

L'AVENTURE HUMAINE: SPIRITUALITY, MYTH, AND POWER
IN THE POST-WAR TRAVEL NARRATIVES OF LOUISE WEISS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the post-war *œuvre* of Louise Weiss through the analytical framework of the travel narrative. The primary sources for this study comprise the substantial number of previously unexamined journal articles, photographic collections, monographs, and short documentaries which Weiss wrote following her journeys throughout Asia, North America, Africa, and the Middle East in the twenty-five years after the Second World War. Previously defined by her early career as a journalist, her lifelong advocacy for peace, and her campaigns for women's suffrage during the interwar period, this study positions Weiss in a new narrative – that of post-war travel writer with a desire to discover a moral code that would mitigate the turbulence and fragility she perceived in the twentieth century. The analysis of this considerable body of source material is approached through the themes of spirituality, myth, and power. These themes, which emerge organically from Weiss's multi-media post-war *œuvre*, offer a fresh perspective on the French post-war travel narrative and allow a new understanding of both the traveller's gaze and the notion of displacement.

For John, my husband, and Dawn, my mother,
who have supported me throughout my journey.

Dedicated to the memory of Bert, my father, and Angela, my supervisor.

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LOUISE WEISS'S AVENTURE HUMAINE

TRAJECTORIES, PATHS, AND ROUTES

Journalist, advocate for peace, and campaigner for women's suffrage, Louise Weiss (1893-1983) was a passionate voice in France's domestic, European, and international affairs. The eldest of six children, Weiss was born in Arras, Northern France, into a bourgeois family with a paternal Alsatian heritage and a distinguished maternal parentage originating in Germany and Bohemia. Weiss was among the first women to pass the *agrégation* at the age of 21. However, she did not follow the academic career this qualification opened up for her, choosing instead to devote her life to political journalism, women's suffrage, and pacifism – three spheres which have since defined her place in history. However, another significant aspect of her intellectual life revolved around her post-war travels, her accounts of which were an attempt to understand the events of the twentieth century. This is an aspect of her work which has been largely overlooked.

In the twenty-five years after the Second World War, Weiss journeyed throughout Asia, North America, Africa, and the Middle East and produced a substantial number of previously unexamined journal articles, photographic collections, monographs, and short documentaries. This observation raises two relatively straightforward research questions: firstly, the extent to which Weiss could be considered to be a travel writer and, secondly, whether her post-war narratives exemplify a type of travel writing. Weiss's post-war *œuvre* indicates that her travels were not undertaken for leisure but had a clear purpose – to engage with other civilisations in an attempt to understand the turbulence and fragility she

perceived in the twentieth century. Her views on contemporary society were subsequently recorded in her travel narratives, revealing a far more complex relationship between Weiss and travel, and inviting an examination of the extent to which her post-war travel narratives helped her understanding of the twentieth century. This section begins by firstly addressing the two questions above before turning to the focus of this thesis and the specific research question of how, and indeed if, Weiss's post-war travel narratives served the purpose she intended.

The years immediately following the Second World War marked a significant turning point in Weiss's life. She withdrew from her career as a journalist and from her campaign for women's suffrage to pursue a freelance career. To appreciate fully the magnitude of this transition, and to contextualise a discussion of Weiss's post-war publications, her earlier years merit preliminary consideration. This introduction opens with a brief overview of Weiss's activities up to the Second World War before examining in more detail the reasoning behind her insatiable desire to travel the world in later life. Marking Weiss's passage from *journaliste* to *voyageuse* in this way establishes a backdrop against which to position Weiss as a traveller and provides a basis for the subsequent examination of her post-war travel narratives.

From *journaliste* to *voyageuse*

After successfully completing the *agrégation* in 1914 – a significant achievement, especially for a woman at that time – and managing a military hospital in Brittany during the Great War, Weiss worked as a journalist on publications as diverse as *Le Radical* (under the

pseudonym Louis Lefranc), the prominent French newspaper *Le Petit Parisien*, and *L'Europe Nouvelle*, her own centre-left journal dedicated to promoting ideas of peace and reconciliation. In 1934, when increasing hostility in Europe made her pacifist tendencies untenable, Weiss resigned from her editorial position at *L'Europe Nouvelle* to focus on women's suffrage.

Inspired by Emmeline Pankhurst,¹ Weiss founded the suffragist movement *La Femme Nouvelle*. She orchestrated mock female elections and interrupted major sporting events such as the Longchamps Grand Prix when, in June 1936, she led a group of suffragettes onto the racecourse. Weiss also engaged in street activities distributing leaflets with groups of women who were chained together, threw two dozen pots of scented powder from a hair salon in the faces of policemen who had thwarted her demonstration,² and presented socks to senators with labels claiming women would still darn them even if given the vote.

Weiss re-evaluated her future in the years immediately following the Second World War. Although Cécile Brunschvicg, Irène Joliot-Curie, and Suzanne Lacore had been appointed as government ministers between the wars,³ but still 'nominées et point élues' as Weiss delighted in pointing out in the strongest of terms,⁴ a political career continued to lie just beyond Weiss's reach. After the Second World War, journalism had also lost its appeal and Weiss no longer felt called to return to the vocation she had followed as a young

¹ Louise Weiss, *Ce que femme veut* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1946), p. 187.

² Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour les femmes 1934-1939* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1970), pp. 87-89.

³ See Siân Reynolds, 'Women and the Popular Front in France: The Case of the Three Women Ministers', *French History*, 8 (1994), 196-224.

⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour les femmes 1934-1939*, p. 123. See also the section dedicated to, 'Ces dames ministres' in Weiss, *Ce que femme veut*, pp. 191-285.

professional. Disillusioned by the changing face of journalism and its pressure to find the latest scoop, Weiss decided not to return to paid employment and embarked on a freelance writing career. This move was to have a significant effect on Weiss's outlook on the world.

As a young journalist Weiss had interviewed many influential people, but she felt she had learned very little of the wider world which she perceived as fragile and typified by unrest, rapid change, and instability.⁵ Weiss declined invitations to return to journalism, explaining that, 'je me sentais obligée à un tour du monde.'⁶ She was intent on understanding the causes of the turbulence she perceived around her and embraced her new vocation declaring, 'brûlant de toutes les fièvres de la connaissance, j'ai quitté la France libérée d'Adolf Hitler et parcouru terres et mers, à la recherche des intuitions guidant les âmes.'⁷ The fundamental aim of her travels was to understand human behaviour and its consequences and, ultimately, to bring home to France a universal formula on which to build a peaceful, moral society.

Surprisingly, references to Weiss as a traveller are relatively sparse. When they do appear, they are usually unattributed in prefaces to her publications. For example, the anonymous foreword to 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire' aptly describes Weiss as 'une inlassable voyageuse.'⁸ Weiss, however, uses this noun to refer to herself on only one occasion. Describing an encounter with Sr. Corrêa, Chairman of San Cristobal de Las Casas municipal council who had guided her around the town fielding diverse and probing

⁵ Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 455-479 (p. 471) and Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976) p. 2.

⁶ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 24.

⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 15.

⁸ Louise Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), 83-100 (p. 83).

questions, Weiss stated, '... le président Corr  a, qu'une voyageuse de ma sorte stup  fiait.'⁹

However, on this occasion, Weiss was probably hinting more at her interactions with Corr  a than her status as a traveller.

Weiss readily fits the description of the twentieth-century traveller proposed by Bertrand Flornoy, President of the *Soci  t   des Explorateurs Fran  ais*, of which Weiss herself was a member. Created in 1937, the Society consisted of a group of renowned travellers intent on uniting exceptional people who shared a passion for discovery and dissemination of knowledge and who believed 'l'existence m  me ... [  tait] ... une aventure.'¹⁰ Amongst its aims, the Society claimed to 'faire se rencontrer exploration, recherche scientifique, et aventure humaine dans une perspective de progr  s et de partage.'¹¹ By association, Weiss became part of a group of travellers concerned primarily with the evolution of contemporary civilisation and communicating their experiential knowledge of the 'aventure humaine' – a philosophy fundamental to Weiss's post-war travel narratives and which inspired the title of this thesis.

Flornoy's description of the traveller was predicated on his view that dreams of exotic paradise islands no longer had a place in contemporary travel. This is comparable to Charles Forsdick's later work on reinterpreting the nature of the exotic.¹² Flornoy's view should not, however, be confused with 'end of travel' theorists such as Claude L  vi-Strauss

⁹ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 40.

¹⁰ La Soci  t   des explorateurs fran  ais, <<http://www.societe-explorateurs.org/societaires/anciens-societaires/>> [accessed 20 February 2018]. See also 'Louise Weiss: Les Indes', *Magazine des explorateurs*, Radiodiffusion T  l  vision Fran  aise, 25 February 1959 at 00:56, Weiss is called, 'une exploratrice'.

¹¹ La Soci  t   des explorateurs fran  ais, <<http://www.societe-explorateurs.org/la-societe/objectifs/>> [accessed 20 February 2018].

¹² Charles Forsdick, 'Salvaging Exoticism: New Approaches to 1930s Travel Literature in French', in *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing in the 1930s*, ed. by Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), pp. 29-45.

or Paul Fussell who, with the advent of mass tourism, mourned a bygone age of travel and the lack of opportunity for new discoveries and fresh narratives.¹³ In a less pessimistic vein, Flornoy advocated how the onset of globalisation had opened up the post-war world to reveal a melting pot of infinite richness and diversity. The traveller was no longer the herald of a supposed superior society, but an integral part of the global community, an international *savant* whose duty was to engage with unfamiliar cultures:

Le monde reste cependant un foyer de découvertes, mais à condition de le prendre tel qu'il est: d'une diversité et d'une richesse infinies dans sa terre, fraternel dans ses hommes, quelle que soit la couleur de leur peau ... La science, comme la politique, comme les soucis de l'homme de la rue, devenait de plus en plus internationale ... Le caractère utilitaire de l'exploration moderne donne une valeur nouvelle à l'aventure. L'aventure, pour beaucoup d'explorateurs, c'est d'abord de s'intéresser au sort des autres hommes.¹⁴

Flornoy's description of a traveller resonates strongly with Weiss's post-war aspirations, but her motivation to travel was rooted in much more than mere interest in the Other.

Weiss's post-war desire to travel

Weiss's insatiable desire to travel arose from her need to understand the turbulence and fragility she perceived in the twentieth century. But it was not until the publication of Volume Six of her memoirs that she explained why she held this view. In May 1952, almost suffocating in the unbearable heat of Abou-Kemal on the border of the Syrian desert, Weiss

¹³ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1955) and Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

¹⁴ Bertrand Flornoy, 'Avant-propos', in *De la banquise à la jungle: les Français, la terre et les hommes*, ed. by Henri Lauga (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1952), pp. 202-216 (pp. 3-14).

identified three experiences which shaped her perception of present-day society and urged her to discover reasons for the fragility she perceived around her: the Nuremberg Trials, her tragic tour around the world, and the moral failure of the United Nations, each of which are discussed in more detail below:

Eh bien ! j'étais là par passion, la même que celle qui m'avait conduite à Nuremberg. L'insuffisance légale du tribunal, puis un tragique voyage autour du monde et la carence morale, déjà patente, de la jeune Organisation des Nations Unies m'avaient poussée à rechercher, dans les écroulements des sociétés passées, les raisons de la fragilité de la civilisation contemporaine.¹⁵

Weiss was clear that she had not undertaken her post-war travels on a whim but with a certain fervour and enthusiasm which began when, as a member of the Press Club, she attended the Nuremberg Trials. However, this was not the first hearing of 20 November 1945 as suggested by Maria Grazia Melchionni.¹⁶ In her biography, Célia Bertin explains that Weiss was prevented from attending the opening of the Nuremberg Trials by her father's illness and subsequent death on 29 December 1945. Her first experience of the Trials was, therefore, the hearings which began on 3 January 1946.¹⁷ Weiss's journey to Nuremberg rekindled her then relatively dormant passion for writing, which had been halted in favour of fighting for women's suffrage. This passion was rooted not in the simple pleasures of travel, but in Weiss's newly-found enthusiasm for her freelance career – one which, as this thesis will show, led to far more publications than Bertin's reference to a few articles placed here and there: 'Ces voyages en Allemagne réveillent son goût pour son métier et son désir

¹⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

¹⁶ Maria Grazia Melchionni, 'Louise Weiss: une femme exceptionnelle passionnée par l'Europe', *Bulletin Européen*, May 2009, 6-8 (p. 7).

¹⁷ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), pp. 364-365.

de faire paraître des reportages. Elle est prête à devenir pigiste, c'est-à-dire à rédiger des articles et à les placer ici ou là.¹⁸

Weiss approached the Nuremberg Trials with optimism, believing that, not only did they rest on laws and principles derived from signed accords between nations, but also that the forum would be a place where the Trials would be conducted 'à l'état pur'.¹⁹ Weiss wanted to see justice prevail. Although the Trials inspired her freelance career, Weiss was forced to record her disappointment in their outcome. She was left feeling sceptical that the Trials had held any legitimacy, claiming, 'le tribunal de Nuremberg n'avait pas apporté de modifications essentielles.'²⁰ Weiss's hope for justice crumbled as all she saw was failure in the legal system. Consequently, Weiss listed the Nuremberg Trials as one of the three experiences which shaped her view of contemporary society.

Weiss's perspective on the trips she made as *correspondante* with *Le Petit Parisien* and journalist, then editor, of *L'Europe Nouvelle* prior to 1945/1946 – which she referred to as her tragic journey around the world – was the second of the three experiences which shaped her perception of the twentieth century and urged her to discover reasons for the fragility she perceived around her. Weiss's perception of tragedy is aligned with despair and sorrow and, arguably, is defined most clearly in her encounter with Jewish refugees, her view of the declining morals of contemporary American society, and her observation of the effects of Communism in the USSR. In 1938, troubled by the plight of Jewish refugees, she convinced Georges Bonnet, the then Foreign Minister, to establish a government-sponsored committee to assist them in obtaining visas to escape their particular circumstances.

¹⁸ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, p. 365.

¹⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 30.

²⁰ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 40.

Between the years 1926 and 1949, Weiss had visited the United States of America on five occasions during which time she had witnessed a change in society's attitudes and morals. Where once there was respect and admiration for the past and its contributions to knowledge, that had now crumbled and disappeared in favour of new ideas. But Weiss observed how the American people, particularly the younger generation, remained anxious and concerned. On her earlier visits to the USSR Weiss had witnessed first-hand 'la misère', 'la faim', and 'une infinie tristesse' which she attributed to the Communist regime, an ideology which, like many of her generation, she feared threatened the stability of the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West which she considered potentially too weak to fight back.²¹

Weiss's sentiment here is suggestive of Paul Valéry's 1919 essay, *La Crise de l'esprit*.²² She was well acquainted with Valéry and Volume Two of her memoirs records, 'Il m'écrivait souvent.'²³ A similar mood is noticeable between Weiss and Valéry's essay which illustrated the insecurity he felt in the cradle of western civilisation – a civilisation that, like others before it, was as fragile as life itself. Valéry's essay questioned the pre-eminence of Europe over potential threats from outside its borders and asked whether Europe would eventually be forced to adopt a political stance similar to its geographical position, 'un petit cap du continent Asiatique.'²⁴ Weiss alludes to this in the final volume of her memoirs

²¹ Louise Weiss, 'Cinq semaines à Moscou', *L'Europe Nouvelle*, 17 December 1921, p. 1611 and p. 1614.

²² Paul Valéry, 'La crise de l'esprit', <http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Valery_paul/crise_de_l'esprit/valery_esprit.pdf> [accessed 20 November 2013].

²³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: Combats pour l'Europe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 238.

²⁴ Valéry, 'La crise de l'esprit'.

where she expresses her consternation at Europe's apparent inability to act as anything but 'petit cap fou de l'Asie.'²⁵

The third experience that Weiss listed as integral to her perception of twentieth-century society was rooted in her opinion that supranational institutions, such as the United Nations, were morally deficient. Weiss's disillusionment with the United Nations can be seen in the references in her memoirs to, firstly, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea which failed to reach the obligatory consensus needed to implement any legal decision,²⁶ secondly, in the conclusion reached by a member state that the Commission for Human Rights had become a corporation 'pour étrangler tous les droits qu'elle ... [la Commission] ... était originellement chargée de défendre,'²⁷ and, thirdly, in her perception that the United Nations promised more than it delivered to the extent that, 'Ceux qui lui demandent asile arrivent, prêts à alimenter une flamme qui existait, plus vive en leur imagination qu'en réalité.'²⁸ Although Weiss identified the moral position of the United Nations as having shaped her perception of the twentieth century, her sense of disillusionment was compounded by her earlier experience of the League of Nations, the forerunner to the United Nations.

Weiss was a passionate supporter of peace initiatives and gave her full support to the League of Nations describing herself as 'l'une des propagandistes, l'une des inspiratrices

²⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 9.

²⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 9. Conference findings in Bernard H. Oxman, 'The Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea: The 1976 New York Sessions', *The American Journal of International Law*, 71 (1977), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2199528.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab7609b8bbee74e07c1d964399d0e8adf>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

²⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 512.

²⁸ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 512.

même'²⁹ and fully espousing the organisation's aims in her admission: 'Je n'avais pas enfanté la Ligue mais je l'avais épousée.'³⁰ Weiss believed it was the ultimate responsibility of supranational institutions to steer nation-states away from violence and prevent latent conflict transforming into more serious aggression:

Je me persuadai que c'était au sein de la Société des Nations qui allait naître que des négociations pourraient être conduites avec l'avantage de ne faire perdre la face à aucune des Grandes Puissances et d'associer les Petites aux décisions prises pour construire la paix.³¹

But, although the League of Nations saw some initial success in resolving disputes, it was powerless to prevent Hitler moving into Austria and Czechoslovakia. For Weiss this represented a potential threat to contemporary society as the onset of the Second World War loomed and the future began to look increasingly unstable. Weiss lost faith in an institution which was ultimately incapable of preventing aggression – the very purpose for which it was established.

In summary, Weiss's perception of contemporary society which motivated her insatiable desire to travel was predicated on her view that legal systems were failing to administer justice, countries were falling victim to oppressive ideologies which, if left unchecked, also threatened the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West, and supranational institutions were failing to preserve peace and the promise of a stable future. Intellectually driven to make sense of this turbulence, Weiss turned to the experiences, failures, and ruins

²⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 56. See also Michael Bess, *Realism, Utopia and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist Intellectuals and Their Strategies for Peace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) for a discussion on Weiss's approach to addressing conflict.

³⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 323.

³¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 56.

of past civilisations as keys to understanding the causes of the upheaval of the twentieth century and, ultimately, the universal formula on which to build a peaceful, moral society: 'Je n'en démordais pas. Je ne voulais pas vivre sans la comprendre et, si possible, dominer intellectuellement, la mutation accélérée du monde de mon temps.'³²

This historical focus should not, however, be seen as regressive, nor as a nostalgic foray into the past. As someone who, in her opening speech to the European Parliament in 1979, opposed Chinese ancestor worship for paralysing growth and development, Weiss reminded her readers that the present and the future were merely supported by the past; traces of bygone civilisations, which were still visible amidst the activities of contemporary society, were reminders of this heritage. Years of history had crafted the twentieth century and Weiss advocated using expert knowledge of that past to advance society rather than allow it to stagnate:

Toutefois, que le culte de nos anciens ne sclérose pas notre action et n'occulte pas nos regards fixés sur l'avenir. Redoutons de devenir les classiques de nous-mêmes. L'histoire avance. Les conjonctures se renouvellent. Ce qui était impossible hier sera possible demain. D'ailleurs, vous ne partez pas d'une table rase.³³

Weiss's intention was to acquire knowledge for the present which was grounded in the experience of past civilisations. Tim Youngs claims that the travel narrative has always been associated with acquiring knowledge.³⁴ Weiss believed that the knowledge she hoped to

³² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

³³ Louise Weiss, 'Un combat pour l'Europe', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 483-502 (p. 471).

³⁴ Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 20.

acquire did not lie in documented sources but in a more intimate and empathetic engagement with the communities she encountered: 'J'espérais en une connaissance impossible à acquérir dans les seules bibliothèques. La perception de l'histoire n'est pas la même devant des parchemins qu'au contact des sols et des survivants.'³⁵ Having mapped Weiss's journey from *journaliste* to *voyageuse*, the following discussion examines her post-war publications in the light of current travel writing scholarship.

On the trail of Weiss's travel narratives

The term 'travel narrative' is emerging in contemporary academic debate as an alternative to 'travel writing' and is capable of embracing many different genres. This is a particularly apt term for discussing Weiss's post-war *œuvre* which she presented in a diverse collection of journals, documentaries, and monographs through photography, film, and text with elements such as maps and stylised images. Some of these works were the result of collaborations with photographers Georges Bourdelon,³⁶ Bernard Daillencourt,³⁷ Louis Miaille,³⁸ Pierre Guéguen,³⁹ and Guy Tabary;⁴⁰ scientific advisor Édouard Dhorme;⁴¹ and

³⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

³⁶ Georges Bourdelon was the photographer to whom Weiss turned most often to accompany her on her journeys overseas and the majority of her travel narratives involved his expertise with the exception of narratives from China and Djibouti.

³⁷ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955).

³⁸ *Le Rocher tragique*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958); *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1959); and *Le Dieu du riz*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded 1958).

³⁹ *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1959); *Au soleil de la mer rouge: la foi qui sauve*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded, 1966); and *Le Rocher tragique*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958).

⁴⁰ *Au soleil de la mer rouge: la foi qui sauve*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded, 1966).

⁴¹ *Le Liban: terre des dieux et des hommes*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1954).

voiceover specialists Claude Thomas,⁴² Jean Negroni,⁴³ Claude Darget,⁴⁴ and Claude Bringuier.⁴⁵ This observation potentially introduces a tension around issues such as gendered gaze, authorship, and agency. These were not equal relationships, however. As Chapter Six will demonstrate, Weiss very clearly remained the *auteur* of her visual travel narratives either directing the shot or scripting the text to be voiced over her documentary. The credits to her documentaries always list her as the *réalisateur*.

The methodology used in gathering together such a rich and varied collection of primary sources is examined below. Both ‘travel writing’ and ‘travel narrative’ appear deceptively uncomplicated in their inference to an account of a journey. Gérard Cogez pragmatically argues that, on a practical level, readers in general ‘parviennent à identifier sans trop d’hésitation, ni excessive controverse, les textes qu’il convient de regrouper dans cette catégorie.’⁴⁶ It would be plausible to assume then that Weiss's travel narratives are

⁴² *L’Afrique du soleil levant: des chameaux, des poignards, et de la boue*, dir. by Louis Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: rien avant le pôle sud*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: ivoire et bois d’ébène*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: ô pauvre Virginie*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *Merveilles Africaines: une reine, un général, un président*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁴³ *L’Afrique du soleil levant: un fils du roi Salomon I*, dir. by Louis Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: un fils du roi Salomon II*, dir. by Louis Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: Djibouti les caravaniers de la lune*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: pirates et parfums*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963) and *Merveilles Africaines: pitié pour les tortues*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁴⁴ *L’Afrique du soleil levant: la mort des zébus*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963) and *L’Afrique du soleil levant: moi et le lion*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁴⁵ *L’Afrique du soleil levant: Djibouti une station-service en mer rouge*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963); *L’Afrique du soleil levant: Le Christ aux sources du Nil*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963) and *L’Afrique du soleil levant: pastorales africaines*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁴⁶ Gérard Cogez, *Les Ecrivains Voyageurs au XXe Siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004), p. 11.

easily identifiable amongst the autobiography, fiction, and plays of her sizeable post-war *œuvre*. Whilst this might be true in practice, scholars looking for a more robust methodology than merely gut instinct tussle with accurately pinpointing those traits by which the reader recognises a travel narrative. Academic debate on defining what constitutes a travel narrative is extensive and bears a brief review before outlining how Weiss's travel narratives were chosen for this study.

Genre theory is the obvious starting point for defining travel narratives. By assigning a set of characteristics to the form, it produces a clear taxonomy against which works can be gauged as belonging or not belonging to a genre.⁴⁷ However, this has, overall, proved to be unhelpful. Roland Le Huenen has demonstrated that it is almost impossible to identify traits capable of being shared by travel accounts as diverse as those attributed to Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484-425BC) and the Greek traveller, Xenophon (431-360BC), or to chronicles from the Crusades, the Spice Route, and fifteenth-century maritime adventures, or to more contemporary accounts of voyages of scientific discovery and mission.⁴⁸ If Le Huenen's observation is applied to Weiss's post-war *œuvre*, it becomes equally difficult to assign characteristics which are visibly shared by Weiss's prose, journal articles, and documentaries. Le Huenen's list of narratives is not, however, exhaustive as it does not include imaginary travel. Cognisant of Odile Gannier's claim that any traveller can write real or imaginary books⁴⁹ and Nicolas Bouvier's comment that 'le voyage n'étant pas affaire de kilomètres mais d'état d'esprit',⁵⁰ proposed definitions of the travel narrative should be

⁴⁷ Yves Stalloni, *Les Genres littéraires* (Paris: Dunod, 1997), p. 10.

⁴⁸ Roland Le Huenen, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un récit de voyage?', *Littérales*, 7 (1990), 11-25.

⁴⁹ Odile Gannier, *La littérature de voyage* (Paris: Ellipses, 2001), p. 3.

⁵⁰ Nicolas Bouvier, 'La clé des champs', in *Pour une littérature voyageuse: le regard littéraire*, ed. by Alain Borer, Nicolas Bouvier, M Chailliu, et al (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1999), pp. 41-44 (p. 42).

applicable to imaginary travel to avoid unintentionally excluding from analysis authors such as Jules Verne, the work of whom Jean-Michel Gouvard considers to be 'presque tous imaginaires'⁵¹ and Xavier de Maistre's 1794 publication *Autour de ma chambre*⁵² which charts the fantastic journey of a young official who, despite being confined to his room, imagined himself travelling between his furniture and art work.

The concept of exclusion, however, was the basis on which Paul Fussell attempted to mitigate difficulties associated with defining travel narratives using genre theory. Rather than trying to identify specific traits, Fussell excluded from the definition of the travel narrative all works which were not autobiographical and proposed a simple dichotomy between the autobiographical travel narrative and the guide book.⁵³ But this reliance on autobiography is less convincing when trying to identify Weiss's post-war travel narratives from her prose, journal articles, and documentaries. The difficulty it poses is expressed succinctly by Victoria Tietze who, to some extent at least, concurs with Fussell by accepting that all travel writing is in some sense autobiographical. This, Tietze claims, is particularly convincing for *récit de voyage* which is written in the first person. However, she emphasises the point that all autobiography does not necessarily embrace travel writing.⁵⁴ It is this claim which is particularly relevant to Weiss's post-war *œuvre*.

Weiss's memoirs comprise six volumes but, although her travels are recorded through necessity as she documents her life, not all six volumes are constructed around her

⁵¹ Jean-Michel Gouvard, 'Jules Verne: une collection de panoramas', *Fabula: Voyages imaginaires et récits des autres mondes (XIXe-XXIe siècles)*, October 2017 < <https://www.fabula.org/colloques/document4803.php> > [accessed 20 February 2018] (para. 1 of 35).

⁵² Xavier de Maistre, *Autour de ma chambre* (Paris: Editions Flammarion, 2003).

⁵³ Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, p. 203.

⁵⁴ Victoria Tietze, 'Across oceans, mountains, and spaces: Sarah Bernhardt's American tour', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 14 (2010), 59-178, p. 159.

travels. Volume One recounts Weiss's youth in Belle Epoque France,⁵⁵ Volume Two is constructed around her desire to see reconciliation between France and Germany,⁵⁶ Volume Three is an account of her campaign for women's suffrage,⁵⁷ whilst Volumes Four and Five record her relationship with her lover, known only as *Le Chevalier*, and the years following his sudden death.⁵⁸ Arguably, only the final volume of her memoirs could be considered to be an example of travel writing.⁵⁹ Here Weiss's post-war journeys are foregrounded and extracts from some of her earlier travel accounts are reprinted.

Weiss did not conceive Volume Six of her memoirs as travel writing, however. As Chapter Seven of this study will show, she struggled to settle on the most appropriate format for this publication. Rather than use her travels as the basis on which to construct her account, as might be expected of a travel narrative, Weiss opted for a structure which embodied what she believed to be the anxieties of the contemporary world – the Western response to coercive power. But it is Weiss's own words in the preface to Volume One, 'Voici mes Mémoires,'⁶⁰ and her opening sentence in Volume Six, 'Me voici au terme de la fresque du siècle que je me suis appliquée à peindre,'⁶¹ which demonstrate her clear intention was to present her perception of the twentieth century through a retrospective account of her life. This aligns Weiss's texts with Philippe Lejeune's understanding of the genre of autobiography through the 'autobiographical pact' where the author contracts to

⁵⁵ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968).

⁵⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe 1919-1934*, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour les femmes 1934-1939*.

⁵⁸ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: le sacrifice du Chevalier 1939-1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971) and Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: la résurrection du Chevalier 1940-1944* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974).

⁵⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*.

⁶⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, page not numbered.

⁶¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 13.

write a 'récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité.'⁶² Woven into this definition is the pre-requisite that, in order to differentiate autobiography from, for example, the autobiographical novel, the author identified on the cover is the same character identified in the subsequent text. Weiss's memoirs then are not considered primary sources for this thesis but are used to contextualise observations arising from her travel narratives.

With such a rich heritage and elusive criteria, Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan label the travel narrative, 'a hybrid genre that straddles categories and disciplines'⁶³ and Loredana Polezzi recognises its parameters as 'fuzzy.'⁶⁴ Jan Borm advocates the use of more descriptive labels such as 'travel journal' which would allow texts with a travel theme to be more easily grouped.⁶⁵ But this approach is equally problematic as Kimberley Healey has demonstrated. Working across Anglophone and Francophone publications, Healey noted the variety of synonyms which could potentially be used including 'récit de voyage, feuilles de route, journal de voyage, récit d'aventure, carnet de route, and notes de voyage.'⁶⁶ Healey concluded that the interchangeability of these terms and the lack of a clear definition still result in a degree of confusion around what constitutes a travel narrative. More recently, it was left to Guillaume Thouroude to point out that contemporary criticism

⁶² Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975), p. 14.

⁶³ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8.

⁶⁴ Loredana Polezzi, 'Between Gender and Genre: The Travels of Estella Canziani', in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 121-138 (p. 121).

⁶⁵ Jan Borm, 'Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology' in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 13-26, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 9.

is now moving away from the potential rigidity of a precise, clear-cut definition in favour of embracing the fluidity of the travel narrative's many different genres, formats, and styles.⁶⁷ Where hybridity was formerly considered undesirable it is now celebrated as one of the distinctive features of travel narratives.

It is the work of Claude Reichler which has been most useful in identifying Weiss's post-war travel narratives, particularly as his model is applicable to text, photographs, and moving images. It forms the methodology for selecting the primary sources for this thesis. Reichler's model is predicated on experiential knowledge through displacement – an approach which resonates with Weiss's own perspective on her post-war travel. By considering how a journey is presented to the reader, Reichler acknowledges two broad categories: *récit de voyage* and *littérature de voyage*.⁶⁸ Both categories have specific criteria describing the narrative voice, the account of the journey, the traveller(s), and the format of an account which are detailed in Appendix Two. However, displacement, or physical relocation, is essential to both categories and interpreted in the sequence of a traveller's departure, journey, arrival, meeting, stay, wandering around, and return. Weiss's available post-war *œuvre* was examined against Reichler's model and those which did not express a sense of displacement, or which did not conform to Reichler's criteria, were discounted as primary sources, leaving 57 works relevant to this thesis. The primary sources were then re-examined against Reichler's criteria: 21 were considered to be examples of *récit de voyage* and 36, including 29 documentaries, were classified as examples of *littérature de voyage*.

⁶⁷ Guillaume Thouroude, 'Towards generic autonomy: the *récit de voyage* as mode genre and form', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13 (2009), pp. 381-390.

⁶⁸ Claude Reichler, 'Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition', *Viatica*, August (2004) <<http://www.crlv.org/outils.francfort/index.php>> [accessed January 2010].

These primary sources are grouped under *littérature de voyage* and *récit de voyage* in Appendix Two.

Reichler considers *récit de voyage* the major component and sub-category of *littérature de voyage*. Written in the first person, *récit de voyage* is 'la narration d'un déplacement par un voyageur adressé à un lecteur.'⁶⁹ It is this reliance on first-person narration which excluded Weiss's documentaries from the *récit de voyage* classification. Reichler defines the reader, or *le lecteur*, quite concisely as an intended recipient of the *récit de voyage* who has an emotional connection with the author, is affected by the narration, and who believes the author exists. As will be illustrated below, this is different to Reichler's understanding of the readership, or *le lectorat*, of *littérature de voyage*. Examples of *récit de voyage* were identified through phrases such as, 'Alors je partis vers l'ouest du Mexique – dernier circuit avant mon départ pour le nord du continent'⁷⁰ which distinguish a first-person account of movement through the world and 'Les sites que vous visiterez je les aurai choisi sans autre considération que leur valeur de rêve'⁷¹ which, through the use of 'vous,' alludes to a certain intimacy between Weiss and the reader, *le lecteur*, who appears to be accompanying Weiss on her journey. A table of all primary works falling into the category of *récit de voyage* along with evidence for this categorisation is included in Appendix Two.

Reichler considers *littérature de voyage* a wider concept than *récit de voyage* with a slightly different bias or amplification depending on the individual work. Displacement is, however, an equally fundamental criteria. *Littérature de voyage* is not necessarily written in

⁶⁹ Reichler, 'Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition'.

⁷⁰ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 109.

⁷¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 17.

the first person and its content is descriptive or factual. The form of the narration can be determined by the readership, or *le lectorat*, but the readership is not emotionally connected with the author and does not have to believe in the author's existence. Examples of *littérature de voyage* were classified as such by their factual evidence in phrases such as 'Au nord se profilent les massifs montagneux de la Turquie',⁷² the use of image, specifically photographs to support the narrative,⁷³ and allusions to the profile of the readership in phrases such as, 'Les tracas de leur journée les avaient épuisés [...] J'écrirais mon livre pour eux, les asphyxiés, afin de les rendre au ravissement de vivre.'⁷⁴ The distinction between *le lecteur* and *le lectorat* introduced above is illustrated by this quotation. Rather than address her readers directly, Weiss's use of 'les asphyxiés' suggests only a generic understanding of who her readership might be and does not establish an emotional connection. A table of all primary works falling into the category of *littérature de voyage* along with evidence for this categorisation is included in Appendix Two.

Uncharted territory

At this juncture, some indication is necessary of Weiss's significance in current scholarship. With a few notable exceptions, as will be shown below, she is almost imperceptible in contemporary academic debate, having fallen somewhat into the margins of literary criticism. Weiss is occasionally referred to in passing alongside some of her more well-known contemporaries, such as Ella Maillart, Isabelle Eberhardt, or Alexandra David-Néel,

⁷² Louise Weiss, *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950) page not numbered.

⁷³ Weiss, *La Syrie*, pages not numbered.

⁷⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 17.

but does not emerge as a central character. More often than not, her activities evade the level of scrutiny given to others. It was not until some ten years after Weiss's death that dedicated works began to emerge. These are relatively sparse, however. What noteworthy scholarship does exist on Weiss can be grouped into two broad categories: biographical works and a select few academic publications.

In terms of biographical works, the first to appear was Elizabeth Kapnist's film which, through interviews with Weiss's cameraman, Georges Bourdelon, and niece, Elisabeth Roudinesco, portrayed Weiss's character through her fight for peace, women's suffrage, and European integration.⁷⁵ Probably the most significant contribution to the field is Bertin's publication which appeared some six years later.⁷⁶ This comprehensive and informative biography of Weiss is based on a close study of archival resources bequeathed by Weiss to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Michel Loetscher's later publication is a less substantial work than Bertin's but one which accurately celebrates Weiss's Alsatian heritage, her fight for women's suffrage, and her passion for a united Europe.⁷⁷

Evelyne Winkler's publication appeared some eight years after Loetscher's.⁷⁸ Despite this being the only biography to hint tantalisingly at a connection between Weiss and travel narratives, Winkler approaches her study from a gendered perspective rather than a travel writing angle. Positioning Weiss as an itinerant journalist in the context of women's place in twentieth century society, Winkler uses Weiss's travels as a metaphor for escaping the confines of domesticity.

⁷⁵ *Louise Weiss L'Européenne*, dir. by Elizabeth Kapnist (Atlantic Films La Sept-Arte, 1993).

⁷⁶ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*.

⁷⁷ Michel Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2009).

⁷⁸ Evelyne Winkler, *Louise Weiss: une journaliste-voyageuse au cœur de la construction Européenne* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2017).

The numerous obituaries which appeared on Weiss's death should also be mentioned under biographical works as they, too, present a factual account of her life and work. However, while recognising the extent of Weiss's professional activities, these biographical works seek only to unfold her life rather than critique her contribution to twentieth-century society. This responsibility rests with a select few academic works.

Where Weiss has been studied in more detail, the focus is polarised between her early life up to the end of the Second World War and her appearance as the *doyenne* of the European Parliament when, at the age of 86, she gave the inaugural speech in her capacity as Oldest Member and Presiding President. This earned her the nickname, 'la grand-mère de l'Europe'⁷⁹ from the then Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Schmidt. The interim period is given no more than a cursory mention as an era typified by extensive travel and, with no further analysis, principal topics of current scholarship turn on Weiss's political interests, her editorial role at the helm of *L'Europe Nouvelle*, her fight for women's suffrage, and her pacifist tendencies.⁸⁰

With perhaps the exception of *French Political Travel Writing in the Interwar Years*,⁸¹ no academic work has yet located Weiss fully in the context of the travel narrative. Where Weiss has been connected with travel, she has been portrayed more readily as a politically

⁷⁹ Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ See Bess, *Realism, Utopia and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist Intellectuals and Their Strategies for Peace*, Angela Kershaw, 'Louise Weiss: Fin de siècle chez une femme du siècle', *Romance Studies*, 18:1 (2000), 45-55, Yaël Hirsch, 'Louise Weiss, l'«aristo-prolo» un féminisme libéral en dialogue avec le communisme', *Aden: Paul Nizan et les années trente: revue du groupe interdisciplinaire d'études Nizaniennes*, 6: (10) (2007), 35-50, Angela Kershaw, *Forgotten Engagements: Women, Literature and the Left in 1930s France* (Amsterdam and New York: Editions Rodopi, 2007), and Yves Denéchère, 'Louise Weiss et quelques autres: candidates et élues gaullistes au Parlement européen (1979-1989)', *Histoire Politique*, (2012), 17-32.

⁸¹ Angela Kershaw, 'The New Soviet Woman and the French Debate on Gender in the 1920s', in *French Political Travel Writing in the Inter-war Years*, ed. by Martyn Cornick, Martin Hurcombe, and Angela Kershaw, (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 99-133.

committed *femme engagée* – an approach consistent with the work of Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan who identified the interwar years as the heyday of the politically curious traveller.⁸² This is the distinguishing factor between *French Political Travel Writing in the Interwar Years*, which is primarily interested in the European intellectual's journey to the Soviet Union between the two World Wars, and this thesis, which focuses on Weiss's post-war travel narratives. Cognisant of this time period, this thesis positions Weiss's travel narratives in an interesting dialogue with the generally accepted view that both Anglophone and Francophone travel narratives fell into a period of dormancy in the years immediately following the Second World War – a period which Carl Thompson describes as the 'post-war dip' which was not redressed until the 1980s.⁸³

Although sitting in the margins of contemporary scholarship, Weiss enjoyed some degree of recognition in France's popular press in the second half of the twentieth century, featuring, for example, in entertainment, news, and specialist interest magazines.⁸⁴ Alongside these popular commentaries, a number of public memorials stand in honour of her memory. A bust of Weiss resides in the main building of the European Parliament which is named after her. A square in Strasbourg, a street in the 13th arrondissement of Paris, and a handful of educational establishments also carry her name, as does a plaque on the wall of the old Richelieu site of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in recognition of her

⁸² Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan, *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing of the 1930s* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 4.

⁸³ Carl Thompson, 'Travel Writing Now, 1950 to the Present Day', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 196-213 (p. 196).

⁸⁴ See L. N., 'Trois vieilles dames, bien dans leurs rides', *Bonne Soirée Télé*, 22-28 September 1973, pp. 14-17 and p. 113, Louise Weiss, 'En volant du Mexique au Canada', *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, 24 February 1949, p. 1, Louise Weiss, 'Carte Blanche à Louise Weiss', *Paris Match*, 9 November 1979, p. 82, Louis Castex, 'Le tour du monde en avion de Louise Weiss', *Les Ailes Journal Hebdomadaire de la locomotion aérienne*, 4 February 1950, p. 1 and Simone de Tervagne, 'Louise Weiss l'Européenne', *Touring*, September 1980, pp. 88-89.

financial contribution. A rose bears her name, an exhibition and memorial conference took place at the Palais du Luxembourg in October 1985 and a commemorative stamp was issued in May 1993.

Bridging the gap between the opposing camps of academic scholarship and the popular press is a set of collected essays published to mark the centenary of Weiss's birth.⁸⁵ These essays trace Weiss's Jewish-Protestant heritage, her experiences of the two World Wars, selected correspondence with key political figures, interviews, and an inventory of her films with a short commentary from cameraman Georges Bourdelon on his collaboration and friendship with Weiss.

Whether Weiss is actively remembered through these publications and public tributes remains doubtful. Even though she was made *Grand Officier de la Légion d'Honneur* in 1976, and despite receiving the Robert Schuman Prize for her memoirs a few years later, Weiss is still not widely known in France. This was made all the more evident in 2016 when ARTE France, the French arm of the Franco-German European culture television channel, produced a programme on Weiss as part of its *Les oubliés de l'histoire* series⁸⁶ which featured accounts of the lives of extraordinary men and women of twentieth-century France who were relatively unknown to the general public. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the field of study remains sparse and a detailed analysis of Weiss's post-war *œuvre* is very much needed. This thesis intends to address precisely this gap in scholarship.

⁸⁵ Fondation Jean Monnet Centre de Recherches Européennes, *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Centre de Recherches Européennes, 1994).

⁸⁶ *Les oubliés de l'histoire: Louise Weiss – une femme pour l'Europe*, dir. by Jacques Malaterre (ARTE France, 2016).

Research focus

This thesis will favour an analytical approach that undertakes a close reading of Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives rather than imposing a single, rigid, external framework such as a (post)colonial or gendered reading, which could potentially obscure some of the nuances of her observations. This approach is grounded in the work of Mary Baine Campbell, who argues that these established approaches are less relevant in a post-war world,⁸⁷ and in that of Charles Forsdick, who proposes that twentieth-century travel is best understood in a pragmatic way rather than by applying rigid markers.⁸⁸ This clarification is particularly relevant to the analysis in Chapter Three which addresses the composition of Weiss's visual travel narratives in terms of the numbers of men and women engaged in spiritual practices – specifically prayer. By not using a gendered analysis, cultural nuances of her encounters are drawn out and a misinterpretation of her gaze based on gender is avoided.

From a close reading of Weiss's travel narratives, three themes emerge as prisms through which Weiss perceived the events of the twentieth century: spirituality, myth, and power. These themes are particularly apt in the context of Weiss's empathy with creating a peaceful, moral society as each alludes to a form of social cohesion through the acceptance of behaviours and norms. These three themes provide the structure for this thesis and are examined in turn below. However, even though this study pragmatically approaches Weiss's

⁸⁷ Mary Baine Campbell, 'Travel Writing and Its Theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 261-278.

⁸⁸ Charles Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher: uses of the peripatetic in contemporary travel literature', *French and Francophone Studies*, 5 (2001), 47-62 (p. 51), Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, Siobhan Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 15.

post-war travel narratives in a thematic way and considers each of these gazes separately, this approach should not be back-read into the primary sources. The themes are not mutually exclusive and present neither a chronological shift in Weiss's outlook, nor a deliberate choice in her gaze. In practice, all three themes can be seen to be operating simultaneously albeit to varying degrees. As this thesis unfolds, Weiss's relationship with, and prior experience of, each theme will be seen to differ – something alluded to in the titles of the chapters. For example, Weiss's encounter with spirituality in Part One suggests a less intimate connection than her journey through the myths of North America and Asia in Part Two, while her engagement with power in Part Three hints at a deeper association with this particular theme than the other two.

Spirituality is considered in Part One, the central proposition of which is that Weiss's concept of spirituality revolves around the recurring trope of a sanctuary which offers a safe haven from a turbulent world. The use of the term spirituality over religion or faith is used here in a similar sense to Sheldrake's concept of 'spiritual life'⁸⁹ or experiential knowledge of what is considered divine. This speaks to Weiss's claim that, 'Je n'ai aucune religion. Mais j'ai un goût du sacré'⁹⁰ and her liberal approach to the syncretic study of world faiths, where she understood faith as a personal trust in specific religious doctrine. Although Weiss accepted there were many different religious paths, she neither adopted nor recommended a specific doctrinal position. By juxtaposing Weiss's secular upbringing with her later interest in the world's major religions, Part One examines the effect of Weiss's changing

⁸⁹ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History* (London: SPCK, 1991), p. 36.

⁹⁰ 'Passionnante Louise Weiss II', Radiotélévision Suisse, 11 July 1976 <<http://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/culture/entretiens/6065743-passionnante-louise-weiss-2-.html>> [accessed 8 November 2017] at 02:39.

gaze on her understanding of post-war society and the extent to which this colours her observations. This challenges Weiss's own continual insistence on eye-witness status as suggested by her keenness to see the world for herself in her comment, 'Je vis la Palestine à ma façon.'⁹¹

Tzvetan Todorov's gallery of ten portraits of travellers (see Appendix One) is integrated into this analysis as a model against which to examine Weiss's own gaze.⁹² Drawn from empirical evidence of how travellers engage with the Other, the value of this model lies in its flexibility to recognise that a traveller's gaze can change depending on the circumstances of the encounter. This is germane to any analysis of Weiss's own gaze which shifts according to the manner in which she engages with the Other. This flexible interpretation of the traveller's gaze is the main criteria for adopting Todorov's approach over other more rigid models such as, for example, William Sherman's construct which defines a traveller's gaze according to profession.⁹³

Chapters Two and Three return to the central proposition of Part One to examine Weiss's spiritual gaze in the context of her encounters with pre-Colombian and twentieth-century spiritual practices respectively. The order of nouns in the title of Chapter Three – Places, Pilgrims, Priests and Prayers – charts a clear intellectual trajectory. It begins by foregrounding a sense of departure by alluding to Weiss's movement to another place and Reichler's displacement which is integral to the travel narrative. It then acknowledges Weiss's interest in the lives of ordinary people over the great and good. As a journalist,

⁹¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 117.

⁹² Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989), p. 452.

⁹³ William H. Sherman, 'Stirrings and Searchings 1500-1720', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 17-36.

Weiss would probably have been more interested in the views of priests who would have occupied a relatively higher social class to pilgrims. However, in the context of Weiss's travel narratives, pilgrims represented the 'survivants'⁹⁴ she so desperately wanted to encounter. Pre-empting the different styles of twentieth-century spiritual practices which are discussed in Chapter Three, and cognisant of Weiss's view of spirituality as a refuge set apart from the world, prayers embrace the notion of both intercessions and ceremonial ritual alluding to the many ways in which Weiss observed people appealing to deities beyond the physical world.

Part Two marks Weiss's passage from spirituality to myth and hinges on an understanding of movement through the world to frame the analysis of myth in her text-based and visual travel narratives. Chapter Four begins by clarifying that Weiss's understanding of contemporary society is not grounded in structuralist theories of mythological archetypes but in specificity of place – the quality of belonging or relating uniquely to a particular area. Chapters Five and Six examine her mythological encounters in North America and Asia respectively. The pragmatic decision to separate myth from spirituality is not to discredit the claim that myth can be understood as a sacred explanation of origins, but to recognise Weiss's view that myth is not necessarily a window onto the divine. Rather, it is entwined with human experience and bonds people together in specific locations. This is indicative of the specificity of place in Weiss's own approach to myth. What begins with an inquiry into the effect of displacement on Weiss's understanding of contemporary society moves on to consider whether displacement should be interpreted more widely than uniquely physical relocation.

⁹⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

Part Three is predicated on the tension between power and morality and the extent to which Weiss considered power a determinant of human nature. Chapter Seven takes as its point of departure Weiss's early experiential knowledge of supremacy and coercion and moves between a Weberian notion of power as an attribute of economic, social and political relations and a Foucauldian stance on biopolitics to locate Weiss in a theoretical framework which conceptualises her own perspective on power. The chapter concludes by identifying four questions against which Weiss tested the existence and impact of power in her post-war travels: *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre? En quel nom?* and *L'Arme absolue*. These questions underpin the rest of the analysis in Part Three. Chapter Eight explores Weiss's encounters with the powerful ideologies of (de)colonisation and Communism in Madagascar and China respectively, whilst Chapter Nine heralds the onset of modernity by considering a more nuanced view of Weiss's perception of power in the context of scientific and industrial progress.

In the light of the findings presented in this thesis, a distinction can be made between Weiss the young journalist and Weiss the post-war traveller. Approaching Weiss's post-war *œuvre* as a collection of travel narratives has opened up a new field of enquiry where virtually no work has been undertaken. Through a close reading of her previously unexamined journal articles, monographs, and documentaries, the following discussion addresses the central research question of how, and indeed if, Weiss's post-war text-based and visual travel narratives provided her with an understanding of the turbulence and fragility she perceived in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

AN ENCOUNTER WITH WEISS'S EMERGING SPIRITUALITY

The tension between spirituality and secularism, so characteristic of Third Republic France, is paralleled in the turmoil of Weiss's formative years. From all-embracing secularism to profound expressions of faith, Weiss's upbringing had a marked effect on her spiritual perspective. In her youth, as discussed in the Introduction, she chose not to follow any religious doctrine but to remain liberal and accepting of different spiritual paths, not reconsidering the importance of spirituality and its relevance to contemporary civilisation until after the Second World War. Weiss's spiritual journey is examined in the following discussion which locates her in the landscape of Republican France at the beginning of the twentieth century. It opens with an analysis of how her mother and her schoolteacher, Mademoiselle Marie Dugard, shaped her early spirituality before examining how Weiss's spiritual gaze changed in her post-war travel narratives.

A Republican upbringing: Weiss's journey through Third Republic France

Weiss was born into a Europe which largely continued to hold traditional Christian or Jewish beliefs and values and into a France of the Belle-Époque characterised by agnostic tendencies, declining religious practice and bitter conflict between the Catholic Church and

the Republican French state.⁹⁵ France's Catholic heritage had begun to emerge as a political force through engagement with social issues. In his 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*, Pope Pius IX attacked rationalism, socialism, freedom of speech and religious toleration. By the end of the nineteenth century, driven by resentment and distrust of the culture, ethnic identity, and religion of the growing number of Jewish immigrants fleeing Czarist and East European repression, Catholics almost unanimously proclaimed themselves anti-Semitic.⁹⁶ The Church began to reject the political and social aims of the Republic and this anti-Republican stance rallied the perception that the Catholic heritage of France embodied all that was counter to modern society. A current of anti-clericalism ran firmly through the prevailing Republican ideology. The repeal of the Falloux Laws of 1850 curtailed freedom of religious teaching, non-authorised religious congregations were closed, and, in 1905, the *Loi de Séparation des Églises et de l'État* formally separated the Church and State, thus designating France a secular republic.⁹⁷

Parallels can be drawn between this troubled and heterogeneous landscape of Republican France and the development of Weiss's own spirituality. The marriage of her

⁹⁵ For commentaries on the landscape of the Belle Époque see Louise Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon* (Paris: Julliard, 1973), p. 115; Daniel Hervieu-Léger, 'Religion and Modernity in the French Context: For a New Approach to Secularization', *Sociological Analysis*, 51 (1990), 15-25; Martin Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 11-29; and W. D. Halls, *Politics, Society and Christianity in Vichy France* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), p. 387.

⁹⁶ The effect of the two world wars on twentieth-century anti-Semitic views held by the Catholic Church is explored in Danielle Delmaire, 'Antisémitisme des catholiques au vingtième siècle de la revendication au refus', in *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth Century France*, ed. by Kay Chadwick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 26-46.

⁹⁷ In addition to 'secular' the French term *laïcité* has more recently been understood as both 'neutral' and 'indifferent'. For an overview of current debate on the sufficiency of these descriptions, see Emile Poulat, 'La laïcité en France au vingtième siècle', in *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. by Kay Chadwick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 18-25. See also Emile Chabal, 'Writing the French National Narrative in the Twenty-First Century', *The Historical Journal*, 53 (2010), 495-516 for debates around French national identity and the role of religion and secularism in public life and Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State, and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

mother and father brought together two different religious traditions. Her mother (née Jeanne Javal, 1871-1956) could lay claim to a distinguished Jewish heritage of a well-educated Alsatian family, whilst her father, Paul Louis Weiss (1867-1945), was from a notable family of Protestants originating from La Petite Pierre, Alsace.⁹⁸ Neither of these religious backgrounds appeared to sit well in the Weiss household which remained staunchly Republican, consistently anticlerical, and challenged the reasoning of both Church and State. In Volume One of her memoirs, Weiss noted that the family background was 'pas fort religieux.'⁹⁹ This type of household is characteristic of Hugh McLeod's observation that, 'in France, both Protestants and Jews belonged to a pre-war heritage which was attracted to secular liberalism.'¹⁰⁰ Although there were no religious standards against which to be judged, the Weiss family enforced their own secular morality.

J'ai été élevée dans un milieu passionnément laïque, mais dont les commandements moraux étaient les mêmes que ceux de l'Évangile. Probablement la rigueur des miens dépassait-elle même celle du clergé [...] Plus tard, je compris que ma famille récusait surtout la raison de l'Église, comme elle récusait la raison d'État.¹⁰¹

From an early age Weiss was sure of her own secularism. In 1911, she joined an educational cruise with her mother to Syria and Palestine. During the journey, Weiss compared herself to the other young girls on board whom she believed to be more fashionable, stylish, and musically talented than she was. In an act of self-awareness, which

⁹⁸ For Weiss's maternal and paternal heritage see Claude Tixier and Gudrun von Nida, 'L'ascendance maternelle de Louise Weiss' in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 99-136 and Martin Nathusius, 'Les origines alsaciennes de Louise Weiss: Éléments de son ascendance paternelle' in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 137-184.

⁹⁹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1969), p. 116.

¹⁰⁰ Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe 1848-1914* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 139.

¹⁰¹ Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon*, p. 115.

was linked not to a lack of self-esteem but rather to the comparisons she had made earlier, Weiss used the flyleaf of her travel diary to write down a list of things she believed she had discovered about herself, specifically, 'Je ne suis pas belle. Je ne suis pas riche. Je ne suis pas musicienne. Je suis laïque.'¹⁰² Weiss was able to say what she believed she was not, but the only positive thing she was able to say about herself was related to her secular perspective. Weiss was not, however, oblivious to, nor dismissive of, spirituality *per se*. Rather, in her youth, she approached the subject of religion from a philosophical perspective rather than from the standpoint of personal faith. Cognisant of the interpretations of spirituality and faith discussed in the Introduction, Weiss was concerned with acquiring knowledge relating to the human spirit or soul rather than trusting in specific religious doctrine. In Volume One of her memoirs she noted, 'Toute ma jeune vie avait été dédiée au culte de la connaissance, à la religion de l'humanité, à l'adoration du clair jugement.'¹⁰³

Weiss emerged from this family environment as a typical child of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. She established herself as such in the title of Volume One of her memoirs – *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* – and, specifically, in the title of the first part of this same work – *Première Partie: Une Enfance Républicaine*. It is perhaps surprising then that spirituality emerged so prominently in Weiss's post-war travel narratives. However, the apparent incongruity of juxtaposing Weiss's early secularism with her later pursuit of a divine understanding of the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century is mitigated by René Rémond's view that, 'not to take account of religion would be to prevent oneself from understanding a fundamental

¹⁰² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 116.

¹⁰³ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 172.

part of people's preoccupations, reactions and behaviour.'¹⁰⁴ For Rémond, spirituality was a determining factor of an individual's conduct.

The importance of spirituality in fashioning a response to the world is endorsed by Sandra Schneiders who likens spiritual practice to 'a personal lived reality.'¹⁰⁵ Schneiders argues that spiritual practice brings together all social and individual aspects of emotion, thought, activity, and passivity. This approach develops Rémond's view of spirituality from a model with the potential to explain human behaviour to a concept which is so all-encompassing that neither the observed nor the observer can avoid the effect of spirituality on their gaze. This is particularly true of Weiss whose own spiritual gaze emerged quite clearly from the real-world actions and attitudes of two of her female role models – her mother and Marie Dugard, her teacher at the Lycée Molière, Paris. The following discussion illustrates two occasions on which the actions of each woman had a profound effect on Weiss's own spiritual perspective – firstly, her mother's response to events at Bexhill-on-Sea and, secondly, Dugard's attempt at converting Weiss to transcendentalism.

To improve her English, Weiss's mother arranged a study trip for her daughter to Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex. The date of this visit is not recorded in either Weiss's memoirs or in Célia Bertin's biography, but it was probably while Weiss was still at the Lycée Molière in Paris as she notes returning to her studies there on her arrival home¹⁰⁶ and that it was in winter as she saw the Christmas decorations¹⁰⁷ as she transited through London on her return home to France. Weiss's descriptions of this experience are less than complimentary.

¹⁰⁴ René Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Sandra Marie Schneiders, 'Religion v. Spirituality: A Contemporary Conundrum', *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, 3(2) (2003), 163-185 (p. 166).

¹⁰⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 53.

She lodged with *Coupie*, the name she affectionately gave to Mrs Coupland, who Weiss described as ‘une immense Anglaise au teint rouge’.¹⁰⁸ *Coupie* ran a boarding house with her adopted niece, Gladys, a woman of dwarf-like stature whose ‘bec-de-lièvre et de proéminentes incisives donnaient l’aspect d’un rongeur.’¹⁰⁹ It is unclear why Weiss was so unkind in her descriptions of these women, but she inextricably linked their scholarly pursuits of culinary etiquette and dramatic renditions of Shakespeare with uncomfortable memories of the local parson’s homilies delivered feebly and clumsily with a stammer from the pulpit each Sunday. Weiss expected her mother would not approve of this religious instruction – the Weiss household was, after all, a secular one. Therefore, when her mother came to take her home, Weiss mocked the parson in an attempt to appeal to her mother’s anticlericalism which, surprisingly for Weiss, earned her a slap and a sharp reprimand.

– Ah ! que je n’oublie pas la Bible et les sermons du pasteur.
 Entraînée par mon récit, j’imitai les bégaiements du Révérend, sa maladresse en chaire et le ton débile dont il vaticinait ses prophéties. Je croyais flatter l’irrégion de la mécréante qui m’écoutait et je continuais ma mimique, grondant comme l’orgue, marmottant comme les paroissiennes dans un bruit de chaises remuées.
 – Tiens ! me dit ma mère.
 Et elle m’administra une maîtresse gifle qui me cloua sur place d’étonnement.
 – Tu t’en souviendras, me dit-elle froidement. Je suis laïque, c’est vrai et j’estime que les croyances non sincères, les profits qu’on tire d’une religion, la crasse morale et physique dans laquelle se vautrent parfois les bigots méritent tous les sarcasmes, mais il est odieux de se moquer des fidèles qui trouvent en leur foi des raisons de bonté, de simplicité et de courage.¹¹⁰

Weiss was clearly not expecting this physical reaction and disciplinary outburst from her mother. She had failed to get her mother’s approval by underestimating her respect for

¹⁰⁸ Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 48.

¹¹⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 52.

the beliefs of others. Weiss thought she had acted in a manner consistent with her family's secularism and her mother's cynical view of religious insincerity and profiteering. But Weiss realised she had achieved the opposite. She was left confused, if not traumatised, by what seemed like her mother's sudden reversal in her attitude to expressions of faith. On an earlier family holiday, her mother's reaction had been quite different to that at Bexhill-on-Sea. The Weiss family had returned to their former country house in Zelsheim (near Sélestat, Alsace) which had once been occupied by Weiss's paternal grandmother (née Emilie Boeckel 1830-1908) only to find it had been transformed into a religious community reaching out to delinquent minors. The priest insisted on showing the family around whilst Weiss's mother surreptitiously ridiculed his demeanour, his scruffy appearance and the pious statues that had been erected in a recently restored hermitage to proffer gilded votive offerings towards Heaven.

Ma mère ricanait de ce vandalisme ecclésiastique.

– Quelle belle grotte, s'exclamait notre guide de son gosier inapte aux gutturales.

– En effet, quelle belle crotte ! reprenait ma mère, en imitant son accent.¹¹¹

Her mother's unexpected lurch from this apparent lack of respect to her later appreciation of the faith of her acquaintances at Bexhill-on-Sea left Weiss confused. She considered the altercation at Bexhill-on-Sea 'comme l'origine d'une crise spirituelle qui devait éclater quelques années plus tard, violemment.'¹¹² Although Weiss does not explain what she meant by this, her memory of the incident resurfaced in a later encounter with Mademoiselle Marie Dugard, her teacher at the Lycée Molière which is examined below.

¹¹¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 66.

¹¹² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 52.

Unquestionably, the incident at Bexhill-on-Sea was confusing for Weiss, but it also left her so ashamed at having ridiculed an expression of faith that she felt compelled to alter her attitude to spirituality claiming, ‘en proie à une telle honte que je dépouillai instantanément le cynisme qui, en matière de religion, influençait déjà mon entendement [...] je m’ouvris à la mystique.’¹¹³ Weiss was encouraged to put aside her sarcasm and to adopt a more generous and open attitude towards spirituality, a move which signalled her subsequent interest in a strategy of reconciliation with the major world religions.

Weiss’s encounter with the devotional nurturing of Dugard, the second woman to have influenced Weiss’s early spiritual gaze, did little to mitigate her religious quandary. On leaving school, Weiss decided to follow an academic career and continued to study under Dugard to prepare for the *certificat d’aptitude à l’enseignement*.¹¹⁴ The classes quickly became unsettling, however, as Dugard demonstrated that she felt responsible for Weiss’s soul as well as her intellect. It did not take Weiss long to realise the real intention behind Dugard’s instruction was something she herself had neither anticipated nor welcomed: ‘Maintenant, j’en étais certaine: sa direction, au lieu de me conférer des titres à une activité professionnelle, ne visait, sous couleur de philosophie, qu’à me donner une foi dont, malgré certains élans, je ne me sentais pas le besoin.’¹¹⁵

With examinations looming, Weiss’s studies with Dugard were nearing their end. Weiss does not allude to whether the prospect of losing her student prompted Dugard’s subsequent actions, but it was at this point that Dugard’s spiritual intentions became clear.

¹¹³ Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 52.

¹¹⁴ For a commentary on challenges facing female students and the French education system at the turn of the twentieth century see Jean-François Condette, ‘Les cervelines ou les femmes indésirables. L’étudiante dans la France des années 1880-1914’, *Carrefours de l’éducation*, 2003/1 (2003), 38-61.

¹¹⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 113.

On the pretext of offering Weiss a gift, Dugard drew out a copy of her monograph on Ralph Waldo Emerson.¹¹⁶ She began reading the Latin preface, waxing lyrical and preaching the principles of transcendental doctrine, urging Weiss to join her as a follower, bemoaning the shortcomings of a university education which did not address the question of sin, and offering Weiss a bond of faith through which the world's insufficiencies could be restored both morally and intellectually: 'Alors vous resterez unie à Lui, unie pratiquement par l'exercice du bien, unie intellectuellement par la recherche du vrai, unie moralement par l'amour.'¹¹⁷

Dugard's behaviour was at odds with the image Weiss held of her. In an era that constrained women's position in public life and promoted the housewife over the educated professional,¹¹⁸ Dugard had formerly embodied Weiss's aspiration to escape the expectation of domesticity through education. Dugard's behaviour now cast doubt on this image as she subordinated education to spirituality and the religious teachings of a male leader. The depth of Weiss's distress at this encounter is suggested by her description of Dugard as a black shadow projected onto white, lime-washed walls by the harsh light of one bulb suspended from the ceiling. In Weiss's eyes, Dugard had become an ominous danger whose preaching threatened her aspirations of freedom from domesticity. The contrast between

¹¹⁶ See Mary Beth Raycraft, 'Marie Dugard takes notes: the spirited reaction to 1890s America by a Parisian secondary schoolteacher of girls', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol.51, No. 3 (2015), 316-334 where Dugard's expertise in regard to the life and works of Emerson is explored and reference made to four books and a biography published in her name.

¹¹⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 90.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of Weiss in the context of nineteenth-century constraints on the twentieth-century French woman, see Angela Kershaw, 'Louise Weiss: fin de siècle chez une femme de siècle', *Romance Studies*, 18(1) (2000), 45-55 and for an observation on Weiss's intentional non-conformity to the seductive image of the young housewife prevalent in French women's magazines, see Michel Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2009), p. 117.

the light, white walls and Dugard's dark shadow alludes to Weiss's perception of her teacher as a dark threat to her hopes of a bright future as an independent young woman.

In the context of her secular upbringing, Weiss was not prepared at this juncture to put such reliance on the merits of religious doctrine. Once again Weiss found herself in a situation where the behaviour of her role model did not match her expectations. Her comment, 'la gifle de Bexhill était revenue rougir ma joue,'¹¹⁹ suggests Weiss was swiftly reminded of the encounter with her mother at Bexhill-on-Sea when she misjudged her mother's viewpoint. However, on this occasion, rather than being left confused by the encounter, Weiss found an inner strength to leave, asserting her own position on spirituality as Dugard locked the door behind her.

Aucun être au monde ne me dominerait. Aucune union d'aucun ordre ne me paraîtrait jamais possible. Je me sentais trop forte [...] Mademoiselle Marie Dugard me reconduisit jusqu'au seuil de son palier. Elle cadenassa sa porte. Je respirai profondément. En proie à une sorte d'ivresse, comme si j'avais échappé à un danger, je descendis à quatre les étages.¹²⁰

Locking the door served the metaphorical function of shutting Weiss off from the spiritual world. But the encounter revealed Weiss's capacity for independence and her intention not to be guided or judged by any spiritual doctrine. She was driven from considering the possibility of any personal spiritual commitment. Framed by Schneiders' view which likens spiritual practice to a personal lived reality, Weiss had taken the first steps along a path that would keep an intellectual distance between herself and spirituality. Throughout her life, Weiss did not observe any form of organised religion, choosing instead

¹¹⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 90.

¹²⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 91.

to remain humanist and liberal. Even her funeral service in a reformed church in Paris's 16th arrondissement was held, not for religious reasons, but in gratitude of the protection the Church had offered her during the occupation of France and only on the condition that the religious community approved.

Louise Weiss dans son testament demanda qu'après sa mort un service protestant soit dit à sa mémoire, si la communauté voulait bien la recevoir en son sein. 'Je demeure reconnaissante, écrivait-elle, à l'Eglise réformée de la protection qu'elle m'a accordée pendant l'occupation de la France par Adolf Hitler.'¹²¹

Weiss's post-war perspective on spirituality

After the Second World War, Weiss felt that contemporary civilisation was collapsing. On a global level, Europe and the world had seen numerous conflicts, people were suffering at the hands of powerful dictators, peace seemed fragile following the failure of the League of Nations and, as discussed in the Introduction, there was a general undercurrent of unease that Eastern or Soviet ideologies threatened the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West. Additionally, on a personal level, Weiss lost her favourite brother, André, in a car crash and her lover and friends as a consequence of war, she had divorced her husband, the architect José Imbert, become estranged from her adopted son, Jacques, and fallen under the scrutiny of German soldiers who, during the French Occupation, had stolen her books and papers. Weiss wanted to understand, particularly in the post-war years, not only what

¹²¹ L'Amiral Henri Labrosse, 'Hommage à Louise Weiss' in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 525-534. Weiss's funeral is also referred to in Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 484 and Nicole Zand, 'La Mort de Louise Weiss: Européenne et Féministe', *Le Monde*, 28 May 1983, p.1 and p. 9.

pushed humanity to violent extremes but, equally, what might curb its aggression and restore harmony.

In the face of what she perceived to be turbulent times, Weiss's attitude to spirituality appears to change in line with the pledge she made in her youth at Bexhill-on-Sea. As she struggled to understand both world and personal events, she came to realise that 'les valeurs religieuses traditionnelles s'écroulent.'¹²² Claiming that 'l'organisation spirituelle de la planète me tenait également à cœur',¹²³ Weiss began to take a closer interest in spirituality as a means of restoring order in society. In a shift from her childhood reaction of avoiding spiritual practice or mocking it, Weiss adopted a strategy of reconciliation with the major world religions reopening the door to spirituality which she had closed in her youth. But Weiss's interest remained intellectual and she never lost her secular perspective. It was through her post-war travel narratives that Weiss's spiritual gaze on the world emerged. The following discussion explores the role which Weiss's career change had in fixing her post-war spiritual perspective.

Having spent her early professional years as press officer and journalist in the company of Europe's most influential political leaders, the only way that Weiss felt she could fully examine the effect of spirituality on contemporary civilisation was by reaching out across the globe to encounter other cultures and practices. Therefore, she abandoned professional journalism for a freelance writing career. Weiss was attracted to the autonomy of freelance work, a career which, although reliant on self-funding, would give her the opportunity to, firstly, pursue her own interests and, secondly, break free from what she

¹²² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 14.

¹²³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe 1919-1934* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 62.

perceived to be a narrow perspective imposed by the press, the changes to the legislative framework, and the rigid management structures imposed in the post-war period.

J'évoque une question de métier; j'avais d'abord été envoyée autour du monde comme correspondante et là j'étais obligée d'aller à l'endroit du fait dont on pouvait tirer un scoop et lorsque je suis revenue j'ai eu un sentiment écrasant de n'y avoir rien compris à ce monde [...] je suis repartie à mes propres frais [...] pour voir le monde à mon idée et en rapporter des images.¹²⁴

Weiss's memoirs suggest that she was successful in securing her freelance work¹²⁵ and Loetscher's biography of Weiss illustrates how her move to freelance work enabled her to branch out into different media.

Louise Weiss, qui a négocié un contrat avec Pathé et l'ORTF pour une série de films sur L'Afrique du Soleil levant sillonne depuis février, avec Georges Bourdelon, les « pays en voie de développement » à l'aube de leur indépendance.¹²⁶

Whether her freelance work gave her the complete freedom she anticipated is questionable, however. The opening pages of *Le Voyage enchanté* record a conversation between Weiss and Armand Lanoux, literary adviser to publishing house *Librairie Arthème Fayard*. Although Weiss's pitch for a travel narrative initially found favour with Lanoux as suggested by, 'Un livre de voyages? Soit !',¹²⁷ he went on to stipulate specific requirements for its content by clarifying, 'mais alors pas un mot de politique ni de finance ou de

¹²⁴ Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss' in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), p. 471. See also Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 19 where Weiss details her disapproval of changes to how the press was structured and managed in post-war France.

¹²⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86, p. 378, and p. 443.

¹²⁶ Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe*, p. 140.

¹²⁷ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard. 1960), p. 11.

stratégie.’¹²⁸ Perhaps mindful of trends in contemporary readership – and possibly the company’s sales figures, although no direct reference is made to this – Lanoux instructed Weiss to concentrate on a mystical, or spiritual, angle for her travel narratives, claiming, ‘l’humanité n’a jamais cessé de rêver à ses origines ni de se passionner pour les mystères de l’au-delà.’¹²⁹ Notwithstanding Lanoux’s direction, the parameters of freelance work still proved to be far less prescriptive than her experience of press journalism. Weiss was ultimately able to map out her own itinerary and establish her role as an independent witness and sole narrator of her experience. Her final handshake with Lanoux sealed a contract that was neither time bound, dependent on topical world events, or focussed on the views of political leaders.

The paramount concern relating to Weiss's vocational focus is not the absence of a global outlook in her early career – the reach of her political journal, *L’Europe Nouvelle*, and its international focus is clearly documented in Loetscher’s biography of Weiss.¹³⁰ Rather, it is to establish that her post-war travel narratives offered her a more appropriate vehicle through which to exercise her emerging spiritual gaze, one that would lead to a more intimate and empathetic relationship with the communities she encountered than she had been able to achieve as a journalist. Similarities emerge here between Weiss and a new generation of travel writer recognised by acclaimed writer and historian William Dalrymple. Dalrymple identified twenty-first century authors who focused less on heroic adventure and more on an intimate knowledge of people and places. Quoting Indian writer Amitav Ghosh,

¹²⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 12.

¹³⁰ See Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l’Europe*, p. 15 where reference is made to Weiss’s overseas engagements as press officer, 800 editions of *L’Europe Nouvelle*, and some 30,000 pages dedicated to informing its readership on European matters.

Dalrymple claimed that their travel narratives remained relevant and stimulating because they were interested in a 'sophisticated knowledge [...] about complex societies, their religions, history, economy, and politics.'¹³¹ Although Weiss was writing some half a century earlier, her post-war travel narratives match this description. Her desire to mediate between Home and the Other, to foster an understanding of socio-political and cultural landscapes through experiential knowledge, positions Weiss as an early example of Dalrymple's model of a travel writer rather than a vestige of a previous era. Against these biographical and historical contexts, the following discussion maps Weiss's spiritual gaze onto her post-war travel narratives to explore her perception of spirituality.

Weiss's post-war spirituality awakens

Irrespective of whether Weiss's travel narratives are text-based or visual, the accounts of her post-war experience are anchored in spiritual references. The following discussion takes examples from both her written accounts and her films – firstly, Weiss's visit to Abou-Kemal and, secondly, imagery from *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie* – to explore the change in Weiss's post-war spiritual gaze.

In 1952, six years after Abou-Kemal passed from French control to independent Syria, Weiss found herself in the small garden of a barracks overcome by heat and the fatigue of a 75-mile journey across the desert in a jeep from Deir-ez-Zor. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs had commissioned Weiss to make a series of documentaries about French

¹³¹ William Dalrymple, 'Home Truths on Abroad', *The Guardian*, 19 September 2009, p. 2 <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/sep/19/travel-writing-writers-future>> [accessed 20 November 2009].

archaeological missions in order to broaden the general public's understanding of the ancient world.¹³² Despite her fierce allegiance to secularism, as Weiss reflected on her situation, she compared herself to the Old Testament patriarch, Abraham, whom she credited with making a similar journey through the same desert centuries earlier.

Si les siècles l'avaient permis, j'y eusse rencontré Abraham arrivant d'Our avec sa femme Sara, ses serviteurs et ses troupeaux. Mais les siècles ne l'avaient pas permis. A comparer l'aventure du patriarche à la mienne, je me demandais, toutes proportions gardées entre un géant de la pensée et une journaliste à la poursuite de la Loi, si celles-ci ne se ressemblaient un peu, un tout petit peu.¹³³

Weiss's presence in Abou-Kemal and the connection she made with its spiritual past locate her on the same path as previous generations and, as discussed in the Introduction, illustrate her desire to gain experiential knowledge from encounters with people rather than documented archives. This connection is reinforced in the documentary *A l'ouest d'Eden* where, at 01:56, the voiceover informs viewers that nothing has changed since Abraham's time and a shot of shepherds walking the hills with their animals suggests day-to-day activities have changed little through the centuries.¹³⁴ But her comparison with Abraham went further than a physical journey. Although she says 'toutes proportions gardées', Weiss hints at similarities in their respective intellects. This belief in her own intelligence appears as an attempt not only to justify herself as an expert for the purposes of completing her commission but to elevate her status in the eyes of the reader by introducing a sense of authority and authenticity into her travel narratives.

¹³² Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86

¹³³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 85.

¹³⁴ *A l'ouest d'Eden*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951).

At this juncture of Biblical history and authentic experience, Weiss's travel narratives can be seen to conform to a trope of her era in their similarity with other contemporaneous accounts. In *Journey Amongst Warriors*, French-American journalist Eve Curie narrates her journey to Africa, the Near East, and Asia. Biblical imagery is also woven into Curie's account similarly fusing her contemporary experience with ancient spirituality to authenticate her journey: 'By a stretch of imagination, the traveller could fill in the blanks and picture invisible characters on the same hills, on the same roads: Solomon, Herod, Jesus Christ.'¹³⁵

Travelling the same path as bygone civilisations is a recurring motif in Weiss's travel narratives. For example, Weiss's introduction to *La Syrie* refers to present-day pilgrims walking along the ancient 'Voie Droite'¹³⁶ en route to Damascus, but the theme is most powerfully illustrated in *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie*¹³⁷ where an ancient road is featured winding towards the horizon (see Figure 1 below). The shape of the road and perspective of the image create a sense of movement suggesting the passing of time and almost enticing the viewer to begin walking along the road. The eye is drawn from the centre-front of the frame, into the shot, and on towards the horizon where the road disappears into a void of blue sky. The age of the road is suggested firstly by the stones and cobbles used in its construction and, secondly, by weeds growing between the paving blocks. The road appears to have been there a long time, bleached by the hot, Syrian sun, and alludes to the heritage of the past continuing into the present and the future.

¹³⁵ Eve Curie, *Journey Among Warriors* (London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1943), p. 97.

¹³⁶ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950), pages not numbered.

¹³⁷ *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Film, 1951).



Figure 1: A still from *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie* showing an ancient road at 03:15

As Weiss travelled to Sinai, Egypt, her journey became entwined with that of another Biblical character, Moses: 'Moïse et son peuple avaient traversé la mer Rouge pour accéder à la Terre promise par des déserts dont l'hostilité empêcherait les Egyptiens de les poursuivre.'¹³⁸ Weiss's focus here, however, is not an intellectual one. She neither compares herself to Moses nor imagines meeting him as she did with Abraham. The dominant metaphor in this analogy is the tranquil end-point of an arduous journey. Parallels can be drawn between the hardships of the Israelites' exodus and Weiss's perception of her turbulent journey through the twentieth century. Weiss, too, was searching for a promised land, a space where peace could prosper. But, where the Israelites were putting their faith in God to lead them out of slavery towards the land that had been promised to them,

¹³⁸ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 125.

Weiss's faith lay in her secular trust in the ability of politics and supranational institutions to bring peace to the land where she already resided. Weiss's concept of the promised land, which was noticeably different to scriptural interpretations as the following discussion will show, framed her perception of spirituality as a means of understanding the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century.

Reference to the promised land appears in the opening pages of Weiss's first post-war travel narrative, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*.

Un défilé s'ouvrait. Le chemin serpentait entre les roches [...] Quelques oiseaux volaient, criant dans le silence [...] Tout à coup les roches s'évanouirent et l'horizon s'élargit en un cirque étincelant de pâtures et d'eaux fraîches [...] Après tant d'aridité, je m'exclamai: la terre promise.¹³⁹

Riding in convoy behind Chief of Police Rodrigo Lopez along the dusty road which linked the Mexican cities of San Cristobal de Las Casas and Chamula, Weiss adopts a god-like perspective in describing the valley opening up before her, a gaze reminiscent of what Mary Louise Pratt terms 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' – a typically imperialist perspective with overtones of conquering the landscape.¹⁴⁰ This technique is not only characteristic of Weiss's text-based travel narratives but can also be seen in her documentaries. For example, in the opening sequences of *A l'ouest d'Eden* a map of major cities fades to panoramic shots of barren desert¹⁴¹ and *Soixante siècles d'histoire en Syrie* opens with an aerial perspective and a flyover of the country's landscape.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 13.

¹⁴⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) pp. 201-227.

¹⁴¹ Weiss, *A l'ouest d'Eden*.

¹⁴² *Soixante siècles d'histoire en Syrie*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951), at 00:42.

Weiss's response to potentially finding an escape from the heat of the arid region in the fertile and verdant oasis of nearby civilisation resonates more with the popular cultural metaphor of the promised land being indicative of a greater good rather than with a spiritual, or Biblical, interpretation. Weiss's reference to 'la terre promise' (above) does not refer to the physical territory promised to the descendants of Abraham, nor the central concept of the Zionist branch of Judaism regarding the right to re-establish the Jewish homeland. Rather it is referring to Lopez's promise of the end of their arduous journey, the oasis town of Chamula where the challenges of Weiss's immediate environment would be alleviated. This refuge from the desert heat and parched terrain became a space of sanctuary rather than salvation. Weiss's perception of the promised land as a factor in the real world rather than as belonging to a divine plane gave rise to her perception that spirituality was a refuge from the trials of the world rather than to any faith in supernatural forces capable of interceding to restore harmony in the face of adversity. This perspective underpinned Weiss's spiritual gaze throughout her post-war travel narratives.

Spirituality as sanctuary in Weiss's post-war travel narratives

In the light of the above metaphor, the following discussion begins with excerpts from the documentary *Face au volcan, face au cyclone*,¹⁴³ and explores how Weiss envisaged physical and emotional adversity in other cultures before examining how Weiss's understanding of spirituality emerges from her post-war travel narratives.

¹⁴³ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: face au volcan, face au cyclone*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

Face au volcan, face au cyclone opens with a flyover of La Réunion's two volcanoes, *Piton des Neiges* in the north-west and *Piton de la Fournaise* in the south-east, one of the world's most active and productive volcanoes. This opening is typical of many of Weiss's documentaries. For example, *Soixante siècles d'histoire en Syrie* opens with a flyover at 00:42,¹⁴⁴ and *Un fils du Roi Salomon II* has aerial views of waterfalls and rapids.¹⁴⁵ The speed of the initial encounter with La Réunion in *Face au volcan face au cyclone* suggests a dominant tourist gaze. In line with Todorov's criteria which define the tourist gaze (see Appendix One), Weiss appears to have little time to stay and interact with the region and is content with experiencing just the physical landscape which she externalises on film. The harsh conditions of the island are depicted through natural forces, specifically close-up and



Figure 2: A still from *Face au volcan, face au cyclone* showing solidified lava flows running down to the rocky coastline at 02:07

¹⁴⁴ Weiss, *Soixante siècles d'histoire en Syrie*, 00.42.

¹⁴⁵ *Un fils du roi Salomon II*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiodiffusion télévision française Pathé cinéma, 1963), 04.32-04.52.

panoramic shots of solidified lava-flows from centuries of volcanic eruptions (see Figure 2 above).¹⁴⁶ The contrast between the dark course of the lava-flow and the white-plumed waves breaking on the rocky coastline hints at the destructive force of the lava-flows and the danger subsequently posed to shipping.



Figure 3: A still from *Face au volcan face au cyclone* showing the barren and inhospitable landscape of La Réunion at 02:19

Figure 3 (above) further illustrates the destructive force of the lava-flows on the landscape which yields only to the occasional patch of brush and wilting vegetation. The dark inclining landmass and bare tree trunks dominate the frame, allowing very little clear sky to penetrate the shot. The trajectory of the eye is initially upwards following the line of the trees but the dark expanse of solidified lava to the right of the frame, which covers more than half of the shot, has the effect not only of overpowering the vegetation but also draining the colour from the trees, causing them to appear brittle and barren. The dark

¹⁴⁶ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 247.

mass appears to exert a force which arrests the upward direction of the eye, pulling it downwards and making what little can be seen of the sky appear to be some distance away at the summit of an almost inaccessible incline.

The inhospitable environment is further reinforced by the film's soundscape. A male voiceover (unnamed) delivers Weiss's commentary against the whistling of a shrill wind. However, the significance of the climatic references is not fully appreciated until the film pans to a close-up of a memorial plaque. This plaque is reminiscent in style of commemorative plaques in Weiss's hometown of Paris¹⁴⁷ and marks the final resting place of 18-year-old Marc Lallemand, a local philosophy student and victim of the devastating cyclone of 4 February 1932 which killed almost one hundred people in ninety minutes (see Figure 4 below).

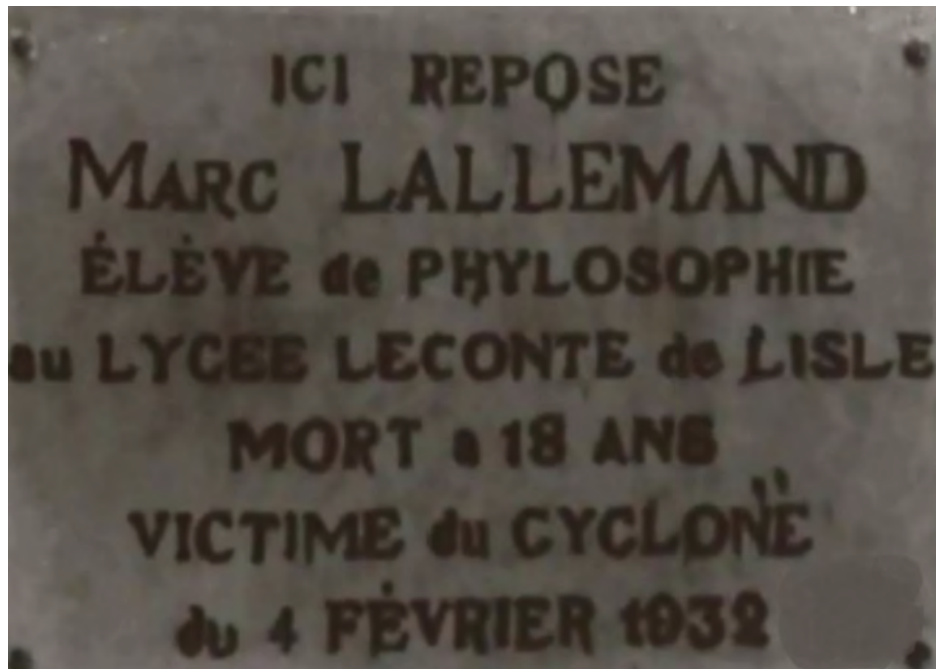


Figure 4: A still from *Face au volcan, face au cyclone* of a memorial plaque to a young islander killed in the worst cyclone to hit La Réunion in 1932 at 12:10

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of how plaques are used for commemorative purposes see Mariana Sauber, 'Traces fragiles. Les plaques commémoratives dans les rues de Paris', *Annales*, 48 (1993), 715-727.

This plaque serves to remind the islanders of the fragility of life and the potential of natural events to cause total and immediate destruction. Other than as a technique to show the inhospitable environment Weiss gives no reason as to why her documentary panned to focus on this plaque. However, on a personal level, parallels can be drawn between Weiss's experience of the twentieth century and the fragility of life suggested by this shot. For example, Weiss had lived through two world wars and witnessed the ensuing destruction across Europe from events over which she had no control. There is a certain empathy here with the survivors of the cyclone. The victims of the Second World War had no control over their fates just as the inhabitants of Reunion Island had no power over harsh climatic conditions: both were left to pick up the pieces in the aftermath and resume everyday life. The images and associations of death and razed landscapes portrayed by the scenes in the documentary resonate with Weiss's experience of the fragility of Western life in the twentieth century.

La guerre de 1914 m'avait profondément marquée. De ses massacres j'émergeais, en pleine jeunesse et révoltée, dans un monde en ruine dont les hommes de mon âge avaient presque tous été tués.¹⁴⁸

This filmic technique draws the observer into a more intimate and empathetic relationship with the island community and signals both the fragility and changing nature of the region and the turmoil faced by the islanders. No refuge from this hardship is suggested until later in the film when, at 05:23, against a soundscape of tolling bells, the Catholic

¹⁴⁸ Louise Weiss, *Souvenirs d'une enfance républicaine*, (Paris: Editions DeNoël, 1937) page not numbered. For a discussion on how the First World War touched almost everyone's life, traumatised a generation and proved hard for memory to digest, see Martin Kitchen, *Europe Between the Wars* (Harlow: London, 2006).

church of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges is pictured with its spire piercing upwards through menacing clouds and the backdrop of black mountains (see Figure 5 below). Built c.1932 this church is characteristic of modern Catholic buildings which were typically designed to elicit an aesthetic approach to faith by creating a sense of splendour, colour, and light through the use of stained glass windows and architectural features. The light in the camera shot accentuates the white walls of the church and creates a sharp contrast between the light of the building and its surroundings. The positioning of the church in this shot is significant. Although it is not in the immediate foreground but behind a row of trees, it is certainly within reach of the onlooker who will not have to endure passage over the bleak mountains and through the leaden clouds to reach it. The church becomes a beacon of bright hope shining through the darkness, a sanctuary for the islanders from the destructive and turbulent forces of the world they live in.



Figure 5: A still from *Face au volcan, face au cyclone* showing Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, Cilaos at 05:12

This metaphor of sanctuary from adversity persists in the presentation of the numerous icons and shrines found on the island. Figure 6 (below), which is a composite of stills from *Face au volcan face au cyclone*, depicts an icon on the left and a shrine on the right. In Weiss's visual travel narratives, icons are typically featured tilted upwards as if pointing towards heaven. In the shot below the thick frame of the icon catches the light in such a way that it is suggestive of an illuminated, sacred barrier preserving the sanctity of the enclosed Biblical scene. The frame appears to be robust enough to keep the surrounding darkness at bay and the spiritual space inside the frame symbolises a safe enclosure separated from the dark menaces of the world.



Figure 6: Stills from *Face au volcan face au cyclone* showing a Christian icon (left) at 03:47 and a Christian shrine at 06:57 (right)

The depiction of shrines on the island imply a similar message of protection against the dark world. The way in which the light falls on the shrine above casts a heavy shadow which extends diagonally from approximately one third of the way up the left-hand side to just under half way across the top edge of the frame. This effect almost divides the image in half, but the lighter part of the image remains larger than the corner in shadow. The eye is repeatedly drawn from the dark corner to the lighter area and back again. This battle

between the light area and the dark corner gives the impression that the shrine is emerging from the shadows of the vegetation behind it and is suggestive of the Biblical trope of light vanquishing the darkness.

To this point, Weiss's spiritual imagery draws on a Biblical narrative. Reasons for this are unclear given her humanist and liberal tendencies and her secular upbringing. However, as outlined in the first section of this chapter, Weiss was born into a Europe which largely continued to hold traditional Christian beliefs and values. Christianity may not have been in her nature, but it did form part of her early nurture. Additionally, although Weiss did not practise a particular faith, she showed a vigorous interest in all the major religions of the world. Her reputation in this field was acknowledged by Pierre Sabagh in a 1959 television interview: 'Néanmoins c'est une spécialiste du Moyen Orient, des Indes, de la Chine, et du Japon. Ses études font autorité dans le domaine, notamment dans les domaines, religieux.'¹⁴⁹

Her observations of encounters with different religious practices are well-documented in this interview and her post-war travel narratives include references to encounters with Jainism, Hinduism, and Islam, amongst others. However, irrespective of the religion, her spiritual gaze remained constant and focused on an earthbound sanctuary to escape the turmoil of the world as the following two examples demonstrate. Firstly, in *Allah aux Comores*,¹⁵⁰ a mosque is depicted at 03:34 in a similar manner to the church in Figure 5 (above) with white walls and a domed spire reaching out of the dark buildings and shadows

¹⁴⁹ 'Louise Weiss: Les Indes', *Magazine des explorateurs*, Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 25 February 1959, at 01.14.

¹⁵⁰ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Allah aux Comores*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiodiffusion télévision française Pathé cinéma, 1963), at 03:34.

of the town to the sky (see Figure 7 below). Secondly, in *L'Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra*,¹⁵¹ a Jain temple is featured at 02:24. It dominates the landscape but its position high up in the mountains is consistent with the trope of an earth-bound sanctuary sited at a distance from the turmoil of the world (see Figure 8, below).



Figure 7: A still from *Allah aux Comores* showing whitewashed walls of a mosque reaching out of dark shadows at 03:34



Figure 8: A still from *L'Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra* of a Jain temple at 02:24

¹⁵¹ *L'Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Louise Weiss, 1954), at 02:24.

The above examples have all foregrounded Weiss's preoccupation with spirituality as a material place of sanctuary from the turbulence of the world. It is only in Weiss's encounter with yoga practitioners during her visit to the Indian subcontinent in 1954 that she begins to consider the possibility that the spiritual sanctuary could extend to a state of mind. During her visit to Srinagar, Kashmir, Weiss met with Shri Swami 108 Krishnananda Saraswati, a Brahman Hindu, yoga practitioner, and leader of the Amarnath Pilgrimage, who demonstrated and explained his religion and the practice of yoga.

Un après-midi, il nous entraîna vers une île écartée du lac de Srinagar, celle où l'on incinérât les morts et là, entre des tas de bûches, au bord de l'eau, sous le ciel bleu, il nous montra l'enchaînement des principaux mouvements physiques qui lui permettaient de conquérir la paix intérieure et donc s'élever vers Dieu.¹⁵²

On initial reflection and given the above analysis of Weiss's perception of spirituality as a refuge, it seems somewhat unsurprising to find this encounter unfolded in a quiet space away from the bustle of daily life. However, as her accounts in *Le Voyage enchanté* and *Connaissance du monde* demonstrate, this was entirely consistent with the importance which Swami Krishnananda Saraswati placed on the individual retreating from the busy world to practise in isolation.¹⁵³ This, Weiss learned, enabled the dissociation of mind and body leaving the individual free to explore the limits of the self and the universe. Weiss's encounter with Swami Krishnananda Saraswati was a particularly significant one in terms of her spiritual gaze. Weiss noted that she had 'l'impression qu'une porte s'ouvrait pour moi

¹⁵² Louise Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1: (1) (1955), p. 44.

¹⁵³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 355-372 and p. 395; Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', p. 28; *Aux frontières de l'au-delà*, dir. by Louise Weiss (La société nouvelle des établissements GAUMONT, département films, 1954) at 03.07-06.00. Photographic archives, reports, and detailed notes on yoga positions, their meaning, and effective practice can be found in the archive in the Musée de Saverne.

sur le monde du merveilleux'¹⁵⁴ – further validation that, in the post-war period, she reopened the door on spirituality which she had closed in her youth.

The path to Weiss's spiritual gaze

This chapter began with the intention of examining how Weiss's spiritual gaze changed in her post-war travel narratives. Growing up, Weiss was influenced by two strong role models – her mother and her schoolteacher – whose actions left her confused and resolved to walk away from any engagement with spirituality. It was not until Weiss embarked on her freelance career that, determined to develop a closer, more empathetic relationship with other cultures, she realised she needed to engage with the personal lived realities of the people she encountered. Weiss needed to re-open the door on spirituality that had closed in her youth.

Although Weiss took an interest in the world's major religions, she retained her humanist and liberal viewpoint and, through her self-appointed witness gaze, avoided imposing Western spirituality on the communities she encountered. Notwithstanding this position, Weiss's spiritual gaze was typified by Christian imagery. She aligned herself with patriarchs and leaders of the Old Testament to give her narratives a sense of authority and enabled her to walk the same road as previous generations, thus merging her experience and journey with theirs. Weiss's post-war spiritual gaze is predicated on a specific interpretation of the promised land which reveals spirituality to be a refuge from adversity – a space of sanctuary rather than salvation. This image of spirituality as a place in the real

¹⁵⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 344.

world where destructive forces and adversity are held at bay is consistent across her travel narratives, differing only in her encounters with religious practices on the Indian subcontinent. Here Weiss's view of spirituality develops from being solely a physical safe haven to a state of mind where the natural turbulence of thoughts and restlessness of the body can also find refuge. The following chapters take up this metaphor of spirituality as sanctuary rather than salvation and join Weiss on the road to her encounters with pre-Colombian and twentieth-century spirituality as she seeks to understand how spirituality might mitigate her perception of contemporary society as a threatening and turbulent reality.

CHAPTER 2

SACRIFICIAL RITUAL AND THE ROAD TO SANCTUARY

AN ENCOUNTER WITH PRE-COLUMBIAN SPIRITUALITY

The twentieth century proved to be an unsettling, if not traumatic, environment for Weiss. Rather than accept the tragic events of her era, she pursued an intellectual route to discover reasons for the turmoil she perceived around her. But, as has been discussed in the Introduction, rather than rely on documented archives, Weiss preferred talking to people who she believed had lived through periods of turbulence comparable to her perception of the twentieth century. Weiss considered these people to be ‘survivants’¹⁵⁵ – survivors of the unrest she perceived in the contemporary world.

This approach inextricably links Weiss with the past but should not be interpreted in any way as nostalgic or regressive. Weiss was neither yearning for better times nor surrendering her place in the twentieth century. Neither should the past and the present necessarily be seen as mutually exclusive in Weiss’s text-based and visual travel narratives. As will be shown below, she was not only conscious of the potential for these time frames to interact with and influence each other, but she intentionally looked for traces of the past and reflected on them in her travel narratives. Weiss believed that this particular gaze on the world would open up the past and help her to make sense of the twentieth century. This chapter begins by exploring how Weiss juxtaposed the past and the present in her text-

¹⁵⁵ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: tempête sur l’Occident 1945-1975*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 86.

based and visual travel narratives before examining how the interplay of the past and present influenced her contemporary spiritual gaze.

Where the past meets the present

The juxtaposition of the past and the present is a common motif in Weiss's travel narratives, irrespective of whether her journeys are told through text, photography, or film. This is explored in the following discussion which takes examples from each of these three genres.

The first example is from Weiss's text-based travel narrative *Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin*¹⁵⁶ which recounts her 1958 journey to China when she visited the Great Wall and the Forbidden City. The second example is a photograph of an exhumed burial casket from a French archaeological dig in the Syrian desert, which was initially featured in an article in a 1952 edition of *Paris Match*, one of France's leading illustrated weeklies in the post-war period.¹⁵⁷ The third example is taken from the opening sequences from Weiss's documentary *La mort des zébus*,¹⁵⁸ where a Madagascan family and other members of their village observe the local custom of the turning of the bones.

Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin opens with a short paragraph of nine lines that briefly lists all the names by which the city had been known as a consequence of the numerous invasions and changing dynasties it had experienced over time. By framing her account in line with periods of unrest and upheaval, Weiss's opening commentary speaks directly to

¹⁵⁶ Louise Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', *Plaisir de France*, 5 (1964), 12-21.

¹⁵⁷ Louise Weiss and Georges Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', *Paris Match*, 6-13 September 1952, pp. 20-25.

¹⁵⁸ Louise Weiss, *L'Afrique du soleil levant: la mort des zébus*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

her interest in societies that she believed had endured periods of turbulence. But Weiss's main interest here is not historical. Rather, she was more interested in the effect of this turbulent history on contemporary civilisation and the value which the past potentially held for the present. This is alluded to in Weiss's juxtaposition of traces of specific historical periods and life in the twentieth century. In the following example, the ancient buildings of the Tartar and Chinese dynasties are considered alongside the hustle and bustle of contemporary life in the then Peking.

L'influence des événements qui s'inscrivent dans les pierres de la cité se retrouve dans l'évolution générale de l'Asie [...] Renaissant constamment d'incendies, d'invasions, de pillages ou de remaniements seigneuriaux, la ville aujourd'hui comporte encore la distinction entre l'ancienne cité tartare et l'ancienne cité chinoise.¹⁵⁹

Weiss observed that thick city walls enclosed each of the Tartar and Chinese neighbourhoods which not only protected the vestiges of the respective dynasty but also separated them from each other. Weiss recorded that there was little movement between the two quarters whose adherence to their particular customs and traditions also sheltered them from the advances of the twentieth century. Claiming that the hold of the past had turned the districts into little more than physical and metaphorical 'forteresses closes',¹⁶⁰ Weiss was interested to learn that the Chinese government was in the process of demolishing the old city walls in an attempt to open up each community and mitigate the constraints imposed by this way of living.

¹⁵⁹ Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', p. 13.

On initial consideration, this seems counter to the traditional Chinese customs of reverence for the past and veneration of ancestors which were founded on the belief that departed ancestors, if revered and respected, influenced the prosperity and good fortune of future generations. In contrast, however, if ancestral homes, patrimony, or individuals were neglected or destroyed, the same departed ancestors were believed to become vengeful and dangerous. But Weiss observed that contemporary China was moving away from this ritualistic, traditional heritage and breaking down the walls was an attempt to break into the past, not to desecrate it, but to reveal its treasures and triumphs to the modern world. Weiss perceived this as a metaphor for accessing the past for the benefit of the present.

De son passé, la Chine d'avant la Révolution n'aimait que les ancêtres. Au contraire, la Chine contemporaine est devenue amoureuse de son histoire. Elle l'exalte, elle l'enseigne, elle y puise des motifs de force et de gloire; elle s'y mire, ayant pris conscience de son génie et de la valeur de ses innombrables trésors.¹⁶¹

The photograph in Figure 9 (below) is the second of the three examples under discussion here. It was taken by Weiss's cameraman, George Bourdelon, who accompanied her on her expedition to the Middle East. As noted in Chapter One, this expedition was commissioned by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the aim of broadening the general public's understanding of the ancient world through a series of documentaries about French archaeological missions. The photograph depicts an exhumed, ancient burial casket moulded into a form resembling an egg and positioned at the base of a shallow undulation of terrain implying it had been unearthed by one of these archaeological excavations. These inferences are reinforced by the caption which explains the subject

¹⁶¹ Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', p. 15.

matter of the photograph, confirms its location in the desert surrounding the town of Mari (north of Abou-Kemal, Syria), and gives an indication of its age, 'Dans le désert de Mari, cet œuf, vieux de 5.000 ans, est un tombeau.'¹⁶²



Figure 9: A photograph featured in *Paris Match* showing exhumed burial casket

This photograph is only one element of the opening content of Weiss's six-page article entitled *60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours*, which focuses on her visit to Syria in 1951. It is positioned on the left-hand side of a double-page spread. The other elements of the article are, firstly, the title with its adjacent subtitle which sits towards the top of the right-hand page, secondly, a portion of the text of the article which appears under this title and which continues on subsequent pages, and, thirdly, a footer which runs

¹⁶² Weiss, and Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', p. 20.

across the double page spread and depicts a panorama of the city of Byblos (see Figure 10 below).

The photograph is the largest element of these four constituent parts and visually dominates the other three. With nothing to distract the eye in the barren desert background, the burial casket remains the focal point of the shot. The size of the photograph in relation to the other elements on the page draws the eye immediately to the left-hand side of the spread. The title, along with its subtitle, is the next largest element of the spread and is tied into the photograph by a shaded horizontal line which carries the article's subtitle, '*Un reportage de Louise Weiss et Georges Bourdelon.*' Through this stylistic feature, the photograph and the title work together to draw attention to the words 'siècles', 'histoire', and 'photographié', hinting at the visual nature of Weiss's journey and the connection she perceived between the past and the present.

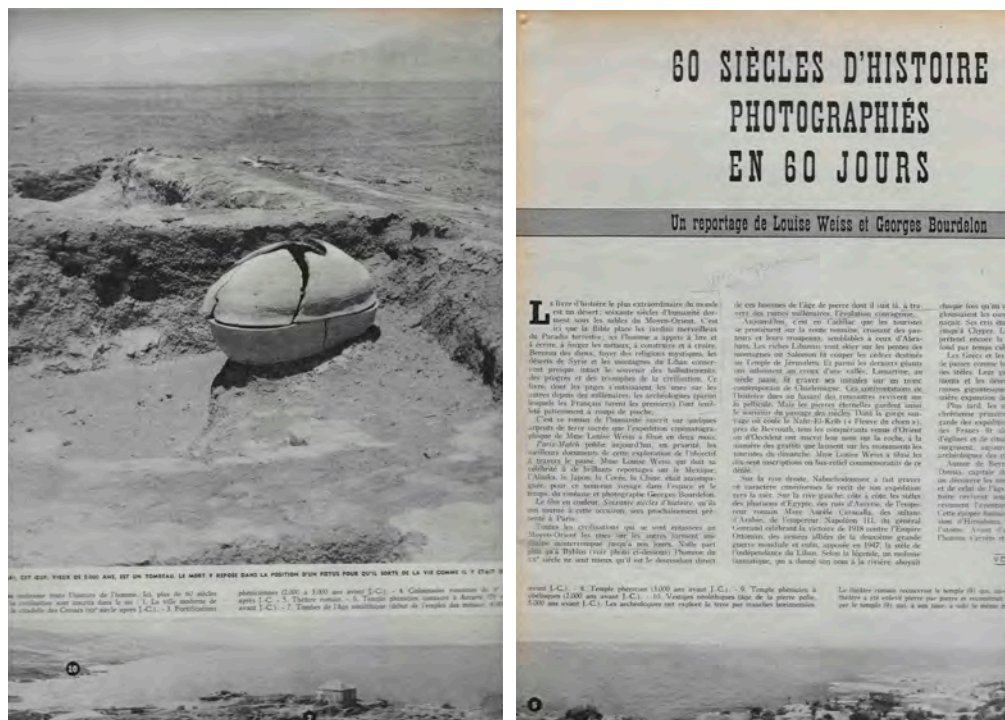


Figure 10: A double page spread from *Paris Match* to illustrate the size of the photograph in relation to the other constituent elements

Weiss's use of '60 siècles' and '60 jours' in the title appeals to a sense of balance between her journey and the passage of time. However, whether 60 days is an accurate record of the duration of her visit is questionable. Weiss's Middle Eastern itinerary was not arranged solely around a visit to Syria but also included trips to Lebanon and Egypt. It is unclear, therefore, whether the 60 days in the title refers to her time in Syria – although the article is based on her experiential knowledge of Syria rather than Lebanon and Egypt – or whether it refers to her entire visit to the Middle East. Additionally, in her biography on Weiss, compiled from archival resources bequeathed by Weiss to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Célia Bertin claims that, 'dans les carnets de Louise, qui ne respectent aucun ordre, il y a des pages manuscrites, d'autres dactylographiées, et les dates manquent.'¹⁶³ As there is no definitive record of the duration of Weiss's journeys, the time frame of '60 jours' cannot be verified. Whether Weiss's choice of '60 siècles' and '60 jours' emerged from the duration of her visit, or was the result of poetic licence, remains conjecture. But this is not the central question of this discussion. What is more relevant here is the implications of how Weiss juxtaposed the past and the present in her visual travel narratives. This is alluded to, firstly, by the way in which Weiss presents the contents of the burial casket and, secondly, in her use of captions for the photograph in this article and other travel narratives.

In the photograph in Figure 9 (above), the casket is not in perfect condition. It appears to have been subjected to an external force causing a large, gaping crack in the top section. The gap would probably have been wide enough to reveal the contents of the casket to the naked eye, but the inside is not visible from the angle of this particular shot.

¹⁶³ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 373.

Its contents, therefore, are not evident to the viewer. However, this problem is alleviated by a parallel reading of *La Syrie*¹⁶⁴ where the photograph is reproduced, albeit cropped slightly to remove the extraneous desert landscape. This is reproduced in Figure 11 (below, bottom left). Cropping the photograph has the effect of foregrounding the casket over its desert location and establishes it as the principal subject matter of the shot. More importantly for this discussion, however, is the way that this photograph is positioned adjacent to another photograph of a similar – but open and unbroken – burial casket, the contents of which are clearly evident to the viewer. This photograph carries the caption, '*Tombeau ouvert; à l'intérieur: des ossements humains*' (see Figure 11 below, right).

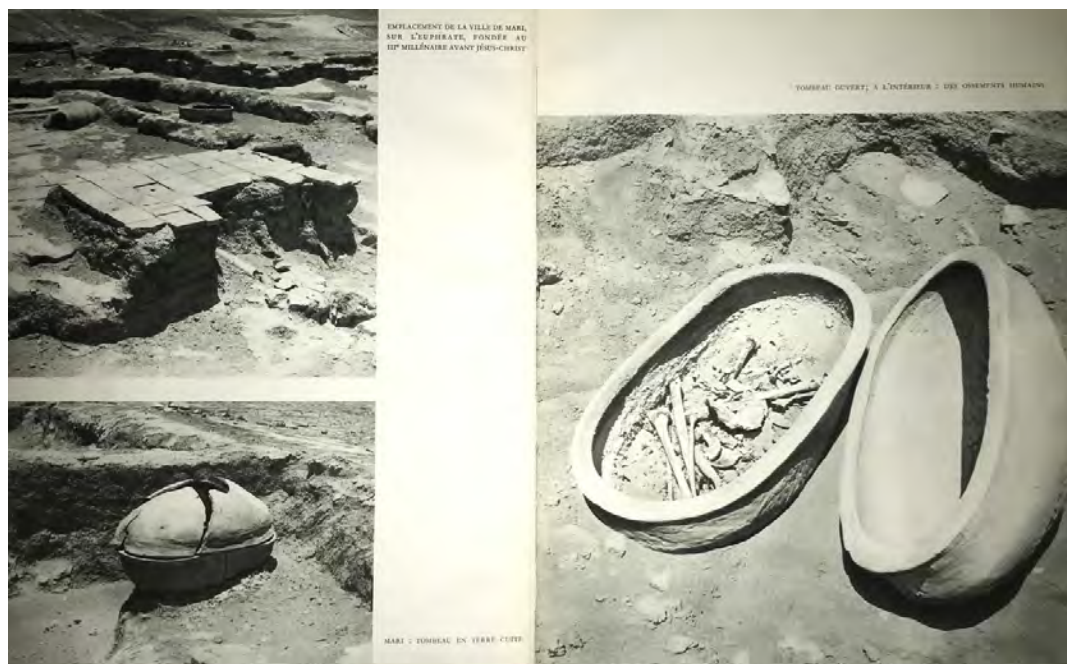


Figure 11: A double page spread from *La Syrie* showing photographs of the closed, broken casket (bottom left) and an open burial casket with human remains inside (right)

¹⁶⁴ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950), pages not numbered.

The caption here is an important element in understanding the message behind Weiss's visual travel narrative. Susan Sontag argues that a caption is an image's 'missing voice and is expected to speak for the truth.'¹⁶⁵ Danielle Méaux builds on Sontag's seminal work by demonstrating that the relationship between the caption and the image is, however, not always efficient and a good caption is one which connects with the content of its respective image.¹⁶⁶ Mary Louise Roberts concurs with Méaux, proposing that a good caption should be relevant, informative, and adequate in making its point.¹⁶⁷ By anchoring her image of a burial casket in a caption which informs the viewer of the precise subject matter of the photograph ('tombeau ouvert'), leads the eye to the focal point of interest ('l'intérieur'), and clarifies what the viewer is looking at ('des ossements humains'), Weiss connects the image efficiently with its caption and asserts authority through her experiential knowledge. To borrow Roberts's criteria, Weiss's caption proves to be 'relevant', 'informative', and 'adequate' and minimises any potential for the reader to misread her visual narrative. Whilst the unbroken burial casket pictured on the right-hand side of the photograph in Figure 11 (above) is clearly not the same casket as in the other photographs under discussion here, the authority of the caption and the juxtaposition of the two images in *La Syrie* prompt the viewer to presume the contents could be similar, which alleviates the uncertainty around the contents of the burial casket in Figures 9 and 10 (above).

¹⁶⁵ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Fairar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977), p. 108.

¹⁶⁶ Danielle Méaux, 'Récit de voyage et photographie, le dialogue du texte et des images', in *Miroirs de texte: récits de voyage et intertextualité*, ed. by Sophie Linon-Chipon, Veronique Magri-Mourgues, and Sarga Moussa (Nice: Publications de la faculté des lettres, arts et sciences humaines, 1998), pp. 170-183.

¹⁶⁷ Mary Louise Roberts, 'Wartime flânerie: the Zucca controversy', *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 27 (2009), 102-110.

The synthesis of these images across the two publications is indicative of the motif introduced above in their juxtaposition of the past and the present. The ancient burial casket represents the past which Weiss was so interested in unearthing and the archaeological dig which excavated the burial caskets is synonymous with her own foray into the past. Whilst the presence of the burial casket in the contemporary world can be seen as a metaphor for survival through the ages – the ruins of past civilisations which Weiss believed held the keys to understanding the causes of the upheaval of the twentieth century – the split in the top of the burial casket in Figure 9 (above) suggests the opening up of the past and the bones in Figure 11 (above) a reminder of the broken and turbulent times throughout history. It is Weiss's accompanying text in *60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours* that seals this metaphor by revealing her perception of how the past and the present are intertwined and, therefore, how an understanding of the past can make sense of the present:

Le livre d'histoire le plus extraordinaire du monde est un désert: soixante siècles d'humanité dorment sous les sables du Moyen-Orient [...] ici l'homme a appris à lire et à écrire, à forger les métaux, à construire et à croire [...] les déserts de Syrie et les montagnes de Liban conservent presque intact le souvenir des balbutiements, des progrès et des triomphes de la civilisation [...] Toutes civilisations qui se sont entassées au Moyen-Orient les unes sur les autres forment une chaîne ininterrompue jusqu'à nos jours.¹⁶⁸

Allusion to unearthing the past and maintaining a continuous link through the generations to the present day are principal themes in Weiss's 1963 documentary *La mort des zébus*, the third example under discussion here.¹⁶⁹ The opening scenes of this

¹⁶⁸ Weiss and Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', p. 21.

¹⁶⁹ Weiss, *L'Afrique du soleil levant: la mort des zébus*.

documentary depict a Madagascan family observing the custom of ‘the turning of the bones’. This custom is held once every two to seven years and is founded on the belief that the spirits of the dead are not reunited with the ancestral world until after the body has decomposed completely. Until that time, the spirit of the deceased lingers, playing a vital role in daily life. The custom is essentially a family reunion during which time the living demonstrate their love for the deceased and involve their ancestors in the contemporary world. When the body is returned to the tomb, it is ‘turned’ upside down to complete the cycle of life and death. *La mort des zébus* follows the family and friends of Madame Flavian Ranimatou who process, apparently joyously, to her tomb, exhume her body, spray it with perfume, wrap it in fine cloth, and rotate her body through 180 degrees before returning it to the tomb in the belief that her soul will continue to watch over them.¹⁷⁰

Figure 12 (below) is a composite of stills from *La mort des zébus* depicting, on the left, Madame Flavian’s family and the village community processing to her burial place and, on the right, her husband and son exhuming her body with help from other village members. The importance of this custom to the community is suggested by the large number of people who are pictured taking part in the two stills. Irrespective of whether the individuals are part of a crowd, as in the left-hand image, or part of a smaller, more intimate group, as in the image in the right, they almost entirely fill the frame with little else visible.

¹⁷⁰ See Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: tempête sur l’Occident 1945-1975*, p. 229 for a more detailed account of the circumstances relating to this encounter, including the traditions associated with how the community took the decision to turn Madame Flavian’s body and how the family, unable to pay for the ritual to take place, accepted Weiss’s payment in return for permission to film the ceremony.



Figure 12: Stills from *La mort des zébus* showing the procession to the tomb at 02:30 (left) and the exhumation of her body at 03:18 (right)

In both of the images in Figure 12 (above), the presence of Madame Flavian amongst the living, or at least her memory, unites the past and the present. In the left-hand image, Madame Flavian's presence is represented by a framed portrait held aloft towards the rear of the crowd. Even though the portrait is some distance from the camera, the light in the shot illuminates it, drawing the eye to the back of the frame and causing the portrait to stand out from the crowd milling around in front of it. Carrying Madame Flavian's portrait aloft attributes it with a sense of authority and suggests she holds the position of a revered guardian looking down on the people of the village, an elder who is respected and valued by the community. Situated in the background, the framed portrait also assumes a temporal reference by alluding to the fact that the deceased Madame Flavian physically belongs to an earlier era than the people leading the procession in the foreground. In the right-hand image, Madame Flavian's presence amongst the living is signified by her corpse which is rolled in a burial cloth. Her body, although illuminated by the light to a lesser degree than the left-hand image, fills the centre of the frame and the careful manner in which her body

is carried implies that the community has retained a high level of respect for their ancestor who they believe continues to have a role to play in their daily lives.

In all of the above examples taken from Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives, there is a compelling sense of wanting to open up the past – particularly the spiritual past of ancestor worship, ancient burial, and religious custom – in order to make sense of the present. In all of these encounters, Weiss attempted to maintain her self-appointed witness gaze. Against the backdrop of the concept of spiritual sanctuary developed in the preceding chapter, the following discussion turns to Weiss's 1949 text *L'Or, le camion et la croix* to explore whether there is evidence to suggest that different gazes can be detected in Weiss's spiritual encounters. This line of enquiry then considers whether her gaze affected her perception of spirituality and the extent to which her juxtaposition of the past and the present helped her make sense of the spirituality evident in contemporary Mexican society.

From witness to *exote*

Weiss's arrival in Mexico in the spring of 1946 opened the door on a fusion of Christian and pagan belief as practised by the population of Chamula who inhabited the 800km² between the equator and the tropics. Her first encounter with spirituality in this region, and one which gave her a glimpse into ancient ritual, was through her guide, Chief of Police, Rodrigo Lopez, who, on their approach to Chamula, appeared to delight in raising the subject of threatening dark practices still observed in the area:

– Ha ! me dit-il en éclatant de rire, votre séjour dans les Chiapas est trop rapide.
Vous ne rencontrerez pas de sorciers.
Je lui criai, car je ne parvenais point à le suivre:
– Quels sorciers?
Il stoppa et m’attendit:
– Ceux de ce territoire où nul Blanc n’a le droit de s’établir.¹⁷¹

The opportunity of encountering sorcerers appealed to Weiss not necessarily for its exoticism, but because the sorcerers symbolised the survivors of the past, who, as illustrated in the Introduction, she had hoped to encounter in her quest for experiential knowledge. As, according to Lopez, no white person was allowed to settle in the vicinity, the sorcerers represented an enclave of ancient, indigenous spirituality unaffected by any Western influence and were therefore a reliable source of information for Weiss and a strong link to the past. But this source was off limits. It is not clear from Lopez’s contradictory remarks why Weiss would not have the opportunity to meet the sorcerers. He initially suggests that her journey was too short to include them in her itinerary, and then states that the sorcerers were to be found in an area where no white person was allowed. Later in his discourse, Lopez clarifies his remark by explaining that the sorcerers posed a real danger to the lives of strangers who entered their territory.

Rodrigo Lopez m’apprit que, maîtres chez eux, les naturels de Chamula – les Chamultèques – occupaient huit cents kilomètres carrés de ces alpes sises entre équateur et tropique. Les Chamultèques étaient vingt mille et n’eussent pas manqué de tuer tout étranger qui aurait prétendu s’installer chez eux.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Louise Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris Julliard, 1949), p. 9.

¹⁷² Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 9.

Irrespective of whether Weiss's journey was too short or whether she was not welcome in the area occupied by the sorcerers, the outcome was the same – Weiss would be denied a face-to-face encounter with these representatives of ancient spiritual practices. This hindered the fulfilment of her role as witness which relied on her presence as an observer. As Weiss was unable to testify to their ancient practices first hand, she had to rely on the words of Lopez to form a foundation on which she could construct her understanding of pre-Colombian spirituality and its relevance to the twentieth century. This placed her at some distance from the survivors of the past with whom she was otherwise so keen to interact.

It could be argued, however, that this encounter was more typical of Tzvetan Todorov's *exote* as defined in Appendix One. Todorov compiled a gallery of ten types of travellers, or portraits, based on their gaze and relationship with the Other. Originally coined by Victor Segalen in 1908, Todorov borrowed the term *exote* to denote a traveller who was open to perceiving the daily activities of the Other, but whose distance from the Other prevented the traveller's assimilation into the foreign culture enabling a lucid observation of difference. Todorov does not, however, specify the means by which a traveller is distanced from the Other but insists on the ability for *l'exote* to make comparisons between home and the Other. Todorov's gallery does not recognise the witness gaze which Weiss persistently attributed to herself. Although the characteristics of *l'exote* resonate somewhat with a witness gaze, the former alludes to a more nuanced relationship based on an encounter with the Other, albeit it a detached encounter. The witness, however, is an onlooker whose presence, rather than an encounter, affords personal knowledge. The distance between Weiss and the sorcerers enabled her to discern

what was inherently characteristic of Chamula spirituality without being blinded by its habitual behaviours, a position indicative more of *l'exote* than witness.

Although Lopez had revealed the remnants of a past spirituality as far as they were evident in contemporary Chamula, Weiss was also drawn to the accounts of three much earlier eye-witnesses: Dominican priest, writer and first resident bishop of the state of Chiapas, Bartolome de Las Casas (1484-1566), from whom San Cristobal de Las Casas took its name; the chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1581), generally accepted as a key source of reliable accounts of events surrounding the Spanish conquest; and Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), the Spanish conqueror who toppled the Aztec empire and brought Mexico under the rule of the King of Spain.¹⁷³ Again, this is more typical of an *exote* gaze than a witness. With the exception of the accounts of Bartolome de Las Casas, a copy of which Weiss took with her when she left the Chiapas region with the intention of studying it further,¹⁷⁴ it is not clear whether Weiss was familiar with these early accounts prior to her travels or whether she was prompted to read them as she journeyed. This is an important consideration in the light of Edward Said's account of the 'Orientalist' Western intellectual whose perception of an imagined and fantasized 'East' or 'Orient' was coloured by Western imperialist or colonialist prejudices.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ For an account of Las Casas's arrival in the Chiapas and contribution to historical records, see C. de Macedo Vitorino, 'Fernão Mendes Pinto et Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas: deux perspectives sur l'autre', in *Les Récits de voyage: typologie historicité*, ed. by Maria Alzira Seixo (Lisbon: Cosmos, 1998), pp. 103-121. The life and work of Bernal Diaz del Castillo is documented in John Cohen, *Bernal Diaz: The Conquest of New Spain* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963). For a commentary on the conquest of America and Cortés see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York: Harper and Roe, 1984) and John Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006). Cortés's arrival in Mexico is also referenced in Bernice Goodspeed, *Mexican Tales* (Mexico: American Book, 1946).

¹⁷⁴ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978). See also Keri A. Berg, 'The Imperialist Lens: Du Camp, Salzmann and Early French Photography', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6 (2008), 1-17 and Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 134 for the impact of Said's work on visual culture.

Said argued that these prejudices, based on stereotypes formed at Home, caused the traveller to assume a superior view of the West over non-Western cultures and claim a knowledge of a place before arriving, thereby reinforcing Europe as the centre from which the rest of the world was observed, if not evaluated.¹⁷⁶ Claude Reichler, however, challenges this view of Orientalism positioning it as a gaze stemming from a misunderstanding of the unknown rather than an 'aesthetic science of the colonial period.'¹⁷⁷ It is not the intention here to evaluate the concept of Orientalism, but rather to highlight the fact that this culturally hegemonic discourse, whether originating in stereotypes of superiority or in misapprehensions, ultimately served to distort differences between two cultures, an observation which impacts on any further analysis of Weiss's gaze.

Carl Thompson maps Said's Orient onto 'the region stretching from Egypt and the Middle East to India, China and Japan,'¹⁷⁸ but it is equally applicable to Weiss's journey through Mexico for two reasons. Firstly, in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, which is the only travel narrative to relate Weiss's encounters as she travelled through Mexico, there are examples of exoticism and colonial influence. Secondly, Weiss's observations of local spirituality may have been coloured by a prior reading of the above-mentioned chronicles. To some extent, the exact point at which Weiss was exposed to these sources is not critical to this analysis. It is more useful to ascertain what degree of 'othering' is discernible in Weiss's gaze where 'othering' is understood in the light of Mary Louse Pratt's definition as

¹⁷⁶ For a discussion on imperialist discourses and the *mission civilisatrice*, see Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, and Siobhán Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

¹⁷⁷ Claude Reichler, 'Littérature et anthropologie', *L'Homme*, 164 (2002), 38-39.

¹⁷⁸ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p.134.

the image of the world produced by the travel writer as a result of assuming a blind authority over an indigenous community which subsequently influences the traveller's gaze and interpretation of the encounter.¹⁷⁹ However, as the primary sources do not give any precise indication as to the extent of Weiss's prior knowledge of these early accounts, the integrity of her gaze can only be judged by the degree to which she relies on these accounts to support or develop her own observations.

Weiss intersperses her travel narrative with excerpts from, and references to, these early chronicles which act as both a vehicle to connect her to the past and a springboard from which to make sense of the present. She clearly authenticated these early accounts, in particular that of Bartolome de Las Casas, firstly by stating they are still considered relevant in the region and therefore anchored in the everyday lives of the local population and, secondly, by noting that the accounts were still referenced by scholars writing in the field:

Barthélémi de Las Casas, premier évêque des Chiapas, s'exprimait ainsi dans un mémoire imprimé en 1552, à Séville, et destiné au conseil des Indes. Son souvenir était resté vif à San Cristobal. Antoine de Villefort ne cessait de le consulter (sic).¹⁸⁰

L'Or, le camion, et la croix is not Weiss's only travel narrative that includes references to other chroniclers. For example, excerpts from the accounts of seventeenth-century French physician and traveller François Bernier can be found in *Cachemire* and

¹⁷⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Oxon: Routledge, 1992) and Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing, the Self, and the World* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 106.

¹⁸⁰ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 31. On page ten of the same publication, Antoine de Villefort, Weiss's travelling companion at this time, is introduced as "un jeune savant" who was researching the history of Mexican peasantry for a doctoral thesis at the University of Paris and whose parents worked for the Mexican diplomatic corps. His military background is detailed on page 18 of the same publication and Weiss notes a commonality between them in their acknowledgement of, and anger for, the previous generation's inability to establish a peaceful world order.

L'Himalaya trône des dieux.¹⁸¹ However, Weiss in no way diluted her own travel narratives by including these external sources. Reichler associates this practice with travel texts from the nineteenth century but argues it did not prevent works being classified as travel writing as it still formed part of an individual account and included the idea of moving from Home to encounter the Other.¹⁸² More recently, Daniel Carey proposed that pointing to credible authorities outside the travel narrative authenticated the traveller's comments and encouraged confidence amongst the readership as the encounter could be contextualised by other narratives.¹⁸³ Such is the case with Weiss's travel narratives.

The circumstances around Weiss's encounter with pre-Colombian spiritual practices in Mexico pushed her to adopt a gaze more reminiscent of an *exote* than a witness and her use of external analepsis in the chronicles of early travellers suggests she developed an interest in a more substantial narrative than her original guide, Lopez, could provide. But, if Weiss was to fully appreciate the spiritual heritage of Mexico, she needed to broaden her gaze further to deepen her experiential knowledge. True to her autoptic principles, Weiss abandoned Lopez and the early chroniclers as sources of information in favour of her own first-hand experience. In light of Todorov's gallery of travellers, the following discussion explores how this strategy moved Weiss's gaze from *exote* to *impressionniste* and how this gaze linked Weiss's perception of ancient civilisations with that of the twentieth century.

¹⁸¹ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), pp. 12-15 and Louise Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955), 7-58 (pp. 11-12).

¹⁸² Claude Reichler, 'Pourquoi les pigeons voyagent: remarques sur les fonctions du récit de voyage', *Versants*, 50 (2005), 11-36.

¹⁸³ Daniel Carey, 'Truth, Lies and Travel Writing', in *Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 3-14 (p. 5).

From *exote* to *impressionniste*

As outlined in Appendix One, Todorov considers *l'impressionniste* a refined tourist. Where the *touriste* is a rushed visitor who hurries through encounters, preferring artefacts and monuments to people, *l'impressionniste* has more time to spend with the Other. However, the defining feature of *l'impressionniste* is the desire to remain the sole subject of the experience of displacement, revelling in the sights, sounds, tastes and more subjective aspects of the encounter. The following discussion takes two examples from Weiss's journey around Mexico – an excursion to the archaeological site of the temple of Tenochtitlan and a visit to the ancient Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan and nearby Monte Alban – to explore how Weiss's *impressionniste* gaze and first-hand experience altered her perspective on spirituality.

During Weiss's excursion to the archaeological site of the temple of Tenochtitlan, the ancient capital of the Aztec empire now known as Mexico City, a disturbing scene of pre-Columbian spirituality emerged. Archaeological excavations had uncovered some of the most architecturally significant pyramids of the pre-Columbian Americas.¹⁸⁴ Here, the culmination of knowledge from historical sources, her own interpretation of ancient societies, and the physical experience of being present in the region led Weiss to imagine the full extent of ancient ritual: idolatry, sun and moon worship, blood-stained priests engaged in animal and human sacrifice, a repellent odour, and haunting visions of streams of blood:

¹⁸⁴ See Ignacio Bernal, *Mexico Before Cortez: Art, History, and Legend* (New York: Anchor Books, 1975) for a commentary on the rich history hidden behind the façade of modern Mexico. A history of Mexico can also be found in Michael D Coe, *Mexico* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977).

A nos pieds, des prêtres aux cheveux tellement poissés de sang qu'ils ne pouvaient plus les démêler, avaient sacrifié aux idoles des milliers d'animaux – et des jeunes gens peut-être. Au son de tambours dont les roulements se répercutaient jusqu'aux confins de la vallée, ils les avaient attachés à ces tables, membres en contre-bas, et, avec leurs coutelas d'obsidienne, leur avaient ouvert la poitrine. Les cœurs des victimes palpaient encore lorsqu'ils les présentaient aux dieux. Fernand Cortès avait surpris dans tout le Mexique des cérémonies semblables. [...] Il [le temple] ruisselait de sang. L'odeur en était si repoussante que, toujours d'après Bernal Diaz, même les abattoirs de Castille n'exhalaient pas une telle puanteur. Des cœurs d'Indiens brûlaient dans les encensoirs. Leurs entrailles avaient été jetées en pâture aux fauves entretenus dans le palais de l'empereur. [...] Les ruisseaux de sang me hantaient.¹⁸⁵

Despite Weiss's earlier efforts to acknowledge the different viewpoints of selected eye-witnesses, in this encounter her own gaze is reminiscent of Said's 'Orientalist' discussed above. Her reading of ancient civilisations and the emblematic role of sacrificial priests is suggestive of a distinct Eurocentric intellectual position. The importance of this observation, however, lies not only in the suggestion of a Western gaze, but – more significantly – in how this episode is indicative of an *impressionniste* gaze. Haunting images of pre-Colombian torture and horror are indicative of a subjective focus on the encounter which can be aligned with an *impressionniste* gaze. Weiss then turned the encounter to focus solely on herself by linking it with her twentieth-century turmoil. Her mental image of hearts burning in a temple running with blood, evoked images of a war-torn France "à feu et à sang"¹⁸⁶ and her impression of the sacrifice of animals and people called to mind her perception of the First World War's relentless 'massacre des innocents'.¹⁸⁷ Weiss's only escape route from this 'cul-de-sac de l'Enfer'¹⁸⁸ – an analogy which was to return to haunt her later in

¹⁸⁵ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 61.

¹⁸⁶ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour les femmes 1934-1939* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1970), p. 153.

¹⁸⁷ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p.207.

¹⁸⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 64.

Teotihuacan – was to retreat to the spiritual heart of present-day Oaxaca. Calling out to her travelling companion, Antoine de Villefort, Weiss returned to ‘les rues d’Oaxaca à la recherche des plus belles églises de la ville.’¹⁸⁹

The need to flee and find refuge from an overwhelming spiritual encounter is not untypical of Weiss. As illustrated in Chapter One, she exhibited a similar reaction in her youth when, feeling overpowered by her tutor’s almost evangelistic discourse, Weiss ran from what she perceived to be a constraining religious practice which threatened her educational and professional aspirations to take refuge in her own secular world, physically closing the door on the encounter. However, at the time of her encounter in Tenochtitlan, Weiss was at a stage in her life when she was more open to spirituality. As discussed in Chapter One, Weiss had, by this time, reopened the door to spirituality. On this occasion, rather than closing the door on a disturbing spiritual encounter which served as a poignant reminder of the atrocities and horrors of the First and Second World Wars, she took advantage of it being metaphorically ajar and fled to seek spiritual refuge in the less threatening environment of present-day Oaxaca.

A second example of how Weiss’s *impressionniste* gaze linked her perception of the contemporary world with that of ancient civilisations can be found in her account of her visit to the ancient Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan and nearby Monte Alban. Here an archaeological dig had excavated pyramids which towered some 46 metres high and which were linked by a broad avenue and a stadium-like open space where ancient rituals were witnessed by crowds of people gathered on platforms which extended out from the sides of

¹⁸⁹ Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 64.

the geometric, pyramidal structures. Describing the stadium as ‘colossal,’¹⁹⁰ Weiss's first impressions were formed by its stature. But her subsequent text, which attempted to drill down into why she felt so moved by the sight, hints at something more sinister in the landscape.

Cette architecture militaire d’une impitoyable précision, je l’avais déjà vue. A Monte-Alban, bien sûr, mais avant Monte-Alban? Où? Sa géométrie, sa tristesse me déchirait. Un cri m’échappa, surgi des profondeurs spirituelles que déjà l’*ahuehuatl* (sic) et les *regidores* de Zinacantan avaient remués – un cri:
– Le stade de Nuremberg !
[...]
Nos blessures s’étaient rouvertes.¹⁹¹

Some elements of the architectural discourse emanating from the stone structures appeared familiar to Weiss. But an underlying negativity was also communicated through the structures which she was initially unable to understand. Eventually, Weiss recognised a similarity between these structures and the Nuremberg Stadium where the Nazi rallies had taken place. Weiss’s use of the imperative in the above quotation illustrates the shock in her reaction at aligning Monte Alban with the abandoned Nuremberg Stadium, which she had visited as a member of the press club during the Nuremberg Trials. Her 1975 article, *Souvenirs de Nuremberg*, recounts her involvement in the Trials and repeats the above analogy she formed between the rituals of Tenochtitlan and hell. Weiss's description of the Nuremberg Stadium suggests she viewed it as an arena which was equally as cruel and brutal as that of the ancient temples of Teotihuacan, claiming: ‘Le stade de Nuremberg était

¹⁹⁰ Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 100.

¹⁹¹ Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 101. *Une huehuatl* is a Mexican musical instrument, a cylindrical wooden drum on three legs with animal hide stretched across the top.

l'Enfer même.'¹⁹² Although the two places were built many centuries apart Weiss became cognisant of the similarity between their form and profile and their respective socio-cultural contexts, values, and ideals. In a similar way to the pre-Colombian priests who led and inspired the masses into pagan rituals and sacrifices, Weiss believed that the leaders of the Nazi regime also exercised a spiritual hold over the masses, leading and inspiring their followers into the ceremony and sacrifice of war. Weiss firmly believed that this overwhelming sense of leadership power, which she described in a later journal article as 'lavage des cerveaux'¹⁹³ and 'l'arme absolue,'¹⁹⁴ was a dangerous weapon which took away the free will of the people, a view which is addressed further in Part Three of this thesis.

Weiss's comparison of Teotihuacan with the Nuremberg Stadium appears to stem from her perception of the built environment around her. Anthropological and socio-cultural theorists have long regarded the landscape and the built environment as both systems of encoding meaning and, more recently, as architectural agents which act upon the senses and generate psychological effects in the individual.¹⁹⁵ The built environment, it is argued, can too easily be shown to be bound up with the identity and ideologies of its builders, perpetuating these belief systems through subsequent generations. Places, therefore, appear to have the power to speak to both the present and the future. The responses of those who encounter this architecture will invariably be bound up with their own socio-cultural and political viewpoints. Over time, as societal attitudes to belief systems change, the question of the validity of this architectural discourse and, ultimately, the fate

¹⁹² Louise Weiss, 'Souvenirs de Nuremberg', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 2 (1975), 306-315 (p. 315).

¹⁹³ Louise Weiss, 'Une visite à l'empereur des perles', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1976), 83-87, (p. 83).

¹⁹⁴ Weiss, 'Souvenirs de Nuremberg', p. 315.

¹⁹⁵ For an overview of key authors in this field, see Sharon MacDonald, 'Words in Stone? Agency and Identity in a Nazi Landscape', *Journal of Material Culture*, 11 (2006), 105-162.

of the built environment, will arise. Sharon MacDonald concurs with this general debate and acknowledges that any psychological effect is dependent upon the individual's sense of self and political positioning. She goes on to conclude that landscapes and architecture not only form 'words in stone'¹⁹⁶ for the present but continue to speak over time leaving a legacy which endures into the future.

Building on this connection between place and reaction, Robert Birch and Brian Sinclair examine the juncture between spirituality and place. They propose a framework to consider the holistic relationship between structural design, people, and the environment, arguing that, 'in the modern world, the places we inhabit, be they private or public, are the vessels through which our needs as humans are nurtured and satisfied.'¹⁹⁷ This framework is predicated on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in particular the later development to the model which adds 'self-transcendence from peak experiences' to the earlier hierarchy of 'physiological needs' for human survival, 'safety needs' such as personal and financial security, needs around 'love and belonging' and 'self-esteem', and 'self-actualisation' needs which enable the individual to realise potential. Maslow argued that progression up the hierarchy relied on satisfying these needs in order. Attainment of the sixth level in the hierarchy is characteristic of individuals who strive to achieve goals beyond the self. Birch and Sinclair acknowledge that this sixth level in Maslow's hierarchy may involve practices such as service to others, devotion to a cause, or the pursuit of a religious faith which unites the individual with what is perceived to be transcendental or divine. They extrapolate this to the built environment, suggesting that architecture can influence the attainment of this

¹⁹⁶ MacDonald, 'Words in Stone? Agency and Identity in a Nazi Landscape', p. 108.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Birch and Brian Sinclair, 'Spirituality in Place: Building Connections Between Architecture, Design, and Spiritual Experience', *Architectural Research Centres Consortium Journal*, (2013), 80-87.

need by virtue of the fact that places are vessels through which human needs are nurtured and satisfied. Spirituality and place coalesce at the juncture where the individual is linked to the place through the socio-cultural context, values, and ideals it communicates. The degree to which the individual's personal belief system may or may not align with the narrative of the built environment generates a unique reaction and shapes the experience of the place.

Weiss's account of her experience on Monte Alban substantiates Sandra Schneiders's view of the importance of spirituality in fashioning one's responses to the world. As discussed in Chapter One, Schneiders argues that the effect of spirituality on a gaze cannot be ignored as it is all-encompassing and represents a personal lived reality. Weiss's personal lived reality of a turbulent twentieth century surfaced from the remnants of the ancient spiritual context she found on Monte Alban. The built environment evoked a spirituality which spoke to her, reminding her of war-torn France, the loss of many men of her generation, and the atrocities of the Second World War.

The interplay of the past and the present in contemporary Mexico

Back in the spiritual heart of present-day Oaxaca and at some physical and psychological distance from Tenochtitlan and Monte Alban, Weiss recorded her visit to the Catholic church of Saint-Dominique. Her objective descriptions of stark differences and her detachment from religious proceedings suggests her gaze had reverted to that typical of Todorov's *exote*.

A l'intérieur de grandes vitrines, la Vierge et les Saints ouvraient leurs bras aux croyants, leur assurant que, s'ils n'avaient pas été heureux sur terre, du moins, dans un bénévolé au-delà, justice leur serait rendue et charité faite. L'église de Saint-Dominique, sa douceur, l'espérance qu'elle symbolisait, était un défi au camp retranché de Monte Alban.¹⁹⁸

The contrast which Weiss draws between Saint-Dominique and the excavated temples suggests that modern religious practice in Mexico had been transformed from an obedience model associated with ancient ritual to one of a relational interaction with deities where prayers for miracles and requests for healing could be heard. Gods were no longer distant, cold, and vindictive but opened their arms to their followers, promising them not only happiness on earth, but something equally joyful thereafter if life had been more of a trial than anticipated. Gods were no longer associated with destruction and sacrificial ritual as the only means of appeasing them had been abandoned in favour of prayers for divine intervention, healing and the resolution of problems.

When considered from a post-colonial perspective, this account of modern spirituality in Mexico implies a degree of empathy with the civilising mission of the European colonial era. Weiss's cultural heritage frames her narrative with the suggestion that the Westernising effect of Catholicism had 'civilised' the pagan ritual of the indigenous communities thereby stabilising social order. Weiss's perception of twentieth-century spirituality, therefore, appears to turn on serving a social need rather than constituting a social threat. However, Weiss suggests that Catholicism had not completely eradicated ancient practices as remnants of the past were still visible in contemporary society:

¹⁹⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 64.

S'échappant de la nef, une des ombres prit, dehors, la forme d'un vieil Indien qui, malgré sa raideur, réussit, en se signant, à saluer trois fois le soleil. Nous le suivîmes. Rodrigo Lopez avait dit vrai: paganisme et catholicisme cohabitaient dans l'âme des Chamultèques.¹⁹⁹

This type of syncretism was exactly what was feared by the sixteenth century Dominican friar, Diego Durán. Todorov credits Durán as being the author of one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the pre-Colombian world. Durán believed that, in order to successfully impose Christianity, all trace of pagan worship had to be eradicated. Any indication of religion drawing from different sources was analogous to the worship of idols and contradicted both the essence and strength of Christianity. But this was potentially difficult, if not impossible, for the Christian missionaries since Durán was of the opinion that they did not understand the indigenous language enough to be able to understand the pagan culture and therefore the extent of the pagan worship.²⁰⁰ Consequently, he claimed, vestiges of pagan worship would continue but would remain invisible to the ignorant.

Weiss's observation concurs with Durán's hypothesis by demonstrating that remnants of the past were still visible in contemporary Mexican society but appeared not to be the subject of any corrective measures. This amalgamation of different religions had produced a syncretic landscape in which neither ancient ritual nor contemporary Catholicism appeared to have any real power. Ancient spirituality had been significantly weakened by modern religion: the sorcerers, who were mentioned to Weiss on her arrival in Chamula, stayed in their own undisturbed enclave away from contemporary society and pagan practice appeared to be remembered in the gestures of older members of the

¹⁹⁹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 17.

²⁰⁰ Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, pp. 202-218.

community but always in the shadow of Catholicism. Catholicism itself promised neither vengeance on the past nor a new power for the present but hope and, ultimately, a better place to those suffering from the trials of modern life.

A parallel can be drawn here between Weiss's perception of modern Catholicism and her view of spirituality established in Chapter One as a sanctuary offering a safe haven from a turbulent world. However, her encounter with pre-Colombian spirituality in both Tenochtitlan and Teotihuacan was markedly different and appeared to offer the antithesis of a sanctuary. An explanation for this difference could lie in Weiss's gaze which has been shown to shift from her self-appointed role of witness to a gaze indicative of Todorov's *exote* and *impressionniste*. It is plausible to suggest the gaze of an *exote* distanced Weiss sufficiently from the encounter to avoid being blinded by the activities of daily life which enabled her to maintain her objectivity. But, when attributed with an *impressionniste* gaze and seen as the sole subject of the encounter, Weiss's perception of spirituality changed. It is certainly true that her detached accounts of her experience in Catholic churches resonate more with the model of the spiritual sanctuary than with her impressionistic accounts on Monte Alban. But this polarisation is too simplistic. Weiss's perception of spirituality is shaped not only by her gaze but by the interplay of the past and present and its effect on the individual.

Weiss's concept of spirituality as a refuge or sanctuary appears to shatter when the past and the present collide under an *impressionniste* gaze which reveals proximity to an all-consuming, destructive power. The juxtaposition of a past which embodied the ritualistic practices of pre-Colombian spirituality with more recent activities associated with the Nuremberg Rallies, revealed to Weiss how a dictatorial leadership of fear and submission

resulted in turmoil rather than refuge and the loss of individuality and free will. Weiss's experience of spirituality in modern-day Oaxaca alluded to a belief that the advent of Catholicism had brought some order to this pre-Colombian chaos. Although written out of an empathy with the colonising mission and the commonly held belief that the pagan world was 'civilised' by the arrival of the West, Weiss's travel narratives suggest that she was of the opinion that Catholicism had brought an end to the dictatorial leadership model. Spirituality was now founded on a personal relationship between God and the people rather than an attempt at appeasing unpredictable and uncontrollable forces. Prayers of intercession had replaced ritual and spirituality had begun to serve a social need. This shift in power and the elimination of a dictatorial leader replaced an environment of fear with a spiritual sanctuary from both the adversity of the past and the turbulence of modern society. Throughout her life, Weiss maintained her position on the destructive power of leadership, reasserting her views to Vera Florence and Marie-Claude Leburgue in a 1979 interview for *Radio Suisse romande* – a French language Swiss radio station – by claiming: 'Du moment que la religion fait du bien à un certain nombre d'êtres, pourquoi les en priver? Mais il ne faudrait pas que l'évangélisme devienne un impérialisme violent.'²⁰¹

The following discussion develops Weiss's empathy with a spirituality which offered a sanctuary from the adversity of the past, a refuge attainable on earth where destructive forces held no power. Through the themes of places, pilgrims, priests, and prayers, Chapter Three explores the extent to which Weiss continued to hold this belief with respect to twentieth-century spirituality.

²⁰¹ Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne*, (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1994), pp. 457-479 (p. 472).

CHAPTER 3

PLACES, PILGRIMS, PRIESTS, AND PRAYERS

AN ENCOUNTER WITH SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The previous chapter focussed on Weiss's journey through Mexico in the spring of 1946 as presented in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*. This publication, acknowledged as the most famous of Weiss's travel narratives,²⁰² is the only commentary to document her encounters in the region in any significant manner. With the exception of a passing reference in *Cachemire* to the floating market gardens of Srinagar resembling those of Xochilmico, Mexico,²⁰³ which, interestingly, do not feature in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, further reference to this region is absent from Weiss's subsequent travel narratives. In her biography of Weiss, Célia Bertin claims that, although Weiss made a friend in Henri Deleuze, the director of the local *lycée* who wrote to her in subsequent years,²⁰⁴ she never returned to Mexico and neither appreciated nor engaged with the region, its landscape or its archaeological sites.

De la Nouvelle Orléans, elle part pour le Mexique [...] Louise ne semble pas apprécier ce pays. Elle ne parle d'aucun site, d'aucun paysage. Même la beauté de la nature, ou celle des monuments, des objets archéologiques ne la touchent pas. D'ailleurs elle n'y retournera pas.²⁰⁵

²⁰² See Louise Weiss, 'Les hommes de minuit moins le quart', *Œuvres Libres*, 128 (1957), 177-208 (p. 177) where the introduction acknowledges Weiss's editorship of *L'Europe Nouvelle*, her involvement in promoting the rights for women to vote, her fictional writing and the many accounts of her travels overseas. Specific reference is made to *L'Or le camion et la croix* as being the most famous of these accounts.

²⁰³ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), p. 116.

²⁰⁴ Letters from Deleuze to Weiss are kept in the archives Weiss bequeathed to the Bibliothèque Nationale de la France.

²⁰⁵ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 368.

Whilst it is true that there is no evidence to support the idea that Weiss made multiple visits to Mexico, Bertin's claim that she did not engage with the region is questionable. The landscape and monuments feature prominently in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*. For example, Weiss refers to 'fonds de terres ravinés par les pluies',²⁰⁶ 'lambeaux de brume traînaient au creux des vallées',²⁰⁷ and 'grandes églises',²⁰⁸ and, as alluded to in Chapter One, there is evidence to suggest that Weiss struggled with the arid climate. Weiss's visits to archaeological sites also appear to have triggered some of her most disturbing and emotional reactions. As Chapter Two suggests, during her visit to the excavated pyramids of the ancient Aztec empire, wounding memories of the Nuremberg Rallies, war-torn France, and the atrocities of the Second World War resurfaced and touched her on a deep and poignant psychological level. Whilst reminders of some of the worst turmoil of her earlier life would not necessarily have endeared Mexico to Weiss, it is probably more accurate to suggest that the reason the country did not feature in any of her later travel narratives was largely due to her perception of pre-Columbian spirituality. As concluded in the previous chapter, Weiss's experiential knowledge had revealed an association with autocratic power, fear, and submission which made it unsatisfactory as an ordering mechanism for society and, with no real presence in present-day Mexico, pre-Columbian spirituality persisted only through watered-down remnants in the shadow of contemporary Catholic ritual.

Seemingly in response to her perceived inadequacy of pre-Columbian spirituality in mitigating the turmoil of the twentieth century, Weiss's subsequent travel narratives

²⁰⁶ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 9.

²⁰⁷ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 10.

²⁰⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 73.

foreground the practice of contemporary ritual over the perpetuation of ancient spirituality. The following discussion develops the closing argument of Chapter One by taking as its departure point the observation that Weiss empathised with a spirituality which offered a sanctuary for contemporary civilisation and explores the extent to which Weiss continued to hold this belief with respect to twentieth-century spirituality. The analysis then broadens to consider the feasibility of movement between the two spaces of refuge and turmoil – the sanctuary and the world. Underpinning this is the question of distinguishing the secular space from the spiritual space. Through the themes of places, pilgrims, priests and prayers, the spiritual and secular space is examined with reference to the significance of, firstly, identity and outward appearance and, secondly, linguistic and behavioural traits.

Places: spiritual sanctuaries set apart from the contemporary world

The concept of a spiritual sanctuary set apart from the turmoil of the twentieth century is a common motif in Weiss's travel narratives, irrespective of whether her journeys are told through photography, text or film. The following discussion illustrates this through three examples taken from each of these genres – a photograph from *Cachemire*,²⁰⁹ her article 'L'Himalaya, trône des dieux,'²¹⁰ and sequences from the documentary *Le Christ aux sources du Nil*.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Weiss, *Cachemire*, plate 58.

²¹⁰ Louise Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955), 7-58.

²¹¹ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Le Christ aux sources du Nil*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

The photograph in Figure 13 (below) dates to c.1954 when Weiss visited the Indian subcontinent. It depicts a Hindu altar found at an altitude of 2,000 metres in the Nun Kun Valley, east of Srinagar, the capital city of Kashmir.²¹² The altar dominates the shot, filling almost half of the frame. It is differentiated from the landscape by the weathered bricks, the arches at ground level, and the line created by the angle of the exterior wall that stems from the centre point of the frame upwards to the top right-hand corner. Two male figures are captured walking out from the background of the picture suggesting their arrival at the altar. Reliance on aid from a walking stick and a donkey, typically associated with navigating hard terrain, invites the viewer to assume the men have probably undertaken a journey of some distance and difficulty to reach this remote sanctuary. There is no evidence of nearby civilisation in the image which further substantiates the claim that the altar is sited at a considerable physical distance from Srinagar.



Figure 13: A photograph of a Hindu alter in the mountains from *Cachemire*

²¹² See Louise Weiss, 'Aux portes du Tibet: dans la vallée de Ladakh', *Sciences et Voyages*, 147 (1958), 24-32 for commentary on the ethnicity of indigenous people and geographical characteristics of this region.

L'Himalaya, trône des dieux, the second example illustrating Weiss's perception of the physical remoteness of holy places in contemporary spirituality, documents her involvement in a pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath when she visited the Indian subcontinent in 1954. Unlike her contemporary Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969), who completed a pilgrimage through the Tibetan mountains to her spiritual home of Lhasa,²¹³ Weiss joined this annual pilgrimage as an observer with no spiritual connection to the journey. Weiss's written account relates how the journey lasted several days as she climbed between three camps en route to this remote spiritual place. However, the magnitude of the distance travelled is not apparent until Weiss's final observation that, having reached the third and final camp, the Cave of Amarnath was still two hours away.

La procession camperait trois fois au cours de l'escalade, à Chandanvadi (3.200 m.), au lac de Shesnag (3.900 m.) et, une dernière fois, après avoir franchi le col de Saskati (4.420m), à Panchatarini (4.000m) au creux d'une vallée située à deux heures de la grotte.²¹⁴

The notion of a spiritual sanctuary set apart from the turmoil of the world is most evident in Weiss's visual travel narratives, as this example from her documentary *Le Christ aux sources du Nil* illustrates. The documentary recounts the daily lives of monks living on islands in Lake Tana, Ethiopia. A sense of distance is created by the film's disproportionately long opening sequence which fills one minute and ten seconds of the two-minute introduction. This opening sequence takes the viewer on a long flight from the Blue Nile

²¹³ See Alexandra David-Néel, *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhasa* (Paris: Plon, 1927).

²¹⁴ Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', p. 51.

Estuary, over a waterfall, and then upriver towards a destination which, although mentioned in the film's abstract, remains mysteriously nameless at this point.

Against a soundscape emanating from the physical features on screen and the ethereal sounds of ethnic music played on pan pipes, both of which reinforce the exotic, non-European context of the documentary, the authoritative, yet reassuring, tone of a male voiceover delivering Weiss's commentary eases any apprehension towards this unfamiliar environment. The viewer's attention is drawn to the landscape, specifically animals running on the ground below and flocks of birds taking flight from the river banks. The angle of the shot is a continuous, sweeping panoramic view over a large expanse of unfamiliar land which, when combined with the soundscape and descriptions of the region's wildlife, reinforces the perception of having travelled a great distance from 'Home'.

The subject matter on screen moves and changes quickly, which is indicative of the speed and distance covered. However, this sense of speed is largely due to the chosen mode of transport and should not be confused with Tzvetan Todorov's description of a rushed tourist gaze with little time to spare (see Appendix One). Weiss's gaze in this instance is more akin to Todorov's *impressionniste* where her journey is grounded in observing reality and revelling in the delights of the sights and sounds of unfamiliar environments. As the journey progresses, movement and the trajectory of the eye is always upriver towards the destination. As Lake Tana approaches, the ground races closer suggesting arrival and preparation for landing. With a final circle of Lake Tana, a group of islands moves into the frame to form the focal point of the shot (see Figure 14 below).

The composition of the image in Figure 14 (below) creates a sense of remoteness by presenting the islands in their entirety in one frame, clearly separated from the distant

shore and the mainland by a vast expanse of water. This water renders the islands almost inaccessible other than by boat, an image reinforced at 02:54 where monks are pictured rowing across Lake Tana in small boats. Air travel is never referred to as a possible transport option in the documentary, despite Weiss relying on this to secure footage for the opening



Figure 14: A still from *Le Christ aux sources du Nil* showing the islands in Lake Tana at 02:30

of her documentary. The dark landmasses contrast vividly with the surrounding lighter waters of Lake Tana further evoking an aura of mystery, perhaps even foreboding, as the eye is unable to penetrate the islands' vegetation to reveal what lies beneath the tree canopy. The shorelines, however, are easily distinguishable and clearly delineate the islands' perimeters, giving the impression of a threshold to cross between the world and the holy place beyond.

At 02:50, a round Coptic church appears through the trees (see Figure 15 below). This early reference to religious practice hints at the importance of spirituality to Weiss's

contemporary gaze. The church's status in the community is accentuated by the vividness of the architectural choice of bright roof material. The sharp contrast formed between the bleached roof of the church and the surrounding dark vegetation is reminiscent of the contrast made in Chapter One between the white walls of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, Reunion Island, and the darkness of the surrounding landscape. In both examples, the place of worship is suggestive of a beacon guiding worshippers to a sanctuary away from the dark, turbulent forces of the world.



Figure 15: A still from *Le Christ aux sources du Nil* showing a Coptic church at 02:50

The dense vegetation in Figure 15 (above) should not, however, be considered solely as a means of accentuating the sacred as it can also be interpreted as a symbol of protection from the world. When observed from left to right, the treeline in Figure 15 loosely forms an undulating triangular shape with the church located at the apex just right of the centre of the shot but below the foliage. From the mid-point of the left-hand edge of

the frame, the treeline adopts an upward trajectory of approximately 45 degrees encouraging the eye to track upwards to the church at the summit of the incline as if fixing on a divine realm before falling away on a shallower descent towards the right-hand edge of the frame. The dark vegetation covers the bottom two-thirds of the image and completely encircles the church reaching up and beyond its roof seemingly shielding it from the errant influences of the twentieth century. Despite this alternative interpretation, the absence of a clear approach and the lack of any modern amenities reinforce Weiss's perception of the remoteness of holy places in contemporary spirituality.

In the second half of *Le Christ aux sources du Nil*, the camera penetrates deeper into the sanctuary of the Coptic church to reveal more of the contemporary spirituality practised there and the everyday activities of the monks. With time to spend amongst the 'Other', Weiss's gaze became indicative of Todorov's *impressionniste*. Whilst acknowledging that Weiss's observations were made from a twentieth-century, Western standpoint, the refuge encountered in the Coptic church on Lake Tana was markedly different to Weiss's pre-Columbian encounter presented in Chapter Two. Both were rooted in the past, but where Weiss seemed to perceive fear and chaos in Mexico, the Coptic church in Ethiopia appeared to be founded on peaceful, ordered simplicity. The juxtaposition of the past and the present in her observations of, firstly, the preservation of worship traditions and, secondly, her extensive coverage of the monks' diligent copying of the style of ancient murals in the execution of new paintings (see Figure 16 below) temporally fixes the Coptic sanctuary at a distance from the twentieth century and alludes to an environment isolated from the destructive forces of the world.

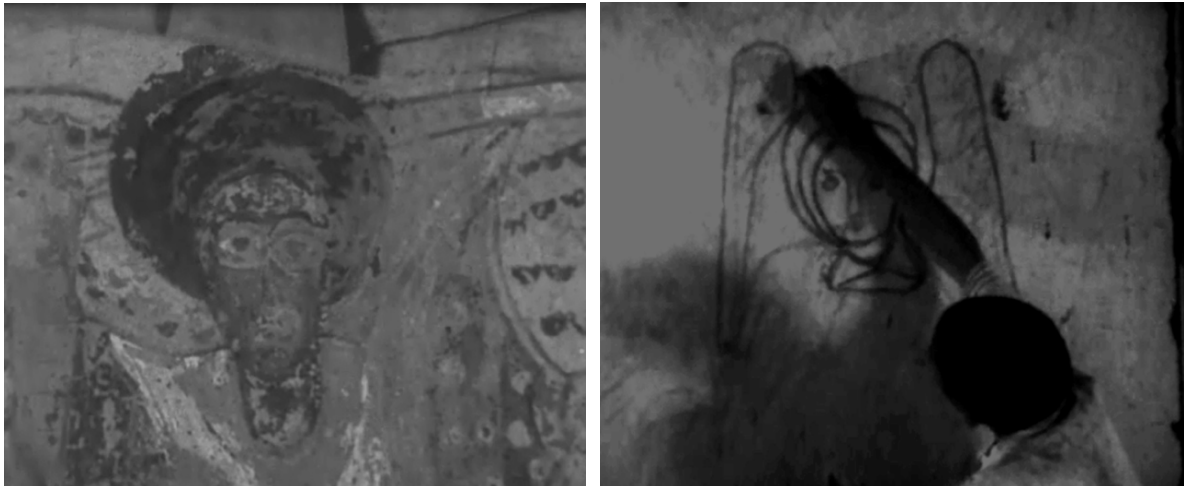


Figure 16: Stills from *Le Christ aux sources du Nil* showing ancient murals on the walls of the Coptic church at 07:16 (left) and new paintings in the same style at 06:27 (right)

However, if the decay of the mural on the left-hand image of Figure 16 (above) is read as a metaphor for the crumbling of the vestiges of the past, both the resilience of this peaceful foundation and the persistence of the holy place as a refuge from the twentieth century are called into question. The turmoil of the contemporary world suddenly appears to be an ever-present threat. This danger is symbolised by a sequence of images towards the end of the documentary which feature birds of prey flying over the Coptic church and alighting on its roof (see Figure 17 below).



Figure 17: Stills from *Le Christ aux sources du Nil* showing birds of prey alighting on the roof of the Coptic church at 13:01 (left) and circling above at 13:06 (right)

The birds are viewed from below with the camera shooting upwards and appear as black silhouettes against the sky. The lighting and the angle of the shot project threatening attributes onto the birds. As the dark images of the birds fly across the screen, the voiceover refers to harmful forces in the world beyond the haven of the Coptic sanctuary. Through this juxtaposition, the birds become synonymous with the turmoil of the twentieth century – an ever-present menace encroaching on the spiritual sanctuary. This ‘esprit de mal’²¹⁵ which Weiss believed threatened humanity, is a common motif in her travel narratives. It is symbolised by a pack of scavenging hyenas in the opening frames of *La foi qui sauve*²¹⁶ and by a serpent in *L’Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra*.²¹⁷ Parallels can be drawn between the symbolism in these images and Weiss's perception of the threat of Communism on the stability of the West, a sentiment she observed in Paul Valéry's 1919 essay, *La crise de l'esprit*,²¹⁸ which is discussed in the Introduction.

Weiss's understanding of twentieth-century spirituality can be seen to be equally grounded in the perception of spiritual remoteness – in holy places set apart from the world. In Kashmir, the Himalayan Mountains, and Ethiopia, Weiss encountered sanctuaries isolated from the world by physical and temporal distances, or boundaries, even though turmoil loomed menacingly on the horizon. It was not until Weiss journeyed through India that she came to realise that these boundaries between the world and holy places were porous and could be breached. Against this backdrop, the following discussion examines Weiss's gaze on contemporary spirituality through her portrayal of people who inhabited

²¹⁵ *Au soleil de la mer rouge: la foi qui sauve*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Louise Weiss: 1963), 00.24.

²¹⁶ Weiss, *Au soleil de la mer rouge: la foi qui sauve*, 00.24.

²¹⁷ *L’Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Louise Weiss: 1954), 07.12.

²¹⁸ Paul Valéry, ‘La crise de l'esprit’, http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Valery_paul/crise_de_l'esprit/valery_esprit.pdf.

both the sanctuary and the world – specifically the pilgrims and priests who moved between these spaces of refuge and turmoil. The transit between spiritual and secular spaces is contextualised by reference to, firstly, identity and outward appearance and, secondly, linguistic and behavioural attributes.

Pilgrims and priests: between spaces of refuge and turmoil

The examples above have largely emphasised the spiritual over the secular and favoured the displacement of individuals out of the world towards the sanctuary. In Figure 18 (below), a photograph taken from *L'Himalaya trône des dieux*,²¹⁹ this journey is reversed by the arrival of a pilgrim on a busy street in 1950s Srinagar, Kashmir. Before examining the significance of identity and outward appearance on spiritual and secular spaces, the following discussion initially considers how this photograph offers an insight into Weiss's twentieth-century gaze on pilgrims.

Cognisant of Tim Dant and Graeme Gilloch's proposal that a photograph's power lies in 'reflecting that moment from the real past rather than drawing us into the different present of a diegesis,'²²⁰ Figure 18 could be interpreted solely as an expression of a precise moment in history rather than a vehicle through which to consider the more contemporary narrative of Weiss's perception of spirituality. It is, of course, true that temporal distance between the present and 'the moment from the real past', to borrow the words of Dant of Gilloch, is greater now than it was at the time the encounter was captured and published.

²¹⁹ Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', plate 1.

²²⁰ Tim Dant and Graeme Gilloch, 'Pictures of the Past: Benjamin and Barthes on Photography and History', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 5 (2002), 5-23 (p. 6).

However, a contemporary understanding of Weiss's perception of spirituality is reliant on spanning this temporal distance to incorporate the gazes of both Weiss and the present-day viewer. Dant and Gilloch's proposal does not lend itself easily to such an application.



Figure 18: A photograph of a pilgrim on a Srinagar street from *L'Himalaya trône des dieux*

A more useful approach is offered by Roland Barthes who maintained that a photograph could act as a visual and temporal referent which incorporated a number of time-based contexts: the time the photograph was taken, the historic past of the subjects, and the present of the viewer.²²¹ This more comprehensive approach has the capacity to embrace a variety of narratives from those associated with the subjects in the image to

²²¹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 2000).

those stemming from the individual gazes of both Weiss and the present-day viewer.

Building on Barthes' principle, the following analysis acknowledges that this image and its accompanying caption cease to be temporal markers of a moment in the past but offer the contemporary viewer insights into Weiss's twentieth-century gaze on pilgrims.

As introduced above, the presence of a pilgrim interacting with city dwellers in the streets of a bustling conurbation suggests movement from the sanctuary into the world. The apparent acceptance of the pilgrim in contemporary Srinagar society is suggested by the open and non-combative body language of the three men engaged in conversation in the foreground of Figure 18. The marked difference in the attire of the three males distinguishes the spiritual from the secular. The two city dwellers are dressed alike in a similar fashion to the other residents of Srinagar visible in the background. By contrast, the pilgrim is almost naked except for a loincloth, a few scarves, and a rosary. The composition of Figure 18 does not give the impression that the pilgrim feels obliged to alter his outward appearance to identify more closely with the secular world. It is therefore plausible to assume that he will eventually return 'Home' at the end of his pilgrimage by once more crossing the boundary from the turbulent world back into the sanctuary. A similar acknowledgement of movement between spiritual and secular places is acknowledged by Laura Nenzi who argues that, for pilgrims, the 'line between the spiritual and the everyday ...[is]... dotted and porous rather than solid and watertight.'²²² This apparent ability of the pilgrim to cross boundaries between spaces of refuge and turmoil suggests that the spaces are not mutually exclusive as an individual can freely inhabit either.

²²² Laura Nenzi, 'Pilgrims', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 217-226 (p. 218).

The turbulence of contemporary Srinagar is suggested by the hustle and bustle of the street scene. The eye wanders from the men's intimate gathering in the foreground of the photograph towards the hotchpotch of shop names which frame the top third of the image. The hoardings are written mostly in English. Only two Indian scripts are visible; one partially hidden by other elements in the picture, and a second, faded title printed underneath a larger, English name. The incongruity between the language and the geographical setting can be explained by the region's colonial history when, between 1846 and 1952, it was a princely state in the British Empire in India.²²³ The design and dominance of these hoardings is indicative of the changing power structures and the turmoil of the region reinforcing it as the antithesis of a sanctuary. The sharp contrast of the black and white lettering and the large dimensions of the hoardings tower over the three men to form a backdrop to the pilgrim's encounter with the Srinagar residents. The composition of the image hints at the pilgrim's arrival in a loud, bustling, urban environment, the intensity of which is further highlighted in the photograph's caption which appears in a list of six others on an adjacent page, numbered to correspond to their respective images.

Le commerce va bon train dans la cité surpeuplée de Srinagar. Les boutiques se suivent, se superposent, s'enchevêtrent. Carrioles, bicyclettes, automobiles roulent en désordre. Nus ou ceints de légers pagens et de chapelets, des moines se mêlent à la foule. A la pleine lune d'août, ils participeront au fabuleux pèlerinage d'Amarnath dont le but est une grotte sacrée située dans l'Himalaya, à 4.500 mètres d'altitude.²²⁴

²²³ See Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, p. 419 where she places Weiss in India in 1954 shortly after the region gained independence from Britain.

²²⁴ Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, p. 16. Weiss's views of the dangers of over-population are further expounded in Louise Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon* (Paris: Julliard, 1973).

Susan Sontag advocates a contiguous relationship between a photograph and its caption. Each exists separately but together they share a co-operative alliance to the extent that the totality of information is carried by these two different elements.²²⁵ Figure 18 and its caption presents the viewer with a polysemous narrative where the pilgrim, having crossed the threshold from the sanctuary into a society emerging from colonial rule, participates in both the secular and the spiritual worlds in equal measure. The use of the verb *se mêler* in the caption supports the visual suggestion of the pilgrim mingling with the hustle and bustle of city life and the reference to the *fabuleux pèlerinage d'Amarnath* illustrates his continued involvement with the spiritual sanctuary. Notwithstanding Dant and Gilloch's proposal that a photograph represents a moment in history rather than an alternative present, the contiguous relationship between Figure 18 and its caption shifts it from a temporal marker to an observation of contemporary Srinagar society. It ceases to be a mimetic image of a past reality but creates an alternative narrative plot around the identity and movement of pilgrims into the secular world.

The significance of identity and outward appearance in the context of spiritual and secular spaces is not necessarily a consideration solely for Weiss's travel narratives from Asia, and neither is it a consideration uniquely for pilgrims or lay people. For example, elders of religious orders whom Weiss encountered in contemporary society were equally observed in relation to these parameters. For example, the French-Canadian, Jesuit priest,

²²⁵ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Fairar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977). For commentaries on the importance of the relationship between images and captions see: Paul Almasy, 'La photographie fonctionnelle', in *Le photojournalisme: informer en écrivant des photos*, ed. by Paul Almasy et al (Paris: Tardy-Quercy, 1990), pp. 27-36; Véronique Boucherat, 'Le journal de voyage et les desseins de Dürer aux Pays-Bas (1520-1521)', in *Art et littérature: le voyage entre texte et image*, ed. by Jean-Loup Korzilius (New York: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 170-183; and Jean A. Keim, 'La photographie et sa légende', *Communications*, 2 (1963), 41-55.

Father Lafortune, wore 'une chainette d'or'²²⁶ with a shining medal embroidered onto his garments as he ministered to the indigenous community of Ile du Roi, Fairbanks. The French missionary, Père Gathy, who travelled between the native peoples of Mackenzie Basin, Alaska, was defined by his 'longue barbe au vent'²²⁷ and 'sa soutane contre ses maigres jambes.'²²⁸ This observation is not, however, limited by gender. In *Cachemire*, two Franciscan nuns are pictured on horseback about to leave for a journey over the hills to minister to a local community (see Figure 19, below).²²⁹ Irrespective of their mode of transport, they are dressed in long-flowing skirts and traditional bonnets which identify them as members of a convent, a holy order, and a sanctuary set apart from the secular world.



Figure 19: A photograph of Franciscan nuns wearing religious dress which identifies them as members of the convent from *Cachemire*

²²⁶ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 297.

²²⁷ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 204.

²²⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 204.

²²⁹ Weiss, *Cachemire*, plate 33.

The almost anthropological style of portraying The Other – particularly in Figure 18 – immediately appeals to the viewer's exotic gaze and is suggestive of Barthélémy's concept of '*beauté barbare*' which focusses on signs of physical appearance to confront and symbolise 'The Other's' difference.²³⁰ A comparable hypothesis of the tendency, particularly of European travel writing, to signify and confront difference is presented by David Scott who claims that travel writers are no more than 'sign readers.'²³¹ The pilgrim's lack of clothing, the city dwellers' baggy tunics over loose trousers, the priests' garments, and the nuns' habits invite the Western gaze to interpret outward appearance as a sign of each individual's respective link, or identity, with either the spiritual or the secular.

Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives record many examples of how the outward appearance of the people she encountered demonstrated the co-existence of, and the interaction between, spiritual and secular spaces. But the significance of linguistic and behavioural traits on the movement between these spaces emerges only from Weiss's observations of prayer. Before considering Weiss's perception of behavioural traits on her understanding of the relationship between spirituality and the turmoil of the contemporary world, the following discussion explores the significance of the linguistic attributes of prayer in her text-based and visual travel narratives.

²³⁰ Guy Barthélémy, 'Photographie et représentation des sociétés exotiques au XIXe siècle', *Romantisme*, 29 (1999), 119-131.

²³¹ David Scott, *Semiotics of Travel: from Gautier to Baudrillard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 23.

Prayers: linguistic and behavioural traits in secular and spiritual spaces

Weiss's early travel narratives devote considerable space to her encounter with Père Gathy, a missionary of the order of the *Oblats de Marie-Immaculée*²³² who had been called to the Mackenzie Basin region. In *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, Weiss records accompanying him to administer the last rites to an old Indian woman of the indigenous *Couteaux Jaunes* community. Surrounded by the woman's distressed family and friends, Père Gathy prayed in the woman's own language. With a gaze suggestive of Todorov's *exote*, Weiss remained detached from the sorrow she observed, recording that: 'L'assemblée retint son souffle. Le père était l'espoir. Le père était la consolation.'²³³

In contrast to the narrative associated with Figure 18, Weiss makes little reference to Père Gathy's dress at this point in her travel narrative. As noted above, he wore garments typical of his order which signalled his link to a holy place, but the porosity of the boundary between the spiritual and the secular was accentuated more by his linguistic abilities than by his clothing. Although his prayers were said in the woman's own language, their message was a spiritual one. These prayers took Père Gathy out of his Western, Catholic 'Home' and (re)positioned him at the very heart of the indigenous community, uniting the spiritual with the secular, and opening a channel of hope through which the group is able to escape its experience of a troubled world. Although Père Gathy's linguistic abilities had transported

²³² For an introduction to the work of the missionaries see Donat Levasseur, *Les oblats de Marie Immaculée dans l'ouest et le nord du Canada 1845-1967* (Alberta: Alberta University Press, 1995). The impact on the Fort Smith environment of the work of the missionaries is noted alongside their care of the physical and spiritual health of the Mountain Indians in Louise Weiss, 'Le radium du cercle polaire', *Le Monde Illustré*, 18 October 1947, pp. 1190-1193.

²³³ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 211.

him across the boundary between the spiritual and the secular, for a fleeting instance, he was perceived by the *Couteaux Jaunes* as a pathway from turmoil towards a safe spiritual refuge. The consolation and hope embodied in Père Gathy hinted at the possibility that even the *Couteaux Jaunes* could cross this threshold to a safe haven.

A similar understanding of prayer as a linguistic metaphor for escaping to the safety of a spiritual place, can be found in Weiss's visual travel narratives. Figure 20 (below) is a composite of, on the left, a photograph from *Cachemire* depicting prayers in the Hazrat Bal mosque²³⁴ and, on the right, a still from the documentary *Ivoire et bois d'ébène*²³⁵ which features prayers in a mosque in Zanzibar. Both images are grounded in the context of a troubled world. In the left-hand image, the eye is drawn to the bottom centre of the frame



Figure 20: A photograph of Friday prayers at Hazrat Bal mosque from *Cachemire* (left) and prayer time in Zanzibar (right) from *Ivoire et bois d'ébène* at 05:10

²³⁴ Weiss, *Cachemire*, plate 40.

²³⁵ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Ivoire et bois d'ébène*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), at 05:10.

where a solitary male figure has broken rank from the ordered rows of his contemporaries to sit in the shadows. His solitary position and despondent pose with hand to forehead suggests a feeling of despair. Weiss's accompanying caption reveals that the men are praying in their own language, using the phrase, 'Ya Pir! Dassé Guir,'²³⁶ to ask for protection and guidance in the face of secular adversity. Their language ceases to be an expression of ritual. It opens a channel to the spiritual space and becomes a metaphor for transit to a refuge set apart from the world. The voiceover commentary heard over the still taken from *Ivoire et bois d'ébène* (right) occurs immediately after a few seconds of chanting in the local language. It alerts the listener to a relatively small Muslim community's fight for independence in the face of a larger, more powerful administrative rule. As if suggesting all options to alleviate adversity had been exhausted, the voiceover claims, 'Il reste l'espérance et la prière,'²³⁷ suggesting that hope and prayer are perhaps the only remaining alternatives for the community to mitigate, even escape, the turmoil of the contemporary world.

Similarities in subject matter and composition can be drawn between Weiss's representations of prayer and the text-based travel narratives of her near-contemporary Marie Anne de Bovet (c1855-1935). *Femme de lettres*, feminist, and participant in *salons*, Bovet had a similar profile to Weiss. She published novels, contributed articles to a number of journals and reviews in both French and English, and documented her journeys in a series of travel narratives. Figure 21 (below), a photograph entitled *La Prière*, illustrates Bovet's perception of prayer in Arab communities and is taken from her 1920 publication *L'Algérie*.²³⁸

²³⁶ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 26.

²³⁷ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Ivoire et bois d'ébène*, 05:14.

²³⁸ Marie Anne de Bovet, *L'Algérie* (Paris: Successeur de Fontemoing et Cie, 1920), page not numbered.



Figure 21: Marie Anne de Bovet's photograph entitled *La Prière* from *L'Algérie*

From her accompanying account of her almost off-road journey to this place of prayer: 'Dès qu'on s'écarte de la grande route [...] les pistes deviennent précaires,'²³⁹ Bovet appears to foreground a perception of spirituality rooted in the concept of physical remoteness from the contemporary world – a sentiment similar to that of Weiss. Similarly, her subject matter – people at prayer – fills the frame and any extraneous or distracting material is cropped away to focus on the ceremonial ritual. Bovet's representation of prayer differs from that of Weiss in one particular aspect, however, in that Bovet's travel narratives are functional and descriptive. They do not relate the socio-economic climate of the places she visited – in this case, Algeria – and, consequently, her accounts of prayer are not contextualised by world events. Weiss's despondent worshipper in Figure 20, however, and the information given by the voiceover commentator in *Ivoire et bois d'ébène* (as discussed above), sites her travel narratives at the socio-political and cultural intersection of people's lives which alludes to a closer connection with the world. However, rather than a criticism, this observation should be interpreted as evidence of the women's different approaches to

²³⁹ de Bovet, *L'Algérie*, p. 60.

travel. Where Weiss's intention was to glean experiential knowledge from 'survivants',²⁴⁰ Bovet was aiming simply to inspire her readers to experience Algeria for themselves.

When comparing Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives, a noticeable difference emerges in the representation of gender in her observations of prayer. Rather than introduce a gendered frame of reference for examining Weiss's travel narratives which, as discussed in the Introduction is not central to the methodology of this analysis, this observation helps avoid a misinterpretation of Weiss' gaze by illustrating some of the cultural obstacles she had to overcome on her travels. Across both formats, there appears to be a proclivity to feature the activities of men rather than women, and rather more so in her text-based travel narratives. The spiritual life of women features more prominently in Weiss's visual travel narratives as illustrated by the Franciscan nuns in Figure 19 (above) and Figure 22 (below) which is a composite of stills from *Catrunjaya ou La sainte Colline de la victoire morale* (left) and *L'Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra* (right). Notwithstanding their presence in Weiss's documentaries, the women are still subordinated by a male presence. In Figure 22, the still on the left features a woman on the far right of the frame participating in the Jain ceremony of the morning office of prayer, but the central ritual of applying a scented paste to the statue is conducted by a male worshipper. The women dancers in the still on the right are praising Krishna, but the voiceover commentary translates their religious chant in the context of pleasing Krishna by looking after their husbands.

²⁴⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.



Figure 22: A still from *Catrunjaya ou La Sainte Colline de la victoire morale* showing a woman participating in a temple ceremony at 09.00 (left) and a still from *L'Amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra* showing a group of women dancing to between 07:40 and 09:45 (right)

In this respect, Weiss's travel narratives are not necessarily consistent with other contemporaneous female travel writers who demonstrate that fervent prayer was also practised by women. Figure 23 (below) is taken from *Comment j'ai parcouru L'Indo-Chine* by French-born travel writer Isabelle Bauche Massieu (1844-1932).²⁴¹ She is credited as being the first French woman to visit Indochina but also travelled across Asia and the Middle East.



Figure 23: Isabelle Bauche Massieu's photograph entitled *Femmes en prière sur la plate-forme de la grande pagode de Rangoon* from *Comment j'ai parcouru L'Indo-Chine*

²⁴¹ Isabelle Bauche Massieu, *Comment j'ai parcouru L'Indo-Chine* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1901), p. 107.

She published picture books and text-based travel narratives based on her observations. Although there are fewer women in Figure 23 compared to the number of men in the examples above, the act of women engaged in prayer is the central concern of this photographic example. Weiss's explanations for the absence of women engaged in prayer are very much practical ones. In a 1959 televised interview with Pierre Sabagh²⁴² she clarified that, during the course of her later travels, specifically those she undertook for the purposes of filming, Weiss had been accompanied by one or two male photographers – as discussed in the Introduction, her collaborators included Georges Bourdelon, Bernard Daillencourt, Pierre Guégen, or Louis Miaille. They had been able to network with influential people who had opened doors to places she, as a woman, would otherwise have been barred from entering such as the men's ceremony and ritualistic prayer dancing in the mosque featured in *Allah aux Comores*.²⁴³ She was also mindful of the position of women in the societies she encountered and noted that women were reluctant to be filmed as they were 'un peu effrayées par le caméra.'²⁴⁴

Weiss's encounters with prayer suggest that it can potentially unite two spaces and facilitate transit across the boundary between the spiritual and secular. However, her travel narratives also suggest that prayer could define membership of a particular group so distinctly that it had the potential to separate these two spaces and hinder movement between them. Probably the most striking example of this is Weiss's account of the language of prayer used by the leader of a black Pentecostal church in New Orleans.

²⁴² 'Louise Weiss: Les Indes', *Magazine des explorateurs*, Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 25 February 1959, at 25:53.

²⁴³ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Allah aux Comores*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), 10:07-11:36.

²⁴⁴ 'Louise Weiss: Les Indes', at 25:53.

– A’m telln’ alla of ya, if ya never git on yo knees to pray, ya had better learn how now, an pray some. A mean, stay on yo knees on Monday an’ Friday an’ do yo’ self some prayin’. Cause if ya ain’t on yo knees prayin’ fo’ you enemies, dey’s on dere knees prayin’ fo’ya – an’ A’m tellen’ ya, good sisters and brothers, yo ennemies ain’t prayin’ for nothin’ good bout ya. So A’m says fo ya to pray! Do ya hear? Pray! Jesus is swell! A know better! (sic)²⁴⁵

Weiss’s phonetic transcription clearly marks the leader’s discourse as black African-American, vernacular speech. It offers her readers a flavour of her own experience, frames her narrative as an authentic representation of a real encounter, and reaffirms her authority as a self-appointed witness. Although presented as text, it functions as a sonic representation of Weiss’s encounter and anchors the leader’s call to prayer in the soundscape of her dominant Western gaze.²⁴⁶ Documenting the leader’s address to the assembled congregation in both italics and dialect sets it apart from the rest of the text and begins a process of linguistic and cultural othering. This is reinforced by Weiss’s subsequent addition of mediating text, or a relay translation of his words, from English into standard French.

Autrement dit:

– Je vous préviens que si vous ne vous agenouillez jamais pour prier, vous feriez mieux de vous y mettre immédiatement. Je parle sérieusement. Agenouillez-vous surtout le lundi et le vendredi et allez-y personnellement de quelques prières. Car si vous ne pliez pas les genoux pour prier pour vos ennemis, soyez sûrs qu’eux sont sur les leurs à drôlement prier pour vous. Et persuadez-vous bien qu’ils ne demandent

²⁴⁵ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), p. 55.

²⁴⁶ The reception of black vernacular speech in 1920s and 1930s France and its contribution to the colonial gaze is discussed in Edwin C. Hill Jr., *Black Soundscapes, White Stages: The Meaning of Francophone Sound in the Black Atlantic* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2013). For a discussion of travellers’ narratives on African-American culture and the use of black African vernacular, see Frank Shuffleton, ‘Circumstantial Accounts, Dangerous Art: Recognizing African-American Culture in Travellers’ Narratives’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 27 (1994), 589-603 where French born J Hector St John de Crèvecoeur (1735-1813) is cited as one of earliest travellers to use black vernacular speech in his 1782 publication *Letters from an American Farmer*, where vernacular speech served as an identity marker singling out the European colonisers from the local communities.

rien au Seigneur qui puisse vous être agréable. C'est pourquoi je vous dis de prier. M'entendez-vous? Priez, mais priez donc ! Jésus est épatant. Je le sais mieux que vous.²⁴⁷

Weiss's translation attempted to help her readers close any cultural gap created by her earlier phonetic transcription of the leader's words. However, by so doing, Weiss did not respect the leader's linguistic identity. Her translation domesticated the source language and robbed his discourse of its cultural specificity. Where initially the leader's dialect appealed to Weiss's western gaze, this ethnocentric reduction of his discourse controlled the level of exoticism to which she was willing to expose her readers. Ultimately, it enforced a gaze characteristic of Todorov's *exote* who did not want to get too close to the subject thereby revealing a tension between Weiss's gaze and the allure of the exotic to the Western eye. But, at the time of the encounter, Weiss did not have access to this mediating text and she was forced to note, 'Pour ma part, j'essayais de comprendre.'²⁴⁸

However, the leader's dialect *per se* was not the single focus of Weiss's account. Her subsequent observations centre on the congregation's behavioural responses to his call to prayer which seemed to instigate disorder and chaos rather than offer any kind of refuge. In addition to chanting, shouting, and petitions for healing, Weiss recorded incidences of jumping, rolling of the eyes, hypnosis, and convulsing – behaviours which she found uncomfortable, but compelled her to stay, saying: 'J'eus envie de m'enfuir, mais je ne sais quels sortilèges me clouèrent sur place.'²⁴⁹ Her reluctance to leave could be attributed to a lure of the exotic, but her overriding perception was one of slavery to a fierce, if not chaotic,

²⁴⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 55.

²⁴⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 54.

²⁴⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 56.

spirituality. Concurring with her local hosts, the Ducœurjoli brothers, Weiss agreed that, 'Ces esclaves [...] ne sont point et ne seront jamais des hommes libres.'²⁵⁰ The apparent autocratic power seen in the leader and the subsequent hypnotic state of the congregation appeared to offer nothing more than ritualistic chaos, a situation reminiscent of Weiss's encounter with pre-Colombian ritual in Chapter Two.

Weiss's treatment of this linguistic and behavioural encounter emphasises the degree of Otherness she felt between the New Orleans community, her Western 'Home' and the idiosyncrasies of both. In contrast to her encounter with Père Gathy, Weiss's perception of the leader's language of prayer, coupled with the behaviours of his congregation, had defined the spiritual space in New Orleans so tightly that neither Weiss nor the leader was able to cross the boundary between the spiritual and the secular.

Weiss's descriptions of her encounters with prayer are written from the standpoint of a Western European gaze. The overriding suggestion of her text-based narratives is a perception that prayer and ritual were escape routes from the turbulent world. For example, Père Gathy's prayers and association with both the secular and the spiritual mitigated the hopelessness experienced by those outside the sanctuary. His prayers opened a pathway enabling the transit to a safe haven away from the destructive forces and turmoil of the twentieth century. However, this is not an image associated with all of Weiss's spiritual encounters. Some of the consequences of prayer and behaviour which she witnessed on her travels appeared to offer nothing more than ritualistic chaos. This was not only potentially harmful for the worshippers involved but seemed to instigate disorder rather than offering any kind of refuge. For example, Weiss noted how the trances and

²⁵⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 58.

rituals of zikr prayers in Libya had led to an incident involving the death of a follower who threw herself out of a window,²⁵¹ and she graphically described injuries to people participating in flagellation associated with the Muslim Feast of Karbala noting they had ‘lambeaux de chair qui pendaient de leurs poitrines déchirées: torture que chacun s’infligeait volontairement.’²⁵² Where the spiritual practice of religious communities was associated with turmoil, Weiss made no allusion to any escape route to a sanctuary. Her travel narratives suggest that these practices augmented chaos and surrounded worshippers with turbulent forces which grew ever more intense as a result of their prayer and ceremonial behaviour. Although the appeal of the exotic and the ‘Other’ often kept Weiss glued to the spot, she appeared to fear the apparent societal disorder it produced.

Weiss's encounter with twentieth-century spirituality

This chapter opened by illustrating how Weiss’s perception of twentieth-century spirituality had much in common with the findings of Chapter Two. As with her encounters with Pre-Colombian spirituality, Weiss’s gaze shifted between *exote* and *impressionniste*. From a contemporary perspective, Weiss consistently empathised with a spirituality which offered sanctuary from adversity, a refuge set apart from the troubles of the world. Her reading of

²⁵¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 59. A fuller account of this story can be found in Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: tempête sur l’Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 128. Here Weiss records that an English woman was captivated by a zikr. She did not have experience or knowledge of the activities and, instead of waiting for the other worshippers, ignored the dangers of some of the activities. Allowing herself to be taken up by the moment, she jumped out of the window. She cracked her skull on the pavement below.

²⁵² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 59. The act of flagellation is widely documented in Weiss’s travel narratives and is part of devotees’ prayers and chants. See the photographic record in Weiss, *Cachemire*, plate 43 and p. 120 and Weiss, ‘L’Himalaya trône des dieux’, p. 42. The Feast of Kerballa is also featured in *Allah au Cachemire*, dir.by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1956) at 14:14-15:18.

this space as a haven where destructive forces held no real power, even though they loomed menacingly on the horizon, created two distinct and separate zones: the spiritual, or holy place, and the secular world. Weiss perceived the distance, or boundary, between the spiritual and the secular as both physical and temporal. For example, she had physically journeyed high into the mountains away from contemporary society to visit a Hindu altar and participated in an arduous pilgrimage over several days to reach the remote Cave of Amarnath. She had also encountered the traditional practices of the monks on Lake Tana which had remained unchanged for centuries and which temporally located their sanctuary, or holy place, far away from the influences of life in the twentieth century. But there is evidence in Weiss's travel narratives to suggest that her spiritual encounters revealed that the physical and temporal distances between these two spaces were not as wide as her initial perceptions might have suggested.

Weiss's encounter with the pilgrim on the streets of Srinagar was pivotal to this realisation. The pilgrim's identity and outward appearance symbolised the porosity of the threshold between the spiritual and the secular: individuals, it appeared, could actively participate in both spaces. However, efficient movement between the spiritual and the secular was equally reliant on language and behaviour. Where these attributes defined a spiritual space so tightly that it foregrounded a strong sense of 'Otherness' and ritualistic chaos contrary to Weiss's perception of 'Home', they hindered, even prevented, any transit between the spiritual and the secular. Spirituality ceased to offer a refuge but perpetuated the turmoil of the world.

Irrespective of location, Weiss consistently viewed the secular world as troubled, either socially, politically, or economically, and her interest lay primarily in how spirituality

might be a means of creating order and stabilising these conditions. Through her travel narratives, Weiss demonstrated a greater affinity with those encounters where she perceived hope in, or escape to, a tranquil sanctuary free from destructive forces. Where individuals were shackled to chaos and turmoil, spirituality ceased to offer her an answer to the turbulence of the twentieth century. Rather, Weiss seemed of the opinion that these situations contributed to the turbulence of contemporary society. If spirituality was to be successful, it needed to serve a social need. Even if prayer did not physically transport its practitioners to the sanctuary, psychologically it provided them with a survival mechanism to cope with a chaotic, turbulent world.

Despite these possibilities, Weiss's overriding narrative implies that spirituality was unsatisfactory as a means by which to understand the turmoil of the twentieth century as it persistently occupied a place apart from the world. For example, the missionaries at Lake Tana voluntarily isolated themselves in the sanctuary and did not engage with the world's troubles. The pilgrim in Srinagar, Père Gathy, and the Franciscan nuns never fully resided in the world, choosing to ensure they could return to their respective spiritual spaces. Where pilgrims and priests crossed into the secular space, their transient presence merely offered a glimpse of the sanctuary which did not result in any tangible effect on the turbulent twentieth century. The Pentecostal leader presided over such a chaotic set of linguistic and behavioural traits that he and the congregation remained a closed enclave in their spiritual place, somewhat akin to the Mexican sorcerers in Chapter Two. Consequently, Weiss was of the opinion that the spirituality practised by all of these people had minimal impact on ordering a turbulent society outside the perimeter of their respective sanctuaries. Although Weiss appeared to empathise with a spirituality which offered refuge from adversity, her

experiential knowledge led her to perceive that spirituality was unsatisfactory as an ordering mechanism for twentieth-century society.

The sense of separation inherent in Weiss's persistent image of spirituality set apart from the world is inconsistent with her unrelenting desire to talk to 'survivants',²⁵³ real people who trod in the footsteps of communities which had survived upheaval. The distance it created drove a wedge between Weiss and the people she encountered. The advantage of a secular alternative in Weiss's search to understand the twentieth century begins to emerge. If Weiss was to achieve her objective and, as discussed in the Introduction, reach beyond archival evidence in favour of experiential knowledge, she would need to draw closer to the heart of the communities she encountered and reduce any sense of detachment or separation. How Weiss approached this dilemma is the focus of Part Two: Myth.

²⁵³ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

CHAPTER 4

AN ENCHANTED GAZE

WEISS'S JOURNEY FROM SPIRITUALITY TO MYTH

Part One of this thesis concluded that Weiss's spiritual gaze brought her no closer to understanding how to mitigate the turmoil she perceived in the twentieth century. Although Chapter One established that her post-war travel narratives, rather than her earlier political journalism, offered a more appropriate vehicle through which she might empathise with the world's people and events, her spiritual gaze did not appear to draw her close enough to the heart of the communities she encountered. Weiss therefore needed a new way of looking at the world. It is only at this juncture that Weiss's perspective on spirituality and its separation from the world emerge as pivotal factors in exploring the transition in Weiss's gaze from spirituality to myth. The following discussion explores the notion that myth offered Weiss this different way of looking at the world and marks Weiss's passage from a spiritual context into a world of ancient narratives. It provides a basis for understanding not only this transition, but also her idiosyncratic approach to myth and how this informed her interpretations of her mythological encounters in her post-war travel narratives.

The rationale for Weiss's transition in gaze from spirituality to myth is supported by Aparna Halpé's proposition that, in a postcolonial context, myth creates the middle space

between sacred and secular narratives.²⁵⁴ Building on the polarised relationship between the spiritual and the secular presented in Part One, this is a particularly useful construct for examining an alternative view of the world in Weiss's post-war travel narratives. However, the paramount concern here is not that Weiss dismissed spirituality in favour of myth. Her comment in an interview for *Radio Suisse romande* in January 1979, 'Du moment que la religion fait du bien à un certain nombre d'êtres, pourquoi les en priver?'²⁵⁵ (previously cited in Chapter Two) suggests Weiss saw some value in religious practice. The authority of her specialist knowledge of the world's major religions was also acknowledged by Pierre Sabagh who, in a 1959 television episode of *Magazine des explorateurs* noted, 'Ses études font autorité dans les domaines religieux'.²⁵⁶ What is more significant here is that Weiss's gaze had shaped her view that spirituality had little influence on ordering the turmoil she perceived in the twentieth century.

In the light of this observation, Weiss's mythological gaze should not be interpreted as a chronological shift in her outlook. Neither should it be considered a mutually exclusive, or deliberate, choice over her spiritual gaze. As discussed in the Introduction, although this study pragmatically approaches Weiss's post-war travel narratives in a thematic way and considers each of these gazes separately, this distinction should not be back-read into her travel narratives. In practice, Weiss employed both gazes simultaneously albeit to varying degrees. For example, both myth and spirituality feature concurrently in Weiss's account of

²⁵⁴ Aparna Halpé, 'Between Myth and Meaning: The Function of Myth in Four Postcolonial Novels' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 2010), p. ii.

²⁵⁵ Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne*, (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1994), pp. 457-479 (p. 472).

²⁵⁶ 'Louise Weiss: Les Indes', *Magazine des explorateurs*, Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 25 February 1959, at 01:17.

her journey in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*²⁵⁷ but her commentary around spirituality is foregrounded over her encounters with myth. In *Le Voyage enchanté*,²⁵⁸ the reverse is true.

This chapter moves Weiss's polarised gaze from the spiritual/secular divide considered in Part One to focus primarily on how she approached her encounters with myth in the 'middle space' identified by Halpé. This provides the context for the subsequent analysis of her encounters with the myths of North America and Asia in Chapters Five and Six respectively. The following discussion begins by firstly locating Weiss' mythological perspective in the landscape of twentieth-century France, before exploring her transition from a young girl fascinated by the world's myths to a post-war traveller whose gaze was firmly rooted in society's ancient narratives.

Locating Weiss's mythological perspective in twentieth-century France

From both an academic and sociological perspective, the twentieth century saw a general resurgence in France's interest in mythology. With regard firstly to an academic perspective, the generally accepted view of myth was as an explanation of the world before advancements in scientific knowledge.²⁵⁹ An alternative approach was subsequently offered by Roland Barthes who used Ferdinand de Saussure's work in linguistics and semiology as a framework to align myth with *parole*. Myth was no longer constrained by a sense of the

²⁵⁷ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949).

²⁵⁸ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960).

²⁵⁹ Daniel Dubuisson, *Mythologies du XXe siècle* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1993), p. 10.

primitive but was recognised as a secondary linguistic system of signs and meanings which constructed the world.²⁶⁰

A structuralist school of thought grew out of this linguistic approach, which advocated that myth should not be interpreted in isolation and only had meaning within an entire cultural system because it expressed what was common to human thinking everywhere. Exponents of this approach included, among others, Carl Jung and Claude Lévi-Strauss who were primarily interested in similarities between myths across one or many cultures.²⁶¹ Myth was interpreted as a collection of archetypes, or shared images, identifiable across the collective human consciousness.

As will be shown below, this evolution in structuralist thinking was not shared by Weiss. Her encounters with myth were predicated neither on the search for archetypes, nor on finding recurring mythological themes across the communities she encountered. A possible reason for Weiss's mythological perspective could lie in her desire to see individualism flourish – a theme alluded to already and developed further in Part Three. For Weiss, subordination of individual freedom and expression pointed towards totalitarianism and universally enforcing mythological constructs across different communities would seem to equate to a similar expression of autocracy.

Weiss's mythological perspective was more typical of the approach later recognised by Jennifer Laing and Geoffrey Crouch whose work positions myth as central to both the

²⁶⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957).

²⁶¹ See: Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'The Structural Study of Myth', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 68 (1955), 428-444; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropology and Myth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1984); Robert A. Segal, *Jung on Mythology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998) and Dubuisson, *Mythologies du XXe siècle* for a comparative study of Dumézil, Eliade, and Lévi-Strauss, three twentieth-century scholars whom Dubuisson believed dominated the field after the Second World War.

way in which communities organise themselves and the appeal of travel. Laing and Crouch claim that 'individuals organise and interpret their experiences through mythologies [...] and myth may be an important part in the appeal of tourism destinations as well as motivations to travel.'²⁶² Although Laing and Crouch were primarily interested in frontier, or adventure, travel, their hypothesis that a traveller is lured by myths because they represent the cultural beliefs and values which shape national identity, resonates with Weiss's own objectives to connect with different communities in an attempt to understand the turbulence she perceived in the contemporary world.

France's perception of the debilitating effects of economic crisis overshadowed by the prospect of further conflict lies behind a sociological perspective on the resurgence of interest in myth. Taking as his departure point Theodore Ziolkowski's observation that the classical Greco-Roman tradition observable in post-war European literature pointed to the shattered values of the contemporary world,²⁶³ Edward Boothroyd noted that twentieth-century authors such as Cocteau, Giraudoux and Camus sought out ancient Greek myths to express the dilemmas of the twentieth century.²⁶⁴ Boothroyd claimed that revisiting myth through the arts, both literary and theatrical, gave post-war France 'a morale boost by reaffirming hope in the future.'²⁶⁵ Catherine Burke concurs with the impression given by

²⁶² See Jennifer H. Laing and Geoffrey I. Crouch, 'Myth, Adventure and Fantasy at the Frontier: metaphors and imagery behind an extraordinary travel experience', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11 (2009), 127-141 (p. 128).

²⁶³ Theodore Ziolkowski, 'The Fragmented Text: The Classic and Post-war European Literature', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 6 (2000), 549-562.

²⁶⁴ Edward Boothroyd, 'The Parisian Stage during the Occupation, 1940-1944: A Theatre of Resistance?' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2009). This thesis is largely concerned with French theatre but addresses the resurgence and impact of myth in the arts. It specifically explores the works of Claudel, Sartre, Montherlant and Vermorel.

²⁶⁵ Boothroyd, 'The Parisian Stage during the Occupation, 1940-1944: A Theatre of Resistance?', page not numbered.

Ziolkowski and Boothroyd that myth provided an opportunity to mitigate the perception of turmoil in the twentieth century by concluding that, in a twentieth century devastated by war, many turned to the classical myths of antiquity for solace and guidance.²⁶⁶

Unlike France's academic interest in myth, in particular developments around a structuralist perspective, changing sociological views of myth resonated more closely with Weiss's own approach. Seemingly typical of her generation she, too, sought to explain the turmoil of the present through an understanding of ancient narratives. This observation further substantiates an analysis of Weiss's mythological gaze as it positions her in the defining mood and spirit of the post-war period. Having located Weiss's mythological perspective in the academic and sociological landscape of twentieth-century France, the following discussion considers the emergence of Weiss's mythological gaze from that of a young girl fascinated by the world's myths to a post-war traveller whose gaze was firmly rooted in society's ancient narratives.

Towards a post-war gaze: Weiss's journey to mythological encounters

A comparison of Weiss's interwar novels and political commentaries²⁶⁷ with her post-war text-based and visual travel narratives reveals that her mythological gaze did not surface in her work until she embarked on her post-war freelance career. The first time Weiss referred

²⁶⁶ Catherine Burke, 'Those women who were fighting men: Monique Wittig's "Les Guérillères"', a mythical revision', *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities*, 5 (2011), <<http://www.mhra.org.uk/publications/wph-5>> [accessed 10 January 2018].

²⁶⁷ Weiss is also credited with writing five plays: *Arthur ou les Joies du Suicide*, *Sigmaringen ou les Potentats du Néant*, *Le Récipiendaire*, *La Patronne* and *Adaptation des Dernières Voluptés*. With the exception of a hand-corrected, unpublished typescript of *Sigmaringen ou les Potentats du Néant*, these plays are currently unavailable for comparison.

to any of her mythological encounters in her travel narratives was in her 1949 publication, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*. This was followed a year later by her subsequent article, 'Du royaume de la perle au temple de la déesse du soleil.'²⁶⁸ However, compared to her 1960 publication, *Le Voyage enchanté*, which is overtly structured around her mythological encounters, these earlier text-based travel narratives did not significantly foreground her mythological gaze.²⁶⁹ Similarly, her visual travel narratives of the 1950s and 1960s are not structured around collections of myths but, where relevant to the subject matter, Weiss's commentaries refer to the myths of the people she encountered. For example, in *Le Liban, terre des dieux et des hommes*, the documentary is devoted to the history of Lebanon from the Stone Age to the present day with a focus on invention, knowledge, and commerce. When the Afqa Valley is described as a place of myth, the story of Adonis and Venus Astarte is briefly narrated.²⁷⁰

Weiss's reference to myth only in her later travel narratives should not be considered an indication that she was previously unaware of the narratives of ancient civilisations. Whilst on holiday in her early teens, Weiss's mother bought her a second-hand copy of *Mythologie de la Jeunesse* which was to prove to be a source of much interest to the young Weiss who recalled, 'Il me fournit une première explication du monde.'²⁷¹ The book recounted some of the most popular Greek and Roman myths. Weiss claimed that whilst

²⁶⁸ Louise Weiss, 'Du royaume de la perle au temple de la déesse du soleil', *France Illustration*, 241 (1950), 515-518.

²⁶⁹ Myths are also retold as a collection of stories in Louise Weiss, 'Les contes de l'igloo', *France Illustration: Le Monde Illustré Supplément Théâtral et Littéraire*, 49 (1949), pages not numbered.

²⁷⁰ *Le Liban: terre des dieux et des hommes*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1954).

²⁷¹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 34. In Louise Weiss, *Souvenirs d'une enfance républicaine* (Paris: Editions DeNoël, 1937), p. 39, Weiss claims the author of this book was anonymous. However, a bibliographic search finds the title attributed to Madame de Renneville (1772-1822) published by Paris Caillot as a new edition in 1837.

other members of her family were occupied with their own pursuits, she would retreat to her study in the attic at the top of the house where, in her own personal space, she would piece together her understanding of the world. It is somewhat unsurprising, therefore, that, as a freelance writer trying to understand the events of the twentieth century, Weiss would once more adopt a mythological gaze in an attempt to understand the world.

Weiss's transition to post-war traveller whose gaze was firmly rooted in the myths of ancient communities is most evident in her account of a meeting in Montparnasse with Armand Lanoux, literary adviser for *Librairie Fayard*. In discussing her next commission, Lanoux encouraged Weiss to write a travel narrative based on her encounters with myth. Seemingly bemused by Lanoux's request, Weiss questioned the detail of his idea.

Je prétends à un récit autre qu'un journal de sociologue, de géographe ou de touriste. Une randonnée dans l'invisible me plairait, dans l'invisible psychologique, s'entend. Ouvrez donc à notre public les portes du surnaturel.

– Du surnaturel?

– Oui, [...] vous avez certainement rencontré des fantômes?

– Des fantômes?

[...]

– [...] Je vous commande un volume de voyage, de vos voyages certes, mais où vous ne retiendrez des pays que vous avez traversés que les légendes.²⁷²

It is not clear why Weiss reacted in this manner. There is no record of the date of this meeting with Lanoux, but the commission appeared in print in 1960 as *Le Voyage enchanté*. It is plausible to assume that this meeting took place just prior to this date. The trigger for Weiss's acceptance of Lanoux's commission was her memory of earlier mythological encounters. Although Weiss gives no further details at this point in her

²⁷² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 11.

narrative, both her mythological gaze and her references to mythological encounters in her two earlier travel narratives cited above are justified by her comment, 'Alors, sortant des cachettes où je les avais relégués, là, en ces confins de Montparnasse, quelques-uns de mes irréels compagnons de route m'assaillirent.'²⁷³

If, as already suggested in Part One, Weiss's spiritual gaze separated rather than united, her mythological gaze leaned more towards familiarity and closeness. Travelling home from Lanoux's office, Weiss turned her attention to her fellow travellers on the metro. Perceiving them to be 'hagards'²⁷⁴ and suffocating from 'les tracas de leur journée',²⁷⁵ Weiss pledged her travel narratives – specifically *Le Voyage enchanté* – would be an escape from the daily grind and a remedy for the hardships of contemporary living. Weiss's meeting with Lanoux and their discussions around *Le Voyage enchanté* mark the point at which Weiss became conscious of her mythological gaze and its relevance to contemporary society. This newly-recognised gaze established Weiss as a post-war traveller whose fresh way of looking at the world became firmly rooted in society's ancient narratives.

This perspective initially seems to be at odds with Weiss's self-appointed role of witness as it hints at a more intimate relationship than might normally be attributed to such a role. However, it is symbolic of her emerging empathetic relation with the post-war world and differentiates her approach to myth from the structuralist debate discussed above. Weiss was not looking for commonality across cultures but that which was unique to

²⁷³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 13. See also Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, pp. 258-259 where reference is made to mythological characters.

²⁷⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 15.

²⁷⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 15.

specific societies. Contextualised by her experiential knowledge of myth and her position in the wider context of twentieth-century French academic and sociological debate, the following discussion examines Weiss's idiosyncratic approach to myth and how this informed her interpretations of her mythological encounters in her post-war travel narratives.

Weiss's post-war mythological perspective

Le Voyage enchanté closes with Weiss's comment that: 'Les légendes auxquelles il a été fait allusion dans cet ouvrage ou celles qui ont fait l'objet d'un texte précis appartiennent au fonds commun des mythes de l'humanité.'²⁷⁶ This sense of a share in the wealth of human capital permeates all of the socio-cultural narratives of the people Weiss met on her journeys. This principle of shared ownership is common to the scholarship of M. Stuart Madden, Fiona Bowie, Percy S. Cohen, and Jacques Lemoine whose shared view establishes myth as a social contract on which society and identity are negotiated.²⁷⁷ This convention establishes a society's structure, ritual, and regulation of disruptive behaviour which both creates and legitimises social order. Implicit in this social contract is the implication that members of a particular community have a shared ownership of the group's narrative. Myths, therefore, are not separate from societies but integral to the place where they

²⁷⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 397.

²⁷⁷ Percy S. Cohen, 'Theories of Myth', *Man*, 4 (1969), 337-353; Jacques Lemoine, 'Mythes d'origine, mythes d'identification', *L'Homme*, 27 (1987), 55-85; Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); and M. Stuart Madden, 'Myth, Folklore, and Ancient Ethics', *Cumberland Law Review*, 37 (2006-7), 43-75.

thrive, helping to form the cohesive bonds that hold a particular society together in a specific place.

Specificity of place, or the quality of belonging or relating uniquely to a particular area, was central to Weiss's approach to myth in both her text-based and visual travel narratives. Her concern was very much with gathering stories from the people she met at particular points along her itinerary. Through examples from Weiss's visual and text-based travel narratives – specifically maps, illustrations, text and the structure of her narratives – the following discussion illustrates the significance of specificity of place to Weiss's mythological gaze.

Specificity of place I: maps and illustrations

Whilst it can be argued that a map can be considered to be a staple element of a travel narrative, its importance as a tool which fixes the spatial parameters of any journey is illustrated by Kimberley Healey's evaluation that: 'Without a map there is nothing in the imaginary before the journey but the potential of a vast unknown space.'²⁷⁸ Maps speak directly to the specificity of place hypothesis as they identify the space through which a journey was undertaken. Illustrated and stylised maps as well as relief and simple, unembellished line maps are common features in Weiss's travel narratives irrespective of whether her journeys are presented as text-based or visual accounts. Examples of these maps are reproduced in Figures 24(a) to 24(h) (below).

²⁷⁸ Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 98.

The depth of information presented through Weiss's maps differs across her narratives. For example, Figures 24(e) and 24(f) (below) feature similar geographical areas but 24(f), with the inset bottom left, contextualises the map more from a global perspective than Figure 24(e). Weiss's maps are comparable to those of her contemporary travellers in terms of emphasising specificity of place and mapping stages of journeys as will be shown below. This not only suggests Weiss's narratives are typical of the era they were published, but also alludes to the importance of maps to the travel narrative and, particularly in the context of this discussion, the nature of Weiss's mythological gaze.

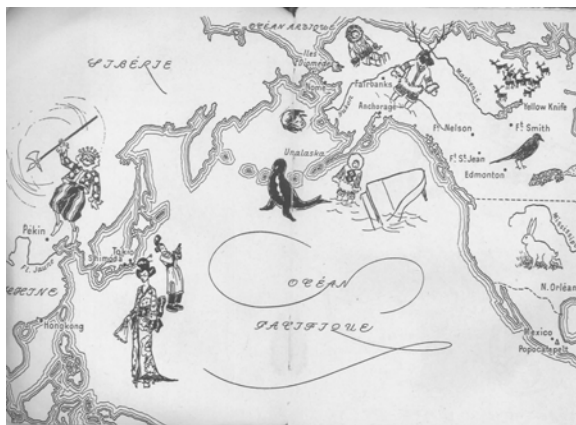


Figure 24(a): A Pacific Ocean projection (double page spread) of an illustrated map of Asia and the west-coast of the North American continent from *Le Voyage enchanté*



Figure 24(b): A stylised map of Syria from *La Syrie*

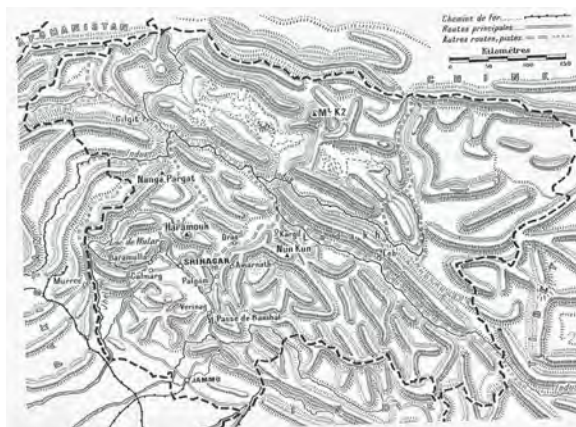


Figure 24(c): A relief map of Kashmir from *Cachemire*

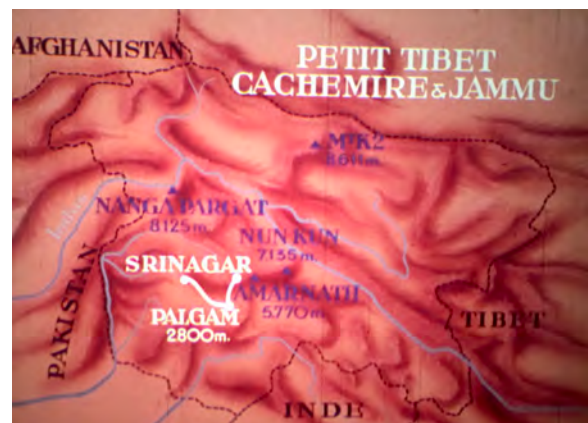


Figure 24(d): A still of a relief map of Kashmir from *Aux frontières de l'au-delà* at 06:51

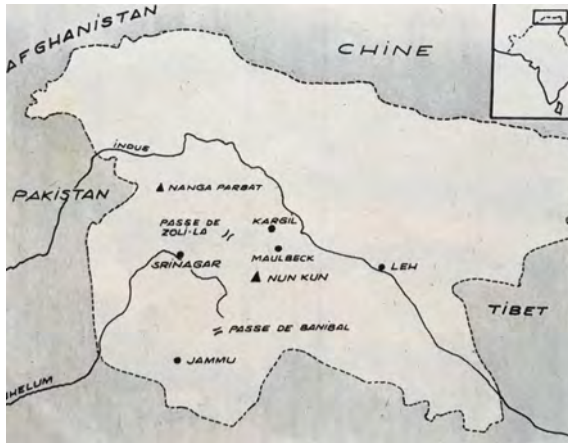


Figure 24(e): An unembellished line map of Kashmir from *Aux portes du Tibet: dans La Vallée de Ladakh*



Figure 24(f): A line map of Kashmir from *L'Himalaya trône des dieux* showing country in relation to its surroundings



Figure 24(g): A still of a simple map of Lebanon with a red itinerary line from *Le Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* at 00:51

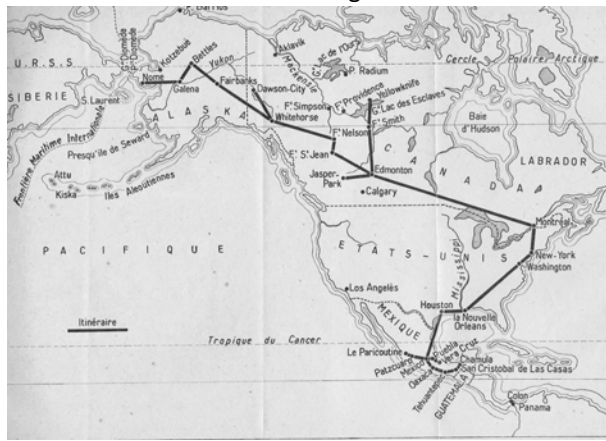


Figure 24(h): A simple map of North America and Alaska showing Weiss's itinerary from *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*

Figures 24(g) and 24(h) (above) depict Weiss's journey across Lebanon and the North American continent respectively. A solid line tracks her itinerary on both maps. A similar technique can be seen on maps in Ella Maillart's *Ti PuSs*²⁷⁹ and *Cette réalité que j'ai pourchassée*,²⁸⁰ Eve Curie's *Journey Among Warriors*,²⁸¹ and Odette du Puigaudeau's *Le sel du désert*²⁸² (see Figures 25(a) to 25(d) (below).)

²⁷⁹ Ella Maillart, *Ti PuSs* (Paris: Petite Bibliothèque Payot/Voyageurs, 2002), p. 10.

²⁸⁰ Ella Maillart, *Cette Réalité Que J'ai Pourchassée* (Geneva: Editions Zoe, 2003), inside cover.

²⁸¹ Eve Curie, *Journey Amongst Warriors* (London and Toronto: Heinemann, 1943), inside cover.

²⁸² Odette du Puigaudeau, *Le Sel Du Désert* (Paris: Libretto, 2001), page not numbered.

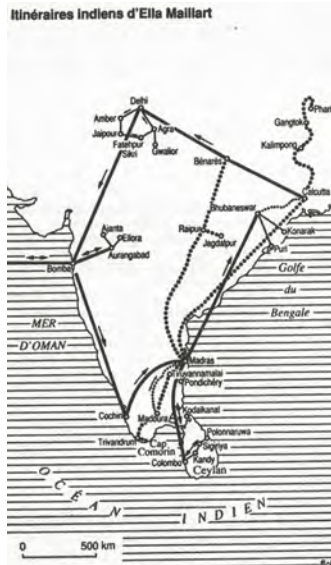


Figure 25(a): A map showing Ella Maillart's itinerary from *Ti Puss*

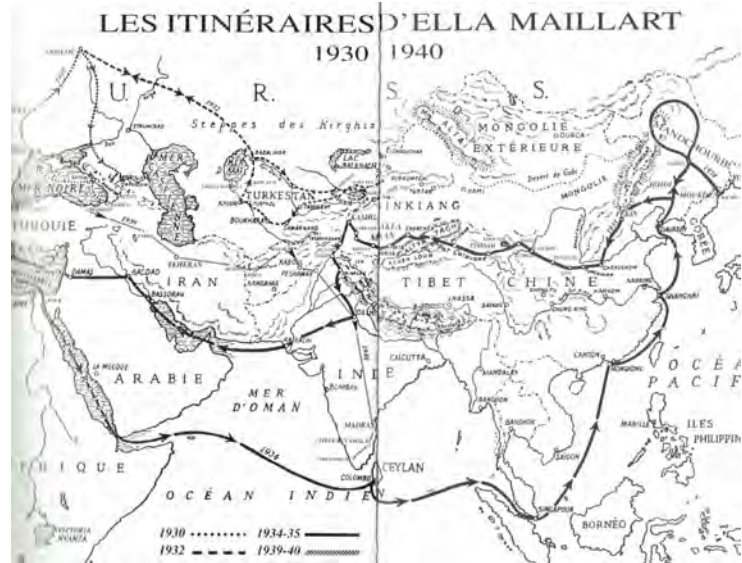


Figure 25(b): A map showing Ella Maillart's itinerary from *Cette réalité que j'ai pourchassée*



Figure 25(c): A map showing Eve Curie's flight itinerary from *Journey Among Warriors*



Figure 25(d): A map showing Odette du Puigadeau's itinerary from *Le Sel du désert*

Andrew Thacker questions the effectiveness of maps in reading travel narratives as he argues they are 'an image of spatial fixity ... [of] ... a discourse concerned above all with representing movement.'²⁸³ However, this sense of perceived immobility is mitigated in

²⁸³ Andrew Thacker, 'A Journey with Maps' in *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing in the 1930s*, ed. by Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), pp. 11-28 (p. 11).

each of the maps in Figure 25 (above) by the addition of arrows or illustrations, for example, aeroplane symbols, which show direction of travel through the respective itineraries. Maps in Weiss's text-based narratives do not, however, carry these directional symbols, her path being dependent on the supporting narrative as will be discussed below. However, her visual travel narratives, specifically her documentaries, clearly represent the direction of her journey. For example, Figure 24(g) (above), a still from *Le Liban terre des dieux et des hommes*, shows how a red line gradually appears section by section on screen as the documentary plays out. It links the named cities in the order Weiss visited them, tracing a north-westerly route from Les Cèdres to Tripoli before a journey south and then east to the end point of her journey at Byblos. This stylistic technique can also be seen in *Allah au Cachemire*, and *Soixante siècles d'histoire en Syrie*.

Figures 24(c) 24(d) (above) incorporate an element of geographical relief and scale (Figure 24(c) only). This in itself reinforces the distinctive topography of the mountainous region of Kashmir whose peaks and valleys, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, are synonymous with a mythological landscape. Similarities can be drawn here with Alexandra David-Néel's map in *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa*²⁸⁴ which also carries an indication of scale as well as showing topographical relief giving a sense not only of geographical reality but also specificity of place (see Figure 26 below).

²⁸⁴ Alexandra David-Néel, *Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhassa* (Paris: Plon, 1927), page not numbered.

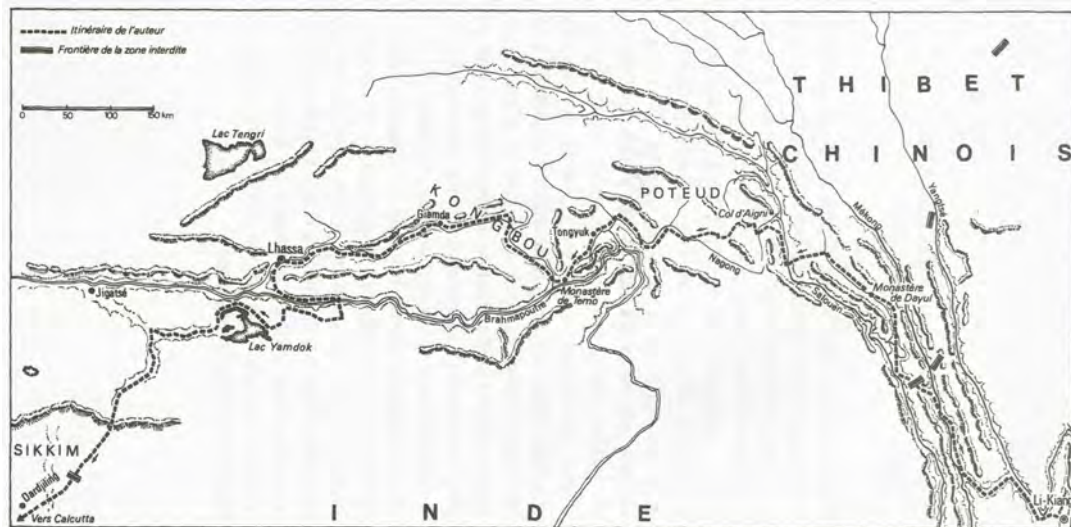


Figure 26: Alexandra David-Néel's map showing topographical relief and scale

There is a close interplay between each of Weiss's maps and its corresponding narrative in terms of places visited and routes taken. This is further evidence that Weiss's mythological gaze is predicated on specificity of place as it reinforces her connection to the place she visited – something particularly evident in Figure 24(b) (above). This map is peppered with illustrations relating to Weiss's journey through Syria. For example, there are drawings of iconic buildings, such as the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, sketches of ancient ruins, including the fort just outside Doura Furapos, and a woman in traditional Syrian dress along with a shepherd tending his flock are depicted at the bottom right-hand corner of the image. All of these illustrations are validated by photographs in the subsequent pages of *La Syrie* and also in Weiss's documentary *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie*. Although Weiss's mythological gaze is not overtly represented here, allusion is made to ancient narratives in the pictorial representation of antiquity.

The connection between place and myth is most evident in the maps in *Le Voyage enchanté* (Figure 24(a) above and Figure 27 below) which have illustrations of the mythological protagonists who appear in the subsequent text. For example, Souen the

Monkey King, The Immortal Parrot, and Evangéline are highlighted on Figure 27 (below) and are positioned in relation to the place Weiss encountered the myth – Souen in China, The Immortal Parrot in India, and Evangéline in North America. However, despite this close connection between myth and place, three anomalies arise between Weiss's visual and textual representation of her journey.

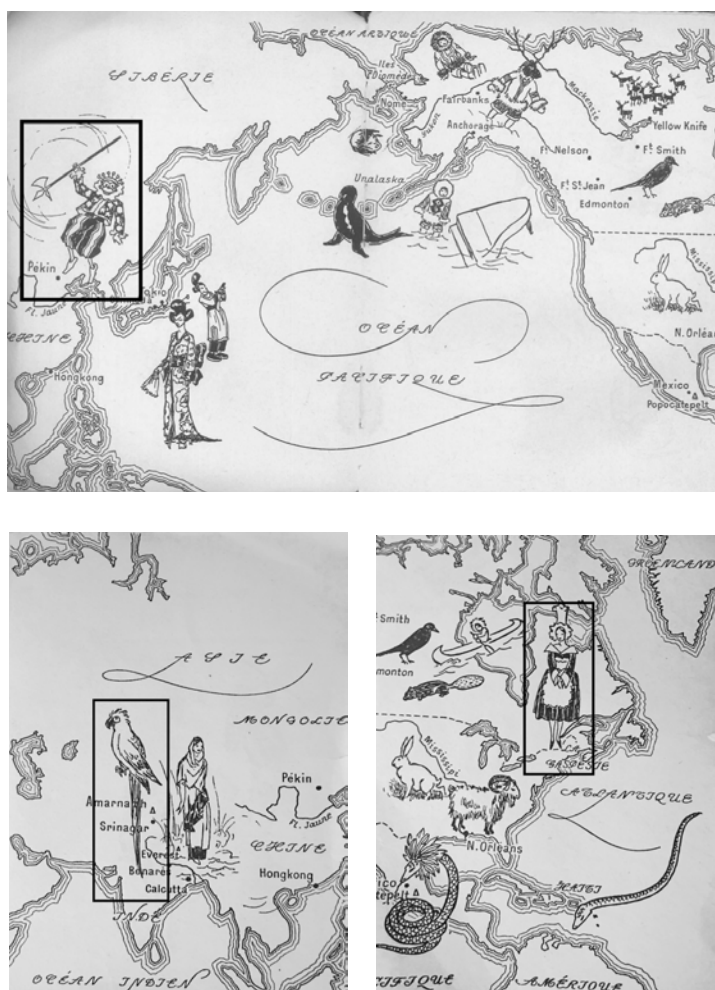


Figure 27: A composite image showing three maps spread over four pages in *Le Voyage enchanté* with boxes added to highlight Souen the Monkey King (top), The Immortal Parrot (bottom left), and Evangéline (bottom right)

Firstly, the order in which the maps are printed is reversed compared to Weiss's account of her journey in the accompanying text. In *Le Voyage enchanté* the maps feature

the Asian peninsula first, followed by the Northern Pacific Rim across a double-page spread, and then the east coast of the North American continent, whilst the subsequent narrative starts in the Gulf of Mexico progresses up the North American continent and then east towards Alaska and on into Asia. Arguably, this renders either the map or the narrative an unreliable representation in terms of chronological sequence. However, the precise direction of Weiss's travel is of little significance. What is more pertinent to this discussion is the association of Weiss's mythological gaze with a particular place. Accuracy, or otherwise, in a specific direction does not necessarily weaken the link between place and myth.

The second anomaly centres on the Pacific projection of the map showing Weiss's mythological encounters in Asia and west-coast America (Figure 27, top). For the Western eye, it is unusual to see this particular angle. Christian Jacob argues that such responses are potentially an 'erreur de perspective'²⁸⁵ rooted in cultural imperialism – specifically, the apparent dominance of the Western gaze. Seeing the world from a non-Eurocentric angle distorts the viewer's relationship to spaces represented by the map and challenges established cartographic conventions. This projection also jars with the impression gained of Weiss's Western gaze. Arguably, her eye would also find this angle unusual as her point of reference was always Europe.

If the Pacific projection was intentional, Weiss's reasoning behind this choice of map is unclear. Whilst it could be simply the result of a printer's formatting decision, it might also have been the most convenient projection for Weiss's journeys as neither Europe nor Russia featured as destinations in her post-war travel narratives. The angle of the map, however,

²⁸⁵ Christian Jacob, *L'Empire des Cartes: approche théorique de la cartographie à travers l'histoire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), p. 25.

creates a sense of the exotic which hints at perhaps a more deliberate motive. For the Western reader, the 'strangeness' of the map's Pacific projection is analogous to the 'strangeness' of the indigenous Other. Recalling the earlier discussion around Weiss's perception of her fellow Parisian commuters as 'hagards'²⁸⁶ as a result of 'les tracassés de leur journée',²⁸⁷ this resonates with Weiss's desire to transport them away from the tedium of the familiar into the unknown.

Voyageurs, le périple dont vous venez de prendre avec moi le départ dans le métro de Paris vous conduira par les chemins du ciel autour du monde ! Vous rencontrez le soleil et la mort, l'amour et la guerre et, aussi, des dieux, des héros et des bêtes créés par des hommes qui ne vous ressemblent pas [...] N'ayez crainte. Vous ne cesserez de vous enrichir et vous jouirez de l'infini avec moi.²⁸⁸

The choice of projection could also be an expression of Weiss's political anxieties. The Alaskan coastline represented America's perimeter defence not only against the invading Japanese army during the Second World War, but also against the clash of Eastern and Western ideologies. Standing on the shores of Alaska, a mere three kilometres away from Siberia, Weiss reminded her readers that: 'Des cinémas tournaient sur ces rocs. L'idéologie américaine et l'idéologie stalinienne, la chrétienté et le totalitarisme, Jésus et Karl Marx, entraient en collision là, dans le brouillard, la tempête, les glaces.'²⁸⁹ As discussed in Chapter One, like many of her generation, Weiss feared the advance of Eastern ideologies on the Judeo-Christian heritage of the West. This Pacific projection emphasises the narrow

²⁸⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 15.

²⁸⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 15.

²⁸⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 17.

²⁸⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 1205.

passage of only three kilometres which separates the Aleutian Islands from Siberia – a short hop for a menacing threat to a fragile world.²⁹⁰

Thirdly, there are two illustrations on the maps in Figure 27 (above) which do not feature in the myths gathered in Weiss's accompanying text: the walrus and the piano. All the other characters are mythological protagonists encountered by Weiss. However, both the walrus and the piano leave an enduring memory with Weiss. The walrus is probably included in recognition of Weiss's frightening encounter with one of these mammals whilst she was travelling around the Aleutian Islands.

Mon kayak volait sur la crête des vagues. Une chasse aux morses me laissa de violents souvenirs. Une horde de ces énormes bêtes était apparue au large. En un tournemain tout le village, ivre de joie, avait mis ses kayaks à la mer et lui avait donné la chasse. Il faut savoir que, blessées, les morses se transforment en torpilles vivantes. J'essayai d'en harponner un. Je ne réussis qu'à l'égratigner. Il sortit des flots son horrible tête, moustaches dressées, défenses cassées, les yeux cramoisis de haine et de fureur. Il fonça sur mon kayak pour le déchirer, mais il me manqua à son tour et disparut dans l'eau.²⁹¹

The piano, which appears partly submerged in the Pacific Ocean, is associated with a person, Nutchuk, rather than a myth. Weiss met Nutchuk in Cook Bay. Although he now lived amongst the local community, his childhood had been spent with missionaries who had travelled widely, he had studied at college in Illinois, and was a talented pianist. Weiss's admiration for him is obvious in her comment: 'Un éclair de sympathie jaillit entre nous.'²⁹²

²⁹⁰ For a discussion of Weiss's view on Alaska's political, economic, and strategic importance see Louise Weiss, 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska', *Politique Etrangère*, 13 (1948), 87-94 and Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 73 where Weiss notes that the iron curtain did not cease to advance across Asia but did not stretch across the Bering Strait.

²⁹¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 226.

²⁹² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 212.

Nutchuk was not an insignificant encounter. Weiss notes she met him several times, retold his life story for her readers, and used his knowledge to validate her own understanding of certain myths she had encountered on other occasions.²⁹³ Whilst neither the walrus nor the piano represents Weiss's mythological gaze, they are inextricably linked to precise locations and events and therefore reinforce Weiss's tendency to share encounters relative to specific places.

Weiss's maps are fundamental to an understanding of her mythological gaze as, through illustration and embellishment, they foreground an approach predicated on specificity of place. The maps presented in Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives are typical of the style seen in twentieth-century travel narratives. Jordana Dym observes that, by the mid-twentieth century, maps had evolved from being documents which captured topographical situations or detailed navigation channels to charts which included travellers' photography and illustrations.²⁹⁴ Building on this evolution, J. Brian Harley later viewed maps as 'cultural texts'²⁹⁵ – a practice which Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchen, and Chris Perkins recognise only from the late 1980s²⁹⁶ but which has been shown here to apply to Weiss's earlier maps. With reference to a map of North Carolina, Harley argues that pictures of an onyx in the local zoo, a Cherokee woman making jewellery, and wild animals native to the region constructed more than a neutral road network or route. This landscape of emblems and values provided an intertextual dimension – a culture transposed into a

²⁹³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 212.

²⁹⁴ Jordana Dym, 'More calculated to mislead than inform: travel writers and the mapping of Central America 1821-1945' *Journal of Historical Geography [Great Britain]*, 30 (2004), 340-363.

²⁹⁵ J. Brian Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica*, 26 (1989), 1-20.

²⁹⁶ Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchen, and Chris Perkins, *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 3.

cartographical text. This cultural text does not detract from the journey but links the map to the social world in which it was created. Harley suggests that maps have since come to be accepted as cultural, non-book texts in the same way as musical compositions and architectural structures. These comments resonate with those of Sharon MacDonald whose view that architecture represents 'words in stone'²⁹⁷ through which meaning can be revealed is discussed in Chapter Two.

Weiss's maps can therefore be seen as spaces where her route and experiential knowledge combine into one visual narrative. Through illustration and embellishment Weiss's visual travel narratives point towards a mythological gaze predicated on specificity of place. But, as advocated by Kimberley Healey, space itself holds little knowledge without an attached narrative.²⁹⁸ The following discussion moves away from the visual spaces created by Weiss's maps to explore how specificity of place emerges in her text-based narratives.

Specificity of place II: text and structure

In Weiss's text-based travel narratives, specificity of place is aligned with the structure of her commentaries. Notwithstanding the reverse order of her maps and text discussed above, Weiss's reports of her encounters with myth follow her illustrated routes very closely with the names of the cities marked on maps appearing either in the subheadings to

²⁹⁷ Sharon MacDonald, 'Words in Stone? Agency and Identity in a Nazi Landscape', *Journal of Material Culture*, 11 (2006), 105-126 (p. 108).

²⁹⁸ Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930*, p. 98.

sections or in the titles of chapters. Figure 28 (below) illustrates how, in *Le Voyage enchanté*, Weiss

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IX. — Les philosophes de Dawson-City.....	247
X. — L'original blanc	279

Figure 28: Contents page from *Le Voyage enchanté* with place names in subheadings (left) and contents page from *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* with place names in the titles (right)

clearly groups the titles of myths under the names of the places where she encountered them. For example, 'Etchoguen, le premier navigateur' appears under the subheading 'Fort Smith' establishing a direct and indisputable link between myth and place. In *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, with the exception of Chapter Ten, each chapter title carries the specific name of the place featured in that chapter: Chamula, San Cristobal de Las Casas, Oaxaca, etc. In the subsequent narrative, myths from these areas are then interwoven into the text under these titles again reinforcing the relationship of a particular myth to a specific place. The omission of a place name in Chapter Ten of *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* does not, however, detract from Weiss's proclivity to reinforce her position geographically as the text

opens with: 'Je revins à Whitehorse et en repartis vers Fairbanks'²⁹⁹ – an immediate reference to her location. When read in conjunction with the map in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (see Figure 29 below) her location and direction of travel north-west to Fairbanks is made clear by the spur which juts out from Whitehorse to Dawson City representing the diversion inferred by the above quotation.

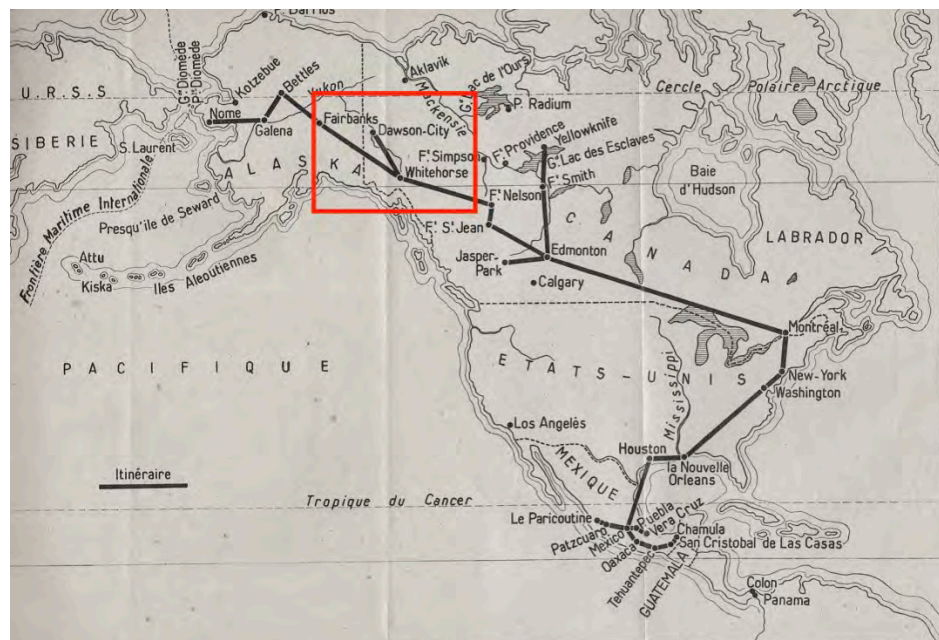


Figure 29: Weiss's map from *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* illustrating the opening journey of Chapter Ten with box added for emphasis

There is no documented explanation why Weiss chose to structure her publications in this way. As a traveller, it might be an obvious tactic for her to reinforce her itinerary – but the order of Weiss's journey in *Le Voyage enchanté* has already been questioned above. Similarly, there is some doubt over the exact stages of Weiss's journey presented in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* since Weiss does not date her travel narratives. Her journeys are

²⁹⁹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* p.279.

recorded, however, in Célia Bertin's biography on Weiss³⁰⁰ which locates Weiss in New York in 1940, Montreal, Ottawa, New Orleans, and Mexico in 1946, Canada in 1947, and Alaska in 1949. A 1950 edition of the journal, *Les Ailes*, records Weiss's journey across North America but picks up only the itinerary from New York through Canada to Alaska.³⁰¹ This suggests a different itinerary to the one presented in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* and raises the possibility that Weiss's journey from Mexico to Alaska was in fact completed in the opposite direction – from Alaska to Mexico. It also alludes to the possibility that it was not a continuous itinerary but a number of journeys over nine years which Weiss collated together for the purposes of publication. However, rather than attempting to piece together the precise legs of Weiss's journey, it is the significance of the structure of her publications in relation to her mythological gaze which is under scrutiny here and there is solid evidence in the way Weiss shapes her text-based narratives to suggest a strong link between myth and place.

However, this indisputable link between myth and place is challenged in the design and layout of *Le Voyage enchanté*. In comparison to *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* – where myth is seamlessly woven into the text recounting Weiss's stay in a particular place – a typographical mark in the shape of a leaf motif separates myths from the narrative of the journey in *Le Voyage enchanté*. The resultant effect is a break between Weiss's account of a place and her retelling of a myth from that region. Figures 30(a) and 30(b) below illustrate this typographical mark and its positioning at the beginning and end of a myth.

³⁰⁰ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999).

³⁰¹ Louis Castex, 'Le tour du monde en avion de Louise Weiss', *Les Ailes*, 4 February 1950, p. 1.

There is little information generally available about typographical marks, also known as ornaments, probably because they are ordinarily used either as a form of decoration or to separate paragraphs in long documents. They were thought to have originally been used to replicate the style of illuminated manuscripts. One of the oldest typographic ornaments in Latin and early Greek texts is the heder a which takes the form of an illustrated ivy leaf. Modern digital print still uses ornaments which are commonly known as ‘dingbats’, a term which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, did not come into use until the twentieth



Figure 30(a): A close-up of a leaf motif

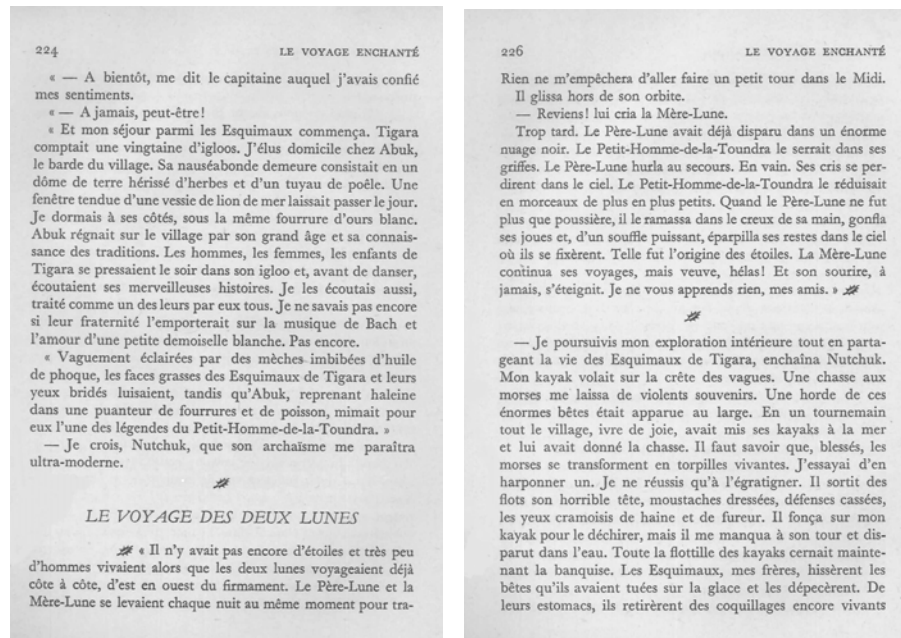


Figure 30(b): Positioning of the leaf motif indicating the beginning of a myth (left) and the end of a myth (right)

century. However, the term 'dingbat' refers to any typographical mark. The ornament used by Weiss does not reflect a contemporary dingbat, neither is it a traditional hedera. It is more akin to the fleuron, a stylised form of a flower or leaf.

The fleuron, which takes its name from the old French word *floron* (flower) is a typographical mark typically used to signal changes in narrative, time, location, mood, or tone.³⁰² The fleurons in Weiss's narrative serve this purpose exactly. For example, they mark changes in the narrative between Weiss's journey and the storyline of a myth, shifts in time from the present day to ancient times when the myth was first told, and movement between Weiss's contemporary Western world and the world associated with the indigenous communities to whom the myth belongs. Both the myth and the narrative appear to occupy their own specifically delineated spaces – a division which is further emphasised by the addition of the title of the myth.

Ornaments were common to a variety of publications in circulation at the time Weiss was writing.³⁰³ It is not implausible to suggest Weiss merely reproduced a contemporary style in her publications and it is likely that publishing houses simply promoted the use of ornaments. But it is of little consequence to this discussion whether the introduction of fleurons into Weiss's travel narratives was a deliberate choice on Weiss's part or the influence of a typesetter or printer. What is more pertinent is their

³⁰² For a discussion on the semiotic implications of the use of typographical marks see Emmanuelle Bordon and Pascal Vaillant, 'Le statut du signe iconique entre iconicité et intertextualité', *VISIO revue de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique Visuelle*, 6 (2001), 57-74.

³⁰³ For examples of ornaments marking (i) temporal changes see Henri Michaux, *Ecuador* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968) and (ii) narrative changes see Alexandra David-Néel, *L'Inde où j'ai vécu* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1951). For examples of ornaments which marked separation between myth and mood in sources see Jacques Soustelle, *Mexique terre indienne* (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1936) and Emile Petitot, *Traditions indiennes du Canada nord-ouest: Littératures populaires de toutes les nations* (Paris: Maisonneuve frères et C H Leclerc, 1888). For examples of drop caps used as ornaments see Bernice Goodspeed, *Mexican Tales* (Mexico: American Book, 1946).

effect on Weiss's mythological gaze. Although the use of fleurons does not break the link between place and myth per se, it creates a noticeable diversion from Weiss's journey and signals a gap between her narrative and her mythological encounters. Gérard Genette defined such markers as 'paratexts' – elements which established a threshold or a boundary between the publication, the author, the reader, the printer, the typesetter, and other parties involved in bringing the narrative to fruition.³⁰⁴

A parallel can be drawn here between this perceived threshold and Weiss's positioning of the spiritual sanctuary in Part One. In the same way that Weiss's overriding view of religious practice implied that spirituality persistently occupied a place apart from the world, the separation produced by the fleurons suggests that her mythological encounters also lay at some distance from contemporary civilisation. If Weiss's mythological gaze was to help her understand the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century, this threshold had to be crossed both metaphorically and psychologically. Metaphorically in the sense of crossing Genette's reading of a gap in the narrative, and psychologically in the sense of Weiss uniting her perception of myth with the contemporary world. The following discussion explores the potential in Weiss's gaze to cross the boundary between the contemporary world and myth.

³⁰⁴ Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987).

Crossing the boundary between myth and the world

Weiss's travels brought her into contact with a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual cross-section of people and sources of myth. Her experiential knowledge of myth was therefore derived from a rich tapestry of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included face-to-face encounters with individuals whereas secondary sources were typically collections of myths gathered and translated from source languages into French and/or English by other travellers. Language difficulties and differences were therefore very real. Catharine Mee notes that, 'all travellers find themselves short of the necessary language skills at some point'.³⁰⁵ But Weiss's narratives suggest she overcame such difficulties by foregrounding her linguistic competency³⁰⁶ and positioning herself as a translator, an intermediary who was able to reach beyond the boundary and connect with the teachings of ancient narratives. The following discussion takes examples from Weiss's primary and secondary sources – specifically stories heard on a pilgrimage and a translation from Gumbo into French mediated by English – to explore the effectiveness of Weiss's gaze and her ability to engage with and share her mythological encounters.

Records of encounters with heads of state, government officials, guides, local people, settlers, immigrants, and other travellers are not sparse in Weiss's travel narratives.³⁰⁷ However, these encounters were often fleeting, lasting just long enough for

³⁰⁵ Catharine Mee, *Interpersonal Encounters in Late 20th and Early 21st Century French and Italian Travel Writing* (London: Anthem Press, 2014), p. 47.

³⁰⁶ In her youth, Weiss had studied English in Bexhill-on-Sea and had also been a student at Balliol College, Oxford (see Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, pp. 124-133) so was presumably competent in English.

³⁰⁷ The extent of her network of contacts can be seen in the original archives at the Musée de Saverne. They include a letter from the Earl of Grenard, Paris dated 12/7/1961 confirming assistance from the RAF when

her to hear their stories over dinner, as they passed through the main square, or led her around tourist attractions. But Weiss's encounter with the pilgrims of Amarnath lasted several days. She joined them on their pilgrimage to a sacred Hindu shrine and camped with them each night. It was during this time that Weiss gathered first-hand information of their heritage, customs, and myths, listening to their hymns and psalms and acquainting herself with their ancient narratives.³⁰⁸ In the references section of *Le Voyage enchanté* Weiss records, 'La Légende d'Amarnath, recueillie par Louise WEISS ... (sic) ... auprès des pèlerins du Cachemire' alluding to face-to-face encounters with pilgrims.³⁰⁹ However, Weiss gives no indication of the language she used to gather these myths from the pilgrims or whether she had any translators to help her. These stories would have been handed down orally from generation to generation. Weiss placed great importance on the oral tradition of storytelling. In the same interview cited in Chapter Two with Vera Florence and Marie-Claude Leburgue for *Radio Suisse romande*, Weiss remembered the positive influence of her grandmother's stories:

Vera Florence: La tradition orale était donc très importante.

Louise Weiss: Très importante. Mon arrière-grand-mère, qui était née l'année de la mort de Napoléon et qui est morte quand j'avais 15 ou 17 (sic) ans, m'a raconté le XIX^e siècle qu'elle avait vu à sa façon.³¹⁰

commercial airlines were not available for her journeys, a business card from B. C. Limb, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Korea, and an introductory letter to the Minister for Overseas Affairs from the French Embassy.

³⁰⁸ Louise Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955) 7-58 and Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp 381-385.

³⁰⁹ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), p. 400.

³¹⁰ Leburgue and Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne*, p. 477.

Weiss also used secondary sources to gather myths. In New Orleans, where several French book shops flourished selling books which once belonged to plantation owners before larger corporations forced them out of the area, Weiss was persuaded to purchase two books.³¹¹ One she believed to be a collection of local stories told to the children of plantation owners, the other a dictionary of the local 'gumbo' dialect, a patois of French spoken by slaves in Louisiana. It was not until later evening, when settling down to read that she discovered with some disappointment she had purchased a parallel text translated into English: 'Il les avait traduits du gumbo en anglais. Ah ! Le misérable ! En voici deux, restitués par mes soins au français.'³¹²

Although Weiss does not name the book in her text, it was probably the publication cited in her list of further references in *Le Voyage enchanté*, namely Professor Alcée Fortier's *Louisiana Folk Tales*, a parallel text with Gumbo on the left-hand page and English on the right.³¹³ Her disappointment was not in the author ('Il') or the book *per se*, but in discovering that a translation had already been made from the source language into English. The English translation would probably not have posed any particular problem for Weiss given her linguistic skills. The disappointment, therefore, was probably the spoilt anticipation of the intellectual exercise of using the dictionary to translate from the original gumbo. Weiss resorted to indirect translation, or the translation of a translation, to share her mythological encounters.³¹⁴

³¹¹ See Castex, 'En volant du Mexique au Canada', p. 1 for reference to books which formerly belonged to plantation owners and mention of Weiss's search for glossaries of the Louisiana language.

³¹² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 63.

³¹³ Alcée Fortier, *Louisiana folk tales in French dialect and English translation* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company for the American folklore society, 1895).

³¹⁴ For a definition of 'indirect translation' compared to 'relay translation' see Alexandra Assis Rosa, 'Theoretical, methodological and terminological issues regarding indirect translation: An overview', *Translation Studies*, 10 (2017) 198-216. Relay translation is explored further in Martin Ringmar, 'Relay

Mindful of her European readers, Weiss's challenge was to restore the stories into the French target language from gumbo – a source language in which she was not competent, and which was fast disappearing as a living language locally – through the intermediary language of English, which was not her mother tongue. Weiss did not engage in a relay translation to produce the text herself but used the existing English version as a mediating text for her translation into French. Weiss's French translations of *Compère Lapin, un néléphant, et la baleine* (sic) and *Le mariage du diable* subsequently appeared in *Le Voyage enchanté*.³¹⁵

This is indicative of Michael Cronin's observation of the capacity of travel writers to interpret or engage with the realities of their encounters when confronted with languages other than their own, or even distinct varieties of their own language.³¹⁶ Yet it was a potentially risky translation strategy. Indirect, or mediated translation is typically viewed negatively because of its inherent risk of opening up the possibility that subtle nuances and dynamics of the original stories are lost through multiple translations.³¹⁷ Other difficulties around this methodology centre on the power relationships arising from the hierarchy of

Translation', in *Interpersonal Encounters in Late 20th and Early 21st Century French and Italian Travel Writing*, ed. by Catherine Mee (Anthem Press: London, 2014), pp. 141-144. For a discussion of translation in travel texts see Mee, *Interpersonal Encounters in Late 20th and Early 21st Century French and Italian Travel Writing*, p. 47. The debate around perceptions of translation as appropriation, the erasing of difference, and colonisation of text are discussed in Susan Bassnett, 'Travelling and Translating', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 40 (2004) 66-76. The relationship between travel writing and translation, specifically the varying reception of texts in different cultures, is explored in Loredana Polezzi, *Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

³¹⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 63-73. Note that Weiss kept the word 'néléphant' to reflect the original gumbo and did not translate it as *an éléphant*.

³¹⁶ Michael Cronin, 'Knowing One's Place: Travel, Difference and Translation', *Translation Studies*, 3 (2010), 334-348.

³¹⁷ Maialen Marin-Lacarta, 'Indirectness in literary translation: Methodological possibilities', *Translation Studies*, 10 (2017) 133-149.

languages in use and the effect of what James Hadley terms the author's 'stand'.³¹⁸ In the context of travel narratives, this is analogous to the traveller's gaze.

There is a double bind here concerning the stands, or gazes, of both Weiss and Fortier. Influences on Fortier's translation are unknown. He also claimed that the original stories were difficult to collect, citing two main challenges: the reluctance of old people to retell stories, claiming they had forgotten them and the lack of knowledge of these stories amongst the younger generation.³¹⁹ Weiss may have therefore had a less than secure English language foundation for her own translations into French. But a close reading of secondary texts in comparison to Weiss's narratives is not the focus of this discussion and lies outside the parameters established in the Introduction. Neither was it necessarily Weiss's job to translate afresh the oral history of the communities she encountered. More pertinent, however, is the role Weiss's indirect translation had in connecting cultures by bridging the gap between an indigenous language, in this instance gumbo, and the linguistic (in)competences of both Weiss and her readers.

Weiss's translations, and by implication her role as intermediary, demand a significant level of trust from the reader in the light of both Mee's and Cronin's observations discussed above. The following three examples – translation in parenthesis, italicisation of foreign idioms, and reporting encounters with accent and dialect – illustrate Weiss's diligent attempts to make sure her readers both understood the meaning of her everyday encounters with different languages, dialects, and accents and also trusted her narratives.

³¹⁸ James Hadley, 'Indirect translation and discursive identity: Proposing the concatenation effect hypothesis', *Translation Studies*, 10 (2017) 183-197.

³¹⁹ Fortier, *Louisiana folk tales in French dialect and English translation*, p. ix. See also Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 398 where this publication is cited as a useful background source for more information on the mythology in and around New Orleans.

When Weiss assumed her readers might not understand non-French words, she used parentheses or italics to highlight those words and immediately followed them with a French translation. For example, in *Cachemire* Weiss introduced a shawl trader ‘«Subhana the Worst» (Le Pire)’³²⁰ translating his humorous nickname into French to ensure her readers understood his reputation for profitable bargaining. When relating foreign idioms, for example French-Canadian, Weiss italicised the Canadian-English vocabulary then translated it for the French reader:

D’un homme qui ne pouvait plus sortir de la brousse, du *bush* et que la solitude avait rendu bizarre, les Canadiens disaient:
– *He is bushed*. La brousse le tient. C’est un broussard.
Compatissant, le patron, le dernier soir me dit de son languide chef de réception:
– *He is Europed* ! L’Europe le tient. C’est un Europard.³²¹

When recounting French speech delivered in a dialect or with an accent, Weiss transcribed the source vernacular first before announcing its translation into a more recognisable morphology for her European readers. In the following example, Weiss explains the French-Canadian dialect heard at Fort Nelson airport: ‘Il n’y a pas eu de malle aujourd’hui. Les papiers manquent. Je traduisis: le courrier et, donc, les journaux ne sont pas arrivés.’³²²

These short translations should not be regarded as a means to highlight the peculiarities of the French-Canadian dialect or keep the reader’s lack of comprehension at bay. Instead they play to Weiss’s experiential knowledge and mythological gaze by suggesting she was present and integral to the encounter. Weiss’s linguistic competence is foregrounded which assigns a sense of authority to her commentary and role as

³²⁰ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 118 and Weiss, ‘*L’Himalaya trône des dieux*’, p. 14 where the story is retold.

³²¹ Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 177. For similar examples of Weiss’s use of foreign words in italics followed by explanations, see p. 251 where she translates native American phrases.

³²² Weiss, *L’Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 231.

intermediary. Arguably, by accurately translating the meaning of these inconsequential phrases, it would instil a sense of trust into Weiss's readers that her detailed translations and accounts of local myths were reliable.

Promoting confidence in the accuracy of her accounts was important for Weiss. She was looking for ruins of the past, palimpsests which had survived their respective turbulent times and perpetuated into the twentieth century. She was firmly of the belief that these would provide some explanation for the upheaval of contemporary civilisation. Weiss's readers therefore needed to believe what was said about myths. They were not weighing up the truth value of her observations, nor were they testing them against Weiss's experiential knowledge or secondary sources. Weiss had presented myths as survivors of the past. These survivors were ruins rather than perfect replicas, but they were the very elements with which Weiss wanted to engage.

En route to mythological encounters

This chapter opened by highlighting Weiss's idiosyncratic approach to myth as counter to the prevailing academic debate of the latter half of the twentieth century. Weiss's experiential knowledge was not rooted in searching for commonalities across cultures but in listening to stories from specific areas which had been handed down from generation to generation. This grounded Weiss in an environment of storytelling rather than journalism and, although it drew her closer to the heritage of the communities she encountered, she was faced with problems around translation and communicating the idiosyncrasies of dialect and accent to her readers.

Consistent with her empathetic post-war view of the world, Weiss's mythological gaze initially promised to alleviate the encumbrance of distance which she had perceived between the secular and spiritual in Part One. It seems, however, that this did not fully materialise for two reasons. Firstly, Weiss's presentation of her mythological encounters created a diversion between myths and her narrative. In at least one of her major publications, the use of fleurons set myths at a distance from Weiss's own journey. Secondly, the very nature of storytelling compounded any perception of distance in the cacophony of different languages, dialects, and accents. The sufficiency of Weiss's role as witness was under scrutiny. To engage fully with myth Weiss needed to appear as the intermediary between the stories of ancient civilisations and the twentieth century. Against this backdrop, the following chapters explore how Weiss engaged with myth in her role as intermediary in North America and Asia respectively.

CHAPTER 5

MOVING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

WEISS'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE MYTHS OF NORTH AMERICA

The preceding chapter began by positioning Weiss's mythological gaze as a new way of looking at the world. Implicit in this was the suggestion that this particular perspective would bridge the gap she perceived between the secular and spiritual which emerged from the analysis in Part One. However, cognisant that Weiss's mythological gaze focussed on the association of myth to the specific community in which it thrived, Chapter Four identified the emergence of a similar boundary between myth and contemporary civilisation, which was reinforced by the corresponding structure of Weiss's travel narratives. Myths appeared to be confined to distinct regions. For example, the section in *Le Voyage enchanté* entitled 'Le Soleil de minuit' recreates the discrete space where Weiss encountered seven myths that are not referred to elsewhere in that narrative.³²³

Weiss's encounter with myth was therefore dependent on moving between these spaces of mythological encounter. As she journeyed, Weiss ultimately created and maintained pockets of experiential knowledge which represented the linguistic and cultural heritage of their respective communities. But these pockets of experiential knowledge are more than literary constructs. They create the spaces for Weiss's mythological encounters and, as such, are fundamental to understanding the notion of displacement that underpins Weiss's mythological gaze. Before examining Weiss's mythological encounters in more

³²³ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), p. 403.

detail, this chapter begins by considering the significance of these spaces to Weiss's physical journey.

Displacement through the contact zone

Distinguishable by their own unique attributes and characteristics, these pockets of experiential knowledge are synonymous with Mary Louise Pratt's 'contact zone' or 'the space of colonial encounters [...] where ongoing relations are established between the traveller and indigenous communities.'³²⁴ Although reference has already been made to Weiss's Western gaze, her conduct in the contact zone was mediated by her self-appointed role of witness and was not necessarily characterised by the colonial coercion and power structures with which Pratt coloured her own definition. Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan qualify Pratt's definition further and in a style more appropriate to Weiss's encounters. They define the contact zone as a geographical, historical, anthropological, political, cultural, and mythical space which created or influenced a traveller's narrative.³²⁵ Claude Reichler also refers to contact zones but, as his focus was largely on defining the travel narrative by movement through the world, or displacement, interprets them purely as sites where the traveller encounters another culture.³²⁶

³²⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Oxon: Routledge, 1992), p. 6. See also Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), pp. 79-106 where 'contact zones' are explored as 'travel zones' and also linked to literary form.

³²⁵ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 67.

³²⁶ Claude Reichler, 'Littérature et anthropologie', *L'Homme*, 164 (2002) 37-56.

A distinction should be drawn here between the work of Claude Reichler and that of Caren Kaplan whose research focusses on the various metaphoric uses of travel and displacement in literary and feminist theory. Kaplan does not read displacement from the perspective of the travel narrative per se but explores how discourses of displacement link rather than separate modernist and postmodernist concepts such as nomadism, feminism, and diaspora. Kaplan examines how and when notions of 'home and away', 'placement and displacement', 'dwelling and travel' play a role in literary and cultural criticism.³²⁷

Weiss's encounter with the indigenous folklore of North America was very much reliant on travelling through discrete contact zones, each with their respective mythological heritages firmly woven into the fabric of the specific region. For example, *L'Histoire d'une tête*, the story of a disembodied head which danced with his best friend at the *kazhgie* (community hall) and married a local girl from Nome, and *L'Homme caribou*, which features a man who left home and lived as a reindeer in order to learn how to behave better,³²⁸ appear only in chapters relating to Weiss's transit through the contact zones of Fairbanks and Nome from where these myths originated. These myths are also illustrated at specific co-ordinates on Weiss's map of the North American continent (see Figure 31 below).

But the degree of alterity in these and other mythological encounters was such that the onus was on Weiss to transfer the essence of her encounter from the contact zone into contemporary society. Weiss presented herself as the principal communicator of her

³²⁷ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).

³²⁸ *L'Histoire d'une tête* and *L'Homme caribou* are told in Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* pp. 206-207 and pp. 187-196 respectively and in Louise Weiss, *Contes et légendes du Grand-Nord* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1957), pp. 46-48 and pp. 49-62 respectively. *L'Histoire d'une tête* also appears in Louise Weiss, 'Les contes de l'igloo', *France Illustration: Le Monde Illustré Supplément Théâtral et Littéraire*, 49 (1949), pages not numbered.

mythological encounters by conveying, and often translating, the ancient stories of the people she met through her post-war travel narratives. Although Weiss never used the term 'intermediary', she unwittingly framed herself as a go-between by her attempts to transit across the boundary she had created between the world and the myths of North America.

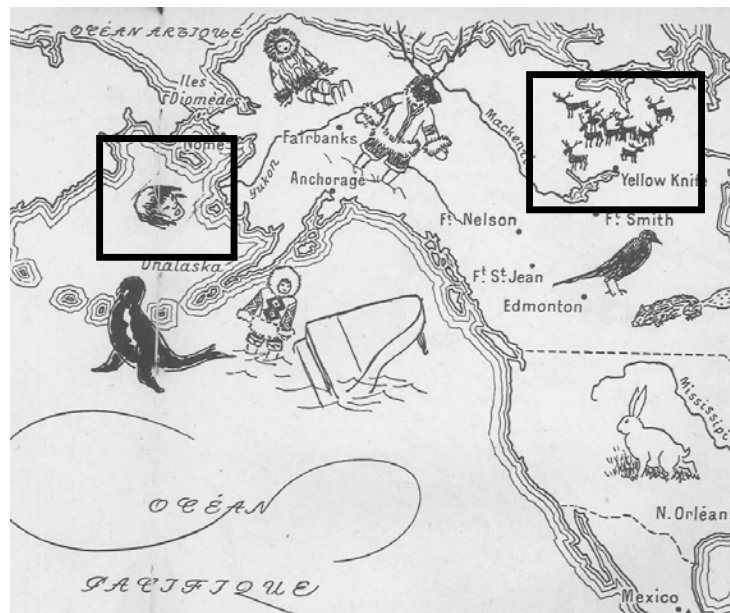


Figure 31: A map from *Le Voyage enchanté* with boxes added to indicate references to *L'Histoire d'une tête* (top left) and *L'Homme caribou* (top right)

In the context of Weiss's mythological encounters in North America, displacement served a more prominent and significant function by positioning Weiss amongst the different story-telling heritages of indigenous communities. Displacement was the only way Weiss could encounter the Other, draw near to mythological heritages, and broaden her experiential knowledge. It enabled her to transit across the boundary between the alterity of myth and her understanding of these stories in the context of the twentieth century. Displacement, then, is inextricably linked with Weiss's movement through the mythological heritage of the world. The following discussion opens with an analysis of Weiss's

displacement in her North American travel narratives before broadening the topic to question whether displacement is exclusively physical relocation. Underpinning this analysis is the possibility that physical displacement might not be the sole factor influencing Weiss's experiential knowledge – an issue which is addressed in the second half of this chapter.

An analysis of displacement in Weiss's North American travel narratives

Although Weiss's journey across North America did not feature in any of her visual travel narratives, physical relocation with the intention of seeking out and encountering different societies and their respective myths is a recurring motif in her text-based accounts of these journeys. Her statement: 'Alors je décidai d'aller au-delà de Québec, vers le soleil de minuit du Grand-Nord-Ouest pour y surprendre les mythes qui y vivaient encore chez les trappeurs et chercheurs d'or modernes ou chez les Indiens,'³²⁹ suggests Weiss believed a meeting with a new group of people promised an encounter with a new collection of myths.

The above quotation announces Weiss's intention to travel further north beyond the province of Quebec and illustrates the importance of physical displacement in her pursuit of myth. It captures both Weiss's itinerant spirit and her determination to travel to uncover the myths that lived amongst discrete indigenous communities. In this instance, Weiss's motivation to travel north arose from a brief but disappointing visit to Montreal, her first stopover in French-speaking Canada and the gateway to the former French colony of Acadia. Having met Acadian descendants, the Ducœurjoli brothers, in New Orleans, Weiss

³²⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 91.

learned not only how important their heritage was to them but also how they still bore the emotional trauma experienced by their ancestors who were caught up in the Great Deportation of 1755-1764.³³⁰ Weiss was reminded of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *Evangeline*. Originally published in 1847, almost a century after the Great Deportation, it was based on an existing story of a girl's lifelong search for a lost love following the forced removal and dispersal of the Acadian people from their home in what would now be the regions of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and parts of Quebec.

Naomi Griffiths notes that the *Evangeline* narrative was adopted by the people of Acadia as their quintessential understanding of their heritage, describing it as 'the unchallenged repository of historical truth in the eyes of the Acadians.'³³¹ Connections between the poem and the people of Acadia were commonplace from the late 1880s onwards and the poem's influence even extended into Europe. Weiss likens *Evangéline* to the romantic prose of Chateaubriand and notes that Longfellow, 'avait ému l'Europe par une histoire d'amour vécue dans les forêts et les prairies du Nouveau Monde.'³³² Against this backdrop and touched by the personal experience of the Ducoeurjoli brothers, Weiss includes her own version of the myth, *La douce Evangéline*, in *Le Voyage enchanté* just prior to her account of her arrival in Montreal.

³³⁰ For a generic study of the dispersion of the Acadian population and the Great Deportation see Carl A. Brasseaux, *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005) and Jean-François Mouhot, *Les Réfugiés acadiens en France 1758-1785* (Canada: Septentrion, 2009). For a specific study of the growth, cultural development, and political efforts of the 2,500 to 3,000 exiles who settled in Louisiana (Bayou Country) around 1764, see Carl A. Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People 1803-1877* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1992). Other communities of Acadian people are studied by region (North America, France, Southern Polar, and Tropics) in Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³³¹ Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973), p. 80.

³³² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 75.

This myth ostensibly acts as a trigger for Weiss's move northwards. Wanting to understand the hold this myth had on the Acadian people and the broader context of the Great Deportation, Weiss left New Orleans for the province of Quebec in pursuit of the myth behind Longfellow's later poem. Weiss undoubtedly expected to find evidence to validate the emotions of the Ducœurjoli brothers but, on her arrival, she found the story had been neither preserved nor retold amongst the local people in the same way as it had amongst the exiled community in New Orleans.³³³ There was no reference to *Evangeline* and, perhaps more importantly for Weiss, no ruins of the past which might have helped her explain the turbulence of the twentieth century. *Evangeline* appeared to have been replaced by more contemporary narratives and even the 'Coureurs-des-Bois',³³⁴ the trappers who traded furs around the region, had long since disappeared. These traders were renowned for establishing close, lasting, and sometimes marital relations with the indigenous communities with whom they traded and would have given Weiss an important insight into the local mythological heritage. Their absence severed any link with myth that Weiss may have found in and around Montreal.

Obviously disappointed by what she found – or did not find – in Montreal, Weiss dismissed her time in this area in a short paragraph of only ten lines in *Le Voyage enchanté*. Undeterred, but clearly driven to discover the ancient stories of North America, Weiss was compelled to move on towards the land of the midnight sun and further afield to the vast

³³³ For a discussion of the difference in habits and cultures between Acadians in Louisiana and the area around Quebec, see Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People*, pp. 81-85 where it is noted that the ways of life of these two populations remained distinct. See also James Laxzer, *The Acadians in Search of a Homeland* (Canada: Doubleday, 2006), p. 187.

³³⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 91. See also Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 180 which records their population numbers and activity in the region.

expanse of the north-west region of the continent in search of other myths. Here she was certain she would encounter a number of new communities whose myths were still very much alive in contemporary society. On this occasion, Weiss was not disappointed – her expectations were met. Her transit from the province of Quebec took her on a journey of some three thousand miles over vast prairie and broad expanses of thick forest to Fort Smith, a small community of a few hundred people, and a mythological encounter with ‘Etchoguen, le premier navigateur’.³³⁵ This was followed by visits to a further six places and encounters with seven other myths as retold in *Le Voyage enchanté*. This resolve and determination to travel to uncover the myths of North America underpins all of Weiss’s mythological encounters.

A discussion of displacement is germane to any publication purporting to be a travel narrative. It is not unusual, therefore, that displacement plays such a pivotal role in the discussion of Weiss's travel narratives. It is a fundamental concept of the genre and, as discussed in the Introduction, lies at the heart of Reichler’s definition of both *littérature de voyage* and *récit de voyage*.³³⁶ Reichler maintains that displacement is contingent on movement through space. This takes the form of departure, transit, arrival, a stopover, wandering around, and return home. The traveller’s reward for completing this process is the acquisition of a predominantly epistemic knowledge of ‘Home’ and ‘Other’ gained from a meeting with the world.

³³⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 95-99. ‘Etchoguen, le premier navigateur’ is also told in Louise Weiss, *Contes et légendes du Grand-Nord* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1957), pp. 168-173 and in Louise Weiss, ‘Les hommes de minuit moins le quart’, *Œuvres Libres*, 128 (1957), 188-192.

³³⁶ Claude Reichler, ‘Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition’, *Viatica*, August (2004) <<http://www.crlv.org/outils.francfort/index.php>> [accessed January 2010] and Claude Reichler, ‘Pourquoi les pigeons voyagent: remarques sur les fonctions du récit de voyage’, *Versants*, 50 (2005), 11-36.

However, Reichler neither presents nor uses his model as anything but a tool for classification; a means of assembling examples of travel writing. Whilst Reichler's model is effective for this purpose, it does not provide a framework capable of supporting a discussion of either the objectives or the value of displacement. In the light of the apparent importance of displacement to Weiss's experiential knowledge of myth, an understanding of displacement needs to go beyond its function of helping define the genre to look at the nature and consequences of the encounter as a whole.

Evelyne Deprêtre reinterprets Reichler's model to offer a different understanding of 'un monde parcouru' – a term which underpins Reichler's concept of displacement.³³⁷ She concurs with Reichler that displacement is a pre-requisite of the travel genre but approaches it not so much from the angle of literary theory but rather by addressing the specific concerns of the travel writer. Rather than displacement simply indicating that a meeting with the world has taken place, as is the emphasis in Reichler's model, Deprêtre appeals for an understanding of displacement that actively and clearly engages with alterity. This subtle modification advocates a shift from epistemic to experiential knowledge. This is particularly apt for Weiss's travel narratives since her specific concerns are not simply travelling through a particular space. More precisely, she is intent on using her journeys to engage actively with the survivors of turbulent times, to talk to them, and to uncover palimpsests which might provide answers for the troubles she perceived in the twentieth century. With particular reference to the myths of North America, Weiss's experiential

³³⁷ Evelyne Deprêtre, 'Le récit de voyage: quête historique et définitoire, la préoccupation de l'écrivain, suivi de création littéraire d'un récit de voyage: parcours essayiste entre subjectivité narrative et dévoilement de l'autre, suivi d'un texte de création Papua Niu Guini, être seulement' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Université du Québec à Rimouski (2011), pp. 26-41.

knowledge was grounded in a displacement which required her to engage intimately with the historical and cultural 'Otherness' of the indigenous communities she encountered.

Notwithstanding the various modes of transport documented by Weiss, her movement around North America primarily took two forms. She was either travelling at speed, flying significant distances between states or towns, or travelling more slowly by walking around districts in the immediate vicinity of each of her stopover points. Weiss's accounts of both types of physical displacement are typified by a combination of verbs of direction, phrases which evoke a sense of movement, and vocabulary which refers to the region's landscape and local population. Building on Deprêtre's contribution and positioning Weiss as an intermediary rather than a witness, the following discussion takes two examples of Weiss's physical displacement – firstly her flight from Mexico to New Orleans and secondly her walk around the town of Fort Smith – and explores the nature and consequences of each and the extent to which speed influenced Weiss's engagement with the myths of North America and, ultimately, her perception of the twentieth century.

Flying from Mexico to New Orleans

In *Le Voyage enchanté* Weiss documents a journey from Mexico to New Orleans: 'Un autre avion me ramena aux États-Unis, ses quatre hélices brassant l'air dans la direction de la Nouvelle-Orléans.'³³⁸ Her choice of vocabulary clearly indicates direction of travel from Mexico to New Orleans and a sense of movement towards this specific destination.

³³⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 47.

However, there is a certain oddness in the use of the phrase 'un autre avion' and the verb 'ramener' at this juncture.

After outlining the circumstances behind her commission to write *Le Voyage enchanté*, the first chapter of this same publication opens with Weiss's version of the Mexican myth of Quetzalcoatl. This is followed immediately by the above quotation which forms the beginning of a new chapter and alludes to Weiss leaving Mexico en route to a different region of North America. *Le Voyage enchanté* makes no reference to either her visit to Mexico or how she got there – Chapter Two noted that *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* is the only commentary to document Weiss's encounters in Mexico in any significant manner. The phrase 'un autre avion' therefore seems semantically incompatible with a narrative that has no prior reference to an aeroplane. Weiss is undoubtedly heading away from Mexico towards the southern states of the North American continent, but the use of the verb 'ramener' hints at repeated journeys which are not explicitly recounted in *Le Voyage enchanté* at this point. This raises the question of whether Weiss's journey had begun somewhere in North America before she travelled to Mexico, or whether she had made journeys to North America previously – possibly in connection with other projects or maybe with different motives not shared here.

In the light of Deprêtre's proposition (above), this anomaly places Weiss's travel narrative centre stage in a dialogue around engagement with alterity and 'un monde parcouru'. It is no longer a discussion around the validity of a simple meeting with the world in New Orleans, but the extent and influence of any prior engagement Weiss may have had with the myths of North America. The frequency of her visits, the mode of transport to this particular location, and the possibility of her previous engagement with indigenous people

are unexpectedly opened up to debate. This sudden interruption in Weiss's displacement is a distraction. A mismatch can be sensed in the perception of her journey and the suggestions underlying the written commentary. Additionally, if read alongside the map in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (see Figure 32 below), the mismatch snowballs as the visual representation of the journey places Weiss's North American itinerary on a liner trajectory between Mexico and Alaska and not New Orleans and Alaska as suggested by the text of *Le Voyage enchanté*.

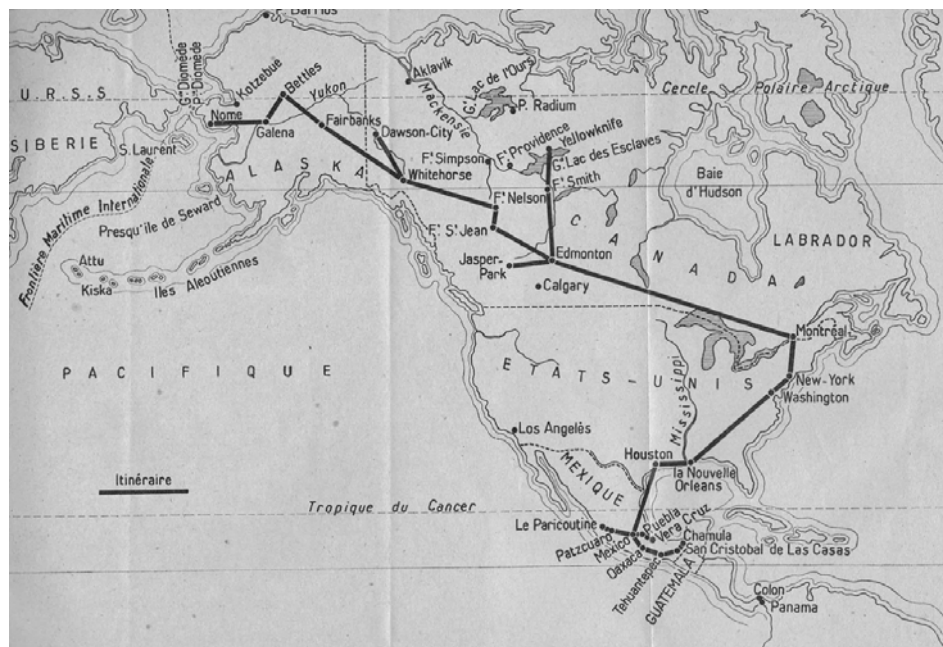


Figure 32: The map of North America and Alaska from *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* showing Chamula, Mexico as the starting point of Weiss's journey

The concept of Weiss's journey established in *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* seems to be inconsistent with the way it is presented in *Le Voyage enchanté*. Cognisant of Pascal Dibié's assertion that understanding arises from grasping the meaning of a concept as a whole

rather than focussing on specific, individual elements of the dialogue or the text,³³⁹ Weiss's journey can only be perceived to be credible if the interaction between the text-based and visual narratives gel together to produce a reliable and consistent overarching idea. There is no room in Weiss's narrative for any gap or broken connection which might shatter the broader picture. If the overall impression of the journey breaks down, the pact she builds between herself and her reader is jeopardised, and she risks discrediting her travel narratives. It is only through a parallel reading of *L'Or, le camion et la croix* and *Le Voyage enchanté* that clarification is offered on any uncertainty arising from Weiss's choice of vocabulary.

From the interplay of the map in *L'Or, le camion et la croix* (Figure 32 above) and Weiss's written accounts in this same publication and *Le Voyage enchanté*, the reader can visualise the overarching idea of a journey from one end of the North American continent to the other. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the starting point of Weiss's North American itinerary was Mexico as both *L'Or, le camion et la croix* and *Le Voyage enchanté* recount journeys northwards to Alaska. Notwithstanding the discrepancies discussed in Chapter Four around whether Weiss's journey was, in reality, as linear as it was implied or, more probably, a collection of separate trips grouped together for the purposes of publication, an assumption should be made that Weiss flew from France, or at least from somewhere outside Mexico, in order to begin her journey in Chamula. Although no clear indication of this leg of the journey is given in *Le Voyage enchanté*, it is implicit in the first chapter of this travel narrative. Travelling home on the Paris Metro from her publisher's

³³⁹ Pascal Dibié, 'Le Voyage ethnologique', *Magazine Littéraire*, 432 (2004), 56-57 (p. 56).

office having secured her commission for the publication, Weiss recalls memories of a previous long-haul flight to Mexico. No further reference is made to this flight:

Je me souvenais. L'avion volait très haut, entre des tours de nuages, des tours immobiles et terrifiantes, des tours compactes comme faites de rochers ... Ces incroyables tours émergeaient d'un abîme violet au fond duquel gîtait la planète dont j'avais quitté le sol la veille pour y redescendre, dans une heure ou deux. Alors ce serait le Mexique, les cailloux, les forêts, les brousses, les marigots du Mexique avec leurs cactus, leurs moustiques et leurs chaumières.³⁴⁰

Against this parallel reading of *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* and *Le Voyage enchanté* both the linear nature of Weiss's journey from Mexico to Alaska and Mexico as its starting point are plausible and the use of 'un autre avion' in the above quotation becomes more convincing with the knowledge that Weiss had departed the day before. But the use of 'ramener' is still puzzling at this point in her narrative. Although no explicit reference is made to previous visits in *Le Voyage enchanté*, Weiss was no stranger to North America. Her first visit was as a young journalist when, in 1925, she followed Finance Minister Joseph Caillaux to New York, presented an English version of *L'Europe Nouvelle* to the American press, and gave a number of seminars throughout the country for the Foreign Policy Association.³⁴¹ In 1940, under the authority of the Vichy Government, Weiss went to America to collect medical supplies for the Red Cross³⁴² and she visited again in the spring of 1946 between her visits to Nuremberg.³⁴³ Her memoirs also record that she had visited

³⁴⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 14.

³⁴¹ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 185 and Louise Weiss, 'Les États-Unis en 1925', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1969), 30-41.

³⁴² L'Amiral Henri Labrousse, 'Hommage à Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, 1994), pp. 525-534, (p. 533).

³⁴³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 25.

certain places on a number of occasions for a variety of reasons, often outside her control, and also that she held a particular dislike for producing chronological narratives – an observation which is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

J'avais parcouru des régions immenses pour m'apercevoir brusquement que mes itinéraires me masquaient des faits essentiels et qu'il me fallait changer de cap, aborder des régions imprévues ou m'en retourner vers des lieux déjà explorés pour y tourner, comme une toupie, jusqu'à l'épuisement de ma curiosité. Souvent les voies m'étaient barrées par des intempéries saisonnières ou politiques, lesquelles me contraignaient soit à une patience d'âne, soit à m'en aller ou encore revenir, mais dans un dédale de pas lassant. L'ordre chronologique valait encore moins. Rien n'aurait été plus fastidieux que de suivre mes carnets de notes, avec leurs redites, leurs recoupements, leurs rappels de textes, leurs quêtes déçues, en dépit de leurs moissons de surprises et d'enchantements.³⁴⁴

It can be assumed that Weiss was not overly concerned with the accuracy of her schedule but was recalling earlier trips to North America in her use of the verb 'ramener', making this verb a far more plausible vocabulary choice. This contextual framework re-establishes credibility in Weiss's narrative allowing her to continue travelling through the myths of North America without damaging any pact between herself and her readers. Her displacement through the myths of the North American continent, is alluded to in the use of the verb 'brasser'. Although principally referring to the mechanics of the aircraft's flight to produce lift and movement towards her destination, it metaphorically embraces Weiss's determination to uncover the myths of the North American continent. As the propellers of the aircraft stir the air to relocate Weiss to New Orleans, her travel narrative stirs up the myths of the North American continent.

³⁴⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

The positioning of Weiss's account of her relocation from Mexico to New Orleans in *Le Voyage enchanté* is pertinent to an understanding of the link between her physical displacement and engagement with myth. It appears between the myths of Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent of Mexican folklore, and Damballah-Wèdo, the grass snake featured in traditional stories from the state of Louisiana.³⁴⁵ This pattern continues as she travels north. For example, her account of her journey from Fort-Saint-Jean to Fort Nelson appears between the myths of 'Eena le castor' and 'Ta Yel, le grand corbeau, et Kw a-Kw a, son fils'.³⁴⁶ In both instances, Weiss's account of her physical displacement between states and neighbouring towns bridges two separate myths from two distinct communities and represents her passage from one contact zone to another and from one mythological encounter to the next. Myth and physical displacement are inextricably linked by this structure. However, building on the earlier suggestion that speed was an inherent factor in Weiss's physical displacement between states and towns, her choice of transport would have undoubtedly played a part in shaping – perhaps even disadvantaging – these mythological encounters.

Weiss's use of vocabulary associated with direction and movement is bound up with the pace of her physical displacement. For example, Weiss often documented the landscape she observed through an aeroplane window. These accounts typically foregrounded repeated and rapid relocation across the North American continent, but detailed

³⁴⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p.47.

³⁴⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 134-146. The spelling above is the version used by Weiss in the title of this myth. It differs in the body of her subsequent narrative, appearing as Kwa-Kwa (without spaces). However, this version is the same as that which appears in the contents list on page 401 of the same publication, namely: 'Tayel, le grand corbeau et Kwa-Kwa son fils.'

descriptions were usually absent. When flying to Dawson City, Weiss noted, 'Nous volâmes dans le crépuscule pendant des heures. A droite, les arbres ondulaient à perte de vue.'³⁴⁷

This observation is consistent with the generally accepted view that speed hinders a traveller's engagement with the world. Charles Forsdick acknowledges Saint-Pol-Roux's earlier theory of the connection between speed and kinetic, sensory, and perceptual impoverishment, reasserting that speed 'abstracts travellers from the surroundings through which they are conveyed.'³⁴⁸ Kimberley Healey, quoting French author and travel writer Paul Morand, reinforces the perception that speed has a dampening effect on a traveller's physical sensation and responsiveness, claiming: 'For Morand, technological speed in travel may merely serve to numb humans to their experience of the world.'³⁴⁹ In Weiss's account of her journey to Dawson City (above) there is a sense of monotony in the flight and little engagement with what she portrays to be an uninteresting landscape unfolding beneath her.

Weiss appeared to hasten from one aeroplane to the next as she journeyed across North America. For example, she signalled her departure from Yellowknife with the phrase 'je me retrouvais dans le ciel du Mackenzie'³⁵⁰ and her hops between Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific Ocean were conducted 'toujours en avion'.³⁵¹ But, unlike her contemporary,

³⁴⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 158.

³⁴⁸ Charles Forsdick, 'Travel and the Body', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 68-77 (p. 70).

³⁴⁹ Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 52 and for a discussion on how twentieth century travel writers adopted literary form in the light of the effects of speed on consciousness.

³⁵⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 99.

³⁵¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 209.

Paul Morand, Weiss was not drawn to this mode of transport through her love of speed.³⁵² Her flights were more important to her mythological encounters and physical displacement between contact zones. They served the purpose of physically relocating her to another area in her pursuit of myth. But, as might be anticipated given the viewpoints advocated by Forsdick and Healey the speed of her physical displacement hindered a deep engagement with myth. Rather than the glue between one mythological encounter and the next, her flights became a metaphor for cleansing or leaving behind previous mythological encounters. Leaving Mexico, Weiss stated, 'Mais déjà l'avion baissait [...] A bord je m'étais débarrassée de Quetzalcoatl.'³⁵³ Landings were an opportunity to embark on new experiences: 'Dès mes premiers pas sur l'asphalte de l'aérodrome, je me sentis entraînée dans un profond monde noir – *the deep black South*.'³⁵⁴

Rather than providing her with the insight to the twentieth century she so desired, Weiss's flights were indicative of a meeting with the world in the Reichlerian sense of a space passed through, and not the clear and active engagement with alterity advocated by Deprêtre. The purpose of this observation is neither to locate Weiss in a discourse of anti-speed nor to criticise her choice of transport over alternative slower options – after all it was impossible for her to walk between states in search of myth. Rather it is to juxtapose

³⁵² Morand's love of speed drew him to the glitzy, jet-set world of sports, events, and machines associated with rapid movement; see Paul Morand, *Air Indien* (Paris: Grasset, 1932) where he dedicates a whole chapter to *Avions* talking about courageous pilots, the sense of adventure of aviators, and the speed at which he crossed South America. See also Andrea Loselle, *History's Double: Cultural Tourism in Twentieth-Century French Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 86 which references Morand's frivolous world and his staging of photographs seated at the tail of a cardboard airplane or with friends on a stage set of an ocean liner at the *Foire des Invalides*. For a critique of Morand's style of travel writing and his apparently glitzy, cosmopolitan lifestyle, see Alain Tassel, 'De New York (1930) à Venise (1971) ou les portraits de villes chez Paul Morand', in *Récits du dernier siècle des voyages de Victor Segalen à Nicolas Bouvier*, ed. by Olivier Hambursin (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), pp. 161-172.

³⁵³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 50.

³⁵⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 50.

two different rhythms evident in Weiss's physical displacement and to explore the consequences of each on her mythological encounters. The following discussion slows down the tempo of Weiss's displacement to explore the nature and consequences of a journey on foot.

Weiss's walk around the town of Fort-Smith

In her statement: 'Je traversai à pied le 60^e parallèle',³⁵⁵ an alternative, decelerated pace of physical displacement is introduced into Weiss's travel narrative as she walked around the immediate vicinity of Fort Smith. This latitude is significant as it marks both Weiss's entry into the land of the midnight sun and the beginning of her mythological encounters in this particular contact zone. Forsdick describes walking as an effective way of engaging with the world, claiming that, by adopting a slower pace, a walker is 'open to the possibilities of otherness'.³⁵⁶ Walking entails a deceleration of movement through everyday life which opens up the pedestrian to 'radically different images' of the world.³⁵⁷ For the average, able pedestrian walking requires no special machinery which might impose an artificial speed on displacement. It leaves pace to the discretion of the individual and links the traveller to a

³⁵⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 93.

³⁵⁶ Charles Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher: uses of the peripatetic in contemporary travel literature', *French and Francophone Studies*, 5 (2001), 47-62 (p. 55). For a discussion of walking in travel narratives and its potential to affect perceptions of the world, see also Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 64.

³⁵⁷ Charles Forsdick, 'Projected Journeys: Exploring the Limits of Travel', in *The Art of the Project: Projects and Experiments in Modern French Culture*, ed. by Johnnie Gratton and Michael Sheringham (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), pp. 51-65 (p. 57).

time before technology when the rhythm of life seemed slower and interaction was more usually conducted face-to-face rather than mediated.³⁵⁸

As discussed in the Introduction, Weiss was keen to engage with people face-to-face rather than rely on documented archives. It was important to her that she trod the paths of those who had gone before and connected with 'survivors' of turbulent times. Walking, therefore, had the potential to position Weiss alongside the remnants of the past she was so keen to uncover. Weiss should not however be judged as nostalgic in her approach. Her focus was very much on applying what she could learn from the past to events of the twentieth century, rather than reminiscing about yesteryear. Walking, a decelerated form of displacement, complemented her inter-state travel. It was an opportunity for Weiss to tread in the footsteps of the survivors she was so eager to encounter and to engage more closely with the mythological alterity of North America.

The tempo of Weiss's accounts of her walks around town is significantly slower than her descriptions of flight and her field of vision takes on a much smaller but more descriptive perspective. Rather than somewhat uninspiring descriptions of the landscape rolling as far as the eye could see with very little variation, Weiss picked out aspects of her immediate surroundings, describing them fully and with reference to their context and local importance.

³⁵⁸ Forsdick, 'A quoi bon marcher: uses of the peripatetic in contemporary travel literature', p. 55. Peripatetic travel on foot has its own arena for debate outside the scope of this discussion around issues associated with walking by choice, walking as protest against mechanisation, walking out of obligation, implications of class and gender differences on walking, and the effect of walking on the traveller's body. For a discussion on these see Catharine Mee, *Interpersonal Encounters in Contemporary Travel Writing: French and Italian Perspectives* (London: Anthem Press, 2014).

Un monument commémorait le souvenir d'un bûcheron mort dans sa hutte de rondins ... En son temps, les chaudières des bateaux fonctionnaient au bois. Tout le trafic de Fort-Smith dépendait de lui. Nous passâmes la maison d'un trappeur. Des ramures d'originaux en décoraient le toit. Un bison empaillé pelait dans le jardin. Huit chiens de traîne hurlaient à fendre l'âme, attachés à un fil de fer tendu entre les arbres. Ils allaient et venaient sans relâche, appelant l'hiver qui venait de s'en aller et ne tarderait pas à réapparaître. Plus tard, je devais m'habituer à leurs lugubres aboiements. Dans la forêt canadienne, chaque communauté d'hommes était flanquée d'une communauté de chiens. On entendait les campements avant de les voir. Les rapides mugissaient au pied de la falaise.³⁵⁹

When moving at a slower pace on foot, Weiss exchanges verbs which evoke a sense of significant and rapid movement for references to the region's scenery and local population. For example, a lumberjack on whom the logistics of the town's communications once depended, moose antlers gracing the roof of a trapper's lodge, packs of dogs living noisily alongside the local community, and white-water rapids thundering and crashing around craggy rock faces symbolise more than the lure of a sense of the exotic (albeit frozen rather than tropical) in this unfamiliar landscape. This slower pace of physical displacement not only enabled Weiss to engage intimately with the historical and cultural 'Otherness' of the indigenous community³⁶⁰ but led her to a significant mythological encounter with 'Etchoguen, le premier navigateur' – the first encounter following her failed attempt to discover more about *La douce Évangéline* in Quebec.

In the five pages which immediately follow this account of her stay in Fort Smith and before she relocated to Yellowknife, Weiss recounts her version of the myth of 'Etchoguen, le premier navigateur' as told by the indigenous people. Consistent with the mythological

³⁵⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 93.

³⁶⁰ See Louise Weiss, 'Petits métiers du Grand Nord', *La Nef*, 48, (1948), 3-14 in which she describes at length the livelihoods of some of the individuals she met in this region including Irma, the daughter of an original pioneer who continued working as a gold prospector, Suzy who reared husky dogs to pull sledges, Tom Foot the trapper, farmers, fur traders, artisans who worked with gold and ivory, dancers, and chefs.

gaze attributed to her in Chapter Four, Weiss's version of the myth does not seek to establish archetypes across other ancient narratives but to reveal explanations of the world through which she was travelling. It tells the story of a local sailor who was the first to make a canoe, master the dangerous rivers, and survive the Great Flood to witness the re-population of the earth. Connections can be made between the myth and Weiss's location in the descriptions of raging waters, the dangers of navigating the river, and the cultural heritage and ethnicity of the protagonists who were considered to be the ancestors of the present-day indigenous people. Weiss had certainly encountered myth in a way that would not have been possible travelling at speed. Weiss's mythological encounter in Fort Smith had brought her into contact with survivors of the past and with remnants of their heritage – a specific concern of Weiss and consistent with Deprêtre's interpretation of 'un monde parcouru' discussed above.

But Weiss's presentation of this mythological encounter feels somewhat incomplete. Not only does the mythological encounter come to an abrupt end, but fleurons are used to mark the beginning and the end of the myth which, as discussed in Chapter Four, divorced it from her narrative. Nothing is recorded between the final sentence of the story of 'Etchoguen, le premier navigateur' and the opening of the next chapter which takes up Weiss's journey some days later. Weiss made neither a comment on the myth nor a link between it and her perception of the twentieth century. The myth stands out, detached from her journey narrative, stemming both the flow of the sequence of events and curtailing Weiss's own movement around Fort Smith. Although her slower physical displacement had brought her nearer to a mythological encounter than her inter-state flights, she had still not succeeded in revealing answers to the turbulence she perceived in

the twentieth century. Seemingly once more unable to adopt the role of intermediary over witness, Weiss failed to transit the boundary between this mythological encounter and contemporary society. Etchoguen remained not only encapsulated by the fleurons positioned at the beginning and end of the printed story but also firmly sealed in a pocket of experiential knowledge in Fort Smith.

A call for fresh interpretations of displacement

In the context of travel writing, displacement is clearly synonymous with movement and relocation. The hypotheses posited by both Reichler and Deprêtre (above) both hinge on physical displacement – more specifically, movement through a space which entails a discernible engagement with alterity. But, when this premise falls down and physical relocation is no longer sufficient for addressing the specific concerns of the travel writer, it is reasonable to look for fresh interpretations of displacement. Current scholarship, however, does not fully provide for alternative perspectives. Jacqueline Dutton firmly reiterates that displacement is considered to be an ‘action that implies covering a certain distance, usually on a spatial plane,’ although she does acknowledge that, if overtly specified, displacement could be seen as ‘temporal, mental, or astral’.³⁶¹ Healey comes closest to alluding to the possibility of different readings of displacement in her comment that: ‘the modern traveller needs only a few minutes in a new place to feel some sort of displacement.’³⁶²

³⁶¹ Jacqueline Dutton, ‘Taking Time Out to Travel: Competing Temporalities in Contemporary French Travel Writing’, *Nottingham French Studies*, 51 (2012), 1-13 (p. 2).

³⁶² Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930*, p. 57.

Taken from her critique of Morand's *Flèche d'Orient*,³⁶³ Healey's use of 'some sort of displacement' suggests a variety of interpretations might be at hand but does not give suggestions as to what these might be. Using 'Home' as a reference point, it is not unreasonable for the traveller faced with a discernible engagement with alterity to feel unsettled or affected by differences in, for example, time zones, economic progress, attitudes, or culture, amongst others. Each represents a metaphorical shift away from the familiarity of 'Home' and any could feasibly be interpreted as Healey's 'sort of displacement.' But Healey does not develop her statement, choosing to frame her discussion of displacement solely in the established context of physical movement through a space and its debilitating effect on a traveller abstracted from the 'Home' environment.

Reading displacement exclusively as physical relocation does not address Weiss's specific concerns as a travel writer and, irrespective of the pace of this displacement, has been shown to have had limited effect on her experiential knowledge of myth. Weiss placed tremendous value on physically going to a place to see for herself rather than reading about the experiences of others. Moving from state to state in pursuit of myth and intimate encounters with indigenous communities were certainly essential to Weiss's experiential knowledge of myth, but physical displacement was not necessarily sufficient to fully understand these mythological encounters. This observation brings this discussion full circle to the question posed at the start of this chapter – whether displacement should be understood exclusively as physical relocation or whether Weiss was affected by other types of displacement. Building on the opportunity for a fresh interpretation of displacement, the

³⁶³ Paul Morand, *Flèche d'Orient* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1932).

following discussion broadens out from the generally accepted concept of displacement as physical relocation to examine the influence of temporal displacement on Weiss's journey through the myths of North America.

A fresh perspective: temporal displacement

Weiss's motivation to travel is predicated on the juxtaposition of the past and the present. Temporal displacement, therefore, is central to her travel narratives. But it is not necessarily restricted to the here and now. Its influence on her mythological encounters is not primarily a question of how long she stayed in one particular place, or how long she was away from 'Home'.³⁶⁴ Rather, temporal displacement is grounded in a dialogue across the centuries – perhaps even across millennia – which switched her point of reference from one era to another. But it is not until she reached the tip of the Alaskan peninsula that she felt the full effect of temporal displacement when she declared, 'L'Alaska, c'était la terre avant la genèse (sic)'.³⁶⁵ Marking the distance between twentieth-century Europe and Alaska in terms of time rather than physical distance conforms to Healey's observation of the early twentieth century European traveller's fascination with time.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ See Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (Co. Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), p. 19 for a distinction between horizontal and vertical travel, where horizontal is the more conventional understanding of travel as a (shorter) linear progression from place to place and vertical is a temporary dwelling in a location for a (longer) period of time where the traveller can drill down into the particulars of a community. Whilst this could spark a discussion of the implications of length of stay on both experiential knowledge and encounters with the Other, Cronin's focus was translation and the acquisition of vocabulary – neither a focus of Weiss's travel narratives. Therefore, a discussion on horizontal and vertical travel lies outside this thesis.

³⁶⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁶⁶ Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930*, pp. 49-50.

When Weiss arrived in Galena, Alaska, a storm was raging. On foot and therefore moving at a decelerated pace, her account continues to make reference to the scenery and local population. Weiss's bleak descriptions of 'des montagnes noires',³⁶⁷ 'des plages noires',³⁶⁸ and 'une mer noire'³⁶⁹ suggest a black void, an emptiness before creation. Only the contrast of the white 'écume des vagues'³⁷⁰ offered any bright hope from 'le deuil du paysage'.³⁷¹ This description is analogous to both a Judeo-Christian interpretation of the chaotic void awaiting light before creation, 'L'Alaska, c'était la terre avant la genèse',³⁷² and Weiss's perception of the chaos of the turbulence of the twentieth century.

As will be shown below as this discussion unfolds, Weiss's use of the word 'genesis' is not a spiritual reference but a temporal marker, a pointer to the beginning of time. This dark, empty space was eventually animated, if only fleetingly, by her encounter with some of the local population whose 'Otherness' attracted her Western eye:

Les autres déambulaient dans leurs longues chemises de peau fourrée. Gais comme des pinsons avec leurs joues rouges et leurs yeux bridés, les enfants, dès qu'ils me voyaient, se sauvaient à qui mieux mieux à travers les flaques. Leur rire me gagnait, tandis que je les observais, mi-ours, mi-magots, grouiller dans la bourrasque. Leurs légendes voulaient que les ours fussent leurs cousins.³⁷³

In this encounter with a handful of indigenous people Weiss was introduced to the importance of local mythology as an explanation of the world and its people. She firstly

³⁶⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁶⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁶⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁷⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁷¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁷² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

³⁷³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 202.

records the mythological status of bears as man's cousin before citing the importance of the sea, earth, birds, and mammals to provincial folklore and the reason for the facial appearance of the indigenous people.³⁷⁴ Suddenly, the roar of a dredger's siren in the harbour snapped Weiss back to the present day. Revelling in the ancient narratives of the local people came to an abrupt end and Weiss was once more conscious of the storm raging around her.

Weiss takes only twelve lines of text to present these untitled myths in a manner which is noticeably different to the examples discussed previously. She presents the myth in short sentences citing only basic facts and does not use fleurons to mark either the beginning or the end. Rather than being separated from Weiss's narrative, the myth is drawn intimately into the report of her mythological encounter. On initial reflection, this suggests that temporal displacement, rather than physical displacement, enabled a closer engagement with the myths of North America. But it appears to have had no longstanding effect on Weiss's experiential knowledge. The abrupt return to the storm raging around her suggests a return to the chaos of the contemporary world.

Temporal displacement had not succeeded in revealing any answers to the turbulence Weiss perceived in the twentieth century. She had found nothing in the past with which to connect. Her encounter had temporally displaced her through 180 degrees to confront her perception of the dawn of time. In a departure from her original motives, Weiss was no longer looking for ruins from the past in the modern world but experiencing the modern world in the past. Alaska almost offered Weiss a blank canvas on which to paint

³⁷⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 202-203.

the answers to a peaceful world; the opportunity to start again. It represented a space which had none of the pain and turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century: it was awaiting creation. But this was not Weiss's intention. She was not looking for a refuge far away from her contemporary world but rather a shared experience from which she, if not mankind, could learn. Here she was surrounded by a vast expanse of civilisation with, as yet, no past, no ruins, and no survivors – a bleak and disappointing region.

Parallels can be drawn between this encounter and Weiss's encounter with the earlier myth of *La douce Evangeline*. Having journeyed to where she perceived the heart of the myth resided, Weiss found nothing. Although Weiss had experienced the clear and active engagement with alterity favoured by Deprêtre in her encounter with the indigenous people, she found this remote Alaskan promontory of little use to her specific concerns and her comment, 'Mon impression de pays non créé persistait,'³⁷⁵ suggests her first impressions never changed during her stay there. This sentiment also alludes to Alaska's administrative and constitutional status at the time of Weiss's visit. Although this encounter was published in 1960, Célia Bertin and the Musée de Saverne record that Weiss visited Alaska in 1949, some ten years before Alaska was admitted as the 49th state of the US on 3rd January 1959. From a hegemonic viewpoint, Alaska was also 'non créé' in the sense that it was not growing into a first world, flourishing economy but was still defined by its American territorial status, its vast unexplored regions, and its gold prospecting.

Implicit in her response to this temporal displacement is the suggestion that Weiss viewed Alaska as inferior, an attitude reminiscent of Pratt's Eurocentric "monarch-of-all-I-

³⁷⁵ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 305.

survey”³⁷⁶ model. By attributing a lack of knowledge and experience to the area and assuming she could learn nothing from the encounter, Weiss positioned herself as a representative of a superior culture, one founded on experience, born, formed and developed with the scars of a turbulent past. At this point in her itinerary, Weiss’s account can also be seen to conform to a general trope of Western travel narratives where travellers venturing to a remote or unfamiliar region portray themselves as going back in time and attribute a degree of historical stasis to another culture.³⁷⁷ Carl Thompson claims this trope is a misinterpretation of the encounter as it ignores the fact that all cultures change over time but in different directions and at different speeds. Weiss, herself, was guilty as charged. She found Alaska isolated, alien, and frozen in a time before creation – but she was measuring this against her own, Eurocentric timeline. Moreover, Weiss once more appeared unable to adopt the role of intermediary over that of witness, failing to transit the boundary between this mythological encounter and contemporary society. Having crossed a threshold into the heart of a mythological encounter, Weiss was then unable to turn through 180 degrees and apply her experiential knowledge to her perception of the twentieth century. Temporal displacement had shown Weiss a void and had distanced her so far from the myths of North America that they held no relevance for the twentieth century.

³⁷⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, p. 201.

³⁷⁷ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 160.

Moving between interpretations of displacement

This chapter has illustrated that displacement can be more widely interpreted than merely physical relocation and that Weiss's mythological encounters are firmly grounded in both physical and temporal displacement. But, although Weiss found a clear and active engagement with alterity, neither her physical nor temporal displacement proved to be fully satisfactory in enabling her to adopt the role of intermediary over that of witness. Three reasons lie behind this. Firstly, Weiss's physical displacement was often dependent on rapid transit over great distances which hampered her engagement with alterity. Secondly, even when she relocated herself in the heart of a community, Weiss's presentation, specifically her use of fleurons, divorced her mythological encounters from her experiential knowledge. The absence of any obvious connection between myths and the contemporary world seems almost intentional – perhaps the result of her relentless positioning of herself as a witness rather than an intermediary. Thirdly, Weiss's temporal displacement instilled in her a sense of superiority which erased any possibility that the ancient heritage of the people she encountered could offer her an explanation of the turbulence of the twentieth century. Irrespective of the nature of her displacement, physical or temporal, Weiss failed to transit the boundary between her mythological encounters and contemporary society. Although her mythological encounters brought her into a more intimate relationship with alterity, she consistently failed to read her experiential knowledge into her perception of the twentieth century.

This sense of detachment runs through all of Weiss's mythological encounters. Probably the strongest example of this is in the quotation already referred to above when,

on her flight from Mexico to New Orleans, Weiss shook off her encounter with Quetzalcoatl with the words, 'A bord je m'étais débarrassée de Quetzalcóatl.'³⁷⁸ The verb used here is very strong: a physical 'shaking off' or 'getting rid of'. Although Weiss states that she thought the story of the plumed serpent of Mexico was, 'la plus belle des fables du Mexique',³⁷⁹ she completely left it behind when she boarded the aeroplane for Mexico. The myth of Quetzalcoatl travelled no further with her and had no influence on her subsequent mythological encounters.

This is an important quotation for a number of reasons. It is central to the relationship between Weiss and myth and indicative of her rejection of mythological archetypes in favour of an approach which foregrounds specificity of place. Quetzalcoatl was specific to Mexico and therefore remained in Mexico when she left. However, it also speaks to the importance of displacement in Weiss's travel narratives. This chapter opened with the suggestion that physical displacement might not be the sole factor influencing Weiss's experiential knowledge and went on to discuss the effects of temporal displacement. Weiss's reaction to the myth of Quetzalcoatl is suggestive of third type of displacement – a psychological detachment not in the Freudian sense of employing defence mechanisms, but in the sense of a mental leap or shift, a movement in the mind which influences the acquisition of experiential knowledge.

The nature of the primary sources relating to Weiss's mythological encounters in North America has restricted the analysis of this chapter to her text-based travel narratives. The following chapter joins Weiss on her journey through Asia and extends the analysis of

³⁷⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 50.

³⁷⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 19.

multiple interpretations of displacement and their effect on her acquisition of experiential knowledge to include her visual travel narratives from this region.

CHAPTER 6

RUNNING THROUGH THE MIND

WEISS'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE MYTHS OF ASIA

The previous chapter called for a fresh understanding of displacement, one which recognises that physical relocation is not necessarily the sole interpretation of this fundamental attribute of the travel narrative. This appeal for a broader reading of displacement is not intended, however, to disregard the generally accepted definition of displacement as physical movement through the world – it is, after all, one of the foremost defining features of the travel narrative. Rather it is to propose that a number of interpretations of displacement can emerge in a travel narrative. Whilst physical relocation cannot be overlooked, it is merely one of several complementary types of displacement which, collectively, impact on encounters in the contact zone.

In the previous discussion of Weiss's accounts of her journey through the continent of North America, temporal displacement emerged alongside physical displacement as a factor which affected Weiss's mythological encounters. These interpretations of displacement were further complemented by a psychological displacement arising from Weiss's mythological gaze on the communities she visited. All three readings of displacement influenced Weiss's acquisition of experiential knowledge. The current chapter joins Weiss as she crosses the Bering Strait into Japan and onwards through the continent of Asia. The discussion is based on the premise that multiple interpretations of displacement are possible, the interplay of which can affect the acquisition of experiential knowledge.

Two examples from Weiss's text-based travel narratives – her flight from Anchorage to Tokyo as described in *Le Voyage enchanté* and her account of her first observations of Asia as she wandered the streets of Tokyo – are used to examine whether Weiss's travel narratives from Asia offer similar or new interpretations of displacement to those evident in her accounts from North America, before exploring how the interpretation of displacement might be affected by the introduction of a visual component.

Weiss's flight from Anchorage to Tokyo

When travelling over long distances, Weiss's transport of choice – or probably transport of necessity given the distances travelled – was typically the aeroplane. Both her text-based and visual travel narratives make reference to physical displacement using aeroplanes. For example, the scripted voiceover to *A l'ouest d'Eden*³⁸⁰ apologises to God for having to take an aeroplane to find the Garden of Eden whilst the images on screen depict two people riding across a barren desert on camels with the silhouette of a small aeroplane high in the sky behind them. At 02:46 in *Allah au Cachemire*, the voiceover informs the viewer that many centuries ago people from neighbouring Mongolia arrived in Kashmir on elephants having trekked over the mountains, but Weiss had made the same journey, '...en avion de Delhi en survolant des passes de 4,000 mètres d'altitude.'³⁸¹ In relocating to Japan Weiss flew directly across the Bering Strait to Tokyo:

³⁸⁰ *A l'ouest d'Eden*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951), 01:05.

³⁸¹ *Allah au Cachemire*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1954).

Et je repartis d’Anchorage, toujours en avion. Volant cette fois très haut au-dessus des Aléoutiennes que leurs fumées dérobaient à mes regards, je vieilliss d’un jour sans m’en apercevoir en franchissant le méridien 180, ligne de démarcation entre l’Extrême-Occident et l’Extrême-Orient, ce méridien que Philéas Fogg rajeunissant d’un jour avait franchi dans l’autre sens, en route vers son appartement londonien dont il avait oublié d’éteindre le gaz.³⁸²

Reading this intercontinental movement uniquely as physical displacement once more signals Weiss's tendency to adopt an approach to myth based on specificity of place. This flight served the purpose of abstracting Weiss from North America and physically relocating her to another region – on this occasion Tokyo – in her pursuit of myth. In a similar vein to her North American journey, the physicality of moving to a different location, coupled with the speed and altitude of the flight, created a distance between Weiss and mythological encounters.

Mindful of the discussion in Chapter Five which demonstrated the effect of speed on Claude Reichler’s concept of a *monde parcouru* and Evelyne Deprêtre’s call for an obvious engagement with alterity, a perception of distance from the Other is similarly suggested by Weiss's later flight to Kashmir, which Célia Bertin dates to 1954.³⁸³ Flying out of New Delhi, India, to Srinagar, Kashmir, Weiss referred to the aeroplane as ‘notre confortable machine’.³⁸⁴ The aeroplane cocooned Weiss in a familiar and relatively undemanding environment and distinguished it from the potential discomfort of alterity which she seemed to expect on arrival in the contact zone.

In Weiss's account of her transit to Tokyo, there is also a suggestion that psychological displacement was operating concurrently with physical displacement. Weiss's

³⁸² Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), p. 229.

³⁸³ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 412.

³⁸⁴ Louise Weiss, ‘L’Himalaya trône des dieux’, *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955) 7-58 (p. 10).

perception of the mists rising from the sea around the Aleutian Islands was more than an observation on the local meteorological conditions. The mists became a metaphor for the mental barrier that Weiss chose to erect between her mythological encounters of Asia and North America.³⁸⁵ The mists formed a blanket that hid the myths of North America from sight, confining them to their specific, Alaskan location beneath the vapours and halting any possibility that they might follow her to Tokyo. Whilst this emotional detachment is not expressed as strongly as when Weiss shook off the myth of Quetzalcoatl on a flight from Mexico to Louisiana, the sense of mentally leaving her encounters behind as she approached Asia is nevertheless apparent.

A temporal reading of displacement in the above quotation from *Le Voyage enchanté* brings Weiss no closer to a mythological encounter in Asia. Unlike the temporal displacement she experienced in Alaska, Weiss was not brought face to face with a time before creation but rather an engagement with early fiction. Distracted by the apparent ageing effect she experienced in crossing the international date line, Weiss inadvertently portrayed herself as a time traveller, a latter-day Phileas Fogg who had turned her attention to fiction rather than myth even though she was travelling in the opposite direction to the protagonist of Jules Verne's 1873 novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*,³⁸⁶ But, if Weiss

³⁸⁵ The Alaskan peninsula is situated on a tectonic plate and has numerous active volcanoes. This area is known as the North-East Belt of Pacific Fire. It is usual to see columns of vapour rise from the ground and from the surface of the sea as a result of the combination of sea temperature and atmospheric pressure. This gives the area its name: 'The Valley of 10,000 Smokes.' It is this phenomenon to which Weiss refers in the section of her travel narrative entitled, 'Le fils de la mer des fumées' in Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 209-228. See also Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 281 where Weiss refers to the density of the vapours.

³⁸⁶ Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days* (London: Dean and Son, 1958).

was interested in connecting with survivors of the past to glean information for the present, she would not necessarily find the answer in a fictional encounter.

Aligning herself with a well-known character, albeit a fictional one, highlights an intertextuality in Weiss's *œuvre* which alludes to an interest in the travel writing genre and which is a recurring feature of Weiss's travel narratives. For example, her account of her journey through Mexico makes reference to and quotes from the chronicles of travellers such as Bartolome de Las Casas, Bernal Diaz del Castillo and Hernán Cortés and her North American travel narratives feature the work of travellers such as Edward Linnaeus Keithahn, a teacher and curator at the Alaska Historical Museum and Library who, whilst living and working in Alaska, gathered tales from the indigenous people and published *Alaskan Igloo Tales*.³⁸⁷ As discussed in Chapter Two, the extent of Weiss's familiarity with the works of other travellers prior to her own journey is unclear. However, her reference to a selection of travel narratives other than her own – albeit minimal – serves to contextualise her own journeys by connecting her with the regions through which she passed.

As Weiss entered Asia through Japan, evidence of displacement similar to her physical, temporal, and psychological experiences of North America emerge in her travel narratives. However, as she began to explore Tokyo an alternative reading of displacement becomes apparent.

³⁸⁷ Edward Linnaeus Keithahn, *Alaskan Igloo Tales* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1974).

Wandering the streets of Tokyo

As Weiss began to explore Tokyo, an alternative reading of displacement emerges. Having arrived in Japan, Weiss wasted no time in recounting her first observations of the streets of Tokyo. As soon as she landed, she was confronted by a street scene which depicted a culture and a way of life that had little, if anything, in common with her perception of either Home or the barren wastes of Alaska which she had just left behind:

Après les déserts de l'Arctique, la fourmilière de l'Empire m'affola. Hommes partout ! Partout ! Partout ! En sortant de l'aérodrome, je vis un ouvrier en culottes bleues qui roulait torse nu, sur sa bicyclette de pacotille. Assise sur le porte-bagage, sa femme se cramponnait à son cou. Elle était enceinte. Deux gosses déjà complétaient le couple. L'honorable fils aîné était ficelé sur le guidon de la machine et l'honorable fils cadet, tête ballante, était niché dans le kimono de sa mère, comme dans une hotte. Et chacun des deux marmots portait, lui aussi, dans son petit kimono, une poupée frangée de cheveux noirs, aux joues vermeilles, qui lui ressemblait étrangement. Vision hallucinante ! J'aurais pu rentrer dans l'aérodrome et repartir autour du monde.³⁸⁸

Weiss's final sentence resonates with Edward Said's Orientalist who does not actually like the Orient.³⁸⁹ However, Weiss's comment in her memoirs, 'Tokyo: la fourmilière! Un choc'³⁹⁰ suggests that her reaction to Japan probably stemmed more from shock than a dislike of the region. Everything about Tokyo proved to be a challenge for Weiss: the density of the population which she likened to ants, the bare-chested worker in blue breeches with the jumble of a family and belongings hanging off his bicycle, and his

³⁸⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 230.

³⁸⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).

³⁹⁰ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 282.

children's toys which resembled the two young brothers far too closely for the comfort of a Western eye. But it was probably his pregnant wife who, clinging to her husband's neck, embodied Weiss's anxieties of an overpopulated world.

Population density troubled Weiss throughout her post-war years. For example, in her memoirs, Weiss discusses the 'fléau de la surpopulation, le mal endémique du Sud-Est asiatique'³⁹¹ and in her documentary *Le Rocher Tragique*, she uses statistics to pointedly refer to the number of people already living in Hong Kong, the future impact of the growing population on housing and square meterage of living space, and the rate of childbirth in Asia which appears as a written comment on screen, 'Vous êtes entrés dans cette salle il y a un moment. Lorsque vous le quitterez, le JAPON, la CHINE, et les INDES ...[sic]... auront doté ce monde de 6,000 à 7,000 nouveaux gosses.'³⁹² But, for Weiss, the issue of burgeoning populations stretched far beyond the borders of Asia. In the 'Africa Archive File' retained by the Musée de Saverne, Weiss's personal notes suggest that she confronted the Catholic church on its position regarding birth control when she visited Mauritius and La Réunion.³⁹³ The prospect of a third child joining the tangle of the family in front of her eyes in Tokyo would have deepened her concerns on this subject.

Weiss's travel narratives from Japan reveal a shift in style compared to earlier examples. Her response to the country was markedly different to that of Pierre Loti who, in *Madame Chrysanthème*, portrayed Japan as delicate, feminine, and ripe for exploitation.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 357.

³⁹² *Le Rocher tragique*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958), 20.30.

³⁹³ See archive file 'Africa' and 'Remarques des auditeurs de Curepipe 7/11' where the church refuted Weiss's comments: 'L'église catholique devra réviser sa prise de position sur le contrôle des naissances sous peine de se trouver en grave difficulté dans les pays où la misère issue de la surpopulation donnera toutes ses chances au communisme.' See also Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 245 where Weiss advocates the civilising mission of colonialism to aid the problem of overpopulation.

³⁹⁴ Pierre Loti, *Madame Chrysanthème* (Paris: Calmann Levy Editeurs, 1922).

Weiss's narratives suggest she experienced so great a cultural shift that her experience of everyday life in Tokyo caused her to renounce the possibility of acquiring any further experiential knowledge. Weiss recorded in her account of her visit to Japan that: 'J'atterris à Tokyo et ne fus pas longue à courir le Japon,'³⁹⁵ suggesting that, in her view, a rapid exit was preferable to an extended stay in such an uncomfortable environment.

This desire to leave quickly was an apparent rejection of the contact zone and had a noticeable impact on Weiss's subsequent mythological encounters. Some of the traditional myths associated with Japan, for example the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters), which is the oldest surviving account of Japan's myths, is missing from Weiss's narratives hinting at a superficial encounter with the ancient narratives of Japan. Only one myth, 'Les quarante-sept fidèles rôlins,'³⁹⁶ is reproduced at length along with six short proverbs.³⁹⁷ The style in which these are presented is similar to the format Weiss used for her North American myths in that typographical marks and stylistic devices are used which separate them from her narrative. The story of 'Les quarante-sept fidèles rôlins' is separated from her narrative by fleurons.

The proverbs, however, which Weiss perceived as being part of an almost anonymous collection of 'mille petits poèmes, mille dictons,'³⁹⁸ are only a few lines long, centred on the page, and italicised as illustrated in the quotation below. In both cases there is a sense of detachment between the mythological encounter and Weiss's narrative:

³⁹⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229.

³⁹⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 239-264.

³⁹⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229, p. 230, p. 213, p. 234, p. 235, and p. 238.

³⁹⁸ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229. See also Louise Weiss, 'Images de l'empire du soleil levant', *Œuvres Libres* 162 (1959), 141-16.

*Papillon, réveille-toi
Et viens !
Nous ferons route ensemble.*³⁹⁹

Weiss makes no reference to the source of these proverbs, but their style is similar to the work of the celebrated Japanese poet Matsuo Basho (1644–1694), widely respected as an exponent of *haiku* – a Japanese poetic form of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables respectively. This format is lost in Weiss's rendering of Japanese proverbs into French, but the translation of Japanese *haiku* is notoriously difficult. This is not only because of the structure of the Japanese language in comparison with that of European languages, but also the socio-cultural subtext underpinning *haiku*, and the challenge of recreating in the translated text the aesthetics of the literary form of the original.⁴⁰⁰

This chapter opened with the stated intention of examining whether multiple interpretations of displacement were apparent in Weiss's travel narratives of her journeys around Asia. Whilst physical, temporal, and psychological displacements similar to those seen in her North American travel narratives are evident in her text-based account of her journey through Japan, the markedly different way of life in Tokyo compared to Western Europe prompted a sense of cultural displacement. Weiss's response to her engagement with the alterity of Japan prompted a rapid retreat and a superficial encounter which noticeably distanced her from the community's myths. But Weiss's itinerary around the continent of Asia was not restricted to Japan, extending into China, Hong Kong, Kashmir,

³⁹⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229. Quotation reproduced in the centre of the page as in the primary source.

⁴⁰⁰ For a discussion of the challenges of translating *haiku* and the approaches adopted by current scholars, see Alison Kirby Record and Adnan K. Abdulla, 'On the Difficulties of Translating Haiku into English', *Translation and Literature*, 25 (2016), 171–88.

India, Cambodia, and Korea. Unlike her stay in Japan which is recorded in text only, these journeys were captured in both written and visual form. Before exploring how the interpretation of displacement might be affected by the introduction of visual components, Weiss's use of photographs and moving images is discussed in the following section.

Moving between word and image

Weiss's *Mission aux Indes* in the summer of 1954 marks the point at which her mythological gaze became apparent in her visual travel narratives from Asia. Although some of her earlier travel narratives included photography or moving image, they recounted her journey around the Middle East rather than Asia and focussed on the region's history without foregrounding her mythological encounters.⁴⁰¹ Weiss's first encounter with the continent of Asia was her passage from Anchorage to Tokyo,⁴⁰² a direct flight with Northwest Airlines across the Bering Strait which Bertin dates as having taken place in September 1949.⁴⁰³ Subsequent to this visit, and before her *Mission aux Indes*, Weiss published four travel narratives which included photographs.⁴⁰⁴ On this occasion Weiss was not accompanied by

⁴⁰¹ Louise Weiss, 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 184 (1949), 384-386; Louise Weiss, 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 186 (1949), 449-451; Louise Weiss, 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 191 (1949), 618-620; Louise Weiss, *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950); *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1951); *60 siècles d'histoire en Syrie*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951); *A l'ouest d'Eden*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951); Louise Weiss, 'Mon carnet de route de Séoul au 38e parallèle', in *De la Banquise à la Jungle: les Français, la terre et les hommes*, ed. by Henri Lauga (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1952), pp. 202-216; and Louise Weiss and Georges Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', *Paris Match*, 6-13 September 1952, pp. 20-25.

⁴⁰² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 231. A reference to a crossing from Anchorage to Tokyo is also made in Louise Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne', *France Illustration*, 232 (1950) 293-296 (p. 293).

⁴⁰³ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, p. 383.

⁴⁰⁴ Louise Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne', *France Illustration*, 232 (1950), 293-296; Louise Weiss, 'Mon séjour en Corée', *France Illustration*, 239 (1950), 479-481; Louise Weiss, 'Du royaume de la perle au temple de la déesse du soleil', *France Illustration*, (1950), 515-518; Louise Weiss, 'Les sériculteurs japonais

a photographer and, with the exception of her article, *Les sériculteurs japonais et leurs honorables vers à soie*, which credits the East West Agency and Blanc and Demilly for the photographs, she does not clearly acknowledge the source of the images she used.

However, from notes and invoices in the archives at the Musée de Saverne, it is plausible to assume that the photographs which remained uncredited were also externally sourced as, firstly, there is evidence that images were purchased and, secondly, those photographs which were used do not illustrate Weiss's mythological encounters but support the facts and events referred to in the articles – they carry the feeling of stock images rather than personal encounters.⁴⁰⁵

Unlike some of her contemporaries who were considered to be gifted photographers – for example Isabelle Massieu (1844-1932), a self-appointed observer in a similar tradition to Weiss who also journeyed to Kashmir, and Dame Freya Stark (1893-1993) who, like Weiss, travelled well into her old age – Weiss did not consider herself to be fully competent in this field noting: '[...] de la technique des images je ne connaissais même pas les rudiments.'⁴⁰⁶ Weiss worked with four photographers in the latter half of the twentieth century. From 1951 Georges Bourdelon, her 'fils d'expédition',⁴⁰⁷ was the photographer to whom she turned most often to accompany her on her journeys overseas. Weiss and

et leurs honorables vers à soie', *Sud-est Asiatique*, 25 (1951), 16-19; and Louise Weiss, 'Mon carnet de route de Séoul au 38e parallèle', *De la Banquise à la Jungle*, 1 (1952), 202-216.

⁴⁰⁵ The 'China Archive' box in the Musée de Saverne contains a list of photos purchased from the Japanese tourist office. Accompanying handwritten notes suggests they cost 4,780 (currency unspecified) but the calculations appear incorrect. The 'Libya Archive' box contains a letter on Arabic letterhead entitled, 'Liste des photographies envoyés à Mme Louise Weiss.'

⁴⁰⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

⁴⁰⁷ Georges Bourdelon, 'L'œil à la camera', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet, 1994), pp. 405-418 (p. 409) and hand-written caption on photograph.

Bourdelon (pictured below in Figure 33) built a long-lasting friendship.⁴⁰⁸ Other photographers with whom Weiss worked included Bernard Daillencourt, Louis Miaille, Pierre Guéguen, and Guy Tabary. Daillencourt was acquainted with Bourdelon and joined him and Weiss on the *Mission aux Indes* as it was felt that the scope of the work merited two photographers.⁴⁰⁹ Miaille and Guéguen, whom Weiss nicknamed Loulou and Pierrot,⁴¹⁰ accompanied her to China in 1958 when she considered it too politically dangerous for Bourdelon to accompany her, and, when Bourdelon fell ill with malaria which he contracted in Chad,⁴¹¹ Guéguen and Tabary accompanied Weiss to Djibouti.

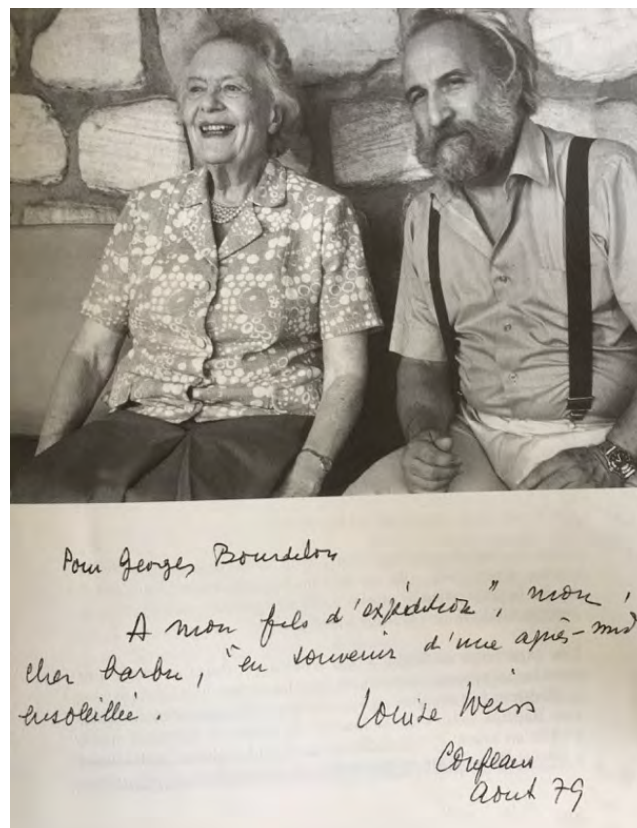


Figure 33: A photograph of Weiss and Bourdelon who enjoyed a long-lasting friendship

⁴⁰⁸ Bourdelon, 'L'œil à la caméra', pp. 405-418. See also Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, pp. 402-403 where Bertin describes their amicable relationship and notes they had a similar anti-clerical viewpoint.

⁴⁰⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 378.

⁴¹⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 444.

⁴¹¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 168.

Weiss's collaboration with professional photographers raises questions around her credibility as a witness and impartial observer. Danièle Méaux argues that the bias and interests of the photographer can affect the composition of a photograph.⁴¹² Therefore, the subject matter and message of the photograph can be influenced by someone else if the photographer is not the travel writer. The involvement of Bourdelon, Daillencourt, Guéguen, Miaille, and Tabary is therefore potentially contentious as it raises questions around the origins of the composition and stylistic elements of Weiss's photographs as well as the messages they conveyed.

However, even though Weiss relied on the technical expertise of professional photographers, there is incontrovertible evidence that she directed the visual content of both her documentaries and photographs. For example, the archive in the Musée de Saverne has retained Weiss's own notes on how specific images were to be captured.

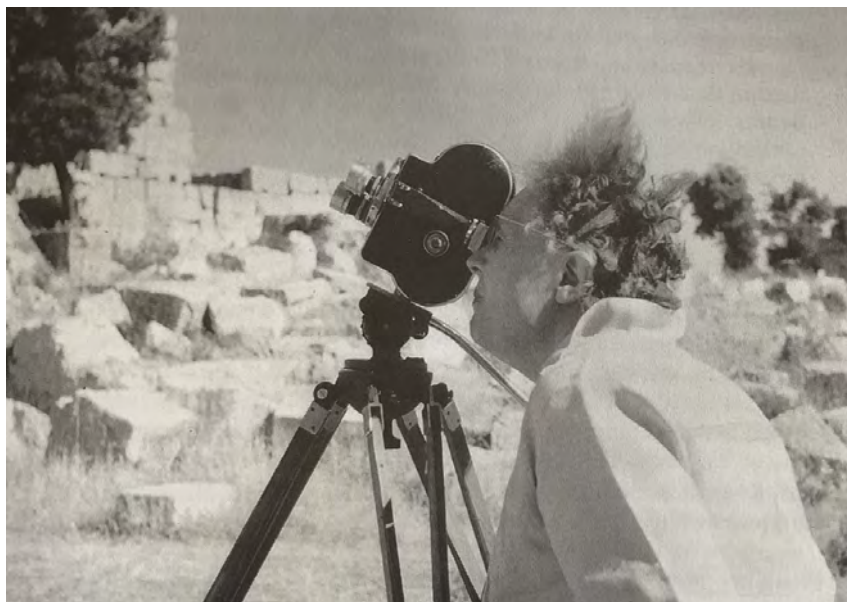


Figure 34: A photograph of Weiss behind a camera testing the angle and composition of a shot

⁴¹² Danièle Méaux, 'Photographies de l'Orient (1850-1880): Empreintes du réel et miroirs de fictions' in *Roman et Récit de Voyage*, ed. by Marie-Christine Gomez-Géraud and Philippe Antoine (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2001), pp. 55-65.

Although Weiss claimed she was not an expert photographer, Bourdelon photographed her behind a camera lens testing an angle (see Figure 34 above).⁴¹³ But it is Bertin's comment which most clearly illustrates Weiss's leadership role in directing Bourdelon in the composition of her visual travel narratives: 'Sans savoir elle-même comment faire, elle lui a appris à choisir ce qu'il devait photographier et elle a eu l'idée des sujets.'⁴¹⁴ This strategy proved to be successful as Freddy Buache, the then director of the Swiss film archive, *Cinémathèque Suisse*, noted that Bourdelon was, 'dès le début des années cinquante [...] le technicien le plus apte à traduire en images et en sons le travail de Louise Weiss'⁴¹⁵ and Weiss herself concluded that 'les images de Georges se révélèrent parfaites.'⁴¹⁶ But it is in *Cachemire* that Weiss's authorship of the visual material is most strongly asserted. Almost relegating Bourdelon and Daillencourt to what seems to be the secondary role of technically capturing the images and challenging usual copyright practice, Weiss notes, 'Les prises de vue ont été dirigées par LOUISE WEISS et réalisées par GEORGES BOURDELON et BERNARD DAILLENCOURT (sic)'.⁴¹⁷

Although Weiss collaborated with professional photographers, she clearly positioned herself as the director who shaped the content and composition of her visual travel narratives. It was her direction and storyboarding which formed the narrative for her readers and she remained the principal communicator of her mythological encounters. As with her text-based travel narratives, when relating her journeys visually, the onus

⁴¹³ Bourdelon, 'L'œil à la camera', p. 413.

⁴¹⁴ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, p. 441.

⁴¹⁵ Bourdelon, 'L'œil à la camera', p. 406.

⁴¹⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 222.

⁴¹⁷ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), p. 128. Capitalisation reproduced as in the original source.

remained on Weiss to transit across the threshold between her mythological encounters and the twentieth century. The role of intermediary proposed for her North American narratives was no less important for her journey across Asia – perhaps even more so given the challenges posed to her and her readers by the unfamiliar, non-Western culture through which she was travelling.

The introduction of a visual component into her later travel narratives from Asia draws together physical, temporal, psychological, and cultural displacements in a new dynamic. The synthesis of these alternative readings of displacement across both her text-based and visual travel narratives offers a more nuanced perspective through which to understand Weiss's acquisition of experiential knowledge. The following discussion uses a map of Kashmir in conjunction with the photograph from the front cover of the book of the same name and an extract from Weiss's text on this region to explore how the interpretation of displacement might be affected by the introduction of visual components.

An analysis of displacement in Weiss's visual travel narratives

It has already been established in Chapter Four that maps of the places Weiss visited are commonplace in her visual travel narratives and are fundamental to the concept of specificity of place. However, as the following discussion will show, maps also contribute to a multifaceted interpretation of displacement.

Kashmir at the time of Weiss's visit is presented cartographically in the publication of the same name and is reproduced in Figure 35 (below).⁴¹⁸ The style of this map is markedly

⁴¹⁸ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 114.

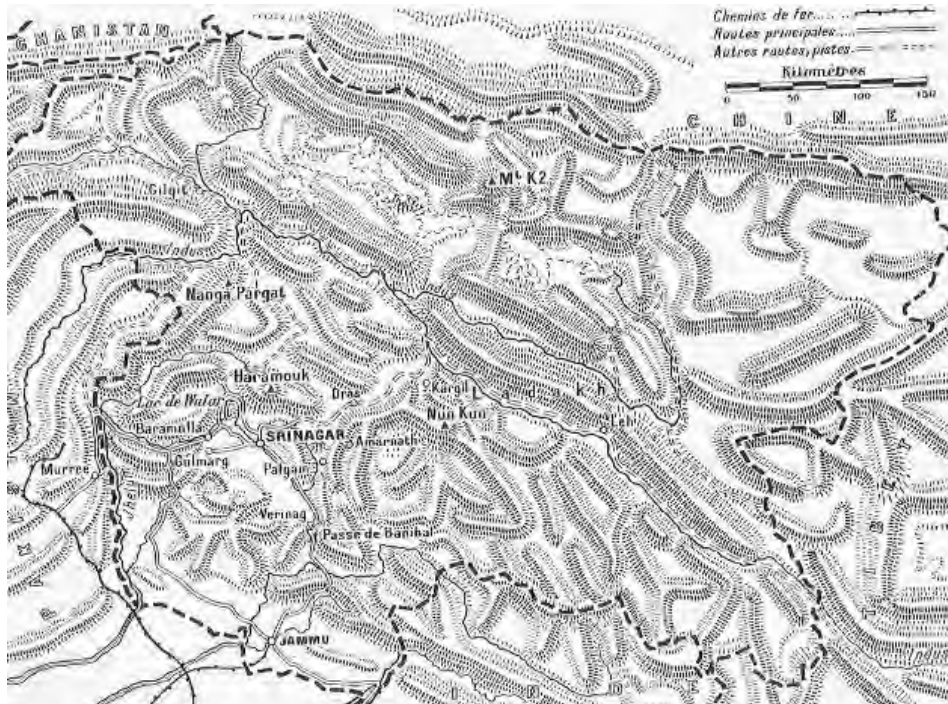


Figure 35: A map of Kashmir from the publication of the same name

different to the style of other maps which appear in Weiss's travel narratives. For example, compared to maps in *Le Voyage enchanté* (see Figure 36 below), it is not illustrated with characters from her mythological encounters but shows the northern Indian state in its entirety and to scale, its external borders in relation to neighbouring countries (Afghanistan appears top left and China top right), its railways, roads and access routes, passes between the mountains and the names of the towns which Weiss visited. The map in Figure 35 is marked with heavy relief lines which indicate the steep, mountainous terrain of the region – the significance of which will emerge below in connection with the photograph on the cover of *Cachemire*. Specific summits, for example Nun Kun, are picked out with small, black triangles.

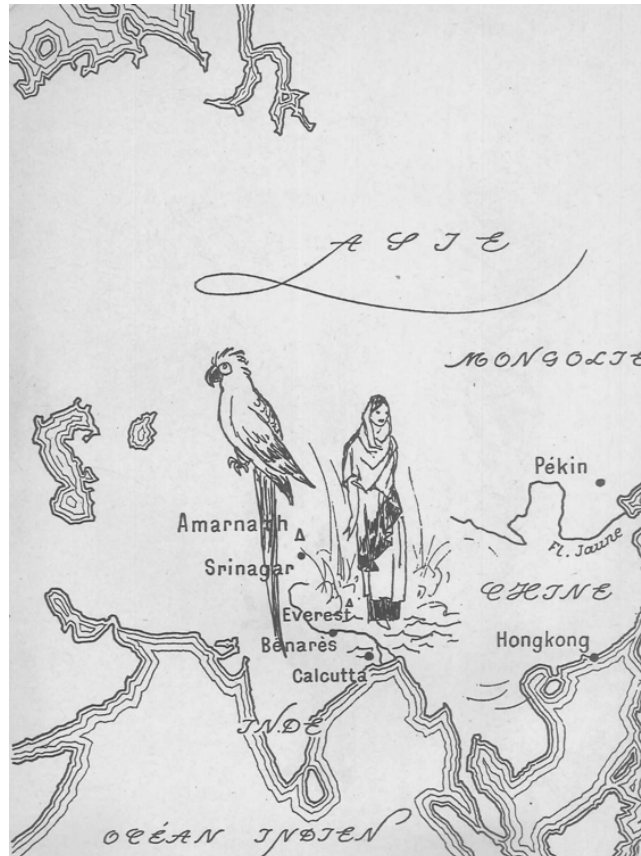


Figure 36: A map from *Le Voyage enchanté* depicting mythological characters

The map in Figure 35 (above) appears to be rooted in a reading of displacement based uniquely on physical displacement. Its focus is geographical, and it makes no reference to any of Weiss's mythological encounters. Consequently, the reader's interpretation of Weiss's journey through Kashmir is potentially distorted by this map. It is only through a parallel reading of other visual and textual elements of her narratives that this incomplete interpretation of her journey is rectified and a more nuanced understanding of her mythological encounters in Kashmir emerge in the interplay between physical, temporal, psychological, and cultural displacement.

The front cover of *Cachemire* in Figure 37 (below) carries a photograph which depicts a lake in a valley in the Himalayas. A similar image also appears in Weiss's

documentary entitled *Aux frontières de l'au-delà*.⁴¹⁹ The title of the publication is printed underneath the picture in a large, easy-to-read font. Susan Sontag claims that putting words to photographs makes the image relevant, classifiable, and authentic in the eyes of the reader.⁴²⁰ The words accompanying the picture in Figure 37 (below) have a similar function to a caption and affirm the authenticity of the subject matter of the image. The colour palette of the title complements the colours of the landscape, further anchoring the title of the book to its location. The location is therefore undisputed as the title of this publication shares its name with the place in the image.

The title is supported by the name of the series, *Les Albums des guides bleus*, which is printed underneath. This was a companion series to Hachette's travel guide portfolio, *Les Guides bleus*, which were considered major French reference books and were extremely

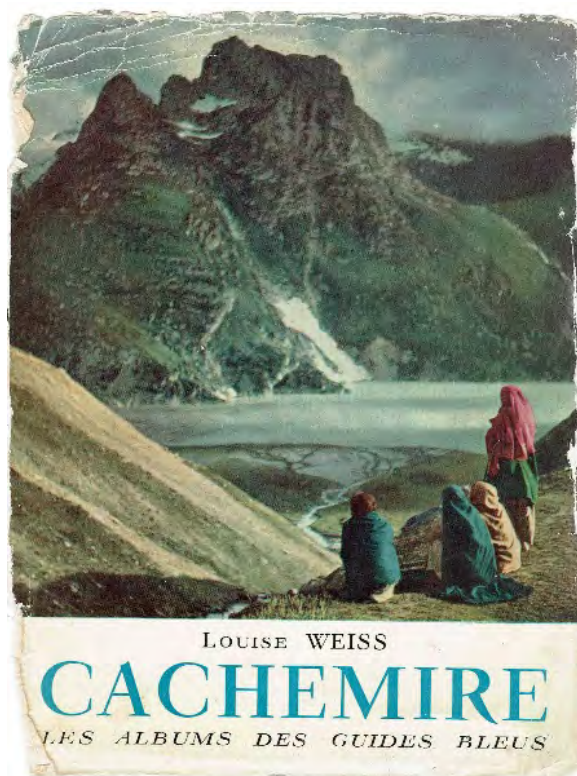


Figure 37: The front cover of *Cachemire*

⁴¹⁹ *Aux frontières de l'au-delà*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Gaumont, 1954), 16.03.

⁴²⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Fairar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977), p. 77.

popular amongst travellers and armchair travellers alike. The reputation associated with *Les Guides bleus* inspires a sense of trust in the publication and the use of the name of the series on the front cover endorses the content of the publication.⁴²¹ This confidence is subliminally transferred to the author, in this instance Weiss herself, whose name appears above the title of the book in the same font, colour, and size as the name of the series. All these elements – title, author, and publication series – appear on a blank, white panel at the bottom of the front cover. There is no noise in this section of the image to detract from the location or the quality and reputation of the publication.

A feeling of remoteness is implied by the lack of any clear sign of permanent human settlement in the photograph. These features are possibly out of shot, perhaps even at a lower altitude away from the mountains, but with nothing to substantiate this suggestion the possibility of a settled civilisation remains conjecture. The four people who are positioned in the bottom right-hand corner of the photograph are the only indication that anyone visits the area. Their demeanour does not suggest they are lost and there is no evidence of any panic or anxiety; a feeling emerges from the generally serene air of inactivity that time has stood still.

The rich red colour of the woman's scarf stands out amongst the browns and greens of the surrounding countryside, drawing the eye to this group of people. Their dress complements the colour palette of the landscape and is obviously not Western, alluding to the possibility that they are local to the area. Even with their clothing wrapped around them and no obvious marker to suggest they reside here, it is doubtful they would have travelled

⁴²¹ See René Clozier, 'Les Albums des Guides Bleus', *L'Information Géographique*, 20 (1956), 80-81 for a discussion of the reputation of the Guides Bleus series.

far to reach the lake as they have neither provisions nor transport to suggest they have trekked over a long distance. Three of the people are seated and one is standing but all have their backs to the camera. There is no interaction between these four people who are all looking expectantly upwards to the mountains, almost listening, perhaps even waiting for something to happen.

The trajectory created by their stance invites the eye to refocus its attention on the barren, craggy mountains on the other side of the lake – the same rugged landscape suggested by the relief lines on the map in Figure 35 (above). The photograph's depth of field gives the impression that the mountains are some way away, cut off by the lake. The small area of snow which remains in the foothills of the mountain, suggests the picture is taken outside of the summer season, possibly in the spring or autumn, and at a high altitude. This white expanse is unlikely to be a waterfall or other stone formation for two reasons. Firstly, Weiss does not refer to such geographical phenomenon in her travel narratives from this region and, secondly, the origin of a water source would probably have been higher up the scar left by the glacial drift which can just be seen extending further above the white area in the photograph. It is not implausible that snow would lie in this region at certain times of the year. In the opening pages of *Cachemire*, when Weiss was strolling around New Delhi on a bright, autumn afternoon, she refers to 'les pics blancs'⁴²² which crown the central plateau of India where Kashmir is situated. Later in the same publication, Weiss notes: 'D'octobre à mai, les montagnes qui l'entourent sont couvertes de neige'⁴²³ and corroborates this in *Le Voyage enchanté* with: 'En juillet: pas de neige.'⁴²⁴

⁴²² Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 5.

⁴²³ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 115.

⁴²⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 338.

The mood of the photograph is also captured in Weiss's account of her stay in India and Kashmir which reads: 'Dans ces vallées himalayennes, des légendes étranges se transmettaient, amplifiées par l'atmosphère des hautes solitudes. Des génies semblaient chevaucher les montagnes.'⁴²⁵ This quotation is loaded with mythological inference. The valley of Kashmir, indicative of Simon Bainbridge's claim that mountains are 'rich with symbolic and mythical associations',⁴²⁶ is transformed by Weiss's text into a place inhabited by mythological characters. Their stories reverberate around the rocky peaks which, at such high altitudes and with no acoustic obstacles to impede them, act almost like loud speakers as they communicate their myths to anyone who will listen. It is almost as if the people pictured in the photograph in Figure 37 (above) had travelled there to hear these myths emanating from the mountains. Although the myths are not directly represented in the image, they are there by implication, endorsed by Weiss's text which describes Kashmir's history as 'une épopée'⁴²⁷ before it retells the story of how Kashmir was formed by the magician Kashyapa.⁴²⁸ Retelling this myth introduces a temporal displacement similar to that Weiss encountered in Alaska. Although Weiss was again repositioned at what she perceived to be the dawn of time, on this occasion she was not faced with a time before creation but rather a time of creation. This mythological encounter enabled her to trace Kashmir's history from its beginning to the present day and identify a contemporary culture built on 'magie', 'nostalgie' and 'splendeur'.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 9.

⁴²⁶ Simon Bainbridge, 'Mountains', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 444-453 (p. 444).

⁴²⁷ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 7.

⁴²⁸ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 7. See also Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', pp. 7-58 where this myth is repeated.

⁴²⁹ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 6.

The combination of these text-based and visual elements creates an analogy between Kashmir and the myth of Shangri-La, which is generally accepted as one of the most striking myths of landscape. The myth of Shangri-La had come to the attention of Europeans in the late 1500s when travellers to the court of the Moghul Emperor Akbar heard strange and marvellous tales of this remote Himalayan world. Its popularity resurfaced in the nineteenth century. Originally an ancient Tibetan, rather than Kashmiri, myth of a remote Himalayan valley, Shangri-La was encircled by mountain peaks where a community was said to live in harmony preparing for when the world would be ready to live in peace. This resonates with Weiss's own interests. Having survived personal suffering and the adversity of two world wars, she was, like many of her contemporaries, an advocate for peace, even trying to change hearts and minds by promoting a European framework of peace through a series of lectures and conferences at the Sorbonne under the auspices of her *Nouvelle École de la Paix*.⁴³⁰ Shangri-La was said to lie in a valley beyond the foothills, next to a lake in the shadow of a white mountain. The many similarities which can be drawn between this myth and the features of the photograph in Figure 37 (above), Weiss's accompanying text, and the map of *Cachemire* in Figure 35 (above), bolster Kashmir's mythological heritage.

The photograph in Figure 37 (above) plays to the exotic interest of the Home readership. Given that Weiss continually strived to reinforce her self-appointed role of witness, this raises the question of whether the photograph is a true representation of

⁴³⁰ María Grazia Melchionni, 'Louise Weiss: une femme exceptionnelle passionnée par l'Europe', *Bulletin Européen*, 708 (2009), 6-8.

reality.⁴³¹ Cognisant that recent developments in modern technology and digital manipulation can alter an image, any analysis of Weiss's visual travel narratives should respect the technology of the era in which they were taken. In his 1985 article, Hubertus von Amelunxen supported the general agreement that a typical viewer perceives a photograph as a real likeness of the world at the time it was taken, claiming: 'La photographie figurant la scène « telle qu'elle a été » non seulement restreint le potentiel d'imaginaire du discours littéraire mais renvoie le lecteur à une réalité dont l'authenticité ne peut être mise en question.'⁴³² More recently Philippe Ortel built on this theory suggesting a viewer therefore places a high level of trust in a photograph.⁴³³ An image, therefore, is indicative of the world and, if the world or the place where the photograph was taken was seen by the viewer, it would resemble the composition of the photograph.

The front cover of *Cachemire*, therefore, could be expected to be a true representation of the region, especially given its endorsement by Les Guides bleus. Claire Gorrara and Margaret Topping develop the argument of *image juste* adding that a photograph has a meaning all of its own which the viewer is at liberty to reinterpret.⁴³⁴ Its meaning, therefore, can seep out of the frame which contains it. Building on Sylvaine Conord's earlier claim advocating the use of a legend or a description of the image,⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ For a discussion of the truth value of a photograph see Howard S. Becker, 'Les photographies, disent-elles la vérité?', *Ethnologie Française*, 1: (XXXVII) (2007), 33-42; Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire* (Paris: Editions Le Seuil, 1980).

⁴³² Hubertus von Amelunxen, 'Quand la photographie se fit lectrice: le livre illustré par la photographie au XIXème siècle', *Romantisme*, 47 (1985), 85-96, (p. 86).

⁴³³ Philippe Ortel, *La littérature à l'ère de la photographie* (Nîmes: Editions Jacqueline Chambon, 2002).

⁴³⁴ Claire Gorrara and Margaret Topping, 'Photography and the Cultural Encounter: François Maspero's *Balkans-Transit* and Nicolas Bouvier's *Chronique Japonaise*', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 8 (2008), 61-75.

⁴³⁵ Sylvaine Conord, 'Usages et fonctions de la photographie'. *Ethnologie Française*, 1: (XXXVII) (2007), 11-22.

Gorrara and Topping propose that text in the form of a caption or a surrounding narrative can stem the above-mentioned seepage and shape the reading of a photograph.

However, it is not the aim of this chapter to present the entire debate around the function of captions. The point of interest in relation to Weiss's travel narratives is the fact that, aside from the title of the publication which appears underneath the photograph, the image has no formal caption. Neither does the map of Kashmir (Figure 35 above) which appears in an appendix entitled 'NOTICES GÉOGRAPHIQUES HISTORIQUES ET ARCHÉOLOGIQUES'⁴³⁶ (capitalisation and omission of punctuation as per the original source). This is inconsistent with the other visual elements in *Cachemire*. Each of the other seventy-one photographs has a caption in this appendix – albeit at some distance from the corresponding photographs. Some of these captions are long, contain data on geographical features, and carry a sense of authority in the knowledge they disseminate. By way of example, the caption for photograph 59 in *Cachemire* entitled *Le chef du pèlerinage d'Amarnath* is 294 words long and the caption for photograph two from the same publication entitled *La vallée du Cachemire* details the size of the area in square metres, its altitude, and the height of some of the surrounding peaks.⁴³⁷

A comparison in the drafting of captions can be made here between Weiss and her contemporary Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1908-1942). In *Loin de New York*,⁴³⁸ Schwarzenbach was trying to understand the American psyche and used photographs with captions to support her narrative. Unlike the captions in Weiss's narratives, these were typically only one sentence long, included much less detail, and their usefulness was

⁴³⁶ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 113.

⁴³⁷ Weiss, *Cachemire*, p. 224 and p. 115 respectively.

⁴³⁸ Annemarie Schwarzenbach, *Loin de New York* (Paris: Editions Payot, 2006).

undermined by the doubt introduced by Schwarzenbach's use of *probablement* (see Figure 38 below). The precision and meticulous detail of Weiss's captions gave them such an air of authority that they cannot be described as anything but useful and informative.



Figure 38: A photograph from *Loin de New York* showing Schwarzenbach's use of *probablement*

The only reference point for Weiss's photograph in Figure 37 (above) is her introductory narrative which begins three pages later and covers 26 pages – far too long to be considered a caption. This potentially leaves the photograph on the front cover open to interpretation and its meaning, therefore, at the psychological mercy of the viewer. But even the subsequent text does not overtly make reference to this particular photograph. Rather, it paints a picture of the entire mythological heritage and history of Kashmir,

demanding a mental leap between the text and the photograph suggesting only psychological displacement can marry the text and the photograph.

There is a noticeable difference in the nature of the psychological displacement in Weiss's accounts of her journey through Asia compared to those of her North American travel narratives. In Asia, psychological displacement appears to be no longer an act of cleansing but a vehicle for closer engagement with a mythological encounter. The psychological displacement triggered by Weiss's visual and textual accounts of her journey through Kashmir enable a mental shift in line with Deprêtre's appeal for a closer engagement with alterity which corresponds to the specific concerns of the travel writer. For example, Weiss had little in common with the Mexican mythological protagonist Quetzalcoatl – they shared no life experiences and the myth was rooted in the chaos of pre-Colombian society, a moment in time with which Weiss could no longer engage in any meaningful sense. She felt the necessity to purge herself of this mythological encounter which afforded her no relevant experiential knowledge for the twentieth century. But, the peace of the Kashmiri valley, its remoteness from turmoil of contemporary society, and its analogy with the peace of Shangri-La resonated with Weiss's perception of, and hopes for, the twentieth-century.

The interplay between the map, photograph, and text taken from Weiss's visual travel narratives draws together various readings of displacement. Physical displacement in Weiss's mythological encounter in Kashmir is suggested by the map which relocates her to another place. Other markers of elsewhere lie in the explicit reference to the Himalayas, the clothing worn by the group in the photograph, and the heavy relief lines on the map which are so unlike the cartography of France. Together they substantiate the feeling of being

somewhere else, somewhere other than 'Home', but there is no hint of any cultural displacement to hasten Weiss's departure. The story of the origins of Kashmir evokes a temporal displacement, a journey that stretches back in time to discover the magic and splendour on which modern-day Kashmir is built. The essence of this mythological encounter and its potential for the acquisition of experiential knowledge is captured by the psychological displacement prompted by the marriage of the photograph on the front cover of *Cachemire* and Weiss's accompanying narrative, '[...] tous les jours un peu plus sûrement, le Cachemire m'envoûtait; tous les jours un peu plus profondément, je m'initiais à ses mythes.'⁴³⁹ Her photograph and narrative appear to work together to appeal to a shared heritage which invites a closer engagement with the mythological tradition of the community – a view which is discussed in the following section.

The importance of a shared heritage

It might rightly be assumed at this juncture that a combination of text-based and visual elements in a travel narrative is more beneficial to understanding the effect of displacement on Weiss's acquisition of experiential knowledge. However, the story of Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes⁴⁴⁰ contests this assumption as it is retold uniquely in text. Except for an illustration of Souen on a map, which is no more accentuated than any of the other

⁴³⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 365.

⁴⁴⁰ There is a discrepancy in the spelling and capitalization of this myth across Weiss's travel narratives. In *Le Voyage enchanté*, 'SOUEN, LE PARFAIT-SINGE-ROI' is used as the title to the myth and the protagonist is referred to by the same rubric in lower case as Weiss's story unfolds between two fleurons. However, outside of the story but in the same publication, the protagonist is referred to as 'Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes' with no hyphens. In the dedication to her memoirs, Weiss uses the format 'SOUËN, LE PARFAIT-ROI-DES-SINGES' with the diacritical mark and hyphens.

mythological figures depicted on the same graphic (see Figure 39 below), this story has no accompanying images through which to indulge a reading of the relationship between physical, temporal, psychological, and cultural displacement. However, despite the absence of visual stimuli, Souen emerges as central to a discussion on Weiss's psychological displacement. The following discussion examines the similarities between Weiss and Souen and explores the importance of a shared heritage to the understanding of psychological displacement.

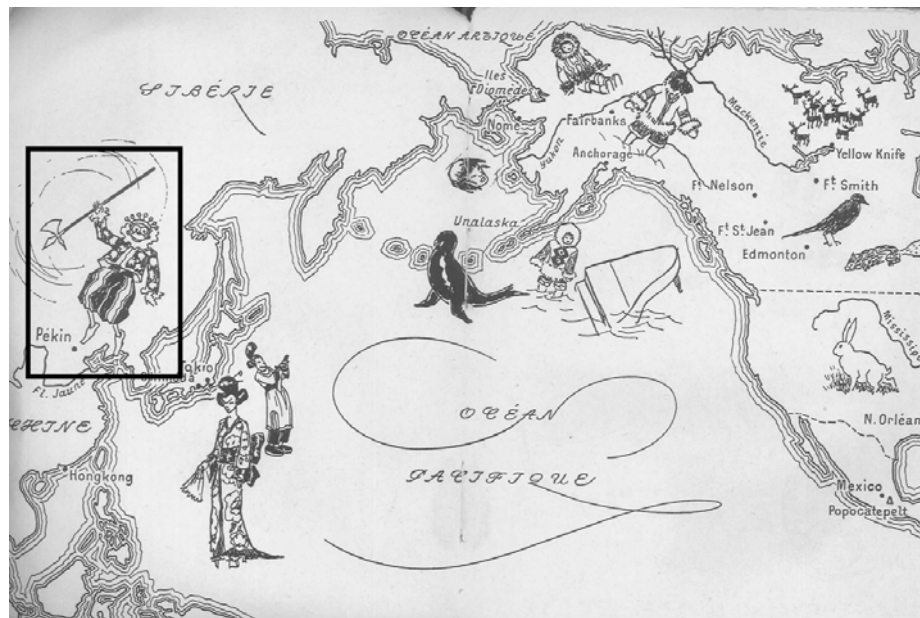


Figure 39: A map from *Le Voyage enchanté* with box added (left) to highlight the illustration of Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes

It has already been established in Chapter Four through the scholarship of M. Stuart Madden, Fiona Bowie, Percy Cohen, and Jacques Lemoine that a group's order and identity is predicated on the mutual acceptance of its narrative.⁴⁴¹ Irrespective of how this narrative

⁴⁴¹ Percy S. Cohen, 'Theories of Myth', *Man*, 4 (1969), 337-353; Jacques Lemoine, 'Mythes d'origine, mythes d'identification', *L'Homme*, 27 (1987), 55-85; Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); and M. Stuart Madden, 'Myth, Folklore, and Ancient Ethics', *Cumberland Law Review*, 37 (2006-7), 43-75.

is presented, it glues the society together into a collective whole. Each member identifies with the group and has a share in its heritage. In her encounter with Souen, Weiss recognised a character who was very similar to herself, whose story resonated with her own. Mentally realigning herself with this mythological protagonist, she identified a shared heritage between them. Before evaluating the contribution of a shared heritage to an understanding of displacement in Weiss's travel narratives, the myth of Souen, le Parfait-singe-roi bears some brief retelling in order to demonstrate the parallels which can be drawn between Weiss and this mythological protagonist.

Souen is a mythological creature from the 15th century Chinese epic novel *Journey to the West*.⁴⁴² Souen accompanied the monk Xuazang on a voyage to retrieve 15,144 Buddhist sutras (or texts) and bring them back to the emperor. Souen himself was born out of the primeval forces of chaos. Encased in an egg, he was jettisoned out of a mountain and the egg was split open by a hurricane. Souen befriended other animals on the earth and ruled as leader over a group of monkeys for 300 years before embarking on a journey to discover the secret of eternal life. Finding nothing, but acquiring supernatural powers, the arrogant Souen eventually returned home. Many battles ensued which escalated to the realm of the gods until Souen was tasked with locating a collection of Buddhist sutras. Having gathered them together, Souen found one page was missing. A cyclone blew up which dispersed the papers far and wide and Souen was obliged to go out once more to find them. When he had reassembled the pages, he found they were blank. Buddha declared that these blank pages symbolised the unwritten laws which virtuous men carried in their heart. The pages were

⁴⁴² Louise Weiss, 'Souen le singe pèlerin', *Œuvres Libres*, 7 (1962), 111-126.

blank because humans could only learn from written texts; mankind was yet to discover the higher laws of morality.

Like Souen, Weiss was also a traveller born out of chaos. Where Souen emerged from the turbulent forces of a primeval world, Weiss emerged from the turmoil of a twentieth-century Europe devastated by the chaos of war. There is also a certain similarity in the objectives of their respective journeys. Souen was searching for the 15,144 Buddhist laws of morality. Likewise, confronted by what she perceived as a lack of justice, a failed political system with little hope of engendering any semblance of peace between nations, and a world sinking further into immorality under the fear of dictatorial regimes, Weiss hoped her journey would provide her with an understanding of human behaviour and the opportunity to seize and bring home the supreme laws which governed and ordered a moral society: 'J'ai essayé de m'emparer en divers lieux du monde des hautes lois du comportement humain, pour les rapporter, à mon tour, en mon pays.'⁴⁴³

Both Weiss and Souen failed in their respective searches. Souen had the supreme laws almost in his reach but they were initially incomplete (the missing page referred to in the myth) and subsequently unobtainable (the blank pages). Weiss's mythological encounters proved to be equally unsuccessful. Her encounter with Evangeline in Montreal produced a similar blank page. When she arrived, she was unable to find anything in the former Acadian region to supplement her original mythological encounter with Evangeline in Louisiana and therefore had nothing further to write about. Additionally, her experiences in Alaska and Tokyo were little more than her own personal cyclone which blew away the potential to gain any experiential knowledge. Weiss, too, claimed: 'La Loi que je cherchais

⁴⁴³ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 9.

s'éloignait à mesure que je croyais l'approcher.'⁴⁴⁴ What began as a mythological encounter, eventually became a metaphor for Weiss's own journey around the world. Both she and Souen endured setbacks in their search for the higher laws of morality. But the dominant narrative which permeates all of Weiss's publications is the doubt she will ever find them: 'Une page manquait aux traités cherchés par Souen. Le Ciel, comme la Terre, a ses lacunes.'⁴⁴⁵

Underpinning this is the question of whether finding the laws in her mythological encounters and subsequently enforcing them is consistent with Weiss's general ethos. Her aspiration – albeit overtly unvoiced – seems to be centred on applying a universal law of morality which would take Europe, if not the world, out of the turmoil of the twentieth century. But such an approach nods to a sense of totalitarianism, a regime which Weiss and her contemporaries were afraid would penetrate into Europe and Western society. A book of rules was considered dangerous; a 'catéchisme élémentaire',⁴⁴⁶ was reminiscent of Mao's China.

Many similarities can be drawn between the journeys of Souen and Weiss that allude to a strong psychological connection and a shared heritage. Souen, therefore, holds a prominent position in Weiss's *œuvre*. Despite the character's unexceptional appearance on the map, Weiss affords the myth of Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes a privileged, if not exalted, status in her travel narratives with her comment, 's'il est une fable chinoise qui doit trouver place en ce livre, c'est la sienne.'⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 15.

⁴⁴⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 9.

⁴⁴⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 268.

⁴⁴⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 294.

Reference to this myth also extends beyond Weiss's travel narratives, indicating its importance and standing in her life experience. For example, the complete story is retold in a 1962 issue of *Œuvres Libres*,⁴⁴⁸ parallels are drawn between the myth and some of Weiss's life experiences in her articles,⁴⁴⁹ and the entirety of Volume Six of her memoirs is dedicated to this mythological protagonist where, in its closing remarks, Weiss includes Souen in the text for her proposed epitaph.⁴⁵⁰ In *Le Voyage enchanté*, Weiss's version of the myth unfolds over 35 pages, the longest report of any mythological encounter in the publication. It also adopts an unusual stylistic feature which hints at Weiss's closer engagement with this myth. A fleuron appears before the opening line of the myth which distances it from Weiss's narrative, but this separation is mitigated by the unusual absence of a fleuron at the end of the story. This stylistic feature is unique to the myth of Souen. The absence of a closing fleuron alludes to the possibility of a shared heritage between Weiss and Souen. No longer fettered by a typographical mark but united by psychological displacement, Weiss and Souen were united on a journey as Weiss uses one of the central plots of the myth as a springboard to move her account from China into India, 'Je partis pour les Indes avec l'idée de quérir auprès du Bouddha quelques-uns de ses 15 144 Traités du Bien pour mon usage personnel.'⁴⁵¹

Although there is no interplay between text and image in Weiss's mythological encounter with Souen, there is no less a sense of psychological displacement in the many

⁴⁴⁸ Weiss, 'Souen le singe pèlerin', pp. 111-126.

⁴⁴⁹ See Louise Weiss, 'Souvenirs de Nuremberg', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 2 (1975), 306-315 where images from the myth of Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes are hinted at in the comparison of the Trial papers to the dispersed papers in the myth and the likening of the courtroom to the *Grand Temple du Fracas du Tonnerre* where Buddha tried Souen.

⁴⁵⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 9 and p. 517.

⁴⁵¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 331.

parallels that can be drawn between Weiss and the myth. Faced with a mythological encounter which resonated so deeply with a traveller's own spirit, it appears that psychological displacement is no longer dependent on the interplay between text and image but on the degree to which a sense of a shared heritage is felt. Weiss found so much in common with Souen that she internalised the character, ceasing to be a witness and adopting a role more akin to an intermediary. In the context of a shared heritage, Souen became Weiss's own narrative and she was able to cross the threshold she perceived between her mythological encounters and contemporary society.

Finding common ground in the many interpretations of displacement

This chapter identifies the benefit that a multifaceted reading of displacement can bring to an understanding of Weiss's acquisition of experiential knowledge. Physical, temporal, cultural, and psychological interpretations of displacement came under scrutiny in this discussion. Allusions to physical and temporal displacement and their ability to draw out the nuances of Weiss's encounters run equally through her travel narratives from both Asia and North America. But it was not until Weiss reached the Far East, in particular Japan, that the negative effect of cultural displacement came to the fore.

With the introduction of visual elements, this same journey provided a richer portfolio of narratives and the opportunity to draw these interpretations of displacement together in a new dynamic. Psychological displacement acquired a more prominent role in this context and underpinned the importance of a shared heritage to Weiss's acquisition of experiential knowledge. Weiss's most profound mythological encounter emerged when she

identified a close association with the shared heritage of a community. When she found some common ground, some shared life experiences, she was able to transit the boundary between her mythological encounter with Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes and contemporary society.

Inherent in this observation is the recurrent clash of the role of witness versus the role of intermediary. After a seemingly relentless pursuit to maintain her role of impartial observer over that of intermediary, Weiss appears to let her defences down in her encounter with Souen. Finally, she was able to join a mythological protagonist on a shared search, a combined journey to uncover the higher laws of morality. In an almost tragic twist to this epic tale, however, the laws she searched for remained outside her grasp. However, if Weiss had found them, she risked placing herself at the mercy of the autocratic power regimes she was so desperate to keep at bay. The following discussion positions Weiss against a backdrop of expressions of supremacy and coercion to explore how her encounters with power contributed to her understanding of the turmoil she perceived in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 7

POWER AND MORALITY, WAR AND PEACE

ENGAGING WITH EXPRESSIONS OF SUPREMACY

Weiss's preoccupation with the tension between power and morality did not suddenly emerge in her post-war travel narratives. Rather, it was the end of the Great War which marked the beginning of her concerns and some thirty years before the publication of the travel narratives under consideration here. Weiss's interwar anxiety with the ethics of supremacy is, however, an important foothold for a discussion of her post-war travel narratives as it contextualises her perception of power in later life. As Weiss's experiential knowledge deepened, her concerns turned to the moral significance of political actions and the extent to which power became a defining feature of human nature.

The purpose here is not to critique the established theories of power but to locate Weiss in a theoretical framework that conceptualises her own perspective on power. This chapter positions Weiss against a backdrop of expressions of supremacy and coercion to provide a basis for understanding how her interpretation of power in her post-war travel narratives was shaped by the events of the early twentieth century. It opens with an analysis of Weiss's personal experience of coercive power before considering how the opportunities of a journalistic career enabled her to probe more deeply the relationship between power and morality. Weiss's encounter with power in the early part of her life raises the question of the reliability of her later role as self-appointed witness. Here, as in previous chapters, Weiss's description of herself comes under scrutiny once more. Her

experiential knowledge of power and morality positions her in a relationship with the world which demands closer analysis. Underpinning this is the assumption that some sort of yardstick was needed by which Weiss could identify, measure and evaluate the impact of the relationship between power and morality through her post-war travel narratives – an issue which is addressed in the second half of this chapter.

Weiss's perspective on coercive power

From early adulthood – Weiss was 21 when the Great War broke out – the potential for a nation to exercise its military might in the furtherance of its socio-economic or ideological objectives, and the propensity for power to be used to exploit and coerce the population, rose to the forefront of Weiss's thinking. Alongside many of her intellectual peers, Weiss was haunted by the spectre of future conflict. She believed that the environment of the twentieth century was such that human behaviour, with its egotistical tendency to pursue its passions and desires, would, if left unchecked, lead to further aggression.

This view of power is consistent with Catherine Brennan's interpretation of the Weberian notion of power which recognises that power itself is not necessarily an independent quality but an attribute of economic, social and political relations, a channel through which political actions can be exercised.⁴⁵² Inherent in this is the probability that certain individuals or groups will have access to resources that allow them to enforce their respective wills, legitimately or otherwise, onto the behaviour of others. Brennan develops

⁴⁵² Catherine Brennan, *Max Weber on Power and Social Stratification: An Interpretation and Critique* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 72-76 (p. 72).

her interpretation of power with a consideration of the Foucauldian contention that there is no power without the possibility of opposition: forces of power and resistance exist side-by-side, rooted in the subjectivity of will and intention. The rise of coercive power or opposition is dependent on the will or intention to either neutralise or engage these forces. It is at this juncture, where available resources are used with the intention to unbalance illegitimately the socio-economic and political relations of a society, particularly through conflict, that Weiss questions the morality of power in the hope of finding an explanation for the upheaval of contemporary civilisation.

Weiss was convinced that peace and security in Europe rested on a Franco-German reconciliation that could only be achieved through supranational institutions. This seed of political realism, sown in Third-Republic France, took root and thrived as the bedrock for a political and journalistic standpoint that was to stay with Weiss throughout her life. The realisation that any sense of morality could diminish as power increased was borne out of her experiential knowledge as a woman in France during the Great War and as a journalist between the wars working on a European and international stage. This experiential knowledge is illustrated below with examples taken firstly from her response to the Great War and its aftermath and, secondly, from her early journalistic career.

Weiss's response to the Great War

Weiss concern with the actions of political regimes was primarily the propensity of these administrations to use their power to coerce communities. In her comment: 'La guerre de 1914 m'avait profondément marquée. De ses massacres j'émergeais, en pleine jeunesse et

révoltée, dans un monde en ruine dont les hommes de mon âge avaient presque tous été tués,⁴⁵³ it is clear that, like many young women of her generation, she was overwhelmed by the scale of destruction wrought across France during the Great War and by the loss of significant numbers of young men who had been ordered to fight for their country. John Keegan cites that, out of a total population of 20 million Frenchmen, 300,000 were killed in the first four months of conflict. By the end of the war the death toll had risen to nearly two million Frenchmen with the heaviest mortality rate amongst the younger age groups. By 1918, there were 630,000 young war widows in France who had little prospect of remarrying.⁴⁵⁴ Martin Kitchen builds on these figures recording that, by 1921, nearly 37% of France's female population was single.⁴⁵⁵ Weiss observed this indiscriminate and widespread mortality at first hand, noting in the first volume of her memoirs: 'La mort entraînait dans tous les foyers. ... Elle ... [la guerre] ... ne distinguait pas entre le fils du ministre et le fils du charbonnier'.⁴⁵⁶ Irrespective of a family's status, almost every household lost sons, brothers, and fathers.

Weiss was confronted by the consequences of political actions during her time as 'directrice' of a military hospital in Brittany, a term she pointedly used in a 1976 interview to respond to, and seemingly correct, the question raised by anchor-man Guy Ackermann in reference to her role as 'infirmière'.⁴⁵⁷ Surrounded by mortally wounded soldiers in the

⁴⁵³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), preface page not numbered.

⁴⁵⁴ John Keegan, *The First World War* (London: Bodley Head Publications, 2014), p. 6 and p. 343.

⁴⁵⁵ Martin Kitchen, *Europe Between the Wars* (London: Pearson Longman, 2006), p. 56.

⁴⁵⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 205.

⁴⁵⁷ 'Passionnante Louise Weiss I', *Les archives de la RTS*, 4 July 1976, <http://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/culture/entretiens/6085238-passionnante-louise-weiss.html> [accessed 8 November 2017], 10.45-10.49.

hospital, Weiss was forced to face the horrors of war. But Weiss's retort to Ackermann was more than a correction of her professional status. By positioning herself in what was effectively a senior management role, it illustrates her desire to be engaged with the organisation of the hospital's activities. Right from the beginning of her career, Weiss involved herself in power structures, suggesting she was someone who also liked to wield power and authority as well as critique it. However, Weiss rarely, if ever, criticised her own expressions of power. Where the actions of those she observed were often questioned or embellished with negative connotations, her own actions were portrayed far more positively and for the greater good.

Weiss's subsequent view of the world was very much defined by her perception of the aftermath of the Great War. In the same interview referred to above, she revealed to Ackermann her belief that war was 'une insurmontable horreur' for which she had 'aucun enthousiasme'.⁴⁵⁸ By this point in her life, Weiss had witnessed much turbulence on an international scale from the breakup of the French empire and its associated challenges from former colonies seeking independence, to the outbreak of the 1946 Indochinese rebellion, and the onset of the Cold War in 1947. As far as she was concerned, war, and by implication its orchestrators and consequences, served no purpose. Or, at the very least, its purpose was not clear to her.

Having lived through both World Wars and witnessed the aftermath of numerous conflicts overseas, Weiss became unsure of the motives behind this particular expression of political power. If war was considered necessary to bring circumstances to their conclusion,

⁴⁵⁸ *Passionnante Louise Weiss I*, Les archives de la RTS, 4 July 1976, <http://www.rts.ch/archives/tv/culture/entretiens/6085238-passionnante-louise-weiss.html> [accessed 8 November 2017], 10:03.

or even if it was carried out as a means to an end, experience had shown her that the most recent fight was very rarely the final conflict. Not only had the Great War proved itself not to be the *Der des Ders*, but other conflicts had arisen elsewhere in the world. A desire for supremacy that encroached on any sense of morality, irrespective of how it was expressed, persuaded her that the idea of one final battle well fought was no consolation for the death of almost an entire generation of men:

La guerre était-elle une fin satisfaisante, un besoin originel ou simplement un moyen? Inversement aux espoirs de ma jeunesse, j'étais conduite à penser qu'il était impossible, après chaque conflit, de se consoler, comme les poilus de Verdun, en se persuadant que l'on s'était massacré une bonne et dernière fois.⁴⁵⁹

Weiss's experience as a journalist

Weiss's professional career as a journalist also provided her with opportunities through which to understand the moral significance of political actions. At the age of 25 and with the financial support of journalist Hyacinthe Philouze, Weiss founded *L'Europe Nouvelle*, a centre-left journal dedicated to promoting ideas of peace and reconciliation.⁴⁶⁰ Its political, economic, and literary articles were written by some of the most well-known commentators of the time, including Weiss herself.

Although during its early years *L'Europe Nouvelle* was criticised for its lack of experience and the vague ideas of its founders, it grew into an influential journal advocating

⁴⁵⁹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 81.

⁴⁶⁰ Details on subscription rates for *L'Europe Nouvelle*, its objectives, and the nature of its articles and contributors can be found in the record of an address given at a social meeting on 27 January 1930 in Louise Weiss, 'L'Europe Nouvelle', *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 9 (1930), 384.

the position and ethos of the League of Nations.⁴⁶¹ In 1920, two years after its launch, Weiss became its editor, a position she would hold until February 1934. Weiss's move to lead *L'Europe Nouvelle* was not untypical. The 1920s had seen an opening-up of professional opportunities for women and Anne Renoult notes that women editors and directors were relatively numerous in France at the time.⁴⁶² These publications, however, tended to be aligned with the feminist press or were focussed on subjects of feminine interest. This subject matter would not be of paramount interest to Weiss until 1936 when she founded the suffragist group *La Femme Nouvelle*.

L'Europe Nouvelle, with its focus on European and international current affairs and a target audience which included the political elite of the day, was the only publication of its kind to be led by a female journalist. As a woman without the right to vote and with no formal access to traditional party structures,⁴⁶³ Weiss was able to intervene in politics through her journalism by actively generating and directing the public debate. Her editorial policy for *L'Europe Nouvelle* was to: '... [rendre] compte des bouleversements politiques, de l'écroulement des anciennes valeurs [...] des scandales politiques et financiers qui ont lieu'.⁴⁶⁴ Once more Weiss demonstrated that she was not reticent in exerting power herself as well as commenting on it.

⁴⁶¹ Michael Bess, *Realism, Utopia and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist Intellectuals and Their Strategies for Peace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 6.

⁴⁶² Anne Renoult, *Andrée Viollis, une femme journaliste* (Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 2004), p. 97. See also Myriam Boucharenc and Joëlle Deluche, *Littérature et Reportage: Colloque international de Limoges 26-28 avril* (Pulim: Presses Universitaires de Limoges, 2000). For a discussion of the contribution of women writers to politically committed literature see Angela Kershaw, *Forgotten Engagements: Women, Literature and the Left in 1930s France* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2007).

⁴⁶³ For a comprehensive critique of this period of French history, and in particular for a discussion of women in interwar politics, see Sian Reynolds, *France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996)

⁴⁶⁴ Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 209.

In her capacity as travelling correspondent, Weiss was one of the first female journalists to travel to the Soviet Union.⁴⁶⁵ Opposed to its political structures but nonetheless attracted by its 'grand mystère',⁴⁶⁶ Weiss made two visits to Moscow, once in 1920 and then again in 1921, which established her as a 'grand reporter'⁴⁶⁷ alongside some of her contemporaries including Andrée Viollis (1870 - 1950)⁴⁶⁸ and Geneviève Tabouis (1892-1985).⁴⁶⁹ Weiss's account of the new Russia was first published in *Le Petit Parisien*, a prominent French newspaper published between 1876 and 1944.⁴⁷⁰ *Le Petit Parisien* achieved a circulation of 1,400,000 copies in the early 1900s and earned the reputation of a pioneer of mass circulation.⁴⁷¹ However, thanks to her influential position as editor of *L'Europe Nouvelle*, Weiss ensured she was also able to reproduce her articles in her own journal the following month.⁴⁷²

L'Europe Nouvelle provided Weiss with a powerful international platform from which she could openly challenge and question the balance between power and morality. But *L'Europe Nouvelle* proved to be less effective in shaping public opinion than Weiss had hoped. To bolster the potential for her journalistic career to influence the general debate on

⁴⁶⁵ For a discussion on the French intellectual journey to the Soviet Union from the perspective of political travel writing, see Martyn Cornick, Martin Hurcombe, and Angela Kershaw, *French Political Travel Writing in the Interwar Years: Radical Departures* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017).

⁴⁶⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe 1919-1934* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 72.

⁴⁶⁷ For a discussion on the emergence of 'grand reportage' and the 'grand reporter' see Catharine Mee, 'Journalism and Travel Writing: From *Grands Reporters* to Global Tourism', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13: (4) (2009), 305-315.

⁴⁶⁸ For a biography of Viollis and an overview of her work see Renoult, *Andrée Viollis*.

⁴⁶⁹ Autobiographical details of Tabouis's professional life as a journalist, her time in the Soviet Union, encounters with Louise Weiss, and a comparison of her and Weiss's 'salons' can be found in Geneviève Tabouis, *Ils l'ont appelée Cassandre* (New York: Editions de la Maison Française, 1942).

⁴⁷⁰ Louise Weiss, 'La reporter rencontre une militante soviétique près de Moscou', *Le Petit Parisien*, 11 November 1921 <<http://expositions.bnf.fr/presse/anthologie/13.htm>> [accessed 28 January 2018].

⁴⁷¹ Berny Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 57.

⁴⁷² Louise Weiss, 'Cinq semaines à Moscou', *L'Europe Nouvelle*, 17 December 1921, pp. 1611-1650.

the moral significance of political actions, Weiss drew on the resources of the publication – its reputation and networks – to establish ‘L’Ecole de la Paix’, an arena where influential speakers debated the major problems facing France, Europe, and the world. Although this move hints more at the role of an activist, it further reinforces Weiss's desire to exert her own power and influence in a given situation.

A pragmatic distinction between journalist and travel writer

Weiss's perception of power and its moral consequences was predicated on her first-hand experience of war and her journalistic career, which extended far beyond the turbulence of the *Hexagone*. Building on the discussion around Weiss's journey from *journaliste* to *voyageuse* in the Introduction, a distinction should be drawn here to avoid confusion between Weiss the interwar travelling correspondent and Weiss the post-war travel writer, the latter being the focus of this thesis.

Before the Second World War, Weiss's role as a salaried journalist is clearly documented by authors such as Célia Bertin⁴⁷³ and Michel Loetscher.⁴⁷⁴ Her writing was, therefore, very much politically directed and commissioned for the press. However, in order to attend press conferences and to interview key politicians and commentators, Weiss travelled extensively during this time. Cognisant that travel writing ‘straddles categories and

⁴⁷³ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, pp. 81-99 and pp. 120-140.

⁴⁷⁴ Michel Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2009), pp. 29-57.

disciplines,⁴⁷⁵ this conceivably opens up the debate as to whether her earlier work could also be considered to be examples of travel writing.

Catharine Mee asserts that journalism has links with travel writing because of a common dependence on physical displacement and a shared status as 'minority genres'.⁴⁷⁶ Martyn Cornick, Martin Hurcombe, and Angela Kershaw explore this link by considering the French intellectual journey to the Soviet Union through the prism of the travel narrative and the committed *voyageuse engagée*. Building on Mee's perspective, Cornick, Hurcombe, and Kershaw emphasise the influence of reportage on the style of interwar travel writing.⁴⁷⁷ This observation clearly distinguishes the specificity of journalism from the more generic travel writing and informs the choice of primary sources for this thesis. Weiss's interwar publications are not considered to be travel writing *per se* but commissioned political reportage. This pragmatic choice stems from a judgement on the specificity of Weiss's interwar vocation and her comments in an interview with Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence in January 1979:

J'avais d'abord été envoyée autour du monde comme correspondante et là j'étais obligée d'aller à l'endroit du fait, dont on pouvait tirer un scoop; et lorsque je suis revenue j'ai eu un sentiment écrasant de n'y avoir rien compris, à ce monde. Alors, très frappée par les progrès et l'intérêt de l'audiovisuel, je suis repartie à mes

⁴⁷⁵ Graham Huggan and Patrick Holland, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8.

⁴⁷⁶ Catharine Mee, 'Journalism and Travel Writing: From *Grands Reporters* to Global Tourism', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13 (2009), 305-315 (p. 306). For a similar debate on the connection between travel writing and journalism see Gérard Cogez, *Les écrivains voyageurs au XXème siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004), p. 23. An overview of journalistic styles of the era, in particular 'reportage', can be found in Myriam Boucharenc and Joëlle Deluche, *Littérature et reportage*.

⁴⁷⁷ Cornick, Hurcombe, and Kershaw, *French Political Travel Writing in the Interwar Years: Radical Departures*.

propres frais, je dirais, en engageant même quelques capitaux dont certains m'avaient été prêtés, pour voir le monde à mon idée et en rapporter des images.⁴⁷⁸

Between the wars, travel was the means to an end for Weiss to secure her primary goal – the story. As a journalist, she reported on current affairs, irrespective of where they were unfolding. In most instances, therefore, neither the location nor the decision to travel, were of her choosing. Her interwar vocation was incontrovertibly that of a writer, whereas her focus after the Second World War foregrounded travel over writing. As discussed in Chapter One, at this point in her life she had made a conscious decision to pursue a freelance career. Her destinations and travel itineraries were her own choices based largely on personal interests and her desire to explore those things which, for her, remained unexplained. Weiss was no longer driven by the story, but by the need to see things that she was unable to imagine, such as a Shinto temple or a Hindu caste, or the aspirations and ideologies of other nations.⁴⁷⁹ Her post-war vocation was that of a traveller rather than a writer. After the Second World War, Weiss ceased to be a writer who travelled and became a traveller who wrote.⁴⁸⁰

Weiss's interwar career is nevertheless important to this discussion as it both frames and substantiates her later view of the relationship between power and morality. Her journalism provided her with first-hand evidence of the consequences of political actions on

⁴⁷⁸ Marie-Claude Leburgue and Vera Florence, 'Entretien avec Louise Weiss', in *Louise Weiss L'Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe: Centre de Recherches Européennes, 1994), pp. 455-480 (p. 471).

⁴⁷⁹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident*, p. 24.

⁴⁸⁰ For a discussion on the implications of the balance between writing and travelling see Iva Cintrat, Luc Collès, Muriel Massau, Carmen Mata Barreiro, and Lúcia Soares, *Le récit de voyage* (Brussels: Didier Hatier, 1997), pp. 5-6; Olivier Hambursin, *Récits du dernier siècle des voyages: de Victor Segalen à Nicolas Bouvier* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), pp. 223-237; Huggan and Holland, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*, pp. 5-7; and Kimberley, J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 4.

subjugated societies and contributed to her future understanding of post-war encounters with power and morality. Cognisant that society functioned on a fragile balance between the exercise of rights and the exercise of power, Weiss believed it was the ultimate responsibility of the treaties and laws of supranational institutions to steer nations away from violence and prevent latent conflict escalating into more serious aggression. But, in Weiss's post-war eyes, it was these very same supranational institutions such as the League of Nations and its successor the United Nations that had ultimately failed in this mission, clearing the way for the triumph of dictatorial rule and the dismantling of the French overseas empire. Against this backdrop, Weiss concluded that, 'le problème fondamental des sociétés a toujours été celui du droit, de leurs droits et des rapports de ces droits avec le pouvoir.'⁴⁸¹

Re-examining Weiss's self-appointed role of witness

A sense of profound pessimism eventually coloured Weiss's view of human nature. Writing in 1976, her comment : 'Et la Loi, resterait-elle au service de la Force?'⁴⁸² alludes to her opinion that human beings possessed the inherent desire to coerce others, to dominate and to conquer, often in the name of a law which legitimised the aggressor's actions as she believed had been the case with the Nuremberg Trials. The seed of political realism, which had been sown in Weiss's early adulthood had, towards the end of her life, matured into what Michael Bess describes as a commitment to 'Realpolitik' – an approach which Weiss

⁴⁸¹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident*, p. 29.

⁴⁸² Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident*, p. 81.

believed to be the only reliable means by which to understand and control the human response to the balance of power and morality.⁴⁸³

After personally living through, and commenting on, the moral consequences of political actions for most of her professional life, it is not surprising that the theme of power should appear as a central tenet to Weiss's post-war travel narratives as she struggled to understand the turbulence of the twentieth century. This does not mean, however, that Weiss abandoned her interest in politics in favour of a commentary on power. Rather, it brings the discussion full circle back to the earlier observation that Weiss's perception of supremacy was consistent with the Weberian hypothesis that political actions are a channel through which power can be exercised. Weiss's perception of power was not based solely on political actions, however. Building on Weber's approach – which also attributed power to economic and social relations – Weiss's perception of power in her post-war travel narratives extends beyond politics to include commentaries on the tensions arising from economic and social conditions. It is at this juncture, where power is played out through political, economic, and social actions, that Weiss looked for morality behind the human behaviours she observed.

As she travelled, Weiss wanted to: '...[s'] emparer en divers lieux du monde des hautes lois du comportement humain, pour les rapporter, à mon tour, en mon pays.'⁴⁸⁴ This almost begs the question of what Weiss planned to do with the knowledge if she had been able to gather it. On a personal level, this experiential knowledge would, presumably, have helped her find some sense of equilibrium in the instability she perceived around her. On a

⁴⁸³ Bess, *Realism, Utopia and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist Intellectuals and Their Strategies for Peace*, pp. 1-40.

⁴⁸⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, preface page not numbered.

professional level, in a society where women were generally excluded from circles of power and influence, revealing her findings might have given her more opportunity to comment publicly on the direction of France's socio-economic and political affairs. As Weiss never revealed her intentions, however, this remains conjecture. More importantly for this discussion is the allusion in this observation to Weiss's perspective on the world. Cognisant of her encounters with, and perception of, power, the experiential knowledge she gained from the early twentieth century introduces a new dynamic into the discussion around the efficacy and appropriateness of her self-appointed role of witness.

Weiss fiercely protected her reputation as a witness for two reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, it arose out of her own, unwavering desire to see things for herself. As discussed in the Introduction, she dismissed the value of any archival or reference material in favour of her own personal encounters and observations. This put an added responsibility on Weiss. It would not be enough for her to merely state what she saw, she would have to project a sense of impartiality and reason. Secondly, her status as witness established credibility amongst her readers. On many occasions, Weiss reminded her audience that this role enabled her to present them with her 'modeste mais implacable témoignage,'⁴⁸⁵ or her self-authored 'fresque du siècle.'⁴⁸⁶ Even when relying on the experience of other travel narratives, such as Pierre Loti's account of a comparable journey through Peking some fifty years earlier, she emphasised the authorial weight of her own work over that of Loti. Almost dismissing his account in seven-and-a-half lines compared to her own fourteen pages, Weiss briefly noted what he recorded, and declared: 'à mon tour d'apporter mon témoignage.'⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour les femmes 1934-1939*, p. 257.

⁴⁸⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 13.

⁴⁸⁷ Louise Weiss, 'Pékin depuis Loti', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 9 (1959), 104-117 (pp. 115).

On the seemingly rare occasions that Weiss was unable to travel to a particular place to witness events first hand, such as the Soviet-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940, she openly recorded that she had made the conscious decision to omit them from her publications due to the absence of her 'témoignage personnel.'⁴⁸⁸

Notwithstanding Weiss's commitment to proving her credibility, previous discussions have already called into question Weiss's self-appointed role as witness. Part One examined Weiss's witness gaze in the context of her encounters with spirituality. It questioned whether her relentless positioning of herself as a witness was responsible for distancing any display of spiritual practice from the real world, thereby establishing a boundary between the secular and the spiritual and mitigating the potential for spirituality to have any real impact on the turbulence of the twentieth century. Part Two recognised that, as the principal communicator of her mythological encounters, Weiss moved physically, mentally, and linguistically between space, time, and cultures using her editorial voice to convey the ancient stories of the people she met. Although Weiss never wavered from proclaiming her status as a witness, the nature of her engagement with the mythological 'Otherness' of indigenous communities inclined more to the role of intermediary than witness. However, her reluctance to accept this role made it difficult for Weiss to gain any comprehension of the turbulence of the twentieth century from her mythological encounters.

Part Three of this discussion now turns to a consideration of Weiss's encounter with power and the question of the reliability of her self-appointed role as witness resurfaces in an examination of whether her prior experiential knowledge of power had the potential to

⁴⁸⁸ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: le sacrifice du Chevalier 1939-1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971), p. 96.

influence, even distort, this role. The following discussion will draw on two illustrations – firstly, a comparison of Weiss's experience of spirituality and myth with power and, secondly, the implications of her association with Souen, le Parfait-singe-roi, the mythological character introduced in Chapter Six – to explore how prior experiential knowledge and empathy with other travellers might challenge Weiss's status as self-appointed witness.

The preceding discussion has demonstrated that Weiss had lived with and written about the tension between power and morality long before her post-war travel narratives addressed it. As a result of this experiential knowledge, she had experienced a lengthier association with coercive power and its consequences than was the case with myth and spirituality. As has been seen in Chapter One, Weiss had closed the door on spirituality in her youth, choosing not to reopen it until much later in life. Likewise, as a child, Weiss had found immense enjoyment in a book of myths given to her by her mother. But, until the publication of her post-war travel narratives, there is no evidence to suggest any further encounter or interaction with myth. Prior to writing her post-war travel narratives, Weiss had spent most of her life investigating and commenting on the tension between power and morality which had had little effect in healing the deep, open wound inflicted on her by the consequences of the political actions she had previously lived through. Any future encounter with power would undoubtedly be contextualised by this experiential knowledge. Weiss's spiritual and mythological encounters, however, were not necessarily coloured by the same length of contact attributed to her encounters with power.

Weiss's close alliance with the above-mentioned mythological character Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes has implications for her role as witness. As implied at the close of

Chapter Six, Weiss did not journey alone to uncover the higher laws of morality but travelled – albeit metaphorically – with Souen, le Parfait Roi des Singes who was also searching for a set of moral doctrines to bring back to his emperor and with whom Weiss imagined a shared heritage. Weiss went on to develop such a strong empathy between this mythological creature and herself, that his story became a metaphor for her own; the underpinning narrative to hers against which she interpreted her own encounters. This is a brave stylistic choice for a travel writer so keen to protect her role as a self-appointed witness as it raises the question of what effect this imaginary partnership had on Weiss's independent commentary.

A close proximity to the consequences of political actions, a public and lengthy interest in power and its consequences, and an empathy with other travellers – albeit imaginary ones – suggests Weiss played more than the role of witness in her encounters with power. To some degree Weiss was a witness simply through the discipline of recording events, but her encounters ceased to be objective as they connected with earlier, subjective experiences. This connection broke down any boundary between her encounters with power and her perception of the twentieth century positioning her as a participant rather than a witness – a role that underpins the analysis of Weiss's perception of power and morality in Chapters Eight and Nine.

Weiss's four measures of power: a question of structure

The debate around whether autobiography can be considered to be an example of travel writing is explored in the Introduction. Weiss's memoirs are shown to belong to

autobiography rather than to travel writing, including Volume Six which foregrounds some of her travels. The Introduction also explains that, although Weiss's memoirs are not considered to be primary sources for this thesis, they are useful for contextualising her travel narratives. This observation is particularly relevant here as an indication of how Weiss identified, measured, and evaluated her encounters with power which emerge in Volume Six of her memoirs.

This publication is constructed around Weiss's fundamental preoccupation with the tension between power and morality which she presented as three questions and one statement: *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre? En quel nom?* and *L'Arme absolue*. Whether it was Weiss herself or her photographer, Georges Bourdelon, who coined at least the first two of these phrases is unclear. Whilst filming on location in Nahr-el-Kelb, Lebanon in the early 1950s,⁴⁸⁹ some twenty years before the publication of Volume Six of Weiss's memoirs, Bourdelon is documented as saying, 'A qui le pouvoir? [...] Et à qui le droit de vivre?'⁴⁹⁰ Notwithstanding this anomaly, these questions are fundamental to Weiss's perception and evaluation of power, but prior to analysing them in detail, the reasons behind Weiss's choice for the structure of Volume Six of her memoirs merit further reflection. These reasons are captured in a relatively detailed statement from Weiss's memoirs which is reproduced below and then examined more closely in the subsequent analysis.

⁴⁸⁹ There is some debate here on the actual date of Weiss's journey to Lebanon, but all possibilities are before the publication date of Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*. In Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, p. 403 the visit to Lebanon is noted as having taken place in 1951. However, the website of the Musée de Saverne <http://www.louise-weiss.org/louise_weiss_voyage_1952.html> [accessed 10 May 2018] notes a visit to Lebanon took place in 1952. Weiss's documentary from this visit was published later *Le Liban: terre des dieux et des hommes*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1954).

⁴⁹⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 123.

Le plan de mon récit était difficile à établir. L'ordre géographique ne valait rien. J'avais parcouru des régions immenses pour m'apercevoir brusquement que mes itinéraires me masquaient des faits essentiels et qu'il me fallait changer de cap, aborder des régions imprévues ou m'en retourner vers des lieux déjà explorés pour y tourner, comme une toupie, jusqu'à l'épuisement de ma curiosité. Souvent les voies m'étaient barrées par des intempéries saisonnières ou politiques, lesquelles me contraignaient soit à une patience d'âne, soit à m'en aller ou encore revenir, mais dans un dédale de pas lassant. L'ordre chronologique valait encore moins. Rien n'aurait été plus fastidieux que de suivre mes carnets de notes, avec leurs redites, leurs recoupements, leurs rappels de textes, leurs quêtes déçues, en dépit de leurs moissons de surprises et d'enchantements. Quant à l'ordre historique, il n'eût fait sombrer dans le chaos de l'actualité. Je me trouvais au Mexique pendant que Charles de Gaulle quittait le pouvoir à Paris, au Cachemire tandis que le président Truman relevait le général Mac Arthur (sic) de ses fonctions, au Sinaï à la veille de l'expédition franco-britannique à Suez, à Pékin pendant le Grand Bond en Avant tandis que craquait l'amitié sino-soviétique, au cap Canaveral pour assister au tir d'Apollo XIII, ceci, quelques heures avant l'assassinat de Luther King.⁴⁹¹

Weiss was very precise in justifying her reasons for the structure of her memoirs. As already discussed in Chapter Five, she was at first undecided about the format: geographical, chronological, and historical narratives were unappealing for a variety of reasons. She felt she had sped too quickly through some places and had returned to others only when climatic conditions were more favourable, when political tensions were reduced, or when her curiosity overwhelmed her. By way of example, Weiss's journey to South Korea in the early part of 1950, which was recorded in a May edition of *France Illustration*,⁴⁹² came to an end well before she was able to observe the tensions around the political hegemony which led to the outbreak of the war between North and South Korea later that year. Her rapid transit through the country had caused her to miss a significant chapter in the history of South Korea. Additionally, in 1949, Weiss embarked on her first visit to Japan. Her article in an April edition of *France Illustration* records how she had a burning desire to

⁴⁹¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

⁴⁹² Louise Weiss, 'Mon séjour en Corée', *France Illustration*, 239:5 (1950), 479-481.

meet General MacArthur who had successfully democratised Japanese power structures after the war by keeping the popular Emperor Hiro-Hito on the throne, transforming his reign from the traditional view of a divine, imperial sovereign to one of a constitutional ruler advocating western values.⁴⁹³ Some ten years later, Weiss returned to Japan with cinematographers Pierre Guégen and Louis Mialle to film *Le Dieu du riz*,⁴⁹⁴ by which time her interest in the region had changed. It was now no longer the ruling elite of the country that fired her curiosity but the socio-economic conditions around the harshness of Japanese life, the inadequacy of the farms and fisheries to provide enough food for the people of Japan, and the country's dependency on supplying large but precarious overseas markets.

Weiss's mental tussle with how to organise her often revised and re-edited travel notes is clearly evident in her memoirs. However, on closer examination, some of Weiss's comments resonate with discussions already presented in Parts One and Two of this thesis which suggests her quandary was aligned more closely with the effect of her gaze on her experiential knowledge than with her strategy as an author. For example, her reference to 'itinéraires ... [qui] ... me masquaient des faits essentiels et qu'il me fallait changer de cap, aborder des régions imprévues ou m'en retourner vers des lieux déjà explorés pour y tourner, comme une toupie, jusqu'à l'épuisement de ma curiosité,'⁴⁹⁵ give the impression of some degree of failure that resulted in a repeated reorganisation of her journey. Even though Weiss had travelled great distances, the higher laws of morality – alluded to by the phrase 'des faits essentiels'⁴⁹⁶ – appeared to remain hidden from her sight as she switched

⁴⁹³ Louise Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne', *France Illustration*, 232 (1950), pp. 293-296.

⁴⁹⁴ *Le Dieu du riz*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded, 1958).

⁴⁹⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

⁴⁹⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

between itineraries. This is synonymous with the lack of success attributed to the mythological character, Souen, le Parfait-singe-roi, whose journey Weiss likened to her own. As recounted in Chapter Six, Souen, le Parfait-singe-roi, failed to find a complete set of the 15,144 Buddhist sutras he had set out to gather and returned to the emperor with only a blank page; the laws he sought also remained hidden from sight.

The physical displacement evoked by Weiss's own image of herself spinning like a top to revisit places and to venture into unexpected territories, illustrates the nuances between the models of displacement proposed by Claude Reichler and Evelyne Deprêtre discussed in Chapter Five. Her rapid transit through the world with no discernible outcome suggests a meeting with the world in the Reichlerian sense of a space passed through, and not the clear and active engagement with alterity advocated by Deprêtre. Viewed in the context of her experiential knowledge, a geographical structure clearly offered Weiss no sense of empowerment or authority over her observations of the twentieth century, thereby legitimising her own dismissal of this format.

Similarly, Weiss's dislike of a chronological structure is also endorsed when viewed from the perspective of her experiential knowledge. Her statement: 'L'ordre chronologique valait encore moins,'⁴⁹⁷ suggests a temporal dialogue similar to that experienced in her mythological encounter in Alaska (see Chapter Five) where she was confronted by a void in which she perceived a world awaiting animation. The temporal displacement Weiss experienced in Alaska was so great that it distanced her from the encounter and gave her no insight into the turbulence of the twentieth century. Parallels can be drawn between this

⁴⁹⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

chaotic moment in time and her later decision to avoid the use of a chronological structure for her memoirs.

By her own admission, her notes were less than meticulously archived and this evokes a similar image of chaos – a disorder in the world around her that would require considerable work to bring to life. This is not an unreasonable concern of hers – Weiss's own resources were depleted as her library, which contained notes of all her interviews, articles, and meetings, had been confiscated by German soldiers in 1941,⁴⁹⁸ and her archives at the Musée de Saverne carry an air of untidiness and disarray that is not necessarily the result of inattentive curation. For example, the archives contain notes which Weiss jotted down on scraps of paper, boxes of undeveloped and unreferenced photographic negatives, and scribbled costs that seem to refer to the purchase of photographs from the Japanese Tourist Office, but which also appear to be incorrectly calculated.

Weiss's difficulty in settling on a structure was compounded by what was essentially the perpetuation of her witness gaze. In justifying her decision on structure Weiss's choice of vocabulary, such as 'mes itinéraires me masquaient des faits essentiels',⁴⁹⁹ and 'les voies m'étaient barrées',⁵⁰⁰ establishes a gaze reminiscent of that associated with her spiritual encounters in Part One. Her vocabulary suggests that she had set herself apart from both the narrative structure of her memoirs and the world she had travelled through. An almost

⁴⁹⁸ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: la résurrection du Chevalier 1940-1944* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974), p. 294. See also T. W. 'Sophie Coeuré: Prises de guerre et trophées de papier', *Le Monde des Livres*, 1 March 2007, p. 7 and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Les pilliers de mémoire', *Le Monde des Livres*, 24th October 2008, p. 7 which both make explicit reference to the theft of documents from Louise Weiss and other well-known personalities.

⁴⁹⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

⁵⁰⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

impenetrable threshold had been created firstly by her busy schedule which came between her and the basic facts she sought and, secondly, by blocked pathways which hindered her passage to her intended destination. With no appropriate format to apply to her memoirs, Weiss opted for a structure that embodied what she believed to be the anxieties of the contemporary world – the question of coercive power and the Western response.

Alors, j'ai ordonnancé mes expériences autour des grands axes de l'inquiétude contemporaine: A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre? En quel nom ce pouvoir et ce droit étaient-ils exercés? Et la civilisation occidentale triompherait-elle de l'arme absolue dont elle était menacée par les Etats totalitaires, à savoir le conditionnement des cerveaux.⁵⁰¹

Under the four headings of *A qui le pouvoir?*, *A qui le droit de vivre?*, *En quel nom?*, and *L'Arme absolue*, Weiss brought together all her experiential knowledge into a concise observation on the state of the world which was predicated on the power relations she observed on her post-war journeys.

The *Sommaire* in Volume Six of Weiss's memoirs lists these headings as follows: 'Première Partie. A qui le pouvoir?' 'Deuxième Partie. A qui le droit de vivre?' 'Troisième Partie. En quel nom?' and 'Quatrième Partie. L'Arme absolue.'⁵⁰² However, when they appear on dividing pages further on in the publication, they are qualified by a phrase that alludes to the content of their respective chapters. This additional text is presented as a sub-heading to the main title (illustrated below with emphasis in italics added here to identify the additional text).

⁵⁰¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 25.

⁵⁰² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 11.

'Première Partie. A qui le pouvoir? *De l'Allemagne et des lois non écrites*,⁵⁰³

'Deuxième Partie. A qui le droit de vivre? *Du Moyen-Orient et de ses tourments*,⁵⁰⁴

'Troisième Partie. En quel nom? *De l'Afrique en gésine de recolonisation*,⁵⁰⁵

'Quatrième Partie. L'Arme absolue. *Le conditionnement des cerveaux*.⁵⁰⁶

Weiss's choice of structure for her memoirs alludes to the concept of specificity of place which is discussed in Part Two in relation to her mythological encounters. On initial consideration, the way in which these headings are presented suggests Weiss restricts her observations to specific issues in particular places. From this structure, it is not unfeasible to assume that discussions around *l'arme absolu* relate exclusively to Part Four of her memoirs and the question *A qui le droit de vivre?* is a concern solely for the Middle East in Part Two. On closer examination, however, this assumption is questionable. As Weiss's commentary unfolds, the four measures emerge as equal considerations in all of her encounters. However, the sections of Weiss's memoirs are not equal: the first is 54 pages long, the second 69 pages, the third 110 pages, and the fourth 237 pages long. This distribution can be loosely equated to Weiss's level of anxiety around each topic. These titles, which are examined in more detail below, not only characterise Weiss's perception of power and her approach to understanding its influence on society, but also offer a framework against which the existence and impact of power can be tested.

⁵⁰³ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 27.

⁵⁰⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 83.

⁵⁰⁵ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 153.

⁵⁰⁶ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 265.

A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre?

The first two of Weiss's questions, *A qui le pouvoir?* and *A qui le droit de vivre?* resonate with the principles of the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics which denotes a specific modern form of exercising power. Matthew Coleman and Kevin Grove understand biopolitics as Foucault's search for a means through which politics and power could be examined in a context other than sovereignty and law.⁵⁰⁷ The link with sovereignty is clarified by Juan Jiménez-Anca who states that kings, or sovereigns, historically possessed the privilege to decide over life and death – a sovereign power which resided with one person.⁵⁰⁸ Michel Foucault contended that, in contemporary society, war was no longer waged in the sovereign's name but in the interests of the whole population. The rights of the sovereign power were subordinated to a power that strived to maintain, develop, and manage life. Biopolitics, then, was a new strategy of power based on life – individuals, people, and communities – where power was 'an inescapable feature of human social life and structure.'⁵⁰⁹

Foucault's hypothesis has been the subject of much scholarly debate.⁵¹⁰ Giorgio Agamben builds on Foucault's hypothesis to suggest that sovereignty and biopower are not separate but inter-connected. Antonio Negri expands the concept of biopolitics to interpret

⁵⁰⁷ Mathew Coleman and Kevin Grove, 'Biopolitics, Biopower, and the Return of Sovereignty', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27 (2009), 489-507.

⁵⁰⁸ Juan J. Jiménez-Anca, 'Beyond Power: Unbridging Foucault and Weber', *European Journal of Social Theory*, (June 2012), 36-50.

⁵⁰⁹ John C. Turner, 'Explaining the nature of power: a three-process theory', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 35 (2005), 1-22.

⁵¹⁰ For a discussion of the differences in approach between Foucault and Agamben see Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben', trans. by Craig Carson, *Rethinking Marxism*, 18:1 (2006), 43-62.

all contemporary politics as a form of power that controls life not from the standpoint of imperial sovereignty but from a position of power that stretches throughout a population. However, it is not the intention of this thesis to explore contemporary forms of exercising supremacy but to present a framework through which to contextualise Weiss's approach to power in the communities she encountered. The discussion of power in Part Three, therefore, is predicated on the concept that legitimate power may no longer reside with one person but with an entire population whose experience of real life is noticeably affected.

The question of who holds power at any one time and, implicit in this, the notion of the strongest challenger overthrowing the prevailing regime – *A qui le pouvoir?* and *A qui le droit de vivre?* – is illustrated in the documentary *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes*.⁵¹¹ In Nahr-el-Kelb, Lebanon, in the early 1950s, the same visit referred to above, Weiss and Bourdelon filmed a number of plaques and monuments set in the side of a mountain along the main approach road to the city of Beirut, each of which represented a different ruler from a specific era in Beirut's history (see Figures 40(a) to 40(i) below). As the camera pans across the landscape, each plaque or monument fills the frame as it is ceremoniously introduced by the male voiceover delivering Weiss's commentary as if announcing a procession of dignitaries attending a VIP event. All of Beirut's political history had been conserved in one place, hewn into the mountain for perpetuity. Weiss's presentation of the plaques, almost like rolling credits to a film, produces a narrative of power – a succession of conquests and regimes through the ages from Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Syria who conquered the region in the seventh century BC, through Roman rule in the third

⁵¹¹ *Le Liban: terre des dieux et des hommes* (Telouet Films, 1954).



Figure 40(a): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with two plaques set side-by-side in the hillside on the approach to the city of Beirut at 04:37



Figure 40(b): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque commemorating Lebanese independence in 946 at 04:39



Figure 40(c): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque commemorating General Gouraud's 1920 entrance into Damascus at 04:45



Figure 40(d): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque commemorating the international troops' oversight of the area in 1918 at 04:51



Figure 40(e): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque commemorating General Beaufort's welcome to Napoleon III in 1860 at 04:57



Figure 40(f): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* depicting a monument with fourteenth century Arab inscription at 05:03



Figure 40(g): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque commemorating the Roman emperor Caracalla at 05:08



Figure 40(h): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* with a plaque representing Nebuchadnezzar of Syria who conquered the region in the seventh century BC at 05:14



Figure 40(i): A still from *Liban terre des dieux et des hommes* depicting an ancient tablet referring to Rameses II at 05:19

century AD, to Lebanon's independence in 1946. As if in response to Bourdelon's questions, *A qui le pouvoir?* and *A qui le droit de vivre?* Weiss notes that it was the stones themselves that answered, 'Au plus fort!'⁵¹² This was the undoubtedly the answer to her third question: *En quel nom?* – the strongest regime had the claim to power at any one time.

En quel nom?

The third title, *En quel nom?* represents Weiss's desire to identify the prevailing power in her encounters. For example, this could be an identification of powerful ideologies such as totalitarianism, communism, or colonialism, as in Chapter Eight, or, equally, aspects of scientific or industrial progress, as in Chapter Nine. Alan Finlayson cites Ernesto Laclau's statement that the act of naming, or signifying, political ideologies 'produces an object for theoretical analysis'⁵¹³ and Simon Critchley argues that such naming produces a label that enables people to organise themselves politically around that name.⁵¹⁴ Weiss's insistence on categorising her encounters with power speaks to this school of thought and can be interpreted as a way in which she was able to contextualise and ultimately understand the ideas and objectives of her encounters with power.

⁵¹² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 123.

⁵¹³ Alan Finlayson, 'Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies', *Political Studies*, 60 (2012), <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00948.x>> accessed (10 May 2018).

⁵¹⁴ Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 103.

L'Arme absolue

L'Arme absolue, the fourth title and the one to which Weiss dedicated the most space in her post-war *œuvre*, refers to her overriding conviction that the absolute weapon humankind possessed was the power to transform and control the minds of others. For her, this was far more terrifying than armaments *per se* which she claimed were, 'inertes' and 'innocentes' until willingly and consciously deployed – the significance of which will become apparent below.⁵¹⁵

From Weiss's perspective, the power to control others was both the definitive weapon and the undisputed deterrent. She believed that, in order to achieve complete subservience, this coercive power could eliminate any capacity for independent thought and exercise its supremacy through conflict. Conquering the spirit of individuals ensured the invincibility of a dictatorial regime by locking people into belief systems, annihilating individuality, and maintaining internal stability. Conversely, it could be used to cleanse the minds of those perceived as the perpetrators of violence in an attempt to re-establish a sense of morality and, ultimately, peace. However, neither interpretation could escape Weiss's label of 'lavage des cerveaux'.⁵¹⁶ As the Cold War began, Weiss's victory through mental conquest rather than victory through military force was her main fear:

Si la conquête des armes est quelque chose d'important, la conquête des cerveaux l'est encore bien plus. Et si nous assistons à une course aux armements épouvantables, nous assistons maintenant, et avec plus de conscience que jamais, à

⁵¹⁵ Guy Ackermann, *Passionnante Louise Weiss II*, 19.10.

⁵¹⁶ Weiss, 'Une visite à l'empereur des perles', p. 83.

cause des mass médias, à la course à la conquête des cerveaux et, finalement, sera le maître du monde celui qui sera le maître des cerveaux.⁵¹⁷

Implicit in this philosophy is the inevitability of turmoil associated with the conquest of one civilisation or ideology and the establishment of another. The march of civilisation and related conquest suggested by the row of commemorative plaques in the mountains in Lebanon resonated with Weiss's perception of the turbulence of the twentieth century and led to her admission that: 'La marche du monde m'enthousiasmait. Elle m'effrayait aussi'.⁵¹⁸ Her fear lay not in her perception of power as an arsenal of weapons, but in the potential for power to be used as *l'arme absolue* – the coercion of moral thought to exercise supremacy. The significance of Weiss's fear is only fully appreciated in the context of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Weiss subordinates the status of this weapon to the (im)morality of unbalancing society through the imposition of ideology:

Dans l'ensemble, puisque je suis constamment obligée de résumer ma pensée, je puis affirmer que le bouleversement dû à l'explosion de la bombe atomique – l'égale d'un petit tremblement de terre ou d'un typhon – a été moins profond que le choc moral ressenti à l'arrivée d'une nouvelle civilisation, laquelle avait fait ses preuves quant au bien-être et à la liberté des gens.⁵¹⁹

Moving to a participant's view of powerful encounters

This chapter has demonstrated Weiss's anxiety over the tension between power and morality – a concern which she had foregrounded throughout her life. It opened with an

⁵¹⁷ Guy Ackermann, *Passionnante Louise Weiss II*, 19 minutes and 40 seconds.

⁵¹⁸ Louise Weiss, 'Shanghai aujourd'hui', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1959), 482-500 (p. 484.)

⁵¹⁹ Louise Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne', p. 295.

analysis of Weiss's personal experience of coercive power before considering how the opportunities afforded her by a journalistic career enabled her to probe the relationship between power and morality more deeply. Chapters Eight and Nine will illustrate that this relationship was not based solely on the morality of political ideologies and that Weiss's interest also extended to the ethics of industrial and scientific progress.

Locating Weiss in a context of supremacy and coercion has provided a basis for understanding how the events of the early twentieth century shaped her interpretation of power in her post-war travel narratives. It has also offered a different perspective on her gaze. In Parts One and Two, Weiss's gaze was recognised as instrumental in distancing her from spiritual and mythological encounters. By contrast, Weiss's prior experiential knowledge of power suggests her gaze is more aligned to that of a participant than a witness, potentially affording her a closer engagement with the communities she encountered. Against this backdrop, the following analysis uses Weiss's four tests – *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre? En quel nom?* and *L'Arme absolue* – to explore her perception of the relationship between power and morality in the context of powerful ideologies and scientific and industrial progress.

CHAPTER 8

TESTING THE MORAL CODE

ENGAGING WITH POWERFUL IDEOLOGIES

The preceding chapter traced back the roots of Weiss's perception of the tension between power and morality to her first-hand experience of war and her early career as a journalist. Although Weiss was firmly committed to the importance of supranational institutions in maintaining world order, she remained preoccupied with anxieties that stemmed from her belief that any sense of morality would be likely to diminish as power increased. As she travelled, Weiss encountered a number of diverse power structures and regimes and became eminently conscious of the potential for coercion in their overarching ideologies. Cognisant of Kerry Brown's assertion that, 'the fundamental issue ... [of ideology] ... is its link to power',⁵²⁰ Weiss was sensitive to the view that every political action bore its own moral significance. Supremacy, therefore, engendered its own ethics – a moral code that could be tested against the four measures documented in the preceding chapter: *A qui le pouvoir?*, *A qui le droit de vivre?*, *En quel nom?*, and *L'Arme absolue*.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, these questions can appear distinct and separate from each other as each one addresses a specific issue. However, this does not appear to have been Weiss's intention as the four measures are given equal weighting in all of her encounters. Whilst each would certainly provide a credible answer relative to its particular

⁵²⁰ Kerry Brown, 'The Communist Party of China and Ideology', *China: An International Journal*, 10 (2012), 52-68, p. 53.

focus, when combined, these measures probe more deeply the tension between power and morality, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the subjects to which they are applied. The following discussion is underpinned by these four measures which are therefore considered together, rather than separately, to avoid a restrictive interpretation of Weiss's perception of power in her post-war travel narratives.

In order to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of Weiss's encounters with powerful ideologies, the following discussion opens with a consideration of Weiss's views on France's *mission civilisatrice*. Then, using examples from both her visual and text-based travel narratives – specifically, Weiss's documentary *Une reine, un général, un président*⁵²¹ and her article 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire'⁵²² – Weiss's perception of the moral codes evident in her encounters with two specific ideologies are explored along with the extent to which these encounters offered her an explanation of the turbulence of the twentieth century. Weiss's observations on power and morality behind colonialism and decolonisation are discussed in her encounter with Madagascar's changing power structures from a monarchy, through French colonial rule, and then to the country's eventual independence. The discussion then turns to an analysis of Weiss's perception of the coercion of moral thought in the exercise of supremacy in her encounter with power and morality in China under Communist rule.

⁵²¹ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁵²² Louise Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), 83-100.

France's *mission civilisatrice*

Regardless of whether her travel narratives are presented as visual or text-based works, Weiss's commentary evokes a sense of empathy with the philosophy and aims of France's *mission civilisatrice*. Perpetuating the belief that French culture and language represented a heritage of refinement, elegance, literacy and knowledge, her dismay at seeing the closure of French language schools in Louisiana,⁵²³ and her satisfaction that, for the indigenous peoples of Asia, 'c'était à notre colonialisme qu'ils devaient non seulement leur bonne condition physique, mais leur formation intellectuelle,'⁵²⁴ suggest she staunchly upheld the values of the French *mission civilisatrice*. This standpoint confirms Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, and Siobhán Shilton's argument that the *mission civilisatrice* had 'shifted to emphasise ...[an] ... ostensibly humanitarian nature'⁵²⁵ rather than perpetuate the view of the nineteenth-century colonial advocates who steadfastly held the belief that 'France ... [was] ... a righteous soldier defending the world against the oppression and barbarity of ignorance.'⁵²⁶ Weiss was not alone in defending the ideology of the *mission civilisatrice*. Michael Bess notes that the majority of French citizens did the same until the mid 1950s and cites the results of a public opinion poll in April 1956 which showed that 75% of the

⁵²³ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: combats pour l'Europe 1919-1934* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968), p. 264.

⁵²⁴ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 454.

⁵²⁵ Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, Siobhán Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 74.

⁵²⁶ Berny Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa: The Promotion of British and French Colonial Heroes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 186.

French population thought it very important to maintain a close association with the (ex)colonies, with only 11% considering such association unimportant.⁵²⁷

To a large extent, however, this was becoming an outdated view amongst many left-wing intellectuals in 1950s France who, rather than defending France's *mission civilisatrice*, contested colonisation. Jean-Paul Sartre, for example, famously defended independence over colonial rule, perceiving destructive forces in what he deemed to be arrogant European colonialism which, although not intentional or conspiratorial, crushed indigenous social structures and redistributed resources to the ruling Western colonisers.⁵²⁸ Likewise, Albert Camus resented colonialism, encouraging rebellion against foreign occupation in the belief that colonialism left people with immeasurable difficulties in rebuilding the physical and sociological structures of their society.

Weiss's fear of the subordination of an individual's free will to an autocratic leadership power as discussed in Chapters Two, Four, and Seven, is not foregrounded in her views on French colonial rule. Arguably, she perceived the *mission civilisatrice* as the reverse of *l'arme absolue*. In the context of empathising with this seemingly more benevolent expression of supremacy, the following discussion explores Weiss's encounter with power in her 1963 visual travel narrative, *Une reine, un général, un président*.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ Michael Bess, *Realism, Utopia and the Mushroom Cloud: Four Activist Intellectuals and Their Strategies for Peace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 20.

⁵²⁸ For a discussion of Sartre's views on colonialism, see Patrick Williams, 'Roads to Freedom: Jean-Paul Sartre and Anti-Colonialism', in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 147-156 (p. 148).

⁵²⁹ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*.

Madagascar: power and morality in colonialism and decolonisation

Weiss devoted the majority of the script for her documentary, *Une reine, un général, un président*, to the changing power structures in Madagascar. Three different administrations are presented in this film. Firstly, the film acknowledges the end of the reign of Queen Ranaivalona III, the last sovereign queen of Madagascar who ruled from 1883 to 1897; secondly, it explores the impact of French colonisation under Marshall Gallieni (1897-1958); and, thirdly, marks the establishment of the Madagascan Republic under President Philbert Tsiranana who was to continue in office until 1972, some nine years after the release of Weiss's film. The combination of images and the scripted voiceover, which introduces the events in a chronological order, makes it relatively straightforward to identify each distinct ruling power and, on initial consideration, provides an uncomplicated and clear answer to the test, *A qui le pouvoir?* However, the answer to this question is less straightforward than might initially appear and, in Weiss's eyes, is certainly not as simple as the succession of three discrete regimes. The changing power structures point to Chapter Seven's discussion that the strongest regime had the claim to power at any one time, which opens up Weiss's visual travel narrative to questions around the morality of power in political actions of hegemony.

The time given to showcasing the three administrations is not equally distributed throughout the documentary. The accounts of both the reign of Ranaivalona and the presidency of Tsiranana are noticeably shorter than the commentary relating to French colonial rule, as will be shown below. Whilst this could be due simply to the historical fact that the duration of each of these administrations was shorter than the period of French

colonial rule, arguably this may be more indicative of Weiss's colonial gaze and support of France's *mission civilisatrice*. The following discussion is contextualised by this hypothesis and analyses in more detail Weiss's perception of power and morality in each governing administration in Madagascar.

Power and morality in pre-colonial times: the reign of Queen Ranavalona

Weiss's documentary opens with footage of a group of indigenous, ethnic dancers. At 05:10 it moves to a contrasting scene of a bustling, modern and cosmopolitan market place in central Madagascar. The film then pans around, finally leaving the market place behind in order to focus firstly on the 'palais des anciennes reines' and, secondly, on the 'palais de l'actuel gouvernement'.⁵³⁰



Figure 41: Stills from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the *Palais des anciennes reines* (left) and *Palais de l'actuel gouvernement* dominating the skyline at 06:06 (right)

⁵³⁰ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 06.02 and 06.09 respectively.

Although both palaces have similar architecture and appear to share equal status, as suggested by the symmetry in their dominant positions on the skyline overlooking the city (see Figure 41 above), details of Ranavalona's reign are eclipsed by Weiss's account of the French colonisation of the region. A mere 54 seconds of the film is devoted to Ranavalona compared to the two minutes and 21 seconds devoted to French colonial rule.

Ranavalona's reign is symbolised by her feathered headdress which is kept in a closed box bearing the initials R. M. underneath a crest. Almost suggesting that this box is still guarded by the Queen's maidservant, a woman's hand carries this box into shot, ceremoniously lifts the lid, and takes out the headdress to display it to the camera (see Figure 42 below). No indication is given in the film as to where the box and headdress are stored, but when the closed box initially comes into shot, the background has the appearance of an aged, wooden cupboard door. Its knots and grains are heavily varnished

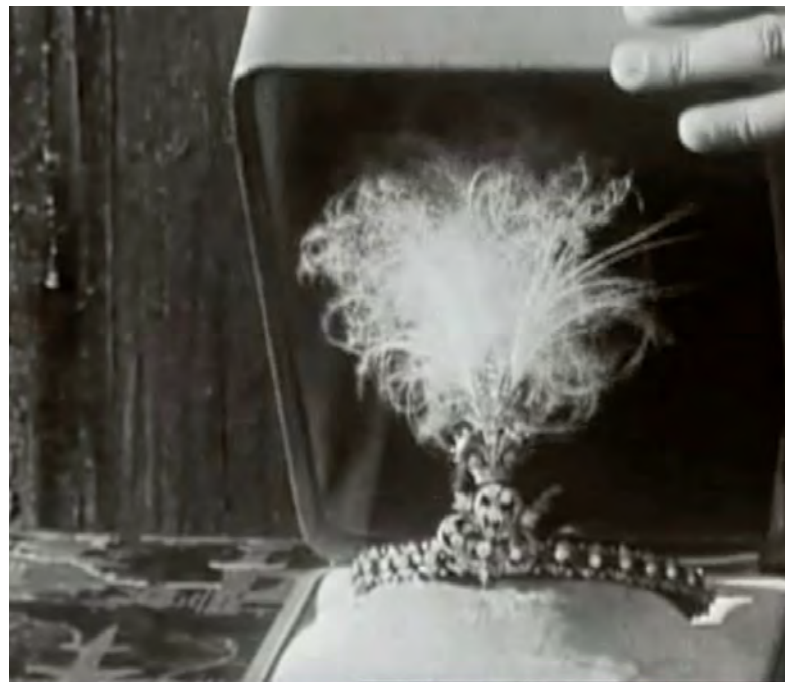


Figure 42: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the headdress of Queen Ranavalona III at 07:30

and there is a sense that time has caused the frame to warp, the wood to splinter, and the doors to misalign on closure. There is no suggestion of the typical rich trappings and tight security normally associated with royal paraphernalia. Although there is no direct reference to this cupboard being the usual storage area for the headdress, the framing and composition of the image renders this assumption valid. Irrespective of where the headdress is stored, the closed box keeps it out of public view and hidden from contemporary society, evoking an image that is indicative of a bygone sovereignty.

When the box is opened, and the headdress taken out, the delicate feathers flutter softly in the breeze, suggesting the blowing away of Ranavalona's flimsy, ephemeral rule which yielded to the stronger colonial power. This is further reinforced by Weiss's script which, at the same time that Ranavalona's headdress is featured on screen, announces that the aim of Gallieni's rule was to modernise Madagascar. Weiss's description of Ranavalona as a 'souveraine frivole'⁵³¹ confirms this image of transient, insubstantial power. In the context of Weiss's measures of power discussed in Chapter Seven, the dominance of colonial rule over the Madagascan monarchy illustrates the comment, 'A qui le pouvoir? – Au plus fort.'

***La Grande Île* under Marshall Gallieni's rule**

By contrast, no sense of flimsiness can be attributed to French colonial rule under Gallieni which Weiss addresses immediately after the reign of Ranavalona. In complete contrast, Gallieni's administration is commemorated in a more powerful manner and with military

⁵³¹ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 07.30.

overtones. Footage of a statue of the French officer sitting tall and erect on the back of a muscular, evidently thoroughbred, horse, and in full uniform, mounted on a large plinth appears on screen at 07:41 (see Figure 43 below).



Figure 43: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the top section of the statue commemorating Gallieni at 07:41

Statues play a significant role in the recognition and celebration of conquerors and heroes and Robert Aldrich recognises Gallieni as belonging to this category in his description of him as a ‘great man of the long colonial age.’⁵³² While it is not the aim of this discussion to evaluate Gallieni’s military career, Hubert Deschamps also associates him with ‘une

⁵³² Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 13.

méthode de colonisation souple et humaine’ exercised in Sudan, where, as governor, Gallieni successfully stopped a rebellion by Sudanese rebels, and in Tonkin, Vietnam, where he commanded the second military division and was successful in defeating the nationalist leader Hoàng Hoa Thám.⁵³³ Berny Sèbe argues that commemorative statues such as these ‘combine the prestige of official state recognition with the impact of a larger-than-life representation that is presented to all passers-by.’⁵³⁴ Seen through Western, colonial eyes, Gallieni’s statue, which was on public display at the entrance to Ambohitovo Park in the centre of Antananarivo, Madagascar’s capital city,⁵³⁵ was a worthy and robust celebration not only of his political actions, but of the power and prestige of France.

Weiss's documentary does not capture Gallieni’s monument as a whole but, as the camera angle pans downwards, the base of the plinth becomes visible and representations of presumably local people can be seen clothed in everyday attire that has the appearance of Western dress (see Figure 44 below). On the right-hand side of the plinth is a man, possibly a labourer carrying a staff, looking up towards Gallieni, a stance typically associated with subservience to a more powerful leader. A female figure is sitting at his feet and appears to be teaching a child from a book – the child’s posture is almost too alert to be reading or listening to a story. The cut of the female’s hair and the style of her dress gives her a Western European appearance. The figure of a farmer with a bull is situated on the left-hand side of the plinth, but this cannot be seen fully in Weiss's documentary. A box has been added to Figure 44 (below) to indicate the bull’s head appearing from behind the

⁵³³ Hubert Deschamps, *La fin des empires coloniaux* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963), p. 36.

⁵³⁴ Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa*, p. 37.

⁵³⁵ Didier Galibert, *Les gens du pouvoir à Madagascar: état postcolonial, légitimités, et territoire (1956-2002)* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2009), p. 215.

plinth in the bottom left-hand corner. The farmer has a similar stance to that of the labourer, looking up towards Gallieni with his hat in one hand.



Figure 44: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the plinth of the statue of Gallieni with labourer, woman, and child (right and front) and the head of a bull appearing on the left-hand side (box added for emphasis) at 07.47

The camera angle in Weiss's visual travel narrative also obscures the reading of the full inscription on the front of the monument. The inscription refers to Gallieni as a 'pacificateur' and 'organisateur de Madagascar' – phrases which, although difficult to see on screen, are scripted by Weiss and read aloud by the voiceover.⁵³⁶

The figures on both sides of the plinth are conceived from a colonial standpoint and can be interpreted in support of France's *mission civilisatrice*, the principles of which Forsdick, Basu, and Shilton claim emphasised the civilisation of the French colonies and the

⁵³⁶ Weiss, *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 06.33. See also Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 228.

education and emancipation of their people.⁵³⁷ The statue of Gallieni, raised high above the local people, represents the supremacy of colonial France and its associated connotations of civilisation and knowledge. The stance of the male figures on the plinth gives a sense of reverence to, and hope in, the French colonial rule led by Gallieni with its promise of economic achievement and education for future generations. In answer to the question, *En quel nom?* Weiss's travel narrative clearly locates power, and effective, productive power at that, firmly in the hands of French colonial rule. She further strengthens this perception in her script with the phrase, 'L'Occident était à l'époque de la conquête coloniale.'⁵³⁸ Power in Madagascar was exercised in the name of French colonialism which Weiss appeared to support.

This interpretation of Weiss's view is reinforced by her decision to omit an account of how Madagascar fell under French colonial rule. There is no discussion or suggestion of any immorality or coercion around the change in power from Ranavalona to Gallieni and Weiss presents the new administration in a matter-of-fact way as the next stage in the island's history. Martin Shipway offers an alternative interpretation of this change of power, however, citing France's involvement in exiling Ranavalona to Reunion Island, executing her prime minister, and burning the royal tombs.⁵³⁹ Similar violence against the monarchy is also recorded by Raymond Betts.⁵⁴⁰ With this omitted from her visual travel narrative and,

⁵³⁷ Forsdick, Basu, Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory*, p. 74.

⁵³⁸ Weiss, *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 07.20.

⁵³⁹ Martin Shipway, *Decolonisation and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of Colonial Empires* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 40. See also Eric T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 33-34 and Eric T. Jennings, 'Madagascar se souvient: Les multiples visages du monument aux morts du Lac Anosy Antananarivo', *Outre-mers*, 93 (2006) 123-140.

⁵⁴⁰ Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonisation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 8.

ostensibly in line with her apparent support of France's *mission civilisatrice*, Weiss's account suggests she was of the opinion that the French colonial regime had been both moral and beneficial.

If the narrative created around Gallieni's statue was not sufficient to inform her audience of her perception of French colonial rule, Weiss rectified any potential sketchiness or vagueness by depicting a number of ways in which Madagascar had benefitted from France's colonial rule: *Institut d'hygiène sociale* at 08:00, *Ecole de médecine* at 08:04 (one of 62 medical institutions which, in her memoirs, Weiss claims were established under French colonial rule⁵⁴¹) *Bibliothèque universitaire* and *Faculté de droit et des sciences économiques* at 08:06, *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* at 08:10 (which Weiss catalogues as one of 700 newly-created educational establishments in her memoirs⁵⁴²), and *Postes et télécommunications* building at 08:13. Additionally, Weiss highlighted in her scripted voiceover at 08:48 how goats had been imported to establish a new mohair industry and at 08:54 how the introduction of goldfish had helped both the food industry and Madagascan leisure time. But it was the construction of what Weiss termed the largest bridge in the country which embodied her perception of the power, value and worthiness of French colonial rule in Madagascar.

The bridge is pictured in the screenshot in Figure 45 (below). It was built over the Mananjary River in Southern Madagascar and linked the coast of the Mozambique Channel on the west with the Indian Ocean on the east. The bridge emerges from woodland on the left at the back of the shot. It passes in front of a wooden hut and extends into the

⁵⁴¹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 228.

⁵⁴² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 228.

foreground of the shot to the opposite edge and out beyond the right-hand border of the frame. From the centre of the shot, the bridge begins to come steadily into focus – it is slightly out of focus at its point of origin – and starts to appear larger as it nears the right-hand edge. A sense of forward motion, a kinesis which cuts through the landscape, is generated by this perspective and camera angle. The composition of the shot gives the impression that the bridge is asserting its presence in a slightly aggressive manner as it pushes on through the landscape and past the washing hung out to dry – a symbol of traditional, every-day, rural life in the Madagascan countryside.



Figure 45: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the bridge over the Mananjary River at 09:06

The prominence of the bridge produced by the juxtaposition of old and new in Figure 45 (above) is not only a celebration of the triumph of French engineering but a metaphor for the French colonial expression of power. At the time of its construction, the only way of crossing the Mananjary River was to wade across it as shown in Figure 46 (below). Despite the apparently easier alternative offered by the bridge, this traditional

course appeared to remain the preferred route for many indigenous people. In her visual travel narrative, Weiss pointedly refers to the continued practice of wading the river as an example of the 'primitivisme de la civilisation.'⁵⁴³ Of those who chose to use the bridge, Weiss depicts how they tentatively approached the bridge and, against a soundscape of whistling wind, clung to the sides of the structure which was open to the elements and at some considerable height from the ground.



Figure 46: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing local people wading across the Mananjary River at 09:46

Weiss refers to only a handful of Madagascan people who walked bravely across the bridge without showing any sense of anxiety. One of these was the young male in Figure 47 (below), who was filmed striding confidently across the bridge. He is pictured standing erect, looking directly ahead, swinging his arms as he walked, and not holding on to the sides of the bridge. He is walking with intent, making a beeline to his destination on the

⁵⁴³ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 09.47.

other side of the river. The young man's efforts are praised in Weiss's script, 'Ce gars a réussi. Il a pris le ton de la République Française pour déboucher sur l'indépendance.'⁵⁴⁴

At this point in Weiss's travel narrative, which was produced after the end of Gallieni's rule and around five years after Madagascar gained independence, this comment no longer refers solely to the young man's confident journey across the bridge. Rather, it is reminiscent of the views of the early supporters of French colonialism and the young



Figure 47: A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing a young man striding confidently across the bridge at 09:50

man's passage from the perceived ignorance of his Madagascan heritage to the civilisation of the Western world – specifically, the civilisation created by France. By walking across the bridge rather than wading across the river, the young man had left behind the primitive traditions of his native country. In commending the young man for adopting what French

⁵⁴⁴ Weiss, *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 09.50.

rule had offered him, he becomes linked to the heritage of France and to its standing in the contemporary world. Implicit in this relationship is the assurance of his personal success which, presumably, he would not have enjoyed without colonial intervention and which ultimately had prepared him for the time when the country would gain its independence.

A similar sentiment is suggested in Weiss's article 'Promenades en Egypte', where she used the possessive form of the first-person plural when, in the Islamic university of El-Azhar, she recalled seeing, 'des étudiants de *notre* Afrique du Nord' (emphasis added).⁵⁴⁵

Laura Loth argues that travel heightens a sense of national belonging and produces a stronger national identity compared to staying at home.⁵⁴⁶ This is consistent with Robert Shannan Peckham's claim that, 'exotic places were being translated in terms of the familiar.'⁵⁴⁷ Weiss's use of 'notre' immediately linked North Africa with France's heritage and standing in the contemporary world.⁵⁴⁸

Weiss depicted French colonial rule in Madagascar in a positive manner. It was supporting and developing both France's overseas interests and the country's own economy. For her there was nothing immoral in this activity. In answer to the questions, *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre?*, Weiss's travel narratives suggest it that it was not the traditional, rural Madagascar, rather the modern society created under Gallieni's administration. Weiss's apparent support of colonialism suggests she perceived no tension in the relationship between power and morality in Madagascar under French colonial rule.

⁵⁴⁵ Louise Weiss, 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 184: (4) (1949), 384-386 (p. 386.)

⁵⁴⁶ Laura Loth, 'Journeying identities: mid 19th-century women's travel writing in French colonial Algeria', *Symposium*, 63 (2009), 107-126 (p. 115).

⁵⁴⁷ Robert Shannan Peckham, 'The Exoticism of the Familiar and the Familiarity of the Exotic: *Fin-de-siècle* travellers to Greece', in *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, ed. by James Duncan and Derek Gregory (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 164-184 (p. 166).

⁵⁴⁸ For a commentary on the extent of France's presence in North Africa see Deschamps, *La fin des empires coloniaux*, pp. 36-37.

However, there is a suggestion of tension between Weiss's experiential knowledge and her self-appointed role as witness.

By virtue of her nationality, Weiss enjoyed a shared ownership of the power structures of all the French colonies. This produced a very different relationship to that of her encounters with, for example, myth. Her experiential knowledge of power (re)positioned her as a participant rather than a witness or even an intermediary. Unlike her encounters with spirituality, Weiss distanced herself from her encounters with power but located them at the very heart of her contemporary experience. Her choice of vocabulary indicates she felt part of the French overseas administrations. Weiss's encounter with power afforded her more than a witness experience. In contrast to her mythological encounters, Weiss did not find herself forced to transit a boundary between the twentieth century and her encounters with power. She was not required to decode her experience for others in order to bring her encounters back to a contemporary space. As she encountered colonial expressions of power, Weiss found her contemporaries were already there with her. This close association with hegemonic administrations crossed any boundary that might be perceived between colonial power and the twentieth century and aligned her experience more with that of a participant than an intermediary.

Although Weiss never openly admits it, and this is where the tension arises, her role in her visual travel narrative from Madagascar appears to be correlated more strongly to that of a participant rather than to that of the witness she relentlessly claimed to be. As a participant, Weiss's perception of the power structures she encountered were potentially coloured by her experiential knowledge which is particularly evident in her account of the third power structure in Madagascar, the rule of President Tsiranana.

Negotiating post-colonial power under Tsiranana's Presidency

Following the 1956 *Loi Cadre*, which transferred power from Paris to elected local government councils in overseas empires, Madagascar achieved autonomy from France in 1958 and then full sovereignty in 1960. With regard to French activities in Africa, Frederick Cooper emphasises that the *Loi Cadre* was not viewed by France as decolonisation but, 'an attempt to reconfigure the place of Africa in the French Union.'⁵⁴⁹ The *Loi Cadre* did not represent constitutional revision so was not an attempt to reconfigure the Union per se but rather to provide a legal framework through which reforms were outlined and left to the discretion of the local government to fulfil on its own terms.⁵⁵⁰

Madagascar's journey to independence proved to be a turbulent time in its history, the detail of which Weiss omits from her travel narratives. She makes no comment on the anti-colonial uprising of 1947 or the 1958 referendum to decide whether Madagascar should become a self-governing republic.⁵⁵¹ However, it was not her intention to document the upheaval she perceived around her since her interest lay in understanding the events of the twentieth century and discerning a universal formula on which to build a peaceful, moral society. In *Une reine, un général, un président*, this began with Weiss's interpretation

⁵⁴⁹ Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship Between Empire and Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 215.

⁵⁵⁰ For an overview of this turbulent period in the history of France's decolonisation, the *Loi Cadre*, and its political consequences, see Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 163-192. For political consequences of the relationship with the French Constitution see Hubert Deschamps, *Les institutions politiques de l'Afrique Noire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), pp. 61-62.

⁵⁵¹ For a brief overview of early Madagascan politics, the turbulence of Tsiranana's rule, and a commentary on the ruling power(s) post-Tsiranana, see Richard R. Marcus, 'Political Change in Madagascar: Populist democracy or neopatrimonialism by another name?', *Institute for Security Studies*, Paper 89 (2004), 1-20 and Deschamps, *Les institutions politiques de l'Afrique Noire*, p. 96. See also Raymond F. Betts, *France and Decolonisation 1900-1960* (London: MacMillan, 1991), p. 119 for a discussion on the subject of growing dissatisfaction with French colonialism in Madagascar.

of the transition of colonial power to an independent government through footage of Tsiranana leaving the *Palais de l'actuel gouvernement* en route to the celebrations for National Day.⁵⁵²

In the voiceover to her documentary, Weiss makes explicit reference to the fact that the new seat of governance occupied the same buildings as the former colonial headquarters and was in full view of the *Palais des anciennes reines* which was situated on the opposite hillside. In this short, seven-second sentence, Weiss clearly establishes the succession of three ruling powers: the monarchy of Ranaivalona, French colonial rule under Gallieni, and Tsiranana's governance of the Madagascan Republic. The answer to *A qui le pouvoir* and *En quel nom?* was now no longer France, but the people of Madagascar; no longer colonialism, but independent governance under a Madagascan national.

Irrespective of the uprising and turbulence associated with the end of Gallieni's administration, Weiss concludes this change in power to be a 'décolonisation réussie.'⁵⁵³ She claims life in Madagascar is now founded on liberty and solidarity and included footage from the National Day celebrations in her documentary. Madagascar celebrates two national holidays: the memory of anticolonial resistance in 1947, the commemoration of the dead, and the decoration of surviving combatants is celebrated on 29 March and Madagascar's return to independence in 1960 is celebrated on 26 June with parades and cultural performances. The nature of the images in Weiss's documentary suggest it is probably the latter celebration which she filmed, but she does not confirm this. Figures 48(a) to 48(f) (below) show stills from the documentary *Une reine, un général, un président*.

⁵⁵² Weiss, *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 09.55.

⁵⁵³ Weiss, *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 12.30.



Figure 48(a): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* of Madagascar's National Day celebrations and Tsiranana's picture framed by roses at 10:34



Figure 48(b): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* depicting Tsiranana's party's banner at 10:16



Figure 48(c): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* depicting Tsiranana's party logo (the tiger-cat) at 10:33



Figure 48(d): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* with Madagascan citizens cheering President Tsiranana as he waves from his car at 10:20



Figure 48(e): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* showing the Madagascan security force at 10:45



Figure 48(f): A still from *Une reine, un général, un président* where a parade celebrates skilled employment, good health and a flourishing arts movement at 11:18

Viewing these images in isolation, a sense of propaganda emerges from the way in which Tsiranana's success is portrayed. There is no evidence, however, that Weiss's film was conceived as a propaganda tool since she was insistent on promoting a witness gaze and her intention was, therefore, to portray real events. Subsequently, commentators have suggested that Tsiranana's rule was, in reality, flawed and that, rather than delivering a truly independent government, the party simply mimicked the previous French colonial rule.⁵⁵⁴

Weiss's film contains some evidence in support of this view. She notes, for example, that many of the traditions established under French colonial rule were maintained by the new administration. In particular, the model for the Madagascan armed forces was based on that of France, and footage shows that schools were still named after colonial heroes such as Gallieni and Jules Ferry, which was a legacy from the colonial period when ruling administrations imposed their own structures rather than encouraging local versions. But it was France's funding of Madagascar's infrastructure after the country had gained its independence that questioned not only the success and autonomy of Tsiranana's rule but also where the real seat of power resided and the extent of France's long-term interest in Madagascar.⁵⁵⁵ Weiss raises this issue by depicting a hoarding which read, 'Travaux réalisés sur le fonds d'Aide et de Coopération.'⁵⁵⁶ In the context of Madagascar's independent administration, a consideration of *A qui le pouvoir?* and *En quel nom?* becomes more complex and less transparent than under colonial rule.

⁵⁵⁴ Jean Fremigacci, 'Madagascar ou l'éternel retour de la crise', *Afrique Contemporaine*, 3, 251 (2014), 125-142, {p. 128.}

⁵⁵⁵ See Giuliana Chamedes and Elizabeth Foster, 'Introduction: Decolonisation and Religion in the French Empire', *French Politics, Culture, and Society*, 33, 2 (2015), 1-11 for a view of the extent to which French decolonisation was 'thoroughgoing' or 'cosmetic' depending on the rebalancing of personnel, influence, and finance.

⁵⁵⁶ *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 08.30.

Weiss deemed Madagascar's decolonisation to be successful but, as her later memoirs would show, she came to question the morality of Tsiranana's regime. Some thirteen years later, a certain anxiety emerged in Weiss's memoirs which was reminiscent of the above suggestion that the National Day celebrations were merely a form of propaganda:

Le président Tsiranana avait détaxé les transistors. Il en aurait volontiers distribué pour imposer le culte de sa personne aux hétéroclites ethnies du pays. Le drapeau malgache claquait aux façades, ou, quelquefois, on ne savait pourquoi, à la pointe d'une pique planté dans des gravats.⁵⁵⁷

This detail does not appear in Weiss's earlier visual travel narrative. Contextualised by this extract from her memoirs, Figures 48(a) to 48(f) (above) can be interpreted differently to imply that, rather than appearing to have achieved an almost celebrity status in the newly-independent Madagascar as a consequence of a successful decolonisation, Tsiranana had a certain hold over the local population. In the opening sentence of the above quotation, Weiss alludes to the importance of the role of mass communication in achieving and maintaining power. By widening access to radio broadcasts, Tsiranana made it easy to communicate his ideals to the Madagascan people. The threat Weiss perceived in this is illustrated in her comment, 'les transistors chloroforment leur esprit critique'⁵⁵⁸ – a sentiment that could conceivably have been borne out of her earlier personal experiences of political broadcasts during a visit to China in 1958, which are discussed below.

Additionally, Weiss's use of the verb 'imposer' suggests a rather more sinister objective behind Tsiranana's actions. The notion of force behind this verb and its association

⁵⁵⁷ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 228.

⁵⁵⁸ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 214.

with the national flag in the next sentence appears to suggest Tsiranana used his position to influence strongly, if not coerce, the people of Madagascar. Weiss portrayed Tsiranana as being in a position to be able to change laws, to use technology to his own advantage, and, ultimately, to communicate whatever ideology he desired to the people of Madagascar – scenarios which allude to Weiss's belief that any sense of morality could diminish with the increase of power.

Weiss's perception of the behaviour of Tsiranana illustrates her concern with *l'Arme absolue* – the coercion of moral thought to exercise supremacy in order for ideologies to be accepted by the masses. The picture she paints of Madagascar's journey to independence implies that the original colonisers had physically left only to be replaced by another regime which used a type of propaganda to influence the minds of the people. For Weiss, this was the ultimate weapon, *l'Arme absolue*. France's *mission civilisatrice* in Madagascar had laid the foundations from which a new regime could impose its own supremacy whilst apparently enjoying financial support from France. Seemingly unconcerned by the irony that her own documentary could be criticised for influencing her viewers' opinions on France's *mission civilisatrice*, the morality of colonialism and the power offered by independence, or, more specifically, the morality of the individuals who led these powerful regimes, finally come under scrutiny in her post-war publications.

China: power and morality under Communist rule

Weiss's observations of the potential for power to be used as *l'Arme absolue* – the coercion of moral thought to exercise supremacy – is nowhere more apparent than in her account of

her journey to China under Communist rule. Published two years after her three-month visit to China in 1958, Weiss's text-based travel narrative, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire',⁵⁵⁹ opens with her account of her arrival in the Chinese immigration hall, having crossed from what was then the Crown Colony of Hong Kong under British rule to the People's Republic of China under the administration of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party. Even before clearing immigration, Weiss is confronted by Communist doctrine. Unlike Ella Maillart's account of her journey through China accompanied by Peter Fleming some twenty years earlier which favoured intercultural and interpersonal contact over politics and power, this initial encounter would colour Weiss's entire journey:⁵⁶⁰

Je suis entrée en Chine Populaire par une galerie couverte étroite et fort longue, celle qui menait du dernier officiel anglais, assurant l'ordre du territoire de Hong-Kong, au premier officiel chinois timbré des cinq étoiles rouges de l'emblème national. Cette galerie couverte offrait à elle seule une première et sommaire explication du pays. Sur les piliers qui en soutenaient le toit à droite, à gauche et, par moments, à perte de vue, étaient collées des affiches qui disaient sur la politique du gouvernement central tout ce qui me crèverait les yeux du matin au soir, en cours de route.⁵⁶¹

Finding herself seemingly alone in a claustrophobic passageway that led her along the lengthy route to the Chinese border, Weiss first encountered the principles by which Chinese society was governed. Pasted onto every pillar as far as the eye could see were posters, the titles of which she reported as: 'votre santé', 'votre travail', 'vos enfants', 'vos

⁵⁵⁹ Louise Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), 83-100.

⁵⁶⁰ Ella Maillart, *Oasis interdites: de Pékin au Cachemire, une femme à travers l'Asie centrale en 1935* (Éditions Payot and Rivages, 2002). For a comparative study of the accounts produced by Ella Maillart and Peter Fleming see Charles Forsdick, 'Peter Fleming and Ella Maillart in China: Travel Writing as Stereoscopic and Polygraphic Form', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 13 (2009), 293-303. For a comprehensive study of Maillart see Sara Steinert-Borella, *The Travel Narratives of Ella Maillart: (En)Gendering the Quest* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

⁵⁶¹ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 83.

ennemis', 'votre pays', 'vos frères et sœurs', 'votre grand ami', 'votre doctrine', and 'votre chef'.⁵⁶² Although presumably written in Chinese – there is no indication of the source language – Weiss claimed to have read these posters in detail and reproduced their content in her travel narrative. Irrespective of how she came to understand the text on the posters, Weiss explains they apparently addressed the need to extinguish vermin to maintain good health; to work hard to ensure the economic success of China over other Western countries; to raise educated children in a joyful manner; to maintain a distance from enemies such as capitalists, imperialists, colonialists and people who did not appear to be Chinese; to reclaim Taiwan which was already opposed to Communist rule enforced on mainland China; to welcome as brothers and sisters those who physically resembled the Chinese in order to build up the Chinese people; to recognise Russia as a friend and Marx and Lenin as inspirational heroes who contributed to the founding of Communism; and to recognise in Mao a handsome, energetic, victorious, cultured, and trustworthy leader who, himself, upheld the principles of Communist doctrine.

In essence, these principles addressed the basic economic and social problems in China at the time which have subsequently been summarised by Zhikai Dong as its low education and high illiteracy rates and the country's need to develop a strong, vibrant, and productive industrial base in order to overcome widespread poverty. Mao and his ruling party were faced with the goal of establishing 'an independent and self-sufficient economic system'.⁵⁶³ But these posters served a more fundamental purpose. In line with Barry Barnes's assertion that power lies in the distribution of knowledge and that stability is

⁵⁶² Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', pp 84-86.

⁵⁶³ Zhikai Dong, 'Mao Zedong and the independent and comprehensive industrial system and the modernisation of China', *World Review of Political Economy*, 5 (2014), 472-487 (p. 472).

inferred because the obedience of some members of the population encourages the same from others, the Communist Party was able to exercise a degree of power and stability over the general population.⁵⁶⁴ Power was manifest in the behaviour and adherence of the populace to these behaviours which suggested the presence and implementation of power. The text of each poster appealed to the reader's subconscious suggesting that, if they followed these principles, the country would prosper on the world stage, they would find joy and truth by reaching out to help like-minded people, they would not need to fear enemies who did not embody the Chinese, or more precisely Communist, vision, and 'tout ira mieux'.⁵⁶⁵

The importance of these posters to Weiss's understanding of the relationship between power and morality in Communist China is implied firstly by the time she spent looking at them – she almost missed her rail connection to central Canton – and, secondly, the space she devoted to them in her subsequent article – the first four of her article's fifteen-and-a-half pages are dedicated to reproducing, in apparently precise detail, the content of each poster. After internalising the text, Weiss declared: 'Informée, je l'étais, dès maintenant.'⁵⁶⁶ The posters provided her with far more than a summary introduction to Mao's China. She had gained an early insight into the relationship between power and morality in Communist China which clearly communicated the answers to *A qui le pouvoir?* and *En quel nom?* Mao was irrefutably presented as the leader under 'l'Etoile Rouge'⁵⁶⁷ with

⁵⁶⁴ Barry Barnes, *The Nature of Power* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 100.

⁵⁶⁵ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 84.

⁵⁶⁶ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 86.

⁵⁶⁷ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 86.

the seemingly ubiquitous power to inspire and enforce the principles of the Communist Party:

Votre chef. – Enfin, voici Mao [...] Votre santé, votre travail, vos enfants, vos ennemis, vos frères et sœurs, votre meilleur ami, votre doctrine sont assurés, déterminés, exterminés, guidés, approuvés, inspirés par lui, le Président tout-puissant des Peuples de la République de Chine.⁵⁶⁸

The location of these posters is equally important to Weiss's understanding of the relationship between power and morality in Communist China. Positioned on the approach to the country, they were the first thing that visitors or returning residents saw and therefore acted as both an instruction and a reminder of the Party's principles. Pasted along the corridor as far as the eye could see, the posters filled the void of what was essentially 'no-man's land' between two immigration points. The posters contextualised the long walk from British Hong Kong to China suggesting that whatever had been experienced outside China should now be forgotten in favour of adopting the rules of the prevailing Communist administration. Cognisant of the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics discussed in Chapter Seven, which is predicated on the connection between politics, power, and the characteristics of humans, Weiss's travel narrative suggests that only those who were prepared to subscribe to this doctrine had *le droit de vivre* in China. This measure of power demonstrated that, even before formally setting foot in the country, Weiss's account of her arrival in China implied the use of *l'arme absolue* and the coercion of moral thought to exercise supremacy. But for Weiss, the answer to the question *En quel nom?* was not

⁵⁶⁸ Weiss, *Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire*, p. 86.

necessarily Communism as the posters suggested, but more pointedly ‘cette propagande’.⁵⁶⁹

Immediately upon arrival in the city of Canton (now known as Guangzhou), Weiss and her guide, a young, thin man who had been summoned to assist her by the *Bureau des Voyages de la Chine Populaire*, were faced once more with what Weiss considered to be nothing more than propaganda. Huge posters had been erected around the central square. All carried the same messages as Weiss had read earlier in the arrival hall. But, on this occasion, the messages were amplified by a loud speaker and an illuminated image of Mao:

Sur la place, des affiches immenses, violemment éclairées, répétaient les thèmes qui m’étaient entrés dans les yeux à la frontière. Un haut-parleur braillait [...] Mes *yuans* acquis, nous revînmes à la gare. Le haut-parleur braillait toujours. Et le Président Mao, illuminé au néon, n’avait pas cessé de sourire à la foule empêtrée de ballots qui encombrait la place.⁵⁷⁰

Weiss's choice of vocabulary relating to examples of both the visual and aural propaganda she encountered – specifically, the abundance of doctrinal posters and the continual bellow of loudspeakers in populated spaces – illustrates her perception of the morality behind the Communist power regime she encountered in China. Her use of ‘immense’ and ‘violemment’ in her description of the posters she saw in the busy square in central Canton suggests a feeling of both dominance and subordination. Garishly lit, the principles advocated by the ruling power dominated both the cityscape and the daily lives of the Chinese people who remained under the watchful smile of the President. The posters, loud speakers, and neon signs reinforced the norms by which the local population was

⁵⁶⁹ Weiss, *Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire*, p. 86.

⁵⁷⁰ Weiss, ‘*Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire*’, p. 88.

expected to abide, their function similar to Barnes' 'mnemonic device which facilitates cognition and the retention of culture.'⁵⁷¹

Weiss's use of commas to highlight Mao's brash luminosity plays on the negative technological and sociological connotations associated with neon lights. Once an extravagant advertising technique used for promotion and drawing people in, this form of lighting was falling out of favour with the Western world at the time of Weiss's article. It had become a nostalgic symbol of the past and, outside the enthusiast's circle, was not associated with modernity.⁵⁷² However, in Asia, neon lighting in cities was widespread at this time and was often featured in Weiss's visual travel narratives. For example, neon-lit signs and images on the streets of Hong Kong are depicted in the opening sequence to Weiss's documentary *Le Rocher tragique*⁵⁷³ and also appear in the closing sequence of *Le Dieu du riz*⁵⁷⁴ which was filmed in Japan. Whilst, perhaps inadvertently, positioning China's technological advancement behind that of the West, Weiss's explicit reference to this type of signage illustrates one of her fundamental concerns of the relationship between power and morality. Steeped in connotations of promotion and appeal, the neon image of Mao had become an instrument of power by which to transform and control the minds of others.

As suggested by the above quotation, Weiss was not only subjected to visual displays of Communist propaganda but also to its aural expressions. In the first six pages of her article, reference is made twice to a loudspeaker bellowing out over the city. Weiss's

⁵⁷¹ Barnes, *The Nature of Power*, p. 104.

⁵⁷² For a technological, economic, and social commentary on the history of neon lights, see Christoph Ribbat, *Flickering Light: A History of Neon* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

⁵⁷³ *Le Rocher tragique*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958).

⁵⁷⁴ *Le Dieu du riz*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded, 1958).

use of the verb 'brailler' in 'un haut-parleur braillait,'⁵⁷⁵ alludes to both the pitch and tone of the broadcast as well as to her annoyance and discomfort. Three pages later, as Weiss embarked on a train journey to Peking (now Beijing), which would last two days and three nights, she was once more confronted by what she heard as the raucous bawl of another loudspeaker, this time in her carriage:

Hélas ! ce haut-parleur, je le retrouvai dans mon compartiment, hurlant sans répit des airs d'opéra, des consignes politiques, des explications sur les sites, des nouvelles, des chansons. Au début, j'écoutais pour me faire au chinois et au régime. Puis je me révoltai, impuissante, contre ce viol de ma vie intérieure. Enfin, je m'y résignai, assommée. Cette agression ne cessait que tard dans la nuit pour reprendre à l'aube [...] En Chine, la propagande ne laisse pas un instant son homme tranquille. L'endoctrinement qui m'avait saisie à la frontière dès la première seconde et ne me quitterait qu'à la dernière dans les eaux du port de Shanghai était à la base de la nouvelle édification psychologique.⁵⁷⁶

On this occasion, Weiss was not outdoors. The propaganda message had infiltrated her private space and she felt violated. In her train carriage, she was not at liberty, as she was in the city square in Canton, to move away from the relentless transmission of the principles of the Communist state. Completely immersed in this encounter with power and experiencing at first hand the effect of *l'Arme absolue*, Weiss's role of witness comes under scrutiny once more as her report of the encounter adopts a more subjective tone. Weiss appears outraged by her experience of power in China, finding herself unable to fight back. Stunned by this aggressive attack on her liberty and independent thought, Weiss eventually resigns herself to the fact that it could not be avoided. She had encountered a dictatorial power which, although promoting wellbeing and prosperity, subordinated its people and

⁵⁷⁵ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 88.

⁵⁷⁶ Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', p. 92.

denied them their intellectual liberty. She considers it was: 'un autre monde que le nôtre et qui comporte ses bienfaits, mais pas celui de la liberté.'⁵⁷⁷

Weiss's account of her experiential knowledge of power in China implies she was affected on a deep and personal level by what can only be understood as a wounding experience of *l'Arme absolue*, an immoral ideology which used what she considered to be the most dangerous weapon of all. As discussed above, Weiss later travelled to Madagascar where she encountered similar practices in the form of Tsiranana's radio broadcasts. It is not surprising, therefore, that this produced a similar negative reaction to what she perceived was essentially a source of propaganda.

Finding the moral code in *l'Arme absolue*

This chapter set out to interpret Weiss's perception of power behind two specific ideologies and the extent to which her encounters with these expressions of supremacy offered her an explanation of the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century. French colonial rule, with which she appeared to empathise, and Communism, to which she was opposed, provided the basis for her experiential knowledge and the context in which to examine Weiss's own measures of power.

On initial consideration, the first three of Weiss's yardsticks – *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre?* and *En quel nom?* – appear to offer a sound framework for her investigation of power. By applying these three tests, Weiss was able to identify the nature of powerful ideologies and whether power resided with people or with a ruling autocracy.

⁵⁷⁷ Louise Weiss, 'L'industrialisation de la Chine', *Revue des deux mondes*, May (1959), 97-110 (p. 107).

Rather than providing her with a moral code which she could apply to alleviate the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century, however, Weiss's encounters with powerful ideologies appeared to lead her no further forward in her understanding beyond concluding that the strongest regime had the claim to power at any one time. What began as an investigation into the relationship between power and morality behind what she perceived as some of the world's most powerful expressions of supremacy, concluded as a pessimistic revelation of the potential for hegemonic regimes to overthrow the status quo and establish their own supremacy in whatever manner they saw fit.

Weiss's travel narratives do not document how the strongest force(s) rose to power. For example, it has been shown above that Weiss made no comment on the turbulence associated with the arrival of French colonial rule in Madagascar or the island's journey to independence. Neither does she refer to any turmoil or uprising associated with the founding of Communism in China. On initial consideration, this hints at a potential inadequacy in Weiss's four measures of power. But, arguably, this was not her focus since her overriding interest did not lie in understanding the causes of the turmoil she perceived around her, but in discovering a universal formula on which to build a peaceful, moral society. Exploring events leading to upheaval would have undoubtedly added to her anxiety rather than alleviate it.

What is apparent in Weiss's travel narratives, however, is the importance of her fourth test, *L'Arme absolue*. Weiss's overriding concern was the extent to which the doctrine of a particular regime infringed intellectual freedom and individuality. For example, in China, under the rule of Mao, Weiss presents Communism as almost synonymous with indoctrination and she later aligned the actions of Madagascar's President Tsiranana with

propaganda and coercion. However, construed as support of what she perceived a benevolent expression of supremacy, Weiss ironically overlooked any accusation of oppression which might have been directed to France's *mission civilisatrice*. Such autocratic power structures, which Weiss considered less regulated, and therefore more dangerous, than the development of military arms and warfare, embodied her ultimate fear of the annihilation of individuality. Conquering the spirit of the people lay at the heart of Weiss's perceived immorality in coercive power. At this juncture, the relationship between power and morality became a question not of ideology, but of *l'arme absolue*.

Cognisant of Weiss's desire for a more intimate and empathetic engagement with the communities she encountered, the following chapter takes up the observation from Chapter Seven that her interest in power extends beyond political ideologies to its effect on the individual. Against a backdrop of the onset of modernity, the following chapter uses Weiss's four measures of power to examine a more nuanced view of Weiss's perception of power in the context of scientific and industrial progress.

CHAPTER 9
ON THE ROAD TO MODERNITY
ENGAGING WITH THE POWER OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

The previous chapter demonstrated that, rather than providing an answer to alleviating the turbulence of the twentieth century, Weiss's encounter with colonial and Communist ideologies led her to the pessimistic belief that the political actions of hegemonic regimes could exert an amoral power to coerce individuals. For Weiss, this was a form of 'lavage des cerveaux'⁵⁷⁸ which helped leaders maintain internal stability by locking people into belief systems under the perceived authority of a set of principles. Specific acts of propaganda became the tools by which ruling administrations established the norms of society and against which they granted and legitimised the right of individuals to function in that society. But for Weiss, this amounted to nothing less than an attack on individuality and transformed people into little more than 'robots téléguidés'⁵⁷⁹ as their creativity and spirit was threatened or crushed.

Although one of the ways in which Weiss evaluated the power structures she encountered was through a consideration of the question, *En quel nom?*, her principal objective was not the designation of these ideologies per se. As this chapter will demonstrate, her interest in power can be shown to be much wider than labelling a particular power structure or ruling administration. As discussed in Part One, the focus of

⁵⁷⁸ Louise Weiss, 'Une visite à l'empereur des perles,' *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1976), 83-87 (p. 83).

⁵⁷⁹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 505.

her post-war travels was to go beyond the political commentary that had framed her earlier career. Her desire for a more intimate and empathetic engagement with the communities she encountered focused her attention on exposing the consequences of power on the individual. This does not mean, however, that Weiss abandoned her contemporaneous anxiety over the potential encroachment of certain Eastern ideologies. As discussed in Chapter One, like many of her generation, Weiss remained alert to the nature of potential threats which she believed menaced the borders of Europe. Rather, it realigns her approach to power with the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics discussed in Chapter Seven where power is considered an unavoidable and integral characteristic of human social life, and where, as Katia Genel maintains, 'the stakes of political strategies become the life of the human species'.⁵⁸⁰

Weiss's preoccupation with the consequences of power on individuals speaks directly to the work of Barry Barnes. Barnes acknowledged that other sources of power exist alongside that of political regimes and coercive ideologies but, in order to understand them, he argues that it is more beneficial to describe their consequences than to focus solely on identifying their exact natures.⁵⁸¹ By adopting a similar perspective in her travel narratives, Weiss's attempt to try and understand the turbulence of the twentieth century through the prism of power or, more precisely, through its consequences on the individual, revealed that other forms of power were at play in the communities she encountered. Two further forms of power in particular emerge from Weiss's travel narratives. Alongside her concern with the effects of powerful ideologies, Weiss became interested in how communities were

⁵⁸⁰ Katia Genel, 'The Question of Biopower: Foucault and Agamben', trans. by Craig Carson, *Rethinking Marxism*, 18:1 (2006) 43-62 (p. 43).

⁵⁸¹ Barry Barnes, *The Nature of Power* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

affected by the power inherent in, firstly, scientific developments and, secondly, industrial progress. Before examining Weiss's encounters with these forms of power, her understanding of each is defined below.

Modernity I: scientific developments

Casey Blanton argues that it is generally accepted that: 'the European concern with science and natural history ... [began] ... soon after the publication of Carl Linné's *Systema Naturae* in 1735.'⁵⁸² This, he concludes, subsequently encouraged many expeditions all over the world as it enabled the classification of all the earth's flora and fauna. It is not unusual, therefore, for travel narratives to be conceived around aspects of science or the search and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and physical world. Carl Thompson outlines how travel narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were often at the 'cutting edge of scientific, political, and moral debate'⁵⁸³ and Mary Louise Pratt argues that more recent travel narratives were 'essential mediators between the scientific network and a larger European public.'⁵⁸⁴ Weiss's travel narratives can be shown to have appealed to contemporary European debate at the time they were written, but her interest does not appear to lie in describing or presenting the natural world. Rather, her travel narratives demonstrate that she was primarily concerned with the application of scientific developments and their ensuing effect on the individual as the world entered the nuclear age.

⁵⁸² Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 71.

⁵⁸³ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 45.

⁵⁸⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 29.

For Weiss, the post-war period marked a significant leap forward in scientific knowledge and its application. The importance she attributes to this step-change is mentioned in the preface to Volume One of her memoirs, written in June 1968, where Weiss claims that: ‘... cette ère marquera, dans l’histoire, la fin de l’âge du fer et le début de l’âge de l’atome’.⁵⁸⁵ Some eleven years later, at the opening of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 17th July 1979, Weiss gave a speech in her capacity as the oldest elected member of the Assembly, and reiterated a similar sentiment by referring to representing ‘[...] nos personnes placées aujourd’hui, dans l’univers, à la charnière de la mutation pathétique de l’ère de l’acier en ère de l’atome.’⁵⁸⁶ Although a comparison of the text in her memoirs with the text of this speech shows Weiss modified ‘l’âge du fer’ to ‘l’ère de l’acier’, her focus on the world’s step-change to the nuclear age was no less apparent.

Whilst the nuclear age can legitimately be seen as a period of revolutionary scientific development that advanced the principles of, for example, artificial intelligence and energy production, it was also synonymous with the threat of nuclear proliferation, destructive warfare, and the geopolitical tension of the Cold War between East and West. Weiss's travel narratives consistently associate a menacing undercurrent with the science of this era, irrespective of whether they are text-based or visual. For example, the effects of energy production and war are addressed in ‘L’industrialisation de la Chine’⁵⁸⁷ and ‘Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne’⁵⁸⁸ respectively. Her documentary, *Le Dieu du riz*,⁵⁸⁹ addresses

⁵⁸⁵ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d’une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1968). No page number.

⁵⁸⁶ Louise Weiss, ‘Un combat pour L’Europe’, in *Louise Weiss L’Européenne* (Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l’Europe, 1994), pp. 481-502 (p. 484).

⁵⁸⁷ Louise Weiss, ‘L’industrialisation de la Chine’, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 5 (1959), 97-110.

⁵⁸⁸ Louise Weiss, ‘Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne’, *France Illustration*, 232 (1950), 293-296.

⁵⁸⁹ *Le Dieu du riz*, dir. by Louise Weiss (distributor unrecorded, 1958).

the pollutive effects of Asia's energy production at 05.45, features work associated with rebuilding a Samurai palace which had been destroyed by American bombs at 06.29, highlights the potential future risk to humanity associated with the development of first-generation robots at 07.26, and depicts scenes from a wreath laying ceremony to remember the victims of Hiroshima at 15.49. In *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, Weiss likens an erupting volcano to the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb⁵⁹⁰ – an image which is indicative of the power and destruction she associated with the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. All of these images have a basis in scientific applications rather than representations of the natural world.

Modernity II: industrial progress

Weiss was far from being the twentieth century's 'industrialised romantic' portrayed by James Duncan and Derek Gregory who, overwhelmed by the extent of Western industrialisation, viewed the world through a romantic frame, positioned the Other in the context of the picturesque and exotic, and considered it best to travel only in one's mind as the world had been spoiled by industrialisation.⁵⁹¹ Rather, Weiss's perspective on industrial progress was predicated on a Western gaze that had become habituated to 'an industrialised mode of consciousness'⁵⁹² which acknowledged progress but which was

⁵⁹⁰ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 83 and p. 111.

⁵⁹¹ James Duncan and Derek Gregory, *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 7.

⁵⁹² Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 57.

equally aware of the powerful impact it could have on society and, more importantly for Weiss, individuals.

Weiss's interpretation of industrial progress is aligned with the advantages and disadvantages of engineering and technological developments. For example, in *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux*, Weiss depicts a young girl walking inside a wheel to operate what appears to be a lifting mechanism for a well (see Figure 49 below.) Weiss's voiceover script suggests that industrial progress, in this instance the building of a dam, was an opportunity to alleviate arduous, manual labour, 'C'est par le pouvoir de telles images que les Chinois d'aujourd'hui ont décidé de moderniser leur pays.'⁵⁹³ This commentary positions her in contrast to the trope of the industrialised romantic. Whilst an exotic interpretation could be applied to the images in Figure 49 (below), there is no suggestion that industry has spoiled this community. On the contrary, Weiss advocates the need for industrial progress as a means to modernise and improve the individual's quality of life.



Figure 49: Stills from *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux* depicting a young girl walking in a wheel (left) and a close-up of girl inside wheel (right)

⁵⁹³ *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1959) at 02.44.

By contrast, Weiss alludes to the disadvantages of industrial progress in *A l'ouest d'Eden*⁵⁹⁴ through the use of images suggesting, firstly, a degree of intrusion of the modern world on spaces of calm and, secondly, the disappearance of the past. Neither image is strong enough, however, to be considered a metaphor for the gaze of the industrialised romantic. For example, at 01.05, Weiss's voiceover script apologises to God for the need to take a plane to find the Garden of Eden. This potential intrusion of the modern world is illustrated only by the image of a small silhouette of an aeroplane in the sky behind two indigenous people riding across a barren desert. Later in the same documentary, the voiceover script announces that: 'les pierres se coulaient alors que la science progressait,'⁵⁹⁵ whilst, onscreen, ruins of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra are shown with the pillars slowly decaying into the ground (see Figure 50 below.) There is no suggestion that industry has spoiled these communities – although there is the implication it might – and the arrival of the plane suggests physical displacement to the area rather than the industrialised romantic's avoidance of travel.

For Weiss, it was not only the ideological supremacy of hegemonic regimes which wielded influence over individuals but, equally, the onset of modernity. Weiss's perception of the tension between power and morality in scientific and industrial progress is illustrated in her 1973 essay, *Lettre à un embryon*.⁵⁹⁶ Here she alerted the next generation to her conviction that its survival lay at a crossroads where humanity faced the choice to either follow its 'esprit de destruction' as a consequence of unregulated progress or employ a

⁵⁹⁴ *A l'ouest d'Eden*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951).

⁵⁹⁵ *A l'ouest d'Eden*, 04.23.

⁵⁹⁶ Louise Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon* (Paris: Julliard, 1973).

‘réaction créatrice’ for a more advantageous application of this evolution in knowledge.⁵⁹⁷

Before exploring Weiss’s perception of the powerful effect of scientific and industrial progress on the individuals and communities she encountered, both an understanding of modernity in the light of recent scholarship, and the positioning of Weiss's travel narratives in the context of modernity, benefit from brief consideration



Figure 50: A still from *A l'ouest d'Eden* showing pillars of the Temple of Bel sinking into the ground at 04.23

Understanding the road to modernity

Recent scholarship has shifted the understanding of modernity, leading Dipesh Chakrabarty to claim that the concept has undergone ‘a change of fortune in the last three or four

⁵⁹⁷ Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon*, p. 29.

decades'.⁵⁹⁸ From its earlier interpretation, which pointed to society's experience of major industrial, scientific, and technological transformations from the late eighteenth century onwards and which Peter Wagner claims 'catapulted Europe (or the West) to the front position in the course of world history',⁵⁹⁹ this view of modernity has since taken on a Eurocentric criticism.⁶⁰⁰ Scholarship now engages with the world beyond Europe, problematising the earlier approach as a grand narrative that implied a value judgement on non-Western contexts.

The following discussion does not reject this revision to scholarship but recognises that Weiss was writing before the emergence of such postmodernist critiques.

Consequently, any attempt to censure her view of modernity would be at odds with her experiential knowledge and world view. In an attempt to pinpoint reliably Weiss's frame of reference and perspective on the world, the following discussion interprets modernity in line with Wagner's view that modernity has always been associated with progress and revolution, where revolution is read as the upheaval experienced as a consequence of a sudden and radical step-change, or move forward, rather than a political development or uprising.⁶⁰¹ This is, arguably, a very apt context in which to anchor a study of Weiss's post-war perception of the power of scientific and industrial progress for two reasons. Firstly, it hints at an observation made in Chapter Eight which refers to Weiss's apparent disinterest in the Madagascan uprisings to the extent she made no reference to them in her travel

⁵⁹⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Muddle of Modernity', *American Historical Review*, 116:3 (2011) 663-675, (p. 663).

⁵⁹⁹ Peter Wagner, *Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), p. 3.

⁶⁰⁰ For a critique of the development of the concept of modernity, see Gurinder K. Bhambra, 'Historical Sociology, Modernity, and Postcolonial Critique', *American Historical Review*, 116:3 (2011), 653-662.

⁶⁰¹ Wagner, *Modernity*, pp. 28-29.

narratives, preferring to focus on the consequences of a step-change in society triggered by a change in the ruling administration. Secondly, it alludes to her anxiety over the turbulence she perceived in the 'mutation accélérée'⁶⁰² as the twentieth century moved forward, undercurrents of which can be sensed in Weiss's statement: 'La marche du monde m'enthousiasmait. Elle m'effrayait aussi'.⁶⁰³

At this juncture, it is not unreasonable to question whether Weiss's travel narratives should be considered to be examples of modernist writing – or modernist travel writing.⁶⁰⁴ She certainly demonstrated a concern for the post-war world and humanity's place in the midst of the turbulence she perceived. However, the tone and style of Weiss's travel narratives do not conform readily to David Farley's characteristics of modernist travel writing since they are neither experimental, nor do they leave meaning and interpretation open to the reader.⁶⁰⁵ An analysis of her post-war travel narratives clearly demonstrates that Weiss had a well-defined objective in her wish to understand the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century and was trying to avoid ambiguity in her accounts.

It is more appropriate, therefore, to view Weiss's post-war publications as travel narratives that have been influenced by a modernist perspective – a position which corresponds to that of Thompson who argues that travel writing is responsive to the modern condition.⁶⁰⁶ It is against this modernist backdrop that Weiss's perception of the tension between power and morality is examined in her text-based and visual travel

⁶⁰² Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

⁶⁰³ Louise Weiss, 'Shanghai aujourd'hui', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1959), 482-500 (p. 484).

⁶⁰⁴ For recent debate on modernist travel writing, see Kimberley Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

⁶⁰⁵ David Farley, 'Modernist Travel Writing', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 278-287.

⁶⁰⁶ David Farley, 'Modernist Travel Writing', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 278-287 (p. 279).

narratives – specifically, her encounters with scientific developments in her 1949 visit to Japan and her observations of industrial progress in both Syria and Mexico.

The detonation of the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima on 6th August 1945 is the event that arguably had the greatest influence on Weiss's perception of the tension between power and morality in scientific progress, since it features prominently in both her visual and text-based travel narratives. Weiss's encounter with this expression of power is examined below using examples from both formats – firstly, her collection of previously unexamined and unpublished photographs bequeathed to the Musée de Saverne archive and, secondly, excerpts from 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne'⁶⁰⁷ and *Le Voyage enchanté*.⁶⁰⁸

Depicting scientific developments in Weiss's visual travel narratives

In the light of Jean A. Keim's early, seminal work on the photographic image which argues that photography permeates all aspects of life and cannot be ignored,⁶⁰⁹ Weiss's previously unexamined and unpublished photographic archive offers a new perspective on her perceived tension between the power and morality of scientific developments. This collection includes references to and evidence of her 1949 visit to Japan which was soon enough after the detonation of the atomic bomb for its consequences to be uppermost in Weiss's mind. Cognisant of both Barthes's explanation that a photograph is referential in

⁶⁰⁷ Louise Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 295.

⁶⁰⁸ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), pp. 232-233.

⁶⁰⁹ Jean A. Keim, 'La photographie et sa légende', *Communications*, 2 (1963), 41-55.

that it refers to something in the real world,⁶¹⁰ and Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan's proposition that photographs record an experience,⁶¹¹ these photographs represent Weiss's way of seeing the world. As a collection, they point both to an event in the real world and to Weiss's awareness of the powerful effect of scientific progress – specifically, the consequences of the atomic bomb.

Although in her autobiography on Weiss, Célia Bertin refers to a manuscript in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* which suggests Weiss brought back 1,500 photographs from this visit to Japan,⁶¹² it is difficult to say with any accuracy who took the photographs retained in the archive. It is unlikely, but not impossible, they were taken by Weiss. Despite her later role as film director, Weiss never considered herself technically gifted as an operator behind the lens claiming: 'Or, de la technique des images, je ne connaissais même pas les rudiments,'⁶¹³ but, an image captured by her photographer Georges Bourdelon some seven years later shows Weiss carrying a small camera in a case over her shoulder which hints at an amateur interest in photography.

The photographs in the archive file are unlikely to be the work of either Bourdelon or the other photographers with whom Weiss worked, namely Bernard Daillencourt, Pierre Guégen or Louis Mialle. Weiss did not begin any form of collaboration with Bourdelon until 1951, two years after her first visit to Japan, Daillencourt did not accompany Weiss to Japan, and her excursion with Guégen and Mialle did not take place until 1958 when she returned on the thirteenth anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb. On this occasion, Weiss

⁶¹⁰ Roland Barthes, *La Chambre Claire* (Paris: Editions Le Seuil, 1980).

⁶¹¹ Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan, *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing of the 1930s* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 6.

⁶¹² Célia Bertin, *Louise Weiss* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), p. 384.

⁶¹³ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 86.

returned as, in her own words, 'cinéaste',⁶¹⁴ with an interest in the moving image rather than still photography.

It is more probable that the photographs were sourced from commercial photographic laboratories or agencies as annotations on the back of some of the photographs would suggest – but not all have this level of detail. It is also possible that Weiss purchased these photographs from the Japanese Tourist Office as the archive file also contains a hand-written calculation, albeit incorrect, of prices – and possibly discounts – for a bulk purchase. Outsourcing photography was not unusual for Weiss. The acknowledgements for 'Les sériculteurs japonais et leurs honorables vers à soie'⁶¹⁵ credit 'East-West Agency' and 'Blanc et Demilly', a photography studio in Lyon, for the supply of photographs to accompany her travel narrative.

Cognisant of Akane Kawakami's claims that, 'the camera's point of view has become an integral part of any traveller's way of seeing, whether or not she decides to carry a camera herself',⁶¹⁶ the question concerning copyright is, to some extent, less important than Weiss's deliberate and voluntary strategy of choosing, and keeping, these particular images. Chapter Six highlights how Weiss was able to direct a shot to achieve her intentions without taking the picture herself. It is plausible to assume, therefore, that she was equally able to source photographs from commercial suppliers that illustrated her journeys in the manner she wished. Weiss undoubtedly attributed some degree of value to these archived

⁶¹⁴ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 293. See also p. 444 where Weiss hints that the reason she worked with Guéguen and Miaille across Asia at that time was due to the risk associated with Bourdelon's political views on Communism at a time when Mao was forcefully oppressing those who challenged the Communist regime.

⁶¹⁵ Louise Weiss, 'Les sériculteurs japonais et leurs honorables vers à soie', *Sud-est Asiatique*, 25:(6) (1951), 16-19, (p. 64).

⁶¹⁶ Akane Kawakami, *Travellers' Vision: French Literary Encounters with Japan 1881-2004* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 128.

photographs as she kept them for almost forty years before bequeathing them to the *Musée de Saverne*, thus making a conscious decision that her photographs, and therefore her experiential knowledge, should be available for future generations – a sentiment entirely consistent with her authorial objective behind *Lettre à un embryon* :

Je ne suis pas une futurologue. Mais peut-être, aux moments critiques, découvriras-tu en mes lignes, que je veux le mince bréviaire tiré de mon expérience du siècle déclinant, quelques fils à suivre pour un comportement avisé, pour une conduite heureuse dans le siècle suivant ... l'avenir est notre propriété à tous ... nos destins sont encore confondus.⁶¹⁷

The subject matter of Weiss's photographic archive is illustrative of François Brunet's assessment that the twentieth century saw the emergence of photography's 'more ambitious discourse' which 'contributed powerfully to a new understanding of photography as an expressive medium.'⁶¹⁸ The photographs in the archive file at the Musée de Saverne depict the horrific aftermath of the atomic bomb in terms of its physical consequences on the people of the region and the devastation it wreaked on the built environment. One photograph in particular shows a man with his uncovered back towards the camera displaying deep, significant scarring over the majority of his back and shoulders and thickening of his skin due to radiation burns. Another photograph is of a young girl who had lost all of her hair except for a few wisps. Other photographs show the extent of the devastation to the landscape and buildings along with notes recording the distances of specific buildings from the centre of the explosion to show the pattern of devastation and the reach of the fallout. These photographs speak directly to two of Weiss's four measures

⁶¹⁷ Weiss, *Lettre à un embryon*, p. 11.

⁶¹⁸ François Brunet, *Photography and Literature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), p. 90.

of power: *A qui le pouvoir?* and *A qui le droit de vivre?* In this particular instance, the most powerful regime, which not only laid claim to power but also exerted it, was portrayed as the Allied Forces under American direction. The answer to *En quel nom?* was now no longer Japan but, apparently, the hegemonic forces of the West.

Without the aid of a caption or accompanying narrative, both of which are typical of her published work, Weiss's ambitious photographic discourse, to borrow Brunet's terminology, is liberated from any text-based constraints which publication may have imposed. Although unpublished, these images can still be deemed to be representative of Weiss's narrative, but accurately pinpointing what her view might have been is somewhat problematic. Hubertus von Amelunxen argues that there is a general belief that a photograph could: 'renvoie le lecteur à une réalité dont l'authenticité ne peut être mise en question.'⁶¹⁹ Gunther Kress and Theo van Leuven counter this by suggesting that the message communicated by a photograph is coloured by the gaze of its viewer and the social, political and communicative dimensions that are in play.⁶²⁰ Weiss's intended message behind these photographs, therefore, has to be formulated in the context of these two competing theories. Given that her images depict life-changing effects on individuals and that there is no evidence in any of her other publications that she supported warfare or hegemonic actions of this nature, Weiss is most likely to have perceived immorality in the application of scientific developments to create and detonate the atomic bomb.

⁶¹⁹ Hubertus von Amelunxen, 'Quand la photographie se fit lectrice: le livre illustré par la photographie au XIX^{ème} siècle', *Romantisme*, 15 (1985), 85-96 (p. 86).

⁶²⁰ For a discussion on the structured meaning of a photograph arising out of the society in which individuals live and work and the social, political and communicative dimensions which are in play, see Gunther Kress and Theo van Leuven, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Chapter Seven questioned the validity of Weiss's role as self-appointed witness on the basis that her experiential knowledge of the twentieth century repositioned her as a participant rather than a witness. Although her photographs represented her way of seeing the world, it was a world that Weiss was unable to witness first hand as the atomic bomb had been detonated some three years prior to her visit and even her own experience of war was different to that of the community of Hiroshima. It remains conjecture as to whether this disconnect between Weiss and her record of the tension she perceived between the power and morality of scientific developments lay behind her decision not to publish these images.

Weiss's subsequent travel narratives, which form the primary sources for the following discussion, were text-based. In contrast to her visual record, they focus on her perception of the tension between power and morality in contemporary Japan at the time of her visit rather than on the physical effects of the atomic bomb which were inflicted some three years earlier. This difference can be attributed to Weiss's experiential knowledge and tendency towards a participant gaze which positioned her not in the immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb, but in a contemporary environment influenced by Western civilisation of which she was a part and to which she could more easily relate.

Narrating scientific developments in Weiss's text-based travel narratives

Weiss's text-based travel narratives switch from the physical consequences of scientific developments to a consideration of the implications of the resultant changes in power

structures. 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne'⁶²¹ and *Le Voyage enchanté*⁶²² recount Weiss's meeting with General MacArthur in 1949 who, following Japan's surrender, led the Allied occupation of the country from 1945 to 1951, and whom Weiss described as, 'le vainqueur des Japonais dans le Pacifique.'⁶²³ Both publications have similar content which focuses on MacArthur's views on the West's post-war relationship with Japan following the detonation the atomic bomb:

– Madame, jusqu'à leur défaite, les Japonais ne savaient rien du Grand-Extérieur. Ils vivaient repliés sur eux-mêmes, fidèles à leurs ancêtres et à leurs dieux. Ils tenaient les étrangers pour des démons. J'ai passionnément voulu, moi, que mes millions de petits Jaunes voient un homme blanc au moins une fois dans leur vie et que cet homme blanc qui les avait vaincus se présente à eux les mains pleines. Il en a certes beaucoup coûté aux contribuables des Etats-Unis, mais rien si l'on apprécie justement le progrès accompli. Seigneur! Faites que cette bonne connaissance continue. Arrière les préjugés, la haine aveugle, l'ignorance génocide. Et que mes Faces-Pâles plaisent aux fils du Soleil-Levant!⁶²⁴

From the above quotation, similarities can be drawn between MacArthur's world view and Weiss's own, French-colonialist tendencies. Both appear to hold a view of Western supremacy as a catalyst for progress and advancement: Weiss in her support of the *mission civilisatrice* (as discussed in Chapter Eight) and MacArthur in his choice of vocabulary, particularly 'le progrès accompli'. However, in using terms such as 'mes millions de petits Jaunes', and the verb 'vaincre', MacArthur subordinated the Japanese people and positioned the West in a role of perceived supremacy. MacArthur's response suggested that the defeat of Japan and, by implication, the arrival of the Allied Forces, had opened up a

⁶²¹ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 295.

⁶²² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 232-233.

⁶²³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 232.

⁶²⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 233.

country previously enclosed around its own traditions and belief systems, to what he apparently believed were superior Western ideals.

Weiss's observations, however, suggest she held a contrary view to MacArthur. In 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne'⁶²⁵ Weiss referred to 'le désarroi moral de l'après-guerre'.⁶²⁶ The post-war period was dominated by the Cold War, nations had changed allegiances, and, in her eyes, MacArthur's administration had shown itself to be nothing more than a hegemonic power overthrowing the very nature of the indigenous Japanese culture and implementing sweeping changes at all levels of society. She records that Japan's ancient imperial power had been overturned by MacArthur and replaced by a Western-style democracy. Hirohito, the erstwhile 'souverain de droit divin'⁶²⁷ had become 'un souverain constitutionnel'.⁶²⁸ A change in working patterns, a re-evaluation of women's position in society in terms of their personal rights and representation, and a separation of the national Shinto religion from the Japanese state, thereby allowing the practice of alternative religions, uprooted the norms of Japanese society and radically changed the nature of its hierarchical interactions.

Weiss was of the opinion that the immorality she perceived in the Allied Forces' imposition of a new way of living onto an existing civilisation was far greater than the physical consequences of scientific developments:

Dans l'ensemble, puisque je suis constamment obligée de résumer ma pensée, je puis affirmer que le bouleversement dû à l'explosion de la bombe atomique – l'égale d'un petit tremblement de terre ou d'un typhon – a été moins profond que le choc

⁶²⁵ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 295.

⁶²⁶ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 295.

⁶²⁷ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 293.

⁶²⁸ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 293.

moral ressenti à l'arrivée d'une nouvelle civilisation, laquelle avait fait ses preuves quant au bien-être et à la liberté des gens.⁶²⁹

Weiss compared the act of detonating the atomic bomb and its physical consequences to a natural disaster such as an earthquake or typhoon in order to emphasise the effects of hegemonic actions on individuals. Although similarities can be drawn between the physical consequences of scientific developments and natural disasters, Weiss considered the moral impact of destroying an existing civilisation by imposing a new way of life was far greater and had a longer-term effect – a sentiment she reiterated in her later memoirs: 'L'état de choc physique des survivants d'Hiroshima comptait peu au regard de l'ébranlement moral dont ils souffraient encore.'⁶³⁰

In her visual and text-based travel narratives, Weiss alludes to a sense of immorality in the power she perceived when scientific developments were used coercively and applied to the real world. From her perspective it resulted in yet another expression of supremacy. In the context of Weiss's four measures of power, *le plus fort* once more appeared to hold *le pouvoir* to grant *le droit de vivre*. Weiss's perception of the imposition of, in this instance, Western culture and its association with dominance over the individual demonstrated little more than the practice of *l'Arme absolue* which brings both this discussion and Weiss's perception of power and morality full circle to the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics discussed in Chapter Seven where power is considered an unavoidable and integral characteristic of human social life.

⁶²⁹ Weiss, 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne: rencontre de deux civilisations', p. 295.

⁶³⁰ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975*, p. 292.

The power of modernity: industrial progress

Industrial innovation, which advanced civilisations from pre-industrial societies to the modern, automated environments of the twentieth century, is a recurring motif in both Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives. For example, in 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska', Weiss notes that: 'les communications intérieures n'étaient assurées, en hiver, que par des traîneaux à chiens et, en été, par des chevaux et les bateaux [...] l'état-major américain décida, incontinent, de construire à travers ces solitudes une route carrossable en tout temps'⁶³¹ and her documentary, *Le Dieu du riz* explains how Japan secured its resources by turning to heavy industry when rice and fish were no longer sufficient to support the economy.⁶³²

Scholarly debate has typically associated the idea of industrial progress with mechanisation, specifically, the mechanisation of modes of travel and the way in which speed affects the traveller's experience.⁶³³ Weiss's travel writing is not resistant to this approach, as Chapter Five has shown in its commentary on the effect of displacement on her experiential knowledge. However, a close reading of Weiss's post-war publications also links the concept of mechanisation and industrial progress with her perception of the tension between power and morality. Weiss's travel narratives demonstrate her awareness

⁶³¹ Louise Weiss, 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska', *Politique Etrangère*, 13 (1948), 87-94 (p. 87).

⁶³² *Le Dieu du riz* between 04.32 and 06.09.

⁶³³ Key texts include: Kimberley J. Healey, *The Modernist Traveller: French Detours 1900-1930* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Charles Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Charles Forsdick, 'Travel and the Body', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 68-77. For a discussion on how twentieth-century travel writers adopted literary forms in the light of the effects of speed on consciousness, see Andrea Loselle, *History's Double: Cultural Tourism in Twentieth-Century French Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

of both the benefits of industrial progress and its potential to destroy individuality – the very essence of *l'Arme absolue*. Using examples from Weiss's text-based and visual travel narratives – specifically, her impressions of nascent industrialisation in Syria in the mid-twentieth century and her encounter with a more developed level of industrialisation in Mexico and Alaska – the following discussion explores her perception of the nature and consequences of the power she perceived in industrial progress:

Industrial progress in the Middle East: Syria

In the context of a young, developing nation, Weiss's travel narratives appear to suggest her approval of the socio-economic benefits of a step-change in manufacturing, production, and technological innovation. In the opening pages of *La Syrie*, she aligns the newly-independent Arab state's emerging success on the world stage with its nascent industrial progress.

Étincelant joyau historique, la Syrie est également un vigoureux État moderne qui, secouant la poudre du passé, s'équipe et s'instruit pour faire bonne figure dans le monde contemporain ... Entre Khabour et Euphrate, la Djéziré devient une région de culture industrielle produisant un coton d'excellente qualité ... Les artisans cèdent la place aux fabriques, les norias aux motos-pompes, les houes aux machines agricoles, les caravanes aux jeeps ... Cette ruée vers le progrès n'enlève à la Syrie rien de son charme.⁶³⁴

Arguably, Weiss's optimism lies in the lack of evidence she found her four measures of power. There appeared to be no autocratic power dominating the individual: *le pouvoir*

⁶³⁴ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie*, no page number.

resided with the newly-independent Arab state. This introductory narrative is followed by 87 photographs depicting the region and people of Syria. However, only one image overtly emphasises the advance of modernity, a half-page black-and-white photograph of The Orient Palace – a hotel in the centre of Damascus that opened in 1932. The caption, placed immediately underneath, makes a direct reference to modern Syria and the centrally positioned car appeals to the perception of a contemporary lifestyle (see Figure 51 below).



Figure 51: A photograph from *La Syrie* depicting a hotel in the centre of Damascus

The above photograph, although possibly slightly over-exposed, is bathed in light giving the impression of an attractive location, and the shape of the building, with its main entrance located at the convergence of the two wings, draws the eye right into the centre of the image and the heart of contemporary Damascus. The miscellany of remaining photographs is less contemporary. It depicts archaeological ruins, farmers engaged in

centuries-old methods of tending livestock, ancient mosques, examples of Arab art, people in traditional dress, and landscapes with no hint of modern construction or the city living suggested in Figure 51 (above), all examples of which Weiss suggests it was not hard to find as: 'A chaque détour, l'histoire de la jeune République syrienne, née de la deuxième Guerre Mondiale, montre son visage.'⁶³⁵ These photographs are indicative of Weiss's description of Syria as 'un creuset'⁶³⁶ – a melting pot of old and new which appealed to her search for the ruins of the past; palimpsests which had survived their respective turbulent times and perpetuated into the twentieth century. Here, in Syria, Weiss found the present effectively juxtaposed with the past. She noted that the past remained tangible even if it was housed in museums, as were the ancient towers of Qasr-El-Heir, or exposed at archaeological sites by the work of French archaeologists Claude Schaeffer and André Parrot to whom she credits some of her photographs. In her closing sentences, Weiss claimed that industrial progress, 'rend les beaux monuments plus accessible à tous'.⁶³⁷ Seemingly, Weiss perceived industrial progress as an aid to Syria's development into a modern, independent state rather than a threat to its traditions and history.

Weiss's apparent pragmatism towards the charm of Syria is haunted by the spectre of a modernity which could ultimately subsume Syria's traditional ways. Hidden by Weiss's apparent delight in Syria, this sentiment is hinted at in her observation of changes in custom, dress, and mobility. Weiss was well-placed to make observations such as: 'les anciens costumes disparaissent, remplacés par des vêtements occidentaux', 'les femmes se

⁶³⁵ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie*, no page number.

⁶³⁶ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie*, no page number.

⁶³⁷ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie*, no page number.

dévoilent', 'la vie sédentaire gagne', and 'la vie nomade diminue'⁶³⁸ as she had a reference point from previous visits to Syria prior to publishing her travel narrative of the same name. Her first visit was in 1911 when, in an attempt to take her adolescent daughter away from the stress of her studies, Weiss's mother had taken her on a cruise to Syria and Palestine organised by the *Revue Générale des Sciences*.⁶³⁹ Bertin records two subsequent visits to Syria, one in 1949 and one in 1950⁶⁴⁰ although there is some discrepancy over this later date between Bertin and the Musée de Saverne website which notes her visit as 1951.⁶⁴¹

Weiss's account attributes an almost embryonic feel to industrial progress in Syria. Having recently gained independence in 1945, Syria was just at the beginning of its journey to modernity and, whilst new industrial methods were evolving, Weiss's travel narrative suggests that a perceptible awareness of its traditional customs remained. Arguably, modernity appeared either to have not yet embedded itself fully into the fabric of Syrian society, or the power of industrial progress was not yet strong enough to impact significantly on the people and the region. For this reason, Weiss's travel narratives from Syria appear less concerned with the tension between power and morality and more accepting of the moral, socio-economic benefits of industrial progress.

⁶³⁸ Louise Weiss, *La Syrie*, no page number.

⁶³⁹ Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: une petite fille du siècle 1893-1919*, p. 115.

⁶⁴⁰ Bertin, *Louise Weiss*, pp. 402-403.

⁶⁴¹ <http://www.louise-weiss.org/louise_weiss_voyage_1952.html> [accessed 19 May 2018].

Routes to industrial progress: Mexico and Alaska

Weiss's travel narratives from Mexico suggest a more menacing view of the potential power of industrial progress. In the following quotation, she juxtaposes an image of heavy industry alongside the fragility of a butterfly:

Nous passâmes devant une des énormes machines qui avait frayé la route panaméricaine. Peintes en rouge, ses tôles réverbéraient les feux du crépuscule. Chenilles, socs, leviers témoignaient de la puissance industrielle des Etats-Unis. Un Indien, dont les aïeux avaient cru que les conquistadores et leurs chevaux ne faisaient qu'un, dormait sur son capot. Son torse était nu et, posé sur son épaule, un papillon frémissait.⁶⁴²

Travelling through Mexico, Weiss encountered construction work for the Pan American Highway which was to link Prudhoe Bay in North Alaska with the southernmost tip of Chile via a 25,800km network of interconnecting roads. The concept of industrial progress is embodied in a large piece of red, American machinery. Weiss's observation of the machine's colour is important here. Gillian Rose argues that colour is 'a crucial component of an image's compositionality.'⁶⁴³ By making reference to a colour generally associated with danger and combining it with the adjective 'énorme' with its implication of great size and force, Weiss hinted at the potential threat inherent in industrial progress. The reflection of the dusk radiance along the length of the machine's bodywork is not only a metaphor for the twilight of Mexican society, but also a pointer to the machine's integral part of its immediate surroundings. By linking the machine with the neighbouring United States of

⁶⁴² Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 30.

⁶⁴³ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2007), p. 41.

America, the image suggests the arrival on Mexican soil of the industrialising power of this nation which Raymond Betts concluded had reached a new global position of supremacy by the end of the Second World War.⁶⁴⁴ Weiss located the power of this industrial progress in the caterpillar tracks, cutting blades, and levers of the machine, alluding to its potential to scythe a path through any terrain, to make a furrow through any society. Through this analogy, Weiss hinted at the immoral power of industrial progress and her perception that society would be unable to escape its eventual influence – a perspective which alludes to her underpinning mantra *A qui le pouvoir? Au plus fort*.

The man sleeping on the bonnet symbolises Mexico's threatened, traditional civilisation. Where his ancestors once believed that early colonisers and horses were one, the man has become one with the modern machine. Both images are metaphors for the driving force of modernity under the direction of humankind. But the man asleep on the bonnet is not necessarily in charge of the machine in the same way as the colonisers were in charge of their horses. With no trappings of modern society, and baring a naked chest, the man appears vulnerable to the onset of modernity. By sleeping, his defences are down. The indigenous people of Mexico likewise appear to be at risk of industrial progress sneaking up on them as they metaphorically rest on their laurels. As the colonisers imposed a new way of life on early Mexican civilisation, so will the machine and, by implication, America.

The fragility of the contemporary world is further symbolised by the trembling butterfly on the man's shoulder. Both have reached a certain stage of maturity: the butterfly has passed from caterpillar larva through its pupal stage to its current advanced form, whilst the traditional Mexican civilisation has also evolved and grown over time. Oblivious to the

⁶⁴⁴ Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonisation* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 23.

insect, the man is unaware that it could fly away, almost undetected, leaving no trace it was ever there. Through this image, Weiss infers that a similar fate awaits the Mexican civilisation if the local people do not stay alert to the onset of modernity. Unaware of the capacity for the latent power of the machine to reawaken and, by analogy, unaware of the potential for industrial power to disrupt society, Weiss implies that traditional Mexican civilisation was at risk of disappearing, leaving no trace it was ever there. As with scientific progress, Weiss's anxiety appears to lie once more in the immoral potential of industrial progress.

By contrast, Weiss's journey along a stretch of the Pan American Highway in Alaska introduces a new dynamic into the reading of her perception of industrial progress by offering the alternative viewpoint that it might also prove to be advantageous and morally good. As she travelled along this route, Weiss became preoccupied with the effect of the construction of the road on the communities through which it carved its route. Her travel narratives do not focus on the physical construction of the road *per se*, but on its effect on civilisations the length and breadth of its course. The following discussion joins Weiss on the northernmost stretch of the Pan American Highway which links Alaska with Canada, a region which, itself, was associated with a certain historical unease:

L'Alcan est née de l'anxiété ressentie par les Américains en 1942, lorsque les Japonais débarquèrent à Attu et Agattu, les dernières îles Aléoutiennes (les premiers pour eux), à 2 500 kilomètres environ du continent. Si les Nippons étaient remontés le long de ces îles, en bateau ou en avion, et avaient envahi L'Alaska, comme ils avaient envahi Malacca, les États-Unis ne disposaient d'aucun moyen de défendre, par terre, ce territoire qu'ils avaient acheté aux Russes à la fin du siècle dernier.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁵ Louise Weiss, 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska', *Politique Etrangère*, 13: (1) (194), 87-94.

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, the construction of a road through Alaska was considered to be of military significance. Japan was trying to extend its East Asia empire and was pushing further and further east through the Aleutian Islands in an attempt to reach the North American continent. In *Le Voyage enchanté*, Weiss mentions a Japanese presence on the Aleutian island of Kiska in addition to the islands of Attu and Agattu referred to in the above quotation.⁶⁴⁶

Alaska was strategically important to both Japan and America. Its topography and climate made it difficult to defend. In the winter months communities were cut off from each other and only dog sleds were able cross the vast expanses between cities. In the summer, these distances had to be covered by horses or boat. For Japan this vulnerability made the question of invasion feasible and potentially provided the doorway to the North American continent. For America, this region was particularly sensitive since the United States Air Transport Command had located a large number of their primary airfields between Edmonton and Fairbanks. The island-hopping strategies of the Japanese Army, its potential capacity for invasion, and the inability for America to defend easily the region were all a threat to this military command point. The Alcan Road was built as a strategic defence against the Japanese and largely to improve communications between Alaskan airfields and adjoining cities.

Weiss travelled the Alaskan stretch of the Alcan Road in the post-war society of the late 1940s and was immediately drawn to the improvement in communications that the road offered. Initially surprised by its size, she declared: 'une route passait sur le plateau si

⁶⁴⁶ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 129.

large que quatre camions pouvaient y passer de front.’⁶⁴⁷ The significance of her comment soon became apparent over the course of her journey. Along the entire length of the Pan American Highway, of which the Alcan Road was a part, Weiss met ‘des conquistadores modernes’⁶⁴⁸ – traders who brought new products to outlying towns and, in less developed regions, apparently offered the local residents ‘un immédiat mieux-être.’⁶⁴⁹ The road appeared to have opened up remote regions, not only to the rest of America, but to the rest of the world. Weiss's comment: ‘En tout état de cause, les routes panaméricaines modernes valaient pour le brassage des hommes, le progrès des conditions de vie et le cheminement des idées’,⁶⁵⁰ suggests she perceived this progress as beneficial to the communities along the route as ideas, people, and goods were able to move freely around the continent. This perspective alludes to Weiss's participant gaze. Her Western background positioned her in a close relationship with this type of entrepreneurial society. Accustomed to similar commercial, intellectual, and social exchange, Weiss's participant gaze would have undoubtedly perceived a benefit in this way of life.

A comparative perspective on industrial progress in Syria and North America

A comparison of Weiss's experiences of industrial progress in Syria with her journey along the Pan American Highway reveals a tension between two opposing viewpoints. Initially, she appeared to welcome industrial progress in North America in a similar way to her

⁶⁴⁷ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 126.

⁶⁴⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 48.

⁶⁴⁹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 12.

⁶⁵⁰ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 29.

encounter with the nascent industry of Syria by focussing on the advantages of exposure to modernity and other cultures. On closer reflection, however, Weiss began to see a power behind this industrial progress that was gradually and forcefully subsuming local culture and indigenous civilisations – a power that would eventually subsume the people of Syria whose traditions had already begun to fade. Weiss recorded how changing patterns of trade eventually affected traditional ways of life. In Alaska, where trappers once pitched their tents made out of caribou skin on the banks of a river, they now sold these skins to traders travelling up and down the road. She also began to realise that traditional customs were dying and indigenous languages had begun to disappear in favour of English, which was believed to open up more opportunities for people to succeed in the modern world. The culmination of Weiss's observations was her perception that the traditional identity of local civilisations was quickly disappearing, individuality was becoming less distinct. Industrial progress no longer appeared as a nascent force for good, but rather a threat for the long-term survival of the indigenous communities.

As she travelled further along the Pan American Highway, Weiss began to interpret the power of the road and, by analogy, the power of industrial progress, quite differently. She observed that, where industrial progress was helping to shape Syria without destroying the past and the essence of the newly-emerging Arab state's civilisation, just the opposite was happening in America where industrial progress had been flourishing for a longer time. What for Weiss had started as an appreciation of industrial progress soon turned into the realisation that this progress amounted to no more than another form of invasion by *le plus fort*. Picking up on the Alaskan unease around the potential Japanese invasion during the Second World War, Weiss was forced to draw an analogy between this and the arrival of

Western progressive civilisation in her comment: 'Les Japonais y revenaient comme par le passé.'⁶⁵¹

This image of invasion was reinforced by Weiss's encounter with Old Mac, a veteran of the Great War who had relocated to Fort-Nelson, Alaska, with the intention of spending the rest of his days in peace. Old Mac had travelled to Fort Nelson by dog sled – presumably in winter given the earlier discussion around Weiss's observations of travel across Alaska prior to the construction of the Alcan Road. He represented a time before the arrival of industrialisation and the mechanisation of modes of travel. Faced with the power of industrial progress which was transforming his world, Old Mac felt pursued by modernity and industrial progress:

Leur sacrée Alcan me dégoûte [...] Oh! bien sûr! la route ouvre le pays. Et puis après? Fatigué de la guerre, moi, j'étais venu chercher la paix ici. J'étais venu la chercher en traîne à chiens. Et elle m'a été enlevée ! Le pays se peuple. Je rencontre beaucoup trop du monde.⁶⁵²

Where once the United States Army had tried to close the door on the invading Japanese army by building the Alcan Road at the northernmost stretch of the Pan American Highway, it was now re-opening that doorway to the invasion of modernity. As her journey along the road came to an end, Weiss no longer perceived the Pan American Highway as a testament to modernity but a depressing metaphor for the tension between power and morality.

⁶⁵¹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p.29.

⁶⁵² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 144.

Face to face with the power of science and industry

This chapter set out to identify which other forms power, in addition to hegemonic ideologies, are evident in Weiss's travel narratives. Two in particular emerge: scientific developments and industrial progress. Irrespective of the name in which Weiss perceived power to be exercised, the tension between power and morality was ever-present in leadership, science and industry. Whilst acutely aware of the physical consequences of power, Weiss's overriding consideration was its moral significance and the extent to which power became a defining feature of human nature.

In the context of Weiss's four measures of power that underpin this discussion, Weiss perceived that *le droit de vivre* largely rested with *le plus fort* across all the forms of power she encountered. However, a close reading of her travel narratives of her visit to Syria and her journey along the Pan American Highway introduces a more nuanced view of the morality behind these measures. In the context of industrial progress, Weiss appears to draw a distinction between power that aids growth and power that forces destruction. With the former, although the power to grow must, by definition, remain with *le plus fort*, the answer to *A qui le droit de vivre?* no longer appears to be the strongest, but rather the aspirant civilisation searching for socio-economic success on the world stage. But, when industrial power becomes destructive, smothering individuality and annihilating the foundations of civilisation, Weiss's travel narratives suggest that *le droit de vivre* is granted only to those prepared to accept the powerful effects of modernity – for her, a new interpretation of *l'arme absolue*.

LOUISE WEISS'S AVENTURE HUMAINE

HEADING HOME

Weiss has rarely been referred to as a traveller. This designation is occasionally seen in publications from the latter half of the twentieth century, but Weiss preferred the title of witness over any other. Similarly, her post-war *œuvre* has not been associated with the travel narrative irrespective of the fact that, in the twenty-five years after the Second World War, Weiss travelled throughout Asia, North America, Africa, and the Middle East recording her experiences in a substantial number of journal articles, photographic collections, monographs, and short documentaries. Analysis of this previously unexamined body of material through the analytical framework of the 'hybrid'⁶⁵³ and 'fuzzy'⁶⁵⁴ travel narrative, has rooted her *œuvre* incontrovertibly in the context of travel. Weiss has been repositioned as a post-war traveller and her stories of her encounters with indigenous communities as travel narratives.

Weiss's view of the twentieth century has been shown to be typical of her generation. Perceiving the world to be in a state of rapid change, Weiss and her contemporaries feared for the stability of Europe's Judeo-Christian heritage, believing that Western civilisation now lived in the shadow of encroaching Eastern ideologies. Disappointed by failing legal systems, concerned by the distress and declining morals she

⁶⁵³ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8.

⁶⁵⁴ Loredana Polezzi, 'Between Gender and Genre: The Travels of Estella Canziani', in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 121-138 (p. 121).

perceived in communities around the world, and disillusioned by the sense of failure she attributed to supranational institutions, Weiss's perspective was that the twentieth century was a turbulent era where peace was fragile and social order was breaking down.

Driven to understand this socio-political unrest, Weiss journeyed beyond the borders of Europe, travelling not for pleasure, but to engage with other civilisations in an attempt to understand the turbulence she perceived around her. Weiss considered her encounters with other civilisations fundamental to her experiential knowledge and her ultimate desire was to bring home a moral code on which to build a peaceful society. Weiss believed previous generations had also experienced turmoil but, more importantly, had survived with a story to tell, a story she so earnestly wanted to unearth and share with both her contemporaries and future generations.

Weiss's interest was not, however, historical. Analysis of the primary sources points to a strong association between Weiss and the past and her belief that contemporary society was following the same path as its antecedents, similarly encountering upheaval as the world changed. Weiss believed that the past held clues to peace in the future. From photographs of cracked tombs,⁶⁵⁵ a Madagascan bone-turning ceremony,⁶⁵⁶ and an account of demolishing old city walls to expose ancient Tartar and Chinese dynasties,⁶⁵⁷ she perceived the past as analogous to a living archive that could be opened up to make sense of the present.

⁶⁵⁵ Louise Weiss and Georges Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', *Paris Match*, 6-13 September 1952, pp. 20-25.

⁶⁵⁶ Louise Weiss, *L'Afrique du soleil levant: la mort des zébus*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), 03.18.

⁶⁵⁷ Louise Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', *Plaisir de France*, 5 (1964), 12-21.

An analysis of Weiss's travel narratives has shown that her experiential knowledge was gained from encounters grouped around three principal themes: spirituality, myth, and power. As discussed, each of these alludes to a form of social cohesion through the acceptance of behaviours and norms that govern society, any or all of which potentially offered Weiss the basis of a moral code on which to build a peaceful society.

This backdrop contextualises the principal research question under consideration here – to examine whether Weiss's post-war travel narratives did indeed provide her with the experiential knowledge she needed to understand the all-encompassing turmoil she perceived in the twentieth century. Two elements emerge from the primary sources as keys to evaluating Weiss's post-war *œuvre*: Weiss's gaze and displacement through the world. The implications of both in her encounters with spirituality, myth, and power have been examined in the preceding chapters through a detailed analysis of Weiss's post-war text-based and visual travel narratives, the principal findings of which are presented below.

Experiential knowledge and gaze

It has been argued that, although Weiss showed a relentless commitment to her self-appointed role of witness – irrespective of whether her travel narratives were presented as text-based or visual – her gaze did not necessarily remain constant throughout her journeys. An examination of the primary sources shows a progression of her gaze from witness in her spiritual encounters, through intermediary in her mythological encounters, to participant in her encounters with power. Weiss, however, never acknowledged anything but a witness gaze and this had a noticeable influence on her experiential knowledge. Her relentless

commitment to her self-appointed role of witness appears to have hindered rather than helped her understanding of the twentieth century.

Examining Weiss's travel narratives in the light of Tzvetan Todorov's gallery of travellers has shown that her gaze on both pre-Colombian and twentieth-century spirituality adopted characteristics analogous to those of *touriste*, *exote* and *impressionniste*. Weiss's *exote* gaze enabled her to draw comparisons between Home and her encounters with spirituality which is not necessarily consistent with a witness whose presence suggests documented observation rather than comparison. Weiss's *exote* gaze made her aware of the influence of the sorcerers of Chamula⁶⁵⁸ and Père Gathy's role in his community⁶⁵⁹ but, equally, distanced her enough from their ancient ritual and from the emotion of administering last rites to avoid assimilation into the Other's culture.

Weiss's *impressionniste* gaze in her portrayal of her flight over Lake Tana – even with its connotations of a rushed *touriste* – grounded her observations in the sights and sounds of her surroundings.⁶⁶⁰ Similarly, in her written account of her visit to the ancient Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacan, this same gaze revealed how the experience appealed directly to Weiss's own experience of war-torn France.⁶⁶¹ Inconsistent with the witness gaze to which she clung, these encounters proved difficult for Weiss eliciting a response to flee in a similar fashion to her encounter with spirituality in her youth.

As has been discussed, all of Weiss's reports of her encounters with spirituality allude to some form of refuge from adversity: her arrival in the promised land of Chamula

⁶⁵⁸ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949).

⁶⁵⁹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 211.

⁶⁶⁰ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Le Christ aux sources du Nil*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

⁶⁶¹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 61.

having crossed a barren and arid stretch of desert,⁶⁶² her portrayal of peaceful Biblical scenes confined to the inside of shrines,⁶⁶³ and her images of places of worship bathed in bright, white light but surrounded by dark, thick vegetation, difficult terrain, city walls, or menacing clouds.⁶⁶⁴ The influence of Weiss's self-appointed witness gaze on her perception of spirituality resulted in two distinct and separate zones – the spiritual place, and the secular world. Weiss did not always perceive spirituality as a safe haven, however. An examination of her post-war travel narratives has shown that, where her self-appointed witness gaze defined a spiritual space so tightly that it foregrounded a strong sense of Otherness and ritualistic chaos, such as in her encounter with the Pentecostal leader in New Orleans,⁶⁶⁵ spirituality ceased to offer a refuge but perpetuated, even exacerbated, the turmoil she perceived in contemporary society.

Even though it appears that the threshold between these two polarised spaces could be crossed physically by priests and pilgrims and linguistically by prayer, it is clear that, based on her commitment to her self-appointed witness gaze, Weiss continued to question the usefulness of spirituality as a means of, firstly, understanding the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century and, secondly, finding the basis of a moral code to order society. Where she encountered pilgrims and priests who had crossed into the secular space – the pilgrim in Srinagar,⁶⁶⁶ the Franciscan nuns in Kashmir,⁶⁶⁷ and Père Gathy in North

⁶⁶² Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 13.

⁶⁶³ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: face au volcan, face au cyclone*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), 03.47 and 06.57.

⁶⁶⁴ See Notre-Dame-des-Neiges in *L'Afrique du soleil levant: face au volcan, face au cyclone*, 05.12; a city mosque in *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Allah aux Comores*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiodiffusion télévision française Pathé cinéma, 1963), 03:34; and a Coptic church in *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Le Christ aux sources du Nil*, 02.50

⁶⁶⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 55.

⁶⁶⁶ Louise Weiss, 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955), plate 1.

⁶⁶⁷ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), plate 33.

America⁶⁶⁸ – her witness gaze never connected them fully with the world. Weiss's portrayal of their outward appearance and linguistic traits was a reminder that they belonged to their respective spiritualities and did not reside permanently in the world. Weiss perceived their presence as transient, offering merely a glimpse of the sanctuary and, therefore, with no lasting or tangible impact on contemporary society. As a result of her relentless witness gaze which positioned spirituality at a distance from the world, Weiss's descriptions of her spiritual encounters failed to provide her with the experiential knowledge she needed to understand the turmoil she perceived around her.

An examination of Weiss's visual and text-based narratives has shown that her mythological encounters were also contextualised by her relentless commitment to her witness gaze. Unlike many of her contemporary French intellectuals whose structuralist perspective advocated the search for mythological archetypes, Weiss's interest in myth was rooted in specificity of place. This approach has dictated a format for her visual and text-based travel narratives which, structurally through titles of chapters and, visually, through the use of fleurons, confined her stories of ancient narratives to the places where she encountered them. Consistent with her spiritual encounters, Weiss's witness gaze on her mythological encounters appears to establish a similar threshold.

However, a closer examination of the primary sources revealed that, where Weiss perceived a shared heritage between her life experiences and her mythological encounters, this threshold became porous and Weiss was able to transit the boundary between myth and contemporary society. Potentially drawing closer to the heart of the communities she

⁶⁶⁸ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 211.

encountered, Weiss was able to interact with the 'survivants'⁶⁶⁹ she so desperately wanted to meet. Here her mythological gaze emerged as more akin to an intermediary rather than the witness she consistently claimed to be.

This difference in her gaze has been traced to three sources: firstly, the beginning of Weiss's account in *Le Voyage enchanté* where, surrounded by mythological protagonists, she metaphorically held the hands of her audiences as she invited them to join her and assured them of their safety in her company;⁶⁷⁰ secondly, through her translations of myths from multi-lingual communities where, cognisant of earlier discussions of the difficulties inherent in translation, Weiss emerged not as a witness, but as a principal communicator, or intermediary, of her mythological encounters;⁶⁷¹ and, thirdly, in her relationship with Souen, *le Parfait Roi des Singes* where, as a result of recognising such a deeply shared heritage between them, Weiss merged her journey with his, thereby intertwining their narratives.⁶⁷² In all three instances, Weiss had crossed the threshold between contemporary society and the space of mythological encounters.

Even though the gaze of an intermediary had the potential to provide Weiss with the experiential knowledge she needed – after all, it had positioned her closer to the communities she wanted to meet – her connection with Souen appears to be so powerful that, rather than enhancing Weiss's experiential knowledge, it perpetuated her witness gaze. Attesting to the failures of Souen's journey, Weiss was unable to see any accomplishment in her own and found no moral code for contemporary society in her

⁶⁶⁹ Louise Weiss, *Mémoires d'une Européenne: tempête sur l'Occident 1945-1975* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), p. 86.

⁶⁷⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), p. 17.

⁶⁷¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 63-73 and Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 177.

⁶⁷² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, pp. 295-330.

mythological encounters. Had these encounters provided Weiss with a law for a peaceful society, however, it would have been uncomfortably close to the imposition of coercive power that she so desperately wanted to keep at bay.

Coupled with an interpretation of myth based on specificity of place rather than archetypes, Weiss's experiential knowledge of ancient narratives became restricted to the spaces of her mythological encounters. Unable to transfer experiential knowledge from her encounters to the contemporary world, she failed to enhance her understanding of the turmoil she perceived in the twentieth century. Once more, her relentless commitment to her self-appointed role of witness appears to have hindered rather than helped her understanding of the contemporary world.

Weiss's encounters with power emerge as her most promising opportunity to understand the turbulence she perceived in contemporary society. Her experiential knowledge of earlier, more subjective encounters with power – her personal experience of war and its aftermath and her early career in journalism – demonstrate a gaze more akin to that of a participant than a witness. Unlike her spiritual encounters which remained separated from contemporary society, and her mythological encounters which restricted her experiential knowledge to the places she visited, Weiss's experiential knowledge of power had the potential to shape both her encounters with supremacy and her perception of the twentieth century. An examination of Weiss's visual and text-based travel narratives has shown, however, that, even in her encounters with power, Weiss clung to her self-appointed role of witness. Her interest did not lie in the operational detail of how power was established – she clearly overlooked the unrest of colonial struggles and battles for

independence in Madagascar, for example⁶⁷³ – but in observations of the resultant effect of power on individuals.

Considering Weiss's approach to power in the light of Foucault's concept of biopolitics emphasises her belief that power was unavoidable and an integral characteristic of the structure of human social life. Cognisant that powerful ideologies and the onset of modernity directly affected the individual, Weiss turned to an examination of the (im)morality behind power through four measures: *A qui le pouvoir? A qui le droit de vivre? En quel nom?* and *L'Arme absolue*.

Coloured by her empathy for France's *mission civilisatrice*, Weiss initially recognised that political power could be beneficial to countries aspiring to independence. Her encounters with colonialism had led her to believe that Madagascar had benefitted – and continued to benefit – from French influence⁶⁷⁴ and Syria was emerging, in her view, as a successful Arab state.⁶⁷⁵ Equally, Weiss's meeting with traders along the Alcan Road pointed to her approval of the commercial, intellectual, and social exchange offered by this arterial network. However, regardless of the name in which Weiss perceived power to be exercised, a general sense of pessimism emerges from her travel narratives. The spectre of immorality haunted Weiss's encounters with power in the form of *l'arme absolue* – the propensity of individuals to conquer spirits, control minds, and enforce their wills, legitimately or otherwise, onto others.

⁶⁷³ See *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963) where there is no account of how Madagascar fell under French colonial rule.

⁶⁷⁴ See *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 08.00-08.54.

⁶⁷⁵ See Louise Weiss, *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950), no page number.

Weiss's overriding conviction was that the coercion of moral thought was the ultimate exercise of supremacy. She had witnessed this through her gaze on the doctrinal posters and neon lights of Mao's China⁶⁷⁶ and President Tsiranana's parades through Madagascar.⁶⁷⁷ Rather than providing Weiss with a moral code that she could adopt as a means of stabilising her contemporary society, her encounters with power led her no further forward in her understanding other than to conclude that the claim to power at any one time lay with the strongest regime or the aspirant civilisation searching for socio-economic success and, more importantly, that *l'Arme absolue* was the greatest threat to civilisation.

Towards a typology of displacement

Weiss's displacement through the world is equally important in evaluating whether her post-war travel narratives provided her with the experiential knowledge she needed. An examination of the primary sources has shown that the implications of displacement are more significant in Weiss's mythological encounters. The distinction drawn between an interpretation of myth based on identifying archetypes and one based on specificity of place favoured by Weiss inextricably links her mythological encounters with movement through the world.

Associating myth with the specific community in which it thrived has been shown to appeal to an interpretation of displacement as physical relocation which is consistent with

⁶⁷⁶ See Louise Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), 84-86 and opening sequences to *Le Rocher tragique*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958) respectively.

⁶⁷⁷ See *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président*, 10.34-11.18.

Claude Reichler's model of a 'monde parcouru.'⁶⁷⁸ As has been discussed, physical displacement, irrespective of speed, significantly influenced Weiss's experiential knowledge. Rather than enhancing her understanding, her air travel was indicative of a Reichlerian meeting with the world and not the clear, active engagement with alterity and the concerns of the traveller proposed by Evelyne Deprêtre. Equally, walking through cities was an impediment to Weiss's understanding of the world. Although slower physical displacement brought her nearer to the communities she wanted to meet, it did not counteract her witness gaze but encouraged her to pick out aspects of her immediate surroundings and describe them only in the context of their local importance. The interplay of physical displacement and Weiss's witness gaze restricted her experiential knowledge to specific places and did not reveal answers to the turbulence she perceived in the twentieth century.

Examining Weiss's travel narratives in the light of Deprêtre's appeal for an understanding of displacement which engages more clearly with alterity and the concerns of the traveller, revealed three further readings of displacement in the primary sources: temporal, cultural, and psychological. Weiss's juxtaposition of the past and the present grounded her travel narratives in temporal displacement and a dialogue across generations that not only moved her between time zones as she crossed the date line between Alaska and Japan,⁶⁷⁹ but also framed her perception of the distance between twentieth-century Europe and less-developed areas of the contemporary world. Weiss's temporal shift to what she perceived to be the dawn of time in Alaska, instilled in her a sense of superiority and

⁶⁷⁸ Claude Reichler, 'Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition', *Viatica*, August (2004) <<http://www.crlv.org/outils.francfort/index.php>> [accessed January 2010].

⁶⁷⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229.

erased any possibility that her encounters could offer her an explanation of the turbulence of the twentieth century.⁶⁸⁰

A similar rejection emerges from Weiss's account of her arrival in Tokyo. Everything about Japan appeared to be a challenge for Weiss. The countless, anonymous proverbs,⁶⁸¹ the population density,⁶⁸² and the markedly different way of life compared to her Western frame of reference prompted a sense of cultural displacement. This shift was so great that Weiss felt compelled to leave – a rapid exit appeared preferable to an extended stay in such an uncomfortable environment. Cultural displacement had caused Weiss to renounce the possibility of gaining any experiential knowledge relevant to her understanding of the turmoil she perceived around her.

An analysis of the primary sources used in this study also points to the effect of psychological displacement on Weiss's experiential knowledge. In her texts from North America, psychological and physical displacement operated concurrently to distance Weiss further from her encounters which hindered her acquisition of experiential knowledge – flying from Mexico, Weiss shook off her experience of Quetzalcoatl⁶⁸³ and, on another flight, mentally leaving her Alaskan encounters underneath the sea mist.⁶⁸⁴

Conversely, in Weiss's travel narratives from Asia, psychological displacement combined visual elements and text that linked Weiss so closely with alterity that she was unable to separate her own displacement from that of the protagonists in her encounters. Where ideals were shared – such as the common values seen in the comparison of the front

⁶⁸⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 201.

⁶⁸¹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 229.

⁶⁸² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 230.

⁶⁸³ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 50.

⁶⁸⁴ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 228.

cover of *Cachemire*⁶⁸⁵ with the myth of Shangri-La, and her desire for a peaceful society – Weiss's aspirations for the twentieth century appeared central to her narrative. But, where psychological displacement is so powerful, as in Weiss's relationship with Souen, her encounters resonated so deeply with his experience that her own experiential knowledge was hindered rather than helped and no answers to her perception of the twentieth century were forthcoming.

Extended itineraries

This thesis offers an important corrective to the commonly-held view of an anglophone and francophone 'post-war dip'⁶⁸⁶ and highlights the importance of visual travel narratives to a field largely – but not exclusively – concerned with text-based works. Weiss's *aventure humaine* is experienced through encounters with spirituality, myth, and power but it is the interplay of her gaze and displacement that reveals whether her post-war travel narratives helped her understand the turmoil of the twentieth century.

The primary sources under consideration here have reinforced earlier scholarship on the importance of displacement to the travel narrative but they have also demonstrated that displacement should not be considered as uniquely physical relocation. Rather, experiential knowledge is dependent on the interplay between physical, psychological, cultural, and temporal displacement and the influence of displacement on the acquisition of experiential knowledge is, in turn, related to the traveller's gaze. Weiss's relentless

⁶⁸⁵ Weiss, *Cachemire*, front cover.

⁶⁸⁶ Carl Thompson, 'Travel Writing Now, 1950 to the Present Day', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Carl Thompson (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 196-213 (p. 196).

commitment to a witness gaze and reluctance to recognise herself as either an intermediary or a participant in her encounters compounded the effects of physical, temporal, cultural, and psychological displacement, ultimately hindering her acquisition of experiential knowledge. Consequently, In her later years, Weiss's travel narratives failed to provide her with experiential knowledge to understand her contemporary society.

Whilst Weiss may not have found answers to the questions that preoccupied her thinking, her travel narratives have revealed a new understanding not of the world, but of her role in it. Weiss has emerged from this study as someone other than those labels which have previously been used to define her: journalist, campaigner for women's suffrage, advocate for peace, and 'grand-mère de l'Europe.'⁶⁸⁷ She has also emerged as someone other than the detached witness she described herself as. Although Weiss was seemingly reluctant to acknowledge any proximity to spirituality, myth, or power, the relationship she had with these themes throughout her life positions her more credibly as an involved *observatrice engagée*, rather than the *voyageuse engagée* of the French intellectual journey to the Soviet Union. The multi-media nature of her post-war *œuvre*, which has been uncovered here, offers an exciting foundation for related research into the lives and impact of French female intellectuals in the twentieth century and the richness of this resource invites further examination of the travel narrative in the context of the photobook and the moving image.

⁶⁸⁷ Michel Loetscher, *Louise Weiss: une Alsacienne au cœur de l'Europe* (Nancy: Editions Place Stanislas, 2009), p. 9.

APPENDIX 1

PORTRAITS IN TODOROV'S GALLERY OF TRAVELLERS

*Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*⁶⁸⁸ is Tzvetan Todorov's study of the relationship between the diversity of people and the unity of humankind. Todorov clarified that, at its most straightforward, this gallery is a study of 'us' – the group to which an individual belongs – and 'the others' – those who do not belong to this group. Todorov based his study on the work of around twenty French writers spanning the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries and structured his subsequent book around the central themes of race and racism, nations, and travel, the latter being the most relevant for the purposes of this thesis. From this study, Todorov compiled a gallery of ten types of travellers, or portraits, which is used as the basis for the analysis in Part One of this thesis. The following table, which begins overleaf, is based on a translation of Todorov's original French text⁶⁸⁹ and lists all ten portraits and outlines the characteristics of each.

⁶⁸⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989).

⁶⁸⁹ Todorov, *Nous et les autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, pp. 376-386.

Portrait	Defining Characteristics
<i>L'assimilateur</i> (assimilator)	<p>Characterised by a Messianic spirit, this traveller seeks to change Others so they adopt similar characteristics. A universalist in principle, this traveller believes in the unity of the human race where difference is measured against the ideals of <i>l'assimilateur</i> and interpreted as deficiency. This figure is similar to a Christian missionary wanting to convert others or a coloniser wanting to impose the idea of European civilisation. This traveller is rare in contemporary writing, predominantly because the beliefs of <i>l'assimilateur</i> are no longer held. A possible modern-day interpretation would be assimilation of a people to an ideology.</p>
<i>Le profiteur</i> (profiteer)	<p>This traveller is a businessman or industrialist, a merchant whose focus is on gaining a profit – even using others to gain a profit. <i>Le profiteur</i> speculates on the Otherness of those he encounters with a view to exploiting them for benefit. <i>Le profiteur</i> is adaptable and learns how to talk in a way which will convince or persuade the Other. To achieve this, <i>le profiteur</i> has no reliance on a supporting ideology. This traveller never aims to build relationships and is only interested in how the Other can help with certain privileges. A contemporary example of this traveller might be someone who travels to gain privileges, for example a better job or salary.</p>
<i>Le touriste</i> (tourist)	<p>This traveller is a rushed visitor who prefers artefacts and monuments to people and who hurries through encounters. The haste experienced is a result of the nature of modern life and because the visit is usually part of a short holiday from the normal routine of work. Displacement overseas is equated with paid holiday and the holiday itself is dedicated to capturing objective images rather than real life encounters with the Other. The traveller has a small window of opportunity to see and do everything and fewer encounters with people proves to be more relaxing as self-identity is never questioned. <i>Le touriste</i> is epitomised by a camera which acts as a tool for collecting and eternalising the collection of monuments. Although <i>le touriste</i> has little, if any,</p>

Portrait	Defining Characteristics
	contact with people, societies are influenced by requests for souvenirs believed to be cultural emblems of the area. This superficial contact encourages homogenisation in a society rather than local diversity.
<i>L'impressionniste</i> (impressionist)	Considered by Todorov as a refined tourist, <i>l'impressionniste</i> has more time than the holidaymaker and is therefore able to spend time with the Other. <i>L'impressionniste</i> collects real examples of local culture rather than tourist clichés. However, <i>l'impressionniste</i> remains the sole subject of the experience of displacement revelling in contact with the sights, sounds, tastes and more subjective aspects of local people.
<i>L'assimilé</i> (assimilated)	This traveller normally makes a one-way journey. The traveller is more likely to be an immigrant who wants to know and live amongst the Other. Acceptance by the population is important because <i>l'assimilé</i> wants to become like them. There is an overlap with the business traveller who becomes an expert of a foreign country and, whilst not necessarily residing permanently in the area, makes very frequent visits for both social and professional reasons resulting in an understanding of the culture. <i>L'assimilé</i> reaches out to others to be like them rather than trying to change the Other.
<i>L'exote</i> (exote)	A term coined by Victor Segalen in 1908, <i>L'exote</i> is based on Brecht's <i>Verfremdungseffekt</i> where the traveller in a foreign country is not blinded by the monotony of daily life and activities as are the local people but is open to perceiving them whilst avoiding assimilation into the culture. The encounter with the Other is a key, defining moment for <i>l'exote</i> . Consequently, <i>l'exote</i> is able to make comparisons between home and the Other and observe differences in a lucid manner. Inherent in this portrait is the necessity not to acquaint oneself too well with the Other. If <i>l'exote</i> understands a foreign culture too well, the relationship with the Other grows stale.

Portrait	Defining Characteristics
<i>L'exilé</i> (exile)	This portrait of a traveller is half <i>exote</i> and half immigrant who mingles into a new culture but avoids total assimilation into that culture. The exile remains separate from a place, not fully belonging, and cherishes the environment because he is not a full and integral part of it. The main interest of <i>l'exilé</i> is the traveller's own life and interests.
<i>L'allegoriste</i> (allegorist)	This traveller will say one thing but understand another using an encounter with the Other to discuss something completely different. This traveller does not seek to understand other environments or peoples, but searches for what is opposite to himself. <i>L'allegoriste</i> speaks of a foreign people to discuss or explore a concern of his own culture.
<i>Le désabusé</i> (disenchanted)	The <i>désabusé</i> typically renounces travel and leaving home. At the end of a journey, <i>le désabusé</i> feels that the trip was unnecessary and believes that man does not need to travel in order to grow. During the journey, <i>le désabusé</i> prefers the company of his own compatriots.
<i>Le philosophe</i> (philosopher)	This figure is a traveller who is unsure whether the philosophical journey has taken place and is satisfied with the encounter of the Other rather than displacement. The <i>philosophe</i> both receives wisdom and gives it out, observing that understanding difference is not the aim but rather the way in which different characteristics are discovered. <i>Le philosophe</i> seeks to draw lessons from the observation of other peoples and cultures and struggles against ethnocentrism.

APPENDIX 2

IDENTIFYING THE TRAVEL NARRATIVE

REICHLER'S MODEL OF DEFINITION AND DISPLACEMENT

Claude Reichler's model which was used to select the primary sources for this thesis and which also identifies works as either *littérature de voyage* or *récit de voyage* is presented in the table below which has been adapted from the source document, *Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition*.⁶⁹⁰ Reichler identifies eight features of the travel narrative: *le déplacement, la narration, l'expérience, le voyageur, le lecteur, l'image, le lectorat*, and *guides de voyage*. These eight features are listed vertically in the first column of the table.

Column two describes each of these features in the context of *littérature de voyage*. The cell under this title, when read in conjunction with a particular feature in column one, is a translation of Reichler's criteria which explains how that particular feature appears in works considered to be *littérature de voyage*. Where the cell contains N/A (not applicable), Reichler has not provided an explanation as the feature is not applicable to *littérature de voyage*. For example, as discussed in the Introduction, Reichler distinguishes between the reader (*le lecteur*) of *récit de voyage* and the readership (*le lectorat*) of *littérature de voyage*. Consequently, the cell in column two adjacent to *le lecteur* reads N/A as *le lecteur* applies to *récit de voyage* rather than *littérature de voyage*. The converse is true: the cell in

⁶⁹⁰ Claude Reichler, 'Récit de voyage, littérature de voyage: propositions de définition', *Viatica*, August (2004) <<http://www.crlv.org/outils.francfort/index.php>> [accessed January 2010].

column four along the row with the designation *le lectorat*, reads N/A as *le lectorat* applies to *littérature de voyage* rather than *récit de voyage*.

Column three contains quotations from Weiss's post-war travel narratives which, when tested against Reichler's model, have fallen into the category of *littérature de voyage*. These quotations are illustrative of Reichler's descriptions but are not exhaustive.

Column four describes each of the features which Reichler considers is essential to *récit de voyage*. This column is read in the same way as column two. The content of the cell under this heading is a translation of Reichler's criteria. It correlates with the feature further left in column one and explains how this feature appears in *récit de voyage*. Once again, if N/A is present in the cell, the feature is considered not to be applicable to *récit de voyage*.

Column five is read in the same way as column three. It contains quotations from Weiss's post-war travel narratives which, when tested against Reichler's model, have fallen into the category of *récit de voyage*. Again, these quotations are illustrative of Reichler's descriptions but are not exhaustive. The table begins overleaf.

Features of Reichler's *littérature de voyage* and *récit de voyage* with examples

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
Le déplacement	Movement between places is a fundamental concept to distinguish <i>littérature de voyage</i> from other forms of writing.	Illustrated in <i>Moi et le lion</i> by pictures of Weiss and other tourists on safari in Africa, disembarking from a coach, checking into Mgumu hotel, and moving between rural and urban landscapes. ⁶⁹¹ 'Nos photographies guideront le touriste là-bas.' ⁶⁹²	Movement between places is a fundamental concept to distinguish <i>récit de voyage</i> from other forms of writing.	'Je partis pour le bassin de Mackenzie, ses missions, ses puits de pétrole, ses mines, ses stations de pêche.' ⁶⁹³ 'Le matin, vers huit heures, je sortais de l'hôtel.' ⁶⁹⁴
La narration	An account by the traveller or someone other than the traveller with no obligation for the narrative voice to be written in the first person.	'Par une étincelante après-midi d'automne, comme je longeais les esplanades de la Nouvelle-Delhi.' ⁶⁹⁵	An individual's account written in the first person.	'Nous arrivâmes à Saint-Albert.' ⁶⁹⁷ 'Je suis entrée en Chine populaire par une galerie couverte étroite

⁶⁹¹ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Moi et le lion*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), 07.05.

⁶⁹² Louise Weiss, 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', *Plaisir de France*, 5 (1964), 12-21 (p. 15).

⁶⁹³ Louise Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), p. 179.

⁶⁹⁴ Louise Weiss, 'Pékin depuis Loti', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 9 (1959), 104-117 (p. 104).

⁶⁹⁵ Louise Weiss, *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955), p. 5.

⁶⁹⁷ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 164.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
La narration (cont.)		<i>Des chameaux, des poignards et de la boue</i> , maps Weiss's journey through As Eyla, Africa, and her encounters with indigenous people. A shot of the town's signpost appears at 03.40. The credits note, 'Commentaire de Louise Weiss et de Claude Thomas, dit par Claude Thomas, directeur de la photo, Georges Bourdelon.' ⁶⁹⁶		et fort longue.' ⁶⁹⁸
	Presented in the form of a series, a compilation, or a collection of works.	Weiss's journeys through Africa were distributed under the collective titles <i>L'Afrique du soleil levant</i> and <i>Merveilles Africaines</i> .	Accompanied by diverse formats – diary, a log, personal letters, or prose.	'Sainte Rose de Chamula juillet 1947.' ⁶⁹⁹ 'Edmonton la porte du grand nord août 1947.' ⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Des chameaux, des poignards, et de la boue*, dir. by Louis Weiss (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963), 00.12-00.44.

⁶⁹⁸ Louise Weiss, 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), 83-100 (p. 83).

⁶⁹⁹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 9.

⁷⁰⁰ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 151.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
La narration (cont.)	Subject matter is typically commentary, description or factual evidence and illustration (tables, graphs, drawings, pictures) loosely associated with the narrative or characteristic of the journey.	'Le Fleuve Jaune (longueur: 4,845 km; bassin: 745 000 km ²)...' ⁷⁰¹	Contains narrative styles such as description, commentary, and illustration (tables, graphs, drawings, pictures) which are dependent on the narrative.	<p><i>Aux portes du Tibet: dans la vallée de Ladakh</i> ⁷⁰² is split into sections such as:</p> <p>(i) 'Le Prince et le Grand Lama' which refers to, Prince Karan Singh. This is supported by photographs of Karan.</p> <p>(ii) 'Trinité fluviale et triple état' contains information on the geography of the region. It is supported by a map marked with the three rivers states.</p>
			Covers a specified time frame and provides a literary space where the author can elaborate and develop the account of the journey.	'De Montréal, en trois jours et deux nuits de chemin de fer, je suis arrivée au pied des Montagnes Rocheuses.' ⁷⁰³

⁷⁰¹ Louise Weiss, 'L'industrialisation de la Chine', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 5 (1959), 97-110 (p. 99).

⁷⁰² Louise Weiss, 'Aux portes du Tibet: dans la vallée de Ladakh', *Sciences et Voyages*, 147 (1958), 24-32.

⁷⁰³ Louise Weiss, 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska', *Politique Etrangère*, 13 (1948), 87-94 (p. 87).

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
L'expérience	A large part of the work must be dedicated to the journey and relate the full experience of displacement whilst acknowledging the existence of Home and Other.	<i>Catrunjaya la sainte colline de la victoire morale</i> opens with a map of West India showing the Indian Ocean and the location of Saurashtra, in the peninsular region of western India. ⁷⁰⁴	A meeting with a world which takes place in a space through which the author has travelled in an organised sequence (depart, travel, arrival, meeting, stay, wandering around, return).	<i>Le Voyage enchanté</i> details Weiss's arrival in Kashmir, the beginning of her journey to Amarnath, and the three stages of the journey – 'les trois étapes: Chandanvadi, Shesnag, et Panchatarini' – and concludes with her return. ⁷⁰⁵
	The traveller engages with the journey on a physical, mental, and intellectual level juxtaposing the perceived safety of the Home environment with the unfamiliar surroundings of the Other. Not reliant on scientific facts obtained at a distance.	The unfamiliar Other is illustrated in <i>Le Rocher tragique</i> which begins with the voiceover affirming at 01.00, 'A l'autre bout de la terre.' ⁷⁰⁶	The narration characteristically has reference to an existing body of knowledge or thought and a comparison between Home and things never seen before.	As she journeyed through Mexico, Weiss relied on the accounts of three much earlier eye witnesses: Bartolome de Las Casas (1484-1566), Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1581), and Hernán Cortés (1485-1547). ⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁴ *Catrunjaya ou La Sainte Colline de la Victoire*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1954), 00.01-00.40.

⁷⁰⁵ Louise Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960) pp. 378-380.

⁷⁰⁶ *Le Rocher tragique* dir, by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1958).

⁷⁰⁷ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 31-44.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
Le voyageur	Characterised by many people travelling as a collective body.	<i>60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours</i> ⁷⁰⁸ is a collaborative work between Weiss and cameraman Georges Bourdelon.	Characterised by one person travelling alone who is a true and believable entity possessing personal characteristics, individual traits, social and historical points of reference and represents everything the reader knows about the experience being recounted. The traveller is speaking from a position of authority having witnessed what is being retold.	Weiss portrays herself as a real person by telling of the pain and hardship she encountered. 'Des moustiques zigzaguaient [...] Les moustiques se multiplièrent, nous piquant dès que nous nous arrêtons pour reprendre haleine.' ⁷⁰⁹ Weiss asserts her authority and knowledge in the opening of <i>Le Voyage enchanté</i> by reassuring those she invites to travel with her that she has been there before them, 'Les sites que vous visiterez, je les aurai choisi sans autre considération que leur valeur de rêve. N'ayez crainte.' ⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ Louise Weiss and Georges Bourdelon, '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', *Paris Match*, 6-13 September 1952, pp. 20-25.

⁷⁰⁹ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 156.

⁷¹⁰ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 17.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
Le lecteur	N/A	N/A	The reader is the intended recipient of the work and affected by the narration, reacting to how the traveller is received and submitted to emotional manipulation through image and iconographic representation. The reader approaches travel writing in a different way to fiction and needs to believe that the narrator exists.	Allusion to France and a shared heritage in, 'Présidée par l'industriel Georges Pinson l'alliance française de Mexico et le lycée franco-mexicain dirigé par Henri Deleuze constituaient d'autres centres importants pour la diffusion de notre culture.' ⁷¹¹ 'Je me relevai angoissée toute la nuit je restai a la fenêtre [...] Je passai mon manteau et bondis sur la route [...] J'entendis l'appel, l'appel de la foret.' ⁷¹²
L'image	Pictures, tables and graphs make up a large proportion of the work and act as a reliable	Maps appear in Weiss's text-based travel narratives with an itinerary	See <i>la narration</i> (above)	See <i>la narration</i> (above)

⁷¹¹ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 79.

⁷¹² Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 138.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
	witness, but the account of displacement is not absent.	clearly marked. ⁷¹³ In Weiss's documentaries, symbols appear on maps to show routes and spread of, for example, religious orders. ⁷¹⁴		
Le lectorat	The form of the narration and the choice of places visited can be determined by the orientation of the readership suggesting that the journey and the way in which it is recounted is initially conceived in the light of the subsequent readership.	'Des voyageurs nouveaux me bouscullaient [...] Les tracés de leur journée les avaient épuisés [...] J'écrirais mon livre pour eux les asphyxies afin de les rendre au ravissement de vivre'. ⁷¹⁵	N/A	N/A

⁷¹³ Weiss, *L'Or, le camion, et la croix*, p. 293.

⁷¹⁴ *Allah au cachemire*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Telouet Films, 1954) see opening frames which show spread of Islam and 12.40 where a map is featured depicting Karbala and Mecca in relation to Europe. See also *A l'ouest d'Eden*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Atlantic Film, 1951) with the River Tigris, Babylonia, and Aleppo. The principal cities/areas marked are Palmyra, Jerusalem, Mount Sinai, Our Ougarit, and the Mediterranean Sea. See also *Aux frontières de l'au-delà*, dir. by Louise Weiss (Gaumont, 1954) at 06.51 where a map appears on screen showing Srinagar and Cachemire then the pilgrims' route, then a map of where the mountain passes lie.

⁷¹⁵ Weiss, *Le Voyage enchanté*, p. 17.

1 Features	2 Littérature de voyage (LV)	3 LV examples from primary sources	4 Récit de voyage (RV)	5 RV examples from primary sources
Guides de voyage	Examples of littérature de voyage with the caveat that they are not necessarily narrations and, therefore, the text is organised differently to that of narrated accounts of travel (e.g. subdivided into sections).	<i>Cachemire</i> was conceived as a <i>Guide Bleu</i> publication. Other than this publication, Weiss did not produce guide books.	N/A	N/A

A list of Weiss's travel narratives from Reichler's typology

Reichler's model was applied to Weiss's post-war *œuvre* in order to identify and select her travel narratives. The following is a list of Weiss's travel narratives used as primary sources for this thesis. The list is grouped by *littérature de voyage* and *récit de voyage* as identified by Reichler's model.

- Littérature de voyage.
 - Books
 - *La Syrie* (Paris: del Duca, 1950).

- *Cachemire* (Paris: Librairie Hachette Les Albums des Guides Bleus, 1955).
- Articles
 - 'Le radium du cercle polaire', *Le Monde Illustré*, 18 October 1947, pp. 1190-1193.
 - 'Petits métiers du Grand Nord', *La Nef*, 48 (1948), pp. 3-14.
 - '60 siècles d'histoire photographiés en 60 jours', *Paris Match*, 6-13 September 1952, pp. 20-25.
 - 'L'industrialisation de la Chine', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 5 (1959), pp. 97-110.
 - 'Ce qu'il faut voir à Pékin', *Plaisir de France*, 5 (1964), p. 12-21.
- Documentaries
 - *60 siècles d'histoire en Syrie* (Atlantic Film, 1951).
 - *A l'ouest d'Eden* (Atlantic Film, 1951).
 - *Premiers chrétiens et croisés en Syrie* (Telouet Films, 1951).
 - *Le Liban: terre des dieux et des hommes* (Telouet Films, 1954).
 - *Allah au cachemire* (Telouet Films, 1954).
 - *L'amour des créatures: danses et sanctuaires du Saurashtra* (distributor unrecorded, 1954).
 - *Aux frontières de l'au-delà* (Gaumont, 1954).
 - *Catrunjaya ou la sainte colline de la victoire* (Atlantic Film, 1954).
 - *Le Dieu du riz* (distributor unrecorded, 1958).
 - *Le rocher tragique* (Telouet Films, 1958).

- *Le Barrage des treize tombeaux* (Telouet Films, 1959).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Djibouti les caravaniers de la lune* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Djibouti une station-service en mer rouge* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Le Christ aux sources du Nil* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Moi et le lion* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: pastorales africaines* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Ivoire et bois d'ébène* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Allah aux Comores* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Pirates et parfums* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: la mort des zébus* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).

- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: rien avant le pôle sud* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *Merveilles Africaines: Pitié pour les tortues* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *Merveilles Africaines: Une reine, un général, un président* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: face au volcan, face au cyclone* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Ô pauvre Virginie* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Des chameaux, des poignards, et de la boue* (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Un fils du roi Salomon I'*, (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *L'Afrique du soleil levant: Un fils du roi Salomon II'*, (Office national de radiotélévision française et la société nouvelle Pathé-Cinéma, 1963).
- *La foi qui sauve* (distributor unrecorded, 1966).

- Récit de voyage.
 - *Books*
 - *L'Or, le camion, et la croix* (Paris: Julliard, 1949).
 - *Le Voyage enchanté* (Paris: Fayard, 1960).
 - Articles and book chapters
 - 'Le grand nord-ouest et la route de l'Alaska' *Politique Etrangère*, 13 (1948), pp. 87-94.
 - 'En volant du Mexique au Canada', *Nouvelles Littéraires*, 24 February 1949, p. 1.
 - 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 184 (1949), pp. 384-386.
 - 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 186 (1949), pp. 449-451.
 - 'Promenades en Egypte', *France Illustration*, 191 (1949), pp. 618-620.
 - 'Port-Saïd est devenu une escale sans joie', *La Liberté*, 9 February 1950, p. 5.
 - 'Les problèmes politiques du Japon moderne', *France Illustration*, 232 (1950), pp. 293-296.
 - 'Mon séjour en Corée', *France Illustration*, 239 (1950), pp. 479-481.
 - 'Du royaume de la perle au temple de la déesse du soleil', *France Illustration*, (1950), pp. 515-518.
 - 'Les sériculteurs japonais et leurs honorables vers à soie', *Sud-est Asiatique*, 25 (1951), pp. 16-19.

- 'Mon carnet de route de Séoul au 38e parallèle', in *De la Banquise à la Jungle: les français, la terre et les hommes*, ed. by Henri Lauga (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1952), pp. 202-216
- 'L'Himalaya trône des dieux', *Connaissance du Monde*, 1 (1955), pp. 7-58.
- 'Aux portes du Tibet: dans la vallée de Ladakh', *Sciences et Voyages*, 147 (1958), pp. 24-32.
- 'Pékin depuis Loti', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 9 (1959), pp. 104-117.
- 'Shanghai aujourd'hui', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1959), pp. 482-500.
- 'Mes premiers jours en Chine populaire', *Œuvres Libres*, 165 (1960), pp. 83-100.
- 'Les Etats-Unis en 1925', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1969), pp. 30-41.
- 'Souvenirs de Nuremberg', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 2 (1975), pp. 306-315.
- 'Une visite à l'empereur des perles', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 10 (1976), pp. 83-87.

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