

CHAPTER SIX: TRAVELER'S VIEW, PART TWO  
WRITING AND RIGHTING, TRAVELOGUES DURING THE  
INTERWAR PERIOD

In the previous chapter I examined the role of visual materials in creating the product narrative of Cambodia for French audiences. While some of these materials, such as postcards, were designed to stand alone, others were part of larger works, such as travelogues. This chapter continues to investigate the narratives, such as travelogues, written for audiences in the *métropole* after the retrocession of Angkor, focusing on narratives published in the interwar 1920s and 1930s when this genre flourished and tales of exotic places were highly fashionable.

The initial route by which Cambodia began to enter the Western, and particularly the French, imagination was through the writings of travelers, explorers, and adventurers. As discussed in the previous chapters, the books published by Henri Mouhot, Francis Garnier, Louis de Carné, and other travelers during the mid- to late-nineteenth century set the tone of how the region would be viewed in the West. From this starting point the number of publications on Cambodia only grew. Articles in newspapers and journals, as well as lengthier monographs, describing the geography, the people, the culture, and the ruins continued to be published throughout the colonial period, and gathered popularity as the decades progressed.

The earliest published works most often took the form of travelogue (such as Garnier's) and personal journal (such as Mouhot's). Works in both of these

media continued to be published throughout the colonial period. In addition, genres such as the short story and the novel were both added to the repertoire that comprised the evolving product-narrative. Travelogues, despite often including heavy doses of fictionalizing, were presented as the factual reporting of the author's journey. Novels and short stories set in the colonies were often openly fictionalized accounts of the author's time spent in the exotic lands that made up *la plus grande France*. Quite often the distance between the "factual" travelogues, and the "fictional" novels was compressed, and the lines drawn between fact and fiction were muddled in the minds of both the authors and their audience. Furthermore, as the authors of many fictional works were well known to have a first-hand acquaintance with the setting of their novels it was often assumed by audiences that there truth in the backdrops to these stories—that the descriptions of the landscape, the monuments, and the details of life were accurate even when the story was imagined. The conflation of fact and fiction in these writings makes their contribution to the creation of the product-narrative of the colonies within the metropolitan imagination an important one.

### *Travelers' Pens*

One of the first travelogues to be published after the retrocession of Angkor was Pierre Loti's 1912 *Pèlerin d'Angkor* (A Pilgrimage to Angkor). The slim volume was popular at the time of its publication in France, not least because of Loti's reputation and fame not only as a writer and essayist, but as a "personality." Loti, who is known as one of the fathers of literary exoticism, was born Louis Marie Julian Viaud in Rochefort in 1850. He followed in his older brother Gustave's footsteps, entering the Naval College in 1867, and becoming a midshipman in 1869. From the point of his graduation from the Naval College, Loti began the world

travels that would form the foundation of his writings, journeying to South America, Africa, and the South Seas.

His voyage to Tahiti both allowed him the experiences that became the basis for his semi-autobiographical novel, *La mariage de Loti* (Marriage of Loti), and gave him his pen name.<sup>1</sup> It also set the pattern for many of his subsequent novels, whose stories often revolved around a tale of love between a French man and a “native” woman, set before an exotic backdrop. The geography of the novels is wide-ranging, from Tahiti to Senegal to China. His writings were often based on his experiences, and his personal life was believed to be as exotic as his novels: he is said to have had wives in Tahiti and Japan, and the love affair that is the focus his novel *Aziyadé* stemmed from a period of residence in Constantinople.

In addition to Loti’s famed novels, he was also known for his essays, which appeared on a variety of subjects in publications such as *Le Figaro* and *L’Illustration*. Among his best known essays is his description of a brief voyage to Angkor in 1901, published in four extracts in *L’Illustration* in December of 1901 and January 1902. His trip was, as the title suggests, a pilgrimage of sorts. A collector of exotic objects since he was a child, Loti had created what he calls a “museum”<sup>2</sup> in the attic of his childhood house that included numerous images of the lost temples, so that his voyage to Angkor decades later is the fulfillment of a long-held fantasy.

However, the exoticism of the temples was not the only image that Loti connected to Angkor. His elder brother, Gustave, who had been a naval surgeon, died of dysentery during his return voyage to France from Indochina. While Gustave departed from Sàì Gòn rather than Angkor, Loti’s descriptions of the

---

<sup>1</sup> “Loti” is the name of a Tahitian flower that he claimed to have been given by a Tahitian princess.

<sup>2</sup> “It was in my “museum”—a tiny room allotted to my childish studies at the top of my parents’ house—where I had gathered together a collection of shells, rare-plummaged birds, Oceanic arms and ornaments, everything that conjured up distant countries for me.” Loti, 1996, p. 5.

temples are infused with images of danger and death that resonate not only with earlier travelers' accounts of the temples, but also with Loti's own associations of his brother's death with Indochina. His initial introduction to Angkor is linked directly to the death of his brother: shutting himself in his "museum... amongst these disturbing objects... some old and yellowed papers that had come back from Indo-China with the belongings of my dead brother..." he finds:

an issue of I know not what colonial review where the discovery of colossal ruins hidden in the depths of the forests of Siam was related. There was one picture at which I stopped with a kind of thrill- showing great strange towers entwined with exotic branches, the temples of mysterious Angkor! <sup>3</sup>

When Loti had the chance to finally visit the monuments he spent a scant two days in the ruins, and the only temples he visited during his pilgrimage were Angkor Wat and the Bayon. There are few passages in Loti's essay that might be considered a description of Angkor; he rarely addresses the monuments directly. Instead, his descriptions focus most closely upon his emotional reactions to what he sees, descriptions of the moods evoked by the area, and to a long string of impressionistic glimpses of how each scene or observation is experienced by him.

Loti's view of the monuments is bounded by his first "view" of Angkor—that initial glimpse in an old journal tucked amongst his brother's belongings. In his discussion of the monuments Angkor Wat and the Bayon, the two temples are made to sound as though they are lost beneath the forest; in his words they appear still as the "colossal ruins hidden in the depths of the forest" that they were in the initial

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-6. He later describes Sàì Gòn as a "mournful" place in his memory, "For it was here that my brother (my elder by fifteen years) had come, like so many others of his generation, to absorb the germs of death." p. 9. And later he laments the poor mothers in France waiting for their sons to come home, "...perhaps, they will not return, but will go to sleep, with thousands of others, in the red earth of these cemeteries here, which are worrying in that they are so vast, and so overgrown with rank weeds." p. 12.

description of Angkor Loti described encountering among his brother's belongings. The temples are surrounded by the "forest, always the forest, and always its shadow, its sovereign oppression,"<sup>4</sup> and Loti describes encountering the destination of his childhood desires as a place whose secrets he says are guarded by "the invading forest."<sup>5</sup> It is as though he is visiting the temples exactly as they would have been for Mouhot.

Loti's view is influenced by how he feels about the temples, the vegetation, and Indochina in general as much as he is by what he sees. For Loti, Angkor is a mood as much as it is an architectural fact: it is a place of "mournful, enclosed solitude, resembling a neglected garden, with brambles entwined with fragrant jasmine, out of which rise, here and there, ruins of little towers, statues with closed eyes, or the multiple heads of the sacred cobra."<sup>6</sup> The road leading to the Bayon is a "sinister avenue passing through an over-mysterious little desert and leading to ruins under a deathly sun."<sup>7</sup>

Although some of the first Europeans to encounter Angkor supposed that they had been constructed by civilizations other than the Khmer,<sup>8</sup> and the explorers of the nineteenth century expressed periodic doubt about the monuments' Cambodian origins, even men like Mouhot and Garnier did acknowledge that they were the work of earlier generations of Khmer. Yet, Loti repeatedly links the structures to a "vanished people,"<sup>9</sup> a "race apart, which gave a bright flash of light in this corner of the world, and then disappeared never to return."<sup>10</sup> Despite stating that the temples are the work of a vanished people, he also attributes their

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Quiroga asserted that the temples were built by one of the lost tribes of Israel, for example. "There are many Jews in the Kingdom of China: they are the ones who built, in Cambodia, the city of Angkor..." Quiroga, 1998, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Loti, 1996, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

construction to the Khmer. He is able to credit both the Khmer and a disappeared race with Angkor's construction by describing the Khmer Empire as if it existed without interacting with other cultures, but as "a people apart, without counterpart in the world, and without neighbors: the Khmer people, a detached branch of the great Aryan race, which... developed far from its original source, separated from the rest of the world by immense expanses of forest and marshland."<sup>11</sup>

As with many of the Western writers who describe journeys to Angkor, Loti's portrayal of the monuments is weighted with his preconceptions about Cambodia and its people. He appears determined in his description to find aspects of the monuments, the roads, the vegetation, and even the monastery within the compound that he can depict as dark, empty, potentially dangerous, and "sinister." Yet, even as he was writing the diary entries that would become his essay, he was interacting with the many monks who maintained Angkor Wat, he was seeing Angkor Wat being used as a religious site, and he was encountering on the roads the people who live in the area. However, in Loti's essay he sees the monuments as though they had, as in the description of Angkor in the old manuscript he found in the attic, just been "discovered," and were therefore empty. His view was tempered by his style of writing—the dramatic exoticism for which he was famous—and by his own associations of Indochina with his brother's death.

Loti's brief pilgrimage ends with his return to Phnom Penh and a viewing of a performance by the royal ballet. However, while he has filled his life-long desire to see the lost temples described in the colonial report of his childhood, he does not depart from Cambodia feeling he has developed a greater understanding of the structures, or of the empire that created them. Rather, he insists that the temples keep their "secrets," while to his "western eyes, I come away with an overriding

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

impression of bafflement and mystery from these dead things... “We do not know you,” (the stones) say to me. “We are conceptions forever foreign to you...”<sup>12</sup>

Loti’s assertion that the stones will not open to his Western eyes is one that both echoes and departs from earlier writers, such as Mouhot and Garnier, for whom the temples’ history was unknown, but who also believed that it would be Westerners who would open that history—who would make the stones speak. Loti’s dramatic declaration of the stones’ silence is also in opposition to the assertions by *EFEO* scholars writing in subsequent decades, and who would claim the “rediscovery” of Angkor’s history amongst their greatest achievements in the Cambodian protectorate. Loti’s writing on Angkor would be excoriated by some of these scholars, including the well-known historian George Coèdes, who in an essay entitled “Theories about Angkor” focuses the entire text upon the numerous ways in which Loti was misguided and simply inaccurate: “Whether from a love of mystery, or from lack of familiarity with our research, the mistaken opinions I have heard on the origins of the race that built Angkor, on the decline of the Khmer civilization, on the dates of the monuments and the length of time taken for their construction, on the cause of their ruin, and on their character and purpose are indeed widespread!”<sup>13</sup> Coedès makes it clear in this essay that Loti bears much of the responsibility for this, indicating how great an influence Loti’s writing had on the reading public and its ideas about Angkor.

Loti, a writer known for his dramatic and exotic novels, applies his craft to his essay on Angkor, creating mysteries and secrets where the *EFEO* and Jean Commaille were gathering answers. However, while many of the scholars who were working to set the chronology or gather the names of the Khmer Empire’s rulers

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> George Coèdes, “Theories about Angkor,” *Angkor An Introduction*, Trans. Emily Floyd Gardiner (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 11

were writing pieces—such as Coèdes’—it was the work of famous writers such as Loti who would exert the larger direct influence on reading audiences in the *métropole*. The themes prevalent in Loti’s description of the temples—mystery, danger, death— continued to play a role in writing about Cambodia, and about Angkor in particular, from travelogues to novels, throughout the colonial period.

Loti is by no means the only literary traveler to cast the temples in this light, and often subsequent writers not only maintain a similar aura in their descriptions of the temples, but even refer to his earlier account. For example, the travel writer Pierre Genin, in the story of his journey piloting an airplane from the Mediterranean to Asia, refers to Loti’s essay, quoting a section that talks of the ruins as “lost” in the forest. He then seconds Loti’s description, stating: “The forest, even more now that the ruins have been recovered, displays its profound enormity, its agonizing mystery.... The majority of the temples at Angkor commune with the forest. The most important (ones) have been cleared... but all the rest still remain buried beneath... the roots of the banyans... lost in the forest, immense vestiges of the old Khmer capital.”<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that forty years had passed between Loti’s and Genin’s voyages, and that Siem Reap was a bustling town replete with numerous hotels and modern conveniences. Most of the major sites had been cleared and many of the “mysteries” solved. Yet, the idea of Angkor as being “lost” is so pervasive that it appears in the descriptions of visitors over and over again, despite the existence of evidence to the contrary.

It is also a depiction that carried across language boundaries, for it appears repeatedly in Anglophone writings on the temples as well. The references throughout many of the works written in English make it clear that these writers

---

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Genin, *27.000 I.E. Vingt-Sept Mille Kilomètres En Avion De Tourisme Vers L'indochine, Méditerranée, Mésopotamie, Golfe Persique, Indes, Birmanie, Siam, Indochine* (Paris: Payot, 1941), p. 152.

were availing themselves of the same French sources, either in the original language or in translation. Significantly, many of these writers, Francophone and Anglophone, claim citations from French guidebooks. An example of a writer who relied heavily upon the official guidebooks published by the conservators of Angkor can be found in the work of the British writer, Geoffrey Gorer, who quotes and references Henri Marchal's guidebook repeatedly in his text. In his 1936 travelogue *Bali and Angkor, A 1930s Pleasure Trip Looking at Life and Death*, Gorer describes a three month voyage he embarked upon in 1935, visiting Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Indochina, with brief stops in Malaya and Siam. Many of the same descriptive tropes found in Loti's essay, written thirty years earlier, reappear in Gorer's book, as is signaled by the chapter heading for his description of the temples, linking them, as Loti did, to death: "Angkor, or Death and the Plastic Arts."<sup>15</sup>

Significant gains in scholarship made it untenable to maintain the belief, by the time of Gorer's writing, that the builders of the temples had "vanished," as was Loti's claim, and Gorer blasts the theory that the structures were built by a race apart. However, he does pronounce the temples to be dead space, declaring that among the numerous factors which make the temples strange and difficult for Westerners to appreciate, "the chief cause of all this alien atmosphere is... the fact that the ruins of Angkor are completely dead."<sup>16</sup> He can't imagine the structures as having ever been in use as a ceremonial space, or as a location of ritual. In fact, he feels it is impossible to "imagine Angkor as other than an uninhabited ruin."<sup>17</sup> It is not simply that Gorer sees the structures as dead, but that he believes their natural state is abandoned and decrepit: he can't imagine an historical moment when the temples were in tact and in use.

---

<sup>15</sup> Geoffrey Gorer, *Bali and Angkor : A 1930s Pleasure Trip Looking at Life and Death* (Singapore; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 170.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183. Not only are the temples dead, but Gorer declares that they are even bereft of ghosts, as if to say that even the dead do not remain.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 184.

Yet, the temples were in use around him even as he was there. The monks were still in residence, and there still would have been incense burning in front of the Buddha statues of the temple. He can't imagine them as anything other than an "uninhabited ruin" even as he would have been passed by monks and others who were using them as religious sites.

In addition to the widely published travelogues, novels set in Indochina were popular, and one can find romances, mysteries, works of humor, and even works written by winners of the prestigious *Prix Goncourt*. Among the various settings writers found in the colonies in Indochina, Cambodia provided one of the most popular backdrops, particularly for exotic adventure novels.

One of the most well-known, and in its time most widely read, examples of this genre is André Malraux's 1930 novel, *La Voie Royale*.<sup>18</sup> While the work is today one of Malraux's lesser-known novels, it was hugely popular at the time of publication. The popularity of the novel owed much to Malraux's biography, which was the apparent basis for the first half of the novel. In the intervening years between the historical moment of the novel's actions and its publication, Malraux had become famous in France and abroad not only for his writing, but more importantly, for his adventures. By the time of the novel's publication, Malraux had solidified his reputation as the consummate "man of action," and the novel's description of an important entry on Malraux's resume assured its success. As a popular, widely-read novel that was attached to both a rising literary star and to the well-known events that brought the writer into the public eye,<sup>19</sup> *La Voie Royale*

---

<sup>18</sup> André Malraux, *La Voie Royale* (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1930)

<sup>19</sup> In 1922 Malraux, his wife Clara, and a friend named Vannec were arrested for removing and stealing a number of bas-reliefs, including several lintels, and architectural sculpture from Banteay Srei temple. The arrest and subsequent prosecution were publicized as a scandal in newspapers not only in Indochina, but also in France. Malraux, who had been primarily a book trader, but had published a small, experimental novel before leaving for Cambodia, became a cause célèbre amongst the artistic community with which he had been associated. Petitions were signed by writers such as André Breton requesting his release and calling his arrest a travesty. This "adventure" was

exemplifies the view of Cambodia and of the ruins that was widely disseminated among the Western public. It is a view that both crafts and reiterates the atmosphere of mystery, danger, and death found in earlier works of fiction and non-fiction alike.

The novel, which is considered one of Malraux's most autobiographical works, tells the story of Claude Vanneec and his pact with an adventurer named Perken. Vanneec convinces Perken to accompany him into the Cambodian hinterland on a mission to locate and remove ancient Khmer statuary lost in the jungle. Vanneec's motives are never clearly delineated; Perken, who resembles the Kurtzian historical figure Mayrena, signs on as a way of funding the arming and defense of his Laotian fiefdom.<sup>20</sup>

In Malraux's novel the ruins that are the ostensive destination of the novel's heroes are cloaked under the curtain of the forest, teeming with insects and characterized by the structural decomposition of abandonment. Vanneec encounters "a chaos of fallen stones... most of the upended; it looked like a mason's yard invaded by the jungle."<sup>21</sup> What Malraux describes bears a resemblance to Francis Garnier's description of the vestiges of the ancient Khmer kingdom more than sixty years earlier:

---

what prompted a publisher in Paris to offer him the opportunity to write another novel—this time about his experiences in Cambodia—and was what brought him into the public eye as a writer.

<sup>20</sup> Mayrena, a former colonial administrator, is said to have organized and ruled his own kingdom in the central highlands of Vietnam. He is described as a figure similar to Joseph Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, with a messianic cult made up of hundreds of Montagnard followers. And like Conrad's Kurtz, whose departure is mourned by his disconsolate native lover, Mayrena is said to have been married to a Cham princess, with whom he traveled his kingdom on the back of an elephant. Ultimately, he was killed in a duel, after losing his territory. Malraux conducted research and began writing a biography of Mayrena after he'd published *La Voie royale*, however he never finished the work. The character Perken declares his own geneology in the text: "...I made a serious attempt to do what Mayrena tried to do,... Fifteen years I've been at it, tackling them one after the other, brave men and sots. And now it's I whom they (the Laos) look up to, not the Siamese government." Ibid, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

...almost everywhere there are archways opening up, peristyles that totter, columns leaning over and several lying on the ground broken, long, trailing shards of moss indicating along the interior walls the destructive work of the rain... How long will it last under the destructive, virulent influence that the jungle and the rains exert at this latitude?<sup>22</sup>

Despite these similarities, it is important to note that these are not descriptions of the same ruin. Malraux was describing his first sighting of Banteay Srei, a ruin located thirty kilometers from the structure Garnier was describing: Angkor Wat. By the time of Malraux's Indochinese adventure, the view of Angkor Wat had changed significantly since Garnier had ruminated on its state in the 1860s. In the intervening sixty years the colonial administration had constructed paved roads that passed by three sides of the temple; the ruin had been largely cleared of vegetation; restoration projects had secured many of the more unstable sections of the structure; and a hotel had mushroomed in the cleared space across the road from the main entrance. By the time of Malraux's visit, one traveled from the dock where boats coming from Phnom Penh left passengers to the door of the *Hôtel des Ruines* in a Ford automobile. In fact, Malraux stayed in the bungalows across from Angkor Wat during his time in the area.

Furthermore, the only description of Angkor Wat that appears in the narrative acts as Vannec's entrée into the sphere of his adventure—what he calls the “prologue to the jungle”—while reiterating the themes (death, abandonment, ruin) that run throughout the work, exemplified by the “rancid odor of drying animal matter (that) assailed his nostrils.”<sup>23</sup> In the distance, hidden behind the “leafy barrier” which “shrouded the fenlands with a growing pall,” Vannec strains to catch sight of the famous temple.<sup>24</sup> Once he does catch sight of the temple's well-known

---

<sup>22</sup> Garnier, 1996, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Malraux, 1935, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

towers, they jog his memory of the blind musician he had seen in Phnom Penh reciting the Indian epics, and he associates the singers of dead legends with the country and its temples, asking:

What better personification of Cambodia, of this land of decay, could he have found than that old singer...? Cambodia, a land possessed, and tamed to humble uses, its ancient hymns like its temples, fallen on evil days; of all dead lands, most dead....<sup>25</sup>

Malraux's portrait of Angkor Wat hidden behind a jungle curtain, which echoes Garnier's description of the temple, however, it is an anachronistic resemblance. By the time of his arrival at Siem Reap, the view of Angkor Wat was only obscured from a distance: the temple itself had been almost completely cleared. While Malraux never describes the structures that make up Angkor Wat itself as vine-covered, his depiction of the temple as hard to discern and lost behind a veil of vegetation leaves the reader under the impression that little has changed since Garnier's time.

The repetition across boundaries of genres and mediums, and within a variety of subjects, appears to confirm an often repeated set of tropes for reading audiences: the association of the temples in much of the period's popular fiction and non-fiction with the themes of abandonment, death, and mystery. It is the incongruity of the descriptions in which monks appear in ruins described as "abandoned" or "dead," which occur often in the travel narratives and novels, in French and English, throughout the interwar years, that form an important act of "exposure." In this case, it is the apparent need for visitors to see Angkor as an abandoned space, as a "lost" location, despite evidence to the contrary.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

These tropes guided the creation of a descriptive lexicon for Cambodian novels across a variety of genres, such as the exotic adventure genre, romances, and mysteries, all of which utilized this visual and verbal vocabulary. They appear again and again in numerous popular novels, such as Pierre Benoit's interwar novel *Le roi lépreux*, which not only places its protagonist at the temples, but names him as the interim *Conservateur d'Ankgor*.<sup>26</sup>

Within many of the novels and short stories written by Western writers and set at Angkor one can find descriptions of the temples as places that are sleeping, dead, or even "hallucinatory."<sup>27</sup> Many repeat the sense of danger that is found in Malraux's novel, or the "sinister" presence described by Loti in his travelogue. For example, Benoit's protagonist Raphaël rushes through the Bayon, "not daring to raise his eyes to meet those of the frightening, sculpted visages flanking each tower,"<sup>28</sup> an extraordinary reaction from someone presumably familiar and interested enough with the sculptures to have been placed in charge of their care. Publications of popular fiction and literature, such as Benoit's, were widely read in France. Many of these works gained national and regional acclaim: *La Voie Royale*

---

<sup>26</sup> Benoit, 2000. Additional examples of novels containing these tropes can be found in Roland Meyer, a French official who held the office of director of Fine Arts in Cambodia, published the three volume story of *Saramani danseuse khmèr* in 1919. The work straddles the subjects of history, ethnography, adventure, intrigue, and romance, and is thought to be based upon Meyer's own interactions with the Cambodian court, and his affair with a member of the Royal Cambodian Ballet. While the first volume carries the subtitle of "In the country of grand rivers," the remaining two volumes carry subtitles that incorporate the temples at Angkor, particularly the third volume, whose subtitle is "The legend of the ruins." Jean Dorsenne opens his 1934 murder mystery, *Sous le soleil des bonzes*, with the discovery of Père Damien's body among the ruins of Angkor. Even George Groslier, the Director of the School of Cambodian Arts in Phnom Penh, wrote and published novels set in the protectorate, including the novels *La route du plus fort* and *Le retour à l'argile*. Roland Meyer, *Saramani danseuse khmèr I Au pays des grands fleuves* (Paris: Éditions Kailash, 1997) Original 1919; Meyer *Saramani danseuse khmèr II Le palais des quatre faces* (Paris: Éditions Kailash, 1997) Original 1919; Meyer, *Saramani danseuse khmèr III La légende des ruines* (Paris: Éditions Kailash, 1997) Original 1919; Jean Dorsenne, *Sous le soleil des bonzes* (Paris: Éditions Kailash, 2001) Original 1934; George Groslier, *Le retour à l'argile* (Paris: Éditions Kailash, 1996) Original 1928.

<sup>27</sup> Benoit, 2000, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 141.

was a contender for the 1930 *Prix Goncourt*,<sup>29</sup> while Groslier's *Le retour à l'argile* won the *Grand Prix de littérature coloniale* of 1931.<sup>30</sup> Many more garnered a broad readership, from lovers of literature to those of pulp fiction. Each served to trace the outline of Cambodia, and Angkor, and to create for their audiences the visual and verbal lexicon that became shorthand for the protectorate. Furthermore, each contributed important elements to the product-narrative that came to represent Cambodia to Western audiences. In the following chapter I will examine the ways in which this product-narrative was given three dimensional form and populated in the *métropole* itself during the international and colonial expositions of the first half of the twentieth century.

---

<sup>29</sup> Malraux's novel *La condition humaine*, which was published in 1933, did win the *Prix Goncourt*.

<sup>30</sup> *Postface* for *Le retour à l'argile* (1996) by Pierre L. Lamant, p. 187