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ETHICAL VIRTUES, CONTACT ZONES, AND REPRESENTATION IN TRAVEL WRITING: EXPLORATIONS PAST AND PRESENT

Abstract: The article focuses on the importance of placing our writing in the context of what Aristotle terms "ethical virtues." This is especially important when writing about different communities and peoples, their customs, religions, histories, and language. After showing Aristotle's approach to ethical virtues, I use as an example the travel writing of Harriet Martineau, a nineteenth century British woman writer who used nineteenth century philosophy, economy, and social thought to express her views on the American women's movement and her aversion to slavery, and to express her attitudes toward colonialist behavior in her work on *Eastern Life, Present and Past* where she explores her views on Egypt, Palestine, Syria. I then show the importance of engaging in representational travel writing and adapting ethical virtues to current-day century sensibilities so that we move away from the "genre of the empire" in current travel writing. I conclude by exposing assumptions in twenty-first century travel writing and providing a theoretical framework for applying ethics in travel writing that allow us to see the connections to other people without assuming that we can achieve symmetrical reciprocity in our interactions with people in our own communities or communities abroad.

Key words: historical travel writing; Aristotle’s ethical virtues; current-day travel writing; colonialism; contact zones; ethical virtues and travel writing

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Introduction

Travel writing, according to Barbara Korte (2000), focuses on "the interaction of the human subject with the world" (p. 5). The recounting of these interactions often shows the writer's understanding of the history, the political system, and the social relationships. Writers recount cultural differences, use master narratives about travels to a specific country, and discuss their encounters with locals. These accounts, Korte reminds us, "are never objective; they inevitably reveal the culture-specific and individual patterns of perception and knowledge which every traveller brings to the travelled world" (p. 6).

My interest in travel writing, and especially in the ethics of travel writing became especially pronounced after reading historical narratives of visits to foreign lands. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters on her travels to Turkey, Mary Kingsley's writing on West Africa, Mary Hall's recounting of her travels from the Cape to Cairo were only a few of the stories that started my own explorations into current discussions of colonial and postcolonial writing, and how the empire still strikes back when writers attempt to explore the cultures and customs of a different country.

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the importance of placing our writing in the context of what Aristotle terms "ethical virtues." This, I show, is especially important when writing about different communities and peoples, their customs, religions, histories, forms of government, and language. After showing Aristotle's approach to ethical virtues, I first use the narratives of Harriet Martineau as an example to highlight the importance of seeing travel writing, and any writing, in its historical and cultural context. As Manfred Pfitzer so aptly pointed out, "the traveller's perception of [a country and its people] is filtered through the home country as a perceptual foil of comparison and contrast, and scripted through established routes and canonized sights" (p. 4). As a 19th century British woman writer, Martineau used her understanding of 19th century philosophy, economy, and social thought to express her views on the American women's movement and her aversion to slavery. Additionally, she expressed her attitudes toward colonialist behavior in her work on *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (1848) where she explores her views on Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. The importance of applying ethical virtues in representational travel writing, I show in the second part of the chapter, is still essential in current travel writing if we want to move away from colonial undertones in current representations of people and countries visited. I conclude by exposing assumptions in 21st century travel writing and providing a theoretical framework for applying ethics in travel writing that rejects the notion of "the-monarch-of-all-I-survey" (Pratt, 1992: 202) and instead allows us to see the connections to other people without assuming that we can achieve symmetrical reciprocity (Young, 1997) in our interactions with people in our own communities or communities abroad.

Travel Writers, Ethos, and World Views

Rhetoric scholars often discuss the rhetorical practices we use in order to convince our audience to take action and improve a current situation. In addition to teaching our students that any rhetorical situation consists of what Lloyd Bitzer (1968) termed exigence, constraints, and audience (p. 4), we also focus on the role of the author, and how the writer's ethos influences the audience's willingness to engage in serious discussions about a problematic situation that needs to be addressed. Our starting point for such discussions is often Aristotle's exploration of ethical virtues, and his argument that ethics needs to be studied to improve human well-being. Ethical virtues, we tell our students, are complex rational, emotional and social skills. To learn these skills, we need to learn how our actions are supported by reason, not only by following general rules but by exploring how general rules are applied to different situations. And because situations differ, ethical virtues cannot be applied by following predetermined procedures. Instead, a person who is ethical has to be good at deliberation and rational inquiry. Ethical virtue, such as being just, courageous, and generous, then, is "determined by *logos* ('reason,' 'account') and in the way that the person of practical reason would determine it" (Aristotle, 1107a1–2).

Aristotle's exploration of ethical virtues acknowledges the existence of easily identifiable unethical emotions (such as spite, shamelessness, and envy) and actions (such as adultery, theft, and murder). However, he emphasizes that most ethical virtues cannot be easily categorized and implemented. Instead, most situations require us to make decisions grounded in theoretical and practical reason. To ensure that such decisions will lead to happiness, Aristotle concludes that human beings have to live in communities that encourage good habits and provide the basic equipment of a well-lived life.

Ethical virtues, then, are not practiced in a vacuum, but are dependent on the political system of the state, the religious practices of the community, and the social organization of the extended and nuclear family unit. In other words, ethical virtues shift over time because our understanding of the world shifts with new political movements, new industrial and technological developments, or new social developments. For example, Victorian culture imposed perceptions of womanhood that confined women to the domestic sphere. This representation of women and of sexual difference, Mary Poovey (2009) argues, influences and shapes a country's "social institutions, the organization of its most basic economic and legal relations, and … the rationalization of its imperial ambitions" (p. 2). Imperial ambitions, largely accepted and supported by 19th century Britain, took as their privilege the domination of subordinate cultures, often justified by "converting local knowledges (discourses) into European national and continental knowledges associated with European forms and

relations of power" (Pratt, 1992: 198). Pratt terms such behavior as "the monarch-of-all-I-survey," imposing the "social and material value of … the explorer's home culture" (p. 201). Now, in the age of postmodernism, post-colonialism, and post-industrialism, what is considered right and wrong, and what is considered ethical, includes new knowledge that was not available to Victorian women or 19th century British explorers.

Some of our students might find it disconcerting that Aristotle advocates for qualifying ethical virtues. However, most can grasp that their virtues have political, social, temporal, and religious underpinnings. Moving to the next step, that contemporary communities—in the same country and across the globe—adhere to different ethical values based on historical events, social conventions, religious affiliations, or political systems, is more contentious. For example, wearing the hijab, engaging in free sex, or supporting circumcision lead to heated debates on whether such practices and behaviors are ethical, whether different political systems allow for ethical virtues to develop, and whether it is our role to change practices that we consider unethical but that might be seen as ethical in the community that adheres to these practices—no matter whether we consider the political system as flawed.

Such discussions are especially pertinent when we examine travel writing. Whether we analyze historical travel writing, or whether we reflect on our own travels and on how we want to write down our experiences, we need to evaluate how our rational, emotional and social skills—leading to our ethical virtues—influence us when we travel to places whose political system is diametrically opposed to our values, whose religious practices we consider restrictive and limiting, and whose social system is based on practices that we fought against in our own community. We need to ask ourselves whether we can approach a country's history without imposing absolute ethical standards, and whether we can move to embracing ethical virtues that expand our own thinking about what is right and wrong. In other words, is our political, social, or religious system the best indicator of building ethical virtues? How do we present ourselves, and how do we represent our experiences to our readers? And finally, how do we place ourselves within a complex and expanding system of ethical virtues without losing our ability to exercise our rational, emotional, and social skills grounded in personal and communal values that increase the happiness of humanity? Harriet Martineau's travel writing is only one example that can be used to explore the questions on what is ethical behavior in Victorian England.

Ethical Virtues in Historical Context: An Example from the Past

An avid writer and traveler, Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) had to push the boundaries of virtuous—or ethical—behavior in early 19th century England. Her life, according to Diana Postlethwaite (1989), "offers a radical challenge to the stereotype of the Victorian woman writer as a subjective, emotive novelist or poet, a Lady of Shalott weaving her

web of words in isolation from the larger concerns of the masculine world" (p. 583). Similarly, Margaret Oliphant (1877) points out that ""as a born lecturer and politician she was less distinctively affected by her sex than perhaps any other, male or female, of her generation" (p. 479). Martineau's autobiography, as well as her fiction and non-fiction works, focus on economics, sociology, travel, history, and philosophy, even though such topics were considered more fitting for men's explorations while writing about romance and domesticity were considered the realm of women's writing. She introduced feminist perspectives in her writing, became a supporter of abolitionism, and supported Darwin's theory because it was based in secularism and not in theology.

As a British traveler contending with 19th century British sensibilities, Martineau was part of a new wave of travelers who could, even though with difficulties, participate in new adventures that were now no longer exclusively the privilege of "Grand Tourists", described by Paul Fussell (1987) as young men accompanied by a governor, "probably a minister of the Church of England" (p. 130). Instead, because of more affordable train travel and a democratization of travel, a larger number tourists could explore different countries. Women travelers, however, were expected to behave and write in such ways that did not impinge on the Victorian understanding of "true womanhood," a concept that included the notion of the "angel in the house." Aptly described by Virginia Woolf in 1942, the Victorian angel in the house was

> …intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily ... in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all ... she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty. (p. 2)

Without suffrage rights, and without rights to own property, women's roles were dependent on a paternalistic system, and a system that resisted women travelers, and often pitied women who traveled on their own. Despite these restrictions, Martineau traveled widely, including an extensive trip to the United States. This trip was initiated, as Deborah Logan (2013) points out in her close analysis of Martineau's writing on Martineau's transatlantic abolitionism, because of "her passion for [America's] ideology and admiration for its citizens" (p. 220). In her volumes dedicated to American travel (*Society in America,* 1837, 3 volumes), Martineau described her visit with President James Madison, her experiences at Boston girls' schools, and her understanding of the importance of women's education. As she wrote in *Society in America,* ""The intellect of women is confined by an unjustifiable restriction of... education... As women have none of the objects in life for which an enlarged education is considered requisite, the education is not given... The choice is to either be 'ill-educated, passive, and

subservient, or well-educated, vigorous, and free only upon sufferance" (1837: 157). Additionally, she made clear her abhorrence of slavery in much of her writing on the U.S. political and social system. She became an avid supporter of the abolitionist movement that she addressed eloquently in *The Martyr Age of the United States,* published in 1839*:*

> There is a remarkable set of people now living and vigorously acting in the world, with a consonance of will and understanding which has perhaps never been witnessed among so large a number of individuals of such diversified powers, habits, opinions, tastes and circumstances. The body comprehends men and women of every shade of color, of every degree of education, of every variety of religious opinion, of every gradation of rank, bound together by no vow, no pledge, no stipulation but of each preserving his individual liberty; and yet they act as if they were of one heart and of one soul. Such union could be secured by no principle of worldly interest; nor, for a terms of years, by the most stringent fanaticism. A well-grounded faith, directed towards a noble object, is the only principle which can account for such a spectacle as the world is now waking up to contemplate in the abolitionists of the United States. (p. 4)

Martineau's strong commitment to the antislavery movement in the United States can, to use Aristotle's concept of community influence in a person's development of ethical virtues, be connected to Britain's abolishment of slavery in the colonies in 1833. Furthermore, women's rights in England had already been addressed by Mary Wollstonecraft who, in 1792 in her treatise titled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* argued for equal educational opportunities, and "rights to humanity" for all (qtd in Lauren, 2003: 32). Wollstonecraft's and her contemporaries' work, and Stuart Mills' 1869 work on women's rights to vote was largely influential in shaping discussions on the subjection of women in Britain. Martineau's rational, emotional, and social skills can certainly be seen as part of a larger fabric that already had addressed, and continued to address throughout the 19th century, dissatisfaction with the current treatment of women and the treatment of slaves.

Martineau's travel narratives were not confined to her extensive work on her American travels. She also published her impressions of *Eastern Life, Past and Present* (1848), which specifically focused on her travels to Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Martineau, a member of British society, not only described her first desert journey but also included her controversial understanding of faith and her impressions of the slave trade in Aswan. Deborah Logan sums up Martineau's argument on theology succinctly, pointing out that Martineau argued that "the parallels and intersections shared by ancient Egyptian religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, evidence theological

evolution, with each succeeding religion representing a step in a progressive evolutionary process" (2009: 174), a position strongly opposed by her brother James Martineau who fervently argued that "The Theological world can not but hate a book which treats of theological belief as a transient state of the human mind" (qtd in Logan, 2009: 174).

In addition to her controversial position on theology, Harriet Martineau also included her impressions of the slave trade in Aswan which, she points out, "is no more defensible here than elsewhere" (1848: 98), continuing her anti-slavery stance she had clearly expressed in her writings about American slavery. Martineau's discussion also includes her group's treatment of the native peoples on her trip. She points out that "we do not agree with travelers who declare it necessary to treat these people with coldness and severity – to repel and beat them" (p. 50). However, Martineau's discussion leaves 21st century sensibilities, and she continues to point out that "we treated them as children; and this answered perfectly well" (p. 50). She continues to let the reader know that "they were always manageable by kindness and mirth" (p. 50). Such treatment, based on her comments, is highly preferable to the treatment meted out by other travelers. Martineau's comments place her directly within 19th century sentiments on the treatment of the colonized, notwithstanding her anti-slavery rhetoric employed in her American travel writing. Termed "infantilization trope" by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (2014), Martineau shows " the political immaturity of colonized… peoples" who suffer from "an inbred dependency on the leadership of White Europeans" (p. 140). Martineau exercised, as Allison Russell puts it, a "knowing gaze or privileged point of view that simultaneously colonizes the landscape and its indigenous population" (p. 5). In other words, she used "imperial eyes" (Pratt, 1992) which focus on the "other" as inferior and unequal to the colonizer. However, she made sure that her actions did not lead to the kind of abuse she could see used by other travelers who come in contact with the colonized.

Maria Frawley (1994), in her work on travel writing by Victorian women, sees Martineau's comments in accordance with 19th century beliefs that women were the "social and psychological superior" and "international disciplinarians in places of English colonization" (p. 119). As 21st century readers, we might be disappointed by Martineau's reaction to who she clearly considers as inferior to herself; however, if we go back to connecting ethical virtue with the rational, emotional, and social skills that are encouraged by the political framework that exists, Martineau's response is a vast improvement to the treatment of "the other" described in the literature of the time which used racialized stereotypes of the brutish and barbaric savage to defend colonialism. Rudyard Kipling (1899) expressed this wide-held belief in his poem "The White Man's Burden" where he describes colonized Filipinos as "new-caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child" (Kipling, 1899). John A. Hobson continued this argument in 1902

when he wrote:

> Probably everyone would agree that an Englishman would be right in considering his way of looking at the world and at life better than that of the Maori or the Hottentot, and no one will object in the abstract to England doing her best to impose her better and higher view on these savages…Can there be any doubt that the white man must, and will, impose his superior civilization on the coloured races? (II.II.14)

Martineau's reaction to the colonized people should not surprise us, especially when we look at her ethical virtues through the eyes of her experiences as a British woman who was born into a political system that focused on expanding its imperial power. To be virtuous, for Martineau, meant to treat those inferior to her with kindness. In her worldview, it did not mean to give up imperial power, decolonize, and withdraw from the colonized territories. This certainly does not justify Martineau's stance on the "inferior race," but it helps us explain why such a stance can be taken by a woman whose many treatises include new views on theology, support of anti-slavery, support of women's rights, support of new laws for the poor, and support of Darwin's theory of evolution.

Ethical Virtues and Current Sensibilities: Theories of Representational Travel Writing

As an example of shifting ethical virtues, Martineau's work highlights the importance of closely examining not only the writing, but also the context in which writing takes place. To explore Aristotle's ethical virtues in connection with current approaches to travel writing, I turn to Stuart Hall's (1997) introduction to his excellent work on *Representation* where he points out that "representation connects meaning and language to culture" (p. 15). Using a constructionist perspective, he underscores the importance of connecting three aspects of culture: "what we might broadly call the world of things, people, events and experiences; the conceptual world - the mental concepts we carry around in our heads; and the signs, arranged into languages, which 'stand for' or communicate these concepts" (p. 61). To arrive at meaning when we interact with different communities and cultures, then, necessitates translation and interpretation. What complicates successful communication--even if we understand that every communicative act is based on connecting people, events and experiences without pre-conceived notions or absolute ethical virtues that we carry with us, and then express ourselves through language—is the temporary nature of our relationships with each other and with the cultures with which we interact. According to Hall, such temporality influences our ability to encode messages, and it influences how our audience decodes these messages (p. 62). Because we participate in communicative acts in shifting

contexts, meaning also shifts over time and from one culture to the next.

Such shifts in meaning—over time or from one culture to another—should not deter us from engaging in successful communicative acts. Instead of taking Hall's awareness of the temporality of discursive acts and the shifting construction of meaning as a hindrance to interacting with different communities and cultures, his insightful comments provide intercultural communicators—which I consider a prerequisite for travel writers—with the impetus to pay attention to how we interpret what we hear and what we see. They help us to become aware that encoding and decoding messages are not linear processes but instead have to be seen within ever-changing contexts influenced by the speaker's and listener's backgrounds, political affiliations, gender, race, economic background, religious affiliation, and age. Iris Marion Young (1997) helps us understand the shifting and asymmetrical nature of communication practices when she points out that

> A condition of our communication is that we acknowledge the difference, interval, that others drag behind them shadows and histories, scars and traces, that do not become present in our communication. Thus we each must be open to learning about the other person's perspective, since we cannot take the other person's standpoint and imagine that perspective as our own. (p. 53)

Egalitarian reciprocity, she argues, does not mean that we can walk in each other's shoes—something she considers impossible to achieve. Instead, it is an acknowledgment of the asymmetry between communicators that makes it possible to imagine that we are not all the same and that, even if there are "similarities and points of contact" when we communicate, we also need to understand that "each position and perspective transcends the others, goes beyond their possibility to share or imagine" (p. 50). This transcendence is especially important to keep in mind when we want to be successful in our understanding that "each [participant] brings to the relationships a history and structured positioning that makes them different from one another, with their own shape, trajectory, and configuration of forces" (p. 50). For this reason, Young insists, it is important to acknowledge difference and be open to learn about the other person's perspective. This is possible, she argues, if we approach interactions and communication with others with a sense of wonder and moral respect in order to achieve an enlarged understanding of the world. As she succinctly instructs her readers,

> Have the moral humility to acknowledge that even though there may be much I do understand about the other person's perspective through her communication to me and through the constructions we have made common between us, there is also always a remainder, much that I do not understand about the other person's experience and perspective. (p. 53)

Such moral humility is especially pertinent in our exploration of the conflicting perspectives on travel writing. Debbie Lisle (2006) points out that a cosmopolitan vision of travel writing—a vision that most of us would like to embrace—attempts to be critical of using "imperial eyes" and instead attempts to examine "what values might cut through cultural difference and make it possible to develop a global order based on shared understandings, norms and sensibilities" (p. 5). In other words, as travel writers, we want to celebrate diversity, see difference as positive, and not judge based on my understanding of what is good and attainable.

However, despite good intentions to strive for a "cosmopolitan vision," it is easy to bring in remnants of orientalism, colonialism, and empire building in travel writing. Based on our own positions as participants in political, social, and cultural environments, we establish, often unwittingly, that we are the social, cultural, historical, political and psychological superior of those we describe in our writings. Lisle sees this "production of difference" in the travel writing that she explores. According to her,

> it is easy to see how contemporary travel writing continues in the colonial tradition: it reproduces a dominant Western civilization from which travel writers emerge to document other states, cultures, and peoples. In this sense, travel writers continue to secure their privileged position by categorising, critiquing and passing judgment on less-civilised areas of the world. (p. 3)

Even though we might see ourselves as post-colonialists, Lisle's comments are reminiscent of Harriet Martineau's descriptions of her treatment of slaves in Aswan, showing us that our own perspectives are often less cosmopolitan than we consider possible. Edward Said (1993) in *Culture and Imperialism* supports Lisle's statement when he points out,

> What one cannot do in one's own Western environment – where to try to live out the grand dream of a successful quest is only to keep coming up against one's own mediocrity and the world's corruption and degradation – one can do abroad. Isn't it possible in India to do everything? be anything? go anywhere with impunity? (p. 42)

Of course, we don't need to visit former colonized countries to pass judgment on the "other," to see ourselves as superior, or to try and reinvent ourselves. We can visit Rome and see the evils of unions when the whole country is on strike and no train leaves the train station. We can feel superior because of our home country's medical system, and we can vilify Britain's system of socialized medicine because we have heard how long the wait is in any of England's doctor's offices. Our perspectives, in other words, are never objective. As Barbara Korte (2000) points out, "Accounts of

travel … inevitably reveal the culture-specific and individual patterns of perception and knowledge which every traveller brings to the travelled world" (p. 5). For travel writers, then, the question is not whether we can objectively recount our experiences, but how we can find points of connections that will illuminate political, social, and cultural understandings, and that will allow us to explore our own preconceived notions while also paying attention to why these notions might limit our appreciation of religious practices, political systems, or cultural practices.

Limitations to efforts of finding such points of connection are often presented long before travel to another country begins. Travelers are often confronted with a myriad of preconceived notions about the country they will visit, and the people who will welcome them—or will dislike them. Comments are wide-ranging, but they express an opinion formed from a single trip, or from conversations with friends, or from media portrayals of the places in question:

> *"You'll love France. It's so beautiful. But be careful of the Parisians. They are so rude."*
> *"Why would you go to Bilbao? Isn't it an industrial city in the middle of the Basque country? Aren't you afraid of the terrorists?"*
> *"I'd love to go to Machu Picchu. It's such an amazing site."*
> *"I wouldn't go to Mexico right now. The drug cartels are everywhere. I heard this story on the news where an American got killed in the cross fire."*
> *"Where in Africa? Aren't they fighting a war right now?"*
> *"I have heard so much about a Safari tour. You'll get to stay in a tent that has everything you'd ever want to have. It looks just like this scene in* Out of Africa*."*

Such portrayals, and the assumptions they highlight, restrict our understanding of the complexity inherent in any culture that we visit. They also restrict our ability to arrive at a more cosmopolitan and postcolonial approach to travel writing. The wide brush strokes with which different cultures are often painted leave out the nuances that characterize the members of any community. In our own country, we take for granted that we will be seen as individuals living in a specific community, with commonalities but also with wide-ranging differences. We acknowledge what Susan Leigh Star (1991) points out in her efforts to show that culture is not a monolithic idea but a complex system. As she puts it, "we are all marginal in some regard, because we are all members of more than one community of practice and thus of many networks, at the moment of action we draw together repertoires mixed from different worlds." (p. 85).

If we emphasize that we are members in many communities and participate in many worlds, it is easier to question our own assumptions of a "one-size-fits-all" approach to peoples from different countries. It allows us to see cultures as "contact

zone." As Marie Louise Pratt (1992) points out, "A contact perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and 'travelees,' not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices" (p. 7).

Pratt's exploration of relations between subjects is especially useful if we understand that our differences do not separate us but instead allow us to get to know a person more closely. Similar to Young's (1997) concept of asymmetrical reciprocity, Pratt wants to ensure that even though we cannot know the other person, we can try to interact, and we can focus on overlapping interests. If we acknowledge asymmetrical reciprocity in our interactions, we need to approach each other with a sense of wonder in order to arrive at an "enlarged understanding of the world" (Young, 1997: 59). Without a sense of wonder for the new and unexpected, and a heightened knowledge of how we can make "moral and political judgments" (p. 59), we are prone to follow in the footsteps of colonial writing practices.

Ethical Virtues and Current-Day Contexts: An Example from the Present

When we travel, we bring with us what Pfister (1996) termed "preconceptions, prejudices, stereotypes, anticipations and preferences" (p. 4) that are based on our experiences, our understanding of the world around us, and our perceptions of what we will experience in our travels. For example, when we arrived in Bilbao, Spain, we were prepared to embrace an "enlarged understanding of the world." (Young, 1997: 59). We did not want to pass judgment without understanding a new community. We came as teachers who would share with our hosts what we knew about teaching American students, and we would learn different approaches to teaching from our host community. We embraced Iris Marion Young's (1997) concept of "egalitarian reciprocity," and we were curious about the new community that we called home for four months. We were eager to learn about Franco's dictatorship from those he ruled and from those he hated the most. We had read about the horrors of Gernika, but we knew that we had only learned a part of the history that was part of the daily lives of the Basque people in whose country we would live for four months. We were ready to learn more about ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna), the Basque separatist movement that to us was mainly a terrorist group whose attacks injured thousands and killed hundreds of innocent people. We were also eager to learn more about the daily life, food, cultural and community events, and about current political perspectives in Bilbao and surrounding areas.

Our interest in learning more about the new community that we were entering enabled us to accomplish what Susan Leigh Star (1991) encourages us to consider. We were able to "draw together repertoires mixed from different worlds" (p. 90) to arrive at

a new understanding of the culture, history, and the politics that defined our host country. We were told about the horrors that the Basque community experienced under Franco's reign. We met people who remembered when their father was taken to prison and never returned. We talked to people whose mother was on her way to the market when Gernika was brutally bombed by the German Luftwaffe and with Franco's support, on April 26, 1937, and who was, with thousands of other civilians, killed on that day. We met ETA supporters and ETA opponents, and we learned about ETA's long and complicated history from an activist student group that opposed Franco's dictatorship to a group that has been classified as a terrorist group by the European Union and the United States.

We saw ourselves as successfully participating in a new community because we expressed what Iris Marion Young (1997) calls a "sense of wonder" and what we considered curiosity in our host country's history, politics, and culture. We were happy to change our eating habits to fit those of the community we called home. We had lunch at 3:00 p.m., and dinner at 10:00 p.m., and we went out after dinner to join hundreds of Bilbao's children and adults for an evening stroll. We politely ate food that we would not eat at home because we were invited to people's homes and we wanted to express our appreciation for their efforts, whether it meant to eat mayonnaise with every dish, red meat, eel, or octopus.

What happens, however, when we consider it important to be accepting, curious, and open to new experiences, and when such a sense of wonder, as Iris Marion Young calls it, is not reciprocated? The people we met, and the people who invited us to dinner, did not show much interest in learning new perspectives about the United States, or about us. They wanted to show us who they were, and they wanted to make sure that we understood how difficult it was for them to survive under Franco. They also wanted to make sure that we realized how much better Basque food was to American food, and how much more cultured Basque people were compared to Americans. Our "education" about our own shortfalls as a country and as a people was conducted in Spanish (Castellano). And even though one of us is fluent in Spanish, it was considered the wrong, Latin-American Spanish. They were not worried that they might offend us with their racist comments about newly immigrated Africans, Chinese, or Latin Americans, even though they knew that one of us was Latina.

Our hosts knew us long before they got to know us. They were not interested in discussing language differences but instead saw the differences as "lack of understanding of correct Spanish." They didn't think they could learn from us because, to use a metaphor employed by Paulo Freire (1970), we were empty vessels that needed to be filled with information that only they could provide. We were not equals, but in their eyes we needed to be educated about what was right, in politics, history, and culture. In retrospect, we realized that they treated us like Harriet Martineau treated the

natives of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Our hosts might easily have repeated what Martineau wrote in her travel writing: "We do not agree with travelers who declare it necessary to treat these people with coldness and severity – to repel and beat them. We treated them as children; and this answered perfectly well" (1848: 50). We were indeed treated well – as children who needed to be told that U.S. politics are plain wrong, that our way of life in the U.S. is wrong, and that our education system leads to violence.

If we apply Mary Louise Pratt's (1992) concept of the contact zone, we did not achieve "copresence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices" because our efforts were one-sided. We did learn much, and our understanding of the culture in which we participated increased manifold. We were successful in practicing what we considered to be a cosmopolitan view of traveling—learning from the host country and appreciating difference without judging it as better or worse. We did not, however, get a chance to show that we are not as one-dimensional as our hosts thought we were—as a country and as individuals from that country. We failed to elicit interactions where, as Young (1997) points out, "we each must be open to learning about the other person's perspective." (p. 53). To our hosts, it was not important what we thought because they already knew more about the U.S. than we could know ourselves.

Looking back: Ethical Virtues Reconsidered

Our understanding of our travel experiences leads us back to Aristotle's definition of ethical virtues as complex rational, emotional and social skills. What is considered right and wrong, according to Aristotle, depends on politics, on historical events, on religious practices, and on social systems. Our ethical virtues change depending on changes in the system. Our ethical virtues at the time of our visit included the belief that interactions should be reciprocal. These ethical virtues, however, were different from the virtues practiced by our host community. From our perspective, reciprocity was necessary to make sure that we didn't engage in colonial and empire-building practices. From our host community's perspective, it was right and true that we needed to be schooled so that we could understand why U.S. politics are wrong. We do not agree with what we see as a one-dimensional perspective on who we, as individuals are. However, we do agree with Aristotle that ethical virtues are acquired in context, and that the U.S. context is different from the Basque context. We know that the Basque community strongly opposed the U.S. support of Franco, and clashed with the U.S.'s classification of ETA as a terrorist organization. The United States had a long history of being an opposing power to the Basque community, which contributed to our hosts' unwillingness to engage with us on a reciprocal basis.

On our next visit, our approach to learning about the people we meet and the cultures we enter might be different, and our host community might be more curious about the U.S. because their new experiences allow for different interactions. Barbara

Korte (2000) points out that “accounts of travel let us participate in acts of (inter)cultural perception and cultural construction, in processes of understanding and misunderstanding” (p. 5). The current exploration of past and present travels is a contribution to our quest for understanding intercultural communication in context, and understanding how rational, emotional and social skills are influenced by and influence our interactions during our travels and at home. As Maya Angelou (1993) tells us, “Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends” (12).

Summary
The article focuses on the importance of placing our writing in the context of what Aristotle terms "ethical virtues." This is especially important when writing about different communities and peoples, their customs, religions, histories, and language. After showing Aristotle's approach to ethical virtues, I use as an example the travel writing of Harriet Martineau, a nineteenth century British woman writer who used nineteenth century philosophy, economy, and social thought to express her views on the American women's movement and her aversion to slavery, and to express her attitudes toward colonialist behavior in her work on Eastern Life, Present and Past where she explores her views on Egypt, Palestine, Syria. To move the discussion to current-day writing, I show the importance of engaging in ethical representational travel writing to move away from the "genre of the empire" in current travel writing. I conclude by exposing assumptions in twenty-first century travel writing and providing a theoretical framework for applying ethics in travel writing that allow us to see the connections to other people without assuming that we can achieve symmetrical reciprocity in our interactions with people in our own communities or communities abroad. I refer back to Aristotle’s definition of ethical virtues as complex rational, emotional and social skills. What is considered right and wrong, according to Aristotle, depends on politics, on historical events, on religious practices, and on social systems. Our ethical virtues change depending on changes in the system.

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ЕТИЧКЕ ВРЛИНЕ, ЗОНЕ КОНТАКТА И РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЈА У ПУТОПИСНОЈ КЊИЖЕВНОСТИ: ИСТРАЖИВАЊА У ПРОШЛОСТИ И САДАШЊОСТИ

Резиме: Рад се фокусира на значај постављања књижевности у контекст онога што Аристотел назива „етичким врлинама”. Ово је посебно важно када се пише о различитим заједницама и народима, њиховим обичајима, религијама, историјама и језику. Након приказа Аристотеловог приступа етичким врлинама, као пример користим путописну прозу Харијет Мартино, британске списатељице из деветнаестог века. Она је помоћу филозофије, економије и друштвене критике деветнаестог века изразила своје мишљење о женском покрету у Америци; исказала је аверзију према робовласништву и колонијалистичком понашању у делу *Живот на истоку у прошлости и садашњости*, где је представила своје виђење Египта, Палестине, Сирије. Расправу потом преносим на савремену књижевност, показујем значај бављења етичком репрезентационом путописном књижевношћу ради удаљавања од „жанра империје” у данашњој путописној књижевности. Рад закључујем излагањем претпоставки путописне прозе двадесет

првог века и давањем теоријског оквира за примену етике у путописној књижевности, што нам омогућава да видимо везе са другим људима без претпостављања да можемо постићи симетричан реципроцитет у интеракцији са људима у нашим заједницама или заједницама изван наше земље. Поново се враћам Аристотеловој дефиницији етичких врлина као комплексним рационалним, емоционалним и друштвеним вештинама. Шта се сматра исправним и погрешним, према Аристотелу, зависи од политике, историјских догађаја, религиозне праксе и друштвених система. Наше етичке врлине се мењају у зависности од промена у систему.

Кључне речи: историјска путописна књижевност; Аристотелове етичке врлине; савремена путописна књижевност; колонијализам; зоне контакта; етичке врлине и путописна књижевност

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