

Perry – Deep mapping and emotion in place-writing practice

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The phases of place inquiry

This chapter proposes a place-writing methodology, which uses deep mapping from archive material and literary sources alongside a set of literary methods for travel writers to elicit emotional responses to spatial practices as they are experienced in the field. From the authors' preparation for their fieldwork as travel writers, a synthesis of the journey and urban scenarios are positioned as elements of place inquiry. Literary narrative is proposed as a form of sensitive, interrogative writing that responds to affect and shares authors' and readers' sensibilities. The planning phase for later literary travel writing is presented in detail as a model of place inquiry for other projects of emotional ethnography. This chapter shows the preparation for the fieldwork in Cherbourg. Through this presentation, alongside discussion of the design process, it is hoped that a robust, reproducible and critically sound method of practice for this type of analytical travel writing will become evident. The design of the planning phase results in an organised array of available cultural knowledge plateaus in the imaginarity of the researcher-writers; this available state of knowing is here called the hexis. This is developed below.

The fieldwork will entail a sea crossing from England in search of an agricultural and production process that has been erased from the city of Cherbourg but may remain in its hinterland, the Cotentin peninsula in Normandy, France. Perry production and distribution appear to have been lost from Cherbourg and its surrounding farmland; why has this mutation taken place? The second theme is in the symbolic realm, using close-reading from literary theory of a dramatized autobiography, which is set in Cherbourg in the early 1940s. Finally, ideas from the travel writing of the literary theorist, Roland Barthes (12 November 1915 - 26 March 1980), will form an articulation point for place-inquiry. Barthes' life has recently been commemorated in Cherbourg with an emotive statue in the city where he was born. This sculpture, *Metamorphosis* (2014) by Christine Larivière, loads the urban space of the Esplanade de la Laïcité with new meaning; this will be a site of investigation, a plateau in this practice.

The literary text, time and emotion

Wolff (2014) identifies within the writing of W G Sebald a genre that she calls 'literary historiography' (Wolff 2014, 68); it is a layered hybrid discourse, she explains, which produces a '[n]ew form of transdiscursive knowledge, a specifically aesthetic knowledge, [that] emerges from this way of working through both material and text' (Wolff 2014, 68). For Sebald, this material consists of newspaper advertisements read during his journeys, historical and everyday events associated with the places he visits, the emotionally-charged sojourns of other literary writers at these places and his

own sensibilities as he finds overnight lodgings or chooses where to dine. Arguably, it is the literary, or literariness of his writing on place that provides additional space for his sensibilities to be encoded and to generate an *affective* social practice for the reproduction of emotional engagement with places in the towns he has visited. The activities in the places where he stays, are his actions driven by the historical events that have marked his body emotionally. In this passage from Sebald's travel vignette, 'A Little Excursion' in *Campo Santo* (Bell [trans.] 2005), all these elements are deployed with a narrative effectiveness to recount the story of a moment in history:

In the evening I walked along the Cours Napoléon, and then sat for two hours in a small restaurant not far from the Gare Maritime with a view of the white cruise ship. Over coffee I studied the advertisements in a local paper and wondered whether to go to the cinema. I like to visit the cinema in foreign towns [...] At about ten, therefore, I was back in the hotel where I had taken a room late that morning. [...] Traffic was still driving down the streets, but suddenly everything fell silent, just for a few seconds, until [...] (Sebald 2005, 15).

Benjamin (2009) notes that 'true literary activity cannot expect to take place in a literary context - in fact that is the usual expression of its failure to bear fruit. Significant literary effectiveness can only come about within a strict interchange of doing and writing' (Benjamin 2009, 46). In this interchange Benjamin proposes publicity bills, newspapers and the prompt language of opinion to discretely oil the turbine that generates literature. In the creation of these experiences during the time of heightened sensibilities during holidaymaking the processes of narrative knowledge offer a method of recording emotion for communication. The resulting mediated artefact of narrative knowledge then remains as an accessible object for sharing the experiential knowledge with other potential holiday-makers.

Small stories as a research instrument

In 2020 Sylvie Patron brought together a collection of research on narrative to define the term, 'small stories' (Patron 2020, 5), and offer it as an analytical tool for other researchers using literary theory in the social field. In Patron's collection, the chapter by Annick Madec (Patron 2020, 267-283) unlocks very short observed and overheard scenes on public transport as a type of knowledge that is sensible to or manifests a sensibility to social structuration and, in her examples, also to the subtle indicators of social class, using a notion from Barbara Carnevali (Carnevali 2013, 30)

'En paraphrasant la définition hégélienne du beau, on pourrait donc définir l'esthétique sociale comme le savoir qui a pour objet la manifestation sensible de la société. Ce savoir considère la société comme un phénomène esthétique : tout ce qui est social apparaît en effet sensiblement, donc esthétiquement. Mais en quoi consiste et comment s'exerce concrètement cette forme de connaissance ?

Et quel rapport institue-t-elle entre le savoir philosophique et les sciences sociales ?' (Carnevali 2013, 30)

This approach of assigning aesthetic value to captured scenes by articulating the mundane description with emotion can be seen in the travel writing of Annie Ernaux; notice her literary turn of the keyword, *comme*, 'like' which unlocks the device of simile:

'In this scene a couple are waiting for a train which must take one of them: 'Le train que l'un des deux devait prendre allait arriver, comme la fin du monde' (Ernaux 2000, 107)' The verbs of movement are compressed here and shifted to an expectant imperfect tense generating tension and anticipation in true narrative sense in what otherwise would have been a documentary text' (Mansfield 2012, 57).

Literary devices then, including imagistic language and the shifting of tenses to the past, allow readers to feel the collective space of the railway station. As a method for the travel writer, this literariness, produces a strategic reevaluation of an otherwise quotidian time and site, integrating it into a larger space to be enjoyed for its emotions.

A practice-led methodology for place inquiry

The methodology for this place writing is practice-led. It makes use of, and tests the theory of the toureme (Mansfield 2015; Mansfield 2018), and establishes a new planning phase for literary travel writers, the hexis. The theory of the toureme is developed from Blanchot's concept of the recounted story, *le récit* (Mansfield 2015). The desk preparation for data collection design for the perry project attempts to create the necessary conditions in the participant team for them to experience the toureme during the fieldwork in Cherbourg. Previous reading, which may be literary or from the participant's own personal cultural capital interests will be completed. This directed reading must have references to the places or socio-economic practices of this port city, in this way the literary reading is of the form proposed by Onfray (2010), expanded later. During the fieldwork the participants will separate and, whilst taking notes, search for the places from their reading, thus creating walking routes through the townscape that do not necessarily coincide with the tourism product. On the spot, the plateaus, they take notes of their emotional and memory responses with a view to sharing them at the end of the reconnaissance. At fixed times the participants gather so that their notes can be recounted to the rest of the research team, and recorded for later synthesis.

Places to visit, making the holiday

A three-stage methodological template for the analysis phase of place inquiry in tourism development management is proposed. It must be remembered, that in this discipline, tourism studies, the concern is with the happiness, satisfaction and accomplishment of the visitors, often now referred to as holidaymakers. This approach to urban space is not that of urbanists who consider the city as a place where people live and work, but as one where they stay and play.

i. Desk research to identify 6 parts for the hexis, being: (a) heritage sites, (b) cultural sites linked with an author, and (c) food and ethnobotany sites, often using the visitor's hotel as a start and end point and restaurant or local food shop.

ii. Conversion of desk research to the field planning *cahier des charges* (CDC). Using a formal, critical language to arrange the parts of the hexis topographically in the researcher's imaginary. This might also be mapped onto a town plan to estimate walking times and distances, and to choose particular streets that can later be found by the holidaymaking readers of the final synthesis.

iii. Capturing of a place-making narrative for tourism planners and stakeholders, and city authorities in a form directly comprehensible to a public readership. These are notes made from recordings of the participant researchers recounting in the past tense their experiences brought back from the field. The template, then, is a meticulous plan for sorties from the hotel to walk out to sites from the planned reading; the three expedition plans are as follows, with an inquiry associated with each one to provide the dialectic or cross-reading for each component:

1. In search of pears, perry and the changing economics of local pear orchards and brewing around Cherbourg. How is this reflected in the labelling of pears and perry in Cherbourg? Where can perry still be found?

2. In search of the house of the heroine in the French biographical novel, and her journeys into Cherbourg centre. What does the walk up to the streets of the rue Lohen and rue Loubet feel like?

3. In search Roland Barthes' birthplace in the suburbs, and the walking routes of his mother alone in Cherbourg and the new statue of her son. Where is the centre of the town for Henriette Binger?

Ghost memories of home

In narrative research methodologies, for instance in recounting personal stories, Dunne (2016) proposes a synthetic process, that she calls *restorying*; 'The *restorying* or re-authoring process, in turn, involves constructing a revised narrative embedded with new personal meaning and emotion that

results from the experience of this process' (Dunne 2016, 142). By working with co-authors in the field team, this restorying process can take place soon after data collection, by providing an interested audience for the experiences of the day or half-day to be recounted, and re-worked with literary methods. In effect this step in the data collection becomes a performance which provides the opportunity to elicit the emotions that Dunne (2016) underlines in her methods work.

Bartlett's experiments with memory from the 1920s and 30s, as explained in Wagoner *et al.* (2019, 16-18) furnish a ready-made method for re-telling experiences from memory by case-participants which, after his work, shows how the re-teller makes qualitative changes as the experience is re-told. It suggests that memory is not a storage place but is instead, transformative, in that it integrates the re-teller's own culture as it is mediated appropriately for the next group of listeners. The re-teller is thus an active subject, which, for this research can be considered an enrichment of the recalled experience. In this research method, the re-telling stage may be repeated after, say, the following day to allow this enrichment to develop further. In the context of this project, too, which is ostensibly seeking the lost art of perry-making, these two periods of organic change are echoed. The first is the fermentation of the fruit sugars, and the second, longer period, the malo-lactic fermentation which converts L(-)-malic acid to L(+)-lactic acid.

The key literary work that the researchers use in this research is *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy* by Bradley Kimberly Brubaker (Brubaker 2005). Although aimed at the young adult market, it is a valuable document of memory writing since the author has created a biography of the wartime memories of Suzanne David, from long meetings and interviews with David many years later in America. Of particular resonance with this work on Cherbourg is the emotional map Brubaker's story of the young singer traces for the researcher as reader. The street where Suzanne, the girl, lives in the story is still easy to find on the map of Cherbourg. In the story, the occupying authorities have seized the space of her home, so that she no longer has rights to this territory (Sassen 2006). It is for the heroine and for the visitor-researcher a *toureau*, a space that marks the body emotionally and thus loads this street space with meaning, both for the occupier that was and the visitor that will occupy it. It is noted that it is often difficult to source a literary or cultural artefact associated with provincial towns. In this project on Cherbourg, only this and a more recent novel, entitled simply *Cherbourg*, were discovered from desk and archive research. It is worth considering newspapers from a specific date, or works from the visual arts, too.

Theory of the planning hexis and the 6-part diathesis

In Hervé Breton's consideration of how the writing subject creates narrative knowledge from lived experience (Breton 2019, 78-79) he draws upon Aristotle's concept of *hexis* to show how writers historicise elements of their knowledge to constitute these elements as available resources. In developing the methodology for this research, the process of historicising is achieved by use of the past tenses to recount the field experiences. The preparation of a hexis, then, is time-consuming but

essential as to create an armature for the researcher's imaginary. This process is fully explored for this project below. *Hexis* is an arrangement or disposition. In fact, the French word, *disponible*, provides a useful tension for an English reader; *disponible* translates as available, in simple terms, but the subject, the travel writer, holds an arrangement of collected knowings, using and deploying them in combination, sometimes to recount story, sometimes to report history (Breton 2019, 78-79), thus showing their disposition of emotions and sensibilities to their readers. In the methodology for this fieldwork, emotion experienced in place is sought out to act as a catalyst for the literary writing of the delivered outcome. Like an exquisite miniature, Thomas Mann paints a hexis of emotions in this scene from *Death in Venice* (1912). One of the characters travels by vaporetto through the port. Without spoiling the story, here is sufficient quotation to illustrate how sensual experiences of the urban tourist space are held arranged, and *disponible*, by the character, by the narrator, and thus, by the readers. It communicates the emotional disposition of the character:

‘The atmosphere of the city, this slightly mouldy smell of sea and swamp from which he had been so anxious to escape - he breathed it in now in deep, tenderly painful draughts. Was it possible that he had not known, had not considered how deeply his feelings were involved in all these things?’ (Mann 1912, 231)

This disposition or hexis of emotions for Mann's character, mapped along his character's inquiring movement across the city, is the key to the method that will be applied for the inquiry into seeking out traces of the semiotician, Barthes, who was born here in Cherbourg, of the drama of the biographical novel, and of the ethnobotany associated with perry production and consumption in this region of France.

Barthes and the centre of the written city

Where is the centre of a city? City centres are a paradox for old sea ports. Apart from Venice, the sea is usually inaccessible to tourists once they have disembarked from their ferry. In tourism studies, the holidaymakers' hotel often becomes their centre, since this is where they first arrive to unencumber themselves of their luggage and travelling clothes, establishing a sanctuary for the duration of their stay. While for the day visitor, the centre may be the railway station, or the ferry terminal itself. In Roland Barthes' own example of travel writing (Barthes 1970, 44) he explores a city of which the centre is a void (Mansfield 2004, 155). In his exploration, then, Barthes turns instead to the railway station, *la gare*. The station is a centre, he explains, but an empty one, devoid of spirit (Barthes 1970, 52-53). However, the careful reader of his city travel book is alerted to a metaphor which links the pleasure that Barthes the writer experiences at the point of departure, not the urban point of departure, *la gare*, but the point of starting to write, when all the elements are at his disposal for composition, and he is disposed to write:

‘Peut-être va-t-il à la gare parce qu'elle est le lieu de départ. Comme désir, la gare est le point dans la grande ville où se trouve le renouvellement du voyage et, pour Barthes, il y a un lien fort entre un lieu nouveau et son travail de l'écriture :

‘visiter un lieu pour la première fois, c’est de la sorte commencer à l’écrire’
(Barthes 1970, 51) (Mansfield 2004, 156).

What did Cherbourg railway station represent for Henriette Binger in 1915? Was it her point of departure and arrival connecting her to her husband, who was often away at sea, or to her mother, Noémie in other cities? Was 107 rue de la Buaille not home but a temporary resting place for the duration of her visit? One hundred years later the city council unveils a statue to her son in an attempt to create a new cultural centre for their city hidden away behind the old theatre in a non-place that has been a building site. The route proposed then for the travel writer-researcher would be to walk first from the hotel in the port area, possible Hotel Ambassadeur, to rue Buaille. This is a walk of 16 minutes, 1.2 kilometres. The return journey would head back into town to find the statue on the Esplanade de la Laïcité, then continue on to the railway station. The return route is 22 minutes, 1.7 kilometres.

Places of drama from the lived biography

In his 2007 book *Théorie du voyage: Poétique de la géographie* French contemporary philosopher Michel Onfray offers his outlook on ‘growing one’s desire’ for travel. Accordingly, ‘travel begins in the library’ (Onfray 2010, 23), where one ‘realizes the first travel, undoubtedly the most magical and surely the most mysterious’ (Onfray 2020, 24). More than anything, Onfray suggests literature and poetry over guidebooks and maps as preliminary readings, as these involve the five senses to create anticipation and pleasure.

In this case, the authors make use of Kimberly Brubaker Bradley’s 2005 novel *For Freedom – The Story of a French Spy* to ‘grow their desire’ for future travel to the northern French City of Cherbourg – where most of the story takes place. The novel re-tells the true story of Suzanne, which was interviewed for the book by the author; Suzanne is a thirteen-year-old French girl facing the horrors of World War Two in Cherbourg. From the beginning of the war up to its very end, Suzanne lives through bombings, Nazi occupation first of her town and later of her very own house from which the family is forced to move. Refusing to give in to her fears, the heroine keeps to her passion of singing and dreaming of a future in opera. One day, her strength of character is noticed by her local doctor, and she is eventually secretly enrolled in the French Resistance as a spy and message carrier throughout Cherbourg. Fighting through her fears and conflicts with her family, she is finally arrested by the occupying forces after delivering messages for many months; but the liberation of France saves her life and earns her the respect of her family as a true French hero.

Suzanne’s function as a spy makes her a particularly complex character, and through her story readers re-live a major social movement, the resistance to authority, through her own emotions. The social sciences have a long history of putting emotions in the centre stage of collective actions, protests and movements (e.g. Flam & King, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta 2001). Our heroine is largely driven by love; particularly in her decision to enrol as a spy. Love for her family and friends, love for her career as a singer and love for her country. Bourdieu points out that love as a driver for

social actions is often marked by confusion, such as tensions between duty and transformations, the politically correct and the incorrectness of emotions. Scribano (2017) shows that love can produce collective actions as an 'interstitial practice'; collective practices and relations which deny traditional normative contents of a certain cultural context. It could thus be assumed that Suzanne, through her interstitial emotion of love and the conflicting social decisions this implies, is changing the urban space of Cherbourg for the reader. This is considered as the second walking route is planned for this fieldwork; the route will use the heroine's plateaus of drama that are still extant in the city today. The researcher will thus see the streets through her eyes, and seek out traces that may have been left from her interstitial practices in otherwise mundane urban space.

Onfray states that a deep reading of the text can allow reader-tourists to '*hear colours, smell perfumes, touch sounds, hear temperatures, see noises*' (Onfray 2010, 28) – imagining places through a true coming together of a five-sense experience. *For Freedom – The Story of a French Spy* allows the researchers to grow their desire for re-living Cherbourg through the eyes of the young spy – and the various faces of love she experiences. Some of the key locations in the city are given around which to plot the field route:

There is the Place Napoleon, described as '*the big square near the Gare Maritime, the station where trains could pull up right to the harbour to load and unload the ships. The Church of La Trinité formed part of the square and from the benches around the edge, we could watch the ships in the harbour, the waves curling, and the birds wheeling overhead. People strolled back and forward across the square.*' (Brubaker 2005, 4). It is the wind blowing in from the English Channel across the square's cobblestones (Brubaker 2005, 3), which brings a fresh spring breeze to the benches which line the sunny seaside quay (Brubaker 2005, 4). The novel also allows readers to imagine Place Napoleon as the spiritual heart of Cherbourg, a place where locals stroll and mingle in cafés, where the local fish and vegetable market is held on Saturdays, and local merchants sell fresh butter and seafood in the salty sea air of sunny spring days. It is here that Suzanne first experiences the devastating bombings, with blood staining the cobblestones and a lonely bench from which she was first confronted with the horrors of World War II (Brubaker 2005, 22). As the novel progresses, it is precisely the square where this bombing took place which offers a stage for all the suffering of Cherbourg and its people: the cobblestones still glittering in the sun, but scrubbed clean of the blood of the first victims; the lonely bench still there, but now surrounded by never-repaired bomb craters; the Saturday market finally gone, as German soldiers tell Suzanne and her mother to '*Go home, madame*' (Brubaker 2005, 42) when they try to buy groceries. It is also here, as is implied by the narrator, that much later American and British ships will dock to liberate France and where Suzanne will eventually meet her future husband; an American soldier with whom she would spend the rest of her life in the United States (Brubaker 2005, 180). The sea breeze, the smell of fish and salt, the cobbled street glittering in the sun, the noises of a busy Saturday market, the empty and long winters of occupation, the sufferings of the departed, and the final liberation on a sunny day on Place Napoleon; the beginning of our journey in the library in Suzanne's company.

Then there is the house of the heroine, where Suzanne lives with her brothers and parents. Situated in Rue Lohen and parallel to Rue Loubet (Brubaker 2005, 38), the house was part of the only two streets which were taken over by and subsequently housed enemy soldiers in the early stages of the occupation. On a shady street on top of a hill, this is where the daily life of Cherbourg plays out.

Suzanne lives in a big house with a beautiful hall and dining room, decorated by a sea-mural painted by her mother (Brubaker 2005, 84). A quiet street, where only the noise of the big hallway clock can be heard - but it is disrupted by invading soldiers breaking open the front door (Brubaker 2005, 32). Much of the personal lives of the novel's characters play out in this area. Further from the sea and shaded by big trees, Suzanne used to walk this hilly neighbourhood to see her school friend, Yvette, go down the hill to the seaside Saturday market with her mother, and – at the far end of the street – visit Dr Leclerc's office, where she will eventually be enrolled into the French Resistance Movement as a spy. It is also here that on long spring and summer days, the air sometimes smells like salt although it is far from the sea (Brubaker 2005, 70); it is here that the grass grew taller and the streets dustier as the war raged on (Brubaker 2005, 96) and it is on these streets that Dr Leclerc was paraded after being discovered to be a member of the Resistance (Brubaker 2005, 173). It is also on these shady and hilly streets where spring leaves fall and increasingly cover the abandoned taxi of one of Suzanne's black neighbours; making her realize that something has happened to him, too. This is a Cherbourg which smells of countryside, is quiet and peaceful, neighbourly and family-oriented; but this is also the Cherbourg which ultimately suffers most, where daily life and human dignity are brutally suspended by an invading force. It is here in the shady hills that all four seasons of Cherbourg truly play out: long summer days; green spring evenings; falling leaves in the autumn; and bleak, cold winter nights. It is here that the traveller can hear the footsteps of Suzanne and Dr Leclerc while walking the alleys; but also, the marching boots of soldiers on patrol; ready to disrupt the life of any passer-by at gunpoint to check identification papers, to questioning them and to set up roadblocks.

In addition to these key locations, there are other places in Cherbourg where the heroine's tale leads the reader. The convent school where Suzanne initially stays, '*high among the hills of Cherbourg*' and farther from the beach than her own home (Brubaker 2005, 1); the gloomy second-floor apartment facing the graveyard, where the family is forced to move after their house is occupied by troops where '*the walls were yellowed, and every inch of the floor was filthy; a smell of old grease hung in the air*' (Brubaker 2005, 44); the crowded café by the theatre, where Suzanne delivers a message to another spy and as real coffee is not available during war times, "*vile, burnt-tasting, stagnant liquid*" (Brubaker 2005, 115) is served instead; aunt Suzanne's house several miles out of Cherbourg, where '*grassy fields smelled fragrant and rich in the summer sunshine.*'; and the opera house in the city, where our heroine has her first on-stage performances and is forced to hurry home before the evening curfew (Brubaker 2005, 92).

Suzanne's Cherbourg is a city of cobblestones, squares, cafés, markets, ringing church bells and French *joie-de-vivre*; a city which looks outwards to the sea, but also inland to Paris as a role model - fiercely proud to be French and yet open to the world; a city of salty sea air, grassy fields, shady hills and fresh summer breezes; but also of stormy winters and bleak, long autumn days. It is a city where Suzanne is allowed to dream of her future career as an opera singer, on the grand stage in Paris, but also of a normality which has been taken away from her by the war. This is the Cherbourg non only of Suzanne, but also of the reader growing one's desire to visit. In fact, Onfray would say that it is growing the reader's desire to come to the destination again, rather than to visit it for the first time; as we have followed Suzanne through her very own Cherbourg, reading about her journey, her life and her dreams; breathing the sea air, anxiously hiding from occupying soldiers in the small

alleyways; and seeing the ships depart on the horizon. ‘*Dreaming of a place, in this frame of mind, allows us more to find it again, rather than to find it.*’ (Onfray 2010, 30).

Perry and the pear in Normandy

Archive research by the travel writer reveals early mentions of perry, as a wine-like drink made from pears. This historical documentation lends an aspect of authenticity to local food products and to the ethnography of the communities who processed crops in this way; ‘these practices sometimes testify the organisation of a group or of the entire society’ (Bérard & Marchenay 2006) so that these practices become a cultural product to be shared and enjoyed. For holidaymakers, who are reading literary travel writing, providing this link with past records and writings helps to show how local ethnobotany can be enjoyed in its traditional setting, often, too, as this section will show, helping them to understand local land use. An early mention does exist in Gerard’s herbal from the late sixteenth century showing that the practice of perry-making was already known at that time, and further, that he noted that it had some positive affects as a drink, but that the question of secondary, malo-lactic fermentation, mentioned earlier in this chapter was still an issue:

‘Wine made of the juice of peares called in English, Perry, is soluble, purgeth those that are not accustomed to drinke thereof, especially when it is new; not withstanding it is as wholesome a drink being taken in small quantitie as wine; it comforteth and warmth the stomache, and causeth good digestion.’ [*sic.* for all spellings] (Gerard 1597).

The malo-lactic fermentation, then, for the travel writer can become a dialogic element. It can provide a cross-reading between two of the plateaus in the hexis, that are visited by the travel writer during research and in that way provide a rich, literary link, perhaps when dining or when speaking with staff in a local produce shop. To understand how perry-pear trees were grown in Normandy, the historical and cultural region of France, recent scholarship provides an entrée into archive material, for example Tracy (1989) is certain that the region’s meadow orchard system, in French *le pré-verger*, dates from the medieval period. By interpreting the travel writings of Gurney (Gurney 1848), an English traveller in this area. Gurney mentions pear orchards in the Pays de Bray, which has been a natural border between Normandy and Picardy since 911 ‘this valley of much beauty and well-wooded both as forests and hedgerow timber, with a great deal of pasture, and both arable land covered with apple and pear trees for the making of cider and perry ; the effect of this is highly picturesque’ (Gurney 1848, 255). More recently, Bérard and Marchenay (2006) note that the production of cider, perry, pommeau and calvados has traditionally been based on and largely still is on the meadow orchard system. This system of cultivating trees over a long period yields from the same land a mixture of complementary products, including pears and perry, with milk and dairy products, particularly cheese and butter (Clout 2003). Bérard and Marchenay (2006, 112) go as far as to assert that ‘The Norman meadow orchard corresponds to a historical and current reality which is

simultaneously interesting to farming, the environment, the local economy the cultural heritage and biodiversity.'

An example of a 4% ABV premium perry, le Poiré Domfront AOC & AOP was developed in the 1990s to create a branded product for pear growers mainly around Barenton. Barenton is 150 kilometres south of the city of study, Cherbourg, so the researcher-writers will have to find commercial and traditional links between this hinterland and the sea port on the northern tip of the Cotentin peninsula. The perry, Poiré Domfront, was awarded the protection of AOC, *l'appellation d'origine contrôlée*, status in 2002 and AOP status in 2006; AOP is the EU equivalent of AOC. The growing area is in the Domfrontais, which lies on the edge of the Massif Armoricaïn with its deep soils and maritime climate. The 100,000 pear trees of this area were under threat but now that they have been incorporated into a commercially viable system they could survive; the AOC requires that 40% of the pears pressed must be from the *Plant de blanc* variety. These trees need to be 50 years old to come into full productivity, which is a challenge for capitalisation of new projects. A technical account of perry production can be found in Arthey and Ashurst (1996). This, along with the names of pear varieties, and examples of the older, manual equipment for picking and processing will provide the researchers in the field with dialogic materials to create links between places to eat and the cultural ethnobotany of the peninsula. It is clear from preliminary web searches that a range of perry is on sale in Cherbourg.

Literary travel writing, rich with cross readings from history to locally available food can offer leadership, or an imprimatur that visitors follow, not by using the imperative command to visit a particular spot, but by creating dialogic reading at that place. Roland Barthes (Barthes 1972) remarks on the process that happens when a catalyst text places a well-known figure in an accessible place. In his text he recounts his moment in the style of one of Patron's (2020) *Small Stories* of how he finds himself in the same restaurant as a well-known author, an imprimatur, prefixing the moment with a literary, imagistic word, gloom. In his autobiography, Barthes communicates that emotion of excitement when he spies Nobel laureate and travel writer, André Gide (1869-1951) eat a pear in the Lutétia brasserie:

Imagine wanting to copy not the works but the practices of any contemporary [writer] —his way of strolling through the world, a notebook in his pocket and a phrase in his head (the way I imagined Gide traveling from Russia to the Congo, reading his classics and writing his notebooks in the dining car, waiting for the meals to be served; the way I actually saw him, one day in 1939, in the gloom of the Brasserie Lutétia, eating a pear and reading a book)!

(Barthes 1977, 76-77)

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