

Geographical Journeys and Journeys of Self-Discovery in “The Count of Monte Cristo” and “A Room with a View”

Elena Raicu

UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST

Keywords

Alexandre Dumas, E. M. Forster, journey, self-discovery

Abstract

In *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-1846) and *A Room with a View* (1908), Alexandre Dumas and E. M. Forster take their characters on a double journey, one that is both geographical and initiatory, which can be seen as one unitary voyage. Already an experienced travel writer by the time he publishes the story of Edmond Dantès, Dumas introduces in his novel entire passages reminiscent of his trips in Italy, France and the Mediterranean Sea. In his turn, Forster tries to describe Florence from the perspective of a British tourist, who is narrow-minded and superficial, using ironical speech to this effect. In addition to these geographical journeys, the two writers also guide their heroes in a physical and spiritual coming of age, in finding and accepting themselves.

Geographical Journeys and Journeys of Self-Discovery in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *A Room with a View*

It is the soul that forms its own horizons
The Count of Monte Cristo, Ch. 112

Traces of travel writing can be identified in many other types of fictional genres, in which they support the main story. Novel, or novella, story characters go on journeys in known/real or unknown/imaginary worlds, on or under water, via roads, and in air or space. These geographical journeys sometimes blend with journeys of self-discovery, in which a boy becomes a man, a girl becomes a woman, fully aware of their qualities, their strengths, their way in life, their soul – a coming of age physically and, most importantly, spiritually. Though some authors focus more on the action or the psychological analysis of the characters, others love to thoroughly describe the places where their characters live or go or their journey to those geographical and/or spiritual places.

Mirroring examples are given by two novels that have unquestionably gained their place in literary history: Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-1846) and Edward Morgan Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908). Both Dumas and Forster take their characters (and with them the reader) on a double journey, both geographical and initiatory, which becomes a unitary voyage. The difference comes from the way in which the authors combine the two journeys. On the one hand, Dumas emphasizes Edmond Dantès' initiatory journey and uses the geographical journey as the background to the first, to illustrate the (near) omnipotence of the character reborn as the Count of Monte Cristo, now in control of time and space. On the other hand, Forster begins the story of his heroine, Lucy Honeychurch, with a geographical journey, through Italy; it is this stepping out of England that triggers her initiatory journey, which results in her discovering the world, herself and romance.

These double journeys are presented to a greater or lesser extent and in a more or less faithful manner in film adaptations of the two novels: 20 surviving movies based on Dumas' book (from 1908 until 2002) and 2 based on Forster's (1985 and 2007)¹. The analysis of the literary journeys will be thus integrated with some observations on their filmic versions

¹ The two adaptations will be referred to with the expressions used by Forster for the first two versions of his novel, *Old Lucy* and *New Lucy* (McLeod Hewitt 359).

Both Dumas and Forster had experience as real travel writers. Dumas wrote an impressive number of books about his impressions on his travels in France, Italy, Russia, Switzerland and Africa [*Quinze jours au Sinaï*, journey taken in 1830 (published in 1839); *En Suisse*, 1832 (1833–1834); *Le midi de la France*, 1834–1835 (1841); *Une année à Florence*, 1835 (1841); *Le speronare*, 1835 (1841); *Le capitaine Arena*, 1835 (1842); *Le corricolo*, 1835 (1843); *Excursions sur les bords du Rhin*, 1838 (1841); *La villa Palmieri*, 1840–1843 (1843); *De Paris à Cadix*, 1846 (1847–1848); *Le Véloce ou Tanger, Alger et Tunis*, 1846–1847 (1848–1851); *En Russie*, 1858 (1860); *Le Caucase*, 1858–1859 (1859)], whereas Forster left some historical, cultural, religious and geographical guides to Alexandria, and a portrait of the Indian royalty of the State of Dewas Senior [*Alexandria: A History and Guide*, published in 1922; *Pharos and Pharillon (A Novelist's Sketchbook of Alexandria Through the Ages)*, 1923; *The Hill of Devi*, 1953].

The Count of Monte Cristo actually owes its creation and title to one of its author's journeys throughout Italy, during his second sojourn in Florence (1840–1843), as Dumas confesses in *État civil du Comte de Monte-Cristo* (1857). It was 1842 when Dumas, as companion to Prince Napoleon on a trip to Elba, passed by the island of Monte Cristo. Though introduced to them as an attractive destination for hunting, the two travellers decided against debarking, which would have brought five to six days of quarantine. They did, however, go around the island to determine its geographical position because its name, heard by Dumas for the first time, immediately inspired him as the title of a future novel, an intention he made known to the prince: 'À donner, en mémoire de ce voyage que j'ai l'honneur d'accomplir avec vous, le titre de l'île de Monte-Cristo à quelque roman que j'écrirai plus tard'² (Dumas, "État civil" 131). Furthermore, Dumas' first thought on this next book was to write eight volumes of *Impressions de voyage dans Paris*, representing, in his words, 'une promenade historique et archéologique à travers la Lutèce de César et le Paris de Philippe-Auguste'³ (Dumas, "État civil" 131–132). When his editors asked him to write a novel instead, using his impressions just as details in the story, Dumas first imagined a plot around a very rich gentleman who lived in Rome under the name of the Count of Monte Cristo and who later went to Paris with the hidden purpose of finding and punishing those who had condemned him in his youth to a ten-year captivity. It was a plot inspired by the anecdote *Le Diamant et la Vengeance* published by Jacques Peuchet in 1838 in

² To give, in memory of this journey that I have the honour of completing with you, the title of the Isle of Monte Cristo to some novel that I will write later (translated by the author).

³ A historical and archaeological walk in Caesar's Lutetia and in Philip Augustus's Paris (translated by the author).

his *Mémoires tirés des Archives de la Police de Paris pour servir à l'histoire de la morale et de la police depuis Louis XIV jusqu'à nos jours*, which Dumas applies to his planned *Impressions de voyage dans Paris*. After this first alteration, Dumas further develops the story, following Auguste Maquet's advice, and divides it into various parts based on the main location of the events: Marseille, Rome and Paris. The hunting episode on the island of Monte Cristo was also added to the novel, and included the itinerary of Dumas and Prince Napoleon's travels Florence-Livorno-Elba-Pianosa-Monte Cristo in 1842. In addition, the literary journey records debarking on Monte Cristo, in spite of the quarantine risk. Moreover, it becomes an essential episode in the story, providing Dumas with the opportunity to introduce Franz d'Épinay and the reader to the character of the Count of Monte Cristo, under the identity of Sinbad the Sailor (Chapter 31 *Italy. Sinbad the Sailor*).

Both *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *A Room with a View* are cyclic novels, starting and finishing in the same place – Florence in *A Room with a View*; or with the same activity – Edmond Dantès sailing to Marseille on the *Pharaoon* to meet his lover and the Count of Monte Cristo leaving the island on his yacht with his lover. In between, the two heroes go on various journeys, geographically and spiritually.

More than mirroring images, the beginning and ending of Dumas' novel bring forward an important element in the story: water, a medium of transport and an initiatory element (symbolizing baptism). Edmond Dantès is an experienced sailor, having conquered seas and oceans – "There are few harbours, even the most difficult ones, in which I could not enter or from which I could not leave with a bandage over my eyes" (Dumas, *The Count* Chapter 21)⁴ – and a great swimmer and diver, admired by many and considered the best in Marseille. The sea, "first horizon of his youth" (Ch. 22), is thus a fundamental element to him, with both a mother's care and a mistress' coquetry: "I was rocked when an infant in the arms of old Ocean, and on the bosom of the beautiful Amphitrite; I have sported with the green mantle of the one and the azure robe of the other; I love the sea as a mistress, and pine if I do not see her for a long time" (Ch. 85). Along with his arrest, he is cruelly separated from his lover and also from the freedom of water; he is imprisoned on an island, surrounded by water, yet not able to touch it. Dantès himself cries out:

Oh, you do not know what is seventeen months in prison! Seventeen ages rather, especially to a man who, like me, had arrived at the summit of his ambition [...] Seventeen months' captivity for a man accustomed to the sea air,

⁴ Words in italic mark the author's intervention into the quotation from the English translation of the novel, based on the French original.

to the independence of a sailor, to the boundless ocean, is a worse punishment than human crime ever merited. (Ch. 14).

He is reborn from water, in a second baptism, as the sea is Edmond Dantès' grave and the baptismal font of the man who will soon be the Count of Monte Cristo, the Maltese (Ch. 23) or Sinbad the Sailor, a name actually indicated as his "baptismal appellation" (Ch. 40). Thus reborn, he creates for himself the identity of a rich ship owner's son from Malta (Zaccone), who served in the navy (Ch. 69). Furthermore, people come to know him as "a wealthy signor, who travels for his pleasure" and resides "on the sea" (Ch. 31). That the sea is his element is also demonstrated by Dumas' observation towards the end of the story, when the Count is heading for Marseille: "as the distance increased between the *Count* and Paris, an almost superhuman serenity appeared to surround *him*; he might have been taken for an exile about to revisit his native land" (Ch. 112). In the very end, he leaves by sea again, probably for the Orient, as he tells Franz when they meet on Monte Cristo – "when I have completed my affairs in Paris, I shall go and die in the East; and should you wish to see me again, you must seek me at Cairo, Bagdad, or Ispahan" (Ch. 31). As it is clearly indicated in the 1929 adaptation, "Désormais l'âme penchée vers le Bien, Monte Cristo allait chercher l'oubli de ses souffrances dans l'amour d'Haydée, au milieu des fêtes de l'Orient"⁵ (1: 34: 50). Though the ending is changed in the 1969 Spanish series, the hero still leaves here for the sea, in a journey to return to the truth, to find a place where there are no corrupted prosecutors, bankers or generals, but only fresh air: "Al mar, ala soledad del mar, a su libertad y a su paz"⁶ (Episode 17 14: 06-14: 15).

Dantès' road to the Château d'If and his imprisonment mark the beginning of his initiatory journey towards the light of knowledge, truth, faith and happiness. It is not accidental that this happens during the night, as the darkness is also a symbol of his poor education and knowledge and of his "blindness" in the face betrayal. He walks through dark corridors, passes through iron doors, and changes the fresh air of a life on the sea with the heavy, stale air of prison. He goes from light to darkness; from the infiniteness of the sea to the limited space of a cell; from happiness to despair; from life to death, a symbolic death – "he had *lived for* so long in a grave, that he looked upon himself as dead" (Ch. 14) – later materialized in a suicidal attempt; from being human to a beastly and demonic state – "[he] walked round and round

⁵ From now on, with his soul inclined towards Goodness, Monte Cristo sought to forget his sufferings in the love of Haydée, in the midst of the faeries of the East (translated by the author).

⁶ To the sea-side, to the solitude of the sea, its freedom and its peace (translated by the author).

the cell like a wild beast in its cage” (Ch. 8), ‘He is worse than [a madman], he is a devil!’ (Ch. 14) – from a name and an identity to a number – “the unhappy young man was no longer called Edmond Dantès – he was now number 34” (Ch. 14). Developing the ability to see in the darkness⁷ is his first initiatory test, which he passes after ten years of captivity.

A simple and uneducated man, Dantès cannot escape the limits of his cell with his mind, and, thus confined, he gradually falls into despair, losing faith in people and in the power of praying: “yet in spite of his earnest prayers, Dantès remained a prisoner” (Ch. 15). He thus comes to feel “the deepest grief”, which makes possible for him to later experience “supreme happiness” (Ch. 117). He has almost given himself to death when God sends him Faria, who helps him rise again, higher than before: after “the most dreadful misfortunes, the most frightful sufferings, the abandonment of all those who loved [him], the persecution of those who did not know [him]”, after “captivity, solitude, misery”, he found the “light and liberty, and [...] a fortune so brilliant, so unbounded, so unheard-of”, which seemed to him as sent by God for some “great designs” (Ch. 112)⁸. His faith now regained, he never loses it again.

As Dantès guide in his initiatory journey, Faria takes him into his care as an apprentice and a son: “You are my son, Dantès [...] God has sent you to me to console, at one and the same time, the man who could not be a father, and the prisoner who could not get free” (Ch. 18). He teaches Dantès everything he knows: science, languages, manners, elegance of speech and behaviour, etc., and stirs up in him a great thirst for knowledge. Dantès’ innate intelligence⁹ and “imitative powers bestowed on him by nature” make him assimilate everything easily, so that “at the end of a year [he] was a new man” (Ch. 17). Then, once free, he embarks on a journey of continuous study, thus coming to master all languages, customs and sciences. He becomes an exceptional being, as he presents himself to de Villefort, but he is also recog-

⁷ ‘he was so accustomed to darkness that he could see a pin in the darkest corner of his dungeon’ (Ch. 113).

⁸ This episode marks a symbolic passage as, soon after meeting Faria, Dantès becomes a new man in whose life despair has no place. It is a symbolic death, of “old” Dantès and a rebirth of the spirit. Abbé Busoni’s announcement to Caderousse of Dantès’ death – “He died a more *desperate and miserable* prisoner than the felons who pay the penalty of their crimes at the galleys of Toulon” (Ch. 26) – can be thus linked to this specific moment.

⁹ “a prodigious memory, combined with an astonishing quickness and readiness of conception: the mathematical turn of his mind rendered him apt at all kinds of calculation, while his *sailor’s* poetical feelings threw a light and pleasing veil over the dry reality of arithmetical computation, or the rigid severity of geometry” (Ch. 17).

nized as such by Madame de Villefort, who regards him as “the epitome of human wisdom” (Ch. 57), and by Maximilien Morrel, who openly tells him: “you are the epitome of all human knowledge, and you seem like a being descended from a wiser and more advanced world than ours” (Ch. 117). In the 2002 adaptation, Dantès cannot even read, so before “economics, mathematics, philosophy [!]”¹⁰, science”, he asks Faria to teach him how “to read and write” (41: 49–41: 53).

After knowledge (the freeing of his mind), Faria gives him the hope of a rich life by sharing with him the secret of the Spada treasure, and, from the land of the dead, he also gives him the freedom of his body. Dantès passes through a symbolic death, taking Faria’s place in the mortuary sack and, “buried” in the Mediterranean waters through an initiatory baptism, he comes out of the water and assumes a new identity of a Maltese sailor: “he miraculously *came out of his grave*, transformed, rich, powerful, *almost god*” (Ch. 113). Out of prison, the hero is no longer Dantès, as is demonstrated by this new identity and later by his new name, as well as by his physical transformation¹¹, which reflect the newness of his mind – this metamorphosis is so radical that he fails to recognize himself. Another illustration of this is Monte Cristo’s trip back to the Château d’If and back into his past in order to retrieve his memories and find Dantès again: “Too many diamonds, too much gold and [splendour], are now reflected by the mirror in which Monte Cristo seeks to behold Dantès. Hide thy diamonds, bury thy gold, shroud thy [splendour], *the rich retrieve the poor, the free retrieve the prisoner, the resurrected retrieve the corpse!*” (Ch. 113). It can be therefore understood that his identity as Count of Monte-Cristo is, in itself, a symbolic passage: “God gave that spectre *who came out of his grave the mask* of the Count of Monte Cristo

¹⁰ In the novel, Faria explains to Dantès that “philosophy cannot be taught; *philosophy is the reunion of the acquired sciences with the genius that applies them: philosophy is the bright cloud on which Christ went up into heaven*” (Ch. 17).

¹¹ “His oval face was lengthened, his smiling mouth had assumed the firm and marked lines which betoken resolution; his eyebrows were arched beneath *a single, thoughtful line*; his eyes were full of melancholy, and from their depths occasionally sparkled gloomy fires of misanthropy and hatred; his complexion, so long kept from the sun, had now that pale colour which produces, when the features are encircled with black hair, the aristocratic beauty of the man of the [North]; the profound learning he had acquired had *in addition* diffused over his features a refined intellectual expression; and he had also acquired, being naturally of a goodly stature, *that well-built vigour of a body always concentrating* all its force within itself.

To the elegance of a nervous and slight form had succeeded the solidity of a rounded and muscular figure. As to his voice, prayers, sobs, and imprecations had changed it so, that at times it was of a singularly penetrating sweetness, and at others rough and almost hoarse” (Ch. 22).

and covered him in diamonds and gold, so that you can recognize him but today” (Ch. 111). In three adaptations of the novel (1961¹², 1975¹³, 1998¹⁴), Monte Cristo considers, however, that his new identity to be a simple mask, allowing him to pursue and accomplish his plans for vengeance, and can easily be given up afterwards (Raicu, “A Clash”).

Dantès starts his new life by passing another test, that of his sailing knowledge on the smugglers’ ship, as he successfully makes a risky manoeuvre¹⁵. Dumas uses these chapters, beginning with Dantès’ escape from the Château d’If, to display his own knowledge of the Mediterranean Sea, giving many geographical markers of the surroundings (see Chapters 21–24).

In order to get hold of Faria’s treasure, the hero must overcome both physical and mental obstacles, as he needs to find his way to the treasure hidden in the mountain without succumbing to his doubtful thoughts – “Anyone else would have rushed on with a cry of joy. Dantès turned pale, hesitated, and reflected” (Ch. 24). He passes here a magical border, like in the *Arabian Nights*, saying the famous magical phrase “Open Sesame” in front of the rock that seals the cave (Ch. 23). From now on, his life becomes that of a prince from those Oriental stories, whose fortunes are equal if not surpassed by his, and whose way of living is adopted by him with joy – taking coffee in the original Arabian manner, without sugar, smoking waterpipes, having Oriental furniture, decorations and his own cave full of treasures, and seeking vengeance/

¹² “Il faut que ce personnage [du Comte de Monte-Cristo] disparaisse à jamais, qu’il s’efface des mémoires, pour qu’un autre homme puisse revenir un jour” (II – : 31: 18-1: 31: 26) – *It is necessary that this character [of the Count of Monte Cristo] disappear forever, that he is erased from memories, so that another man can return one day* (translated by the author).

¹³ “I am no longer the instrument of God! I’ve been plunged back into nothingness! I’m searching for something lost... my soul, my self... for Edmond Dantès” (1: 40: 56-1: 41: 12).

¹⁴ ‘Crois-tu que j’aime être le Comte de Monte-Cristo? C’est un homme terrible, impitoyable et froid. Mais ce n’est pas moi qui ai voulu devenir cet homme-là. Oui, il me suffisait d’être Edmond Dantès. Je n’attendais rien d’autre de la vie. [...] En essayant de tuer le jeune marin qui ne demandait rien à personne, ils ont fait naître le vengeur qui vient à leur demander les comptes. Bien, tant pis pour eux” (I – 0: 24-0: 59) – *Do you think I like being the Count of Monte Cristo? He is a terrible, pitiless and cold man. But it was not I who wanted to become that man. Yes, it was enough for me to be Edmond Dantès. I expected nothing more from life. [...] In trying to kill the young sailor who asked nothing from no one, they created the avenger who comes to haul them for their actions. Well, too bad for them; ‘Edmond Dantès est revenu” (IV – 1: 26: 27-1: 26: 37) – *Edmond Dantès is back* (translated by the author).*

¹⁵ “the small vessel, instead of keeping tacking, started to advance towards the island of Rion and passed by it, as Dantès had predicted, twenty fathoms to windward” (Ch. 21).

justice and the law of retaliation: “in return for a slow, profound, *immeasurable*, eternal torture, I would give back the same, were it possible; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, as the *Orientalists* say” (Ch. 35).

The “Maltese” starts his journeys by reaching Livorno, then heading to Genoa and to Marseille for his first journey into the past; the second will be ten years later at the Château d’If. He passes for a Spanish nobleman in Genoa and uses an English passport in Marseille. He also assumes several identities: a stateless¹⁶ Sinbad the Sailor, a Sicilian Abbé (Giacomo) Busoni, an English Lord Wilmore. However, these are not just simple masks, but fully assumed identities, with specific looks, personality, gestures, language, etc.¹⁷.

As a sailor, Dantès had the opportunity to travel around the world¹⁸, but only after he is incarcerated and starts assimilating new knowledge does he really begin to travel, intellectually, in time and space. He passes symbolic, mental borders, which only later become geographical; he passes these as he likes once he is free, believing that “*it is the soul that forms its own horizons*” (Ch. 112). His life thus becomes one of travelling, following the example of

¹⁶ Franz: “What country does he come from?”, Captain: “I do not know” (Ch. 31).

¹⁷ Sinbad the Sailor: “a man of thirty-eight to forty years of age, dressed in a Tunisian costume, that is to say, a red cap with a long blue silk tassel, a vest of black cloth embroidered with gold, pantaloons of deep red, large and full gaiters of the same [colour], embroidered with gold like the vest, and yellow slippers; he had a splendid cashmere round his waist, and a small sharp and crooked cangiar was passed through his girdle” (Ch. 31).

Abbé Busoni had a ‘strong/marked Italian accent’ (Chapters 26, 69, 103), and wore a long cassock, a priest’s tonsure, three-cornered hat or cowl, large spectacles, which covered not only his eyes but also his temples, and used a cane (see Chapters 69 and 82).

Lord Wilmore: “a man of about thirty or two-and-thirty, dressed in a bright blue frock coat, nankeen trousers, and a white waistcoat, having at the same time the appearance and accent of an Englishman” (Ch. 28); “a very rich Englishman, eccentric almost to insanity” (Ch. 56); “rather above the middle height, with thin reddish whiskers, light complexion and light hair, turning rather [grey]. [...] dressed with all the English peculiarity, namely, in a blue coat, with gilt buttons and high collar, in the fashion of 1811, a white kerseymere waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons, three inches too short, but which were prevented by straps from slipping up to the knee”, “One of his peculiarities was never to speak a word of French, which he however wrote with great facility”, he spoke with “that tone which is only known to *the most pure* natives of Great Britain”, and behaved “with English coolness” and with “the stiff politeness of the English” (Ch. 69).

¹⁸ In this first period of his life, he went only in the Orient, once to India and a few times to the Levant (see Chapter 17), his last voyage having as a destination Smyrna, with stops on the way back at Trieste and Naples, and of course to Elba (see Chapter 1).

the famous sailor whose name he has assumed, as Franz d'Épinay observes. Moreover, by this he sets out to accomplish a vow made "at a time when [he] little thought [he] should ever be able to accomplish it" (Ch. 35), meaning when he was imprisoned in the Château d'If; but he will also use travelling as "an infallible remedy" against annoyance (Ch. 85) – "I am pleased with one place, *I* stay there; I get tired of it, *I* leave it; I am free as a bird and have wings like one" (Ch. 31). He knows no boundaries, and goes "*as far as the earth will carry [him]*" (Ch. 85), making people wonder about his unpredictable itinerary: "three months ago, he was then at Rome, but since that time who knows where he may have gone?" (Ch. 40¹⁹). Dumas emphasizes this life of travel by calling his character at the beginning of his story, in Paris, a traveller, a designation later used by Monte Cristo himself²⁰. This passion is obviously shared by his alter egos, Lord Wilmore and Abbé Busoni, who are known as great travellers²¹.

In ten years, the Count lives mostly in the Orient²² (from the Ottoman Empire to India and China), as Dumas constantly reminds it, but also in Italy, Spain, Tunis, and France (as Lord Wilmore²³ or Abbé Busoni²⁴, but not as Sinbad or Monte Cristo²⁵), and "everywhere else you can imagine", as he confesses in the 2002 adaptation (1: 50: 56-1: 50: 57). Yet he is actually "of no country", but a true cosmopolite: "My kingdom is *as big as* the world, for I am not an Italian, or a Frenchman, or a Hindu, or an American, or a Spaniard: I am a cosmopolite. No country can say it saw my birth. God alone knows what country will see me die" (Ch. 48). He adopts all customs – "you call yourself Oriental, Levantine, Maltese, Indian, Chinese, *savage* [...] and yet

¹⁹ Chapter 39 in the French original.

²⁰ "a traveller like myself" (Ch. 40).

²¹ "[Lord Wilmore] was one of those English tourists who consume a large fortune in travelling"; 'the abbé *travelled often and occasionally stayed for a long time on a voyage*' (Ch. 69).

²² "up to the present time I have followed the Eastern customs, which are entirely in contrast to the Parisian. I beg you, therefore, to *forgive me if you find in me something too Turkish, too Italian, or too Arabian*" (Ch. 39).

²³ The security police describe him as "a rich foreigner, who is sometimes seen in Paris" (Ch. 69). But he also was in Marseille, back in 1829 (see Chapters 25, 28-30).

²⁴ Since he tells de Villefort, disguised as envoy of the prefect of police, that Monte Cristo "applied to me six months ago for the particulars he required" about Paris (Ch. 69). It can be assumed that as Abbé Busoni he has visited Paris in these ten years. He did travel in France, near Marseille, between the village of Bellegarde and the town of Beaucaire (to Caderousse's inn), and to Nîmes (where he saved Bertuccio from prison), in 1829 (see Chapters 26, 27, 44 and 45).

²⁵ Under these identities, the hero denies many times having ever been to France, and more precisely to Paris (see Chapters 31, 38, 39 and 42).

the first day you set foot in Paris you instinctively display the greatest virtue, or rather the chief defect, of our eccentric Parisians, that is, you assume the vices you have not, and conceal the virtues you possess” (Ch. 40), “I, who have a seraglio at Cairo, one at Smyrna, and one at Constantinople” (Ch. 96); speaks all languages – “You believe me to be a Frenchman, *is not that so?* For I speak French with the same facility and purity as yourself. Well, Ali, my Nubian, believes me to be an Arab; Bertuccio, my steward, takes me for a Roman; Haydée, my slave, thinks me a Greek” (Ch. 48); and eats all types of food – “[I] lived on macaroni at Naples, polenta at Milan, olla podrida at Valencia, pilau at Constantinople, curry in India, and swallows’ nests in China. *There is no cuisine for a cosmopolite like me. I eat everything and everywhere, only I eat but little*” (Ch. 40).

The nearly omnipotent Monte Cristo – “all-powerful visionary, [...] invincible millionaire” (Ch. 113) – controls time and distance²⁶, travelling very fast, to the astonishment of the others: “You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, [...] but even the telegraph”; “The Count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and everyone turned to notice the dazzling meteor’ (Ch. 85). The same speed is reached on water, with his yacht being “not a ship, but a bird”, and beating “any frigate three knots in every nine” (Ch. 32), and his steamboat as fast as an Indian pirogue, with “two paddle-wheels [...] like two wings with which [it] skimmed the water like a bird”(Ch. 112).

Dumas first introduces his hero as the Count of Monte Cristo in Rome, and uses this opportunity to describe the eternal city and the way of life of its people, dedicating a whole chapter to the Carnival (Chapter 36). The same attention to the Carnival is found in the 1988 Russian miniseries (Episode 2) and in the 2002 film. Other adaptations try to show the Count’s journeys throughout the world by using illustrative images of the places mentioned in the novel. In the 1942 Mexican film, in the scene between the Count and Haydée at the beginning of their storyline, which place in her apartments in the house on the Champs-Élysées, is anticipated and moved to the island of Monte Cristo before they start their travels in Europe. This chronological twist allows the illustration of their itinerary through very brief scenes showing the two characters in the foreground of the Basilica di San Pietro in Rome, the Campanile di San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale in Venice (although Venice is not mentioned in the novel), and the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. In the 1969 Spanish series, postcards representing Rome and again

²⁶ ‘I have only two adversaries; I will not say two conquerors, for with perseverance I subdue even them: they are time and distance’ (Ch. 48).

Venice are used, accompanied by an aerial view of Paris with the narrator's comments about the Count's life in Italy and his entrance to Paris after rescuing Albert (Episode 9). Maps of Europe, Asia, Central and South America, alternating with pages from the ship register, are used for the same purpose of illustrating Monte Cristo's life of travels in the 1965 Norwegian series (Episode 2).

The initiatory journey of Dumas' hero does not end with him assuming the identity of the (almost) omnipotent Count of Monte Cristo, but continues until he rediscovers his humanity, which is represented by his identity as Edmond Dantès, and integrates it into his present self. In this part of his journey, the reader sees how Dumas reveals the Count's identity after first breaking all direct connections between him and Dantès even as he continues to juggle different identities. It also becomes clear how the Count himself accepts his double identity. It is not only Dumas who puts distance between his hero's life in the Château d'If and his life after his escape, but the character himself, in a moment of doubt, also realizes that he has distanced himself from his past: "I must look upon the past in a false light. [...] *What is missing to my reasoning today is a clear appreciation of the past, because I see this past from the other end of the horizon. Indeed, the past, like the scenery through which one walks, fades as one moves ahead*" (Ch. 113).

Dumas stops calling his hero Edmond Dantès in Chapter 25, deliberately refers to him as *The Unknown*, thus making clear his passage from past to present/future. Back in Marseille, Dantès revisits his father's apartment on the fifth floor of the house on the Allées de Meilhan. Under the identity of Lord Wilmore, he purchases the entire building for "twenty-five thousand francs, at least ten thousand more than it was worth", but "*had Dantès been asked half a million, he would have paid this price*" (Chapter 25). This is the last mention of Dantès; from this point the character is addressed through impersonal terms such as "man" or "the generous *inquirer*".

The next chapters introduce his alter egos, Abbé Busoni (Chapters 26 and 27, in the subplot with Caderousse and the diamond) and Lord Wilmore (Chapters 28-30, as the chief clerk of the House of Thomson and French in Rome, rewarding Mr. Morrel)²⁷. However, he does so without naming them and or allowing any direct connection between them and Dantès. The end of Chapter 30 refers to the hero as "the unknown", who says farewell to "kindness, humanity, and gratitude" and is ready to take the place of a vengeful God in order to punish the wicked.

²⁷ Lord Wilmore is mentioned previously, in Chapter 25, as the name on Dantès' passport, but it is only here that the character's physical and moral traits are detailed.

When the reader finds Dumas in Chapter 31, he has jumped from 1829 to 1838, and from France to Italy, introducing Sinbad the Sailor, who had previously only been named (in Chapters 29 and 30). The Count of Monte Cristo is first mentioned in Chapter 34, as maître Pastrini introduces Franz d'Épinay and Albert de Morcerf to their neighbour on the second floor at Hôtel de Londres, in Piazza di Spagna, as “a very great nobleman, of Sicily or Malta, [...] noble as a Borghese and rich as a gold mine”. His appearance reveals to Franz that he was none other than “*the mysterious* host of Monte Cristo” (Ch. 34), the man who called himself Sinbad the Sailor.

An interesting mention of Dantès is made in Chapter 50, as Maximilien tells Monte Cristo the story of his father's miraculous deliverance: “his last words were: “Maximilien, it was Edmond Dantès!””. This revelation moves the Count so much that he turns frighteningly pale and can hardly speak.

The first revelation of Monte Cristo's true identity happens at the death of Caderousse (Ch. 83). The latter is, however, the only one to find it out since Dumas keeps it hidden to the reader. The Count, disguised as Abbé Busoni, tells the dying man: “I am... I am...? *And his lips, just barely open, uttered a name so low that the Count himself appeared afraid to hear it*”. Nevertheless, it is made clear that Abbé Busoni and the Count are one and the same, a similar revelation made previously in regard to Lord Wilmore, albeit conversely since Monte Cristo disguises himself in Abbé Busoni and Lord Wilmore un-disguises himself to reveal the Count²⁸. This de-metamorphosis indirectly reveals that Monte Cristo and Dantès are the same man, as Wilmore was the identity used by Dantès upon his return to Marseille (see Chapter 25).

That the Count is actually Edmond Dantès is made known to the reader only in Chapter 89, when Mercédès comes to ask him to spare her son's life: “Edmond, you will not kill my son!”. Whether the reader has already guessed Monte Cristo's identity or not, Mercédès is surely the only character in the story to do so: “[Mercédès] remembers, for she alone recognized you when she saw you, and even *without seeing you*, by your voice, Edmond, by the simple sound of your voice”. This is not only the recognition and remembrance of old times, but a true return in the past, as she herself assumes her old identity: “Edmond, it is not Madame de Morcerf who is come to you, it

²⁸ “The tunic soon disappeared under a long cassock, as did *the Count's* hair under a priest's wig; the three-cornered hat over the wig effectually transformed the Count into an abbé” (Ch. 82).

“Lord Wilmore, having heard the door close after him, returned to his bedroom, where with one hand he pulled off his light hair, his red whiskers, his false jaw, and his scar, to resume the black hair, *matte* complexion, and pearly teeth of the Count of Monte Cristo” (Ch. 69).

is Mercédès” (Chapter 89). Nonetheless, Monte Cristo does not assume his identity, so unexpectedly revealed by Mercédès, just as easily. He only accepts it by finally yielding to her request to call her by her real name and not Madame de Morcerf, which is an acceptance of Mercédès herself, of whom he initially said was dead (to him), claiming to “know no one now of that name”. Otherwise, he speaks about his past self in the third person: “poor Edmond will not have long to be loved by you” (idem).

The Count continues his revelations to his enemies, but still without saying his name. When confronted by and confronting Fernand (now Count of Morcerf), he reveals his identity by putting on Dantès’ sailor suit, and by accepting and declaring the recollection of Mercédès as his betrothed, a memory only recently returned to him in his previous encounter with her, now Countess of Morcerf²⁹. It is Fernand who utters his name, with a “single mournful, lamentable, agonizing cry: Edmond Dantès!” (Ch. 92).

The first fully assumed revelation, one that was not planned by Monte Cristo³⁰, comes in a desperate moment, as he tries to stop Maximilien from killing himself. In addition to his name, the Count again makes use of a memory from his remote past: “I am Edmond Dantès, who let you play, as a child, on his knees” (Ch. 105).

With every revelation, Monte Cristo gets one step closer to reconnecting with his past self. From saying his name in a low voice, to indirectly identifying himself and then to finally declaring it, the moment arrives when, as his rival recognizes him, he bluntly gets ahead of him: “Ah, I recognize you, I recognize you!” exclaimed the king’s attorney; ‘you are...’ / ‘I am Edmond Dantès!’ (Ch. 111).

After another encounter with Mercédès, this time in Marseille (Chapter 112), Monte Cristo returns to his Calvary, the Château d’If. There, he remembers the past, as openly stated in the title of Chapter 113 (*The Past*), and for some time this increases the gap between his two identities. Paradoxically, it also emphasizes the connection between past and present: “the mirror in which Monte Cristo seeks to behold Dantès”; “the Count [felt] his heart gradually fill with the bitterness that formerly nearly overwhelmed Edmond Dantès”; “The journey had seemed *once* very long to Dantès, but Monte Cristo found it equally short” (Chapter 13). This chapter also records the first time that Dumas refers to his character by his real name since he had assumed Monte Cristo’s identity: ‘Dantès took some louis from his pocket, and gave them to the man who had twice unconsciously pitied him’ (idem). It is as if

²⁹ In Chapter 89, detailed in the paragraph before.

³⁰ “*God is my witness that I wanted to bury [this secret] forever in my heart; your brother Maximilien snatched it by a violence he repents of now, I am sure*” (Ch. 105).

Dumas wants to identify the exact moment of the reconnection and reconciliation of Monte Cristo with Dantès – his return to Faria’s cell, the same place in which Dantès had passed the symbolic threshold of death by taking the abbé’s place in the mortuary sack.

The last revelation, to Danglars, suggests a re-assumed identity, translated into humanity and humbleness, which is demonstrated in his demand for pardon, not from people, but from God, whom he acknowledges as his only superior:

I am he whom you sold and [dishonoured]; I am he whose betrothed you prostituted; I am he upon whom you trampled that you might raise yourself to fortune; I am he whose father you condemned to die of hunger, *he who condemned you* to starvation, and who yet forgives you, because he *needs* to be forgiven *himself*: I am Edmond Dantès! (Ch. 116)

At this point, it is worth mentioning that in front of Caderousse, de Villefort and Danglars Monte Cristo denies his present identities (Busoni, Wilmore, the Count himself), in an attempt to make them return to the past and recognize him as the one they betrayed and condemned to “a *slow and hideous* death” (Ch. 111).

This reconciliation of Monte Cristo with Edmond Dantès is again emphasized in the last chapter (Ch. 117), in two passages of Monte Cristo’s farewell letter to Maximilien and Valentine. In the first, he again refers to himself in the third person, mixed with first person references – “my house in the Champs-Élysées, and my *small* château at Tréport, are the *wedding present* bestowed by Edmond Dantès upon the son of *his master Morrel*”. The second is represented in ending the letter with his double signature, “EDMOND DANTES Count of Monte Cristo”. This clarifies once and for all that his past self, Edmond Dantès (symbolizing his humanity), has been integrated into his present self, the Count of Monte Cristo (symbolizing his superiority). It is only now that he can regain the happiness of which he has been long deprived, and which he yearned for even in Monte Cristo’s superior sphere – ‘*Oh! My God! [...] would you permit me to love again!*’ (Ch. 92) – by leaving with Haydée towards new horizons.

In Forster’s novel, a parallel of the water in *The Count of Monte Cristo* is the city of Florence, where the story begins and ends. This is where Lucy Honeychurch starts her initiatory journey, discovering romance and freedom of thought and action. And here she returns, after a detour, to celebrate her way out of the Middle Ages, her emancipation from the constraints of the rather stiff Edwardian society, which she achieves by embracing her previous initiatory experiences and in finally living “as she plays” (Forster Ch. 3). It is thus Lucy’s trip out of England that triggers her journey of self-discovery and

coming of age, unlike the case of Dumas' hero. Lucy replies to Mr. Beebe's concern regarding the lack of wisdom of her intention to go out alone, in the 1985 adaptation: "too wise one might have stayed at home in Summer Street" (13: 20-13: 22). But she does not stay at home.

The simple act of stepping out of England gives this "commonplace girl" (Ch. 8), indoctrinated with the rules of etiquette and propriety, yet possessing a 'rebellious spirit' (Ch. 1), a certain sense of independence, which increases when she goes out alone to take a walk (see Chapter 4). The difference between this experience and her "free, pleasant life at home" (Ch. 5), enclosed in "a circle of rich, pleasant people, with identical interests and identical foes", in which "one thought, married, and died" (Ch. 10), is enormous. One of the things she learns on this trip is her "fever of travel" (Ch. 18), although she will use it for the wrong reasons until she fully accepts herself. It is more for running away from her own feelings and thoughts, and from George, than for the pleasure of travelling that she goes from Florence to Rome and later to the Alps, then from Summer Street to London. It is the same reason for her wish to go to Greece with the Miss Alans, a decision she makes only because she feels that she "must go somewhere", and somewhere far, since she refused Miss Bartlett's invitation to stay with her for six months at Tunbridge Wells (Ch. 18).

Florence remains, however, the ultimate destination for Lucy. It is almost a character itself, witnessing and guiding her through her initiatory experiences. Its importance is also emphasized by the time and energy that Forster spends describing the city and scenes of daily life³¹. This is not repeated with Rome or London, where Lucy does not have the same initiatory experiences.

³¹ "Over the river men were at work with spades and sieves on the sandy foreshore, and on the river was a boat, also diligently employed for some mysterious end. An electric tram came rushing underneath the window. No one was inside it, except one tourist; but its platforms were overflowing with Italians, who preferred to stand. Children tried to hang on behind, and the conductor, with no malice, spat in their faces to make them let go. Then soldiers appeared – good-looking, undersized men – wearing each a knapsack covered with mangy fur, and a great-coat which had been cut for some larger soldier. Beside them walked officers, looking foolish and fierce, and before them went little boys, turning somersaults in time with the band. The tramcar became entangled in their ranks, and moved on painfully, like a caterpillar in a swarm of ants. One of the little boys fell down, and some white bullocks came out of an archway. Indeed, if it had not been for the good advice of an old man who was selling button-hooks, the road might never have got clear" (Ch. 2).

Forster alludes to these scenes also in the last chapter, when George leans out of the window, in a similar gesture to Lucy's in Chapter 2: "There was the parapet, there the river, there to the left the beginnings of the hills" (Ch. 20).

On the contrary, these two cities represent some kind of hideaway for her³². Even the society she is surrounded by in these two cities is not the challenging one from Florence, a free-thinking father and son, but rather one that is pleased with itself and its status quo, though “swamped” and “crushed”, and that is characterized by “a witty weariness” (Ch. 11). Lucy’s trip to Rome, which Miss Bartlett calls “the flight to Rome” (Ch. 11), is only briefly mentioned by Forster here and there: in Lucy and Miss Bartlett’s last-minute preparative for the journey, in the recollection the two ladies or Cecil have of it, or in Mrs. Honeychurch’s conversation with Freddy, without any observations of the city itself or its people. The reader only finds out that they visited St. Peter’s, the Roman Forum and the Baths of Caracalla (Chapters 8 and 11), but (s)he is not invited nor persuaded to visit them himself/herself, if only with his/her mind, as (s)he is by Forster’s descriptions of Florence and its monuments. London is represented only by the Vyses’ well-appointed flat and the grandchildren of famous people invited to Mrs. Vyse’s dinner-party, as they were the only ones not to have left London for the golf-links or the moors. It is only briefly mentioned that Lucy visits a “deserted Metropolis” and scenes “[she was] to know so well later on” (Ch. 11), as Cecil’s wife. The two film adaptations have different approaches to this geographical side of the novel. In *Old Lucy*, Rome is mentioned only once, when Lucy confesses her disapproval in inviting Charlotte to Windy Corner, apparently for Cecil’s sake, as Miss Bartlett had driven him “quite frantic” when they met in Rome (1: 08: 13–1: 08: 16). In its turn, *New Lucy* gives the eternal city “spotlight treatment” (Raicu, “A Room” par. 38) and shows the details of many well-known Roman monuments: San Pietro’s Dome, the Pantheon, the Fontana di Trevi, the Ponte and Castel Sant’Angelo. Nevertheless, these places have no direct connection with the story, since the characters – Lucy, Cecil, Charlotte and Mrs. Vyse, are shown only in public gardens. The exception is the Buco della Serratura at the Villa del Priorato dei Cavalieri di Malta on the Aventine Hill (with the keyhole view of San Pietro’s Dome), where Cecil proposes to Lucy. This is in harmony with Cecil’s opinion of the contemporary city, as he appreciates Rome and its monuments, but not its people: “Rome would be wonderful if it weren’t full of Romans. Modern ones, I mean. If only anyone would be able to fill Rome with some painless poisoned gas that preserved all the buildings and works of art, but got rid of all those dreadful people” (42: 27–42: 43). As for London, the episode in the novel is remembered only in the 1985 adaptation, though reduced to a dinner-party.

³² ‘She would not enjoy anything till she was safe at Rome’ (Ch. 6); “the tenants moved into Cissie Villa while she was safe in the London flat” (Ch. 11).

The most illustrative places to which Forster leads his characters and readers in Florence are Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, with della Robbia terracotta babies, much appreciated by Lucy³³; Santa Croce, with Giotto frescoes in the Peruzzi and Bardi Chapels, where Lucy is guided by Mr. Emerson; Piazza della Signoria and Loggia dei Lanzi, where a most powerful bond is created between Lucy and George; the Lungarno, where George realizes that he “shall want to live” (Ch. 4) and where Lucy will later place “the real event – whatever it was” (Ch. 6); and the hills between Florence and Fiesole, where Lucy contemplates George as a god in the Italian landscape³⁴. *Old Lucy* prefers to linger in Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, showing the equestrian monument of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I, the Loggia dei Servi di Maria, the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata and the Ospedale degli Innocenti. Lucy’s wandering about in Santa Croce also shows more of Florence than what is mentioned by Forster, such as the funerary monument of Dante Alighieri and the major altarpiece. As for *New Lucy*, this film replaces Forster’s choice of Piazza della Signoria as the crime scene with Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, and the steps in the Uffizi Arcade, where George takes Lucy, with those of Loggia dei Servi di Maria. The close-ups of the statuary in Piazza della Signoria that ‘suggest, not the innocence of childhood, nor the glorious bewilderment of youth, but the conscious achievements of maturity’ (Ch. 5) have different meanings in the two adaptations. In *Old Lucy*, the focus is on violent details (Medusa’s head, Perseus’ sword, Hercules’ club, Nessus’ head, Pyrrhus’ sword, the Sabine man, the head of the dog at the base of *Hercules and Cacus*), foretelling the crime that will make Lucy faint. In *New Lucy*, the various details of nudity and sexuality (*The Rape of Polyxena*, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, *David*) refer to Lucy’s sexual awakening (Raicu, “A Room” par. 19).

Unlike Monte Cristo, Lucy is a tourist in the places she visits, as she honestly admits when questioned by Mr. Eager³⁵. As noticed by Cecil, she actually seems to be “a typical tourist – shrill, crude, and gaunt with travel” (Ch. 8), who attracted the residents’ pity. Yet she has a certain inclination to go off the track and do un-touristy things, for example watching from her window triv-

³³ “Lucy thought she had never seen anything more beautiful” (Ch. 2).

³⁴ “I had silly thoughts. The sky, you know, was gold, and the ground all blue, and for a moment he looked like someone in a book. [...] Heroes – gods – the nonsense of schoolgirls” (Ch. 7).

³⁵ “Meanwhile Mr. Eager held her in civil converse; their little tiff was over. ‘So, Miss Honeychurch, you are travelling? As a student of art?’ ‘Oh, dear me, no – oh, no!’ ‘Perhaps as a student of human nature,’ interposed Miss Lavish, ‘like myself?’ ‘Oh, no. I am here as a tourist.’” (Ch. 6).

ialities like “the men and women who live under [the blue sky]” (Ch. 2). This offers a great opportunity for Forster to describe the locals’ daily activities and, moreover, to emphasize the difference between them and the tourists: “No one was inside [the electric tram], except one tourist; but its platforms were overflowing with Italians, who preferred to stand” (Ch. 2). Lucy’s desire to “go round the town in the circular tram – on the platform by the driver” (Ch. 4) could therefore be seen as an unconscious desire to mingle with the locals, to get to know their life and customs, to become a traveller.

Her return to the Pension Bertolini in Florence, while the Miss Alans went to Greece by themselves and ended up travelling around the world, comes as a conclusion to Lucy’s initiatory journey. And it is not a coincidence that this happens in spring, the season of rebirth. Now as Mrs. Emerson, she returns to her old room, the one with a view that she had after George and his father offered the two ladies their rooms at the beginning of the novel³⁶. Another link to the first trip to Florence is the cab-driver who offers his services to George – “Signorino, domani faremo uno giro” – who, as Forster indicates, “might be that very Phaethon who had set this happiness in motion twelve months ago” (Ch. 20). *Old Lucy* goes even further and shows a dinner scene similar to Lucy’s first evening in Florence, with guests who “appear to be just another set of Miss Alans, Miss Lavish, Mr. Beebe, and indeed Charlotte and Lucy” (1: 51: 24–1: 51: 29). It is the new Lucy that makes this observation, which completed with the mention of the free-thinking Emerson couple, then father and son, now husband and wife. Forster ends his novel with a few skilfully built phrases which entwine both the geographical and the spiritual: “Youth enwrapped them; the song of Phaethon announced passion requited, love attained. But they were conscious of a love more mysterious than this. The song died away; they heard the river, bearing down the snows of winter into the Mediterranean” (Ch. 20). *New Lucy* does not stop here and has Lucy return to Florence one more time, ten years after her first trip, but this time alone, as a widow. The film switches between 1922 and 1912 Florence, as she remembers past events.

³⁶ George recognizes the room as his, but Lucy proves to have better recollection of the events: “it is the room I had, and I had your father’s room. I forget why; Charlotte made me, for some reason” (Ch. 20). The fact that she does not remember why Miss Bartlett insisted on her having Mr. Emerson’s room and not his son’s, of course a decision dictated by propriety (‘If you are to accept a favour it is more suitable you should be under an obligation to his father than to him. I am a woman of the world, in my small way, and I know where things lead to’), shows that she managed to escape from the constraints imposed by decorum, although she was not fully aware, at the time, of ‘where things lead to’ – “Mother wouldn’t mind I’m sure,” said Lucy, but again had the sense of larger and unsuspected issues” (Ch. 1).

Forster takes every opportunity to underline the “narrowness and superficiality of the Anglo-Saxon tourist” (Ch. 6). He observes ironically that “the traveller who has gone to Italy to study the tactile values of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy, may return remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live under it” if he spends his “valuable [hours]” watching “trivialities” such as men at work or on the platforms of the electric tram, or soldiers passing on the street (Ch. 2). Charlotte, in *New Lucy*, adopts the same superficial way of thinking, telling Lucy that they came ‘to see Italy, not meet Italians’ (5: 06-5: 08). The superficiality of the British tourist is evident in his/her reaction towards the Italian art, which (s)he does not really understand or like – “a black-and-white facade of surpassing ugliness. [...] It was Santa Croce” (Ch 2); “The Piazza Signoria is too stony to be brilliant. It has no grass, no flowers, no frescoes, no glittering walls of marble or comforting patches of ruddy brick” (Ch. 5), but to give the impression of being cultivated he says: “Of course, it must be a wonderful building. But how like a barn! And how very cold! Of course, it contained frescoes by Giotto” (Ch. 2). Lucy walking about, in Santa Croce, “disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date” (Ch. 2) is yet another evidence of this trait.

Also, under the guise of Eleanor Lavish, Forster makes some precious observations: “The true Italy is only to be found by patient observation”, or “Every city [...] has its own smell” (Ch. 2). In *Old Lucy*, Miss Lavish explains that: “It is only by going off the track that you get to know the country, see the little towns” (3: 54-3: 59), while in the 2007 adaptation she advises Lucy to consult her own feelings and not the Baedeker, also emphasizing the difference between the “tourist dreary track’ and the ‘delightfully dirty back way” (8: 23-8: 30).

It is in this Florence and in this society that Lucy lives two major initiatory experiences, which help her escape her safe and dull destiny as a typical Edwardian lady and British tourist, a position by no means devoid of danger³⁷. Though she stops herself from doing something “unladylike” – going “round the town in the circular tram – on the platform by the driver” – Lucy does long for “something big” (Ch. 4). Her wish comes true in a most unexpected way when George catches her in his arms. Piazza della Signoria is the perfect place for this to happen: “Here, not only in the solitude of Nature, might a hero meet a goddess, or a heroine a god” (Ch. 5). Forster’s remark connects this first experience with the second: George’s kiss up in the (sol-

³⁷ “That there are shops abroad, even in Athens, never occurred to [the Miss Alans], for they regarded travel as a species of warfare, only to be undertaken by those who have been fully armed at the Haymarket Stores” (Ch. 19).

tude of the) Tuscan hills, preceded by Lucy's contemplation of him as a god. It can therefore be concluded that in Piazza della Signoria George is the hero who saves and then falls in love with the goddess, while near Fiesole the heroine of the story meets her god.

After being saved by George, "the thought that she, as well as the dying man, had crossed some spiritual boundary" (Ch. 4) keeps coming to her mind. Yet she does not understand the meaning of all this and believes at first that she can return "to the old life" (Ch. 4). The kiss will show her, however, that "something tremendous has happened" (*Old Lucy* 27: 13-27: 14), to her and to George and, more precisely, between them. She dreams about this kiss while at the Vyses in London (see end of Chapter 11) and remembers it in Summer Street, when walking with Cecil at the "Sacred Lake" (in the 1985 adaptation). The kiss then comes to haunt her like a ghost:

The original ghost – that touch of lips on her cheek – had surely been laid long ago; it could be nothing to her that a man had kissed her on a mountain once. But it had begotten a spectral family – Mr. Harris, Miss Bartlett's letter, Mr. Beebe's memories of violets – and one or other of these was bound to haunt her before Cecil's very eyes. (Ch. 13)

As Cecil observes, 'Italy worked some marvel in her,' giving her light and shadow, therefore substance, and making her resemble "a woman of Leonardo da Vinci", mysterious and secretive (Ch. 8). She returns from her trip with "new eyes", a rebel who now desires "equality beside the man she loved", but also who is open to interacting with people of various social classes. And this is because Italy offered her "the most priceless of all possessions – her own soul" (Ch. 10).

But Lucy is not a strong character, she does not believe in herself and lets others tell her what to do, what to think and how to behave. What she lived in Italy was beyond her wishes and dreams (even those of a schoolgirl dreaming about heroes and gods), since at home "nothing ever happened to her" (Ch. 5). Her new feelings and thoughts frightened her, despite her wish for a life-changing experience. As a result, when instead of getting consolation and help in understanding herself, she is abused for her naivety and need for love by her astute cousin, she chooses to suppress her feelings: "Since she could not unravel the tangle, she must take care not to re-enter it" (Ch. 5). She starts lying to her family, friends and acquaintances, and, finally, to herself. She also runs away, from Florence to Rome, from Summer Street to London and, hopefully (in her opinion), to Greece. She thus adds lying and running away to the obstacles laid on her by social constraints.

She does not escape from the muddle into which she has got herself until she stops being selfish and learns to be truthful. In the end, Lucy gives up the ideal of the medieval lady, whose mission is to “inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve [herself]” (Ch. 4), and become a woman of her time, achieving the desired “equality beside the man she loved” (Ch. 10). It is a de-nouement that will find its way in the 1985 adaptation, whose Lucy is a living image of Forster’s character, both in terms of her personality and journey towards womanhood and emancipation. Whereas her counterpart in the 2007 film, who is more mature, independent and world-wise, with her journey towards sexual awakening, is rather ahead of her times.

Lucy has her own guide in her initiatory journey: not an Abbé Faria, to teach her mathematics and languages, but old Mr. Emerson, who begins by being her guide in Santa Croce: “Stop being so tiresome, and tell me instead what part of the church you want to see. To take you to it will be a real pleasure” (Ch. 2), “You see me leading a little private tour of my own” (*Old Lucy* 16:41-16:46). He understands she is trapped in a world ruled by etiquette and propriety, and gives voice to her own hidden thoughts about herself – “poor girl” (Ch. 2) – which she immediately denies:

Poor girl? I fail to understand the point of that remark. I think myself a very fortunate girl, I assure you. I’m thoroughly happy, and having a splendid time. Pray don’t waste time mourning over me. There’s enough sorrow in the world, isn’t there, without trying to invent it. (Ch. 2)

He even shows her the way to follow:

Let yourself go. Pull out from the depths those thoughts that you do not understand, and spread them out in the sunlight and know the meaning of them. By understanding George you may learn to understand yourself. It will be good for both of you. (Ch. 2)

Finally, Mr. Emerson makes her admit to herself that she loves George and encourages her not to give up her feelings despite the difficulties that this will bring:

You have to go cold into a battle that needs warmth, out into the muddle that you have made yourself; and your mother and all your friends will despise you, oh, my darling, and rightly, if it is ever right to despise. George still dark, all the tussle and the misery without a word from him. (Ch. 19)

Finally, Lucy finds someone who understands and comforts her, and, even more important, who makes her understand and accept herself:

He gave her a sense of deities reconciled, a feeling that, in gaining the man she loved, she would gain something for the whole world. [...] He had robbed

the body of its taint, the world's taunts of their sting; he had shown her the holiness of direct desire. (Ch. 19)

She also does him justice and admits his important role in her coming of age, confessing to George that his father was 'the only person alive who could have made [her] see sense' (Ch. 20), though she 'never exactly understood [...] how he managed to strengthen her. It was as if he had made her see the whole of everything at once' (Ch. 19).

Conclusions

In their novels, both Alexandre Dumas and E. M. Forster offer a glimpse of their travel writing abilities, as they take Edmond Dantès and Lucy Honeychurch on a double journey, geographical and initiatory.

At its origins, a book on travel impressions in Paris, *The Count of Monte Cristo* is reminiscent of its author's journeys in Italy, France and the Mediterranean Sea. This is visible in the possible division of the story into various parts based on the main location of the events – Marseille, Rome and Paris – as well as in the many geographical markers given by Dumas, either on the Mediterranean Sea, in Rome, or in Paris and its surroundings. Being a great traveller himself, Dumas also makes his hero pass his life in travelling, in his youth as a sailor, mentally in the Château d'If, under Faria's guidance, and as Monte Cristo, with his many identities, all over the world, but especially in the Orient, adopting local customs and speaking all languages.

These geographical journeys underline Dantès' journey towards self-discovery: a coming of age morally, spiritually and intellectually, which is translated into his transformation into a superior man (the Count of Monte Cristo). The evolution of the character continues until he is reconciled with his past self and integrates into his present life the humanity and humbleness of the erstwhile sailor.

Dumas skilfully juggles the two journeys, geographical and initiatory, the first being the perfect background for the latter, a great way to reveal the exceptional being that the hero becomes and to illustrate his (near) omnipotence. Travelling very fast, with almost equal speed to that of the telegraph or even the meteor, is just one example.

Written half a century later, *A Room with a View* has many similarities to Dumas' novel from the point of view of its heroine's journey, though they are sometimes seen as mirror reflections. Here Forster takes Lucy out of her comfort zone, represented by Windy Corner and Summer Street, to Florence, where she has important initiatory experiences that guide her across the threshold to womanhood and emancipation. This provides the perfect

opportunity to Forster to describe the city, its surroundings, as well as the locals' daily life as a contrast to the hurried, Baedeker-enclosed life of the tourists.

Lucy's return to Florence, as Mrs. Emerson, is necessary for her transformation to be complete: from a young lady with banal interests (iced coffee, meringues, Mr. Beebe's sermons) into a free-thinking woman, fully aware of the view within. Another metamorphosis, no less important, is emphasized by this second trip to Florence: from a typical tourist into a traveller.

The two novels are directly connected through a geographical element: the city of Florence. It was in Florence where Dumas lived when he went on the trip that enabled him to discover the island of Monte Cristo, which proved to be the starting point of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. And it is in Florence that Forster's heroine finds the path to herself, a journey triggered by a room with a view over the Arno.

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