ROCZNIKI HUMANISTYCZNE
Tom LX, zeszyt 5 — 2012

MAGDALENA OŻARSKA

MARY SHELLEY'S "RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843" AS A DIGRESSIONAL SPECIMEN OF THE ITALIAN TOUR SUB-GENRE

A b s t r a c t. The article presents Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, 1843* as a specimen of the sub-genre known as the Italian tour. *Rambles* is replete with digressional features, in accordance with its title (cf. the two meanings of "rambles", i.e. "wanderings" and "incoherent utterances"). The text's generic characteristics are discussed against the background of contemporary travel-writing conventions, cultural trends as well as selected aspects of verifiability of the travel experience.

Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* appeared in print in London in 1844, but it was not this author's first travel book. Back in 1817, with Thomas Hookham, she had published an anonymous travel account entitled *History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland With Letters Descriptive of A Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of The Glaciers of Chamouni*, which drew heavily, as she admits in the "Preface", on the actual journal kept by herself and Percy Bysshe Shelley, her husband-to-be, during the summer 1814 elopement months. Benjamin Colbert has noted that the Shelleys' collaboration on *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* is remarkable in that one of the co-authors was female (2004: 15-19).[1] Yet Mary Shelley's 1844 travelogue also has its curiosities, the most striking of which is the sheer volume

Dr. MAGDALENA OŻARSKA — Institute of Modern Languages at the Jan Kochanowski University; address for correspondence: Instytut Filologii Obcych UJK, ul. Leśna 16, 25-509 Kielce; e-mail: ozarska@pu.kielce.pl

[1] Only one other text before was a product of a similar collaboration: it was John Parker and Mary Ann Parker's *A Voyage round the World, in the Gorgon Man of War. Performed and Written by Captain John Parker, His Widow, for the Advantage of a Numerous Family* (1795). Cf. COLBERT 2004.

of narratorial "rambling" (or digression), shrewdly suggested by the very title, with the Italian part representing a generic subtype of the travelogue known as the Italian tour. Due to this "rambling", Shelley's travel book can be viewed as a digressional specimen of the Italian tour, representing what might be termed "the Italian ramble".

In her study of representations of Italy in Romantic literature, Olga Płaszczewska remarks that the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe was a period marked by a lively interest in all things Italian (2003: 13). Trips to Italy were undertaken for several reasons, including those related to health, education, culture and religion. Of interest to Romantic travellers were also the Italian national spirit and national traits, Italian popular characters (such as Neapolitan *lazzaroni* or Venetian gondoliers), together with Italian climate and nature. The abundance of accounts of trips to Italy, featuring these themes, has led researchers to label them collectively as "Italian tours". Their typical characteristics display a combination of the travellers' effusions concerning contemporary Italian cultural phenomena, intertextual reflection on the writings of other visitors to the same or nearby sites (whose travelogues were frequently perused during the journey itself), with a personal, subjective experience of travelling in Italy. The genre tends towards a hybrid of memoirs, diaries and letters (PŁASZCZEWSKA 2003: 39-48; 135-41), marked by the presence of a narratee, and is relatively free from formal constraints. This is due to the fact that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, little distinction was made between various life-writing genres.[2]

The motivation behind the writing of the *Rambles* appears rather practical: Mary Shelley was possibly attracted to Ferdinand Gatteschi, an impoverished Italian nobleman, committed to the cause of his country's independence from Austria.[3] To her, he quite likely "personified the earlier dreams of European freedom she and [Percy Bysshe] Shelley had shared" (BENNETT 1995: xxvii-xxviii). She wished to assist Gatteschi and his cause with the proceeds on the publication, £60, and may have even hoped for marriage (MOSKAL 2003: 250). But her conspicuous aim was to create a positive attitude towards the Italian nation, "to arouse interest in their subjugation by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and to aid them in their fight for independence

[2] As Charles Batten has observed, epistolary travel accounts were often classed "under the heading of 'diaries', and the *Monthly Review* opined that 'the form of a journal' is 'the natural form for travels'" (1978: 38).

[3] It has been found that Mary Shelley translated an essay by Gatteschi on the subject of the Carbonari, which became part of *Rambles* (ORR 1998 [on-line]).

and liberty" (BENNETT 1996: 114). Naturally, Mary Shelley considered actions of this type helpful and necessary: some Britons, while on the whole sympathising with the fate of the Italian people, believed them incapable of self-government (MOSKAL 2003: 248). This involved stance lies very much in Mary Shelley's family tradition of combining travel with advocacy of important social causes, suffice it to recall *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796) by her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. This type of involvement is not at all unusual in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries: writing about Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Dorothy Wordsworth, Helen Maria Williams as well as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Bohls concludes that "women travellers … often seem to identify with Turkish or Scottish women, Scandinavian peasants or French revolutionaries" and expose their social concerns (1997: 203).

For mid-nineteenth-century travel writers, knowledge of the convention, with its standard features, was vital. Reader expectations were also conventionalised: it was a "tradition that expected figuration and selection in travel books and in which the boundary between travel and fiction was contested" (MOSKAL 1003: 243). According to Clarissa Campbell Orr, only two options were open to female authors of travel accounts during the first half of the nineteenth century: "One was to write a useful guidebook, like Mariana Starke's *Travels in Europe for the use of Travellers on the Continent* (1820). A second was to follow … the model of the celebrity author. Here Germaine de Staël's *De L'Allemagne*, and her novel *Corinne*, were seminal texts" (1998 [on-line]). While the latter would seem to have been the more obvious choice for Mary Shelley, it is worth noting that in her *Rambles* she displays a rather ambivalent attitude towards herself as a recognised author. For example, rather than use her standard signature, "by the author of Frankenstein", she opts for "by Mrs. Shelley", refraining from "capitalis[ing] on her own status as a literary celebrity" (ORR 1998 [on-line]). She thus becomes associated with her husband instead. On the other hand, her travelogue is not simply "a useful guidebook", either.

To observe generic principles in terms of travelogue structure, Italian (and other) tour writers traditionally head their letter-chapters with what has been called synoptic titles (cf. STANZEL 1984). Following the convention, Mary Shelley is no different and her titles are, for the most part, precise records of her geographical transitions: "Departure from Milan. — Journey across the Simplon" (I: 125) or "Sorrento — Capri — Pompeii" (II: 262). Sometimes, however, her titles suggest essayistic rather than experiential

contents of some letter-chapters, witness "The Carbonari" (II: 161), "Italian literature" (II: 190) or "Insurrection of 1831, and occupation of Ancona by the French" (II: 249). These are the most significant for Mary Shelley's innovative approach to the otherwise conventionalised Italian tour. Given the narratorial promise of a travel account contained in the "Preface", essayistic sections of the text naturally function as extended digressions from the main, travel-related plot. These letter-chapters are of standard length; they feature hardly any personal addresses to the narratee; and in most cases fail to address any external sources of information whatsoever.

This provides an additional dimension, defined explicitly in the text's title, i.e. *Rambles*. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, since the seventeenth century, "a ramble" has denoted "an act of rambling; a walk (formerly any excursion or journey) without definite route or other aim than recreation or pleasure", as well as an act of "wander[ing] in discourse (spoken or written); writ[ing] or talk[ing] incoherently or without natural sequence of ideas". If both of these meanings are taken into consideration, it appears that — besides defining the written product as one of the travel genre — the author also undertakes to accommodate a certain amount of irregularity in the arrangement and presentation of her material. It is easy to list the major topoi: politics — as the writer argues for the cause of Italian liberation from Austria; travel and sightseeing — with the knowledgeable narrator always ready to add extra historical or cultural information to the accounts of the places visited; and autobiography — which is best seen in the narrator's attempts to relive her past through present experiences. The combination of these recurrent themes is effected through the use of digressions, a typical travel-writing trope (cf. CHARD 199: 6-8), and the narrator herself occasionally admits her conscious reliance on this method in her metacommentary, as in: "This is a long digression, but I have not much more to say" (I: 144).

Accumulated, extensive digressions acquire an almost hyperbolic dimension, thus refuting Chloe Chard's view of the tropes of digression and hyperbole operating as binary oppositions (1999: 40 ff.). Shelley's inflated digressions in fact fulfil the function which Chard ascribes to the hyperbole in travel writing: that of "a movement beyond the limits of verisimilitude" (1999: 66), by disrupting the narrative flow of the travelogue. Moreover, the *Rambles* comprises two volumes approximating three hundred pages each, which reflects the "rambling" quality in yet another way. In view of the above, it may be argued that, by means of the concept underlying her text, Shelley aims to introduce a further sub-

genre of the Italian tour, the Italian "rambles". Undoubtedly, her innovation lies in the digressional form, which — it has been claimed — is what "separates [*Rambles*] from others of the genre" (BENNETT 1996: 113).

In her *Rambles*, Mary Shelley[4] has thus contrasted her writing method with the standard practices of other travel writers:

> I know not of what clay those persons are made who write on board steamers, or before going to bed, when they reach an inn, after a long day's journey. I rather disbelieve in such achievements. A date or reference may be put down; but during a voyage, I am at first too interested, and then too tired; and at night, on arriving, I confess, supper and the ceremonial of retiring to rest, are exertions almost too much for me: I cannot do more. (I: 155)

By saying so, she disclaims routine travel writing practices both of her contemporaries and her predecessors,[5] and — by admitting her use of briefer notes for subsequent compilation of her travelogue — Shelley creates a framework which justifies her tendency to digress and turns the travel genre into a springboard for reflection on other subjects.

Besides extended digressions of largely non-narrative quality, Mary Shelley inserts few loosely related narratives proper into her *Rambles*. These are, however, never sustained beyond more than one setting or more than one letter-chapter. Shelley's longest narrative inclusion is the story of an English madman who arrives at Cadenabbia, where she and her party are staying. Labouring under the delusion that he is about to be murdered by his persecutors, he uses loaded pistol to frighten local inhabitants. The incident is reported factually, without any suggestion of its deeper, metaphorical significance, with a considerable quantity of detail, serving the purpose of enhanced realism (I: 71-3). Overall, this madman figure may be taken as a symbol of the writer's sense of guilt, which is often highlighted by Shelley's readers, and her quest for atonement (cf. MOSKAL 2003: 251-2). On

[4] In accordance with late-twentieth-century theories of life writing (travel writing being seen as a category thereof), in particular those of Philippe Lejeune, concerning the so-called autobiographical pact, i.e. a working identity of the author, narrator and protagonist in a life writing text, herein the name of the author will be used interchangeably with the term "narrator".

[5] These have been found to originate with Tobias Smollett who, "as 'proof' that his letters were composed on the spot, … superscribes each with a date and a particular location. In another variation, Dr. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* takes the form of a personal journal, giving his narrative the appearance of an immediate and spontaneous account. In his *Journey*, Johnson in fact attacks travelers who do not at least compose notes on the spot" (BATTEN 1978: 71).

balance, to achieve a less serious effect and soften the travelogue's tone, Shelley may include an occasional anecdote: one of those retells an incident in which "a student of the [Padua] university looking over the bridge, and seeing come up the river a barge full of pumpkins, cried out, 'Vengono i dotti — see, they have sent their heads before them!" *Testa di zucca*, or pumpkin-head, answers to our phrase of blockhead" (II: 117). Inconsequential stories like that do not, as a rule, serve the purposes of metaphorical implication or emotional expression. The narrator of *Rambles* can be quite explicit about her feelings without recourse to metaphors, as in the following passages:

> Window-curtains, the very wash-hand stands, they were all such as had been familiar to me in Italy long, long ago. I had not seen them since those young and happy days. Strange and indescribable emotions invaded me; recollections, long forgotten, arose fresh and strong by mere force of association, procured by those objects being presented to my eye, inspiring a mixture of pleasure and pain, almost amounting to agony. (I: 60-61)

or

> Poor people! how I long for a fairy wand which would make them proprietors of the earth which they till, but must not reap. … I never lived among a people I liked so well as these Sorrentines. (II: 274)

Shelley's 1840 travels take her to Cadenabbia and Milan, those of 1842-3 — to Florence, Venice, Verona, Rome and Naples, as well as Sorrento. She does not narrate her voyage back to England, "leav[ing] the reader somewhat abruptly" (ORR 1998 [on-line]), which provides yet another departure from the standard practice of contemporary travel writers. As John Urry (1990: 2) and Chloe Chard (1999: 15) have observed, travel necessarily involves the notions of both departure and homecoming. Instead, Shelley depicts her return to an Italian hotel in Sorrento, which is meaningful, given her hostile feelings towards England and subsequent idealisation of Italy, both evident from her later personal journals.

To each traveller correspond his/her "travelees" (i.e. local residents of the countries visited), according to Elizabeth Bohls. Unlike Shelley's travel writing predecessors, such as Hester Lynch Piozzi in her 1784-86 *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany*, Mary Wollstonecraft in her 1796 *Scandinavian Letters*, or Dorothy Wordsworth in her 1798 *Journal of a Visit to Hamburgh and of the*

Journey from Hamburgh to Goslar — Shelley does not seem particularly attracted to the female experience of her Italian travelees. Mary Shelley's *Rambles* features surprisingly few remarks concerning women. Those that there are range from observations on minor cultural phenomena (cf. Angela D. Jones's remark on female travellers' customary "immersion in the ordinary experiences of daily life", 1997: 489-99), such as the fact that Italian ladies, unlike their English counterparts, do not think it proper to enter coffee shops (II: 104) or Italian marriage customs (II: 108), to the more significant, such as the social position of unmarried Continental women (II: 109).

Only one extended passage concerning the fate of a particular woman (who serves the narrator as a guide during her tour of Capri) is inserted into *Rambles*. Her appearance, "a beauty at once full of dignity and expression" (II: 269), is described in considerable detail. At the sight of local peasants, dancing their way up to the ruined palace of Tiberius, the narrator comments: "two or three of the women were handsome; but none so attractive as the woman who was my guide" (II: 270). Needless to say, the palace itself receives little description, the narrator summarising her impression of the site merely by saying that "the relics [were] … of very solid yet elaborate workmanship" (II: 269). Even the fact that "the view from the summit … is more grand than anything I ever saw" (II: 269-70) is dismissed with just one short sentence, while the narrator's interest clearly focuses on her guide. The scene opens with the phrase: "As we descended, I talked to her" (II: 270). No more dialogue is quoted for another page as Shelley's narrator, in her usual digressional manner, elaborates on the fates of the local poor, social injustice, the paupers' food and drink, down to child mortality rates. Then this general information is again particularised as the narrator narrows her vision down to the guide and her circumstances:

> My Juno-looking guide had had four children: one only survived. Poor little fellow! he ran beside his mother; and she looked on him with anxious fondness, for his complexion and figure all spoke disease. (II: 271)

In terms of tourist gazes deployed by Mary Shelley's narrator, it seems that the spectatorial gaze of a collector of images like the above predominates, but in her "rambling" she relies to a considerable extent on the anthropological gaze (cf. URRY 1990, 1995). As for the former, it seems — somewhat contrary to tradition — that Shelley's images are often acquired indoors (besides those recorded while on the road), as she traverses the countless

galleries and museums of Italian cities. There are, however, some outdoor encounters with the locals or landscapes: whether indescribable ("I wish I could by my imperfect words bring before you not only the grander features, but every minute peculiarity, every varying hue of the matchless scene" (I: 67)[6] or "points of view to charm a painter" (I: 46), referring to picturesque qualities of the sights. When Shelley's narrator says:

> We must become a part of the scenes around us, and they must mingle and become a portion of us, or we see without seeing and study without learning. There is no good, no knowledge, unless we can go out from, and take some of the external into, ourselves: this is the secret of mathematics as well as of poetry (I: 265),

she means more than simply collecting images in a spectatorial manner. The point is to become integrated with the scene, to enter it and absorb it into oneself, so that a broader anthropological perspective can be obtained. Her anthropological gaze receives a large proportion of her travelogue space: the narrator rarely limits herself to mere depiction of what she is seeing, but — as the travelogue progresses — increasingly treats images as pretexts for broader historical, political or cultural reflection.

Nevertheless, despite the above departures from travel writing tradition, paradoxically, from the very start it is evident that Mary Shelley sees her *Rambles* against this very backgrounds. In her "Preface", she admits:

> I have found it a pleasant thing while travelling to have in the carriage the works of those who have passed through the same country. Sometimes they inform, sometimes they excite curiosity. If alone, they serve as society; if with others, they suggest matter for conversation.
>
> These Volumes were thus originated. Visiting spots often described, pursuing a route such as form for the most part the common range of the tourist — I could tell nothing new, except as each individual's experience possesses novelty. … I was satisfied to select from my letters such portions merely as touched upon subjects that I had not found mentioned before. (I: vii-viii; my emphasis).

In the course of Mary Shelley's *Rambles*, which — in several sections — is particular enough to be used as a guidebook, Shelley's narrator makes several references to travel books with which she is familiar. These include

[6] In Shelley's time, indescribability was typically used as "a cliché for grandeur or sublimity" (HOMANS 1980: 91).

"Murray's Hand-book" (I: 164) with which she alternately agrees (cf. "We found Murray's description true to the letter, and were much amused", II: 39) or disagrees (cf. "On this subject only Murray's Hand-book seems to run faulty", II: 35), as well as noting which place names are not listed therein (II: 48). Madame de Genlis' presentation of Venice (II: 101) as well as travel books by Mrs. Starke are referenced too, Shelley's narrator recommending the latter as "both accurate and well written, and for this part of Italy … an excellent guide" (II: 266). She also favours the "very agreeable *Excursions in Italy"* by "Mr. [James Fenimore] Cooper" (II: 266). This kind of parading the author's familiarity with contemporary travel writing texts is clearly conventional.

As already indicated, the most popular form of contemporary travel writing was the broadly conceived epistolary/diaristic format (BENNETT 2003, 217). This aspect of the convention was followed before by Mary Shelley as she modelled her *History of a Six Weeks Tour* on the memoir genre, with the appendix containing letters and "Mont Blanc" by P. B. Shelley. Her *Rambles* also uses the standard epistolary structure, leaning towards the genre of the letter-journal, a typical hybrid form of early eighteenth-century serial life writing (cf. BRANT 2006: 25-30), with dates appearing at least once within each numbered letter section and a distinct starting date: June 13, 1840.

Yet opting for the epistolary form rather than that of the travel journal proper necessitates further choices, in particular the need for a narratee. Curiously, Mary Shelley's *Rambles* does not contain any specific information on who the narratee of her letter-journals might be. If the introductory dedication is taken as an indicator, it may be the writer's friend, Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), an English poet, author of a long poem entitled "Italy" (1822-28), to whom Shelley means to explicitly present "these volumes … as a slight token of respect, gratitude, and affection" (SHELLEY 2011, I: unnumbered page). In her 1838 journals, Mary Shelley mentions "delightful" breakfasts at Rogers' (1995, 552-53), so this does not seem implausible. The figure of the narratee, presented as a male friend of the female narrator, invites familial forms of address, assuming both the narratee's general familiarity with certain facts from her life and his readiness to mentally follow her itinerary,[7] witness Shelley's narrator's addresses to her narratee:

[7] These biographical elements are not the only ones which suggest the identity of the traveller persona and narrating self with the actual writer. The social status of the writer as shown in her

> Do not call me a grumbler. A tragedy has darkened my life. (I: 74)
>
> Good-night. I will tell you more to-morrow of our plans and future proceedings. I cannot now, for I have not the slightest idea at present what they will be. (I: 173)
>
> I will now endeavour, though the time I stay is too short to enable me to observe much, to tell you something of the Venetians. (II: 102)
>
> Look at these, and a certain feeling of exalted delight will enter at your eyes and penetrate your heart (II: 160).

Numerous are also shorter conversational discourse markers directed to her narratee, such as "you ask", "I told you", "as you know", "do you remember?", "I wish you could see", or "you see".

While personalised, autobiographical elements conventionally inform what Ian Watt has called formal realism, the traveller-narrator takes care to include explicit statements concerning her truthfulness and reliability. The statements are not isolated; in fact, they are — as tradition demands — repeated at various occasions. The "Preface" contains examples of narratorial claims to truthfulness: "What I have said, I believe that I may safely declare,

---

travelogue also serves to underscore this identity. The narrator of Mary Shelley's *Rambles* is travelling with her son on a rather limited budget which needs to be managed extremely carefully. It has also been claimed that the Italian trip (personal reasons for revisiting the country of her youth apart) was meant to let Shelley regain some of the lost respectability as she accompanies her son and his university friends in their journey (cf. ORR 1998 [on-line]), which may be viewed as a Grand Tour (MOSKAL 2003: 242). This is suggested by the fact that at the outset of her journey, Shelley complains bitterly about her dubious status, trying to reach a philosophical consolation: "In society you are weighed with others according to your extrinsic possessions; your income, your connexions, your position, make all the weight — you yourself are a mere feather in the scale. But what are these to me now? My home is the readiest means of conveyance I can command, or the inn at which I shall remain at night — my only acquaintance the companions of my wanderings — the single business of my life to enjoy the passing scene" (I: 10). This would explain why she goes into housekeeping minutiae, detailing the expenses which need to be met. She repeatedly makes a note of clean hotels (I: 18), poor dinners (I: 48; II: 70), finding the lodgings and hiring a cook (I: 64), the quality of stage coaches (I: 141), ruining her shoes (I: 146), recovering the missing luggage (I: 156), being robbed of money and passports (I: 165), or the proverbial dishonesty of the locals towards tourists (I: 168). All these, naturally, are part of the late-eighteenth- to early-nineteenth-century travel writing convention, meant to testify to the writer's verifiable, personal encounter with a foreign culture. On some occasions, however, the narrator allows a large amount of personal response to that encounter. A case in point is the episode narrating her inability to pay an inn-keeper which makes her feel belittled, like "Gulliver, in the hand of the Brobdignagian reaper" (I: 272); the ensuing unplanned four-day solitary stay at Milan while the others have gone on as she waits for the post (I: 114-23) is depicted in considerable detail, with focus on her feelings of confusion and helplessness.

may be depended upon" (I: ix). When the narrator is in the process of discussing the Carbonari and the hardships of the Italians, she inserts the following paragraph in a still eighteenth-century apologetic manner:

> Nothing is more difficult than for a foreigner to give a correct account of the state of a country — its laws, manners, and customs… . A stranger can only glance at the surface of things — often deceptive — and put down the results of conversations, which, after all, if carefully examined, by no means convey the whole truth, even if they are free from some bias, however imperceptible, either in speaker or hearer, the result of which is a false impression — a false view. (II: 181)

Another category of attempts at reinforcement of her travel writing reliability comprises Mary Shelley's occasional "writing to the moment", as Samuel Richardson would have put it. Examples such as "I sit down to close this letter" (I: 124) or "I write this letter, and now I am told the carriage is ready, and I am going out…" (I: 280) are not many, and are used to mark closures of journey stages: the former terminates the trouble related to a postal delay and ensuing lack of funds; the latter closes Volume One of *Rambles*.

Apology apart, Shelley's travel account appears adequately documented. The sections devoted to actual travel and sightseeing come complete with a number of footnotes, containing additional information or listing the writer's sources. The inclusion of footnotes provides a welcome opportunity to insert limited amounts of external material, i.e. unrelated to immediate travelling experience, which in itself is part of the travel writing convention. For instance, in the "Preface" to *Rambles*, Shelley attempts a brief outline of the Italian temperament — "something explanatory of their real character": to that, a footnote is added in which the writer speaks authoritatively about a variety of crimes which she believes to be regularly committed by Italians (I: viii-ix). On a more regular basis, footnotes are used for the above-discussed polemic with guidebook writers (II: 35) or acknowledging the narrator's sources, cf. "Alison's History of Europe" (II: 45) or "Rome in the Nineteenth Century" (II: 234), as well as providing further comments on the subject under discussion, as in the case of Letter XX which advocates the superiority of Anglicanism over Roman Catholicism (II: 235), a viewpoint commonplace with English travellers to the Continent.

A rather conventional motif of contemporary travel writing is categorisation of travellers according to human types which they represent. So what sort of traveller is the Shelleyan "rambler" on her Italian tour? The Sternean

division offered in his 1768 *Sentimental Journey*[8] seems hardly applicable after several decades, and Shelley attempts her own classification:

> Sometimes I amuse myself by classifying the party. There is a round, good-humoured clergyman, with his family, who is the Curious Traveller. He is very earnest in search of knowledge, but gentlemanly and unintrusive. There is the Knowing Traveller: he pounced upon a poor little man sitting next him, to-day. "So you have been shopping, — making purchases; been horridly cheated, I'm sure. Those Italians are such rogues! What did you buy? What did you give for those gloves? Four *swanzigers* — you *have* been done! …" This gratuitous piece of misinformation made the poor purchaser blush up to the eyes with shame at his own folly (I: 120; italics original; my emphasis).

At another point, she asks:

> In a classification of travellers, what name is to be given to those who travel only for the sake of saying that they have travelled? He was *doing* his Saxon Switzerland; he had *done* his Italy, his Sicily; he had *done* his sunrise on Mount Etna; and when he should have *done* his Germany, he would return to England to show how destitute a traveller may be of all impression and knowledge when they are unable to knit themselves in soul to nature, nor are capacitated by talents or requirements to gain knowledge from what they see (I: 265; italics original).

Judging from the above passages, it appears that Shelley's narrator, with her usual detachment, omits to place herself in any of the above categories. Instead, she represents herself as a mere observer of people and circumstances, and as such appears rather typical: travellers usually tended towards an overview of others, placing themselves outside their own categorisations. In this capacity, Shelley occasionally expresses her critical attitude to her countrymen. This acquires further significance, if juxtaposed with her remark: "I believe that I am nearly the first English person, who many years ago made a wild, venturous voyage, since called hacknied" (I: 170), in which she sees herself as a precursor of what has since become part of commonplace tourist experience.[9]

[8] The division comprises: "Idle Travellers, Inquisitive Travellers, Lying Travellers, Proud Travellers, Vain Travellers, Splenetic Travellers. Then follow the Travellers of Necessity. The delinquent and felonious Traveller, The unfortunate and innocent Traveller, The simple Traveller, and last of all (if you please) the Sentimental Traveller" (STERNE 1984: 11).

[9] On the other hand, she comments on the English facing a certain amount of defamiliarisation "when they disembark on a foreign strand, and find every familiar object startlingly changed"

As has been shown, *Rambles* follows several aspects of travel writing conventions of the age, and yet manages to establish its own departures therefrom. The Italian part of Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy* clearly represents the travel-writing sub-genre of the Italian tour — with its combination of personal experience and objective information, expressed through the epistolary form tending towards the letter-journal. Shelley's most conspicuous modification is the "rambling", or digressional, mode. This necessitates deviations from the main plot, resulting from insertion of material from beyond the scope of the writer's foreign encounter, as well as limited use of standard travel writer gap-fillers related to trivialities of the journey itself. Due to the said rambling, Shelley's travel book may be viewed as a digressional specimen of the Italian tour, representing what might be termed "the Italian ramble", contributing to and enriching standard practices of travel writers in the first half of the nineteenth century.

WORKS CITED

BATTEN, Charles L. *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978.

BENNETT, Betty T. "Introduction" to *Selected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*. Ed. Betty T. Bennett. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995: xi-xxxii.

——. *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: An Introduction*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

——. "Mary Shelley's Letters: the Public/Private Self". *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*. Ed. Esther Schor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003: 211-25.

BOHLS, Elizabeth A. *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics 1716-1818.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

BRANT, Clare. *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

(I: 157). She admits having experienced that sensation, and declares, very much like the throngs of other English people to whom she has referred, "I have a passionate love of travelling. … Travelling is occupation as well as amusement, and I firmly believe that renewed health will be the result of frequent change of place" (I: 158). She elevates this activity to the status of "the Creator's own writing, … [which] imparts sublimer wisdom than the printed word of man" (I: 158). As early as her "Preface", Mary Shelley discusses her enthusiasm at the prospect of revisiting the sites of her youth, even if painful, and admits "feel[ing] a good deal of the gipsy coming upon [her]" (I:9), and "grow[ing] young again" in the firm belief that "travelling will cure all" (I: 2). It seems that this initial assumption may serve to create a category for the *Rambles* narrator as a "passionate" and "health-seeking" traveller.

CHARD, Chloe. *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

COLBERT, Benjamin. "Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text". *Bibliography of British Travel Writing, 1780-1840: The European Tour*. Issue 13, 2004. 5-45.

FELDMAN, Paula R., and Diana Scott-Kilvert. "Introduction" and "Notes" to *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-1844*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. xv-xxiii.

HOMANS, Margaret. *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Brontë, and Emily Dickinson.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980.

JONES, Angela D. "Romantic Women Travel Writers and the Representation of Everyday Experience". *Women's Studies*, 26:5, 1997: 497-521.

LEJEUNE, Philippe. *Le Pacte autobiographique*. *Nouvelle édition augmentée*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996.

——. *On Diary*. Eds. Jeremy D. Popkin and Julie Rak. Transl. Katherine Durnin. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.

MELLOR, Anne K. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. New York & London: Routledge, 1989.

MOSKAL, Jeanne. "Travel Writing". *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*. Ed. Esther Schor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003: 242-58.

ORR, Clarissa Campbell. "Mary Shelley's *Rambles in Germany and Italy,* the Celebrity Author, and the Undiscovered Country of the Human Heart". *Romanticism on the Net*, 11 (August 1998). [On-line] http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1998/v/n11/ 005813ar.html, accessed June 7, 2011.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED) on CD-ROM, Version 1.02. Oxford: Oxford University Press and Rotterdam: AND Software BV, 1992.

PŁASZCZEWSKA, Olga. *Wizja Włoch w polskiej I francuskiej literaturze okresu romantyzmu [The Representation of Italy in Polish and French Literature of the Romantic Period]*. Krakow: Universitas, 2003.

POOVEY, Mary. *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

SHELLEY, Mary. *History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland With Letters Descriptive of A Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of The Glaciers of Chamouni*. 1817. [On-line] http://www.archive.org/stream/sixweekhistoryof 00shelrich#page/50/mode/2up, accessed May 5, 2011.

SHELLEY, Mary. *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814-1844*. Eds. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

SHELLEY, Mary. *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843.* 2 vols. Breinigsville, PA: Nabu Public Domain Reprints, 2011.

STERNE, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy By Mr. Yorick.* Ed. Ian Jack. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

STANZEL, F. K. *A Theory of Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

URRY, John. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: SAGE Publications, New Delhi: Thousand Oaks, 1990.

——. Cons*uming Places*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

WATT, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979.

„RAMBLES IN GERMANY AND ITALY IN 1840, 1842, AND 1843" MARY SHELLEY JAKO PRZYKŁAD PODGATUNKU „PODRÓŻ WŁOSKA" O CECHACH DYGRESYJNYCH

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Autorka prezentuje *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* („Wędrówki po Niemczech i Włoszech w latach 1840, 1842, 1843"), autorstwa Mary Shelley, jako przykład podgatunku „podróż włoska" o cechach dygresyjnych, zgodnie z określeniem zawartym w tytule utworu, tj. *Rambles* (ang. „wędrówka"; „bezładna, chaotyczna wypowiedź"). Cechy gatunkowe utworu omawiane są na tle ówcześnie obowiązujących konwencji podróżopisarskich, w odniesieniu do wybranych tendencji kulturowych oraz aspektów weryfikowalności doświadczenia podróży.

Streściła Magdalena Ożarska

Key words: women's travel writing, English Romanticism, Italian tour.
Słowa kluczowe: podróżopisarstwo kobiet, romantyzm angielski, podróż włoska.