

The Peregrination of Dissociation: *The Unfortunate Traveller* in the Symbolic Cartography of Nation-building

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Perhaps the subtitle should be re-arranged or reversed as "The Symbolic Cartography of Nation-building in *The Unfortunate Traveller*," but my emphasis in this paper will be how the text might function in the English cultural context of the 16th century. Here, we have a *chiasmatic* structure of a text performing the cultural function of nation-building *and* such a cultural function *represented, negotiated* in that text, *at the same time*. Perhaps an inversion of this kind suits the very structure of the Menippean narrative at work in *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Written at the time when England had just not long ago declared itself as an "empire" (when in fact it was hardly even a "nation": According to Richard Helgerson, who is talking about the possibility of the English nation in the Elizabethan age, "A kingdom whose boundaries are determined by the language of its inhabitants is no longer a kingdom in the purely dynastic sense, but *neither*, so long as it goes on identifying itself with the person of a hereditary monarch, *is it quite a nation*" [emphasis mine]'), the text might have functioned at the threshold of the changing landscape within the symbolic cartography of England's self-imagining. Our question would be: how to make of this *situatedness*, this *positionality*, within the context and the process of the construction of the new English nation. What is the role of genre conventions at work in *The Unfortunate Traveller*? What is the relation between the "foreign model" and the English adoption/adaptation in this text, and how does this relation negotiate the cultural and social context of the relationship between the Roman influence and English "independence"? What is the

supposed "subversiveness" and disturbance of a Menippean text? How to put a Menippean text, in our case here, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, into the web of *inter-national* relationship and *inter-national* cultural relationship? Has a Menippean satire, for all its "subversiveness," transcended, or has it been still implicated in, national culture and cultural identity? How do different cultures produce different Menippean texts, with different functions? How to read a Menippean text within a *European scene*? Considered both within the national context and international network, does *The Unfortunate Traveller*, as a Menippean text, fore-close its supposed "subversiveness"? These are the questions which I hope I can deal with in the following pages.

I believe it is by no means accidental that *The Unfortunate Traveller* is set in the time-frame of Henrician era: it is not merely for the sake of convenience that Nashe projected his satire on the Elizabethan England into the immediate past of Henry's rule. Charles Nicholl has argued that this strategy of projection is a measure of evading the danger of censorship: "The main mode of comment in *The Unfortunate Traveller* is not . . . the submerged topical reference *a la piece*, but the historical parallel. By placing his chronicle in the bygone days of Henry VIII Nashe is able to wrap his comments in the protective clothing of the past."² This may well be true, but besides wrapping the satiric comments in the "protective clothing of the past" there is an important reason connected with the fact that the Henrician era is the time the "empire/nation" of England began to emerge.³ No reader will fail to notice that the entire narrative of *The Unfortunate Traveller* is framed within the exploits of Henry VIII into France. At the very beginning of the text:

About the time that the terror of the world and fever quartane of the French, Henry the Eight (the only true subject of chronicles), advanced his standard against the two hundred and fifty towers of Turney and Turwin, and had the emperor and all the nobility of Flanders, Holland and Brabant as mercenary attendants on his

full-sailed fortune, I, Jack Wilton, a gentleman at least, was a certain kind of an appendix or page, belonging or appertaining in or unto the confines of the English Court . . . ⁴

And at the end of Wilton's journey, in the form of the return of the prodigal son, he returns "home," not exactly to England, but to the realm, more precisely the "camp," of English military powers, just in time to celebrate Henry VIII's victory. His "unfortunate" journey thus comes to a full circle; and in this way his "chronicle" serves as an "appendix" or *supplement* to the national chronicles of conquest and triumph:

[I] hastened so fast out of the Sodom of Italy, that within forty days I arrived at the King of England's camp twixt Ardes and Guines in France, where he with great triumphs met and entertained the Emperor and the French King and feasted many days. And, so, as my story began with the King at Tourney and Turwin, I think meet here to end it with the King at Ardes and Guines (370).

With the exception of a few references, Nashe's narrative does not deal explicitly with Henry's war, but this lack of explicit elaboration does not mean that it is really absent from the text. Rather, it *appears in disappearance*, as it were; it appears in another form, in disguised form. (By the way, I shall deal with the reference to Italy as "Sodom," a practice not uncommon in European discourse, later in this paper.) Now, we remember Pierre Macherey's reminder about the importance of the *silence* which is nevertheless uttered: "What is important in the work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notation 'what it refuses to say' . . . But rather than this, what the work *cannot* say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is acted out, in a sort of journey to silence."⁵ The present paper is an attempt to account for the relative

silence within the frame of English nationalist sentiments. But, of course, before we come to that, we have to deal with the fact that *The Unfortunate Traveller* is a literary discourse, a negotiated representation, rather than a simple reflection. Which means that before we go into a discussion of the political implications of Nashe's text it is perhaps advisable and illuminating to begin with one aspect of Nashe's literary representation that often induces confusion and conflict among the critics. I am going to begin with the genre question.

The Unfortunate Traveller is by all means a disturbing text; its playfulness and level of mischief seem to reach such a degree that readers and critics have trouble in making sense of it: the text seems all surface and playfulness. Jonathan Crewe even goes so far as to say that *The Unfortunate Traveller* is about rhetoricity itself: "[O]ne might call *The Unfortunate Traveller* an informal phenomenology of the page: of its prehistory, its historical interlude, and its end."⁶ I think it is safe to say that any attempt to grasp the "meaning" of the it would fail; yet, then this is the "general" condition of textuality, according to at least some "vulgar" (popularized and simplified) version of post-structuralism (rather than the more sophisticated kind, perhaps). How to determine the "sense" of a text when it seems to make fun of the seriousness of every, or indeed the very, attempt of sense-making? One way, a traditional way, out of this dilemma (but is it possible?) is to determine the genre to which the text "belongs"; it is believed that by thus putting the text into a literary category, its "proper" place, as it were, it would be more susceptible to our conceptual framework, to be grasped and understood. In this respect, *The Unfortunate Traveller* is extremely perplexing; Jack Wilton's journey is at once a journey of a fictional character, who is a "page" ("[Jack Wilton] as 'a certain kind of an appendix or page. . . . sole King of the Cans and Black-jacks, Prince of the Pigmies, County Palantine of Clean Straw and Provant . . .'" p. 254) and that of a *printed* page. Lorna Hutson summarizes the genre problem in this text:

The printed page . . . becomes the explicit mediator of innumerable alien discourse, different styles, genres, and types of utterance whose pretensions to integrity are mocked by the materializing effect of Jack's narrating *mimicry* . . . As well as "palpabrizing" or making effigies out of various styles, Jack's *endless mimicry* has the effect of emphasizing stylistic incongruity by juxtaposing one genre with another, or interrupting one narrative style with the insertion of another more colloquial.⁷ (Italics added.)

This hybridity or mixing of genres leads Hutson to conclude that "this free-wheeling irony, along with what has been characterized as it 'picaresque' qualities, are features which place *The Unfortunate Traveller* in the Lucianic or menippean tradition."⁸ Stephen Hilliard expresses similar view when he employs the term "Menippean" satire to describe the difficult genre trouble in *The Unfortunate Traveller*. "The label that fits the work best is Menippean satire, although there is no evidence that Nashe was conscious of this genre. Both Erasmus and More were influenced by Lucian, and Nashe followed them even if he does not show any direct knowledge of the ancient satirist."⁹

So much has been talked about in relation to the supposed "subversiveness" of the Menippean satire, as if it were something out there, in the things themselves. And so much has also been discussed about the Menippean satire by applying the Bakhtinian notion of "carnavalesque" and "polyphonic" narrative.¹⁰ But it is important to bear in mind, at this juncture, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's overview and reservations about the so-called carnivalesque interpretation and the revolutionary optimism behind such an interpretation. Paying special attention to the contexts in which carnivalesque rituals or narratives were historically, socially produced and used, Stallybrass and White argue that it is actually meaningless to "fight out the issue of whether or not carnivals are *intrinsically* radical or conservative, for to do so automatically

involves the false *essentializing* of carnivalesque transgression." (Italics added) ¹¹ This is an important reminder, for their emphasis is on the very *doubleness* of the carnivalesque: the carnival ritual, throughout Western history, can be both an official mechanism for defusing pressure of social energy and, when adopted by the popular revolts, a potential site of oppositional struggle, *at the same time*. What is needed is a more detailed, historicized analysis of individual case, because "the politics of carnival cannot be resolved outside of a close historical examination of particular conjunctures: there is no a priori revolutionary vector to carnival and transgression."¹² Under such circumstances, the so-called subversiveness of the carnival ritual cannot be taken for granted:

Carnivals, fairs, popular games and festivals were very swiftly "politicized" by the very attempts made on the part of local authorities to eliminate them. The dialectic of antagonism frequently turned rituals into resistance at the moment of intervention by the higher powers, even when no overt oppositional element had been present before. . . . Symbolic polarities of high and low, official and popular, grotesque and classical are mutually constructed and deformed in carnival.¹³

Even when we are not dealing with carnival itself, but "the carnivalesque" in Nashe's narrative, the sense of precaution about the doubleness of carnival still applies. Even when we accept the carnivalesque interpretation of the Menippean narrative in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, even when we see it is true to argue that the carnival reversals of polarities are the key to the understanding of the text, we should bear in mind that *The Unfortunate Traveller*, in the manner of *mise en abyme*, is itself implicated in another polarity: its own double nature regarding its political significance.

To be true to the "spirit" of the Menippean, I shall begin with the *end* or ending of Nashe's narrative. I have mentioned earlier

about the reference, upon Jack Wilton's return from his journey, to Italy as "Sodom": "[I] hastened so fast out of the Sodom of Italy . . . " (370). Now, the practice of referring to a foreign land or nation as Sodom has its deep semantic network in Renaissance, especially in English Renaissance. Nashe's usage of the term in a sense "reflects," or is implicated in, a larger and more general cultural practice of alienation, for, in English Renaissance at least, "sodomy" is not an equivalent of our understanding of "homosexuality." According to Alan Bray, in his pioneer study of Early Modern male same-sex relation, the term sodomy can mean practically anything, anything outside the pale of custom and law. It was debauchery in general; it referred to any "unnatural," or "non-reproductive," act, not even necessarily sexual. What is more: "It could also be a heterosexual sin."¹⁴ In the current literary interpretations of male homoerotic texts, "sodomy" is something that keeps slipping away, and in turn it ends up, as it has always been, as, to use Foucault's expression, "that utterly confused category."¹⁵ For Jonathan Goldberg, the question is: "What is sodomy?" Celebrating the confusion inherent, historically, in the term and its representations, he regards sodomy as a trope for violent deconstruction of whatever identity, an abyssal or abysmal overturning of boundaries of any kind, without the possibility of being recuperated.¹⁶ Whether *The Unfortunate Traveller* is a text of homoerotic implications is still a question to be explored, yet for my present purpose the focus is on the reference to "Sodom" at the end of the text. Given that "sodomy" is a slippery term, it can be linked to a variety of offenses against "nature." It is noticeable that the term was quite usually deployed as a strategy of exclusion: in the context of the Renaissance England, it was mainly associated with Papery, with Rome--old imperial Rome as well as Catholic Rome. So at the end of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, the point of dissociation or exclusion from the continent is established by a reference to Italy as "Sodom." But what function does this reference serve in the textual economy of the book?

Indeed, even as critics argue that "sodomy" in the Early

Modern usages represents a far less fixed term than the later, more clinical "homosexuality," and thus enjoys more flexible range of significance and political implications, it is still true that it is deployed as a mark of difference. And it is as a mark of difference that the term "Sodom" functions, implicating the city of Rome, at the end of *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Indeed, the reader may gradually come to realize that, cruel jokes and pranks aside, the whole journey of Jack the page is a symbolic quest in pursuit of a recognition of difference. It can be argued that in his encounters with the fanatic Puritans or Roman Catholics Jack's journey is full of the experiences of "contact zone," which, according to Mary Louise Pratt, is "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical [sic] inequality, and intractable conflict."¹⁷ Of course, by using the term "contact zones" to describe the incidents in the journey of the unfortunate traveller, we have to notice the modifications needed to suit our case. In our texts it is not the least "colonial" encounters that are at stake; it is not a contact between a colonizing subject and a colonized object. It is a contact of a more "proto-national" nature, as I will explain later. However, Pratt's term is still useful here because, even though she is talking about the 18th century imperial travel writings, Jack Wilton's far less realistic peregrination is meant to establish points of difference and a sense of self-identity similar to those in the later European travels that Pratt focuses upon. (And let us not forget that Jack does foreshadow the later *imperial espionage*, a grand tradition of traveling men, by doing some secret "intelligence work": "I knew a piece of *service of intelligence* which was presently to be done, that required a man with all his five senses to effect it, and would overthrow any fool that should undertake it" (263; italics added).)

The movement of *The Unfortunate Traveller* is from England of Henry VIII to Rome, and this was also a route of pilgrimage in Catholic Christianity. One comes to realize how close this is to

Benedict Anderson's notion of travels of nation-building:

It is not simply that in the minds of Christians, Muslims or Hindus the cities of Rome, Mecca, or Benares were the centres of sacred geographies, but that their centrality was experienced and 'realized' (in the stagecraft sense) by the constant flow of pilgrims moving towards them from remote and *otherwise unrelated* localities. Indeed, in some sense the outer limits of the old religious communities of the imagination were determined by which pilgrimage people made.¹⁸

This kind of journey to the religious centers to forge a grand or universal community became in time the chance for the people in the peripheries to detect and develop their own sense of difference, because during the travels and in the centers people from the outside sense a mark of divergence rather than commonality. The road to Rome is thus a chance for sameness *and* difference, at the same time, depending on the change in the historical conditions. Thus Jack's itinerary from the English battlecamp in France, at the siege and capture of Terouanne in August 1513, to his coming back to England and surviving an epidemic of sweating sickness, to returning to Europe as a soldier of fortune, to telling the story of the Battle of Marignano, to witnessing the slaughter of John Leyden's Anabaptists at Munster, to traveling with Lord Henry, Earl of Surrey, to meeting Erasmus and Sir Thomas More at Rotterdam, to being impressed by Luther, Carolostadius, and Cornelius Agrippa at Wittenberg, to encountering Diamante in Venice, to Florence for Geraldine, and finally to Rome, where Jack was framed, imprisoned, and almost killed, to being nearly anatomized by the Pope's physician, Doctor Zachary¹⁹; thus Jack Wilton's itinerary imitates and mocks the typical Christian journey to the religious center.

In Anderson's description, it is precisely this same journey which aims to establish connections to the center or metropolis that

provides the *fissure* to make the travelers *recognize* the insurmountable difference, the *shibboleth* perhaps, that prevents them from integrating into the center and from merging with others in other parts of the peripheries. That is why Jack's itinerary in fact follows what I have called a *peregrination of dissociation*. The argument that the prose narratives of travels or journeys help construct nations is now familiar.²⁰ Yet in the case of Nashe's narrative, the similarities are so striking that it deserves a closer investigation. Anderson observes: "In a pre-print age, the reality of the imagined religious community depended profoundly on countless, ceaseless travels."²¹ We know that one of Anderson's major arguments is about the role of print-capitalism in the formation and construction of nation as well as nationalism. (In this paper, I will not be able to deal with the complicated issues of the "archaic," patrician state in British/English nation and the oxymoron of "English nationalism."²²) But in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, set in a transitional period, is the travel of "an appendix or page" (254); its author is very aware of the question of printing press. And he plays with it: "A proper fellow page of yours, called Jack Wilton, by me commends him unto you, and hath bequeathed for waste paper here amongst you certain pages of his misfortunes. . . . Printers are mad whoresons; allow them some of them napkins" (235).²³

Perhaps if we bypass the de Manian (rather than Derridean) deconstructive strategy in the following quotation by Jonathan Crewe, we may get a more radical sense of the text: "The page of *The Unfortunate Traveller* is (in both senses) no longer the innocently sprightly page of Lylyan fiction; with its new self-knowledge it seemingly acquires a new 'character' and destiny, both of which can be affirmed in the pronoun and the narrative of the first person."²⁴ The coincidence of the emergence of self-knowledge of the printing press and the emergence of a sense of the nation is very obliquely played out in the self same character of Jack Wilton. It is a sign of the anteriority of *The Unfortunate Traveller* that the pre-print age travel and the mark of the printing "page" co-exist. It is because the text was written at the threshold of

the age of nation-building that the more the travel of dissociation was employed to link to the rise of the printing press.

But there is a pre-condition for the rise of the printing press, and thus of nation and nationalism. It has been said that the sense of nation-ness cannot emerge if the political system is still dynastic in the full sense, is still dynastic without constitutional restrictions and modifications that check supreme "sovereign's" power.²⁵ If the system were still dynastic, it would be impossible to forge a sense of being-together-ness or of community. Now, quite interestingly, Nashe's strange narrative of the page has a large section dealing with the question of humanism, which is in turn of interest to the question of nation. Helgerson has mentioned that in English Renaissance a certain kind of "[h]umanism . . . is not only antichivalric but antimilitaristic and even antiaristocratic."²⁶ But he is too interested in the simplistic binaries between Goth and Greek, French and Italian poetic forms, and supposed conflict between rime and quantitative verse, to work on this more elaborately. Helgerson does not mention specially about Nashe, but Robert Weimann comes to a similar observation, even though in terms very different from mine: "Insofar as the signifying vehicle of 'duncified' turn out to have a well-known historical referent, the very mode of Nashe's self-representation adopts a highly ambivalent strategy by which the humanist position in poetics itself is severely interrogated."²⁷

However, the question of humanism, coupled with that of class, is key to an understanding of *The Unfortunate Traveller's* relation to nation-building. Another critic has also devoted some discussion to this matter of humanism vs. popular culture: "In *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Nashe's ambiguous relation to elite modes is at its most playful: various aspects of high culture are defamiliarized from a viewpoint socially very hard to define. Neither simply popular nor elite, nor even 'middling,' the page Jack Wilton . . . 'moves with equal facility in two spheres, the elite and the plebeian.'"²⁸ Indeed, especially in his description of Jack's relation to Surrey the humanist poet, Nashe is at once trying to integrate *and* maintaining

a distance from the latter's typical Petrarchanism (his mode of poetic discourse, his rather conventional devotion to Geraldine, etc.). Thus in this proto-novelistic narrative we see not the rise of the novel out of bourgeoisie, but the hybrid intertwining of the high and the low, the narrative both from above and from below. So much so that there is just a mild mockery of reversal of social hierarchy:

With him [Agrippa] we travel along, having purchased his acquaintance a little before. By the way as we went, my master and I agreed to change names. It was concluded betwixt us that I should be the Earl of Surrey and my man, only because in his own person, which he would not have reproached, he meant to take more liberty of behaviour; as for my carriage, he knew he was to tune it at a key either high or low, as he list. (298)

This is as innocuous as it can be, and, apart from some Bakhtinian interpretations, few critics try to come up with any political reading other than the "subversiveness itself" routine. However, (of course this is just one possible reading, among others) if we put this reversal into the context of our argument, that is, the argument about the peregrination of dissociation and nation-building, we come to realize that this displacement of hierarchy points to the important social change which set the basis for a more "popular" kind of political entity.²⁹ In his playfulness, Nashe is certainly not an ideological writer, and his writings are never evidence of historical or social events. As I have pointed out in the beginning of this paper, what might be of interest is that his narrative of fantastical journey might have a certain impact, indirectly, upon the his contemporary readers, who, though not being told about any positive thing about the emergent empire/nation, were at least exposed to the effects of a negative symbolic travel of dissociation, dissociation from the "European" humanist legacy, from the Catholic Sodom, from Rome.³⁰ This imaginary journey does not reflect the historical

"reality," but it might contribute, not so much directly as obliquely, to the rise of a more "popular," rather than aristocratic, empire/nation.

Under such circumstances, the *inter*-national grafting of the Menippean satire has a cultural-political percussion that is often ignored in the discussions of this particular genre. In a sense, a "Roman" literary form is set against a Rome, the pagan genre employed to attack Catholicism at the service of a Reformed Christianity. So the matter is even more complicated than Stallybrass and White would have it. I began writing this paper by asking a lot of questions: What is the relation between the "foreign model" and the English adoption/adaptation in this text, and how does this relation negotiate the cultural and social context of the relationship between the Roman influence and English "independence"? How to put a Menippean text, in our case here, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, into the web of *inter*-national relationship and *inter*-national cultural relationship? Has a Menippean satire, for all its "subversiveness," transcended, or has it been still implicated in, national culture and cultural identity? How do different cultures produce different Menippean texts, with different functions? How to read a Menippean text within a *European scene*? Considered both within the national context and international network, does *The Unfortunate Traveller*, as a Menippean text, fore-close its supposed "subversiveness"? It is time to come up with a more sophisticated interpretation to consider the adoption of genre and the grafting of national culture.

We can see that the Menippean text is still quite subversive; after this long process of writing this paper, I must admit that any engaged reading of any kind has had and will have a hard time in trying to reduce the Menippean satire, perhaps more than other genre, to any pre-determined position or meaning. But still it is capable of being used and placed in relations that would perform certain political results. What is more, the grafting of the Roman model unto the English Menippean satire in *The Unfortunate Traveller* signifies something even more complicated than sameness or difference: to be more precise, it points to the

ghosting of the Roman imperial formation in the coming English new empire, it points to the coupling, grafting and doubling of the residual and emergent imperial formations.

(As I have mentioned elsewhere: "In a structure of supplementarity, the new empire needs the symbolism and form of the earlier empire in order to form itself in a new configuration; in this we see the spectrality of empires, the *sur*-vival of the old in the new. The grafting, in the structure of *spectrality*, seems to be a necessary step in the constitution of the nation-empires of the Northern Europe. Speaking about the double structure of the "revived phantom" of the Holy Roman Empire in Charles V of France, Frances Yates comments: "[T]he *phantom* of the Empire *did* revive. . . . the imperial phantom which revives with Charles V is not the Romanized phantom which has haunted the earlier humanists. It is the northern phantom which returns with the second Charlemagne, and which finds congenial expression in the revived chivalrous epic, though it also drapes itself in the classical formulae which humanist studies had enriched."³¹ We should notice from the above quotation that the operation of the "revived phantom" (or my expression, *sur*-vived phantom, the phantom that lives on) is triple, and the interrupted-revived continuum of Roman/Holy Roman/French imperial formation works through the sequence of history in its *sur*-vival. Also we should never forget the Holy Roman Empire is itself the revived/*sur*-vived version of the residual "undying Roman Empire."³² In Yates's study, the situation is generally similar in the northern, peripheral part of Europe, where the expansionist states and economic structure are ready to re-build the European empire in exploration and colonization. Famous for its analysis of the symbolism of Elizabeth as Astraea, Yates's book does not fail to pay attention to the English situation:

It has been said of the Italian Renaissance that 'it starts from the medieval conception of world-empire.' The whole process of the 're-naissance' of art and letters is *intimately* bound up with the *return* to the classical golden age, or rather with the more vital idea

of eternal *survival* and living rebirth of that age. The Elizabethan age is the great age of the English Renaissance, and in this sense the golden age theme lies behind it. It is an age of national expansion, and the universal medieval aspirations turn in a nationalist direction, toward a golden age for England.³³

At stake here is the appropriation of the imperial symbolism to the periphery. And I would say it involves more than symbolism, or more precisely the "grafting" or the former imperial system disclose the proximity in ideological deployment between the old and the new (coming) formations.³⁴ But two things in this passage deserve our attention. The first is the spectrality, the intimate embrace, of the residual and the emergent in the empire-building; the second is the intertwining of the imperial formation and nation-building. Upon this reading, it is impossible to separate the problem of English nationhood with the current of the return of the empire in the spectral form."³⁵

That *The Unfortunate Traveller* is full of xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments is clearly displayed in the pages of the text. Jack Wilton endures the *misfortunes* of travel only to show that there is indeed nothing of interest in travel: "Countryman, tell me, what is the occasion of thy straying so far out of England to visit this strange nation?... The first traveller was Cain, and he was called a vagabond runagate on the face of the earth. Travel . . . is good for nothing but to tame and bring men under" (341). This is followed by a famous catalogue of the ills and sins of the prominent European nations, with a specific reference to Italy as a land of "sodomitry" (345). But in borrowing the Menippean form to distance England from Europe in general and Rome in particular, Nashe unwittingly, in the political unconscious as it were, acknowledges the inheritance and legacy from the European model, and by implication acknowledges the debt to the imperial Roman culture in the emergent English cultural and literary scene. At the moment of *The Unfortunate Traveller's* publication (1594), England was an

"empire" in a nominal and the weakest sense of the word (see my Note 1): "we need to remember that in 1580 England did not control a square inch of territory outside the British Isles."³⁶ But Nashe's text, written in the Elizabethan time and set in the Henrican era, marked the beginning of dissociation, through the detour of a symbolic peregrination that would have to be dispensed with and regarded as unnecessary and, even, unfortunate.

Notes

¹ Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 2. About England's declaration of itself as an empire: "[G. R.] Elton points to the 1530s as the crucial moment of change. In that decade parliament declared England as 'an empire,' severed the ties that bound the English church to the church of Rome, and established the king as 'supreme head' of both church and state. And in that decade, if Elton is right, a 'revolution in government' transformed the essentially household rule of what was still thought of as the king's estate into a *genuinely national administration*" (Helgerson, p. 4; emphasis mine).

² Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1984), p. 158.

³ For the much neglected Henrician era, see the essays in *Rethinking the Henrician Era: Essays on Early Tudor Texts and Contexts*, ed. Peter C. Herman (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

⁴ Thomas Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton," in *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, ed. J. B. Steane (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 254. Henceforth, page numbers will follow all the citations from this text.

⁵ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey

Wall (London: Routledge & Kagen Paul, 1978), p. 87.

⁶ Jonathan V. Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 69.

⁷ Lorna Hutson, "Nashe, Mock-Testament, and Menippean Dialogue," in *Thomas Nashe in Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 141. See also Margaret Ferguson, "Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*: the 'News of the Maker' Game," *ELR* 11 (1981), pp. 165-82; Ann Rosalind Jones, "Inside the Outsider: Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* and Bakhtin's Polyphonic Novel," *ELH* 50 (1983), pp. 61-81.

⁸ Hutson, p. 141.

⁹ Stephen S. Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 134.

¹⁰ See, for example, Anne Rosalind Jones' essay, mentioned above, in Note 6. For Bakhtin, see, among others, his *Rabelais and his World*, trans. R. W. Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968); *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978); *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

¹¹ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 14.

¹² Stallybrass and White, p. 16.

¹³ Stallybrass and White, p. 16.

¹⁴ Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995; originally published in 1982), p. 14.

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1: Introduction (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p. 101.

¹⁶ See Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford university Press, 1992), p. 123-24. This is not the place to discuss the question of sodomy in full; please see also Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Jonathan Goldberg, ed., *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); more recently, Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writings and Transculturation* (London: Routledge: 1992), p. 6.

¹⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; revised and extended edition, 1991), pp. 53-4.

¹⁹ I have tried my best to summarize the Nashian plot; for the difficulty in getting hold of the plot, see Charles Nicholl's *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe*, pp. 156-8. Cf. also the comments by Stephen Hillard in *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe*: "The sequence is governed, not by the logic of events, nor by Jack's development as a character, but by Nashe's shifting interests. The threat to Jack becomes increasing serious, but this shift from jests to the macabre is caused by external factors rather than being inherent in the story or in Jack's character. The presence of a central character and the coherence of the style make *The Unfortunate Traveller* a unified experience, even if it lacks the internal unity we associate with novels" (136). The matter of a "confused" plot is in fact of historical-generic significance, as I will explain later. For this moment, let me cite Robert Weimann: "[T]he noteworthy thing . . . is not the weakness of the links between

the fantastical conveyence of *historia* and the historically concrete conveyence of *fabula* but the fact that the two are simultaneously brought to bear on the traditional context, which their joint presence doubly undermines, of a jest-book narrative of anecdotes" ("*Fabula and Historia: The Crisis of the 'Universal Consideration' in The Unfortunate Traveller*," in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p.188.)

²⁰ See the essays in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1989). They, however, deal with texts and problematics in the range of the 19th and 20th century literary representations, rather than, as in our case, the Early Modern proto-novelistic narratives.

²¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.54.

²² For these important question, see Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (London: NLB, 1977); Perry Anderson, "Origins of the Present Crisis," in *English Questions* (London: Verso, 1992); for more recent modifications, see Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997).

²³ For the conditions of the Elizabethan printing press, with special reference to Nashe, see Lorna Hutson, "Publication: Credit and Profit," in *Thomas Nashe in Context*, pp.55-71. See also Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

²⁴ Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric*, p. 72.

²⁵ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 19-22.

²⁶ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, p 43.

²⁷ Weimann, "*Fabula and Historia: The Crisis of the 'Universal Consideration' in The Unfortunate Traveller*," p. 194.

²⁸ Peter Holbrook, *Literature and Degree in Renaissance England: Nashe, Bourgeois Tragedy, Shakespeare* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), p. 70.

²⁹ For the idea of the poplar in the Elizabethan England, see Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

³⁰ For the Elizabethan readership, see Hutson, "The Profitable Discourse of the Elizabethans," In *Thomas Nashe in Context*, pp.38-54.

³¹ Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Pimlico, 1993; rpt. of RKP's 1975 edition), 26-7.

³² Frances Yates, *Astraea*, 27.

³³ Frances Yates, *Astraea*, 38-9; Italics mine.

³⁴ Cf. The illuminating Samir Amin's description of the grafting of the old proto-capitalist roots unto the northern periphery of Europe, where local "weak feudalism" made the North more capable of developing a capitalist system: "The Mediterranean system that I discussed . . . formed the prehistory of the capitalist world system. Nevertheless, this Mediterranean system did not make the qualitative leap forward to a completed capitalist form. On the contrary, the driving forces of development emigrate from the shores of the Mediterranean toward the peripheral regions of the European Atlantic northwest, thereby crossing the divide that separates the prehistory of capitalism from its later flourishing. The capitalist world system is therefore fashioned around the Atlantic, marginalizing, in turn, the old Mediterranean center," *Eurocentrism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), 73. One should notice that the spectrality of capitalist transition described by Amin parallels my description of the spectrality of the empire.

³⁵ I have borrowed the above observation about the "spectrality" of empires from my earlier piece, Shuan-hung Wu, "The Founding

Moment: The Formation of Nation and the Spectrality of Empire in *Henry V*," *Wenshan Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1998): 157-8.

³⁶ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, p. 164.