion involving the English novelist Zadie Smith and the North-American critic James Wood, who urged for contemporary authors to abandon Social-Realist affectations. Wood took Stendhal's mirror for a walk under the not-so-azur Manhattan skies and concluded that it wouldn't survive the experience: it would explode. See Wood, 2001, 6.

36 Eagleton provocatively portrays Realism as the inescapable beast preying on Western literature: "Indeed, it has proved perhaps the most resilient cultural form in Western history, beating off all contenders. And this suggests that it has at least some of its roots deep in the Western psyche" (Eagleton, 2004, 66).

congruence between the landscape and the mood of the protagonists is decisive, constituting the central process through which the unbounded dimension of the Romantic soul is depicted. Instead of a metaphorical function,[37] the landscape (or, alternatively, the act of traveling through the landscape) fulfills a social role in Stendhal's travel literature – the tourist does seek an inner truth, but his inner truth relies heavily on the world around him:

> Je n'eus jamais le temps de m'enquérir, ou, pour mieux dire, de chercher à deviner comment les gens chez lesquels je passais avaient coutume de s'y prendre pour courir après le bonheur. C'est pourtant là la principale affaire de la vie. C'est du moins le premier objet de ma curiosité. J'aime les beaux paysages: ils font quelquefois sur mon âme le même effet qu'un archet bien manié sur un violon sonore: ils créent des sensations folles; ils augmentent ma joie et rendent le malheur plus supportable. (Stendhal, 1891, 77)

Stendhal weaves an abrupt connection between society and landscape, a *non-sequitur* of sorts that subsumes both realms into the same quest for happiness and existential meaning. Although inspired in his existential-touristic insights, Stendhal made one crucial mistake while assessing the economic and cultural impact of the railway within French society, claiming that despite helping commerce and increasing the number of travelers, the railroad would ultimately not create new forms of consumption or business (Stendhal, 1891, 333). Stendhal could not predict that within less than a century tourism would become one of the world's – and in particular one of France's – largest and fastest-growing industries, and one with a direct impact on literature.

Already Flaubert, four meager years after Stendhal's death, was touring Brittany alongside his friend and photography enthusiast Maxime du Camp (1822–1894). Between 1849 and 1850 he journeyed through Egypt, Greece, and Turkey, before visiting Carthage in 1858 in order to collect material for his historical novel *Salammbô* (1862).[38] Flaubert wasn't alone – François-René de Chateaubriand

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37 "Das mimetische Konzept der Aussenwelt ist in Balzacs Roman noch nicht aufgegeben. Die Darstellung dynamischer psychischer Prozesse wird nicht durch die Reduktion der Landschafts-tableaux auf eine metaphorische Funktion ermöglicht, sondern durch eine quasi-realistische Motivierung: Die Landschaft verändert sich tatsächlich." (Küpper, 1986, 224)

38 Susanne Zepp, in her work on Jorge Luis Borges, discusses the importance of this Flaubertian maneuver to the Borgesian aesthetics, a topic that shall be resumed shortly: "Der Roman Flauberts um das Schicksal der Fürstentochter Salammbö spielt drei Jahrhunderte vor Christus, den geschichtlichen Rahmen für die Handlung bilden Karthagos Kämpfe mit seinen Söldnern nach dem ersten Punischen Krieg. Flaubert hat für diesen 1863 erschienenen Roman intensiv recherchiert, zahlreiche historische Darstellungen miteinbezogen und einige Reisen an Orte des Geschehens unternommen, um dem Text einen größtmöglichen Realismus zu geben" (Zepp, 2003, 92).

(1768–1848), Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), and Gérard de Nerval (1808–1855) – to name a few contemporary French heavy-weights – were also mobile, but it is Flaubert that leads the charge in Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism* (1978).

Said resorts (among many others authors) to Flaubert's depiction of Oriental landscapes and customs (his bourgeois attempt at escaping from the "boredom" of French bourgeoisie[39]) as a way of conveying the hidden Eurocentric prejudices that accompany any representation of the Orient ("the great Asiatic mystery"): "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences". By means of wave upon wave of cultural pilgrimage and misrepresentation, Europe managed to accomplish what tangible, empirical geography had not: a technique for "turning vast geographical domains into treatable, and manageable, entities" (Said, 1979, 1; 115).

Mimicking Lorrain's beloved technique for rendering an Italian scenery, these European traveler-authors conjured farfetched images of golden-coated landscapes, a stark contrast to the otherwise damp and grayish vistas available back home. European cultural imperialism thus succeeded in further exoticizing a vast geographical region, and in doing so drawing a very neat line between "our" space and "their" space: "Imperialism", writes Whyte (2002, 144), "involved an expansion of European landscape conventions and ways of seeing landscape – and often elements of European landscapes themselves – into other parts of the world".

Whereas a first wave of Napoleonic explorers sought to convert the foreign, exotic landscape into an extension of Europe's, the second batch of travelers – among whom Flaubert and, on the British front, Richard Burton (1821–1890) – could then retrace the steps of the first group under the pretence of dispelling "the mustiness of the pre-existing Orientalist archive" and hence providing a "fresh new repository of Oriental experience" (Said, 1979, 169). Burton, in particular, comes across as the ambiguous and multifaceted explorer: on the one hand recognizing his role as a pawn in England's imperial power in the East, and on the other relating to the local population and their struggle. According to Said (1979, 169), what one reads in Burton's prose is "the history of a consciousness negotiating its way through an alien culture by virtue of having successfully absorbed its systems of information and behavior. Burton's liberty lay in having shaken himself free of his European origins enough to be able to live as

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39 "Flaubert's Oriental perspective is rooted in an eastward and southward search for a 'visionary alternative', which 'meant gorgeous color, in contrast to the greyish tonality of the French provincial landscape. It meant exciting spectacle instead of humdrum routine, the perennially mysterious in place of the all too familiar.'" (Said, 1979, 185)

an Oriental". Burton sets the example for the late twentieth century Eurocentric writer aspiring to discuss the Orient – or, for that matter, any of non-"our" spaces: they must have tread its landscapes, experienced the culture firsthand, camou-flaged themselves amidst the society. They have no pending ontological commit-ment to reality – they are no anthropologists after all –, but they do have a heavy conscience. They must pay their forefather's dues for all the wood they chopped and all the gold they mined and all the bad films they shot in the desert: a bit of displaced suffering is the least they can do. Thus the late twentieth century writer who isn't born in exile must voluntarily seek it if they aspire to World-credibility. But it still helps immensely if they are born in Europe.

Such intertwinement between exile, mass-tourism, and anthropology shall be analyzed throughout this research. Meanwhile, back in the eighteenth century, while Flaubert and Burton were exploring Eastbound landscapes, the everyday European dweller was also becoming increasingly mobile: aboard trains and along boulevards.

European urban centers were experiencing exponential and disorderly growth under the impact of industrialization and rural depopulation (Bade, 2003, 41), and amid such chaotic, epidemic-laden and migration-intensive envi-ronment, the so-called detective or crime fiction genre found the perfect setting for its exploits. The unsettling feeling of insecurity and lack of guarantees engen-dered by the new urban logic was – following Benjamin – one of the main reasons behind the rise of crime fiction, in particular that of its founding father: Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849). Poe's detective was a *flâneur* of sorts, simultaneously seeking the city and hiding himself in it: "The flâneur was to Poe, above all, someone who does not feel at ease in his own company. That is why he seeks out the crowd; the reason why he hides in it is probably close at hand" (Benjamin, 1991e, 550).

The subsequent development and consolidation of the genre in the early twentieth century preserved in its depths the dark mark of Poe's detec-tive-*flâneur* dubiously roaming through an ever-pathological "modern cosmog-ony" (Benjamin, 1991e, 545). "There has always been a subversive element in the genre", claims John G. Cawelti (1997, 6), "possibly going back to the ambiguous mixture of rationality and decadence that Edgar Allan Poe built into his origi-nal creation". The subversive element endured, albeit temporarily hindered by the conservative turn taken between 1880 and 1920: "When the detective story first became widely popular through the great success of Sherlock Holmes, the social values and ideologies it expressed were generally conservative" (Cawelti, 1997, 6). Not only Sherlock Holmes, but the vast majority of the period's detectives would embody the high-moral values of a society threatened with dissolution and uncertainty. In many ways, the predictable formula concocted by the detective

novel assuaged the fears of the modern-day city dweller, providing a bourgeois escape from the urban unknown.

Although Cawelti's argument posits the genre's constitutive subversion, and that its subversive undertones may be proven by both the dominance of female writers and the recurring depiction of minority groups and themes, it is nevertheless the case that the genre remains up to today a source of certainty amidst the debris of cultural skepticism and fading institutional guarantees. It is perhaps for these reasons that Cawelti admits, towards the end of his article, that "the detective story constitutes a *mythos* or fable in which crime, as a distinctive problem of bourgeois, individualistic, and quasi-democratic societies is handled without upsetting society's fundamental institutions or its worldviews" (Cawelti, 1997, 12).

It is no surprise that crime fiction is a fiercely devout Realist genre: Realism – to a lesser extent – and crime fiction – to a larger one – are the sole literary havens in a post-Joyce, post-Dadaist world. They bestow upon the readers a tranquility no longer to be found in real life: everything will be explained in due time. Writing in the beginning of the 1930s, Benjamin notes that "few are those who, aboard trains, read books that they have on their shelves back at home, choosing instead to buy what catches their eye in the very last moment". By resorting to the formulaic and suspenseful predictability of a literary genre, the traveler seeks to anesthetize "one fear through another one": they replace the real qualms of a rapidly changing society with the artificial ones pressed between the covers of a book: "Between the freshly-cut pages of crime novels he seeks the idle or, as it were, virgin feelings of trepidation which could help him get over the archaic ones of the journey" (Benjamin, 1991e, 381). The reader-traveler is worried about being late and missing their connection (the ever-increasing pace of things), about being alone in their compartment (and in life in general), about the unknown destination where they are headed (the sprawling urban growth) – as the locomotive gains speed and blurs the actual landscape, the reader resorts to the fictional landscapes of their favorite detective.

Location – the landscape as *couleur locale* – is fundamental to crime fiction, arguably even more than to any other literary genre. A detective is, after all, known for the landscapes he or she inhabits, adding, through them, unity and social realism to the whodunit formula. Stijn Rejinders' (2011, 27–29) very provocative take on the intersection between crime fiction, landscape, and tourism sheds some light on the matter. Resorting to Pierre Nora's concept of "places of the imagination" and Harvey's notion of "geographic imagination", Rejinders argues that the genre's insistence on a same setting "brings unity to something that in fact has no unity", thus raising the story's credibility: "[t]he plots may be fictional, but the events could also actually have occurred – they could literally

have *taken place*". The landscapes are hence "injected" with narrative meaning, not only helping to move the plot forward, but also becoming extensions of the detectives' own personalities.

By conjuring a sturdily Realist environment, the crime fiction writer is in fact asking for the reader's unrestricted belief: the landscape may be recognizable, but the actual crime-solving mechanisms are not. Instead of boring, bureaucratic legal procedures, the fictional detective relies on a mixture of tight-paced action and personal geniality – unlikely traits in the life of everyday law-enforcement workers. The implicit promise made by the writer is the following: by "telling the truth" about the landscape, he or she also makes a commitment with "telling the truth" about everything else. The landscape is thus stripped from its aesthetic attributes and employed as a mere tool for writerly credibility.

The landscape also plays an important role in asserting the detective's movement from crime scene to clue location. Rejinders (2011, 30) points out the "on the go" nature of crime fiction, in which the police investigation appears "as an unending movement through the narrative space": "the landscape is a realm that contains certain secrets, which means that it needs to be passed through and investigated, in search of truth and justice". In doing so, the detective's *modus operandi* nears that of the early twentieth century tourist, moving from attraction to attraction in search of some kind of sensorial illumination. If the second half of the nineteenth century marked a literary transition from the Romantic *flâneur* to the Realist detective, the second half of the twentieth century fashions the detective into a tourist – and a clueless one at that.

In the cunning hands of a Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) or a Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977), the predictable structure of crime fiction is truly subverted into a series of wrong turns and false solutions, a labyrinthine enigma in which all clues are set in place for a detective to sort them out – but to which enigma they belong to and who is supposed to uncover them remains to be seen. Building a case for Borges' constitutive skepticism, Susanne Zepp resorts to "La Muerte y la Brújula", a 1942 short-story that undermines the conventions of crime fiction by exposing the hiatus between logic and reality: "What is 'true' from the standpoint of thought is false from the standpoint of facts". The story's detective, Erik Löhnrot, ends up getting lost in his own investigation and "must pay with death for his rational dogmatism" (Zepp, 2003, 76; 77). Cawelti (1997, 12) follows suit and places Borges and Nabokov among the twentieth century authors that "find a way of artistically expressing the pervasive philosophical and cultural skepticism of modern times by using or inventing the double plot of the detective story to create a structure in which their own sense of problems of truth and meaning can be embodied". Such a development lies at the core of Carvalho's narratives, and shall be returned to, by way of Walser, in due time.

The mystery lingers, but the reader now finds himself destitute of the detective's helping hand. The reader is lured into a double-edged Borgesian trap which suggests – according to Alberto Manguel (2010, 72–73) – both that "authorship is a casual, haphazard thing", and that "it is the reader who determines the nature of a text through, among other things, attribution". The reader is turned into a tourist holding in his hands a guide whose writings either do not coincide with the reality of what he or she sees, or expose mechanisms he or she would have preferred to stay hidden (the illegal immigrants selling miniature Eiffel towers in its vicinity). Borges notoriously blurs the distinctions between reality and fiction, and with him a sort of literary anxiety is born, an anxiety towards a post-war world that seems more and more keen on denying literature, on denying artistic artifice. The misadventures of Pierre Menard or of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"'s unnamed narrator (perhaps Borges himself) are escape mechanisms of sorts that attempt to simultaneously crack bitter jokes about the writer's (or literature's) condition, and to philosophically supply the meaning History fails in providing (or the lack thereof). As if through literature, through its artifice, Borges could proceed to filling the gaps that history "neglected to fill": "Fake, then, in Borges's universe, is not a sin against creation. It is implied in the act of creation itself and, whether openly recognized or adroitly concealed, it takes place every time a suspension of disbelief is demanded" (Manguel, 2010, 74).

And by the time Borges was publishing both "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote", and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" in his 1944 masterpiece *Fictions*, the world was forcing upon its population a monstrous suspension of disbelief.

After the unspeakable traumas of war, language does come back – but it cannot be trusted anymore. W. G. Sebald's (1944–2001) account of the post-air-raid anesthesia to which the German population succumbed in 1943–4 is interspersed with reports from eyewitnesses whose testimonies were burdened with clichés to the point where language's main function was not so much to convey information, but to "cover up and neutralize experiences beyond our ability to comprehend": "The apparently unimpaired ability – shown in most of the eyewitness reports – of everyday language to go on functioning as usual raises doubts of the authenticity of the experiences they record" (Sebald, 2003, 36).

Everyday language is not to be trusted for the reality to which it adheres ceases to be a reality to which one subscribes, or to which one would like to subscribe. Reality becomes a cruelty, a campfire horror tale that cannot be interrupted even if the storyteller is silenced. The need for a new language surfaces, infused with a semblance of truth one may believe in, or may derive some meaning from. For an eerie post-war beauty lingers as the last fires are put out and autumn closes in, and with it landscape's vengeance takes place.

One cannot make poetry after Auschwitz but nonetheless the flowers are blooming and one must make some sense out of it, out of nature's callous indifference to human suffering. Sebald seems to channel what Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) called the "Grausamkeit der Natur" – nature's cruelty – in order to evoke his post-war horror at nature's brutal indifference to the plight of those to whom she herself gives life, the perverse pleasure she finds in destroying the very things she has previously created. Nature, to Nietzsche (1987, 64; 140), is not only cruel but also cold-blooded, an ice queen devoid of compassion and mercy, merely continuing on while people suffer senselessly. Or, as Sebald puts it:

> At the end of the war, some of the bomb sites of Cologne had already been transformed by the dense green vegetation growing over them – the roads made their way through this new landscape like 'peaceful deep-set country lanes' [Sebald is quoting Heinrich Böll's *Der Engel schwieg*]. In contrast to the effect of the catastrophes insidiously creeping up on us today, nature's ability to regenerate did not seem to have been impaired by the firestorms. In fact, many trees and bushes, particularly chestnuts and lilacs, had a second flowering in Hamburg in the autumn of 1943, a few months after the great fire. (Sebald, 2003, 39)

It is this painful, incongruous process that the Dutch artist and poet Herman Dirk van Dodeweerd, known as Armando (1929–), referred to back in the 1970s when coining the term 'guilty landscapes'. Having spent his childhood near the transition camp of Amersfoort (meant for prisoners who were later to be dispatched to concentration camps), Armando was overcome, after the war was over, by nature's ambiguous stand – on the one hand having sheepishly submitted to the enemy,[40] and on the other having blossomed into something beautiful after the enemy was gone:

> I observe them, I look at them, and something frightful occurs: they are beautiful, I find them beautiful. (...) The beauty of sites where the enemy was, where the enemy was located, where the enemy lived and plundered, where the enemy exerted its reign of terror, where traces of the enemy's terror are still to be found. Right there. Beauty should be ashamed. (Armando, 1988, 245–247)

Armando would from then on carry the ambiguity close to his heart – a simple stroll down the boulevards of Berlin would suffice to trigger in him the very conflicting

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40 "Look at the pictures in which the enemy is busy: there they stand, the trees, they stand laughing in the background. And not only pines and firs, the other trees too. Shouldn't something be said about this? I'd think so, because sometimes they are still there, the trees, the forest's edge and the trees, the same place they were back then; do not think they have moved on, they are still standing there like indifferent eyewitnesses." (Armando, 1988, 245–6)

emotions of indifference and anger, of death and rebirth. He wishes he could be "totally indifferent to the masses" that populate the houses he sees on both sides of the streets, but he cannot: he complains about it as vehemently as he complains about the guilty landscapes that just stood there and impassively watched "amid all that human strife" (Armando, 1996, 46).[41] He even ironically advocates a tree-like behavior as a means of escaping the ruthless post-war realities: "It's better to follow the example of one of those beaming trees. It might even add a few years to your life, provided those cowardly organs on the inside of your body do their part" – after all, "[t]he land and the people had to come together at some point. Why not in a beautiful forest" (Armando, 1996, 45–46), an eerie reflection that seems directly taken from Walser's *Jakob von Gunten* (1909), as shall be demonstrated in the fifth chapter.

Why not in a beautiful forest, amidst a beauty that should be ashamed – but is not. The revenge of the landscape lies in its starting anew whereas humankind is still trying to find the language that will make sense of it all. They both have burned and drowned, but only one is blossoming again, effortless. As if centuries of scenic representation were rendered useless by trauma and time, having taught us nothing of concrete value. When humankind most needed the therapeutic, anesthetizing vistas of a Romantic landscape, it was just then that they had no remaining value whatsoever.

A mixture of incomprehension and anger haunts henceforth all artistic endeavors, confirming Eagleton's (1996, 30) suspicion that, sadly, one does not read literature in order to become "a better person" – a wishfully formulated notion meant to allay bleak times: "When the Allied troops moved into the concentration camps (…) to arrest commandants who had whiled away their leisure hours with a volume of Goethe, it appeared that someone had some explaining to do". Neither beauty nor *Bildung* are acceptable: they both convey a deceiving, unlayered stability that fails in uncovering the landscape's darker narratives, its guilt and shame, its terrifying lack of empathy *vis-à-vis* the people who inhabit it.

The landscape is henceforth infused with an unreality of its own, blurring even further the borders between reality and fiction:

> …when he assigns an active role to space, Armando is joining a philosophical movement that has long been part of Western thought, though it is true that it was never a dominant

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41 "Oh, I can go on walking around Berlin and asking myself every time I come to a house: what was here before, who used to live here, what did it look like? But it's high time I cut that out. Who gives a damn about the people who used to live here, they're probably all dead anyway. Is there something wrong with that? Yes, there is, but I won't elaborate on this hypothesis. I suspect I'd be wasting my breath."

school. Different phenomenological philosophers, from Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty, have
pointed to the importance that place has in the experience and observation of reality.
(Rejinders, 2011, 34)

Through a sense of 'being-in-the-world', phenomenology sought to reconnect the
self and the world. The individual should not be perceived as a self-contained
entity treading in the world 'out there', as if the world were a passive receptacle to
his or her projections. Tim Ingold (2000, 173) maintains that "it is through being
inhabited, rather than through its assimilation to a formal design or specification,
that the world becomes a meaningful environment for people". In all its hope-
fulness, phenomenology tried to revert landscape's loss of empathy by binding
both our identity and consciousness to it. Far from a Romantic mood-projection
onto the landscape, phenomenology's "being-in-the-world" saw the individual
as already integrated to the world and partaking in its "dialectical 'pull' between
transcendence and ruination" (Ebbaston, 2013, 3).

When Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) briefly changed the Zeitgeist's gears and
went from epistemology to ontology, he was in part alluding to phenomenolo-
gy's contradictory bidding: to bind humankind to the world, despite it being a
highly unstable, alienated, and 'progress'-mad one. How does one philosophi-
cally go about praising the earth and the skies – as did Maurice Merleau-Ponty[42]
(1908–1961) – when all empirical testimonies point towards loss and indifference
and the ambiguous status of technology? One of the solutions set forth by both
Heidegger – less successfully – and Merleau-Ponty – more poetically – was to
phenomenologically uncover the unheimlich found in nature and in everyday
life. In many ways they were looking for transcendence amidst ruins, a flash-
light piercing the darkness in search for meaning – a maneuver Jean-Paul Sartre
(1905–1980) achieved with a higher degree of existential accomplishment than
Heidegger (minus the transcendence), although the two philosophers ultimately
differed on what "existence" meant.

Phenomenology inadvertently provided the theoretical tools for landscape
sentiency, inasmuch as it transferred onto the landscape a somewhat bizarre
and human-like agency. No longer only a Romantic or touristic trope, nor the
background for war crimes (although simultaneously remaining all of these
things), the landscape also became a place for vengeance, its lack of empathy was

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42 "Moi qui contemple le bleu du ciel, je ne suis pas en face de lui un sujet acosmique, je ne le
possède pas en pensée, je ne déploie pas au-devant de lui une idée du bleu qui m'en donnerait
le secret, je m'abandonne à lui, je m'enfonce dans ce mystère, 'il se pense en moi', je suis le ciel
même qui se rassemble, se recueille et se met à exister pour soi, ma conscience est engorgée par
ce bleu illimité." (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 248)

turned into literary rebellion. Not that it was solely phenomenology's doing – it merely updated philosophically an ongoing literary trend.

Between the 1930s and the 1960s, nature's active indifference demanded literary compensation. As a result, it was often cast in three different roles: as the narrative's set-up, as its climax, or as its silver lining.[43]

The first role portrays an implacable landscape that is to be blamed for uprooting the characters and setting the plot in motion. Such is the case of two American masterpieces: a northern one – John Steinbeck's (1902–1968) *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) – and a southern one – Graciliano Ramos' (1892–1953) *Vidas Secas* (1938). The drought serves both books as the triggering incident towards the (attempted) reconstruction of a new life in the midst of economic and social hardships. In Steinbeck's case, nature is so relentlessly unpredictable that it turns drought into flood by the end of the book, whereas *Vidas Secas* begins and ends in an arid, hopeless setting (a setting that follows the characters wherever they go). Nature seems to create havoc at its own will, stripped from the Godly punishment that colored literary representations of natural disasters in previous centuries.

Nature also provides climaxes for a broad range of texts and in a wide variety of manners. It may be as cleansing as it is catastrophic, for instance in Jean Rhys' (1890–1979) *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) or in Ray Bradbury's (1920–2012) *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Fire is devastating and redeeming in both narratives, but fire never erupts as a mere accident: it is a deliberate, man-triggered action that then takes a life of its own. The characters unleash nature and are thereafter either dangerously drawn to it – as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s overt fire politics[44] –, or unable to control it – as in *Fahrenheit 451*'s redemption through fire (and, when that does not pan out as expected, through more reliably lethal atomic bombs). It may also be bellicose and existential, as when trees abandon their submissiveness and provide characters with enlightened and timely solutions. Sartre's *La Nausée* (1938) benefits from a learned chestnut in its narrative path towards existential malaise and philosophical awe. J.R.R. Tolkien's (1892–1973) *The Two Towers* (1954), the second installment into the widely popular *Lord of the Rings* trilogy,

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43 A fourth category should also be considered were it not so heavily steeped in allegorical motifs, thus shadowing landscape's revenge with symbolic undertones: Camus' *La Peste* (1947) and Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien Años de Soledad* (1967) would serve as its most accomplished examples.

44 The book's last sentence is pregnant with fiery revenge, a motif already abundant in *Jane Eyre* (1847), a novel which *Wide Sargasso Sea* seeks to prequel and comment upon: "Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do. There must have been a draught for the flame flickered and I thought it was out. But I shielded it with my hand and it burned up again to light me along the dark passage" (Rhys, 1996, 190).

channels technological-angst into the otherwise peaceful and non-committal treelike Ents: the fact that vast portions of the forest are being felled in order to fuel an evil wizard's furnaces is enough of a *casus belli* to send the Ents on a war-mongering rampage, ultimately winning the battle for the Allies.

Lastly, nature may offer a conflicted silver lining by hinting at a hope that is later on revealed to be unavailable to anyone other than to nature itself. In Tennessee Williams' (1911–1983) play *Spring Storm* (1937) a storm foretells the inevitable despair to which its characters are doomed, and none other than a *spring* storm – a capricious season if ever there was one. Or, more famously, in the paltry tree that sprouts leaves between the first and second acts of Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) *Waiting for Godot* (1949), the ever-so-elusive promise of a regeneration none of the play's characters are bound to find. Nature no longer carries neither a spiritual nor a secular wisdom about itself, having instead forsaken humankind to its own solitary fate.

Human solitude is accentuated by landscape's intangibility and teasing appearance, as finely exemplified in Heinrich Böll's (1917–1985) début novel *Der Zug war pünktlich* (1949), in which the landscape is always seen at a distance, from train compartments, restaurant windows, and brothel rooms, or recalled from childhood memories. Written shortly after the war's aftermath, the novel is infused with a traumatic, revolving, regurgitating language that every so often repeats the same set of words and sentences, returns like a prayer to their familiar incantation in search of refuge and meaning (a cadence which bears a distinctive German post-war inflection, and which is not only tentatively rehearsed throughout Walser's oeuvre, but also a vital – yet overlooked – aspect of Carvalho's own diction, as shall be shown in the next chapter). Andreas, the novel's main character, is bound in a non-heroic journey to the Polish battlefront, and through the train window he helplessly watches the "gorgeous gardens, gentle hills, smiling clouds" of the passing landscape, all the red trees and green houses and blue skies and golden suns he shall never again set eyes upon (Böll, 1972, 21; 22). At first sight, the landscape at least brings color to the otherwise gray world that seems to engulf Andreas: the gray railway tracks, the gray faces of soldiers, the gray darkness behind him, the gray coffee and the gray milk, the gray skin. The only color to be found in the novel is located outdoors, but none of the characters are ever allowed outdoors. Although alluring, the landscape is not to be indulged, for therein lies nothing but despair:

> It was indeed summer, and the crops stood golden in the fields, thin blades of grass, some scorched black, eaten up by the summer, and I hated nothing so much as to die a hero's death in a cornfield, it reminded me too much of a poem, and I didn't want to die like in a poem, to die a hero's death like an advertisement for this dirty war... (Böll, 1972, 37)

Böll's début novel is primarily concerned with life, with how one continues to live when all seems to point at death and despair. The colorful life Böll never- theless indentifies in the landscape (the landscape between 1944 – when the narrative is set – and 1948 – when the book was finished) is not a human life, and although plants are blossoming, man is not thriving, and the novel ends, accordingly, in tragedy and despair. Böll's novel is exemplary not only because it contributes to the departure of post-war German-language literature towards new beginnings, but also because it does so by decisively moving the characters' actions and fates indoors, both physically and mentally, a maneuver foreshad- owed – albeit still timidly, in comparison – by Walser, as shall also be shown further on. These characters' existences are less corporal than vaporous, so overwhelming is their guilt, anguish, and perplexity. Landscape's unrelenting indifference spawns a world of abandonment from which the artist derives no meaning, and in which he or she struggles to find his or her place and relevance (is the author dead, after all?). The landscape is neutralized as twentieth century literature turns more and more to language, as is the case with Thomas Bernhard (1931–1989), whose writings are equally central to this research, as mentioned in the introduction.

If the importance of landscapes once rested on "the relationships between the physical environment and human society", thus underlying the engagement of people "with the world around them" (Whyte 2001, 7), the second half of the twentieth century abruptly severed this connection by increasingly alienating the representation of landscape in literary works.[45] The (mental and physical) indoors became the rule, and the landscape was no longer worthy of a leading role. Landscape was once again turned into the supporting act meant to hold the show's background together, but instead of serving religion, like it did in Dürer's day, it now seems to serve a combination of two possible outcomes, as posited in this research: either to infuse a literary text with the hue of sensibility (or prosaic poetry), or to convey a feeling of World-literature authenticity.

Roland Barthes' (1915–1980) theoretical and eventually testimonial dealings with the outdoors – its weather and light, its topography and melody – is a good

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[45] A particularly European maneuver that was counterattacked by the rebirth of American Realism in the late 1980s, whereupon the landscape – albeit an urban one – was once again given some prominence as a link between literature (art) and society (world). Tom Wolfe's initial manifesto "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast: A Literary Manifesto for the New Social Novel" (1989) and, further on, Jonathan Franzen's successful rebranding of a Tolstoy-inspired all- encompassing ambition as seen in *The Corrections* (2001) and *Freedom* (2010), were fundamen- tal to the twenty-first century Realist insurgence.

example of the landscape's reduction to "a class sensibility"[46] that is not readily available to all speakers – and despite exposing this "short-circuit of language", Barthes nonetheless frequently indulges in a belletrist exercise, deriving vitality (but "no signified") from an atmospheric reading of the landscape: "Again, after overcast days, a morning of clear weather, the glow and subtlety of the atmosphere: a cool, luminous silk; this blank moment (no signified) produces a self-evident truth: that life is worth living" (Barthes, 2003, 84). Elsewhere, Barthes goes as far as to argue that the capacity of "reading" a landscape according to the whims of the body and the memory is the "vestibule of knowledge and analysis that is assigned to the writer: more conscious than competent, conscious of the very interstices of competence" (Barthes, 1982, 129). The writer should then be attuned to this class sensibility which enables him to craft a literary text that shall nonetheless remain incomprehensible to the same *boulangère* with whom he tried to communicate before, which, if done with either too much levity of ego (which, despite all, is not Barthes' case), may open literature to some precarious developments.

The second supporting role played by landscape, as posited in this research, is a variation on the already mentioned strategy of exile as a literary credibility-inducing maneuver. The post-colonial concern with representation and authority (both artistic and historic) revives the Romantic notion of authenticity as a means of counter-attacking colonizing instances and institutions. The landscape portrayed by a post-colonial-prone literature is therefore aesthetic only in the sense in which it is aesthetically credible: an accurately authentic (albeit fictionalized) world is (re)created instead of a universal one (for it would be too easily subjugated by the powerful and the dominant). The landscape is an artifice, a quotation mark in quest for legitimacy. In the manner of an academic text whose validity is undermined by insufficient or insubstantial sources, so is the literary text aspiring to World Literature, to a theoretical weight that might grant it access to both academia and the canon. Landscape, in the turn of the twenty-first century, is both performative and peripheral – a misplaced gasp for poetry or credibility.

By seeking the anthropological and/or topographical detail that shall render a landscape credible, the twenty-first century World-Writer is paradoxically emulating globalization's *modus operandi*: "globalization itself creates a corresponding

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46 "Ce matin la boulangère me dit: il fait encore beau ! mais chaud trop longtemps ! (les gens d'ici trouvent toujours qu'il fait trop beau, trop chaud). J'ajoute: et la lumière est si belle ! Mais la boulangère ne répond pas, et une fois de plus j'observe ce court-circuit du langage, dont les conversations les plus futiles sont l'occasion sûre; je comprends que voir la lumière relève d'une sensibilité de classe..." (Barthes, 1975, 178)

need for localism, for places and their landscapes that retain their distinctiveness and continuity" (Whyte, 2002, 217). The need arises in response to globalization's very tendency of homogenizing places, from motorways to hotel rooms, as typified by Marc Augé's concept of 'non-places'[47] (1992), or prophetically illustrated in Italo Calvino's (1923–1985) *Le Città Invisibili* (1972). The writer thus scavenges this local, peripheral landscape for a precarious illumination that shall be relevant to the universal urban realities of his or her readership. It remains to be seen whether this writer may be acting like an outdated or misguided anthropologist, feeding off a sense of authenticity in search of a reverberation that should rather come from literature itself.

The underlying ambiguity of these nowadays seemingly ubiquitous non-places – a liminal space that leads not to discovery and awe, but to solitude and disillusion, eliciting a sense of rootlessness akin to both exiles and tourists (minus the political implications) – seems to provide a blank enough slate with which to frame, historically and conceptually, the main goal of this study: to promote the landscape once again to the foreground of literary discourse and, by using the century and the ocean that stand between Walser and Carvalho as a strategic constraint, to resort to the landscape as a tool to explore, on the one hand, the oeuvre of these two authors, and, on the other, to better gauge the implications of some of the historical and aesthetic developments overseen in this literature review.

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47 Non-lieux are transitional places, tightly linked to mass tourism and late capitalism. In a way, they subvert (without cancelling out) a "chronic restlessness" Sebald identifies in Böll and in the German craving (via Romanticism) for travel: "Later, Henrich Böll suggested that such experiences of collective uprooting are at the origin of the German craving for travel: a sense of being unable to stay anywhere, a constant need to be somewhere else. In terms of social conditioning, this would make the ebb and flow of the population bombed out of their homes rather like a rehearsal for initiation into the mobile society that would form in the decades after the catastrophe. Under the auspices of that society, chronic restlessness became a cardinal virtue" (Sebald, 2003, 34).