

Liliana Sikorska*

Homo Viator, or on the Motif of Journeys in Medieval and Modern Texts**

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/LC.2019.010>

Abstract: Medieval Christians perceived themselves as pilgrims, or *peregrini*, with the concept of pilgrimage identified as the emblem of an individual life's journey. Thus, for medieval people traveling in time and space had a spiritual dimension. They journeyed not to be amused but to be spiritually enriched. The aesthetics of travel has recently acquired the status of a popular subject. Together with the rise of post-colonial studies, contemporary literary criticism has taken pains to discuss the issues related to the discovery of new lands and the exploration of hitherto unexplored territories. The present article is a voice in this debate as it investigates the notion of *homo viator*, man as a "traveling animal"¹. It analyzes the seemingly contentious concepts of the aesthetics and didacticism of travel found in medieval and contemporary literature in English. In what follows, I will discuss three types of medieval voyages: the final passage, the anchoritic journey within oneself, and the expedition of exploration as manifested in drama, mystical treatises and (the Saracen) romances and their respective renditions by modern authors.

Keywords: pilgrimage, travel narrative, Saracen romances, anchoress

* Professor, M.A. Ph.D., D. Litt Professor of English Literature and head of the Department of Literature and Literary Linguistics at the Faculty of English Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. E-mail: sliliana@wa.amu.edu.pl.

** The first version of this paper was delivered at the session in Toruń dedicated to the 30th (and 70th as the first English Department was opened there in 1946) anniversary of the Department of English at Nicolaus Copernicus University. Kazuo Ishiguro and Robyn Cadwallader both asked me to pass on their greetings to the Polish scholars (used by permission of the authors). I would like to dedicate the paper to Professor Mirosława Buchholtz, Head of the Department of English at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Her knowledge, boundless energy and enthusiasm influence not only those who work with her on an everyday basis but also those, like myself, who admire her efforts and successes from afar. To all my friends and colleagues at the Department of English in Toruń: Many happy returns!

¹ The explanation of the topos is offered by Chew (2007); later renditions and revisions of the motif are discussed by Tucker (2003).

Homo Viator, czyli o motywie podróży w średniowiecznych i współczesnych tekstach w języku angielskim

Streszczenie: Średniowieczni chrześcijanie postrzegali siebie jako pielgrzymów, *peregrini*, a idea pielgrzymki była dla nich emblematem indywidualnej wędrówki przez życie. Stąd dla ludzi średniowiecza podróże w czasie i przestrzeni miały wymiar pokutny i dydaktyczny. Wojażowali oni nie dla rozrywki, lecz dla stawy duchowej. Poprzez związki z krytyką postkolonialną estetyka peregrynacji i eksploracji tego, co nieznanne stała się w ostatnich latach załączkiem nowego podejścia nie tylko do samych pielgrzymek, ale też wielu różnych typów narracji podróżniczych. Niniejszy artykuł jest głosem w tej debacie i stara się pokazać wieloznaczność pojęcia podróży, ich estetycznych i dydaktycznych aspektów na podstawie trzech typów wędrówek średniowiecznych: tzw. ostatniej drogi Każdego, wejścia w głąb własnej duszy anachoretki oraz eksploracji Wschodu, jakie znajdujemy kolejno w dramacie, wyznaniach mistyczek, oraz romansach saraceńskich. Te trzy średniowieczne formy narracyjne są ukazane w kontekście ich wykorzystania we współczesnej literaturze w języku angielskim.

Słowa kluczowe: pielgrzymka, narracja podróżnicza, romans saraceński, anachoretki

Introduction

“**I** pray you all give audience / And hear this matter with reverence”². This is how one of the most popular and universal plays of the Middle Ages begins. A medieval dramatic work such as the morality play of *Everyman* customarily included a short outline of the plot, followed by the tirade of a fairly disenchanted God concerning the manifold sins and offences of Mankind. The prologue was to prepare the audience for what they were about to see. The play itself, although saturated with medieval definitions of sin, reverberated with concepts of time and memory, strangely reminiscent of the ideas verbalized by John Lydgate (1370–1449) in the “Prologue” to his translation of Guillaume de Deguileville’s (1295–before 1358) *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*: “Trusteth there-for, ye folk of euery age, / That yowre lyff her ys but a pilgrimage; / ffor lyke pylgrymes we passe to and ffro, / whose loye ys euere meynt A-mong with wo. / Al worldly blysse, medyld ys with stryff; / ffor ay the cours of thys mortal lyff” (*Trust therefore you folks of every age that your life here is but a pilgrimage, for like the pilgrims we are tossed to and from and our life is a mixture of joys and woes. All worldly bliss is always mixed with strife for that is the course of this mortal life* [Lydgate 1996: 2], translation mine, L. S.). In many ways, the metaphor of life as a journey, as well as various of life’s journeys, are the leitmotifs of the following paper as each of the following parts represents

² All subsequent quotations come from the edition of *Everyman*. In: G. A. Lester (ed.). *Three Late Medieval Plays: Mankind, Everyman, Mundus et Infans*. London 1999 [1981], p. 63, ll. 1–2.

a different type of traveling both real and figurative, through medieval and modern literary works: through drama, mystical treatises and the Saracen romances. The three parts, or in a more medieval fashion, “books”, illustrate various forms of dialogue between medieval and modern texts.

Journeying is one of the most potent metaphors in medieval culture. Following St. Paul’s statement, medieval people saw themselves as *peregrini*, their life on earth but a short flight towards eternity. The literary and theatrical representation of the process dramatizes Christian repentance³. The linear progression in time, unimportant in the great scheme of things, was nevertheless treated as an opportunity for humans to prove their worth, their devotion to God and the Church. If they failed to do this, one way to atone for one’s sins was, once again, a penitential journey. The emergence of the concept of Purgatory, which unlike Heaven and Hell, existed in time, with punishments expressed in terms of days or weeks (Webb 2002: 21), changed the perception of life on earth. Furthermore, the waves of the black death, wars and famine were thought to bring people closer to God, and the belief in the transcendental was the only way to cope with brutal reality. The final passage of a human, the good death, was seen as an insurance for everlasting life in Christ. Although the idea of voluntary exile, the wandering into the unknown seeking enlightenment as well as penance were popular in Celtic Christianity, Dyas points out that the Roman Church “placed greater emphasis on journeying to specific destinations for specific reasons: to learn to visit the shrines of saints, to do penance or to evangelize” (2001: 95). Self-imposed banishment is also written into the practices of mysticism, of which anchorhold was the extreme expression of withdrawal from life in the world. Anchorites were symbolically dead to the world, living a life of prayer and penance; each and every day they traveled into themselves. In the words of Victor and Edith Turner, “[p]ilgrimage may be thought of as extroverted mysticism, just as mysticism is introverted pilgrimage” (1978: 33).

As has been noted, in medieval thought the voyage out is dominated by the need to fulfill one’s spiritual obligations. The holy city of Jerusalem, remaining in the hands of “unbelievers”, was a fixed point of such voyages. This is where the known (civilized) world ended. The Crusades were conceptualized as armed pilgrimages with the promise of expiation of all one’s sins. They became holy wars in the name of Christ. Those who went there and returned were as equally fascinated as they were repelled by what they saw there, due to the fact that in the medieval imagination and culture, the East represented something inalienably foreign⁴. Hence the narratives always oscillate between fact and fiction, comic and serious modes of representation. In the following texts that have been selected for further analysis, both the medieval and the contemporary literature depict real and metaphorical journeys. They are all journeys to God and in search of spiritual illumination.

³ F. C. Gardiner argues that there is a clearly outlined relationship between “biblical exposition and liturgical drama” (1971: 9).

⁴ For more, see Sargent-Baur (1992). Lavezzo talks about “cultural geography” as related to the re-mapping of native vs. foreign spaces and the creation of civilization vs. wilderness oppositions (Lavezzo 2006: 1–26).

The Book of Reckoning

One of the ways to illustrate difficult theological concepts was through drama. Even though essentially somber, medieval morality plays used laughter to lighten the tone of the play and, in the end, to show the need for religious elucidation. As a rule, the comic aspects of any play were related to the human inability to grasp the divine mysteries. Accordingly, the self-assured Everyman asks Death: “What Desireth God of me?” (Lester 1991: 68), referring to the Almighty as if he was a man of business who comes to Everyman to trade. In a similar manner, Everyman engages Death: “O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!... Yea, a thousand pounds shalt thou have, / And defer this matter till another day” (ibid.: 69). The contrasts between the serious and humorous, high and low elements, provide the comic relief to the grave tone of this drama, as all the characters who promise to accompany Everyman in his journey, which they think is a short trip to another place, refuse to share his one way ticket. They come up with the silliest excuses. Cousin, for example, deserts Everyman telling him: “By our Lady, I have the cramp in my toe / Trust not to me, for, so God me speed, I will deceive you in your most need” (ibid.: 78).

The entertaining facets of *Everyman* are utilized by Peter Barnes (1931–2004) in his play *Red Noses* (1985). This time, the original *Everyman* is presented as “the play – within – the – play”. Similarly to the original, it also starts by calling for the audience’s attention: Bembo [Messenger]: “Oyez, oyez. Give audience to our play. ‘Tis called *Everyman* and fair or foul, it will include one short interval. Mirth’s our purpose, so smile. And if you like it, clap your hands the while. See the first scene’s in Heaven, where God dwells. We thought you’d had too much of hell” (Barnes 1988: 56–57). As was the case in medieval theater when the audience participated in the play much more actively, with God’s appearance on stage, a member of the audience shouts: “It’s a lie. I know that voice. He’s not God. It’s Father Toulon” (ibid.: 57). But the show must go on and so, unmindful of such remarks, Toulon continues the performance:

Toulon [God]: Death, see how they live without fear. Go visit Everyman in my name and take him on his last journey. No, wait, he prays...

Brodin [Everyman]: Lord God, only hear my prayer. I can never get a fire started. Could you make me a burning bush in my backyard?

Toulon [God]: Oaf imperfect! Go Death, bring him to his reckoning.

Flote [Death]: Lord, I cut down the fairest flower at your command. But I must be suitably at-tired first (ibid.: 57).

Regardless of Death’s plea for a new outfit suitable for a person of his importance and station, angry God [Toulon] orders: “Put the fear of God back into him. Drag him off to judgment. Go down, Death!” (ibid.: 59). And so Death [Flote] has to summon Everyman: “... God has sent me down to take you on your last journey...” (ibid.: 59). Predictably, Barnes’s *Everyman* wants to bargain with Death, but unlike his medieval predecessor who offered a bribe, Barnes’s *Everyman* suggests throwing dice: “Shall we make it truly interesting and play for money as well, Death?” (ibid.: 61), to which Death retorts: “I don’t carry money when I’m working” (ibid.: 62). The motif of playing games with Death depicted in the medieval and contemporary play was immortalized in *The Seventh Seal* (1957) by

Ingmar Bergman where Antonius Block, a knight returning from the Crusades, plays chess with Death. In *The Seventh Seal* the *dance macabre* at the end makes one think not about the last rites but about a song by the recently departed Leonard Cohen (1934–2016) “Dance me to the end of love”, or “life” in this case.

Instead of explaining to Everyman that God wants him to prepare his book of reckoning, Death announces that he is sent because Everyman has not suffered enough, to which Everyman replies: “What do you mean God doesn’t think I’m suffering enough? I’m married, aren’t I. My wife got a tongue that can clip a hedge. In the beginning she took to me like a duck to green peas. Now it’s so quiet in bed, I can hear ice melting” (Barnes 1988: 59). Indeed, Everyman’s shrewish wife, Marguerite, is an additional source of humor in Barnes’s work, and it seems that Everyman is judged less severely by God than by his wife: “Did you pray for riches, Everyman? You promised me riches and everything that goes with it and all I got was everything that goes with it” (1985: 58). In contrast to its medieval predecessor, Barnes’s play does not end with Everyman’s confession and death but with all the characters laughing and dancing merrily, and unlike *The Seventh Seal* their dance is not the dance of Death. So in a way, Everyman’s final journey is not completed.

The motif of Everyman’s passage⁵ outlined above forms the basis for Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Buried Giant* (2015)⁶ set in ancient Britain’s magical Celtic world of ogres, she-dragons and pixies, permanently veiled in mist, which is evocative of the mist of Avalon. There, an elderly couple, Axl and Beatrice, embark on an expedition to their son’s village. What begins as a realistically described trip becomes a nightmarish and hallucinatory descent through dark strange landscapes, a Shelley-like course “[t]hrough the dim wilderness of the mind”⁷ to the Otherworld. It is also a voyage of discovery, within themselves, to recover their long lost memories; and as such, a version both of *Everyman* and John Bunyan’s (1628–1688) *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), marked by encounters with various characters who both hinder and speed up their passage. As the couple trudges through the mist-filled countryside, they meet an old man, later identified as Gawain, who tells them that although he means no harm to anyone, he carries a sword: “... of duty to my king, the great and beloved Arthur, now many years in heaven...” (Ishiguro 2016: 118–119). During their first encounter, Gawain has an eerie feeling that he might have met Axel before: “Horace [Gawain’s faithful horse, L. S.] and I often mistake a face for one from the past” (ibid.: 123). Instead of the young courageous hero of the medieval romance, we meet Gawain who is old and forgetful. More than a knight he is a Peregrine in a scenery akin to John Keats’s “La Belle Dame sans Merci”⁸. Resembling Keats’ knight, Gawain together with his auspicious horse Horace

⁵ Kazuo Ishiguro once remarked that the character of the butler Stephens in his *Remains of the Day* (1989) is akin to Everyman as he is likewise embarking on his final journey unaccompanied and losing everybody and everything on the way.

⁶ I am grateful to Kazuo Ishiguro for graciously answering my questions. It has been a rare privilege to meet him and correspond with him. I have always been fascinated by his work, and now I can also admire the person behind the literary masterpieces.

⁷ The dreamscape of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *The Wanderer* reads:
“He wanders, like a day-appearing dream,
Through the dim wildernesses of the mind;
Through desert woods and tracts, which seem
Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined” (1821), in: Shelley 1994: 697–698.

⁸ John Keats (1819), to be found in Keats (2001: 336–337). Gawain together with his auspicious horse, Horace, roam the land in a seemingly erratic manner.

roam the land in an ostensibly erratic manner. The end of his journey is analogous to that of Axl and Beatrice, as Gawain will also find death at the end of it. Despite the mythical setting, but correspondingly to Ishiguro's other novels, mainly *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) and *The Remains of the Day* (1989), this novel is about the waning of the old world and the coming of the new one, with fiercer and stronger warriors such as Wistan, a proto-Beowulf Saxon character⁹.

The Saxon presence is therefore a permanent feature among the Britons, and so are the conflicts between the two ethnic groups. At the beginning of the story, Axel and Beatrice live in a village which is almost buried in the ground and in which huts are joined by underground passages. The village can be seen as the symbol of the Celtic culture, gradually consigned to non-existence. Curiously, in this allegorical narrative one feels that (Celtic) Christianity is also threatened by the sinister birds (as if taken out of Hitchcock's film) who attack human beings, wreaking havoc in the monastery. The birds might seem to epitomize the threats gathering over Britain, anticipating future conquests and the death of the Celtic world. So perhaps while the old world slowly dies, it is natural that the characters cannot remember many things.

Aging has never been the favorite topic of literary texts¹⁰. Romances as well as novels tended to favor young people. Having an elderly couple as the main protagonists, *The Buried Giant* exudes a powerful sense of loss. One loses one's loved ones twice, once through death and then through the loss of memory¹¹, and it is difficult to determine what makes us more lonely – remembering or forgetting. Yet, in the novel forgetting has its merits: "... the mist covers all memories, the bad as well as the good" (2016: 180). Axl (or Axelas or Axelum as he was then called) had negotiated a peace treaty between the Saxons and the Britons (ibid.: 273). The peace ended with the Britons massacring the Saxon non-combatants (women, children, and the elderly); this event led to Axl's defection from Arthur. In order to protect the land, on Arthur's orders, Merlin had cast a spell on the She-Dragon Querig, and Gawain became the protector of the Dragon, the Giant¹². Following Querig's death, Beatrice and Axl recovered their memories and recalled that their son had died of plague. Estranged by Beatrice's adulterous affair, Axl refused to allow her to visit their son's grave. At the conclusion of the novel the boatman (the narrator of the final chapter) offers to take the couple to an island (of Avalon?) where they can see their son, but the couple must prove their true love to live together there¹³. Having interrogated each of them separately, the boatman then decides to take Beatrice first. The sinister boatman resembles *Everyman's*

⁹ We are used to Old English heroic literature as coming first, followed by Middle English romances of Arthur. However historically, Arthur's times and his struggles portray the times of the inevitable destruction of Celtic Britain.

¹⁰ As demonstrated by W. B. Yeats' poem *Sailing to Byzantium* (1928); cf. Yeates 2001: 94–95.

¹¹ In *The Buried Giant* Axl is identified as "a farmer from a Christian village two days away" (2016: 122).

¹² Gawain addresses Wistan: "Even before that battle was properly won, I rode out with four good comrades to tame this same creature, in those days both mighty and angry, so Merlin could place this great spell on her breath. A dark man he may have been but in this he did God's will, not only Arthur's. Without this she-dragon's breath, would peace ever have come? Look how we lie now. Old foes as cousins, village by village. Master Wistan, you fall silent before this sight. I ask again. Will you not leave this poor creature to live out her life? Her breath isn't what it was, yet holds the magic even now. Think, sir, once that breath should cease, what might be awoken across this land even after these years!" (2016: 326). The monk Jonus reveals that "[i]t's Querig's breath which fills this land and robs us of memories" (2016: 176).

¹³ During a long interview at the IAUPE conference, Ishiguro revealed that he always begins writing with the ending of a novel, yet he is thinking in terms of emotions rather than words. For him a good ending is not

Death; accordingly, when their reckoning is done, on their final journey each of them must be alone.

The Book of Revelation

A different type of loneliness is the subtext of medieval mystical treatises. With the onset of the 20th c. feminist medieval studies, women mystics underwent a kind of rebirth; they began to be perceived as Woolfian mothers to “think back through”¹⁴. Isolated in their desire to grasp the intricacies of theology, limited by the constraints of ecclesiastical authority and “written in” the masculine discourse, they lived in a world in which sanctity and heresy were divided by a very thin line¹⁵. No wonder the scribe who copies the work of an English anchoress, Julian of Norwich (1342–1416), advises the readers to submit themselves to “the faith of the Holy Church” (1966: 213)¹⁶ while reading and interpreting Julian’s works. Julian authored two versions of her testimonial *Showings*, the first one known as The Short Text (c. 1373) immediately after her illness, the second longer version, the Long Text, some twenty years later (c. 1390). We do not know much about her life except for what is offered at the beginning of the Short Text. As Julian thought she was dying, she had not only a priest but also her mother with her, which might suggest that she was not yet a nun, but decided to enter her cell, her anchorhold following the death of her family (husband and children), perhaps during the plague (1978: 208–209). Julian of Norwich, who chose *vita contemplativa*, expressed her optimism in the phrase “all shall be well”, which articulates her unwavering conviction that God’s grand plan was, in fact, revealed to her fellow Christians through her *Showings*. When she had been already immured and was quite famous throughout East Anglia, she was visited by Margery Kempe (1373–1438), who, apart from being the author of the first English autobiography¹⁷, was also the first medieval woman who fashioned herself into a mystic¹⁸. Margery, the wide traveler – one cannot resist the Anglo-Saxon refer-

a happy ending but a probable one. Regarding emotions, he knows exactly with what kind of feelings he wants to conclude his work.

¹⁴ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, 1929 (1991). The work of Michèle Roberts *The Book of Mrs Noah* (1987), *Impossible Saints* (1997) but also the Booker Prize nominated *Daughters of the House* (1992) inspired by the life of the Little Flower, St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus or St. Thérèse de Lisieux (1873–1897) utilizes the feminist perspective to depict the lives of female saints.

¹⁵ See Margaret Porète (1250–1310) *Le Miroir des simples âmes* (*The Mirror of Simple Souls*, 1295) and Mechthild of Magdeburg (1210–1282) *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* (*The Flowing Life of the Godhead*, composed between 1250–1280).

¹⁶ The whole quotation reads: “I pray God almighty that this book shall fall only into the hands of those who intend to be his lovers, and who are willing to submit to the Faith of the Holy Church, and to obey such sound and instructive teaching as is given by men of virtue, maturity, and profound learning. For this revelation contains deep theology and great wisdom, and is not meant for those who are enslaved by sin and the Devil. Beware of selecting only what you like, and leaving the rest. That is what heretics do. Take it whole, all together, and know in truth that all agrees with Holy Scripture, and is indeed based on it. And Jesus, our real love, light, and truth, will show this wisdom of his to all souls who, cleansed from their sin, humbly and perseveringly ask him” (1966: 213).

¹⁷ One may venture a claim that Margery’s autobiography prefigures the third-person ones by John Maxwell Coetzee’s, namely, *Boyhood* and *Youth*.

¹⁸ The idea of martyrdom by marriage is presented by Johannes of Marienwerder in his canonization acts of Saint Dorothea of Prussia, in J. of Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, a Fourteenth Century Recluse* (1997).

ence to *Widsith* – and the collector of relics, desired *vita activa* among the community of the faithful; hers would be “martyrdom by slander”. Yet another medieval woman desiring *vita mixta*¹⁹ was our very own Dorothea of Montau (1347–1394), a secular woman, a wife and a mother, who having gone through the ordeal of marriage and childbirth, at the end of her life entered the anchorhold at the Cathedral of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn). Apart from the pilgrimages they undertook to visit various holy places, all of the mystics show us different kinds of journeys, most notably the journey within oneself.

Such is the novel *The anchoress* (2015) by an Australian writer, Robyn Cadwallader²⁰. It is set in the mid 13th century, which in contrast to Günter Grass’ excruciatingly long, loquacious and boring *Flounder* (1977), avoids verbosity, does not attempt to psychoanalyze the anchoress and, by telling a relatively simple story, makes the lives of medieval people more palatable. Cadwallader illustrates a young woman’s passage, from the outside world to the confines of her cell and inside herself. Setting the action almost a hundred years earlier than the times of Julian, Margery and Dorothea, the text quite faithfully recreates the landscapes of medieval life and thought²¹. Analogously to Dorothea, Sarah cannot enter a convent because she has no dowry to offer. As a daughter of a merchant who had lost all his money, she decides to become an anchoress, provoked and enraged by her father’s suggestion that she should marry and perhaps get a loan to save his business²². What is more, because of the “attachment” between herself and a young squire, whose father has forced him to marry a woman of his choice and wants Sarah safely out of the way – so as to ensure his son’s “happiness” – it is his father who agrees to sponsor the anchorhold. In this way Sarah is settled with two maids to take care of her needs and a cell of her own. When the old squire dies, Sarah remains immured but is now at the mercy of her old flame, Sir Thomas²³.

She chooses seclusion and the life of prayer²⁴ so as to fend off her previous experiences, her unhappy life, at first failing to understand the finality of her decision: “My vows and my enclosure hadn’t yet shown me what it meant to live with death ... ” (Cadwallader 2015: 45). After the funeral mass when she was immured, she thought, or rather hoped

¹⁹ Her very unfavorable portrait is presented by Günter Grass in *The Flounder* (1977). The differences between Cadwallader’s *The Anchoress* and Grass’s *The Flounder* illustrate the shift between post-modernism and post-postmodernism and, in a way, between feminism and post-feminism. Grass writes about the “High Gothic Dorothea”, her High Gothic turd, her high Gothic ascetic practices such as flagellations which he compares to contemporary (at the time of writing the novel) pot smoking. Such references might be funny first time around but the repetitious denigration of Dorothea, who is depicted as a calculating bitch whose sole desire is turned towards man-God Christ, can be tedious and does not add either to the historical or literary value of the novel. Cadwallader’s poised unpretentious prose stands in marked contrast to Grass’s and even Roberts’s novels.

²⁰ Robyn Cadwallader did her Ph.D. on medieval hagiography, the topic was the life of St. Margaret of Antioch.

²¹ Anna, a character in the novel, mentions sugar and sugar cakes Cadwallader (2015: 47), since the setting of the novel is the early 1250s and sugar, “sweet salt”, was brought to Europe after the Crusades in the 12th century and the first record of sugar in English is in the late 13th century, so Anna would probably make her cakes with honey rather than with sugar.

²² Her father loses the shipment and suggests that she should look more favorably at men and Sir Thomas (Cadwallader 2015: 61).

²³ Lady Cecilia and Sir Thomas are married unhappily. Thomas comes to visit Sarah and tells her that it is a shame that she is burying herself in this darkness (ibid.: 132).

²⁴ “This life meant that I was to pray all day, as I woke, as I dressed, as I ate, as I read” (ibid.: 9). Following her entrance to the cell she realizes the finality of her decision. “The clotted smell of dampness, the earthy smell of moss. This was to be my home – no, my grave – for the rest of my life” (ibid.: 7). The rule tells her that she is dead to the world, and that her cell is her grave.

that “[w]hen they hammered the nails, I left the memories behind” (ibid.: 22)²⁵. Little does she know that the past, the memories, will always come unbidden, and neither is the outside world ever truly shut out. “Memories of home nagged at me now, old griefs and horrors and desires that I thought had quietened: they interrupted my prayer, walked through the pages of my Rule. If only someone would tell me how to behave, surely my heart would follow” (ibid.: 23). Sarah recalls her mother’s death, who having given birth to their youngest brother, simply withered away. She remembers her sister Emma, who like the older sister of Catherine of Siena (1347–1380)²⁶, the first attested anorexic, also died in childbirth:

Her [Emma’s] wails of pain, then her whimpers that terrified me even more, the desperate grip of her hand that weakened and finally let go. I took a deep breath, let it out slowly. Here, inside these walls, Christ would heal me of my grief, help me let go of my woman’s body, its frailty and desire. I would learn to love him above all others, to share his suffering (Cadwallader 2015: 10).

Even though her confessor, Father John, warns her that “despair is a sin” (ibid.: 32), Emma’s death strengthened Sarah’s resolve to become an anchoress, as “there was nothing the world could tempt me with anymore” (ibid.: 19). This is how her cell becomes her refuge but also her disguise, a version of a woman’s veil.

She cannot and does not want to be part of the life of her community anymore, yet when one of her maids, the young pretty one, Anna, whose head and shoulders at times remind Sarah of her sister, is found pregnant, Sarah deduces that it was Sir Thomas who had raped the girl, and refuses to let her go. Anna later dies in childbirth. Sarah also listens to Jocelyn the woman beaten by her husband: “I waited until her crying had stopped and promised to pray for her; my words of counsel lay shrivelled on the ledge between us” (ibid.: 63). She sees the powerlessness of women and her own inability to offer anything more than moral support. Unwittingly, she turns to ascetic practices. “My Rule tells me that keeping my body in need will bring me to God” (ibid.: 27), a compulsion which Father Ranaulf, her confessor, tries to mollify. Brought up on anti-female Church propaganda, Ranaulf²⁷ at first feels strangely disturbed by their encounters. Eventually he begins to understand her ways of thinking and his own role, his assistance in her inward journey²⁸.

²⁵ Father Ranaulf thinks: “This enclosure, forbidding sight and touch, was foolish and wrong. It was killing her slowly, he knew. He lifted his hand, then let it drop again” (Cadwallader 2015: 258).

²⁶ For more, see A. B. Baldwin, *Catherine of Sienna. A Biography* (1987).

²⁷ Ranaulf unwillingly albeit obediently substitutes for her old confessor, Father Peter.

²⁸ Sarah is aware that “[f]or him [Ranaulf], words, spoken or written, were like seeds...” (Cadwallader 2015: 281) and that is why he decided to write the story of St. Margaret for the anchoress. Ranulf’s views on women are fashioned by the Church Father’s discourse on women as the devil’s gateway (ibid.: 69). When asked to copy the Life of Saint Margaret for the anchoress, he is uneasy about this endeavor, but then as he begins to know her better his view changes. He collects and writes down the story of Isabella, thereby atoning for the sin of the Church against her. There were two predecessors of Sarah: Sister Agnes and Sister Isabella. The bones of the first one are buried in the church, the other left to the anchorhold and as Sarah finds out later, she was raped and beaten by the bishop and, disgraced, disappeared from the village and finds out that the words of her confessors – “Enclosure is the only means by which your virginity may be assured” (ibid.: 16) – is strikingly not true. And this is also what Father Ranaulf finds out when he starts asking questions about Sarah’s predecessors. Afraid that he might be denounced but also feeling that Sarah should know what happened to the less than saintly Isabella who left the cell, Ranaulf asks Sarah to keep the papers together with the story of St. Margaret he copied for her. In the “Afterword”, Cadwallader notes that *Ancrene Wisse* mentioned specific prescriptions “...for example, that an anchoress should not gossip, keep a cow, teach children or hold documents in safe-keeping for others – sug-

Allowing their friendship to develop, Cadwallader reproduces the most fascinating aspect of mysticism, encapsulated in the close connection between the female mystic and her confessor, which Mooney so aptly portrays in her work on gender and sanctity in the accounts of medieval saints and their interpreters (1999). In a truly contemporary fashion, she does not let Sarah be construed by her confessor. Instead, the latter becomes her link with the reality beyond her cell.

Having realized that she is unable to forgo the outside world and conscious of the needs and drives of the body²⁹, Sarah has a small enclosed garden built for her use³⁰. And paradoxically, stretching her limbs and breathing the fresh air, she regains the will to stay in her cell³¹. Reading *Ancrene Wisse*, she returns to the fragment in Book VII when a Knight from a distant land woos a courtly lady³². In this story of Christ as the lover longing for the pure soul, she finds peace:

My Rule tells me that I must come to know God by controlling my senses, by keeping the flesh in need and not allowing my eyes or nose or ears to lead me back into the world. I had read and reread the words, wearied myself, tried so hard to be a holy woman, beaten my body and heart against stone. But that morning, it was as if I turned, and love was there, simple and without rules (Cadwallader 2015: 308).

In the vein of Julian of Norwich she finds the answer not in death but in love. What began as an inward journey, was in fact the voyage out, to accept the world rather than shun it completely.

gests that such things happened, and were seen to undermine her commitment to being enclosed from the world" (Cadwallader 2015: 311).

²⁹ Sarah reads the section in the rule about protecting the senses as the eyes make us leap into sin, "just as Lucifer and Eve leaped after sin because of what they had seen" (ibid.: 135). Sarah recalls: "I remember that night, the pricking and tearing of the hairshirt, then the warmth of Christ's body against my skin, the way he wrapped a hand around my neck, the touch of his lips, my body melting into his. Flames. I had thought they were sin, had confessed them, repented them. Perhaps not" (ibid.: 215). There is a similar scene in *The Book of Margery Kempe* when she imagines Christ the lover sitting on her bed, the scene is quite clearly erotically charged. Christ "aperyd to hys creatur which had forasakyn hym in lyknesse of a man, most semly, most bewtyous, & most amiable pat euyr mygth be seen with mannys eye, clad in a mantyl of purpyl sylke, syttyng up-on hir beddys side, loking vp-on hir with so blessyd a chere pat sche was strengthyd in alle hir spyritys, seyde to hir þes wordys: 'Dowtyr, why hast þow forsakyn me, and I forsoke neuyr the?'" (*The Book of Margery Kempe* 1993: 8).

³⁰ "Like most anchorholds, my cell had been built in the shadow of the church so that it would never receive any sun" (Cadwallader 2015: 282).

³¹ The book is also a meditation on freedom and imprisonment in the Boethian sense. Sarah is immured while Sir Thomas is equally un-free in his unhappy marriage. At the end of the novel after the fire in the Manor house, it is Thomas who lies immobile, and nobody knows whether he will wake up. He is more out of this world and she is more in it, as if, metaphorically they have exchanged places.

³² Savage and Watson 1991: 190–195.

The Book of Rescue

The idea of *homo viator*³³, man as the eternal traveler, is the religious foundation of the medieval Saracen romances, whose heroes are both crusader-knights as well as pilgrims³⁴. One such text is the romance of *Guy of Warwick* (originating sometime in the 13th century, here cited in the 15th century version), one of the longest and most influential of medieval anti-Muslim narratives. Ostensibly divided into two parts, the first one is devoted to Guy, the knight, who has to gain fame and become the greatest knight in the world, unsurprisingly by fighting the Saracen armies. The second part relates how Guy, the pilgrim, goes “into hethen cuntre”³⁵ and once more battles the Saracens, this time the two horrible, inhuman giants, Armorant and Colbrond, again defending Christendom. It did not matter to the medieval audience that the adventures were entirely unrealistic. There are three essential elements of such tales: the first one being the original reason or incentive to travel East, the second the portrayal of the barbaric sultans who worship idols which they destroy, punishing them for not aiding in their combats against Christians, and finally, the third, approximating the contemporary comic-book scene of cutting off the Sultan’s head. The idea of “Maumetrie”³⁶, vilified by the anonymous author of *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* as a near-blasphemy linked to the worshipping of idols, was, in reality, related to the Lollard denigration of images³⁷.

Given the above perspective, Guy’s first “oriental adventure” begins in Europe when he meets Greek merchants who tell him that in Constantinople³⁸:

The ryche sowdan of Sysane [probably Sarasine]
(To honowre god wyll he not payne),

³³ Gardiner draws attention to the fact that by the 12th century, following the Augustinian idea of the idea of pilgrimage as a framework for human moral choices, “man’s pilgrimage in life” was already a well-established and “venerable theme” (Gardiner 1971: 11). The thorough discussion of the concepts of “*via*, *viator*, the related ones of *pererinus*, *peregrinatio*, and of *alienus*, *alienatio* on the one hand, and of *ordo*, *ordinare* on the other, are quite essential ingredients of early Christian life” according to G.B. Ladner 1967: 233. Ladner’s work articulates the fundamental ambiguities connected with the above mentioned terms as the said “strangeness” of “*peregrine*” is both a feeling of being a stranger in the physical world (positive) as well as one who is estranged from God (negative). Ladner stresses also that a stranger is, literally, someone who is an outsider in a given community (ibid.: 44).

³⁴ In Ladner’s view, “chivalry coalesced with the medieval pilgrimage movement in a great pilgrimage of arms aimed at recapturing Jerusalem, the ideal center of the Christian world” (ibid.: 246).

³⁵ *The Romance of Guy of Warwick* (1966: 212).

³⁶ The word coined in reference to the name Mahomet.

³⁷ The anonymous author of *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* explains: “And so they forgotten to be percener of the preyer of Christ, for the maumetrie that men do to siche miraclis pleyinge – maumetrie, I seye, for siche pleyinge men as myche honoryn (or more than) the word of God whanne it is prechid and therefore blasfemely they seyen that siche pleyinge doith more good than the word of God whanne it is prechid to the puple” (1993: 111–112).

³⁸ When Guy reaches his destination, he once again learns from the besieged emperor, Ernis:

“The sarasyns haue beset me
And lefte me nothur towne nor cyte,
But oonly thys, þat we are ynne.
Some þey stroye and some þey brenne.
They slewe my men on a day

Thretty Thousande, for soþe to say” (1966: 80).

Similarly to Hrothgar, the old king in *Beowulf*, the Emperor cannot protect his land and his people and hopes that Guy would help “make my londe recoueryd to bee” – 1966: 280).

xv kyngys of hethynesse
And sixty amerals more and lesse,
That haue besieged the emperowre
Wyth mony knyghtys and grete socowre.
There ys not lefte in that cuntre
Castell, towre nor cyte,
Buy hyt ys brente and stroyed all.

(*The Romance of Guy of Warwick* 1966: 78)

Constantinople was a strategic city standing between Europe and Asia, by far one of the richest, providing a great venue for trade and exploration³⁹. Accordingly, the presence and importance of merchants brave enough to venture into the East is quite evident. Yet throughout the period, the merchants continued to occupy a somewhat ambiguous space as anything that had to do with money was almost immediately disparaged⁴⁰. The merchant's complaint concerning the on-going war and the resulting impossibility to trade, relates the original reasons the Emperor Alexius requested Pope Urban II to undertake an armed intervention to free the Holy Land from the infidels. In the romance, the merchants and pilgrims as well cannot pass freely through the land, and the evil sultan oppresses the Christians who live there. The liberation of Christians and the Church had to be presented as both a secular as well as spiritual goal. Even if Guy's original purpose was to win Felice, the daughter of his Lord, he soon realizes that it is the fight for Christendom that should bring him true recognition and lasting glory: Guy reveals that "Hyt wyll be moche for owre honowre: / To Constantyne wyll we fare" (ibid.: 79)⁴¹.

Religious disparity is stressed throughout the text because this was the only way to justify the pre-emptive war. The merchants identify the Sultan as a pagan, and yet they do not specify which god he did not pay tribute to. Allah, as we know, is usually not mentioned together with the pagan trinity of Muhammad, Terragan and Apollo. Since Islam is a monotheistic religion, in order to degrade it Muslims had to be presented as (Christian) God-hating devilish idolaters⁴². This was done by the much-repeated image of the angry Sultan who blames his "idols" for abandoning him in his need. He orders the idols to be brought:

³⁹ Besides the traffic of relics, the city was a central point in the trade of cloth and spices.

⁴⁰ Trade contributed to the contacts between East and West, and Muslim merchant families as well as European ones profited greatly from such encounters. The documents collected by Lopez and Raymond (1961) demonstrate how the Mediterranean trade, dominated by Jews in the earlier Middle Ages, during and after the Crusades is taken over by Southern European nations, especially Italy. The development of trade in effect creates a very important figure, that of the itinerant merchant. The related documents on trade and travel are to be found in Lopez and Raymond (1961: 103, 89–92).

⁴¹ The Byzantine Emperor, notified of Guy's approach, appears exceedingly happy to see Guy, and their initial encounter strengthens Guy's claims for fame, as it seems that Guy fulfilled his task of becoming the best knight in the world, and is now seen as "the erle of great renowne" (1966: 80). The Emperor addresses our hero as "Gye of Warwyck" (1966: 82) stressing that "In all the worlde ys non þe lyke" (1966: 80). The famed Guy is asked for "helpe and counsayle" (1966: 80).

⁴² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen reads images of the Saracens in romances as a simplification of the inherent complexities of individual and national identity (1999: 133). Cohen assumes that the never-ending European wars, which repeatedly contested alliances and nationalities (see the period of the French and English squabbles during the reign of Henry I through the reign of Richard the Lionheart) make "... the English romancers to dream of a time when self-identity was easy to assert, because the enemy was wholly Other (dark skin, incomprehensible language, pagan culture) and therefore an unproblematic body to define oneself against" (ibid.: 133).

'A, goddys, he seyde, 'ye are false:
The deuyll yow honge be the fals.
I haue done yow many a gode dede:
Euyll ye haue qwytt me my mede' ... (ibid.: 98)

He toke a staffe of appulle tre
And bete hys goddys all three.
He brake of þem boþe legge and arme (ibid.).

The narratives of battles with Islam appeal to the audience, who share the writer's sense of impotence and constant anxiety about real or imagined danger. In a much quoted study by Vamik Volkan, it is claimed that we "need" enemies to provide a contrast to our own way of life. In political psychology, the enemy is not individualized: "The enemy is insinuated into the self-image of the group or nation, becoming 'the other', a collection of traits that the group itself does *not* wish to have" (ibid.: 6). Enemies, then, function as external beacons of our sense of identity, of belonging. The clash of characters and civilizations, be it in medieval or modern texts, is consequently a narrative necessity.

Still, the proposal of Emperor Ernis indicates a specifically medieval way to end the conflict by the combat of champions. Such a message is entrusted to Guy, who instead of greeting the Sultan, as would be suitable upon entering the Sultan's pavilion, offers a short outline of the Christian religion, referring to all believers of Mahomet as heretics (ibid.: 105). Foregoing any danger, Guy decapitates the Sultan, there and then:

He smote the sowdan with hys sworde,
That the hedde trendyld on þe borde
The hedde he toke in hys honde (ibid.: 106).

With the Sultan's head under his arm, Guy is pursued by many Saracens, and habitually, "[m]any of them hath he slayne" (ibid.: 107), in this way finishing his heroic exploit. Decimating the forces of the enemy had been one of the great Christian fantasies. It is their safety that legitimizes Guy's aggression and turns the historical failure of the Crusades into a literary victory. One has to remember that the Crusades glorified armed warfare, contrary to the mission of the Church's preaching of peace⁴³. Islam, in turn, has also represented itself as the religion of peace, save for the necessity to spread *Dar al-Islam*⁴⁴. Hence, Guy's journey East is an expedition of rescue; he is the one because of whom "þe warre was brought to endyng" (ibid.: 109) and the barbarians were humbled, at least, for the time being.

Yet another version of the rescue missions is encapsulated in 19th century narratives. Victorian travelers produced numerous accounts of expeditions into hitherto undiscovered lands. Concurrently, Victorian writers fictionalized such accounts in what came to be known as the Victorian quest romance⁴⁵. While the medieval Saracen romances recapitu-

⁴³ See: Mastnak's, *Crusading Peace. Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (2002) and Asbridge's, *The Crusades. The War for the Holy Land* (2010).

⁴⁴ Historical accounts of Islam usually mention Mohammed's "hijra", the escape from Mecca to Medina in the year 40 or 43, after which he changed his view on missionary warfare (Guillaume 1983: 23–24).

⁴⁵ One of the most interesting travel narratives is Emin Pasha's rescue expedition. Emin Pasha, or Mehmed. Emin Pasha (born Isaaq Eduard Schnitzer, baptized Eduard Carl Oscar Theodor Schnitzer; March 28, 1840 in

lated aspects of the Crusades, the Victorian romances are reenactments of exploration and colonization. The brave westerners embark on very dangerous pursuits into the unknown. They fight the bad guys, help the good ones and fall in love with the native women, who, in turn, sacrifice their lives for the white men. In many ways, the texts envision the taking (not to say raping) of the land, symbolized by the appropriation of native women⁴⁶. *The Mistress of Abha* (2010) written by William Newton (1927–2010)⁴⁷ is a contemporary version of the Quest romance. Following his well-known predecessors such as Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) (*The Lost World*, 1912), Henry Rider Haggard (1856–1925) (*King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1886)), and especially T.E. Lawrence (1888–1935) (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 1922), the latter is invoked when the narrator in Newton's novel, describes his journey "... I went by sea to Aqaba and then my way to Jeddah by railway that had once been blown up by Lawrence of Arabia, the name by which he was known even in these parts" (Newton 2011: 31), Newton creates a story of exploration and discovery. So as to enhance the generic links with travel narratives, *The Mistress of Abha* is equipped with a map. Whilst Ivor Willoughby, having completed his Arabic studies wants to enter the Diplomatic Service in the East: "My head was filled with dreams of high adventure, for I had achieved my ambition and Arabia beckoned like a bride. It was January of the year 1930 and I was twenty-six" (ibid.: 29). In this manner, the author employs the conventions of adventure tales. Ivor's desire to serve in the Middle East was incited by the disappearance of his father, Robert, and throughout the novel Ivor's quest concentrates on either finding his father or learning what had happened to him.

The said Robert Willoughby, following a miscalculated affair with a Ms. Lavender Doolittle, despite his previous attachment to Emma Littleboy, marries the pregnant Lavender, but almost immediately after the marriage leaves her to join the war effort in the Middle East. Our eponymous medieval hero, Guy of Warwick, did not even wait that long. Robert comes back home only once after the First World War, explaining to his son that:

One of the reasons I have come back to England, apart from coming to see your mother and yourself, is to report to the Foreign Office, who will not even know whether I am still alive. I shall ask to return to Arabia to resume my original mission, which was to gain British influence and allies in the province of As'ir in case of further fighting. A new threat is arising in Eastern Arabia where the Asheukh in Riydah has become increasingly powerful, and no one knows whether he will be a friend or an enemy (ibid.: 17).

He tells Ivor of a man called Tabarhla, who had saved his life. "Did you ever hear the story of Charlemagne and Rolande and the pass at Roncesvalles?' I shook my head. 'If you had, then you would understand the debt that I owe now. Such a debt that I can only repay by fighting the battles that Tabharlah fights'" (ibid.: 19–20). The link between chivalry

Opole – October 23, 1892) was the governor of Southern Sudan, supposedly stranded in his post. The rescue expedition was organized by Henry Morton Stanley (b. John Rowlands. 28 January 1841 in Denbigh, died 10 May 1904 in London) and is recorded in Stanley's *In Darkest Africa* (1890). There is also an interesting narrative by Richard Burton (19 March 1821 – 20 October 1890), which is an account of the brothels in India and strange sexual practices in Somaliland (*First Footsteps in East Africa*, 1856).

⁴⁶ The reversal of this one finds in John Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999).

⁴⁷ This is the pen name of Kenneth Newton, a retired doctor turned writer, the author of two novels *The Two Pound Tram* (2005) and in *The Mistress of Abha* (2010).

and (late) Victorian gentility is quite in place here, as Victorian medievalism engendered the representation of English gentlemen as chivalric knights⁴⁸. In the spirit of Lawrence of Arabia, Robert Willoughby notices that: “The Arabs rightly seek independence – from the Turks, from the French, from ourselves – it doesn’t matter which, for we are all foreigners to them. Sooner or later they will achieve full independence and then there will be matters of trade, in particular permission to decide who drills for petroleum oil”⁴⁹. T. E. Lawrence (1888–1936), one of the iconic figures of the early Arab wars for independence, was also involved in the post war drafting of the borders in the Middle East⁵⁰. Robert Willoughby’s adventures and involvement in the Arab wars is based on T. E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. As was the case with T. E. Lawrence, Robert Willoughby learnt Arabic and lived among the Arabs.

In Arabia, Ivor ascertains that his father was quite famous, known under the name “Ullobi”⁵¹. While searching for his father, he meets Etza, a former slave⁵² who in a long narrative and during the months of his stay in her household (Newton 2011: 189) tells him of his father’s activities. While in Abha, Ivor also learns about a woman, Na’ema, Tabarhla’s second wife, who drove the *marktab* to battle⁵³. Etza’s account recreates the world of pirates, slave dealers⁵⁴ and tribal fights, while her own fate is ominously intertwined with those of Na’ema’s and Ullobi’s, and so, indirectly with Ivor’s. At the end of her story she gives him letters his father had written in English, most probably in the hope of sending them to his son. This is how Ivor discovers the details of the conflicts with the Saudis, his father’s capture and escape and then, the final destruction of Tabarhla’s family⁵⁵. Yet, Etza

⁴⁸ For more, see M. Girouard, *The Return to Camelot. Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (1981).

⁴⁹ Newton 2011: 21. Later on, his son hears “Anglees, are you indeed? The Anglees have given us a lot of trouble. They supported our enemy the Hashemite Hussein who calls himself Sheriff of Mecca” (2011: 37). See also, Abdelrahman Munif (1933–2004) *Cities of Salt* (1984).

⁵⁰ For more, see Anderson’s biography of T. E. Lawrence: *Lawrence of Arabia. War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (2014).

⁵¹ A Victorian archaeologist and Orientalist, Charles Montague Doughty (1843–1926), *Arabia Deserta* (1888) is called “Khalil”.

⁵² Etza was not captured. She was sold by her family who embarked on the pilgrimage, the hajj to Mecca. They had to sell their daughter to complete the hajj (Newton 2011: 222–258).

⁵³ “It is the chariot drawn by warriors which carries a virgin into battle. They drag it into the middle of fighting and her screams make them fight harder. Then at some point she bares her breasts and that makes them madder still. She is safe, for no one will harm her because she is a woman. It would be shameful. All women are inviolate, that is the ancient law” (ibid.: 42).

⁵⁴ We find out that the white slaves are the most valuable, and we also learn that Nura Tabharla’s third wife came from the tribe of Idrisi, who “... were an alien people not Sunnis like the rest of As’ir but Sufist who came from The Senussi mountains in northern Africa at the edge of the Muslim world. Their customs were notoriously barbarous: he recalled that their slaves were hamstrung to stop them escaping and they practiced the circumcision of both sexes in an abominable manner forbidden by the Quran” (ibid.: 135).

⁵⁵ The ulemas (“those recognized as scholars or authorities” in the “religious hierarchy” of the Islamic religious studies, and guardians of the legal and religious tradition in Islam) began persecuting the civilian population; Glasse (2008: 536). The Ta’if massacre was an incident that followed the short 1924 Battle of Ta’if. The battle was carried out between the Hashemites and the Saudis. Following a short siege, the city of Tif in Hejaz was abandoned by Hashemite forces and then capitulated to the battle-ready Ikhwan force under the command of Abdulaziz Ibn Saud. The Ikhwan troops took out their rage on the residents of the city. In the resulting blood-bath, some 300–00 Ta’if residents were massacred. Na’ema talks about the Bedouin women who were always persecuted because they were not quick enough to anticipate danger. “They seized a woman who they claimed had been caught in adultery. They made a pretence of a trial but it was obvious they would find her guilty. They dug a hole in the ground and buried her up to the waist. They tore off her clothes until she was naked and then they... they stoned her... I cannot describe... what happens to a woman’s body... she breaks up... pieces of her flew into the air” (Newton 2011: 178).

leaves her tale unfinished and refuses to reveal the fate of Na'ema⁵⁶. Ivor, driven by curiosity, goes to the coast of the Red Sea where he suspects Na'ema could be hiding and indeed finds a hermit woman living in the caves close to the beach. She turns out to be Na'ema, who reveals the rest of the story of his father's sojourn in Arabia. It was because of Na'ema that Robert Willoughby had stayed in Arabia and with her had had a deaf daughter, Isis. Having concluded her account, Na'ema predictably dies, and Ivor is able to complete his journey: "I was persuaded that my own voyage of discovery had after all been of certain value, and that my search for truth had served a purpose of its own, even if rather different from what I had expected" (Newton 2011: 299).

Conclusion

The words of Ivor Willoughby quoted above remind us that we are all travelers in time and space. From birth to death, human beings are pilgrims on Earth. Even a funeral procession brings to mind a journey, the final one. The variety of medieval traveling, of pilgrimages, mystical inward journeys and the Crusades, have been adopted by contemporary culture and figuratively translated into the passage towards Avalon in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*, the voyage of acceptance of one's life in Robyn Cadwallader's *The Anchoress* and the expedition of adventure and discovery in William Newton's *The Mistress of Abha*. The rich repository of travel writings and their rewritings evince not only human interest in the exploration of hitherto unexplored territories, but first and foremost point to the insatiable hunger for greater knowledge of the reality around us. Be it a journey into one's soul or a journey to the edge of the known world, the characters are always enlightened at the end of their peregrinations "... ffor ay the cours of thys mortal lyff".

References

- Asbridge, Thomas 2010. *The Crusades. The War for the Holy Land*. London: Pocket Books.
- Anderson, Scott 2014 [2013]. *Lawrence of Arabia. War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. London: Atlantic Books.
- A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* 1993 [1981]. Edited by Clifford Davidson. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications.
- Baldwin, Anne B. 1987. *Catherine of Siena. A Biography*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
- Barnes, Peter 1988 [1985]. *Red Noses*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Barthes, Roland 1991 [1975]. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: The Noonday Press.
- Bautier, Robert-Henri 1971. *The Economic Development of Medieval Europe*. London: Thames and Hudson.

⁵⁶ Etza does not want to talk about what happened to Naema, but she gave him a neck chain with a bronze medallion telling him that if he should find Naem'a this should be returned to her.

- Cadwallader, Robyn 2015. *The anchoress*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Chew, Samuel 2007 [1962]. *The Pilgrimage of Life*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Coetzee, John Maxwell 1999. *Disgrace*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome 1999. *Of Giants. Sex Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis–London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Coldewey, John (ed.) 1993. *Early English Drama. An Anthology*. New York–London: Garland Publishing.
- Dyas, Dee 2001. *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700–1500*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.
- Everyman* 1999 [1981]. In: G. A. Lester (ed.) 1999 [1981]. 59–105.
- Gardiner, F. C. 1971. *The Pilgrimage of Desire. A Study of Theme and Genre in Medieval Literature*. Leiden: Brill.
- Girouard, Mark 1981. *The Return to Camelot. Chivalry and the English Gentleman*.
- Glassé, Cyril 2008 [1989]. *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*. London: Stacey International.
- Grass, Gunter 1989 [1977]. *The Flounder*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. London: Picador.
- Guillaume, Alfred 1983 [1954]. *Islam*. London: Penguin Books.
- Ishiguro, Kazuo 1991 [1982]. *A Pale View of Hills*. London: Faber and Faber.
- 1987 [1986]. *An Artist of the Floating World*. London: Faber and Faber.
- 1996 [1989]. *The Remains of the Day*. London: Faber and Faber.
- 2016 [2015]. *The Buried Giant*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Keats, John 2001 [1994]. *The Poems of John Keats*. Introduction, Glossary and Notes by Paul Wright. London: Wordsworth Poetry Library.
- Kempe, Margery 1993 [1940]. *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Edited by Sanford Meech Brown and Hope Emily Allen. Oxford: Oxford University Press. EETS. O.S. 212.
- Ladner, Gerhart B. 1967. “*Homo Viator*. Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order”. *Speculum* XVII: 233–259.
- Lavezzo, Kathy 2006. *Angels on the Edge of the World*. Ithaca–London: Cornell University Press.
- Lester, G.A. (ed.) 1999 [1981]. *Three Late Medieval Plays: Mankind, Everyman, Mundus et Infans*. London: A & C Black.
- Lopez, Robert S., Irving W. Raymond (eds.) 1961. *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*. New York–London: Columbia University Press.
- Lydgate, John 1996 [1899]. *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man. English by John Lydgate, A.D. 1426, from the French of Guillaume de Deguileville, A.d. 1330, 1355*. Edited by F. J. Furnival, with Introduction, Notes, Glossary and Indexes by Katherine B. Locock. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer. EETS E.S. 77, 83, 92.
- Mastnak, Tomáš 2002. *Crusading Peace. Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order*. Berkeley–London: University of California Press.
- Mooney, Catherina M. (ed) 1999. *Gendered Voices Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Munif, Abdelrahman 1989 [1987]. *Cities of Salt*. Translated from the Arabic by Peter Theroux. New York: Vintage International.
- Newton, William 2004 [2003]. *The Two Pound Tram*. London: Bloomsbury.
- 2011 [2010]. *The Mistress of Abha*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Of Magdeburg, Mechthild 1998. *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. Translated and Introduced by Frank Tobin, Preface by Margot Schmidt. New York, Mahawah: Paulist Press.
- Marienwerder, Johannes von 1997. *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, a Fourteenth-Century Recluse*. Translated by Ute Stargardt. Lampeter, Ceredigion: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Of Norwich, Julian 1966. *Revelations of Divine Love*. Translated into Modern English and with an Introduction by Clifton Walters. London: Penguin.
- 1978. *A Book of Showings to the anchoress Julian of Norwich*. Part One and Two. Edited by Edmund Colledge O.S.A. and James Walsh S.J. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies.

- Porete, Marguerite 1993. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. Translated and Introduced by Ellen L. Babinsky, Preface by Robert E. Lerner]. New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- Roberts, Michèle 1998 [1997]. *Impossible Saints*. London: Virago.
- 1999 [1987]. *The Book of Mrs Noah*. London: Vintage.
- 2001 [1992]. *Daughters of the House*. London: Virago Press.
- Sargent-Baur, Barbara N. (ed.) 1992. *Journeys Toward God. Pilgrimage and Crusade*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University, Medieval Institute Publications.
- Savage, Anne, Nicholas Watson (eds.) 1991. *Anchoritic Spirituality. Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*. Preface by Benedicta Ward: Mahawah. New York: Paulist Press.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe 1994. *The Complete Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley with notes by Mary Shelley*. New York: The Modern Library.
- The Romance of Guy of Warwick. The Second 15th Century Version* 1966 [1875]. Edited by J. Zupitza. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tucker, G. H. 2003. *Homo Viator, itineraries of exile, displacement and writing in Renaissance Europe*. Geneve: Droz.
- Turner, Victor, Edith L. B. Turner 1978. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Webb, Diana 2002. *Medieval European Pilgrimage*. London: Palgrave.
- Woolf, Virginia 1991 [1929]. *A Room of One's Own*. New Introduction by Hermione Lee. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Volkan, Vamik 1988. *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies. From Clinical Practice to International Relationships*. London: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Yeates, William Butler 2001 [1997]. *The Major Works*. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Edward Larissy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.