ARTIGO

DEFINING OTHER LANDS[1]

DEFININDO OUTRAS TERRAS

CAROLINA DEPETRIS*

ABSTRACT
How do we know other Geographies? How do we define other lands? This article suggests some answers to this question by taking Patagonia as scenario starting with the arrival of Magellan in 1520 until mid nineteenth-century. In this process of building a geographic knowledge, I set out from the analysis of two legends: the Patagonian Giants and the City of Césares. Then, through a rhetorical analysis of some travel journals annotated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we shall see how these legends were replaced by a solid epistemological apparatus that clearly defines this geographic region and the way in which this epistemology correlates a precise discursive expression.
KEYWORDS: Geography; Rethoric; Patagonia; Patagonian Giants; City of Césares

RESUMO
Como conhecemos outras Geografias? Como definimos outras terras? Este artigo sugere algumas respostas a esta questão tomando a Patagônia como cenário a partir da chegada de Magalhães em 1520 até meados do século XIX. Neste processo de construção de um conhecimento geográfico, parti da análise de duas lendas: os Gigantes Patagônicos e a Cidade dos Césares. Depois, através de uma análise retórica de alguns diários de viagem anotados nos séculos XVIII e XIX, veremos como essas lendas foram substituídas por um sólido aparato epistemológico que define claramente essa região geográfica e a maneira pela qual esta epistemologia correlaciona uma expressão discursiva precisa.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Geografia; Retórica; Patagônia; Gigantes da Patagônia; Cidade dos Césares

Six years after Columbus' arrival in Guanahani, John Holywood describes America and its inhabitants in the following terms:

> In 1491, year of our Lord, our great King Ferdinand of Spain, sent experienced sailors to the Equatorial Occident to search for islands. When the navigators returned after nearly four months, they told about the many islands found in the Equator or near it. To prove this, they brought along a great deal of different exquisite bird species, several aromatic spices, and some gold; they also brought with them some natives from those regions. Those men were not tall, but they were well built, they laughed pleasantly and had a good disposition. They were also trustful and acquiescent, showing a considerable intelligence, blue in colour and with a square head.[2]

We know that fable and truth are continuously bound in textual spaces to turn imaginary topographies into other's real places. Nevertheless it is important that this mechanism should always be addressed towards far away and abstruse geographies barely perceived. It is in the unknown where it becomes stronger. These fabulous places and the string of legends and creatures that inhabit them, always move towards other lands: Far East, Africa, and Northern Europe, hence escaping from the known world.

Starting in the 15th Century, the huge mass of land that America represents, becomes the proper place for myths and legends to converge. Their common feature is the fact of being "wonderful". This category permits both, the Medieval and the Renaissance man to qualify the inexplicable, the strange and the superlative.

This imaginary, fantastic America co-exists, as time goes by and explorations advance, with a more real one. This is due to the effort of some kings such as Felipe II, who encourages the gathering of positive

data in his territories through Relaciones histórico-geográficas written by numerous travelers, and civil and religious authorities from different regions.

This news coming from the new place opens the gap between fable and truth. At the same time it corners all fantastic signs by means of an epistemological apparatus which becomes more and more solid, until it is definitively established in the second half of the 18th Century. This was carried on by a program instituted by the Borbon monarchs. Their purpose was to fortify their possessions in America, both politically and economically. Paradoxically, this will only be accomplished at the end of the Spanish Empire.

But it was not just the trace of myths that drove to the gradual revelation of America; its location on the globe was fundamental to impulse the exploratory travels. This was not so because of the promissory richness that this new land offered, but for the one that it forbade. It is known that the commercial objective of Europe in the Low Middle Ages and early Renaissance was the Far East. Europe, seeking for a new route, this time through the West, encounters a huge obstacle that blocks its way from North to South.

The first domestic sea voyages and also the first explorations inland, were guided by the need of finding a passage that might allow the crossing of the American barrier. An opening to what it is today the Pacific Ocean, and from there, continue until reaching those far away lands rich in silk and spices.

The first one to find such passage was Magallanes and it is he, who takes us for the first time to the lands we are here dealing with. In

1520 he touches the coasts of what is today Argentine Patagonia. Magallanes does not leave any testimony of his travel. However, there exists a written testimony of this first encounter between Europeans and

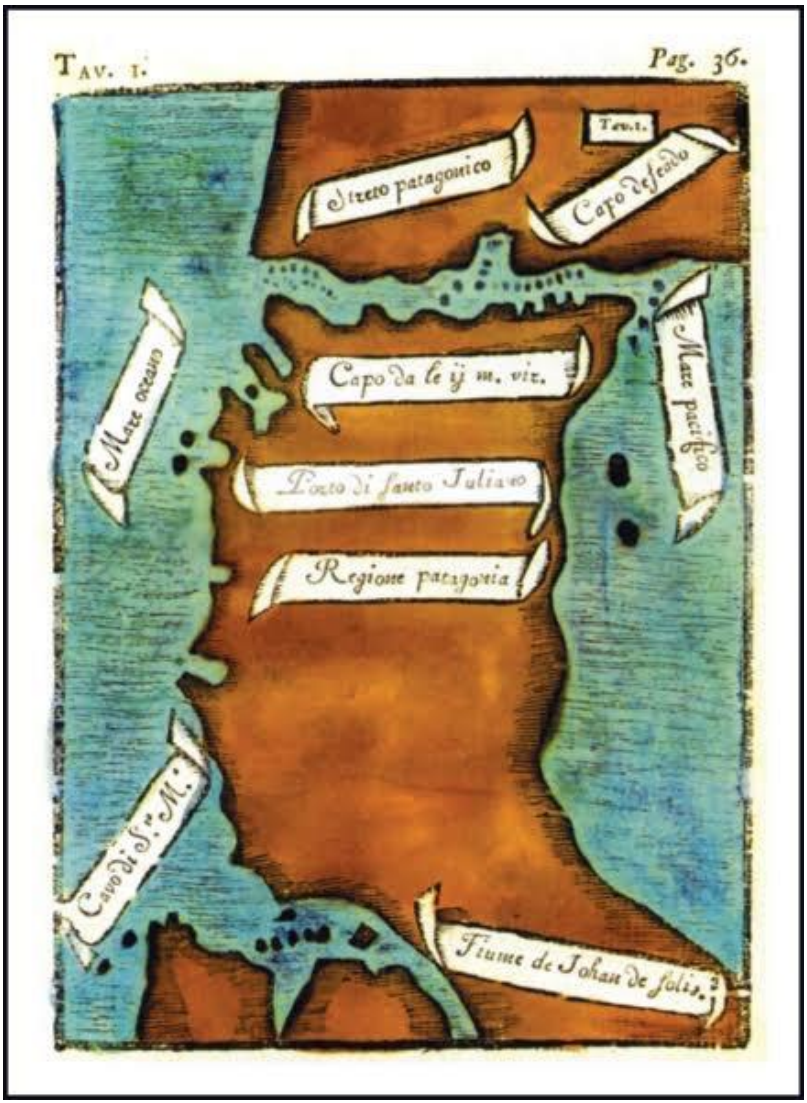

Figure 1 - First map of Patagonia, by Antonio Pigafetta

Patagonian aborigines in a most interesting and amusing book: The First Travel Around the world by Antonio de Pigafetta. The first image of Patagonia that Pigafetta depicts is almost a scheme, a precarious idea of what is nowadays the geographical representation of the region.

At present, when other lands are displayed for consultation at any computer, when a map can take us anywhere, when an atlas allows us to learn about the farthermost regions in the world, little do we think of the monumental effort that involves defining unknown lands. But, what happened since that moment in which Magallanes' crew saw Patagonia for the first time? How have we been able to reach an evident knowledge of this geography?

At the beginning, Patagonia, like the rest of America, shows itself as a region that starts getting outlined following the wake of some legends. Among some myths going around on these lands, there are two specially persistent: the one about the Patagonian Giants and the other one about La Ciudad de los Césares. Both suppose a first ethnographical and geographical attempt to define an alter region.

Legends of Giants and Captain César

Pigafetta writes:

> After abandoning those islands, we headed South, arriving as far as 49° 50', where we found harbour […] During two months we did not see a single living soul on that land; one day, all of a sudden a man appeared on the beach. He was gigantic in stature and practically naked. Then, while dancing and singing, he began to throw sand all over his head […] That man was so tall that we hardly reached his waist.[3]

In the 16th Century, giants were part of the European mental universe. They exist in the Bible, in Greek- Latin mythology,[4] and even in contemporary Literature, such as in satiric or cavalry. [5]

These giants assemble a very varied symbology, from entailing myths of Creation to fulfilling precise actantial functions (like being treasure guardians). Their semantics is logically well contrasted, since they may be dangerous or protective, good or bad, stupid or very clever. They themselves, are a mere quantitative magnification of the ordinary, just a representation of what may be colossal; this understood as what exceeds habitual dimensions regarding human beings. This is valid for both, shape and strength. In almost all traditions, this excess supposes the incursion of what is marvelous or even dreadful, into what is ordinary or quotidian. Nevertheless, they always preserve, even in the second case, certain aspect of inferiority or submission, specially in the narrations where they fight against heroes. They are, in general, isolated characters (Goliath, Og, Atlas, Hercules are good examples of this), although sometimes they appear in groups, as it happens with cyclops or titans. This was the case in Patagonia. At first the giants were pointed at as individual beings, but a whole ethnical group -the tehuelche tribes- was soon identified as such.

Vespucio, who was believed to have reached some point in the southern hemisphere, and who may have even touched the Patagonian coasts, writes in his letter dated July 18th of the year 1500, addressed to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici, that in his trip they had found seven extremely tall women, and that all of them were taller than he was by at least a palm and a half, and that then, thirty-six men came. These men

"were so tall that each one of them on his knees, was taller than I was standing" (1983, 16). In 1579, Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, crossing Magellan's Strait, declares that "the natives in that province […] were big people" (1988, 121), and calls them repetitively "giants".

Based on these testimonies and on an encyclopedia formed by different bookish sources, Europe in the 16th Century, was absolutely convinced that a nation composed by huge people, existed in the southern tip of the American continent. This evidence remains until the 18th Century is well advanced, as it may well be seen on the following comparative table regarding statures attributed to Patagonians.[6]

HEIGHT OF THE PATAGONIAN GIANTS (average height of the European man, 1.60 m)	SOURCES AND EPOCHS
"Taller on his knees than I standing": 2.13m	A. Vespucio (1500)
"That man was so tall that we barely reached his knees": 2.13m	A. Pigafetta (1519)
"Twice as large as the largest man in all Europe": 3.65m	J. Alfonse (1559)
3.35 m	A. Thevet (1575)
3.12 m	J.Jane Kniver (Cavendish) (1592)
3.04 m	Sebald de Weert (1598)
2.74 m	Le Maire Schouten (1615)
2.74 m	Carman (1704)
2.74 m	J. Byron (1764)

1.82 m	Duclos – Guyot Chesnard de la Giraudais (1766)
1.82 m	Bougainville Nassau-Siegen (1766)

It is in this last century precisely, when legend ends up by giving a name to the region with the work of the missionary Thomas Falkner who traveled around Southern Argentina. He entitled his testimony Description of Patagonia and adjacent parts of Meridional America (1774).

In 1778, the third edition of the Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers by Diderot and D'Alembert is published. In the second volume two articles devoted to the term "America" appear. The first one was signed by "D.P.", and the second one by "E". The first one seems to be Abbot Corneille de Paw; the second one may be Abbot de la Chapelle. De Paw, in his article of the Encyclopedia as well as in Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, is one of the most radical exponents in what was known as "the Dispute of the New World". Bestiality, degeneration and laziness in the American man are insistently pointed out by De Paw. One of the most indolent races is precisely the Patagonian one. And, when speaking of Patagonians, with the typical illustrated confidence in a positive reason, De Paw definitively ends up with the legend about this people:

> Only some blind love for what is wonderful may have been capable of spreading this type of scandalous and irritating fables that speak of a gigantic species found in Magellan's lands, which at present are being called Patagonia. The most reasonable travelers […] who

> have had some kind of contact with Patagonians, present them as regular sized men.[7]

Last, in 1831, young Darwin boards the HMS Beagle under the captainship of Fitz Roy. In January 1834, Darwin faces his first encounter with one of "the famous so called gigantic Patagonians". Cautious, Darwin admits that, in fact, they belong to a race with high average stature and built. Those dimensions were also made more conspicuous by certain "scenographic" effects.

> Their height appears greater than it really is, from their large guanaco mantles, their long flowing hair, and general figure: on an average their height is about six feet, with some men taller and only a few shorter; and the women are also tall: altogether they are certainly the tallest race which we anywhere saw.[8]

Fitz Roy backs up this picture with a graphic support somehow simian and squalid which does not do much justice to Darwin's description.[9] On the contrary, a photograph by Lewis Jones, a Welsh colonist from Patagonia complies with Darwin's description. He appears surrounded by tehuelches, ca.1867, and although the photograph offers and evident pattern of comparison, he may slyly be seen seated among the standing aborigines.[10]

The César's city myth is almost contemporary to that of the giants. It was born a little after the La Plata River had been discovered by Juan Díaz de Solís. In 1527, Sebastiano Caboto reaches the La Plata River while searching for the biblical lands Tarsis and Ofir, rich in treasures. He finds two survivors of the Solís' expedition, who had reached the river in 1515 while looking for the famous passage leading to the Pacific Ocean. Caboto hears that sailing upstream the Paraná River one would get to a low

mountain rich in gold and silver, and decides in 1529, to go after those lands.

With that purpose, he sends Captain Francisco César with fourteen men. César does not find these lands, but asseverates that there exist others of huge richness about which he had been told by some Indians from the Cuyo area. The legend crosses Argentina from the eastern coastal forests as far as the Andes in the West. This city rich in treasures starts being recognized as the City of the Césares or Trapaland.

Once sited in the Andean region, this legend branches out in two directions: towards the North, where the City of the Césares diluted into the wealth of the Incan world; and southward to Patagonia, where the legend strengthened, generating a new one: that one of the White Césares.

The White Césares were supposed to be some Spanish shipwrecked sailors who, after having sunk in the Magellan Strait, found a fertile valley and founded there a city inhabited only by them. Since the 16th Century, numerous expeditions were sent to find this city located in some uncertain place in the Argentine-Chilean Patagonia. The existence of this city, remained unquestionable until the end of the 18th Century.

In the first tome of the Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la Historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Río de la Plata, Pedro de Ángelis compiles a series of documents about Trapaland which he entitles: "Derroteros y viages a la ciudad encantada de los Césares que se creía existiese en la cordillera, al sud de Valdivia" ("Routes and Travels to the Enchanted City or the City of the Caesars that was believed to exist in the Andes, south of Valdivia"). In this docket, Silvestre Antonio de Roxas

describes this city in 1707. This news was notified at the time to the Spanish Court in Madrid as follows:

> On the other bank of this large river lies the city of the Spanish Caesars, on a populated plain longer than the usual square side, similar to that of Buenos Aires plan. It has beautiful temples and carved stone houses well roofed, just like houses in Spain; in most of them they have indians at their service and for the work in their plantations. Those indians are Christians [...] To the North and the West, they have the snowed mountain range of the Andes where they exploit lots of gold and silver minerals, and also copper; towards the Southwest and West, in the direction of the mountain range, their fields with ranches having lots of major and minor cattle appear, as well as many small farms where abundant grains and vegetables are harvested; they are ornamented with cedars, poplars, orange trees, oaks and palm trees with a profusion of very tasty fruits [...] Towards the South at about a distance of two leagues, the sea awaits providing them with seafood, fish and shellfish. Their temperament is the best in all the Indies; they are so healthy and fresh that people die of pure old age. None of the diseases which may be found in other parts of the world exist there [...] No one is to believe exaggerated what is here referred, since it is pure truth, as I can assure to have gone over these places and touched them with my own hands.[11]

The legend conjugates with another coveted land since the Middle Ages, which was also autarkic, isolated, non temporal: the land of Preste Juan, where "honey flows and milk is abundant", where "poisons lose their power and the funny frog does not croak".[12] The reign of Father John, presumptively located in the Middle East and then in Ethiopia, is a Christian relict in an infidel land. A comforting legend after all the Crusade attempts to recover Jerusalem. The City of the Césares, like the land of Priest John, is nothing but the quintessence of a utopian place, since it has

an ideal internal organization, is Christian, is zealously isolated, and is detained in a prosperous time. And above all, what stands out in Roxas' description is that through the City of Césares, Patagonia appears like a very fertile place, "a second Garden of Eden" - as Falkner says- with warm climate, abundance and richness of an Arcadian and idyllic nature, of a golden time where not even illness exist and everyone dies of old age. All this is stated, although this land is actually a region submitted to an extreme climate and a harsh orography.

Then, in the 19th Century, the City of Césares will be abandoned as a geographical certainty, and will become in the 20th Century a literary motive, like in the story "La ciudad encantada" (The Enchanted City) that Manuel Mujica Láinez includes in Misteriosa Buenos Aires.

What has undoubtedly influenced in the tenacious persistence of these two Patagonian legends has been the numerous testimonies of "ocular witnesses" of the giants and of the wealthy city. Pigafetta begins his narration by saying: "I knew that sailing in the Ocean, admirable things might be observed. I was determined to make sure through my own eyes, that all that was told was true, so as to be able to relate my travel to others".[13] Sarmiento de Gamboa associates this fact of "seeing" to truth, just as it is ascertained by the royal notary of the Navy who accompanies him:

> And I, Juan de Esquivel, royal notary of this Navy and flagship of his Majesty, attest and certify that I was present during all this travel and at the discovery of the Mother of God Strait, previously called Magellan Strait, and that I saw it.[14]

Falkner, like Roxas, sustains that he not only saw the City of the Césares, but that he walked around and through it and touched it as well: "Everything that is here referred to, is not overstated or exaggerated in any way, but only pure truth of what exists there, since I myself, have wandered all over it and have seen it and even touched it with my very own hands". [15]

So, when the time comes to start delimiting an unknown or practically ignored space until then, it appears as an epistemological clause the fact of "seeing with one's own eyes", cardinal axiom to support the truth of those geographical news that travelers give about their journeys.

Observation is one of the fundamental activities in every geographical expeditionary travel. This clause gets linked with two others, thus completing the objective of this type of land and sea courses: the traveler perceives a topography and represents it (verbally and iconologically) to transmit in this way what he has seen, to all those who have not but want to learn about that place.

In sum, the traveler sees a place, represents it in a text and in images, and by means of diaries, reports, collections of harbour plans, and schemes, makes it knowledgeable to others.

Up till the 18th Century, stating "this exists, and it is so because I have seen it" was true enough, in spite of travelers describing creatures and places that did not really exist. Since the 18th Century "seeing with one's own eyes", will not be enough to sustain the evidence of testimonies. These "eye witnesses" will have to adjust not only to some specific way of observation, but also of writing, in order that the geographical knowledge that they transmit should result trustful, reliable, believable and true.

It is true that myths and legends functioned like the real motor of geographical learning in America and that if the new continent was defined in these precarious contours relatively fast, it was due to this epistemic impulse that involves the bond between myth and science. Nevertheless, the 18th Century will not only promote the geographical knowledge clearing up in this way, more and more the legend spaces, but will also take special care in concreting an epistemology. Hence, taking Patagonia as the chosen scenery, I am going to review how an 18th Century Geography is perceived and learnt, and how this knowledge articulates with discourse. With that purpose, I will use different travel journals and diaries compiled in the six volumes of the Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la Historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Rio de la Plata by Pedro de Ángelis.

Writing other territories

In the 18th Century, the Spanish Crown, confronts serious problems in its American lands. British, French, Russians and Dutch men, start invading these territories. These invasions clearly showed that the north of what is Mexico today, and the south of Argentina and Chile, were two vulnerable spots in the empire. Both territories had a very extended geography which, at the same time, was very little known and poorly populated by Creoles and Spaniards. All these were conditions that curbed the economic development of both areas. The Borbon Kings, specially Charles III and Charles IV, take care of this problem by sending a great number of expeditions to these latitudes. Their mission was to define if it was worth fortifying the frontiers, or if on the contrary these regions

should be abandoned, because they only represented great expenses and no profits at all to the Royal Treasury.

Today we know how fiercely these monarchs encouraged the scientific travels in Spanish America, and how much they enlarged by these means the knowledge on important matters, specially regarding Natural History. But it is also important to consider, that behind these enterprises there is a strong economic interest, an inveterate conviction that scientific knowledge is closely related to material progress. Therefore, the Crown did not hesitate. After précising the topography of both, the Septentrional and the Meridional borders in their American Empire, they decided to defend to northern lands of New Spain because they were rich in mineral quarries, and to abandon the Patagonian establishments considered commercially unfruitful.

But, how does the King in the 18th Century get to have a clear and evident image of his far away possessions so as to make a political decision regarding their destiny? It is here where a chain of communication going from the first perception of a place to its representation and knowledge, opens up. Under the King's orders, a series of expeditionary missions travel over certain areas with precise instructions regarding what to observe and even how to do it. These travelers write down in their diaries, what they perceive in their journeys, and then send this information to Viceroys and other authorities who, at their time, condense it before sending it to the Indies Minister, who, in turn, communicates it to the King. A clear example of this dynamics may be found in the Informe del Virrey Vértiz para que se abandonen los establecimientos de la costa

Patagónica (Report by Viceroy Vértiz advising to abandon the establishments on the Patagonian coasts).

The Yucatecan Juan José de Vértiz was the King's Representative in the La Plata River Viceroyalty in 1778. In 1883, after gathering a great deal of news coming from various travelers who had explored Patagonia, he sends the above mentioned report to José de Gálvez, who was at the time a minister of Charles III. In this formal record, his advice is to abandon the Patagonian establishments, which he himself under José de Galvez's orders, had founded along the coast in 1779.

The epistemic and rhetoric rules of the diaries that travelers write, are condensed in this document. Firstly, these expeditionary travels have as objective "the appraisal of those territories, the quality of land and water, temperament, timber, lumbering and harbor".[16] This first objective defines the basic scheme of what is registered in a travel journal: courses, distances, topographic accidents, quality of the land, whether there are pastures or not, if there are timber and watering places, all of them necessary conditions to establish practicable commercial routes and found villages and forts. Secondly, the travelers in charge of these expeditions are "impartial subjects" who examine the explored territories and are "intelligent at port entries, anchoring grounds and all other circumstances".[17] Thirdly, these travelers give "news and reports" of their observations through journals, diaries and maps where "they give appraisal and knowledge" of the land, and "pass judgment" upon what has been commissioned to them.[18]

In this way, through all the information received from the travelers, the Viceroy synthesizes the data in a representation of an absent

environment, and declares that in Patagonia, harbors are unsafe and difficult to enter, that land is arid and hard to cultivate, that there the soil is deserted, and that safety is uncertain because of " the many infidel Indian nations". [19] Finally, he advises to abandon the Patagonian establishments because they do not entail a profitable investment to the Crown. This piece of advice is received by Minister Gálvez. He approves of it, after the previous consent of Charles III.

All this chain of communication draws the configuration of a determined geography by means of specific ways of observation and verbal registry of a territory. This geographic and rhetoric episteme is defined, as some signs in Vértiz's report already show, in the frame of Illustration.

When it comes to the configuration of other geographies, the travelers' diaries do not comply with a mere informative or anecdotic function, but with an essentially cognitive one. Basically, this means that they set up a relationship between a cognitional subject and an object to be known through vision.

We have seen that Patagonian giants and the City of Césares, existed in the European imaginary, because they had been seen by numerous travelers. Nevertheless, we have also seen how these myths lose their power in the second half of the 18th Century. This is so, because to the illustrated thought "seeing" itself, is not anymore a sufficient means to know the physical world. The illustrated reason is that one that gets divorced from authorities, dogmas, myths, and traditions, in order to defend the autonomy of thought which will not only be scientific as long as intelligence is used adequately. In the 18th Century "the adequate use of

intelligence" is understood as an adjusted inductive articulation of reasoning derived from experience. Thus, in Illustration, "seeing" is not enough "to know". "Seeing" has to be performed in a certain manner. There exists a precise epistemology of "seeing" that Viceroy Vértiz defines as "impartial".

In this frame of reference, by "impartial subjects" I understand two things: that the traveler's observation is controlled by a powerful scientific realism derived from an exterior and neutral positioning of the subject facing the object; and that within the cognitive relationship subject / object, it is the second one the one which controls the first one excluding any a priori in this relationship. Therefore, in principle, impartiality refers to "objectivity", that is to say, a distance between the subject and the object, some not being of what is observed in the beholder and, inversely, a non projection of the subject on the observed object. The traveler lacks the capacity of any meaning and interpretation whatsoever, and the object is perceived from the outside as a "natural" reality.

Philosophically, impartiality finds its most clear formulation in Locke's "white paper". It is John Locke in book I of his Essay on human understanding who sustains that in order to reach a true knowledge upon something, every previous concept regarding any sensitive experience experimented in the cognitive relation, has to be erased:

> Let's assume that our mind is, as it is usually said, a blank board or paper, clean and free from any impression whatsoever, with no idea on it at all. How do these ideas come to the mind? […] Where from does it take all the material regarding knowledge and reason? To this, I answer with one single word: EXPERIENCE. It is in it where our knowledge has its foundations. It ultimately derives from it. Our observation applied to sensitive external objects or to

> the internal operations of the mind that we perceive and submit to reflection, is the one that furnishes our intellect with all the necessary materials for the act of thinking.[20]

In the 18th Century, we may clearly see how the epistemic function of the witness begins to be precised. Basically, the witness is not a mere mediator between the phenomena that could not be directly observed, and the persons who had no access to that particular observation. Now, so as to offer a reliable testimony, the witness is required to adjust observation to experimentation.

At the time, that was understood as "making things speak about things on a basis different from common knowledge; on mathematical, instrumental or experimental basis".[21] It is only through this observational model, that the witness, starting from data derived from experience and, following an inductive line of reasoning, may be able to reach a kind of knowledge non susceptible of being submitted to doubt. That is to say, an evident knowledge.

We see that according to Vértiz's report and to his proposal of impartiality, the expeditionary diaries of the 18th Century follow this direction which started with English empiricism.[22] However, the impartiality defended by Vértiz is still an illusion sustained by a series of rhetoric resources. All this takes place is spite of Vértiz's leaning on an epistemology more and more solidly attached to modern science.

To start with, in these expeditionary diaries, the call for experience is extreme. Diaries are written down in a chronological order. In this way, any concept which might be prospectively anticipated to the observation instant, is eliminated. The traveler does not know what he will see one kilometer ahead. He only takes down in his diary the things he sees at the

precise moment he sees them (with an accurate localization of the day, time and coordinates) and just in the way they came in sight. However, this diachronic registration does not imply the existence of succession regarding time. In these diaries two verb tenses are basically used: the Simple Past Tense to refer the journeys ("after I ordered to settle down, I climbed up a small dune…"), and the Simple Present to write down about the characteristics of the environment ("the fields are excellent and good"). The use of these two verb tenses suggests: firstly, that the use of the Simple Past indicates that a double writing operates in those texts: the diarist puts down what he sees and when he sees it, and later on, probably in his resting time, he puts that information in order; secondly, the traveler writes about what he has already seen, but he presents it in the immediacy of the present, pretending that what has been observed during the journey, is present, is there when the diarist writes about it in his diary and when the reader reads it.

Therefore, although there is a chronological writing of what is observed, there is not really a temporal sequence in what is written down. Writing in Simple Present what has already been seen, props the non anticipation of the concept at the moment of experimentation, fact that Illustration promotes, and it also casts the illusion that what is observed, directly or indirectly, exists because it is always present before the person who sees it and the one who reads about it.

This impartiality may also be seen in the continuous use of impersonal stating clauses, specially in the use of Passive Voice, and the majestic plural "we": "We were not able to observe", "We surveyed the area", "We set off…", "…was observed", "a lagoon was found", and so

on. In the 18th Century diaries, it does not matter who speaks or whatever happens to him in his exploratory travels. What really matters is the scenery of that trip, the space the explorer covers, showing it as he goes over those territories, as if it were a canvas, generating a clear image of it all. But, it does not exist in the discourse a way of showing something that would not require a sintagmatic development, that would not present the need of a stating voice to articulate a succession of sentences.

Illusion lies in generating what Barthes call "reality effect". This is a strong pretense of mimesis defined in Genette's formula: "Tell the most possible and tell it the least possible", meaning by this, that in the exercise of describing something, the writer must tell about it in the most possible thorough way, while "showing" himself or his participation in the least possible way. That is to say, turn the discourse into a firm simulation that what is being told is told by itself, that nobody is directing it.

Every discourse, including these diaries that have a strong demand for reality, needs a teller who is the one to select among many semantic possibilities, and who then sets them in a time sequence by means of words and sentences. Impartiality requires, epistemologically speaking, that the object be the one to control the cognitive relationship. This knowledge turned into discourse, speaks of a representation that demands for maximum information through a minimum participation of the informer. This is just a rhetoric illusion that tries to abolish the distance existing between vision and diction, thus generating the impression that it is there where Geography meets directly with its own expression.

The illustrated impartiality that in the 18th Century the diaries of geographical expeditions promote, finds in description its adequate

discoursive mode. Every discourse is articulated by means of narrations and descriptions. We may say that in the diaries it is through narrations that travel events are told and that it is through description that we understand what has been observed in the itinerary. Both existing, diaries always stress the second one because it neither really matters the event of the travel itself, nor do the emotions awakened in the traveler by the course of action. What does matter, is the traveled space and what is wanted to be shown of it.

The possibility of building the image of a certain geography by means of discourse is the competence of description, because that is its rhetorical function: to generate the image of something that later may be shown through words. The basic descriptive scheme of a diary implies, as we have already said, the registration of courses, distances, and land accidents. This information is articulated into a predictive series of the particularities of the depicted object. This is done according to an expansive order that recognizes in paratactic forms (that is to say: lists, inventories, catalogues, enumeration) its adequate profile. Let us see, what Lozano says about the minerals that he found in Puerto Deseado:

> There is abundance of "barilla", to make glass and soap: abundance of red marble with white stripes, black marble and some other green one: a great deal of limestone and some large shotgun flint boulders, white and red in colour with some little mirrors inside that look like diamonds, lots of millstone and another yellow one that resembles vitriol.[23]

In this citation, what is visible is organized as a list that only ends when observation ceases. Patagonian topography is configured like a radial display of its constitutive parts: each mineral conforms the geology of

Puerto Deseado which in turn forms the topography of the Patagonian coast, which in the end defines the geography of Patagonia. This coordination is synecdochic because the parts define the whole, and this inclusive rhetoric, where what is general is defined through its particular features, reflects the inductive logic that Illustration promotes.

Behind this description of realistic and paratactic logic, hides a strong lexical conception of language. As it happens with every taxonomic statement, the reality mentioned in discourse does not admit any semantic instability and promotes the illusion that language is a neutralized means that unites meaning and referent in a natural way, without any mediation. From this characteristic it is possible to suppose that the diaries are not really reading texts, but consulting ones, just like dictionaries and encyclopedias are. This taxonomic function is addressed to building a for ever available memory fund. However, to promote the memorable potency of description, it is not enough to name, or call a place, or even to describe it. A space comes to be, through repetition, through textual recurrence.

Diaries may result boring when one reads them, due to the insistent reiteration of collected data, but it is also true that it is this anaphoric effect the one which permits reaching a determinant knowledge. In the diaries written by commissioned travelers appointed by Vértiz, it is the anaphoric display in relation to Patagonian aridity what generates in the Viceroy the certainty that the land in this region is desertic and nonproductive, and that it is more convenient to abandon this geography than to keep it.

Finally, through and inductive logic and the effect of reality that impartiality bears, these diaries accomplish the rhetoric functionalism of every description, which is to generate an image of the object that has been described through discourse.

A correct description is that one that allows the emitter, by means of words, to get his addressee to see the described extratextual referent. So does Quintiliano say in Intitutio oratoria: "Multum confert adiecta veris credibilis rerum imago, quae velut in rem praesentem perdurece audientis videtur" (It contributes a lot to make things believable, to put an image that may make it present to the listeners).[24] This is what Quintiliano understands in rhetoric by "evidence", and this is also the rhetoric functionalism of the description that diaries promote. Deeply subjected to the referent, the diary grammar is directed to construct an evident reality of a direct and immediate presence addressed to a subject, the reader.

In this construction of unknown geographies, each moment of human history has supposed a route towards certainty, where legends, thought, science and words have sustained a monumental work in design and knowledge of other's reality. In this process, the search for a geographical truth, has always been accompanied by illusion: firstly, a bookish illusion linked to myths and legends which are itching regarding curiosity; then epistemological certainties supported by rhetoric simulations. The truth is that between both extremes, truth and illusion have joined so that uncertain contours drawn by Pigafetta, should turn, as years went by, this conic region located between 40 and 55 degrees latitude South of the American continent, into what is today unmistakable Patagonia.

Notas

* Investigadora titular A de tiempo completo en el Centro Peninsular en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Miembro del Sistema Nacional de Investigadores de México

[1] Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Papiit IG400116 and Conacyt CB 253921. I want to specially thank prof. Elizabeth Merino for her assistance in the translation of this paper. E-mail: carolina.depetris@gmail.com

[2] Cited in ROJAS MIX, M. América imaginaria. Barcelona: Lumen, 1992, p. 5.

[3] PIGAFETTA, A. Primer viaje alrededor del mundo. Buenos Aires: El Elefante Blanco, 2001, p. 41.

[4] They exist in fact in nearly every mythology, perhaps in all of them. The tablets of the Poem of Gilgamesh, for instance, were found and deciphered only in 1845, although in this Sumerian poem, Humbaba, the first giant in known mythical accounts, appears. The poem itself has been of great influence in biblical and classical narrations, like in the Odyssey for example.

[5] In María Rosa Lida's opinion, in early Renaissance there existed a cavalry novel which hero, Primaleón, confronted a giant called Patagón (cited in NAVARRO FLORIA, P. Historia de la Patagonia. Buenos Aires: Ciudad Argentina, 1999, p. 34).

[6] This table is based on the one published by DUVIOLS, J-P. **L'Amérique espagnole vue et rêve**. Les livres de voyages de Chistophe Colomb à Bougainville. s/r: Promodis, 1985, p. 70, which on its turn had been taken from Alcide d'Orbigny, L'homme américain, 1839.

[7] DIDEROT ET D'ALEMBERT. **Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences et des Métiers, par une Société des Gens de Lettres**. VI, II. Genève and Neufchatel: Jean-Léonard Pellet et Société Typographique, 1778, p. 349.

[8] DARWIN, C. **Journal of researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of H.M.S.** Beagle roud the world. London: John Murray, 1860, p. 232.

[9] See photograph in British Library archive.

[10] See https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/14092

[11] ROXAS, S. Derrotero de un viage desde Buenos Aires á los Césares, por el Tandil y el Volcan, rumbo de sud-oeste, comunicada á la corte de Madrid, en 19707, por Silvestre Antonio de Roxas, que vivió muchos años entre los indios Peguenches. In: ÁNGELIS, P. DE. **Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Rio de la Plata**. VI, I. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del estado, 1836, p. 5.

[12] LALANDA, J. **La carta del Preste Juan**. Madrid: Siruela, 2004, p. 91.

[13] PIGAFETTA, A. op. cit., p. 235.

[14] SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA, P. **Viajes al estrecho de Magallanes**. Madrid: Alianza, 1988, p. 195.

[15] FALKNER, T. Derrotero desde la ciudad de Buenos Aires hasta la de los Césares, que por otro nombre llaman la Ciudad Encantada, por el P. Thomas Falkner, jesuita (1760).

In: ÁNGELIS, P. DE. **Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Rio de la Plata**. VI, I. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del estado, 1836, p. 26.

[16] Informe del Virey Vertiz, para que se abandonen los establecimientos de la costa patagonica. In: ÁNGELIS, P. DE. **Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Rio de la Plata**. VI, V. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del estado, 1837, p. 123.

[17] Ibid. 122.

[18] Idem.

[19] Ibid., 124.

[20] LOCKE, J. **Ensayos sobre el entendimiento humano**. México: Porrúa, 1999, p. 91.

[21] GUILLAUMIN, G. **El surgimiento de la noción de evidencia**. México: UNAM, 2005, p. 267.

[22] Even before with Novum Organum by Bacon, and with Descartes' Discourse on Method, works which break with the Aristotelian syllogism as a reasoning model.

[23] LOZANO, P. Diario de un viage a la costa de la mar magallanica en 1745, desde Buenos Aires hasta el estrecho de Magallanes; formado sobre las observaciones de los PP. Cardiel y Quiroga. In: ÁNGELIS, P. DE. **Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia Antigua y Moderna de las provincias del Rio de la Plata**. VI, I. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del estado, 1836, p. 7.

[24] QUINTILIANO. **Instituciones oratorias**. Madrid: Imprenta de Perlado Páez y Cía., 1911, IV, II, p. 123.