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Travel Writing, Ethnography, and the Colony-Centric Voyage
of the *Jesuit Relations* from New France

The seventeenth-century *Jesuit Relations* from New France have long been understood to be the products of a daring voyage. French missionaries departed the Old World to brave the perils of the open ocean and settle among Iroquoian and Algonquian potential converts in what is today Eastern Canada, risking their lives at every step of the process. Once established in the colony, the Jesuits seldom returned to Europe (Dubois 52). Instead, like their brethren around the world, they sent detailed reports of each year's events to their Old World superiors, fulfilling the prescription of Ignatius Loyola himself that all members of the Society of Jesus be kept informed of their colleagues' work through the regular circulation of letters.¹ The Jesuit superior in New France compiled these *Relations* on the basis of the letters and journals of missionaries who were scattered throughout the Canadian wilderness, editing out all that was "impolitic or at best unessential to the purposes of the published series [...] removing portions here, altering the language there, and welding the several pieces before him into a concise and comprehensive story of the year's mission in Canada [...]" (Wroth 117-119).² The texts then were sent to France on one of the merchant ships that departed the colony each autumn, where they were edited a second time before being published and widely read from 1632 to 1673, with a few earlier installments appearing before annual publication became the norm (Wroth 114; Pouliot 24). Although accurate within its limits, this common understanding of the texts as products of a Eurocentric voyage does not fully reflect how the *Relations* circulated and shaped knowledge, because it posits them as

vessels that transported news in one direction only: toward Europe. This article suggests that accounting for the texts' westward movements is also essential for understanding them and their role in disseminating knowledge. Despite the common assumption that the *Relations* were the result of a circular process beginning and ending in France, I will show that there is good reason to believe that the texts were sent back to the colony after publication, thereby completing a colony-centric circular movement. This insight, I argue here, brings nuance to the texts' status as a prime example of travel writing and a favorite source of ethnographic data.

In a step that has never before, to my knowledge, been considered part of the process through which the *Relations* collected and transmitted information, some and perhaps all of the texts were sent back to New France after being edited and published in Paris, giving the missionary authors an opportunity to observe how their words had been changed by Old World editors. Indeed, the library of the Jesuit college in Quebec appears to have had a complete, or nearly complete, set.³ The library—the first and largest in colonial New France (André Beaulieu 15)—was pillaged and its contents dispersed when the conquering English requisitioned the college in 1759. Two partial catalogues are known to have been produced in the early eighteenth century, but unfortunately neither has been found. Efforts to reconstruct the library's holdings by Antonio Drolet, Claude Pariseau, and Pierre-Emile Filion have uncovered 750 volumes in the collections of other Canadian libraries that bear inscriptions indicating that they originally belonged to the Jesuit college library. Among these books are thirteen of the forty-one published *Relations*. Other volumes in the series that originally belonged to the New France Jesuits were destroyed in fires in the nineteenth century, including thirty volumes that had been

purchased by the government of Canada in 1851 (Pouliot 30).⁴ Although the current state of knowledge on the Jesuit college library and what happened to its collection in the wake of the conquest unfortunately does not allow for a volume-by-volume accounting of its holdings of the *Jesuit Relations*, it is clear that the library had a large collection of the texts, and probably a complete set.

Clues from other volumes that are known to have been held in the Jesuit college library suggest that each year's *Relation* may have been sent back promptly to the colony, in time to influence subsequent installments. Notations in some of the recovered books suggest that it was not uncommon for newly published works on the sciences, religion, philosophy and other subjects to be received by the Jesuits in New France soon after their publication (Drolet 491). And many of the books also bear inscriptions indicating that they were gifts from Parisian printer Sébastien Cramoisy, the publisher of the *Relations*. In fact, if the provenance of the recovered texts is any guide, Cramoisy was the college library's most important source of books during the seventeenth century, the period during which about two-thirds of the library's collection apparently arrived in the colony (Drolet 489; André Beaulieu 17). It is not difficult to imagine that as long as the printer was frequently sending books to the New France Jesuits, he may have routinely included the cheap and small annual *Relations*.

The *Relations* themselves contain comments that indicate clearly that at least some of these texts found their way back to New France less than a year after publication. The published 1632 *Relation*, for example, arrived in New France in time to alert mission Superior Paul Le Jeune that his next report would be printed for public consumption.⁵ More than one scholar has attributed the shifts of tone and organization in subsequent

volumes to Le Jeune's realization that his first text had been published (Donnelly 2-3; Campeau 2.136 introduction). As I will soon show, there is evidence that Le Jeune also was able to see his published 1633 *Relation* before composing the following year's installment. And in 1638, Le Jeune offered a hint that he had read the previous year's published text before writing its successor, this time by complaining of the results of his superior's decision to switch printers in 1637:⁶

J'auray cette consolation cette année que, disant peu, il se glissera peu de fautes sous le rouleau de la presse. La *Relation* de l'année passée en est remplie. Il faut que j'en conte une, pour inviter l'imprimeur à prendre quelque jalousie de son ouvrage. Au chapitre 8, page 145, [...] au lieu de me servir d'exorcismes contre le diable, l'imprimeur me fait servir d'une espée. Voicy ce que j'avois couché dans l'original: "En effet, j'avois dessein de me servir d'une espèce d'exorcisme"; l'imprimeur a mis: "En effet, j'avois dessein de me servir d'une espée désormais." Je vous confesse que ce beau contretemps m'a fait rire (Campeau 4.132).

I shall have this consolation this year, that, in saying little, few faults will slip under the roller of the press. The *Relation* of last year is full of them. I must mention one of them, in order to induce the printer to take some pride in his work. In chapter 8, on page 145 [...] the Printer makes me, in place of employing exorcisms against the devil, use a sword. This is what I wrote in the original: "In fact, I intended to employ a sort of exorcism;" the printer made it: "In fact, I intended to use a sword hereafter." I must confess that this pretty witticism made me laugh [...] (Thwaites 14.277).

The precise correction Le Jeune offered, including chapter and page number, suggests that he was not relying solely on descriptions of the book provided by those who had seen it in Europe, and must have possessed and carefully reviewed a copy.

The fact that the *Relations* seem to have been frequently and promptly sent back to New France after publication has potentially far-reaching consequences for scholarly understandings of the texts, full exploration of which would be the work of several articles. I focus in the following pages on the two related areas of scholarship on the *Relations* with which I am most familiar, travel writing and ethnography. As I will argue,

the colony-centric circulation of the texts brings nuance to their longstanding relationship with the genre of travel writing. And the texts' role in collecting and transmitting information about the Amerindian groups that missionaries encountered in the New World similarly must be reexamined in light of the fact that the authors at least sometimes were able to consult their published texts to see how they had been changed by Old World editors. I leave aside for now the consequences of the published texts' return to New France for the spiritual, political, and linguistic qualities of the texts, among others, although these are aspects of scholarship on the *Jesuit Relations* that may benefit from similar reevaluation. Without claiming to account for all of the implications of the observations made above, then, I aim here to illustrate two consequences of the fact that the *Jesuit Relations* were sent back to the colony after being published in France, and to point the way to further research.

Travel Writing

To borrow a phrase from Mary Baine Campbell, Travel Writing is “a genre composed of other genres” (6). Texts as different from each other as the journals of explorers and traders, missionary reports, shipboard logs, diaries, letters, and botanical treatises are often considered to be examples thereof (Pioffet, “Présentation,” 1-2). The *Jesuit Relations*, which themselves are far from homogenous, with various installments taking the form of long chronological narratives, collections of short letters, and books organized into thematic chapters, were framed from the beginning as belonging to this

odd assortment of texts inspired by experience of faraway places.⁷ The full title of the 1635 *Relation*, to cite just one representative example, was as follows:

Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle-France en l'année 1635, envoyée au révérend Père Provincial de la Compagnie de Jésus en la Province de France, par le Père Paul Le Jeune de la mesme compagnie, Supérieur de la résidence de Québec (Campeau 3.44).

Relation of What Occurred in New France in the Year 1635 Sent to the Reverend Father Provincial of the Society of Jesus in the Province of France. By the Father Paul Le Jeune of the same Society, Superior of the residence of Quebec (Thwaites 7.251).

The title, and the minor variations that appeared on the frontispieces of the other installments in the series, labels the texts as a contribution to a literary genre inspired by travel that thrived in early modern France, with more than 1,300 texts in print by the end of the seventeenth century (Melzer, “Une ‘Seconde France?’” 78). According to Antoine Furetière’s 1690 *Dictionnaire Universel*, the term “relation” referred to the “récit de quelque aventure, histoire, bataille [...] se dit plus particulièrement des aventures des voyageurs, des observations qu’ils font dans leurs voyages” [“the account of some adventure, story, battle [...] especially said of the adventures of travelers, of the observations that they make during their voyages” (my translation)]. The title also makes clear the direction in which the voyage in question was understood to operate: a European had visited the New World, and was offering readers in the Old World an account of that experience. In light of the texts’ roles in informing the public of Jesuit activities in the New World and attracting spiritual and material support for the mission, it is not particularly surprising that the authors or their editors in France would choose to frame the texts this way, as eyewitness accounts by Europeans who had unique knowledge because they had traveled far from home.⁸

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the implications of the texts' very titles, modern ethnohistorians and literary critics alike have generally read the *Relations* as the accounts of European voyagers in the New World, texts that recorded their authors' impressions of an unfamiliar place and then transported to Europe knowledge about the world outside its borders. Indeed, they often have been taken to be key texts in early modern French travel writing. Normand Doiron, for example, credited the 1632 *Relation*—along with Gabriel Sagard's *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons* and Samuel de Champlain's *Les Voyages de la Nouvelle France Occidentale*—with inaugurating the genre in seventeenth-century France (“l'Art de Voyager” 85). Reading the texts in this spirit, scholars of literature have examined the role of the *Relations* in seventeenth-century French literary debates, lexicography, philosophy, and religion, seeking to understand how new information from a distant place may have influenced European concerns.⁹ The texts also have been a major source of examples for those who study the poetics of travel writing, testifying to their enduring prominence as an example of that genre.¹⁰ The common tendency to interpret the texts as travelers' tales has yielded many worthy contributions to scholarly work on the genre and its impact on European thought, culture, science, and literature.

But such work also tells only half of the story, and the texts' movement from colony to metropole and back poses interesting questions about their place within the genre of travel writing. Although extremely diverse in its forms, travel writing typically has been understood at least since the seventeenth century to have a clear relationship to the physical movement of the traveler. Upon leaving home, the traveler experiences a rupture, an opening of literal and figurative distance between him or herself and the home, populated by those who will not travel and therefore will not see what the traveler

sees, nor experience the things that he or she experiences (Doiron, *L'Art de Voyager* 74 and 149-159). As a number of theorists have remarked, travel—as opposed to wandering, exile and other forms of physical displacement—is organized around the concept of gain, whether the goal is spiritual, intellectual, or material enrichment (Van Den Abbeele xv-xviii; Clifford, *Routes* 66). The voyage therefore is concluded only when the traveler takes account of what has been gained or lost in the journey, and of how his or her relationship to home has changed. The goal of acquiring something beneficial makes all voyages essentially circular, since, as Georges Van Den Abbeele has pointed out, no loss or gain can be registered without a fixed, unchanged point against which to measure it, the traveler's home or a substitute.¹¹ The “home” in relation to which the voyage is defined and evaluated does not necessarily correspond to the traveler's actual place of residence, but in most conventional voyages it is indeed the homeland, hometown, or home base that serves as the fixed point against which a journey's success or failure is measured.

And yet, the home to which the traveler returns logically cannot be identical to the point of departure. According to Van Den Abbeele, “[...] the point of return as repetition of the point of departure cannot take place without a difference in that repetition: the detour constitutive of the voyage itself” (xix). Aside from whatever social or physical changes might have occurred during the voyager's absence, the home is changed irrevocably in his or her eyes by all that was seen and experienced during the journey. The point of origin and return of any voyage is therefore caught in the tension between the need to be recognizable upon the traveler's return to it—for without a return home to evaluate what was gained or lost, the voyage becomes exile, vagabondage or another

form of displacement—and the inevitability that it is changed in the eyes of the traveler, who has experienced and seen things that cast the questions, problems, and truths of the homeland in a new and perhaps revealing light. Returning home is therefore not, for the traveler, a mere matter of returning to the geographic point of departure, but also of renegotiating a relationship to that place, of reconciling the home of departure with the home of return—populated by friends, family, and financial backers who did *not* travel.

As Michael Harbsmeier has observed, recounting the voyage to those who stayed at home is one way of effecting this reconciliation:¹²

Returning home after a long absence can generally be seen as a transition asking for some kind of *rite de passage* through which the traveller is reintegrated into the community of those who stayed at home. Telling about what happened out there is thus tantamount to reaffirming the traveller's membership of the group with which he again can feel at home (219).

By imparting the wisdom accrued over the course of the voyage to those who stayed behind, the traveler permits them to glimpse the things he or she glimpsed, and thereby to close the figurative distance between traveler and home opened up during the voyage.¹³ Accounting chronologically for his or her movements and experiences, the traveler transforms the rupture of departure and the potentially turbulent reintegration upon return home into a smooth, unbroken line “that can be drawn on the map,” allowing those who stayed at home to repeat the voyage by reading the traveler's tale, and providing the knowledge they would need to update their understanding of the world to match that of the traveler (Van Den Abbeele xix; Campbell 2-3).¹⁴ And indeed, if one purpose of the travel account is to effect a rapprochement between the traveler and those who stayed at home, the vicarious journey offered by the travel account would surely be superior even to an actual voyage, since there could be no guarantee that a second traveler's experience

of the treacherous Atlantic crossing and poorly known Amerindian groups would be sufficiently similar to that of the first traveler to bind them together with shared knowledge.

Although the *Relations* themselves, as I will soon show, are in some ways a good conceptual fit for the genre described above, it is clear that the texts in other ways diverged from typical travelers' texts. With very few exceptions, they were not organized in the usual chronological fashion, but arranged instead into thematic chapters. This could be because there was not, in fact, a voyage in the sense outlined above to be recounted. It is not an exaggeration, to borrow an expression from Marie-Christine Pioffet, to say that the Jesuit texts are more *relations de séjour* than *relations de voyage* as far as the priests' own physical movements are concerned (*La Tentation* 20).¹⁵ Year after year, the missionaries stayed in the colony as their texts were appearing in France, going to Europe only when bureaucratic duty or material necessity demanded it, and usually returning to New France at the earliest opportunity. Le Jeune's visits to France in 1641 and 1643 to request aid against Iroquois aggressors occasioned not the nostalgic musings of a traveler returned home after a long absence, but the priest's longing for a departure at the earliest opportunity to New France, which he apparently considered his home. Wrote Le Jeune in the introductory letter to his 1641 *Relation*,

J'espère qu'aussitost que je me seray acquitté de ma commission, Vostre Révérence me donnera mon passeport pour retourner en ce nouveau monde et mourir dans un nouveau país ou parmy ces bons néophytes, qui m'ont ravy le cœur par leur piété et par leur dévotion (Campeau 5.62).

I hope that, as soon as I have executed my mission, Your Reverence will give me my Passport, that I may return to the New World and die in a New Country, or among these good Neophytes who have ravished my heart by their Piety and their devotion (Thwaites 20.121-123).

Le Jeune's verb choice—"retourner"—indicates that the departure from France that he was hoping for was not, to his mind, the start of a new voyage, but a return to a home he had only grudgingly left in the first place. His mention of the possibility of dying in a "new country" instead of among the Amerindians he already knew suggests that his nostalgia for his adopted homeland extended to parts of it that were not yet entirely familiar to him.

It seems that Le Jeune's attitude was shared by his colleagues, many of whom expressed a desire to finish their lives in the colony instead of returning to the country they once called home. Being a Jesuit missionary in New France ideally meant living out one's days in the New World. In fact, Le Jeune boasted in his 1634 *Relation* that Jesuits in France were clamoring to make one-way trips to the colony:

Je ne souhaiterois maintenant que cinq ou six de nos pères en chaqu'une de ces nations et cependant je n'oserais les demander, quoi que pour un qu'on désire, il s'en présente dix tout prests de mourir dans ces travaux (Campeau 2.736).

I would like to have now only five or six of our fathers in each of these nations; and yet I would not dare to ask for them, although for one that we desire ten would volunteer, all ready to die in these countries (Thwaites 7.225).

Not only did Le Jeune and his associates return to France in only the rarest of instances, it seems that repatriation was not part of the missionary enterprise as they envisioned it, a fact that explains the missionary-authors' oft-expressed desire to die in New France.¹⁶ As Carole Blackburn has noted, "Many Jesuits thought that martyrdom was necessary in order to plant the faith in New France. [...] the 'Blood of the Martyrs' was 'the seed and germ of Christians,' not least because the Jesuits believed that their willingness to die would impress people with the truth of their teaching" (Blackburn 65). As defined above,

“travel”—with its implication of circular movement—is a concept that simply does not apply to the typical New France Jesuit’s expectations or experience.

Although the missionaries may have more closely resembled permanently relocated Europeans than typical travelers, their *Relations* nonetheless in some ways can be understood as travel writing. The texts, after all, carried information to Europe that helped the west adjust its knowledge and beliefs to account for the example of people beyond its borders, thus fulfilling one role of the typical traveler’s tale: providing vicarious knowledge to readers who had stayed at home. The other major function of travel writing discussed above—the reconciliation of the author with the home—could not have occurred upon the texts’ arrival in France and publication there, since the priests were not present to update their relationship to the once-familiar place in light of their own experiences and perceived changes in the homeland. And yet, this reconciliation may have been made possible by the trans-Atlantic movements of the texts themselves. Missionaries observing how Old World editors had changed their texts might have been able to glean lessons about attitudes and social conditions in France, and to revise their understanding of the Old Country accordingly. What the missionary authors may have learned by consulting the published version of their texts will be addressed in the next section of this article. For the present, it is sufficient to remark that the Jesuit authors, who did not travel in the traditional circular sense, nonetheless produced texts that can be understood to conceptually resemble typical travel accounts. The fact that this resemblance is only possible thanks to the colony-centric movements of the texts points to a need, already heralded in some quarters, to question whether the traditional

relationship between physical movement and travel writing is productive or needlessly limiting.¹⁷

In addition to bringing nuance to the status of the *Relations* as travel writing and to the limits of the genre itself, the reading offered here points to a potential response to the criticism that scholarship on travel writing often reproduces a Eurocentric point of view. Mary Louise Pratt, for example, has recently pointed out that “[...] our scholarly analyses tend to spontaneously follow the traveler-author (as his reader does) and repeat his discourse in our terms, as if we were looking over his shoulder, as readers and fellow travelers. ‘This is how traveler X saw place Y.’ The analyst follows the book that follows the trip” (“Modernity, Mobility, and Ex-Coloniality” 18). Although work retracing the steps of traveler-writers has incontestably been of great value in distilling the precise contributions of travelers’ tales to evolving western knowledge about the outside world, it also risks perpetuating the colonial impulse to organize the world with Europe at its center, with all other places and peoples interesting only for what could be extracted for Europe’s benefit.¹⁸ The example of the *Jesuit Relations* suggests that in at least some cases, travelers’ tales could be understood to transmit information in more than one direction, allowing for readings of travel writing that privilege not what was learned in the exotic destination and then transported to Europe, but what was extracted from Europe for the benefit of the colony.

Ethnography

Closely related to the *Jesuit Relations*' status as travelers' tales is their widely recognized value as a source of ethnographic data. Like twentieth century anthropologists, the Jesuits were credible—and generally remain so today—because they were *there*, and knew things from experience that those who had stayed at home in France did not and could not know without relying on the knowledge carried eastward by the Jesuits' texts (Carile 27-30).¹⁹ Indeed, the value of the texts as a source of information on the Amerindian cultures that the Jesuits encountered is well established. Historian Alain Beaulieu, to cite just one example, has observed that “It is no longer necessary to insist on the interest of these *Relations* for the history of the beginnings of the colonization of New France. They constitute by far the most important source of information on this period” (19).²⁰ Modern ethnohistorians are often sensitive to the various factors that make the *Relations* a problematic source: the missionary authors were, after all, primarily interested in converting the people they encountered, and did not have the benefit of a modern theory of ethnography to guide their writing.²¹ Relatively few scholars, however, have acknowledged that the texts were changed in the Old World prior to publication, and none, to my knowledge, have attempted to account for how the colony-centric circulation of the texts might have shaped the authors' efforts to describe the Amerindian cultures with which they came in contact. Might the fact that the Jesuit authors at least sometimes had an opportunity to review their published texts prior to composing subsequent installments have influenced what they chose to include, and what was left out?

Contrary to common assertion, there is reason to believe that the Jesuit authors may have found the published versions of their texts substantially different from the manuscripts they sent to France.²² Although direct comparison between the missionaries'

drafts and the published versions is for the present impossible, due to the unfortunate absence of the manuscripts,²³ clues in two of the installments nonetheless give a good sense of the kinds of changes that editors in France made to the texts, and how those changes may have been received by the authors. Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard's 1616 *Relation de la Nouvelle France*, an early precursor to the annual series that would start in 1632, contains several oddities that betray the intervention of an Old World editor. Chapters eleven and twenty-two are missing, and promises for more information that go unfulfilled at the end of the preceding chapters indicate that their apparent absence is the result of deletions rather than simple numbering errors. In addition, chapter twenty-one ends with an account of the Jesuits' vigorous efforts to defend themselves against an accusation that is not explicitly described in the published text, indicating that a portion of that chapter was left out as well. Drawing on contemporaneous documents, Lucien Campeau has built a strong case that the accusation in question was a colonial agent's assertion that one of the missionaries had admitted that the Society favored the assassination of King Henry IV, a slur that Jesuits had been fighting in France since 1610. This theory also, according to Campeau, explains the omission of chapters eleven and twenty-two, in which the subject of conflict with colonial authorities likely would have required frequent mention of the same accusation. That Biard himself was made aware of these changes and adjusted his future writing is indicated by the Latin summary of the *Relation* that he subsequently prepared. In that text, Biard avoided all mention of the accusation that apparently had been prominently featured in his unedited *Relation* (Campeau 1.226-229-introduction).²⁴ Not only did editors in France make substantial

changes to the text, those changes appear to have influenced the author's subsequent accounts of his time in New France.

The second example, Paul Le Jeune's 1634 *Relation*, affords more certainty about what material was deleted by editors in Paris. The *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* houses a handwritten contemporaneous copy of the text, which preserves some elements of the original manuscript that did not survive the editorial process. These deletions are not included in Reuben Gold Thwaites' edition of the *Relations*, which has long been the standard.²⁵ This omission perhaps explains why so few scholars seem to be aware of the handwritten copy and the ways in which it differs from the published version of the 1634 text. Lucien Campeau's more recent, superior, and less widely-used edition includes the deleted material in brackets, and catalogues hundreds of differences between the two versions.²⁶ Most of these differences are typographical errors, grammatical mistakes, and variations in spelling, but several passages that apparently were deleted prior to publication reveal that the editors also made substantial changes to the text. The *Relation's* chapter on Montagnais food, for example, was cut short by several paragraphs in the published version of the text. As published, the chapter ends with a paragraph detailing hardships that the Montagnais faced when winter hunts came up empty, which, according to Le Jeune, happened all too often. The priest's treatment of the subject of Montagnais food is thus concluded with a characterization of the Amerindian group as vulnerable and helpless (Campeau 2.617).

The deleted material preserved in the handwritten copy, however, shows that the chapter originally ended on a very different note. Le Jeune recounts his inability to hide

his disgust upon trying a Montagnais delicacy, and the insults directed at him by his hosts as a result:

[...] à peine en pouvois-je manger [...] on me dit que j'estois un superbe, que je n'avois point d'esprit, que je ne sçavois pas ce qui estoit bon, que c'estoit un festin de capitaine. Ce sont les caresses des sauvages. Il les faut recevoir comme ilz le donnent, sans se fascher (Campeau 2.618).

[...] I could barely eat it [...] they told me I was arrogant, that I had no spirit, that I did not know what was good, that it was a feast fit for a king. These are the caresses of the Savages. One must take them as they give them, without becoming angry (my translation).²⁷

The original version of the chapter ends with Le Jeune cast as vulnerable and weak, forced to endure insult without defending himself because he had no choice but to rely on his Montagnais hosts for shelter and sustenance, disgusting though it may have been. Though Campeau speculates that deletions of this sort are the result of an editor's dislike of extraneous detail (2.642, note 8), it is also possible to read the two versions of the chapter's conclusion as a dialogue between New France missionary and Old World editor over the nature of Jesuit power. On the opposite end of the Jesuit power structure from their superiors in France, missionaries in New France had a strategic incentive to emphasize their own weakness relative to potential converts—particularly in the early years of the mission—in order to justify slow progress in converting souls to Catholicism. Jesuit authorities in Europe, in contrast, would have had an interest in portraying the Jesuits as strong in comparison to Amerindians in order to represent the mission in as favorable a light as possible to readers and potential donors, and also to fend off challenges to the Jesuits' authority and capabilities that were launched by rival missionary organizations in France.²⁸

Another intriguing difference between the published *Relation* and the handwritten copy comes in the tenth chapter, on Montagnais clothing and fashion. Le Jeune begins by briefly summarizing Aristotelian ideas about three stages through which mankind passes in pursuit of perfection. According to Le Jeune, humans in the first stage are concerned only with survival. In the second, they begin to combine utility with an aesthetic sensibility before finally arriving at the third stage, in which the pursuit of knowledge becomes a top priority. Amerindians, Le Jeune asserts in the published text, were stuck in the first stage:

Ils ne pensent qu'à vivre; ils mangent pour ne point mourir; ils se couvrent pour bannir le froid, non pour paroistre. La grâce, la bienséance, la connoissance des arts, les sciences naturelles, et beaucoup moins les véritez surnaturelles, n'ont point encore de logis en cet hémisphère, du moins en ces contrées. Ce peuple ne croit pas qu'il y ait autre science au monde que de vivre et de manger (Campeau 2.637).

Their only thought is to live, they eat so as not to die; they cover themselves to keep off the cold, and not for the sake of appearance. Grace, politeness, the knowledge of the arts, natural sciences, and much less supernatural truths, have as yet no place in this hemisphere, or at least in these countries. These people do not think there is any other science in the world, except that of eating and (living) [...] (Thwaites 7.7-9).²⁹

Le Jeune follows this assessment with examples of the Montagnais' utilitarian orientation, and lack of concern for style, focusing on what they wore to protect themselves from the elements in each season. As published, the chapter generally supports its opening remarks about the strictly functional quality of Montagnais clothing, and that group's interest in survival to the exclusion of aesthetics. Two passages that were deleted prior to publication, however, undermine the chapter's premise by suggesting that the Montagnais were not concerned only with survival in their choice of attire. The first deletion preserved in the handwritten copy describes tattooing practices,

face and hair painting, piercing, and jewelry. A second, shorter omitted passage describes ornaments that were sometimes added to robes, including the style preferred by “les plus riches et les plus magnifiques” (“the richest and most magnificent”) (Campeau 2.642; my translation). Reading the deleted passages in their original context makes it clear that the chapter was edited in France to make the Montagnais appear simpler than Le Jeune had originally described them.

The clues about how the *Relations* were edited for publication that are furnished by the 1616 and 1634 texts indicate that Old World editors at least sometimes altered the Jesuits’ accounts in ways that substantially changed their meaning. This insight should give pause to scholars who have long relied on the published *Relations* for information about the early history of French America and Amerindian groups as they existed at the time of contact. And the colony-centric movements of the texts makes these changes all the more intriguing, since each edited text that made its way back to New France could be considered feedback that the missionaries may have used in tailoring subsequent installments to the perceived tastes of their European editors. Indeed, the texts contain clues that the missionary authors were sensitive to the changes wrought by editors in Paris. In addition to the examples cited earlier, the contemporaneous handwritten copy of the 1634 *Relation* reveals that Le Jeune included a note—ultimately deleted by the editor or printer—urging care in the typesetting of two prayers in an Amerindian language:

Si ces deux petites oraisons sont mises sous la presse, je supplie l’imprimeur de prendre garde aux mots sauvages. Ceux qui estoient dans la *Relation* de l’an passé esté corrompus et remplis de fautes à l’impression (Campeau 2.705).

If these two short prayers are printed, I beg the printer to take care with the savage words. Those included in last year’s *Relation* were corrupted and filled with printing errors (my translation).

In addition to indicating that Le Jeune had received and carefully reviewed a copy of his 1633 text in time to complain about it in the following year's *Relation*, this comment suggests that the missionary author had no expectation that his manuscript would survive intact the editorial process in France. He does not ask the printer to be careful *when* typesetting Amerindian words, but only *if*, suggesting that he knew that his texts, like any traveler, were bound to be changed in ways that were perhaps not entirely predictable to him by their experience of a foreign place.

It is clear, then, that the missionary authors were aware that the published *Relations* would not perfectly mirror the manuscript versions that they sent to France,³⁰ and that they had the opportunity to observe how French editors changed their texts. The alterations to the 1616 and 1634 *Relations* discussed above suggest that the authors in New France could have discerned clear lessons about how their superiors wanted to portray the colony and Amerindian cultures from the ways their texts were changed prior to publication, and could have put those lessons to work while writing subsequent installments in the series. This possibility suggests that it may be valuable for scholars to redouble their efforts to locate more early copies of the texts that might include material that was deleted prior to publication, or even original manuscripts. Detailed analysis of how the published texts differed from the manuscripts, and how those differences may have influenced missionaries' writing choices, will have to wait for the discovery of more early copies that could be compared to the printed *Relations*. It is nonetheless clear from the analysis offered here that editorial intervention in Paris was at least sometimes more significant than previously believed, and that the Jesuit authors were attentive to how their texts were changed by Old World editors.

It is certainly true that the *Relations* were and continue to be received as a riveting account of Europeans' experiences in the New World and a valuable source of information about New France and its Amerindian inhabitants. I have argued, however, that the *Relations* also served to transport information in the opposite direction, and that this point of view on the texts brings nuance to their status as travel writing and a source of ethnographic data. Although I have focused on these two aspects of the texts, other researchers may find here a promising avenue of inquiry into other areas of scholarship on the *Relations*. In the meantime, it is clear that the texts' trans-Atlantic circulation has potentially far-reaching consequences for literary and ethnohistorical studies that draw on them. To understand the *Jesuit Relations* this way is to decline to tag along on a Eurocentric voyage while reading the texts, and to see them and all of their contents as a reflection of an ongoing conversation between Jesuits on both sides of the Atlantic, rather than a traveler's earnest, if perhaps biased, perceptions of a foreign place.

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¹ Explained Loyola, "For in this way, it will be possible to have better information about the persons and to govern the whole body of the Society better, for the glory of God our lord" (293). Although initially conceived as internal memoranda, texts produced by Jesuit missionaries in such far-flung places as Japan, India, and South America were sometimes published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I refer the reader to Auguste Carayon's 1846 bibliography of Jesuit writings, which reveals that annual or nearly annual relations were published for Spanish and Portuguese Jesuit missions in Japan, India and elsewhere at various times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although Carayon's work is generally recognized to have been surpassed in completeness by the late-nineteenth-century bibliography of Carlos Sommervogel, Carayon's volume lists all mission texts in a single section, making it easy to gauge the scale and scope of Jesuit missionary publication around the time the New France *Relations* appeared.

² For examples of the kinds of changes that could be made at this stage, see volumes 57 and 58 of Thwaites' edition of the *Jesuit Relations*. Thwaites' edition preserves material that was cut out in the process of preparing the 1672-1673 *Relation* to be sent to France.

³ Pouliot 27; Verreau 356. Verreau and Pouliot claim that the library had all of the *Relations*, but regrettably do not state the grounds on which they reached this conclusion. Its truth, however, seems likely, as I will endeavor to show here.

⁴ Between six and ten first editions of the *Relations* were destroyed in a fire at the library of the Québec Parlement in 1849 (Giguère 362), some or all of which theoretically could have belonged originally to the seventeenth-century Jesuit library, although it is impossible to know for sure. That a second, more devastating fire at the Parlement library in 1854 destroyed *Relations* from the Jesuit library is certain. The fire took a heavy toll on the Parlement's *Histoire de l'Amérique* collection, which included what was perhaps the only full set of the *Jesuit Relations* in a single collection at the time, including thirty volumes that reportedly came from the Jesuit college library (Pouliot 30). Only eight volumes of the *Relations* survived the second fire (Giguère 364), making it a mathematical certainty that many volumes from the former Jesuit library were destroyed.

⁵ In the early years of the Society, it was expressly forbidden to pass such reports to outside readers (Pouliot 4). Nonetheless, by the time the New France Jesuits began writing their texts, missionary reports from Asia and South America had found their way into print. Although possible at this time, publication was certainly not a requirement. A Jesuit mission in Maryland that was roughly contemporaneous with the New France mission produced no such published reports, mostly for political reasons (see Cushner 176).

⁶ Unlike all of the other annual *Relations*, the 1637 installment was published by Rouenais printer Jean le Boulenger. The reason for the change is not clear, and the Jesuits switched back to Cramoisy after only

one year, perhaps due to the typographical errors that riddle Boullenger's edition. For more, see Wroth 138-140.

⁷ The 1632 and 1633 *Relations* are in the form of letters. Starting in 1634, most of the New France texts took the form of books divided into thematic chapters, although the 1655 *Relation* was made up of two letters because the report that had been composed in New France was stolen on its way from the port of La Rochelle to Paris, where it was to be printed (Campeau 8.763). In addition to these variations in form, some of the *Relations* were not composed in the colony at all. Le Jeune, procurer for the mission in Paris after his stint in the colony ended, composed the *Relations* for 1652 and 1653, although their frontispieces listed the mission superior in New France as the author (Campeau 8.277 and 8.561). Indeed, Léon Pouliot has concluded that of the *Relations* that were published between 1650 and 1662, only the 1659 installment did not include substantial material composed by Le Jeune in Paris (Pouliot, "La Contribution").

⁸ Jesuit missions worldwide were expected to support themselves by attracting "[...] gifts of land, goods, and money from churches and individuals, from the state, and from converts in the field. The support of the Canadian mission was undoubtedly aided by these *Relations*, which kept its activities before the public in a series especially marked by regular, frequent, and continuous publication" (Wroth 112).

⁹ See, to mention just a few recent examples, Brian Brazeau, *Writing a New France*; Vincent Grégoire, "Mais Comment Peut-on Etre Protestant en Nouvelle-France au 17^e Siècle ?"; Sara Melzer, "Le Nouveau Monde et la Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes"; Micah True, "Retelling Genesis."

¹⁰ See for example Réal Ouellet, *La Relation de Voyage en Amérique*.

¹¹ Van Den Abbeele refers to such a point as an "oikos," Greek for home (xvii-xviii). See also: Doiron, *L'Art de Voyager* 69 and "L'Art de Voyager" 85-86. I use the terms journey, voyage, and travel interchangeably. I understand them all to mean "travel" as defined in this article.

¹² For a detailed discussion of this and other *rituels du retour* that mark the traveler's reintegration into society, see Chapter 12 of Doiron's book.

¹³ Christine Montalbetti offers a concise but thorough description of conceptual links between travel, writing about travel, and reading a travel account. See especially pages 100-105.

¹⁴ Seventeenth-century texts called *arts de voyager* that established norms for the genre called on authors to use the voyage itself as a model for their *récits*: "Les règles auxquelles on recommande aux voyageurs de conformer leurs itinéraires intéressent tout autant l'écriture. La route suivie dans la nature servira dans un second temps à définir l'ordre naturel du discours classique. Le monde et le livre sont alors compris dans un même espace" (Doiron, "l'Art de Voyager," 86). According to Van Den Abbeele, "The 'relation' (from *refero*, to bring back) itself acts as a voyage that brings back what was lost in the voyage. If it acts as a voyage it is because *qua relation* it repeats the voyage by recounting the itinerary in chronological order at the same time *qua relation* (from *latus*, borne or transported) it displaces the topography into a topic of discourse" (xx-xxi).

¹⁵ It should be recognized that Jesuit movements within the colony—Paul Le Jeune's winters spent following nomadic Montagnais bands, for example—could perhaps be understood as travel in the sense outlined above. Accounting for the relationship between the *Relations* and the Jesuits' circular itineraries within the colony would be the work of a separate study.

¹⁶ As Laurent Dubois recently noted, "Those who volunteered to go to Canada knew that almost no Jesuits ever came back. A few stayed for their whole career, eventually dying of old age, but many others succumbed to sickness or suffered a violent death in one of the wars that shook much of the region during the 17th century" (52).

¹⁷ See, for example, Ted Cachey's introduction to *Petrarch's Guide to the Holy Land*, which argues that Petrarch's precise directions for pilgrims to the Holy Land—a voyage the author never made himself—signals a need to reconsider the distinction between accounts of real and imaginary travel.

¹⁸ As Pratt has observed, "The *study* of travel writing operates along the same often colonial lines of power that generate the metropolitan travel and travel writing themselves. [...] The scholar's account is licensed to repeat the sequential centripetal-centrifugal movement that sends the metropolitan subject forth to know the world and bring him and sometimes her back to tell about it, the movement that performs Europe's self-creation and self-understanding as a planetary center, *the* planetary center" (Modernity, Mobility, and Excoloniality" 18). Emphasis in original. A revised version of Pratt's article appears in the 2008 second edition of her influential book *Imperial Eyes*, but regrettably does not include her insightful comments on the relationship between travel and travel scholarship. Christine Montalbetti has also traced the links between travel and travel criticism. See especially pages 105-108 in her book.

¹⁹ As Mary Baine Campbell has observed, “Neither power nor talent gives a travel writer his or her authority, which comes only and crucially from experience” (3). Experience of a foreign place and culture also has been understood to confer authority on modern anthropologists. According to James Clifford, “The predominant mode of modern fieldwork authority is signaled: you are there...because I was there” (*Predicament* 22).

²⁰ My translation. “L’intérêt de ces *Relations* pour l’histoire des débuts de la colonisation de la Nouvelle-France n’est plus à souligner. Elles constituent, et de loin, la plus importante source d’information sur cette époque.”

²¹ For a particularly sensitive use of the *Relations*, see Carole Blackburn’s fine book *Harvest of Souls*.

²² Campeau, as will soon become clear, was aware that the texts were edited in France, but dismissed the changes made as unimportant. Wroth allowed that the texts were edited “with current European conditions in mind” (118), but nonetheless affirmed that the texts maintain the integrity of first-hand accounts (118-119). Sara Melzer, to her credit, wrote that the Parisian editors were more concerned with “projecting the proper image than in historical accuracy,” but stops short of examining changes made during the process (“The French *Relation*” 226).

²³ It remains unknown what became of the original manuscripts of the *Relations*, although Campeau speculates that they were destroyed because they were too heavily marked up by editors to be worth saving (2.532).

²⁴ In an earlier analysis of Biard’s 1616 *Relation* (“Autour de la *Relation*”), Campeau concluded that Biard himself was responsible for these changes to the text, and that they could be explained by the author’s change of heart concerning criticism of the recently deceased Jean de Biencourt de Pourtincourt, the lieutenant governor of Acadia. Campeau revised his position on the basis of subsequently discovered materials, including the apparent deletion from chapter twenty-one and an annotated copy of the published *Relation* in which one of Biard’s missionary colleagues attributed the truncations to maladroït “*compileurs*.” In addition, Campeau speculates, if Biard had made the deletions himself, he would have adjusted the surrounding text to reestablish the book’s coherence (1.227).

²⁵ Although at least one scholar has asserted that this manuscript was the basis for Sébastien Cramoisy’s published edition (La Flèche 226), Lucien Campeau makes a convincing argument that the Cramoisy edition and the manuscript were independently produced copies of a single, earlier version of the text, which itself may or may not have been the original sent from New France. Both the manuscript and Cramoisy’s published edition contain elements that are absent in the other, making it possible to find in the manuscript elements of Le Jeune’s original text that were omitted from the Cramoisy edition (Campeau 2.532-534).

²⁶ For a discussion of the relative merits of Campeau and Thwaites’ editions of the *Relations*, see Codignola, “The Battle is Over.”

²⁷ Thwaites’ edition of the 1634 *Relation* does not include material from the handwritten copy that was deleted prior to publication. My translations of this and other such passages are based on Campeau’s edition.

²⁸ For more on this power dynamic and how it may be reflected in the *Relations*, see True, “Maistre et Escolier.”

²⁹ Thwaites’ original translation renders « ...que de vivre et de manger » as « except that of eating and drinking. » I have corrected it to more closely reflect the original French.

³⁰ Indeed, from the very inception of the Society of Jesus, members’ reports were excerpted and edited by superiors for circulation within the order, and sometimes outside of it (Wroth 114-116). It surely came as no surprise to the New France Jesuits that their texts were edited prior to publication, but that does not necessarily mean that they would have been incurious about the changes editors wrought in their texts.