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IMAGES OF CORSICA IN FRANCE: TRAVEL MEMOIRS
AND 19TH CENTURY WRITERS

by

James O. Mayo

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Department of French and Italian

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

James O. Mayo

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

Date

Corry L. Cropper, Chair

Date

Scott M. Sprenger

Date

Kelly D. Patterson

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of James O. Mayo in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

Date

Corry L. Cropper
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

Date

Corry L. Cropper
Department Chair

Accepted for the College

Date

Joseph Parry
Associate Dean, College of Humanities

ABSTRACT

IMAGES OF CORSICA IN FRANCE: TRAVEL MEMOIRS AND 19TH CENTURY WRITERS

James O. Mayo

Department of French and Italian

Master of Arts

Considered an integral part of Metropolitan France, the island of Corsica is situated nonetheless on the very periphery of the modern state that claims it. Actually situated geographically closer to Italy than to any part of France, its culture and its people are likewise more closely related to their Italian neighbors than to the rest of what Corsicans term “Continental France.” Following the acquisition of Corsica, both government officials and bourgeois travelers would seek to visit the island, often recording their findings and publishing these memoirs for others to know of their travels. This concept of travel memoirs, specifically those regarding Corsica, had already been a fairly common practice among the British, as they had often placed interest in the island itself. From this group of French and British travel memoirs would come the writings of James Boswell, P. P. Pompéi, and the Baron de Beaumont, among others. Corsica

becomes a place of unique setting for novels and short stories throughout the century, with tales of banditry, vendetta, and violence permeating from the island. For those authors seeking to place their stories in Corsica, inspiration was drawn from the very travel memoirs they had read regarding the island. I have chosen three specific 19th century authors in relation to the images created by the travel memoirs of Corsica:

Prosper Mérimée, Honoré de Balzac, and Guy de Maupassant. The purpose behind each author's use of the images of Corsica already created was very different and shows different ways that these images were used. Mérimée directly used Corsica to show the triumph of the uncivilized over the civilized, Balzac used Corsica to represent France itself, and Maupassant used Corsica to show that "reality" is really nothing more than a personal illusion. Though when publishing their travel memoirs the authors might not have expected much to come of them, they have actually influence an entire century of writers, and possibly an entire nation, with their images of Corsica.

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Introduction

Considered an integral part of Metropolitan France, the island of Corsica is situated nonetheless on the very periphery of the modern state that claims it. Actually situated geographically closer to Italy than to any part of France, its culture and its people are likewise more closely related to their Italian neighbors than to the rest of what Corsicans term "Continental France." Being physically separate from the rest of France, and also being one of the last additions to that country, Corsica has often been considered by the French to be an integral, yet very distinct part of their country. As for the Corsicans, they have officially been French subjects since 1769 when their island was purchased for the French Crown from the Genoese (Antonetti 369-376). Fighting the French both right before the official handover and right after the outbreak of the French Revolution, some Corsican people have continued to seek independence to this day.

The French media to this day continue to dwell upon the outlandish and often scoffed at idea that Corsicans would really want to be independent. The majority of news stories that make it from Corsica to the Parisian newspapers deal with the same ideas expressed in travel memoir sources to be discussed in this work. The most recent example is that of Yvan Colonna, who was brought to trial for the murder of the Prefect Claude Erignac in 1998. He was found guilty, but has since appealed. The prefect was a governmental official from continental France

assigned to his post in Ajaccio. The media in Paris have placed much news coverage on the matter of a violent assassination, just the kind of activities one would “expect” from Corsica. These “expectations” that have persisted over the years can be tied to sources from the 18th and 19th centuries: both works of fiction and travel memoirs.

Following the acquisition of Corsica, both government officials and bourgeois travelers would seek to visit the island, often recording their findings and publishing these memoirs for others to know of their travels. This concept of travel memoirs, specifically those regarding Corsica, had already been a fairly common practice among the British, as they had often placed interest in the island itself. When the island again proclaimed independence following the outbreak of the French Revolution, the British sent Admiral Nelson and two fleets of the Royal Navy to claim the island as a protectorate of George III (Gregory 49-64). The British would lose the battle and France would regain sovereignty of the island, and both British and French travelers would continue to travel to Corsica and publish their memoirs.

Then dawned the 19th century that, for France, would be a century full of governmental conflict, civil unrest, and a nation of regions seeking to unify under any form of government that would succeed. The century produced three different republics, two empires, and three restored kings, not to mention an industrial revolution; the influence of these constant changes would be felt in all aspects of daily life, including literature. Literary movements would include romanticism, realism, and naturalism, and major works would be produced reforming and

solidifying the idea of the novel, the short story, and the poem (Avisseau 227-228). Authors would be from diverse backgrounds, with diverse projects in mind, and diverse ways of looking and recording life around them.

The desire to seek inspiration for their work often led authors of the 19th century to flee to Corsica, “pour échapper au siècle ‘bourgeois’, à son mercantilisme et son utilitarisme” (Manuel de littérature française 419). An author could flee to another century, to bury himself in what he assumed to be the glories of the past:

Ainsi s’explique la mode du Moyen Âge que le XIX^e siècle redécouvre, revisite et réinterprète à sa façon sans réel souci de rigueur archéologique, en littérature comme en architecture. L’autre fuite possible peut s’opérer dans l’espace, par la quête de lointains exotiques: le voyage offre donc, tout au long du siècle, une échappatoire qui permet de se détourner de la prosaïque et décevante réalité française. (Manuel de littérature française 418-419)

French for less than a century, the Corsica of the 19th century retained much of its own unique culture (Versini). Travelers to Corsica would feel as if they had traveled to another country, one not connected to France in anything more than trivial governmental overlords. Corsica becomes a place of unique setting for novels and short stories throughout the century, with tales of banditry, vendetta, and violence permeating from the island. For those authors seeking to place their stories in Corsica, inspiration was drawn from the very travel memoirs they had

read regarding the island. Both English accounts, translated into French, and accounts from Frenchmen themselves were widely popular and highly read.

Prosper Mérimée often comes to mind when speaking of Corsica, especially because one of his most famous stories, *Colomba*, is a tale of a Corsican woman and her need for vengeance. “Le pays, ses aspects, ses mœurs et l’esprit de ses habitants y sont dépeints avec une telle exactitude, une telle sûreté de touche, que, pour la plupart d’entre nous, la Corse, c’est *Colomba*” (Avisseau 336). This short story shines so importantly that the island becomes somehow connected to the story of *Colomba* itself, and the imagery used by Mérimée is eternally connected to the vision that the French have of Corsica. This work of fiction, then, becomes the basis for all future images that French people have of the island. The media surrounding Colonna’s trial must have certainly been thinking of *Colomba* somewhere in the back of their minds. This fiction, then, becomes their conceived reality of Corsica. *Colomba*, however, was not Mérimée’s first short story placed in Corsica, neither was short story the only format Mérimée used to write about the island.

Written more than ten years before *Colomba*, “Mateo Falcone” is a much shorter story about a very different situation, though still taking place on the island. Ten years after writing about the son murdered by his own father, Mérimée gets the opportunity to visit the island, officially as an inspector of historical monuments. Following his return he publishes his findings on the monuments in a work entitled *Notes d’un voyage en Corse* in which he meticulously writes detailed accounts of

historical monuments found around the island. A massive work quite different from his short stories, Mérimée's *Notes* are written in a highly administrative style.

One year following Mérimée's publication of *Mateo Falcone*, Honoré de Balzac publishes a short novel entitled *La Vendetta* to include in his study *La Comédie humaine*. The interesting concept that Balzac introduces with this novel is bringing the other back to France. While the novel does include Corsicans as its main characters, as well as bringing to light their inner desire for vendetta, he places the characters and the action of the novel in the city of Paris, the heart of French civilization. While possibly making a statement that Corsica is technically a part of France, he shows through his novel that the Corsican characters cannot completely adapt to Parisian life, and continue to hold certain innate habits from their homeland, such as the unbridled need for vengeance. Balzac's desire to show the reality behind human nature leads him to use a more realistic mentality in his novel. Having never visited the island himself, however, he uses stereotypes that his readers are already familiar with. Balzac uses images of Corsicans created by others, but subtly twists them to create a truly unique story. The Piombo family emigrated from Corsica to Paris early in the life of their daughter Ginevra. As such Balzac creates a Corsican daughter who grows up in the heart of French civilization, and yet shows Corsican tendencies that remain within her. Through Ginevra we see the internal struggles between two cultures playing out inside a single person. Balzac can use a Corsican character to represent France.

By the end of the century, Corsica was still being used a backdrop for many novels and short stories. From 1880 to 1890 Guy de Maupassant published several novels, travel memoirs, as well as over 300 short stories. For four of these stories, “Un Bandit corse,” “La Main,” “Le Bonheur,” and “Une Vendetta,” Maupassant uses Corsica as the setting and Corsicans as the main characters. Maupassant also published his own account of his travel to Corsica in 1880 in the work *Au Soleil*. His own travel memoir is strictly four diverse articles dealing with four tales taken from what others have recounted or from what he experienced himself. They are almost as if he were writing four more short stories, though he did live through some of these himself. In his short stories set in Corsica Maupassant differs from both Mérimée and Balzac by not attempting to showcase Corsican morals or character. He wrote in the preface to one of his novels,

Faire vrai consiste... à donner l'illusion complète du vrai, suivant la logique ordinaire des faits, et non à les transcrire servilement dans le pêle-mêle de leur succession. J'en conclus que les Réalistes de talent devraient s'appeler plutôt des Illusionnistes. (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 821)

And further on he continues,

Chacun de nous se fait... simplement une illusion du monde, illusion poétique, sentimentale, joyeuse, mélancolique, sale ou lugubre suivant sa nature. Et l'écrivain n'a d'autre mission que de reproduire fidèlement cette illusion avec tous les procédés d'art qu'il a appris et dont il peut disposer. (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 821)

His mission, then, is to show the illusion of reality in Corsica. A true Realist, for him, is an Illusionist, and nothing more. Here we see that the so called reality of Corsica created by the travel memoirs, and perpetuated by the writers of the 19th century is nothing more than what Maupassant describes as the illusion around us. This same illusion is the one that has continued in the French mentality to this day.

With so many representations of Corsica, it would be hard to not imagine some small link between them, beyond the simple desire to travel abroad. The travel memoirs published upon the return of travelers, both English and French, were readily available to all readers who wished to know about the island without having to actually travel to it. For authors, such as Mérimée, who wished to publish a short story that takes place in Corsica, having never traveled there himself, the obvious solution would be to do research on the area. The travel accounts of Corsica were one obvious source for knowledge and inspiration. While some documents were simply petitions to explore the island in the name of the government, like that of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, others were merely conjectures on the style of government that would succeed there, like Rousseau's *Projet de constitution*. Other travel accounts were based much more on the actual experiences and interactions between native Corsicans and the European traveler. James Boswell and the Baron de Beaumont are two examples of travelers who published such memoirs. Other travelers, upon their return to France, published memoirs simply for the desire to refute the ideas already put forward by other published memoirs. It would seem that each traveler would have their own unique opinion on Corsica and its inhabitants, an idea Maupassant would call the "illusions" around us.

Connections between travel memoirs published in both the 18th and 19th centuries and novels and short stories containing Corsica have been researched before by more than one person. Most research has been conducted regarding one specific author and their works in connection to specific travel memoirs. By far the most popular author researched in this category would be Mérimée. In 1945 G. Roger wrote an entire book entitled *Prosper Mérimée et la Corse*, in which he describes in detail what he believes to be both literary influences on *Mateo Falcone* and *Colomba*, as well as Mérimée's personal travels in Corsica, and his publication of *Notes d'un voyage en Corse*. While the book is lengthy and contains much detail, it only mentions the most obvious sources of inspiration for the short stories, taking into account only the actual stories themselves. He excellently details what he terms "de la réalité à l'art" where he shows the differences between what the true story held and what Mérimée changed to create a short story of fiction (Roger 173). Likewise many an article, such as "Mérimée et la Corse" written by Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani, has been written recounting influences that Mérimée could have leaned upon, or sources he could have dipped into in order to write his Corsican tales, though usually regurgitating that which had already been written on the matter. Antoine Naaman, in his 1967 book on "Mateo Falcone," writes a chapter on the inspiration behind the story, which simply includes a detailed explanation of all the possible sources listed up to that date. No further research into other sources is conducted by Naaman, as his idea behind the publication of the book is simply to inform the uninformed reader of the wealth of research which had been conducted on "Mateo Falcone."

Mérimée's writings on Corsica have even lead some in the other direction, using the popularity of his accounts to research other information of the 19th century to piece together and recreate the Corsica of Mérimée's time, a book about this very subject being published by Xavier Versini in 1979. Throughout my research I have found no books written about the connection between Balzac and Corsica, and only one book discusses Maupassant's "Une Vendetta" in one of its chapters, though does not research any connections between Maupassant and travel memoirs, as its main purpose is referring to dogs in literature (Parry). Articles have been written on Balzac's *La Vendetta*, though not to the extent where they show sources connecting Balzac and travel memoirs.

As far as Maupassant is concerned, having written over 300 short stories along with novels and travel accounts, few articles have been written concerning Maupassant's Corsican short stories. Articles that do discuss them usually have other motives for including them, and do not discuss any connections between Maupassant and travel memoirs. This could be for the simple fact that his four short stories in Corsica were written after his own trip to the island, and after he published his own travel articles about Corsica. One could easily push aside the matter and assume that Maupassant had no other influences outside of his own personal experiences.

Finally, there is one book of extensive research written by Pierrette Jeoffroy-Faggianelli published in 1979 and entitled *L'Image de la Corse dans la littérature romantique française*. In her book the author spends a chapter each on *Mateo*

Falcone, Colomba, and La Vendetta. She also discusses the works of Boswell, Simonot, Pompéi, and Beaumont, though she only spends time on these works as a means to set the stage for the Romantic period that is to follow. She does not mention any of these travel memoirs in relation to the short stories of Mérimée and Balzac that she discusses later in the book. There is no mention of Maupassant as the book treats only works by Romantic writers.

While much has been researched and published regarding Mérimée and his connections to Corsican travel memoirs of the 18th and 19th centuries, not all memoirs have been taken into account regarding possible influences, specifically those of Boswell, Pompéi, Simonot, and Beaumont. Likewise, only a few articles have been written discussing Balzac's *La Vendetta*, though none have made connections of influence between this short story and the travel memoirs. Maupassant's four short stories revolving around Corsica have had little research conducted around them, and no research shows connections tying possible influences in his writing with the travel memoirs previously stated. As such, it seems appropriate to conduct both further research on Mérimée's "Mateo Falcone" and *Colomba*, Balzac's *La Vendetta*, and Maupassant's "Un Bandit corse," "La Main," "Le Bonheur," and "Une Vendetta." Correlations between these authors and travel memoirs published before the publication of their short stories can show the relations between these authors and their ideas of Corsica and its inhabitants, and could suggest a broader view of Corsica in France during the 19th century, at least for authors.

Mérimée, Balzac, and Maupassant all used the stereotypes sometimes created but more frequently discredited by the various travel memoirs I will discuss written in the 18th and early 19th centuries, though they used them for very specific purposes. The vast amount of research that has been performed by various researchers over the years has neglected the specific travel memoirs that will be discussed in the first chapter for the simple reason that these men did not usually reinforce the stereotypes already previously created. These three 19th-century authors, however, would use the stereotypes anyways, in order to create specific stories that would serve their purposes. While these purposes might not have been to directly reiterate the stereotype, and in the case of Maupassant the exact opposite, their works nonetheless have lasting influences on French readers even to this day. Mérimée created stories with direct scenes of civilized versus uncivilized, where he ironically shows the ultimate strength of the uncivilized over the civilized. Balzac uses the images of Corsica to subtly tell a story about France itself, using characters the French would not relate themselves to. Maupassant uses the images to their most extreme in order to show that the reality created by authors is nothing more than an illusion. The careful reader who is familiar with the images of Corsica created in the travel memoirs will both see their influences on the authors as well as each author's individual reasoning and ultimate message.

Vendetta, Banditry, and Honor: Travel Memoirs of Corsica

The island of Corsica, being located in a strategic location in the Mediterranean, has a long and varied history of conquest and occupation. Throughout it all, the people that inhabit this land have been able to create an identity unique and separate from both their conquerors and their neighbors (Colonna de Cesari-Rocca and Villat 220-230). What their true identity is, however, and how they are perceived by those around them can be two completely different things. Corsica has been a part of France for 240 years, as it was only annexed officially into the Kingdom of France in 1770, following a treaty with Genoa and a battle between France and the Corsicans themselves. Though they have had the opportunity over the past two centuries to integrate into French society, they continue to retain their separate identity. This fact has helped the French to continue to perpetuate in their own minds the idea of what Corsica is and what its people represent. An image of Corsica in the minds of the French today may be influenced by events that continue to transpire daily, but the creation of this image may not be as recent a phenomenon.

The French were not the first foreigners to be interested in this region. In fact, many had sent emissaries to see Corsica and try to capture its essence. So in order to begin a study of French travelers, a brief look into their predecessors becomes essential, especially because the history of Corsica is not a simple one.

While the Duke de Choiseul, representing France, may have legally bought Corsica from the Genoese Republic in 1764, the Corsicans, under the leadership of Pascal Paoli had already declared themselves an independent republic in 1755. To them the French represented merely another conqueror. The English, on the other hand, appeared much more sympathetic to the Corsican cause, especially since the Corsicans were now fighting against the French, an enemy of the English at the time (Gregory 15-64). One writer and traveler in particular becomes essential to study, since his work on Corsica was translated into several languages, including French, and was well known throughout Europe, and could have easily influenced later French writers and adventurers.

In the late 18th century, James Boswell, a Scottish lawyer and author, was visiting Europe on his grand tour and had the opportunity to meet Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from whom he learned about the struggle of the Corsicans and their small self-proclaimed republic against their Genoese overlords. Captivated by the tales of their fearless leader Pascal Paoli, Boswell decided to travel to Corsica to meet this soon-to-be idol of his. Though the first part of his *Account of Corsica* was simply a geography and history thought even at the time to be merely copied from others, the second part of the account contains direct experiences while traveling on Corsica in 1765, and his own interactions with Corsicans, as well as Pascal Paoli himself. His account was originally published in 1768, two years before the formal annexation of Corsica by France, and was so popular that it had three editions in Britain and three in Ireland in that same year. The journal was translated into German, Italian, Dutch, and twice into French, with the earliest French edition coming one year after its

original publication. This account was well-read and well-known in both his native Britain and on the continent.

From the very onset of his work we can see that Boswell had a preconceived notion of what was in store for him on his adventure, as he describes the happenings in Corsica at that time in his own words:

Corsica occurred to me as a place which no body else had seen, and where I should find what was to be found no where else, a people actually fighting for liberty, and forming themselves from a poor inconsiderable oppressed nation, into a flourishing independent state. (161)

Boswell wished to visit Corsica to see what such a people was like, though he must have had some idea of what lay ahead because on his next page, when referring to the letter of introduction he requested from Rousseau, he adds, “which if he refused, I should certainly go without it, and probably be hanged as a spy” (162). One must surely take into account that Boswell was living in an era much different from our own, to be sure, but he must have heard something of the Corsican people to assume that he would be hanged upon arrival without a letter of introduction.

What is most fascinating about this second half of his account is the information that he gives contrary to all conventional notions of Corsica. He starts out by specifically citing the letter that Rousseau eventually wrote for him including this astonishing statement, “Au reste vous n’avez besoin d’autre recommandation près de ces Messieurs que votre propre mérite, la nation Corse etant naturellement si accueillante et si hospitalière, que tous les etrangers y sont bien venus et

caressés" (162). To then go ahead and claim that the Corsicans were welcoming and hospitable would have seemed ridiculous to others' perceptions of Corsica. Boswell even continues by telling the story of a British naval officer and his personal opinion of Corsica. He writes,

I recollect with astonishment how little the real state of Corsica was known, even by those who had good access to know it. An officer of rank in the British navy, who had been in several ports of the island, told me that I run the risk of my life in going among these barbarians; for, that his surgeon's mate went ashore to that the diversion of shooting, and every moment was alarmed by some of the natives, who started from the bushes with loaded guns, and if he had not been protected by Corsican guides, would have certainly blown out his brains. (164)

Boswell is shocked that someone who has had personal contact with the Corsicans cannot even see their "real state" and goes on to list another example of people who live within sailing distance of Corsica warning him not to go because of the danger. He truly believed their perception to be wrong, even though he had never traveled there himself. Upon sailing to Corsica he met some natives and pens for us the ultimate double character of the Corsicans, as described by themselves, "they told me that in their country I should be treated with the greatest hospitality; but if I attempted to debauch any of their women, I might lay my account with instant death" (165). The Corsicans see themselves as hospitable, but also ruthlessly violent.

Upon Boswell's actual arrival to the island he clearly states that he had been imagining his encounter with the "malcontents of Corsica," as he calls them, and their leader, Pascal Paoli. He witnesses firsthand that "they were all armed," as the surgeon's mate had previously recorded, coming out of the bushes. Still he is able to change the perception around and see it as just a part of life and nothing out of the ordinary, and certainly nothing to get frightened over (164). This passage helps us to understand Boswell as a person and as a writer. He himself admits to having dreamed of this encounter with this almost mystical island and its leader. Anything that was spoken negatively about the island before must have been wrong, as these were simply misguided souls who should have known better. Boswell continues with the same mentality in Corsica where he encounters the dangers spoken to him and pushes them off not as dangers, but simple "reality," producing an almost positive light.

In fact, he goes so far as to purposefully point out "surprises" he encounters while in Corsica. He notices that the houses he first visits are all Italian in nature and that there are nice paintings on the walls of the first man that he visits, an obvious point to the sign that these people are civilized (165). When he finally gets to visit the leader of this group of rebels, the founder of the Corsican Republic, Pascal Paoli, he again specifically points out these "surprises."

He smiled a good deal, when I told him that I was much surprised to find him so amiable, accomplished, and polite; for although I knew I was to see a great

man, I expected to find a rude character, an Attila the king of the Goths, or a Luitprand king of the Lombards. (179)

Though Boswell clearly points to his possession of expectation being that of finding a ruthless leader, he clearly uses this notion of barbarianism to counteract what he finds in Corsica: a civilized, accomplished, polite leader. Boswell did not really believe that he would find a barbarian; he had already spent the last part of his account telling how he did not believe any of the accounts of danger and barbarianism that others had told him, but he uses others' notions of barbarianism to counter what he says he truly found upon visiting the leaders of the rebels. Boswell uses this ingenious tactic throughout his encounter with Paoli. He speaks, for instance, of the arts and sciences that he hopes to see flourishing throughout Corsica, while certainly anticipating Paoli's response,

Patience Sir, said he... Corsica has fought a hard battle, has been much wounded, has been beaten to the ground, and with difficulty has lift herself up. The arts and sciences are like dress and ornament. You cannot expect them from us for some time. But come back in twenty or thirty years hence, and we'll shew you arts and sciences, and concerts and assemblies, and fine ladies, and we'll make you fall in love among us, Sir. (179)

Who would have dared think of arts and sciences flourishing in Corsica? Boswell uses his knowledge of others' images of dangerous and rough Corsicans to specifically show that his reality of Corsica is quite the opposite. He expects to see

the Corsicans rise to become a great nation, something that everyone around him seems to dismiss as impossible.

Boswell speaks little of the people, though he often states that Paoli praises them, and little of the island itself, since he used the introduction he added to his journal as a means to explain the geography and topography. He does, however, make an interesting note about vendetta, a topic that even he could not avoid; though, again, we see that he was able to shine a positive light on it like everything else.

During Paoli's administration, there had been few laws made in Corsica. He mentioned one which he has found very efficacious in curbing that vindictive spirit of the Corsicans, of which I have said a good deal in a former part of this work. There was among the Corsicans a most dreadful species of revenge, called "Vendetta trasversa, collateral revenge," which Petrus Cyrnaeus candidly acknowledges. It was this. If a man had received an injury, and could not find a proper opportunity to be revenged on his enemy personally, he revenged himself on one of his enemy's relations. So barbarous a practice, was the source of innumerable assassinations. Paoli knowing that the point of honour was every thing to the Corsicans, opposed it to the progress of the blackest of crimes, fortified by long habits. He made a law, by which it was provided, that this collateral revenge should not only be punished by death, as ordinary murder [sic], but the memory of the offender should be disgraced for ever by a pillar of infamy. He also had it

enacted that the same statute should extend to the violatours of an oath of reconciliation, once made. By thus combating a vice so destructive, he has, by a kind of shock of opposite passions, reduced the fiery Corsicans to a state of mildness, and he assured me that they were now all fully sensible of the equity of that law. (339)

Though Boswell clearly states that the Corsicans have created a vendetta system that he abhors and finds dreadful, he is able to show that Paoli has created a law to combat it and that the fiery Corsicans have now been transformed to a state of mildness. He quotes Paoli's assurance so as to assure his own audience that the Corsicans have now changed, leaving behind forever their violent ways of the past. This idea, in and of itself, seems to point to the fact that Boswell was living in, or attempting to create, a dream world where everything in Corsica was opposite to what others had believed, since accounts continue over two centuries later of vendetta throughout Corsica. Once again, however, these continued accounts of vendetta could be because of the continued images of Corsica created during this time period. If cases of vendetta were the only events recorded, certainly one would be prone to think that nothing else happens in Corsica.

Boswell's work as a whole is a very strange, yet fascinating work. One can understand the reasons behind its wide success in his native country and abroad. What is most fascinating about the account is the often overly dreamy perception that Corsica is exactly the opposite of what everyone has told him. Several times in the account he acknowledges where others might have got their ill-conceived

notions, though he then fills the account with so many positive surprises that the careless reader will come away simply accepting Boswell's view of Corsica as a civilized, peaceful state. This, however, must be specifically countered by others' accounts of Corsica both before and after Boswell's, and anyone truly interested in knowing about Corsica, such as those wishing to write stories that happen in such a place, would certainly use more than one source upon which to base their ideas.

Boswell does quote Rousseau's *Du Contrat social*:

Il est encore en Europe, un pays capable de législation; c'est l'isle de Corse. La valeur et la constance avec laquelle ce brave peuple a su recouvrer et défendre sa liberté mériterait bien que quelque homme sage lui apprit à la conserver. J'ai quelque pressentiment qu'un jour cette petite isle étonnera l'Europe. (209)

This statement would seem to sum up James Boswell's ideals of and for Corsica. He, like Rousseau, sees Corsica as a place of liberty loving people who will one day throw off all their conquerors, possibly including the evil ideas that others have of them, and become important leaders of Europe. Though he had never visited the island before, Boswell most certainly believed in what he had read and used every moment in Corsica to place upon them his own preconceived notions of what they were. He did not want to follow the images created by those in constant contact with the Corsicans; he wanted to follow the image created by Rousseau, who incidentally had never visited Corsica himself.

Those that read Boswell's account are able to notice this irony: a man who goes to visit these people for his first time does not accept the warnings and perceptions of those who have come into daily contact with the Corsicans. It is easy to see that Boswell might possibly be living in his own state of mind while traveling through Corsica, as this perception can turn some readers to assume that Boswell's story itself is nothing of truth, just a purely whimsical twist of reality. This could explain later authors' views on Corsica, even after having read Boswell's account. It is certain that this almost too happy account of Corsica was created by Boswell as he was trying to get government support for the Corsican cause. To make the Corsican nation seem more civilized could only be seen as a plus. Whether Boswell specifically wrote his account to counteract the preconceived notions of Corsica that surrounded him, the sources of which will be discussed in the next chapter, for just such a purpose, or whether Boswell himself truly believed the Corsicans to be, in reality, the opposite of what others were telling him may never be known, but the popularity of Boswell's account is an irrefutable fact, showing that people enjoyed reading the account, and many became acquainted with Corsica through his eyes, whether for good or for bad.

While from the outside the images of Corsica created and shown in Boswell's account will be shown to be in complete discord with those of others, it is safe to say that Boswell's journal was still very influential. Whether later travelers and writers believed Boswell's opinions or not may not be known, what is known is that over the next century following the publication of Boswell's account interest in Corsica flourished. Many wished to visit it, and many wished to write about it, and many did

write about it having not even visited the island itself. Boswell did create interest in Corsica, as he had desired in setting out to write his account, though it did not create interest in Corsican independence, as he had desired.

Upon studying French travelers to Corsica, one will note the surge in their numbers after the French formally annexed the territory in 1770. One year later, French botanist and writer Bernardin de Saint-Pierre started a friendship with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who, it has already been mentioned, spoke of Corsica in his *Du Contrat social* of 1762. He also had already written a *Projet de constitution pour la Corse* in 1765 in which he creates his own ideal government for Corsica, again without having visited the island himself. After the start of this friendship, Saint-Pierre becomes interested in Corsica and decides to write up a project. Though not technically a travelogue, its contents show the newfound interest in Corsica by the French. Even this early in France's ownership of Corsica, this author was already asking permission from the king to take a party into Corsica to study its landscapes and peoples. The idea of what lay in Corsica must have already been on the minds of all those who saw the new land and wanted to know how useful it would be for the kingdom. Saint-Pierre, having never visited Corsica before, already had some ideas of what he would find, and even goes so far as to call the population as having "leur caractère mou"(4). A fascinating assumption in which one must decide what definition of "mou" Saint-Pierre is using. Is their character one "qui manque d'énergie, de vitalité" or is it more of one "qui manque de caractère, de vigueur morale." Saint Pierre might be playing off of any number of stereotypes he could have heard about the Corsicans: that they are lazy or that they lack character or

moral vigor in general. He even uses the word “bandit:” “On aurait par privilège, assurancement contre les bandits, nécessité de s’établir dans les montagnes pour résister” (6) which leads one to believe that Saint-Pierre might have been thinking more of their having a lack of character, since he mentions these bandits and the need to resist them. Though the word violence is not explicitly used, it is most certainly implied. Rousseau and Saint-Pierre are two examples of men interested in Corsica without even visiting. Saint-Pierre uses ideas and assumptions in his own proposal to visit Corsica. Like Boswell, he assumes he knows what he is going to find without even having visited it. Unlike Boswell, however, he makes no assumption that these notions are wrong, and simply reproduces them.

In 1820, J. F. Simonot published a fascinating response to an earlier work on Corsica published by M. Réalier-Dumas. Simonot takes several of the sentences from Réalier-Dumas’ work and then proves them to be wrong. Not much is particularly said about the people themselves or the geography, but it is more of a political book as he is trying to show how the court could do better in getting to know this island and using its resources. It is interesting in that it was written in epistolary format (33 lettres) and that he was writing to an “ami” that he never names. Also, he explains in the last letter that he is going to add some notes to the end. He writes from Bastia the two years that he is there. Whether or not this man actually lived in Corsica and whether or not he actually wrote and sent these letters to someone is not known. Though he writes little of the people themselves, he does at one point leave the political overtone aside and writes, “Ne regardez-vous pas, mon ami, comme une chose fort singulière que la Corse qui, depuis plus de

cinquante ans, fait partie de la France, soit encore si peu connue, et si mal jugée?” (223). Simonot points out specifically to his friend that there are all sorts of ideas about Corsica going around and yet people in France have no idea what Corsica is really like. If one assumes, then, that Simonot is actually living in Bastia and has encountered the people themselves on a daily basis, he would then be able to accurately say that the ideas going around in France of what Corsica is like are completely false. Looking forward to our study of Maupassant in Chapter Four, however, we will see that all reality can be described as one’s own personal illusions. What Simonot might have seen could most certainly have been different from others. He might agree with Boswell that there is much less violence than expected, while another might simply disagree. The argument could go on forever because of the idea that Maupassant called “illusions.”

Similarly, in 1821 P. P. Pompéi writes a response to works written by “messieurs Volney, Feydel et Réalier-Dumas” and points out that all of their assumptions on Corsica and all of their writings are false. Pompéi goes on in his own right to describe his perceptions in a work entitled *Etat Actuel de la Corse : caractère et mœurs de ses habitans*. In the first part of his work he does not go against what has been previously stated about the Corsicans saying, “Tout semble s’être réuni pour inspirer aux Corses un indomptable penchant pour l’indépendance” (30) and even, “Mais ai-je besoin de m’étendre longuement sur la bravoure de nos insulaires, qualité si naturelle en eux et qui leur appartient tellement, que personne jusqu’ici n’a songé à la constater?” (179). He starts with what he considers to be notions that are true in nature to the Corsicans themselves:

their desire for independence and their undying bravery. He then quickly moves on to what he feels are misinterpretations of some of their other characteristics.

Pompéi specifically talks about vendetta, for instance, starting out with his own definition of the matter: “La manifestation de cette haine par une action quelconque, à la suite d’un mal qui nous a été apporté, ou qui nous menace inévitablement, est ce que j’appelle vengeance” (195). The author in no way defends this act and even states, “Dans cet état, plus un peuple a l’instinct de la justice, plus il doit être porté à reprendre l’exercice de la vengeance personnelle, qui est la justice le l’état sauvage” (201). The word “sauvage” here helps to make his point that vendetta is not something that a civilized nation would do, according to one that comes from that specific civilized nation. Instead of denying the fact that vendetta is a part of the nature of the Corsicans, he makes a statement regarding their present state in relation to this internal nature:

Ainsi, on ne voit plus guère le Corse supporter, pendant des mois entiers, la faim, la soif et toutes les intempéries de l’air pour guetter son ennemi au passage, et satisfaire sa haine; on ne voit plus de femmes conserver la chemise ensanglantée le leurs époux pour exciter leur fils à la vengeance.
(212)

Instead of saying that the Corsicans do not exercise vendetta, his observation is that they no longer do it as often as others say they do. Vendetta, then, is a dying, almost archaic and savage mentality that is no longer prevalent in the general population, as others of his day believed and wrote. As if he expected to have a reaction to that

statement, he turns around and then explains the still large number of assassinations happening in Corsica (deux juges qui, en peu d'années, y ont été assassinés) by quoting the late-Emperor Napoleon as saying, "Les Corses se sont toujours tués et se tueront toujours" (215). Napoleon, however, by using the term "les Corses" is showing that he himself has moved on and up. He is no longer a part of that uncivilized world, but now belongs to the civilized. He is distancing himself from what others consider a negative situation. Another about-face and Pompéi concludes his book with his own solution to the problematic characteristics of the Corsicans that his fellow countrymen write so much about. "On les accuse d'être indociles, impatiens de tout frein: eh bien! dans l'intérêt même de cette accusation, qu'on leur donne des magistrats, des administrateurs nés parmi eux" (268). The solution, then, to their bad character traits would be to allow them to govern themselves. He starts with their desire for independence and ends by suggesting a sort of self-government for them.

Joseph-Gabriel-Marie de Beaumont, more commonly known as the Baron de Beaumont, was a member of the Légion d'Honneur and an auditor for the Council of State. He produced mainly politically based writings about the Légion d'Honneur, but also wrote about the state of affairs in Mexico and other projects, and presented his reports to the government and parliament. In 1822, and again in 1824, he published his *Observations sur la Corse*, an exposé about the conditions in Corsica at the time. The Baron de Beaumont shows his interest in the geography of the island and its effects upon the people by mentioning nothing but the uniqueness of the Corsican landscape throughout the first part of his work. He especially dwells upon

the *maquis* which is so prevalent in Corsica, and which becomes an important descriptive tool for authors in the 19th century. “Tout ce qui reste en friche, quoique susceptible de culture, produit spontanément un mélange de végétaux auquel on donne le nom de Makis. Ce mélange a de trois à douze pieds de hauteur, et se compose d’arbousier, de laurier, de ciste, de myrte, de bruyère, etc.” (9). His specific use of the word “friche” helps us to understand his disapproval for this region of the country. He continues negatively by writing “Les chemins sont, en général, des sentiers rocailleux, qui, loin de se dessiner à l’œil, diffèrent à peine du terrain qui les environne. Aussi rien n’est-il plus facile que de s’égarer en plein jour” (11). And after spending the first part of his work speaking about the *maquis*, he concludes his book by speaking about it one more time.

Après le préjugé qui protège les contumaces, après l’abus qui empêche de les distinguer des insulaires jouissant de leurs droits civils, le plus grand obstacle à la poursuite tient aux localités. Il faut bien souffrir des montagnes qu’on ne peut aplanir, des précipices qu’on ne peut combler, des rochers qu’on ne peut gravir et des torrens qu’on ne peut traverser; mais ces éternels makis dont la Corse est hérissée, ne peut-on les détruire? (71-72)

He almost sounds angry with the *maquis* by using the terms “éternels” and “hérissée” to underline his exasperation that nothing can be done to destroy them. The term “éternels” is also ironic in that the three previously mentioned natural phenomenon (mountains, precipices, rocks, and torrents) could all be viewed as being more “eternal” in nature than the *maquis*.

After describing their natural surroundings, the Baron de Beaumont moves quickly into describing the Corsicans themselves.

Il était dans la destinée de la Corse de devenir l'objet des insultes étrangères et des flatteries nationales. Depuis Sénèque jusqu'à M. Réallier-Dumas, depuis Cirneo jusqu'à M. Pompéi, le caractère des habitans de cette île a été alternativement déchiré et caressé de telle sorte, qu'il est devenu presque impossible de s'en former de loin une idée exacte. (15-16)

This statement by the author shows first of all that he is well read when it comes to opinions on Corsica, both from ancient times and his own time, and he points out to the reader, who also might have read several other observations on Corsica, that it is nearly impossible for anyone to be able to find the "truth" about the island.

Everyone seems to have a differing opinion on the matter. Having prefaced the rest of his book which will talk about his own observations of the Corsicans, the reader assumes that what will come next will be different from what has been read before. In fact, Beaumont suggests that the truth can be found in between what has been previously stated.

La vérité se trouve entre ces deux exagérations. Le Corse est essentiellement fier, spirituel et brave: chacun de ses actes porte l'empreinte de l'une au moins de ces qualités. Doué d'une grande pénétration, du talent de l'analyse et d'une tenacité originelle, il conçoit rapidement, combine avec adresse et marche à son but avec une constance imperturbable. Prodigieusement ardent dans toutes ses affections, n'oubliant ni l'injure ni le bienfait, il sert

l'amitié au péril de ses jours et ne suspend la vengeance que pour mieux en assurer l'effet. Nul peuple n'est plus avide de gloire et moins avide de richesses; l'honneur, bien ou mal entendu, est chez lui ce que l'intérêt est ailleurs: la cause du mouvement ou de l'inaction. (17)

The author points out several key terms that he, and he assumes his readers, have previously come across in others' assertions of the Corsicans, and he says that the truth can be found in between the two extremes. Corsicans are friendly and vengeful, lazy and active; and above all is the key to the Corsican spirit: honor.

Following his explanation of honor as the guiding light to all Corsicans, Beaumont moves into one of the most talked about subjects in relation to Corsica: la vendetta. He makes no point of ignoring the fact that it exists and even gives his own description of how it all happens.

Un Corse est-il en vendetta? Il prévient son ennemi qu'à compter de tel jour, il cherchera l'occasion de le tuer. De ce moment, les deux champions, armés jusqu'aux dents, ne marchent plus qu'avec précaution, car ils doivent s'attendre à tout: le code qui régit deux armées belligérantes étant le seul à leur usage, les embuscades sont de bonne guerre; le choix des armes reste à chacun; sa force dépend de ses calculs ou de son influence: il est libre de tenir seule la campagne, ou de se faire suivre d'amis qui le secondent activement. (27-28)

Beaumont conscientiously includes the terms "code," "champions," "calculs," and "libre" pointing out that vendetta is not merely something between two made men

running around with guns trying to kill one another. It is a social system with a specific code between two men who feel in the right and who are both given the freedom in this system to make their own choices surrounding it. And Beaumont reminds us,

En voyant un tel état de choses, dans un pays où le point d'honneur exerce un pouvoir absolu, on est forcé de conclure que la vengeance y anoblit les plus honteux moyens. Tout est bon pourvu que l'on triomphe, et l'on n'attache pas plus d'importance à une dénonciation qu'à un coup de fusil. (33)

The idea of vendetta for Beaumont is something that will naturally always be there because of their entire existence upon the idea of honor. Beaumont shows the the vendetta is the natural way for a people constantly conquered by others to settled their own affairs because of the little trust they put in their new overlords. Why should the French system work any better at producing justice than the Genoese system? The internally present idea of honor so inherent in Corsicans is not something they can demonstrate before the laws of France. As we will see in *Colomba*, this idea of the law versus honor will be played up by Mérimée to contrast the civilized with the uncivilized.

In the previous quote, Beaumont includes the use of the word “fusil” to remind us of how these vendettas are usually settled. Again, he does not deny the fact that the Corsicans carry around these guns:

Ainsi le Corse marche toujours armé: n'ait-il aucun sujet de crainte, son fusil, ou tout au moins son stilet l'accompagne dès qu'il franchit le seuil de sa

porte. Cette pratique guerrière est presque générale hors des villes maritimes, mais elle ne porte aucune atteinte à l'exercice des vertus civiles. (34-35)

This is just a part of everyday life, and not something that should be frowned upon by others, according to Beaumont. Corsicans carry guns and knives around with them because they have no fear, and this presence of weapons does not hinder any civility among the Corsicans themselves. It is as if Beaumont is simply trying to show the reader that just because the Corsicans do things differently does not mean that they are in any way less virtuous.

Having therefore introduced the topic of violence and Corsica, the Baron de Beaumont then goes on to explain the “myth” of the bandits that roam around the island. As a written footnote to a sentence he penned referring to the “contumace corse” the Baron writes, “On leur donne souvent et ils prennent eux-mêmes le nom de bandito; mais cette qualification n’emporte avec elle aucune idée de flétrissure, parce que bandito, qui signifie également bandit, banni, proscrit, est pris ici dans ce dernier sens” (43-44). Beaumont uses this opportunity to point out that the idea of bandits running around is actually a mistranslation of the Corsican word “banditu” which could be translated in many ways, and that the *banditi* running around Corsica are not bandits going about attacking people, but banished or outcast people. “Rien n’est donc plus éloigné de la vérité que de représenter l’île comme infestée sans cesse de brigands affamés de sang et de rapines” (45). He underlines this theory again with his next bold statement:

Je suis convaincu que le département où les assassinats sont le plus nombreux, est en même temps celui où les assassins de profession sont le plus rares. Ces banditi que l'on transforme en brigands au moyen d'une traduction infidèle, sont, comme je l'ai déjà dit, les meilleures gens du monde lorsqu'ils ne se trouvent pas en présence de la justice, de la faim ou de leurs ennemis particuliers. (67)

Here the author clearly points out that although Corsica may be the department with the most assassinations, it's not because it has the highest number of professional assassins. He feels that the mistranslation of *banditu* is such a vital link to the misunderstanding of Corsica that he repeats his theory again here. The *banditi* are not *bandits* but rather *banished* people.

Beaumont, like Boswell and others, is once again going against the images of Corsica created by others, while still making constant references to those images. These writers have obviously observed other characteristics among the Corsicans and are trying their hardest to show what they believe to be the truth. The violent images of Corsica already prevalent would be hard to erase by the simple fact that they are being played to the French population. Readers in France would rather hear about violent, fantastic events taking place on a far-off island than to hear about the same events happening in their backyards. Were the "other" to become as they are, the stories would be much more dull. There is a constant need for negative images of Corsica so that Paris can shine brighter and brighter as the center of civilization.

Beaumont believes that foreigners, however, should not fear Corsica just because of the high number of assassinations, since the *banditi* are only out there to seek revenge upon those that have done them wrong. Beaumont takes this opportunity to point out the last key trait that he finds in Corsicans: that of hospitality. He writes,

Nul peuple n'est plus hospitalier que les Corses... Ce double artifice ne peut exister dans un pays où l'hospitalité est une sorte de culte. Quelles que soient les apparences qui accompagnent ici un étranger, il est toujours bien reçu; et, lorsqu'il veut quitter le toit hospitalier, je défie qu'il échappe aux politesses qui souvent le suivent à plusieurs milles. (46-47)

Having stated his own opinions on the matter, he turns to a great French writer and thinker (Montesquieu in *Esprit des lois*, chap. XX, liv. II) to back up his own philosophy. "Montesquieu lui-même dit: 'l'hospitalité, très-rare dans les pays de commerce, se trouve admirablement parmi les peuples brigands'" (48). While Beaumont might not feel the term *brigands* to be the best to describe Corsica, as he had previously stated, he does use this philosophy from Montesquieu to strengthen his own arguments.

The Baron de Beaumont makes references in his work to all those that have written on Corsica before as either being extremely too nice or too harsh when summing up the Corsican people. He starts with the importance of the geography and terrain and then speaks of their morals. He reminds us that the truth lies not in the extremities but in the middle. They are a violent people, but they are also the

most hospitable. They may be rough in appearance, but they are also civilized. He seems to take all the assessments about vendetta, bandits, hospitality, and honor and tie them together to create what he considers the “true” image of Corsica. It is interesting to note that he publishes his thoughts in the 1820s, right before the publication of other important literary works on Corsica.

While the travel memoirs, diaries, and observations of those that traveled to Corsica, were planning to travel to Corsica, and even those who never made it to Corsica vary considerably, they do hold several description points in common with one another. Most of the works discuss violence in some form or other. This violence is usually portrayed through bandits or vendetta, or both. Vendetta itself will become one of the biggest features shared throughout the fiction revolving around Corsica or Corsican characters. While Boswell sees great hope for the Corsicans, few of the French writers and explorers that followed him dwelt upon this topic. The circumstances had changed by the time they arrived; France had officially purchased Corsica from the Genoese and now possessed it. The travelogues seem to dwell heavily upon the negative, possibly as a way to show the superiority of the conquerors over the conquered. However, they do all seem to express a similar hope as that of Boswell. While the French writers do not feel that the Corsicans are civilized at the moment they do see hope for the future. Simonot and Pompéi both express concerns over previously published material by stating that they have been misjudged. The Baron de Beaumont continues this and puts forth his own theory that the truth lies somewhere in the middle of the extremes; the Corsicans are neither docile nor constantly bloodthirsty. His ultimate

observation, that honor is the key to the Corsican character, seems to sum up what all the travelogues were trying to express. Honor is what runs the lives of the Corsicans, the way they think, and the way they act. Violence, carrying guns and knives, and vendetta are all ways of expressing this idea of honor. The descriptions given by these men were so clear that they were ultimately used as templates for characters in the many novels and short stories surrounding Corsica and its people that would follow throughout the 19th century in France.

Prosper Mérimée, Mateo Falcone, and Colomba

In May of 1829, Prosper Mérimée published a short, but influential, story entitled “Mateo Falcone” in the *Revue de Paris* about banditry, the maquis, and murder in Corsica. This short story, one in a series of stories later published in a collection, is one of the earliest examples of French literature written about Corsica, with many more to follow by several authors throughout the 19th century. Corsica having been owned by France for less than half a century, the subject of Corsica in French literature was a new world. The 19th century also saw many works on Corsica because of the Emperor Napoleon’s impact on French life. He being Corsican, there grew an intrigue and desire to know about his native land. In his work on “Mateo Falcone,” Antoine Naaman states, “C’est avec *Mateo Falcone* que le pays natal de Napoléon Bonaparte entre pour la première fois dans le domaine sacré des Lettres” (36).

Mérimée’s influence for writing the story is well documented and this same Naaman takes great effort, in 1967, to describe them all. He states the reasoning for this search of sources: “Comme Prosper Mérimée n’a guère inventé le sujet de ses œuvres, les critiques se sont acharnés à rechercher les ‘sources’ de *Mateo Falcone*” (36). Among the sources that Naaman lists and documented were *Histoire des révolutions de la Corse, depuis ses premiers habitants jusqu’à nos jours* from 1771 written by L’abbé de Germanes, which includes a story with similar elements,

though the story is about a colonel and not members of a family. *Voyage en Corse et vues politiques sur l'amélioration de cette île* from 1787 written by L'abbé Gaudin includes a similar tale, but includes a father and son scenario where the father does end up killing his son at the gates of the city. *Sketches of Corsica or a Journal written during a visit to that island in 1823* written by Robert Benson contains the same story, but mentions the idea of violated hospitality. *Novelle Storiche Corze* from 1827 written by Francesco Ottaviano Renucci includes for the first time the the father declaring that his son is not Corsican. *Mœurs et coutumes des Corses* from 1799 written by Gabriel Feydel includes a description of the maquis very similar to that used by Mérimée in his story. *Des devoirs de la France envers la Corse* appearing in 1828 in the *Revue Trimestrielle* simply restates what had already been told in previous works, while several articles from the *Globe* appearing in 1826 and 1827 do likewise. Finally *Etat actuel de la Corse ; caractères et mœurs de ses habitants* from 1821 written by P. P. Pompéi is mentioned only in passing without any explanation. In a footnote, Naaman also refers us to a list previously created by G. Roger in his 1945 work entitled *Mérimée et la Corse*, without mentioning any details, which also includes the following as possible sources for "Mateo Falcone:" *Histoire de l'île de Corse* from 1779 written by Pommereul, *Mémoire sur la Corse* from 1819 written by Réalier-Dumas, *Lettres sur la Corse* from 1821 written by J. F. Simonet, and *Vie de Napoléon Bonaparte* from 1827 written by Walter Scott (Naaman 35-42).

It must first be noted that much research has been conducted into the possible sources for Mérimée's works. While I also wish to show other possible sources in this chapter, it must be noted that Mérimée's works on Corsica use these

images while being original at the same time. Mérimée might have been copying these and further sources for his own image of Corsica, but why use the image itself? After a closer look into other possible sources, it will become apparent that Mérimée used these images to create a contrast between the uncivilized world of Corsica and the civilized world of the continent, but it is quite possible that he used these images ironically.

There have been numerous suggestions as to where Mérimée could have heard or read the story that he would later transform into “Mateo Falcone.” I seek to add to this list, not citing that these sources held stories essentially the same as Mateo Falcone, as can be found in the above mentioned sources, but that Mérimée’s added details and underlying understanding of Corsican values could have easily been gained from the travel memoirs listed in the previous chapter. Naaman concludes his chapter on the sources of “Mateo Falcone” by stating,

De l’ensemble de ces hypothèses, fort déconcertantes, nous pouvons affirmer que Mérimée n’a pas inventé le sujet de *Mateo Falcone*. Il l’a emprunté, soit à l’un des ouvrages se rapportant à la Corse, nombreux à l’époque, soit à un article de revue, soit à la tradition orale, soit à plus d’une source. Il n’a pas manqué aussi de se documenter sur l’île, et principalement sur le caractère et les mœurs des habitants. Mais il a complètement transformé les données initiales de ses sources et il a admirablement combiné les éléments divers pris de ses références. (42-43)

Though there are several possible sources for the tale, it is Mérimée's combination of references and sources into a whole that makes the story so readable and beloved. Here I will simply strive to show that the travel memoirs previously discussed may be added to the ensemble of references already enumerated so well by Naaman and others.

Mérimée did not just write a story for the sake of fun and fantasy. He liked to recount real life accounts in order to express something about human nature. In his preface to *Chronique de Charles IX* edited in 1828, he writes, "Je n'aime dans l'histoire que les anecdotes, et parmi les anecdotes je préfère celles où j'imagine trouver une peinture vraie des mœurs et des caractères à une époque donnée." This is why Mérimée chose to write in the form he did, as well. In the short story format, Mérimée can tell simply one "anecdote" from a character's life to illustrate the morals and character of a certain people. He continues,

Il est curieux, ce me semble, de comparer ces mœurs avec les nôtres, et d'observer dans ces dernières la décadence des passions énergiques au profit de la tranquillité et peut-être du bonheur... Il me paraît donc évident que les actions des hommes du XVI^e siècle ne doivent pas être jugées avec nos idées du XIX^e. Ce qui est crime dans un état de civilisation perfectionné n'est que trait d'audace dans un état de civilisation moins avancé, et peut-être est-ce une action louable dans un temps de barbarie. Le jugement qu'il convient de porter de la même action doit, on le sent, varier aussi suivant le pays, car entre un peuple et un autre peuple il y a autant de différence qu'entre un

siècle et un autre siècle. (Jeoffroy-Faggianelli, *L'image de la Corse dans la littérature romantique française : le mythe corse* 199)

While writing about a different century in his work on Charles IX, and pleading for us to not compare the 16th century with the 19th century, he also expresses his idea that we also cannot judge one culture, or people, based on another. Understanding Mérimée, then, allows us to see that “Mateo Falcone” was written not for us to judge the actions committed by the father and son by our own standards, but simply as an anecdote in history for us to glimpse the morals and character of the Corsican people. This, in fact, is most likely why an added titled of “mœurs des Corses” was added after “Mateo Falcone” in the original 1829 version. In her book entitled *L'Image de la Corse dans la littérature romantique française*, Pierette Jeoffroy-Faggianelli writes, “Mérimée s’attache donc à peindre les mœurs corses, que certains jugeront sauvages ou barbares parce qu’ils ne teindront pas compte du milieu” (199). While Mérimée may have taken elements from the works of l’Abbé Gaudin, Benson, or Réalier-Dumas, he nonetheless used other sources to create what he called “la couleur locale” to introduce this foreign land of Corsica and its morals to his readers. Having never visited Corsica himself, Mérimée had to use these other sources to create a realistic setting for his story.

The most commonly cited source for the “couleur locale” that Mérimée includes in his story is the book *Mœurs et coutumes des Corses* written by Gabriel Feydel in 1799. Apart from Jeoffroy-Faggianelli and Rogers, Naaman himself includes this footnote when speaking of Gaston Courtillier’s work in 1920:

“L’ouvrage contient en frontispice le portrait en pied de trois bergers couverts ‘du manteau brun à capuchon,’ fait remarquer M. Levailant dans *Mosaïque*, p. 408; ‘de vêtements en poil de chèvre,’ précise G. Roger” (40). Naaman actually uses the image as a frontispiece of his own when introducing the text of “Mateo Falcone” in his book. Jeoffroy-Faggianelli explains,

Or, pour évoquer ce milieu, il s’inspire de Feydel. Voilà qui explique encore le caractère outré de l’image de la Corse dans *Mateo Falcone*. L’anecdote, qui dans la revue illustre l’ “instinct de l’honneur” et l’ “horreur de la trahison,” se mue aisément, sous la conduite de Feydel, en exemple de ce que ce dernier appelle la “théorie atroce de l’honneur.” (199-200)

What, then, can be said of the other possible sources listed in the previous chapter? Following this citation of what Feydel felt was the “atrocious theory of honor,” we contrast the feelings of Feydel with those of the Baron de Beaumont. Again, he states, “l’honneur, bien ou mal entendu, est chez lui ce que l’intérêt est ailleurs: la cause du mouvement ou de l’inaction” (17). Honor, then, is merely the key to the Corsican spirit, not something that we can judge as “atrocious” or virtuous. Mérimée picks up on this principle, as quoted earlier, that he does see how one situated in a certain civilization can judge another civilization but by their own rules. Mérimée does not include his own judgment upon the Corsicans in his short tale. He simply gives the story of Mateo and his son Fortunato as examples of the character or morals of the Corsican people. The choice of short story as the format for his tale allows Mérimée to narrate without judgment.

This idea of honor plays a central theme in Mérimée's portrayal of Corsican values. While the mere introduction of the name Mateo Falcone makes both the bandit and the *voltigeurs* speak in reverence, the betrayal of the bandit's hiding place by Fortunato is answered by the exclamation of "Malédiction" by Mateo. As for the captured bandit, upon the return of Mateo from the maquis, "se tournant vers la porte de la maison, il cracha sur le seuil en disant: 'Maison d'un traître!'" Mérimée continues,

Il n'y avait qu'un homme décidé à mourir qui eût osé prononcer le mot de traître en l'appliquant à Falcone. Un bon coup de stylet, qui n'aurait pas eu besoin d'être répété, aurait immédiatement payé l'insulte. Cependant Mateo ne fit pas d'autre geste que celui de porter sa main à son front comme un homme accablé. (34)

Honor is everything to Mateo, and being a part of that society, the bandit understands this himself. Mateo being the head of the family is the one upon whom the dishonor rests. Mateo tells his wife, "Eh bien, cet enfant est le premier de sa race qui ait fait une trahison" (35). Even though Fortunato is the one that betrayed the bandit, Gianetto spits upon the whole house of Mateo, symbolically represented by the threshold, and pronounces those terrible words, "Maison d'un traître!" Mateo knows that his family has been dishonored by the act of his only son, and it is up to him as head of the house to return the honor. In order to do so, he must seek justice. Justice in Corsican terms, according to Mérimée, is death of he who has brought the dishonor. In the Baron de Beaumont's own words,

En voyant un tel état de choses, dans un pays où le point d'honneur exerce un pouvoir absolu, on est forcé de conclure que la vengeance y anoblit les plus honteux moyens. Tout est bon pourvu que l'on triomphe, et l'on n'attache pas plus d'importance à une dénonciation qu'à un coup de fusil. (33)

This “couleur locale” that Mérimée borrowed so readily from these travel memoirs was what he used to set his work of fiction apart for the simple tales recounted by so many others in the past. Mérimée uses these specific details to portray a highly uncivilized world when compared to the world of the Parisians. What violence the people of France might see around them can easily be compared to the barbarous, honor driven act committed by the father in this story. Mérimée, however, might possibly be making an ironic statement about France itself. While the violence on Corsica may distract his viewers from seeing the violence around them, the father in the story sees the act as a necessity. Mérimée, however, ends his story with another fascinating twist in the tale.

One of the details that Mérimée chooses to include in his short story is the 20 or so lines near the end of the story where Mateo requests that Fortunato say his prayers. Here, he allows him to repeat the *Pater noster* and the *Credo*, and even asks if he knows any others. “Mon père, je sais encore l'*Ave Maria* et la litanie que ma tante m'a apprise. –Elle est bien longue, n'importe” (36). While one could read this long period of prayer as a Mateo trying to prolong the moment that will eventually occur, I believe Mérimée might have included this for another effect. Writing in short story format requires the author to include only the bare essentials for the

progression of the anecdote that he is recounting. The mere fact that Mérimée includes these 20 or so extra lines near the end of the story shows the importance that he placed on this particular part of the tale. His design being to show the "civilized" culture of the Corsicans, we can assume that the author wished to convey a specific message on this matter. I believe that Mérimée wished to show a civilized nature in even the most barbarous situation, though he portrays it in a way to show its apparent inferiority to civilized behavior.

Here we can see some possible influencing by the work of James Boswell. Though Boswell's work was perhaps an overly positive sketch of Corsica, expressly countering all that had been previously, and which was subsequently, reported on Corsica and its inhabitants, it was a widely published work. Mérimée, though getting his story details from elsewhere, might just have been influenced by this positive view. Boswell goes to great lengths to express how civilized the Corsicans are, directly comparing them to the English, of course, and uses instances in his work, such as the visit to Pascal Paoli, to dispel the myth that Corsicans are not an enlightened people. Though Mérimée's story of a father shooting his only son may seem barbarous when compared to the civilized ways of other Europeans, he specifically includes the 20 lines where he allows his son that is to die to say his prayers so that he might not go to Hell. "Que Dieu te pardonne" is Mateo's response before shooting his son. This is not said in any malicious fashion, but perhaps as a civilized plea that he might be pardoned by God for his sins. As for Mateo, he must continue with the killing in order to save the honor of his family. Mérimée's ultimate portrayal of Mateo Falcone is then influenced by the Baron de Beaumont's

feelings on Corsicans. “La vérité se trouve entre ces deux exagérations” (17). “True” Corsican morals and character are found at neither extreme; Mérimée therefore introduces both, one right after the other, refusing to judge another culture based upon his own. He does, however, set the story to allow his readers to judge the uncivilized versus the civilized. What Mérimée specifically points out in this scene, however, is that no matter how much “civilization” is placed upon the uncivilized, their basic and natural instincts will always win out. The father might have had compassion on his son, and allowed him to say his prayers, but he ultimately also chose to shoot him to fulfill the needs of the native honor system.

In July of 1840, Mérimée publishes his second short story based in Corsica, entitled *Colomba*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Unlike his first story, however, the inspiration behind the story of *Colomba* is well known to be based upon the life of a woman named *Colomba Bartoli* that Mérimée actually visited. In 1839, ten years after the publication of his first story based in Corsica, Mérimée sets off to visit Corsica for himself. His travels in Corsica were actually published right before *Colomba* in March of 1840. *Notes d'un voyage en Corse* is an account of Mérimée's travels to the island for archeological research and description. Mérimée was a member of the Commission des monuments historiques and of the Comité des travaux historiques, as well as several other committees and subcommittees. As such, he was assigned by the Minister of the Interior to travel to Corsica to make a report on the several archeological sites and historical monuments that existed on the island.

Knowing this, it is obvious that Mérimée's accounts in his *Notes* are quite different from those that were previously studied in the first chapter of this work.

Ce sont ces rapports techniques, à la sécheresse administrative, mais augmentés de notes plus détaillées, de quelques anecdotes et impressions personnelles, de quelques jugements amusés sur telle ou telle époque, tel ou tel monument, telle ou telle personne, qu'il publie en volumes. Il s'agit donc d'un texte hybride, qui n'est pas fait des seuls rapports administratifs (dont on trouve quelques exemples dans l'édition de la correspondance) mais qui n'est pas, non plus, le récit de voyage d'un "touriste." (Becker 130)

In her essay on all of Mérimée's published *Notes d'un voyage...*, from the West and South of France as well as Corsica, Colette Becker expresses Mérimée's intended audience: "Mérimée vise un public cultivé, qui n'est pas seulement composé de spécialistes" (130). These travel memoirs were not meant to be used as a fascinating read as many of the other memoirs were. Mérimée's intended audience was not only his committee members, but also certainly a cultivated group of citizens. The writing here is described as very dry and administrative. This was the style expressly chosen by Mérimée. He was not writing another short story to describe the people or their surroundings. He was simply doing the duty and rendering the account of his travels among the historical monuments of the island.

Here we can see the contrast between this travel memoir and the others, helping us to see the complex nature of the many documents and writings of travels to Corsica. While Mérimée's intent might have been a straight forward account of

the monuments on the island, James Bowell was certainly writing a piece of travel literature for both the political purposes of helping the Corsican people to be known, and hopefully helped, by the British people, but also as a narrative of his travels to amuse and bemuse this same public. As for the writings of Simonot and Pompéi, they simply were writing in response to others' writings on the Corsicans, to share that their experiences among the Corsicans were very different. Writing to confound others, their accounts can also be seen to be written to interest the reading public in general. The Baron de Beaumont follows a similar course, while expanding upon his travels and giving his own personal opinions and insight into the Corsican people, which both Saint Pierre and Rousseau did, albeit it in opposing fashion, but without having visited the island themselves. Mérimée's own travel memoir of Corsica, then, contrasts sharply with these others. His style is, again, administrative and straightforward, with a more refined and specific audience in mind, and above all, striving to leave his own opinion out of the mix. His memoir is to be as scientific as possible.

What Becker is pointing out in her essay is that Mérimée's accounts were very much what she calls a "hybrid text."

Leur principal mérite, outre de nous renseigner sur l'état du patrimoine dans les années 1830-1850 et sur les immenses efforts faits pour le sauver, est, probablement, de nous révéler un homme d'action, un découvreur véritablement passionné par ses fonctions, désirant faire partager sa passion pour les œuvres du passé, un voyageur finalement très moderne. (143)

In order to do so, Mérimée occasionally includes several anecdotes, personal impressions and judgments on what he sees around him, breaking from his otherwise scientific and administrative format.

Dans les notes sur la Corse, il fait un long portrait de l'habitant de Bastia, qu'il rapproche de l'Italien. Il recueille, surtout, superstitions, poésies populaires, improvisations des "vocératrices" autour d'un mort par vendetta, en langue du pays, en donnant, en regard, la traduction française; il consacre une longue note à la vengeance chez les Corses, forme inhumaine, primitive du duel, préjugé atroce, qui renvoie à un des vices de notre nature, d'où son intérêt pour lui. (Becker 134)

Though not included in his *Notes* themselves, Pierre-Marie Auzas reminds us in his introduction to *Notes d'un voyage en Corse*, "Vers le 5 septembre, il se rend à Sartène par Olmeto et Propriano et passe plusieurs jours chez Jérôme Roccaserra, l'homme dont le fusil a récemment fait coup double. Il utilisera l'exploit dans sa nouvelle" (7). As previously stated, Mérimée also meets Colomba Bartoli and her daughter on his trip to Corsica. Both of these experiences, as well as others he had on Corsica, would form the basis for his new short story *Colomba*.

Le grand apport de Mérimée par son voyage est double: c'est avant tout, certes, ce chef-d'œuvre de la nouvelle qu'est *Colomba*, sur laquelle, on s'en doute, existe une très abondante bibliographie qui semble ne devoir jamais être close. Mais c'est aussi la préhistoire. (Mérimée, *Notes d'un voyage en Corse* 10)

What becomes important in our study here is whether or not the travel memoirs studied in Chapter One had any influence on Mérimée's *Notes d'un voyage en Corse* or *Colomba*. While the format and intended audience for his *Notes* were completely different than those of Boswell and others, one could see that Mérimée's previous experience with travel memoirs, especially while writing his "Mateo Falcone," could have influenced Mérimée to travel to Corsica to begin with, with the possibility of finding new material for other stories as well. We cannot, however, downplay the importance of the monuments in Mérimée's decision to embark on the expedition, either. In her essay entitled "Mérimée et les monuments historiques," Jannie Mayer writes,

Le 27 mai 1834, Thiers nomme Prosper Mérimée au poste laissé vacant par le départ de Ludovic Vitet. 'La place convient tout à fait à mes goûts, à ma paresse et à mes idées de voyages', écrit Mérimée. [This was written in his letter to Sutton Sharpe on 12 May 1834.] (147)

Even with his personal excitement for adventure to seek out historical monuments, we cannot forget that while Mérimée's *Notes* were mostly administrative in nature, he did use the voyage to Corsica for some of his own designs that did not include studying monuments. He gained the essential storyline for his second Corsican short story from several different experiences on the island during this trip. Auzas even suggests that Mérimée started *Colomba* while still on the island. "Le mauvais temps est certainement propice à la préparation d'un grand livre. *Mateo Falcone* ne sera pas la seule nouvelle corse" (Mérimée, *Notes d'un*

voyage en Corse 7). Knowing the true sources for the short story of *Colomba* makes it much more difficult to see any influences these travel memoirs might have had on Mérimée. Still, Mérimée is considered a great author not simply because he can copy stereotypes from other travel memoirs. What makes the case with Mérimée unique is that he uses the stereotypes here to create a completely fictitious scene. While striving to show that it is ridiculous to assume that the civilized world is better than the uncivilized, he uses the short story format to stress that what we might have invented in our minds is pure fiction. The civilized characters use stereotypes just as much as the Corsican, uncivilized characters do. As such, we cannot assume that one will be superior over the other, since they are what Maupassant will call pure “illusions.” Mérimée will use the stereotypes found in the travel memoirs to prove that the idea of civilization being superior to the barbarous world is purely fictional.

The first part of the story of *Colomba* includes the two main British characters, the Colonel and his daughter Lydia. Jeffroy-Faggianelli gives the possible basis for these characters as being from the Italian short story by Lady Jane entitled “Ascanio, le lazzarone.” It is most certain that Mérimée borrowed many ideas for Nevil and his daughter from this short story published in 1837. In it Lydia is the daughter of Lord Ellis, and both of them are with Lydia’s fiancé, an eligible Englishman, in Naples with a guide by the name of Ascanio. Jeffroy-Faggianelli also goes on to compare the boat ride that Ascanio takes with Lydia to the boat trip of Orso and Lydia, as well as the others. Why, then, would Mérimée rehash an story already written by someone else? What becomes unique is the setting for

Mérimée's version of the tale. Corsica is described as a wild and savage country in relation to the civilized Italy where the other Lydia's story unfolds. By transporting his story to Corsica, Mérimée points out the glaring civilized versus uncivilized previously explored in his earlier work. One of the biggest similarities is the use of native uncivilized rituals and morals winning out over the attempted civilized impositions. One of the best instances of this in *Colomba* is when she and her brother visit the scene where their father was murdered. The civilized symbol of the Catholic cross is quickly swept away by the strange rituals of placing branches on the site. The cross itself is visually blocked by these native traditions. One other clear example is that it would appear as if *Colomba* has finally been tamed in the end when she decides to leave Corsica and move to England with her brother and sister-in-law. In Italy, however, she runs across the man who killed her father, and gives him the evil eye, a mystic idea that springs from the native traditions of Corsica. Once again, the uncivilized wins out over the civilized.

While it is plausible that Mérimée borrowed his characters heavily from the short story of "Ascanio," it is also quite possible that other ideas were already in his head upon reading the story. Mérimée read several travel memoirs, both before writing "Mateo Falcone" and before he embarked on his trip to Corsica, and therefore among them he was most certain to have read the English accounts, both of Benson, which was previously mentioned, as well as the major work by Boswell discussed in Chapter One. Though direct evidence suggests that Mérimée could have borrowed the idea of Colonel Nevil and Lydia from "Ascanio," there is also the possibility that these English accounts were fresh on his mind.

The English themselves had taken part in the exploration of Corsica long before the French did. This was, of course, mainly political as the English were seeking their own foothold in the Mediterranean. They did, however, help the Corsicans in their struggle for independence in several different ways. Boswell himself wrote his account of Corsica and their great leader Pascal Paoli during the Corsican Republic, and following its downfall, Paoli fled the island and sought refuge in Great Britain. There he lived with friends until he was able to return after the French Revolution. He did not share the same ideas of democracy as the leaders of the revolution, and in 1794 created the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom. Using his connections in England, he was able to negotiate help from Great Britain and created a system of government that essentially made Corsica a British protectorate subject to King George III. Two short years later in 1796 the French recaptured Corsica and Paoli set sail to live the remainder of his life in England. This, however, did not stop the English from continuing to explore the island, as Robert Benson's *Sketches of Corsica* did not appear until after his own trip to Corsica in 1823. The influence of the English, and English travelers to Corsica, continued for at least the 60 years immediately following the formal French annexation of the island (Gregory 14-64). Through Boswell's account of a British man (Boswell himself being Scottish, similar to the Colonel being Irish) visiting and befriending a Corsican, we can see a similarity to Colonel Nevil and his daughter both visiting Corsica and befriending two natives. In Mérimée's mind it would have been nothing out of the ordinary to have two English people visit the island. He might have been influenced by the tale of Ascanio when writing his tale, but it was Mérimée who chose to place his

characters in Corsica, and not in Italy where Ascanio and Lydia's tale takes place. Mérimée, having read the English accounts, was able to confidently place two English travelers there and know that his tale was still authentic. Following Boswell's own experience, he knew that his two English characters could appreciate the Corsicans and see the good that is inside them.

Another relation between *Colomba* and the travel memoirs is similar to what took place in Mérimée's *Mateo Falcone*. As previously discussed, Boswell's account of Corsica was extremely positive and wished to show that there were good things about the people and culture, contrary to what has been reported by others. The big difference that Mérimée points out in this story as opposed to that of "Mateo Falcone" is introduced with one of the main characters Orso Antonio. Orso appears to be a very civilized man from the beginning, but the reader quickly learns that he has been on the continent for a while and those in Corsica even feel that he has been influenced by the French. Mérimée directly points out the cultural differences between the French and the Corsicans. He continues, however, to show that just because the culture is different in Corsica, he doesn't necessarily feel that it is uncivilized. The two main Corsican characters end up leaving the island to live with the two English travelers, Orso even going so far as to marry Miss Lydia. How could the civilized Englishwoman marry someone as uncivilized as a Corsican? Mérimée uses the ideas of Boswell showing that the culture may be different in Corsica, but the people can certainly be as civilized, cultivated, and even enlightened as their European counterparts, and this even after the Orso has accomplished his vendetta.

Once again the words of the Baron de Beaumont come ringing in our ears: the truth is found between the two extremities.

The theme used in *Colomba* of vendetta is very different from that used in “Mateo Falcone,” but the main idea stays the same: that of honor. This is a direct influence from the very words of the Baron de Beaumont’s work on Corsica. Honor is the key value that makes the Corsican character what it is. What Mérimée does is introduce Orso, who has been on the continent for a while, who then returns to Corsica and meets his sister who demands that he uphold the family honor. The desire for Orso to uphold the family honor does not return until almost the end of the story, and Mérimée uses all the stories between the moment that Orso meets Colomba and the end when he avenges his father’s murder to expand upon Orso’s internal struggle between the values that he has learned on the continent and his internal, natural Corsican instinct for honor of family. Once again Mérimée sets up the scene to show the striking differences between the civilized and the uncivilized, yet shows that civilizing, colonizing, and cultivating cannot win out.

This same exact struggle is what we find in Bowell’s work on vendetta and Pascal Paoli’s idea on it. Paoli is one of the most revered Corsican heroes of all time, and yet here is what he thought on the matter:

Paoli knowing that the point of honour was every thing to the Corsicans, opposed it to the progress of the blackest of crimes, fortified by long habits. He made a law, by which it was provided, that this collateral revenge should

not only be punished by death, as ordinary murder [sic], but the memory of the offender should be disgraced for ever by a pillar of infamy. (339)

Paoli, a Corsican himself, felt that vendetta was “of the blackest of crimes” and that it was actually opposed to the honor that Corsicans feel naturally. This is the struggle we see in Orso Antonio. He feels that the honor of his family need be upheld, but he, unlike his sister, feels that not vendetta, but rather the law of the land, is the answer. His natural instinct finally takes over, however, when he sees the Baricini father one day and he finally snaps and feels the need for vendetta. Mérimée’s uncivilized wins out even in this most staunch believer in “civilized” law.

This exact scene reflects the very words of Pompéi concerning the matter of vendetta. “Dans cet état, plus un peuple a l’instinct de la justice, plus il doit être porté à reprendre l’exercice de la vengeance personnelle, qui est la justice le l’état sauvage” (201). Pompéi brings up the idea of justice here, and opposes civilized justice with savage justice, which he calls personal vengeance, or vendetta. This is the exact pressure that Orso feels during most of the story. He feels that civilized justice will take effect and must be trusted. Then we see the scene where everything changes, a scene where his “savage” character, as Pompéi would put it, takes over and he seeks this “savage” form of justice, vendetta.

While “Mateo Falcone” and *Colomba* were both written by the same author, they are two very different stories that treat two different experiences. Though the experiences be different, they can both be boiled down to the same idea: Corsican morals and character that essentially rest in the one single concept of honor. The

influence of the travel memoirs discussed in Chapter One varies also depending on the short story. "Mateo Falcone," written ten years before Mérimée sets foot on the island, relies heavily upon the ideas and tales recounted both in previously researched memoirs, as well as those of Boswell and Beaumont. Upon returning home from his trip to Corsica, Mérimée writes his *Notes d'un voyage en Corse*, a travel memoir of his own that contrasts greatly with the styles and formats of those he previously read. While his *Notes* did not influence the writing of *Colomba* a great deal, his experiences on Corsica did. Although he used these experiences extensively in the creation of his second Corsican short story, Mérimée was still influenced by the opinions of other writers, including Boswell, Beaumont, and Pompéi. In his search to create a believable story, Mérimée used both his own experiences as well as those of others.

Mérimée's ultimate choice for the images he had taken from the travel memoirs was to show the stark contrast between the uncivilized world on the island, and the civilized world of France, specifically Paris. His readers would be from that civilized world and would appreciate and read his writings because they were exciting and thrilling, and because they also believed Corsica to be wild, savage, and unruly. What they most likely did not see, however, was Mérimée's ironic message about the uncivilized world. In both his short stories he portrays situations where the systematically imposed "civilization" was ultimately rejected for the native uncivilized traditions. Mérimée describes the monuments as being in worse condition than those in France, and actually spends most of his time studying the prehistoric monuments, those representing the uncivilized Corsica. While it is

true that Mérimée uses the stereotypes set down in the travel memoirs, he does so to create situations where the winner is the unexpected. The civilized is ultimately vanquished by the barbarian.

Balzac's *La Vendetta*: Corsica as France

The year 1830 marked an important turning point in both French history and in the life of Honoré de Balzac. During this year he produced many of the novels and short stories that became part of his project *La Comédie humaine*. Only a year after the appearance of "Mateo Falcone," Balzac adds his own account of the image of Corsica to those recently published. What makes the study of Balzac interesting and almost necessary is that while Balzac reinforces the image already set up by his predecessors, he sets his story in Paris and not Corsica. A closer examination of Balzac's role in the creation and reinforcement of a French image of Corsica becomes essential.

In this industrious year of 1830 Balzac writes a short novel entitled "La Vendetta," naming it after the family blood feuds, usually of a hereditary character, that both Mérimée and Maupassant would later use as a basis for their stories *Colomba* and "Une Vendetta." As with many of his other novels, Balzac shows an obsession for the contrast between Napoleon's time and the Restoration. While the vast majority of *La Vendetta* takes place during the Restoration, the prologue, added by Balzac later, includes a short story where the father Bartholomeo arrives in Paris and meets with Napoleon. Here is brought up once again the obsession with Napoleon and the need to include him in the story. Though it is almost impossible to talk of Corsica at this period without mentioning Napoleon's influence, whether

for good or for bad, in some way, both Mérimée and Maupassant will avoid him all together, at least in their short stories.

Pierrette Jeoffroy-Faggianelli in her book entitled *L'Image de la Corse dans la littérature romantique française* marks an interesting reading of this opening prologue and meeting with the First Consul. In fact, she points out that the newly arrived Bartholomeo is giving an evaluation, so to speak, of the actual "corsitude" of Napoleon. She marks three distinct sections of the evaluation with three distinct comments made by Bartholomeo. The first is Bartholomeo's response when asked by the First Consul what he was doing at the Tuileries: "Te demander asile et protection, si tu es un vrai Corse." The second section happens when Bartholomeo reminds Napoleon and his brother that his enemies used to persecute their family, and at the lack of hatred on either of their faces at the mention of their family's enemies we read, "Ah! Vous n'êtes plus Corses, s'écria Bartholomeo avec une sorte de désespoir." The third section appears at the end of the "evaluation" when the First Consul reassures Bartholomeo of his commitment and of the friendship and hope that their two families share. Bartholomeo's response is the key and final part to this evaluation of Napoleon's "corsitude:" "Il y a encore du Corse en toi!" (Balzac 24-27).

The first and third responses show the customs of hospitality and solidarity typically spoken of when referring to Corsicans, while the second comment speaks of the Corsican attitude of vengeance, la vendetta! Jeoffroy-Faggianelli explains the gravity of the situation,

C'est à c'est épreuve [la vendetta] qu'échoue le Premier Consul. La formule finale confirme que Napoléon n'est plus entièrement corse aux yeux de [Bartholomeo] Piombo, et peut-être aux yeux du narrateur. L'image de la Corse, au travers de cet examen, se résume en deux mots: générosité et rancune, extrêmes l'une comme l'autre. (234)

Here Balzac sums up the ideal image of Corsica through his dialogue between Napoleon and Bartholomeo: generosity and rancor. This is the image of Corsica that Balzac presents us with at the very beginning of the book. Balzac shows us through his details that he understands the acknowledged image of Corsica as set out by his predecessors, in the many travel memoirs discussed in Chapter One, whether or not it is actually true. The idea that even Balzac would continue to use the nuanced views of Corsica introduced by his predecessors, though for his own brilliantly specific reasons, shows the pattern that would follow, again leading to the present day ideas of Corsica that continue to prevail in France.

Where, then, would Balzac have acquired his knowledge of the character and internal feelings of Corsicans? Both the idea of generosity and that of rancor are introduced by the authors of the travel memoirs previously discussed. Boswell includes an interesting observation on generosity and hospitality in that he recounts what a Corsican man told him, "they told me that in their country I should be treated with the greatest hospitality" (165). It would seem, then, that even Corsicans consider themselves very hospitable, which would explain why Bartolomeo was expecting it of Napoleon, a fellow Corsican. The Baron de Beaumont also mentions

hospitality as a key ingredient in the Corsican make up. “Nul peuple n’est plus hospitalier que les Corses... Ce double artifice ne peut exister dans un pays où l’hospitalité est une sorte de culte” (46-47). He introduces the idea of vendetta before the actual story even takes place. The idea of Vendetta is widely discussed in the travel memoirs. Boswell introduces the idea of vendetta along with Paoli’s law abolishing it. Here, in Balzac’s novel, we see another Corsican head of state who seems to reject the idea of vendetta. Boswell’s Paoli can be seen through Balzac’s Napoleon.

Balzac’s inclusion of this prologue is explained in the book itself: “Quinze ans s’écoulèrent entre l’arrivée de la famille Piombo à Paris, et l’aventure suivante, qui, sans le récit de ces événements, eût été moins intelligible” (27). It seems, then, that Balzac felt the need to explain the ideal Corsican so that the rest of his story could be understood. By introducing these key character traits, Balzac is a genius in setting up the scene between two Corsicans: one deciding if the other is still Corsican by naming these traits recognized by both the Corsicans and the French. By using two Corsicans to define the traits, Balzac is proving the validity of the images of Corsica in French minds, though Balzac must rely on others’ knowledge of these traits, as he has no firsthand knowledge himself.

After examining Napoleon and coming to the conclusion that he is not completely Corsican because of his lack of need for vengeance (an idea Napoleon himself would approve of, as Pompéi showed us that he wished to distance himself from “les Corses”), a closer examination of Balzac’s detailed descriptions of the main

characters in the book will help in the creation of Balzac's personal touch on the French image of Corsica. While the main character of the book is not Bartholomeo di Piombo, he is Balzac's ideal Corsican, and so he is the main person to examine in this story to create a picture of an ideal Corsican in Balzac's mind. While the appearance of the character might not seem as important as the description of the attitudes in terms of creating an ideal Corsican, some of the descriptions given by Balzac explain a different, yet interesting, side of the Corsican image question.

Balzac writes, "quoique nobles et fiers, ses traits avaient un ton de dureté qui les gâtait" (21). The interesting word here is the term "dureté" which fit into similar descriptions of the landscape of Corsica itself. Descriptions of the Corsican landscape are made by several of the authors of the travel memoirs, while the Baron de Beaumont includes a lengthy description of the hard landscape, and without even visiting the island Saint-Pierre mentions the rough, mountainous landscape. While Balzac places the storyline of his novel in Paris, he does bring in the characteristics of the original landscape of Corsica into the physical descriptions of Bartholomeo. Likewise Corsica is often described as a land of darkness, in contrast to the enlightened continent, usually through the judgments of the authors of the memoirs. This plays into the question raised earlier by Balzac as to Napoleon's own Corsican character. Once again Boswell's account of an enlightened Paoli contrasts with the accounts of others regarding Corsica. Balzac shows the extremes that the Baron de Beaumont specifically discusses in his account. While he believes that true Corsicans lie somewhere in between the two, Balzac presents us with the two extremes, choosing the more negative image as a template for his own Corsican

characters. This fits in with Balzac's description of the hair of the Piombo family as being very black. It might seem obvious that they would have black hair, being of Mediterranean stock, but if it were obvious, why would Balzac go to such lengths to describe the hair of the family? Balzac is making links between the physical traits of his characters and where they come from.

This idea of light versus dark is also a theme in the creation of an image of Corsica. A similar comparison is made between the civilized world of the continent and the savage world of Corsica. Again, the idea of savagery is discussed in travel memoirs published prior to the publication of this novel. The idea of the uncivilized Corsican is usually shown in the travel accounts through images that would appear immediately contrary to French society, their idea of what civilized means. The most common image used to express savagery is the idea of the bandit, who roams free in the maquis outside of any city or civilization. Here we see the contrast between the wild countryside roamer and the civilized city dweller. Balzac will fall in line and show his knowledge of the Corsica character by using this idea of savagery himself in the novel. What is interesting, once again, is that he uses the word *savage* to describe the attitude and feelings of Bartholomeo and not the natural environment. He teaches his daughter "sentiments sauvages...comme un lion apprend à ses lionceaux à fonder sur leur proie" (76). This teaching becomes an important element in the story, since his daughter is growing up not on Corsica, but in Paris, and this will be discussed later.

Balzac shows a clear distinction between the civilized world of Paris and the natural and savage world of Corsica, without even taking us there. This contrast is best seen in the transition between the prologue and the rest of the story (Jeoffroy-Faggianelli 227). In the prologue, as we have previously discussed, we see the “true” nature of Corsica and the introduction of the theme of vengeance. The descriptions of Bartholomeo show him as a strong willed man. He and his family walked on foot from Fontainebleau to the Tuileries to visit with Napoleon; they are all tired, but determined people. His clothes are described as being those of a stranger, yet the people of Corsica are technically citizens of the Republic. Bartholomeo and his family are savages from a far and distant land, once again showing this idea of people roaming the countryside. They represent the natural world, in contrast to the civilized world of Paris. The opening of the story, after the prologue, is a scene of several young ladies painting in the workshop of a famous Parisian painter, Servin. This scene is in stark contrast to the three rough “foreigners” that we met in the prologue. Here in the workshop there is order and civility. Each young lady comes from the aristocracy or the bourgeoisie and each has her own easel and work area. This scene is ultimately described by Balzac as, “un groupe d’anges assis sur un nuage dans le ciel” (31).

Introduced into this cloud of angels is the main character of the story Ginevra di Piombo, the daughter of Bartholomeo. Her characteristics could be described as being similar to those of her father. The most important description that Balzac gives of her is that which makes her face so different from those of the other girls in the room. He writes, “Par un singulier caprice de la nature, le charme de son visage

se trouvait en quelque sorte démenti par un front de marbre où se peignait une fierté presque sauvage, où respiraient les mœurs de la Corse” (35). There are two things of interest in his statement here. The first is the fact that he uses the word nature here in the same sentence that he describes her most Corsican characteristic. We find once again nature’s importance in the image of Corsica. The second is that he uses the typical savage to describe the Corsican characteristics of Ginevra, savage being tied directly into nature.

Yet Balzac does not always describe Ginevra as having these typical Corsican characteristics. He actually switches between calling her “la Corse” and “l’Italienne.” Jeoffroy-Faggianelli describes the difference in the use of these two terms and describes the two characteristics as showing the two different sides of this one character. As is previously discussed, Ginevra is described as Corsican when she exhibits the traits of savagery and nature. Pride, aggression and vengeance become the typical traits that are exhibited by Ginevra when Balzac uses the term “la Corse.” In contrast to these characteristics, Ginevra shows beauty and love whenever she is described as “l’Italienne.” The importance that Balzac wanted to place in this contrast is seen when we look into corrections made by the author himself. Once he replaced Ginevra with “la belle Corse” to underline the importance of her Corsican heritage and characteristics. A more interesting correction was made when he changed “l’Italienne” to “la fille corse” in the reaction of Ginevra when told that none of the girls would return to the workshop because of her. He writes, “De moi! Répéta la fille corse en se levant, le front menaçant, l’œil fier et les yeux étincelants.” Balzac wishes to underline the origin of Ginevra by this correction. “Cette

correction est amenée sans nul doute par l'attitude spécifiquement corse, aux yeux de Balzac, d'une Ginevra altière et inquiétante dans sa colère" (Jeoffroy-Faggianelli 231).

What is most interesting about this novel is that Balzac fills it with contrasts to show us the images that he wants his readers to specifically see. Just as Ginevra herself is a contrast between civilization and nature, the two couples mentioned in the story can also be compared and contrasted to show Balzac's real interpretation of the French image of Corsica. The first couple is the parental couple of Bartholomeo and his wife Elisa, who, when combined, represent Balzac's Corsican couple. A description of Bartholomeo has already been drawn previously in this article, but what becomes important here is the relationship between him and his wife. There are few moments in the story where we truly see the two, let alone the mother at all, but these glimpses are of course filled with lines that Balzac wrote on purpose for us to understand what his message is. In the prologue, the mother is left outside with the child on a rock in the gardens while the father is the one that goes inside to discuss the business with Napoleon. The father is in charge of the family. Likewise, the father is shown in charge of the family again when he is sitting with his wife wondering where Ginevra is. When his wife comments that she regrets not having a carriage for Ginevra to come home in, Bartholomeo responds, "elle n'en a pas voulu, répondit Piombo en regardant sa femme qui, accoutumée depuis quarante ans à son rôle d'obéissance, baissa les yeux" (77). Here we see a typical description of the roles of husband and wife in Corsican society. The wife is so used to her role after forty years, that she doesn't even want to fight against it. The man

is the head and the wife lowers her eyes and appears to simply agree with her husband.

One more interesting scenario that takes place in the story that demonstrates their relationship is when Ginevra moves out of the house and Bartholomeo refuses to help her. Her mother uses secretive means to get the money that is Ginevra's inheritance and bring it to her at the hotel where she is staying. The description of the event is essential in the understanding of Balzac's Corsican couple, and, more specifically, the role of the silent wife in that couple.

L'argent était accompagné d'une lettre où la mère conjurait d'abandonner son funeste projet de mariage, s'il en était encore temps; il lui avait fallu, disait-elle, des précautions inouïes pour faire parvenir ces faibles secours à Ginevra; elle la suppliait de ne pas l'accuser de dureté, si par la suite elle la laissait dans l'abandon, elle craignait de ne pouvoir plus l'assister, elle la bénissait, lui souhaiter de trouver le bonheur dans ce fatal mariage, si elle persistait, en lui assurant qu'elle ne pensait qu'à sa fille chérie. En cet endroit des larmes avaient effacé plusieurs mots de la lettre. (108)

There are many interesting aspects that Balzac includes in this detailed description of the letter that make it worth analysis. First of all, this is the most that the mother will ever speak in the novel; this observation makes it especially interesting, since she's not even technically speaking here. One notes once more that the wife in the couple stays quiet. Another observation of the description is the way the wife constantly supports the husband in his decisions, even when these decisions bring

her to tears. She calls the marriage “fatal” and “funeste” and asks her daughter to abandon it. The mother says that she will think only of her daughter, but that she will have to abandon her if she gets married. The mother is a loving character and she even goes to great lengths to give her daughter her inheritance. One can understand through these words of “précautions inouïes” that the mother has not informed her husband of her decision. The image of a Corsican couple that Balzac portrays is that of a husband who takes charge and makes the decisions and a wife who always obeys her husband and accepts his decisions.

This can be drawn in contrast with the more modern couple that we have in the novel, and the entire reason for the story in the beginning. Ginevra falls in love with Luigi Porta, who, it turns out, is the sole survivor of the vendetta between the Piombo family and the Porta family. This union cannot be accepted by Bartholomeo, seeing as how the Porta’s are the ones that burned down his vineyard and killed his sons. Ginevra cannot understand her father, and neither can Luigi. It is important to note that both Ginevra and Luigi were born on the island of Corsica to what are described as “true” Corsican families, since they both understand the Corsican trait of vendetta. It is also important to note the lack of comprehension on the part of the younger couple, and an analysis will show the reasons behind this lack of comprehension. As is seen in the prologue, Ginevra is taken from Corsica when she is young and brought to Paris to be raised. While she did grow up in a Corsican household, she also grew up in a completely French environment. She initially grows up during the Empire and then we meet up with her under the Restoration.

As for Luigi, he leaves Corsica at the same time and is raised for a while by a man in Genoa before moving to France and joining Napoleon's army.

While these may seem like simple details, Balzac includes this information because he finds it essential for our understanding of the contrast between the couples, and even more important is that through this contrast he paints his picture of a Corsican. This younger couple that grew up under France is composed very differently from the older Corsican couple. The man, Luigi, is definitely not the typical take-charge head of the family. While he does get a job so that he can pay for his family's needs, his wife also works. One feels through the descriptions that Bartholomeo would never let his wife work, especially since they come from noble families. Luigi lets his wife paint and earn money simply because it is something that she enjoys doing. He is never overtly confident in any decisions he makes apart from continuing with the marriage plans, and even then it is Ginevra who makes the ultimate decision to leave her family and marry Luigi. Ginevra, for her part, is not even close to being a Corsican wife. She makes decisions on her own and cuts herself off from her family completely. As mentioned, she works to bring in money and she is one of the least silent people in the book. Luigi speaks less than she does, which is in complete contrast to the older Corsican couple.

Balzac's use of contrasts has already helped us to see his image of Corsica as being wild, savage and natural in contrast to the civilized France. Here he has used another contrast to show us his ideal image. In Balzac's mind the Corsican man is one that is prideful, opinionated, and virile, which plays into the typical

characteristics mentioned previously for when Ginevra is categorized as “la Corse.” The Corsican woman is one that is supportive, loving, and silent. It is here that the travel memoirs remain silent. While wanting to express the characteristics and morals of the Corsicans, they mention no contrast between men and women. Balzac’s own image of the contrast between men and women could only have been influenced by the memoirs by the fact that all bandits and gun carriers mentioned in all travel accounts list men as the characters. If men are the dominant figures in Corsican society, the women, then it must be deduced, are the ones that are silent and servile. What is fascinating here is that both Mérimée and Maupassant will use women characters in their later short stories as the main characters seeking vendetta, modeling their characters more similarly to Corsican males, the same way that Balzac models Ginevra.

This brings up the question of the originality of Balzac in writing *La Vendetta*. Jeoffroy-Faggianelli writes a chapter on this very subject and she comes to the conclusion that Balzac simply takes his story from several elements of works of fiction and non-fiction of the time period that he has read. She goes through to show the influence of “Mateo Falcone” and Stendhal’s *Vanina Vanini* on *La Vendetta*. Her argument points to the fact that Balzac has nothing original to add to this study of the image of Corsica, because he simply takes elements of all the other works previously published and combines them together to create a new work. She mentions a play entitled *Paoli ou les Corses et les Génois* which was written by Frédéric Dupetit-Méré et Lepoitevin (226). It is even mentioned that Balzac could have helped out in the writing of this play, though this has never been proven.

While I completely agree with all the proof that is laid out in the book, having shown that he was also influenced by travel memoirs, I have to disagree with the fact that Balzac was only repeating or combining elements of previous writings on the subject of Corsica. Balzac was using these repetitions and elements of other writings to prove to the public reading his works that he understood the image of Corsica as it was previously laid out. Were Balzac to create his own image of Corsica or even had his own image already, and then use this image it would have been detrimental, since his public would have only recognized Corsicans through the image already in their minds.

What I think is the genius behind Balzac is the way that he takes this typical Corsican image, reinforces it to the extent that he even titles his work *La Vendetta* then uses that image in contrast to the image of the France of the Restoration to prove a point about something completely different. One must first understand Balzac's style, approach, and reasoning behind writing in order to understand his message in this book. He was not simply hurriedly writing stories in 1830 for no reason at all. Each work contains an important message from the author himself, but he only expects the careful reader to fully comprehend his message in the end.

There are two important messages that Balzac is trying to get across in this particular novel, and to understand the first we must understand the group of works that surround *La Vendetta*. This novel fits into the first section of Balzac's massive work *La Comédie humaine* entitled *Scènes de la Vie Privée*. These short stories and novels "sont destinées à illustrer les conséquences néfastes d'une éducation

coupable” (225). This guilty education is most definitely one of the reasonings behind Balzac’s writing of the story of Ginevra. Knowing this, one begins to see that the death of Ginevra, and ultimately the downfall of Bartholomeo himself, is the education that the daughter receives from the father. Throughout the book one begins to realize the impact that the father’s education has on his daughter. In the end he does not teach her to be a good Corsican wife, but he is keener on teaching her the importance of vendetta. While she does ultimately understand the importance of standing up for yourself and being proud of who you are, she misses the lesson of obeying her father and finding fault and wishing to seek vengeance on those that have hurt her family. In the end the education of father to daughter backfires and explodes in Bartholomeo’s own face. Balzac’s message, then, seems to point out the importance of a correct education.

Another fascinating point that Balzac is trying to make by writing this book is that he wishes to make a statement about France itself. Balzac had no intimate knowledge of the island of Corsica itself, and so he more easily set the novel in Paris. Why set a novel about Corsica and her people in Paris? Balzac’s ultimate commentary is not on the morals of the Corsicans or even their attitudes and traditions, but on France herself. One must consider that Corsica is simply being used as a metaphor for the France of another time period, one of nobles and feuds; Corsica, then, represents France during the years before the revolution and the establishment of law. Paris sets the scene since it has changed with the times and it represents the France of the Republic and the Restoration. The scene of the marriage is the ultimate meeting of the two worlds. The Corsican couple may

represent the noble couple wishing to have their own way. Their daughter will not marry this soldier simply because they do not want it. However, changes have taken place and the daughter is able to have a notary come and tell her parents that their wishes mean nothing. Under the established law Ginevra has the right as a citizen of the country to marry whomever she wishes. The Corsican (aristocratic) lawlessness meets the laws of the Republic. What is most fascinating of all, of course, is that this part of the story takes place during the Restoration when the nobles are striving to return to their old ways of power and prestige. Balzac seems to be making a statement through this novel that while the nobles may be in power, they most certainly cannot take away the privileges and rights that the people have fought for. Not accepting the laws established by the people will ultimately lead to the detriment of the nobles themselves. Had Bartholomeo simply accepted the law and allowed his daughter to marry, he would have been there for her to sustain her at her weak moments before her death. But he refused to accept the law and instead tried to live in his own world, that represented in the novel by Corsica.

Honoré de Balzac writes his novel, *La Vendetta*, at a time when many other writers had ventured to write on the subject. He examined what was previously written and used characters in his novel to reinforce the already conceived notion of the Corsican, using the parts from various sources that he felt would best represent his necessary characters for his work. He uses not only fiction of other authors that previously set works in Corsica, but also relies on travel memoirs previously published to create and mold his own Corsican characters based upon the accounts travelers to the island have brought back to France. However, by setting his story in

Paris one is pushed to assume that Balzac has a much higher meaning than simply rehashing an already told tale. He shows us the dangers behind a guilty education and goes on to warn the nobles of his time that they cannot simply return France to an archaic past filled with lawlessness. Balzac uses *La Vendetta* to both reinforce the image of Corsica, but also, more importantly, to make a social commentary on life in Restoration France.

Maupassant's Classic Corsica

“Violent conflict, vendetta and banditry are central to the popular view of Corsica” (14). So states Stephen Wilson in his work on Corsican banditry and conflict, where he expounds upon the factual evidence given behind the popular stereotypes. “Already established in the eighteenth century, when it was offset by the libertarian hopes associated with Paoli and the movement for independence, this reputation was reinforced in the nineteenth” (Wilson 14). By the end of the 19th century Guy de Maupassant was writing his own tales focusing not on the Romantic Movement characterized by Mérimée, nor completely the Realist Movement, of which Balzac might be considered a member, but was weaving Realism with Fantasy. His continued use of the images of Corsica already present in the literature of the 19th century shows a continued influence from the travel memoirs of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Though most of his writing activity can fit within a decade of his life, Maupassant wrote over 300 short stories, finished six novels with two more underway when he died, published three travel memoirs, penned dozens of poems, and authored eight plays. Of these works he wrote four short stories that take place in Corsica, and published four articles of accounts while visiting Corsica himself. His works not only reflect the image of Corsica established by his predecessors, but he seems to use it to a larger extent than those before (Wilson 14). Maupassant had his

own ideas of how an author should show the reality around him. This becomes essential to the study of Maupassant since his own tales and articles of Corsica were written after his own personal stay on the island.

Because of this firsthand experience on Corsica, it would be easy to simply believe that Maupassant wrote the reality that he saw around him. Upon closer inspection of Maupassant's works, however, we see that the image he uses to present Corsica to his readership is the same as his predecessors. Influenced by writers before him, the images of the island so prevalent in the Corsican travel memoirs can be readily seen in the writings of Maupassant. Why, then, would Maupassant use the image already created by those preceding him? Balzac may have used the image created by others to further his story about France itself, but Maupassant had a different vision.

In his work entitled "Le Roman," an introduction to his novel *Pierre et Jean*, Maupassant sets forth his personal theoretical ideas about the novel and writing in general.

Le romancier ne saurait donner au lecteur une reproduction exhaustive du réel ("raconter tout serait impossible"); d'autre part et surtout, même une fois qu'il a tiré les éléments significatifs de la réalité, le bon romancier n'a pas à les "transcrire servilement dans le pêle-mêle de leur succession," mais doit s'attacher à "donner l'illusion complète du vrai," de manière à atteindre une "vérité choisie et expressive." (Hamon and Roger-Vasselin 821)

For Maupassant, the “whole reality” being unattainable in a story, the author must then give his own personally chosen illusion of the truth. This idea of illusion surfaces and resurfaces in the writings of Maupassant, especially in this introduction. Again he writes, “Faire vrai consiste... à donner l’illusion complète du vrai, suivant la logique ordinaire des faits” (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 826). Though the author cannot give all the “truth,” he can give a complete illusion of the truth. He continues,

Chacun de nous se fait... simplement une illusion du monde, illusion poétique, sentimentale, joyeuse, mélancolique, sale ou lugubre suivant sa nature. Et l’écrivain n’a d’autre mission que de reproduire fidèlement cette illusion avec tous les procédés d’art qu’il a appris et dont il peut disposer. (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 826)

Maupassant sees that each individual has a different view on the world, and he believes that each author must do all he can to illustrate the different facets of illusion that people have created for themselves. These different shades of the illusions that we have created constitute “reality” for Maupassant.

Turning again to the task of the author, Maupassant writes,

Le réaliste, s’il est un artiste, cherchera, non pas à nous montrer la photographie banale de la vie, mais à nous en donner la vision plus complète, plus saisissante, plus probante que la réalité même... les Réalistes de talent devraient s’appeler plutôt des Illusionnistes. (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 821)

By these statements we see that Maupassant did not believe in the cookie cutter as a model for the Realist author. He was not to simply take a cut out of life and simply throw it up for show. Maupassant believed that by doing so the author was not showing the entire vision of what was truly “reality.” Once again, true Realist authors would be Illusionists rather than “realists” by showing all that is hidden from the simple face of life itself.

Delving into the psyche of humans themselves, Maupassant wished to show that reality is not simply what is seen on the outside. He did not, however, feel that the author should then simply show the thought patterns of the characters themselves, either.

Plutôt que d'analyser les sentiments des personnages, il faut les faire découvrir par la transcription juste des propos, comme “un peintre qui fait notre portrait ne montre pas notre squelette.” La psychologie n'est que “la carcasse de l'œuvre.” (Hamon and Roger-Vasselín 821)

The true Realist novel would be the one that represents the illusions of reality created by the characters themselves. By leaving out the details behind the thought processes of the characters, the reader is persuaded to understand and learn the nature of the character the same way that he would learn the nature of a real man. This, Maupassant believed, creates a story that contains the “true reality” that we live in.

What, then, would be Maupassant's purpose, if he did in fact do “much to conform to the stereotype” (Wilson 14)? Maupassant used that image of Corsica

already present in French literature because he did not want to paint the skeleton of Corsica; he wanted to paint her portrait. Maupassant's idea of what a Realist author's true work was is seen specifically through his use of these ever-present images. Whether or not the images of Corsica in France were "reality" or even the reality that he encountered while living there did not matter. To create a "real" story Maupassant used the illusions or views of reality already created by others. The "real" story, then, hides not in the details he used, but in the fact that he used them to begin with. These images are an illusion of reality created by the French themselves.

Though the details themselves might not have been the true message of Maupassant, it is essential to review them so as to see the source from which he drew these illusions. As with Mérimée and Balzac, Maupassant used travel memoirs from the 18th and 19th centuries as blueprints for the image of Corsica he used in his writings. While there are many sources of travel memoirs from which to draw comparisons, I will limit our comparison of Maupassant's works to the specific travel memoirs discussed and studied in depth in the first chapter.

It must be noted that Maupassant might have simply used other pieces of literature, including Mérimée's and Balzac's works, as blueprints instead of the travel memoirs themselves. While this is a plausible idea behind the acquisition of the image of Corsica Maupassant paints, especially since Maupassant does not publish his works until well after several other works on Corsica were penned, it must be noted that Mérimée and Balzac could have done likewise. Whether or not

he did so does not matter, since it has been shown that both authors obtained their own images of Corsica from the travel memoirs. If Maupassant used their images, logically he then is using images created from the travel memoirs, and therefore the travel memoirs remain the basis for the images. Maupassant, however, most likely did not limit his study to the pieces of literature themselves. As a passionate reader, Maupassant discovered works from all genres of literature, and did not exclude authors outside of France either. In fact, it was his meeting the poet Swinburne that inspired many of his stories, and much of the fantasy he includes can be traced back to this encounter. To limit Maupassant's research into the image of Corsica would be to limit Maupassant as an accomplished man and author. The similarities between his images and those created by the authors of the travel memoirs are striking in and of themselves.

What makes the correlation between Maupassant and Corsican travel memoirs so exhilarating and difficult at the same time is the lack of research that has been conducted on the subject up to the present date. During my extensive research, I was only able to come across one book that produced an outright correlation between Maupassant and Corsica. Upon closer inspection, the book was simply a collection of stories about violent dogs, the reason for which the editor included his own English version of Maupassant's "Une Vendetta" (Parry). Stephen Wilson's *Feuding, Conflict and Banditry in Nineteenth-Century Corsica*, mentions Maupassant in only three instances, while Mérimée is mentioned a few dozen times. An article written by the same author mentions Maupassant twice, and only in the footnotes, though it is intriguing to note that Wilson states, "There were (and are)

varieties of maquis, the most dense reaching a height of five or more metres; for a classic description, see Maupassant” (Wilson, *Conflict and Its Causes in Southern Corsica, 1800-35* 33). Though only mentioned twice in passing, Wilson still believes that Maupassant’s image of Corsica is “classic,” the very idea of which Maupassant would have been proud, since his goal was to copy others’ images and not create his own. In a two paragraph explanation of the source of Maupassant “La Main,” Benjamin Woodbridge makes no mention of the image of Corsica Maupassant created in the story. Likewise G. M. Fess wrote an article on the sources of several other Maupassant short stories, including “Le Bonheur.” Fess mentions nothing of the image of Corsica created, since his objective is to show that the source for the story is not from Corsica itself. Ernest George Atkin mentions the first part of the story of “La Main” in his article about the supernaturalism in Maupassant’s stories, but again mentions nothing of his image of Corsica. Beyond these basic articles mentioning some of the short stories of Maupassant that take place in Corsica, little is produced in searches of articles on Maupassant and Corsica. The lack of research might be explained by the fact that Maupassant lived in Corsica before writing his stories, thereby creating an obvious source for his images of the island. Likewise, as has been previously mentioned, it could be believed that he simply used what he found in literature already published on the matter. A search into the connection between Maupassant and the travel memoirs will show two things: firstly, that Maupassant was using others’ images of Corsica to create the illusion of reality he sought in his writing, and secondly, that the influence of the 18th and 19th century

travel memoirs discussed in Chapter One continued to be felt well through the end of the 19th century.

While visiting his sick mother on Corsica at the end of 1880, Maupassant wrote and published four separate articles in *Le Gaulois*, later combined at the end of his travel memoir to Algeria, *Au Soleil*, under the titled *En Corse*. These articles are a mix of travel memoirs and stories heard while on the island and recounted by Maupassant, supposedly in their original form. These articles give us the opportunity to see Maupassant's first images of Corsica in his writing, as his short stories containing Corsica in them would not be published until afterwards. These articles were written very straightforward and contain very little apparent glimpses of an actual image of Corsica itself. Still at the very beginning of the decade in which he would write the vast majority of the thirty volumes of works he would produce, Maupassant's interest in the image of Corsica was only beginning to develop.

Ever present, however, of the existence of an image of Corsica, Maupassant entitles his first article "La Patrie de Colomba," directly referencing the widely popular novel written by Mérimée forty years earlier. It is in this account, where he recounts his first sighting of Corsica, that he describes the island as, "la terre de la vendetta" (185). A theme used by both Mérimée and Balzac, this appellation is reminiscent of the Baron de Beaumont's belief that vendetta would always be a part of Corsican culture, something that no foreign occupier could eradicate. This phrase, picked up on by Stephen Wilson in both of his works on Corsica, also reminds us of the famous phrase attributed to Napoleon by Pompéi, "Les Corses se

sont toujours tués et se tueront toujours” (215). This idea of Corsica as the eternal land of the vendetta is portrayed by Maupassant as one of the first ideas that came to mind upon seeing the island for the first time.

Although quite obvious that the only way to visit the island, at least in the 19th century, was by boat, Maupassant starts his article in Marseille and recounts the trip across the sea and the sight of Corsica upon reaching it. This is reminiscent of Boswell’s account of Corsica. Unlike many of the other authors of travel memoirs who describe the island as if they were already on it, Boswell takes the time to describe the trip across the sea and the initial docking at the island. This same idea was also picked up on by Mérimée, who used the first chapters of *Colomba* to describe the passage from the continent, or civilization, to the island. Maupassant, in using this approach to the island, reflects Boswell writing style and his introduction to Corsica itself, even if they initially traveled to opposite sides of the island.

Another fascinating link between the travel memoirs and this first article of Maupassant’s is the actual description of the nature of the island itself. Barely covering eight pages of regular sized print, the short article mentions the geography of Corsica on two separate occasions. First mentioned when gliding up to the island in the boat, Maupassant returns to the geography at the very end of the article itself. “Sommets,” “collines,” “granit,” “maquis,” “montagnes” are all mentioned in these two instances in a way that makes the reader feel the overbearing nature of the mountains and the maquis. This idea of overbearing nature and geography could

have been taken from both Boswell's account and the Baron de Beaumont's memoir. Boswell and Beaumont both use the first halves of their extensive works to describe in depth the nature and geography of the island itself. After reading page after page on the mountains and maquis of Corsica, the reader gets the feeling that there is truly nothing else on the island. Though Maupassant includes a small story about an encounter in Ajaccio, he uses his first article on Corsica to describe the overwhelming geography and nature in two separate instances, clearly reflecting on the writings of Boswell and Beaumont.

This idea of the overwhelming nature of Corsica is continued in his second article, "Le Monastère de Corbara," in which Maupassant recounts his visit to a friend who used to live in Paris. While the basis of the article is the visit with Père Didon, he once again begins and finishes his article by describing the geography and nature of Corsica. Père Didon himself points out the surrounding mountains, which he uses to seek solitude and reflect on life. The reader remembers little about the father himself, but clearly remembers the "savage" scenery described so vividly by Maupassant. He uses the beginning and the end of the article to compare Corsica to mainland France. In the beginning he compares the mountains of the island to the Alps: "elles (the mountains of Corsica) sont plus familières" (193). Strange that he would use the word "familières" because the next part of the sentence refers to them as "sauvages." At the end he writes, "les calanches de Piana sont une des merveilles de la Corse; on peut dire, je crois, une des merveilles du monde... dont la route cependant est plus belle, à mon avis, que la 'Corniche' tant célèbre" (202-203). Such positive images would not be reflected in his later works.

For his third article, Maupassant chooses another ever-present theme reflected again in a later short story by a similar name. Here he writes, “Les Bandits corses,” in which he recounts a story told to him by one of his guides. The Brothers Bellacoscia will be used by Maupassant to reflect the description of Corsican bandits that his travel guide supposedly recounts to him, though one cannot help but wonder if Maupassant is using other sources in this tale of his.

His descriptions of the bandits reflect the writings of several of the authors of the travel memoirs. In the first part of his description, Maupassant writes, “Ce ne sont point, d’ailleurs, des malfaiteurs, car jamais ils ne voleraient les voyageurs” (208). This statement reflects the views of the Baron de Beaumont who wrote, “Rien n’est donc plus éloigné de la vérité que de représenter l’île comme infestée sans cesse de brigands affamés de sang et de rapines” (45). Beaumont ties the characteristics of bandits with the idea of hospitality, an idea that Maupassant picks up on and reflects with his next sentence describing the bandits: “Un fait de cette nature les exposerait peut-être même à être jugés, condamnés à mort et exécutés par leurs semblables, gens d’honneur s’il en fut” (208). Maupassant states here that the bandits show hospitality for the travelers and they are not the true targets of the bandits after all, an idea stated directly by Beaumont in his definition of what a bandit truly is and does. Following this sentence, Maupassant goes on to write one more sentence that clearly reflects the memoir of Beaumont. Writes Maupassant, “C’est en effet un sentiment exagéré de l’honneur qui a poussé presque toujours ces pauvres diables dans la montagne” (208). Here Maupassant mentions the word

honor for the second time, the very conclusion of the Baron de Beaumont reflecting the true principle behind all activities in Corsica.

Maupassant is not ready, however, to accept the true feelings that Boswell expresses in his account of Corsica. Maupassant does not find the Corsican people to be civilized and enlightened as does Boswell, and Rousseau for that matter. He describes the actions of the bandits as anything but civilized:

Quand une femme a trompé son mari, quand une fille est soupçonnée d'une faute, quand on a une querelle de jeu avec son meilleur ami, et pour mille autres causes aussi légères sur lesquelles les civilisés passent assez facilement l'éponge, on égorge ici la femme, la fille, l'amant, l'ami, les pères, les frères, les parents, toute la race. (208-209)

Not only does he use the somewhat graphic word "égorge," a trait he would continue in his other stories, he specifically calls the Corsican people savage, or the opposite of civilized, because of these actions. Here we see the opposite of Mérimée, who felt that a good writer does not judge a culture by his own. For Maupassant, the idea of the savage can be found in an image already played up by Pompéi in his account of Corsica.

The fourth article written by Maupassant, entitled "Une Page d'histoire inédite," recounts a story told to him by a Corsican, and which Maupassant wrote, "presque sous la dictée sans y rien changer, sans en rien omettre, sans essayer de le rendre plus 'littéraire' ou plus dramatique" (218). The story is about Napoleon when he was very young and his narrow escape from being captured, a dramatic

story that, Maupassant reminds us, “décida le sort de l’Europe.” The story itself picks up on a theme not covered in this project, that of Napoleon Bonaparte. Most of the travel memoirs discussed in Chapter One were either written before Napoleon’s time, or right after, in a period where many might have been apt to not mention the fallen emperor. Balzac mentions Napoleon in his work, but Mérimée leaves him out all together. By the end of the century, Maupassant could not avoid writing about Napoleon in relation to Corsica, as he arrives “sur cette terre de Corse où le souvenir de Napoléon est encore si chaud et si vivant” (218-219). No connections between this article and the travel memoirs discussed can be made, since there is no mention of Napoleon, except by Pompéi in a passing quote attributed to him. This is, however, the only writing of Maupassant’s that takes place in Corsica and is specifically about Napoleon himself.

Having studied these articles published by Maupassant during his travels in Corsica, we can see the influence that the travel memoirs had on his writing, even when it was simply recounting the events of his stay. Over the next four years Maupassant would publish five separate short stories that contain images of Corsica and its people. The stories continue to show the impact of these travel memoirs upon Maupassant’s “classic” image of Corsica.

In 1881, Maupassant published a short story entitled “Histoire corse” in the journal *Gil Blas*. The opening paragraph is worth copying here to show the immense condensing of all possible images of Corsica in the opening sequence.

Deux gendarmes auraient été assassinés ces jours derniers pendant qu'ils conduisaient un prisonnier corse de Corte à Ajaccio. Or, chaque année, sur cette terre classique du banditisme, nous avons des gendarmes éventrés par les sauvages paysans de cette île, réfugiés dans la montagne à la suite de quelque vendetta. Le légendaire maquis cache en ce moment, d'après l'appréciation de MM. les magistrats eux-mêmes, cent cinquante à deux cents vagabonds de cette nature qui vivent sur les sommets, dans les roches et les broussailles, nourris par la population, grâce à la terreur qu'ils inspirent.

(WikiMedia)

The bandit, the typical idea used by so many others, is used here by Maupassant to again show that what we specifically believe in is not merely the reality for everyone. What he does by placing it here in his story is showing us that even the French of his time believed heavily in this nuanced idea of Corsica. What we find later, however, is that Maupassant will use these images ironically. Maupassant uses the very first paragraph of his first short story set in Corsica to include every image of Corsica he has written about previously. He includes banditry, savages, mountains, vendetta, maquis, summits, rocks, and brush. Maupassant is able to weave the overwhelming presence of the geography and nature of the island with the characteristics of the inhabitants themselves. If anything Maupassant is showing that he knows exactly what image the French have of Corsica.

This short story is unique in that it can almost be included as a fifth article, though not written while on Corsica. He recounts a personal adventure of his while

traveling between Bastia and Ajaccio, but uses as much space as possible in the story to describe the scenery around him. His description of the maquis here, is what is described as “classic” (Wilson, Conflict and Its Causes in Southern Corsica, 1800-35 33):

Les maquis, formés de chênes verts, de genévriers, d'arbousiers, de lentisques, d'alaternes, de bruyères, de lauriers-tins, de myrtes et de buis, que relie entre eux, les mêlant comme des cheveux, les clématites enlaçantes, les fougères monstrueuses, les chèvrefeuilles, les cystes, les romarins, les lavandes, les ronces mettaient sur le dos des côtes dont j'approchais une inextricable toison. (WikiMedia)

This description of the maquis is the one both created by other and reflected in the mentality of the French even today. Maupassant uses these images directly from other sources to continue his idea of “reality” being directly influenced by one’s ideas. This reflects directly the descriptions of the maquis given by the Baron de Beaumont at both the beginning and the very end of his travel memoir. A description of the maquis is essential, as most other literature has produced some description of it. For Maupassant to create his illusion of reality, the image of Corsica held by the French, he also must produce this detailed description of the maquis.

In this story Maupassant recounts his meeting a family with several vendetta issues, and ends up sending a firearm to one of the young girls of the family who wants to use it to kill her brother-in-law. This twisted story of family members

killing one another and running off into the mountains and maquis to be bandits is Maupassant using every possible image of Corsica imaginable. He lays everything out to show the readers exactly what they expect to see. In so doing he is once again creating his illusion of reality.

A year later in 1882 Maupassant published another short story in *Glis Blas* entitled “*Un Bandit corse.*” Here he transitions further away from his experiences and towards fiction. He starts out recounting a passage through the valley of Niolo, but upon entering he asks his guide about the bandits. The guide then recounts a story, which can be taken as truth or fiction. In this instance, unlike the story of Napoleon, Maupassant makes no effort to claim to have written it down word for word. We can infer that he might have doctored up the story a little bit for literary purposes.

This story recounts a similar event to the main plot of Mérimée’s *Colomba*, where vendetta is the key to a story between a brother and sister whose father was murdered. Here, too, the sister is pushing her brother to do his Corsican duty and seek vengeance. Here, too, the man finally cracks when he sees those responsible pass by one day and he goes to hide his weapon in the maquis, eventually shooting and killing mercilessly both men responsible for his father’s death. Once again this scene reflects the very words of Pompéi concerning the matter of vendetta. “Dans cet état, plus un peuple a l’instinct de la justice, plus il doit être porté à reprendre l’exercice de la vengeance personnelle, qui est la justice le l’état sauvage” (201). Pompéi brings up the idea of justice here, and opposes civilized justice with savage

justice, which he calls personal vengeance, or vendetta. Maupassant is once again showing the savage versus the civilized to create his illusion of reality.

In the year 1883 Maupassant published two short stories that take place in Corsica. The first one, "Une Vendetta," published in *Le Gaulois*, is about an old woman who loses her son through a vicious murder, and is forced to seek vengeance on her own, since she has no male relatives. She trains her dog to attack the killer, slowly but surely, and eventually takes the dog to do the deed he's been trained to perform. Fantastic in its own sense, here we see Maupassant's darker side coming out. The typical image of vendetta and bandits is still present in this story, though an old woman must train her dog to do the deed for her. The overall theme of unnecessary violence comes through best in this short story over the others about Corsica that Maupassant has written. He moves definitively away from his travel experiences on the island and gives us a completely new story that we must stretch our minds a little to comprehend. This story not only uses the typical image of Corsica, but also starts to show Maupassant's desire for the real illusion of "truth." He does not explain the thought processes of the mother, but gives us the story and allows us to read her for ourselves.

The second short story published in 1883 was "La Main" in *Le Gaulois*. Here we have a true taste of the reality stretched to fantasy that Maupassant is often known for. Though starting off in a circle of women and a judge in Paris, the story quickly moves to Corsica, where the fantastic story takes place. Maupassant even uses the word "surnaturel" from the beginning. The story, recounted by a Parisian

judge, about an Englishman, takes place on Corsica. Though the story has little to do with Corsica itself, besides being the backdrop, Maupassant cannot help but give a nod to his already established image of Corsica. In the one paragraph following the events surrounding the judge's moving to take a position on the island, Maupassant slips in the word and idea of vendetta. He includes an entire paragraph leaving no raw image behind:

Ce que j'avais surtout à poursuivre là-bas, c'étaient les affaires de vendetta. Il y en a de superbes, de dramatiques au possible, de féroces, d'héroïques. Nous retrouvons là les plus beaux sujets de vengeance qu'on puisse rêver, les haines séculaires, apaisées un moment, jamais éteintes, les ruses abominables, les assassinats devenant des massacres et presque des actions glorieuses. Depuis deux ans, je n'entendais parler que du prix du sang, que de ce terrible préjugé corse qui force à venger toute injure sur la personne qui l'a faite, sur ses descendants et ses proches. J'avais vu égorger des vieillards, des enfants, des cousins, j'avais la tête pleine de ces histoires. (161)

The great images of Corsica specifically placed here at the beginning of the story help Maupassant to show the illusion that he discusses so frequently in his introduction to *Pierre et Jean*. As such, though most of the story has nothing really to do with Corsica, he is able to prove that he knows that this illusion is one that the French have consistently played upon. His fantasy world that he has created is one that has almost become a reality for the French. By placing it in this work of supernaturalism, Maupassant is showing his idea that "reality" is nothing more than

an illusion. And the perfect place to project French illusions, be they of violence or love (as we will show below), is Corsica. This is, once again, the only paragraph in the story describing Corsica, but Maupassant takes a whole paragraph to throw in the images of Corsica so prevalent in his stories, and in the minds of his readers.

Still at the beginning of his decade of writing, in 1884 Maupassant publishes the last short story of his to take place in Corsica. Entitled “Le Bonheur,” a most perplexing title given the images of Corsica he has presented up to this point, it was published in *Le Gaulois*, and along with “Une Vendetta,” and “La Main,” was included in a collection of short stories republished in 1885 under the name *Contes du jour et de la nuit*. This final story of Maupassant concerning Corsica is also told in two different locations, as was “La Main.” The group of people is on the shore in France and because of exceptional weather, they are able to see Corsica. The sight reminds one of the men of his own excursion to the island earlier in his life. The story itself is a love story of two people from Lorraine that fled to Corsica, but once again, Maupassant cannot help but put in his image of the island, so readily available in all his stories on the subject.

The narrator that remembers visiting Corsica and tells the others the love story rambles on for five paragraphs before beginning the actual story. In these five paragraphs Maupassant puts in his imagery of Corsica: savage, wild, uninhabitable, but hospitable. “Cette île sauvage est plus inconnue et plus loin de nous que l’Amérique, bien qu’on la voie quelquefois des côtes de France, comme aujourd’hui” (79). We see that the idea of a savage, strange and foreign land comes right out as

one of the first descriptions that Maupassant gives us. “Figurez-vous un monde encore en chaos,” and later on, “C’est un sol vierge, inculte, desert... Point de culture, aucune industrie, aucun art” (79-80). In his final paragraph on the subject we read,

Et, en face d’elle [Italy], la Corse sauvage est restée telle qu’en ses premiers jours. L’être y vit dans sa maison grossière, indifférent à tout ce qui ne touche point son existence même ou ses querelles de famille. Et il est resté avec les défauts et les qualités des races incultes, violent, haineux, sanguinaire avec inconscience, mais aussi hospitalier, généreux, dévoué, naïf, ouvrant sa porte aux passants et donnant son amitié fidèle pour la moindre marque de sympathie. (80-81)

Here we see the double standard so prevalent throughout the travel memoirs. Here is where Maupassant once again proves that the images created were simply illusions, and not necessarily reality. To assume that one country is superior over another is something that is viewed in one’s mind, based solely on one’s own perspective. Violence, vendetta, banditry all somehow counteract the hospitality and generosity. This double-sided image is exactly what the Baron de Beaumont expresses in his memoir. “La vérité se trouve entre ces deux exagérations,” wrote Beaumont, and he firmly believed that the truth behind the Corsican character was that they truly did represent both images (17). Maupassant ultimately chooses to use both images here, in his last description of the island.

Maupassant, who was known to have played up every stereotype of Corsica, did so with a specific purpose in mind. He felt the desire to show that reality, was a

personal illusion for each man and woman. His job as a Realist author was to be the illusionist, to show the specific view of “reality” of the character in the story, often a specific narrator. He would not, however, show the inner thoughts of the character, allowing the reader to judge and understand the character in the same way that he would a person in the street. By doing so, Maupassant believed his works showed the reality that truly exists: that of a multisided illusion.

Why, then, would Maupassant choose to use travel memoirs as a source for his image of Corsica when he had traveled there himself? The images created in the travel memoirs were readily used by his predecessors, and his readers would pick up on the well known images of Corsica. This reality of Corsica is once again, simply an illusion from one or several people’s perspectives on the island. Maupassant did not delve into the minds of the Corsicans in his stories because in reality we cannot do that, but must discover for ourselves the reasoning behind the action. What is readily apparent by studying Maupassant is that the images set forth by the travel memoirs in the 18th and early 19th centuries had become fixed images in the minds of the French by the end of the 19th century. Maupassant used every angle of the image of Corsica in France imaginable to create his own “reality.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to point out the fact that Mérimée, Balzac, and Maupassant all used the travel memoirs of the 18th and 19th centuries in their descriptions of Corsica and its inhabitants. Though they each may have portrayed them in their own ways, and for their own reasons, the thread they share between them is undeniably present. These authors did much to perpetuate the image of Corsica already present in France, whether that was their goal or not. That image, however, was not created by the writers of the 19th century, but rather by the travel memoirs and accounts published following traveler's expeditions to the Island of Corsica in both the 18th and 19th centuries.

The readers of the time period were already familiar with what both English and French travelers had described, and it would have been impossible for Mérimée, Balzac and Maupassant to have created their own images of Corsica and still have their readers believe their stories. Had Colomba not been seeking vendetta, Mérimée's story of Orso and Lydia might not have been as successful as it was. Though Balzac might have been searching to use Corsica as an image of monarchical France, had he created his own Corsican character, his readers might not have believed him, or cared to read the story at all. Maupassant's use of fantasy and the supernatural was surely something he was known for, but had he created his own

vision of Corsica, his readers might have easily forgotten that what they were reading was even related to the island.

The same images represented in these 19th century novels seem to be ever present in the media today. The cases of Yvan Colonna and others help the media to perpetuate the image of Corsica set down on paper by Mérimée, Balzac, and Maupassant. Images in the French mentality of today can still be connected directly to images found in these authors' writings. While these images of Corsica live on today, these authors were surely not the only ones to have perpetuated the images of Corsica already laid out by the travel memoirs. The 19th century is full of others that used both Corsica and Corsican characters as a means of transmitting the image of Corsica so prevalent. A worthy extension of this project would surely include these other works. Most of these works are outlined by Pierrette Jeoffroy-Faggianelli in her work *L'Image de la Corse dans la littérature romantique française*. Works include notable writings such as *Nouvelle Corse* by Napoleon, *Vie de Napoléon* by Stendhal, *Les Deux îles* by Hugo, *Le Médecin de campagne* by Balzac, *Mémoires sur Napoléon* by Stendhal, *Mémoires* by Chateaubriand, and *Les Frères corses* by Dumas, père.

Beyond these more well known pieces of literature, Jeoffroy-Faggianelli lists 30 or so short stories, novels, plays, and operas all written in the 19th century using Corsica or Corsican characters. An extension of this project would be a study into these 40 or so additional pieces of literature to see connections that these authors might have had with the images created by the travel memoirs of the 18th and 19th

centuries. Comparisons could be made between the works themselves and ultimately point to the author or authors that were most influenced by the travel memoirs, who then went on to influence other writers.

Likewise a plausible extension of this project could include works outside of literature. Including the operas already stated by Jeoffroy-Faggianelli, other forms of print could be studied from the period. While many of the short stories studied here were printed in journals or newspapers, other stories including Corsicans printed in the 19th century could be studied. And a most important source of information on images of Corsica perpetuated in France could include personal letters written not only by writers of the 19th century, but also by government officials, and those French that come into contact with Corsicans. These images would not necessarily need to conform to images already create and could offer other clues as to other images of Corsica in France.

While this project could have gone in many directions, the starting point would inevitably fall on the travel memoirs of the 18th and 19th centuries. These firsthand accounts of interactions with Corsica and its inhabitants paint images of Corsica that would continue to be perpetuated throughout the 19th century into the present time. Further research could link the 19th century images of Corsica with those in the 20th and now 21st centuries. I chose to limit my research to Mérimée, Balzac, and Maupassant for specific reasons. Not only was my time limited in the amount of research that could be performed, but I chose Mérimée specifically to show that there are still more sources for his short stories that should not be ruled

out. I chose Balzac to show that an author could borrow the idea of Corsica to prove a point about France itself. And I chose Maupassant for the fact that practically no research has been conducted on his links to Corsica. Likewise, the purpose behind each author's use of the images of Corsica already created was very different and shows different ways that these images were used. Mérimée directly used Corsica to show the triumph of the uncivilized over the civilized, Balzac used Corsica to represent France itself, and Maupassant used Corsica to show that "reality" is really nothing more than a personal illusion. Though when publishing their travel memoirs the authors might not have expected much to come of them, they have actually influence an entire century of writers, and possibly an entire nation, with their images of Corsica.

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