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Telling true stories through fiction: Exploring intertextuality in Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues *and French Pacific travel narratives*

Abstract
Jules Verne was renowned for weaving literary, non-fiction and scientific sources into his fictional adventure narratives. While many have explored Verne's intertextuality with other fiction writers (such as Baudelaire, Scott and Poe) and the origins of the technological innovations in his stories, few studies have analysed how Verne textually adapted his non-fiction source material into the literature of fiction. This paper examines the original French text of Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea *(1870) with related passages from the voyages of the French Pacific explorer Dumont d'Urville (1826-29 and 1837-40). Verne's story can be seen as part of a flow of knowledge from journals, exploration narratives, scientific accounts, through popular travel and natural history publication to fictional stories –an ongoing process of adaptation that continues today into computer games, comics, graphic novels and movies. Verne draws upon his non-fiction sources not only for accurate content, but also for narrative structure and literary devices, while also adapting and re-arranging factual material to suit the demands of an adventure story. Verne's landmark novel illustrates how Verne adapted literary devices across fiction and non-fiction but also how factual accounts ripple into broader popular culture through the mediation of fiction. Keywords: intertextuality, exploration narratives, adventure stories*

Introduction

Jules Verne's classic adventure story *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1870) [1] was first published as a novel in Pierre-Jules Hetzel's *Bibliothèque d'éducation et de récréation*. Hetzel's intention was to provide reliable educational information in an entertaining and accessible form for older children as well as adults. Verne's initial titles were so successful that Hetzel launched a new series, *Voyages Extraordinaires* exclusively for Verne 'to outline all the geographical, geological, physical, and astronomical knowledge amassed by modern science and to recount, in an entertaining and picturesque format that is his own, the history of the universe' (Hetzel 1866: ii). In the course of the fifty-four novels produced for the series (in addition many other works besides) Verne could be argued to have done just that, gaining considerable popularity in his time, particularly among children and readers from less affluent backgrounds (Heywood 2013: 58).

Verne's early work was not only popular with readers, but also garnered critical acclaim. George Sand declared that she and her children loved them, and his work was praised by scientists and literary critics alike for its technical veracity

and engaging characters (Evans 2000). But despite the international acclaim for Verne's earlier works, his popularity declined over the course of his career. Later books sold poorly and after his death, his classics were often abridged and a proliferation of poor quality English translations damaged his reputation among Anglophone critics (Derbyshire 2006). Even in his home country, Verne was 'shunned by the French intellectual elite, because he wrote children's literature, considered to be a minor genre' (Heywood 2013: 58). Emile Zola, for example, described Verne as 'an amiable popularist' whose works were derivative of Perrault's fairytales and of no importance to literature, while Charles Lemire derided him as an 'entertainer of schoolboys' with 'pseudo scientific pretensions' (quoted in Evans 2000: 14-17). For many years, Verne was absent from discussions of French literature.

In the mid-twentieth century, however, Verne underwent something of a 'critical renaissance' (Heywood 2013) [2] gaining the attention of writers who had perhaps grown up with these childhood classics, such as Foucault, Barthes and Butor. Here, the very appropriation of classic texts of which Zola was so critical, was recognised as an innovative and experimental literary technique. Today, Verne's use of intertextuality, from literary and scientific narratives, is one of the hallmarks of his work (Unwin 2000), and an intriguing precursor to the modern literary collage (such as David Shield's *Reality Hunger* 2010), merging the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction through unacknowledged textual appropriation.

Intertextuality in Verne

As an author 'so cavalier in the plundering of other people's writing' (Unwin 2005: 215), it is ironic that Verne's books should have been so 'travestied, reappropriated in alien contexts, misrepresented, and adapted for purposes he did not intend' (Unwin 2005: 215). A century and a half of adaptation and repetition have made much of Verne's original work so familiar as to be clichéd, disguising the fact that in his own time he was a highly experimental and original writer.

Verne's appropriation of literary sources is well-studied. Jean Chesneaux (2005) describes Verne's writing as having a 'polyphonic richness'. Evans (1996) documents a rich array of literary intertexts in Verne's work, including classic and contemporaneous French, English and German writers. Evans notes Verne's close connections with Baudelaire, Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe. Similarly, Kaplan (1998) notes the inspiration for *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Such literary lineages are particularly apparent in Verne's 'sequel' to Poe's *Narratives of Arthur Gordon Pym* with *An Antarctic Mystery* (1897) as well to Johann Wyss's *Swiss Family Robinson*, with *The Castaways of the Flag* (1900).

Verne's intertextuality also extends to his own previous works. For example, several characters in *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* subsequently appear in *The Mysterious Island* (1875). Not only do characters and storylines connect across Verne's works but so too do the books themselves, with characters in later books referring to early stories by Verne as part of their literary *milieu*. These references are 'intratextual' rather than specifically intertextual (Unwin 2005: 141), but both function to blur the fictional boundaries of Verne's stories by giving fictional characters and events equivalent status with those of history.

Evans argues that this 'narrative recipe' of appropriating both his own and other authors' work into his stories serves to 'anchor his narratives to a recognizable cultural tradition, and thereby broaden Verne's own literary authoritativeness by identifying his novels more closely with those of the canonical literature(s) of his time' (Evans 1996: 171). Not all of Verne's appropriations were familiar to his readers, though. Compère suggests that although Verne's literary appropriations are generally well-assimilated into his novels, his nonfiction sources retain a level of exoticism: an '*aspect étranger*' (Compère 2005: 171), which Evans also regards as a deliberately exotic 'otherness' (Evans 1988a: 104). It was this innovation, above all else, which led to Verne's pioneering contribution to the *romans scientifiques*, science fiction or even scientific fiction. Perhaps, having helped birth such a vigorous mutant genre, Verne also excluded himself from the inherently conservative cloisters of the French literary canon. Indeed, even today, attempts to resuscitate Verne's literary reputation are achieved only by redefining 'science fiction' so as to exclude Verne on the grounds that his science is too realistic (Butcher 2006) [3].

Verne made a feature of his scientific exoticism. Technical information makes frequent incursions into Verne's stories, from long descriptions of fish in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* to the recitation of the history of Australian exploration in *In Search of Castaways*. Théophile Gautier argued that the inclusion of so many true and accurate details in *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* completed the illusion of the story. For this contemporary reviewer, 'the maritime, mathematical and scientific technicalities employed, print such a stamp of veracity on this fantastic Forward that we are persuaded that he himself has completed this voyage of exploration' (1866, quoted in Evans 2000: 12-13, our translation).

Verne was well known for his extensive collection of technical information. Mortelier notes that Verne 'assiduously read the accounts of the explorers of his time: those which would, indeed, feed his fictions; and which he remembered long after they had ceased to be discussed in the newspapers' (Mortelier 1997: 590, our translation). A contemporary visitor (Belloc) described Verne's library as:

> lined with book-cases and in the middle a large table groans under a carefully sorted mass of newspapers, reviews, to say nothing of a representative collection of French and English periodical literature. A number of cardboard pigeon holes, occupying however, wonderfully little space, contain the twenty odd thousand notes garnered by the author during his long life. (Belloc 1895)

A partial estimate of this library lists over 700 volumes of works of literature, as a well as sizeable collections of scientific and mathematical studies (66 volumes), humanities monographs (61 volumes), biographies and memoirs (34) and subscriptions to many of the leading scientific and literary periodicals (such as *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, *La Nature* and *Les Gaietés de l'année*). The collection of geography and voyage accounts was also considerable, running to at least 76 titles (Dehs 2011; Kiszely 1995).

Verne's libraries, personal, public and virtual, were essential to his writing process as well as a recurring motif within his books, reminding readers of the educative nature of reading (Evans 1988b). Evans suggests that Verne incorporated this rich seam of nonfictional material into his novels for several reasons: to 'increase the authoritative credibility' (1996: 171) of his books, to 'bolster the verisimilitude of his fictional plot-structures', and to 'experiment

stylistically with the juxtaposition of scientific and literary terminology' (1996: 171). Such appropriation of scientific and nonfictional texts produces a distinctive literary effect: a 'vast patchwork of data' (Unwin 2005: 52) through the juxtaposition of contrasting language. As Foucault describes Verne's writing: 'The storytelling text continually breaks off, changes signs, reverses itself, moves away, comes from elsewhere, as if from a different voice' (Foucault 1966: 138).

Verne's stylistic '*fête du savoir*' (or knowledge-feast, to use Barthes' apt term) may have been unrecognisable as literature to his contemporaries but his 'plays on words … complex juggling of narrative voice and point of view, his revolutionary creation of technological and scientific exoticism' (Evans 2000: 17) made him a writer of the future, rather than of the past.

Verne's 'calculated interleaving of fictional and nonfictional realms' is also apparent his illustrations and maps, which Harpold (2005: 21) argues are structured so as to persuade the reader that Verne the author is also an actor in the story: for example, Verne is named as the illustrator of the maps of the voyages of Captain Hatteras. This same device is employed in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, where the opening map – allegedly of Dr Aronnax's journal – is labelled 'by Jules Verne' rather than by a fictional character or unlabelled.

The technology of Verne's stories, far from being predictions of future innovation, were almost always based on published accounts of nineteenth-century developments. For example, the 'ultra X rays' of Professor Friedrich of Elbing, mentioned in *The Will of an Eccentric,* have been traced back to an article in the *Revue Scientifique* (de Vries-Uitterweerd 2011). Similarly, the *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* can be seen as a 'fictionalized paleontological treatise' foreshadowing a range of paleoanthropological debates based on the work of Humphry Davy (Debus 2006: 420). The possible source material for Verne's descriptions of submarines has been extensively documented in an appendix to Butcher's translation of *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (Butcher 2009). More significantly, scientist and writer Louis Figuier's *Les Merveilles de la science* and *Articulés, poissons, reptiles et zoophytes, mollusques* have been identified as the source of biological material in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (Breyer & Butcher 2003).

More challenging, perhaps, is the task of mapping the voyages of Verne's characters on a real map (Faivre 1955) or the path of a real voyage; despite being the 'geographic consciousness' of his generation, even small specific locations may prove elusive. Margot (2012) relates the debates around the precise location of the Great Eyry in Verne's last novel, *Master of the World*, set in the North Carolina Appalachian mountains. Mortelier (1997) argues that primary inspiration for Verne's *Mysterious Island* was a little known account of castaways by Francois Edouard Raynal, published in 1866 and translated into English as *The Castaways of the Auckland Islands*.

And yet the precedents of Verne's most beloved voyage, that of the *Nautilus* over twenty thousand leagues are well documented, not least by Verne himself. His expertise in global exploration was demonstrable in his authoritative three volume nonfiction book *Celebrated Travels and Travellers: The Exploration of the World* (1878-80). Verne had family and friends in the Pacific region and had read extensively in the area (Faivre 1955). In addition, he was personal acquainted with Jacques Arago, artist on Louis de Freycinet's Pacific voyage (1817-20) and author of a highly successful travel narrative of the journey. The *Nautilus* itself steadfastly follows in the wake of France's most famous naval explorers of the day, Jean-François de Galaup Lapérouse and Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville. The achievements, voyages and tragedies of both

these men reverberated through French culture before and during Verne's lifetime and, aided by his stories, continue to do so today.

Lapérouse and Dumont d'Urville

The voyages of the French navigators Lapérouse and Dumont d'Urville were both well known to Jules Verne, featuring extensively in the second and third volumes Verne's own non-fiction study of great explorers (*Celebrated Travels and Travellers*, 1878-80). Verne had at least one volume of Dumont d'Urville's *Voyage to the South Pole* in his personal library (Dehs 2011). Dumont d'Urville features in several of Verne's novels including: *The Children of Captain Grant* (1868), *Dick Sands the Boy Captain* (1878), *Propeller Island* (1895) in addition to *Twenty Thousand Leagues* as well as (in passing) *From the Earth to the* Moon (1865), *Round the Moon* (1870) and *The School for Crusoes* (1882).

There is a clear geographic link between the underwater journey of the *Nautilus* and the earlier voyages of the *Astrolabe* and the *Zélée*. Both Nemo and Dumont d'Urville travel to Vanikoro and search for the missing expedition of Lapérouse. They both traverse Torres Strait to the north of Australia, where both Nemo's *Nautilus* and the d'Urville's *Astrolabe* run aground. And both explorers visit Antarctica where their respective ships become stuck in ice. The narrative accounts of Dumont d'Urville's voyages provide valuable source material for Verne's own fictional voyage. Not only does Dumont d'Urville provide a detailed narrative chronology of events for both voyages, but the associated atlases (cartographic, ethnographic, zoologic, botanic, etc) provide a rich source of visual and textual material (thirteen and twenty-three volumes respectively: Clode & Harrison 2013) for Verne to plunder.

Given Verne's propensity to utilise intertextual resources in his fiction and given the obvious similarities between *Twenty Thousand Leagues* and Dumont d'Urville's two final voyages, we explore the extent to which Verne explicitly make use of this maritime record? Does he do so for the purpose of authenticity or for aesthetic or stylistic purposes and how does this intertextuality inform the textual richness of Verne's story?

Text comparison

For this analysis we compared the three sections of *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (Verne 2013 [1870]) that correlated most closely with events from Dumont d'Urville's narratives (Dumont d'Urville 1830-35 and 1841-54). In particular, we compared the descriptions of Vanikoro and the exploration of the Lapérouse shipwreck in Verne, Part 1, ch18 (*Quatre mille lieues sous le Pacifique*) and Part 1, ch19 (Vanikoro),with sections from the *Voyage of the Astrolabe* (v5, ch34, 22 Feb 1828-17 March 1828: 142-206). We then compared the grounding in the Torres Strait in Verne, Part 1, ch20 (*Le detroit de Torres*) and ch21 (*quelques jours à terre*)with *Voyage to the South Pole and Oceania* (v9, ch68, 1 June 1840-9 June 1840: 219-237). Finally, we compared the accounts of being stuck in Antarctic ice from Verne's Part 2, ch13-16 with Dumont d'Urville's *Voyage to the South Pole and Oceania* (v2, ch10-16, 13 Jan 1838-6 April 1838: 37-115; v8, ch59, 1 Jan 1840-1 Feb 1840: 123-78). For in-text referencing purposes the two Dumont d'Urville texts will be designated as VA and VSPO respectively. In addition, we also considered Verne's Part 2, ch22 *(la foudre du capitaine Némo*) in relation to descriptions of Dumont d'Urville.

In all cases, we are comparing the original French texts of all narratives as cited in the references and have provided our own English translations of these texts for this article. Published English translations, of Verne in particular, are often abridged or highly inaccurate and may not include the examples we have used in this article.

Direct textual similarities

Within the geographic and historical plot points connecting these texts, there are several striking textual similarities (highlighted in bold below). Verne frequently uses lists in his novels, and many of these are similar to those found in Dumont d'Urville, such as these items from a shipwreck:

> gisaient des **ancres, des canons**, des saumons de fer et de plomb, **empâtés** dans les **concrétions calcaires.** (Verne pt1, ch19 emphasis added)

> Disséminés ça et là et **empâtés** de **coraux**, **des ancres, des canons**, des boulets et divers autres objets, surtout de nombreuses plaques de plomb. (Dumont d'Urville VA v5 p161 emphasis added)

Such lists may simultaneously be regarded as extraneous (and removed in abridged modern versions – Heywood 2013: 61) or be considered by others to be extraordinarily poetic in their resonance (Stoltzfus 2011: 71).

Both writers use similar language to describe how the natives refuse to give up information about the shipwreck, presumably for fear of reprisals.

> Les naturels, **adoptant un système de dénégations** et de faux-fuyants, refusaient de les mener sur les lieux du sinistre. (Verne pt1 ch19 emphasis added)

> Il était évident que ces insulaires … **avaient adopté de concert un système de dénégation absolue**… (Dumont d'Urville, VA, v5: 147, see also 159 and 185 emphasis added)

Both Verne (Part 1, ch19) and Dumont d'Urville (VA, v5: 147) comment in similar ways on the islanders' fear of retribution from the French. Both authors use similar phrases to describe the erection of the 'cénotaphe à la mémoire' or 'mausolée de La Pérouse'. In both cases, the construction consists of a 'pyramide quadrangulaire' on a coral base with no 'ferrure' to tempt the 'cupidité' of the natives.

As Aronnax is explicitly recounting Dumont d'Urville's version of this particular event such similarities are hardly surprising. Nonetheless, Verne does stray from the d'Urville narrative. For example, Verne provides more information about Peter Dillon's role in the discovery of the wreck of Lapérouse expedition than Dumont d'Urville (VA, v5: 143, 149). An element of French national pride may have underpinned Dumont d'Urville's desire to be the first to *verify* that the shipwreck was indeed that of the Lapérouse expedition, although Dillon was subsequently rewarded by the French state for his discovery. Verne also gives a different date for Dillon's arrival in Vanikoro (7 July 1827 instead of 13 September 1827). Other amendments include minor name changes (from Païou Reef to Pacou Reef) and the simplification of tasks from particular individuals to 'the crew'.

Although Verne frequently shortens and simplifies events described at length in Dumont d'Urville, in general the similarities remain striking. For example, Verne describes the *Nautilus* running aground in Torres Strait (pt1, ch20) under conditions similar to those affecting Dumont d'Urville (VSPO v9: 220, 224). Both ships run aground with a shock or a jolt and both lean to port. Naturally, both ships must await the tide to lift them off their 'bed of coral'.

Similar parallels can be found between the two authors in their Antarctic descriptions. Verne describes polar environments in a number of his books, including *A Winter amid the Ice* (1855), *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (1866) and *The Fur Country* (1873). In these books, and in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, Verne recycles not only descriptions of the ice, weather and climate from d'Urville but also his impressions of the environment and the influence of the environment on the men. D'Urville's descriptions are a way of orienting oneself in this specific environment and stress the importance of meteorology, although there are no long descriptions of the ice in Verne like there is in Dumont d'Urville.

Verne uses many similar phrases to Dumont d'Urville in his description of the icebergs, most particularly through the metaphor of a city. Verne writes that there would have been enough ice to build a 'ville de marbre' (pt2 ch13). Dumont d'Urville describes the icebergs as forming 'une grande cité … avec ses maisons, ses palais, ses fortifications et ses clochers.' (VSPO v2: 50, see also 57) (pt2 ch13) and even appearing as an 'immense ville en marbre blanc' (VSPO v8: 61).

Verne also uses strikingly similar imagery to Dumont d'Urville for the icebergs:

> **veines vertes**, comme si le sulphate de cuivre en eût tracé des lignes ondulées (Verne pt2 ch13 emphasis added)
>
> d'énormes **améthystes se laissaient pénétrer par la lumière** (Verne pt2 ch13 emphasis added)
>
> teinte de bleu **améthyste transparent**, et de l'autre était nuancée par des **veines de couleur verte**, semblable à celle du sulfate de cuivre (Dumont d'Urville, VSPO v2: 71 emphasis added)

Both writers stress the fact that nobody has explored this part of the world before: 'ces mers que l'homme n'a jamais sillonnées encore' (Verne pt2 ch13) [these seas that man has never yet crossed]. Both lay territorial claims to their newly discovered lands. Nemo theatrically plants a flag at the South Pole claiming the entire continent in his own name, subverting, even mocking, such territorial pretensions in the absence of any capacity (military or colonial) to uphold them. Dumont d'Urville's account is similarly grand, yet also ambivalent and considerably less theatrical, in tone. He quotes from officer Dubouzet's journal:

> Suivant l'ancienne coutume que les Anglais ont conservée précieusement, nous en primes possession au nom de la France… Notre enthousiasme et notre joie étaient tels alors, qu'il nous semblait que nous venions d'ajouter une province au territoire français par cette conquête toute pacifique. Si l'abus que l'on a fait de ces prises de possession les ont fait regarder souvent comme une chose ridicule et sans valeur, dans ce cas-ci, au moins, nous nous croyions assez fondés en droit pour maintenir l'ancien usage en faveur de notre pays. Car nous ne

> dépossédions personne, et nos titres étaient incontestables… (VSPO v8: 150) (Rosenman v2: 474)

Pedagogical information

Both authors were required to include explicitly pedagogical information in their narratives (by Hetzel's educational imperative for Verne and the naval instruction to document new knowledge for d'Urville). While Verne faced the challenge of incorporating this pedagogical information within the narrative of a two-volume story (roughly 100,000 words), d'Urville was able to keep much of the drier scientific information out of his ten-volume *histoire du voyage* and *atlas pittoresque*, and confine it to the additional twelve specialist scientific volumes and their five technical atlases (of his final voyage).

As a result, a much stronger scientific metadiscourse runs through Verne's novel. Verne's commitment to the superiority of scientific progress is evident in one of the few overtly political comments remaining in the novel (most of which were removed at the request of his editor and publisher, Butcher 2005):

> Ce fut Tasman qui découvrit ce groupe en 1643, l'année même où Torricelli inventait le baromètre et où Louis XIV montait sur le trône. Je laisse à penser lequel de ces faits fut le plus utile à l'Humanité. (pt1 ch19)

Verne frequently introduces such pedagogical information in through explanatory periphrasis or additional sentences such as:

> lunettes à réticules, qui au moyen d'un miroir corrigeait la refraction (pt1 ch14)

In this way, he shares scientific information on the ocean depths and their fish, on saltwater and the role of salt (ch18), on the value of sago (ch21), on coral madrepores and limestone (ch19) and the polar night (ch14). Such information is not simply educational, but has also been argued to have a poetic function (Clamen 2005), like his use of lists and scientific and exotic names (Freligni 2004).

Verne mimics the scientific discourse of the d'Urville's atlases and their focus on taxonomic classifications and identification of new species, by exhorting Conseil (and the reader) to note the distinguishing characteristics of different seals, sea elephants and walruses. This level of detail and scientific language sometimes slows the rhythm of the story and may impede, rather than educate, the young reader. But in other cases, Verne builds layers of knowledge more gradually. Compère documents the progressive introduction of a literary reference to the work of Rabelais. Firstly, it is noted that Ned Land speaks the vulgar language of Rabelais. Later Aronnax sees Rabelais's book on the bookshelf. Further on, a situation reminds Aronnax of Gargantua (Compère 2005: 170). Verne uses the same technique to introduce travel narrative references. He first speaks of Dumont d'Urville, then uses a map by one of Dumont d'Urville's men, he then follows Dumont d'Urville's route and encounters similar difficulties as Dumont d'Urville.

Dramatising true stories

Verne is not constrained to follow Dumont d'Urville's route precisely. The *Nautilus* follows its own path, intersecting with historical reference points but also charting new fictional territory. Verne appears to interchange descriptions and events that Dumont d'Urville documents from Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands to the events in the Torres Strait and New Guinean islands. Dumont d'Urville himself noted the striking similarity between New Guinea and Vanikoro (VA, v5: 146), allowing Verne to justifiably use this information for his description of the island Gueboroar. Both describe the forest vegetation as 'admirable' with a similar range of plants. While much of the action on Vanikoro in Verne's text takes place in recount and underwater, the subsequent events in the Torres Strait and New Guinea (above water) bear a striking similarity to Dumont d'Urville's accounts of Vanikoro. In Dumont d'Urville, the Vanikorans come on board for trade but the relationship is often tense and confrontational. Verne presents the Torres Strait islanders as a more direct and aggressive threat and in both cases the potential for conflict overshadows the departure of the ships.

The narrative forms used for both texts are naturally very different. Verne's novel is a third person dramatic story, while Dumont d'Urville's is a journal, essentially a daily series of recounts. The episodic nature of d'Urville's narrative is punctuated by calculations of longitude and latitude, weather, soundings depths and substrate composition as well as detailed descriptions and scientific explanations. The presumed knowledge of the reader is very different for both authors and the placement or assumption of knowledge has a major impact on the narrative dynamic of each work (Vierne 1973).

Character and narratorial voice

One of the most dramatic structural differences between Dumont d'Urville and Verne's narratives is the role of the narrator. Dumont d'Urville's narrative is written in first person: the narrator is Dumont d'Urville himself, although, like Verne he sometimes explicitly refers to recounts of others. As Dumont d'Urville heads the expedition, his account explains his way of directing men, the difficulties of doing so and the necessity of making compromises. As Dumont d'Urville himself put it:

> il est d'ailleurs certaines occasions où je crois qu'un chef doit sacrifier ses propres opinions au vœu général, même au risque des plus grands malheurs (VSPO v1: 82)

Dumont d'Urville's account is often human and emotional, while at the same time presenting himself as the only one who has an objective and realistic view of the situation. Annoyed by the loss of the corvette while seal-hunting, he despairs at the naivety of young men (VSPO v1: 86) and about the recklessness of the officers (87). He disagrees with some of the decisions of Jacquinot, the captain of *La Zélée*, and argues fiercely with the surgeon Leguillou who disapproved of the final assault on the Antarctic. This was Dumont d'Urville's third and final voyage to the Pacific. He was a very experienced navigator and, at the age of fifty, by far the oldest officer on the ship, well known for his physical toughness and his brusque and tactless personality (Rosenman v1: xlvi- xlviii). As an essentially objective, yet autobiographical account, Dumont d'Urville does not have the opportunity to fictionalise his own character overtly in his narratives, although he is knowingly writing himself into history and undoubtedly tries to present himself in a positive light.

In Verne, the narrator is Aronnax, a professor, who is an observer, not a commander. In this way, Verne splits Dumont d'Urville's role as narrator and scientist (Aronnax) from that of commander (Nemo). While we are aware of Dumont d'Urville's motivations and the internal challenges he faced as commander, Nemo's thoughts and motivations remain mysterious and critics have argued that his depiction as a commander is a caricature, lacking in psychological depth. Nonetheless, separating Nemo from the narrator also allows us a more objective view of Nemo's actions. The split role also allows Verne to increase the tension as the reader sees the gap between Nemo's and Aronnax's perspectives. Aronnax's lack of control over events also increases the fear of conflict and danger. Verne's narrative choice also contributes directly to interpersonal tension, as there is a clash of personality and opinion.

Dumont d'Urville is more than just a source material for Verne – he is also a character in Verne's fiction, just as Verne uses Poe as both a source of *The Mystery of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1897) and a character in it. Verne explicitly references Dumont d'Urville as the source for the maps used in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (pt1 ch20). His name occurs regularly as part of a broader network of explorers, who all appear in relation to geographical references in Verne, following the convention in exploration narratives of acknowledging the achievements of previous explorers. Verne mimics this nonfiction device in a fictional context by referencing itineraries from fictional voyages in his own novels. For example, in *The Mystery of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1897) the captain has the book *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Poe 1837) in which he finds indications for the itinerary of the voyage (Menegaldo 2005).

Nemo himself describes Dumont d'Urville in the following terms:

> Ce fut un de vos grands marins, me dit le capitaine, un de vos plus intelligents navigateurs que ce d'Urville! C'est votre capitaine Cook, à vous autres, Français. Infortuné savant! Avoir bravé les banquises du pôle Sud, les coraux de l'Océanie, les cannibales du Pacifique, pour périr misérablement dans un train de chemin de fer ! Si cet homme énergique a pu réfléchir pendant les dernières secondes de son existence, vous figurez-vous quelles ont dû être ses suprêmes pensées! (pt1 ch22)

But despite d'Urville's significant achievements, Nemo has, inevitably, done better:

> Ce que votre D'Urville a fait à la surface des mers, me dit le capitaine Némo, je l'ai fait à l'intérieur de l'Océan. (pt1 ch22)

And, of course, in a better ship:

> *L'Astrolabe* et *la Zélée*, incessamment ballotées par les ouragans, ne pouvaient valoir *le Nautilus*, tranquille cabinet de travail, et véritablement sédentaire au milieu des eaux! (pt1 ch22)

While Dumont d'Urville is largely confined to the facts as he knows them, Verne is able to close off open-ended aspects of the story in a more satisfactory manner. For example, while Dumont d'Urville is unsure which members of Lapérouse's expedition survive to build a smaller ship, Verne decides (pt1 ch19) that Lapérouse himself escapes Vanikoro with a group of his men, and Nemo finds the proof of this. Thus Nemo is not only a talented captain; he is also a hero who solves historical enigmas that baffled even the great Dumont d'Urville who, at this time, was idolised as a French naval hero. According to

Menegaldo (2005: 376), Verne uses this same process of inventing a new ending to suit his fiction in *Le Sphinx des glaces* (1879).

Dramatisation/exaggeration

Verne employs considerable dramatisation and exaggeration in his novel, including highly emotive appeals, to increase the dramatic tension of his story. For example, Verne gives a fascinating and realistic view of a shipwreck in (pt1 ch 18), including an affecting scene with a dead mother and her child. Interestingly, Verne foreshadows this motif in chapter 12 where a dead mother whale is also described with her dead baby.

Verne also exaggerates numbers. Clamen (2005: 156) argues that Verne uses more and larger numbers, and more detail, that might usually be found in fiction, perhaps in order to impress young readers with very concrete images. According to Clamen, these numbers form a poetic element while also creating some fictional events in the plot and driving action. For example, when Dumont d'Urville is threatened by Vanikorans on his ship prior to departure, there are only half a dozen local men aboard. A similar scene in Verne (pt1 ch22) in the Torres Strait involves five or six hundred people.

Verne uses many more superlatives, referring to incommensurable quantities, abundance and giganticism in relation to the South Pole (pt2 ch14). He writes of a *world* of birds and *myriad* fish, of life *abounding*, of *schools* (troupeaux) of marine mammals and of *empires* of wildlife. His animals are frequently gigantic. Verne describes a sooty albatross with a 4 metre wingspan: in reality their wingspan is around 2.2 metres. He describes seals with 'têtes de bulldog, circonférence de 20 pieds, longueur de 10 mètres' . In reality, the largest of the Antarctic seals, the male southern elephant seal grows to between 4-6 metres long.

Relationship with nature

D'Urville's narrative is essentially a 'man against nature' conflict, while Verne's is a 'man against man' narrative. Nature in Verne (as described in pt1 ch21) is very generous. In this, Verne shares much in common with robinsonnades, a genre which Verne further developed over his career in *The Mysterious Island* (1874-1875), *The School for Crusoes* (1882), *Two Years Holiday* (1888) and *Second Fatherland* (1900). The abundance provided by nature in Verne and the many superlatives he uses in his descriptions contrast with the difficulty Dumont d'Urville recounts finding and storing food and fresh water or the monotonous dinners on board (with the exception of some good fishing). In general, there is a much greater and richer variety of food available in Verne. While nature in Verne is generous and all providing to its robinsonnade castaways, Dumont d'Urville's voyage is a realistic and constant battle against nature – weather, disease, hunger, thirst and damage. Nature is the antagonist, not other people.

Verne's decision to set his narrative as man against man has unfortunate consequences for his depictions of other cultures. Unlike for Dumont d'Urville, native people are not individuals for Verne. He does not invite them on board, learn their names, ask their advice and assistance or seek to understand their customs and habits. Verne's natives are feared stereotypes, not potential partners or collaborators. It is clear, given the highly sophisticated level of ethnographic information Dumont d'Urville brings to his own factual and

fictional narratives, that this is a field of scientific knowledge which Verne has made no attempt to utilise. He has set up his narrative as enlightened people against barbarians (of both 'civilised' and 'primitive' varieties). Dumont d'Urville's narrative (as explicitly stated in the instructions of most French voyages of the time) is one of understanding and helping other cultures – of sharing knowledge and learning on a more equivalent basis.

In general, Verne's experience of natives reads like apocryphal folklore rather than direct observation and experience. He describes native people as monkeys (pt1 ch22), as bipeds, and as cannibals. By contrast, even when Dumont d'Urville despairs of their negative qualities (as he often does), he does so in a way that recognises their human and individual characteristics – having greedy dispositions, or being irascible or perfidious (VA v5: 158). He describes Nelo's son as insolent, while Nelo is sincere (VA v5: 152-153). Although Dumont d'Urville describes the indigenous women as 'hideous', he also records their role in society, the fact that they will not accept the advances of his men (144) and that their own men defend them jealously (164-165). Verne, famously, had little time for any women in his stories, let alone native ones. In general, d'Urville acknowledges the individuality and the intelligence of different native people.

Verne's simplification is not restricted to native characters though. Verne's British Canadian whaler, Ned Land, is a comparable figure to the whaler Hambilton (or Hamilton) taken on by Dumont d'Urville first in Sydney and then on Tikopia (Rosenman, v2: 602). While Ned Land is a caricature, a hunter and an animal killer, Hambilton is useful for approaching local people and collecting information from them. In this way, Verne stereotypes his characters in order to increase conflict. While the tensions experienced by Dumont d'Urville are complex and interpersonal, Verne creates tension between relatively simplistic philosophical positions, which might be more readily interpreted by a broader audience. In this instance, Verne has sacrificed knowledge for a conventional plot device which, ironically, deprived him of the opportunity to provide a more nuanced socio-political discussion (Butcher 2005).

It may be that less sympathetic and less complicated studies of foreign character suited Verne's milieu in the New Imperialist period of French colonial expansion. Certainly, Verne's writing has often been seen as part of a pre-colonial rhetoric. Siskind, for example, argues that Verne's oeuvre systematically 'remapped the world in an epistemology of adventure and exoticism', effectively globalizing the novel and releasing the bourgeois European imagination to conquer the world. 'The power of Verne's narratives to promote and reinforce the discourse of globalization must have been huge' (Siskind 2010: 343). Similarly Letourneux (2013) argues that Verne brought the 'aesthetic' adventure novel to France allowing the next generation of authors to go from a discourse of knowledge (Verne) to a logic of colonial propaganda (Louis Boussenard, Alphonse Brown and Paul d'Ivoi).

Simplification

Both narrative drive and brevity constrains the amount of detail Verne can include in his story. Verne's chapters are short. His editions were deliberately cheap, to appeal to the widest demographic. D'Urville's narratives were long, expensively illustrated and bound tomes, available only to the wealthy and largely given away as prestigious state gifts. Their immediate audiences could not have been more different.

Verne had to abridge Dumont d'Urville's accounts, even when he is recounting directly. For example, Verne simplifies and reduces the story of constructing the monument to Lapérouse, considerably to increase the pace of the story. In the original text, Dumont d'Urville needs to leave Vanikoro before more of his men fall ill and to make use of seasonal weather, but also can't leave because of sickness and bad weather (VA v5:196, 205-206), or because the memorial needs to be built and difficulties finding a way out between the reefs. Such complexities are absent from Verne's text.

Verne doesn't mention Gressien's efforts to find a safe exit against strong currents, or the role of Nelo or the interview with the old man of Manevai. It is not that these events are not dramatic – indeed these very same events have been used explicitly to raise tension in *Voyages to the South Seas* (Clode 2007) – but Verne's underlying plot choice of man against man, rather than man against nature, precludes their use in his story.

Conclusion

The way in which Verne changes his source material is as revealing as the similarities themselves. He positions his text within historical and geographic realities and yet exaggerates, dramatises, simplifies and expands on his factual foundations. Naturally, as part of Hetzel's educational remit, Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaire* were pedagogically implanted with factual scientific information and such 'scientifically didactic discourse' was common among many late 19th and early 20th century French authors, such as d'Ivoi, Le Rouge, Robida and Rosny Aîné (Evans 1988c). And yet Verne also uses both the implanted information, and the literary devices commonly used by informational texts, to great literary effect.

There is little doubt that by using recounts of exploration voyages, Verne adds credibility or verisimilitude to his own work. Precision isn't crucial, however; Verne has both a literary goal and an informative goal. He does not follow strictly Dumont d'Urville's itinerary and at the same time he goes further. Verne's hero can do better than Dumont d'Urville. Verne extrapolates beyond his reading of Dumont d'Urville, as he does for all the contemporary scientific and technological frameworks of his stories. He finds what is useful and fascinating in Dumont d'Urville, reusing, remaking, referencing and recycling people, places, events and words. In other areas, Verne does much less than Dumont d'Urville. The simplicity and crudity with which Verne represents indigenous people, particularly in contrast with the nuanced and complex portraits of his source material, is certainly worthy of further socio-political discussion and investigation.

Such scientific scaffolding frees Verne to further imaginative flights. Ponnau argues that

> science for Verne is what allows dreaming to occur, whether by serving as a logistical support to the text, in matters of aerial voyages, or, in a matter perhaps more enlightening, by bringing retrospective justification to the wanderings of a fantastic imagination given free reign. (Ponnau 1997: 367 our translation)

Foucault argues that the artifice Verne uses, that of a shifting point-of-view, is one that has become unpopular and unfamiliar to modern readers but was common at the time, particularly in theatre, where Verne began his writing career. Behind the main characters of Verne's stories 'there reigns a whole

shadow theatre, with its rivalries and its nocturnal contests, its jousts and its triumphs. Bodyless voices jostle each other to recount the fable' (Foucault 1966: 159). These voices – literary, scientific, authoritative and unreliable – provide variable levels of information not available to the main characters, but which are necessary for the story to be understood. These voices are not just those of the author, but are even more exterior to the story – what Foucault calls technical discourse:

> Now we can grasp the coherence that exists between the modes of fiction, the forms of the fable, and the content of the themes. The great play of shadows that unfolded behind the fable was the struggle between the neutral probability of scientific discourse (that smooth anonymous, monochord voice that comes from who knows where and inserts itself in the fiction, imposing the certainty of its truth) and the birth, triumph, and death of the improbably discourses in which the figures of the fable took shape, in which they also disappeared. In defiance of scientific truths and breaking their icy voice, the discourses of fiction constantly proceeded upstream toward the greatest improbability. Above that monotonous hum in which the end of the work was expressed, of impatient unreason. Jules Verne's novels constitute the negentropy of knowledge. Not science turned recreative, but re-creation based on the uniform discourse of science. (Foucault 1966: 143)

Thus while Verne's novels contain factual 'educative' material, their fictional message is quite contrary. The world is unchanged by the revelation of truth – the scientists and their discourse retreat back to the world of knowledge, sealed off from reality, while the dumbstruck ignorant protagonists must return to the flawed and disordered world of human society (Foucault 1966: 144).

Barthes too, perhaps, speaks to a similar conflict within Verne's books. He sees Verne's *Nautilus* as a metaphor for the safety of the womb, a safe 'home' from which to view the external world. Barthes argues that instead of encasing oneself in the security of the known world, or science, the writer should instead, throw themselves at the mercy of the elements, stepping out into the reality of chaos and the unknown (Barthes 1957).

Gramsci wrote that:

> In Verne's books nothing is ever completely impossible. The 'possibilities' that Verne's heroes have are greater and above all not 'outside' the line of development of the scientific conquests already made. What is imagined is not entirely 'arbitrary' and is therefore able to excite the reader's fantasy, which has already been won over by the ideology of the inevitability of scientific progress in the domain of the control of natural forces. (Gramsci 1971: 367)

Such 'continuous oscillation between a Positivistic and a Romantic treatment of science' is characteristic of Verne's *oeuvre* (Evans 1988a: 103).

Verne's novels speak to the modern challenges of science communication not just as a model for adaptation and appropriation and effective cultural transmission of new ideas, but also, in and of themselves, as a metaphor for the difficulties such scientific language and discourse has in finding a place in the story-telling forms of popular culture. Verne illustrates the challenges of assimilating factual and scientific information into popular stories, retaining

authenticity yet maintaining human interest. Science, technology, and even history, does not always tell the stories that humanity wants to hear. Science fiction has long been the genre which documents, overwhelmingly, our fears for our own seemingly relentless progress (Clode & Stasiak 2014). Understanding the way in which writers like Verne adapt and translate 'knowledge' into 'story' at both a thematic and textual level, provides the scientist, scholar and/or writer (see Clode & Maizonnaiux 2015) with valuable tools for taking us all on much needed imaginative flights into the future.

Notes

[1] The original (French) publishing dates and accepted English title translations for all of Verne's books have been taken from the Evans (1966: 173-8). The English titles have been used for convenience, but any textual analysis and discussion refers to the original French publications. Abridged English language versions may not include all the references discussed in the text. return to text

[2] See also Zvi Har-El's Jules Verne Collection at http://jv.gilead.org.il/ (accessed 13 June 2015). return to text

[3] See Silverberg (2014) and Le Guin (2009) for a broader discussion of this issue. return to text

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TEXT
Vol 20 No 2 October 2016
http://www.textjournal.com.au
General Editor: Nigel Krauth. Editors: Kevin Brophy & Enza Gandolfo
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