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***Washington Irving's Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise
Beyond the Rocky Mountains (1836) and Peter Stark's
Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale
of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier
(2014): A Comparative Study***

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To our loved ones

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Abstract

This is a comparative study that sought to examine the different parallels between Washington Irving's *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains* (1890) and Peter Stark's *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier* (2015). To conduct this study, we relied on Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality and some of its pertinent concepts like ambivalence and transposition as well as Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism. This dissertation was divided into three major chapters. In the first chapter, we examined the historical and literary contexts, uncovering that both Irving and Stark recount the same historical events, drawing from similar primary sources such as journals and travelogues. The second chapter dealt with themes like ambition, overcoming adversity, perseverance, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. These themes, deeply rooted in both narratives, are shown to be interconnected and central to the respective authors' interpretations of the Astoria project. The third chapter focused on the divergences in discourse, style and major characters' traits.

Keywords: Astoria, intertextuality, Manifest Destiny, orientalism, racism, westward expansion.

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I. Introduction

Nations are fast losing their nationality. The great and increasing intercourse, the exchange of fashions, the uniformity of opinions by the diffusion of literature are fast destroying those peculiarities that formerly prevailed. We shall in time grow to be very much one people, unless a return of barbarism throw us again into clans. (as cited in Hellman & Trent, 1919, p.97)

When we read the previous citation by Washington Irving, various seemingly contemporary concepts come into our minds: globalization, diffusion and evolution of ideas, isolationism as well as international conflicts. These concepts usually find their route into literature through and by the mediation of influence and intertextuality. Irving's words feel like the ones that a politician or a historian of the late twentieth to the twenty-first century would say. Yet, these are the words of a writer who lived during the nineteenth century. Irving was, more than anyone else, able to fathom the complexity and implications of what was happening before his own eyes. In fact, born in 1783, the writer witnessed the beginning of the westward expansion that was triggered by the very lucrative business of fur trade initiated by the French in the Canadas, and carried on by the British after the acquisition of that vast territory in 1763 (Wood, 1967, p.6). Carrying the long tradition of travel writers like Daniel Defoe, Irving wrote in a different context: the United States' attempt to assert its existence beyond the reach and dominance of its mother land, Great Britain (MacLaren, 1990, p. 3). The 19th century travel writers usually relied on travelogues and journals. Therefore, their writings were pervaded by a commercial nature.

The westward expansion has been an inspiring subject for legions of novelists, travel writers, and historians. They recounted the dangers and the adventures of traveling in newfound lands. Some also wrote about the political implications and historical origins of the westward movement. They linked it to explorers like Alexander Mackenzie as well as Lewis and Clark. One writer particularly succeeded to pinpoint the first attempt of U.S. settlement in the West: Washington Irving. In *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky*

Mountains (1890), Irving narrated the project and expedition initiated by John Jacob Astor. He reported his efforts to establish the first trading post on the mouth of the Columbia River (Wood, 1967, p.117). The same event has caught the attention of a more recent travel writer named Peter Stark. Influenced by Irving's *Astoria*, he wrote his work entitled *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier (2015)* in which he dealt with Astor's project from a contemporary angle.

This dissertation is a comparative study of the works of Irving and Stark. Works that are separated by nearly two centuries. Consequently, because there is no research that has dealt with both works in a comparative study, our contribution would be a rather pertinent exploration of the two writers' narratives of the establishment of Astoria. Our research allows a deep analysis of how historical and literary contexts shape similar themes. It also highlights critical divergences in the representation of race and gender. Thus, by analyzing these dissimilarities, this study reveals how the changing social and ideological standards may influence historical recounting. It also provides fresh understanding of the relationship between literature, history, and cultural values over time.

Review of the Literature

Washington Irving's and Peter Stark's texts about Astoria received their share of critical attention. To begin with the former, Edwin Winfield Bowen (1906) in *Washington Irving's Place in American Literature* said that Irving "may not inappropriately be called the father of the American republic of letters" (Bowen, 1906, p.171). Indeed, he was celebrated as a precursor of the American Literature. On Irving's *Astoria*, James P. Ronda (1990) claimed that it was a kind of precursor that drew the first traits of the whole scheme that would be known later as the United State of America. He said:

The empire got its first comprehensive treatment from the pen of Washington Irving. In April 1832, Irving returned to his native New York and acclaimed as the premier American man of letters. Seventeen years in Europe-years filled with

business affairs and diplomatic service-had been Irving's literary apprenticeship. (Ronda, 1990, p.337)

Ronda insinuated that Irving might be seen as an American literary pioneer whose previous travels all over Europe during seventeen years trained and gave him tools and materials to write future literary works. These influences are noticeable in Irving's works, for he had been advised by Walter Scott to do so. The latter "urged him [Irving] to study German, to read the old German stories, to use tales and legends in writing, and Irving listened intently" (Wood, 1967, p.54). Irving's *Astoria* narrates the "epic tale" of an American trader who sought to secure the whole West for his country, not for wealth, but for his nation and posterity. Ian Scott MacLaren claimed that, though the nationalist theme was not recurrent in Irving's "career as a writer of historical romance", he depicted the "Jacksonian entrepreneur" as a national conqueror and hero. The latter, by his personal means, had supposedly sought to offer the whole West Coast to the U.S.A. In *Astoria*, Irving romanticized Astor's project as if he was only driven by patriotic sentiment, and he offered it as a counterpart to Walter Scott's romanticized and nationalist depiction of Scotland (MacLaren, p.3).

On the account of historical validity, John Denis Haeger (1991) claimed that Hubert Howe Bancroft "had only scorn for Washington Irving's account and accused the author of deliberate falsification" (Haeger, 1991,p.95). I. S. MacLaren claimed:

Irving's *Astoria*, when considered critically at all, is most often judged for its fidelity to the historical record, its accurate depiction of the frontier West, and its testament (or not) to Irving's willingness (or not) to sacrifice literary interest for quick commercial gain [...] Romance and history are both unified in the figure of John Jacob Astor, whose dream it was to establish permanent commercial activity on the Pacific Coast and Ocean before anyone else did. (MacLaren, 1990, pp.1-2)

MacLaren enquired whether Irving was contented with a narrative of the historical hard facts of the expedition or he had to process them for literary purposes at the expense of losing historical objectivity. He concluded by noticing the joint composition of Astor's character. MacLaren went further and declared that "Without doubt, Irving's single greatest problem

took the form of Astor himself” (MacLaren, 1990, p.6). Astor is described by MacLaren as a “stay-at-home” hero waiting for his agents who endorsed and endured all the dangers and calamities in order to see Astor’s plans arrive to fruition. The critic claimed that because John Jacob Astor did not endure the same hardships as his agents, characterizing him as the hero of *Astoria* was “potentially as ludicrous as the notion that Queen Elizabeth I could be made the heroine of a narrative of Sir Francis Drake’s Voyage to the Pacific” (MacLaren, 1990, p.3). Indeed, MacLaren claimed that Wilson Price Hunt would have been a better choice than John Jacob Astor (p.7).

As for Peter Stark’s work, it attracted fewer critiques. Most of the reactions he received are book reviews in newspapers and magazines amongst which we selected Joe Streckert’s from the *Portland Mercury* newspaper in which he said:

one wonders why British and American settlers ever bothered with this corner of the continent. Peter Stark’s *Astoria*, published earlier this month, answers that question. The earliest settlements in this state had nothing to do with pioneer optimism or stalwart settlers looking for a promised land. Initially, Brits and Yankees came to Oregon to make big buckets of cash [...] Settling Oregon didn’t happen because Americans are self-starting pioneers. No, it happened because a rich man in New York had a lot of money, a lot of ambition and, most importantly, a whole lot of hubris (Streckert, 2015, para. 1-4)

Streckert did not only dismiss all colonialist and expansionist aspirations of the settlers who occupied the West, but he also ascertained Stark’s claim. In sum, it was all about Astor’s economic aspirations. Moreover, Dennis Drabelle from *The Washington Post* pointed out Stark’s question about whether Astoria would have been a separate nation apart from the first thirteen colonies had Astor succeeded in his plans. Drabelle observed:

He [Peter Stark] also raises a tantalizing question about the enterprise as a whole. Astor went on to make his fortune in other ways, but what if he’d realized his Pacific Coast dream? Jefferson and other statesmen had given little thought as to how Astoria, as the short-lived outpost was called, would be assimilated into the United States, or whether it would be assimilated at all. (Drabelle, 2015, para.8)

In other terms, and as a response to Streckert’s claim, if we stretch Drabelle’s assumption further, he might have asked: Did John Jacob Astor have the same imperial and colonialist

aspirations that those who established the thirteen colonies had ? or, had his plan succeeded, would those hypothetical aspirations have permitted him to secure a whole territory carrying his name and perhaps a nation later on ?

On Peter Stark's account of *Astoria*, Streckert in the *Portland Mercury* newspaper highlighted the author's unusual act; he attributed a selfish and irresponsible behavior to John Jacob Astor. Streckert noticed: "Throughout the book, Stark goes out of his way to paint Astor as a removed and naïve leader, oblivious to the suffering of the men he's sent to found his commercial empire on the far side of North America" (Streckert, 2015, para.3).

Interestingly, Streckert's observation echoes MacLaren's comment about Astor. According to John Denis Haeger (1991), some of Astoria's chroniclers "raised questions about Astor's responsibility for the settlement's failure [and] accused Astor of deliberately sending inferior goods" (Haeger, pp.15, 135). In addition, Streckert considered Stark's joy and effectiveness in writing *Astoria*. He claimed:

The author also seems to revel in everything that went wrong with the Astoria mission [...] Stark does a very good job of explaining exactly why Astor bothered with such a dangerous and expensive mission, why his employees had the problems that they did, and what it meant for the U.S. as a whole and Oregon in particular. The book is a welcome departure from romanticized tales of Lewis and Clark or of later pioneers. (Streckert, 2015, para.3-4)

Moreover, it is important to stress the fact that most of the reviews of Stark's *Astoria* put more emphasis on the adventurous side of the expedition than on themes like colonial discourse, the idea of Manifest Destiny, ambition and perseverance etc.

Annie Dawid in her article entitled "Sovereign Contempt" (2015) commented on the style of the author: "Stark's account of their travels, plagued by problems instigated by both nature and human folly, reads like an adventure story by Herman Melville" (Dawid, para.4). Indeed, the latter's works draw upon his own experiences at sea and his deep knowledge of the whaling industry. Accordingly, Chris La Tray (2018) claimed that Stark is also an

adventurer and “no stranger to environmental hardship” (La Tray, para.5). Moreover, even if Stark’s *Astoria* is a non-fictional work, La Tray claimed that the author went out of his way and allowed himself to “take some liberties in what actual conversations may have been, or what principal characters may have been thinking” when there are no historical evidence corroborating that (La Tray, para.5).

Issue and Working Hypothesis

Given the amount of research and reviews done on both works, we noticed that, even if Irving’s and Stark’s books dealt with the same event, all critiques tackled the two authors’ books separately, and to our knowledge, none has dealt with them simultaneously in a comparative study.

Our objective in carrying out this research is to compare Washington Irving’s *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains (1890)* and Peter Stark’s *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson’s Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier (2015)* in terms of similarities and differences. We think that both works diverge in many respects. Nevertheless, our discussion will not be solely on divergences. It will focus on three levels of comparison which are the similarities between the two texts in terms of historical and literary contexts using Kristeva’s concepts of Intertextuality. In the second level, we will tackle similarities between Irving’s and Stark’s major themes by applying aspects of Intertextuality conceptualised by Kristeva and Gerard Genette like the concept of “Transposition” and “epigraph”, respectively. Concerning the differences, our third hypothesis suggests that the major differences between the two books are at the level of the authors’ interpretations of the decisions and attitudes of the major characters. We will also explore differences related to the impact of the temporal context and ideological frame in which authors wrote on their stances. We will study these dissimilarities through the prism of

Kristeva's Ambivalence and Bakhtin's Dialogism under the auspices of Jessica Mason's work on Intertextuality.

We will start by exploring the ways in which both authors converged in terms of the effect that their respective historical and literary contexts had on their writings. We will demonstrate that though they have been written in different periods, both works share similarities in the way they justified or described the immediate context in which Astor's project had been thought of and carried out. Next, we will tackle convergences between both books in some major themes like ambition, adversity and perseverance as well as the idea of Manifest Destiny. It is important to point out that both works narrate the exact and same event and relied on approximately the same resources. Therefore, all characters are the same. Both authors differed in the way they dealt with the important actors that took part in the project and influenced it. Thus, it will make an important part of our third chapter in which we will explore the authors' description of three major characters: John Jacob Astor, Wilson Price Hunt, and Duncan McDougall. Alongside these characters, we will study major ideas that are frequently encountered throughout both works like colonial discourse "orientalism" versus objectivity and "political correctness". We will also address Irving's epic and biblical style in contrast to Stark's scientific and modern approach. The aim of this chapter is to display the dialogic and ambivalent nature of both works.

II. Methods and Materials:

1- Methods

The theoretical framework through which we tend to study Washington Irving's *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains (1890)* and Peter Stark's *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier (2015)* is Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality and Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogism. The former, along with some of its tenets, will be dedicated to explore the similarities between both texts, while the latter will serve to highlight their major differences.

a. Intertextuality and Dialogism

The term Intertextuality was coined by the French Semiotician and philosopher Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality implies that the meaning of a text is to be seen "in relation to other texts" within each of which there are inherent features that relate it to a multitude of other texts in a sort of "web" (Allen, 2021, p.6). According to Michael Worton and Judith Still in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice (1990)*, a text does not have a "self-sufficient" nature and cannot exist in an "hermitic" realm (Worton & Still, p.1). They added: "the reader's experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation" (Still and Worton, p.2). This brings us to Roland Barthes's "Reader Response Theory" and "The Death of the Author".

In *The Death of the Author (1967)*, Barthes enquired about the identity of the speaker in Balsac's *Sarrasine (1830)* who is describing the castrated male character in his work. The French poststructuralist claimed that it was a detail that shall not be known for the act of "writing" is the frontier where no voice keeps any objective identity (Barthes, p.142). According to Barthes, writing begins simultaneously with the death of the author, a phenomenon that gives birth to the reader inasmuch as the latter is a "space" in which all utterances and references intersect for the purpose of creating new writings and thus newer

meanings (Barthes, pp.146, 148). Furthermore, Michel Riffaterre (1988) highlighted the reader's importance in the signifying process and claimed: "The text tends therefore not to be interpreted for what it is" as the text neither has a stable meaning nor an objective truth, "but for what is selected from it by the reader's individual reactions" (Riffaterre, p.212).

Kristeva formed the conceptual frame of the theory of Intertextuality by applying what has been said by the structuralist (Saussure), the poststructuralist (Barthes) as well as Bakhtin's contributions. The latter worked on the "existence of language within specific social situations" (Allen, 2021, p.3). Consequently, for the elaboration of dialogism, Bakhtin linked the literary creation to the social milieu. In other terms, dialogism, according to him, is socially constructed. It is a common point that united him and Kristeva which provided the latter with one of the bases upon which she built her theory. She arrived to the point that "texts cannot be detached from the social or cultural textuality which is the back drop in which a text is created. The social text and the literary text are inseparably knit together to fabricate a tapestry" (Prayer, 2016,p.78). The process by which this tapestry is knitted is called "Ambivalence". This concept had been commented by Kristeva (1986). She identified it as the double nature through which a text has meaning-generating abilities through its intimate relation to history. She said:

The term 'ambivalence' implies the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history; for the writer, they are one and the same. When he speaks of 'two paths merging within the narrative', Bakhtin considers writing as a reading of the anterior literary corpus and the text as an absorption of and a reply to another text (Kristeva, p.39)

If history and text are one and the same entity, and if the text is the "absorption and transformation of another", any text is the product of its immediate or remote context (Kristeva, p.37). In addition, according to Julia Kristeva, Intertextuality had been supplanted by a more appropriate term which is "transposition". This implies superposing "one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (Kristeva, 1984, p.60). It also

suggests the “abandonment of a former sign system, [and] the passage to a second” through a medium shared by both systems, and the creation of a “new system with its new representability” (Kristeva, 1984, p.60). Kristeva suggested that when we move from one sign system to another, we alter the “Thetic position” – from thesis (p.59). During this step, the subject tries to affirm and build his own thesis to detach himself from the object that he has hitherto been part of. This is called “signifying process” which is able to produce new meanings by using the same “signifying material” (pp.59-60). Before her, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) described the meaning-generating ability of language as “a spring of dialogism that never runs dry for the internal dialogism of discourse is something that inevitably accompanies the social, contradictory historical becoming of language” (Bakhtin, p.330). In other words, history ceaselessly answers history.

Furthermore, Mikhail Bakhtin said that no text stands alone in a monologic stance but each one responds to another in a sort of “Socratic dialogue” through which many viewpoints intersect and mingle so that at the end find response (Prayer, 2016,p.78). In *Problems in Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, he wrote: “A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.252). As a result, a discourse might have a polemical nature. Truly, “Another’s discourse in this case [...] acts upon, influences, and in one way or another determines the author’s discourse, while itself remaining outside it. Such is the nature of discourse in the hidden polemic,” Bakhtin added (p.195). In this case, the author’s intention and the “original” discourse – the former text – are paradoxical. As a result, “The second voice, once having made its home in the other’s discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him to serve directly opposing aims”

(p.193). Thus, the “Thetic Phase” being obsolete, is supplanted by a more recent one without negating it.

It goes without saying that the aforementioned diverse quotes cover a wide spectrum. However, we tend to find all this quite theory-centred rather than a material permitting to draw a practical understanding that would allow us to apply it on literature. Therefore, we thought appropriate to introduce Jessica Mason’s *Intertextuality in Practice* (2019) in which she studied intertextuality aiming to “operationalize” those researches that would permit to “identify, describe and analyse” intertextual “manifestations” across and between texts (Mason, p.1). Mason claimed that there are relations everywhere and between everything (p.5). Before going any further, it is necessary to make some distinctions between narrative interrelations that show the presence of intertext. According to Mason, there are marked and unmarked references: the former are called text-driven references while the latter are reader-driven ones (p.43). The former consists of “what can be evidenced and identified: intertextuality as an examinable feature”(p.5). Among this category, we may cite pure match references which can be in a form of citations, quotes, character names, setting name, epigraphs, and any obvious manifestation pertaining clearly to a previous or outside text. According to Mason, “‘Pure match’ intertextual references are instances where a reader simply recognises that the Base shares an identical feature with another narrative” (p.55). The second category relates more to Barthes’s reader response theory. The reader-driven category suggests that the intertext spotted by the reader has not been thought of by the author, and it is solely based on the knowledge and appreciation of the reader. In other words, unmarked references, unlike marked ones, always carry a degree of “uncertainty” regarding their presence within the analysed text (p.116).

2. Materials

a. Biographical Background of Washington Irving

Washington Irving, son of William Irving of Scotland and Sarah Sanders of England was born in New York, U.S.A., in 1783 (Wood, 1967, p.6). He was fascinated by works like: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *The World Displayed*. Irving was so thrilled by those narratives that he thought of going to sea and travel like the heroes he read about (p.16). After the war of 1812 that opposed the U.S.A. and Great Britain, he enlisted in the army for he was deeply affected by the conflict (p.47). He would travel all over Europe for seventeen years, serving as translator, writer, and even diplomate. On May 21st, 1832, Irving returned to New York. Subsequently, he began to discover the wild west of the Appalachian Mountains and rediscovered the fur trade stories from fur traders and more specifically, from John Jacob Astor (p.46).

During the 1830s, also known as the Jacksonian Era, the U.S.A. faced many changes like The Indian Removal Act of 1830 that was an important issue that represented the struggle – Democrats vs Republicans (Satz, p. 53). Irving was a prolific writer which owed him a great reputation (Aderman, p.155). During three consecutive years, he wrote three books dedicated to the westward exploration: *A Tour on the Prairies (1835)*, *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains (1840)*, and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville (1837)*. Finally, he wrote *The Life of George Washington (1859)*. The author died the same year.

b. Biographical Background of Peter Stark

Peter Stark was born in 1954 in Wisconsin into an adventurous family. He was raised and received his education in Wisconsin. He studied English, Anthropology, and Psychology. Stark worked for *The Missoulian* newspaper in Montana for a brief period. Then, he dedicated himself entirely to work as a freelance writer. His writings were focused on adventurous

exploits, exploration history, wilderness and autochthonous populations as well as the effects of high stress and the extreme conditions of the wilderness on the human body. After his exploits in Luganda river in Mozambique in 2002, Stark decided to put a halt to his adventures and shift to another kind of exploration: history. Based in Missoula, Montana, he specialized in investigating and writing historical accounts of early American explorers in the wild settings and their contact with autochthons. His *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire a Tale of Ambition and Survival on the Early American Frontier (2015)* is a product of his professional shift. This work was a New York Times bestseller and PEN U.S.A. literary award finalist (Stark, biography, para.2).

c. Brief Summary of the Two Works

As both works deal with the same historical events and characters, we will present a single summary of the whole story of the establishment and fall of Fort Astoria.

The two books relate the actual story of a young German immigrant to New York named John Jacob Astor. He moved from the status of a German middle class butcher's son from Waldorf, Germany, to a merchant of music instruments, then a fur trader in New York in late 1780s and finally to one of the richest business men in the United States of America. The two works retrace his beginnings in Germany. Then, they give a historical account of how Astor came to think of his plan. Before he even came to the U.S.A., there were a multitude of explorers and traders who explored the western parts of the American continent either by land, crossing from East to West or through Cape Horn then to the mouth of the Columbia on the Pacific Ocean. Irving and Stark mentioned explorers like, George Vancouver, Alexander Mackenzie, Lewis and Clark for being pioneers in reaching the West.

Astor cumulated a thorough knowledge in the fur trade as well as the wilderness and realized the possibility of expanding the business further to reach a worldwide monopoly. After receiving the President Thomas Jefferson's benediction and approval, Astor, in 1810,

sent two expeditions in order to establish Fort Astoria. The first party to take leave was by sea on board of the *Tonquin* carrying most of Astor's partners. The second party – The Overland Party – travelled by land and took off few weeks after the *Tonquin*. The sea party was under the leadership of a U.S. navy captain named Thorn. He was so harsh and inquisitive that he was embroiled in various troubles: first with Astor's partners, McDougall too particularly, then with the Natives later on the mouth of the Columbia River. While bargaining with the coastal tribe, Captain Thorn offended a well-respected elder among the aboriginals. Consequently, the autochthons killed everyone except the native translator. The overland party was led by Wilson Price Hunt. They crossed dangerous places, met with new members as they made progress through the continent. Members who would prove valuable for the excellent information they provided about the surrounding environment and dangerous tribes.

After multiple hardships and nearly impossible challenges, they managed, not without some casualties, to meet the other party on the mouth of the Columbia at Fort Astoria in February 1812. But while the Astorians were dispersed in different directions in order to establish other trading posts, Hunt sailed on board of the *Beaver* to St. Paul in order to trade with Russians. Unfortunately, while Hunt was absent, the United States of America declared war against England. Unable to guarantee the Fort's security and their interests, the partners, especially McDougall, decided to sell all Astoria's merchandise and hand over the Fort to the British. Another overland party, led by the young Robert Stuart, travelled back to New York through St. Louis. On arrival, the Astorians narrated everything that happened to them to Astor, who was embittered by the failure of his project. This failure would inspire him to immortalize his project and give it to posterity. Thus came *Astoria (1890)* into existence. The latter would inspire and influence a multitude of historians, novelists and travel writers like Peter Stark.

III. Results

This research has offered a comprehensive exploration of the various similarities and differences between Irving's and Stark's works. By applying Kristeva's Intertextuality we achieved the result that the historical context shared a close relation with the two writers' texts. Moreover, we arrived to the findings that both writers relied on approximately the same literary sources like travelogues and journals.

Within the second chapter, we explored similarities in relation to various themes. We observed that the two books are intertextually linked as they both explored and described, similarly, major themes like ambition, overcoming adversity, and perseverance, as well as the idea of Manifest Destiny. As an outcome of this chapter, these themes were dealt with as to show that they are interconnected.

Third, we studied the dialogic aspect pertaining to the differences between both works with respect to themes and major characters. As a result, we unveiled the authors' discordances at the level of their ideological stances and styles. We found that Stark's text, though it was not specifically meant to criticize Irving's, bore obvious signs of clash and polemical nature. Truly, the two authors diverged on critical subjects like: racism and misogyny. They also differed in their dealing with characters like: John Jacob Astor, Duncan McDougall, as well as Wilson Price Hunt.

IV. Discussion

Chapter One: Historical and Literary Contexts in the Two Works

Washington Irving and Peter Stark lived in different periods, but their works are related at different levels including their historical and literary backgrounds. According to Bakhtin, history and texts are related, and by the medium of ambivalence, each one leads to the other and each accretes the other in a mutual feeding relation (Bakhtin, as cited in Kristeva, 1986, p.39). Thus, if we apply Bakhtin's thoughts about writing being the act of reading history, Peter Stark's *Astoria* can be seen as the product of the same historical and literary contexts and narratives that produced Irving's.

Irving set the reader in the context of the public debate of the turn of the nineteenth century when the accounts of Alexander Mackenzie were published. The latter urged the British crown to impose a monopoly on the U.S. West Coast. Irving observed: "Mackenzie [...] suggested the policy of opening an intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans" (Irving, 1890, pp.33-34). This proposition attracted "the attention of the American government" (p.34). Jefferson, as we will see in Stark's account, was informed of Mackenzie's literature when he dispatched Lewis and Clark to explore the West. The period was coloured with diplomatic conflicts between the U.S.A. and England, culminating in an open war 6 years after Lewis and Clark's expedition ended. But prior to this, to contextualize later events and conflicts, we will mention the purchase of Louisiana in 1803. This was undoubtedly a turning point that swayed the game when the British had so many geographic advantages over the U.S.A. Irving made allusion to the purchase of Louisiana stating: "In this way they hoped soon to monopolize the trade with all the tribes on the southern and western waters, and of those vast tracts comprised in ancient Louisiana" (p.27). The author referred to the territory as "ancient Louisiana", insinuating that when he wrote *Astoria*, Louisiana had a new status. Hiram Martin Chittenden (1986) explained that two years prior to the purchase, in

1801, France retrieved Louisiana from Spain. After that, a great apprehension had been felt concerning Napoleon's possible aspiration for the American continent. But Napoleon projected to dedicate his full power to those "he most desired to impoverish and humiliate: [the British in Europe]". This led to the U.S. purchase of the same territory in 1803. Subsequently, President Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark westward to conquer the West in the name of the young nation (Chittenden, 1986, p.81, 83). About Jefferson's emissaries, Irving wrote:

In the meantime [Sic] the attention of the American government was attracted to the subject, and the memorable expedition under Messrs. Lewis and Clarke fitted out. These gentlemen, in 1804, accomplished the enterprise [...] where their countryman, Gray, had anchored about twelve years previously (Irving, p.34)

Irving showed the importance of Lewis and Clark's fits either among U.S. authorities or US citizens. In this context, James P. Hendrix JR said:

In sum, by the time the official Biddle paraphrase of the journals appeared in 1814, the American people and their potential literary and artistic spokesmen had been given more than enough information about Lewis and Clark to begin to create mythic heroes of the explorers. (Hendrix, 2001, p.213)

In this quote, Hendrix ascertained the cultural prominence of the two explorers in the "public sphere" during and after the nineteenth century. Thanks to the journals and publications that narrated the exploits of the two men, a patriotic sentiment emerged. Irving bathed in this atmosphere. Therefore, he presented Astor's endeavour in a romanticized manner.

Stark's *Astoria*, if put side by side with Irving's, presents the same historical and cultural contexts. Indeed, Stark situated Astor's project within a larger frame than the mere ambition of one individual – John Astor. He situated it within that of Lewis and Clark's expedition, Alexander Mackenzie's, Captain Gray's and many others'. In sum, Stark framed his work around the westward expansion which has been triggered by the fur trade and the general public discussion that surrounded it. Though the author acknowledged Astor's merit in launching and thinking of a wider plan than the one thought of by Mackenzie, Stark, like

Irving, traced back the source of John Jacob Astor's scheme to earlier explorers. In other words, the author resituated the story around the purchase of Louisiana by Jefferson.

Moreover, he put the reader in the context of the President's commissioning of Lewis and Clark while the British army was busy fighting Napoleon. Peter Stark wrote:

Alexander Mackenzie posed exactly that same question to his British readership in his account of his Canadian overland journey to the Pacific. Writing in his *Travels*, published in 1801 [...] He [Jefferson] had read Alexander Mackenzie's 1801 warnings to his British countrymen about the urgent necessity of controlling the Columbia's mouth and Pacific Coast. With Britain distracted by the Napoleonic Wars. (Stark, p. 15-16)

Stark pointed the importance of Mackenzie's writing prior to Lewis and Clark's expedition.

Either among the British or the U.S., the question of who would take control over the vast Western territory remained a debate that would trigger Astor's attention. This was the historical context in which Astor's project was born. Interestingly, Astoria came into existence whence the British Crown's and U.S. Government's trading practices were such that would impact the success or failure of any business.

When we analyse the U.S. and British expansions under the cover of the fur trade, we notice that they followed two distinct patterns: royally supported settlements – or enterprises – versus private enterprises. The first type was related to Great Britain, while the second was connected to the newly independent U.S.A. Since the discovery of America, most of the British expeditions were made by Royal charters, and all discoveries as well as settlements were in the name of the Monarch. However, the U.S. efforts were private and individual attempts for most of them. Thus, on the one hand, the privileges and royal aids given to British companies by royal charters “were such as no other company ever enjoyed,” like the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company (Chittenden, 1987, p.87). On the other hand, their U.S. counterparts were let to act on their own in dire situations. In fact, in 1796 the U.S. Congress established “Liberal Trade” which gave private U.S. individuals and companies the right to trade with the Indians. It stipulated that the U.S. Government was a

mere competitor to U.S. private companies; the U.S. Government neither offered help nor controlled anything (Chittenden, p12). This policy would continue even in Jefferson's terms. Though Jefferson desired to claim new territories, gain monopoly and take the lead over the British, he knew that the U.S. "government did not have the courage of its convictions" (Chittenden, p.13). The British however had a long history of military and trade expeditions led by Royal charters. This contributed to the failure of Astor's plans and left him to fight alone using his own means. This very context found its route into Irving and Stark's works.

Accordingly, Irving lamented the fate of Astor's enterprise. He was embittered by the fact that the U.S. government did not do enough to save his Astoria and let him fight using his personal means. The author wrote:

For this purpose, as early as 1796 the government sent out agents to establish rival trading houses, [...] The expedient, however, was unsuccessful, as most commercial expedients are prone to be, where the dull patronage of government is counted upon [...] What government failed to effect, however, with all its patronage and all its agents, was at length brought about by the enterprise and perseverance of a single merchant, [...] John Jacob Astor, the individual in question. (Irving, p.27)

In the above passage, the author commented the inefficacy of the U.S. Government in facing the competition despite its huge means and agents while the private companies like Astor's succeeded to compete and take the challenge on their own. Furthermore, Irving revealed that Astor did not benefit from the Government's huge means. On this account, the author regretted: "Had he been seconded by suitable agents, and properly protected by government, the ultimate failure of his plan might yet have been averted." (p.375). Moreover, the author alluded multiple times to the disastrous and unfavourable conditions in which Astor's enterprise was evolving. He lamented that the U.S. "government should have neglected the overture of Mr. Astor, and suffered the moment to pass by" (p. 376). Nonetheless, their British counterparts, as Irving showed, benefited from their Government's support. They have been sent an armed ship to escort the North West Company's *Isaac Todd* to the mouth of the

Columbia as soon as they received the letter sent by the North West Company's partners. The letter explained the importance of Fort Astoria for the U.S.A. and for controlling the whole West Coast (p.345).

Peter Stark, in his turn, reported the difference between the British and U.S. practices. He said that some U.S. leaders would have loved to take control over the West. However, the U.S.A. had not the same urge of conquering the West because it would mean running the risk of losing their thirteen colonies hardly obtained. Stark said:

But President Jefferson felt that the U.S. government by itself had neither the will nor the funds to extend itself far west enough to settle the far edges of the continent. However much he wished to see it, he thought a Pacific Rim seaport was best left to private enterprise. (Stark, p.16)

Stark's passage reads as Chittenden's previous quote in which he explained how the U.S. Government preferred to be a mere competitor to U.S. fur companies. This freed the way for private companies to carry the burden of conquering the West because it – the US Government – had not "the courage of its convictions". Thus, through both works, it is clear that Astor's scheme originated and developed during a still young and growing U.S.A. On the one hand, the U.S.A. had not enough means and experience to venture and risk everything it had cumulated so far. On the other hand, the old British nation was ready to whatever cost. Therefore, Peter Stark described President Jefferson as "a philosophical idealist (but practical statesman)" (p.20) who would very well conquer but not on the expense of losing everything. Nonetheless, both nations were in harsh competition.

A context of rivalry reigned prior to and after Astoria's establishment. Northern America was entrenched in a wave of international attempts for hegemony. After that the British crown obtained the Canadas from the French in the seven year's war, in 1763, there had been an increasing British interest in the West and in its furs. The U.S.A. grew anxious about the British ambitions. Irving claimed that the U.S. government was suspicious about the advancing and thriving British companies among the Natives, West of the Missouri. The

author asserted: “The government of the United States began to view with a wary eye the growing influence thus acquired by combinations of foreigners over the aboriginal tribes inhabiting its territories, and endeavored to counteract it” (Irving, p.27). Nevertheless, the U.S. government was not the only one to worry but the British as well. Louisiana was a vast French territory, and the British lost the 13 colonies. Therefore, the English crown was concerned about the remaining lands that had not been claimed yet by any one. Mackenzie, in *Voyages from Montreal through the continent of North America to the frozen and Pacific oceans in 1789 and 1793, with an account of the rise and state of the fur trade (1911)*, insinuated that if the British did not conquer the lands, there were plenty “who would be willing, as they are able, to engage in, and carry on the proposed commercial [sic] undertaking” (Mackenzie, p.356). He added that the West Coast was “at present left to American adventurers” (Mackenzie, p.359). Thus, he summed the tense atmosphere between both nations. In fact, after the North West Company (NWC) had heard of John Jacob Astor’s impending establishment on the mouth of the Columbia, they sent agents to outrun the U.S. ambitions. Consequently, the NWC and other British companies asked the British navy for help. William H. Goetzmann (1966) claimed: “Trade was an end in itself, and meeting the internal competition within the network of the British empire held priority over everything else” (Goetzmann, p.12-3).

Washington Irving corroborated Goetzmann’s claim. For him, the NWC sought to anticipate Mr. Astor in his intention of effecting a settlement [...] Mr. Thompson had pushed on his course with great haste, calling at all the Indian villages [...] presenting them with British flags, and even planting them at the forks of the rivers, proclaiming formally that he took possession of the country in the name of the King of Great Britain for the Northwest Company. (Irving, p.79)

The previous passage proves that the context was that of open rivalry and conflict. As a result, it urged President Jefferson to support Astor’s plan. Additionally, Irving informed that relations were so bad between both nations that they went to war in 1812. He wrote:

“Unluckily, the war which broke out in 1812 between Great Britain and the United States suspended the association; and after the war it was entirely dissolved” (p.30). For the author, Astor’s plan and aspirations would be considerably hindered by the war.

Likewise, Peter Stark’s work is witness to the American British rivalry. Indeed, he informed that “President Jefferson felt compelled to get there first, before his long-hated British” (Stark, p.16). As a result, Jefferson sent a letter to Astor. In Stark’s work, we read:

The field is immense, & would occupy a vast amount of capital. [. . .] You may be assured that in order to get the whole of this business passed into the hands of our own citizens [. . .] every reasonable patronage & facility in the power of the Executive will be afforded. (p.17)

This correspondence, if analysed in parallel with the previous quote, would prove, again, the state of harsh systematic contest between the U.S.A. and the British crown. The previous passage taken from Jefferson’s letter may be considered as a pure match reference which is, according to Jessica Mason, any intertext taken as it is from the former text (Gentner, 1989, as cited in Masson, 2019, p.55). In the letter, the statesman reaffirmed his intense and solid conviction to support any enterprise that sought to carry the nation’s destiny further. However, as we already demonstrated, those were mere words and wishful thinking. The incessant feud and defiance was also felt even among Astor’s proxies. For example, Captain Thorn was wary and untrusting of Astor’s partners because they were British subjects and a war started between their respective nations (pp.76-77). Moreover, Astor negotiated with the NWC to fret their furs by his own ships, which was rejected by the aforementioned company as they were British and did not trust him. Peter Stark reported that in a discussion with President Madison and James Monroe, Astor tried to convince both men of the “expedient” nature of taking possession of that vast territory West of the Rockies. He urged them to dispatch military ships to defend Fort Astoria from the British (p.97). Unfortunately, Astor received no proper answers. Stark said:

During their meeting, Astor explained to Secretary Monroe how deeply the West Coast and its fur trade mattered both economically and strategically. In a polite follow-up letter, Astor asked Monroe, in effect, if the United States planned to claim this rich country, the Northwest, or let the British have it. (p.264)

The previous passage proves the tense and rivalrous context under which Fort Astoria was established.

Furthermore, Jefferson's retirement in 1808 is another historical context. During the period, the relations between the United States of America and England were worsening until getting to the breaking point of open war in 1812. Stark referred to the war in the following: "ASTOR [...] got the news in late June 1812: War declared [...] he had laid out a comprehensive strategy [...] to defend the emporium from British attack or seizure" (p.257). Stark claimed that Astor "wanted to ensure that his enterprise [...] would be primarily managed [...] by American rather than British personnel, especially as tensions continued to rise between the two nations" (p.237-238). This ascertains the climate of war, rivalry, and conflict in which Fort Astoria thrived that Irving reported as well.

In addition to the historical context, it is important to refer to the literary influence on the two works. Our approach will consist of three phases: first, we will reveal the original texts from which Irving took his narrative; second, we will present Irving's work transposed on the original ones; and third, we will transpose Stark's contribution to the same narrative based on the previous texts.

Irving relied on many journals from writers like Gabriel Franchère, John Bradbury, Robert Stuart, and Wilson Price Hunt as well as others. However, we will focus solely on the four aforementioned chroniclers. According to Edgeley W. Todd, Gabriel Franchère's *Relation d'un Voyage à la côte du Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale, Dans les Années 1810, 11, 12, 13, et 14 (1820)* had been a major source for Washington Irving. Indeed, Franchère's account had been "his principal source for the voyage of the Tonquin as well as for many of the events which took place at Astoria and along the Columbia" (Todd, 1964,

p.xxx). However, Irving relied on “the original French version,” for the English translation would not appear until 1854 (p.xxx). Interestingly, Irving’s and Franchère’s accounts of the Astorians’ first encounter with Mr. Thompson are quite alike. Franchère wrote:

Thompson nous dit qu’il avait traversé le continent dans le cours de l’hiver précédent mais que la désertion d’une partie de ses gens l’avait contraint d’hiverner au pied des montagnes, près de la source de la Rivière Columbia ; qu’au printemps [Sic] il avait construit un canot, et s’était rendu à notre Etablissement. [...] Mr. Thompson tenait, à ce que je crus voir, un journal régulier, et voyageait plutôt en géographe, qu’en commerçant; de pelleteries [...] et pendant un séjour de huit jours qu’il fit à notre Etablissement, il eut occasion de faire plusieurs observations astronomiques. (Franchère, 1820, pp.92-93)

Even if Irving did not clearly cite Franchère, the following account of that very encounter is witness to his literary influence on Irving. The latter reported that Mr. Thompson was an astronomer and trader who had been deserted by his men. In spring, he camped at the source of the Columbia River. Then, he built a cedar canoe “the same in which they had reached Astoria” (Irving, 1890, p. 79). All the details reported by Irving match to a certain extent those of Gabriel Franchère. This can be considered as pure match reference according to Jessica Mason (2019) because Irving took the details as they were in Franchère’s text (p.55). This type of intertextual manifestations is, according to Mason, “contained observation rather than catalysts for challenge or elaboration” (Mason, p.55). In other terms, there is so little to say about it that Gentner called it a “surface similarity” (Gentner, 1989, as cited in Mason, 2019, p.55).

Peter Stark relied on the same source to narrate this very encounter. Through Stark’s account we learn about the impression that Mr. Thompson had on Franchère. Like Irving and Franchère, Stark narrated the difficulties that Thompson passed through (Stark, 2015, p.194). Furthermore, the author emphasized Thompson’s astronomic and geographic qualities. He said that Thompson was not just “any trader who had wandered in” because he was also “a tremendously accomplished explorer, [and a] mapmaker” (p.193). Moreover, in order to echo Franchère, Stark declared that “Thompson made astronomical observations and fixed its

latitude and longitude”. He also used a pure match reference and cited Franchère’s aforementioned quote taken directly from the latter’s journal (page 92): “‘Mr. Thompson kept a regular journal,’ reported Franchère, ‘and traveled [Sic], I thought, more like a geographer than a fur-trader’” (p.195). This is another case of transposition. Stark transposed the journal of Gabriel Franchère and Irving’s work, which are different sign systems, in order to create or “articulate” his own.

Additionally, Irving’s account about the meeting with the three Kentuckians Edward Robinson, Hoback and Reznor is another example of literary influence and “‘pure matching’ intertextual references.” The author’s source for this piece of information was John Bradbury’s *Travels in the Interior of America, 1809-1811 (1909)*. The latter is the sole thorough narrative about that encounter. John Bradbury declared that Hunt’s party met with the three Kentuckians while breakfasting. Hunt’s party saw three white men on board of two canoes descending the river. They fired a canon in order to attract their attention. Bradbury presented the three men as being highly experimented hunters who longed for their respective families. He reported that they had experienced enough dangers. He also declared that, on seeing Hunt’s strong group, their longing for their homes disappeared for they were excited to tag along. This illustrated the resilience and determination that reigned among hunters and explorers at that time. Thus, Bradbury was one of the sources of this very theme in Irving’s *Astoria*. This is a theme that will be explored in chapter two. Then, Bradbury made a favourable comment about the new recruits and expressed his satisfaction with them because they had knowledge that was vital in times of danger (Bradbury, 1904, p.98). Washington Irving’s narrative resembles Bradbury’s. He did not omit any detail from Bradbury’s account. He concluded his report by depicting their “irresistible” urge to join Hunt’s party and Bradbury’s joy for making new recruits (Irving, 1890, pp.138-139).

Peter Stark provided approximately the same details. He said that the three men suffered during winter and were exposed to the danger of the Blackfoot Indians. Therefore, they decided to abandon and go back to their homes. However, their plans changed after meeting Hunt's party. Stark wrote:

They had been paddling downstream on the swift spring snowmelt bound for their Kentucky farms, when, on that morning, May 26, 1811, they ran into Wilson Price Hunt and his party breakfasting on the riverbank. Even after all the harrowing experiences they'd undergone, or perhaps because of them, the sight of Hunt's large Overland Party was too tempting to the three Kentucky trappers, as were the possible riches they might accrue under Astor's transcontinental scheme. They abandoned their plans to head back to their family farms and signed with Hunt's and Astor's enterprise. (Stark, 2015, p.111)

The literary influence thus shown might be considered as a pure match reference and a form of intertextual transposition. Irving used Bradbury's journal while Stark used Irving's and Bradbury's texts altogether. "Transposition plays an essential role here," said Kristeva, for "it implies the abandonment of a former sign system, the passage to a second via an instinctual intermediary common to the two systems, and the articulation of the new system with its new representability," she added (Kristeva, 1984, pp.59-60). Thus, Peter Stark's account about the three Kentuckians came from the transposition of at least two other texts: Irving's and Bradbury's. Stark departed from the former texts in order to create his own sign system. The latter would also be transposed and serve to articulate further texts.

We learnt, thanks to Todd's Introduction to his edition of Irving's *Astoria*, that Hunt's diary provided sixteen chapters to Washington Irving's account (Todd, 1964, p. xxxi). Irving relied on Hunt's diary to narrate the harrowing expedition of the overland party that took place from St. Louis to Fort Astoria. Hunt's account described the harsh conditions and uncertainty that prevailed during their peregrination. For instance, Wilson Price Hunt and his men bitterly spent twenty days evolving in the icy wilderness for naught. We read in a part of Hunt's diary that on the 16th of December, before arriving to the Sciutogas tribe, they camped on the banks of a river that they had already crossed on the 26th of the previous month in 1812

(Rollins, p.299). In other words, they thought they were advancing further while they were actually turning around the whole time. As a result, they wasted valuable time. In addition, Hunt had received stressing news that “Mr Mackenzie and his party” might have crossed before them; Hunt’s account let the reader feel an atmosphere of anguish and distress, for Hunt understood that Mackenzie’s party might have perished (Rollins, p.299).

Irving reported some of the details above. If we put his account and Hunt’s texts side by side, we would realize the extent to which Irving’s *Astoria* had been highly influenced by Hunt’s narrative. Irving wrote:

after twenty days of fatigue, famine, and hardship ... ineffectual attempt to find a passage down the river. They now encamped on a little willowed stream, running from the east, which they had crossed on the 26th of November. Here they found a dozen lodges of Shoshonies, recently arrived, who informed them that had they persevered along the river, they would have found their difficulties augment until they became absolutely insurmountable. This intelligence added to the anxiety of Mr. Hunt for the fate of Mr. M’Kenzie and his people, who had kept on. (Irving, 1890, 234-5).

Similarly, Peter Stark offered his own narrative about the overland party. To do so, he relied on Hunt’s diary. Stark gave us a glance of Hunt’s state of mind in early December 1812 after wasting valuable time and ending by backtracking. Stark quoted Hunt: “‘To my great regret,’ Hunt recorded of that morning of December 7 after his restless night, ‘it was thus necessary to backtrack with the hope of finding some Indians’” (Stark, 2015, p.170).

Embittered, Hunt regretted that he led his men to a dead-end. Moreover, based on Hunt’s reports, Stark speculated on the reasons that brought Wilson Price Hunt to take such decisions. He qualified his choices as “an often fatal mistake made by lost and hypothermic hikers” (p.170). Based on the diary of Astor’s agent as well as his own experience and knowledge, Stark drew his conclusions and analyses. Though Stark used or “transposed” the same material as Irving, he ended by articulating a “new system with its new representability” (Kristeva, 1984, p.60).

In addition, Irving relied on Robert Stuart's journal. The author used some of Stuart's writings "without attribution as the basis for much of Astoria" (McCartney, 2004, p.5). According to Howard Lamar, Robert Stuart was the one who discovered the South Pass (Lamar, p.2). Thanks to Lewis and Clark, the United States of America oriented its attention to the "wilderness West of the Mississippi", but it was thanks to Robert Stuart, said Laton McCartney (2004), that the westward expansion was triggered (McCartney,2004,p.6). Thus, Stuart was not only important as an explorer but also as a writer, for his Travelling Memoranda had been of great importance either for Washington Irving, Philip Ashton Rollins, and Peter Stark as well as many others.

Robert Stuart's journal was "the direct source of some fifty pages" for Irving's *Astoria* (1890) (Spaulding, 1950, p.150). For instance, the journey from Fort Astoria back to St. Louis was principally taken from Stuart's account. His writing about that very expedition back to St. Louis depicted the miserable and harsh conditions lived by all the members. Within Robert Stuart's journal edited by Kenneth Spaulding (1953), there is an astounding and shocking anecdote about a French Canadian voyageur who approached the party's leader – Stuart – carrying his gun and asking to eat one of the party's members; he argued that it was their only chance of survival as they had not seen any animal for days. He then proposed to decide upon which person to sacrifice by drawing lots provided that the leader would be exempted. Astor's Scottish partner threatened to shoot the man if he insisted (Stuart,1953, pp.114-115).

This very scene found its route into Irving's book. As a matter of fact, Irving revealed that one of Mr. Stuart's men approached the latter "with his gun in his hand" and told him that "it was all in vain" to continue further. "It was better, therefore, that one should die to save the rest" Irving reported (Irving, 1890, p.304). He added:

He proposed, therefore, that they should cast lots ; adding as an inducement for Mr. Stuart to assent to the proposition, that he as leader of the party, should be exempted. Mr. Stuart shuddered at the horrible proposition, and endeavored to

reason with the man, but his words were unavailing. At length, snatching up his rifle, he threatened to shoot him on the spot if he persisted. (Irving, p.304)

Peter Stark also accounted on this anecdote. He narrated approximately the same details in his epilogue (Stark, 2015, p.304). This scene and the effect it had on Stuart would inspire the author to use two epigraphs that responded to one another. The first was Robert Stuart's monologue – which is a non-paginated para-text in Stark's *Astoria*. Stuart said:

Let him but visit these regions of want and misery; his riches will prove an eye sore, and he will be taught the pleasure and advantage of prayer. If the advocates for the rights of man come here, they can enjoy them, for this is the land of liberty and equality, where a man sees and feels that he is a man merely, and that he can no longer exist, than while he can himself procure the means of support. (Stuart, 1953, p.115)

The second epigraph was taken from Thomas Jefferson's letter to John Jacob Astor. Jefferson said: "[Y]our name will be handed down with that of Columbus & Raleigh, as the father of the establishment and the founder of such an empire" (Stark, 2015, p.7). In his monologue that we may consider, according to Bakhtin, as a dialogue with Astor and Jefferson, Stuart thought about the real meaning of liberty, equality, and wealth when faced with scarcity and danger in remote and dry regions. Obviously, the French-Canadian's suggestion of cannibalism had shaken Stuart. The latter entered into sarcastic and critical thoughts about these great men – supposedly Astor and Jefferson – who wanted to conquer by proxy such a vast and barren territory and yet furnished but scanty efforts themselves (Stark, 2015, p.304).

Thus, Stark's literary influence is again related to Irving's as both relied on Stuart's text to provide their own accounts about Astor's enterprise, each through his own lens. It might be considered a pure match reference because the references were taken as they were from the former texts. It is also an example of transposition inasmuch as each writer superposed former texts in order to create new ones that represent them the most. In this respect, Mason claimed that the recent writer might rely on the same materials, he would

nonetheless end with a different sign system “with its new representability”, while keeping the same meaning (Kristeva, 1984, p.59-60).

To conclude, the two works bore the stigmas of the nineteenth century events and writings. Authors who dealt with this period, the westward expansion more particularly, discussed the purchase of Louisiana, delved into the public debate of that very period, and immersed the reader in the rivalrous atmosphere that reigned during the same century. We resorted to the concept of “ambivalence” to show the writers’ implication within the historical context during which the Astoria project was carried out. Finally, we used the concept of “transposition” and “pure match references” to prove the literary implication of the two writers. Both authors treated some common themes like ambition, adversity, perseverance, and the idea of Manifest Destiny that we will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Similarities in Themes in the Two Works

In this chapter, we are going to study the intertextual parallels in Washington Irving's and Peter Stark's books in terms of themes. For this purpose, we will apply the concepts of "transposition" and "epigraph". The former involves the use of pre-existent texts by an author in order to produce and write a new text. The latter tends to "offer readers one of their first flavours of a Base" and informs them about the "potentially [sic] themes of the forthcoming text"(Mason, 2019, p. 99). There are two intertextual references: marked references, or what Mason named "Text-driven" references and "Reader-driven" references. The latter consist of intertexts that have only occurred to the reader without necessarily being anticipated by the author (p.43).

To start with, we noticed that ambition is well-represented within both works. Washington Irving opened his *Astoria* with the following: "Two leading objects of commercial gain have given birth to wide and daring enterprise in the early history of the Americas: the precious metals of the south, and the rich peltries of the north" (Irving, 1890, p.17). These first lines, put side by side with the title, foreshadow the story's interest in enterprise and investment in peltries "beyond" the limits of human reach and civilization. Similarly, Peter Stark linked his title to the beginning of his work. He used an epigraph – an intertextual aspect according to Genette and Mason – which consists of Thomas Jefferson's letter to John Jacob Astor complimenting him for his ambitious enterprise. "[Y]our name will be handed down with that of Columbus & Raleigh, as the father of the establishment and the founder of such an empire" Stark reported (Stark, p. 7). Peter Stark, in the first paragraph, used a metaphor about "card game"; when a player's hand was favorable, it was time to "make life's important decisions", in this case investing (p.7). As a result, Stark's title is also linked to the ideas present in the epigraph and the first paragraph. They suggest a story about

“ambition and survival” beyond the limits of the thirteen colonies. Thus, both authors began their texts with an atmosphere of trade, enterprise, rivalry, and ambition.

Irving described the white merchants’ powerful desire to pursue their ambitions to the fullest. He wrote: “Immense profits were thus made by the early traders, and the traffic was pursued with avidity” (Irving, p.18). The fur trade was so lucrative and well tolerated even among the “Indians” that companies like the North West Company were formed “spontaneously”. This indicated the ambitious mindset of those men. The companies attracted so many prospective entrepreneurs that they were not able to accept further partners. Irving wrote: “The company, [...] was at first a spontaneous association of merchants; but after it had been regularly organized, admission into it became extremely difficult” (p.23). New members had to prove their will and their worth before realizing their “ambition, [which is] a partnership in the company” (p.23).

Additionally, Irving showed Astor’s ambitious spirit. In order to carry his grand project to fruition, John Jacob Astor recruited experienced voyageurs and traders of the North West Company. Interestingly, the NWC’s workers who wanted to become partners were easily tempted by Astor’s visionary idea. According to Irving, Astor projected to establish a great empire in the mouth of the Columbia River and create a trading network all over America’s Northwest side. His next step would be to create a global monopoly. John Astor was so ambitious that he even anticipated to supply Russians with furs so that they would not feel obliged to hunt on the lands he envisioned to conquer. Irving said: “it was part of the plan of Mr. Astor to conciliate the good-will” of the Russian Fur Company “by the most amicable and beneficial arrangements,” (p.35). The author reported that a part of Astor’s plan consisted of furnishing “the Russian fur establishment [...] with regular supplies” so as to render it dependent on his ships. Consequently, when Astor received the first “most flattering accounts” about “the success [...] of his ambition” he had an “overpowering” feeling (p.346).

Moreover, the fur trade did not only induce the ambitious and enterprising tendencies of the white people, but also the Native Americans'. Irving informed: "As the valuable furs soon became scarce in the neighborhood of the settlements, the Indians of the vicinity were stimulated to take a wider range in their hunting expeditions" (p.18). Their contact with white traders taught them how to bargain and created in them the same urges and inclinations for gain, monopoly, and control. Irving wrote:

When a trader arrived in his village, he caused all his goods to be brought into his lodge and opened. From these he selected whatever suited his sovereign pleasure blankets, tobacco, whiskey, [...] No one was allowed to dispute the prices fixed by the white trader upon his articles, who took care to indemnify himself five times over for the goods set apart by the chief. (p.127)

This showed how the Natives practiced monopoly, special treatments and nepotism. The author added: "In this way the Blackbird [the chief] enriched himself, and enriched the white men, and became exceedingly popular among the traders of the Missouri" River (p.127). Blackbird wanted to prevent any competition and settle his own monopoly. Thus, because the seed of greed and desire are sown within each individual, it was only natural that the Natives would display the same entrepreneurial and commercial behaviors as the white traders.

In parallel to Irving, Stark reported the ambitious schemes of North American traders in general, and Astor's particularly. The author informed that taking the lead on the North America's furs was "the *raison d'être* for the great trading companies of the Canadian north, such as the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company" (Stark, 2015, p.12-13). British traders created the Hudson's Bay Company and sought to apply a "royal British monopoly" on all furs that were on the vicinity of the Hudson Bay (Stark, 2015, pp. 12-13). These British ambitions fuelled Astor's as well. In fact, Astor wanted to establish a global trading network that would rival European companies. He imagined a "near-global monopoly on fur" that would have been possible through a series of wide-range negotiations that Stark would qualify as "a gargantuan deal" (Stark, 2015, p.94). Stark said that Astor wanted to:

link the interior North American fur trade over the Rockies with the Pacific coastal fur trade and link that to the Russian Alaskan fur trade, and link that to China, to London, to Paris, to New York. Astor's thinking revolved on entire continents and oceans. (p.76)

The previous passage shows the scale of Astor's vision. He wanted that his ships cover as many countries as possible. This would be seen as mere monopoly. It would also be seen as laying the premises of what would be known later on as globalization. The latter, unbeknownst to Irving under its present terminology, was however referred to by Irving himself in his journal under the expression of "one people" (as cited in Hellman & Trent, 1919, p.97). In fact, in the case of Astoria, the ambitions of one man, Astor, would lead to strengthen and widen the scope of the U.S.A. and its hegemony over the world. However, non-white populations were ambitious as well.

Like Irving, Stark also tackled the ambitions and greed of the Natives. Thorn's party discovered that the Hawaiian King Kamekameha imposed a royal monopoly over the trade of pigs and any product with a huge trade potential. Stark wrote: "But to buy pigs, Governor Young told them, they had to sail to Oahu and call on King Kamekameha himself, who kept a monopoly on the sale of pigs to foreign ships as a means of generating profits for the royal treasury" Stark informed (p.63). Thanks to his frequent contact with white sailors and traders, the King developed a shrewd sense of business. It is even more true that when Astor's partners asked him if they could recruit some Hawaiians, the King "encouraged" it and "urged his subjects to travel to foreign lands and learn new skills" that would be beneficial to Hawaii (p.64). Besides, their contact with the white traders taught them that everything related to the white men was potentially beneficial for them.

Even if the two texts were written during different periods, they narrated the same circumstances, ideas and themes. In fact, Stark's text absorbed and transformed the text of Irving. Kristeva said:

If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its

‘place’ of enunciation and its denoted ‘object’ are never single, [...] but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. (Kristeva, 1986, p.111)
Stark provided further texts corroborating Irving’s utterances. He described North American inclinations for gain in the nineteenth century, be it among white traders or non-white populations. By transposing his own signs on Irving’s, he added to their meaning.

Another important theme which is prevalent in Irving’s work is adversity. Irving’s book described the adventurous journey of the “overlanders”. He illustrated how the adventurers faced unpredictable weather, starvation, vast prairies, abrupt mountains, agitated rivers, and some vindictive Natives. Irving wrote:

On the third of September, finding that the mountain still stretched onward, presenting a continued barrier, they endeavored to force a passage to the westward, but soon became entangled among rocks and precipices which set all their efforts at defiance. (p.194)

In this quote, Irving depicted the harrowing obstacles encountered by the overland party. Each time they envisioned their relief, they discovered further obstacles. As a result of the rough conditions, many had tragically died. Irving qualified Antoine Clappine’s loss as “a day of disaster”. This was worsened because one of their embarkations hit a rock and they lost their merchandise. He wrote:

flung poor Clappine off into the raging stream, which swept him away, and he perished [...] This disastrous event brought the whole squadron to a halt, and struck a chill into every bosom. Indeed, they had arrived at a terrific strait, that forbade all further progress in the canoes, and dismayed the most experienced voyageur. (Irving, 1890, p.214)

Every step that Astor’s agents made was based on completely unpredictable conditions. The unknown played a great role in their physical and mental exhaustion as the overland party marched forward on lands and territories they had never seen. Their hardships were not solely natural. They were also man-made hardships. Accordingly, Irving narrated:

the Sioux Indians, who had manifested repeated hostility to the white traders, and rendered their expeditions extremely perilous; firing upon them from the

river banks as they passed beneath in their boats, and attacking them in their encampments. (p.104)

The author described how the Native Americans presented a very troublesome obstacle for the traders' advancement. Astor's agents also risked their lives with some particularly violent Native Americans: the Blackfeet.

Peter Stark dealt with the theme of adversity as well. He recounted how the experienced voyageurs had difficulties to proceed further. They were overwhelmed by the extreme conditions during several weeks along the Mad River. He reported: "Three of these weakened voyageurs told Hunt they didn't have the strength to go onward. It's a measure of their deprivation and extreme exertion [...] Frail, spectral versions of their former selves" (Stark, 2015, pp.177-178). The men were experienced voyageurs. However, the conditions were far from any they had hitherto experienced. Furthermore, the writer reported some casualties, for example, Marie Dorion's new born died. Therefore, given the urgency, Hunt reported this very death as follows: "'The Dorion baby died,' Hunt recorded tersely" (p.182). Stark informed that, given the circumstances, they might not have held any ceremony to the poor "infant" as there was no mention of that in Hunt's diary. Nonetheless, the natural extreme conditions were not the sole hindrance.

Stark dealt with the man-made obstacles as well. In fact, the author showed how men could also be an annoying hindrance for the whole project and the group. For instance, on their journey back to St. Louis, Robert Stuart's party encountered another man-made obstacle. They were chased by the Catatouch Indians. The chief of the Walla Walla tribe prevented Stuart's group pointing to "an approaching cloud of dust in the distance raised by the Indian horses" (Stark, p.268). "'Taking the hint,'" recorded Alexander Ross, "'we lost no time'" (p.268). He added: "'some had breakfasted, some not, kettles and dishes were all huddled together and bundled into the canoe, and, embarking pell-mell, we pushed with all haste from the inauspicious shore'" (p.268).

Furthermore, Captain Thorn obliged his valuable men to risk their lives to find an entrance to the mouth of the Columbia despite the imminent danger. Stark wondered why anyone who pretended to act for the sole benefit of his boss would willingly jeopardize the whole enterprise by risking the life of one of his best men (p.76). Truly, Thorn's decisions and orders caused the death of his first mate, Mr. Fox. This shows that natural conditions were a very lethal element but, sometimes, the human factor proved to be deadly as well.

Nevertheless, those men never lost sight of their respective objectives. This leads us to another significant theme which is perseverance. Both books vividly illustrated the unwavering determination of Astor, his agents, and the other traders. About Astor's reaction to the loss of the *Tonquin*, Irving reported that Astor "felt it in all its force, and was aware that it must cripple, if not entirely defeat, the great scheme of his ambition" (Irving, p.94). He was so saddened and disheartened that he called it "a calamity [...] he could not foresee" (Irving, p.94). However, when a friend of Astor saw him in a theater he wondered why he was so calm and entertaining himself. Astor replied: "What would you have me do?" He added: "would you have me stay at home and weep for what I cannot help?" (p.94). This proves the strong belief of Astor in his plan and his capacity to "remedy" the situation (p.94). Moreover, Astor had all the reasons to abandon for it "was a hard trial" for the endurance of one single "individual" (p.326). Irving said that the man had already spent a lot of money. The situation was filled with "so much uncertainty" and the "risk of loss was so greatly enhanced," but he was calm (p.326). In addition, he could benefit from "no insurance" in case of complete loss, and yet, Astor, with an unwavering determination, sent another expansive ship to carry on with his grand project (p.326).

Furthermore, the case of the three Kentuckians offers us another significant example of perseverance and resilience of the early settlers of the West. Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor were craving for their homes. They were determined to abandon. Irving reported that

Astor's project seduced them so much that "it was irresistible: homes and families" and all the dangers they passed through and those that would come "vanished from their thoughts" (Irving, p.39). With Astor's men and many others, we learnt the most extreme degrees of perseverance and resilience. When they had neither provisions nor the ability to hunt animals, one of Robert Stuart's men proposed to resort to cannibalism (p.304). This ascertains the determination of those men to succeed and survive no matter the costs.

Peter Stark offered a testimony of the perseverant and resilient attitude of Astor as well as that of his agents and partners. Hunt was a man of great physical and mental resistance. Despite adversity, Hunt was resolved to succeed in his mission while preserving the lives of all his men. Stark reported Hunt's account: "I spent the night reflecting on our situation". He added: "I had to answer for the needs of more than twenty famished people and, moreover, to do all that I could for Mr. Crooks and his men" (Stark,p.161). Though Hunt was urged by his men to abandon the weakened, he "slowed his party, believing they should stay with the collapsing men" (p.171). Stark stated that the men "were fighting to stay alive, and Hunt was fighting to save them" alongside the project (p.162). Moreover, John Day offered one of the astounding examples of perseverance. Though he had "scurvy" and was poisoned by the "deathcamas" he "remained a crack shot" as he succeeded in hunting a wolf to feed on it and save his friend Mr Crooks (p.134).

Furthermore, the writer proved Astor's determination. The U.S. Government refused to dispatch warships to protect Astoria. Consequently, Astor resorted to his connections in the Russian Embassy in Washington D.C. in order to provide his ship (the *Lark*) with Russian papers. These new documents would exempt the *Lark* from "the British blockade or seizure" (p.158). This ship (*Lark*) was destined to "outrun the British gunships" and would protect Fort Astoria against the British. In addition, Astor purchased another gunship, the *Forester*. He was so determined that he owned a "private navy" and sent it "to the Pacific to defend" his

interests (p.277). Astor's letter tells more about his determination. He claimed: "Were I on the spot [...] I would defy them all" (p.260). Peter Stark reflected on the source of the "perseverance on John Jacob Astor's part". As a matter of fact, John Astor alleged: "My plan was right". He added: "but my men were weak. Time will vindicate my reasoning" (p.288). As if he had some uncanny knowledge about the stakes and implications of his project.

In addition to the themes we have hitherto explored, we will analyze another pertinent concept, namely the idea of Manifest Destiny which is intimately linked to the theme of perseverance. The idea of Manifest Destiny was attributed to John L. O'Sullivan. In an essay entitled "Annexation" (1845), we read: "It is time now for opposition to the Annexation of Texas to cease [...] for [...] the fulfillment of our Manifest Destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence" (O'Sullivan , p.5). Writers and historians traced the genesis of the idea of Manifest Destiny to the time of the Puritans. They dreamed of an America that would be a "city upon a hill". They wanted a great nation that would enlighten other nations (Greenberg, 2005, p.20). According to Amy S. Greenberg (2005), the Manifest Destiny implied that the "race of American 'Anglo-Saxons' was destined to dominate lesser races" (p.20).

Interestingly, Irving's *Astoria* (1890) was written during the Texas Revolution of 1835-1890. His work captured the essence of the belief that Americans were destined to expand westward and to dominate the other populations. This very idea would trigger the interests of U.S. leaders since early nineteenth century. Therefore, as the Astoria project was brought up by Astor and supported by Jefferson, we ought to demonstrate these men's role in the westward expansion. Irving informed:

In a word, Astoria might have realized the anticipations of Mr. Astor, so well understood and appreciated by Mr. Jefferson, in gradually becoming a commercial empire beyond the mountains, peopled by 'free and independent Americans, and linked with us by ties of blood and interest' (Irving, 1890, p.376)

James P. Ronda (1990) declared that “with a little luck” the British “North West Company could have had men and posts across the mountains well before Jefferson wrote instruction for Meriwether Lewis. But good fortune eluded Nor’westers” (Ronda, p.21). In addition, Irving said that Alexander Mackenzie urged the British crown to conquer the West Coast as soon as possible (Irving, 1890,p.34). Based on Ronda’s and Irving’s quotes, we may claim that Jefferson was aware that the British could have taken the West Coast first. Yet, it was free to be taken by the U.S. Government. Arguably, Jefferson did not need further signs, divine providence or “good fortune” as Ronda named it, sided with the young nation.

Irving shared a part of Jefferson’s letter in which he informed that Astor’s proposition was “a great public acquisition”, because he was eager to see the “descendants” of the settlers who “should have spread themselves through the whole length of that coast, covering it with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us but by the ties of blood and interest, and enjoying like us the rights of self-government” (Irving, 1890, pp.36-37). Thus, Jefferson wanted to spread the U.S. values Westward. He sent private agents to the native tribes in order to “link their interests and feelings with those of the people of the United States” (Irving, 1890, p.27). Arguably, traders like John Jacob Astor that the U.S. government had supported could probably be the pioneers of the Manifest Destiny. It was said that in the early 19th century “most Americans believed that expansionism would bring progress and enlightenment” for everyone through “influence and persuasion” (Greenberg, 2005, p.21).

Irving explained that the project of Astoria had “continually expanded in” Astor’s mind as an incessant idea. Astor compared himself to men who, by their individual efforts, have “enriched nations, peopled wildernesses, and extended the bounds of empire” (Irving, 1890, p.36). He also anticipated that his enterprise “would form the germ of a wide civilization; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains” (p.36). Thus, Astor was also endowed with an unshakable urge to expand Westward. He knew

that his plan had larger significance. Consequently, the actors of this grand project, Astor and Jefferson more particularly, set the bases for a gargantuan and overwhelming venture.

However, they could not name it until it had been coined in 1845 under the epithet of the Manifest Destiny.

Irving alluded to the idea of the primacy of white settlers over the Indian existence, and by extension, the primacy of the destiny of the white people over the destiny of the Indians. In fact, he insinuated that the Indians were predetermined to fade to the benefit of the white population. Irving offered a digression about the Indian names of places and the necessity of keeping them. He wrote: “and here we cannot but pause to lament the stupid, commonplace, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great West by traders and settlers” (p.172). For some reason, Irving was embittered by the loss of those primitive names. Nevertheless, the author romanticized and glorified the whites’ expansion. We suppose that the writer might be nostalgic. Indeed, he wanted to keep the primitive names, for they were the names of “the lords of the soil, of whom in a little while scarce any traces will be left” (p.172). As a result, we understand better Irving’s motives. Here we will use what Jessica Mason (2019) called a “reader-driven” reference (Mason, p.43). She wrote: “Reader-driven references then” in contrast to text-driven ones “are references which appear to have occurred to readers’ of their own volition” (p.43). As readers, we assume that, in his previous quote, Irving pointed to the inexorable fate of the “Indians” as opposed to the fate of the white settlers. Unfortunately, their destiny, according to Irving’s words and their present state, had never been as manifest as the destiny of white people.

Additionally, when narrating the disappearance of the manually driven boats for the benefit of the mechanical ones, Irving insinuated that the fate of the Indians was to fade because white people were destined to prevail. He lamented: “But we are talking of things that are fast fading away !” (Irving, 1890, p.43). The author offered a romantic elegy on the

French-Canadian voyageurs because they would disappear soon. They would be overwhelmed by the more modern U.S. boats. He added: “They are no longer the lords of our internal seas and the great navigators of the wilderness.” (p.43). His message was destined more to the autochthons than to the French voyageurs. As a matter of fact, he would carry on and write:

In the course of years they will gradually disappear ; their songs will die away like the echoes they once awakened, [...] will become a forgotten race, or remembered, like their associates, the Indians, among the poetical images of past times, and as themes for local and romantic associations. (p.43)

Washington Irving mentioned the Indians referring to their inexorable fading alongside the manually maneuvered boats. Thus, even though Irving did not name the Manifest Destiny, his text is full of allusions to it. Truly, through his work we learnt how the Natives’ fight was seen as vain. Still and Worton said: “the reader’s experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation” (Still and Worton, p.2). Obviously, it was not the first time that Irving referred to the fact that a bigger entity erased the singularities of other nations. In one of his journals, Irving anticipated that the specificities of nations would be replaced by one and only superior entity, a globalising and suffocating identity that would merge with the rest of the world. He had described the act of opposing that unification as a “return of barbarism” (as cited in Hellman & Trent, 1919, p.97). Arguably, Irving foresaw that the U.S. ambitions would be challenged. He might have wanted that the U.S.A. became the beacon of anti-barbarism because it was its destiny to enlighten the world.

Peter Stark highlighted the role that Thomas Jefferson played in the westward expansion, in Astor’s project more particularly, and the whole scheme called the Manifest Destiny. The President said: “[Y]our name will be handed down with that of Columbus & Raleigh, as the father of the establishment and the founder of such an empire” (Stark, 2015, p.7). This is a reference to Jefferson’s letters that Irving cited as well in *Astoria (1890)* which is also a pure match reference (Irving, pp. 36-37). In later paragraphs of the President’s letter, Jefferson expressed how it was expedient to take control over the West. The author informed

that the president felt obliged to reach that vast territory before the British (Stark, 2015, p.16). Therefore, President Jefferson promised Astor that he would insure “every reasonable patronage & facility in the power of the Executive will be afforded” (p.17). Like Irving, Stark showed Jefferson’s commitment to that very project.

Peter Stark, arguably more than Washington Irving, realized the importance of those two men, Astor and Jefferson. Indeed, thanks to Stark’s text, we realized that Jefferson and Astor were the pioneers of something big that was yet to come. As a matter of fact, Thomas Hart Benton, a U.S. senator and a fervent proponent of the Manifest Destiny would declare in February 1823 that “Astoria had ‘consummated’ the U.S. title to the region” (Stark, p.298). He meant that the establishment of Fort Astoria solidified and completed the United States’ claim to the Oregon Territory. Prior to Benton’s declaration, in early 1813, John Jacob Astor met “with U.S. secretary of state James Monroe [...] Astor was attempting to get word to President Madison of the towering importance to future U.S. national interests of protecting his West Coast emporium and colony” (p.264). He presented to him the critical and expedient nature of the West Coast and its fur trade. Astor explained the economic and strategic implications of taking control over the West (p.264).

Interestingly, in 1823, President James Monroe proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine (Merk, 1966, p.220). The latter stipulated that any European aspirations toward the American continent would be seen as a direct threat by his country. Jay Sexton (2011) claimed that “Monroe’s doctrine” was meant to achieve the President’s “expansionist agenda” (Sexton, p.99). According to Stark, in 1813, Astor spoke with James Monroe multiple times. Thanks to Astor, Monroe might have realized “how deeply the West Coast and its fur trade mattered both economically and strategically” (Stark, 2015, p.264). Peter Stark claimed that Jefferson’s “vision” of North America’s “destiny” and Astor’s vision of the whole continent’s political destiny were complementary (Stark, 2015, p.26). Just like Irving who acknowledged the two

men's value, Peter Stark, building on Irving's assumption, showed the real implications of their whole scheme and their weight. He wrote: "It was Astor's vision to capture its wealth. It was Jefferson's vision to make it a democracy" (p.3).

Furthermore, the writer drew a concordance between the ambitions of Astor and the Manifest Destiny, hence his repetitive use of the word "destiny" all over his work. He declared that John Astor had chosen a "far larger destiny than the life of a butcher's son in Walldorf" (p.96). He insinuated that Astor's fate was predetermined, as if "he was compelled [...] toward it" (p.96). Moreover, when narrating Hunt's journey, Stark referred to Napoleon Bonaparte's quote that says: "geography is destiny" (Stark, 2015, p.153). The author added: "It was here that geology and destiny converged to determine the fate of the Overland Party". The latter's fate might have "unfolded quite differently" were it not for the divine providence (pp.155-156). Should they have stumbled on a different geography and geology, everyone would have died. Hunt said: "I cannot thank Providence enough for [...] having reached this point" (p.183). So, in other terms, according to Stark, in North America, providence had a special scheme for white people.

In addition, the writer alluded to the idea that the destiny of white people would displace all destinies. To corroborate this idea, Stark used the anecdote of a young Native who gave back the item he stole from Mr. Clarke. According to Indian law, after a prejudice had been fixed, the problem was settled (p.167). Nonetheless, the whites' law and tradition said otherwise; Mr. Clarke insisted that the young Native would be executed under the watch of his tribe. Stark summed the fate of the young Native with two words: his death "was inexorable" (p.267). The word "inexorable" serves as a "reader-driven" reference (Mason, p.43). Stark's emphasis on this very incident might imply that, on Indian lands, the whites' law supplanted all laws. The "inexorable" aspect of that death might echo another inexorable or predetermined fate, the America's destiny, or should we say: its "Manifest Destiny".

Ironically, this group, led by Robert Stuart, would be, as we explained in Chapter One, the discoverers of the South Pass. James P. Ronda argued that this discovery was certainly the greatest “accomplishment” of Robert Stuart and his group because it would become “an essential part of the Oregon Trail” (Ronda, 1990, p.323). This corroborates our “reader-driven” reference. Like Irving, it would not be the first time that Stark alluded to the primacy of the white population in general and the U.S.A. prevalence more precisely.

Stark built his account transposing Irving’s narrative keeping in mind the implications of the Manifest Destiny according to the data he had in 2015. In sum, the idea of Manifest Destiny signed the autochthons’ end. Likewise, though Irving did not name the concept, he alluded to the idea that the whites’ presence signed the unavoidable decline of the Indians. It is intertextual as both authors referred to the same idea in different ways. They superposed different texts to “articulate” new ones (Kristeva, 1984, p.60). That is transposition, as it “involves an altering, the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one” in order to refer to the same idea (Kristeva, p.59). However, in this case, the alteration does not mean a complete erasure of the former position (text) as this process is able to produce new ideas by using the same “signifying material” (p.59).

Thus, the two writers converged in themes related to adventure and exploration. We explored the various similarities between both works by relying on concepts like “epigraph”, “transposition”, and “reader driven reference”. We may say that Irving and Stark treated common themes and transposed the same materials. They ended to new signifying systems. However, as we will see, they diverged on some critical themes that pertain to human dignity like racism and gender equality.

Chapter Three: Differences in Themes and Characterization in the Two Works

In chapter one, we explored similarities through a discussion of the historical and literary context in which Astor's plan originated and has been put into application. In the second, we delved into the intertextual parallels in terms of some major themes. Now, it is time to consider the differences between both works that pertain principally to the periods in which Irving's and Stark's *Astoria(s)* have been written. Irving's writing about the westward expansion had been considerably affected by the Jacksonian era while Stark's had been affected by his own time as he is a contemporary writer. Therefore, the two authors took rather polemical and divergent perspectives. Their works can be seen as dialogic. Thus, Bakhtin's dialogism is relevant since it "bears a more subjective" and usually a "provocatively polemical" stance that we may use to display the multiple dissimilarities between both books (Bakhtin, 1981, p.282). In this sense, the two writers engaged in a sort of a clash "between two voices" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.193). When reading Stark's *Astoria*, a knowledgeable reader would detect the equivocation created by the act of transposing his text on Irving's as the former carries stigmas of the latter, hence our use of "ambivalence" as well.

The first area of "clash" is related to Irving's colonialist and patriarchal tendencies as opposed to Stark's nuanced and politically correct discourse. Washington Irving used a rather racist discourse toward the Indians. For instance, he frequently called them "savages" (Irving, p.22), "wild people" (p.45), "lazy" (p.84), "primitive in their habits" (p.241). Moreover, he associated an Indian tribe with stealing. He said: "the laws of meum and tuum being but slightly respected among them" (p.76). By the Latin expressions of "meum" and "tuum", he meant "mine" and "yours", respectively. This is a rather daring attitude, to say the least, from someone who romanticized tales of his own kind colonizing the properties of others. Furthermore, he described the Blackfeet as "more savage and warlike" as well as "deadly foes of the white men" for they opposed the presence of strangers on their lands (p. 104).

Additionally, Washington Irving reported and approved a chronicler's racist opinions about the Indians. He reported: "By such worthless dogs as these' says an honest trader in his journal" (p.85).

However, due to the spread of humanist ideas, incrimination of racism and misogyny, Peter Stark adopted a nuanced and politically correct discourse. As a result, the only two times he used terms like "savage" was when quoting Alexander Ross and Irving himself. Stark quoted the latter when he said that Thorn "held the whole savage race in sovereign contempt" (Stark, 2015, pp.202-203). This is a pure match reference according to Jessica Mason as it was taken as it figured in Irving's work (Mason, 2019, p.55). When commenting the unwelcoming behaviour of the Blackfoot Indians, he acknowledged: "The warrior tribes of the Plains had good reasons to display their ferocity to outsiders who infringed on their territory whether the outsiders were other tribes, or, later, Europeans like Hunt and his companions" (Stark, 2015, pp.113-114). Stark added more meaning to the scene reported by Irving about the Blackfeet. Stark's contribution clarified all misunderstandings related to Irving's as the Blackfeet were hostile toward Indians and white people. This can be seen as dialogic inasmuch as Stark's "voice, once having made its home" in Irving's "discourse" clashed with it for their respective utterances bore divergent and opposing narratives (Bakhtin, 1984, p.193).

Moreover, when Robert Stuart's group crossed Wishram lands, the author showed an understanding attitude. He knew that those tribes would be against it. Contrary to Irving who celebrated the expansion on the expense of the Natives (Irving, p.376), Stark wrote: "The Indians no doubt viewed the white parties as an incursion on their territory and a threat to their tremendous wealth of salmon" (Stark, 2015, p.230). In doing so, Stark entered into a dialogue with Irving's previous commentary on "meum and tuum" and answered his logorrhoea about respecting people's property. Furthermore, the author presented the

Wishram tribes and explained the depth of their historical presence in North America (p.230).

He even mocked Daniel Boone's fervour to save the wild nature from decay while his own work caused nature's and natives' increasing shrinkage. Stark wrote:

Here in the flesh stood what would become a central irony in the exploration of the West those trailblazers who marked the path for 'civilization' to follow still felt an emotional tug to keep it wild and pure, knowing that this wildness, like the native peoples and animals, was diminishing with every passing year. Pulling a few miles farther upstream. (p.102)

We see that within the former passage, two causes merged: ecocriticism and postcolonialism. In fact, though these themes are not the sole purpose of Stark's work, it would not be absurd to claim the presence of a touch of contemporary criticism from Stark as opposed to Irving's nineteenth century imperialist tendencies.

What follows represents an attempt to study the theme of Indians' violence in more details. Washington Irving dealt with this issue but he did not provide us with any objective reason for it. Irving insinuated that the Natives' attacks were unjustified. For instance, when narrating the incident of the *Tonquin*, Irving declared: "Captain Thorn [...] very much against the advice of his Indian interpreter, who warned him against the perfidious character of the natives of this part of the coast" (Irving, 1890, p.87). He called the Natives "perfidious" as if it was their intrinsic nature. Each time the author narrated an incident involving the Indians and the white traders, he omitted the whole context as well as the genesis of that very situation. Additionally, Irving claimed that the Indians were "a restless and predatory tribe, who had conceived an implacable hostility to the white men" (p. 116). Moreover, he suggested that the coastal Indians were "hostile tribes, who would doubtless be incited and encouraged to deeds of violence" (p.94). The author frequently depicted the Natives as genuinely and inherently savage, evil, and insinuated that their hostility toward white traders was utterly unprovoked.

However, historical records and earlier literature show that many autochthonous tribes, the coastal ones more specifically, suffered from many white traders. Truly, faced by astute autochthons who refused to sell under certain prices, some white captains forced them to sell their merchandise or took the furs after massacring them. James P. Ronda (1990) argued: “Because captains in the maritime fur trade believed they could easily escape the consequences, they often used unbridled terror to make favourable bargains” (Ronda,p.34). F.W. Howay (1928) acknowledged the responsibility of white traders. He wrote: “a little examination shows that, like a great many more so-called unprovoked attacks, it was in reality an effort to take revenge” (Howay, p.73). Thus, Howay ascertained that the Natives’ hostility was a retaliation to the white captains. Nevertheless, Irving preferred to side with the white men and supported their version of the story.

Taking this into account, Peter Stark, dealt with the issue of violence among the Native Americans and provided the reader with some of the missing pieces. According to Stark, Captain Robert Gray, a U.S. trader, on one of his expeditions on board of the *Columbia Redeviva*, sent one of his officers, John Boit to destroy the Indian village of Opitsatah in 1792 (Stark, 2015, pp.74-75). Stark claimed that Gray was not a negotiator but rather someone who preferred to “take furs by force”, leading to extreme retaliations from the coastal autochthons. Contrary to Irving, Stark divulged how the whites had willingly provoked the Natives. This made his narrative more objective.

Thus, according to Prayer, because there is no text intrinsically monologic, and each one responds to another in continuous way through which many viewpoints intersect, we may claim that Stark’s contribution on this matter served obviously a dialogic purpose (Prayer, 2016,p.78). When writing, Stark reads Irving’s “literary corpus” that is transposed on other historical texts. In doing so, he absorbed and replied to “another text” (Kristeva, 1986, p.39). Therefore, we may say that Stark’s work is a “dialogue with the preceding literary corpus

[and] a perpetual challenge of past writing” (Kristeva, p.40). Mikhail Bakhtin in *Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1984) said that the “Dialogic banquet discourse” is characterized by “ambivalence; that is, the combination in one discourse” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.120). In other words, each new text carries within it at least a pair of meanings which, as the “signifying process” goes, cumulates further meaning in a form of layers that are superposed on each other. That is “ambivalence”.

In addition, some of Irving’s treatments of non-white populations, women more particularly, are reminiscent of Edward Saïd’s ideas about the Western depiction of the Orient. Irving wrote: “the women with regular and occasionally handsome features, and a lascivious expression [...] when the exposure of their persons was at first very revolting to a civilized eye” (p.57). The author emphasized the sexuality of the Hawaiian women, as if it was their only feature. He portrayed them as purposefully willing to tempt Astor’s men. We noticed that this kind of depiction of the Native women is rather systematic and evocative of a very common aspect among nineteenth century writers. Though Edward Saïd’s observations were done mainly on the Western treatment of the Eastern populations, they can be extended to the 19th-century description of American non-white population. According to Saïd, for “travelers [Sic] and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing” (Saïd, 1979, p. 207).

Irving would not be an exception. When describing the French-Canadian traders’ way of life, he wrote: “The French merchant at his trading post, in these primitive days of Canada, [...] had his harem of Indian beauties, and his troop of half-breed children” (Irving, p.21). Obviously, Irving’s writing is indicative of the very issue that Edward Saïd criticized and sought to divulge. His *Astoria* is full of orientalist ideas. His words like “harem”, “savage” versus “civilized”., etc are symptomatic of his orientalist vision of the Indians. These pieces

of evidence might be reminiscent of his seemingly positive treatment of Marie Dorion. She was the wife of the Native translator, Pierre Dorion, recruited by Wilson Price Hunt. Irving described the pregnant Marie as someone who would bear “all her hardships without a murmur”, with “patience” and would keep the “pace with the best of the pedestrians” (p.225). Though Irving glorified her, his apparently favorable comments bore rather patriarchal and misogynist considerations. We have to point out that Marie was obliged to be silent and be obedient; her husband – Pierre Dorion – had beaten her because she refused to be part of the dangerous expedition. Moreover, Irving qualified the violent treatment that she received from her husband as “the Indian discipline of the cudgel” and as an exercise of “his conjugal authority” on her (p.114).

Washington Irving had never mentioned Marie Dorion’s name. Alternatively, he referred to her as “squaw, wife, Pierre Dorion’s family”. For him, she could only be identified in relation to others, as a wife or a mother. Irving reported: “Early in the following morning the squaw of Pierre Dorion, who had hitherto kept on without murmuring or flinching, was suddenly taken in labor, and enriched her husband with another child” (p.337). The use of terms like “enriched” shows that women were considered like mere giving-birth-apparatuses. Their aim was to empower their husbands thanks to their troops of “half-breed children” (p.21). Thus, we understand Irving’s favourable comments and the amazement of Hunt’s men about Marie Dorion. Indeed, obedience, silence, and commitment to a husband might have been well sought standards in the nineteenth century. Marie Dorion’s obedience and commitment were so convenient for everyone that Irving did not even consider to display the woman’s opinions or desires. This was typical of an era when not even all white males had the right to vote. Therefore, it would have been rather odd and even revolutionary to read a detailed description of an Indian woman’s opinions and dreams in a harrowing expedition

narrated by a man of the same era. Consequently, being a writer in the nineteenth century went in pairs with essentialism, orientalism as well as patriarchy.

Concerning the representation of Native women, we noticed that Stark's and Irving's accounts were dialogic as well. Indeed, Stark emphasized the lustful side of the white traders rather than that of the Indian women. He acknowledged that the sexual performances that the Native women offered would not have existed were it not for the rising demand of the white traders. Thanks to his modern and politically correct perspective, Peter Stark ironically viewed the white traders' behaviour to be unworthy of men of faith – Christians. He wrote: “The dumbfounded young visitors from the Bible-toting lands of New England and Scotland and Montreal had never seen anything like it”. Yet, they ceaselessly enjoyed and contemplated other women (Stark, 2015, p.60). Stark anecdotally narrated:

On seeing an Arikara chief in a thoughtful mood one day, Brackenridge asked the chief what was the matter. ‘I was wondering,’ said he, ‘whether you white people have any women amongst you.’ ‘I assured him in the affirmative’. ‘Then,’ said he, ‘why is it that your people are so fond of our women, one might suppose they had never seen any before?’ (Stark, 2015, p.124)

According to the Chief, married men should not ask for other women. He thought they do not have any wife or they had never seen any woman because they were eager for sex. Astor's men were lewd whenever they faced Indian females.

Because “texts cannot be detached from the social or cultural textuality which is the back drop in which a text is created” (Prayer, 2016,p.78), Irving's and Stark's texts are the products of their respective societies. Thanks to Stark's contribution, the Natives entered into a dialogic exchange with Irving and with the whole Western narrative. Still and Worton said: “the reader's experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation” (Still and Worton, p.2). We suppose that Peter Stark, either on purpose or not, gave a counterpart to Irving's orientalist view. Thus, in both works “Discourse” became “an arena of battle between two voices” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.193).

Peter Stark's treatment of the sole woman of the expedition was different as well. He mentioned Marie Dorion by name and said that "she would stumble out of the wintry wilderness many months later with an incredible story to tell" (p.25). Unlike Irving, Stark gave her more importance. The latter wondered:

Marie Dorion, [...] was on something of a forced march [...] How had she been thinking about the life gestating inside her? Were the endless walks and climbs, the hardships and privations, all contributing to her unborn child's spiritual power? Had she even assumed extra hardships to give her child power? (p.180)

Stark revealed that she was obedient and silent because she was forced to. Therefore, he enquired about her thoughts, feelings, and inner discussions at that very moment. He even reflected on her exchange with Sacagawea, who had probably informed her about the white people. Stark Wrote:

What would Sacagawea have told Marie Dorion? [...] You and your children will suffer. . . . [...] Sacagawea [...] may have understood that whites, with their powerful guns and endless numbers and relentless urge for furs and farmland and profit, had just begun [...] that these first expeditions heading westward represented the beginning of the end for her people's ancient, seminomadic way of life. One imagines her saying to Marie Dorion, Don't go. (p.108)

Peter Stark gave women a role other than that of obedient brides, mothers and sexual commodities. He offered them a voice to discuss colonialism, the decline of their civilization, culture and population.

Thus, Washington Irving's treatment of women was diametrically different from and dialogic with Peter Stark's. Indeed, while the former reduced women to a trivial, misogynist, and sexual portrayal, the latter discussed serious subjects and gave her a tribune. Stark narrated the same events as Irving. However, he gave them a different meaning. As a result, transposing Stark's text on Irving's is what created the equivocation that Bakhtin and Kristeva called Ambivalence. Stark wrote in an era whence he could not share and celebrate Irving's thoughts about women. As a result, he contradicted him even if it meant adding some fictional elements that neither Irving nor any chronicler wrote. Indeed, La Tray claimed that Stark took

“some liberties in what actual conversations may have been, or what principal characters may have been thinking” (La Tray, para.5). This “determines the author’s discourse”. While he kept himself outside the clash, he gave a “hidden polemic[al]” nature to his narrative (Bakhtin, p.195).

In this part, we will compare Irving’s Biblical and epic references with Stark’s modern and scientific discourse. Irving was well versed in myths, Biblical narratives as well as stories of the Orient. According to him, the Natives who had been dispossessed of their lands in the East Coast and were forced to settle west of the Appalachians “may resemble those great hordes of the North ‘Gog and Magog with their bands,’ that haunted the gloomy imaginations of the prophets” (Irving, p.169). This analogy with the Prophets gave to the presence of the white populations a holy and divine purpose. The author assimilated the “Indians” to a never ending danger that threatened the prosperity of the white traders and people. He also compared the adventures of Astor’s men, Hunt’s more particularly, to the epic exploits of the “Sinbad” (p.356). This parallel was meant to give the whites a romanticized and epic dimension. The author declared: “I was at an age when imagination lends its coloring to everything, and the stories of these Sinbads of the wilderness made the life of a trapper and fur trader perfect romance to me” (p.3). Thus, Irving acknowledged the imaginary and phantasmagorical effect of those exploits on him. Furthermore, he compared Astor’s men to “the poor Israelites [who] hailed the first glimpse of the promised land” (p.239).

In contrast, Stark related Astor’s agents’ destiny to Geology. He wrote:

It was here that geology and destiny converged to determine the fate of the Overland Party. John Jacob Astor’s West Coast empire may have unfolded quite differently were it not for a giant bubble of lava that percolates from the earth’s molten interior and pushes close to its cool surface in today’s northwestern Wyoming and eastern Idaho. (Stark, 2015, pp.155-156)

The writer linked the success, or not, of Astor’s project, and to a larger measure, the aspirations of the United States of America, to whether the explorers could, or not, overcome

those geologic specificities. He versed into a scientific explanation about how “the geologic principle called plate tectonics” influenced geography and thus the success of any expedition (p.156). Stark also spoke of some dangerous conditions unknown to Irving, that caused delays in Hunt’s schedule. For instance, we learnt that one of the sicknesses Hunt’s men were exposed to was “scurvy”. Stark offered a brief digression about the effects of this sickness and the ways to prevent it and cure it. He wrote:

Many species of cherries are extraordinarily high in vitamin C. The Hunt and Crooks parties’ suffering and weakness was no doubt due partly to the onset of scurvy, a debilitating illness that frequently killed early European seafarers subsisting on a diet of salt meat and grains. [...] posed one of the single greatest obstacles to early exploration.[...], its early symptoms included fatigue, weakness, [...] Then [...] hemorrhage, followed shortly by death. (p.174)

Irving resorted to the Bible and epic tales to justify the obstacles and give them a transcendental meaning. He meant that those men were on a holy trial. Should they fail, it would be the evil Gog and Magog’ fault. But in case they succeeded, it would have been the work of the divine providence. Alternatively, Stark has adopted a modern and scientific approach. This difference is indicative of the divergent influences of both authors. Irving’s and Stark’s texts did not stand alone as they have their “meaning, therefore, in relation to” their respective contexts (Allen, 2021, p. 6). When Irving interpreted everything in terms of romance and divine providence, Stark saw the manifestation of nuance and science. Thus, a contemporary reader would detect a plethora of possible interpretations for the recent text.

Both works dialogically intersected in terms of characterization as well. To begin with Astor, Irving claimed that he was not driven by profit as he was “already wealthy beyond the ordinary desires of man, but he now aspired to that honorable fame which is awarded to men [...] who [...] have enriched nations [and] extended the bounds of empire” (Irving, p.36). Irving treated John Astor as a providential and benevolent man whose plan would have secured a brilliant future for the United States of America. On multiple times, Irving expressed his “sincere regret” for the failure of the grand project (p.376). He thought that

there would not be a second chance for Astor to secure that territory. He feared that Astor's failed project would be a very brief glory for the U.S.A. as its archenemy – Great Britain – was conquering the North West. He wrote: “Should any circumstance, therefore, unfortunately occur to disturb the present harmony of the two nation[s] [...] and Astoria become the watchword in a contest for dominion on the shores of the Pacific” (p.376). In this regard, MacLaren (1990) said, “Romance and history are both unified in the figure of John Jacob Astor” (pp.1-2). However, we sense a certain irony in the treatment of Astor, as this wannabe hero stayed at home while he sent dozens of men to the wilderness to face danger thousands miles away from New York.

Contrary to Irving, Peter Stark viewed Astor as a profit-seeking man. Stark reported Astor's reaction to the sad news of the loss of the *Tonquin* and the death of the whole crew as follows: “But he was not about to give up of his dream of empire over the loss of a single ship” (Stark, 2015, p.240). Stark added: “Rather the *Tonquin*'s loss seemed to harden his determination and prepare him to deepen his already staggering investment. His eminent business practicality trumped whatever sentimentality he felt for the loss of life” (Stark,p.240). According to Peter Stark, Astor considered money and men as things he could invest as he pleased in prospects of later benefits. Like a nineteenth century U.S. *Wolf of Wall Street*, Astor acted in a Machiavellian and pragmatic way. He was depicted like a ferocious business man who was ready to face whatever cost as long as he succeeded. Annie Dawid commented Stark's depiction of Astor:

Stark's portrait of a 19th century mogul will remind readers of certain modern businessmen, ruthless, avaricious and determined. In a 2015 conference room filled with American billionaires, John Jacob Astor would be right at home. (Dawid, para.5)

Astor's treatment in *Astoria (2015)* corresponds to Haeger's comment on him. In fact, Haeger claimed that Astor's agents – Alexander Ross and Gabriel Franchère – criticized

him for acting selfishly. They made him accountable for their misery and Astoria's failure (Haeger, pp.15, 135).

In sum, Irving had fantasized about an alternative reality where the “venerable projector” – Astor – would have surely secured that vast territory for his cherished U.S.A. (Irving, p.376). Nonetheless, as Dennis Drabelle commented, Peter Stark wanted to know if Astor would have handed it over at all had he secured it (Drabelle, para.8). The two authors presented a divergent and discordant portrayal of the character. Stark asked:

What kind [of empire]? Would it become, [...] a sprawling and powerful trade empire controlled by a dictatorial fur and real estate baron based in Manhattan? [...] In these places is America a beacon of democracy that will unflinchingly support individual rights? Or is it a trade empire looking out for its best economic interests? [...] If Astoria had become a reality, this was an issue that almost certainly would have arisen, and perhaps been bitterly fought. (Stark, 2015, p.296)

Stark's seemingly naive questions carry a dark truth within them. His context is apparent through his multiple questions about Astor's real aspirations. Indeed, he supposed that, like any authoritarian leader, John Jacob Astor would have established a dictatorial state. In this, Stark's doubts were justified. Indeed, the 20th and 21st centuries witnessed the most barbaric wars led by supposedly “great” democracies.

Irving informed that Astor projected to take possession of one of Hawaii's islands and use it for his personal schemes (Irving, 1890, p.56). Hawaii would be invaded by the U.S.A. few decades later. Haunani-Kay Trask (1999) explained how the U.S. “troops” colonized Hawaii in 1893 pretending that it was to “restore order” (Trask, p.12). Therefore, we suppose that Stark's text, either on purpose or not, answered Irving's *Astoria* as well as his quote we began our dissertation with. In fact, Astor might have paved the way for the destruction of Natives' “peculiarities that formerly prevailed” (as cited in Hellman & Trent, 1919, p.97). Irving's reality and context were reflected through his interpretation of the whole project. In an era whence the only concern of the

great powers was to conquer before others did, Irving did not have second thoughts about the morality or legitimacy of his country's acts.

As a result, in the first phase, Peter Stark has read Irving. Both authors shared the same stance or thesis. In the second, Stark inserted himself into history. In this step, also called "thetic phase" by Kristeva, the author dissociated himself from Irving and offered his rewritten history – his own thesis. Thus, his final version is the synthesis which, on its turn, would become someone else's thesis to build upon. Peter Stark "directly opposed [...] the original" discourse. His "second voice, once having made its home" in Irving's "discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him to serve directly opposing aims" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.193). Therefore, the authors' theses are dialogically opposed to one another.

Another major character upon whom both writers diverged is Wilson Price Hunt. For romance and literary purposes, Irving depicted the overland party's men as "sinbads" (Irving, p.356). However, in terms of effectiveness, the author had only negative comments. Truly, Washington Irving held Hunt responsible for any delay. Hunt was introduced as a "scrupulously upright and faithful in his dealings, amicable in his disposition, and of most accommodating manners" (Irving, 99). However, Irving followed his positive comment by stating that "He was not practically experienced in the Indian trade" (p.99). The author's later account of Hunt would prove much more critical as he always recalled his lack of experience and blamed him for each delay. The writer declared: "Another cause of embarrassment and loss was the departure from the plan [...] Mr. Hunt absent from his post, when his presence there was of vital importance" (Irving, 1890, 374).

In contrast, Stark knew, better than anyone else, Hunt's conditions. Given his considerable knowledge in Anthropology, Psychology and in the effects of the extreme conditions on the human body, Stark described Hunt as a "loyal" man. He claimed that he was the only agent who would unequivocally serve Astor's interests (Stark, p.154). As for the

delay Hunt had caused, the author insinuated that as a consensus-seeking man he might have been overwhelmed by Captain Sowle. The latter might have imposed his will upon him and sailed to Hawaii to repair the ship, causing a huge delay. Through Stark's lens, we discovered a different Hunt. The writer described how embittered and lost he was. Wilson Hunt was so afraid to lead his men into dead-ends that he became "Skeptical" about everything (p.179). The man should have decided over business matters only. However, he found himself endowed with another role that caused him "tortured thoughts", making "naked choices over life and death" (p.172). For Stark, Hunt decided that Astor's enterprise had primacy over "the welfare of the straggling men", while Irving insinuated the opposite (p.178). Stark's treatment of Hunt echoes I.S. MacLaren's and is a response to Irving's. Indeed, MacLaren insinuated that, contrary to Astor, Hunt would have deserved better the title of a hero (MacLaren, 1990, p.7).

On the one hand, Irving considered Hunt's choices through a subjective angle, Astor's interests. Therefore, he ceaselessly criticized his choices whether he suffered from them or not. Success and expansion were the priority. On the other hand, Stark, from a dialogic perspective, saw through the prism of his own experience of the wilderness. Elmo Raj Prayer said: "The author compiles the text by reading other texts and the text becomes available to the audience in a process of reading. Bhaktin [sic] finds in a Socratic dialogue an earliest form of novel, [...] dialogism, what Kristeva later names as intertextuality" (Prayer, 2016, pp.77-78). Stark used multiple texts and opinions amongst which Irving's, the various chroniclers' as well as his own experience, confronted them with each other as no text stands alone in a monologic stance. As a result, he came up with a new account about the character under study that answered Irving's.

When dealing with most, if not all, actors who had a role in Astor's project, we noticed that Irving had indiscriminately blamed everyone alike except for one: Duncan

McDougall. Truly, Irving held the Scottish accountable for almost everything. Therefore, from the very first introductions of the character of McDougall, Irving showed a palpable dislike for the man. He introduced him as “the champion” of those who wanted to commit mutiny against captain Thorn. Irving contemptuously called him a “short man” who would not have that much of importance were it not for “being the proxy of Mr. Astor” (p.47). In addition to this, the author gave details about McDougall’s hypothetical unfaithfulness. He said that the “honest captain [Thorn] was not invariably wrong in his suspicions” about McDougall (p.78). It would not be calumnious to put Irving’s judgements under the sign of a chauvinist sentiment as Irving’s and McDougall’s countries were enemies.

Irving almost accused McDougall of treason when the latter welcomed a partner of the rival North West Company, Mr. Thompson). Irving reported: “Though Mr. Thompson could be considered as little better than a spy in the camp, he was received with great cordiality by Mr. M’Dougal, who had a lurking feeling of companionship and good-will for all of the Northwest Company” (p.80). Furthermore, on one of his exchanges with the Hawaiian king, Dunkan McDougall presented himself as an “eri”, which is the “Hawaiian word for king” (Stark, p.64). McDougall also acted as an “eri” when they met the Chinooks. As a result, when McDougal proposed to the daughter of the Chinookan king, Irving ironized: “Mr. M’Dougal seems to have had a heart susceptible to the influence of the gentler sex. [...] one of the daughters of the hospitable Comcomly eventually made a conquest of the great eri of the American Fur Company” (Irving, p.74). By “great eri” Irving sarcastically insinuated that the man was self-important.

Contrastingly, Peter Stark gave a rather objective depiction of the same character. Stark offered a mitigated point of view on McDougall’s behaviour. Ross complained: “M’Dougal received [Mr.Thompson] like a brother” (p.195). The author described his comment as “disdain” (p.195). Nonetheless, Ross admitted that McDougall might have meant

to push his guest to unveil his real motives. Alexander Ross then gave credit to McDougall's astuteness. He said that both men – McDougall and Thompson – shared the same “acuteness and diplomatic craft” which made of McDougall the only possible opponent of Thompson (p.196). We did not see this balanced and fair description with Irving. Later on, Peter Stark offered a disclaimer in which he informed that McDougall received Mr. Thompson because “Even among rivals of opposing nationalities, a formal cordiality often prevailed in distant wilderness outposts” and not because he would have been some sort of a traitor (p.193). Peter Stark's treatment clearly shows that McDougall was a far more complex personage.

Thus, Astor's Scottish partner found better understanding within *Astoria* (2015). Stark compared McDougall to Captain Thorn who kept his martial rigidity with everyone and in every situation. He then complimented McDougall for his flexibility and for selling the furs in order to gain whatever price that the British offered. McDougall's choice secured the furs, Fort Astoria, and their lives altogether. Stark concluded by affirming that John Jacob Astor funded the project. He claimed that Astor and Irving did not consider one critical factor: Astor was not there, but his agents were (pp.289-290). By doing so, the author entered in a dialogue with Irving and echoed MacLaren's comment on Astor. Truly, MacLaren said “Without doubt, Irving's single greatest problem took the form of Astor himself” (p.6). He compared Astor to Penelope who stayed at home while waiting for her husband Odysseus. He described John Astor as a “stay-at-home” hero as opposed to Hunt, McDougall and all his agents who risked their lives. Accordingly, as a response to Irving, Stark offered a thorough advocacy for the case of Duncan McDougall.

Peter Stark relied on various journals and discordant viewpoints, which we may call theses in order to come up with the most accurate and plausible version of the character under study as well as Astor's project. Consequently, Stark's narrative “in one way or another determines the author's discourse” while he remained at a distance from it (Bakhtin, p.195).

As Bakhtin (1984) would say: “Such is the nature of discourse in the hidden polemic” (p.195). Thus, Stark’s final version of the said character is like a synthesis that answered his own thesis and Irving’s in a Bakhtinian dialogic way. It is a form of “hidden polemic”, for Peter Stark’s work was not specially meant to counterclaim or criticize Irving’s. Nevertheless, as we have hitherto proved, in matters of major characters, both works contradict each other.

V. Conclusion

In this dissertation, we sought to compare Washington Irving's *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains* (1890) and Peter Stark's *Astoria: Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire. A Tale of Ambition and Survival in the Early American Frontier* (2015). We had attempted to unveil the intertextual and dialogic connections between both works at the level of their respective historical and literary contexts, socio-cultural themes and ideologies. In order to achieve this aim, we used different tenets of intertextuality and dialogism thought of by Julia Kristeva and Mikhail Bakhtin. Thanks to these concepts, we reached the conclusion that because both writers wrote in different epochs they diverged on very critical subjects like prejudice, gender equality, colonialism, while they converged on less critical subjects like ambition and adversity.

First, using the concept of "ambivalence", we studied the impact of the historical and literary contexts on both works. We found that Irving's and Stark's works carried traces of the historical, social, and literary contexts they sought to narrate. Second, we explored the similarities between the two works in terms of themes like ambition, perseverance as well as the idea of Manifest Destiny. Thanks to Kristeva's "transposition", we displayed how the most recent text converged with the previous works. Furthermore, we unveiled how Irving and Stark vividly depicted the adventurous, ambitious, and perseverant attitude of the different actors of Astoria. In the third chapter, we uncovered the diametrical divergences between both texts. We used Kristeva's ambivalence along with Bakhtin's Dialogism. Irving glorified and romanticized the westward expansion, denigrated the Natives, and adopted a rather colonialist rhetoric. Stark's work was not meant to criticize Irving. However, in 2015, a writer cannot transpose a nineteenth century text without inserting some twenty-first century ideas into his work. Truly, both authors are the advocates of their respective eras. As a matter of fact, we reached the conclusion that because the authors wrote in different epochs they

diverged on very critical subjects like prejudice, gender equality, colonialism, while they converged on less critical subjects like ambition, adversity and perseverance.

In our research we explored the various similarities and differences that lay between Irving's and Stark's works. However, other perspectives could be investigated for further results. We suggest to apply Roberto Cintli Rodriguez's *Yolqui, a Warrior Summoned from the Spirit World: Testimonios on Violence (2019)*. This work would offer a new reading of Irving's and Stark's books. Indeed, Cintli's work is a critique of the Discovery Doctrine and an advocacy of the rights of the native populations of the American continent. Through this research, the student may unveil the colonialist aspirations of the early European explorations in the New World.

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