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Frédéric Dumas

1. Introduction

- 1 In 1872, Mark Twain was the famous author of *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), which recounted his touristic travels to Europe, the Black Sea and the Holy Land. *Roughing It* may be read as a *Bildungsroman* and as an attempt at cashing in on the success of the bestseller. Mostly set in the American West between 1861 and 1866, it is centered on the transformation of Twain's persona from a "young and ignorant" (1) greenhorn into a writer and a lecturer, after disastrous bouts as a miner and aspiring millionaire. Twain's brother, Orion, "had just been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory" (1). Before Orion hired him as his private secretary, the narrator's imagination flared up into "envious contemplation" (1):

Pretty soon he would be hundreds and hundreds of miles away on the great plains and deserts, and among the mountains of the Far West, and would see buffaloes and Indians, and prairie dogs, and antelopes, and have all kinds of adventures, and may be get hanged or scalped, and have ever such a fine time. (2)
- 2 Such irrepressible mental images owed a lot to folklore and were part of a general apprehension of western territories as clearly defined tableaux peopled with familiarly unfamiliar scenes, duly conveyed by mainstream iconography and discourse.
- 3 *Roughing It* was published the year when John Gast completed *American Progress*:

Figure 1. – John Gast, *American Progress*.

- 4 Also often called “Manifest Destiny”,¹ the small painting (12 ¾ x 16 ¾ inches, i.e. 32 x 42.5 cm) had been ordered as an illustration for *Croft's Western World* magazine and was used widely thereafter:

Figure 2. – Croft's published *American Progress*.

- 5 Relying notably on modern techniques of reproduction and marketing, the image was to become one of the most prominent visual and ideological tools for the promotion of westward advance: "Subscribers to the publication *Croft's Western World* received a small reproduction of the painting, and a steel engraving made from it was used as the frontispiece of other publications." (Gottfried, 2013: 8)
- 6 As was the case with other travel books of the period, *Roughing It* was lavishly adorned; three hundred and four illustrations contributed to its aesthetics and its ideology. On the whole, Twain's illustrative concern was characteristic of his wish to make sure that his narrative enterprise should meet aesthetic quality as well as marketing success. David insists on the author's thorough involvement in the process:
- Mark Twain knew the language and power of pictures. His books were published by subscription, and subscription books were packed with prints of every type and size; the pages were bound with brassy gold, image-stamped covers. In the subscription market illustrations functioned as a major sales tool. [...] Not only did Twain recognize the potency of pictures he also acknowledged that his subscription readers expected his books to be "fully illustrated," 300 to 400 pictures per volume. [...] He often chose the illustrators, approved the artists' sketches, edited or created the captions, and even directed the placement of the prints in the letterpress. (2001: 1-2)
- 7 As the frontispiece, the very first picture provides a programmatic synthesis of the whole book:

Figure 3. – Frontispiece: "The Miner's Dream".

- 8 Among the several illustrations to the first chapter, the second dream scene presents the expectations of the soon-to-be pioneer and makes up a fantasized prolepsis of his future adventures:

Figure 4. – “Innocent Dreams”.

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- 9 The similarities between the frontispiece, “Innocent Dreams” and *American Progress* suggest common values between national destiny and (Twain’s) individual ambition.
- 10 This article considers “image” both as a visual and a mental representation, for although Twain’s text may perfectly stand on its own as a complete work (only authoritative editions, such as that of The Mark Twain Library, used here, publish the whole artwork), the original publication of *Roughing It* completed it with many illustrative visual images. The comparative study of *American Progress*, the original frontispiece of *Roughing It* and “Innocent Dreams” will first delineate the ideological specificity of Twain’s vision. Continuing to rely on the text and its illustrations, the article will then establish that Twain’s West is greatly an aesthetic and introspective construct.

2. A comparative study of *American Progress*, the frontispiece and “Innocent Dreams”

2.1. *American Progress*

- 11 The woman in the center of *American Progress* bears a strong resemblance to Columbia.² Floating in the air as she is, her allegorical figure embodies the two most notable senses of “progress”, namely the physical aspect (“forward movement in space [as opposed to rest or regress]”) and the figurative one (“usually in good sense, advance to better and better conditions, continuous improvement”).³

- 12 The viewer recognizes New York City in the background on the right-hand side, as Brooklyn Bridge was under construction. The woman comes from the East and is bound westward, where overall darkness appears to be receding as she progresses. Her crossing the continent leads her to fly from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores, over the Great Plains and what looks like the Rocky Mountains. Her forehead bears what Croft calls the “star of the empire” and her hands hold a telegraph cable and a schoolbook, heralding the advent of fast transcontinental communication as well as of mass education. Still living in western darkness, wild animals (buffaloes and a bear) as well as natives are fleeing the figure’s advance. The bear running away from the armed man contrasts with the peaceful shoeless floating woman, all the more so since the man’s feet are firmly set on the ground in their heavy boots. The deer at the bottom, though also a wild animal, is running too, but the other way: it is meant to stay among men, probably because it is not frightening and will provide meat to the conquerors.
- 13 “Manifest Destiny” being a common alternative title to the painting, the implied viewer was most probably reminded of the California Campaign against Mexico in 1846–7⁴, which is subliminally presented as natural.
- 14 Greenberg—who selected *American Progress* as the cover of her study—notes:
- The first thing that strikes the viewer, of course, is the scantily clad and well-formed flying woman who dominates the painting. So focused is Gast’s allegorical figure on her civilizing project that she fails to note that her translucent gown is in imminent danger of sliding off. (2005: 1)
- The woman thus appears as a liminal figure: though she belongs to civilization, she seems on the verge of recovering the wild nature embodied by the bare-chested Indian woman and men fleeing her advance. True to the ideological foundations of Manifest Destiny, the figure is meant to justify the subjugation of the land and the ruthless displacement of the natives; its popularity contributes to
- [...] a myth and ideology of expansion in which racial warfare complements the processes of agrarian development. The story of American progress and expansion thus took the form of a fable of race war, pitting the symbolic opposites of savagery and civilization, primitivism and progress, paganism and Christianity against each other. (Slotkin, 1998 [1985]: 53)
- 15 The woman’s “angelic being’s paradoxical innocence and sensually alluring presence”⁵ is due to the reverted analogy between the symbolic course of the figure, going East to West—i.e., from right to left, and that of the reading process. For the implied viewer of the painting is an Occidental who, formatted as he is to reading from left to right, is subconsciously led to associate a leftward movement on a painting to a move in the direction of the past. Therefore the future-oriented spirit of the American progress is intrinsically linked with a triumphant conquest of the past. The fact that the allegorical representation of civilization may be seen to be on the verge of losing her clothes thereby setting her in peculiar harmony with the wild creatures she is displacing, ironically undermines the moralizing message: the appealing figure “has the effect of distracting and softening the reality and the violence of this movement to ‘win the west’”.⁶ True to traditional marketing techniques, the picture eroticizes its subject (the woman) so as to sell its object (the desirability of the subjugation of the continent by the technological masters).
- 16 This subliminal justification of the American future takes it for granted that woman is an apt medium for the message. Exposing her barely concealed carnality, however, still

maintains the validity of her status as the biblical temptress: the new country delivered from the obscure forces of the past still bears the seeds of its original fall.

2.2. The frontispiece, "Innocent Dreams" and *American Progress*

- 17 The role of the frontispiece is to synthesize the whole book; at that moment all the proleptic images act as teasers. Since the man, in whom we recognize Twain, whose image was already famous, is referred to as "a miner", the book will textualize Twain's whole subconscious universe, entirely related to the fulfillment of essentially material fantasies.
- 18 The dream appears to have an easily discernible structural pattern, which follows the circumvolutions of the terrain (the roads, the paths, the circular forms of the objects) and the course of the moving vehicles (the boat and the horse-drawn carriages):

Figure 5. – "The Miner's Dream".

- 19 The viewer's eye is drawn from the bottom to the top, which takes one to three different types of building: a church-like dome (red arrow), a ladder-like tower (yellow arrow) and Egyptian pyramids (green arrows).⁷
- 20 Such a pattern may be perceived in *American Progress* too:

Figure 6. – *American Progress*.

- 21 Both pictures hint at an elevation from ground level to the sky and its spiritual import. Even the woman's star finds its equivalent in the fountain above the dreamer's head, which in oblique fashion grants him some sacred aura.
- 22 *Roughing It*, then, is also presented as an allegorical narrative; the miner's dream bears fundamental values that transcend the individual and embrace humanity. Presented as a dream, the image is as imaginary as *American Progress* but, unlike the woman floating, the miner seems to have his feet on the ground, beside the tools of his trade. His visions are presented as deriving from his own physical efforts rather than from an ideological belief. A closer look reveals, however, that his feet may actually not be fully touching the ground, which could also make the dreamer a liminal figure. His dreamy state makes him a part of both the real world (symbolized by the spade and the pickax) and the spiritual one. To the attentive reader, though the levitation is barely perceptible, Twain and the woman share the same symbolic characteristic; they appear as two allegorical figures in the same ideological community.
- 23 "Innocent Dreams", which is situated in chapter 1, illustrates the *incipit*: the young traveler has just embarked on his voyage and may at that moment only fantasize his adventures. The main structural differences with *American Progress* lie in the approach to the West and to the Indians:

Figure 7. – *American Progress* & “Innocent Dreams”.

- 24 The pro-easternization stance of *American Progress* is signified through the image of the rising sun: the West represents both opportunity and obscurity; it is to be snatched from dark forces as well as to be got for civilization. This ambivalent status is reminiscent of the Puritan attitude that held the unknown territories as hellish and at the same time potentially connected to the Promised Land. Twain, on the other hand, literally dreams the West. His fascination is totally positive, denoted by the setting sun, his ultimate destination: the blue arrow above reproduces the course of the viewer's eye which, starting from the dreamer's forehead (which is the source of the dream scene), follows a direct route to the sun, determined by the inclination of the miners' back and pickax, prolonged into the sun's rays.
- 25 As for the Indians, those in *American Progress* are fleeing westward with their useless weapons, along with the buffaloes, while Twain's are hunting the buffaloes in the opposite direction. Unlike Gast and Crofutt, Twain is not excluding the natives from his idealistic America.
- 26 To Twain's contemporaries, both pictures most probably echoed *Across the Continent* by Palmer who, "[b]y the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, [...] had become one of America's most prolific and versatile printmakers":⁸

Figure 8. – *Across the Continent*.

- 27 A quick comparison between the two widely published images is enough to establish the common features. Both scenes, for instance, are provided with a spiritual dimension thanks to the upward angle of the mountain ranges at the top. Just as they do in *American Progress*, the wagons lead the way; Palmer's Indians are passive in their contemplation, and Twain's dream does not include the train (which will be tackled in the next part of this paper):

Figure 9. – *Across the Continent* & "Innocent Dreams".

- 28 On the whole, with the exception of the representation of the Indians, Twain's illustrations are perfectly in tune with what seems to be the prevalent notions put forward by mainstream ideology, as sustained by contemporary iconography. Despite the common features, though, *Roughing It* reveals an undeniably personal approach in its enthusiasm in conquering the West.

3. An aesthetic, introspective view of the West

3.1. A puzzled/ing West

- 29 The originality of Twain's view of the West lies in the harmony between the subversion of conventional/eastern type views and his peculiar narrative technique. The confrontation of Croft's maps of railroads and their equivalent in *Roughing It* exemplifies Twain's fundamentally different aesthetic and ideological agenda:

Figure 10. – Croft's and Twain's Maps of Railroads.

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- 30 Croft's neatly organized map conveys a sense of total control over the territory, which is made to look as tame and ordered as a modern American city. Twain's, on the other hand, is ordered too, though in a chaotic way. The West also looks already conquered, but the absence of indications of longitude and latitude denotes an essentially subjective approach to the region: Twain's West remains a place where a traveler may still get lost.
- 31 Though published at basically the same time as Croft's magazine, Twain's travel took place just a few years earlier, which Twain acknowledges was a radically different time: "[...] that was stage-coaching time on the great overland, ten or twelve years ago, when perhaps not more than ten men in America, all told, expected to live to see a railroad follow that route to the Pacific." (15)
- 32 As represented in *The Miner's Dream*, the persona is also a liminal figure, for in the space of only a few years he has been part of an early wave of travelers and a witness to the advent of the Pullman train, which quickly transformed the reasonably risky adventure of traveling West into a comfortable experience. Twain supplies the copy of a recent article from *The New York Times*, which provides a telltale contrast to his own stories, notably that of his stop at a station building, where travelers were offered among other nauseating food and drink "slumgullion", which "pretended to be tea, but there was too much dish-rag, and sand, and old bacon-rind in it" (15). The stagecoach passengers then

[...] flew along all day. At 2 P.M. the belt of timber that fringes the North Platte and marks its windings through the vast level floor of the Plains came in sight. At 4 P.M.

we crossed a branch of the river, and at 6 P.M. we crossed the Platte itself, and landed at Fort Kearney, *fifty-six hours out from St. Joe—THREE HUNDRED MILES!* (26)

- 33 The alternation of small type capitalized letters, italicized words and the concluding fully capitalized phrase, ending with the exclamation mark, makes up a euphemized textual equivalent of the iconic representation of Texas—both easily covered visually and messy enough to spot out the intrusion of a subjective authorship.

- 34 The *New York Times* journalist presents a wholly different picture of his Westward trip on the Pullman train:

It was a revelation to us, that first dinner on Sunday. And though we continued to dine for four days, and had as many breakfasts and suppers, our whole party never ceased to admire the perfection of the arrangements, and the marvelous results achieved. [...] we sped along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, agreed it was the *fastest* living we had ever experienced. ([...] two days afterward [...] we made twenty-seven miles in twenty-seven minutes, while our Champagne glasses filled to the brim spilled not a drop!) [...] Then to bed in luxurious couches, [...] and only awoke the next morning [...] to find ourselves at the crossing of the North Platte, three hundred miles from Omaha—*fifteen hours and forty minutes out.* (26–8)

- 35 Interestingly, the article is entitled “Across the Continent”, just like Palmer’s painting, which is its contemporary and whose ideology it corroborates, as well as that of *American Progress*. When *Roughing It* was published, crossing the American continent had already reached its next phase: the insistence on lush comfort and technological achievements had already transformed the adventurous traveler into a tourist. The corresponding illustration encapsulates the lavishness of Pullman traveling:

Figure 11. – “Pullman Car Dining-Saloon”.

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- 36 While the picture illustrates the *New York Times* article, it also fits Twain's own imagery, insofar as in their remarkable attire the "Ethiop waiters, flitting about in spotless white" (27) make up an apt equivalent of the exotic Egyptian pyramids in the "Miner's Dream". Twain's response to the growing transcontinental comfort discloses his nostalgic outlook on a very recent American past: "I can scarcely comprehend the new state of things." (26)

3.2. A puzzled sense of identity

- 37 Twain's enthusiasm rests a lot on the experiences linked with what at the time of writing was already considered as outdated traveling: "It was fascinating—that old overland stagecoaching." (20) Crossing the wide plains and deserts brought about a sea-change in the inexperienced travelers, whose perceptions of themselves changed due to a necessary adaptation to new, harsher surroundings. From the very beginning, the passengers came to face their inadequacy, as revealed in the description of the furniture in the "station-keeper's den" (21), whose fairy-tale-like appearance heralds puzzling happenings: "The roofs, which had no slant to them worth speaking of, were thatched and then sodded or covered with a thick layer of earth, and from this sprung a pretty rank growth of weeds and grass. It was the first time we had ever seen a man's front yard on top of his house." (21) The topsy-turvy logic of the house bears consequence on the disoriented travelers, whose kaleidoscopic representation of themselves on the premises verges on the surrealistic:

By the door, inside, was fastened a small old-fashioned looking-glass frame, with two little fragments of the original mirror lodged down in one corner of it. This arrangement afforded a pleasant double-barreled portrait of you when you looked into it, with one half of your head set up a couple of inches above the other half. (22)

- 38 The mirror literally reflects the traveler's now fragmented identity: though still an easterner, he has already become someone else, begotten by western influence. With its transparent allusion to one of the emblematic western props (the double-barreled shotgun), the split portrait is the hallucinatory glimpse of Twain's split vision of himself:

Figure 12. – “A Powerful Glass”.

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- 39 Just as the course of the dreamer's visions pointed west in images previously analyzed, the rays that emanate from the painting point to the top left corner of the image, and the clearer spot at the top of the man's head create the halo-like effect detected in the "Miner's Dream". This time, Twain's pose is evocative of countless self-portraits; the educated reader/viewer is led to consider this image as an echo of those of the many revered artists that the persona ironically calls "masters" in his other travel books.⁹ The timeless clothes might fit Renaissance or seventeenth century Dutch painting, his disheveled hair lets out an impression of a glimpse at the artist in his solitary creative process. The right arm, which is only half shown, may drive the attentive viewer to complete the picture according to a conventional pattern that displays the hand manipulating the tools, i.e., the palette and the paintbrushes. The book that appears in front of the model/creator provides an incongruous element (both in the picture and in the unsophisticated environment of the station) that points to Twain as the barely hidden writer of the very book we are holding, and contains the image illustrating his textual creation. This meaningful confusion fits harmoniously in the aesthetic rendition of "the toll roads" previously alluded to. More importantly, it introduces a characteristic element of the *vanitas* painting, which crystalizes Twain's concern with the relevance of art in the context of his mortal condition.¹⁰
- 40 The barrenness of the new surroundings is due to the fact that the station is situated at the outpost of what may be considered as a new world, unrelated to European education and history. True to the highly coded hodgepodge of the *Vanitas* tradition, however, the very few elements scattered in the building contain much symbolic value. The basic furniture is mostly made of crude pieces built with local raw material, and the very few European elements testify to the passing of the values of the Old World:

There was one isolated piece of table furniture that bore about it a touching air of grandeur in misfortune. This was the caster. It was German silver, and crippled and rusty, but it was so preposterously out of place there that it was suggestive of a tattered exiled king among barbarians, and the majesty of its native position compelled respect even in its degradation. (23)

- 41 The fall from social grace of the caster bears witness to the irrelevance of the Old World's political and cultural systems. As for its relative personalization, it confers a touch of tragic meaning to the scene ironically presented in its pathetic portrait:

Figure 13. – “Dignified Exile”.

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- 42 Though the aristocratic-looking foot still looks fit enough to carry the weight of the entire piece, the latter's total lack of balance bodes for further decline. The mirror-like figure that dominates the whole also suggests a fairytale aspect, denoting both the incongruity of the caster in its crude environment and the irrepressible predominance of fiction in the whole narrative strategy. The presence of this mirror with a distorted angle mirrors—as it were—that of the broken “Powerful Glass” a few pages earlier, thereby contributing to a pervading introspective streak, the unquietness of which should be detected between the lines and inside the illustrations.
- 43 The travelers' distorted sense of identity is rendered more acute by the ruthless attitude of the western locals:
- [...] we were well aware that these superior beings despised “emigrants.” We permitted no tell-tale shudders and wincings in our countenances, for we wanted to seem pioneers, or Mormons, half-breeds, teamsters, stage-drivers, Mountain Meadow assassins—anything in the world that the plains and Utah respected and admired—but we were wretchedly ashamed of being “emigrants,” and sorry enough that we had white shirts and could not swear in the presence of ladies without looking the other way. (119)

- 44 Despite its ill-adapted appearance, the German caster was found useful in a strictly material context. The eastern travelers' education, attire and ignorance of the local culture and reality, on the other hand, prove incompatible with the West. The following image shows the sharp-dressed traveler, with his sophisticated hat, vest, coat, tie, trousers and his trimmed beard, being pointed at by a representative western crowd. The woman's attire cannot be distinguished, but the men and child are wearing the efficient, sturdy clothes typical of the area, as displayed by the station master ("pantaloon of coarse, country-woven stuff, and into the seat and the inside of the legs were sewed ample additions of buckskin, [...] unspeakably picturesque. The pants were stuffed into the tops of high boots [...] The man wore a huge beard and mustachios, an old slouch hat" [22-23]):

Figure 14. – "An Object of Pity".

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- 45 The identity crisis signified in Twain's broken glass heralds his upcoming forced adaptation to the local type of ideal American. Just as Europeans were supposed to greatly rid themselves of their national culture in order to become the new individuals called forth by the New World, the supposedly more affluent American easterners newly arrived in the West had to become "that proudest and blesseddest creature that exists on all the earth, a 'FORTY-NINER'" (120). Moving West, then, implies much more than coping with traveling in grueling conditions. It requires total assimilation to the mainstream ideology supported by the myth of the entrepreneurial forty-niner, the glorious miner who took part in the famed gold rush of 1849. An ensuing dress change is but the visible transformation of the traveler. To Twain, the impact of the West is one of the several confrontations with alien cultures brought about by the worldwide journeying narrated in his travel books, notably in *India* and *Europe*.

4. Conclusion

- 46 The literary and the illustrative images of *Roughing It* contribute to building a mythic American West that fits the contemporary type. They combine into a coherent chaos where the creator fashions the territories as they are transforming him. The humorous split image of “Powerful Glass” discloses a glimpse of the persona’s multifaceted face in the midst of an environment akin to magic.
- 47 Already past its historical relevance, Twain’s West is shown as taking shape simultaneously with its creator. Each is revealed as a work in progress in an idiosyncratic humor shared by what is made to look like a national character:

Figure 15. – “One Crest”.

ONE CREST.

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- 48 By indicating that “united we stand” is the motto of Missouri, his home State, Twain discloses the two friendly bears and their barrel as an oblique portrait of himself as a Missourian, which then constitutes an ironic pendant to his “double-barreled portrait” in “Powerful Glass”. Following that logic, Twain’s divided self might be considered as a sign of failure in his writing endeavor, but the subversive role of humor defuses such pessimism for his creative enterprise is also the concrete illustration of uninterrupted conscientious work, as symbolized by the industrious bees on the crest of bustling Utah:

Figure 16. – "The Other".

THE OTHER.

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- 49 Like the industrious beehive, America is fast building itself through the absolute dedication of its members. Twain's writing endeavor—indissociable from his relentless mining pursuits—exemplifies the nature of the American individual: always transforming himself and his country, at the (humorous) risk of never knowing who he really is about to become.

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NOTES

1. The Library of Congress references the piece the following way:

Title: *American Progress*

Other Titles: *Westward the Course of Destiny* / *Westward Ho!* / *Manifest Destiny*

(*American progress*, <www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97507547/>, retrieved 1st May 2017).

2. With her name strongly inspired by Christopher Columbus', Columbia is an allegorical figure who had been personifying America since the 18th century.

3. "Progress", *Oxford English Dictionary* (1997).

4. Slotkin states that the editor of "[t]he passionately expansionist Democratic Review [...] had coined the phrase 'Manifest Destiny'" (1998 [1985]: 179) to conceptualize the American imperialistic urge that characterized the era: "[...] the United States was destined by Divine Providence to stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean" (Ted Yanak & Pam Cornelison, "Manifest Destiny", in *The Great American History Fact-Finder*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993). That creed was instrumental in the Mexican War (1846–1848), which eventually led the United States to obtain New Mexico, Texas and California: "Next to Jefferson's purchase of the Louisiana Territory, this was the most important land acquisition in US history." (Genovese, 2018 [2013]: ch. 2)

5. See <https://aras.org/sites/default/files/docs/00043AmericanProgress_0.pdf>, p. 3.

6. Ibid.

7. The unusual presence of the pyramids in the American West expresses the metaphysical value of Twain's dreams and is also an echo of the Egyptian journey in *The Innocents Abroad*.

8. <www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/308328.html>, Philadelphia Museum of Art, retrieved 1st May 2017.

9. *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), *A Tramp Abroad* (1882), and *Following the Equator* (1897).

10. See Frédéric Dumas, *Mark Twain : tourisme et vanité*, Grenoble & Lyon: Ellug, 2015.

ABSTRACTS

Mostly set in the American West between 1861 and 1866, *Roughing It* (1872) is centered on the transformation of Twain's persona from a greenhorn into a writer and a lecturer. His imagination was driven by mental images that owed a lot to folklore and were conveyed by mainstream iconography and discourse.

Roughing It was published the year when John Gast completed *American Progress*, also often called “Manifest Destiny”. The image was to become a prominent visual and ideological tool for the promotion of westward advance.

As was the case with other travel books of the period, *Roughing It* was lavishly adorned; three hundred and four illustrations contributed to its aesthetics and its ideology. The similarities between the frontispiece, “Innocent Dreams” and *American Progress* suggest common values between national destiny and individual ambition.

This paper starts with a comparative study of *American Progress*, the original frontispiece of *Roughing It* and “Innocent Dreams” to delineate the ideological specificity of Twain’s vision. Still relying on the text and its illustrations, it then establishes that Twain’s West is greatly an aesthetic and introspective construct.

Roughing It (1872) est un récit de voyage qui se déroule principalement dans l'Ouest américain entre 1861 et 1866. Il relate la transformation de Twain en écrivain et conférencier dont l'imagination était stimulée par des images mentales souvent véhiculées par l'iconographie et le discours dominants.

Roughing It fut publié l'année où John Gast acheva *American Progress*, aussi appelé « Manifest Destiny ». Cette image allait devenir un outil visuel et idéologique fondamental dans la promotion de l'avancée vers l'Ouest.

Comme d'autres livres de voyage de l'époque, *Roughing It* était richement décoré ; son esthétique et son idéologie étaient soutenues par trois cent quatre illustrations. Les similitudes entre le frontispice, « Innocent Dreams » et *American Progress* suggèrent des valeurs communes entre le destin national et l'ambition individuelle.

Cet article commence par une étude comparative d'*American Progress*, du frontispice original de *Roughing It* et d'« Innocent Dreams » afin de délimiter la spécificité idéologique de la vision de Twain. Toujours en s'appuyant sur le texte et ses illustrations, il établit ensuite que l'Ouest de Twain est avant tout une construction esthétique et introspective.

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Keywords: Twain, America, travels, myth, illustration, image, dream, ideology

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