

ORIENTALISM OR MERIDIONISM?
BRITISH IDENTITY FORMATION
THROUGH TRAVEL WRITING ON
INDIA AND ITALY, 1760-1850.

David Peter Robinson

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Abstract

This thesis compares two bodies of travel writing; the accounts of ‘middling types’ of British travellers to Italy and to India from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Rather than treat British engagement with these two travel destinations separately, as has tended to be the case, I consider the ways in which British travel to Italy and India contributed to and justified an emerging sense of British identity, which reflected the growing cultural and political authority of the middle-classes.

Travellers’ discourse on India has been, broadly, considered as part of Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism; the creation of an East-West binary of racial inferiority and superiority. However, the ‘superiority’ of the West is apparently disrupted by another division configured by travellers during the same period, that of a European North-South binary. Manfred Pfister has termed this binary ‘Meridionism’, noting that ‘there is an intra-European “Meridionism” as well as a global Orientalism.’¹ Rather than think about Orientalism and Meridionism separately or as two parallel but distinct processes, this thesis examines the relationship between Orientalism and Meridionism. I explore the ways in which Orientalism and Meridionism interact to and reinforce each other and, in the process, configure a sense of British identity based around bourgeois ‘virtue’.

¹ M.Pfister (ed.), *The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers: An annotated anthology* (Amsterdam, 1996), 3.

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Introduction

This thesis compares two bodies of travel writing: the accounts of British travellers to Italy and to India from the late eighteenth- to the mid-nineteenth centuries.

In terms of an original contribution to scholarship, this falls into two overlapping parts. Firstly, travellers' discourse on India has been, broadly, considered as part of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism: the creation of an East-West binary of racial inferiority and superiority. However, the 'superiority' of the West is apparently disrupted by another division configured by travellers during the same period, that of a European North-South binary. Manfred Pfister has termed this binary 'Meridionism', noting that 'there is an intra-European "Meridionism" as well as a global Orientalism.'² As Maria Schoina has put it, 'Intra-European Meridionism' has been adopted as a 'term being used in academic phraseology to describe 'a counterpart' to Said's Orientalism.'³ Meridionism apparently describes British configurations of Italy based on, like Orientalism, a set of binary oppositions, 'not only in terms of geographical latitude, but also in racial terms of human physiology and character'.⁴ Gail Mobley describes the 'European South' as 'a sort of inner "Orient", against which the Northern European identity could conceive itself to be both modern and superior.' She argues that 'if Orientalism was born as a cultural tool for the implementation of European colonialism, Meridionism was born as a cultural tool for the foundation of the modern European identity.'⁵ I consider these ideas and, rather than think about Orientalism and Meridionism separately or as two parallel but distinct processes, examine the relationship between Orientalism and Meridionism, exploring how they interact to 'produce' and reinforce each other.

Secondly, rather than treat British engagement with these two travel destinations separately, as has tended to be the case, I consider the ways in which British travel to

² M. Pfister (ed.), *The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers: An Annotated Anthology* (Amsterdam, 1996), 3.

³ M. Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians: Configurations of Identity in Byron, the Shelleys and the Pisan Circle* (New York, 2016), 7.

⁴ Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, 22.

⁵ G. Mobley, Naqvi, Z. B., Neagu, D. S., Vanino, E., Bolton, I., Poirier, M. (eds.), *Travelling Europe: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Place and Space* (Cambridge, 2015), 87-8.

Italy and India *combined* to contribute to and justify an emerging sense of British identity which reflected the growing cultural and political authority of the middle-classes. Stoler and Cooper *et al* have argued that ‘metropole and colony’ should be treated as ‘a single analytical field’.⁶ Instead, I propose that that the emergence of a middle-class identity for Britain, reflected in, and reinforced by, the accounts of travellers, is better understood within a tripartite frame that includes Italy, India and Britain.

In searching for a way past the racial binaries of Orientalism, I offer an alternative framework of intersecting discourses. I am not suggesting this is the *only* way forward, but it is one way. Consider Mary Shelley’s reference to the ‘Anglo-Italians’ as a new British ‘race’ of ‘well-informed, clever and active’ travellers, Schoina discusses various connotations and definitions of the term ‘race’.⁷ Of the different definitions available, Schoina argues that it was ‘a set or group of people with common interests’ to which Shelley referred when she used the term ‘race’. Shelley implied a group of like-minded travellers (including herself) that were ‘cultured, sophisticated, [...] with a distinct standard of taste, unified sensibility, a discrete sense of place-attachment, and a shared vision for cultural reform.’⁸ Schoina goes on to show how Shelley juxtaposed ‘Anglo-Italians’ with both her own non-Italianised compatriots and Italians themselves, thus demonstrating the cultural superiority of this new ‘race’.⁹ I will extend this idea by considering the degree to which the apparently admirable qualities to which Shelley referred were claimed as not just characteristic of Anglo-Italians but, more broadly, as defining the virtues of another ‘new race’, the nascent middle classes. By comparing accounts of India and Italy, I explore the extent to which travel writing produced a collective sense of Britishness that was based on values associated with the emergent bourgeoisie. Rather than think about accounts of Italy and India separately, I consider whether the emerging sense of middle-class identity expressed in British travel writing might be better understood by reducing the ideological and

⁶ A. Stoler & Cooper, F. (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 3-4.

⁷ Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, 3. Shelley’s comments originally in M. Shelley, ‘The English in Italy’, *Westminster Review*, VI (1826), 325-41, 327.

⁸ Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, 3-4.

⁹ Schoina, *Romantic Anglo-Italians*, 4. Shelley, ‘The English’, 327.

geographical distance between ideas of East and West, metropole and colony, centre and periphery and considering India, Britain and Italy within a *tripartite* frame of analysis. In doing so, I examine how the discourses produced through travel writing were used simultaneously to assert British national ‘superiority’ abroad as the exportation of bourgeois virtue and, by re-importing such claims, bolstered by ‘national superiority’, to contest cultural, civic and political authority back home.

The Importance of Travel Writing

Travel accounts were not only particularly popular during the period discussed, they garnered considerably more academic and cultural respect than does the genre today. As Carl Thompson notes, rather than ‘read principally for personal amusement’, travel writing was ‘a vital medium for debate and dissemination across a broad range of disciplines and discourses.’¹⁰ But more than this, as Mary Shelley hints at above, the act of travel itself constituted ‘a conspicuous claim of, and bid for, cultural and intellectual authority.’¹¹ This idea was hardly new, as Yaël Schlick describes. From the time of Socrates, ‘travel and wisdom’ were inextricably bound together.¹² By the mid-eighteenth century Enlightenment, though, writers like Rousseau understood travel not only as a ‘means of gaining knowledge’, but essential to ‘becoming a cosmopolitan individual’ and, key to this thesis, ‘as a prerequisite to political participation.’¹³ The traveller’s account, therefore, maps not only the route taken through foreign geography, but the internal journey, from youthful innocence, or ignorance, to political and cultural citizenship.

If this is the case, then *who* writes such accounts is key. Those who are, *practically*, able to travel, write and publish, those socially and culturally *authorised* to do so, those whose accounts are *approved* of, are those whose cultural and political inclusion

¹⁰ C. Thompson, ‘Journeys to Authority: Reassessing Women’s Travel Writing, 1763-1862’, *Women’s Writing*, 24 (2017), 131-50, 135.

¹¹ Thompson, ‘Journeys to Authority’, 136. Elsewhere, Thompson notes that ‘travel was strongly invested with epistemological prestige and civic responsibility’ (C. Thompson (ed.), *Women’s Travel Writings in India, 1777-1845*, in 5 Vols., Vol. 1 (Abingdon, 2020), ix).

¹² Y. Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel after the Enlightenment* (Lewisburg, 2012), 16. My emphasis.

¹³ Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel*, 14. For ‘Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile* and its influential discussion of the political and educational value of travel to young men’, see Chapter One, ‘The Sex of Travel’, 23-47, in the same volume.

is also authorised and approved. In the mid-eighteenth century, such writers were, predominantly, male Grand Tourists. By the early-nineteenth century, a combination of two previous decades of relative inaccessibility to the Continent and a changing socio-political and economic environment meant such published accounts were more likely to be written by travellers from the nascent middle classes than youthful aristocrats. Changes in authorship of travel accounts thus accompanied growing debates about a move away from aristocratic hegemony and towards broader political inclusion. The cultural and political authority previously conferred on Grand Tourists could now be claimed through the physical movement of the middle classes.

This is, partly, what prompted early-nineteenth century concerns that an increase in the volume of published travel accounts was accompanied by a commensurate decline in its quality. That is the claim made by Norma Clarke as regards women travel writers, that the ‘fall’ in the reputation of women’s travel accounts ‘coincide[d] with the beginnings of democracy and the undermining of a system based on deference.’¹⁴ More broadly, Ina Ferris discusses concerns about the excessive number of accounts of ‘excruciatingly long and boring travels [that] were a standard butt of caricaturists, satirists, and reviewers of the period.’¹⁵ Regardless, the *Edinburgh Review*, the key periodical before the Tory-supporting *Quarterly Review* was founded by the publisher, John Murray, in direct opposition to its Whig forerunner, was clear about the importance of travel writing. As Henry Brougham wrote at the opening of the nineteenth century, ‘we are of the opinion, that books of travel deserve a greater degree of attention, in proportion to their merits, than other works.’¹⁶ Partly, this was the role of travel as a ‘descriptive knowledge genre.’¹⁷ As Macvey Napier wrote in an 1806 *Edinburgh* article, travel was key to ‘collecting materials for the philosopher, the historian and the political economist’, in subjects such as ‘natural history . . . geography . . . science’.¹⁸

¹⁴ N. Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters* (London, 2004), 3.

¹⁵ I. Ferris, ‘Mobile Words: Romantic Travel Writing and Print Anxiety’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 60 (1999), 451-68, 451-3.

¹⁶ H. Brougham, ‘Hunter’s Travels Through France, &c. in 1792’, *Edinburgh Review*, 4 (1804), 207-14, 207.

¹⁷ Ferris, ‘Mobile Words’, 455.

¹⁸ M. Napier, ‘Griffiths’ Travels’, *Edinburgh Review*, 7 (1806), 35-51, 36.

Thirteen years later, also in the *Edinburgh*, Sydney Smith described a different form of essential knowledge garnered through travel. 'A traveller who passes through countries little known', he wrote, 'should tell us how such countries are cultivated-how they are governed-what is the face of nature-what is the state of the useful arts-what is the degree of knowledge which exists there.'¹⁹ This was the type of knowledge which informed a view of the state of foreign *civilisation* or, more likely, the lack of it, the relative pre-modernity of their civic, cultural and political institutions. Travel was, thus, paradigmatic for the self-configuration of the 'modern' and 'civilised' British, the superior mirror image of the 'inferiority' found abroad.

The act of recording one's movement through foreign territory, then, was one which conferred cultural and political citizenship. The objective for young men was 'to travel in order to become an informed, worthy, and dutiful citizen of his own nation upon his return so that he can assume his rightful place as a responsible member of his society'.²⁰ For travelling women, their accounts were, perhaps, of even greater import. The focus on writing about India has tended to discuss women's travel accounts in terms of whether they contested or supported the problematic aspects of an inherently male discourse of imperial domination. Contesting such discourse has been equated with challenging women's subordination to patriarchy back home.²¹ More recently, scholars such as Carl Thompson and Yaël Schlick have considered how travel accounts have been 'utilized by women writers as a means of arguing for greater freedom and of accessing the public sphere, the arena of politics.'²² Thompson discusses the 'public influence and agency that women might garner from travel writing', leading to the possibility of women's 'wider recognition as 'intellectuals' and 'cultural commentators'; a process he describes as 'a journey to authority.'²³ In his most recent work, Thompson has shown how women's travel accounts have highlighted their varied roles as 'authors, intellectuals, educators, activists, missionaries, social reformers, and businesswomen.'²⁴ He describes women-writers' 'proto-feminist' bid to demonstrate

¹⁹ S. Smith, 'Heude's *Voyages and Travels*', *Edinburgh Review*, 32 (1819), 111-18, 114.

²⁰ Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel*, 19.

²¹ Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel*, 13.

²² Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel*, 14.

²³ Thompson, 'Journeys to Authority', 133.

²⁴ Thompson, *Women's Travel Writings in India*, Vol. 1, ix.

their ‘civic-mindedness and capacity for empirical observation and rational debate’;²⁵ essentially a bid for inclusion as fuller political citizens back home. Although the scholars above use women travellers to India as their examples, as I will show, the very same arguments can be made from the accounts of women-travellers to Italy, as Mary Shelley’s comments, above, suggest.

Inevitably, women’s writings are regularly considered through the discursive lens of the supposed public and private ‘separate spheres’ of men’s and women’s societal roles. Indeed, Schlick warns against the

tendency to overly “domesticate” the woman writer’s travelogue, to see it too thoroughly through the lens of domesticity and thus overly to liken travel to typically domestic female activities.²⁶

Yet, as Thompson notes, we cannot ignore the ‘narrative of homemaking and domestication’, because it is often this that women subvert, by extending their perceived role as ‘Angel of the House’ to demonstrate their agency in the greater public arena.²⁷ By considering women’s use of a domestic discourse in this way, we avoid the danger of inadvertently creating the very discourse we attempt to critique, by configuring women-writers as the stereotype of the Victorian, petticoat-clad, submissive and simpering woman, lacking in agency. Indeed, the women discussed were the very antithesis of such ideas.

Neither can we ignore, though, what Joyce Grossman has described as the ‘double voiced’ aspect of women-writers, whereby visions ‘of “degenerate” subjects are off-set by images of bigoted, myopic colonizers whose Eurocentricity obfuscates flaws in their own culture.’²⁸ Carl Thompson extends this ‘double voiced’ aspect of women’s writing to include the ways in which women’s travel accounts subverted the genre to enter the public arena as commentators whilst, simultaneously, writing in ways and about subjects which offered protection from potential accusations of inappropriate writing

²⁵ Thompson, *Women’s Travel Writings in India*, Vol. 1, xvi.

²⁶ Schlick, *Feminism and the Politics of Travel*, 13.

²⁷ Thompson, *Women’s Travel Writings in India*, Vol. 1, xiv-xv.

²⁸ J. Grossman, ‘Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers: Mary Sherwood’s Indian Experience and “Constructions of Subordinated Others”’, *South Atlantic Review*, 66 (2001), 14-44, 15.

and behaviour for women. Thompson argues that, traditionally, critics have seen such 'double voicing' as a 'strategy of subterfuge and subversion, forced upon women by their marginalisation from authoritative discourse.' Instead, he emphasises its 'enabling aspects.'²⁹ I argue that both sides of this coin should be considered together; that by subverting and utilising the 'separate spheres' trope, women, to some degree, were forced to concede (in theory, if not in practice) conformation to it. Women's apparent specialist knowledge of the domestic environment was another example of travel writing as a 'knowledge genre', one which allowed women to enter the realm of public cultural and political discourse. As I argue in greater depth in Chapter 6, this strategy had ambivalent repercussions for women, of which they were, often, uncomfortably aware.

In the accounts of male and female travellers, the characteristics of foreign peoples and lands were also mapped onto groups back home, the aristocracy and the lower classes. The superiority of the British traveller was also, supposedly, that of the metropolitan middle classes. As Ferris concludes, 'travels served their middle-class readers as a sign of both social status and intellectual capital.'³⁰ Their accounts, then, formed an essential weapon as part of a simultaneous and co-constitutive assertion of national superiority and a middle-class bid for civic, cultural and political authority back home.

Middle class?

Although I use the term 'middle class', I am aware of the potentially somewhat nebulous and non-specific nature of such labels. 'Middle class' is often defined as much by what it is *not* rather than by specific identifiers. For example, the Collins dictionary defines the noun, 'middle class', as 'the people in society who are not working class or upper class'. It adds that 'business people, managers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers are usually regarded as middle class.' Collins also offers 'middle class' as an adjective, to describe attitudes that may be considered 'conventional'.³¹ Of course, what determines 'convention' may and does change over time. In the period I describe,

²⁹ Thompson, 'Journeys to Authority', 142.

³⁰ Ferris, *Mobile Words*, 453.

³¹ Collins Dictionary. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/middle-class> (Accessed 16/12/19).

many travellers that would certainly have thought of themselves as middle class may well have considered themselves as in *opposition* to the conventions of the day, defined by the upper classes and aristocracy. Perhaps what Collins defines as conventional today are attitudes promoted by those travellers, who considered them new and reformist. Regardless, there is a world of difference between, for example, a minor merchant or shopkeeper and a financially independent traveller or the wife of a knight of the realm, although none are lower class or aristocratic. Indeed, many might argue that a butcher was not middle class at all, but if he was successful in his trade, reasonably financially secure, harboured realistic and ambitious aspirations for the marriage of his daughter and, perhaps, for his son to be sufficiently educated to qualify, for example, as a doctor or a lawyer, it would be hard to argue that he was lower class. He might, also, have subscribed to beliefs and ideas that could be considered 'bourgeois', defined by Collins as having attitudes typical of the middle classes.³² Again, these are potentially nebulous terms but might include aspiration to capital accumulation and consumer power; a belief in hard work and industriousness; a commitment to the importance of, and a belief in his right to exercise, civic and political responsibility; religious adherence and piety; the value to the nations' stability at home and superiority abroad, of the domestic family unit, with biologically-assigned roles for men and women.

Having said this, the travellers I discuss do generally fall into the category of professional soldiers, lawyers, theologians, doctors, colonial administrators, their wives and some unmarried women, usually accompanying a married sister or other family member. My point is simply to recognise the limitations of terms such as 'middle class' whilst needing some form of label to broadly identify the categories I am discussing. For my purposes, when I refer to middle-class travellers, I mean to suggest those that identified with the values discussed and, perhaps more importantly, to the belief that such 'virtues' (as they saw them) were superior characteristics which entitled them, as a group, to claim political, moral, civic and cultural authority at home and defined what it meant to be *British*. I recognise, though, that this group

³² Collins dictionary: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/bourgeois> (Accessed 17/12/19).

were far from unified across, for example, a range of political, cultural, religious, and gender debates.

Meet the Travellers

There has always been debate regarding what constitutes travel writing, a form of writing generally accepted as encompassing many other genres.³³ Although the claim to truth in travel writing is ubiquitous among its authors, evident in the common disclaimer that 'I only wrote what I saw', travel writing often contains fictional techniques, may re-construct dialogue in extended form, include fictional stories or myths, exaggerate, or simply down-right lie. Equally, fictional travel writing is often, as with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, or Germaine De Stael's *Corinne*, based on actual journeys undertaken, or includes autobiographical experiences, factual information or historical events.³⁴ It is easier to talk of certain characteristics of travel writing rather than strict definitions that include or exclude specific texts. However, perhaps the definition that is most useful for our purposes here is that of Carl Thompson who argues that travel writing 'is underpinned by, and emerges from, an encounter between self and other precipitated by movement.'³⁵ As I will shortly discuss, it is the record of the encounter with alterity, one that leads to comparison and justification for assuming the superior morality and utility of one culture over another, with which I am most concerned.

³³ For example, Tim Youngs states that travel writing is a 'mixed form, composed of different genres and discourses, and produced at a variety of historical moments'. (T. Youngs & Forsdick, C., (eds.), *Travel Writing* (Oxford, 2012), 1). Charles Forsdick describes travel literature as 'a literary form situated somewhere between scientific observation and fiction' (C. Forsdick, 'French Representations of Niagra: From Hennepin to Butor' in S. Castillo & Seed, D., (eds.), *American Travel and Empire* (Liverpool, 2009), 56-77, 58). Michael Kowaleski calls travel writing 'dauntingly heterogeneous', borrowing from 'the memoir, journalism, letters, guidebooks, confessional narrative, and, most important, fiction'. (M. Kowaleski, 'Introduction: The Modern Literature of Travel' in M. Kowaleski (ed.), *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel* (Athens: Georgia, 1992), 1-16, 7). For a comprehensive review of what constitutes travel writing, see 'Defining the Genre' in C. Thompson, *Travel Writing* (Abingdon, 2011), 9-33. For an historical overview of travel writing, see 'Narrating self and other: an historical overview' in C. Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York, 2002), 1-29.

³⁴ J. Borm, 'Defining Travel' in G. Hooper & Youngs, T., *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004), 15-16. Borm suggests that travel writing is 'not a genre, but a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel' (13). See also, Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 27-33. Chloe Chard, for example, includes within her definition of acceptable travel writing sources, 'theoretical exposition and scientific enquiry, poems concerned with particular places, or with some general theme that prompts reference to the foreign, and fictional narratives'. (C. Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester, 1999), 13).

³⁵ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 10.

The majority of texts I consider are uncontroversial in their status as travel accounts, in that they are conventional published accounts of the observations and experiences of travellers who visited Italy and India for professional purposes, their health, their own private recreation and interest, or even to avoid opprobrium back home. Occasionally, I consider writing that slightly pushes against conventional definitions, such as academic works, the poems or novels of travellers which contain autobiographical experiences of the place written about or, for example, supposedly factual accounts that claim to be drawn from the real-life experiences of third parties but whose literal truth may be somewhat more dubious. I draw from such accounts sparingly and, generally, to support points made with reference to more conventional narratives.

Travel writing was a particularly widely-read genre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, perhaps only religious writing was more so.³⁶ Many travellers' accounts were reviewed by periodicals and journals representing all sides of the political spectrum. Travel writing was, therefore, an influential medium for reflecting and propagating themes and ideas. For historians, then, travel accounts and their reviews are a useful window onto, as Carl Thompson puts it, a 'broad range of cultural, political and historical debates'.³⁷ The category of 'traveller' though, is by no means homogeneous. Travellers encountered the space to which they travelled through a filter of their own previous experiences, beliefs and identities. As I will shortly discuss, in the eighteenth century, Grand Tourists visiting Italy, and scholars of Indian history and religion, interpreted the same sites, the same 'manners' and cultural experiences, very differently to middle-class travellers to Italy and colonial administrators of India in the early nineteenth century. As John Urry describes, 'people gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires, and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education.'³⁸

³⁶ Crone and Skelton describe travel writing as 'outrun in popularity among the reading public only by theology'. (G. R. Crone & Skelton, R. A., 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels', in E. Lynam (ed.), *Richard Hakluyt and his Successors* (Ashgate, 2010), 78).

³⁷ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 2.

³⁸ J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London, 2011), 1-2. Similarly, Nigel Leask writes that travel entails 'highly particularised, performative parameters of class, gender, and nationality, rather than pre-supposing any essential "European" identity' (N. Leask, *Curiosity and the aesthetics of travel writing* (Oxford, 2002), 4). Put

The travellers whose accounts I have selected for comparison all fall into the category of having been written by the ‘middling sort’, fairly equally balanced between male and female writers. In doing so, I have not excluded accounts written by different groups. The most widely read and reviewed accounts of Italy and India during this period were written by the middling types. The men include: lawyers; doctors; military officers; established artists and poets; academics; theologians; colonial administrators; politicians. Some of the women I have selected travelled to accompany their husbands, particularly those who wrote about India. However, many of those women were already published authors of some note, as travellers, poets or novelists. Others would go on to publish accounts of unaccompanied travels as widows or travelled unaccompanied once ‘in country’. In the case of Lady Morgan’s account of Italy, she and her husband travelled there specifically to fulfil *her*, very lucrative, publisher’s writing commission. This is not to suggest, however, that these travellers necessarily represented any financial elite. Although most eventually enjoyed some degree of financial security, many had flirted with *insecurity*, particularly as single women, or were dependent on a salary for their livings. Not a few had their writing to thank for their eventual material comfort.

In every case, whether male or female-authored, I have selected accounts that were particularly popular, often running to multiple editions over several years. Some became the defining account of their generation whilst others attracted attention for their controversial views. All were reviewed by the leading periodical press such as the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Monthly Review* or the *Quarterly Review*, many in glowing terms; others were castigated for political or other views with which the reviewers vehemently disagreed. I hope, therefore, to have captured the most influential and widely-read accounts of Italy and India, those which most stimulated agreement or controversy, at least debate, among the reading classes of Britain. Another defining

another way, our reactions to unfamiliarity are mediated by our culturally constructed beliefs (T. Youngs, *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2006), 2). The assumption of a homologous ‘superior’ British, European, or Western traveller commenting on ‘inferior’ foreigners has been one of the criticisms of Said and characterised as the ‘cultural historian’s dominant preoccupation with racial difference’ (M. Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian Lives in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33 (2010), 49-65, 59).

feature of the accounts I have selected is the way in which travellers linked their experiences and observations with opinions as to what they believed they entailed, in terms of the political, cultural, religious, moral and civic institutions and customs of the people and places they observed. Indeed, the very fact that, within one of the most widely-read genres of literature, the bulk of the most widely-read accounts of India and Italy *are* so political in nature underlines their contemporary influence and importance as historical sources today.

Background to the research

In his seminal book of 1978, *Orientalism*, Said proposed that Europe 'invented' the East as its mirror-image 'other': the unchangeable, irrational, exotic and backward opposite of the rational, moral, progressive and superior West. He argued that an East-West binary was formalised to justify and augment European imperialism from around the end of the eighteenth century. The importance of travel writing to Said's thesis is illustrated by the fact that a keyword search reveals travel writing to be mentioned nearly eighty times throughout the text. As I will discuss, however, Said's treatment of that writing is contentious. In one of many criticisms, Mary Campbell describes Said as initiating 'critical discussion of modern travel writing in a crude form: the West vs. the Rest'.³⁹

At the heart of any discussion about travel writing is a discussion about the description and deployment of *alterity*. If the purpose of travel is to encounter alterity and travel writing is an account of that experience, that account is also a record of the differences which constitute identity, or perhaps identities: one identity that is self-claimed by the traveller; another assigned, however benignly, by the traveller to those whom they write about. If there are no differences between people and places, identity has no meaning. As Trinh T. Minh-ha points out, 'identity is largely constituted through the process of othering'.⁴⁰ Many travellers' remarks about Italians deployed the same

³⁹ M. B. Campbell, 'Travel writing and its theory', in P. Hulme & Youngs, T., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), 261-78, 264.

⁴⁰ T. T. Minh-ha, 'Other than myself/my other self' in G. Robertson, Mash. M., Tickner, L., Bird, J., Curtis, B., Putnam, T., (eds.) *Traveller's Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement* (London, 1994), 18.

pejorative terms used by travellers commenting on India in a similar period. The characteristics British travellers assigned to Italians were, they often wrote, at the heart of Italy's inability to form effective civic and political institutions, just as travellers to India claimed was the case in the sub-continent.⁴¹

British travellers appeared, then, to categorise Italians and Indians in similar ways during the same time period. Yet, a comparison of the historiography of such characterisations shows that their treatment has often been different. Much of the postcolonial historiography and analysis concerned with travellers' accounts of India focuses extensively on the discursive construction of the 'Oriental'. Travellers' descriptions of what they saw as lazy, superstitious, irrational, exotic, sexually immoral and generally pre-modern Indians were taken as bearing out, certainly in a general way, much of Said's thesis.⁴² The postcolonial approach argues, broadly, that travellers drew on their encounters with difference to construct a racial discourse of an apparently submissive, pre-modern and inferior East. This, scholars following Said argue, was a *requirement* if the West was to self-identify as the mirror-image opposite: supposedly rational, progressive and superior. This approach is significantly interested in geo-politics and the way in which travel writing helped the imperial West to construct versions of itself and the East which justified and augmented imperialism from the late eighteenth century.

Alternatively, consider Chloe Chard's more literary work on imaginative geography in travellers' commentary on Italy, a key text in the study of British travel to Italy. Chard's interest in alterity is in the role it played as a rhetorical trope in 'producing an effect of pleasure by imposing on the topography of foreignness a demand for some form of dramatic departure from the familiar and the mundane.'⁴³ Chard is primarily

⁴¹ There are other similarities too. Both India and Italy were peninsulas, albeit of very different sizes; both were a series of fragmented territories or states, known by collective terms which had little coherence in political reality; although Italy was not a formal colony of a single state, much of it, like India, was ruled by foreign powers; both were noted for their significant classical pasts, a great flowering of civilisation, only to fall into chaos and instability in latter times.

⁴² This is not to underplay the extensive criticism of Said's thesis, which I will document in my first chapter.

⁴³ C. Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (Manchester, 1999), 2.

concerned ‘not with what was thought or felt about the foreign’ but with the literary devices that framed ‘what it was possible to say and write about it.’⁴⁴ Like Said, Chard’s interest is in what she terms the ‘discourse of travel’ to Italy rather than viewing these texts as social history, but her analysis of that discourse takes a very different turn to that of postcolonial historians.⁴⁵ For instance, take her treatment of the themes of ‘excess and transgression’, using the examples of the behaviour of nineteenth-century married Italian women and the supposed enforced confinement of unmarried women in convents.⁴⁶ British observers noted the degree to which, they claimed, Italian women reacted strongly against such excessive restrictions in their early lives through excesses of licentious behaviour with their *cicisbeo*, once married and free of the nunnery.⁴⁷ Chard focuses on the ways in which such examples are used in travel writing as rhetorical devices to create a kind of breathless drama as travellers equivocated ‘between censure and pleasure’.⁴⁸ She describes travellers’ vacillation between repulsion and attraction to ‘violence, cruelty and suffering’;⁴⁹ all examples of ‘powerful hyperbolic device[s]’.⁵⁰

I was reminded, though, of similar institutions and behaviours described in the writings of travellers to India. As Chard notes, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers’ observations of the ‘Oriental’ harem ‘provide an *obvious example of a similar site of fascination*.’⁵¹ Apparently slavish adherence to oppressive religious institutions was another obvious similarity in comments made by travellers to both India and Italy. In postcolonial analysis, though, these examples are often used very differently, as examples of the way in which India was portrayed by travellers as the despotic, sexualised, immoral and generally backward mirror image of the superior West. There

⁴⁴ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 13, footnote 35.

⁴⁵ Rather than the ‘changes and discontinuities in travel itself’, Chard is concerned with the ‘changes and discontinuities in the forms of language employed in travel writing’ (12).

⁴⁶ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 91.

⁴⁷ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 91-2. The *cicisbeo* was an upper-class single man who chaperoned married women in public. A predominantly aristocratic practice, it is one I deal with in some depth in later chapters.

⁴⁸ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 91-102, 102-3.

⁴⁹ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 103.

⁵⁰ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 98. In a related vein, see also Carl Thompson’s exploration of the ‘suffering traveller’, who sought to differentiate themselves from ‘tourists’ (C. Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford, 2007)).

⁵¹ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 128, footnote 5. My emphasis.

are other differences too. Chard discusses, firstly, the 'Romantic approach' (emphasis original), which she describes as 'the promise of a discovery or realisation of the self through the exploration of the other.' Secondly, she describes 'the approach of the tourist', in which the individual is concerned with 'keep[ing] the more dangerous and destabilising aspects of the encounter with the foreign at bay.'⁵² Chard is, then, essentially interested in the travellers' reactions to alterity as *individuals*. This contrasts with the postcolonial approach, whereby Said describes how the West has deployed alterity as a 'corporate institution' to dominate and control the East.⁵³

I was, though, drawn to the similarities in these two bodies of travel writing for two, slightly conflicting, reasons. Firstly, the fact that British travellers appear to have talked about Italy and India in much the same way seemed problematic for Said's claim that such discourse served the purpose of creating an East-West binary of inferiority and superiority. How could this be the case when part of the West was, apparently, as 'other' as the East? Yet, the similarities in the configuration of both Italy and India suggested some substance to Said's claims, at least in terms of the *process* by which the 'Other' was constructed. This was particularly the case when considering the two elements that, Said claimed, comprised Orientalism. What Said called the 'academic' form of Orientalism consists of apparently objectively observed and gathered 'evidence' which 'proved' the East to be premodern, superstitious, inherently exotic and immoral and so forth. But, Said claimed, such 'evidence' was gathered and evaluated within another, 'imaginative', form of Orientalism; a hegemonic, cultural framework and context that already claimed to intimately 'know' the Oriental 'character' and made it impossible to see the East as anything other than what the 'evidence' confirmed it to be.⁵⁴ These two forms of Orientalism, claimed Said, worked together in a totalising and racist fantasy of 'the Orient', complete with 'supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles'.⁵⁵ Although the historiography which discussed Orientalism does

⁵² Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 11.

⁵³ E. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), 3.

⁵⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 2-3.

⁵⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

not consider, in these terms, the way in which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers configured *Italy*, they seemed to me to be similar constructions. As I will discuss in more detail in forthcoming chapters, the Italy understood and written about by British travellers in this period drew very much on a framework found in imaginative and literary creations of various types. Many British works on Italian history assumed, as their starting point, this same Italian ‘character’ which ‘explained’ why modern Italy was, actually, *premodern*.⁵⁶ Italians (like Indians) were, supposedly, scheming, emotional rather than rational, religiously superstitious, cowardly, sexually obsessed and immoral. Such traits had, writers assumed, pre-determined their inability to form effective political and civic institutions and pre-conditioned them to ‘slavery’ under the heel of religious and foreign despots. The co-constitutive way in which fictional, or ‘imaginative’, and supposedly academic genres drew from each other to configure Italy seemed to me to exhibit all the hallmarks of Said’s Orientalism. As Said observed as regards the East, travel writing was in no way incidental to this process. Indeed, it appeared to form an essential pillar of the discourse. Firstly, it was one the most widely-read, reviewed and discussed forms of literature during the period discussed. Secondly, and crucially, travel writing stands at the intersection of these two forms of Orientalism; an influential genre of *imaginative* entertainment which purports to be providing *academic* evidence in the form of, supposedly, objective observation.

These similarities have been considered previously, perhaps most notably in the introduction to Manfred Pfister’s *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*. Pfister notes that Said’s theory of Orientalism has rarely been

projected from the large-scale dimension of “Europe and the rest of the world” onto the smaller scale of intra-European relations , from the level of differences

⁵⁶ Indeed, in many ways, such stereotypes regarding Italy have outlived the 18th-19th century configuration of India. Italians are still regularly thought about and portrayed in imaginative culture as passionate, loud-talking, obsessed with love, sex and food, emotional, effeminate, religious and mother-obsessed. For many, such traits still commonly ‘explain’ why Italy is, supposedly, politically and economically inept, cowardly in combat, in thrall to organised crime and so forth.

between Europe and non-European countries to that of differences *within* Europe.⁵⁷

He goes on to note that, over several centuries, British travellers have ‘constructed’ versions of Italy that say ‘more about Britain than Italy’.⁵⁸ Pfister details travellers’ accounts since the sixteenth century which have constructed a binary opposition between Britain and Italy.⁵⁹ This binary is composed of many subsections of oppositions such as

Protestant vs Roman Catholic, [...] truth vs superstition, sincerity vs sophistication, discipline vs sensuous power, [...] civic liberty vs feudal or papal despotism, political order vs arbitrary power and anarchy, modern achievement vs classical heritage’.⁶⁰

Pfister appears to be suggesting that Meridionism is the process of Orientalism, applied to a different division of geographical space.⁶¹ This claim is somewhat problematic, as Said’s point is that Orientalism is *specifically* a *Western* discourse deployed to create an East-West binary opposition of inferiority and superiority. A North-South Meridionism that casts Italy as Britain’s Other, with the same characteristics of ‘otherness’ as India, clearly disrupts Said’s theory. Equally, Said *specifically* locates the late eighteenth century and colonialism as the starting point and context within which Orientalism arose as an organised discourse of control and authority over the East.⁶² Pfister details accounts of Italy which precede this period by two centuries. This would imply that Orientalism is a version of Meridionism rather than the other way around.

⁵⁷ Pfister *The Fatal Gift*, 3.

⁵⁸ Pfister, *The Fatal Gift*, 3.

⁵⁹ Pfister, *The Fatal Gift*, 4.

⁶⁰ Pfister, *The Fatal Gift*, 5.

⁶¹ The degree to which Pfister is eliding Orientalism and Meridionism is not quite clear. One of his reviewers describes his approach as an ‘analogy with the theory of Orientalism’ (T. Hoenselaars, ‘Review’, *The Modern Language Review*, 93 (1998), 780-782, 780).

⁶² Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

Pfister is not alone in the idea that travellers and other writers construct intra-European binaries of civilised and uncivilised based on a variant of Said's Orientalism. Milica Bakić-Hayden, Larry Wolff and Ezequiel Adamovsky have all discussed how forms of Orientalism have formed a binary of an apparently civilised and progressive Western Europe in opposition to an uncivilised and backward Eastern Europe.⁶³ Anna Carastathis has considered the discursive constructions of ancient and modern Greece in the imaginary of Western Europe, arguing 'that the function of Hellenism in constituting both the fantasy of Europe and western hegemony has an Orientalist structure.'⁶⁴ Although I have specifically considered travellers to Italy, this is not to suggest that the accounts of travellers to different destinations might not be fitted into the same co-constitutional, analytical frame. Writing on European travellers to Spain, for example, Monica Bolufer shows the same complex construction of European identity and the way in which it was formed not only in opposition to the external world but also, fundamentally, by processes of homogenization and hierarchical organization that gave meaning to its internal differences.⁶⁵

Similar examples can be found beyond Europe, and beyond the confines of formal British colonial territories. One of the writers featured in later chapters, Maria Graham, travelled to, and published on, both Italy and India, as well as Chile and Brazil. Writing about the latter, Graham employed the same literary metaphor as she did in India, describing the country as a 'castle of indolence', a reference to James Thompson's 1748 allegorical poem, which juxtaposes the merits of British industriousness with foreign idleness and epicurean tendencies.⁶⁶ In Chile, she highlighted the lack of 'education in the upper and middling classes' which, as we will see, so many writers about India and Italy position as a key reason for apparent foreign

⁶³ M. Bakic-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 917-931, 930; E. Adamovsky, 'Euro-Orientalism and the Making of the Concept of Eastern Europe in France, 1810-1880', *The Journal of Modern History*, 77, 3 (2005), 591-628; L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA, 1994).

⁶⁴ A. Carastathis, 'Is Hellenism an Orientalism? Reflections on the boundaries of 'Europe' in an age of austerity', *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*, 10 (2014), 2-17, 2.

⁶⁵ Bolufer, 'Orientalizing Southern Europe?', 451.

⁶⁶ M. Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil, and Residence There, During Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* (London, 1824), 200.

political and cultural inferiority compared to Britain.⁶⁷ In another overlapping discourse, she describes Chilean villagers in Pudaguel as ‘*vulgar Sicilians*’.⁶⁸ In India, Graham was disdainful of the Anglo-British society she considered as the lower classes living beyond the means and social status they would have had back home. Similarly, Anglo-Chileans are also ‘vulgar’ and ‘trash’.⁶⁹ Rather than selecting from more wide-ranging geographical sources, I have chosen a more detailed study of British travellers to Italy and India. Because both loomed so large in the British imaginary, they provide a paradigmatic model. But the brief examples above suggest that further research on travellers to other geographical locations would support the arguments I make here and help break free of the constraining binaries that have so often defined the study of cultural relations.

Returning, though, to the arguments of Pfister *et al*, about North-South and East-West intra-European binaries, their arguments all seem to rest on the idea of Orientalism as either a template applied to different geographical binaries or, at least, as unconnected parallel processes. From the start, I found this ‘parallel’ or analogous approach unsatisfactory. For example, in a defining postcolonial text, Mary Louise Pratt reverses the Eurocentric gaze to look *back* at Europe from the ‘imperial frontier’, to highlight how ‘Europe’s aggressive colonial and imperial ventures’ acted ‘as models, inspirations, and testing grounds for modes of social discipline’ in the very *creation* of the *idea* of the West.⁷⁰ Pratt also acknowledges that Europeans travelling within Europe during the same period, often wrote about their encounters with alterity in very similar ways to those who describe imperial encounters. Suggesting a Meridional divide between northern Europe and Mediterranean cultures, Pratt concedes that the same dynamics of power are found in *intra-European* travel writing, although she has little more to say

⁶⁷ M. Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile, During the year 1822. And a Voyage from Chile to Brazil in 1823* (London, 1824), 157.

⁶⁸ Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile*, 197 (emphasis original).

⁶⁹ Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile*, 156 & 234.

⁷⁰ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* 2nd ed. (Abingdon, 2008), 35-6. In her analysis of three classic English novels, Gayatri Spivak says something similar, that ‘one cannot read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as Britain’s social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English’ (G. Spivak, ‘Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism’ in H. L. Gates (ed.), *“Race,” Writing, and Difference* (Chicago, 1985), 262-81, 262).

on the subject.⁷¹ What, then, is to be seen by the British traveller to Italy who looks homeward to Britain, or south to India or, indeed, northward from India to Italy? Although it is not the point she is making, Chloe Chard hints at a *specific connection* between the Orient and Italy in a discussion of the poet, Lord Byron. Chard notes Byron's deployment of hyperbole in a 'dramatic account of an Italian sunset.'⁷² Byron effectively elides Italy and the East in this account, writing that his description might appear 'fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an *Oriental or Italian* sky.' (my emphasis)⁷³ Byron's sky seems not to be specifically Italian but a symbol, evocative of some exotic or, in Byron's words, 'fantastical' commonality between Italy and the East. This point reminded me, as I will discuss, of similar hyperbole in Reginald Heber's account of India and his descriptions of Indian topography and architectural ruins, reminiscent of themes and tropes found in Italian-set Gothic literature.⁷⁴

Travel writing about the East was central not simply to assertions of Western authority and superiority, but part of the process by which the idea of the West was formed. Yet, one of the key criticisms aimed at Edward Said is that he creates exactly the problem that he points out regarding a European view of the Orient; the assumption of an essentialised and monolithic 'West'.⁷⁵ Cooper and Stoler, for example, argue that, through their encounters with their colonies, European elites worked out and tested ideas about citizenship and cultural and political leadership. There was no essential idea of 'Europe' to be imprinted onto the blank slate of a colony. Such encounters were 'part of the making of bourgeois Europe'.⁷⁶ Pratt argues that the 'strategies of

⁷¹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 12.

⁷² Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 4.

⁷³ Note to stanzas 27-9 in Canto IV of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, quoted in Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, 4. See G. Byron, *Complete Poetical Works* vol. II, 228.

⁷⁴ Which I will detail and discuss in a later chapter.

⁷⁵ The criticism is that the West which Said proposes is as monolithic as the East he claims was invented by the West, which becomes, in Said's theory, ubiquitously racist and imperialist. As A. J. Caschetta puts it, 'the biased, ethnically supremacist, cultural imperative that Said sketches is exaggerated at best and fabricated at worst' (A. J. Caschetta, 'Review: Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid', *Middle East Quarterly* (2010), 78-80, 78). In an idea on which I will expand in a later chapter, Koditschek argues that 18th century Anglo-Indian scholars and EIC administrators actually built their initial policies on a respect for Indian history and culture. It was the failure of such policies that saw a turn towards the discourse with which we are familiar from Said's work (T. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, 2011), 60-2).

⁷⁶ Stoler & Cooper, *Tensions of Empire*, 2.

representation' in travel accounts that asserted 'European hegemony' were 'discourses which legitimate[d] bourgeois authority.'⁷⁷ All imply a Britain in the *process of formation* rather than an existing entity. Saree Makdisi diverges from Said to make precisely this point. He maintains that the period from the late eighteenth century was one when there was no firm sense of what it meant to be British or even Western, that Britain 'had to be *made* Western' by identifying, reforming and, if necessary, expunging the internal Other in a process which determined authoritative citizenship in a new idea of *how* one was to be British.⁷⁸ As Makdisi argues,

the "us"/"them" distinction that began to emerge in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century did not operate simply along native/foreigner or native/immigrant axes: it cut across and among native, indigenous English people as well.⁷⁹

In the middle-class Britain under construction, the internal Other were 'the degenerate aristocracy and the teeming multitudes.'⁸⁰ In her discussion of French and British travel writing, Lisa Lowe, likewise, posits 'notions of otherness' which include, 'for example, the Orient, woman, the poor' as well as 'the colonized'.⁸¹ Cooper and Stoler go on to say that because 'social transformations are a product of both global patterns and local struggles, we treat metropole and colony in a *single analytic field*'.⁸² Yet, as Pratt concedes, the same patterns and struggles are seen in intra-European writing, such as that on Italy. I consider whether this binary field, within which such social transformations occur, where Britain was 'made' and new ideas tested, should be widened to include Italy, India and Britain within a tripartite frame of analysis. I intend to pick up from the point that Pratt makes about looking back, but from Italy as well as from the imperial frontier. I consider not simply the view from Italy,

⁷⁷ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 9 & 12.

⁷⁸ S. Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race and Imperial Culture* (Chicago, 2014), xiii.

⁷⁹ Makdisi, *Making England Western*, xi.

⁸⁰ Makdisi, *Making England Western*, 17.

⁸¹ L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (New York, 1991), 195. This idea is by no means new. F. G. Hutchins writes that 'the increasing use of the metaphor of "colony" for the place where the laboring and dangerous classes of England resided was no coincidence. The dark continent was at the East End of London, to be "discovered," "governed" and "contained"' (F. G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, 1967), 107, footnote 16).

⁸² Stoler and F. Cooper, *Tensions of Empire*, 4. My emphasis.

northwards to Britain, but also south to India and back again. I will consider the extent to which travellers connected India, Italy and Britain and how doing so contributed to an emerging sense of British identity as essentially middle-class.

The Making of Bourgeois Britain

If travellers' accounts of Italy and India reflected cultural and political changes back in Britain, then it is important to consider those accounts in the historical context of increasing middle-class claims to authority in Britain, from the late eighteenth century. Davidoff and Hall have explored the ideological formation of the middle-classes between 1780 and 1850. They show the expansion of a 'middling' group who derived their wealth and income from trade, professional occupations, and growing economic opportunities, sources different from those of the gentry and aristocracy. This group, although by no means homogeneous, became aware of their mutual social and political interests, as part of securing their economic base.⁸³ Accordingly, the middle-classes increasingly 'placed themselves in opposition to an indolent and dissolute aristocracy, and a potentially subversive working class'.⁸⁴ Against apparent extreme displays of aristocratic consumption, gambling, debt and sexual impropriety, the middle classes set rational sobriety, industry and Christian family values.⁸⁵ At the other end of the social scale, declining rural wages and grain prices increasingly mobilised the 'dangerous' lower classes, discomforting the middle classes as they watched 'the night skies flare with burning ricks or saw Chartist crowds sweep past their comfortable parlour windows'.⁸⁶ Not that the radical threat came necessarily 'from below'. The radical gentleman-farmer Henry Hunt whipped up crowds with his call for universal suffrage. It was to hear 'Orator' Hunt that 50-60,000 people gathered at St Peter's Fields in Manchester in August 1819. The subsequent 'Peterloo massacre'

⁸³ L. Davidoff & Hall, C., *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class*, 3rd ed. (London, 2019), 18-19.

⁸⁴ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, xxxiii.

⁸⁵ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 21.

⁸⁶ Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 23.

shook the country to the core, as local troops charged the crowds, causing seventeen deaths and over 650 injuries.⁸⁷

The emerging middle-classes, in response to what Davidoff and Hall describe as a 'heightened fear about both social and economic chaos and the perils of daily life', and to contrast themselves with an indolent aristocracy and the lower-order mob, searched for the characteristics that would define them as a group.⁸⁸ Events such as the 1820 Queen Caroline affair focussed opposition on the immoral nature of the aristocracy, against which the growing middle classes set their own values of Christian morality and the family. The solution was to create the home and family as both barrier and virtuous example, a 'bedrock of morality in an unstable and dangerous world'.⁸⁹ At the heart of middle-class Britain was the nuclear family, where wives and mothers were the idealised moral centre of the domestic unit, whilst the manly and stoic virtues of the husband forged success in the public sectors of business and politics.⁹⁰ A combination of middle-class fear, aspiration and Evangelical Christianity created an 'intense sentimentalization of the home [...] a 'domestic religion' centred around the 'moral influence' of the wife and mother'.⁹¹ As I will discuss, it is notable how often the language employed by travellers to describe the forms of domesticity with which they self-identified had religious overtones, deploying words such as 'purity', 'sanctuary', 'temple', 'votaries', 'Goddess', and so forth. The 'separate spheres' of male and female activity, 'the common-sense of the middle class', became a primary way to self-identify as a distinct group and assert their moral superiority, socio-political authority, and economic hegemony.⁹² This was a narrative that could be

⁸⁷ R. Poole, "'By the law or the sword": Peterloo revisited', *History*, 91 (2006), 254.

⁸⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, xvii. Ironically, it was 'Orator' Hunt's dubious domestic behaviour that was the catalyst for his radicalism. His ostracization from polite Wiltshire society, for his affair with a married woman and consequent separation from his wife, was at least a 'contributory factor' in his subsequent radicalism (J. Belchem, 'Henry Hunt', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14193> (Accessed 6/11/18).

⁸⁹ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. xix.

⁹⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 150.

⁹¹ B. Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (London, 1983), 14.

⁹² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, xvi. For historiographical debate over Davidoff & Hall's ideas and the 'separate spheres' thesis generally, see K. Gleadle, 'Revisiting Family Fortunes: reflections on the twentieth anniversary of the publication of L. Davidoff & C. Hall (1987) *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson)', *Women's History Review* 16 (November 2007), 773–782; A.

deployed to assert national superiority abroad as well as bourgeois authority at home. As Elizabeth Rigby, an experienced traveller herself, wrote in an article on women travel-writers for the influential Tory periodical, *The Quarterly Review*, 'every country with any pretensions to civilisation has a two-fold aspect [...] a home life as well as a public life, and the first quite necessary to interpret the last.'⁹³

Rigby's writing is an example of the ambivalences of women's travel writing, discussed in depth in a later chapter. Her letters and diaries reveal a woman of agency, independent thought and action.⁹⁴ Early in life, she travelled to Estonia, unaccompanied, to visit her married sister, and wrote a subsequent account of her experiences there.⁹⁵ It was this travel account that brought her to the attention of the publisher, John Murray, who published her account and commissioned her to write many articles for the *Quarterly Review*. After her 1849 marriage to the first Director of the National Gallery, Charles Eastlake, and his subsequent knighthood, she became Lady Eastlake, the name by which she is, perhaps, better known today. Lady Eastlake accompanied Sir Charles on annual visits to Italy, in search of many of the paintings that adorn the Gallery walls today. She also became a respected art critic in her own right.⁹⁶ After Sir Charles' death in 1865, she even confided in a letter to her cousin, that she would have been the 'best successor' to her husband, as the National Gallery's Director.⁹⁷ By the end of her life, Eastlake had written seventy-five books and articles, placing her amongst only eleven women writers out of fifteen hundred to have over fifty entries in the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*.⁹⁸

Given this background and the way in which she inserted herself into public debates as a published author, she appears to be a perfect example of a women whose writing

Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383-414; P. Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900* (London, 1987).

⁹³ E. Rigby, 'Lady Travellers', *Quarterly Review*, 76 (1844), 98-136, 99.

⁹⁴ J. Sheldon (ed.), *The Letters of Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake* (Liverpool, 2000), 4-6.

⁹⁵ E. Rigby, *A Residence on the Shores of the Baltic* (London, 1842).

⁹⁶ R. Mitchell, 'Eastlake [nee Rigby], Elizabeth, Lady Eastlake', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

⁹⁷ J. Sheldon, 'His Best Successor': Lady Eastlake and the National Gallery' in K. Hill (ed.), *Museums and Biographies: Stories, Objects, Identities* (Woodbridge, 2014), 61-74.

⁹⁸ J. P. M., Kanwit, 'My Name is the Right One: Lady Elizabeth Eastlake's Professional Art Criticism', *Nineteenth Century Prose*, 40 (2013), 141-72, 143.

was, as Thompson puts it, a 'journey to authority'. As Elizabeth Rigby, she seemed to be making precisely this point when she extolled the virtues of women's travel writing, remarking that 'there are peculiar powers inherent in ladies' eyes [...] every country therefore, to be fairly understood requires reporters from both sexes.'⁹⁹ And yet, she qualified this statement by declining to comment on women who 'take all the trouble of travelling abroad merely to express those private opinions upon affairs in general which they could as well have given utterance to at home' and those 'who regularly make a tour in order to make a book'.¹⁰⁰ The value that English women travellers brought to their writing, she wrote, were their 'domestic' natures; it was 'precisely because home, manners, and comforts are what they are, that the Englishwoman excels all others in the art of travelling.'¹⁰¹ When accompanied by their wives, the travelling Englishman 'takes his *home* with him.'¹⁰²

Rigby wrote a series of articles for the *Quarterly*, on ostensibly innocuous subjects such as 'Biographies of German Ladies', 'Books for Children', and 'Evangelical Novels'. Despite her independent agency in all aspects of her life, they were, often, disguised polemics on the importance of maintaining separate public and domestic roles for men and women respectively. Rigby argued that that the characteristics of a nation were derived from their domestic habits, particularly from the character and role of the women at the heart of British domesticity. As she wrote in 1843, reviewing German women writers, 'we look to the biography and writings of a woman to show us the interior of a nation as well as of a family.'¹⁰³ Rigby concluded that a fallacious belief in the equality of the sexes was a failing of the German state, writing that 'the false enlightenment of modern Germany has erred [...] in supposing them to be intellectually alike.'¹⁰⁴ The points that Rigby makes in these articles were more than simple social conservatism. They were part of an agenda between Rigby and the editor of the *Quarterly*, John Lockhart. Lockhart was committed to broadening the appeal of

⁹⁹ Rigby, 'Lady Travellers', 98.

¹⁰⁰ Rigby, 'Lady Travellers', 99.

¹⁰¹ Rigby, 'Lady Travellers', 99-100.

¹⁰² Rigby, 'Lady Travellers', 100.

¹⁰³ E. Rigby, 'Biographies of German Ladies', *Quarterly Review*, 73 (December, 1843), 142-87, 142.

¹⁰⁴ Rigby, *German Ladies*, 145.

the *Quarterly*, spreading conservative ideology to as wide a readership as possible. In a letter to John Croker, the *Quarterly's* Chief Correspondent, Lockhart wrote

The Q.R. must not be the reflection of merely a few peoples' private views hopes, or fears...nor does the Q.R. address itself exclusively to great lords and fine gentleman...My opinion is as it always has been that the Q.R. ought to look to the great cause of Conservatism...There is an essential difference of views between those who have long breathed the atmosphere of St. Stephens-still more of Downing St.- & the Tory mass throughout the country.¹⁰⁵

Rigby represented an opportunity to broaden the appeal and influence of the *Quarterly*. Lockhart wrote to her revealingly,

I had long felt and regretted the want of that knowledge of women and their concerns that men can never attain, *for the handling of numberless questions most interesting and most important to society.*¹⁰⁶ (My emphasis).

The same letter also comments, 'you seem to have it in your power to render the 'Q. R.' an instrument of great improvement among classes of readers that have hitherto probably given no attention to its contents.'¹⁰⁷ Rigby's letters to Lockhart, and the *Quarterly's* owner, John Murray, reveals Lockhart as directing the themes for all of Rigby's articles.¹⁰⁸

The *Quarterly's* stance advanced the standard middle-class view, 'a conviction that women were designed (whether by God or Nature) to be first and foremost wives and mothers, and that their social and political subordination is the proper corollary of that position'.¹⁰⁹ This commitment to biological difference has a direct relationship

¹⁰⁵ J. Shattock, *Politics and Reviewers: The Edinburgh and the Quarterly* (Leicester, 1989), 68-69.

¹⁰⁶ C. E. Smith, *Journals and Correspondence of Lady Elizabeth Eastlake* Vol. 1 (London, 1895), 51.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, *Journals and Correspondence* Vol. 1, 51.

¹⁰⁸ Sheldon, *Letters*, 59, 69, 70, 76, 83, 88.

¹⁰⁹ V. Sanders, *Eve's Renegades: Victorian Anti-feminist Women Novelists* (New York, 1996), 5.

with the construction of class groups. Rigby and the *Quarterly* were codifying biological difference as a form of gendered domesticity and an assertion of middle-class authority.

By no means, though, was a model of middle-class cultural and political reform universally accepted. Fear of the mob, within living memory of the French Revolution, saw a resurgence of conservative thought which clashed with calls for political reform. The influential parliamentarian and confirmed conservative, Edmund Burke, had previously defended the rights of *anciens regimes*, in Europe and, significantly, in India, where he was critical of East India Company's usurpation of Mughal authority.

The period discussed here coincides fairly closely with the Company's rapid expansion after their 1757 victory at the Battle of Plassey, and the end of their rule after the Indian Mutiny of 1858. Eight years after Plassey, the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, was forced to cede, under the guise of voluntary acquiescence, the lucrative role of *divan*, or revenue collector, to the Company.¹¹⁰ Further Mughal resistance followed, though, from the rulers of Mysore (Mysuru), Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, and from the Maratha Empire.¹¹¹ But, by the end of the century, the Company had prevailed in all of these wars, prompting a Mughal official to ask 'what honour is left to us when we have to take orders from a handful of traders who have not yet learned to wash their bottoms?'¹¹² Less than 50 years after the Battle of Plassey, a company of merchants who were, on the face of it, as Macaulay put it in a Parliamentary speech, 'as little fitted for imperial functions as the Merchant Tailors' Company', took control of most of India south of Bengal.¹¹³ After 1820, they also took control of the Punjab and Sindh, as well as territories further afield in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma (Myanmar). The Company's private army swelled during this period, from 20,000 Indian Sepoys in 1765, to around

¹¹⁰ S. Sen, *A Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (London, 2002), xii.

¹¹¹ The E. I. C. fought wars in 1767-69, 1780-84, 1790-92, and 1798-99 against the Mysorian forces of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, and in 1775-82, 1803-05, 1817-18 against the Maratha Empire.

¹¹² J. Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs* (Calcutta, 1952), 63, quoted in W. Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (London, 2019), 41.

¹¹³ T. B. Macaulay, 'Government of India (10 July 1833),' *Speeches of Lord Macaulay, Corrected By Himself* (London, 1877), 65-66.

200,000 troops, twice the size of the British state's army.¹¹⁴ Although never entirely at peace, the Company's army facilitated greater security and stability, allowing the commensurate growth of the general Anglo-Indian presence.¹¹⁵

Despite *de facto* Company authority over much of India, they were at pains, as Sen remarks, not to 'assume indiscreetly the mantle of sovereign authority in India'. The Company maintained the 'nominal regality' of the Mughals, from whom was granted, *de jure*, the Company's rights to territorial administration and revenue collection.¹¹⁶ As Burke recognised, though, even symbolic gestures of Company acceptance of Mughal precedence were gradually eroded from the 1770s. In 1828, the Company resisted the 'the humiliating designation' of *fidvi*, or vassalage, to the Mughal emperor, declaring that 'the relation of Sovereign and Vassal had ceased between the representative of the house of Timur and the British government in India.'¹¹⁷ Even so, it was not until after the Mutiny of 1858 that any British pretence of a respectful, even subservient, relationship to the Mughals was dropped.¹¹⁸ Thus it was, during the period discussed, that a trading company, dealing in fabrics and spices, transformed itself into what Stern calls 'a Company-State and a merchant-empire.'¹¹⁹

Burke, however had argued against heavy-handed imposition of Company authority in India which ignored the continuation and importance of social and political rank and of historical tradition in maintaining India's (indeed, any society's) cultural and political identity. He also concurred with British Orientalist scholars who had long accorded respect for Indian history, languages and tradition.¹²⁰ Burke's application of the same arguments to the revolution in France, British rule in India and reformist ambitions in Britain, created the opportunity for reform-minded opponents to

¹¹⁴ Dalrymple, *The Anarchy*, 41 & 45.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, *Women's Travel Writings in India*, xi.

¹¹⁶ Sen, *Distant Sovereignty*, xiii.

¹¹⁷ Extracts from E. I. C. political letters, quoted in Sen, *Distant Sovereignty*, xiii.

¹¹⁸ Sen, *Distant Sovereignty*, xiii.

¹¹⁹ P. J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011), 4. In fact, Stern argues that such Company political power was being exercised far earlier, from the seventeenth century, although their authority grew beyond all expectations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹²⁰ By 'Orientalist', I refer here to scholars of the 'Orient', its languages, history, law, culture and so forth, rather than the sense of the world when used by Said.

conflate scholarly cultural respect for India with political conservatism in Britain.¹²¹ Conservatives in Britain fought against liberal reforms with what Stokes describes as ‘the spirit of Burke’, but found it easier to do so using the example of India, as the progress of the industrial revolution increasingly challenged their idea of an ‘immemorial society’ based on Burke’s ‘emotional kinship with the spirit of feudalism and the heritage of the past.’¹²² By the early nineteenth century, India’s past had become a site for contestation at home between conservatives and reformists. This played out as a dispute between Orientalists and Anglicists, those who saw no value in India’s cultural and historical past and called for wholesale reform in the English language, through English cultural, political and educational institutions.¹²³ Reformists argued that Britain’s colonies were simply ‘a source of power and patronage for the ruling elite’, who concocted visions of economic gain in India to justify Britain’s Imperial role. Orientalist scholars, such as the pre-eminent William Jones, also an Anglo-Indian judge, were conservative apologists for, they (somewhat unfairly) argued, the aristocratic *ancien regime*, having hidden the true backward nature of India, and thus the need for reform, behind the fallacy of India’s cultural and historical importance.¹²⁴

Balachandra Rajan describes the period between 1785 and 1810 as one where ‘the sudden elevation of India’s past in the first wave of Oriental scholarship opened a moment of opportunity for understanding between peoples.’¹²⁵ The later part of the

¹²¹ J. Majeed, ‘James Mill’s ‘The History of British India’ and Utilitarianism as a Rhetoric of Reform’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 24 (May, 1990), 209-224, 210-11.

¹²² E. Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford, 1959), xvi.

¹²³ I. Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India* (Delhi, 1998), 22.

¹²⁴ Jones had been accused of the very opposite of conservatism back in the early 1780s, having published three ‘radical’ pamphlets. For example, Franklin describes ‘Jones’s growing reputation as a radical Whig’ in the 1770s (M. J. Franklin, ‘Jones, Sir William’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2011)) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15105> (Accessed 4/12/19)). However, Jones’ public agreement and regular correspondence with Burke over British-Indian policy marked him as a conservative by the turn of the century, six years after his death (Majeed, ‘The History of British India’, 213.). See also, T. R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley, 1997), 100, footnote. 1. The three texts by William Jones were *An inquiry into the legal mode of suppressing riots, with a constitutional plan of future defense* (1780); *The principles of government* (1782); *A speech of William Jones esq. to the assembled inhabitants of the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, the cities of London and Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark* (1782). Additionally, Jones’ respect for Hindu religion became associated with an apparent irreligiosity which, it was claimed, was also at the heart of the French revolution. This clashed with the rising tide of Evangelicalism in Britain, in a conflation of political, moral and cultural reform. (Trautmann, *Aryans*, 102.).

¹²⁵ B. Rajan, *Under Western eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (London, 1999), 122.

period was the turning point in 'the swiftly changing power relationship between England and India', when 'the mutual respect that is a condition of dialogue' disappeared and 'subject peoples [were] to be educated, not listened to.'¹²⁶ That is not to deny, however, that by the early nineteenth century, many visitors to India had already configured the country and its people as religiously superstitious, irrational, degraded and backward, and Indian men as effeminate and naturally submissive. As early as the 1760s, the travel-writer Jemima Kindersley, the wife of a British army officer, had described Indian 'seapoys [sic]' as lacking 'continual attention to discipline' due to the 'effeminacy of the people.'¹²⁷ In the same decade, Robert Orme, a surgeon, traveller and historian of India opened his account of India with several pages describing India as backward and submissive, as a result of a religion which was 'a heap of the greatest absurdities'.¹²⁸ Abundant in natural resources and 'addicted to commerce', India had always been simultaneously 'immensely rich' and yet 'incapable of defending their wealth.'¹²⁹ In a further work of 1782, Orme described the average Indian Hindu as 'the most effeminate inhabitant of the globe; and this is the very point at which we now see him.'¹³⁰ In 1797, a director of the East India Company, Charles Grant, wrote an essay for the Court of Directors of the Company. Grant noted that

it has suited the views of some philosophers to represent that people as amiable and respectable; and a few late travellers have chosen rather to place some softer traits of their characters in an engaging light, than to give a just delineation of the whole. The generality however of those who have written concerning Hindostan, appear to have concurred in affirming what foreign residents there have as generally thought, nay, what the natives themselves

¹²⁶ Rajan, *Under Western Skies*, 122.

¹²⁷ J. Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies* (London, 1777), 164-5.

¹²⁸ R. Orme, *History of the military transactions of the British nation in Indostan* vol. 1 (London, 1763), 3.

¹²⁹ Orme, *History*, 8.

¹³⁰ Robert Orme, *Historical fragments of the Mogul empire, of the Morattoes, and of the English concerns in Indostan from the year MDCLIX; origin of the company's trade at Broach and Surat, and a general idea of the government and people of Indostan* (London, 1805), 472.

freely acknowledge of each other, that they are a people exceedingly depraved.¹³¹

Such views had always been voiced but now they were increasingly mobilised as arguments for reform, at home and abroad. It is notable that Orme's 1782 work was republished in 1805, and Grant's 1797 essay was printed and published by Parliament in 1813, providing ammunition for a changing view of India as the debate intensified in the early nineteenth century. The contest culminated in the publication of James Mill's hugely influential *History of British India* (1818). Mill and his Anglicist colleagues portrayed India's ancient characteristics as the 'offspring of a rude and ungoverned imagination'.¹³² Orientalist studies were portrayed as an over-romanticised smokescreen for maintaining the cultural and class divisions of the *ancien regime* which were barriers to reform.¹³³ As Trautmann describes, 'Indomania' in Britain turned to 'Indophobia', seen in the narratives of travellers and reflecting the growing middle-class reformist agenda back home.¹³⁴

Of course, the idea of policies of imperial rule in India as co-constitutive reflections of political and cultural contestations back in Britain seems dramatic in comparison with accounts of Italy. How can visiting Rome to comment on the Forum be compared with the discourses at the intersections of domestic and imperial rule, accounts which justified the imposition of authority over the disenfranchised of India and Britain? How does quoting a little Byron from the Bridge of Sighs compare with configuring the Oriental Other as the opposite of Western superiority? Of course, to the Italians, the stakes were considerably higher. Subsequent to the French Revolution, Napoleon's adventuring in Italy had led to French control of much of Italy, either directly or

¹³¹ C. Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals and on the means of improving it – Written chiefly in the Year 1792. Ordered by The House of Commons to be printed 15 June 1813* (London, 1813), 25.

¹³² J. Mill, *The History of British India* vol. 1 (London, 1830), 166. Stokes notes that 1818 was also the year that the historian, parliamentarian and great advocate for the middle classes, Thomas Babington Macaulay, disavowed his family conservatism and declared himself a radical. Trautmann argues that Mill's *History*, along with Grant's *Observations*, were the key texts which shifted British views of India towards the need for intervention and reform of an 'uncivilised' society (99).

¹³³ Majeed, 'The History of British India', 216-7.

¹³⁴ See also chapters three and four for Trautmann's full account of the change in British opinion regarding India, from mania to phobia (Trautmann, *Aryans*, 62-130).

indirectly, from 1796 until his abdication in 1814. After Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna left Italy still, considerably, a network of states under foreign rule.¹³⁵ Conflict with the French had effectively cut Italy off from most British travellers for two decades, until 1815 when they returned in enthusiastic droves. There was a brief window of opportunity during the 1802 Peace of Amiens. One of our travellers, Joseph Forsyth, was unfortunate to be caught by the French in 1803 and was held captive for a decade. It was in captivity that he wrote his account of Italy, published shortly after his release.¹³⁶ On the return of the British after 1815, though, the Austrian diplomat, Metternich, exclaimed that it was 'raining Englishmen' as 600 per day arrived in Paris, much to the delight of the local prostitutes!¹³⁷

The records of earlier travellers to Italy, aristocratic Grand Tourists, reflect little interest in seascapes, mountains or wildernesses. Instead, their focus on the landscape of Italian cities, past and present, reflected changing attitudes to urbanism, consumerism and cultural tastes back home. They expressed a reverence for classical architecture over Gothic and for the ancient over the medieval. Their praise for ancient monumental buildings on streets wide and straight was matched by their enthusiasm for the grand secular architecture of modern London, which they noted was absent from modern Italy. Their responses to Italian cities thus informed and reflected their shifting sense of modernity and national identity.¹³⁸ The British, they implied, had inherited their role as the literal builders of civilisation from classical

¹³⁵ For Italy under Napoleonic rule, see M. Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796–1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European context* (Basingstoke, 2005). Also, A. Grab, 'From the French Revolution to Napoleon' in J. Davis (ed.) *The Short Oxford History of Italy* (Oxford, 2000), 25-50. For the impact of Napoleonic rule on Italy and the post-Napoleonic Restoration, see J. A Davis (ed.), *Italy in Nineteenth Century: 1796-1900* (Oxford, 2000), 7-13.

¹³⁶ R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour c.1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012), 10-11. See also, Also, D. Laven, 'The British Idea of Italy in the Age of Turner', in D. B. Brown (ed.), *J. M. W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and watercolours* (Tate Research Publication, London, 2015), footnote 15. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (Accessed 16 April 2017).

¹³⁷ R. Mullen & Munson, J. *The Smell of the Continent: The British Discover Europe* (London, 2013), x-ix.

¹³⁸ As Rosemary Sweet puts it, the aspects of Italy that interested Grand Tourists, about which they wrote, reflected an 'evolving sense of what it meant to be British' (Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 5. See also, 1-4). For more on how the writings of Grand Tourists reflected cultural shifts back home, see Jeremy Black, who argues that, 'the search for Italy helped define pleasure and interest in eighteenth century' (J. Black, *Italy and The Grand Tour* (London, 2003), ix. See also, Davis, *Italy in Nineteenth Century*, 6).

Rome, whilst modern Italian cities, which were pale imitations of their British counterparts, helped to define a sense of British national superiority.¹³⁹ Grand Tour reverence for classical architecture reflected, partly, a classical education but also a reverence for the past generally, a reactionary conservative tradition of political and cultural authority predicated on wealth and status by right of birth.¹⁴⁰ It might be more accurate, then, to say that Grand Tourists' observations of the Italian urban environment, past and present, were attempts to include the modern in a continued justification for the *ancien regime*.

The travellers I consider here were just as interested in the same sites of classical antiquity and empires but for different reasons. In the writings of travellers, Italy and India's pasts became linked as sites of contestation over domestic politics. As Grand Tourists had reflected the cultural and political landscape back home, so too did these new travellers. They were concerned with the contested terrain between reactionary and reformist politics and about the very nature of empires generally, not least the fate of their own in India. Writers' interest in Italian 'manners' increased and travellers took up the same questions in Italy as they posed in India: why, as they saw it, had a previously glorious classical civilisation fallen to foreign and religious despotism? Why were Italians, like Indians, seemingly inherently incapable of throwing off the yoke and forming their own civic and political institutions? To what degree was the nature of Italian domesticity and family life to blame for their political moribundity? As awful as the events of the French Revolution had been and as much as they decried the imposition of Napoleonic despotism in Italy, travellers wrote that some of his measures had, perhaps, been of value in rolling back the benighted institutions of religious and aristocratic authority. In other words, these travellers and their questions and observations reflected the changing nature of political and cultural life back home. Italy, as much as India, was a site where arguments could be rehearsed and ideas tested out for application back home.

¹³⁹ Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 151.

¹⁴⁰ Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 6-13.

It is worth finishing here with a comment to which I will return more than once. That is Bernard Cohn's point, that in occupying India, the British 'invaded and conquered *not only a territory but an epistemological space as well*', (my emphasis) creating 'forms of knowledge' which 'bound the vast social world that was India so it could be controlled.'¹⁴¹ In the coming chapters, I will consider the extent to which British travellers staged a similar epistemological invasion of Italy. Italy may not have been under British control but 'knowledge' of Italy, like that of India, was used by travellers to organise a world of bourgeois virtue which justified empire, middle-class authority at home and abroad, superiority and the right of control over the foreign and domestic 'Other'. Of course, although I highlight the similarities, the outcomes of such epistemological invasions played out very differently in various practical and political ways. I concede the many ways in which Italy and India should be considered as separate geographical spaces. Still, I hope to bring Britain, India and Italy together in an analytical frame that helps understand the role of travel writing in the development of a middle-class identity that goes beyond the constraints of binary oppositions.

A Plan of the Work

The thesis is divided into three parts and each part into two chapters.

In Part One, Chapter One, I consider the similar ways in which Italy and India were discursively configured from a combination of apparently objectively observed 'evidence' and more imaginative literary depictions, with travel writing located at their intersection. In Chapter Two, I explore how India and Italy were co-constitutively configured, with representations of each appearing in the travel accounts of the other.

Part Two deals with travellers' engagement with the classical pasts of Italy and India. In Chapter Three, I investigate the appropriation of Italy's classical past by the British and the uses to which it was put in understanding and justifying the nature of Britain's empire in India. Conversely, I also explore the degree to which 'Imperial Britain' was far less comfortable and confident about itself than many travellers sought to assert,

¹⁴¹ B. Cohn, 'Colonialism and its forms of knowledge', in A. Howe (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (Oxford, 2010), 117-124, 118.

and how some even engaged with Italy's past to challenge Britain's self-identity as just and progressive. Chapter Four considers the changing nature of travellers' engagement with India's past, in line with political shifts back home and to justify aspects of new colonial policy. I compare the ways in which travellers thought, often contradictorily, about the relationship between past and present in Italy and India.

Part Three compares observations of Italian and Indian morals, manners and their forms of domesticity. In Chapter Five, I show how travellers' observations of Indian and Italian families reflected the ways in which domestic forms became increasingly important in middle-class self-representation back home. Chapter Six considers how British middle-class women travellers, particularly those in India, used their unique access to Indian domesticity to think about, justify and challenge their own positions within British society. I show how they used observations of their own country-women in India to protect themselves against incursions across class boundaries. In the final part of the chapter, I consider how women travellers began to question the validity and value of the type of British domestic institutions held up as superior.

I finish with a section of general conclusions where I try to show how scholars might usefully move beyond the binary rigidities of East and West, North and South. I also show how travellers constructed a vision of middle-class Britain to justify and lay claim to their own authority at home and the right to represent Britain abroad.

Part One: Italian Orientals

Chapter One: 'Knowing' India and Italy

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how different literary forms combined in travel accounts to similarly configure India, Italy and, indeed, Britain. Initially, I discuss Edward Said's theory of the formulation of the Orient and the ways in which supposedly objective, scientific, 'academic' evidence and imaginative constructions work together to configure a particular version of 'the East', one which is apparently inferior, backward and premodern. I examine how the value of the Indian past was debated by those on opposing sides of political arguments in Britain, although all configured India in similar ways to make their points. In the second part of the chapter, I explore how travellers configured Italy in ways very similar to those used in India. I consider how a version of Italy was constructed through the same interaction of apparently objectively observed 'evidence' and imaginative versions of Italy taken from various forms of literature. Many travellers to Italy were also historians, Gothic novel writers and Romantic poets. I will consider how these forms of literature informed each other and contributed to a vision of Italy which was, like India, apparently premodern, civically and politically backward.

In the 1839 account of her Indian residence, Marianna Postans mused on the literary genres through which societies of varying degrees of civilisation related their own histories and culture. Postans was the wife of a junior Anglo-Indian army officer who lived in India from 1833-46 and published two accounts of her travels and residency, in addition to journalistic writing for the *Asiatic Review*.¹⁴² In 1839, she published two accounts of her travels. *Western India in 1838* was praised by the *Monthly Review* for her 'active and lively habits of observation and research, and pleasing and racy style'. They also noted how 'very favourably received by the public' was her other

¹⁴² B. Colbert, 'Marianne Postans', *British Travel Writing* (2019). <http://www4.wlv.ac.uk/btw/authors/1113> (accessed 16/5/19).

publication, *Cutch*.¹⁴³ Similarly, the *Literary Gazette* described Postans as ‘one of the most intelligent lady-travellers and pleasant lady-writers of the day’.¹⁴⁴

The bardic tradition, wrote Postans, ‘held in high estimation by nations whose literature was limited’, was ‘essentially the art of barbarous times.’¹⁴⁵ Postans noted the history of the ‘story-tellers’ of ancient Europe. The Icelandic sagas, the ‘martial tales’ of the Normans and the ‘bardic remains of the Celts’ all told stories of ‘times too barbarous to have left us any other chronicle.’¹⁴⁶ Too bad, Postans lamented, that the bardic style left little or no trace of itself. As European civilisation advanced, so had their forms of history and literature. The tradition of the bardic story-teller was left in the darkness which separated modernity from the violence of the past. The development of the literary and academic arts went hand in hand with civilised modernity, each reflecting and reinforcing the other. Not so in the East, Postans explained, where the inhabitants were ‘indolent by nature’ and ‘unacquainted with general literature’. Instead, they retained an ‘unwearying taste’ for a genre which reflected India’s lack of civilisation and an absence of civic and political virtue.¹⁴⁷ This was a typical Enlightenment narrative of civilizational progress. The Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, David Hume, for example, argued that the development of the civilised arts and political systems went hand in hand. Postans echoes Hume’s remark that ‘the first growth of the arts and sciences can never be expected in despotic governments.’¹⁴⁸ The arts would develop to best advantage in a ‘free state’, although they might also thrive in ‘civilized monarchies’.¹⁴⁹ Post-Reform Act Britain was an example of both; middle-class suffrage within a constitutional monarchy.

¹⁴³ ‘Review: Western India in 1838’, *The Monthly Review*, 1 (1840), 80-7, 80.

¹⁴⁴ Colbert, ‘Marianne Postans’. <http://www4.wlv.ac.uk/btw/authors/1113> (accessed 2/3/19).

¹⁴⁵ M. Postans, *Cutch, Or Random Sketches of Western India* (London, 1838), 188.

¹⁴⁶ Postans, *Cutch*, 189-190.

¹⁴⁷ Postans, *Cutch*, 189.

¹⁴⁸ D. Hume, ‘Of the Rise and Progress of the arts and Sciences’ in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* in 4 Vols., Vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1827), 124-155, 132. See also, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ‘Enlightenment Views on Progress’. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/progress/#EnlViePro> (accessed 19/12/19). See also, the systemisation of ‘races’ which followed from Linnaean theory (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 24-36).

¹⁴⁹ Hume, *Of The Rise and Progress*, 139.

The East was not, though, the only place where pre-modern arts persisted. Postans noted that Italy too, 'still boasts of her *improvisatori*', or performers of impromptu and improvised history, poetry, and song.¹⁵⁰ Here, she drew on a long tradition of travellers who suggested that, as theatrically entertaining and as skilled as the *improvisatori* were, their artistic performances were of a lower standard than those of Northern Europe. For example, a traveller to Italy in 1802, Joseph Forsyth, described the improvised style as having 'none of the higher felicities of art'.¹⁵¹ An 1824 history of the Italian *improvisatori* in a British periodical suggested that the form could barely 'withstand the keen glance of deliberate criticism.' 'Enlivening historians' they might be but the output of their accounts matched the Italian temperament, 'pour[ing] forth at the impulse of the moment, and under the influence of an excitement over which the will can have but little control.'¹⁵² Postans thus drew on ideas about Italy to prove her point about India and, in doing so, reinforced a narrative of the pre-modernity of both. As we will discover, such ideas were common among British travellers, that Italy lacked modernity and full civilisation. Like Indians, Italians were portrayed as emotional, lacking self-control, languishing in indolence, addicted to pleasure and *dolce far' niente*.

In Madame de Staël's iconic novel, based on her own travels in Italy, the eponymous protagonist, Corinne, was also an *improvisatori*. Although beautiful and talented, intoxicating even, she was not the appropriate choice of wife for the British aristocrat, Oswald, another traveller to Italy.¹⁵³ Indeed, Corinne's open expression of her individuality was exactly what made her inappropriate. For many travellers and readers, *Corinne* exemplified British superiority over Italy. As Francis Jeffrey suggested

¹⁵⁰ Postans, *Cutch*, 189.

¹⁵¹ J. Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy, in the years 1802 and 1803* 3rd Ed (London, 1824), 50. See also J. Moore, *A View of Society and Manners in Italy* in 2 Vols., Vol. 2 (London, 1781), 195. For a fuller discussion of the reactions of travellers of various nationalities to the art of the *improvisatori*, see R. Casillo, *The Empire of Stereotypes: Germain de Staël and the Idea of Italy* (New York, 2006), 35-9.

¹⁵² 'Italian Improvisatory', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 11 (Jan. 1824), 193-202, 202. This article also relates the history of the *improvisatori* starting with Andrea Marone in the fifteenth century. For modern historiographical account of the *improvisatori* from mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, see C. Gonda, 'The Rise and Fall of the Improvisatore, 1753-1845', *Romanticism*, 6 (2000), 195-210.

¹⁵³ Madame (A-G-L) De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* in 3 Vols. (London, 1807). For the impact of *Corinne* in Britain, see Casillo, *The Empire of Stereotype*, 3-4. Also, Laven, 'The British Idea of Italy', footnote 15. (accessed 16 April 2017).

in the *Edinburgh Review*, 'it is Great Britain and Italy, the extremes of civilised Europe, that are personified and contrasted in the hero and heroine of this romantic tale'.¹⁵⁴ Such conclusions suited some commentators, who dispensed with the need for first-hand observation entirely. *The Oriental Herald and Colonial Review* pointed out the weakness of some travel accounts of India, where so much was still hidden from European eyes. In any case, factual accounts, or 'a dry enumeration of customs' as they put it, were 'irksome, both to writers and readers.' Perhaps, they argued, 'tales, novels, romances, plays, &c., are the best medium through which a knowledge of the East can be conveyed to Europeans'.¹⁵⁵ It was in this vein that Francis Jeffrey had suggested that the best descriptions of contemporary Italy and Britain came in fictitious form.

In criticising the bardic tradition, Italians and Indians were spoken *for*, in widely-circulated accounts which 'produced' hegemonic knowledge of foreign places, peoples, and cultures.¹⁵⁶ Spivak calls this 'epistemic violence', the destruction or suppression of knowledge of the Other, in favour of a 'western ways of knowing'.¹⁵⁷ Spivak draws on Michel Foucault's concept of 'subjugated knowledges', or 'a whole set of knowledges' about the Other, 'that have been disqualified as inadequate'.¹⁵⁸ She notes the application of these ideas to the 'project to constitute the colonial subject as Other' in India, in which 'one explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one'.¹⁵⁹ Clearly though, 'epistemic violence' was done to the Italian tradition of the *improvisatori*, every bit as much as to its Indian equivalent. For travellers and

¹⁵⁴ F. Jeffrey, 'Corinne, ou L'Italie' *Edinburgh Review* (October, 1807), 183-194, 183.

¹⁵⁵ Review, 'The Zenana', *The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*, xiii (1827), 499-510, 499.

¹⁵⁶ For the seminal articulation of this idea, see G. Spivak, 'Can the subaltern speak? Speculations on widow sacrifice', *Wedge*, 7/8 (1985), 120-30. This essay has been reprinted many times, most recently revised in G. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Mass, 1999). Further references are taken from this version, published in R. Morris (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York, 2010), 21-78. For an illuminating explanatory account of this notoriously difficult essay, see J. P. Sharp, *Geographies of Postcolonialism: Spaces of Power and Representation* (London, 2009). The term *subaltern* was coined by Antonio Gramsci and his work on cultural hegemony. See Q. Hoare & Smith, G. N., (eds.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York, 1971), 52. For an history of the concept and its uses, see E. H. Louai, 'Retracing the concept of the subaltern from Gramsci to Spivak: Historical developments and new applications', *African Journal of History and Culture*, 4 (Jan., 2012), 4-8.

¹⁵⁷ Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', 35-6. Sharp, *Geographies*, 108.

¹⁵⁸ M. Foucault, 'Power/Knowledge' in S. Seidman & J. C. Alexander (eds.), *The New Social Theory Reader*, (London, 2001), 69-75, 70.

¹⁵⁹ Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 35.

their reviewers, Italian and Indian accounts of themselves were ‘forms of knowledge [that] have been rendered as less valid, or even downright wrong.’¹⁶⁰ Just like India, Italy was known through the voices of the outsider, the traveller, the representative of the ‘superior’ civilisation.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider how British travellers came to ‘know’ India and Italy, how they represented those places and rendered their ‘epistemic violence’ through their accounts and observations.

Constructing Knowledge of India

In his highly contentious book, *Orientalism*, Edward Said noted the role of travel literature in the discursive configuration of the East:

travel books or guidebooks are about as “natural” a kind of text, as logical in their composition and in their use, as any book one can think of [...] many writers of travel books or guidebooks compose them in order to say that a country is like this [...] people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes.¹⁶¹

He also noted the variety and overlap of literary sources from which an ‘Orient’ was constructed:

The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient therefore constitute an analyzable formation—for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies—whose presence in time, in discourse [...] gives it strength and authority.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Sharp, *Geographies*, 107. Dipesh Chakrabarty notes how a Eurocentric view still ‘continues to dominate the discourse of history [...] third-world historians feel a need to refer to works in European history; historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate’ (D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000), 28).

¹⁶¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 93.

¹⁶² Said, *Orientalism*, 20.

Said described how the meaning of 'the East' generally, was configured through discursive Western fantasies that portrayed the Orient as exotic, uncivilised, pre-modern and dangerous. By implication, 'the West' became the rational, modern, and civilised corollary of the East, 'its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'.¹⁶³ It is this portrayal of an East-West binary, within which a ubiquitously domineering and oppressive 'West' continues to systematically oppress and exploit a victimised 'East', that has been so contentious.¹⁶⁴ As I have already hinted at, the processes by which imaginative configurations of Italy and India were produced through travel accounts appear quite similar. There may be some value, then, in considering such discursive constructions within the context of Said's thesis.

As Said put it, 'Orientalism' was (is) more than a simple set of stereotypes, not 'an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice'.¹⁶⁵ Said contended that 'Orientalism' works in an 'academic' sense, with 'objective' knowledge of the East generated through scholarship in Oriental history and culture. As already mentioned, Bernard Cohn has shown how, in invading India, the British invaded 'an epistemological space' as well as actual territory. In doing so, by authoritatively describing what they encountered, they created 'forms of knowledge' which 'bound the vast social world that was India so it could be controlled'.¹⁶⁶ The British assumed

¹⁶³ Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

¹⁶⁴ Lauded and criticised in equal measure, the influence of *Orientalism* 'can hardly be disputed' (R. Young, *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction* (Oxford, 2001), 384). For a full range of views, see: L. Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', *Art in America*, (May, 1983), 118-131 & 187-191; 'The MESA Debate: The Scholars, the Media, and the Middle East', *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, 16 (1987), 85-104; I. Warraq, *Defending the West: A critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (Amherst, 2007); A. J. Caschetta, 'Review: Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism', *Middle East Quarterly* (2009), 77-9; M. Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, 2001); F. Halliday, 'Orientalism and its critics', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20:2 (1993), 145-63; A. Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, nations, literatures* (London, 1992), chapter 5; C. A. Breckinridge & Van de Veer, P., (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South East Asia* (Philadelphia, 1993); V. Chaturvedi (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London, 2000); R. Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, 1990); D. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Washington, 2007); A. J. Caschetta, 'Review: Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid', *Middle East Quarterly*, (2010), 78-80.

¹⁶⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge*, 118. Nicholas Dirks notes the important role played by Cohn 'long before [...] Michel Foucault made "knowledge" a term that seemed irrevocably linked to power, and before Edward Said opened up discussions of the relations between power and knowledge in colonial

the authority to investigate, observe, research, collate, categorise, write about and define what it was to be Indian, claiming 'a kind of intellectual authority over the Orient within Western culture'.¹⁶⁷ Said draws on Foucault and the relationship between knowledge and power in developing these ideas:

Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.¹⁶⁸

Eighteenth-century scholars of the Orient were sympathetic to and genuinely interested in ancient Indian culture, history, and religion. Later, in the early-nineteenth century, the influence of Anglicists, particularly James Mill and his 1817 hegemonic *History of British India*, led to a scathing view of Indian culture as degraded and backward, and of Indians as requiring wholesale re-education along British lines.¹⁶⁹ As Ronald Inden points out, however, sympathy or otherwise is not the point, 'a genuine critique of Orientalism does *not* resolve around the question of prejudice or bias, of the like or dislike of the peoples and cultures of Asia'.¹⁷⁰ Take, for example, the work of Sir William Jones, a traveller and the preeminent eighteenth-century scholar of the East, the founder of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. For Jones, the region was the

nurse of sciences, the inventress of delightful and useful arts, the scene of glorious actions, fertile in the productions of human genius, abounding in

discourse' (N. B. Dirks, 'Foreword', in B. S. Cohen, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, 1996), ix).

¹⁶⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 19. Not everyone took this approach. Suleri notes that, in Edmund Burke's famous speech during Prime Minister Fox's 1783 East India Bill, in his 'reliance upon the locutions of astonishment and horror, Burke's speech insists on the futility of approaching India as though it could be catalogued or would ever be categorizable' (S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (London, 1992), 26). See, *Mr. Burke's Speech on Mr Fox's East India Bill* (London, 1784). <https://archive.org/details/mrburkesspeecho00burkgoog/page/n5> (accessed 21 Aug 2019).

¹⁶⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 11. M. Foucault, 'Power/Knowledge' in S. Seidman & Alexander, J. C., (eds.), *The New Social Theory Reader*, (London, 2001), 69-75.

¹⁶⁹ J. Mill, *The History of British India* in 3 Vols. (London, 1817). For the general context of 'James Mill and the British assault on Indian history', see Koditschek, *Liberalism*, 82-90. Also, J. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford, 1992).

¹⁷⁰ R. Inden, 'Orientalist constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies*, 20 (1986), 401-46, 408-9.

natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government, in the laws, manners, customs, and languages, as well as in the features and complexions of men.¹⁷¹

In his essay, *On the Poetry of Eastern Nations*, Jones wholeheartedly recommended ‘to the learned world a species of literature, which abounds with so many new expressions, new images, and new inventions’.¹⁷² Jones wrote that ‘the poets of the East may vie with those of Europe in the graces of their diction, as well as in the loveliness of their images.’¹⁷³ He went on to explain the influence of climate, which ‘disposes the Eastern people to a life of indolence’.¹⁷⁴ Such a lifestyle might, Jones conjectured, give Orientals ‘full leisure to cultivate their talents’, and thus account for the richness of their poetry. Alternatively, or in addition, it might be that the sun itself ‘has a real influence on their imagination’.¹⁷⁵ In any case, Jones noted that ‘it has always been remarked, that the *Asiaticks* excel the inhabitants of our colder region in the liveliness of their fancy, and the richness of their invention.’¹⁷⁶ In spite of Jones’ enthusiasm and genuine respect for Eastern culture, his academic studies provided ‘evidence’ of Orientals as inherently indolent and described best by terms such as ‘imagination’, ‘fancy’, and ‘invention’, in opposition to sober Western rationality. The source of Jones’ support for these ideas were ‘remarks’, the observations of visitors and travellers, themselves influenced by, and reinforcing, pre-existing ideas of the East from a combination of literature and ‘scholarship’. As Inden notes, sympathetic scholars of Oriental language, history, and culture tended to represent the East as a ‘civilisation of dreams’.¹⁷⁷ The defining characteristics of Indians, according to Jones, were ‘softness’, ‘love of pleasure’, ‘indolence’, and ‘effeminacy’, which had made them ‘easy prey to all the western and northern swarms, that have from time to time invaded them.’¹⁷⁸ Although not outright cowards, ‘they are at least extremely docile’. Some imposition of

¹⁷¹ J. Elmes (ed.), *Discourses delivered before the Asiatic Society*, (London, 1824), 2.

¹⁷² W. Jones, *Poems consisting chiefly of translations from the Asiatick languages* (London, 1777), xv.

¹⁷³ Jones, *Poems*, 166.

¹⁷⁴ Jones, *Poems*, 170.

¹⁷⁵ Jones, *Poems*, 170.

¹⁷⁶ Jones, *Poems*, 170-1.

¹⁷⁷ Inden, *Orientalist Constructions*, 408.

¹⁷⁸ Jones, *Poems*, 179.

discipline might, Jones thought, make them ‘excellent soldiers’, but without such, they had historically sunk into ‘a state of inactivity’.¹⁷⁹

The same Indian characteristics which, for Jones, ‘explained’ the profusion and beauty of their poetry, held very different conclusions for James Mill. For the latter, it was not great poetry and creativity that was the ‘offspring of a rude and ungoverned imagination’, but ‘a rude and credulous people, whom the marvellous delights [...] and whom the real occurrences of life are too tame to interest’.¹⁸⁰ Mill expanded in quite vitriolic terms in a footnote to this comment. Where Jones saw creative imagination, Mill described ‘passion and sentiment’, ‘wild and extravagant effects’, ‘national vanity’, all of which distinguished ‘rude nations’ and ‘uncivilised society’.¹⁸¹ A word search reveals the term ‘rude’ appearing 265 times in volume one (of six) alone, or on approximately one in every three pages. Where Jones described ‘docility’ that might be counteracted under the right influence, Mill ascribed rank cowardice to a people who ‘run from danger with more trepidation and eagerness than has been almost ever witnessed in any other part of the globe.’¹⁸² Where Jones discussed the invasions to which India has been subject ‘from time to time’, Mill wrote of ‘the mental habits and attainments’ of Indians which made them politically impotent and ‘which has rendered India so easy a conquest to all invaders’, including Britain.¹⁸³ As Ronald Inden observes,

scholars whose attitudes seem at polar opposites do not disagree here in any major way about the facts of Indian history, facts which constitute India as a

¹⁷⁹ Jones, *Poems*, 179-80. In another example of Jones’ contradictory descriptions of India, to gain an advantage in a court case, ‘Jones was prepared to reverse his scholarly and sympathetic championing of Oriental law and culture by impugning Indian law and implying that mere contact with India was corrupting’ (M. J. Franklin, ‘Accessing India: Orientalism, anti-‘Indianism’, and the Rhetoric of Jones and Burke’ in, T. Fulford, *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830* (Cambridge, 1998), 48-66, 51). Jones claimed that the unfair prosecution of his client was akin to ‘Indian laws’ being imported ‘into England, by imprisoning and indicting an honest man, who had done no more than his duty, and, whose only fault was fear, of which both his prosecutors were equally guilty’ (G. Cannon (ed.), *The Letters of Sir William Jones* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1970), 430-1). The ‘prosecutor’ in question was John Holwell, former Governor of Bengal. In self-interest, and to pique a ‘returned nabob’, Jones ‘panders to the popular prejudice that Oriental law equated despotic tyranny’ (Franklin, *Accessing India*, 50).

¹⁸⁰ Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 98.

¹⁸¹ Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 98.

¹⁸² Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 310.

¹⁸³ Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 460.

veritable glass-house of vulnerability, forever destined for conquest by outsiders.¹⁸⁴

Jones had a deep respect for Indian religion, culture, and history, motivated by his broader agenda, to show the common Indo-European origins of language and religion. This was a project to demonstrate a 'rational defense of the Bible out of the materials collected by Oriental scholarship.'¹⁸⁵ It was also an attempt to find common historical ground between Britain and India. They might only be 'distant cousins', but their shared heritage lent some justification to Britain's intervention in 'bringing modern civilisation to the Indians.'¹⁸⁶ Mill's agenda was one of Utilitarian modernisation, in which India's ancient past held nothing of value.¹⁸⁷ As discussed in the introduction, India became a site for contesting metropolitan conservative values by political reformists who argued that Britain's colonies were simply 'a source of power and patronage for the ruling elite'. The Anglicist reformist project was to educate Indians through an English curriculum in the English language. This was most famously articulated in Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education*. Macaulay, who had been instrumental in Parliament, calling for middle-class suffrage in the Reform Act debates, now argued for the production of a similar class of Indians, go-betweens and 'interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, to be educated in the English language, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in morals, and in intellect'.¹⁸⁸ Thus, 'knowledge' of Indians was generated through academic study and travellers' observations (often the same thing) and used to support diametrically opposed agendas, in India and back in Britain. Yet, opposing points of view were based on a similar 'understanding' of India, as essentially and inherently irrational, exotic, feminine, submissive, and politically impotent.

¹⁸⁴ Inden, 'Orientalist constructions', 410.

¹⁸⁵ T. R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (London, 1997), 42. For a more detailed account of Jones' research and writing in the context of his own religious beliefs, or rather his attempt to reconcile the biblical narrative with aspects of Hinduism, and his personal philosophical views, see A. David, 'Sir William Jones, Biblical Orientalism and Indian Scholarship', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30 (Feb., 1996), 173-184.

¹⁸⁶ Koditschek, *Liberalism*, 60-1.

¹⁸⁷ Trautmann, *Aryans*, 129.

¹⁸⁸ T. B. Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education* (Calcutta, 1835).

A key difference then, one which differentiates between Orientalism and simple ‘othering’, is that the body of knowledge Orientalism creates has the appearance of objectivity and authenticity. Knowledge produced by scholars has the apparent ability to objectively construct the reality of the East, and supposedly represents the inhabitants of the East better than they are able to represent themselves. Orientalism is a discourse imposed from the outside, one which erases difference between individuals and denies those described the opportunity to respond or refute the construction. Orientalism translates into real power, given that the body of knowledge produced for eighteenth and nineteenth-century colonisers justified and ‘enabled the Orientalist and his countrymen to gain trade concessions, conquer, colonise, rule, and punish in the East.’¹⁸⁹

In parallel with ‘academic’ knowledge about the East, Said described an ‘imaginative’ form of ‘Orientalism’, whereby writers in various genres have a preconceived notion of an Eastern mind-set, an Eastern ‘way of being’.¹⁹⁰ Orientalist novels and poetry by writers such as William Beckford, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and Robert Southey, drew on previous work such as Antoine Galland’s 1704-1717 *Arabian Nights*, and apparently academic studies like Barthelemy d’Herbelot’s 1697 *Bibliothèque Orientale*. The latter was completed by Galland, showing the co-constitutive link between imaginative and academic ideas. As Said notes, such work was influential in creating the idea of an exotic, despotic, sexualised, and irrational Orient.¹⁹¹ Said observes that

poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and Imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions and

¹⁸⁹ Inden, *Orientalist Constructions*, 408.

¹⁹⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 10-11.

¹⁹¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 65- 67. For the history of the influence of *Arabian Nights*, see F. M. T. S. Al-Olaqi, ‘The Influence of Arabian Nights on English Literature: A Selective Study’, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 31 (2012), 384-396. For the influence of d’Herbelot on writers as diverse as Edward Gibbon and William Beckford, see G. Fowden, ‘Gibbon on Islam’, *English Historical Review*, 81 (2016), 261-292. As Fowden notes, ‘*Vathek* and *The Decline and Fall* were as poles apart as their authors. Still, they both illustrate the range of public curiosity about the old caliphal world, and the role of scholars such as d’Herbelot in nourishing it’ (271-2). See also, J. Osterhammel, *Die Entzauberung Asiens: Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18 Jahrhundert* (Munchen, 1998), 56-7. For articles detailing the influence of *Arabian Nights* from Hawaii to Persia, see Special Issue on ‘The Arabian Nights: Past and Present’, *Past and Present*, 45 (2004), 56-7.

political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind,” destiny, and so on.¹⁹²

Said notes an on-going exchange between ‘the academic and the more or less imaginative meaning of Orientalism’ which extends hegemonic knowledge of the East throughout Western culture. Here Said draws on Gramsci’s distinction between the coercive and consenting institutions of political and civil society respectively, whereby ‘culture [...] is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent’.¹⁹³

The interchange between the academic and ‘imaginative’ forms of Orientalism combine in ‘a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.’¹⁹⁴ This is Orientalism as a ‘corporate institution’ which takes advantage of a helpless and inferior East, and justifies, even valorises, authorises and facilitates the colonial activities of European nations. ‘Orientalism’ configures not only the East, but also ‘helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience’.¹⁹⁵ Where the East is irrational, pre-modern and inferior, the West is the opposite, justifying their intervention and control of the East as a ‘civilising mission’. As Rana Kabbani puts it, ‘if it could be suggested that Eastern peoples were slothful, preoccupied with sex, violent, and incapable of self-government, then the imperialist would feel himself justified in stepping in and ruling.’¹⁹⁶

Travel writing stands at the intersection of the academic and imaginative forms of ‘Orientalism’. Most travel writers make the claim to objective observation, that they only record, as William Hodges wrote in an introduction to his a count of India, ‘the simple garb of truth’.¹⁹⁷ The popularity of travel writing back home, served to create hegemonic impressions of the people and places observed. The following brief

¹⁹² Said, *Orientalism*, 2-3.

¹⁹³ Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

¹⁹⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ R. Kabbani, *Europe’s Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule* (Basingstoke, 1986), 6.

¹⁹⁷ W. Hodges, *Travels in India during the years 1780, 1781, 1782, & 1783* (London, 1793), iii.

examples demonstrate this, and how observations of India mapped onto metropolitan debates.

William Hodges was born a blacksmith's son in London. He discovered his talent for drawing at school and was apprenticed to a landscape painter for seven years before securing a draughtsman's post on James Cook's voyage to the South Pacific, from 1771-5. Much of this work was published as engravings in Cook's official account and brought Hodges to public attention. In 1779, Hodges travelled to India, patronised by Warren Hastings. He stayed in India for six years and on his return published his drawings as aquatints in *Select Views in India*, to considerable acclaim. His subsequent account of India was published in 1793, its popularity boosted by his fame as an artist. *Travels in India* included fifteen plates from drawings made in India. These and his written account made a 'substantial contribution to the British perception of India's past.'¹⁹⁸ As he approached Madras for the first time in 1780, Hodges noted his observations of Indian men.

The rustling of fine linen, and the general hum of unusual conversation, presents to his mind for a moment the idea of an assembly of females. When he ascends upon the deck he is struck with the long muslin dresses, and black faces adorned with very large gold ear-rings and white turbans. The first salutation he receives from these strangers is by bending their bodies very low, touching the deck with the back of the hand, and the forehead three times.¹⁹⁹

This short passage contains the essential motifs of British travellers' descriptions of Indian culture, that Indians were strange and exotic, effeminate, and naturally submissive. Of course, to the men he describes, their conversation was far from 'unusual', but their native tongue. To Hodges, it was not English and was therefore 'strange' by definition. Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that 'Europe works as a silent

¹⁹⁸ L. H. Cust, revised by L. Macfarlane, 'W. Hodges', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2009). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13425> (accessed 4/1/18).

¹⁹⁹ Hodges, *Travels*, 2-3.

referent in historical knowledge'.²⁰⁰ Hodges assumed, even thousands of miles away from home, that the English language and style of dress were normative standards. Although Hodges drew attention to the feminine appearance of Indian men, their 'dresses' and the way they were 'delicately framed', he contradictorily conceded that they are *actually* 'usually above the middle size' and fell back on suggesting that it was their *hands* which were small and feminine, out of proportion to their body. Hodges added the suggestion of a phallic reference, noting that Indian sabres were too small for European hands.²⁰¹ Hodges furthered a popular discourse that described Indian men as 'delicate' and 'effeminate', even when the evidence suggested that perhaps they are not. Thus, the distinction was drawn between the physically and sexually potent, masculine West and the effeminate and ineffectual East. Hodges' connection between the 'hum of unusual conversation' and an 'assembly of females' hinted at the trivialisation and domination of women generally, the incoherent babbling of women who are subservient and have nothing important to say. Hodges' Orientalist discourse on Indians thus also mapped onto and reinforces a gendered aspect of bourgeois identity and another binary we will encounter: the dominant, rational and intelligible man and the submissive, unintelligible and infantile women.

William Ward's 1811 travel account of India and the 'manners of the hindoos' commented adversely on the Indian caste system, describing it as 'prejudicial, in the highest degree, to the general happiness.' Initially indentured to a printer, Ward became a journalist, a newspaper editor, and the owner of a printing business, before re-training as a Baptist missionary. In 1799, he travelled to India as a missionary, revisiting England briefly in 1818. Returning to India in 1821, he died of cholera at Serampore in 1823. Restricted by government order from settling in Calcutta, due to concerns over excessive Christian proselytising, Ward was forced to live in Serampore instead. He was occupied chiefly in his original calling, as a printer, translating Biblical scripture into more than 20 languages of the sub-continent.²⁰² Joined in these

²⁰⁰ Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 28.

²⁰¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 3.

²⁰² E. I. Carlyle, 'Ward, William (1769-1823)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, 59 (1899).
[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ward,_William_\(1769-1823\)_DNB00](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ward,_William_(1769-1823)_DNB00) (accessed 5/12/18).

endeavours by William Carey and Joshua Marshman, together they became well-known as the Serampore Trio.²⁰³ In his account of India, Ward contrasted the caste system with ‘the creation of different orders founded on merit, property etc, which still leaves all the social and benevolent feelings in unconstrained operation’, a reference to his view of the British class system.²⁰⁴ In comparison to such a system containing apparently ‘benevolent feelings’ between different classes, the injustice of the Indian caste system reduced Indians to the ‘lowest possible state of degradation.’²⁰⁵ Ward’s account created a binary of Indian inferiority and British superiority, but also configured and justified a British class system which Ward describes as equitable and agreeable to all, because it was based on ‘merit, property etc’. Ward appears to imply that the ownership of property is meritorious in itself. Whilst this might suggest that *inherited* wealth was meritorious, Ward was from fairly humble beginnings, the son of a carpenter and builder.²⁰⁶ In the early nineteenth century, a nascent middle class, upwardly mobile, industrious, and religiously upstanding, was increasingly juxtaposing itself with an indolent and decadent aristocracy as part of a bid for greater socio-political authority.²⁰⁷ Ward’s comments may have, therefore, reflected an emerging middle-class view that hard work and the consequent acquisition of property and assets was deserving of that authority, rather than birth and aristocratic inheritance as the determinants of socio-political power.

In her account of India in the late 1820s, Emma Roberts blurred the line between fantasy and reality in describing the sights and sounds of an Indian wedding procession. Roberts moved to India to live with her married sister after the death of her mother in 1828. Already a published author, she continued to write and publish poetry and articles for periodicals and Anglo-Indian newspapers. On the death of her sister in 1830 and remaining unmarried, writing became her main source of income.

²⁰³ W. O. Simpson, ‘Biographical Information’, in W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos: Including a minute Description of their Manners and Customs and Translations from their Principle Works*, Fifth Edition, Vol. 1 (Madras, 1863), 3.

²⁰⁴ W. Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos* (Serampúr, 1811), 204.

²⁰⁵ Ward, *Hindoos*, 205.

²⁰⁶ Oxford Database of National Biography, ‘William Ward’ (1769-1823).

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28710> (accessed 2/5/17).

²⁰⁷ Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 18-20.

Roberts returned to England after four years, where she continued her writing career in various fields. She moved back to India in 1839, only to die at Poona the following year.²⁰⁸ In her account of an Indian wedding, palanquins glided along, decorated like ‘gorgeous birds’, accompanied by camels of a ‘supernatural appearance’ and elephants who moved like ‘monuments of black marble’, taking the shape of ‘strange monsters-flying griffins-and chimeras dire.’²⁰⁹ These apparitions were interspersed ‘amid the promiscuous multitude of horse and foot’, to the musical accompaniment of a ‘wild discord’ of Bacchanalian cacophony.²¹⁰ She noted that ‘in beholding these strange pageants, the wonders of an Arabian tale become realities; we are no longer surprised at the wild phantasies of the authors’ who ‘draw from nature’.²¹¹ Roberts brought all the exoticism and horror of the *Arabian Nights*, Orientalist and Gothic fiction to her descriptions of India. Late at night, Europeans witnessed ‘strange groups of very unearthly character’ and ‘individuals so withered and so wild’. She continued:

Three or four demoniac-looking personages, of a horrid blackness, half-clad in in uncouth garments, will suddenly emerge from some ravine, brandishing flaring torches, and making the air ring with discordant cries, and the clang of still more fearful instruments.²¹²

Roberts allowed full and free rein to her imagination as she painted for her readers, a picture of terrifying creatures ‘disgorged from the subterranean dominions of some mighty magician’.²¹³ It is perhaps worth remembering here, that Roberts began this passage by describing not the calling forth of demons from the pits of hell, but a simple wedding procession. Still, whether a wedding procession or an ‘incantation scene’ from a religious ceremony, ‘they certainly contrive to equal in horror the most frightful descriptions of the writers of fiction.’²¹⁴ Emma Roberts’ description of India

²⁰⁸ R. C. Raza, ‘Roberts, Emma’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/23747> (accessed 27/9/19).

²⁰⁹ E. Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* in 3 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1835), 276.

²¹⁰ Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics* Vol. 1, 276.

²¹¹ Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics* Vol. 1, 276-7.

²¹² Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics* Vol. 1, 277.

²¹³ Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics* Vol. 1, 277.

²¹⁴ Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics* Vol. 1, 277.

sits at the intersection of fact and fiction, of apparently empirical observation and imaginative fantasy in a phantasmagoria of supernatural exoticism.

When India is considered in isolation then, Said makes a compelling case for the creation of an East-West binary, from the combination of apparently objective academic knowledge and the 'imaginative' configuration of the generic Oriental. Travel writing plays a significant discursive role in combining both forms of Orientalism. In the next section I will show that Said's thesis is, however, significantly complicated by travellers who make precisely the same case for Italy.

Constructing Knowledge of Italy

Joseph Luzzi opens his account of Italian Romanticism with a description of a modern Alitalia advert, telling the tourist to 'fire their therapist...do something monumental...give in to temptation'. In doing so, the Italian national airline 'draws on a myth, formed by writers in the early nineteenth century, of Italy as a premodern, sensual, and unreflective (hence, analyst-free) oasis.' Such descriptions represent a 'habit of thinking about Italy as an eminently premodern corpus of cultural traditions.'²¹⁵ This comment is similar to Ronald Inden's observation, that Indian agency was stripped by scholars who imagined 'an India kept eternally ancient.'²¹⁶ Luzzi adds that, for Italy, this was 'a habit that emerged in the Romantic literary movements of Europe in the early nineteenth century.'²¹⁷

The idea of Italy as a Romantic literary construct in the minds of British (and German, Swiss, French etc) travellers is well established.²¹⁸ As David Laven observes, 'by the late 1810s British engagement with Italy had come to be shaped heavily by a handful of

²¹⁵ J. Luzzi, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (London, 2008), 1.

²¹⁶ Inden, *Imagining India*, 1.

²¹⁷ Luzzi, *Romantic Europe*, 52.

²¹⁸ For example, the seminal C. P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: The Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1957); C. Hornsby (ed.), *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London, 2000); L. M. Crisafulli (ed.), *Imagining Italy, Literary Itineraries in British Romanticism* (Bologna, 2002); L. Bandiera and Saglia, D., (eds.), *British Romanticism and Italian Literature. Translating, Reviewing, Rewriting* (Amsterdam, 2005); J. Stabler, *The Artistry of Exile* (Oxford, 2013); Laven, 'The British Idea of Italy'. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 16 April 2017).

Romantic poets and writers.²¹⁹ The writers to whom Laven refers however, (Lord Byron; Percy and Mary Shelley; John Keats; Germaine de Staël; Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning for example) were themselves informed by what Walchester calls ‘a complex chain of reference’ which included ‘eighteenth-century accounts, which draw on Italian Renaissance poetry, which in turn refers to Classical descriptions of Italy.’²²⁰ For example, the work of popular Gothic novelists such as Anne Radcliffe, itself informed by descriptions of Italy by historians and eighteenth-century travel writers, was instrumental for later Romantic authors and their tales of Italian rape, incest, and murder.²²¹ Consider Radcliffe’s typical Italian protagonists in her 1792 novel, *A Sicilian Romance*, who ‘exhibited a boundless indulgence of violent and luxurious passions.’ There was a salutary lesson in ‘their deaths’ which ‘marked the consequences of such indulgence.’²²² The lesson was one for the character of nations as well as individuals. As Chloe Chard notes, the writers of such fiction drew on accounts of travellers for ‘many of the details and general themes of their characteristic *mise-en-scène* of the foreign and the forbidden.’²²³ In an interactive relationship between travel accounts and Gothic fiction, such were the hegemonic views of Italy in the minds of travellers, writers of fiction, history and their readers back home.

Romantic literature was also ‘intimately linked’ to and informed by Italian history and politics.²²⁴ Edward Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88) and William Roscoe’s *Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici* (1795) stimulated public interest in classical and medieval Renaissance Italy, as did the Genevan historian Sismondi’s *Histoire des Republiques Italiennes au Moyen Age* (1809-18). Slightly later British historians such as Henry Hallam and George Perceval recycled much of this earlier

²¹⁹ Laven, *The British Idea of Italy*. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 16 April 2017).

²²⁰ K. Walchester, *Our Own Fair Italy* (Bern, 2007), 39. For the configuration by early nineteenth-century middle-class British travellers of a ‘prism of imagined and idealised Italy’ see also, M. O’Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination: Italy, the Middle Class and Imagining the Nation in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1998), 21. O’Connor describes the intersection of culture and politics in a middle-class imagination of Italy.

²²¹ Laven, *British Idea of Italy*. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 16 April 2017).

²²² A. Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1792), 205.

²²³ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, vii.

²²⁴ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, x.

work in their own accounts of Italy.²²⁵ Italy was ubiquitously portrayed as having slumped into ‘decadence and defeat’ since its days of glory.²²⁶ Such views were also informed by earlier historical views of Italy. Inspired by national pride and jealousy of superior Italian commerce and diplomacy, and as a reaction to Catholic Inquisitional persecution of Protestants, sixteenth and seventeenth-century British travellers often described Italians as lascivious, corrupt, vicious, treacherous and deceitful.²²⁷ In 1570, Roger Ascham, a poet, writer, Royal tutor and secretary to the Privy Council declared that in nine days in Italy, he witnessed more sin than in nine years in London.²²⁸ As John Navone noted back in 1974, from the 16th century, the ‘Italian villain is the perennial favourite’ of Anglo-Saxon literature and part of the ‘image-making’ of Italy. Italians are represented ‘deceivers, troublemakers, outlaws, corruptors, traitors, chisellers, killers, monsters, parasites, criminal masterminds, and endless other variations of human wickedness and malice.’²²⁹

Contemporary continental politics also played its part in Italy’s portrayal, for example by Count Daru in his eight-volume account of Venice, *Histoire de la République de Venise* (Paris, Didot, 1819). For Daru, Venice’s moral collapse justified Napoleonic conquest. Whether accurate or not, such accounts were influential on the creation of semi-historical Romantic productions.²³⁰ Between 1815 and 1840, episodes of Italian

²²⁵ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 187. H. Hallam, *A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* in 2 Vols. (London, 1818). By 1860, *View* had run to twelve editions. Hallam’s configuration of a moribund Italy served as a mirror image of his laudatory description of the English constitution in his 1827 *Constitutional History of England*. A ‘sophisticated constitutional government demarcated the English from other peoples and represented an outstanding characteristic of English identity’ (A. Brundage & Cosgrove, R. A.; *British Historians and National Identity: From Hume to Churchill* (Abingdon, 2016), 4). See this work also, for the role of Hallam *et al* in the making of English identity. See also, G. Perceval, *The History of Italy, from the fall of the Western Empire to the commencement of the wars of the French revolution* in 2 Vols. (London, 1825). Perceval was a pseudonym for George Proctor. Perceval/Proctor wrote that, ‘since the second fall of Italy, her annals have been for three centuries languid and her fortunes inglorious’. The telling of this period of Italy’s history he described as ‘an ungrateful task, a melancholy consummation’ (Perceval, *The History of Italy* Vol. 1, ix).

²²⁶ Laven, *British Idea of Italy*. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 16 April 2017).

²²⁷ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 1.

²²⁸ R. Ascham, *The English Works of Roger Ascham* (London, 1815), 248. R. O’Day, ‘Ascham, Roger’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/732> (accessed 6/10/17).

²²⁹ J. Navone, ‘The Italian Devils of Anglo-Saxon Literature’, *New Blackfriars*, 55 (1974), 68-77, 68.

²³⁰ D. Laven, ‘Lord Byron, Count Daru, and Anglophone Myths of Venice in the Nineteenth Century’, *MDCCC*, 1 (2012), 5-32. See Laven also for the ‘mutually supportive’ intersection of Hallam and Lord Byron on the portrayal of Venice as an example of the ‘wider literary construct’ of Italian decline, ‘of its fall, and of its present “infamous repose” under foreign rule’ (12). See 13 for further literary examples.

history inspired semi-fictional creations by Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, Robert Browning, Mary Mitford, Walter Landor and Felicia Hemans.²³¹ In reverse, a literary construction of Italy influenced academic writing on Italy, as in the case of George Percival, whose historical account ‘reads rather like a series of romantic tales than a connected historical study.’²³²

Unsurprisingly, the themes which garnered most attention and came to form the British view of Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century, were

the violence and unrestraint of passion in Italy, with all the gruesome horrors and miseries resulting from it...the exciting, almost incredible adventures of men of extraordinary courage and personality...the struggle for freedom of peoples subjected to tyrannous rulers.²³³

A slew of plays and novels were predicated on themes of Italian revenge and delight in torture, murder and rape. Emerging from such work, was a view of Italians as passionate and talented but irrational, violent, jealous, and unable to control their emotions and energy or direct them to positive moral, political or civic ends. The popular novelist Anne Manning wrote in her own account of Italy that, historically, ‘the energy and violence which marked their national character was often directed to evil purposes by such dark and vindictive passions.’²³⁴ Following the same ideas about India, Manning attributed some of the Italian temperament to the hotter Italian climate, producing ‘emotions of hatred and jealousy which in our cooler climate occasionally ruffle our bosom, and are mastered by steady principle and placid

²³¹ For example, G. G. Byron, *Marino Faliero: Doge of Venice* (London, 1821), using the Venetian historian Marino Sanuto (1466-1536) as a source; P.B. Shelley, *The Cenci, A Tragedy, in 5 acts* (London, 1819), based on the life of Beatrice Cenci, using Ludovico Muratori’s *Annali d’Italia* as a source; R. Browning, *Sordello* (London, 1840), a poem based on the life of Sordello da Goito, a character appearing in Dante’s *Purgatorio* and featuring several historical characters; M. Mitford, *Rienzi* (London, 1828), based on the life of the 14th century Italian patriot; F. Hemans, *The Vespers of Palermo* (London, 1823), based on the late-13th century War of the Sicilian Vespers.

²³² Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 187.

²³³ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 189.

²³⁴ A. Manning, *Stories from the History of Italy* (London, 1831), 59.

temperament.²³⁵ In a later account of Italy and in a similar vein, the Countess Blessington also discussed the climate in Rome, and praised young Englishmen for (apparently) resisting the ‘temptations of this luxurious capital...the delicious habits of the *dolce far niente* [carefree idleness]...[to] which the climate disposes people’.²³⁶ Blessington published several accounts of life in London and travel in Europe, where she befriended Byron, and was well disposed towards Italians, but limited her praise for Italian men to their particular skills in music, their gallantry, and their talent for seductive *amour*. By contrast, she made the (dubious) observation that young Englishmen were studious and rational, and used their Italian experience to gain knowledge and skills to aid a ‘future career of utility’.²³⁷ Similar to comments we will encounter describing Indian women, Italian women had a ‘*naivete* resembling that of children.’²³⁸ Different travel accounts thus ‘objectively’ observed that the Italian climate produced passion in its people, which could turn alternatively towards sensual luxury, childish indulgence, or jealous and violent anger. Northern climates apparently produced a rational, sober and purposefully industrious character. The parallels with comments made regarding India, by writers, travellers and scholars are obvious here, in terms of Italian characteristics and their climatic causation. And yet, Joseph Forsyth described Florentines as ‘the timid, passive, Christian kind.’ They refused to ‘face danger’ and ‘have exchanged the more turbulent virtues for meekness, long-suffering, obedience, and every quality that can adorn a slave.’²³⁹ Italians were passionate and violent whilst, simultaneously, cowardly and submissive. These were also the contradictions written about Indians who exhibited ‘wild discord’ in one moment and timidity the next.

²³⁵ Manning, *History*, 59. For many Enlightenment commentators, particularly Montesquieu, ‘climate theory’ provided explanations for the characteristics of different ‘races’, derived from the climate in which they lived (Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, translated by Thomas Nugent, Book xiv (Ontario, 2001), 246-60). For a history of climate theory, see R. Wheeler, *Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia, 2000), 23-27. For the influence of climate theory on colonialism and imperialism see M. Gilmartin, ‘Colonialism/Imperialism’, *Key concepts in political geography* (London, 2009), 115-123. Ironically, although Montesquieu’s exposition is rightly cited as being used to configure the Eastern and African Other, Montesquieu may have been influenced by the medieval Arab sociologist, Ibn Khaldun (W. E. Gates, ‘The spread of Ibn Khaldun’s ideas on climate and culture’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 28 (1967), 415-22).

²³⁶ M. Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, *The Idler in Italy* in 3 Vols., Vol. 2 (London, 1839), 213.

²³⁷ Blessington, *Idler*, 213.

²³⁸ Blessington, *Idler*, 214.

²³⁹ Forsyth, *Remarks*, 497.

As Inden observed regarding India, the point here is not the extent to which travellers criticise, praise, or sympathise with Italians, but how Italy is configured as naturally and inherently a certain way, through the 'objective' observation of evidence. Italian 'nature' explained both their creative talent and socio-political ineffectiveness, and why Britain had, supposedly, surpassed Italy morally, politically, civically and economically. Although critical of the outcomes of Italian 'nature', Manning expressed pity for Italian victims of *inherent* disadvantages, those of 'prevailing example, the influence of climate, and the imperfect moral restraint of [...] [Catholic] religion.'²⁴⁰ Describing the events between 1797 and the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Manning depicted an impotent Italy as a trophy to be tossed between the French and the Austrians. Manning's Italians, like Blessington's, are somewhat naïve and infantile, unaware of their own self-interest, at once looking to Napoleon as a patriarchal 'guardian angel', but complacently content to be rid of him when once again under the Austrian yoke.²⁴¹ Manning conceded that some Italians had been awoken to their lack of freedom but implied that Italian religion, prejudice and general nature meant that achieving freedom was likely to be an uphill struggle.²⁴² Like India, Italy had a 'natural' propensity for submission to the foreign yoke. Historical academic 'evidence', literary constructions, and travellers' observations interacted to empirically demonstrate such traits.

Manning's comments about the negative influence of the Catholic religion on Italy was a typical feature of travel discourse. Most travellers were at least interested, often fascinated, by Catholic rituals. After English Catholic emancipation in 1829, there was a British revival of Catholicism and many more positive and balanced accounts of the Italian church.²⁴³ For many however, and particularly in earlier accounts, Catholicism was suffused with superstition and ritual, intimately linked to civic and political weakness. As we will see, very similar remarks were made by travellers with respect to

²⁴⁰ Manning, *History*, 59.

²⁴¹ Manning, *History*, 351-9.

²⁴² Manning, *History*, 358-9.

²⁴³ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 215.

Hinduism. William Hazlitt, the painter, poet, writer, journalist and friend to influential Romantics such as Coleridge and Wordsworth, wrote an 1826 travel account which was typically scathing, particularly regarding Catholicism's use of confession 'to get rid at once of all moral obligation, of all self-control and self-respect, by the proxy of maudlin superstition.' Hazlitt concluded that Catholicism 'suits the pride and weakness of man's intellect, the indolence of his will, the cowardliness of his fears, the vanity of his hopes.'²⁴⁴ The nature of Catholicism was woven into knowledge formation about Italy, part of the reason why Italians lacked purpose, industry, and political freedom. Maria Graham's 1820 account of the *campagna* east of Rome set out to describe the present-day 'peasants of the hills' and

their actual manners as may enable others to form a judgement of their moral and political condition and to account for some of those irregularities which we do not easily imagine to be consistent with the civilised state of Europe, but which for centuries have existed in the patrimony of the church.²⁴⁵

Maria Graham, *nee* Dundas (1785-1842) was born in Cumberland to a naval officer and an American-born mother brought up in Liverpool. Around 1804, she visited Edinburgh, where she met and was influenced by various academics of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as Dugald Stewart, John Playfair, and Thomas Brown. At the end of 1808, Maria sailed with her father to India, where the latter had been appointed a naval commissioner in Bombay. On her return to England in 1811, she published first *Journal of a Residence* in India in 1812, and then *Letters on India* in 1814.²⁴⁶ Six years later, she published her account of Italy.

Graham associated Catholicism with superstition. She implied that Catholicism was at odds with free-thinking rationalism, and with fair, just and effective government. She suggested that Catholicism's preference for show over substance and its encouragement of idolatry, inculcated submission in Italian people, hindered their

²⁴⁴ W. Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey* (London, 1826), 246.

²⁴⁵ M. Graham, *Three Months Passed in the Mountain's East of Rome* (London, 1820), iv-v.

²⁴⁶ O. Gust, 'Mobility, gender and empire in Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812)', *Gender and History*, 29, 2 (2017), 273-291, 275-6. Also, R. Akel, *Maria Graham: A Literary Biography* (New York, 2009), xi-xiv.; R. Mitchell, 'Callcott [*née* Dundas; *other married name* Graham], Maria, Lady Callcott', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4399> (accessed 11/9/19).

ability to think for themselves or engage with political life, and failed to develop in them, a strong and proper work ethic. Graham described the Italian

state of moral lethargy [which] produces great indifference as to public interest, and renders them acquiescent under any government, so long as they remain in peace, and can sit every man under his own vine and his own fig tree.²⁴⁷

Once again, like Indians, Italians were configured as indolent, politically and civically moribund, in opposition to the middle-class sentiments of hard-working ambition and political inclusion promoted back home.

In her account of India, Maria Graham described the ‘spark’ of Indian talent, ‘ready to blaze forth if properly awakened, into all that genius and fancy can hope.’²⁴⁸ These were very much the sentiments expressed regarding Italy. Sismondi’s contrast between Italy’s *potential* which ‘remained in the fragments of the broken colossus’ and the failure of modern Italians to realise the possibilities, added to their moribund image in the eyes of the British.²⁴⁹ This is also the sense captured by French novelist Madame de Staël’s enormously influential 1807 *Corinne, ou l’Italie*, a novel based on de Staël’s own Italian journey and widely read in Britain. De Staël describes an Italy of great potential but populated by effeminate men lacking purpose or political drive. As de Staël’s British protagonist Oswald considers, ‘the Italians are more remarkable for what they have been, and might be, than for what they are.’²⁵⁰ The influence of *Corinne* was such that ‘perhaps more than any other work of its time, it provided a paradigmatic interpretation of Italian society, politics, and character’. As Robert Casillo is also quick to point out, though, ‘Staël often follows in the path of seventeenth and eighteenth-century travel writers whose attitudes and judgments she shares’.²⁵¹ For many travellers, *Corinne* exemplified British superiority over Italy; as already noted above, Francis Jeffrey suggested in the *Edinburgh Review* that ‘it is Great Britain and Italy, the extremes of civilised Europe, that are personified and contrasted

²⁴⁷ Graham, *Three Months*, 60.

²⁴⁸ M. Graham, *Letters on India* (London, 1814), 8.

²⁴⁹ J. C. L. S. Sismondi, *Histoire des républiques italiennes du Moyen Âge* in 16 Vols., Vol. 1, (Zurich, 1807–18), 3.

²⁵⁰ De Staël, *Corinne*, 16.

²⁵¹ Casillo, *The Empire of Stereotypes*, 2-3.

in the hero and heroine of this romantic tale'.²⁵² It is also notable that Jeffrey configured Britain as male against a female Italy. As Jeffrey also pointed out, a theme to which we will return in a later chapter, 'what a difference between the ancient Romans and the modern Italians.'²⁵³

For many then, modern Italy was 'a land of barbarians', in contrast to its glorious Greco-Roman and Renaissance past.²⁵⁴ This in no way detracted from Italy's popularity as a travel destination. Indeed, the poet and travel writer Mary Shelley compared the transit of English travellers to Italy with that of rats crossing a stream over the bodies of their drowned companions: 'we fly to Italy; we eat the lotus; we cannot tear ourselves away'.²⁵⁵ Shelley deployed images of the soporific East to describe a kind of addiction for Italy. The image of the soporific lotus flower from classical mythology was associated with Eastern opium-eaters and their associated exotic and indolent lifestyle.²⁵⁶ She drew a distinction though, between residents of Italy like herself, better informed and sensitive to the 'real' Italy, and the hordes of 'rats' scurrying across the Channel, 'guidebook in hand'.²⁵⁷ Many residents however, simply ignored Italians or reduced them to stereotypes.²⁵⁸ The poet Walter Savage Landor, resident in Florence from 1821, claimed he took 'no interest whatsoever in the affairs of Italians: I visit none of them: I admit none of them within my doors.'²⁵⁹ Percy Shelley, sympathetic to Italian independence, wrote of Venice in a letter of 1818, that it was 'a wonderfully fine city', yet of the 'avarice, cowardice, superstition, passionless lust' of

²⁵² Jeffrey, *Review*, 183.

²⁵³ Jeffery, *Review*, 194.

²⁵⁴ Brand, *Italianate Fashion*, 14.

²⁵⁵ M. Shelley, 'The English in Italy', *Westminster Review*, VI (1826), 325-41, 326-7.

²⁵⁶ Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Samuel Butler, book ix (New York, 2017), 66-75. 'The myth of the lotus-eaters continued to resonate throughout the nineteenth century [...] the myth was projected onto the foreign drug habits of the colonized' (M. Jay, 'The Lotos-Eaters', in R. Dickins (ed.), *Out of the Shadows* (London, 2015)). For the Eastern flower motif, see J. F. Eastman, 'The language of Flowers: A new source for "Lotus Eaters"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 26 (1989), 379-96, particularly 389, 391. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, made the term famous in his 1832 poem, 'The Lotos Eaters'. John Croker of the *Quarterly Review* was characteristically disapproving of a poem, the subject of which were 'a kind of classical opium-eaters' (J. Croker, 'Poems by Alfred Tennyson', *Quarterly Review*, 49 (April & July 1833), 81- 96, 92). The connection between Italy and 'Lotus Eaters' continued with W. Somerset Maugham's 1935 short story of the same name, whereby a hard-working Englishman is seduced into a life of indolence by the beauty of the Italian island of Capri.

²⁵⁷ Shelley, *English*, 327.

²⁵⁸ A. Szegedy-Maszak, 'A Perfect Ruin: Nineteenth Century Views of the Colloseum', *Arion*, 2 (1992), 115-142, 127.

²⁵⁹ T. Earle Welby (ed.), *The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor* Vol. 11 (London, 1930), 89.

the people.²⁶⁰ Separating the city from its modern context, Shelley revealed the historical and literary influences on his opinion, describing palaces with dungeons ‘where these scoundrels used to torment their victims...where the sufferers were roasted to death...where the prisoners were confined sometimes halfway up to their middle in stinking water.’²⁶¹ The juxtaposition of the beauty and luxury of the palace with the horror and degradation of the dungeon, became a common theme recycled from historical and literary accounts. The historian George Perceval famously wrote of Venice that ‘her prisons and her palaces were contiguous’, describing the ambivalence of ‘the double nature of Venice, their extremes of misery and joy’. Such views were reinforced by the popular symbolism of the Bridge of Sighs, from which prisoners had their last glimpse of Venice whilst crossing from the Doge’s palace to the prison. Perceval also noted the debt owed to Byron as ‘one of the key-stones of the arch’ in the configuration of a romanticised Italy, yet thought that Byron paid too little attention to ‘all her silent crimes’.²⁶² Byron had, however, already written two historical tragedies in *The Two Foscari* and *Marino Faliero*, tales which included Italian intrigue, murder, revenge, torture, libel, and political corruption. A year after his letter above, Shelley published *The Cenci*, an ‘historicised and Gothic vision of Italy’, in a story of incest and parricide based on an apparently true story from Ludivico Antonio Muratori’s 1749 *Annali d'Italia*.²⁶³ Shelley was aware of the commercial potential of the work, telling his publisher that it was ‘written for the multitude’, which suggests the ubiquity of such portrayals of ‘Italian-ness’.²⁶⁴ However, his private correspondence above shows the degree to which historical accounts of Venice such as Count Daru’s intermingled with popular Gothic fantasy in Shelley’s own imagining of Italy. In the same letter, Shelley repeated the trope, like that applied to India, of Italian inability to contest foreign oppression or their own despotic rulers. Shelley wrote of Venice, ‘which was once a tyrant, is now the next worst thing, a slave; for in fact it ceased to be free or worth our regret as a nation from the moment that the oligarchy usurped the

²⁶⁰ S. C. Hughson (ed.), *The Best Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Chicago, 1892), 133.

²⁶¹ Hughson, *Letters*, 133.

²⁶² Percival, *History*, 170.

²⁶³ Laven, *British Idea of Italy*. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 24/4/17).

²⁶⁴ Introduction, ‘The Cenci’ in *Delphi Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (Hastings, 2012).

rights of the people.²⁶⁵ Italy was a slave to its own nature as much as to foreign oppression. The aspects of Italian character which had taken them from classical and Renaissance triumph to domestic despotic oppression, now left them unable to regain their independence in the face of foreign domination. Although very many scholars have noted Byron and Shelley's undifferentiated and essentialised depictions of the East in their Orientalist work, few note their similar portrayal of Italians.²⁶⁶ It is striking, the degree to which descriptions of Italians as sexually obsessed, cruel, revengeful and almost psychopathically violent mirror increasingly Indophobic British depictions of the sub-continent. In the same year as the publication of *The Cenci*, Mill labelled Indians as having a 'disposition to revenge', an 'insensibility to the suffering of others', and an 'active cruelty'.²⁶⁷

Disparagement of Italian character was by no means restricted to Venice, even when Italians did attempt to throw off the Austrian yoke. The 1821 Neapolitan failed uprising served only, as Castlereagh put it, to 'place in a clearer point of view the cowardice, versatility, profligacy and total want of character of the Neapolitan nation...it would be a waste of words to say more of them.'²⁶⁸ Lord Normanby, a long-term Italian resident, commenting on the failure of the Piedmont uprising of the same year wrote, 'it grieves me to be compelled to treat in a mingled vein of ridicule, these attempts to obtain rational liberty.' Normanby concluded that the Italians deserved a 'point of view more ludicrous than either hateful or demanding sympathy.'²⁶⁹ The British acquiesced to Austrian rule in Italy, partly over fears for the security of their Indian territories.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ Hughson, *Letters*, 133.

²⁶⁶ For example, for a full review of Byron's Orientalism, see J. Alber, 'The specific Orientalism of Lord Byron's Poetry', *AAA: Arbeiten aus Englistik und Amerikanistik*, 38 (2013), 107-27. Alber concludes that Byron's Orientalism is ambivalent, and often deployed to criticise, for example, British imperialism, although he always returns to an essentialised vision of Eastern 'pomp, luxury, polygamy, and excess' (124). Yet, the same could be said of Byron's poem, *Beppo*, which satirises the hypocrisy of British 'morality', yet does so against a stereotype of Italian liberal sexuality and frivolity. In another example, in a book about Byron's Orientalism, Peter Cochran skips over *Parisina*, because it 'is a family drama set entirely in Italy' (P. Cochran (ed.), *Byron and Orientalism* (Newcastle, 2006), 49). The themes of murder motivated by illicit sexual relationships in *Parisina* would surely seem apt in a study of Orientalism.

²⁶⁷ Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 307.

²⁶⁸ C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance* (London, 1925), 334.

²⁶⁹ C. H. Phipps, Lord Normanby, *The English in Italy* in 3 Vols., Vol. 2 (London, 1825), 39-40.

²⁷⁰ R. Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica: English Romantics and Italian Freedom* (London, 2005), 5.

Subsequent failures of Italian uprisings only showed they had been right in their judgement; there had been 'no confidence that the Italians could be trusted with their own destiny' and 'the Italians seemed unable either to re-enact their past or to seize the promise of their future.'²⁷¹ Italy was not colonised by the British, but it was largely subjugated to foreign domination, and its status as such played a part in maintaining Britain's stability as a colonising power elsewhere. Orientalist constructions of Italy as naturally submissive to oppression thus suited a broader British agenda and justified Italy's continuing subjugation.

Italian resident Mary Shelley, anonymously reviewing Lord Normanby's account of Italy, took a slightly more sympathetic view of Italy, but one which still configured the peninsula as intrinsically unsuited to resistance. Shelley suggested that Italy lacked not the desire for freedom, but the organisational drive to effect it. The rich and poor of the cities cared more for their wealth and security respectively than to risk rebellion; the senior academic community were too naturally timid to resist; their younger students lacked any sense of higher moral purpose; the peasantry of the countryside had no thought of political liberty at all.²⁷² Shelley believed that emancipation would eventually come, because Italy was such a repository of natural talent, although not of the kind best suited to the type of purposeful activity required to achieve freedom. Their talents were of a different stripe: 'untaught courtesy, their love of the fine arts, the poetry with which their sunny sky endows them'.²⁷³ Such comments parallel William Jones' observation, that the creative nature of Indians, and their indolence, were two sides of the same coin. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Shelley suggested this 'native genius' was the 'foundation stone [...] of Italian liberty [...] though no superstructure is thereto added'.²⁷⁴ As in India, climatically-driven Italian artistic genius was both their blessing and their hindrance to freedom in an Italy configured as a pre-modern Romantic fantasy.

²⁷¹ Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica*, 6 & 8.

²⁷² Shelley, *English*, 330.

²⁷³ Shelley, *English*, 330-31.

²⁷⁴ Shelley, *English*, 330-31.

Prior to Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Italy was largely inaccessible to most British travellers and therefore for most of the first post-Napoleonic travellers, unknown through personal experience. Presumably this served to heighten the view of Italy discursively created through many of the historical and literary texts discussed above, the view of Italy most commonly available. Regardless, as Laven concludes, British views of Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century 'were the product of a dialogue, which was not only transnational, but shaped by the relationships between different *creative arts and academic disciplines*.'²⁷⁵

As this last point makes clear, the discursive configuration of Italy and Italians by British travellers, is very similar to that of India. In the following chapter, I show how 'Orientalist' productions of Italy and India are more than reflections of each other, not simply separate or parallel processes. I consider how the discourses which created British ideas of India and Italy in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries intersect and were partly dependent upon each other. Many of the ideas about Indians as backward, potentially violent, scheming, despotic, sexually degraded, effeminate, and religiously superstitious were dependent on similar ideas about Italians. Exploring the ways in which writers drew on Italy to describe India and *vice versa*, I consider how Italy, India and Britain, can all be seen within a tripartite frame of analysis. Each is important to an understanding of any other in the travel accounts of British travellers.

²⁷⁵ My emphasis. Laven, *British Idea of Italy*. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/david-laven-the-british-idea-of-italy-in-the-age-of-turner-r1176439> (accessed 16 April 2017).

Chapter Two

An Intersecting Discourse

Introduction

Having discussed the ‘Orientalist’ structure underlying the discursive configuration of India and Italy by British travellers, I will now consider how these discourses intersect and overlap. I will explore how discourses on Italy and India interact and move back and forth between India and Italy, within literature and travel writing.

Firstly, though, I will address another example of the intersection of Italy and the East, in this case, Maurizio Ascari’s case study of a late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British travel account, one which I will also consider shortly. Using William Beckford’s account of Venice and Pisa, Ascari notes how Beckford saw and felt ‘the pervasive presence of the Orient’ all around him.²⁷⁶ Ascari uses Beckford’s account as an example of the ambivalence of Italy in the eyes of British travellers; both ‘cradle of civilisation’ and ‘land of romance and misrule’.²⁷⁷ Ascari’s conclusions rest quite substantially on visual similarities between objects and people in Italy and India. For example, Beckford noted the sight of Greeks and Turks sitting under awnings, talking in their native languages, selling their Eastern merchandise, smoking hookahs and drinking coffee, all of which put him in mind of the Orient.²⁷⁸ Other visual similarities in Ascari’s argument include Beckford’s observation of camels in Pisa and his comparison of the domed roof of the Pisan Duomo to an ‘Oriental’ building.²⁷⁹ At the same time, Ascari argues, travellers to India related what they saw to aspects of Italy, such as similarities in architecture and the presence of religious artefacts.²⁸⁰ He notes passing resemblances between the Bridge of Sighs and covered walkways linking

²⁷⁶ M. Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders: The Lure of Italy and the Orient in the Writings of 18th and 19th Century British Travellers’, in M. Ascari & Corrado, A., (eds.), *Sites of exchange: European Crossroads and Faultlines* (Amsterdam, 2006), 227-236, 228.

²⁷⁷ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 235.

²⁷⁸ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 227.

²⁷⁹ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 230.

²⁸⁰ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 233-4.

houses across narrow streets in India, and a Catholic rosary found on an Indian market shoe stall, for example.²⁸¹ Ascari argues that such examples represent the “Orientalization” of Italy’ and the “Italianization” of the Orient.’²⁸²

Firstly, a passing resemblance between architecture or the presence of people and animals found in the East are not examples of ‘Orientalization’ within ‘the framework of Said’s theories’.²⁸³ In Beckford’s account of Venice, visual similarities were hardly surprising given that, as Ascari recognises, the city contained a significant ‘Eastern’ population. Said’s thesis relies on far more than visual similarity. He argues that a variety of literary sources, the supposedly factual and the more imaginative, combine to ‘prove’ a certain Eastern *mindset* and *way of being* which is reflected in all the ‘Oriental’ says and does. The similarities in travellers’ observations noted by Ascari deserve attention but they require a more detailed treatment to understand them within the context of Said’s thesis. Visual similarities do not necessarily translate into the ‘utter “Orientalization”’ of Italy.²⁸⁴ Nor do they automatically represent ‘the “Italianization” of the Orient’.²⁸⁵

Secondly, to navigate the ‘otherness’ of India, Ascari argues, and to communicate it to a British audience, travellers drew on Italy as ‘a sort of middle ground between East and West.’²⁸⁶ Whilst agreeing with Ascari that we should ‘question the notion of a stable geographical border between East and West’, I disagree with his implication that India is at one extreme end of a scale of ‘otherness’, a scale on which Italy is some way along but not quite as far. In this interpretation, Italy is a kind of pale imitation of the otherness of India based on little more than visual similarities. Said’s point is that apparently objective observation and ‘imaginative’ or fictional accounts combine to configure an image of ‘the Orient’ that purports to describe the totality of what it means to be ‘Oriental’: how ‘they’ think and act; why ‘they’ have backward or

²⁸¹ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 233 & 234.

²⁸² Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 228.

²⁸³ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 227.

²⁸⁴ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 230.

²⁸⁵ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 233.

²⁸⁶ Ascari, ‘Shifting Borders’, 233.

premodern civic and political institutions; why ‘they’ are exotic, immoral, and sexually obsessed. The outcomes of such discourses are to configure groups of people and places that embody either a set of virtues or their opposites, a lack of such virtues. Such ‘explanations’ translate into structures of power that justify the assumption of cultural, moral and political authority abroad, imperialist and colonial interventions, and bids for cultural, civic, and political authority at home. Said applies these ideas to formulate an East-West binary, whereas I argue that such ideas apply equally to Italy and a tripartite discourse between India, Italy and Britain. Ascari’s argument is one to which I will return in my conclusion, an argument I would term a kind of ‘vulgar Orientalism’ applied to non-Eastern people and places.

In what follows now, however, I will attempt to show how travellers’ observations *do* interact to mutually configure India, Italy and Britain in ways that follow Said’s *methodology* of Orientalism, but do not necessarily his *conclusion* of an East-West binary of inferiority and superiority.

Venice-on-the-Mithi

The above is not to suggest that visual similarities could not be deployed in a tripartite frame of analysis between India, Italy, and Britain. Take, for example, Marianne Postans’ *Western India in 1838*. On the shores of the Mithi River at Bombay harbour Postans observed that, in such a beautiful location, it was hardly surprising ‘that yachting should be, as it is, a very favourite recreation.’²⁸⁷ Against the backdrop of the quintessentially ancient and mystical Indian site of ‘the time-hallowed island of Elephanta’, on which were to be found the famed carved religious caves, British pleasure craft, such as the ‘Lovely Lucy’ and the ‘Lalla Rookh’, flew their ‘gay streamers’.²⁸⁸ Postans’ description is an example of what Nigel Leask calls the ‘imperial picturesque’, or descriptions of strangeness and exoticism made palatable for an audience back home.²⁸⁹ Physically and discursively appropriating the river for British

²⁸⁷ M. Postans, *Western India in 1838* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1839), 5-6.

²⁸⁸ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 6

²⁸⁹ N. Leask, *Curiosity and travel writing 1770-1840: From an Antique Land* (Oxford, 2002), 166-9. Postans’ description is arguably also an example of the ‘feminine picturesque’ (S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992), 75). This allows women to mitigate ‘subcontinental threats’ through mediums such as travel

recreational purposes, bobbing about in quaintly-named yachts, tamed the ancient Otherness of the 'time-hallowed' India represented by Elephanta. Even the boat-name 'Lalla Rookh' refers to an 1817 Romantic poetic portrayal of the Orient by Thomas Moore.²⁹⁰ Turning inland, 'however charming' the river view, it was 'the *modern* town of Bombay' (emphasis original), a British example of 'the march of progress', to which Postans wanted to draw attention.²⁹¹ The view thus moves from the ancient Otherness of Elephanta in the background, through the intermediate calming scene of recreation, to the foreground of 'civilisation' brought to India by the British. Postans led her readers temporally and spatially from past to present, from the Indian 'time-hallowed' to the British 'modern'.

Still, though, the presence of the Other was always to be found. Among an array of craft, Postans particularly noted the

bundah boat [...] with its comfortable cabin lined with soft cushions, and surrounded with smart green Venetians [blinds], awaiting an engagement to convey a party to the spot selected for a pic-nic [sic], or to stretch down the coast to the various beautiful and sea-girt stations of the southern Concan.²⁹²

The parallel with the Venetian gondola is clear here. Percy Shelley's description from 1818 commented similarly that

the couches upon which you lean are extraordinarily soft, and are so disposed as to be the most comfortable to those who lean or sit. The windows have at

accounts or painting (75). Such strategies subvert gender norms by allowing women to comment on non-traditional subjects, yet simultaneously collude with gender norms in using a medium which 'follows the strictures of sentimentality' associated with women (78). Also, see Pratt's 'anti-conquest', an apparently innocent strategy for the appropriation of landscape through the description of natural history, often combined with 'sentimental travel writing' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 8-9, 38, 37-67). The juxtaposition of Postans' 'dark masses of rich foliage' and the 'beautiful wooded scenery of Salsette' against the 'bright relief' of the British presence on the river and in the guise of 'modern' British Bombay serve to take control of the landscape, to conquer and own without physical duress (6).

²⁹⁰ T. Moore, *Lalla-Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (London, 1817).

²⁹¹ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 6.

²⁹² Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 7.

will either Venetian plate-glass flowered, or Venetian blinds, or blinds of black cloth to shut out the light.²⁹³

The gondola was (is?) a symbol for Venice (indeed, Italy more broadly) in the imaginations of British travellers, writers, and their readers. Both were sites of beauty and comfort, and of the potential for illicit sexual fantasy, the blinds drawn to shut out prying eyes.²⁹⁴ As Byron put it, ‘just like a coffin clapt in a canoe/where none can make out what you say or do.’²⁹⁵ Pfister and Schaff note Byron’s references, common to British travellers, to ‘fantasies of sexuality and death’.²⁹⁶ The poet continues,

but not to them [gondolas] do woeful things belong
for sometimes they contain a deal of fun
like mourning coaches when the funeral’s done.²⁹⁷

The gondola could also mirror the role played by the ‘imperial picturesque’ in India. As with the Indian bundah boat, the blinds could be drawn, blocking ‘unpleasant and unappetising aspects of the city.’²⁹⁸ Postans’ Indian ‘bundha boat’ has more profound similarities with an Italian gondola than the simple visual level suggests. Its appearance reminded her readers that, despite the British civilising influence, India was essentially an exotic, possibly erotic, place of Otherness. The bundah boat and the gondola are recognisable symbols of things taboo, that are not British, and their deployment reinforces the Otherness of Italy and India. Far from the Otherness of Italy being an imitation of that of India, here a symbol of Italy is redeployed to ‘understand’ India. The Freudian eros/thanatos fantasy, the twin drives of sexuality and death, was here constructed and perpetuated in the imagination of the traveller

²⁹³ Letter to Mary Shelley, 23rd August 1818 in R. Garnet (ed.), *Select Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London, 1882), 45.

²⁹⁴ M. Pfister & Schaff, B., *Venetian Views, Venetian Blinds: English Fantasies of Venice* (Amsterdam, 1999), 3. See also T. Tanner, *Venice Desired* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 48-9.

²⁹⁵ G. G. Byron, *Beppo: A Venetian Story* (London, 1818), Verse xix, 10.

²⁹⁶ Pfister & Schaff, *Venetian*, 3.

²⁹⁷ Byron, *Beppo*, Verse x, 11.

²⁹⁸ Pfister & Schaff, *Venetian*, 3.

and reader. Despite the 'civilising' influence of the British, they still brought their exoticised fantasy life with them.²⁹⁹

Catholic Hindus

Travellers also regularly made interconnections between Italian and Indian religion. James Mill claimed that one of the chief causes of Indian 'weakness' and 'degradation' was 'the religion of the Hindus.'³⁰⁰ This was by no means a new idea. Twenty years previously, Charles Grant had described Hinduism as 'feigned' by a 'crafty and imperious priesthood', to exercise control 'over the civil state of the Hindoos, as well as over their minds.'³⁰¹ Grant's comments had been privately addressed to the Directors of the East India Company in 1797, but were printed for general consumption, or ammunition, in 1813 as the Anglicists' 'Indophobia' gathered momentum. Trautmann notes that the theme of 'priestcraft' was 'a distinctly Protestant motif [...] a critique of Catholicism turned to new purposes in India.'³⁰² Helen Mackenzie, for example, compared elements of Catholic and Hindu religious display. The daughter of a British naval admiral, Helen had married Colin Mackenzie, a political and military officer, in India in 1843. Apart from a brief return to England in 1855, the Mackenzies remained in India until 1873, Colin rising to the rank of Lieutenant General. Helen published her account of India in 1853, and several other works subsequently, including a biography of her husband.³⁰³ Visiting the site of the Taj Mahal and its surrounding tombs and halls, Mackenzie noted the striking beauty of the site, typical of other monuments to 'false' religions. Whether 'a Muhammadan

²⁹⁹ First espoused in S. Freud, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (Leipzig, 1920).

³⁰⁰ Mill, *India* Vol. 1, 307.

³⁰¹ C. Grant, *Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals; and on the means of improving it* (London, 1813), 86. Homi Bhabha describes Grant's essay as second only to Mill's *History of India* as 'the most influential early nineteenth-century account of Indian manners and morals' (H. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', in F. Cooper & Stoler, A. L., (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, 1997), 154). Bhabha attributes Grant's motivation to his desire for Christian 'civilising' education among the Indian population. Ultimately, however, Bhabha asserts that Grant betrays these principles by accepting that it is preferable to produce only an 'imitation' of English Christian manners, 'which will induce them to remain under our protection' (Grant, *Observations*, 282). Influenced by Grant, Macaulay also proposed educating not genuine Englishmen, but 'a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern'. As Bhabha puts it, 'to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English' (Bhabha, *Of Mimicry*, 154).

³⁰² Trautmann, *Aryans*, 104.

³⁰³ R. T. Stearn, 'Mackenzie, Colin', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17574> (accessed 29/3/19).

building' or 'the "long-drawn aisles" and "dim religious light" of an ancient cathedral', both invoked 'emotions of rapture'. Such feelings, she wrote, were 'natural' outpourings of 'tendencies to wonder and reverence', but 'spurious poetic devotion' was often mistaken for genuine religious revelation.³⁰⁴ This was the prevailing view of the founding Protestants, who removed Catholic representations of Christianity lest they 'delude the worshipper'.³⁰⁵ It was not only Catholics who were misled by invocations of strong emotion, 'a heathen can feel them—a Muhammadan architect or an infidel poet can excite them.'³⁰⁶ Mackenzie's "'long-drawn aisles'" and "'dim religious light'" came from the poems of Thomas Gray and John Milton respectively. Both were philosophical reflections on melancholy, although Mackenzie appropriated them for a very different purpose.³⁰⁷ Having described both Catholic and Islamic architecture as designed to invoke the same emotional reactions, Mackenzie suggested there was also little difference between Catholicism and Hinduism. She even claimed to have heard Hindus agreeing and arguing that

if they [Hindus] are to have idols, they may as well keep their own. I saw a speech made by an educated Brahman the other day, in which he dwelt upon the numerous points of similarity between Romanism and Hinduism.³⁰⁸

The 'cultivated minds' of Hindus, Mackenzie continued, believed 'that each nation is right in having a religion of its own.'³⁰⁹ Far from praising such liberality, she contrasted Hindus with Muslims, whose minds were 'uncultivated', like 'that of a child'. Hindus were *capable* of more sophisticated analysis but refused to accept the existence of just one true religion, thus turning *deliberately* 'away from the light'.³¹⁰ Of course, for Mackenzie, the 'light' of Hinduism was a false beacon anyway, but by

³⁰⁴ H. Mackenzie, *Life in the mission, the camp and the zenana* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1854), 116. Helen's husband, Colin Mackenzie (1806-1881), should not be confused with Colin Mackenzie (1754-1821), also a Colonel, and appointed Surveyor General of India in 1810.

³⁰⁵ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 116.

³⁰⁶ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 116.

³⁰⁷ T. Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (London, 1751), line 39. J. Milton, *Il Penseroso* (London, 1645/1646), line 160.

³⁰⁸ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 152.

³⁰⁹ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 152.

³¹⁰ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 152-3.

accommodating other religions, Hindus were rejecting even the idea that there could be only one true religion.

By connecting Hinduism and Catholicism, Mackenzie turned her discourse back towards Italy, and of course Britain, implying that Catholicism and Hinduism were similarly superstitious idolatry.³¹¹ Like Hindus, Mackenzie implied, Catholics were capable of sophisticated analysis but turned deliberately away from the truth.

Mackenzie described Hindus in terms of angels from Dante's inferno, those who were "non furon rebelli, ne furon fedeli a Dio, ma per se foro".³¹² Neither rebels, nor faithful to God, they acted only in their own interests. Dante describes them as residing in Hell, with those who 'vissero senza meritarsi infamia né lode (gli ignavi)'. Living neither for praise nor infamy, they were 'the lazy ones'.³¹³ Mackenzie thus finds Italian and Indian 'indolence' in yet another form. Monotheism was a defining principle of a 'rational' religion like Protestantism which 'allow[ed] a scientific understanding of the world'.³¹⁴ By pointing out the similarities between Catholic and Indian superstition and idolatry, Mackenzie marked out Britain as the rational, Protestant nation-state mirror image.³¹⁵ Both Mackenzies were known for their strong religious convictions. Indeed,

³¹¹ Peter Van de Veer notes the role of religion in the making of the nation-state in both India and Britain, their interconnections through Empire, and how these 'affected the location of religion in Britain and India' (P. van de Veer, 'The Moral State: Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India', in P. van de Veer & Lehmann, H., (eds.), *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton, 1999), 15-43, 39).

³¹² Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 153. D. Alighieri, *Comedia* (1320), Canto iii, versi 37-9.

³¹³ Alighieri, *Comedia*, Canto iii, versi 34-6.

³¹⁴ van de Veer, 'The Moral State', 37. See also, G. Viswanathan, 'Colonialism and the Construction of Hinduism', in G. Flood (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism* (Oxford, 2003), 23-45. Viswanathan notes the attribution of religion to 'the decline of the Indian polity'. Post-Enlightenment ideas about 'the relationship of religion to effective governance' became 'the yardstick for evaluating the quality of religion'. Thus was provided another co-constitutive parallel between the "paganism" and rank superstition' of Indian religion and Catholicism, and the shared political, civic, and economic declines of India and Italy. (35). Just as 'Orientalist' descriptions of Italians are far more complex than mappings of the East onto Italy, travellers' comments on Indian religions are far more than simple transplantations of ideas about Catholicism into India.

³¹⁵ Despite the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act, many still viewed with suspicion a religion they 'considered subversive and fundamentally anti-British' (G. P. Landow, 'Roman Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Great Britain', *The Victorian Web* (1998). <http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/cath1.html> (accessed 13 June 2019)). The extent to which Protestantism was linked to ideas of political and civic freedom is underlined by comments made in 1851 by John Henry Newman, a convert to Catholicism and co-founder of the Oxford Movement, the origin of Anglo-Catholicism: 'Everyone speaks Protestantism [...] it is the current coin of the realm. As English is the natural tongue, so Protestantism is the intellectual and moral language of the body politic' (J. H. Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (Birmingham, 2000), 366). For a deeper historical context, see A. Nash, 'introduction', vii-lxxxvii in same 2000 edition of Newman's *Lectures*.

in Afghanistan Captain Mackenzie, as he then was, was known to his indigenous colleagues, despite his Scottishness, as 'the English Mullah'.³¹⁶

In another part of the site, Mackenzie employed themes found in Gothic and Oriental literature, to describe the horrors apparently visited on ladies of the harem.

Clambering around the ruins of one 'vaulted apartment', she described how those who had displeased their master were 'hung upon a black beam which still traverses the apartment, and when life was extinct, the once admired form was cut down and suffered to drop into a deep well beneath.'³¹⁷ Long since abandoned, 'the well is now nearly choked up, and the air was poisoned with the smell of the bats who infest the place—fit emblems of the evil deeds committed there.'³¹⁸ The apartment reminded Mackenzie of 'one of the Halls of the Inquisition', although it had no direct religious connection. Regardless, continuing the rather forced theme, she noted that, however terrible, such acts of violence

do not shock one so much when resulting from human passion as when committed under pretext of doing either God or man service, as in those dark places of the earth, the Inquisitions at Venice and elsewhere.³¹⁹

Reinforcing an Italian connection, Mackenzie described 'Florentine mosaics' and a variety of Italianate decoration. These, and the prevalence of the bas-relief lily, were 'probably' the efforts of an 'Italian artist, out of devotion to the Virgin', although she offered no supporting evidence at all.³²⁰

Misappropriating and combining a variety of Italian, English, and Indian poetry, literature, and architecture from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Mackenzie promoted ideas about different religions and their impact on civil and

³¹⁶ National Army Museum: Online Collection. <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1961-10-61-1> (accessed 8 May 2019).

³¹⁷ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission* Vol. 1, 122.

³¹⁸ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission* Vol. 1, 122.

³¹⁹ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission* Vol. 1, 122.

³²⁰ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission* Vol. 1, 122-3.

political society. Her discourses on Catholicism, Islam, and Hinduism sit within the same analytical framework, reflecting and reinforcing each other as they travelled back and forth between West and East. Ultimately, they all served to assert the religious, moral and cultural superiority of Britain's Protestantism at home and abroad, as the backbone of the successful British state. By interconnecting Catholicism, Islam and Hinduism, Mackenzie's strategy is not that of Said's Orientalism. She does not so much compare the Orient and Occident, but is able to pivot from East to West, sometimes finding similarity, sometimes difference to configure aspects of religions she found inferior. The literary imagination, from Dante to gothic horror, added to the discursive mix. What Mackenzie's discussion of religion produces, is not a binary image of western superiority over the east, but a set of religious and moral *un-virtues*, drawn from a combination of East *and* West, in opposition to the virtues of modern, middle class, Protestant Britain. Britain, Italy and India are configured within the same analytical frame rather than East and West standing apart.

The Oriental Pleasure-Palace of St. Peter's, Rome

The author William Beckford took parallels between Eastern and Western religion in an entirely different direction. Beckford was the inheritor of a fortune derived from his father's colonial plantations in the West Indies. The father had been Mayor of London, and William the Member of Parliament for Wells. It was, though, his role as a novelist and patron of the arts for which he was chiefly known, as well as his scandalising of society. Indeed, he travelled to Italy in 1782, prompted by his family's concern over his relationship with the eleven-year-old aristocrat, William Courtenay, which finally erupted into scandal in 1784.³²¹ Aspects of his subsequent travel account frequently mirror the kind of Orient personified in his novel, *Vathek*, written just two years

³²¹ Biographers have continually speculated on Beckford's sexuality, which has always been placed by them at the centre of his life and creativity, even if only to deny aspects of it. The affair with Courtenay is undeniable, however, as are the effects of his bisexuality on many aspects of Beckford's life. For further information, see introduction to T. Mowl, *William Beckford: Composing for Mozart* (London, 1998). Also, A. McConnell, 'Beckford, William Thomas', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2009). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1905> (accessed 13 June 2018).

later.³²² Beckford described Venetians as ‘weak and listless’, they ‘wafted around from place to place in a gondola, full of ‘indolence’, wasting their time on gambling long into the night, staving off sleep with an excess of coffee. In this, he wrote, ‘I can scarcely regard their Eastern neighbours in a more lazy light; who, thanks to their opium and their harems, pass their lives in one perpetual doze.’³²³ Indeed, Beckford described Venice as ‘a series of eastern ideas and adventures. I cannot help thinking St. Marks a mosque, and the neighbouring palace some vast seraglio.’³²⁴ Partly, as discussed, this is due to the Asiatic presence in Venice, of the ‘oriental curiosities. The variety of exotic merchandise, the perfume of coffee, the shade of awnings, and the sight of Greeks and Asiatics sitting cross-legged under them’.³²⁵

Beckford imposed an Oriental vision on Italy, but he also drew on Italy to configure the Orient in his later novel. *Vathek*, is set in a generic Orient, the main protagonist is a Muslim sultan who connives with the supernatural and displays horrific cruelty in his lust for power and to satiate his hedonism. Sophia Arjana describes Vathek’s kingdom as ‘a shop of horrors, with a giant eye that follows every move, skies full of human blood, and hellish chasms in which masses of innocent children are sacrificed’.³²⁶ The other main character in *Vathek* is a demon posing as an Indian merchant, ‘a monster with green teeth and pasty, discolored skin’ who leads Vathek to his ultimate doom in hell.³²⁷ The title character is partly auto-biographical, Vathek’s taste for ‘women, men, and young, nubile children’ mirroring Beckford’s own sexual predilections.³²⁸ The novel reflected and reinforced an eighteenth-century European

³²² W. Beckford, *Italy, with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (London, 1834). Beckford’s original account was entitled *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents* (W. Beckford, *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents; In a Series of Letters, From Various Parts of Europe* (London, 1783)). 500 copies were printed, but publication was suppressed by his family, for reasons that are not entirely clear, but may have to do with hints at his sexual indiscretions. Only 5 copies of *Dreams* now exist. The revised text was eventually published as *Sketches* in 1834, with *Dreams* eventually published in its original form in 1891 (Mowl, ‘William Beckford’). See also, W. Beckford, *Vathek: An Arabian Tale* (London, 1786).

³²³ Beckford, *Italy*, 122.

³²⁴ Beckford, *Italy*, 293.

³²⁵ Beckford, *Italy*, 292. Up to 1797, one would have expected to encounter significant numbers of Turks and Greeks in Venice. As the trade disappeared due to the fall of the Republic, foreign rule, the Napoleonic Wars/Continental System, and then after 1814, the Habsburg privileging of Trieste, the eastern Mediterranean population largely disappeared. For a history of Greeks and Turks in Venice until 1797, see B. Ravid, ‘Venice and its Minorities’, in E. Dursteler, *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797* (Leiden, 2013), 449-86.

³²⁶ S. R. Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (Oxford, 2015), 114.

³²⁷ Arjana, *Muslims*, 106.

³²⁸ Arjana, *Muslims*, 118.

‘vogue of considerable intensity’ for all things Oriental, in which Beckford shared, promoting the East as a place of ‘sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, intense energy.’³²⁹

Beckford’s Orient owed much to his reading of the *Arabian Nights* and d’Herbelot’s 1697 *Bibliothèque Orientale*.³³⁰ He combined this, however, with the style of Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, the ‘initiating prototype’ of the Gothic genre, set in Italy.³³¹ The themes of immorality, sexual impropriety, despotism, violence, and lust for power, which configure the typical Oriental in *Vathek*, although more extreme, mirror themes in Walpole’s earlier work, and are reflected in the literary and historical ideas of Italy and Italians as discussed. Earlier Italian writers such as Dante and Boccaccio also informed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic literature.³³² Marnieri shows the parallels between *Vathek* and Dante’s *Inferno*, for example.³³³

In *Vathek*, the eponymous character builds five separate palaces to indulge his various epicurean tastes, monuments to food and wine, music, objects of beauty and curiosity, perfumes and incense, and sexuality. The themes of *Vathek*’s palaces seem to mirror aspects of Beckford’s account of Italy. Visiting St Peter’s, Beckford reveled in the ‘perfume of incense’, the ‘several hundred lamps’ which ‘twinkled round the high altar’, and the ‘vast arches glowing with golden ornaments.’³³⁴ He imagined being allowed to ‘erect a little tabernacle within this glorious temple’ in which he would live. Beckford hinted at a homo-erotic fantasy, writing, ‘I cannot say I would be perfectly contented unless I could obtain another tabernacle for you.’³³⁵ They would ‘have all the space to ourselves’, with ‘no priests, no cardinals: God forbid!’. Together they would climb the cupola, as if a mountain, and take ‘evening walks on the field of marble.’

³²⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 118.

³³⁰ M. Al-Alwan, ‘The Orient “made Oriental”’: A study of William Beckford’s *Vathek*, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 30 (2008), 43-52, 43.

³³¹ *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. R. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (London, 1764). https://www.wnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/topic_2/welcome.htm (accessed 20 June 2018).

³³² D. Saglia, ‘From Gothic Italy to Italy as Gothic Archive: Italian Narratives and the Late Romantic Metrical Tale’, *Gothic Studies*, 8 (2006), 73-90, 75.

³³³ M. T. Marnieri, *Critical and Iconographic Reinterpretations of Three Early Gothic Novels. Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance Influences in William Beckford’s Vathek, Ann Radcliffe’s Romance of the Forest, and Matthew G. Lewis’s The Monk*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Barcelona, 2016), 75.

³³⁴ Beckford, *Italy*, 236.

³³⁵ Beckford, *Italy*, 236-7.

Music would play, 'at one time to breathe in the subterraneous chapels, at another to echo through the dome.'³³⁶ Beckford did not reveal to whom he writes, but it seems likely to have been his art teacher, Alexander Cozens, or perhaps Courtenay.³³⁷

The themes of *Vathek*'s later palaces are all contained within what Beckford called his 'imaginary palace' of St Peter's, which he left 'exhausted with contriving plans for its embellishment.'³³⁸ In *Vathek*, his plans came to fruition, in the form of separate palaces to the themes he explored in Rome. Beckford no doubt found it amusing and apt for a Gothic tale, that his homo-erotic fantasy, and the idea for *Vathek*'s hedonistic palaces, were located in the very heart of Christianity. Later that evening, Beckford expressed his sorrow that he has not recently heard from the recipient of his letters. He imagined wandering through the Catacombs, 'which I try lustily to persuade myself communicate with the lower world.' There he thought he might find a letter from the object of his desire, who had perhaps died, 'lying upon a broken sarcophagus, dated from the realms of Night.'³³⁹ These supernatural themes are later found in *Vathek*'s subterranean Halls of Eblis and are, along with forms of architecture such as catacombs and palaces, characteristic of Gothic fiction generally. Beckford overlaid Italy with his ideas of the Orient, but he equally drew on his own experience of Italy, to configure sites and ideas in his Oriental Gothic novel.³⁴⁰

Vathek exerted a significant influence on later Gothic and Orientalist writers. Themes which originated in Beckford's study of academic and imaginative literature on Italy and the Orient, and, I would argue, his personal experience of Italy, combined in his Orientalist novel.³⁴¹ These subsequently influenced other visions of Italy and the

³³⁶ Beckford, *Italy*, 237.

³³⁷ Mowl, *William Beckford*, 92. S. During, 'Beckford in Hell: An Episode in the History of Secular Enchantment', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70 (June, 2007), 269-88, 272.

³³⁸ Beckford, *Italy*, 237.

³³⁹ Beckford, *Italy*, 239.

³⁴⁰ Beckford claimed that the inspiration for the Halls of Eblis were his birthday revelries in the halls of his home at Fonthill. Mowl describes this as 'ingenious nonsense' and suggests the real inspiration were the quarries in the grounds of Fonthill (Mowl, *William Beckford*, chapter 7). For a fuller description of Fonthill as inspiration for *Vathek*, see During, 'Beckford in Hell', 272. However, it seems likely that the fictional setting was a conflation of several settings and experience. The themes described at St Peters and the Eblis seem too similar to be coincidental. As During notes, '*In Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents*, travel writing turns radically inward, treating grand tourism as a form of intoxication—a stimulus for private, non-social intensities, fantasies, pleasures, and self-undoings' (273).

³⁴¹ D. Saglia, 'William Beckford's 'Sparks of orientalism' and the material-discursive orient of British Romanticism', *Textual Practice*, 16 (2002), 75-92, 77. Al-Alwan, 'The Orient', 43.

Orient in an on-going co-constitutive discursive interchange between academic and imaginative literature which configure both as exotic, strange, sexualised and enchanted spaces.

Italian India

Such literary intersections between Italy and India are also seen in several travel accounts of India. For example, in her 1812 account of India, expressing her disgust at what she finds in a Hindu temple, Maria Graham called the site a 'Castle of Indolence', a reference to the popular 1748 Spenserian poem by poet James Thomson. The plot of *The Castle of Indolence* is a celebratory allegory of British constitutionalism, of industriousness and scientific and economic modernity.³⁴² The castle is ruled over by a mystical character named Indolence and is home to a variety of sensual epicurean hedonists. There are clear similarities here, between *Indolence* and Beckford's later *Vathek*. Thomson does not explicitly locate his Castle of Indolence although, over the fictitious castle's environs, Thomson describes the sky as 'whatever Lorrain light-touched with softening hue/Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew', all artists famed for their Italian landscapes.³⁴³ Ideas about Italy and India thus draw from each other, moving back and forth in geographical space.

More than a decade later, Reginald Heber, the newly appointed Bishop of Calcutta, similarly configured India through Italian-inspired Gothic literature. Heber was the son of a wealthy clerical father and had been a country parson for sixteen years before being offered the post of Bishop in 1823. The appointment came through Charles Williams-Wynn, chairman of the Indian Board of Control and a friend from Heber's Oxford days. Heber's generally poor health was exacerbated by the difficult conditions in India and he died just three years later, in 1826. His wife, Amelia, edited her

³⁴² A. W. Ward & Waller, A. R., (eds.), *The Cambridge History of English Literature* Vol. 10 (Cambridge, 1913), 120. J. Thomson, *Castle of Indolence: An allegorical poem written in imitation of Spenser* (London, 1748).

³⁴³ Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence*, Canto 1, verse xxxviii, 20. Thomson also had a record of similar didactic work. For example, his 1730s poem, *Liberty*, was inspired by a visit to Italy and his being 'struck by poverty and misery brought about by bad government, civil and religious'. *Liberty* was a 'Whiggish historical narrative' which follows the torch of civilisation being passed from the ancient world to modern Britain. Thomson also wrote the words to *Rule! Britannia* (J. Sambrook, 'Thomson, James', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008)). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27306> (accessed 13/6/19). J. Thomson, *Liberty: A Poem* (London, 1735-6).

husband's unfinished account, which was first published in 1828, running to three editions in the first year, with a fifth appearing by 1876.³⁴⁴ The Hindu palace at Chunar reminded Heber of 'Mrs. Radcliffe's castles', whilst the Hindu shrine therein was a 'mimic "mount Calasay"', a reference to Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, which took its style partly from Italian-set Gothic fiction.³⁴⁵ In another example, the palace at Umeer was a 'gorgeously gloomy [...] enchanted castle' from the pages of Sir Walter Scott or the Italian medieval epic poet, Ariosto.³⁴⁶ Walking through the palace court, Heber spied a 'pool of blood on the pavement, by which a naked man stood with a bloody sword in his hand.' Taken with the 'romantic' scene, Heber cast himself as an adventurous hero in his own plot fantasy. Girding himself for action, he felt himself 'instinctively clench more firmly a heavy Hindoostanee whip I had with me.'³⁴⁷ Heber's guide calmed his manly ardour, pointing out that the gory scene was simply the remnants of a dead goat. Visiting Sibnibashi, Heber paid a trip to the Raja's palace. Once again, he conjured up an exotic fictional comparison, this time from Southey's 1801 *Thalaba the Destroyer*, quoting from the poem as he approached the palace, 'Cautiously he trod and felt/The dangerous ground before him with his bow'.³⁴⁸ Marianne Postans suggested that Heber's drawing from Italy was recognised by his contemporaries, and that 'objections have been made to his descriptions, as too Italianized and florid'.³⁴⁹

There is a discursive network here, rather than a linear direction, in which portrayals of Italy and India drew from each other. James Thomson's influence can be seen in lines from *Indolence* used by Ann Radcliffe as an epigraph in her Italian-set Gothic novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.³⁵⁰ Radcliffe's writing was also influenced by Beckford, whose pleasure-palaces in *Vathek* are similar to Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, and his

³⁴⁴ D. Hughes, *Bishop Sahib: A Life of Reginald Heber* (Worthing, 1986), 82-4.

³⁴⁵ R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India* in 4 Vols., 3rd ed. Vol. 1 (London, 1828), 408-9. R. Southey, *The Curse of Kehama* (London, 1810).

³⁴⁶ Heber, *Narrative*, 3rd ed. Vol. 2, 418

³⁴⁷ Heber, *Narrative*, 3rd ed. Vol. 2, 419.

³⁴⁸ R. Southey, 'Thalaba the Destroyer' in R. Southey, *The Complete Poetical Works of Robert Southey, LL.D* (Philadelphia, 1846), 267, in Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 123.

³⁴⁹ Postans, *Western India*, Vol. 1, 5.

³⁵⁰ Robertson, *The Castle of Indolence*, Canto 1, iii, p. 188, in A. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, (Philadelphia, 1859), epigraph to Chapter xxiii, 173.

personal experience of St Peter's. Radcliffe's influence appears in Southey's Indian novel, *The Curse of Kehama*, in which the eponymous character 'is really a Gothic victim in disguise'.³⁵¹ *Kehama*, like another of Southey's Orientalist Gothic works, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, also draws on Beckford's *Vathek*, which in turn was influenced by Walpole's Italian-set Gothic writing.³⁵² To understand and contextualise their experiences in India, travel-writers drew on their conceptions of Italy to configure the Orient, and *vice versa*. In some cases, for example Heber's, the traveller actually inserted themselves into the narrative.

From Ireland to Britain, via India and Italy

Lady Sydney Morgan offered another different set of interconnections between Italy, India, and Britain, and also her native Ireland. Lady Morgan was born Sydney Owenson, in Dublin, and gave her own birth year as 1783, although she was probably born in 1776.³⁵³ Over her professional lifetime, Lady Morgan published more than twenty-five works of fiction, poetry, travelogues, essays and periodical articles, in addition to three autobiographical works.³⁵⁴ Her writing was known less for its literary genius and more for controversial political and religious themes, and its championing of nationalism. Her early novels particularly espoused the cause of Irish nationalism, and Morgan also supported nationalists in Belgium and Poland.³⁵⁵ Lady Morgan's account of Italy was vociferous in demanding a unified voice and nationhood for its people. Morgan was no doubt sincere in her lobbying for the oppressed of the peninsula, but she was also drawing her readers to the analogous position of Ireland *vis à vis* the rest of Britain in the wake of the 1801 Act of Union.³⁵⁶

³⁵¹ J. R. de J. Jackson, *Poetry of the Romantic Period* (Abingdon, 2016), 51.

³⁵² J. Watt, 'The Peculiar Character of the Arabian Tale: William Beckford and the Arabian Nights' in S. Makdisi & Nussbaum. F., (eds.), *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West* (Oxford, 2008), 202.

³⁵³ D. A. Badin, *Lady Morgan's Italy: Anglo-Irish Sensibilities and Italian Realities* (Bethesda, 2007), 17-18. See also, D. R. Dean, 'Morgan [nee Owenson], Sidney, Lady Morgan', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19234> (accessed 14/8/19).

³⁵⁴ J. Belanger (ed.), *Critical Receptions: Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan* (Bethesda, 2007), 5.

³⁵⁵ J. Donovan, *Sidney Owenson, Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style* (Dublin, 2009), 9.

³⁵⁶ D. A. Badin, 'Lady Morgan in Italy: A Traveller with an Agenda', *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*, 6 (2016), 127-148, 127. See also, M. Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile: Italian Emigres and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, 2009), 194.

Under her maiden name of Sidney Owenson, Morgan wrote a series of popular novels, implying criticism of Britain as a despotic imperial power, both in India and Ireland. One such novel was *The Missionary*, set in India, featuring a doomed relationship between a European Catholic priest and a Hindu priestess. Morgan critiqued British imperial hegemony and religious differences between Christianity and Hinduism, using ‘politically charged religion’ to examine British representations of ‘non-European people, places, and cultures’.³⁵⁷ Morgan drew parallels between Britain’s treatment of India and Hinduism, and that of her native Ireland and Irish Catholicism.³⁵⁸ Yet, as Balachandra Rajan points out, Morgan reinforced the very discourse she tried to critique. She presented the key protagonists as the epitome of colonial domination and submission whilst also conforming to gender stereotypes. In Morgan’s words ‘she, like the East, is lovely and luxuriant; he, like the West, lofty and commanding.’ Whilst she is ‘a creature formed to feel and to submit’, he is ‘a being created to resist and to command.’³⁵⁹ Ultimately, the novel ‘subscribes heavily to the discourse it also interrogates.’³⁶⁰

Morgan later did a very similar thing in a politically explosive account of her visit to Italy, drawing attention to the oppressive nature of empires and despotic regimes generally. Her account partly highlighted her views on contemporary British political reform, including what Fitzpatrick describes as the ‘manifest colonial elements’ in the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain.³⁶¹ Morgan castigated Britain as a ‘political scavenger’ in its policy towards Italy, enabling their subjugation to despotic powers, and with hypocritical pretence ‘to virtue, and affected assumptions of piety, justice, and moderation’.³⁶² In contrast, the anti-monarchist Morgan praised the ‘civilising’ effects of French rule in Italy, described the French Revolution as a ‘revolution in public opinion’ and ‘one of those great epochs in the history of

³⁵⁷ S. Morgan, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (London, 1811). L. S. Dabundo, “‘The Sabbath of the Heart’: Transgressive Love in Lady Morgan’s India”, *The Wordsworth Circle*, 41 (2010), 84-88, 84.

³⁵⁸ Dabundo, *Lady Morgan’s India*, 84.

³⁵⁹ Rajan, *Under Western Eyes*, 130.

³⁶⁰ Rajan, *Under Western Eyes*, 137.

³⁶¹ D. Fitzpatrick, ‘Ireland and Empire’ in A. Porter & Louis, W. R., (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. 3: *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 2014), 494-521, 494.

³⁶² S. Morgan, *Italy* in 3 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1821), 87.

humanity.’³⁶³ Yet, as in her Indian novel, Morgan colluded with a particular configuration of Italians to make her point. She described Piedmont as one of many ‘little despotisms of Italy’, combining ‘unmixed despotism in the ruler, privilege and prescription in the nobles, influence direct and indirect in the priesthood, and ignorance, degradation, and passive obedience in the vassal people.’³⁶⁴ Morgan added to this, the destabilising effects of sexual immorality, and the prevalence of violence and murder prior to French rule.³⁶⁵ Morgan described Italians as ‘wily’ and ‘cunning’, characteristics she claimed were necessary in order for oppressed peoples to survive.³⁶⁶ With the advent of French rule, Morgan argued that many of Piedmont’s civic and political weaknesses, aristocratic licentiousness instilled through ‘ages of tyranny’, their violence, gambling, immorality and ill-education, were curbed and substantial improvements made.³⁶⁷ Yet, with Napoleon’s defeat in 1815, without French influence, Morgan reported a significant return to the *status quo ante*. Admittedly, Morgan suggested that the French civilising influence had indeed had some permanent impact, as Piedmont moved slowly ‘to forward the interests of the community.’ This was despite Piedmont’s seemingly inherent ‘*ignorantins*, feudalities, and legitimate misrule’.³⁶⁸

There are clear similarities between Morgan’s collusion with the discourse she critiqued in India and Italy. She configured an identity for both which was civically and politically impotent, as a tool to indict a mode of governance she found in Italy, India and, to a degree, Britain. It was not specifically the *people* she criticised, but a form of religious and secular despotism which produced a society of immoral, submissive, violent, despotic, scheming, ignorant, and backward individuals. Morgan separated Italy from Europe, concluding that it is the influence of ‘*European education*’ (my emphasis) which might overcome Italy’s civic, political, and moral weaknesses.³⁶⁹ Although Morgan implied criticism of Britain, in *Italy* she still revealed

³⁶³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol.1, 29.

³⁶⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 88.

³⁶⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol.1, 91 & 98.

³⁶⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 288.

³⁶⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 96.

³⁶⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 103.

³⁶⁹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 103.

a 'European' ideal, in the guise of Republican France. 'Europe' is less a defined geographical space or a racial designation, and more a set of ideas about how Morgan thought societies should behave and be governed. In the same way, both India and Italy portrayed 'Oriental' characteristics, but so did Britain in the sense of its 'despotic' behaviour towards Ireland and its other colonies. In setting out her thoughts on political and social authority, Morgan drew from Italy and India, and from Britain, and from her travellers' observations to her fictional renderings. Although she reinforced Indian and Italian stereotypes, even as she expressed sympathy for them, Morgan did not use an East-West binary to make her points. She offers her critique of the exercise of despotic power from a tri-partite frame of Britain, Italy and India.

Blundering around India and Italy

In the last part of this chapter, I will compare Maria Graham's travel accounts of India and Italy. Relatively few travellers produced accounts of both places. A comparison of *Three Months in the Mountain's East of Rome* with her *Journal of a Residence in India* illustrates how similarly Graham 'produced' each space and its inhabitants. I will also bring together all the themes discussed in this chapter. Not only did Graham use very similar methods to construct the Indian and Italian 'other', her configuration of Indians and Italians mapped onto debates about race, class, and gender back in the metropole.

Onni Gust has noted how Graham used mobility as a device to differentiate between her own rational and free movement and the pointless and frenetic actions of Indians. Graham's

representation of their [Indians'] bodily movements as circular and frenetic, or as completely immobile, enabled her [Graham] to construct herself as a free and individual agent. In doing so, she configured herself in relationship to a wider understanding of Europe, and of England in particular, as the epitome of

‘civilization’ and of progress that justified the subordination of India as a space and society.³⁷⁰

Gust goes on to note that ‘Graham’s discourse of mobility formed a part of the construction of the ‘grammar of difference’ that provided the cultural foundations of imperial rule.’³⁷¹ Had they compared Graham’s Indian account with her observations of Italy, Gust would have noted that Graham’s strategy was not related entirely to Britain’s imperial authority. Nearly a decade later, Graham employed the same device to describe the movement of Italians, to contrast the ‘civilised state of Europe’ with the ‘irregularities’ she noted in Italy. Once again, in Graham’s account, ‘Europe’ was not a united geographical entity that represented ubiquitous civilisation within an East-West binary. For example, Graham described the ‘moral lethargy’ of Italians, which allowed them to be contented so long as they were able to ‘sit every man under his own vine and his own fig tree.’³⁷² Graham observed that the local men roused themselves somewhat, when threatened by the proximity of the *banditti*, but ‘relapsed into indifference’ once ‘the pressing danger passed...for their usual state is just good enough not to encourage a wish to change.’³⁷³ Graham used, as she did in India,

³⁷⁰ O. Gust, ‘Mobility, gender and empire in Maria Graham’s *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812)’, *Gender and History*, 29 (2017), 273-291, 273. Gust notes Charlotte Mathieson’s work on how mobility shapes ‘nation-space’ in nineteenth-century literature (275). Mathieson explores how mobility mediates ‘the negotiation between national and global concerns’ (C. Mathieson, *Mobility in the Victorian Novel: Placing the Nation* (Basingstoke, 2015), 17). Mathieson’s reviewer acknowledges her ‘valuable contribution to our growing understanding of a nineteenth-century imperial cultural imaginary that was far more complex than a simple opposition between centre and periphery’ (R. Livesey, ‘Review’, *Victorian Studies*, 60 (2017), 139-41, 141). Interestingly, Mathieson’s front cover illustration is Augustus Egg’s *The Travelling Companions*, which features two almost identical women in a carriage travelling back from Italy. The two women may actually be the same woman portrayed in slightly different poses, hinting at a someone who travelled to Italy as an ‘innocent’ woman but returned less so!

³⁷¹ Gust, *Mobility*, 273-4. Gust refers here to Cooper and Stoler, who ‘explore a most basic tension of empire: how a grammar of difference was continuously and vigilantly crafted as people in colonies refashioned and contested European claims to superiority.’ This point is part of a broader ‘interrogation of the relationship of colonial state to metropolitan state and of the making of nation to the making of empire’ (Cooper & Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*, 3-4). This is, indeed, my point, that Britain, Italy, and India should be considered within a tripartite frame of analysis.

³⁷² Graham, *Three Months*, 60.

³⁷³ Graham, *Three Months*, 61. The *banditti* were portrayed ambiguously as both a threat to the lives and liberty of travellers but also somewhat romantic figures. Samuel Rogers devoted a part of his paradigmatic poem *Italy* to the *banditti*, where he implies them as reluctant anti-heroes: ‘Tis a wild life, fearful and full of change, the mountain-robber’s. Time was, the trade was nobler, if not honest; When they that robbed, were men of better faith than kings or pontiffs’ (S. Rogers, *Italy* (London, 1830), 178-9). Rogers’ *banditti* were illustrated by Turner, adding to their romantic image. They figured in various literary works, such as Dumas’ *Count of Monte Cristo* and Irvine Washington’s *Tales of a Traveller*. See also Tate Gallery,

immobility and languorous torpidity as a metaphor for Italian backwardness. Italian ‘moral lethargy’ and their physical inactivity were conflated. Resistance to ‘change’ symbolised unwillingness to modernise, literally and metaphorically a desire not to move forward. Where Graham described an increased degree of Italian movement and mobility, as in their response to the *banditti*, it either quickly dissipated or it was as ‘circular and frenetic’ as her descriptions of the movement of Indians. The *banditti* she described as energetic and purposeful but their activity misdirected and disruptive. For the *banditti*, ‘the fire burns not to warm but to destroy’. Graham wrote that their ‘energy [...] under a better [presumably British] government’ might be redirected to better ends, to ‘conduce to the happiest effects’.³⁷⁴

Having utilised the ‘immobility’ and ‘misdirected activity’ tropes, Graham’s descriptions of local resistance to the *banditti* were in the ‘circular and frenetic’ category, disorganised and ineffectual. Graham’s descriptions infantilised the almost comical local efforts to organise themselves into an effective resistance. The commander of the ‘civic guard’ did little other than ‘walking up and down...with a single horse pistol stuck in his ammunition belt.’³⁷⁵ A contingent of a few ‘young men’ marched just outside of the town walls and conducted target practice ‘within sight of the enemy’s camp’. Having wasted most of their ammunition they left to pursue the enemy but with ‘little hope or intention’ given Graham’s claims that they used up their shot during target practice. Shortly afterwards, others returned and Graham described ‘shouts of joy and triumph’ and the almost carnivalesque ‘very unusual sight’ of the men preceded by large numbers of cattle ‘running down the street followed by their drivers, and accompanied by all the women and children of the town.’³⁷⁶ Graham patronisingly trivialised local efforts by suggesting this return of the townspeople as disorganised and frenetic even though she acknowledged that saving their cattle was their main intention, being insufficiently armed or in great enough numbers to rout the *banditti*. When a party of regular soldiers arrived to assist, Graham described them as more concerned with their ‘lodging and victualling’ than the task in hand. Shortly

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-banditti-for-rogerss-italy-r1133321> (accessed 13 June 2019).

³⁷⁴ Graham, *Three Months*, 64.

³⁷⁵ Graham, *Three Months*, 164.

³⁷⁶ Graham, *Three Months*, 164-5.

afterwards, 'the expected attack on the town was forgotten and the night passed quietly as usual.' After bursts of disorganised and frenetic activity the Italians soon 'relapsed into indifference'.³⁷⁷

The following day, Graham described an armed party responding to a woman who had 'heard a whistling in a deep glen.' The party, led by the woman, all descended 'with great difficulty' into a ravine in strict silence.³⁷⁸ Graham described the group as losing their cohesion and beginning to separate, causing confusion among the others who then broke their silence thinking they are being abandoned. On reaching the bottom of the ravine the party became aware of their exposure which 'reduced the soldiers to looking for a place to ascend'.³⁷⁹ What Graham described was a semi-chaotic descent, followed by an immediate re-ascent, underlining the pointless and circular nature of their movement. As the party ascended, a further confusion led them to believe they had stumbled upon the *banditti* but, instead of decisive action, they 'hesitated'.³⁸⁰ Eventually resolving to advance, the final comic moment came when someone was 'nearly shot by one of the men, who heard a rustling among the leaves'.³⁸¹ Retiring to a safe distance, the men 'amused themselves by climbing for squirrel's nests' or jumping out of trees. At length, they spotted another group, but because 'neither group like to approach the other' both were left dithering until they finally all trooped home again, completing another ineffectual and circuitous movement.³⁸² Graham's parting shot was to tell the reader that 'the *banditti* had really been in the other direction'.³⁸³

Graham did not clarify that she and her own party were present, but she does stop the narrative to note the 'romantic' nature of the scene containing the wooded and rocky ravine with the 'peasants' making a 'picturesque addition to the natural wildness of the scene'.³⁸⁴ It seems slightly incongruous to describe a potentially dangerous situation as romantic or picturesque. There must be some scepticism as to the accuracy of her

³⁷⁷ Graham, *Three Months*, 165.

³⁷⁸ Graham, *Three Months*, 170.

³⁷⁹ Graham, *Three Months*, 171.

³⁸⁰ Graham, *Three Months*, 171.

³⁸¹ Graham, *Three Months*, 171-2.

³⁸² Graham, *Three Months*, 172-3.

³⁸³ Graham, *Three Months*, 173.

³⁸⁴ Graham, *Three Months*, 170.

description and whether it was written for comic and ideological impact. This point underlines the difficulties in describing travel writing as a factual genre. More importantly, by adding such relatively trivial comments, Graham underscored her infantilization of Italian movement through her suggestion that the situation was never as serious as the Italians thought. By implying her presence, but in a detached, controlled and observational role, Graham underlined her own rational movement.

Gust argues that 'Graham's emphasis on mobility' highlighted the contrast between East and West, justifying the latter's imperial authority.³⁸⁵ Yet, Graham's descriptions of Italian movement suggest this was not entirely an imperial strategy, nor one that created a simple East-West binary. Clearly, Graham used very similar strategies to configure Italian and Indian mobility and movement. Rather than considering them in isolation, comparison of Graham's Indian and Italian accounts adds a deeper understanding to her deployment of the mobility trope, revealing it to be more than a strategy of imperialist, which complicates the assumption of 'European' superiority within an East-West binary. Even in Graham's Indian account, there was no simple or essential definition of 'European'.³⁸⁶ Graham used a similarly scathing discourse of mobility toward much of the *British* population of India, describing their pointless and frenetic activity back and forth, in an endless cycle of eating, drinking and sleeping, 'a train of frivolous visitations, a procession of 'idlers' who are entertained with food, wine and beer, after which the ladies retire to lie down and sleep.'³⁸⁷ Lacking any better occupation, the European community resorted to driving around 'furiously' in 'their gayest equipages'. For no better reason than 'the opportunity of flirting and displaying their fine clothes' they 'loiter round and round the cenotaph', and they did this 'every day in the year'.³⁸⁸ Each morning, 'the young men go from house to house to retail the news, ask commissions to town for the ladies, bring a bauble that has been newly set'.³⁸⁹ Around midday, 'another troop of idlers appears, still more

³⁸⁵ Gust, *Mobility*, 287.

³⁸⁶ As Anne Stoler highlights, a narrow reading of travel writing can lead to viewing all colonisers as homogenous male elites, rather than a diverse community with differing, often conflicting, interests (A. Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989), 134-161, 135). Also, Stoler & Cooper, *Tensions of Empire*, 3.

³⁸⁷ Gust, *Mobility*, 283.

³⁸⁸ Graham, *Journal*, 130.

³⁸⁹ Graham, *Journal*, 130.

frivolous than the former, and remains till tiffin, at two o'clock'. After lunch, comprising 'wines and strong beer from England [...] the ladies then retire, and for the most part undress, and lie down with a novel in their hands, over which they generally sleep.' Later, when her husband returned from work, 'the lady dresses herself for [dinner] [...] and goes from table to bed, unless there be a ball, when she dresses again, and dances all night.'³⁹⁰ Graham emphasised not only the frivolous nature of Anglo-Indian activities but also its circular and repetitive aspects, assuring readers that what she describes is 'a fair, very fair account of the usual life of a Madras lady.'³⁹¹

Here, Graham complicated a purely racial, imperial or even national explanation. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, her concern was the blurring of class boundaries in India where conditions allowed for a better standard of living for the lower and lower-middle classes than might be expected back home. Graham applied the same discourse of mobility to the offending Anglo-Indian community as she did to the indigenous population. Although Graham used mobility to construct European-Indian racial difference, she also used the same device to configure similar negative qualities in Italy and to emphasise *class* difference among people of her own nationality.

Conclusion to Section One

In this first section, I have shown how the discursive construction of both India and Italy in the accounts of travellers has an 'Orientalist' structure; bodies of apparently objective knowledge formed through the interchange of academic and imaginative ideas. British travellers and their readers understood Italy through what Said called, although referring specifically to 'the Orient', a 'system of knowledge' which made all kinds of assumptions about what 'Italian-ness' embodied.³⁹² Standing at the intersection of the supposedly objectively 'academic' and the 'imaginative' forms of Orientalism, influential and highly popular travel accounts purported to truthfully describe objective reality whilst entertaining readers with strategies shared with fictional writing. If the West 'produced' the East in the way in which Said claimed,

³⁹⁰ Graham, *Journal*, 131.

³⁹¹ Graham, *Journal*, 131.

³⁹² Said, *Orientalism*, 177.

they did so at least in part by drawing on an Orientalist construction of Italy (and *vice versa*). This does not invalidate Said's claim that Orientalism is a racial discourse that facilitates imperialism through the creation of an East-West binary, but it certainly complicates that idea. Much of the literature and travel writing on the East which Said argued makes up the forms of Orientalism is built on the Gothic and Romantic plays, novels, academic work, and travel writing which similarly configured Italians.

As we have seen, travellers drew on a range of interconnecting literary sources to compose narratives that configured Italian and Indians in very similar ways. These were more than separate processes. Travel accounts dipped into a shared pool of resources which might have seen an Italian-set Gothic novel deployed to 'explain' Indian characteristics or an experience of Catholic religious architecture used to shape the despotic ruler of an Orientalist novel. The cruel oppression of the latter might then serve as the template for a Gothic villain, who resurfaced in a traveller's account of Italy, used to 'understand' why submissive Italians were prone to being cowed by tyrannous rule. As we saw with Maria Graham's descriptions of Anglo-Indians, the kind of discourse aimed at Italians and Indians might also be used to suggest how British society ought to be organised and defined, with the appropriate class barriers and roles in place. In subsequent chapters we will find similar examples which chime with the 'superiority' of the middle classes at home and abroad, debates over gendered domesticity, or even out-right challenges to the British political system. Versions of Britain, India and Italy were configured, understood, lauded and contested within a co-constitutive tripartite frame.

Part Two : Travellers in Time

Chapter Three

The Uneasy 'Lords of Human Kind'

Introduction

In 1840, the politician and historian Thomas Babington Macaulay asked his readers to imagine a traveller observing the remnants of a once-great empire. Macaulay conjured a vision of the future, 'when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Pauls.'³⁹³ The origin of Macaulay's New Zealander was Edward Gibbon's 1776 remark in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.³⁹⁴ Gibbon prophesied 'that New Zealand may produce, in some future age, the Hume of the Southern Hemisphere.'³⁹⁵ Later illustrated by Dore, the New Zealander was 'a 'noble savage' made good by the civilizing process of colonization'.³⁹⁶ The period under discussion opens and closes therefore, with reflections on the rise and fall of empires passing on the torch of civilisation, metaphorically and literally illustrated by their

³⁹³ T. B. Macaulay, 'The Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes of Rome, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *The Edinburgh Review*, 72 (1840), 227-258, 228. Macaulay's use of the New Zealander was slightly obscure, coming in a review of a work on the history of the Popes and illustrating his point that the Catholic church may well endure for far longer than many anticipated, indeed, even until London lay in ruins.

³⁹⁴ Originally published as E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in six Vols. (London, 1776-89). Subsequent quotations taken from single volume edition of 1830.

³⁹⁵ E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1830), 404.

³⁹⁶ T. Ferguson (ed.), *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes* (Basingstoke, 2013), 99. The image of the New Zealander was so common throughout the 19th century that in 1865 *Punch* called for the 'retirement' of 'Macaulay's New Zealander' ('A Proclamation' *Punch* Vol. 48 (1865), 9). In fact, the image of the New Zealander was not originally Macaulay's. For a history of the New Zealander, see: D. Skilton, 'Contemplating the Ruins of London: Macaulay's New Zealander and Others', *Literary London Journal*, 2 (2004). <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/skilton.html#1> (accessed 9/8/19); R. Dingley, 'The Ruins of the Future: Macaulay's New Zealander and the Spirit of the Age', in A. Sandison & Dingley, R., (eds.) *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy and Science Fiction* (Basingstoke, 2000), 15-33.

successors. The New Zealander represented the rise of a new civilisation from the wreck of the once-great British Empire, a traveller who sat among the crumbling ruins to sketch and record the ultimate failing of even mankind's greatest achievements.³⁹⁷



3.1 Gustav Dore, *The New Zealander* (1872).

Macaulay had made similar remarks in the Commons when, in a speech on the East India Bill of 1833, he presented Britain as successor to the Greco-Roman past in the historical cycle of civilisational rise and fall. They were 'the most renowned of Western Conquerors', with an empire extending 'beyond the point where the phalanx of

³⁹⁷ Originally published in 1872, quotations here are taken from 2005 edition. Dore's engraving was for a co-production with Blanchard Jerrold, a description of London, replete with dystopian images of poverty and squalor for which they attracted the ire of the critics (P. Ackroyd (ed.), *London: A Pilgrimage* (2005), xix). Blanchard wrote, 'Now we have watched the fleets into noisy Billingsgate; and now gossiped looking towards Wren's grand dome, shaping Macaulay's dream of the far future, with the tourist New Zealander upon the broken parapets, contemplating something matching - "The glory that was Greece - The grandeur that was Rome"' (222-3).

Alexander refused to proceed [...] a territory larger and more populous than France, Spain, Italy, and Germany put together [...] the world has seen nothing similar.³⁹⁸

In the next breath, though, Macaulay contemplated British decline, justifying British imperialism as a civilising mission that would endure beyond the life-span of the British Empire:

The sceptre may pass away from us [...] but there are triumphs which are followed by no reverses. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.³⁹⁹

Gibbon and Macaulay's visions of the future thus reflected the glorious heights of the imperial nation but also concerns about its eventual *fall*, as inevitable for Britain as the decline of Greece and Rome. Macaulay's New Zealander and his Commons' speeches were attempts to mitigate the fear of British decline. Even accepting that inevitability, Britain would have, like Greece and Rome, played its part in the advance of civilisation.⁴⁰⁰ As Vlassopoulos puts it, such ideas are illustrative of the way in which

³⁹⁸ T. B. Macaulay, 'East India Company's Charter Bill, 2nd Reading', *Hansard* (10th July 1833), 516. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1833/jul/10/east-india-companys-charter> (accessed 20 June 2017).

³⁹⁹ Macaulay, 'East India Company's Charter Bill', 536. Sargent notes the regular appearance in various literary genres of 'the collapse of Britain and the shift of power, culture and learning to the former colonies' (L. T. Sargent, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias', in G. Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, (Cambridge, 2010), 200–22, 205). This was an ambivalent idea, both a 'presage of national decline [...] as Greece and Rome before it' but also celebrating, and justifying, Britain's 'civilising' power (Dingley, *Ruins of the Future*, 26–8).

⁴⁰⁰ The civilising and educating forces in Macaulay's narratives were very much those of the middle classes. Macaulay came to prominence after publishing an article on Milton's poetry. The essay was a nationalist history of middle-class support for English freedom, making Macaulay *the* historical advocate for the Whig cause (O. Edwards, *Macaulay* (London, 1988), 14–16). The implicit and explicit theme of 'natural' and inherent middle-class authority in Macaulay's many historical essays, often published in the *Edinburgh Review*, emerged in a variety of forms, from his Commons speeches in favour of electoral reform at home through to his plan for Indian education as Secretary to the Board of Control. Macaulay's history 'inform[ed] Whig ideology by use of the past' (Edwards, *Macaulay*, 96). This can be seen in his deployment of the New Zealander in an essay on the Popes and an argument for middle-class authority in an essay on Milton. At home, 'the flower of the middle classes' would 'temper' aristocratic rule and keep 'the mob [...] at bay' (C. Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (Yale, 2004), 332). In India, the indigenous population he wanted to become 'English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect' represented the same middle-class Whiggish process of improvement (T. Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education* (1835), 12. https://archive.org/details/Minutes_201311 (accessed 9 Sept, 2019)). Catherine Hall writes that, in Macaulay's vision, 'Indians would progress, following the path that the English had trodden from barbarism to civilisation' (Hall, *Macaulay*, 333). This was the same path down

‘ancient history provided a cognitive model within which [the British] could make sense of contemporary events and personalities and even predict the course of future developments.’⁴⁰¹

In this chapter, I explore how travellers configured Britain as the successors to ancient Rome and how that idea was used to justify and debate their occupation and control of India. On the one hand, Britain was the ancient world’s glorious inheritors whilst, on the other, as I will discuss, travellers expressed their concerns about Britain’s imperial future and the nature of empires generally. For some, the benefits brought to India by the British were not only reflections of their ‘civilising’ ancient Italian ‘forebears’, they were also the same ‘virtues’ claimed by the middle classes in their claim to cultural and political authority back home. I will also consider how Britain’s (imagined) relationship with Italy’s past was used by travellers and their critics in the periodical press to contest and examine British and broader European political ideas and developments. As we will discover, for some travellers, Britain’s supposed Roman inheritance was not something to be lauded but a repeat of the brutal imperial despotism of the ancient world, re-enacted in India, Ireland and, potentially, even in Britain itself. India, Italy and Britain can, once again, be understood in the same analytical frame. I will close the chapter by exploring how, over the first half of the nineteenth century, travellers began to distance contemporary Britain from the ancient world.

The Rise of the ‘New’ Romans

The periodical reviewer Francis Jeffrey noted in 1807 that ‘an Englishman bears a much greater resemblance to a Roman, than an Italian of the present day.’⁴⁰² The English represented the living embodiment of a glorious past whilst contemporary Italians languished in a backward present. Thomas Macaulay’s *The Prophecy of Capys*, part of

which the English middle classes had led their own nation, the Scottish Highlanders and the people of Ireland (with less success).

⁴⁰¹ K. Vlassopoulos, ‘Imperial Encounters: Discourse on Empire and the Uses of Ancient History during the Eighteenth Century’, in M. Bradley (ed.), *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire* (Oxford, 2001), 29-53, 30.

⁴⁰² F. Jeffrey, ‘Review of “Corinne, ou l’Italie.”’ *Edinburgh Review* 11 (1807), 183-95, 194.

his poem, *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, is an instructive example of this British appropriation of Italy's past. Ostensibly representing Italy's glorious past, the lengthy poem also positioned Britain as the new Rome, celebrating 'the expanse of the British Empire from Arctic Canada to the Orient':⁴⁰³

Where fur-clad hunters wander
 Amidst the northern Ice;
 Where through the sand of morning-land
 The camel bears its spice;
 Where Atlas flings his shadow
 Far o'er the western foam
 Shall be great fear on all who hear
 The mighty name of Rome.⁴⁰⁴

Unlike the British, the Romans never set foot on the 'Northern ice', nor traversed the 'western foam' of the Atlantic. As Mark Bradley notes, Macaulay's poem was 'clearly coloured by Macaulay's own earlier service in India.'⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, Macaulay confirmed as much in a letter to fellow historian Henry Hallam in 1842. His inspiration came to him whilst on colonial duty 'in the jungle at the foot of the Neilgherry hills.'⁴⁰⁶ Macaulay's poem illustrates how the British drew on the Italian past to justify their activities in contemporary India, invoking ancient Rome as the 'definition of imperial purpose'.⁴⁰⁷ In a theme I will explore in greater depth in the next chapter, Macaulay used *Lays* to play with time. With Britain cast as the modern incarnation of ancient Rome, 'the past

⁴⁰³ M. Bradley, 'Foreword', in Bradley (ed.), *Classics and Colonialism*, ix.

⁴⁰⁴ T. B. Macaulay, 'The Prophecy of Capys' in *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, Stanza 31 (London, 1842).

⁴⁰⁵ Bradley, *Classics and Colonialism*, ix. For Macaulay's time in India, see Hall, 'Imperial man and the space of difference' in *Macaulay and Son*, 201-258.

⁴⁰⁶ T. Pinney, *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge, 2008), 66.

⁴⁰⁷ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 164. See also Catharine Edwards for the 'parallels between Capys' vision of Rome's future and Britain's own imperial mission' (C. Edwards, 'Translating Empire? Macaulay's Rome', in C. Edwards (ed.), *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture 1789-1945* (Cambridge, 1999), 70-87, 73).

was made present, the distant near.⁴⁰⁸ His friend, brother-in-law and East India Company administrator, Charles Trevelyan, extolled the benefits of Rome's military conquest of Britain 2,000 years previously.⁴⁰⁹ He argued that

the acquisitions made by superiority in war, were consolidated by superiority in the arts of peace; and the remembrance of the original violence was lost in that of the benefits which resulted from it.⁴¹⁰

Britain now submitted India to the same tough love they had themselves apparently benefitted from at the hands of ancient Italians. Trevelyan expressed the hope that

the Indians will [...] soon stand in the same position toward us in which we once stood towards the Romans [...] from being obstinate enemies, the Britons soon became attached and confiding friends.⁴¹¹

He further argued that the advance of civilisation required control to be imposed 'from without', given that 'the instances in which nations have worked their way to a high degree of civilisation from domestic resources only are extremely rare.'⁴¹²

Trevelyan *et al* were only the latest to appropriate Italy's past to justify contemporary British imperialism. In an account of Italy which inspired his hugely influential *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon's observations and interpretations of Italy's past reflected debate regarding contemporary British socio-politics and Britain's emerging status as an imperial nation. Gibbon described his preparation for his Italian journey entirely in terms of Italy's classical past. He studied 'the Latin poets and historians [...] the Topography and antiquities of Rome

⁴⁰⁸ Hall, 'Imperial Man', 251. Hall also explores Macaulay's ambivalences about Britain's imperial role. For a broader discussion of what Hall describes as Macaulay and the role of 'history writing' and its part in 'the construction of British imperial identities' (36), see C. Hall and Rose, S. O., (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge, 2006), 32-53.

⁴⁰⁹ Trevelyan began his India career as an E. I. C. writer, or clerical administrator, and would eventually be appointed as Governor of Madras, although he was recalled to Britain for leaking sensitive criticism of government policy to the press. He was also a future Westminster Parliamentarian of note and appointed 1st Baronet of Wallington in 1874. Trevelyan played a significant role in denying aid to Ireland during the Potato Famine, supporting the view that the famine was a divine judgement on the Irish. See, D. Washbrook & Boase, G. C., 'Trevelyan, Sir Charles Edward, First Baronet', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27716> (accessed 11 Aug 2019).

⁴¹⁰ C. E. Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India* (London, 1838), 36.

⁴¹¹ Trevelyan, *Education*, 196-7.

⁴¹² Trevelyan, *Education*, 196.

[...] the military roads which pervaded the empire of the Caesars.' Passing through Paris *en route* to Italy in the aftermath of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, ending the Seven Years War, Gibbon noted the respect for Britain among the French, not just for their military achievements but for British culture generally. Gibbon quoted Lucan's praise for Pompey the Great, 'clarum et venerabile nomen Gentibus' (his name is great among...).⁴¹³ Gibbon thus draws parallels between Britain and Rome, transposing the same allusion from the past to the contemporary nations of Britain and France; the recent war between the two had shown Britain and not France to be the new Rome. Britain's name was deemed great even by its defeated enemies and France paid its respects.

On his approach to Italy, 'few travellers', Gibbon wrote, 'more compleatly [sic] armed and instructed have ever followed the footsteps of Hannibal.'⁴¹⁴ Gibbon's was a discursive invasion, conducted 'not on the back of an elephant, but on a light osier seat.'⁴¹⁵ Describing the essential attributes of the traveller to Italy as 'a copious stock of classical and historical learning', Gibbon configured Italy as a show-piece for its classical past, ignoring it as a contemporary space.⁴¹⁶ Once in Italy, almost all aspects of contemporary Italy were absent or judged according to their relationship with the past: Milan cathedral was dismissed as 'an unfinished monument of Gothic superstition and wealth'; Gibbon was unimpressed with Genoan palaces; other than classical Italy, only some aspects of Renaissance Italy, such as selected paintings and the Venus of Medici sculpture were worthy of attention.⁴¹⁷ Padua University was a 'dying taper', although Verona at least, 'still boasts her native amphitheatre'. Palladio's home town of Vicenza was also worth visiting, but entirely due to his 'classic architecture'.⁴¹⁸ Time spent in modern Venice were 'days of disgust', and Naples was

⁴¹³ J. Murray (ed.), *The Autobiographies of Edward Gibbon* (London, 1897), , 261.

⁴¹⁴ Murray (ed.), *Autobiographies*, 265. For ease of electronic searching, I have referred to this version of Gibbon's autobiographical manuscripts and journals, although they were first published as John, Lord Sheffield, *Miscellaneous works of Edward Gibbon, Esquire* in 2 Vols. (London, 1796). For a history of this work, see the short British Library publication, J. Gawthrop, *A History of Edward Gibbon's six autobiographical manuscripts* (1999). <https://www.bl.uk/eblj/1999articles/pdf/article12.pdf> (accessed 14 Aug 2019).

⁴¹⁵ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 266.

⁴¹⁶ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 269.

⁴¹⁷ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 266-7.

⁴¹⁸ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 268.

full of 'luxurious inhabitants' dwelling among the 'confines of paradise and hellfire.'⁴¹⁹ As Gibbon enthusiastically admitted, 'Rome is the great object of our pilgrimage', and a waking dream, or rather an experience of 'sleepless nights' and 'days of intoxication', wandering the 'ruins of the forum...each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell'.⁴²⁰ This was an image drawn from Cicero, who, on the same spot, had written that 'the sight of our senate house at home' recalled 'thoughts of Scipio, Cato, Laelius'.⁴²¹

Gibbon's interpretation of Rome was the 'product of the imperial context in which it was written'.⁴²² In *Decline and Fall* for example, Gibbon drew on Tacitus' descriptions of the introduction to 'barbarous' Europe, of improved infrastructure and methods of land use. Such were also the 'civilising' improvements claimed by the British as the benefits of, and justification for, their own imperial activities in India.⁴²³ Linking the ancient Roman world to India, Gibbon wrote that 'the classics have much to teach' and 'the orientals have much to learn.' Had 'the philosophers of Athens and Rome' had more influence they 'might have gradually unlocked the fetters of eastern despotism.'⁴²⁴ Gibbon implied that this was now Britain's role, as the modern incarnation of the Greco-Roman philosophers. Gibbon's comments on the East, as well as America, Australia, and New Zealand, show how 'the colonial aspirations of the eighteenth century clearly influenced the formation of Gibbon's attitudes towards civilisation and the Roman Empire.'⁴²⁵

Fifty years later John Chetwode Eustace reflected very similarly on the remains of ancient Rome. Eustace described 'one of the richest exhibitions that eyes could

⁴¹⁹ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 268.

⁴²⁰ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 266-7.

⁴²¹ Cicero, *De Finibus*, Book V, I. As we will see, this was also an image deployed by other travellers.

⁴²² Rogers & Higley, 'Edward Gibbon', 207. Vasunia, also, writes that Gibbon must be read 'within contemporary imperial contexts' (Vasunia, *Classics*, 255). As I will discuss, the context was very much was one of ambivalence, vacillating between the 'civilising' benefits of empire and the likelihood of its collapse. Dirks discusses works by other authors concerned with future British decline which were 'deliberately modelled on Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*' (N. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: Mass, 2006), 264).

⁴²³ Rogers & Higley, *Classics and Imperialism*, 189-209, 197-8. Gibbon was referring to Tacitus' AD 98 work, *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*, his father-in-law and Governor of Britain, AD 77-84 (originally, P. C. Tacitus, *De vita et moribus Iulii Agricolae* (Rome, 98). Again, as we will see, Gibbon was not the only one to employ this image.

⁴²⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 478-9.

⁴²⁵ Rogers & Higley, *Classics and Imperialism*, 199.

behold, or human ingenuity invent', amongst which the Romans decided 'the fates of heroes, kings, and nations.'⁴²⁶ Eustace was born in 1761, to an Anglo-Irish father and an English mother. After deciding against a vocation as a Benedictine monk, Eustace became a tutor to aristocratic children and was ordained as a Catholic priest at Kildare in Ireland. Eustace moved to England in 1798 taking up a chaplaincy in Norfolk before tutoring George Petre, nephew to Lord Petre. During the Peace of Amiens and the lull in Napoleonic hostilities Eustace visited Italy, in 1801-2. He accompanied three young charges, John Cust, later Lord Brownlow, Robert Rushbrooke, and Philip Roche. Eustace wrote an account of his journey, predominantly a study of the classical past. Although not published until 1813 Eustace's *Classical Tour* became the 'standard *vademecum* of classical tourists', running through eight editions between 1813 and 1841.⁴²⁷ In a eulogy for Eustace after his death in 1815, *Gentleman's Magazine* wrote that, as a result of his subsequent fame, 'his acquaintance was sought by almost all persons in this country distinguished by rank or talents.'⁴²⁸

On the Palatine Mount, Eustace described the 'glory of Rome, and the admiration of the universe', in Rome's 'numerous temples, its palaces, its porticos and its libraries.'⁴²⁹ Standing where Cicero and Gibbon had stood among the ruins of the Capitol, like them, Eustace recalled influential orations by Manlius, Caius Gracchus, and Scipio Africanus, all 'inspired by the surrounding edifices'; such was the 'awe, interest and even emotion' which the Capitol roused in observers.⁴³⁰

Eustace eulogised classical Italy, implying a similar British role, as the

⁴²⁶ J. C. Eustace, *A Classical Tour Through Italy* in 4 Vols, Vol. 1 (London, 1813), 216.

⁴²⁷ G.M. Murphy, 'John Chetwode Eustace', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (May, 2007). www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9837 (accessed 13 July 2017).

⁴²⁸ 'Memoir of the late Rev. John Chetwode Eustace', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 85 (1815), 372.

⁴²⁹ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 221.

⁴³⁰ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 216-7. Rosemary Sweet also notes this spot as one where 'visitors were wont to conjure up the shades of Cicero and Cato and the traditions of Roman oratory' (R. Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c. 1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012), 110). There was, however, more to Gibbon's and Eustace's 'channelling' of illustrious predecessors than simply showing off or appropriating the role of previous worthies. See S. Cheeke "'What So Many Have Told, Who Would Tell Again?": Romanticism and the Commonplaces of Rome', *European Romantic Review*, 17 (2006), 521-541. As Cheeke notes, Eustace and Gibbon, and Byron, recognised that Cicero had been commenting on the impermanence of empires. For Cicero too, 'Rome was a city with an ancient past' (526). By aping Cicero, these travellers expressed their 'anxiety about the subjectivity of existence, the insecurity of truth and value, and the fragility of authority—the anxieties inevitably aroused in the visitor to Rome, perhaps particularly in those contemplating the fact that the civilization that gave utterance to these ever-fresh sentiments had disappeared' (536).

the instrument of communicating to Europe, and to a considerable proportion of the globe, the three greatest blessings of which human nature is susceptible - Civilisation, Science, and Religion.⁴³¹

Again, like Gibbon, Eustace described Roman rule as standing in contrast to ‘the despotism of the Eastern monarchies.’⁴³² The parallels with contemporary Britain and its colonial dominions are clear here and crystallise further with Eustace’s description of Rome’s own dominions as ‘nurseries of citizens’ whom ‘they improved in civilisation’. Schools and teachers, infrastructure improvements, arts and culture, transport links, all proliferated ‘wherever the Roman eagles penetrated’.⁴³³ Once again, like Gibbon, these words were reminiscent of Tacitus’ description of the Romans in Britain nearly two millennia previously.⁴³⁴ Where the Roman eagles had stood in Britain’s soil, Britannia’s standard was now proudly planted in its own colonial territory. The ‘new’ Romans were in a position to do what their older forebears had not: ‘civilise’ the despotic East.

Middle-Class Romano-India

Such narratives travelled well, finding a home in India. In the late 1830s, Charles Trevelyan drew on the Italian past to make very similar points. Trevelyan presented Britain as following in ancient Rome’s civilising footsteps in recognising ‘the obligation they were under’ to educate their colonial population. The Romans had progressed Britain towards modernity in ‘an intellectual revolution similar to that which is now in progress in India.’⁴³⁵ Trevelyan found a model in the mutual Italian and British past which paralleled and justified Britain’s ‘civilising mission’ in India. He configured what

⁴³¹ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 194.

⁴³² Eustace, *Classical Tour*, Vol. 1, 194.

⁴³³ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 196.

⁴³⁴ See, for example, Tacitus, *Agricola*, 19-22 for improvements to infrastructure, availability of grain, education etc.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0081%3Achapter%3D21>. (accessed 12 Aug 2019).

⁴³⁵ Trevelyan, *Education*, 38-9.

Tschurenev calls ‘the role of the emerging “civil society” in the building of colonial empires’, a role which simultaneously reflected and supported middle-class claims to moral, civic, and political authority in Britain.⁴³⁶ Trevelyan conceded that ‘the poor man is not less the object of the committee’s solicitude than the rich’, but educational resources in India were scarce.⁴³⁷ Like the Romans, the British would first educate ‘the upper and middle classes’ who would then ‘extend the same advantages to the rest of the people.’⁴³⁸ The ‘rich, the learned, the men of business [...] a new class of teachers will be trained’ who would become ‘our schoolmasters, translators, authors’.⁴³⁹ Ultimately, such education would encourage ‘printing and free discussion [...] debating societies [...] the establishment of a national representative assembly.’⁴⁴⁰

This was clearly the same ‘improving’ narrative found back home. Trevelyan connected Italy’s past not just to Britain’s contemporary imperial role in India but also to a middle-class zeitgeist. A very similar set of ideas emerged from the account of another traveller previously discussed, Marianne Postans. Trevelyan’s observations were aimed at an audience primarily interested in modes and strategies of governance in India. Postans, as a female travel writer, would expect a different readership although the themes were the same. Such were the ways in which travel writing could be influential, by circulating ideas back home from the very heart of Anglo-Indian government. In comments remarkably similar to those of Trevelyan, Postans noted that

India stands in a similar position to Britain now, which Britain once did to the powers of Rome [...] we, the descendants of this once savage tribe of painted islanders, have now a name hallowed and glorious throughout all lands.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁶ J. Tschurenev, ‘Diffusing useful knowledge: the monitorial system of education in Madras, London and Bengal, 1789–1840’, *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 44 (2008), 245–64, 247.

⁴³⁷ Trevelyan, *Education*, 48.

⁴³⁸ Trevelyan, *Education*, 48.

⁴³⁹ Trevelyan, *Education*, 48–9.

⁴⁴⁰ Trevelyan, *Education*, 199.

⁴⁴¹ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 67–8.

In gratitude for the civilising effects of Roman occupation, she wrote, 'how sacred is the obligation to do as we have been done by.'⁴⁴² Like Macaulay, Postans noted that the key feature of British occupation was not 'military rule' but the effects of education and instruction which would create 'a monument of fame, which shall reach unto the heavens, and endure for ages.'⁴⁴³ Postans further drew on Macaulay and Trevelyan to argue that it would be the Indian middle class that would 'produce results of the highest interest.'⁴⁴⁴ Through 'the work of improvement', she wrote,

the tone of society is changed. The native gentry now form a recognised, and important part of the community; their sons are educated to fit them for any mercantile or political appointment.⁴⁴⁵

She added that 'an English education' would lay the 'superstructure' for the 'perfect civilisation of the native gentry'.⁴⁴⁶ Applied, however, to 'tradesmen or artizans, the features of the case would alter.'⁴⁴⁷ As in Britain, middle-class and national 'virtue' were analogous.

Although referring to Indian society, Postans might easily have been referring to the improvement of the British lower classes when she wrote that middle-class education

originate[s] a change in the condition of nations, which is perfected by progressive and general improvement, until the arts, sciences, literature, and religion of civilized life, banish the horrors attendant on a barbarous state.⁴⁴⁸

Italy's past was not simply a model for the civilising imperial nation. Ancient Rome offered a template for middle-class virtue, the virtues *from which civilisation was derived* and, by extension, national success. The middle classes had the opportunity, indeed the obligation, to provide improvement for groups as diverse as the British lower classes and the entire Indian population.

⁴⁴² Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 68.

⁴⁴³ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 68.

⁴⁴⁴ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, vii.

⁴⁴⁵ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 3.

⁴⁴⁶ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 45.

⁴⁴⁷ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 61.

⁴⁴⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 258.

By no means, though, were travellers' narratives of India without their concerns about the fragility of empire. Concerns about threats internal and external had a long history. Not entirely approving of the British in India, in her 1777 epistolary account of India, Jemima Kindersley had been concerned that they may fall prey to the same seductive temptations as had the Indians. She wrote that the 'great riches' of the East had encouraged 'luxury, indolence, rapine, extortion, and injustice'. Those riches had now become 'the prey of foreigners'.⁴⁴⁹ Kindersley noted the soporific effect that the climate had had on the invading Moguls. Initially, this had helped the invaders conquer a Hindu people steeped in 'effeminacy', but subsequently, 'every generation becomes more and more slothful.'⁴⁵⁰ The Moguls eventually 'contracted the effeminacy and avarice of the *Hindoos*', typified by their domestic practices.⁴⁵¹ As Kindersley pointed out, the British had consequently found India an equally easy conquest.⁴⁵² The combination of climate, riches, and easily available luxury seemed to make her feel uneasy about the British future in India. From the first, Kindersley had confessed that she could 'scarcely believe myself amongst English people', who seemed worryingly fond of 'entertainments, dress, and pleasure'.⁴⁵³

If Kindersley was concerned with the threat of the empire weakening from within, the mid-level East India Company administrator, Samuel Snead Brown, warned of the threat from without. He wrote that 'our dangers lie in the vast mass of people whom we have subjected to our rule in this country, and who would gladly rise and shake off the yoke of the "feringees"'.⁴⁵⁴ Nor was the introduction of middle-class example necessarily without its dangers. In a remarkable passage, given the strictures against women discussing political themes, Marianne Postans set out her concerns for the future security of British India and the necessity of a liberal solution.⁴⁵⁵ She first

⁴⁴⁹ J. Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, 1777), 177.

⁴⁵⁰ Kindersley, *Letters*, 164-5.

⁴⁵¹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 197.

⁴⁵² Kindersley, *Letters*, 165.

⁴⁵³ Kindersley, *Letters*, 80.

⁴⁵⁴ S. S. Brown, *Home Letters Written from India Between the Years 1828 and 1841* (London, 1878), 191.

⁴⁵⁵ As is so often the case, a woman-writer offers a far more layered and interesting account of the British involvement in India than male writers, who tended to simply disparage the 'other' in very similar and stereotypical terms. This was, of course, in stark contrast to the general belief that men restricted women's writing to 'women's' subjects such as scenery or domestic concerns which typified the 'feminine picturesque' (S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992), 75).

pointed out the historical precedent for the civilising of barbarian peoples; indeed, she asked, was British druidical, Scandinavian, or Saxon paganism 'less horrible than the worship of Juggernath?'⁴⁵⁶ Hinting that it might be a deliberate British strategy to keep India in a state of 'civil warfare' and under 'darkened policy', Postans exhorted her readers to consider it a conqueror's responsibility to provide the means for physical and moral emancipation. Besides, if nothing else, an imminent danger provided ample motivation. The likelihood was that the 'desire of liberty' among the people of India would eventually cause them to 'trample on our government and 'expel us from their rich and glowing land.'⁴⁵⁷ The indigenous population might well take inspiration from the changing composition of the Anglo-Indian community, particularly the increasing numbers of middle- and working-class Britons. The British social and class system, overlaid on India, would not only provide a dangerous example of political and social freedom but also the means by which the Indian population might acquire practical abilities 'highly prejudicial to our interests.'⁴⁵⁸ Let Britain demonstrate, then, that 'our policy is liberal' and allow 'the conquered of her colonies share the influence of her civilising power.' The time was at hand to show Britain's higher moral purpose...if only 'on the ground of political security.'⁴⁵⁹ Such were precisely the arguments made back home in support of broader suffrage and political reform. Either emancipate the population in a controlled form or risk revolution. British moral purpose had about it a distinctive ring of utility.

Postans' plea was a mixture of morality and practicality but she did hint, perhaps unwittingly, that Britain's colonial mission was of an even darker ethical hue. She ended by quoting lines from William Cowper's poem, *The Task*, hoping that 'wisdom, religion, and peace shall "circulate through every vein of all your empire"'.⁴⁶⁰ This was Cowper's anti-slavery poem, prior to abolition, and was regularly quoted in this context.⁴⁶¹ If Postans hinted that Britain's 'civilising' empire was little more than a

⁴⁵⁶ Postans, *Cutch*, 112.

⁴⁵⁷ Postans, *Cutch*, 113.

⁴⁵⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 114.

⁴⁵⁹ Postans, *Cutch*, 114.

⁴⁶⁰ Postans, *Cutch*, 114.

⁴⁶¹ W. Cowper, *The Task*, Book ii, 'A Time Piece' (London, 1785). <https://poets.org/poem/task-book-ii-time-piece-excerpt> (accessed 13 Aug 2019). See the poem's inclusion in, for example, *A Concise View of Colonial Slavery* (Newcastle, 1830), a pamphlet published for the Newcastle Ladies Anti-slavery Association (6).

gloss on slavery, some travellers, as we will see, took a far more determined stand against empires, contemporary and historic.

(In)glorious Empire: Contesting the Past

In Italy, the remnants of classical antiquity were reminders of the civilising potential of great empires, of Britain's inheritance of status and responsibility in this respect. They also served to warn contemporary Britain of the dangers of excess, the over-extension of territorial acquisition and the inevitability of decline. Contemporary events at home did little to allay such fears. Our period opens with Gibbon's consideration of the fall of Rome, but also with the loss of the American colonies. The French Revolution gave further food for thought on the collapse of societies into barbarity and slaughter, particularly considering radical politics and social unrest in Britain. The possible ramifications of Napoleon's adventuring and empire-building offered an equally disquieting vision of the potential future for the British, and in the 1840s, a wave of revolution swept through Europe. Throughout the period, the Indian elephant in the rooms of cabinet and the offices of the East India Company, was the potential threat from the enormous imbalance of personnel between the British and the Indians. Samuel Snead Brown wrote home of his concern that the British would be 'swept off the face of Upper India like chaff'.⁴⁶² Indeed, Brown went further, questioning the supposedly benevolent and civilising nature of British rule. He wrote home to tell of 'what British India really is [...] a pure despotism - one of the most cheerless and uninviting kinds.'⁴⁶³ By the late 1830s, Brown's concerns appear to have turned almost to disgust, writing that the British had 'neglected the many opportunities presented to us of improvement and civilisation, and bowed the *mass* to the dust, and kept them there by extortionate taxation'.⁴⁶⁴

Social unrest, revolution, forms of political governance at home and abroad, and the rise and fall of civilisation were clearly themes at the forefront of concerns over the

⁴⁶² Brown, *Letters*, 153-4.

⁴⁶³ Brown, *Letters*, 113.

⁴⁶⁴ Brown, *Letters*, 191-2.

entire period and were reflected and reinforced in the accounts of travellers. John Chetwode Eustace signalled his fear of British decline even as he configured Britain as the inheritors of the classical legacy. Italy had ‘tumbled from the pinnacle of Glory’ and was ‘the now enslaved offspring of our predecessors in the career of glory, of the former LORDS OF HUMAN KIND’ (Emphasis original).⁴⁶⁵ The extent to which Italy had ‘forgotten the theatre of the glory and imperial power of their ancestors’ was highlighted by the contrast between the Forum past and present, or the contemporary ‘Campo Vaccino’ [Cow Pasture], complete with ‘a herdsman, seated on a pedestal, while his oxen were drinking at the fountain.’⁴⁶⁶ Eustace implied that the British were the new ‘lords of mankind’ but, like modern Italy, they might one day also lie ‘prostrate at the feet of a victorious enemy, and claim his compassion as a tribute due to the greatness of their ancestors.’⁴⁶⁷ Eustace observed that Scipio, witnessing the flames of a burning Carthage, presciently reminded a triumphant Rome of a passage from the Iliad, which warned of

The day when Thou, imperial Troy! must bend
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.⁴⁶⁸

Succeeding Rome, ‘Empire’ wrote Eustace, ‘like the sun, has hitherto rolled westward’ to Britain. He continued, however,

it is still on the wing; and whether it be destined to retrace its steps East, or to continue its flight to Transatlantic regions, the days of England’s glory have their number, and the period of her decline will at length arrive.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁵ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xxxii.

⁴⁶⁶ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 218.

⁴⁶⁷ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xxxii.

⁴⁶⁸ Iliad vi in Eustace, *Classical Tour*, vol. 1 xxxii. Like the New Zealander, here is, perhaps, another unacknowledged debt to Edward Gibbon, whom Eustace had surely read. Gibbon made the same point, that Scipio had said to his friend, Polybius, whilst watching Carthage burn, that ‘while he recollected the vicissitudes of human affairs, he inwardly applied them to the future calamities of Rome’ (E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 6 Vols., Vol. 3 (Dublin, 1788-9), 539).

⁴⁶⁹ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xxxii.

It was in Rome that it occurred to Gibbon to write *Decline and Fall*, or rather whilst contemplating the conflation of ancient and modern Rome, listening to a Catholic service in the ‘Temple of Jupiter on the ruins of the capitol’.⁴⁷⁰ Gibbon’s first thought was to write about the physical and architectural fall of the city, but for Gibbon, witnessing what he considered to be the weakening influence of Christianity among the ruins of a symbol of classical antiquity, physical decline was analogous to moral and political. When Gibbon wrote of the ‘view of Italy and Rome’ which inspired him, he was equating ‘Rome’ with past glory, and ‘Italy’ with contemporary decline.⁴⁷¹ The two were separate entities in Gibbon’s mind and in his writing.

Of course, denigrating modern Italy justified Gibbon’s appropriation of their ancient glory for Britain, which in turn ideologically empowered their imperial activities in India and elsewhere. He expressed, though, a sense of his concern about the nature of empires. Womersley suggests that whilst Gibbon ‘admired the artistic and cultural achievement of Rome, he was no admirer of empire as a political system.’⁴⁷² Some years prior to *Decline and Fall*, in 1764, the opening words to his *Essay on the Study of Literature* were, ‘the history of empires is that of the miseries of humankind.’⁴⁷³ In *Decline and Fall*, he wrote that ‘there is nothing perhaps more adverse to nature and reason, than to hold in obedience remote countries and foreign nations, in opposition to their inclination and interest.’⁴⁷⁴ Gibbon’s interpretation of Rome has often been construed as a celebration of the Roman empire and an ‘elegy’ for ‘departed glory’, yet was more subtle and ‘pushed at the edges of received opinion.’⁴⁷⁵ Like later travellers to Italy and, as we will see, their critical reviewers back home, Gibbon revealed uncertainty about empire and reflected socio-political debate about the nature of rule in Britain and abroad. He was melancholic about the ruins of Rome, ‘founded for eternity’, but now lay ‘prostrate, naked, and broken, like the limbs of a mighty giant’.⁴⁷⁶ Gibbon closely anticipated Shelley’s Egyptian traveller in *Ozymandias*, who

⁴⁷⁰ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 270.

⁴⁷¹ Murray, *Autobiographies*, 270.

⁴⁷² D. Womersley, ‘Gibbon, Edward’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (May, 2006). www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10589 (accessed 11 Jan 2017).

⁴⁷³ E. Gibbon, *An Essay on the Study of Literature* (London, 1764), 1.

⁴⁷⁴ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* Vol. 3 (London, 1828), 386.

⁴⁷⁵ Womersley, ODNB. www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10589 (accessed 11 Jan 2017).

⁴⁷⁶ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Vol. 7, 443.

observed the ruins of another fallen empire, or the ‘colossal wreck’, of Ramesses, now just ‘two vast and trunkless legs of stone’, whilst ‘boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away.’⁴⁷⁷ As Peter Cochran observes, a friend of Shelley, another Romantic traveller and his autobiographical alter-ego, Byron and *Childe Harold*, also appears to have been inspired by Gibbon’s description of Rome:

O’er steps of broken thrones and temples –

Ye! Whose agonies are evils of a day –

A World is at our feet as fragile as our Clay.⁴⁷⁸

Byron seemed to warn that the colonial world at Britain’s feet was potentially as politically and physically fragile as the ruins of Rome beneath a traveller’s step.

Gibbon wanted his readers to understand that what his ancient Roman historian-predecessors had written about their own past needed to be considered within the context of their contemporary historical circumstances. By the same token, Gibbon extended ‘a further invitation to his audience’, to read *Decline and Fall* ‘within the world of the late eighteenth century.’⁴⁷⁹ In doing so, he ‘indirectly invoked the British Empire.’⁴⁸⁰ For example, Gibbon described the exacting requirements of an imperial power:

an absolute power, prompt in action, and rich in resource; a swift and easy communication with the extreme parts: fortifications to check the first effort of

⁴⁷⁷ P. Shelley, *Ozymandias* (1818). <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46565/ozymandias> (accessed 10 July 2016). For discussion of Shelley’s poem within the context of other 18th & 19th century ‘ruin poems’, see A. Janowitz, ‘Shelley’s Monument to Ozymandias’, *Philological Quarterly*, 63 (1984), 477-491. Ozymandias reflected ‘Shelley’s anti-tyrannical political position’ (477) within a genre which ‘does not hesitate to make the lesson of Empire clear’ (485).

⁴⁷⁸ G. G. Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* Canto iv, stanza 78.

⁴⁷⁹ Vasunia, *Classics*, 255. Gibbon’s entire progress towards a study of history was located within the framework of his own family and national history (J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, in six Vols., Vol. 1 ‘The Enlightenment of Edward Gibbon 1737-1764’ (Cambridge, 2009), 14-15. Gibbon’s concerns about empire may also have been influenced by Edmund Burke, with whom he shared ‘overlapping imperial milieus’ and a ‘caution against untrammelled empire’ (Vasunia, *Classics*, 257). Also, J. G. A. Pocock, ‘The Ironist’, *London Review of Books*, 24 (Nov. 2002). <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v24/n22/jga-pocock/the-ironist> (accessed 14 Aug 2019). Gibbon also openly admired Burke for his political views on France, writing ‘I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry’ (J. E. Norton, *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*, in 3 Vols., Vol. 3 (London, 1956), 216.

⁴⁸⁰ Vasunia, *Classics*, 257.

rebellion: a regular administration to protect and punish; and a well-disciplined army to inspire fear, without provoking discontent and despair.⁴⁸¹

Gibbon was discussing the difficulties of establishing stable rule after the fall of ancient Rome, due to the lack of such organisation within the ranks of the Germanic tribes who usurped the Romans. Within the context of his own times, his words might also have been a warning to the British in India, that they might find the task there harder than they had anticipated. As Vasunia notes, Gibbon's reading of Roman history implied that the

future of the British Empire [...] its longevity, or collapse, turns on the way in which Britain manages its relationship with its overseas possessions [...] the possibility [that] decline and fall hovers over the British Empire and that Britain too, might someday find itself bereft of its imperial possessions.⁴⁸²

Lady Morgan's treatment of classical Italy also drew parallels between ancient Rome and the British empire. However, where Eustace, for example, configured Rome, and thus Britain, as a civilising force, Morgan drew attention to the oppressive nature of empire. This was partly to highlight her views on contemporary British reform, including what Fitzpatrick describes as the 'manifest colonial elements' in the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain.⁴⁸³ Lady Morgan's writing was infused with socio-political views born of her early life-experiences, particularly the impoverishment of her Irish nationalist father at the hands of the ruling Anglo-Irish.⁴⁸⁴ These experiences were overlaid onto her descriptions of Italy's classical past, in ways which contrast sharply with Eustace's configurations of ancient Italy, and which promoted radical reform.

Following the financial success of her previous travelogue, *France*, Morgan's astute publisher, Henry Colburn, wrote suggesting a similar work on Italy. Colburn agreed a fee of two thousand pounds, worth approximately £160,000 in 2017.⁴⁸⁵ Lady Morgan

⁴⁸¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 355.

⁴⁸² Vasunia, *Classics*, 255-6. It is also worth mentioning that Gibbon may have had personal motivation for such concerns as he 'owned bonds in the East India Company' and was concerned about his finances (253-4).

⁴⁸³ Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and Empire', 494.

⁴⁸⁴ Badin, *Lady Morgan's Italy*, 19-20.

⁴⁸⁵ <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org/> (accessed 23 Aug 2017).

and her husband travelled first to France and thence to Italy, where they stayed from May 1819 to May 1820, with *Italy* first published in 1821. Italian political forces gathered around the work from the off-set. Before departing London, Lady Morgan described a visit, ostensibly social, from Count Confalonieri and Marquis Capponi, who urged her to write “a book such as *France*”. ‘My two Italians’, as Morgan termed them, underlined the link between Morgan’s novels and her support of nationalism generally by adding, “and with such feelings of sympathy with the oppressed as in your native novels”.⁴⁸⁶ Confalonieri and Capponi promised letters of introduction in Italy and ‘many other things, which it will not do to commit to a journal.’⁴⁸⁷ The extent to which Morgan was lobbied underlines the influence of the work (and of travel writing generally), ‘which left a mark on Italy and on the understanding of Italy in Great Britain’.⁴⁸⁸ Through *Italy*, Morgan particularly critiqued the union of religious and aristocratic despotism. Through observation of Italy’s classical past, Morgan commented on imperial authority, forging a link between ancient Rome, Italy, Britain, Ireland, India, and the despotic nature of empires generally. Further work followed, but Morgan’s popularity had declined by the 1830s, partly because other writers took up where she had begun, particularly on the subject of Ireland. By mid-century however, critics agreed on the importance of Morgan’s novels and travelogues in promoting nationalism and radical socio-political reform.⁴⁸⁹

Morgan noted in her introduction to *Italy*, that ‘the moral instinct of man’ was to break free, as had happened in France, when ‘every human abuse had reached the utmost possibility of endurance’. Yet still, even when changes came, ‘grand, splendid, and overwhelming’, there were always ‘temporary interests successively opposed to their duration and influence.’⁴⁹⁰ Although Morgan acknowledged Britain’s relative constitutional freedom, she advocated for further reform to which she was convinced elite power was inherently opposed. These views were mapped onto Morgan’s view of

⁴⁸⁶ S. Morgan, *Passages from My Autobiography* (New York, 1859), 213. Capponi and Confalonieri visited England to elicit support for Italian nationalism from the Whig aristocracy (Isabella, *Risorgimento*, 115). They also ‘looked to Britain as a model of superior civilization, advocated free trade and admired the English political model’ (219). For Morgan’s thoughts on Italian politics, see Isabella, *Risorgimento*, 194-6.

⁴⁸⁷ Morgan, *Autobiography*, 213.

⁴⁸⁸ Badin, *Lady Morgan in Italy*, 127.

⁴⁸⁹ Belanger, *Critical Receptions*, 15.

⁴⁹⁰ Morgan, *Italy*, Vol. 1, 29-30.

the Italian past. Setting out some 'historical sketches', Morgan made the popular comparison between ancient and modern Italy in noting that,

the fables of antiquity have assigned to the Peninsular [sic] of Italy a golden age; and history [...] has peopled its Eden plains [...] and has covered regions with numerous flocks and plenteous harvests, where desolation now reigns over pestilential marshes.⁴⁹¹

Morgan noted that 'the Capitol, from Virgil to the last learned school-boy, or travelled school-girl [...] has been a theme of description, of wonder, and reminiscence.'⁴⁹² The popular impression of Rome was one of 'images of stupendous edifices, inaccessible precipices, of an immense and elevated space, covered with fortresses, temples, oracular fanes, and glittering shrines.' Yet for all the rhetoric, 'the site of all these miracles', Lady Morgan observed, 'the accumulated produce of power, wealth, and art, is scarcely larger than the usual space allocated for the lantern-house and dusty garden of a London citizen'.⁴⁹³ Morgan scoffed at Eustace's (and Gibbon's) appropriation of Roman orators like Cicero. Tales of yore, of Roman heroes who 'rise on the imagination', of 'the Scipios, and the Catos, Pompey, Antony, Caesar, and Cicero', those who 'hover over the dreams of antiquarian anticipation', were mostly 'apocryphal', 'manifest falsehood', and 'absurd'.⁴⁹⁴ The much-vaunted ancient monuments to such men and events were now little more than 'a few imperfect ruins' which rose 'amidst mounds of rubbish'. Describing the Capitoline Hill, Morgan noted that, however lauded, barely 'a trace in stone or tower, not a wreck, remains, except some formless masses and disputed sites'.⁴⁹⁵ Instead, more 'modern edifices' stood, but 'their elevation is mean, and their facades broken and encumbered by pilasters'.⁴⁹⁶ Far from celebrating the glory of ancient Rome, such ruins were 'monuments of her crimes

⁴⁹¹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 1.

⁴⁹² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 334.

⁴⁹³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 334-5.

⁴⁹⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 329-30.

⁴⁹⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 330.

⁴⁹⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 335-6.

and her corruption.⁴⁹⁷ Rather than the bringers of light and civilisation, Lady Morgan describes ancient Rome as

vile in its origin, barbarous in its institutions, a casual association of outcasts [...] Europe to the extent of its known boundaries was subjected to slavery, and the independence of almost the entire civilised world merged in the dominion of the Quirites [early Roman citizens].⁴⁹⁸

For Morgan, 'the inherent principle of the Roman government [...] was power, privilege, and knowledge for the few - slavery the most abject for the many.'⁴⁹⁹ The Roman system was one where 'few were found willing to sacrifice an aristocratic principle', overseen by 'unfeeling patricians' for whom 'to talk of plebeian rights, was a loss of cast; and to plead for the people, was to incur the suspicion of a desire to rule.'⁵⁰⁰ Such comments reflected Morgan's own socio-political beliefs and experiences. Yet, as she conceded, such was the ubiquitous reputation of Roman glory, that for travellers to Italy, 'fancied virtue and imaginary heroism, with all the false impressions to which they gave rise, will recur to the least classic taste.'⁵⁰¹ Morgan was scathing of those who 'happy as they are' with the image of a utopian ancient Rome, remained 'undisturbed by historical doubts, unseduced by novel views' and 'remain fixed in the orthodoxy of history, as of religion.'⁵⁰²

Such comments were the antithesis of Eustace's eulogisation of the ancient world. Lady Morgan was explicit in her castigation of Eustace, referring to him negatively on no fewer than fifteen occasions. Perhaps the most representative was her description of Eustace's 'false, flimsy, and pompous work, of his utter ignorance of Italy' and 'his premeditated perversion of facts.'⁵⁰³ In many ways, Morgan's account of Italy was a direct challenge to social and political views that she (and others) attributed (perhaps

⁴⁹⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 330.

⁴⁹⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 2.

⁴⁹⁹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 333.

⁵⁰⁰ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 332-3.

⁵⁰¹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 329.

⁵⁰² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 328.

⁵⁰³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 105.

unfairly) to Eustace. Several critical reactions to the latter suggest that, in some circles at least, the glorification of ancient Rome was associated with the kind of support for aristocratic authority which previous Grand Tourists engendered. Certainly, Eustace was explicitly associated with such support, as a later traveller demonstrated. In 1831, James Johnson, a naval surgeon and travel writer, still referring to Eustace in his own account of Italy, wrote of the latter's 'fear of revolutionary, and his admiration of aristocratic and monarchical principles.'⁵⁰⁴ In modern historiography, Benjamin Colbert notes that Eustace's audience was essentially patrician and his account of Italy, dedicated to his travelling companion, Lord Brownlow, was very much in the mode of the previous generation of Grand Tourists.⁵⁰⁵

Still, Eustace had argued in his opening pages that 'the Constitution of England actually comprises the excellencies of all the ancient commonwealths, together with the advantages of the best forms of monarchy.'⁵⁰⁶ In comparing republics with monarchies, Eustace overtly favoured the former, writing that the crimes of the latter were more numerous and despotic.⁵⁰⁷ Eustace suggested that the ideal monarch was 'without either defect or excellency', possessed of enough awareness not to be manipulated by despotic forces, but insufficiently ambitious to turn to despotism themselves.⁵⁰⁸ In Eustace's view, a monarch's chief quality ought to be, as the *Edinburgh* somewhat bemusedly put it, 'that of mediocrity', more benign figurehead than effective ruler.⁵⁰⁹ Yet, for all his praise of British constitutionalism, Eustace had indeed suggested that perhaps there were limits to representative government and appears to have thought that such limits had been reached in Britain. The British form of government was one considered 'unattainable perfection by Cicero'. If the British had exceeded the limits of what the Romans considered possible, 'a scheme of policy that enchanted the sages of antiquity, may surely content the patriot and philosopher of modern days.'⁵¹⁰ Tacitus had considered such political perfection 'fair, but transient',

⁵⁰⁴ J. Johnson, *A Change of Air* (London, 1831), 13.

⁵⁰⁵ B. Colbert, *Shelley's Eye: Travel writing and aesthetic vision* (Ashgate, 2005), 129.

⁵⁰⁶ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xii-xiii.

⁵⁰⁷ Review, *Edinburgh*, 416.

⁵⁰⁸ Review, *Edinburgh*, 411.

⁵⁰⁹ Review, *Edinburgh*, 411

⁵¹⁰ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xiii.

yet Eustace wondered if ‘in spite of courtly encroachment and of popular frenzy, it may last for ever.’⁵¹¹ Despite Morgan’s criticisms, Eustace’s advocacy of a system somewhere between monarchical rule and full suffrage was no more than the mainstream middle-class view.

Morgan was particularly critical of Eustace’s ‘projected renovation of Latin, as the common language of Europe, and the restoration of the Pope to his ancient supremacy.’⁵¹² Admittedly, Eustace had advocated for the Pope as head of a united Italy. He had also had written of his somewhat incongruous desire ‘to see the spirit and the glory of Rome again revive’, and even ‘unite with Great Britain’ against France to restore the ‘equilibrium of power so essential to the freedom and to the happiness of Europe.’⁵¹³ Calling for a revival of the *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, Eustace imagined a united Italy ‘in union with Great Britain’ against France, as ‘the common enemy of Italy, of Great Britain, and of mankind.’⁵¹⁴ To Morgan, as we have seen, the upheavals in France represented social and political progress. She therefore contested and critiqued Eustace’s classical Italy, through which he configured and projected his vision of a classical legacy, an anti-French union, culturally and religiously if not literally, between modern Britain and Italy.

The united Italy which Eustace hoped to see would be ruled by ‘the Pontiff, a prince without passions, without any interest but that of his people.’⁵¹⁵ But he also proposed that ‘the people might exercise their powers by a representative body’ alongside ‘a wise and illustrious senate’ comprising ‘the cardinals and the first patricians’.⁵¹⁶ Although headed by a religious authority, in many senses, his proposed Italian government was similar to the British Houses of the Commons and the Lords. The great commonality that might facilitate a united front between Britain and Italy was Christianity. In spite of the perceived gulf between Catholicism and Protestantism, Eustace asked his

⁵¹¹ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xiii.

⁵¹² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 105.

⁵¹³ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 4, 323.

⁵¹⁴ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 4, 382.

⁵¹⁵ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 4, 382.

⁵¹⁶ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 4, 382.

readers to retain an open mind about Italy, and not prejudice against the country for its (and his) Catholicism, which ‘the Author affects not to conceal, because he is not ashamed of its influence.’⁵¹⁷ In spite of his vision of a Papal-led Italy, Eustace was at pains to stress that he did not ‘arraign those who support other systems.’⁵¹⁸ In a latitudinarian spirit, Eustace stressed that Protestant as well as Catholic ‘claims to mercy’ were based on ‘Sincerity and Charity’ and the ‘common Father of All’. Eustace wrote that ‘Reconciliation’, ‘Peace’, and even ‘Union’ between denominations were his ‘warmest wishes.’⁵¹⁹ In addition to criticising aspects of excessive Catholic show and ornamentation, Eustace went to some lengths to argue that Papal infallibility had been unfairly ascribed as a Catholic doctrine, and described such a position as ‘absurd.’⁵²⁰ Such comments earned the disapprobation of his clerical superior, Bishop Milner, who accused him of ‘gadding with Protestants.’⁵²¹

Despite Eustace’s good intentions, his critics did not see things in the same light. Lady Morgan wrote that the ‘true character’ of Eustace’s work ‘is to be found in the 4th canto of *Childe Harold*’. By this, Morgan meant John Cam Hobhouse’s notes on his friend Byron’s fourth Canto, which were viscerally critical of Eustace. Hobhouse took advantage of his contribution to Byron’s work to devote several pages to a diatribe against ‘one of the most inaccurate, unsatisfactory writers that have in our times attained a temporary reputation.’⁵²² Employing an image of the fear felt by ancient Greek citizens of slave uprisings, Hobhouse objected to the constant appearance of Eustace’s ‘Gallic Helot to reel and bluster before the rising generation, and terrify it into decency by the display of all the excesses of the revolution.’⁵²³ This was a response to Eustace’s virulent anti-French position which pervaded his entire work and which he made clear in the very first pages. Eustace wrote that his ‘abhorrence of that [French] government and its whole system’ was ‘deep and unqualified’; ‘as long as

⁵¹⁷ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xi.

⁵¹⁸ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xi.

⁵¹⁹ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, x-xii.

⁵²⁰ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 2, 646.

⁵²¹ G. Martin Murphy, *John Chetwode Eustace*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, (2007). www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8937 (accessed 13/10/17).

⁵²² Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, 230.

⁵²³ Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, 231.

religion and literature, civilisation and independence are objects of estimation among men', he opined, 'so long must revolutionary France be beheld with horror and detestation.'⁵²⁴ Eustace objected to the cultural damage inflicted by 'those modern Vandals' in Italy.⁵²⁵ The French, who 'tore' and 'dragged' with 'their sacrilegious hands' had 'surpassed the rapacity of the Goths and Vandals' in their treatment of the Vatican collections, depositing them in the 'dull, sullen halls [...] of the Louvre'.⁵²⁶

Hobhouse's objections to Eustace's anti-French sentiments were not entirely unqualified. He conceded that 'animosity against atheists and regicides in general, and Frenchmen specifically, may be honourable'. Magnanimously, though, he 'stated as an incontrovertible fact', that the French introduced into Italy, many improvements for the better which 'put Mr Eustace's Antigallican philippics entirely out of date.'⁵²⁷ Of course, when they were written in 1802, they were *not* out of date. Referring to Eustace's friendship with Edmund Burke, Hobhouse described Eustace as 'blowing the borrowed trumpet of Mr Burke'.⁵²⁸ This was the nub of Hobhouse's objection to Eustace's antipathy to the French; he assumed that Eustace was, as Burke had done, employing fear of the French Revolution as a device to warn against the dangers of excessive democratic reform.

Many of Eustace's reviewing periodicals took a somewhat more balanced line.⁵²⁹ As the *London Magazine* reasonably pointed out in a long vindication of Eustace's anti-French remarks, in 1802, 'when he [Eustace] wrote his work, the sign of the times caused men to do justice to his sentiments.'⁵³⁰ Eustace had been far closer to fears of the potential implications of Napoleon and the French Revolution for Britain than

⁵²⁴ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, xiv.

⁵²⁵ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, lix.

⁵²⁶ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 297.

⁵²⁷ Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, 231-2.

⁵²⁸ Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, 233. Burke was also a common link between Eustace and Gibbon.

⁵²⁹ For a fascinating study of 'Romantic travel writing in relation to the city of Rome' (including all writers covered here but Morgan), the way in which 'rival and competing discourses of travelogue, tourist guide, classical companion, and poem [...] overlap, intersect and echo their rival narratives', see Cheeke, 'What so many have told', quoted separately above. For an overview of critical reactions to Eustace and several other rival writers, see Keith Crook's edition of Forsyth's *Remarks* (2001), xxi-xxix.

⁵³⁰ Correspondent, 'Vindication of Eustace, from the charges brought against him in Mr Hobhouse's notes and illustrations to Childe Harold', *London Magazine* vol. 1 (1820), 532-537, 536.

Hobhouse in 1818, and his account had only been published ten years after it had been written. Hence, Eustace's concerns regarding 'popular frenzy', or as *The Gentleman's Magazine* somewhat dramatically phrased it, 'the wild uncurbed wanderings of democratic fanaticism' which, for Eustace, were epitomised by the French Revolution.⁵³¹ The Whig-supporting *Edinburgh Review* was also more forgiving of Eustace's extolling of Catholic virtue, noting that 'it is pretty manifest, that a person who feels thus warmly attached to the Catholic religion, visits Italy with far livelier interest than they who are merely attracted to it by its classical associations.'⁵³² They added that Eustace's work was 'one of the best books of travel that have appeared since we began our labours.'⁵³³ It is hard to believe that Hobhouse was not well aware of these points and somewhat disingenuously took Eustace's comments out of context. What Morgan contested and critiqued in Eustace's treatment of classical and modern Italy, was a vision that she took to imply support for Papal and monarchical authority. Morgan was renowned as a radical, as were, in name at least, many of the well-known Romantic travellers like Byron and Shelley. Hobhouse, later a Whig member of Parliament and government minister, was even imprisoned in 1819 for a seditious pamphlet. For them, Eustace stood as a convenient symbol of religious and royal despotism, his narrative a barrier to progress and reform.⁵³⁴ Morgan noted that 'all [Hobhouse] has to say on Rome is worth quoting.'⁵³⁵

Lady Morgan continued with a discussion of the Tarpeian Rock, a site of execution during the Roman Republic where victims were flung from the top of the high cliff to meet their deaths below. She noted that Marcus Manlius, a hero who had fought for and saved Rome, proposed that the ordinary people, bowed down by their debt owed to patrician Romans, ought to have distributed amongst them, 'the plunder of nations, rusting in the temples of the Capitol.' For such effrontery, he was 'flung from the

⁵³¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 372.

⁵³² *Review, Edinburgh*, 379.

⁵³³ 'Review: A Tour through Italy', *The Edinburgh Review* 21 (1813), 376-424, 376.

⁵³⁴ Cheeke ('What so many have told') notes, but expands little on, the 'competing forms of knowledge and feeling among visitors to Rome, which is bound up with questions of class and social status.' (526) Similarly, Crook (Forsyth's *Remarks*) discusses the 'acrimonious exchange of partisan approval for rival travelogues' between reviewers (xii.)

⁵³⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 105 & Vol. 2, 336.

Tarpeian Rock!’⁵³⁶ Eustace had described the Capitol as ‘the palace of the Roman people, the seat of their power’.⁵³⁷ Immediately prior to her section on the Tarpeian Rock, Lady Morgan had directly addressed this point with heavy sarcasm and multiple exclamation marks: ‘The power of the Roman people!!!’.⁵³⁸ After all, what power did the Roman ‘people’ possess? Morgan then cleverly used the Tarpeian Rock to illustrate the ‘real’ Rome, where the state executed those who challenged their despotism. This was an effective strategy, as the unfortunate Manlius was the same individual whom Eustace had argued was a shining example of open Roman debate in the Capitol. By pointing out the reality of Manlius’ demise at the hands of self-interested patricians, Lady Morgan challenged Eustace’s idealised vision of Rome as the progenitor of modern political civilisation. By showing how Rome was essentially an absolutist regime which used its power to shut down public debate, she struck at the heart of the so-called freedoms of British constitutionalism. The warning was clear. If ancient Rome was a template for modern Britain, it was also illustrative of all forms of non-representative government, ancient and modern. Whether it was ‘the degraded people of Rome’ or the common British citizen of the modern day, all such measures were ‘invented or employed to agonize that dupe and victim of all systems-*man*!’.⁵³⁹ Ultimately, Morgan concluded,

there are no legitimate beginnings of empires...all monarchical governments, owing their origin to the wants or the crimes of man, are founded in conquest, or are consolidated by usurpation.⁵⁴⁰

The barbarian ‘multitudes’ who felled the Roman empire were certainly no better, those who ‘exterminated while they plundered’. Indeed, ‘such was the origin of those feudal dynasties’ of which Europe was later composed.⁵⁴¹ The political power of the church came in for particularly dramatic criticism, described in almost Gothic terms as

⁵³⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 342.

⁵³⁷ Eustace, *Classical Tour* Vol. 1, 213.

⁵³⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 339.

⁵³⁹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 341.

⁵⁴⁰ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 3-4.

⁵⁴¹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 3-4.

‘founded in sacrifice, enforced by persecution, with terror for its spring, and human degradation for its object, dark, despotic, exclusive [...] it rose above all divine origin.’⁵⁴² The church and absolute temporal rulers were the ‘two great holds of authority and of opinion’ which combined in despotism to oppress all nations.⁵⁴³ The legacy of Italy’s past was not civilisation but despotism, in the form of the Holy Roman Empire and the Church. It was the Italian republics of Florence, Milan, and Venice who ‘proved by the test of experiment, that knowledge and civil liberty are the sole bases of human virtue and civilization.’⁵⁴⁴ Yet these beacons of freedom, birth-places of ideas which would inform the later British constitution, were merely a ‘solecism in the reigning system of Europe’, and that union of ‘despotism and bigotry’, temporal and spiritual absolutism, ultimately prevailed; ‘the State shook her iron sceptre, the Church unfurled her red-cross banner’, and as had their classical predecessors, they deployed their ‘imperial legions’.⁵⁴⁵ In Europe, where absolutism had reigned, Morgan conceded that Britain was ‘a land, where gallant sons and patriotic husbands have successfully advocated a people’s rights’.⁵⁴⁶ For Lady Morgan, Britain’s relative freedom and success was achieved *in spite* of a European legacy that was the enemy of freedom. Yet Morgan also sounded notes of caution, implying that the potential for the type of despotism inherent in all empires, and epitomised in classical Rome, was still present in Britain. Although Lady Morgan celebrated ‘the accidents of fortune’ that meant the British travellers were less subjected to acts of despotism committed by either religious or patrician authority, she warned against ‘men who, whether clothed in ermine or dignified by place, would convert the judgement seat into an engine of political power.’⁵⁴⁷ Even under a representative constitution like that of Britain, patricians and prelates who harboured a ‘lust for arbitrary mis-rule’ were never far away; those who might one day ‘teach a British patriot to dread a lawless sentence, and a Tarpeian Rock!’⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 5.

⁵⁴³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 11.

⁵⁴⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 18.

⁵⁴⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 17-18.

⁵⁴⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 343.

⁵⁴⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 343.

⁵⁴⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 343.

If Britain wore the mantle of the classical past, it was in terms of its potential for despotism, which was to be guarded against. As discussed, Morgan had criticised in her novels the imperial British treatment of both India and her native Ireland; as regards the latter, she had had personal experience. Thus, Morgan drew parallels between the Roman and British empires, but in ways which emphasised their oppressive natures. In Britain, constitutional government had been established, thanks not to any Roman legacy, but to two seventeenth-century revolutions. Ultimately, Morgan believed that the progress of liberty was as inevitable as the incoming tide, 'ebbing as it flows' until 'it covers with its waters the whole waste of shore, where rocks and shoals have vainly stemmed its incursions.'⁵⁴⁹ Morgan noted that the first, the Cromwellian revolution, was stigmatised by the elite as 'rebellion', yet was the 'parent of English liberty' in comparison to the 'more calculated movement' of 1688. English liberty was gained *despite* the ruling elite, through 'an ardour, a generosity, and an intellectual vigour in the *people*'.⁵⁵⁰

Critical Reactions: Differing to Agree

Unsurprisingly, *Italy* was pilloried in the press. John Croker's review in the *Quarterly* was apoplectic, stating 'this woman is utterly *incorrigible*' (emphasis original). Croker described *Italy* as 'a series of offences against good morals, good politics, good sense, and good taste', savaging Morgan for her 'indelicacy, ignorance, vanity, and malignity.' In fact, the *Quarterly* engaged not at all with Morgan's actual arguments. Croker concluded that the work was so uniquely bad, that 'her example is very little dangerous.'⁵⁵¹ Given the book's widespread attention, however, driven by its controversial nature and contentious reviews, this comment might have been wishful thinking on Croker's part, who was likely most concerned about the seditious influence of Morgan's work. The Whiggish *Edinburgh Review* declined to review *Italy* at all. It remained for Leigh Hunt's more radical *Examiner* to provide support for a 'refreshing' account of Italy, which exposed the 'moral, religious, and political hypocrisy' of the times and condoned 'the most hopeless and deadly despotism of

⁵⁴⁹ Morgan, *Italy*, Vol. 1, 30.

⁵⁵⁰ Morgan, *Italy*, Vol. 1, 27. (My emphasis).

⁵⁵¹ J. W. Croker, 'Review: Italy' *Quarterly Review*, 25 (July, 1821), 529-34, 529.

Europe.⁵⁵² Such responses were typical of periodical reviewers for whom the very idea of a woman making adverse political comments was enough to warrant their wrath.⁵⁵³

Critical responses to Eustace were more complex and revealing of many of the ambiguities discussed in this chapter. As we have seen, some were sympathetic to Eustace, or at least understood him within the context of the period in which he travelled, during the Peace of Amiens, in the aftermath of Napoleonic hostilities. But even the complimentary *Edinburgh Review* took issue with Eustace's enthusiasm for the Roman empire. They protested

against the substance of the statement, which alleges Rome to have been instrumental in promoting the happiness of the human race. A more signal curse was never surely inflicted upon humanity, than in the long duration of this savage empire, whose aim was universal conquest, and whose boast was, that fraud and murder were its trade.⁵⁵⁴

The *Edinburgh* added that

The admiration of Rome is one of the worst heresies which we bring with us from school; and it cannot admit of a doubt, that the elegance acquired from an

⁵⁵² 'Q', 'Italy', *Examiner*, 704 (July, 1821), 412-3, 413. For Italian reactions, particularly Foscolo, to Lady Morgan, Eustace and to other British travel writers, see Isabella, *Risorgimento*, 189-202. As noted in previous chapters, the chief Italian objection to British travel writing was their 'fictional, romanticized attitude towards all things Italian'. By 'reinventing places and facts' travellers undermin[ed] the very foundation of Italian national consciousness, its cultural heritage' (190-1).

⁵⁵³ See J. Rendall, 'Bluestockings and reviewers: gender, power, and culture in Britain, c. 1800-1830', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 26 (2004), 355-74. Rendall argues that 'the new critical periodicals of early-nineteenth-century Britain were recognizable if inconspicuous sites for a series of conflicts around issues of gender, conflicts between reviewers and the reviewed, and between reviewers of the different journals' (356). The role of women was considered as an essential guide to a society's modernity and state of civilisation. These ideas built on 18th-century publications such as William Alexander's *History of Women* (Dublin, 1779) and John Millar's *Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (Dublin, 1771). The latter was particularly influential, see especially his opening chapter, 'Of the Rank and Condition of Women in Different Ages' (1-79). Regardless of political affiliation, 19th-century periodicals generally agreed that, ideally, women should express a 'form of domestically based but refined sociability' (Rendall, 358). Most reviewers were 'deliberately and quite self-consciously, redefining the republic of letters as a space for gentlemen, and constructing, shaping, and identifying with a mainly though not entirely upper middle-class reading public' (Rendall, 357).

⁵⁵⁴ Review, *Edinburgh*, 396.

early intercourse with ancient authors, is dearly purchased by the perverted notions of glory and greatness so generally imbibed at the same time.⁵⁵⁵

Unsurprisingly, the *Quarterly Review*, the *Edinburgh's* Tory rival, took issue with Eustace's characterisation of Catholicism, describing the religion instead as 'an ingenious system of methodised intrigue, tending by slow, but certain, means, to the establishment of unbounded authority.'⁵⁵⁶ The *Quarterly* agreed, though, with the *Edinburgh* that Eustace had rather hypocritically romanticised the benefits of the Roman empire in comparison to the Napoleonic French, suggesting both shared the 'same unbounded and unprincipled lust of dominion.'⁵⁵⁷ Yet, the *Quarterly's* negative view of the French was qualified and, although unacknowledged, conceded ground to Lady Morgan when they wrote that 'in spite of our contempt for the philosophy and the republicanism' of the French, and their 'abhorrence for the character of its despot [Napoleon] [...] some eventual benefit may possibly arise out of the confusion and chaos of the revolution itself.'⁵⁵⁸ The improvements and benefits referred to here were those arising from the replacement, in France and Italy, of monarchical and Papal absolutism. Lady Morgan could hardly have put it better. Similarly, rather than propose Britain as the inheritors of the classical legacy the *Quarterly* commented that, although Roman history excited the emotions of the traveller, 'these exalted feelings will gradually subside, when he reflects that the glory with which they are surrounded, was purchased by the misery and degradation of millions.'⁵⁵⁹ The *Quarterly* attributed Eustace's enthusiasm for ancient Rome to over-exuberance and concluded that, 'true, however, to those impressions of classical taste which he imbibed in youth, Mr. Eustace contemplates the Roman character with enthusiastic delight.'⁵⁶⁰

The *Quarterly* here added to what seems like a common view, that a misleading and overly romantic view of the Italian past was being, or at least had been, taught in

⁵⁵⁵ Review, *Edinburgh*, 396.

⁵⁵⁶ Review, 'A Tour through Italy', *Quarterly Review* (Jan. 1814), 222-250, 233.

⁵⁵⁷ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 228.

⁵⁵⁸ Review, *Quarterly*, 243.

⁵⁵⁹ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 222.

⁵⁶⁰ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 222.

schools. This hints at the possibility of changing views, that such ideas were products more of the past than the present. In terms of this and their distaste regarding the nature of ancient Rome, not only did the *Quarterly* concur with their great rival periodical they, despite their castigation of Lady Morgan, also appear to have agreed with some of the substance of her arguments. This general agreement between rivals, even enemies, suggests that the discursive construction of Britain as the inheritors of the classical world was perhaps viewed far from ubiquitously positively. Furthermore, whilst the *Quarterly* accepted that 'it is impossible for barbarians long to mix with a polished people, without acquiring some degree of improvement', they argued that colonial dominions were 'not as nurseries for citizens', as Eustace had suggested, 'but for soldiers, for the tools and instruments of more extensive conquests'.⁵⁶¹ They added that the eventual collapse of Rome had begun with its moral decline when the state 'expanded its views and institutions, in proportion as it embraced a wider field of operation, and aspired to the dominion of the world.'⁵⁶² The *Quarterly's* concerns regarding past empires had a very contemporary feel. They implied that the line between 'improvement' and over-reaching imperial despotism was a fine one and the potential consequence dire for both colonisers and colonised.

In other areas, the *Quarterly* were closer to Eustace's view. Respecting the earlier Roman Republic's model of governance, between monarchical rule and universal suffrage, they expressed their 'profound admiration' for

the address of the patricians in extending and confirming their own authority, without exciting too much the jealousy of the plebeians; neither are the patience and moderation with which the latter submitted to the dominion of superior wisdom, less entitled to praise.⁵⁶³

These ideas clearly map onto contemporary mainstream middle-class views in Britain, that representative government should not extend to universal enfranchisement, and

⁵⁶¹ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 232.

⁵⁶² 'Review', *Quarterly*, 232.

⁵⁶³ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 232.

concerns lest this should cause agitation among the lower classes. Perhaps this relative agreement with Eustace was the reason that the Tory *Quarterly* ultimately conceded that 'Mr Eustace's political principles [were] liberal.'⁵⁶⁴

On the face of it, Lady Morgan and John Chetwode Eustace represent polarised opposing positions. One, (in theory anyway) a supporter of traditional aristocratic authority and Britain's imperial role; the other demanding radical political change, and for whom Britain's colonialism was indicative of despotic characteristics hidden beneath a light constitutional veneer. Similarly, the divide between the *Quarterly* and Morgan appears unbridgeable. As we have seen, though, there is far more which binds these apparent adversaries, including the *Edinburgh Review*, than separates them. All sides agreed that Italy's past provided a model for a range of views about the present, about the nature of political rule in Britain and its imperial role abroad, even if the value of that model to Britain was contested. There was also broad agreement regarding the benefits to Britain of representative government, even if some favoured further reform. But perhaps the broadest agreement was over their concerns about the nature of empires generally and their specific fears of the British mirroring Roman over-reaching and decline. The all-conquering British apparently brimmed with self-confidence born of an emphatic belief in the rightness of their civilising imperial mission in India and beyond. In truth, from the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth, from historians of the classical period to Romantic poets to middle-class travellers and their reviewers, few could agree wholeheartedly that the whole endeavour was even a good idea.

Perhaps, then, it is unsurprising that a distancing of Britain from parallels with the ancient world appears to take place in writers' accounts of Italy from the 1830s. Thomas Roscoe, for example, writing an 1831 account of Rome for the popular *Landscape Annual*, drew no direct comparison between Britain and ancient Italy. Rather than appropriating the ancient Italian past for Britain, Roscoe allowed Italy possession of their history, but his 'deep feeling of melancholy' among the 'fallen

⁵⁶⁴ 'Review', *Quarterly*, 223.

monuments of Roman days' and the 'abandoned habitations of modern years' hinted at the connection between past and present Italy.⁵⁶⁵ Between the ancient and modern, Roscoe described the rise of Church power, well-intentioned at first, but ultimately the 'seat of spiritual tyranny'.⁵⁶⁶ For Roscoe, such tyranny marked not only the 'general character of pontifical history', but also 'of Rome in the zenith of her latter glory'.⁵⁶⁷ In describing the 'constant recurrence of evil men and evil deeds in the course of her rise and fall, for so her state may now almost be termed', Roscoe returned to Italy its past, but in a way which implied a cycle of misuse of excessive power in the name of political and religious zeal which had led to a modern failed state.⁵⁶⁸ Roscoe wrote that the history of Italy contained

mirrors of wisdom to future generations-as full of moral doctrine as of monuments of mightier days-the utter extremes of human power and weakness are typified in their history and their doom.⁵⁶⁹

These were mirrors in which British travellers had long glimpsed warnings. Self-anointed inheritors of the classical past and the latest 'Lords of Human Kind' perhaps...but the mantle fitted with no certainty and it was with a sense of distinct uneasiness that the British wore the new purple.

⁵⁶⁵ T. Roscoe, *The Tourist in Italy* (London, 1831), 132.

⁵⁶⁶ Roscoe, *Tourist*, 135.

⁵⁶⁷ Roscoe, *Tourist*, 144.

⁵⁶⁸ Roscoe, *Tourist*, 144.

⁵⁶⁹ Roscoe, *Tourist*, vi.

Chapter Four

Indian Antiquity: The Present State of the Past

Introduction

On February the 24th, 1784, the traveller, scholar and Anglo-Indian Supreme Court judge, William Jones, gave his opening discourse to the inaugural meeting of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Jones recollected his ‘inexpressible pleasure’ at viewing the coast of India from his ship, ‘encircled by the vast regions of Asia.’⁵⁷⁰ For Jones, the region was the

nurse of sciences, the inventress of delightful and useful arts, the scene of glorious actions, fertile in the productions of human genius, abounding in natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government, in the laws, manners, customs, and languages, as well as in the features and complexions of men.⁵⁷¹

As such an ‘important and extensive a field was yet unexplored’, Jones congratulated his audience on founding ‘a Society for inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Natural Productions, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia.’⁵⁷² The aim of the Asiatic Society was to seek ‘nothing but truth unadorned by rhetoric’.⁵⁷³ This was inquiry for inquiry’s sake into ‘Man and Nature; whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other’.⁵⁷⁴

Over fifty years later, the East India Company administrator and future parliamentarian, Charles Trevelyan, suggested that the purpose of British historical

⁵⁷⁰ J. Elmes (ed.), *Discourses delivered before the Asiatic Society* Vol. 1 (London, 1824), 1-2.

⁵⁷¹ Elmes, *Discourses*, 2.

⁵⁷² Elmes, *Discourses*, 2.

⁵⁷³ Elmes, *Discourses*, 11.

⁵⁷⁴ Elmes, *Discourses*, 4. For biography of Jones, see M. J. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, poet, lawyer, and linguist, 1746-1794* (Oxford, 2011). For the influence and founding of the Asiatic Society, see chapter 6 (205-51). Their journal, ‘Asiatick Researches, would transform Western conceptions of a marginalised subcontinent, placing a vibrant India at the centre of European Romanticism’ (206).

inquiry into the Indian past was something *other* than the pursuit of objective knowledge. ‘The object of the Asiatic societies’, wrote Trevelyan, was

to lay open to the European world whatever the records of Asia contain to illustrate and aid the progress of mind, of morals and of natural history.⁵⁷⁵

Indian history was a ‘medium for investigating [...] the progress of mind and manners during so many ages.’⁵⁷⁶ What it revealed to Trevelyan was a system ‘skilfully contrived for arresting the progress of the human mind.’⁵⁷⁷ Consequently, for Trevelyan, the British purpose in educating Indians in the English language, was to *counter* the Indian past, ‘to instruct the people of India in *sound* knowledge and *true* morality’ (my emphasis).⁵⁷⁸ Interpretation of the Indian past was not to be left to Indians. Trevelyan doubted whether the entire canon of Eastern literature had ‘enabled us to ascertain a single fact of the least consequence towards the history of the ancient world.’⁵⁷⁹ True to his enthusiasm for Indian history, William Jones had suggested that the Asiatic Society might publish translations of Indian documents submitted by ‘native authors’. A more open question was ‘whether you will enrol as members any number of learned natives’.⁵⁸⁰ In his second anniversary discourse, for all his exultation of Indian history and claims to objective research, Jones implied the European inheritance of the ancient cradle of civilisation by noting that travellers’ observations of the ‘superiority of European talents’ were ‘at least as old as Alexander.’⁵⁸¹ Jones configured ‘Europe as a sovereign princess, and Asia as her handmaid’.⁵⁸²

In this chapter, I will explore how the past was, whether Indian or European, not simply a matter of academic inquiry, but an indicator of, and site of contestation over, contemporary moral and cultural superiority. In the previous chapter, we saw how most travellers, regardless of their opposing views, generally agreed on that modern Italians were most *unlike* their famous forebears. I will begin this chapter by

⁵⁷⁵ Trevelyan, *Education*, 53.

⁵⁷⁶ Trevelyan, *Education*, 182.

⁵⁷⁷ Trevelyan, *Education*, 84.

⁵⁷⁸ Trevelyan, *Education*, 53.

⁵⁷⁹ Trevelyan, *Education*, 208.

⁵⁸⁰ Elmes, *Discourses*, 7.

⁵⁸¹ Elmes, *Discourses*, 10.

⁵⁸² Elmes, *Discourses*, 11.

considering how travellers configured contemporary India as the opposite, as *exactly* like their ancient predecessors. I will examine how travellers deployed portrayals of modern India's close convergence on its own past as indicative of the latter's unchanging, even unchangeable, nature and 'explained' the backward and premodern state of their contemporary society. Such a contradictory approach to the pasts of India and Italy allowed the British to appropriate from the ancient Romans, the role of the bringers of civilisation to an India that, they claimed, was unable to extricate itself from premodern antiquity.

In the later part of the chapter, I explore travellers' reactions to monuments of the Indian past. I will examine how, whilst some travellers praised India's artistic and architectural history, others found it strange and wanting in comparison with the ancient European past. Still others refused to attach any importance at all to India's past. I consider how, in all cases, their observations helped them navigate and explain the differences in the ways in which they perceived that Indian and British society had progressed (or failed to).

Travels through Indian Space-Time

Describing India in the 1830s, Marianne Postans marvelled at how 'the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water'. There were, she wrote, 'few scenes' that were 'more interesting than the morning gatherings round an eastern well.' She continued,

on these occasions, the women of a city are seen probably to the greatest advantage; their "bravery" of gold and tinkling ornaments is donned; the brightest hues of their silken draperies, arranged with exquisite effect; and the brazen vessel, which bespeaks the industrious performance of a domestic duty, poised gracefully and securely on the head.⁵⁸³

The reason Postans appeared transfixed by what, on the face of it, was a relatively mundane task was because the tableaux appeared to her as a 'custom [that] so

⁵⁸³ Postans, *Cutch*, 110.

eminently belongs to the earliest ages of the world, and its primitive society.’⁵⁸⁴ When she wrote that ‘the really picturesque effect is heightened to the imaginative mind by the charms of association’, it was because she was witnessing the past in the living present. These were nothing less than the ‘images of the olden world, when the daughters of the Patriarchal tribes went forth to fill their brazen water vessels, beside the shaded wells of Palestine.’ They were ‘rich in retrospective power.’⁵⁸⁵ Why Postans chose to transpose this image to Palestine is a matter for speculation. Perhaps because ‘Patriarchal’ Palestine signified the very beginnings of time and history for Postans; at least, that which marked the origins of social, political, and religious civilisation. Regardless, the ‘retrospective power’ she invoked did indeed carry weight. Its discursive authority configured an India for her readers that was a living embodiment of the past. Where Europe had progressed into modernity, India had remained in the past, Biblical even, rooted at the beginning of time. Portraying Indian society as, effectively, two millennia behind Britain justified British intervention.⁵⁸⁶

Although Postans imbued her narrative with a sense of shocked revelation, the idea that everyday Indian life was rooted in antiquity was hardly new. At the opening of our period, Jemima Kindersley listed several examples in her 1777 account of India illustrating the ‘universality and unchangeableness of many of the customs in the East.’⁵⁸⁷ These ranged from the social and religious features of both Hindu and Muslim life to the timeless construction of light-weight bamboo cots which Kindersley surmised must have been the practical explanation for Jesus’ instruction to a sick man

⁵⁸⁴ Postans, *Cutch*, 111.

⁵⁸⁵ Postans, *Cutch*, 111.

⁵⁸⁶ Colin Kidd describes such ideas as the ‘dark side’ of the Enlightenment (C. Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World 1600-2000* (Cambridge, 2006), 81). Traditionally seen as a ‘triumph of tolerance over barbaric prejudices and superstitions’, Kidd reflects on how ‘the Enlightenment, the principle prop of modern western intellectual life’ led to an assumption of ‘the superiority of white European culture to the values of extra-European civilisations’, including support for ‘overseas empire and colonialism.’ (79). Eze writes that ‘reason could only come to maturity in modern Europe’ whereas those of ‘non-European racial and cultural origins’ were ‘described and theorized as rationally inferior and savage’ (E. C. Eze (ed.), *Race and Enlightenment: A Reader* (Oxford, 1997), 4). These ideas have also been extended to the discursive configuration of Eastern Europe. See, L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The map of civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment* (Palo Alto, 1994). Also, M. Bakic-Hayden, ‘Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia’, *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 917-931. Of course, I argue that something similar applies to Italy, a western European space. As I will discuss in my conclusions, it was not only racial difference for which some people had not benefitted from the ‘modernising benefits’ of the Enlightenment.

⁵⁸⁷ Kindersley, *Letters*, 266.

to 'take up thy bed.' She also included among her examples, the prevalence of superstition, the habit of excessive bathing and both men and women anointing themselves with copious amounts of scented oil.⁵⁸⁸ Reflecting on the customs and usages in this country' she wrote,

I cannot help comparing them with many of those in ancient times. There is certainly a great analogy between the present and ancient manners in the east; which undoubtedly the particular religion, and unchangeable customs of the Hindoos, have greatly contributed to preserve.⁵⁸⁹

It is notable that many of the examples Kindersley gave are the very habits that travellers ubiquitously cited to configure contemporary Indians as effeminate and indolent. Although such descriptions are often considered as features of later Indo-phobic writing, the configuration of India as effeminate and licentious was clearly well-established by travellers by the 1780s.⁵⁹⁰ As I will discuss in a later chapter, such ideas were also used as examples indicative of a degraded Indian domesticity at the heart of their 'backward' society. Kindersley charged India with being not just unchanging, but '*unchangeable*', implying the requirement for a long, if not indefinite, involvement with Britain.

Other travellers from around the same time played with images of past and present in ways which reflected and reinforced the relationship between the modern British and 'backward' India. William Hodges' first impressions were not actually of India as such, they were of the British presence and authority in India and implied the classical past as Britain's inheritance. 'The English town', observed Hodges, 'rising from within Fort

⁵⁸⁸ Kindersley, *Letters*, 263-6.

⁵⁸⁹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 263.

⁵⁹⁰ Trautmann argues that British 'Indomania' gave way to 'Indophobia' in the early nineteenth century, driven by Grant's *Observations on the state of society* and Mill's *History of British India* (Trautmann, *Aryans*, 99). However, as Kindersley's earlier account of India shows, the building blocks of Mill's and Grant's configurations of India were in place well before this. As Suleri argues, 'the feminization of the colonized subcontinent remains the most sustained metaphor shared by imperialist narratives from ethnographic, historical, and literary fields' (Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India*, 16). Sen notes several eighteenth-century writers who 'rendered the Gentoos [as] naturally effeminate' (S. Sen, *Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (Abingdon, 2002), 19). In discussing eighteenth-century Scottish writers on India, Chen notes that 'as an imposed and haunting identity, the attribution of effeminacy can be traced throughout India's colonial history [...] the result was cultural and ideological justification for British imperialism' (Chen, Jeng-Guo S, 'Gendering India: Effeminacy and the Scottish Enlightenment's Debates over Virtue and Luxury', *The Eighteenth Century*, 51 (2010), 193-210, 193-4).

St. George, has from the sea a rich and beautiful appearance.' The buildings, covered with marble-like chunam stucco offered 'to the eye an appearance familiar to what we may conceive as a Grecian city in the age of Alexander.'⁵⁹¹ A year later when Hodges visited Calcutta, his initial impression as his ship sailed up the Ganges was 'rather unpromising', until the 'capital of the British dominions in the East' similarly 'burst upon the eye'⁵⁹² (See plate below). The English presence there also had the 'appearance of Grecian temples; and indeed every house may be considered as a temple dedicated to hospitality.'⁵⁹³ Britain's 'civilising' power was, thus, depicted as a direct legacy of the classic 'European' world. The 'virtues' of Greece and Rome, which Britain claimed to have, in large part, reproduced, justifiable their 'inheritance' of the Classical 'right' to exercise authority over other lands, such as India.⁵⁹⁴

Hodges also played with past and present to consider a different city. He described the people of Benares in terms of an antique sealed time capsule. Benares was 'one of the most ancient Hindoo cities', and one in which

the same manners and customs prevail amongst these people at this day, as the remotest period that can be traced in history: and in no instances of religious or civil life have they admitted of any innovations from foreigners.⁵⁹⁵

Hodges had effectively travelled in time as well as space, observing the past as he considered how 'curious, and highly entertaining' it was 'to associate with a people whose manners are more than three thousand years old.'⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 1-2.

⁵⁹² Hodges, *Travels*, 14.

⁵⁹³ Hodges, *Travels*, 14-15.

⁵⁹⁴ As discussed on p.14. though, the idea of ancient Greece as the origin of 'western civilisation' was an imagined concept.

⁵⁹⁵ Hodges, *Travels*, 59.

⁵⁹⁶ Hodges, *Travels*, 59-60.



A VIEW of CALCUTTA, taken from FORT WILLIAM.
*Engraved by W. Byrne from a picture Painted by W. Hodges R.A.
 in the Collection of Warren Hastings Esq.*

4. 1 A View of Calcutta, (1780) W. Hodges, *Travels In India*, 14.

Yet he was confused to find that these living antique artefacts displayed impressive ‘attention and polished behaviour’ which ‘usually marks the most highly civilised state of society’ (my emphasis), but presumably did not indicate such in India.⁵⁹⁷ Hodges situated both Britain and India in the past, but to very different effect.

Hodges had opened his late-eighteenth century account of India with thanks for the Orientalist scholars of India and the ‘learned labours of gentlemen’ who had illuminated India’s history. Yet, Hodges challenged the authenticity of India as presented by Orientalist scholars, noting that little had been presented to the general public that represented ‘the face of the country’.⁵⁹⁸ Elsewhere, he complained of the ‘arrogance and pride’ of ‘nabobs’ who eschewed contact with Indians, preferring to be

⁵⁹⁷ Hodges, *Travels*, 60.

⁵⁹⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, iii.

‘mounted on lofty elephants, and glittering in splendour.’⁵⁹⁹ He suggested that those who had lived in India for some time had lost the novelty of their ‘first impression’ of the country, as ‘reasoning assumes the place of observation.’⁶⁰⁰ Thus, although Hodges insisted that his observations were ‘the simple garb of truth, without the smallest embellishment from fiction, or from fancy’, they were in fact observations made through the lens of maximum novelty, of the greatest contrast with his British norms, unaffected by familiarity with India.⁶⁰¹ By emphasising the novelty of first impressions, Hodges created maximum difference between his European identity and that of India, reinforcing both.

Hodges consistently positioned India as an antique society. Watching a variety of Indians cook their evening meals, Hodges described the manner in which they dug a hole to fashion a hearth and admitted that ‘the simplicity and primitive appearance of these groups delighted me.’⁶⁰² Like Kindersley before him and Postans after, Hodges’ eliding of contemporary Indians with those of antiquity implied a premodern society in the present. In another example, returning to Calcutta by boat along the Ganges, Hodges enjoyed the sight of young Indian women in the river. Some were ‘sporting and playing’, whilst others were ‘with vases on their heads, carrying water to the temples’. As they had appeared to Postans, to Hodges too they seemed ‘like Naiads or Syrens’ as he admired their ‘fine antique figures [...] the beautiful female form ascending these steps from the river with wet drapery, which perfectly displays the whole person.’⁶⁰³

Although he claimed to observe with his ‘painter’s mind’, there is a clear sense of objectification in Hodges’ description. More than this, whereas British identification with the classical past represented their *modern virtue*, in his positioning of contemporary India in the past, Hodges represented their *backward premodernity*. Hodges configured both Britain and India as places where time was collapsed together in a conflation of past and present. The difference was that where parallels with the

⁵⁹⁹ Hodges, *Travels*, 14.

⁶⁰⁰ Hodges, *Travels*, iv.

⁶⁰¹ Hodges, *Travels*, iii.

⁶⁰² Hodges, *Travels*, 30-1.

⁶⁰³ Hodges, *Travels*, 33.

past thrust Britain towards the future, India was pushed back into antiquity. Leask notes that Hodges' description of the water-gathering women cast 'Indians as antique Greeks or Romans, mingling classical decorum with [...] erotic voyeurism.'⁶⁰⁴ This is what Leask calls the 'temporalizing trope', which 'emphasised [India's] living continuity' with the past.⁶⁰⁵ By deploying this trope, travellers repeatedly emphasised the apparent premodernity of India. The message to their broad audience of readers back home was justification for the intervention of the British, the imposition of their authority for the good of India.

Hodges was by no means the only traveller to describe India in terms of 'time as well as cartographic space.'⁶⁰⁶ In the 1810s, Maria Graham wrote that

the customs and habits of the natives seem immortal, and present us now with the same traits under which they were painted by the Greeks who visited them two thousand years ago.⁶⁰⁷

In this configuration of India, the imperial British had taken the place of the ancient Greeks, observing from a perspective of civilizational and military authority. The Indians, meanwhile, were as mired in pre-modernity as they had been under the eye of Alexander.

Deploying the now-familiar temporalising trope, Graham too noted the 'native women' drawing water, 'in their graceful costume, reminding one of antique sculptures.'⁶⁰⁸ Graham mused that it was a scene which 'a painter might have studied', to which Hodges might have replied that a painter had!⁶⁰⁹ Like Hodges' objectification of Indian women, Graham's description of the women focussed on the waist, the bare leg, and the breast, or, as Regina Akel puts it, 'parts of the body that make them sexually attractive.'⁶¹⁰ Reference to Indian women's everyday clothing as 'costume' also implied a kind of performance for the European gaze.

⁶⁰⁴ Leask, *Curiosity*, 174.

⁶⁰⁵ Leask, *Curiosity*, 174.

⁶⁰⁶ Leask, *Curiosity*, 44.

⁶⁰⁷ Graham, *Letters*, 7.

⁶⁰⁸ Graham, *Residence*, 2.

⁶⁰⁹ Graham, *Residence*, 2.

⁶¹⁰ Akel, *Maria Graham*, 56.

Maria Graham visited India at a pivotal time, as different ideas and configurations of India clashed and were being contested. Gust notes that ‘in form and content Graham’s *Journal* bears close resemblance to William Hodges’.⁶¹¹ In some ways, Graham’s account is a response to Hodges, one which reflects the changing nature of the British view of India and its past. For example, Hodges had, whilst visiting the Taj Mahal, lauded the Mughal Akbar as ‘an Emperor, whose great actions have resounded through the world, and whose liberality and humanity were his highest praise’.⁶¹² Indeed, he wondered whether what he saw was a remembrance of ‘the greatest and richest empire, perhaps, of which human annals can produce an instance’.⁶¹³ As regards Indian Hindus, Hodges, as we will see, mostly chose not to engage with their apparently strange, impenetrable ways. Decades later, Graham took an opposite stance. She saw great Hindu potential from which the former ‘spark’ of Indian greatness might once again, under benevolent British supervision, ‘blaze forth, if properly awakened’.⁶¹⁴ If Hindu India was currently somewhat moribund, it was not due to inherent weaknesses, ‘*not* the peculiar character of the Hindus, or encouraged by their laws or their faith’⁶¹⁵ (my emphasis). She argued that if ‘in their moral character the Hindus are worse than their ancestors’ it was because their virtues had been eroded by many centuries of slavery ‘to hard masters’, under an oppressive Mughal regime.⁶¹⁶

The differences between these opposite configurations of Hindu and Mughal India reflected changes in British imperial policy towards control of land and its associated revenue-raising policies. In the mid-eighteenth century, always keen to justify their actions as at least vaguely constitutional, it suited the British to claim they were operating within an accepted tradition of, if despotic, at least informed and basically benevolent Mughal rule. This justification became shakier when, by the end of the eighteenth century, they wished to implement a more permanent settlement of revenue-raising policy, from land mostly controlled by Hindus. It became more

⁶¹¹ Gust, *Mobility*, 274.

⁶¹² Hodges, *Travels*, 122.

⁶¹³ Hodges, *Travels*, 151.

⁶¹⁴ Graham, *Letters*, 8.

⁶¹⁵ Graham, *Letters*, 7.

⁶¹⁶ Graham, *Letters*, 7.

expedient to suggest that the ancient customs and usages of India were those of the Hindus and had been usurped by marauding Mughal invaders. By providing a permanent and regulated policy of revenue-raising the British were, they argued to themselves, offering greater security of tenure to Hindus and operating within ancient Hindu tradition and usage; as close, as they saw it, to a form of genuine constitutional legality as was possible in India.⁶¹⁷ This was a system *imposed* by the British but, as Travers puts it, they were at least moving from ‘despotism to...well, to a different, more enlightened kind of despotism.’⁶¹⁸ The general effect, as can be seen in the accounts of Hodges and Graham, and in the minds of their many readers, was to promote ‘a divisive view of India’s people as Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects, foreign invaders and ancient inhabitants.’⁶¹⁹

Regardless of her apparent sympathy for Hindus, Maria Graham’s accounts are highly inconsistent, representing both the Orientalist view and also prefiguring early Anglicist accounts of India. Graham openly drew on many of the Orientalist scholars of India throughout both *Residence* and *Letters* but also on writers like Orme who had been disparaging about India.⁶²⁰ Many of the remarks she made configured a contemporary degraded India in need of full British intervention and re-education. As discussed above, however, she also expressed concern regarding the colonial project, or at least the manner in which Britain had gained and kept control. Graham expressed her ambivalence in other ways too, recognising as had so many travellers that all empires shared the same inevitable fate. Observing the great scale of the

⁶¹⁷ R. Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth-Century India* (New York, 2007), 241-9. By the end of the nineteenth century, ‘the Mughal empire appeared more like the ‘Norman Yoke’ [...] curtailing an earlier tradition of [Hindu] legal rights’ (p. 241.) As the E.I.C.’s official historian put it, Mughal rule had little validity and was no more than ‘the accidental talents and success of a few ambitious and able leaders’ (J. Bruce, *Historical View of Plans for the Government of British India* (London, 1793), 31). For the primacy of Hindu tradition, see also Trautmann, *Aryans*, 66. For a full discussion of the history of these changes in E.I.C. policy, see Travers, *Ideology*, 207-249. Also, J. E. Wilson, *The Domination of Strangers: Modern Governance in Eastern India 1780-1835* (Basingstoke, 2008). However, there was no single monolithic view of either Hindu or Mughal India at any given period. For differing contemporary views, see Sen, *Distant Sovereignty*, 17-19. For a history of both British ‘Indomania’ and ‘Indophobia’ from the middle of the eighteenth century, see Trautmann, *Aryans*, 64-130. It would be more accurate to say that different ideas about Hindus and Mughals existed simultaneously, which British policy makers used expediently and opportunistically, reflected in travellers’ accounts.

⁶¹⁸ Travers, *Ideology*, 248.

⁶¹⁹ Travers, *Ideology*, 249.

⁶²⁰ Graham, *Letters*, iv.

ancient Hindu past, she wrote of the inevitable decline of human achievements, of 'vast cities now too large for their diminished inhabitants, towns embellished with temples and with tombs now falling into decay.'⁶²¹ At Mahvellipoor [Mavallipura], she walked around the ruins of five ancient temples. The abandoned 'loneliness' of the site, much buried in sand, caused Graham to 'meditate concerning the short duration of the monuments of human pride.' Although the temples were 'works of taste and magnificence', their builders and their arts were gone forever, and their efforts 'now adorn a desert' which had been reclaimed by 'Nature'.⁶²² Graham's imagery of the fall of civilisations remarkably prefigured Shelley's *Ozymandias*, written just a few years later.

Despite her claims for Hindu potential, Graham wrote that 'the arts and virtues that adorned them are sunk in the years of slavery under which the devoted Hindus have bent'. She listed their 'slavish' characteristics of 'patience, meekness, forbearance, and gentleness.'⁶²³ There is a sense of equivocation over Graham's employment of the term 'slave' throughout. At times, she implied slavery to foreign or Mughal oppression, whilst at others the implication is that Hindus were slaves to a set of inherent natural characteristics present since their antiquity. These arguments were almost exactly those made about Italy by travellers, historians, poets and novelists over generations. Indeed, Graham was to make them herself in her own account of Italy a few years later. India and Italy were places of great potential which the people were unable to realise, being victims of political, civic and religious oppression. In a circular argument, though, their 'natural' submission to foreign and domestic oppression was the result of their historical and inherent character weaknesses in the first place. They were 'slaves' to their own weaknesses and nature, which made them susceptible to outside despotism.

Despite protesting that contemporary Hindus were not victims of inherent weaknesses, Graham still noted that 'I every day find some traces of the manners and simplicity of the antique ages.'⁶²⁴ She found her 'evidence' around her in everyday

⁶²¹ Graham, *Letters*, 6.

⁶²² Graham, *Letters*, 163-4.

⁶²³ Graham, *Residence*, 27.

⁶²⁴ Graham, *Residence*, 27.

Indian life. In Chimechore [Chinchore] she had encountered the ultimate representation of the past in the present, ‘an *alive god*’ (original emphasis), a twelve-year-old child deemed the living embodiment of the Hindu deity, Ganesh.⁶²⁵ In Bombay, Graham watched a wedding procession ‘which at a distance looked like the groups we see on antique bas-reliefs.’⁶²⁶ Observing the apparently timeless nature of Hindus following the wedding procession, she further noted that ‘they are cunning, and incapable of truth; they disregard the imputations of lying and perjury, and would consider it folly not to practice them for their own interest.’⁶²⁷ Watching the night-time celebrations she concluded that, although the procession looked picturesque at a distance, ‘when one comes near, one is shocked at the meanness and inelegance of the god, and at the filth and wretchedness of his votaries.’⁶²⁸ A very different association with the classical past emerged in the village boys ‘whose wildness might make them pass for satyrs’, in a ceremony which ‘put one strongly in mind of the ancient Bacchanals.’⁶²⁹ These were relics of a past that contributed to the ‘the miserable state of society’.⁶³⁰ Hodges had quite similarly described the village’s annual ‘grand sacrifice’ of a buffalo, and their subsequent celebrations.⁶³¹ He recorded his distaste for the ‘universal revelling and intoxication’ or the ‘rites of Bacchus which far exceeded the bounds of temperance’, particularly the involvement of the ‘fair sex.’⁶³²

Both Graham and Hodges regularly denied India the context of its own antiquity and made instead comparisons with aspects of the European classical past. Leask describes such comparisons as an aesthetic ‘resource for rendering alien cultures commensurable, and therefore intelligible, to European travellers.’⁶³³ What was most ‘intelligible’ was that the British ruled from their modern Grecian temples whilst Indians languished in their ancient scenes of pagan and licentious excess.

⁶²⁵ Graham, *Residence*, 70.

⁶²⁶ Graham, *Residence*, 27.

⁶²⁷ Graham, *Residence*, 27.

⁶²⁸ Graham, *Residence*, 35.

⁶²⁹ Graham, *Residence*, 35.

⁶³⁰ Graham, *Residence*, 2 & 3.

⁶³¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 91-2.

⁶³² Hodges, *Travels*, 93.

⁶³³ Leask, *Curiosity*, 49.

Cast in Stone: India past and present

Scenes from everyday life presented both Hodges and Graham with opportunities to insert Indian people into a kind of imagined hybrid part-European past which served to demonstrate their essentially pre-modern nature. In considering the architecture of India's past, its temples, palaces, and monumental caves, travellers were confronted with physical realities of their history.

Hodges made several summarising observations in his account of India. He recognised the value of painting as 'specimens of human excellence and genius' in their own right but declared that the real value of art was its ability to 'faithfully represent the manners of mankind', which he clearly felt he had done.⁶³⁴ For this reason, he encouraged further artistic exploration of the Indian past, which would 'add greatly to our stock of knowledge relative to the Eastern continent'.⁶³⁵ The question, then, is what did Hindu art have to say about the 'manners' of its producers? As Hodges pointed out, 'everything has a particular character, and certainly it is the finding out the real and natural character which is required.'⁶³⁶

Hodges had no issue with the technical skill or aesthetic quality of Hindu artefacts. He described Hindus as 'superior to the Mahommedans in the ornamental parts of architecture'. Their sculptures were to be 'commended for the beauty of the execution' and 'finely drawn, and cut with a particular sharpness.'⁶³⁷ What such works represented was another matter, one which Hodges considered paradigmatic of Hindu 'character'. They were 'curious and valuable' artefacts, but ultimately 'purely mythological, the artists have only considered the symbolic character.'⁶³⁸ Casting about for understanding, Hodges' only reference point was the art with which he was familiar. Hindus were, Hodges concluded, 'without a power of giving a perfect form, such as we see in the Grecian statues.'⁶³⁹ Here was a comparison between artistic

⁶³⁴ Hodges, *Travels*, 156.

⁶³⁵ Hodges, *Travels*, 154.

⁶³⁶ Hodges, *Travels*, 155.

⁶³⁷ Hodges, *Travels*, 152.

⁶³⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, 153.

⁶³⁹ Hodges, *Travels*, 153.

styles, one of which was indicative of a rational society and another which suggested the very opposite. There was almost a sense of fear in Hodges' statement that 'the imagination must be under the guidance of cool judgement, or we shall have fanciful representations instead of the truth.'⁶⁴⁰ Perhaps it was a concern that over-familiarity might induce a madness from which there would be no return when he admitted that 'I am neither sufficiently qualified, nor willing to lose myself in the unfathomable, and perhaps impenetrable darkness of Eastern antiquities.'⁶⁴¹ This was an ever-present theme across our entire period. In the mid-eighteenth century the highly influential scholar Johann Winckelmann had noted that Oriental art produced 'strange figures' which were more 'extraordinary than beautiful'.⁶⁴² In the 1840s, Helen Mackenzie wrote that 'Hindu mythology' was 'far beneath that of Rome and Greece' and that 'their architecture and sculpture is proportionately debased' and that 'there is something *diabolical* about it'.⁶⁴³ She continued, 'and in viewing it one's sympathies are all with the fierce Mussalmans, who gloried in the title of idol-breakers.'⁶⁴⁴ The presence of a Catholic-Protestant comparison is, of course, just barely beneath the surface of such comparisons. A comparison of the Moghul and Hindu pasts is one to which we will return shortly.

Hodges' engagement with Hindu antiquity combined moralising disapproval with a seeming reluctance to say much at all. Hodges noted, for example, the 'many basso reliefs' inscribed in the stones of the Parthasarathy Temple near Madras, which 'I suppose relate to the religion of the Hindoos'. He was reluctant to comment further given that 'some of them are of the most indecent kind.'⁶⁴⁵ This was scant commentary on a site of past and contemporary importance, one Hodges must have known had been at the centre of local politics for some time. The British had intervened and mediated local disputes over the use of the temple on several occasions since the mid-eighteenth century, including in the years immediately preceding Hodges' visit.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁰ Hodges, *Travels*, 155.

⁶⁴¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 63.

⁶⁴² J. Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art* (Boston, 1873), 235.

⁶⁴³ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission*, 139. (My emphasis).

⁶⁴⁴ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission*, 139.

⁶⁴⁵ Hodges, *Travels*, 11.

⁶⁴⁶ K. Mukund, *The View from Below: Indigenous Society, Temples and the early Colonial State in Tamilnadu, 1700-1835* (New Delhi, 2005), 64-70.

There was a similar sense of brevity and disapproval when his party visited the pagoda temples at Deogur. Despite the site being 'perhaps the very oldest construction to be found in India', Hodges restricted his comments to just a few lines.⁶⁴⁷ He noted the simplicity of their design, and an ornamental trident resembling that of 'the Greek Neptune'. His only other observation was of the darkness of the single cramped chamber within each pagoda, with just 'a lamp, hanging over the Lingham', a phallic symbol of regeneration which was 'the great object of superstition among the followers of Brahmah.'⁶⁴⁸ Although acknowledging the great antiquity of the site, Hodges declined to comment on its historical importance. The religious context of the temple's symbology was relegated to mere 'superstition'. Hodges' description here immediately followed his disapproval of the previous night's 'rites of Bacchus', discussed above. Both are covered in little detail, by less than one full page of text. The reader's overall impression is to minimise any historical significance or context and create instead, a link between modern and ancient Hindu culture, pagan excess and sexual degradation.

In another example, close to the village of Sultangunge [Sultangani] Hodges visited the island of Jangerah [Jahangira] in the middle of the Ganges. This was a significant Hindu religious site, topped by a small hermitage in which lived a monk (see plate below). The island also boasted several antique religious rock carvings. The Orientalist scholar Charles Wilkins, noted for the first translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* into English and active in India at the time of Hodges' visit, wrote of Jangerah that the site was 'highly worthy of the travellers' notice'.⁶⁴⁹ Hodges had little respect for Wilkins' opinion, nor for the significance of the site itself. Indeed, he cynically suggested that the 'holy father' had occupied his lofty residence not from religious sentiment but for its 'extensive prospect of the country and river' and its coolness during the 'summer heats'.⁶⁵⁰ Wilkins singled out for particular praise the figure of Hary [Hari], a particular incarnation of Vishnu, 'recumbent on a coiled serpent', describing the sculpture as

⁶⁴⁷ Hodges, *Travels*, 94.

⁶⁴⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, 94.

⁶⁴⁹ Q. Craufurd, *Researches concerning the Laws, theology, learning, commerce etc of ancient and modern India* Vol. 1 (London, 1817), 97.

⁶⁵⁰ Hodges, *Travels*, 26.

‘finely imagined, and executed with great skill.’ The serpent Wilkins described had multiple heads with which

the artist has contrived to spread a kind of canopy over the sleeping god, and from each of its mouths issues a forked tongue, seeming to threaten death to any whom rashness might prompt to disturb him.⁶⁵¹

Hodges was less impressed with this site of antiquity and, unlike his Orientalist contemporaries, was ‘concerned I cannot pay so high a compliment to the art of sculpture among the Hindoos as is usually paid by many ingenious authors who write on the religion of Bramah.’⁶⁵² Wilkins’ context for the carvings was the light they shone on Hindu history and religion, and the materials and conditions available to the sculptor, carving directly from the rock. Hodges saw them instead ‘with the eyes of an artist’, or rather through the eyes of a European artistic aesthetic.⁶⁵³ He made no attempt to assess the historical or religious significance of the Jangerah carvings, writing only that they ‘are only to be paralleled with the rude essays of the ingenious Indians I have met with’ on his previous South Seas travels.⁶⁵⁴ Hodges went on, ‘modern works in sculpture of human figures, by the Hindoos, lay claim to very little more merit than their ancient productions.’⁶⁵⁵ Once again, Hodges’ entire treatment of this ancient site covered less than one full page; indeed, my discussion here is longer than his observations of the island! Clearly, there was little to say other than to point out that the unsophisticated and backward Hindu art of the ancient past had not improved in the present, which mirrored the nature of ancient and modern Hindu ‘character’ and ‘manners’.

⁶⁵¹ Craufurd, *Researches*, 97.

⁶⁵² Hodges, *Travels*, 26. The *Gentlemen’s Magazine’s* positive review of Hodges, ‘which cannot give the publick [sic] too favourable an impression’, simply parroted Hodges’ words without acknowledging as much or giving any context at all. For example, they repeated Hodges’ description of the ‘the rock, or island of Jangerah, adorned with sculpture rude as that in the south sea islands, and of equal merit with their modern sculptures’ (‘Review: Travels in India’, *The Gentlemen’s Magazine, and Historical Chronical*, 63 (1793), 337-343, 337-8). Such are the ways in which travellers’ narratives and their reviewers combined to present the public with seemingly authoritative but potentially misleading images.

⁶⁵³ Hodges, *Travels*, 26. For a brief history of the island see B. S Dhammika, ‘Jahangira: The Forgotten Temple’, *The Buddhist Temple* (2007). <https://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=18,5550,0,0,1,0#.XUSMluhKjIV> (accessed 8 Aug 2019).

⁶⁵⁴ Hodges, *Travels*, 26.

⁶⁵⁵ Hodges, *Travels*, 26.



4.2 W. Hodges, *A View of an Insulated Rock, in the River Ganges at Jangerah* (1787). From W. Hodges, *Select Views in India* (London, 1786-8).⁶⁵⁶

Slightly contradictorily, Hodges concluded by saying that other ‘ornaments’ he has seen in Hindu temples were ‘beautifully carved’. This statement set up his presentation of a thesis on the origins of various types of architecture.⁶⁵⁷ Despite regularly finding Hindu art lacking in quality, Hodges began by refuting the idea that only Greek architecture ‘comprizes [sic] all that is excellent in the art.’⁶⁵⁸ Whereas at Jehangira, Hodges refused to view the rock carvings within the context of the site, insisting on judging them by the standards of European art, here he maintained that architecture should be judged in the context of ‘all the climates and countries which mankind inhabit’.⁶⁵⁹ Although admiring of Greek architecture, Hodges asked that we

⁶⁵⁶ Note the picturesque aesthetic of the painting, which offers no clue as to its religious nature.

⁶⁵⁷ Hodges, *Travels*, 26.

⁶⁵⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, 64.

⁶⁵⁹ Hodges, *Travels*, 64.

should not be blind to ‘the majesty, boldness, and magnificence of Egyptian, Hindoo, Moorish, and Gothic.’⁶⁶⁰

Hodges’ thesis proposed that the ancient Greek temple was a copy in stone of the original Greek pre-civilisational wooden hut dwelling. Other architectural styles were based on the development of the pre-civilisational cave-dwelling within a mountain, apparently home to ancient Europeans, Indians, Egyptians and so forth.⁶⁶¹ Hindu, Egyptian, Moorish and Gothic architecture were not copies of each other, but the ‘older and younger brothers and sisters of the same family’. Thus, ‘the pyramid, the obelisk, the spire steeple, and minaret’ were the ‘bold, stupendous imitations of the romantic forms of spiry, towering rocks, which the imitators of humble huts never presumed to attempt.’⁶⁶²

To some degree, Hodges’ thesis is contradictory from the start, at odds with all else he had to say about Hindu art and architecture. It had also been inspired by his curiosity on observing what he considered Greek forms of carved ornament on a pillar in a Hindu building (see plate below).⁶⁶³ Giles Tillotson notes this, and also that the ‘Greek hut’ theory had been long proposed and that Hodges was extending the idea to other forms of architecture.⁶⁶⁴ Regardless, Tillotson suggests that Hodges’ contribution was an important one in dethroning ‘Western Classicism from its assumed position’ of superiority and as ‘the measure of all.’⁶⁶⁵ Phiroze Vasunia notes that throughout his text, Hodges regularly relied on ‘particular European principles of aesthetics’ and often failed to see ‘Indian art forms within the terms of Indian traditions’.⁶⁶⁶ Despite the apparent contradictions, Vasunia concludes that Hodges challenged a contemporary European aesthetic and to some degree represented a view that saw ‘the Greek tradition as a constraining force’ and expressed the need to ‘transcend the limits of classicism.’⁶⁶⁷ These assessments seems somewhat generous towards Hodges, whose

⁶⁶⁰ Hodges, *Travels*, 64.

⁶⁶¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 62-76.

⁶⁶² Hodges, *Travels*, 76.

⁶⁶³ Hodges, *Travels*, 63.

⁶⁶⁴ G. H. R. Tillotson, ‘The Indian Travels of William Hodges’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2 (November, 1992), 377-398, 389-92.

⁶⁶⁵ Tillotson, ‘William Hodges’, 393.

⁶⁶⁶ P. Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford, 2013), 180.

⁶⁶⁷ Vasunia, *Classics and Colonial India*, 180.

insistence that Greek architecture was not the only form to be admired was not only inconsistent with his other comments but also had a disingenuous sting in the tail. Other forms of architecture, based on the cave dwelling, had been ‘bred to *more or less* grandeur, elegance, and perfection’ (my emphasis), begging the question, which forms had *more*, and which *less*?⁶⁶⁸ In Egyptian and Hindu architecture, ‘gloom and darkness were common’ but also ‘desirable’ as ‘fancy works best when involved in the veil of obscurity.’⁶⁶⁹ If the ‘single and grouped pillars’ of Egyptian and Hindu architecture ‘should appear heavy’, it was because they had originally been strong props to support a cave roof.⁶⁷⁰ European architecture has transcended the ‘heaviness’ of Egyptian and Hindu architecture, had ‘found out easier and more pleasing proportions’ until, ultimately, ‘aspiring genius [...] dared to give them lightness and all the fanciful forms and graces of the Gothic style.’⁶⁷¹ Hodges’ thesis did not exactly therefore, as Tillotson suggests it did, posit that various forms of architecture ‘should be seen as equal but different.’⁶⁷² If Hodges transcended the limits of classicism, as Vasunia claims, it was to create a different hierarchy, one which placed the European Gothic as the ultimate representation of the pre-historical cave. The dark and gloomy, heavy-pillared symbolism of Eastern superstition or ‘fancy’ had been transformed into the light and airy Gothic form, representing the ‘true’ religion through the ‘genius’ of Christian Europe. What Hodges proposed was not so much ‘equal but different’, but schematics for the superiority of Christianity and European Gothic architecture.

William Hodges appealed substantially to an emotional sensibility which highlighted aspects of Indian historical monuments which, to him, illustrated an inherent Indian strangeness best avoided. Maria Graham had a different approach, attempting to construct a logical argument based on a combination of scholarly research and aesthetic appreciation. She drew her readers’ attention to what she saw as the contemporary practical issues of religious despotism and immorality which she found around her in everyday life and carved into the monumental stones of India’s past. As with her initial declaration that she did not find the causes of modern India’s woes in

⁶⁶⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, 76.

⁶⁶⁹ Hodges, *Travels*, 76.

⁶⁷⁰ Leask, *Curiosity*, 47.

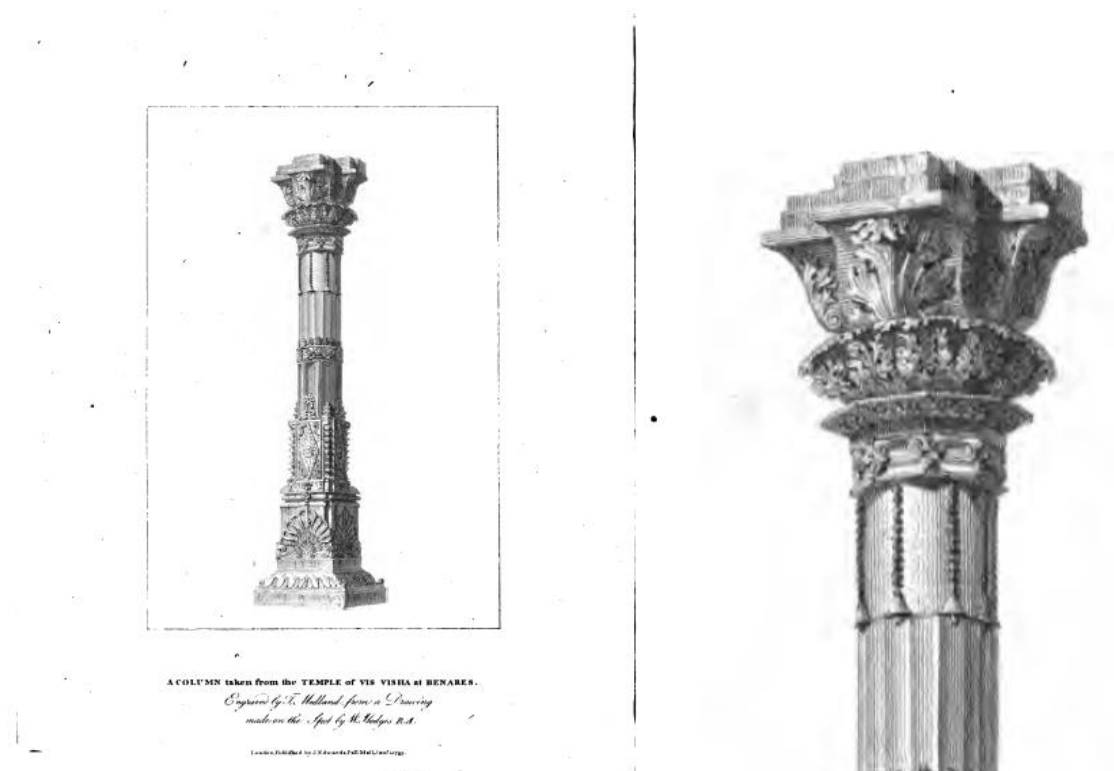
⁶⁷¹ Hodges, *Travels*, 76.

⁶⁷² Tillotson, ‘William Hodges’, 391.

any inherent set of Indian characteristics. Graham's opening response to Indian historical monuments appears sympathetic.

She expressed her intent to provide a

sketch of its [India's] former grandeur and refinement, restore it to that place in the scale of ancient nations, which European historians have in general unaccountably neglected to assign it.⁶⁷³



4.3 The column and magnified corbel from the Temple at Vis Visha, Benares, which gave Hodges the idea for the origins of European Gothic architecture: Hodges, *Travels*, between p. 62 & p. 63.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷³ Graham, *Letters*, 2.

⁶⁷⁴ Tillotson states that the column and corbel are 'standard' and 'usual' for Hindu temples and that Hodges' apparently Greek motif is 'entirely imaginary'. See G. H. R. Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Richmond, 2000), 138.

Graham extolled the ‘most ancient and magnificent monuments of Hindoo art’ and described them as ‘remarkable pieces of sculpture’.⁶⁷⁵ Praising ‘architectural ornaments’, she suggested that ‘the Hindu chisel has perhaps seldom been surpassed’, with their ‘light and airy foliage, its elegant volutes, and the variety of its subjects.’⁶⁷⁶ Unfortunately, although Graham made some attempt to consider such examples within their proper context, her observations mostly served to reinforce the same narrative of a people born to live as their ancestors had done. Whilst her impressions of every-day life bore out this conclusion, the evidence for the unchanging and unchangeable nature of India was literally and metaphorically cast in stone; the evidence of a permanent past in the present was etched and carved into the monumental walls of Indian history.

Graham’s visit to the temple caves of Elephanta and their ‘wonderful excavations’, is an example of the way in which, despite her aesthetic appreciation, she employed the past to explain India’s present, combining Orientalist scholarship with the pejorative views of India discussed.⁶⁷⁷ Graham preceded her description of the caves with a lengthy explanation of Hindu theology and its associated pantheon of Gods. Without such academic context, Graham explained, her description of the cave and its sculptures ‘would not be intelligible.’⁶⁷⁸ Graham drew on several Orientalist scholars, quoting Henry Colebrooke at length for example, and referencing the ‘heetopadesa’ [Hitopadesa], an ancient Hindu Sanskrit text admired by William Jones and first translated by Charles Wilkins in 1787.⁶⁷⁹ She also drew on research from her own contacts and conversations, her guide, Pundit Bapoojee, for example. The latter was no doubt a useful source of information and apparently merited quoting in her footnotes, although he was not a recognised authority or scholar, but a twenty two-year-old Brahmin whom Graham had found to be one of two ‘well informed natives’ she encountered.⁶⁸⁰ Graham’s initial reactions to the cave of Elephanta were a

⁶⁷⁵ Graham, *Residence*, v.

⁶⁷⁶ Graham, *Letters*, 56.

⁶⁷⁷ Graham, *Residence*, 45.

⁶⁷⁸ Graham, *Residence*, 45.

⁶⁷⁹ Graham, *Residence*, 45-9.

⁶⁸⁰ Graham, *Residence*, 16. Nicholas Dirks has discussed some difficulties regarding the use of the ‘native informant’ in his chapter on the eighteenth-century archival collection of Colin Mackenzie, a British army officer and eventual first Surveyor General of India (N.B. Dirks, ‘Colonial Histories and Native Informants’ in C.

‘sensation of astonishment’ at the ‘wonderful’, ‘remarkable’, and ‘beautiful’ sculptures therein.⁶⁸¹ She offered a detailed description of a monumental tri-partite sculpture of the Gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, complete with aspects of the theology represented in the sculpture and including her own detailed drawing of the sculpture.⁶⁸² Having explored the remainder of the cave complex, Graham attributed Elephanta to ‘a people far advanced in the arts of civilised life, and possessed of wealth and power’.⁶⁸³

If this all seems like a reasonably thoughtful and sensitive treatment of Indian heritage, it should be considered alongside her following comments and those of a few pages previously. In another comparison with the European past Graham had noted that the ‘coarseness and inelegance of the Hindoo polytheism, will certainly disgust many accustomed to the graceful mythology of ancient Europe.’⁶⁸⁴ She had also declared that she could not ‘look with indifference upon a system’ which was ‘barbarous and superstitious’ and had ‘so strong a hold of the minds of its votaries.’⁶⁸⁵

In the same passage Graham had suggested that ‘living among the people, and daily beholding the prostrate worshiper, the temple, the altar, and the offering’ meant that her ‘interest in them [Hindus]’ carried particular authority.⁶⁸⁶ Despite Hindu polytheism’s ‘want of poetical beauty’, Graham implied that her analysis took readers beyond a mere aesthetic appraisal.⁶⁸⁷ These comments had perhaps been pre-made to justify and add weight to her ultimate assessment of the caves of Elephanta. For all the

A. Breckenridge & van der Veer, P., (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia, 1994), 279-313). He notes that information collected by Indians may have been ‘fashioned’ or at least influenced ‘in relation to a variety of [native] interests and concerns’, relating to the potential for the colonial state to use the information in its revenue-raising activities (300). This seems justified as official responses to Mackenzie’s archive, assembled mostly out of his own historical interests, recognised its value for exactly those purposes (304-5). The stakes might not have been so high in the information provided to Maria Graham but, as a more general point, the original voice and context of ‘native’ histories ‘got lost once they inhabited the archive’ and became, effectively, the property of the colonial state. (301) Ironically, for example, whilst the value of native informants was recognised with respect to revenue-raising policies, the same officials were doubtful of the authenticity of historical information provided by Indian informants. (304). The original voices ‘become anonymous footnotes for a new kind of colonial knowledge’, preventing Indians from speaking for their own pasts. The very act of doubting the information provided authorised colonial interests to take control of India’s history (308). See also, N. B. Dirks, ‘Castes of Mind’, *Representations*, 37 (1992), 56-78. particularly, 74-6.

⁶⁸¹ Graham, *Residence*, 54-5.

⁶⁸² Graham, *Residence*, 55-6.

⁶⁸³ Graham, *Residence*, 58.

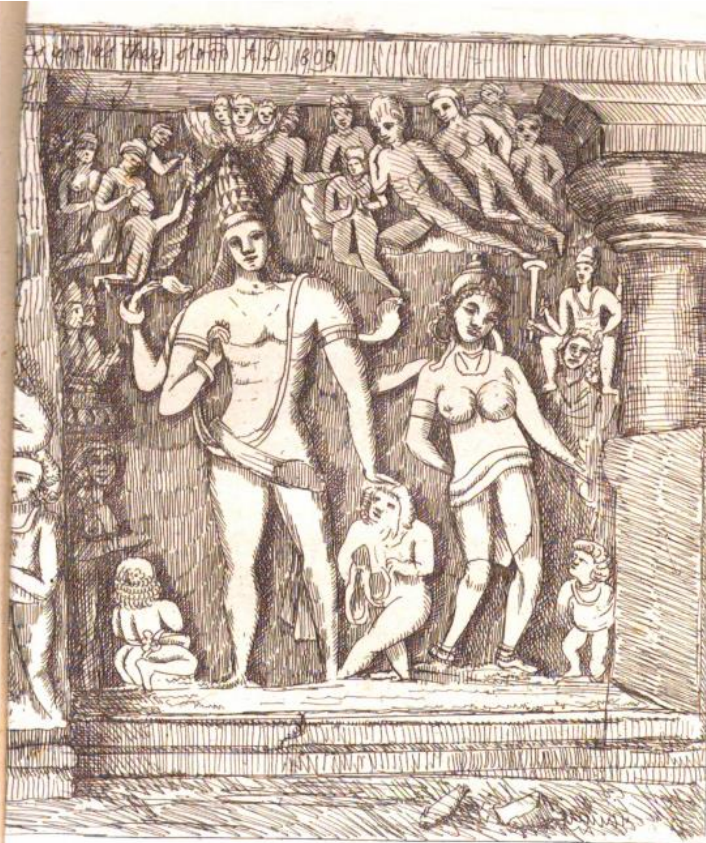
⁶⁸⁴ Graham, *Residence*, 53.

⁶⁸⁵ Graham, *Residence*, 54.

⁶⁸⁶ Graham, *Residence*, 53-4.

⁶⁸⁷ Graham, *Residence*, 53-4.

evidence of the 'wealth and power' of an advanced civilisation, this was authority 'lodged in the hands of a crafty priesthood' for their own benefit, whilst they 'preached a miserable and degraded superstition to the multitude.'⁶⁸⁸ Graham bemoaned that it was not possible to follow 'the advancement and fall of the arts which produced such monuments' because 'not a trace of their history remains.'



4.4 'Figures in cave at Elephanta', drawn by the author: Graham, *Journal*, 64.

Even so, she was able to determine that traces were *indeed* visible in the 'natural progress' of contemporary Indians who were 'subtle and ingenious, but depressed by superstition' and by a caste system which left them incapable of 'rising individually, by any virtues or any talents, to a higher rank in society than that occupied by their forefathers.'⁶⁸⁹ Inscribed on the walls of Elephanta was not just the past, but also the present.

⁶⁸⁸ Graham, *Residence*, 58.

⁶⁸⁹ Graham, *Residence*, 58.

Of course, Graham was guilty of historical anachronism here, by attributing aspects of modern Hindu society to a religious despotism in ancient times, which she *assumed* in the absence of any real evidence, on the basis of what she *perceived* was the case in the modern day. It was, though, a narrative rich in what, as discussed above, Postans would later call 'retrospective power'. Combining academic context and background with a serious and apparently sympathetic aesthetic consideration of the architecture and carvings of the cave complex offered the reader a compelling historical explanation for modern Indian pre-modernity. It was an argument about religious oppression and its impact on broader society with which many readers would have been familiar from accounts of Catholic Italy; indeed, from Graham's *own* account as discussed in a previous chapter.

Graham's visit to an ancient Jain temple elicited a slightly different reaction. Inside the Great Cave at Carli, Graham observed an 'astonishing' coved roof supported by 'twenty-one pillars on each side'. Graham wrote that 'we almost fancied ourselves in a Gothic cathedral' and, implying the superiority of European architecture, added, it 'is really one of the most magnificent chambers I ever saw'.⁶⁹⁰ Graham described as 'beautiful work', the inverted flower motifs of the pillar capitals, complete with two elephants and riders.⁶⁹¹ In the portico, she noted the 'variety of figures', particularly the 'remarkable' statue of a dancer and its 'gracefulness of design'.⁶⁹²

Although clearly impressed with the skill and beauty of both, Graham wrote that the differences between Elephanta and Carli were 'striking', both in their physical representations and the theology underpinning each. At Carli, there were 'no personifications of the deity, no separate cells for secret rites; and the religious opinions which consecrated them are no less different.'⁶⁹³ Rather than worshipping multiple gods, the Jains celebrated one 'Great Deity', alongside 'men raised to the rank of divinities.' Men who achieved perfection through the contemplation of God achieved

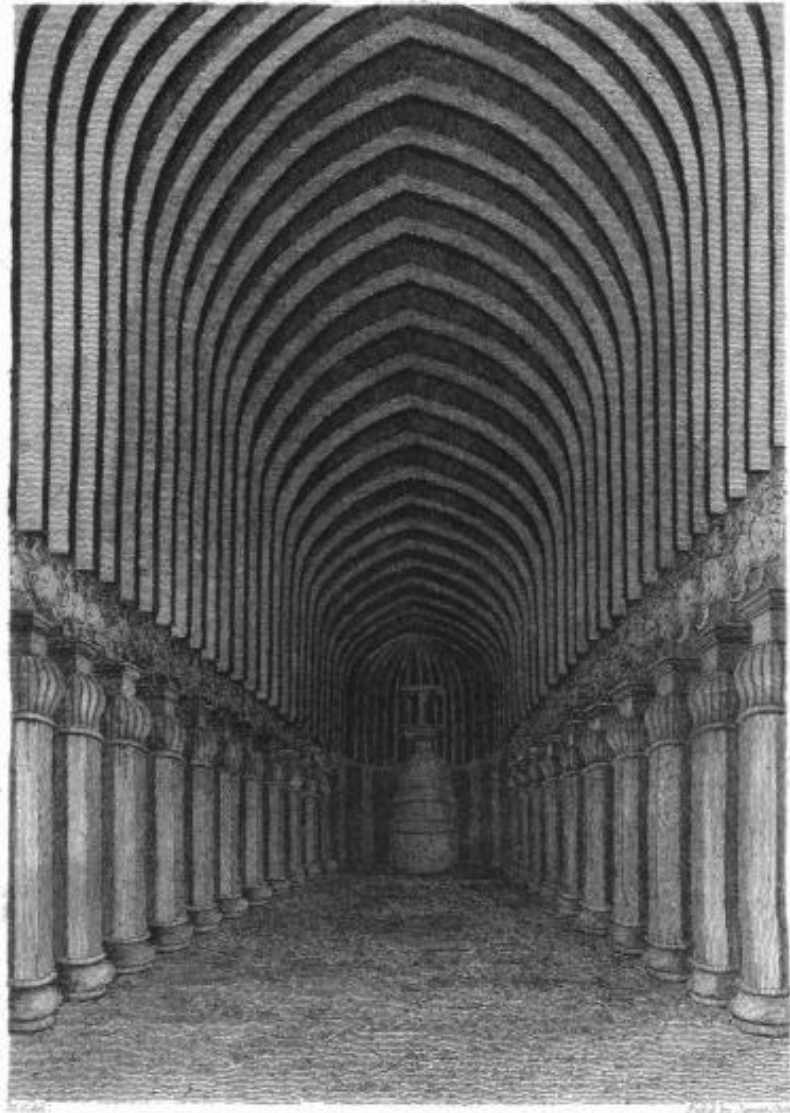
⁶⁹⁰ Graham, *Residence*, 64.

⁶⁹¹ Graham, *Residence*, 64.

⁶⁹² Graham, *Residence*, 65.

⁶⁹³ Graham, *Residence*, 65.

a status not equal to God, but were rewarded by being allowed to be 'in the presence of God', 'in the likeness of God', and 'absorbed into the divine essence.'⁶⁹⁴



Interior of the Great Cave at Carli.

Engraved by G. S. S. & Co. for J. H. & Co. London

4.5 The Jain temple at Carli, described by Graham as a 'Gothic Cathedral', drawn by the author: Graham, *Residence*, 64.

⁶⁹⁴ Graham, *Residence*, 65-6

Rather than exhibiting a range of human-like capricious qualities, the 'Great Deity' was

all-wise, all-seeing, all-productive, all-happy, without relation, without shape, immortal; he is exempt from ignorance, mental ignorance, name, tribe, love, and weakness.⁶⁹⁵

Graham implied that, as with Hindus, the moral characteristics of the Jains followed from their religious beliefs, writing that they abstained from murder, the killing of any living thing and from adultery and theft.⁶⁹⁶ Such characteristics were reflected in their more European-like architecture and artistic creations. If the Hindu moral character had degraded as a result of their 'slavery', Graham did not imply that Jains had similarly suffered, even though she wrote that they had been impoverished, defeated and denied their nationhood since the thirteenth century by a succession of Hindu, Muslim and, latterly, East India Company conquerors.⁶⁹⁷ Graham was far more sympathetic to the plight of the Jains and demurred to challenge or criticise the tenets of their faith or their moral character, which seems to have stood up to the effects of 'slavery' far better than the Hindu. It is notable that, in comparison with the repeated use of the lower-case Hindu 'god(s)', Graham capitalised 'God' in reference to the Jain divinity, implying a similarity to Christianity in terms of the style of the divinity and moral superiority. The contrasts between the Jain religion and Hinduism also mirrored the debate between iconoclastic and monotheist Protestantism and idolatrous and superstitious Catholicism. Nearly twenty years later, Marianne Postans plainly stated the comparison, writing that the 'great divisions' between the 'Catholic and Protestant creeds' paralleled those of 'Hinduism and Mahomedanism.'⁶⁹⁸ Describing the Kanphuttees, a particular sect of Hindus, she noted that there was 'much' which reminded her of 'the Catholic institutions of continental Europe.'⁶⁹⁹

Returning to Maria Graham, outside of the temple cave were some smaller caves, domestic dwellings for the families of the Jain priests. Although interested, Graham

⁶⁹⁵ Graham, *Residence*, 66.

⁶⁹⁶ Graham, *Residence*, 66.

⁶⁹⁷ Graham, *Residence*, 67.

⁶⁹⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 117.

⁶⁹⁹ Postans, *Cutch*, 122.

and her party declined to visit them, 'not thinking it right to disturb them merely to gratify our curiosity.'⁷⁰⁰ Such respect was notably lacking on other occasions, when for example, Graham visited a Hindu village and, unbidden, 'followed a pretty child into a hut, where I found a native still at work.'⁷⁰¹

Like Graham, Hodges also treated monuments of the non-Hindu past differently to those of the Hindus. Toward the end of his time in India, he visited the Mughal city of Agra. Describing the beauty of the Taj Mahal, Hodges conceded that it 'far surpasses anything I ever beheld.'⁷⁰² Although Hodges noted Agra was 'supposed to be a place of high antiquity', it was the ruins of the later sixteenth-century Mughal city and its erstwhile Emperor, Akbar, which mostly exercised Hodges' imagination.⁷⁰³ Hodges' descriptions here were reminiscent of descriptions of ancient Italy, the themes of fallen splendour and *sic transit gloria mundi*. Contemplating 'the ruins of ancient grandeur' which composed the tomb complex of Akbar, Hodges might have been describing the Roman forum or the Colosseum.⁷⁰⁴ Its monumental buildings, paved avenues, fountains, aqueducts, and columns presented 'a glare of splendour almost beyond the imagination.'⁷⁰⁵ As Gibbon *et al* had wandered around Rome and imagined the achievements and orations of Cicero, Tully, and Caesar, so Hodges recalled how 'under the shade of these awnings the mollahs [sic] or priests of the religion of Mahommed conversed with the men of learning.'⁷⁰⁶ Yet, 'it was impossible', he wrote, 'to contemplate the ruins of this grand and venerable city, without feeling the deepest impressions of melancholy.'⁷⁰⁷ Hodges might have been comparing the Roman Republic and the later Empire as he recalled how, at one time, previous rulers of Agra had 'exercised their rights with wisdom.' Yet, standing now in 'desolation and silence', the city was 'a melancholy proof of the consequences of a bad government, of wild ambition, and the horrors attending civil dissensions.'⁷⁰⁸ Hodges' fears echoed an

⁷⁰⁰ Graham, *Residence*, 68.

⁷⁰¹ Graham, *Residence*, 26.

⁷⁰² Hodges, *Travels*, 124.

⁷⁰³ Hodges, *Travels*, 117.

⁷⁰⁴ Hodges, *Travels*, 123.

⁷⁰⁵ Hodges, *Travels*, 122.

⁷⁰⁶ Hodges, *Travels*, 120.

⁷⁰⁷ Hodges, *Travels*, 119.

⁷⁰⁸ Hodges, *Travels*, 123.

ambivalence regarding empires generally whilst reflecting debates back home about the balance between the dangers of autocratic rule and the sensible limits of democracy. They were also illustrative of the discussion previously, of the way in which Mughals were configured as conquerors, as opposed to the strange, unchanging and submissive Hindus. The mythological and strange representations of the Hindu religion were very different and far less palatable to him than the marbled and pillared buildings of Agra and the great Akbar's tomb.

Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta, also favoured Mughal monuments over Hindu, writing of the latter that 'these trifling relics bear no comparison with the works of Greece and Egypt!'. He continued,

my mind decidedly accords with [James] Mill, that the Hindoos [...] had made no progress in the arts, and took all their notions of magnificence from the models furnished by their Mahommedan conquerors.⁷⁰⁹

Of course, this was a strange assessment given that so much of the Hindu heritage predated that of the Mughals.

Heber was saved the conundrum of comparing a sophisticated Indian civilizational history with an apparently backward present by denying India a past at all, or at least one of any importance or cultural significance. He represented the way in which India had become, as Travers puts it, 'an object of British knowledge'.⁷¹⁰ Heber consistently trivialised the significance and uniqueness of monuments of Indian history, often denying their claims to antiquity. At Sibnibashi, for example, Heber was invited to visit the Raja's palace. In his description, Heber feigned confusion, not believing that 'the ruins of a very extensive palace' before him could possibly be occupied, although he was well aware that it was.⁷¹¹ Heber employed a Romantic theme, describing the

⁷⁰⁹ R. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay 1824-1825* 3rd ed. in 3 Vols., Vol. 2 (London, 1828), 392.

⁷¹⁰ Travers, *Ideology*, 241. As Dirks notes, 'colonized voices have been written over' (Dirks, 'Native Informants', 309). Heber's comments also reflect Pocock's 'Enlightened narrative' discussed above. Heber fails to consider Hindu art in its own context. In comparison to the assumed artistic standard of Greece and Rome, it had 'made no progress' and remained rooted in a perpetual past which reflected Indian Hindu society.

⁷¹¹ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 123.

derelict palace as ‘all overgrown with ivy and jungle, roofless and desolate.’⁷¹² The wildness of the place was compounded by ‘the jackalls, whose yells began to be heard around us as the evening closed in.’⁷¹³ Yet, he disarmed the potentially dangerous sublimity of the scene by comparing the dilapidated residence to ‘Conway Castle’, some aspects of ‘Bolton Abbey’, still others of ‘Rhuddlan Castle’ and ‘Carnarvon Castle’.⁷¹⁴ The scene described was partly reminiscent of descriptions of the ruined Campo Vecchio in Rome, with cattle grazing in the palace courtyards, although Heber removed any sense of past glory from the scene through comedic effect. Where a soldier ought to hold his defensive position, there was now a cow ‘looking out from the top of a dilapidated turret.’⁷¹⁵ The sense of the ridiculous was completed when Heber finally made his way into the palace and was received by the Raja, ‘a fat shortish man, of about 45’, barely distinguishable from his servants and courtiers.⁷¹⁶ The overall effect of Heber’s description was to patronise and trivialise the place of the Raja’s palace in local history. Heber did not even suggest a fall from past glory, instead implying past India as a place of inflated importance sitting in contemporary decay and ruin. Even the potentially dangerous, exotic and wild aspects of scenes inspired by Gothic and Romantic fiction, turned out to be faintly absurd.

The sense that scenes from India were really nothing unique, reminiscent of those from pre-modern England, is repeated throughout. Heber included eleven comparisons between India and Chester alone: pagodas at Barrackpore were reminiscent of the ‘Propylaeum at Chester castle’;⁷¹⁷ the streets of Benares were ‘like those of Chester’;⁷¹⁸ the streets of Almorah were ‘*exactly* like those of Chester’ (my emphasis);⁷¹⁹ the terraced palace garden at the palace of Jyepoor was ‘like that of Chester’, and so forth.⁷²⁰ Ironically, of course, the appearance of Chester was

⁷¹² Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 123.

⁷¹³ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 124.

⁷¹⁴ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 123-4.

⁷¹⁵ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 124.

⁷¹⁶ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 124.

⁷¹⁷ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 59.

⁷¹⁸ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 1, 372.

⁷¹⁹ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 2, 211.

⁷²⁰ Heber, *Narrative* 3rd ed. Vol. 2, 402.

substantially influenced by its much-lauded Roman past. Still, the sense Heber gave is one of, *there is nothing here that cannot be found in Britain*.

Where Heber was unable to deny the unique nature of a relic of the Indian past, he reverted to doubting its antiquity. Visiting the cave at Elephanta, Heber was more impressed than he had anticipated being, conceding the site to be ‘of a more noble character, and of a more elegant execution than I had been led to suppose.’⁷²¹ He continued, ‘even the statues are executed with great spirit, and some of no common beauty’, although this judgement was qualified, given ‘their dilapidated condition and the coarseness of their material’.⁷²² In addition to his conditional and slight praise, Heber downplayed the historical importance of the site, stating that it was ‘not a famous place among the Hindoos.’⁷²³ He was also ‘not disposed to assign to it any great degree of antiquity.’⁷²⁴ After a brief description, he directed interested readers to his wife’s account of the site for further details.⁷²⁵ The latter is included in Heber’s footnotes, but was probably an addition by his widow, who edited Heber’s *Narrative* after his death in 1826. Implying that Elephanta was not a place of any cultural importance or significance, Heber concluded that Elephanta is ‘a mere trifle’ when set against ‘the great salt mine at Northwich.’⁷²⁶

In another example, Heber visited the Buddhist temple caves at Kennery. Again, although Heber was reasonably appreciative of their aesthetic value, he drew attention to aspects of the caves which were reminiscent of features of ‘Italian Churches’, or ‘St Helena’s Church at Jerusalem’, and noted various features which ‘are unfinished.’⁷²⁷ Whilst his companions were impressed with the antiquity and historical context of the caves, Heber was less so and thought ‘they cannot be very old’. He suggested they may have been altered and added to by various groups, including possibly Europeans over the years.⁷²⁸ He was also dubious about their genuine religious importance, writing

⁷²¹ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 181.

⁷²² Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed Vol. 2, 181.

⁷²³ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 182.

⁷²⁴ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 183.

⁷²⁵ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 180.

⁷²⁶ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 183.

⁷²⁷ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 190.

⁷²⁸ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 191.

that 'little or no credit can be given to the accounts contained in the Brahminical writings.'⁷²⁹ Rather than a historically important Buddhist site of antiquity, Heber thought the caves much more recent and probably used by a variety of religious groups, possibly including Christians. Heber concluded by noting one of his companion's comments, that in terms of 'comparative merit', these caves were inferior to Egyptian counterparts, which 'in point of beauty', he 'very much preferred.'⁷³⁰

In correspondence written in India from before he visited either Elephanta or Kennery, Heber compared Hindu and Muslim religion, concluding that, although Muslims were not much liked by the English, 'the mussulmans have a far better creed'.⁷³¹ In terms of Hindu and Muslim science and learning, 'I should certainly follow that of the Mussulmans, whose histories seem really very much like those of Europe.'⁷³² Heber followed these with a comparison of Hindu and Muslim 'architectural antiquities', before he had even visited any.⁷³³ He expressed his doubt over the antiquity of many well-known Hindu sites, including Elephanta but also others at Benares, Dacca, Dehli, and Jyepoor.⁷³⁴ Heber suggested that such sites appeared older than they are, due to the destructive and aging effect of the climate, and also because 'no man in this country repairs or completes what his father has begun.'⁷³⁵ What appeared to be the ruins of antiquity were actually prematurely aged structures which had been abandoned unfinished. Heber's critique of Hindu architecture was thus an extension of the common narrative of the deleterious effects of the Indian climate and environment. Its debilitating impact was not only a cause of Hindu indolence, and dangerously wearing on generations of visitors, from the conquering Mughals to the contemporary ruling British, it sapped the life from the very stones of the buildings.

From the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, travellers took slightly different approaches. William Hodges found Hindu art aesthetically inferior to that of

⁷²⁹ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 191.

⁷³⁰ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 192.

⁷³¹ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 385.

⁷³² Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 389.

⁷³³ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 389.

⁷³⁴ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 391.

⁷³⁵ Heber, *Narrative*, 1st ed. Vol. 2, 390.

ancient Greece and Rome, and imbued with a strange, even hypnotically dangerous, mysticism which reflected aspects of the Hindu 'character'. Maria Graham took a more scholarly approach, promising to judge the Hindu past with a balanced and objective eye, but in fact finding evidence of a modern living continuity with their ancient ancestors which explained their contemporary backward degradation. Mughal history, its religion and inherent conquering nature may have had its distasteful aspects but could at least be understood in magnificent monuments to the past. For Heber, the actual age and religious importance of Hindu relics was not the key point. By denying the antiquity of Indian relics, what Heber was really denying to India, was an antiquity of any *importance*, an ancient past from which developed a culture of art and learning such as that seen in Italy, Greece, even to some extent in Egypt and in Islamic culture, and certainly in Britain.

The unifying trait in travellers' accounts of India was a sense that the past was everywhere in the Hindu present. Hindu religious, scientific, political and social inferiority was an extension of their failure of artistic and architectural history, in the same way in which modern Europe had grown out of an ancient past which embodied a superior artistic culture. As Marianne Postans wrote, 'the prejudices of the natives of India, have become venerable from their antiquity; and forming as they do, the great frame-work of social manners'.⁷³⁶ This 'fact' was to be found writ large every day in the streets and set in the stones of Indian antiquity. Such comments are more than the casual remarks of travellers, they formed an important part of the apparently 'academic' study and categorisation which helped to construct a hegemonic view of India as degraded and backward, stuck permanently in the past. Travel accounts furnished, as Postans noted, 'most interesting data to the philosophical enquirer into the history and progress of the human mind, in the earliest stages of its development.'⁷³⁷ The 'objective' evidence of travellers showed that India was trapped in an eternal past whilst a consideration of their history 'proved' why. Travellers often expressed distaste at depriving people of constitutional rights but such was the perpetually appalling state of Indian society that, as Maria Graham reluctantly put it, 'I

⁷³⁶ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 157.

⁷³⁷ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 157.

could even be almost reconciled to the methods by which the Europeans have acquired possession of the country' if it would 'in ever so remote a period free the natives of India from their moral and religious degradation.'⁷³⁸ The implication that such freedom would take until a 'remote' period in the future, underlines the degree to which India was currently mired in the equally 'remote' past. It was through the manipulation of past, present and, even, the future that travellers' narratives calmed British Imperial ambivalence, justified imperial intervention, and created a mirror for their own 'superiority'. These were travellers in time as well as space.

Conclusion to Section Two

The history of India and Italy, or rather the *meaning* ascribed to that history changed over time in travellers' accounts of both. Italy's ancient history was, initially, denied to its contemporary inhabitants. Travellers, reviewers, periodical journalists and novelists agreed that the British were better suited than the Italians to lay claim to the title of inheritors of the Roman tradition. Although Britain did not colonise or control Italy in a physical sense, travellers such as Edward Gibbon and John Chetwode Eustace exploited the raw materials of its past and imported them into a narrative of Britain as the new Rome. It was the British who now carried the torch of modernity forward. Re-exported to India, such ideas justified British imperial activities in the name of improving and civilising barbaric and backward societies. As the Romans had dragged the ancient Britons into the modern age, so the British now took that responsibility. Not only this, but the virtues displayed by these latest benevolent conquerors were those of the middle classes. Charles Trevelyan, Thomas Macaulay and Marianne Postans, for example, drew direct comparisons between ancient Rome and Anglo-Indian Britain from different perspectives. Trevelyan's experiences of Indian travel were put to use in publications aimed at influencing Indian education and other 'improving' strategies; Macaulay, also an Anglo-Indian administrator, constructed Britain as the new Rome in his parliamentary speeches and in poetical format in his *Lays of Ancient Rome*; Postans' observations were those of an Anglo-Indian officer's

⁷³⁸ Graham, *Residence*, 70.

wife. In their different ways, all agreed on the benefits of, as the Romans had, supposedly, done in Britain, creating an Indian middle class imbued with all the virtues of their British equivalents which, of course, underpinned British success at home and abroad. Accounts of Italy and India were thus essential to each other, the one providing the material which justified imperial activity in the other. Equally, Britain's 'improvement' of India 'proved' their claim to be the inheritors of the classical Roman tradition. The middle-class virtues inherited from the ancient Italian past and deployed in the Indian present brought Britain into the same frame, the same virtues justifying middle-class claims to cultural and political authority at home.

Such discourse was not free from some inconsistencies. For a start, travellers' claims that generations of subjugation had left India and Italy weak, effeminate, irrational and superstitious, unable to assert their independence, was a circular one. Such weaknesses were, they argued elsewhere, long-standing, inherent qualities which had made them susceptible to conquest in the first place. Regardless, to India was applied a version of the grand narratives developed by historians like Gibbon, a story of classical civilisations which had collapsed into barbarity. India, like modern Italy, had had its great classical period, only to fall to foreign and religious despotism, both symptom and cause of their general immorality and superstition.⁷³⁹ Where nations like Britain had flowered into Enlightenment modernity, India and Italy had failed to do so. The 'descendants' of the classical period, as the British thought of themselves in relation to the ancient Romans, were, through Enlightenment rationality, gloriously advancing civilisation in Europe and reviving it in India. If the contemporary British bore some relation to the ancient Italians, so too did early travellers and Orientalist scholars find a degree of kinship with India, in terms of the shared origins of their respective languages and evidence which, they claimed, supported the truth of the

⁷³⁹ 'In India, Britons imagined a classical Hindu civilisation, a dark age of barbarianism and religion under Muslim tyranny, and a modern era of colonial enlightenment' (Travers, *Ideology*, 244). See also, Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, Vol. 2, *Narratives of Civil Government*, 1-4. Pocock uses the term the 'Enlightened narrative' to describe this dominant overarching historical theory among eighteenth-century European historians (2).

biblical narrative. This was a 'shared heritage' which justified British intervention in supporting their Aryan cousins.⁷⁴⁰

There were, though, further ironic inconsistencies in such ideas. For example, travellers conceded that both India and Italy had admirable classical civilisations. Yet, whereas modern Italians (although such a term might have been considered an oxymoron by British travellers) were considered moribund due to being almost *opposite* in virtue to their classical predecessors, India's similar 'backward' contemporary state was a result of being almost *identical* to theirs. What helps to explain this inconsistency was the changing British attitude over time towards the Hindu and Mughal pasts discussed in Chapter Four, which justified British changes to Indian methods of land management and revenue-raising. The idea that the ancient Indian traditions and 'laws' which governed such traditions were those of the Hindus, the reimplementing of which the British claimed was to their benefit, was actually turned discursively against them. Towards the end of the eighteenth century and certainly by the early nineteenth century, the longevity of Hindu customs, their 'unchanging' nature, became their '*unchangeable*' nature. The Mughals, previously well-intentioned if conquering, even sharing some 'civilising' tendencies with Britain, were now brutal despots. Policies previously thought of as benevolent Mughal reforms were now usurpations of ancient Hindu tradition, demonstrating the 'unchangeable' nature of the latter. Doing for them what they could not do for themselves, 'freeing' Hindus from the 'violent subjugation' of Mughal invaders amply, justified British control. To explain their interventions in places like India, it behoved the British to cast themselves as the inheritors of the ancient Roman tradition of 'civilising' backward peoples. For this to be coherent, Britain appropriated Italy history for itself and cast modern Italians as very *different* to their own classical past whilst India was configured as essentially *the same* as theirs. This reflected the growing Indophobic narrative that the Indian past had nothing of value to offer, which was increasingly reflected in travellers' observations of India. Even everyday tasks such as collecting water took on an ancient hue in the accounts of many visitors. They were amazed to

⁷⁴⁰ As discussed in Chapter One.

witness, travellers wrote, the ancient world played out in front of them. Back home, as discussed in the introduction, praise for a classical Indian civilisation by Orientalist scholars and travellers like William Jones was, disingenuously, interpreted as political agreement with Edmund Burke's reactionary support for aristocratic *anciens regimes* in India and Europe in the context of conservative resurgence after the French Revolution. For the likes of James Mill, any sense of kinship between India and Britain was not just distasteful, it was a ridiculous suggestion, quite possibly a bid by reactionary conservatives to hinder middle-class political reform. Any relationship, then, between the pasts of Britain and India had become untenable and was severed.

At the same time, something similar was taking place in terms of the perceived relationship between Britain and Italy's past. As historical discourses were reformed, twisted and bent into usable shape, cracks appeared in the British façade of imposed but enlightened benevolence. From the start of our period, even those who most extolled the virtues of ancient Rome, such as Edward Gibbon, who drew sympathetic parallels between the Italian past and Britain's present, simultaneously expressed uncertainties about the imperial project. Eustace, in his fulsome descriptions of ancient Rome, also admitted that Britain would, one day, decline and suffer the fate of all empires.⁷⁴¹ As we have seen throughout, travellers often revealed British anxieties, over security at home and abroad and what the future might hold for imperial Britain. Some were more direct in their approach. Few travellers write as radically as Lady Morgan, for whom the connections made between ancient Rome and modern Britain were only correct in as much as they exposed the truth of both as brutally despotic imperialists. Power corrupted in modern Britain as it had in ancient Rome and the colonised of both, particularly in her native Ireland, had traditionally borne much of the brunt. Although she never visited the subcontinent, Morgan's India-set novels expressed the same ideas as her travel accounts.

More broadly, though, the close connection between modern Britain and ancient Italy was challenged by travellers other than radicals like Morgan. The criticism drawn by Eustace, from fellow-travellers, periodicals and reviewers was an example of different

⁷⁴¹ See chapter 4.

discourses butting up against each other. On the one hand, Britain had been framed as the new Rome, supposedly improving and civilising wherever Britannia planted her standard. On the other, by the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, such narratives could be tied to reactionary conservative support for monarchical authority. The Tory *Quarterly* even joined their *bête noire*, Lady Morgan, in agreeing that Eustace had hagiographified the Roman empire. Once again, Edmund Burke appears here as a connection between Italy, India and Britain. Eustace's criticism of the French Revolution was taken, together with his eulogisation of ancient Rome, unfairly so, as concurrence with the reactionary opposition to constitutional reform of his friend, Burke.⁷⁴² There had been ten years between Eustace writing and publishing his account. The interim had seen acceptance, reflected in sources as diverse as radical travellers like Morgan and Hobhouse, conservative periodicals and Romantic poets like Byron and the Shelleys, that the French had done some service in countering the aristocratic traditions which had held Italy back, politically and civically and which were equally unwelcome in Britain. Overt support for an unmediated relationship between Britain's present and the Roman past could now be interpreted (often unfairly) as reactionary political alignment with aristocratic Grand Tourists of the past and a conservative push back against a middle-class narrative of liberal constitutional reform.

By the 1830s there are notably fewer accounts of Italy which attempt to overtly connect ancient Rome to modern Britain. This did not stop travellers like Trevelyan and Postans from equating Britain's policies in India with Rome's civilising impact on ancient Britain, but accounts of Italy took a different tack. As noted at the end of chapter four, Thomas Roscoe drew entirely different lessons from his observations of the remnants of ancient Rome, that the 'utter extremes of human power and

⁷⁴² Ironically, Burke shared concerns about the kind of 'untrammelled empire' the Romans represented. See Chapter 3, footnote 87, 18. Burke did, though, draw on the Roman historian Tacitus to compare the British and Roman empires in terms of urging caution towards political reform: 'What has been said of the Roman empire, is at least as true of the British constitution-"Octingentorum annorum fortuna, disciplinaque, compages haec coaluit; quae convelli sine convellentium exitio non potest"' (This mighty structure has come together thanks to eight hundred years of good fortune and discipline, which cannot be uprooted without destroying the uprooters) (Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.74, in D. E. Ritchie (ed.), E. Burke, *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1992), 196).

weakness' were two sides of the same coin. They had spelled 'doom' for ancient Rome and perhaps they might for Britain in the future. Roscoe was more concerned with the connection between Italy's classical past, the eventual rise of religious despotism and the political and civic 'fall' of modern Italy than he was in a connection between ancient Italy and modern Britain. He was not the only writer to so comment.

Catherine Taylor made very similar points in her 1835 account of Italy, published five years later. Taylor made no attempt to connect the Roman past with Britain. Indeed, they held only the sobering lessons of the futility of man's vanity in 'his hopes of an immortality of earthly glory.' Quoting Isaiah xiv. 12, Taylor noted 'how art though cut down to the ground which didst weaken nations.'⁷⁴³ Her history of ancient Italy traces the transition from 'republican virtue' to imperial Rome, 'blotted with cruelty and despotism' and the eventual rise of 'the mighty fabric of Papal power'.⁷⁴⁴ The Bishops of Rome contended for power, 'temporal as well as spiritual', the 'origin of the feuds' which had 'laid waste the fair provinces of Italy.'⁷⁴⁵

Like the travellers who severed the connection between the histories of India and Britain, Roscoe and Taylor cut the historical cord between Britain and Italy. The fireside travellers back home would now read less about how modern global Britain was a reflection of ancient Rome and more about how the past had come back to haunt the peninsula, the successor to Rome being the religious, political and civic despotism of contemporary Italy. Britain was on its way to standing on its own discursive feet, its stability and global authority built on its own past efforts, no longer requiring the nourishment of the Indian or Italian pasts.

In the next section, I explore the development of another discourse essential to Britain's growing middle-class self-identity, that of the family and domestic formations.

⁷⁴³ C. Taylor, *Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1840-41), 131.

⁷⁴⁴ Taylor, *Letters from Italy*, Vol. 1, 102-110.

⁷⁴⁵ Taylor, *Letters from Italy*, Vol. 1, 113.

Part Three: Morals, Manners and Marriage

Chapter Five: Family Politics

Introduction

Henry Matthews, who would later be appointed as advocate fiscal of Ceylon, visited Italy for his health, between 1817 and 1819. His subsequent 1820 *Diary of an Invalid* enjoyed popular success, with five editions by 1835. He personally presented a copy of his second edition to George IV, a work that remains in the Royal Collection today.⁷⁴⁶ Whilst in Rome, Matthews reminded his readers that generations of travellers to Italy, from Roger Ascham in the seventeenth century, to the Grand Tourists of the eighteenth, had warned of the immorality and vice to be found there. If, by the grace of God, British travellers had avoided the worst influences in past times, ‘we may well feel anxiety for the ladies of our own.’⁷⁴⁷ Matthews’ apprehension was more than chivalric concern given his belief that ‘the character of a nation is ever mainly determined by the institutions of domestic life’, within which women’s roles were central.⁷⁴⁸ Matthews expressed a common belief among travellers, one discussed in my introduction, that the structure of the family and the domestic roles of men and women were closely linked to political and civic stability and health of a whole society.

In this chapter, I will follow how the domestic discourse at the heart of British middle-class self-identity was reflected in travellers’ observations and understanding of Indian

⁷⁴⁶ K. Prior & Cooper. T., ‘Henry Matthews’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18344> (accessed 19 Sept 2018).

Royal Collection Trust. <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/1124916/the-diary-of-an-invalid-being-the-journal-of-a-tour-in-pursuit-of-health-in> (accessed 19 Sept 2018).

⁷⁴⁷ H. Matthews, *Diary of an Invalid* 2nd ed. (London, 1820), 262. Ascham was a scholar, writer and educator, mostly famously the tutor to Queen Elizabeth I. For full bibliographical material, see J. Arnold, ‘Roger Ascham’, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2018). <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0167.xml> (accessed 23 Sept 2019). After a visit to Italy in 1570, Ascham declared that he witnessed more sin in 9 days in Italy than in nine years in London (R. O’Day, ‘Roger Ascham’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/732> (accessed 23 Sept 2019).

⁷⁴⁸ Matthews, *Diary*, 263.

and Italian domestic arrangements. I will explore how travellers reacted to domestic customs and institutions they considered representative of upper-class and aristocratic Italian and Indian society. Through accounts of both, I examine how travellers associated a lack of moral and effective Italian and Indian domesticity with their 'failure' to develop modern civic and political institutions. Comparing travellers' observations from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I chart the shift in apparent blame for domestic immorality and ineffective family structures, from men towards women. I will consider the extent to which, by the early to mid-nineteenth century, travellers' accounts of Italy and India reflected and reinforced a middle-class narrative that claimed their own forms of domesticity were central to national civic and political stability and global success. Within this idea was the importance of the different domestic functions of men and women and, particularly, the centrality of the role of women to the success of the family and, hence, the nation.

The '*triangolo equilatero*': Politics and marriage

In his discussion of Lady Morgan's observations of Italian domesticity in *Italy*, Roberto Bizzocchi notes the influence of the Genevan historian Sismondi, on early nineteenth-century British travellers, such as Lady Morgan, who took up with enthusiasm the Genevan historian's 'forthright condemnation of the private morality and lifestyle of Italian men and women'.⁷⁴⁹ Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi was an outstanding economist but is better known for his multi-volume work, *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge*.⁷⁵⁰ In particular, it is the 'markedly political character of his [Sismondi's] moral condemnation' which draws Bizzocchi's attention, the link between Italy's moral and political decline.⁷⁵¹ For example, Sismondi wrote that,

⁷⁴⁹ R. Bizzocchi, 'Sexuality and Politics: Lady Morgan and the Morality of the Italians', in V. P. Babini, Chiara, B., Riall, L., (eds.), *Italian Sexualities Uncovered, 1789–1914* (London, 2015), 15-36, 16.

⁷⁵⁰ Sismondi's initial volumes were printed in Zurich, between 1807-9, with the sixteenth and final volume completed in 1818. Between 1807 and 1824, *Histoire* was published in French and German, with shorter versions in English and Italian. The readership of *Histoire* was therefore international, and its influence substantial. I am indebted to David Laven for Sismondi's publishing history, from his forthcoming D. Laven, *Venice remembered: identity and the historiography of the Venetian Republic in the long nineteenth century* [unpublished book manuscript]. For the substantial influence of Sismondi on British travellers and the British idea of Italy, see Laven, 'The British Idea of Italy in the Age of Turner'.

⁷⁵¹ Bizzocchi, 'Sexuality and Politics', 17.

No one has included among Italy's public calamities perhaps the most general cause of the private problems of all Italian families; the affront, I mean, to the sacred bond of marriage by means of another bond regarded as honourable, and that the foreigners always see in Italy with the same amazement, without being able to understand why it is so; and it is that of the *cicisbeo* or *cavaliere serventi*.⁷⁵²

Sismondi referred here to the aristocratic custom of the *cavaliere servente*, or *cicisbeo*, a single man acting as attendant and companion to a married woman. For Sismondi, and many nineteenth-century British travellers, *cicisbeism* was an institution which not only personified Italian immorality, but also explained their political and civic impotency, their inability to free themselves from foreign oppression.⁷⁵³ *Cicisbeism* was not actually the license to commit adultery that travellers often suggested it was. Traditionally, *cicisbeism* was a formal and public institution whereby an unmarried man, generally of noble breeding, attended to the social and private needs of a married woman. Services provided included accompanying the lady in public, on walks or to the theatre, paying her bills, entertaining her at meal times, serving her coffee and generally ensuring that her needs and wants were met.⁷⁵⁴ Although very alien to a non-Italian observer, this was 'the normal – or at least *a* normal – model of marriage' for aristocratic and upper-class Italians.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² J. C. L. Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Âge* Tome Seizième (Paris, 1826), 221-2.

⁷⁵³ Balzaretto, R., 'British Women Travellers and Italian Marriages', *Italian Sexualities Uncovered*, 251-72, 253. Also, R. Bizzocchi, 'Cicisbei: Italian Morality and European values in the Eighteenth Century' in P. Findlen, Wassyng Roworth, W., & Sam, C. M., (eds.), *Italy's Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, 2009), 35-58. Bizzocchi writes that Sismondi's treatment of the *cicisbeo* in *Histoire* is 'a fundamental text for Italian culture and the image of modern Italy' (36). For more on the custom of the *cicisbeo*, see S. Patriarca, 'Indolence and Regeneration: Tropes and Tensions of Risorgimento Patriotism', *The American Historical Review*, 110 (April, 2005), 380-408, 397-400. Sismondi claimed it was 'the loss of liberty that brought about corruption and decline, and these were deepened by the arrival of the Spaniards and the absolute domination of the Catholic Church in the peninsula from the Counter-Reformation onward' (398).

⁷⁵⁴ Bizzocchi, 'Sexuality and Politics', 16-21. As we will see, British travellers made similar attributions in the late-eighteenth century before reversing the argument and claiming that inherent immorality was the cause of their civic and political downfall.

⁷⁵⁵ R. Bizzocchi, *A lady's man: the cicisbei, private morals and national identity in Italy* (Basingstoke, 2014), 9.

Lady Morgan noted that ‘almost all civilised nations have assumed a different moral phasis, according to the direction gradually given to them by different political institutes’.⁷⁵⁶ Sismondi’s point was slightly different, that Italy’s political woes were partly due to their domestic habits. Morgan was implying the reverse, that Italy’s political institutions were responsible for their domestic immorality. Regardless of the realities of *cicisbeism*, she took a dim view of the ‘authorised libertinism’ of traditional Italian domestic arrangements. The sacred ‘bond of marriage’ was ‘one of mere convenience’, or the ‘fashion’ of every man ‘neglecting his own wife, and entering into the service of his neighbour’s’.⁷⁵⁷ Such irregular practices not only ‘undermined morality’, they produced a society where ‘pride, privilege, and ignorance, were the endowments; and satiety, poverty, and discontent were the inevitable results’.⁷⁵⁸ Unmarried women were effectively kept in captivity, cloistered ‘in the cell of a convent, or the garret of a palace’.⁷⁵⁹ Married women were the opposite, living independently of their husbands and quite without restraint. They spent their days in dishevelled indolence, ‘lounging at home’, their every whim attended to by their *cavalieri servente*.⁷⁶⁰ Such descriptions are remarkably similar to what Sara Suleri calls an ‘Anglo-Indian narrative’ which ‘schematizes’ Indian women as either invisibly ‘sequestered in the unknowability of the *zenana* or all too visible in the excessive availability of the professional courtesan’.⁷⁶¹ Italian husbands were unable to manage their own and family affairs, reliant on their wife’s *cicisbeo* and often taken advantage of by hangers-on, ‘*scroccone*,’ or ‘idlers of small means and good families.’⁷⁶² Morgan

⁷⁵⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 3, 239.

⁷⁵⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 91.

⁷⁵⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 91. Bizzocchi notes that the custom of the *cicisbeo* existed outside of Italy, in Spain, for example, undermining the claim that the custom was ‘a factor contributing to an unabashedly [Italian] servile political subordination’. The absence of the *cicisbeo* in Protestant countries suggests, says Bizzocchi, that it was a Catholic custom (20). Certainly, as Bolufer notes, Spain was another country about which travellers ‘connected political regime, economic conditions, cultural life, manners, and morals’ (M. Bolufer, ‘Orientalizing Southern Europe?: Spain Through the Eyes of Foreign Travelers’, *The Eighteenth Century*, 57 (2016), 451-467, 455). See also, indeed, travellers to Spain commented on the reclusion of Spanish women, their scheming, general Spanish sexual immorality, an excess of passion and sensuality, sexual jealousy among men and so on (458-9). See also, J. N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain 1500-/700: The Formation of a Myth* (Michigan, 2000). Although these examples might be taken for Protestant religious prejudice, or North-South Meridionism, the very same points were made about Indian women and domestic habits. So too were they made about the English working classes and the aristocracy.

⁷⁵⁹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 227-8.

⁷⁶⁰ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 229.

⁷⁶¹ Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 92.

⁷⁶² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 229.

described married women as effectively out of control and husbands as impotently dependent on another man to attend to their wives and rescue them from their own ineptitude in private affairs.⁷⁶³ Italian spouses were emasculated, part of a humiliating '*triangolo equilatero*' with a *cavalieri servente*.⁷⁶⁴ They displayed 'the visible helplessness of men who have been long forbidden to take any part in public affairs, to exercise any profession, or exhibit any activity'.⁷⁶⁵ Their political and civic impotence was reflected and reinforced at home, where men had not control even of their own households.

Where the *cicisbeo* was the focus of interest in Italian marriages, travellers to India channelled their righteous indignation towards polygamy and the unnatural practices of the *zenana*, or harem. For example, Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, wrote in 1824 of the 'degradation of their women by the system of polygamy, and the detestable crimes, which, owing to this degradation, are almost universal.'⁷⁶⁶ As with *cicisbeism*, the reality of the *zenana* was often very different from the discourse, being simply the private quarters for the female members of a polygamous household, from which the non-family men were generally excluded.⁷⁶⁷ Regardless, for most travellers and the reading public, their understanding of the *zenana* drew from the relationship between intersecting literary forms. Since the first western voyages east, travellers had fed a voracious appetite for tales of 'that veiled world of languorous ease and tantalising mystery.'⁷⁶⁸ The constructed Orient of Antoine Galland's 1704-1717 *Arabian Nights*, and

⁷⁶³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 233.

⁷⁶⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 232.

⁷⁶⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 233.

⁷⁶⁶ Heber, *Narrative*, 356.

⁷⁶⁷ J. Nair, 'Uncovering the *zenana*: Visions of Indian womanhood in Englishwomen's writings 1813-1940', *Journal of Women's History*, 2 (1990), 8-34, 26, footnote 6. Nair discusses 'the multiple, and apparently ambiguous, ideological purposes that were served by the various representations of Indian women engendered in these writings on the Indian *zenana*.' (9). Sara Suleri writes that in 'penetrat[ing] the *zenana*, the Anglo-India can claim to "know" the Indian'. In doing so, they duplicated 'in miniature the entire structure of the colonial project' (S. Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992), 93). For further historiography on the *zenana*, see: M. Roberts, 'Contested Terrains: Women Orientalists and the Colonial Harem' in J. Beaulieu & Roberts, M., (eds.), *Orientalism's Interlocutors* (Durham and London, 2002), 179-203; Leask, *Curiosity*, 212-38; S. Bhattacharyya, 'Encounters in the *zenana*: representations of Indian women in 19th-century travelogues of Englishwomen' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 70 (2009-2010), 649-656; Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 52-68. For the *zenana* in the 17th century, see K. Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Oxford, 1995), 40-45. for the late-18th century, see D. Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 2006), 69, 25-6, 95-6, 121.

⁷⁶⁸ Bhattacharyya, 'Encounters in the *zenana*', 650.

Barthelemy d'Herbelot's 1697 *Bibliothèque Orientale* combined influentially with accounts such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Embassy Letters from Turkey*, which gave the first eye-witness accounts of the Eastern harem.⁷⁶⁹ The co-constitutive relationship between Orientalist and Gothic fiction, previously discussed, added to a configuration of the East (and Italy) as a sexualised and exotic space. Literary descriptions were augmented by a tradition of Orientalist painting which displayed the zenana as a space where Eastern despots lounged in luxury, surrounded by sexually-enslaved naked women in some homogenised Eastern *seraglio*.⁷⁷⁰

An early, transnational, example of such art was Eugène Delacroix's 1827-28, *La Mort de Sardanapale*. Delacroix's painting was inspired by Lord Byron's play of 1821, *Sardanapalus*, which tells a typical Orientalist tale, set in the ancient East and based on the life of the last King of Nineveh.⁷⁷¹ Delacroix adapted Byron's Orientalist play to depict the last moments before Sardanapalus takes his own life on a funeral pyre built by his own hands. In Delacroix's painting, the king lies on his harem bed, dispassionately overseeing his order to murder his concubines and destroy his horses, whilst a wealth of jewels and luxurious goods lie carelessly abandoned around the room. Sardanapalus' emotional distance is emphasised by the waiting maid serving him wine on a silver tray by his bedside, whilst his servants stab to death and cut the throats of the naked women of the harem and another thrusts a dagger into the breast of the King's once-beloved horse. Here are all the themes of the sexually-obsessed, cruel, luxuriating Eastern despot. On the verge of losing his crown and power to rebellion and betrayal, in an ultimate act of grasping greed and covetousness, Sardanapalus decides that if *he* cannot retain the luxuries of the harem, then no-one shall. In one final act of irrational and cruel spite, he orders the destruction of his living 'possessions', abandoned like so much human chattel. Byron wrote *Sardanapalus* whilst in Ravenna and the play was published in the same volume as *The Two Foscari*, Byron's tale of Italian family tragedy, treachery, murder, torture and exile at the heart of Venetian government. Moving directly from one text to the next,

⁷⁶⁹ Roberts, 'Contested Terrains', 181.

⁷⁷⁰ Roberts, 'Contested Terrains', 179.

⁷⁷¹ G. G. Byron, *Sardanapalus, A Tragedy. The Two Foscari, A Tragedy. Cain, a Mystery* (London, 1821).

readers could hardly fail to see the apparent similarities between the East and Italy. Reinforcing the 'accuracy' of his portrayal of both, Byron insisted on the historical basis for his Italian and Orientalist plays. He drew from William Mitford's *History of Greece* and the first-century Roman historian, Diodorus Siculus for *Sardanapalus*, and the life of the real fifteenth-century Doge, Francesco Foscari for *Foscari*.⁷⁷² Once again, we find the interaction of the 'academic' and 'imaginative' forms of discourse to reinforce the configuration of the similar characteristics of Italy and the Orient. *Sardanapalus* inspired several musical compositions and operas as well as Delacroix's painting, all adding to the Orientalist image of the East, whilst *Foscari* sat alongside Byron's other Italian-themed compositions and those by Shelley and other authors previously discussed. Again, we see an eros/thanatos tension between violent death and sexual titillation. Sardanapalus quietly, casually, watches over the destruction of his naked concubines, whilst Delacroix asks the viewer to adopt an uncomfortable role as a voyeur to murder. Travellers drew on these preformed ideas of the East (and Italy) and then reinforced them through their own writing. The harem, or Indian zenana, was thus firmly established as a site of illicit sexual fantasy and exotic, potentially violent and deadly intrigue.⁷⁷³

⁷⁷² W. Mitford, *The History of Greece* in 5 Vols. (London, 1784-1810).

Byron's lover during his stay in Ravenna and his biographer, Contessa di Teresa Guiccioli, wrote that Byron first read of Sardanapalus in Mitford at the age of 12 (P. Cochran (ed.), T. Guiccioli, *Lord Byron's Life in Italy* (Newark, Delaware, 2010), 261). In a letter to his publisher and friend, John Murray, Byron claimed that in writing *Sardanapalus*, he had 'thought of nothing but Asiatic history' and that, as regards *Foscari*, 'the Venetian play too is rigidly historical' (T. Moore, *The Works of Lord Byron; with his letters and journals, and his life* in six volumes, vol. ii (New York, 1836), 295).

⁷⁷³ Roberts, 'Contested Terrains', 179.



5.1 Eugène Delacroix, *La Mort de Sardanapale* (1827-28).

As Janaki Nair notes, the ‘English conviction’ of Indian immorality was ‘based on three empirical certainties, child marriage, polygamy, and worship of the “phallus,” all of which retained their mystery in the zenana.’⁷⁷⁴ This was ironic, as men were forbidden access to the zenana and their depictions did not draw on personal experience.⁷⁷⁵ A lack of direct knowledge did not prevent William Ward authoritatively declaring that the zenana and polygamy were ‘acknowledged to be the greatest of all domestic afflictions among the Hindoos.’⁷⁷⁶ Ward attributed the evils of the zenana predominantly to Hindus. Although polygamous marriage was practiced by some Hindus, the zenana was more likely to found in regions controlled or heavily influenced by Mughal rule. Neither was the zenana by any means ubiquitous across India. It was to be found predominantly among the upper and middle-class elites, and

⁷⁷⁴ Nair, ‘Uncovering the Zenana’, 28, footnote 22.

⁷⁷⁵ Bhattacharyya, ‘Encounters in the Zenana’, 651.

⁷⁷⁶ Ward, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, 133.

more often in the north, north-west and east of India.⁷⁷⁷ Emma Roberts, a single woman who accompanied her married sister to India, made exactly this point, that 'many more persons than is usually supposed, either through individual attachment, or for the sake of peace and quietness, content themselves with one [wife].'⁷⁷⁸ Like *cicisbeism* though, descriptions of the *zenana* were generally distorted, as places of sexual immorality that represented the totality of Indian domesticity. Those Indians who did not maintain or live within a *zenana* were more prevalent and the detail of their lives theoretically more accessible to travellers, yet most accounts are silent on domesticity outside of the *zenana*.⁷⁷⁹ The *zenana*, or at least the fantasy of it, was more interesting to the reader and more instructive as an ideological symbol of the apparently backwards and degraded nature of Indian society. Hence 'the Hindoos', wrote Ward, 'never appear to have considered the subject of marriage as having anything to do with moral or intellectual advantages.'⁷⁸⁰ The arranged marriages of young girls were the source of much domestic unhappiness and 'the most enormous evils'. These included, Ward had been told, three-quarters of the male population keeping concubines.⁷⁸¹ Hindu domestic institutions were fundamentally 'unnatural and miserable' and 'contrary to moral order.'⁷⁸²

Like Lady Morgan's commentary on Italian marriage, Ward linked Hindu manners and domesticity to India's lack of civic and political virtue. He wrote that the unchanging and ancient Hindu civic institutions 'possess a powerful influence upon the morals and general condition of this people.'⁷⁸³ This is followed by several paragraphs relating the lack of Hindu civic and moral virtue to their polygamous domesticity, the lack of female education and the failure of Hindu women to properly educate their children.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁷ Nair, 'Uncovering the Zenana', 11.

⁷⁷⁸ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 2, 85.

⁷⁷⁹ Nair, 'Uncovering the Zenana', 11.

⁷⁸⁰ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1 xiv.

⁷⁸¹ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 123.

⁷⁸² Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 133

⁷⁸³ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 202.

⁷⁸⁴ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 202-4.

The themes found within early-nineteenth century accounts of both Italy and India thus appear broadly the same. The link that Sismondi notes between morality and politics is clearly visible in travellers' observations of Italy *and* India. Such remarks are also found well *before* the opening decades of the nineteenth century. As I will now discuss, disparaging comments about immoral and degrading sexual and domestic practices in Italy and India were nothing new and neither was the connection between domestic morality and civic and political virtue.

'The effeminacy of the zennanah': Domesticity in Eighteenth-century India and Italy

Taken together, the travel-writing tradition of the eighteenth-century aristocratic Grand Tour amassed a view of Italy which was 'predominantly negative'.⁷⁸⁵ Such views were both reinforced and reflected in the many literary and academic depictions of Italy, as discussed in previous chapters. Literary and historical work had also long since constructed an East that was mostly despotic and morally, civically, and politically moribund. Jemima Kindersley wrote that the main character-traits of the Hindu were 'effeminacy and avarice' and those of the Muslim Indian, 'cruelty and ambition'.⁷⁸⁶ Kindersley had much to say about Indian domesticity, at least where it was observable. She noted that it was hard to comment on Hindu women, so rarely were they seen in public. Most Hindu women, Kindersley explained, were married as child brides and 'have no education given to them.' Later, living a life of indolent inactivity, they 'retired in the zennanahs, and amuse themselves with each other, smoking the hooker, bathing and seeing their servants dance.'⁷⁸⁷ Kindersley noted the chaos and 'distraction of the state', occasioned by the endless rounds of conflict and war between and within Indian Royal families.⁷⁸⁸ Many tired of civil strife, withdrawing from public responsibility and 'sinking into the effeminacy of the zennanah'.⁷⁸⁹ In some cases, Indian effeminacy and their love of pleasure had been turned against them as a tactic by the British. The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II was left, according to Kindersley, without 'hope of ever recovering the possession of his

⁷⁸⁵ Bizzocchi, 'Sexuality and Politics', 18.

⁷⁸⁶ Kindersley, *Letters*, 197.

⁷⁸⁷ Kindersley, *Letters*, 124.

⁷⁸⁸ Kindersley, *Letters*, 146.

⁷⁸⁹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 147.

empire, or even being seated on the throne of his ancestors at Delhi'. He had withdrawn almost permanently into domestic indolence. His main activities were 'smoking his hooker [pipe], bathing according to the Mahomedan custom, and his haram [sic].'⁷⁹⁰ Kindersley also made the connection between the lack of Indian civil and political virtue and the Indian domestic sphere as a place of oppression, effeminacy and indolence. Kindersley specifically hesitated in ascribing these Indian characteristics to race but rather to a system of despotic government which 'checks the growth of every virtue.' She asked, 'where property is not secure, what incitement is there to industry? Where knowledge is of no use, who will resign his indolence and ease in endeavours to obtain it?'.⁷⁹¹ If there were no opportunities to engage in political and civic matters, what incentives were there to leave behind the luxurious indolence of the zenana?

The idea that Indian society had turned towards vicarious pleasure in the absence of productive civic and political processes to pursue, is repeated in observations of Italian domesticity from around the same period. In 1772, the Scottish physician John Moore visited Italy as 'bear leader', or older companion and tutor, to Douglas, the young eighth Duke of Argyll, publishing 'one of the most sober and well balanced views of Italy' in 1781.⁷⁹² Moore's account was particularly popular, with six editions to 1795. Shortly after his return to Britain, Moore retired from medicine to concentrate on writing, including a successful Gothic novel, *Zeluco*, in which the main protagonist was a monstrous Sicilian aristocrat. His 'balanced' account of Italian manners and domesticity did not prevent him from using a fictionalised Italian stereotype to contrast the behaviour and characteristics of virtuous and unvirtuous nations.⁷⁹³

Like Jemima Kindersley, Moore noted how, in the absence of civic or political duties to attend to, the Italians had turned to intricate rituals of mostly-platonic courtship to fill

⁷⁹⁰ Kindersley, *Letters*, 156.

⁷⁹¹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 193.

⁷⁹² R. S. Pine-Coffin, *Bibliography of British and American Travel in Italy to 1860*, L. O. Olschki (ed.), (Florence, 1974), 127.

⁷⁹³ H. L. Fulton, 'Moore, John', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19130> (accessed 26 March 2019). J. Moore, *Zeluco. Various views of Human Nature taken from Life and Manners, Foreign and Domestic* (London, 1789).

their days.⁷⁹⁴ Moore suggested that in Germany, for example, men had a substantial commitment to their military careers, even in times of peace. They therefore had little time to devote to women outside of their marriages.⁷⁹⁵ Frenchmen were impetuous and too changeable in their tastes to devote themselves to one woman, as was required by a *cavalieri servente*.⁷⁹⁶ In countries 'where men are permitted to speak and write without restraint on the measures of government', entry into constitutional politics could 'lead to honours, and a broad road to wealth and power.'⁷⁹⁷ Consequently, in Britain, 'the spirit of play and of party draws the minds of the young men of fortune from love or gallantry.'⁷⁹⁸ In Italy, though, where it was 'death or imprisonment to censure the particular measures of government; love becomes a first, instead of a secondary object.'⁷⁹⁹

In general, Moore disassociated himself from the harsher comments of some travellers. He noted that, merely from the differences that travellers find between their own and foreign manners and customs, they were 'too apt to form hasty and, for the most part, unfavourable opinions of national characters.'⁸⁰⁰ Still, Moore noted the prevalence of women accompanied by their *cicisbeo*, reflecting dryly that such a gentleman 'may be her relation in any degree, or her lover', before adding 'or both'.⁸⁰¹ He noted that 'some writers have described the manners of Venetians as more profligate than those of other nations'. Such commentators accused Italian governments of encouraging licentious behaviour, to distract the people from the despotism under which they languished.⁸⁰² Moore was generally dismissive of these ideas, although he did imply that the authorities were indeed reluctant to investigate or sanction immoral behaviour. He also pointed out, though, that a great number of foreigners assembled in Venice every year 'merely for the sake of amusement'. He concluded that it was unlikely that the Italians were any more 'given to sensual

⁷⁹⁴ J. Moore, *A View of Society and Manners in Italy* in 2 Vols., Vol. 2, (London, 1781), 416.

⁷⁹⁵ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 398-400.

⁷⁹⁶ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 400-01.

⁷⁹⁷ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 398.

⁷⁹⁸ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 399.

⁷⁹⁹ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 399.

⁸⁰⁰ Moore, *View* Vol. 1, 459.

⁸⁰¹ Moore, *View* Vol. 1, 384.

⁸⁰² Moore, *View* Vol. 1, 246.

pleasures than the inhabitants of London, Paris or Berlin'.⁸⁰³ Moore suggested that, in general, ciccisbeism was an innocent practice, admittedly strange to an Englishman, but a consequence of the lack of Italian political and civic involvement.⁸⁰⁴

The relationship between domestic and civil and political virtue expressed by travellers to both Italy *and* India was well summarised by Hester Piozzi, who observed that,

where religious and political liberty is enjoyed to its full extent, as in Great Britain, the people will forge shackles for themselves, and lay the yoke heavy on society, to which, on the contrary, Italians give a loose, as compensation for their want of freedom in affairs of church or state.⁸⁰⁵

Late eighteenth-century accounts of Indian and Italian morals, manners and marriage thus range from amused ridicule to indignant condemnation, but also to more balanced views. Even these early accounts linked Italian and Indian domestic practices to their lack of political and civic involvement and freedom.

However, as we will see, there are differences between late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century accounts of Italian and Indian domestic practices. For instance, the earlier examples above, although hardly complimentary, appear less pointedly vitriolic than the observations of later writers such as Ward or Morgan. Also, in earlier accounts, women tend to be portrayed as victims of their domestic circumstances. Later accounts were more likely to cast women as the instigators or *cause* of domestic disharmony and the embodiment of immoral practices. As discussed above, earlier accounts generally regarded the lack of virtuous domesticity,

⁸⁰³ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 247.

⁸⁰⁴ Moore, *View* Vol. 2, 408-420.

⁸⁰⁵ H. L. Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections made in the course of a journey through France, Italy, and Germany* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1789), 293-4. Hester Piozzi had scandalised society by breaking barriers of class, religion and nationality by marrying a Catholic Italian music teacher. Her Italian sojourn was partly the result of her social ostracization, and her travel account a response to her acidic critics back home. See, M. J. Franklin, 'Piozzi, Hester Lynch', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22309> (accessed 12 Jan 2018).

in the form of *cicisbeism* in Italy and the polygamous *zenana* in India, as a *consequence* of despotic government and a lack of political freedom. In the absence of meaningful political and civic activities, men sank into domestic indolence and hedonism.⁸⁰⁶ Later accounts, particularly those of male travellers, were considerably more strident and suggested that degraded domestic practices were significantly *responsible* for that lack of civic and political virtue in the first place. Domestic practice was placed far more firmly at the heart of the national character and political and civic life of Italy and India, just as it was being so done in Britain at the same time, as part of an emerging middle-class configuration of society. The role of women was emphasised to a far greater extent in the later accounts. Women were assigned more responsibility, both for their culpability in immoral practices and for the importance of their activities at the heart of the domestic unit. In many accounts, this led to the assignment of particular desirable or undesirable female traits, characteristics which determined whether they are 'good' or 'bad' wives and mothers. Taken together, such observations promoted male authority over the demure and submissive woman within an ideal of British middle-class domesticity at the heart of national stability and international success. In the following sections, I will develop these arguments further.

'Numerous and important corrections and additions': A moving discourse

Some early-nineteenth century accounts of both India and Italy were subsequently reproduced in new editions, altered in tone and content, reflecting a shifting attitude towards domestic practices. In these accounts, the negative portrayal of women was brought to the fore. This was the case, for example, with Joseph Forsyth's account of Italy. Forsyth wrote one of the most popular accounts of Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century, running to several editions, including issues produced in America and Geneva. Having travelled to Italy in 1802, during the Peace of Amiens and the cessation of hostilities, he was taken prisoner by the French in 1803. During his captivity, Forsyth wrote his account of Italy, which was published in 1813, although he

⁸⁰⁶ Patriarcha translates Sismondi as writing that, in the absence of political or civic duties, Italian men suffered from 'a "constant laziness" and to give the sons of the nobility something to do, the "bizarre rights and duties" of the *cicisbeo* were "invented"' (Patriarcha, 'Indolence and Regeneration', 398).

was only able to return to Britain in 1814.⁸⁰⁷ His first edition of 1813 contains little commentary on Italian manners and domestic circumstances.⁸⁰⁸ Three years later, his second edition, published a year after his death, and the subsequent third and fourth editions, contains several sections which rail against Italian morals and marriage, linking these to socio-political deficiencies. After the first edition, Forsyth moved publishers, from Cadell and Davies to John Murray. When the latter reprinted the work in 1818, they announced it in their own *Quarterly Review*, as containing ‘numerous and important corrections and additions made by the author previous to his recent decease’.⁸⁰⁹ These additions came almost exclusively in lengthy new sections, entitled, ‘Manners of Florence’, ‘Siena-The People’, ‘Rome-Character’, and ‘Naples-Society’. These extensive additions added a whole new dimension to the book, one in which Italy’s domestic practices are portrayed as the substantial *cause* of their civic and political weaknesses. The publishers clearly thought this different approach would be interesting and informative for their readers.

Like Forsyth’s description of Italy, William Ward’s account of India, from around the same time, also went through several iterations, indeed five editions in total. Ward’s account combined academic study with personal observation of contemporary Hindu culture and life. Although not exactly travel literature in the traditional sense, this combination, including the extensive reconstruction of dialogue and conversations between Indians, underlines the blurring of fact and fictional techniques typical of travellers’ observations. His first four-volume edition, published in India between 1807 and 1811, was entitled *Account of the Writing, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos, including Translations from their Principle Works*. In his preface, Ward begged to differ with previous authors who had portrayed Hindus as ‘a moral, and comparatively an honest people’. Instead, he referred to ‘the vices of lying, deceit, dishonesty, and

⁸⁰⁷ J. Cooper & E. Baigent, ‘Joseph Forsyth’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Sept. 2004). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9929#Externalresources> (accessed 4 Sept 2018).

⁸⁰⁸ J. Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy, in the years 1802 and 1803* 1st ed. (London, 1813).

⁸⁰⁹ *Quarterly Review*, ‘Books printed for John Murray’ Vol. xviii (London, October 1817 and May 1818), 6.

impurity' he found inherent in Hindu society.⁸¹⁰ Yet he restricted his distaste to just a single page in his opening comments, in a work which set itself out, as the title suggested, as an academic study of the texts and history of Hindu religion and literature. Ward's second edition, in two volumes, was published in 1815 and re-printed in 1818, advertised as 'carefully abridged and greatly improved'. This edition was entitled *A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*, including 'a minute description of their manners and customs'. It opened with what Pennington describes as a new and 'long, venomous preface' which sets an entirely different tone for the work.⁸¹¹ Towards the beginning of sixty pages of 'introductory remarks', Ward thanked God for placing India under British control, replacing 'the absolute and rapacious tyrannies of the former Hindoo and Mussulman princes' to serve 'the wants and circumstances of so vast a population'.⁸¹² Ward compared 'the precise boundary which marks the distinction between the civilized and the savage state' with 'the state of man' and 'irrational animals'. Hindu 'manners', claimed Ward, 'strongly remind us of this distinction'.⁸¹³ When combined with the British civilising mission, 'to improve the civil and moral condition of our Indian subjects', Ward's introductory remarks moved his second edition away from an academic account of Hindu history, literature and religion and towards a linkage between traditional Hindu culture and their contemporary civic and political failings.⁸¹⁴

The subjects of domesticity and the Hindu family were very much more to the fore in Ward's second edition, including in a new section entitled '*Remarks on the tendency of the Hindoo institutions, and on the moral state of the natives*'.⁸¹⁵ His introductory remarks included a long list of domestic failings, including: a lack of care over pregnant women; enforced early marriages; lack of discipline in bringing up children; no female education; no moral basis for Hindu marriage; polygamy.⁸¹⁶ Although the

⁸¹⁰ W. Ward, *Account of the Writing, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos, including Translations from their Principle Works* 1st ed, Vol. 1 (Serampore, 1811), xxi.

⁸¹¹ B. K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford, 2005), 77.

⁸¹² W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos: Including a minute Description of their Manners and Customs and Translations from their Principle Works*, 2nd ed., Vol. 1 (Serampore, 1818), vi.

⁸¹³ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, xiii.

⁸¹⁴ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, viii.

⁸¹⁵ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 202-16.

⁸¹⁶ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, xii-xvi.

section which specifically dealt with marriage remained similar to that in the first edition there are also additions, such as the claim that Hindu marriages were ‘seldom happy’, and could not be otherwise given the ‘state of complete servitude’ to which Ward claimed women were reduced.⁸¹⁷ Ward referred to aspects of wifely virtue quoted in Hindu scripture, such as the willingness to act as her husband’s ‘slave’, as his ‘courtesan’ and to bear his anger and impatience ‘without a murmur’.⁸¹⁸ In both his first and second editions, Ward included apparently over-heard, fully re-constructed, conversations between neighbours, villagers, husbands and wives. In Ward’s first edition, this section ran to eight pages and the conversations recounted are all on the subject of religion, bar one on the topic of domestic strife between Hindu spouses.⁸¹⁹ By the second edition, this section had expanded to fifteen pages with the addition of three conversations on the subjects of polygamy, further domestic strife and child marriage.⁸²⁰

Ward’s third edition, published between 1817 and 1820, made the link between civic and political society and manners and morals more explicit. In this edition, the slightly revised preface opened with the statement that ‘it must have been to accomplish some very important moral change in the Eastern world’, that God had assigned control of India to the British. This was ‘the moral enterprize [sic] of the age’, and it was only from Britain that ‘the intellectual and moral improvement of India could have been expected.’⁸²¹ Moral improvement went hand-in-hand with the transformation of the region, to rescue it from ‘so many long and dark ages’.⁸²²

Ward’s account then, began in the first decade of the nineteenth as a predominantly academic study of Hindu religion and history. This account was circulated almost

⁸¹⁷ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 135.

⁸¹⁸ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 135.

⁸¹⁹ Ward, 1st ed, Vol. 4, 194-202.

⁸²⁰ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 4, 169-184.

⁸²¹ Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3 (London, 1820), xvii. The preface actually opens the 3rd volume. The author explains that the 1st and 2nd volumes were intended to be the 3rd and 4th, whilst the latter were intended to be the first two volumes. Hence the preface is found in the 3rd volume. Ward’s return to Britain disturbed his original plan for the 3rd edition. See pp. liv-lv. The four volumes were re-arranged as originally intended in Ward’s 4th edition, but in three volumes (W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos: Including a minute Description of their Manners and Customs and Translations from their Principle Works*, 4th ed., in 3 Vols. (London, 1822).

⁸²² Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3, xvii.

exclusively in India and, although by no means complimentary, has been described as 'rather mild in its attitude towards Hinduism'.⁸²³ By the end of the second decade it had become something different, utilising Hindu cultural history and institutions to explain India's civic and political failings. The lack of virtue in Hindu domesticity were increasingly placed front and centre in Ward's later commentary. Through his later editions, Ward's work gained widespread recognition in Britain and, according to Pennington, 'contributed more than virtually any other person in Britain to the construction and diffusion of knowledge about India and its religious character'.⁸²⁴

In the fifth edition of 1863, the Reverend W. O. Simpson, in his introductory biographical remarks, also noted the differences between Ward's earlier and later editions. Ward's revisions, claimed Simpson, were a deliberate move away from an academic format towards a more populist account of Indian life and civic institutions. The original version was 'foreign to the purpose of the new issue', which was to 'in a popular way, treat of the belief, institutions, and practices of the Hindus.'⁸²⁵ This editorial commentary highlights the intersection of apparently objective observation and the 'imaginative' forms of Orientalism at the heart of the discourse on the East. The changes in Ward's account of India reflected the growing 'Indophobia' back home in Britain, which bolstered increasing support for Anglicist reform in India.⁸²⁶ Ward's later editions were clearly an attempt to influence public opinion in this respect.

In Britain, India and Italy the importance of 'moral tone' was central to reform but, as Stokes identifies, also reflected 'the ascendancy of the new middle classes' in Britain.⁸²⁷ Although Britain was in no position to directly affect reform in Italy, British travellers clearly still indicated that such was required if Italy were to take its place in the 'modern' world. The contrast between virtuous British middle-class domesticity and that of Italy and India, 'explained' the difference between their respective civic and political states and justified middle-class authority in Britain and intervention in India.

⁸²³ B. Pennington, *Was Hinduism invented?*, 77.

⁸²⁴ Pennington, *Was Hinduism invented?*, 77.

⁸²⁵ W. Ward, 5th ed. (Madras, 1863), 7.

⁸²⁶ Pennington, *Was Hinduism invented?*, 77. Again, we find the idea of unchanging Hindu practices. Indeed, *unchangeable* without benevolent British intervention.

⁸²⁷ Stokes, *The English Utilitarians*, 27.

Reflecting these ideas, many travellers juxtaposed Italian and Indian manners and domesticity with their British equivalents, specifically mapping their observations onto the kind of middle-class domestic habits discussed at the start of the chapter. Where Italy and India were trapped in a cycle of declining moral and political virtue, Britain was blessed with the reverse, a positive cycle which reinforced a connection between British domesticity and their civic and political superiority. In one of his first-hand comparisons of Italy and Britain (he claimed), Lord Normanby contrasted the outcomes of British and Italian domesticity. Unlike Britain, Italians were more concerned with pursuing pleasure than they were with any sense of national spirit or duty. Consequently, their families failed to nurture sons with civic pride who valued political freedom. This was something of a circular argument though. It was because they suffered under political despotism and were unable to involve themselves in party politics that, once again unlike in Britain, they were 'forbidden to dream of ambition'. This was why 'the Italian devotes himself to love' as an outlet 'for all their enthusiasm'.⁸²⁸ Thus, the degrading spectacle of Italian domesticity was both a cause and a consequence of their inability to engage in political and civic life.

By the middle of the second decade of the nineteenth century, discussions of Italy and India were replete with observations of how domestic life impacted on society more broadly. Travellers to Italy perhaps tended to give more specific examples than did travellers to India who made more generalised arguments. To a degree, this may have reflected the fact that women, and domestic life generally, were more hidden from public view in India, whereas visitors to Italy suggested that Italians displayed far more in public than they ought!

Joseph Forsyth offered a typical example of how Italy's failed domestic system had led to their civic and political failures. Forsyth directly linked the general malaise in Siena and the city's inability to assert its independence to the licentious behaviour of its people. Upper-class women consorted with the lower classes, or 'intrigue with their own footman'. Alternatively, they jealously held court at home, each a 'goddess' in

⁸²⁸ Normanby, *English*, 41-3.

their own 'temple' hoping to attract the attentions of male 'votaries' to their social gatherings, or *conversazione*. The men either attended these or the casino.⁸²⁹ Consequently, Siena's ruling classes lacked energy and effort and 'shed their natural torpor and insipidity' over a city which 'raised her sluggish head, not to act, but to suffer.'⁸³⁰ Siena's unnatural marriage practices meant that many elite family lines had been extinguished whilst many others 'hang only by a single thread, and that a rotten one.'⁸³¹ Younger brothers unable to start families were either allotted roles as *cicisbeos* or 'condemned to celibacy' within the church. Marriages of genuine love and affection between equals were discouraged and fewer and fewer marriages were taking place at all.⁸³² Such was the state of a society, 'passive and indifferent to every party', that had allowed a variety of foreign and domestic invaders to fight over their city without resistance.⁸³³

Henry Matthews similarly discussed the cowardly ineffectiveness and lack of discipline of the Neapolitan army, in the face of the enemy. He attributed this to their 'slavish submission to a despotic government, and confirmed habits of effeminate indolence.'⁸³⁴ He suggested that such traits became biologically encoded, 'an hereditary taint in their blood,-gradually making what was *habit* in the parent, *constitution* in the offspring,-and so deteriorate the breed.'⁸³⁵ Matthews' argument was the familiar circular one, whereby Italian 'submission to despotic government' and their 'effeminate indolence' were simultaneously both symptom and cause of each other. He noted the general dissatisfaction within Italian society, where revolution was a 'common topic of conversation.'⁸³⁶ Referring to the excesses of the French Revolution, Matthews argued that reform was far preferable to revolution, reform which ought to emerge from the middle classes, 'the virtuous and well informed part of the public.'⁸³⁷ Yet, it was just this part of society which lacked the stability of moral

⁸²⁹ Forsyth, 4th ed., 395.

⁸³⁰ Forsyth, 4th ed., 393-4.

⁸³¹ Forsyth, 4th ed, 397.

⁸³² Forsyth, 4th ed, 397.

⁸³³ Forsyth, 4th ed, 394.

⁸³⁴ Matthews, *Diary*, 195.

⁸³⁵ Matthews, *Diary*, 195.

⁸³⁶ Matthews, *Diary*, 257.

⁸³⁷ Matthews, *Diary*, 258.

and effective domesticity and ‘there can be little hope of its *political* amelioration, till some improvement has taken place in its *moral* condition.’⁸³⁸ (emphasis original). Ultimately, he asked, what progress could be made whilst ‘the state of society is so depraved, as to tolerate the *cavalieri servente* system?’.⁸³⁹

Lady Morgan linked the decline of Venetian morality with the city-state’s desire for ‘power and foreign dominion.’ Ambition had poisoned ‘the state, and the institutes of society-circulating its infection under the various guise of ambition, luxury, and ostentation-corruption in morals, licentiousness in manners!’.⁸⁴⁰ Civic and moral virtue are thus inextricably linked, rising and falling in unison. Given her previously discussed disapproval of Britain’s attitude and actions in Ireland and other colonies, Morgan’s comments here also acted as a warning to Britain regarding its own imperial activities. She did occasionally find cause to praise political and social change in Italy in conjunction with revised domestic habits. Morgan singled out the Neapolitan Prince Pignatelli for his ‘domestic virtues and habits of life’ which were ‘in unison with his patriotism and public principles.’⁸⁴¹ She wrote that the importance of moral revival to the future of Italian political change ‘cannot be too often repeated’. The ‘newly acquired [civic and political] virtues’ of some parts of Italy were both the result of, and had resulted in, ‘scenes of domestic virtue’.⁸⁴² Although disapproving of Napoleon’s self-glorifying policies, Morgan supported his description of *cicisbeism* as ‘counter-revolutionary’ and applauded his efforts to ‘bring matrimony into fashion’ as part of the improvements to Italian domesticity necessary to put Italy on a path to modernity.⁸⁴³ By 1830 then, Italian morals, manners and marriage had become considerably more than the subject of casual derision or moral indignation. They were considered key to Italian lack of constitutional freedom and mature civic institutions. I have already noted that travellers to Italy provided more specific examples of the practical application of such theories than did observers of India. Partly, this was

⁸³⁸ Matthews, *Diary*, 258.

⁸³⁹ Matthews, *Diary*, 258.

⁸⁴⁰ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 3, 410-11.

⁸⁴¹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 3, 284.

⁸⁴² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 3, 284-5.

⁸⁴³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 257.

because that there was more on public view in Italy than in India, although there are other considerations. Travellers to Italy, where there was no potential for British rule, implied the possibility of an independent and self-governing state, if only there could be some improvement in their domestic morality. Travellers' case studies lamented a lack of Italian domestic virtue that led to their inability to constitute an effective Neapolitan army or assert Sieneese independence, for example. British *schadenfreude* may have been a useful confidence boost for their own domestic and political virtue but in demonstrating their superiority, British travellers also pointed out a path towards Italian independence, if only Italians would rectify their domestic immorality. Travellers to India did not have the luxury of making this case, as Indian independence was not desirable. Justifying British control of India depended on arguing for their 'civilising' occupation, rather than proposing blue-prints for Indian self-rule. It would thus hardly have been helpful to mobilise a domestic discourse to suggest changes that might facilitate greater Indian constitutional freedom. Instead, Indian domesticity was an example of how Indian self-governance was unthinkable without anything less than a complete remodelling of every Indian civic, religious and political institution along British lines. This would clearly require something more than a few changes to marriage customs and implied British control for some while yet.

This said, in India as well as Italy, travellers argued that a lack of domestic and civic and political virtue went hand in hand. Indeed, some travellers to Italy argued this without having ever set foot in India. Two decades after her account of Italy, Lady Morgan published an history of women, entitled *Woman and her Master*. Here, she described polygamy as 'that institute which has the most impeded the progress of society, wherever it has been perpetuated [...] annihilating even the hope of political liberty'.⁸⁴⁴ Indeed, the zenana was 'mortifying evidence of the incapacity of some races for improvement and reform.'⁸⁴⁵ So much for Lady Morgan's radical liberality, so critical of imperial despotism! Presumably, she had been influenced by first-hand accounts of India. Charles Grant, for example, explained that domestic immorality had

⁸⁴⁴ S. Morgan, *Woman and her Master* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1840), 35-36.

⁸⁴⁵ Morgan, *Woman* Vol. 1, 37.

a broader impact, writing that ‘there is no sentiment, diffused at large through society, which attaches shame to criminality [sexual impropriety]. Wide and fatal are the effects of this corruption of manners.’⁸⁴⁶ The failings of Indian society generally, were the result of, William Ward wrote, ‘the institutions they have formed, as displayed in the manners, customs, and moral circumstances of the inhabitants.’⁸⁴⁷ Consequently, ‘we find the hindoo still walking amidst the thick darkness of a long long night’.⁸⁴⁸ One of the key practical problems Ward identified was the relationship between the wives and children in a polygamous household. There were ‘multitudes of instances’ he wrote, ‘in which a plurality of wives is the source of perpetual disputes and misery.’⁸⁴⁹ An Indian acquaintance, ‘a person of some respectability’, had bemoaned to him, Ward claimed, his own experience of polygamy, into which he had been forced by his family.⁸⁵⁰ Due to the ‘continual quarrelling’ and ‘the innumerable vexations and collisions inseparable from polygamy, he was almost driven to desperation’.⁸⁵¹ This atmosphere of domestic strife and discontent was an ineffective environment to raise children and foster a sense of civic responsibility.

Many of the early nineteenth-century accounts of Indian domesticity were written by men who had no access to the zenana. Their comments were therefore necessarily more generalised, based on a combination of hearsay, salacious wishful thinking, moral indignation and stereotypes culled from fiction. For female observers, who did potentially have access, there were fewer opportunities in the early part of the nineteenth century. The East India Company only established control of large parts of the sub-continent from the 1820s, allowing more women to travel ‘up country’ and accounts of the zenana increased as a result.⁸⁵²

Marianne Postans paid a visit to the zenana of His Highness, the Rao of Cutch, within which resided his five wives. She prefaced the description with an excerpt from *The*

⁸⁴⁶ Ward, 2nd ed., lvii-lviii.

⁸⁴⁷ Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3, xviii.

⁸⁴⁸ Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3, xxvii.

⁸⁴⁹ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, 133.

⁸⁵⁰ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, 133.

⁸⁵¹ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, 133.

⁸⁵² D. Arnold, ‘The Travelling Eye: British Women in Early 19th-Century India’ in R. Dias & Smith, K., (eds.), *British Women and Cultural Practices of Empire* (London, 2018), 31-50, 32-3.

Pirates Song off the Tiger Island by the popular poet Letitia Elizabeth Landon, better known to the public by her initials, L. E. L.⁸⁵³ The poem described the aftermath of a successful night's piracy:

Shawls, the richest of Cashmere,
 Pearls from Oman's Bay are here;
 Golconda's royal mine
 Sends her diamonds here to shine.⁸⁵⁴

Perhaps these lines are suggestive of Postans' opinion of the illicit nature of the wealth she encountered in her visit to this India Royal house, or perhaps she was hoping the reader would direct themselves to the lines immediately preceding those she quoted:

Maidens, in whose orient eyes,
 More than morning's sunshine lies—
 Honour to the wind and waves,
 While they yield us such sweet slaves—⁸⁵⁵

The sense of the women of the zenana as sexual slaves is certainly one Postans projected initially, describing two 'hideous eunuchs', armed each with a blunderbuss and whom she termed 'sooty guardians of female virtue' and 'retainers of marital tyranny'.⁸⁵⁶ On meeting the women, Postans was 'pleased with their amiability',

⁸⁵³ Landon, L. E., 'The Pirate's Song off the Tiger Island' in *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap Book*, (London, 1832). Landon inspired several 'women poets who followed [her]', such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti, 'who reacted against the limitations that had been imposed on her, against the emphasis on women writing only from the heart' (G. Byron, 'Landon [married name Maclean], Letitia Elizabeth [pseud. L. E. L.]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Sept. 2011)). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15978> (accessed 29 Sept 2019). See also, V. Blain 'Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Eliza Mary Hamilton, and the Genealogy of the Victorian Poetess', *Victorian Poetry*, (Spring, 1995), 31-51. Although Landon's reputation suffered after her death, she was positively reappraised in the 20th century. For example, see G. Greer, 'The Tulsa Centre for the Study of Women's Literature: What are we doing and why are we doing it?', *TSWL*, 1 (Spring, 1982), 5-26, 23. Co-incidentally, Emma Roberts, whose account of India I have featured, also a poet, wrote the introduction and a memoir of Landon's life in an 1839 collection of her work (L. E. Landon, *The Zenana and Minor Poems of L. E. L.* (London, 1839)).

⁸⁵⁴ Postans, *Cutch*, 50.

⁸⁵⁵ Landon, *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrapbook*, 15.

⁸⁵⁶ Postans, *Cutch*, 50-1.

although she somewhat infantilised them.⁸⁵⁷ They were ‘abashed and timid’, fiddled nervously with their jewellery and asked her a ‘variety of trifling questions.’⁸⁵⁸ The triviality of their incessant ‘whisperings, gigglings, and other demonstrations of amusement’ seemed to be a source of slight annoyance for the serious-minded visitor.⁸⁵⁹ Such relatively innocent characteristics hid darker consequences. The constant proximity of the wives to each other had facilitated between them a destructive ‘jealousy tyranny’. The effects of this female antagonism for broader society were severe, spilling over into disputes between men in the outside world, which had ‘spread anarchy over kingdoms and deluged them with blood.’⁸⁶⁰ What was required was a ‘great spirit of change should move over their political, moral, and religious institutions.’⁸⁶¹ India’s political impotency and a lack of social cohesion had its roots ‘in the recesses of the harem’.⁸⁶² Postans made a similar point discussing female infanticide, another damaging cultural practice which, she argued, ‘political influence’ could not eradicate.⁸⁶³ Once again, Indian society’s broader problems were hidden from western eyes, concerned that the ‘recesses of the harem conceal the blood that may flow’.⁸⁶⁴

Postans wrote that she ‘felt sincere commiseration for their degraded, useless, and demoralizing condition’ and that the women of the harem were ‘slaves of a web of circumstances’. This said, they displayed a ‘a cunning aptitude for political intrigue’. Although the women were ‘all equally ignorant’, and their behaviour often simply infantile, Postans described ‘many of them’ as ‘far more evil in their nature’.⁸⁶⁵ The impression she left is that the women of the zenana needed little encouragement to act upon their scheming natures.

Postans’ comments here were typical of nineteenth-century travellers, who, in comparison to their eighteenth-century counterparts, ascribe the ills of society far

⁸⁵⁷ Postans, *Cutch*, 56.

⁸⁵⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 54.

⁸⁵⁹ Postans, *Cutch*, 51.

⁸⁶⁰ Postans, *Cutch*, 56.

⁸⁶¹ Postans, *Cutch*, 57.

⁸⁶² Postans, *Cutch*, 56.

⁸⁶³ Postans, *Cutch*, 148.

⁸⁶⁴ Postans, *Cutch*, 148.

⁸⁶⁵ Postans, *Cutch*, 56.

more to the women at the heart of debased and ineffective forms of Indian and Italian domesticity. In the following section, I will discuss this point in more detail.

A 'system of female supremacy': Female culpability

One of the key changes in the discourse of Italian and Indian domesticity in the first decades of the nineteenth century was the culpability placed upon women. As the importance assigned to wives and mothers at the heart of the family and the nation grew back home, so travellers emphasised the lack of their virtuous equivalents in Italy and India. In late eighteenth-century accounts of India and Italy women were largely cast as the victims of oppressive men. For example, John Moore placed the blame for licentious marital behaviour with Italian husbands, preferring to see their wives as victims rather than active agents of immorality. Moore noted the excessive jealousy of Venetian husbands which resulted in them confining their wives behind 'iron bars, bolts, and padlocks'.⁸⁶⁶ He sympathised with women who might have 'preferred the common gondoleers [sic] of the lakes, and the vagrants of the streets, to such husbands'.⁸⁶⁷ Jemima Kindersley generally cast Indian women as the cowed victims of oppression. For example, she described the accidental burning down of a Muslim zenana in which twenty women and children passively perished. Kindersley reported that the victims, 'either dreading the jealous rage of their husbands, or the disgrace of being exposed in public, did not attempt to make their escape'.⁸⁶⁸ Describing sati - the immolation of a Hindu wife on her husband's funeral pyre - Kindersley suspected that the male Brahmin priests were largely responsible for encouraging the ritual, on account of the jewels, 'which are often of considerable value' and were appropriated by the Brahmins on the death of the women.⁸⁶⁹ Kindersley wrote that women's 'retirement' at home, their lives spent away from the public gaze, came from a sense of 'dignity' and 'delicacy'.⁸⁷⁰ These comments came after a passage which noted the revered status of the 'honour' of women, 'particularly those of the higher casts.' Even death might result from transgressions of such honour.⁸⁷¹ The sense was that a

⁸⁶⁶ Moore, *View of Society* Vol. 2, 241.

⁸⁶⁷ Moore, *View of Society* Vol. 2, 242.

⁸⁶⁸ Kindersley, *Letters*, 102.

⁸⁶⁹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 124-6.

⁸⁷⁰ Kindersley, *Letters*, 127.

⁸⁷¹ Kindersley, *Letters*, 127.

woman's honour was not so much her own, as it was a symbol of status for her husband or male members of her family. The 'dignity' of women, therefore, restricting themselves to their domestic environment, would not perhaps be their own preference but a consequence of the patriarchy which saw men claim women's 'honour' for themselves.

This portrayal of women changed significantly by the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century. This is not to suggest that Indian or Italian men are portrayed differently, indeed they were not. For example, Henry Matthews described the 'effeminate indolence' of ill-educated and otherwise unoccupied Italian men.⁸⁷² The pursuit of 'love' was their 'serious and sole occupation of life', rather than something to occupy 'an hour of idleness'.⁸⁷³ For Ann Deane, the lives of Indian men were predisposed to indolence. Deane travelled to India in 1799 with her husband, a captain in the Dragoons. Apart from a brief return to England to attend to the schooling of her younger son, she remained in India until 1814, publishing a widely well-reviewed account of her experiences in 1823.⁸⁷⁴ Deane wrote that Muslim men were

allowed four wives; and he cannot imagine a greater luxury than being stretched on a *char-piahy* with a *hookah* in his mouth, listening to an old *fakcer* who relates Persian stories, with one or two of these women to fan and *champoo* him.⁸⁷⁵

The portrayal of Indian and Italian women changed, though, from victim to culpability, playing the role, for example, of the temptress. Italian and Indian women were assigned an assertive sexual agency. A typically condemnatory commentary on Italian women in the opening decades of the nineteenth century was that of Joseph Forsyth who portrayed Italian women as sexual sirens. Those of the upper classes

⁸⁷² Matthews, *Diary*, 195.

⁸⁷³ Matthews, *Diary*, 113.

⁸⁷⁴ B. Colbert, 'Ann Deane', *Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840*. <http://www4.wlv.ac.uk/btw/texts/1044> (accessed 29 March 2019).

⁸⁷⁵ A. Deane, *A Tour Through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan Comprising a Period between the years 1804 and 1814: with Remarks and Authentic Anecdotes* (London, 1823), 94.

‘excel in all the arts of the sex’, whilst the apparently demure dress of middle-class women was actually ‘a refinement in coquetry.’ The actions of both were designed to attract ‘not barren admiration, but men’.⁸⁷⁶ Forsyth described the ‘ludicrous’ spectacle of the Italian wife flaunting her infidelity before God with her *cicisbeo*, or ‘professed adulterer’.⁸⁷⁷ It was not unfair, he wrote, to judge Italian women by English standards, because ‘infidelity is everywhere vice.’⁸⁷⁸ Forsyth concluded that ‘an Italian beauty with an Italian temperament, remaining faithful to an Italian husband, in the midst of Italian manners, is more virtuous than an English wife can possibly be.’⁸⁷⁹ Italian women who did remain true, were virtuous indeed, given the temptations and ubiquitous immorality of Italian society. Forsyth was scathing about the ‘servilities’ imposed on the *cicisbeo* by his mistress.⁸⁸⁰ Wives effectively humiliated their husbands, to whom ‘she allots but the drudgery of her caprices’, whilst the *cicisbeo* ‘sips the delight’, in exchange for submitting to such servility.⁸⁸¹

Similarly, Henry Matthews described the ‘serious and enthusiastic expression of passion’ in Italian women.⁸⁸² They were, he wrote, ‘in the grandest style of beauty [...] voluptuousness is written in every feature.’⁸⁸³ It was reputed, claimed Matthews, that women used the offices of the *ruffiano*, a go-between, to arrange illicit sexual encounters. He concluded that ‘the existence of such a degrading profession is a sufficient evidence of a lamentable state of society.’⁸⁸⁴ To ‘secure the purity of the domestic sanctuary’, Matthews warned his British male compatriots to guard against what he calls a ‘system of female supremacy’ which operated in Italy.⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁷⁶ Forsyth, 4th ed., 415.

⁸⁷⁷ Forsyth, 4th ed., 380.

⁸⁷⁸ Forsyth, 4th ed., 381.

⁸⁷⁹ Forsyth, 4th ed., 381.

⁸⁸⁰ Forsyth, 4th ed., 381.

⁸⁸¹ Forsyth, 4th ed., 395.

⁸⁸² Matthews, *Diary*, 113.

⁸⁸³ Matthews, *Diary*, 113.

⁸⁸⁴ Matthews, *Diary*, 114.

⁸⁸⁵ Matthews, *Diary*, 262.

In India too, opinion on Indian women changed from relative sympathy for the victims of lascivious men, to condemnation for acting with deliberate and immoral sexual agency. For example, Ann Deane warned against the sexual intriguing of Indian women, although she specifically excluded Hindu women from her comments, describing them as 'more respectable' and less confined to the zenana.⁸⁸⁶ Deane cast Muslim women not as the victims of lascivious men, but as sexually divisive manipulators. Yet, it was not just Indian men over whom they enjoyed 'unbounded influence', but European men too. Muslim Indian women, wrote Deane, 'do nothing but adorn their persons, study deception, and smoke their hookahs.'⁸⁸⁷ They were 'cunning and deceitful', and 'adepts in blandishments'; skills in which they excelled, having been 'instructed in them from their infancy.'⁸⁸⁸ Men were, Deane wrote, 'in the hands of these women as clay in the hands of the potter, perhaps even more easily moulded.'⁸⁸⁹ This last observation was a withering judgement on the weakness of European as well as Indian men. Charles Grant related a similar story, albeit with more sympathy for European men. He counselled his readers to be on their guard against unscrupulous Indians, lest they be relieved of their interests and fortunes, warning that many Europeans have been 'careless or credulous' in their dealing with Indians. He warned against the avaricious grasping of sexually manipulative Indian women, lest unsuspecting European men, like their Indian counterparts, 'find that they have fallen into the hands of harpies'.⁸⁹⁰

Marianne Postans also described how Muslim women 'exercise considerable influence over their lords' within 'the sanctity and etiquette of the harem' which 'affords them unquestioned power.'⁸⁹¹ Postans described Muslim Indian women as devoid of natural maternal instinct. On female infanticide, Postans condemned the Indian men who maintained such barbarism but wrote that 'a Rajpoot wife becomes even more

⁸⁸⁶ Deane, *A tour*, 94.

⁸⁸⁷ Deane, *A Tour*, 94.

⁸⁸⁸ Deane, *A Tour*, 93

⁸⁸⁹ Deane, *A Tour*, 94.

⁸⁹⁰ Ward, 2nd ed, li.

⁸⁹¹ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 260.

tenacious of this custom than her husband, and makes no effort to preserve the life of her hapless infant.'⁸⁹²

By the early- to mid-nineteenth century both male and female travellers were assigning a far greater degree of blame to women for the lack of domestic virtue in India and Italy. Such discourse reflected the growing importance of the role of women in middle-class Britain, as the moral centre of the family, and hence the nation. British women were the supporters of husbands and the educators of children; girls and boys brought up to understand their respective roles in a nation which enjoyed constitutional freedom at home and dominance abroad. The contrast between Indian and Italian women and their British counterparts showed how virtuous women at the centre of the middle-class family were essential to civic and political stability at home and national superiority abroad.

'A man can hardly be a good man without a good mother': Configuring the domestic Goddess

Alongside the domestic habits of Italians and Indians was the mirror-image promotion of the kind of domesticity which emphasised the positive role of women, that with which the middle classes increasingly identified back home. Lady Morgan noted the importance of wives and mothers 'in determining the character of society' and establishing constitutional independence and freedom.⁸⁹³ In another circular argument, though, she wrote that, in Britain, 'liberty is the sun under which domestic virtues have always flourished', and that 'the wives and mothers of England owe their glorious pre-eminence far more to Magna Charta, than to their chill skies and northern latitude.'⁸⁹⁴ Regardless, British domesticity and its associated civic and political benefits were in direct contrast to the 'demoralizing bigotry' of Italian domesticity, 'which was calculated to make women concubines and devotees, but

⁸⁹² M. Postans, *Cutch*, 146. Other examples abound. William Ward claimed that Indian wives turned their houses into 'secret brothels' (Ward, 2nd edition, 521). Joseph Forsyth railed against Italian women who 'clap gentlemen on the thigh' and 'keep the conversation continually fluttering on the brink of obscenity' (Forsyth, 4th ed., 379). Both men seem to express a frisson of excitement behind their breathless indignation.

⁸⁹³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 196.

⁸⁹⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 183.

which could not produce good wives and mothers'.⁸⁹⁵ Henry Matthews also contrasted the benefits of British and Italian domestic life. He observed that Italian marriages were often arranged, with the bride and groom meeting for the first time at the altar. Certainly, 'few Englishmen would be found to bear the yoke that is here imposed on a *cavaliere*'.⁸⁹⁶ Italians did not expect from marriage, Matthews wrote, 'the happiness of home, with the whole train of domestic charities which an Englishman associates with the marriage-state.'⁸⁹⁷ English domesticity provided more than nuptial bliss though. Matthews praised 'the female virtues of England' which were responsible for 'not only the happiness of our homes, -but also for the support of that national character, which has led to all our national greatness.'⁸⁹⁸ Matthews concluded that 'it is to the influence of maternal precept and maternal example upon the mind of childhood, that all the best virtues of manhood may ultimately be traced.'⁸⁹⁹

In his account of India, William Ward made very similar points, contrasting Indian and British motherhood. Ward eulogised 'European mothers' who were 'greater benefactors to the age in which they live, than all the learned men with which a country can be blessed.'⁹⁰⁰ By contrast, Indian women failed to give their children 'that instruction which lays the foundation of future excellence'.⁹⁰¹ Placing the domestic role of women at the heart of national success, Ward noted 'how greatly must a nation suffer from this barbarous system.'⁹⁰² There was not, Ward claimed, 'a single school for girls' in the whole of India, as Hindus considered that 'the employments of women do not require the assistance of education.' Such policies entailed the loss to society of 'those who might become the best part of it.'⁹⁰³ In his third edition, Ward went on to implore the women of England to lobby for the education of Indian women. They too might then gain the same 'enjoyment of so many comforts, in a society so much

⁸⁹⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 196.

⁸⁹⁶ Matthews, *Diary*, 261.

⁸⁹⁷ Matthews, *Diary*, 258.

⁸⁹⁸ Matthews, *Diary*, 262-3.

⁸⁹⁹ Matthews, *Diary*, 263.

⁹⁰⁰ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. I, 203.

⁹⁰¹ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. I, 203.

⁹⁰² Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. I, 202.

⁹⁰³ Ward, 2nd ed., vol. I, xiv.

improved by their virtues'.⁹⁰⁴ The role of women as supporters of their husbands and educators of their children was thus essential to a nation's political and civic success. As Ward concluded, 'no wonder that Hindoo society is so degraded.'⁹⁰⁵

As illustrated in the quotation at the opening of this section, Helen Mackenzie's husband, Colin, castigated Indian women as poor wives and mothers, noting the inevitable outcome for society given that 'a man can hardly be a good man without a good mother'.⁹⁰⁶ Marianna Postans regretted that 'the domestic arrangements of Moslem families, tend much to retard improvement, the youths being confined to the harem until an advanced period of life'.⁹⁰⁷ Reflecting a view of British middle-class domesticity, Postans could see how this might be turned to some advantage. Were wives and mothers to be allowed better education, their 'influence might then produce impressions on the minds of their sons highly advantageous to their future improvement'.⁹⁰⁸ Postans raised the importance of maternal influence in educating children, a theme found throughout narratives of Italy and India. One of the causes of the dangerous and uncontrolled sexual politics which spilled over into public life, Postans wrote, was a lack of female education and 'a real usefulness and responsibility in social life' for women.⁹⁰⁹ Similarly, Helen Mackenzie claimed that 'it is looked upon as a calamity, in a Hindoo family, if a women receives any kind of instruction.'⁹¹⁰ She argued that Indian women would be more effective 'as wives, mothers, and neighbours, than such as can barely read and write.'⁹¹¹ Postans and Mackenzie introduced an idea I will consider in more detail shortly, that the purpose of female education was to make them better wives and mothers, rather than for its own sake. Lady Morgan observed that Italian wives also, had 'no domestic or maternal duties to perform'.⁹¹² Joseph Forsyth commented on the humiliation of the husband 'left at

⁹⁰⁴ Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3, I.

⁹⁰⁵ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. I, xiv.

⁹⁰⁶ Mackenzie, *Life in the mission*, Vol. 1, 243.

⁹⁰⁷ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 258.

⁹⁰⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 230.

⁹⁰⁹ Postans, *Cutch*, 57.

⁹¹⁰ Mackenzie, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 48.

⁹¹¹ Mackenzie, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 95.

⁹¹² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 229.

home with the children', whilst his wife paraded publicly with her *cicisbeo*.⁹¹³ Visiting a girls' school, Lady Morgan praised the establishment for raising 'a generation of well-educated females' who would raise the moral character of the nation.⁹¹⁴ The French authorities required many Italian families to send their children away to similar schools across Italy, and even to France. Morgan referred to such education as 'European'.⁹¹⁵ 'Europe' was thus a marker of civilisational progress from which Italy was excluded, rather than a geographical identifier. Morgan regretted the 'despotic' nature of enforcing such education but felt it was justified by benefits essential to Italy's future.⁹¹⁶ Ironically, Lady Morgan supported here exactly the kind of justification for despotic actions to which she was so antipathetic in Britain's colonial 'civilising mission', throughout her travel-writing and novels. In Piacenza, Morgan had noted that, even 'amidst the oppression and misrule of Italian Principalities' there is more prosperity than in Ireland. She was scathing about the 'boasted Constitution of England', with which 'the Irish nation is mocked with its semblance.'⁹¹⁷ Yet, the enforced removal of children to places of 'European' education, of which Morgan approved, smacked of colonial policies aimed at the 'improvement' of a 'backward' people, against which Morgan's novels railed in India and Ireland. Presumably, Morgan's inconsistency stemmed from the fact that she approved of the ideology driving the French authorities but not those behind British actions.

Contemplating the array of skills taught to the young pupils, Morgan particularly noted 'cutting out shifts, making stays, inventing dresses, and mending stockings' as activities which 'no mother or mistress of a family should be ignorant'.⁹¹⁸ It was not only what Morgan termed 'homely duties' that attracted praise but also education in, 'languages, the arts, the sciences, and literature'. The primary function, though, of these 'useful female works' was to train girls to 'keep the books, and manage a

⁹¹³ Forsyth, 4th ed. 380.

⁹¹⁴ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 197.

⁹¹⁵ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 446.

⁹¹⁶ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 446.

⁹¹⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 465.

⁹¹⁸ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 199.

family.⁹¹⁹ Regardless, considering the range of academic as well as practical skills which she described as part of a 'liberal system of female education', Morgan appeared to endorse activities that might take women well beyond the domestic sphere. This is a point which seems well supported by Morgan's praise for female academics at the University of Bologna. She even noted sarcastically, the difference between Italy and Britain in this respect, where a woman's 'erudition' was considered 'a greater female stigma than vice itself'.⁹²⁰ Yet, Morgan added that 'genius' in women was not of the same type as that of men. Women's 'talent' originated not in 'bookworm erudition' but was 'developed sensibility'. Women's writing was able to 'open the springs of human sympathy, to correct the selfishness of human egotism, and to increase the sum of literary enjoyment.' A woman learned, not from hours of research, but 'by what she feels.'⁹²¹ Fortunately, such skills did not require 'the sacrifice of that time and attention, which belong, by the finest law of nature, to her better duties as wife and mother.'⁹²² Academic ability and education in women enhanced their ability to perform their primary domestic functions rather than provide an alternative direction in life. Indeed, where women excelled academically, it was due to their superior domestic attributes of well-developed sensibilities and sensitivities to the human condition. A 'liberal system of female education' added to a woman's skills in managing a household; in teaching their children; in entertaining and complementing the role of their husbands on social occasions. Even a writer considered as radical as Lady Morgan subscribed to a gendered form of domesticity as the basic unit of moral, civic and political civilisation. Taking forward her Italian experiences, in her later history of women, Morgan made compelling and passionate arguments for the better treatment of women, their equality before the law and for recognition of their contribution to society.⁹²³ But for all of that, women had a unique set of traits, 'dependent on the softer constitution of her structure-a more rapid and delicate sensibility, and a wider range of sympathies.'⁹²⁴ These natural and inherent

⁹¹⁹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 199.

⁹²⁰ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 26.

⁹²¹ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 26.

⁹²² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 26-7.

⁹²³ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 3-18.

⁹²⁴ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 323.

characteristics fitted women for a specific role, that of the 'moral development' of children and even of nations.⁹²⁵ Morgan made a specific point of adding an explanatory note to her pleas for female equality, distancing herself from the kind of freedom from traditional relationship roles advocated by Mary Wollstonecraft.⁹²⁶ Men and women were not equal in the sense that they were 'one androgynous political identity'.⁹²⁷ Indeed, 'on the contrary', Morgan held 'the sacro-sanctity of wedlock to be the only possible foundation for common justice to the "weaker sex"'.⁹²⁸

Bemoaning the lack of education for Indian women, William Ward made quite similar points. He observed that 'this deficiency in the education and information of females not only prevents their becoming agreeable companions to their husbands but renders them incapable of forming the minds of their children'.⁹²⁹ The purpose of female education was not education for its own sake, nor was it intended to help women make their way in the world of scholarship, the law, industry or civic management where they might compete with fathers, husbands or brothers. Instead, female education directly facilitated their 'natural' roles as wives and mothers, apparently vital to the good of the nation. On where educational deficiencies lay, Ward noted that 'the use of the needle, knitting, and imparting knowledge to her children, are duties to which she has no call'.⁹³⁰ Elsewhere, he noted that Indian women 'never touch a pin, a needle, a pair of scissors, or a pen'.⁹³¹ Even British women's education, so lauded by travellers, was not for its own sake but to enhance the domestic talents of wives and mothers. As Helen Mackenzie quoted her husband, Colin, as telling an Indian acquaintance,

⁹²⁵ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 14.

⁹²⁶ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 325.

⁹²⁷ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 325.

⁹²⁸ Morgan, *Women*, Vol. 1, 326.

⁹²⁹ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 203.

⁹³⁰ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, xiv.

⁹³¹ Ward, 3rd ed., Vol. 3, xlvi.

"We educate our women," he said, "that they may be good wives and good mothers [...] our women remain pure-minded, and are not like the women of this country, whose minds are polluted with vice."⁹³²

This of course, was also 'education' in a broader sense, the use of 'we educate' denoting the control exercised by men over women, whilst 'our women' implies a sense of ownership. The apparent 'freedom' enjoyed by British women was thus highly qualified and the message between the lines was that all women were universally liable to the same 'faults' observed in Indian and Italian families. The 'virtue' of British domesticity lay largely in the proper supervision of women by their husbands, fathers and brothers. Underlining this point was Colin Mackenzie's advice to a Muslim Afghan colleague. His wife wrote that 'C. showed him the passage in Titus, where women are exhorted to be keepers at home.'⁹³³ In the King James translation, this passage advises women 'to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.'⁹³⁴ The familial, and hence moral, civic and political repercussions of improperly supervised women, as demonstrated in different ways through observation of Indian and Italian domesticity, acted partly as justification for highly gendered British middle-class domestic formations. Colin Mackenzie's message, dutifully disseminated by his wife, was that 'educated' women were chaste, pliant and obedient to their husbands.

Within the observations of domesticity was a related discourse, that which defined the 'feminine' characteristics of the virtuous woman. Lamenting the manners of Indian women, William Ward credited the 'politeness and urbanity which is found in the modern manners amongst European nations' to 'the company of the fair sex'.⁹³⁵ Helen Mackenzie noted with distaste the nautch, or dancing, girls at a Muslim Indian wedding, their 'beckoning, smiling, and joking with the populace.' They exhibited 'a boldness of manner most displeasing in a woman.'⁹³⁶ Prefiguring her later publication

⁹³² Mackenzie, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 243.

⁹³³ Mackenzie, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 186.

⁹³⁴ King James Bible, Titus 2:5, *Bible Gateway*.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Titus+2%3A5&version=KJV>. (Accessed 17/12/18).

⁹³⁵ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 203.

⁹³⁶ Mackenzie, 2nd ed., Vol. 1, 151.

on women, Lady Morgan praised the ideal characteristics taught to young women, those of 'tameless and gentility, conventional grace and arbitrary elegance'.⁹³⁷ Describing a cabinet of curiosities in a University, Morgan wrote that the attraction 'to a female' was not their scientific value, but 'the beauty, order, and neatness of its arrangement'. Joseph Forsyth remarked that 'the reserves of education and perhaps a certain cleanliness of thinking' in English women, 'throw an elegant drapery over the female mind.' This was in contrast to the forwardness of Italian women, which 'appears in the nakedness of honest nature.'⁹³⁸ Henry Matthews asked his readers to 'consider the character of the Italian women', whom he described as 'ardent and impassioned - jealous of admiration-enthusiastic alike in love or in resentment', as opposed to the submissive 'meek and gentle spirit' of British women, embodied by Shakespeare's Desdemona.⁹³⁹ His preference for 'meek and gentle' women over their 'ardent and impassioned' Italian counterparts, suggested a fear of female authority and independence. Similarly, Joseph Forsyth testified that the beauty of Italian women was often combined with qualities such as 'intelligence', 'pride', 'defiance' and even 'devotion', but 'seldom with modesty'.⁹⁴⁰ There was a palpable sense of his discomfort in meeting Italian women's eyes, which were invariably 'rakish in their expression.'⁹⁴¹ Thus, British men who assigned so much personal and national importance to the influence of their mothers in the domestic sphere, were disturbed by the independence of assertive women in public.

To underline his point about the sexual ethics of Indian women in his second edition, William Ward introduced a long extract from Charles Grant's *Observations on the State of Society*. Although not travel writing as it is usually understood, Ward's inclusion of Grant's essay in his own account brought the latter's views further to the public attention and once again underlines the variety of material gathered under the label of travel literature. Grant was excoriating in every possible way, laying the groundwork for the whole Indophobic case. He found that even within the security of

⁹³⁷ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 1, 196.

⁹³⁸ Forsyth, 4th ed., 379.

⁹³⁹ Matthews, *Diary*, 259.

⁹⁴⁰ Forsyth, 4th ed., 380.

⁹⁴¹ Forsyth, 4th ed., 380.

the zenana, absence of the supervising husband often led to sexual immorality.⁹⁴² Much like observations of Italian women, when women were ineffectively supervised by their husbands, ‘the purity of the female character is not always so well preserved in reality, as in appearance.’⁹⁴³ When their husbands were away, groups of women associated with each other, becoming ‘the great instruments of corrupting their own sex.’⁹⁴⁴ Unchecked in their activities, many mixed with ‘indecent’ religious devotees, the results being ‘as might be expected.’⁹⁴⁵

This is by no means a purely male discourse nor one applied solely to non-British women. On meeting the women of the zenana, Marianna Postans noted that, ‘permitted the free association of numerous beings of their own sex’, they involved themselves in jealous scheming, with dire consequences for society in general.⁹⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Postans observed how they indulged in ‘two of the strongest desires of the female mind, curiosity and gossip.’⁹⁴⁷ The dangers of women freely associating with each other without proper supervision and their propensity for gossip and so forth, appear to apply to women generally and not just to Indian women. Elsewhere, and employing a selection of Byronic quotes from *The Bride of Abydos* and *Childe Harold* respectively, Postans wrote that “‘fair as the first who fell of woman-kind,” the dark-eyed Rajpootni [Rajput] frequently becomes the victim of her wayward and evil passions’, within “‘the sacred harem’s silent tower ” [...] too often the scene of desperate intrigue’.⁹⁴⁸ The implication was that women’s ‘wayward and evil passions’ were not unique to Rajput or even specifically to Indian women in general but intrinsic to the ‘nature’ of women, inherited from the first of her sex, as Postans implied with Byron’s reference to Eve. It was a lack of proper female supervision and domestic duties which might lead to the intriguing which blighted both the home and the wider society beyond.

⁹⁴² Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1. lvii.

⁹⁴³ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1. lvi.

⁹⁴⁴ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1. lvii.

⁹⁴⁵ Ward, 2nd ed., Vol. 1. lvii.

⁹⁴⁶ Postans, *Cutch*, 56.

⁹⁴⁷ Postans, *Cutch*, 51.

⁹⁴⁸ Postans, *Cutch*, 132. See also G. G. Byron, *The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale* 10th ed. (London, 1814), Canto I, verse vi, 8. Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto II, verse lv, 88.

As Henry Matthews' remarks at the start of this chapter suggest, there was a common British belief that different forms of domesticity were at the heart of a nation's success or failure, at home and as a world power. Conversely, through the mirror image of Indian and Italian domestic practices, travellers 'explained' the apparent lack of civic and political virtue in those places. However, what appears to be a simple narrative of national or racial superiority served an ideological function in promoting middle-class values. Travellers' comments on foreign manners and domesticity, and their contrast with those back home, demonstrate how 'English marriage customs were a vital part of English national identity.'⁹⁴⁹ Travellers argued that Britain's apparent national superiority was a consequence of its superior domestic practices, espoused and claimed by the middle classes in the early nineteenth century.⁹⁵⁰ Observations of foreign domesticity played a significant role in asserting middle-class values as civically, morally and politically superior at home in Britain. Britain's 'obvious' superiority over India and Italy demonstrated the rightness of middle-class values at home. Whilst it was only in India that the British might propose more direct intervention in foreign domesticity, travellers to Italy suggested similar 'civilising' re-education policies as beneficial to Italian civic, political and constitutional development. Such discourse served to reinforce the same ideas at home and in India. Observations of the domestic sphere thus place Britain, India and Italy with the same sphere of analysis.

In the following chapter, I will explore, largely through the experiences and writing of British women travellers to India, the intersections of race, class and gender. I consider the concerns of middle-class Anglo-India women who criticised not just Indian women but their own, lower class, countrywomen. Through access, in India, to a lifestyle normally unavailable to them back home, ordinary soldier's wives, maids, children's nannies and governesses 'transgressed' across class borders. We see how

⁹⁴⁹ Balzaretti, 'British Women travellers', 255. See also the centrality of 'the relationship between gender, class and national virtue' in women's travel accounts to Italy (K. Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender and national Identity* (Aldershot, 2001), 165 & 166-80). As I will show, the same themes are well represented in accounts of India.

⁹⁵⁰ As discussed in the introduction, see Davidoff & Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

such incursions posed a threat to middle-class women. Finally, I consider the ways in which British middle-class women travellers expressed their doubts and anxieties about their own forms of domesticity, even as they were forced to conform to them.

Chapter Six

Border Conflicts

Introduction

In his discussion of Italian sexualities and politics, Roberto Bizzocchi attributes pejorative comments about Italian domesticity among British travellers to a reaction against *cicisbeism* as an aristocratic practice and, by implication, a criticism of aristocratic socio-political authority generally.⁹⁵¹ Certainly, travellers attributed licentious and degraded domestic arrangements to the aristocracy. Lady Morgan associated the immorality of pre-Napoleonic Italian domesticity with an aristocratic and despotic 'political and religious system'. She expressed a hope that 'royal and imperial re-action' would be prevented, to safeguard the moral and political advances recently made.⁹⁵² She noted further that upper-class Italian wives had 'no domestic or maternal duties to perform'.⁹⁵³ The novelist and writer on Italy, Anne Manning, highlighted the civic and political importance of such 'duties'. She praised the French introduction of 'liberal education' to combat the 'ignorance and bigotry of most of the Italian ladies', in institutions run by French women in the absence of suitable Italians. A 'liberal education' was essentially domestic instruction, vital to the development of the 'character and disposition of their sons.'⁹⁵⁴ It was the introduction of superior middle-class domestic practices that gave Manning some hope that the younger generation of Italians might fight for the freedom that their older compatriots were incapable of achieving, given the ignorance, bigotry, superstition and fatalistic submission of the latter.⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵¹ 'The truly salient feature of *cicisbeism*', writes Bizzocchi, was 'its inseparable link' with 'aristocratic sensibility'. The practice became 'unacceptable from a strictly political perspective' because it cemented elite rule through networks of 'solidarity and alliance-building' among the ruling aristocratic families (Bizzocchi, 'Sexuality and Politics', 20). The *cicisbeo* was also the 'target of late eighteenth-century anti-aristocratic satires' from within Italy (Patriarcha, 'Indolence and Regeneration', 400).

⁹⁵² Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 3, 285.

⁹⁵³ Morgan, *Italy* Vol. 2, 229.

⁹⁵⁴ Manning, *History*, 353.

⁹⁵⁵ Manning, *History*, 383-9.

Equally, disapproval of the polygamous Indian zenana was, in part, a reaction against another, supposedly, upper-class domestic practice. Marianne Postans described the scheming jealousy between Indian wives as 'the exhibition of many of those little arts, practised by ladies, whose leisure affords them abundant time to become proficient in the science of ingeniously tormenting.'⁹⁵⁶ This comment could easily apply not just to Indian women but to unproductive 'leisured ladies' more generally, reflecting a middle-class discourse of upper-class indolence back home. Postans also specifically criticised aristocratic Rajput women who 'marry these men for the sake of their estates'.⁹⁵⁷ She was more approving of the educational developments in India 'taking place among the [Indian] gentry, which will produce results of the highest interest'.⁹⁵⁸ Her enthusiasm, though, for what she implied was a nascent Indian middle-class that 'now form a recognised, and important part of the community; their sons are educated to fit them for any mercantile or political appointment', was qualified: 'were they tradesmen or artizans', she wrote, 'the features of the case would alter'.⁹⁵⁹

It was not, though, only considerations of foreign class divisions, or aristocratic practices, about which travellers commented and even expressed anxiety. Emma Roberts noted approvingly of the 'infinite pains' taken by the organisers of Anglo-Indian theatre to keep lower-class British women from temptation. Roberts wrote that

soldiers' wives are not permitted to enact the heroines in dramatic entertainments, lest it should lead to deviations from the path of duty; and when female characters cannot be cut out, they are performed by beardless youths'.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁶ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 97.

⁹⁵⁷ Postans, *Cutch*, 132.

⁹⁵⁸ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, vii.

⁹⁵⁹ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 1, 61.

⁹⁶⁰ Roberts, *Scenes*, Vol. 3, 42-3.

Although such policies led to a 'deterioration of the spectacle', Roberts thought the 'principle' on which they were founded 'cannot be too highly commended.'⁹⁶¹

Through the observations of the border conflicts between race and class, gender and marriage, we will see the demarcation of the middle class from the upper and lower classes, implied as essential to morality, and to social, civic and political stability at home and national superiority abroad. It was also, as I will show, essential to the self-interest of middle-class women. Although I will consider some travellers to Italy, I will consider women's accounts of India to a greater extent. Women travellers to India, uniquely, enjoyed opportunities to witness and write about certain experiences. Women, for example, were able to experience the zenana in ways which men were not. The large Anglo-Indian community also gave travellers the opportunity to comment on lower-class British domesticity. Focusing on British women's observations of women of their own nationality and gender, but of a different class, such as Anglo-Indian soldiers' wives, I will, firstly, explore how women wrote about the intersections of personal, class and national interests and anxieties. In particular, I will consider how women used their observations of Indian and Anglo-Indian women and families to express their concerns about cross-border class incursions from below. In the later part of the chapter, I compare British women's accounts of Indian and Italian families and how they compared with their own domestic experiences. I explore their realisation that the model of British middle-class domestic bliss had its own flaws and that Indian and Italian families exhibited many admirable qualities missing from British middle-class 'utopia'. Finally, I consider how, despite realising the short-comings of British middle-class domesticity, women travellers were trapped at the intersection of race, class and gender. I explore how, in order to benefit from their middle-class status, as colonisers abroad but also as participants in economically valuable marriages and as holders of civic and cultural authority at home,

⁹⁶¹ Roberts, *Scenes*, Vol. 3, 43.

contradictorily, British women travellers were forced to voluntarily submit to a discourse which largely restricted them to domestic roles.⁹⁶²

‘Under-bred and overdressed’: Patrolling the borders of polite society

Although there was a large British contingent both visiting and living in Italy, they did not construct the kind of British communities we see in India, in camps, towns and military establishments. The size and nature of the Anglo-Indian community offered opportunities for observations which were mostly unavailable to travellers to Italy. In the first part of this chapter, I shall confine my analysis to observations of the lower-class Anglo-Indian community by middle-class women travellers, because it is here that we see the anxieties and concerns of the latter. As lower-class women transgressed class boundaries, they threatened the interests of their middle-class countrywomen.

Emma Roberts’ comments on ‘soldiers’ wives’ needing to be kept from sexual temptation was by no means the only middle-class configuration of lower-class women. Describing her time in India in the early 1810s, Maria Graham turned her acerbic pen on the Anglo-Indian community. She found little in them to recommend to her readers, writing that

the manners of the inhabitants of a foreign colony are in general so well represented by those of a country town at home, that it is hopeless to attempt making a description of them very interesting.⁹⁶³

The women, in particular, were a disappointment, appearing ‘like the ladies of all the country towns I know, under-bred and overdressed, and, with the exception of one or two, very ignorant and very grossiere.’⁹⁶⁴ Graham went on to describe the tortures of

⁹⁶² See, also, Ghose, who notes that, in pointing out the restrictions and enforced seclusion of Indian women, British women expressed ‘repressed truths about women’s disenfranchisement in their own society’ which they ‘deflected and projected onto the [Indian] other’ (Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 11).

⁹⁶³ Graham, *Journal*, 27.

⁹⁶⁴ Graham, *Journal*, 28.

an Anglo-Indian dinner party, where she poured further scorn on the women's conversation, which featured

lace, jewels, intrigues, and the latest fashions; or, if there be any newly-arrived young women, the making and breaking matches for them furnish employment for the ladies of the colony till the arrival of the next cargo.⁹⁶⁵

The women's apparent obsession with petty gossip and bejewelled splendour mirrored many travellers' observations of the Indian women of the zenana. Certainly, there was no lack of finery on display nor expense spared on the food. Each man had a servant in attendance and guests went home in carriages drawn by fine Arabian horses driven by 'a whiskered Parsee, with a gay coloured turban, and a muslin or chintz gown.' To complete the party, 'there are generally two *massalgeest* or torchbearers, and sometimes two horse-keepers, to run before one.'⁹⁶⁶ Disapproving of the excesses of Anglo-Indian society, she wrote to her friend that the company she preferred in India was that which 'we have enjoyed together in Britain';⁹⁶⁷ 'our Scottish [sic] Athens' as she termed Edinburgh.⁹⁶⁸ She noted that the Anglo-Indian women found in society were generally of a lower class than the men and, she implied anyway, certainly lower than herself!⁹⁶⁹ Many men and women in the Anglo-Indian community lived in 'a manner well above the station from which they had sprung in England', with a 'passion for gentility' previously unavailable to them, seemingly a concern for Graham and other travellers.⁹⁷⁰ For example, John Beames was horrified that the British manager of an Indian hotel in which he and his wife stayed took it upon himself to dine with them every evening. This, wrote Beames, 'was typical of the tone assumed by the middle and lower classes of Europeans in India, every one of whom considers himself a 'Sahib' or gentleman.'⁹⁷¹ Beames' comment also reveals the instability of the term 'middle class', variably applicable to an hotel manager, the wife of an army

⁹⁶⁵ Graham, *Journal*, 29.

⁹⁶⁶ Graham, *Journal*, 30.

⁹⁶⁷ Graham, *Journal* .133.

⁹⁶⁸ Graham, *Journal*, 119.

⁹⁶⁹ Graham, *Journal*, 28.

⁹⁷⁰ F. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, 1967), 107-8.

⁹⁷¹ J. Beames, *Memoires of a Bengal Civilian* (London, 1961), 132. Ironically, Beames himself was giving himself graces. As a mid-ranking Anglo-Indian civil servant and son of a London preacher, he was hardly from the top echelons of society himself!

officer, a Bishop, or travellers of independent means. Maria Graham seemed to be particularly concerned with women who might get ideas above their station and transgress the boundaries of their class. She configured not simply an East-West or colonial-colonised racial binary but also one of civilised-uncivilised based on an upper middle-class sensibility.

Incursions across class barriers were also a concern back home. In an infamous review of *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Rigby was horrified when Jane transgressed gender and class boundaries by asserting her independence as a woman and assenting to marriage with the upper-class Mr Rochester. Rigby claimed the novel had been written with 'the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code, human and divine, abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home.'⁹⁷² Jane's role as a governess was at the heart of the debate about middle-class women, expected by convention to be restricted to domestic roles yet forced to work if unable to marry well. Governesses usually came from the educated middle-classes yet, with a growing number of unmarried women, the economic requirement for women to work meant that more women from the lower orders were competing for such roles.⁹⁷³ This bred concerns that the moral stability of the middle-class family was under threat, that 'the governess was not the bulwark against immorality [...] but the conduit through which working-class habits would infiltrate the middle-class home.'⁹⁷⁴ For the governess to marry her master was crossing the Rubicon for Rigby, who considered the sub-text of *Jane Eyre* to be thinly disguised incitement to social and political rebellion.

Emma Roberts had had similar misgivings two decades earlier, but from a more personal perspective which exposed the consequences of the shortage of available Anglo-Indian women for marriage. On the subject of prospective Anglo-Indian

⁹⁷² E. Rigby, 'Vanity Fair and *Jane Eyre*', *Quarterly Review*, 84 (December 1848), 153-85, 174. For discussion of Rigby's review of *Jane Eyre*, and of her portrayal of the author as a 'fallen woman' (838), see J. Sheldon, 'In Her Own Metier': The *Quarterly Review* of *Jane Eyre*', *Women's History Review*, 18 (2009), 835-47. For contemporary concerns about the 'Jacobin' nature of *Jane Eyre* and its threat to the British class system, plus general critical reactions to the novel, see H. Rupiper, 'Contemporary Reactions to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*', *Women in Literature* (Spring, 2016) <http://www.uwgbcommons.org/archives/32698> (accessed 27 Sept 2019).

⁹⁷³ M. Poovey, *Uneven Developments: the ideological work of gender in mid-Victorian England* (London, 1989), 128.

⁹⁷⁴ Poovey, *Uneven*, 129.

marriages, she wrote, men of rank were little discerning when it came to choosing their wives, preferring ‘a few shewy accomplishments,—that of singing especially’, over genuine breeding. Even ‘gentlemen of high birth and suitable appointments’, Roberts wrote, ‘will stoop very low’.⁹⁷⁵ Still, Roberts had opened her account of India with a shrewd, satirical, often hilarious but also sensitive perception of Anglo-Indian marriages. Opinion back in England erred if it thought India replete with opportunities for young women to make financially valuable matches. Long gone were the days when young girls might easily secure ‘some old, dingy, rich, bilious nawaub’. Undoubtedly, some ancient and devoted servants of ‘the conclave in Leadenhall-street’ (the East India Company) still existed, ‘some dingy, and some bilious’ but, unfortunately, ‘very few rich.’⁹⁷⁶ The enthusiastic and expectant young bride-to-be found ‘to her horror’ that she was ‘compelled to make a love-match’ with one of a few motley subalterns.⁹⁷⁷ Also long gone were the days when, as ‘some writer upon India has remarked’, probably referring to Maria Graham, ‘the ladies are over-dressed.’ Times had changed, debt levels among young couples were high, as were the prices of London fashions, whilst salaries were low.⁹⁷⁸ Yet, Roberts concluded, the challenges faced by couples in India made for marriages which were ‘productive of lasting happiness’.⁹⁷⁹

From personal experience Roberts knew very well the problems of single life in India. There were few

more wretched situation[s] than that of a young woman in India who has been induced to follow the fortunes of her married sister under the delusive

⁹⁷⁵ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 2, 126.

⁹⁷⁶ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 1, 18. The large numbers of young women who travelled to India in search of husbands were known as ‘the fishing fleet’ (K. Charsley (ed.), *Transnational marriage: New Perspectives from Europe and Beyond* (Abingdon, 2012), 3). From the late sixteenth century, the Company divided such women by class, clothed them and provided board and lodging for a year. If they were unable to find a match within this time, they were shipped home as ‘Returned Empties’. Many marriages were concluded with a ‘rapidity usually confined to spotting a business opportunity’ (A. De Courcy, *The Fishing Fleet: Husband Hunting in the Raj* (London, 2012), Prologue).

⁹⁷⁷ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 1, 19.

⁹⁷⁸ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 1, 25.

⁹⁷⁹ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 1, 26.

expectation that she will exchange the privations attached to limited means in England for the far-famed luxuries of the East.⁹⁸⁰

Perhaps her later remarks on Anglo-Indian marriage were tinged with some personal bitterness but any sense of romantic whimsy about love blossoming out of adversity changed somewhat in tone when Roberts was faced with (mis) matches, born of love or not, which crossed barriers of class:

The European waiting-maid has as fair a chance as her young mistress of making the best match which the society can afford, and mortifying instances are of no unusual occurrence, in which a *femme de chambre* has carried off a prize from the belles of the most distinguished circle of the presidency.⁹⁸¹

The speed with which women of all classes were snapped up as wives was a particular problem when it came to children's education. No sooner had a governess been appointed and brought from England than she was wooed, proposed to and left her post.⁹⁸² Women of rank were equally vulnerable to marrying below their class, particularly 'unportioned women' who lacked independent means. If a man of superior class was unavailable, or perhaps even if one was, 'pride' was often trumped by the 'superior wealth' of a 'rich tradesmen'.⁹⁸³

As for the lower classes, the 'comfort and happiness' enjoyed by the 'wives and children of European soldiers' in India was, Roberts wrote, unheard of for one of their class back home.⁹⁸⁴ Their freedom from 'all those laborious toils and continual hardships' to which their class was otherwise accustomed, was a concern for Roberts.⁹⁸⁵ Their unexpectedly easy lifestyle was 'apt to render them so lazy, insolent, and over bearing, as to be perfectly intolerable'.⁹⁸⁶ There is something rather mean-

⁹⁸⁰ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 1, 33-4.

⁹⁸¹ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 2, 126.

⁹⁸² Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 2, 126-7.

⁹⁸³ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 2, 127.

⁹⁸⁴ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 47.

⁹⁸⁵ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 48.

⁹⁸⁶ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 49.

spirited and inconsistent in Roberts' judgement here. As she freely admitted, soldiers' wives earned extra money through their own efforts, by 'dress making, feather-cleaning, lace-mending, washing silk stockings'. In employing such skills, and by working 'as ladies-maids, or wet nurses', they cleverly exploited a lack of suitable European labour.⁹⁸⁷ In another class, such entrepreneurial industriousness was considered virtuous but when demonstrated by mere soldiers' wives, Roberts wrote that it 'shews how indifferent they are to the means of acquiring money by personal exertion.'⁹⁸⁸ Roberts' claim that soldiers' wives were 'lazy' seems somewhat unfounded but she soon revealed the meaning behind her statement here. Walking past the soldiers' barracks, Roberts glimpsed through the open doors,

some fat and unshapeable lady, attired in a loose white gown indulging in a siesta in an elbow-chair, with a native attendant, ragged and in wretched case, who, fan in hand, agitates the air around her.⁹⁸⁹

By 'lazy', Roberts meant a lack of attention to the type of duties 'suitable' for such women. Their economic freedom to act as a higher class of lady might was an unacceptable and concerning transgression of class boundaries. Roberts concluded with a type of snobby and patronising 'imperial picturesque'. Rather than a description of native land or peoples made acceptable to an audience back home, Roberts turned the picturesque on her own nationality. To calm disquieting feelings of boundary incursions by the lower-class 'other', Roberts described 'how dear, are the first meetings with country people of an inferior class in the jungles of India.' She found comfort in the 'music on the ear' of 'the homely provincial accents of some untaught soldier'. These audible reminders of class division engendered 'a rush of painfully-pleasing emotions; recalling past scenes and past days', presumably days when appropriate class divisions were more sharply drawn.⁹⁹⁰

⁹⁸⁷ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 48.

⁹⁸⁸ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 48.

⁹⁸⁹ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 49-50.

⁹⁹⁰ Roberts, *Scenes* Vol. 3, 50.

The experiences of soldiers' wives might have been an opportunity to show how the new spirit of middle-class Britain had inspired and empowered economically-disadvantaged women to break the financial and social shackles which bound them to domestic drudgery. Instead, Roberts used her writing to patrol the borders of class division. There was more than ideology at play here. There were also the very real and practical concerns of middle-class women who were economically dependent on 'good' marriages, for whom increased competition from lower-class women was a threat. Unmarried herself, Roberts could see clearly the threat posed to insecure middle-class women by lower-class women marrying above their station and using the market functions of supply and demand to find economic freedoms unknown to them in Britain. At least lower-class women *could* employ their domestic skills to earn money. Recourse to such activities would be a disaster to the standing and prospects of a middle-class woman hoping for an advantageous match.

Like Emma Roberts, Marianne Postans attributed the 'irregularities and vices' of soldiers' wives to their lack of 'necessary occupation'. The provision of a cook, for example, 'relieves them from the toil of domestic duties'.⁹⁹¹ In the absence of 'appropriate' responsibilities, they lapsed into 'mischievous associations, discontented murmurings, and habits of dissipated indulgence.'⁹⁹² Commenting on the unseemly speed with which soldiers' wives remarried on the deaths of their husbands, she implied they did so not out of unfortunate and practical necessity, but from selfish avarice.⁹⁹³ Postans also noted the regular drunkenness of lower-class Anglo-Indian women and the domestic violence which regularly ensued between soldiers and their wives.⁹⁹⁴ Once again, like the women of the zenana, they apparently reverted to malicious gossip and fomenting unrest when left without appropriate domestic occupation. Where Emma Roberts used the image of the ill-educated but quaint British lower-classes to calm her disquiet, Postans drew a picturesque description of lower-class Indian domestic life. Unlike British soldiers, the Indian sepoys had no

⁹⁹¹ Postans, *India* Vol. 1, 165.

⁹⁹² Postans, *India* Vol. 1, 165-6.

⁹⁹³ Postans, *India* Vol. 1, 163-5.

⁹⁹⁴ Postans, *India* Vol. 1, 166.

barracks, so constructed their own mud-based dwellings in which the men and their families lived in close proximity. She wrote that,

it is pleasant to pass the sepoy lines during the evening ride, and to see the bright wood fires briskly burning, the men in their graceful and snowy undress, baking their badjeree cake for the family meal, or playing with the little urchin “logue,” in quiet and domestic enjoyment.⁹⁹⁵

From her elevated position on horseback, Postans surveyed the tranquil and reassuring sight of appropriate lower-class domestic activity; an aspect of Indian life presented as a lesson for the British soldiery.

Observations of domesticity stand at the intersection of class and race. Travellers deployed apparently virtuous forms of middle-class domesticity to assert national and class superiority, which intersected with their own personal and economic interests. For middle-class women, this meant constant vigilance for incursions across the class border. Although this was an economically expedient measure, such writing represented an insidious form of self-policing that required women to conform to restrictive norms of ‘appropriate’ domestic roles and behaviour in order to access the benefits of their middle-class status. Perhaps this was why the same women often used observations of foreign domesticity to critique the British marriage and family experience. As I will now discuss, British women regularly noted the degree to which British domesticity was restrictive and stifling, implying a hypocrisy in claiming the moral, political and civic high-ground for such institutions.

‘The toils and dullness of an English home’: Critiquing English marriage

It is notable that by the 1830s, far fewer travellers commented on Italian manners and domesticity. Partly, this was because the prevalence of cisisbeism declined in the wake of the Napoleonic regime.⁹⁹⁶ Sympathy for Italian unification from the 1820s also

⁹⁹⁵ Postans, *India* Vol. 1, 141. “Logue” was a Hindi collective noun for a group of young children.

⁹⁹⁶ Bizzocchi, ‘Sexuality and Politics’, 20-21.

changed the tone of British opinion.⁹⁹⁷ Supporters of *Risorgimento* were perhaps less inclined to highlight Italian domestic practices as an obstacle to the very thing they were calling for. As Balzaretti notes, from the 1820s, as the interest in Italian domesticity waned, some travellers recognised the stifling and restricted nature of British family life for women. For those women commenting on Italian domesticity as a way of reflecting on their own matrimonial situations, 'Italian 'cicisbeism' was no longer the problem: English marriage was.'⁹⁹⁸ By writing about Italian domesticity travellers could engage in a transnational debate about marriage generally. Although Italian marriage was less than perfect, English domesticity held considerable restrictions. As we will see, the very same sentiments were explored by women writing about their Indian experiences. As much as the zenana was a placeholder for the supposed lack of Eastern civilisation, it could also be a site of fantasy, eroticism and of temporary escape from the strictures of middle-class British marriage.

Lord Normanby's Italian account of 1825 is an example of the contrast between the male and female gaze on Italian domestic habits. In the late 1820s, Italian resident Mary Shelley reviewed Lord Normanby's description of a doomed marriage between an English girl of high rank, and an Italian Count, based on an apparently genuine experience related to him by a first-hand observer. Matilda, the poor English unfortunate whose head was turned by the Italian natural talent for seduction, was eventually forced to accept the humiliation of her new husband's infidelities. Worse, she was obliged to consent to a cicisbeo when her husband characteristically tired of her company and became inattentive. When Matilda complained that she is being sexually harassed by her cicisbeo, her husband laughed it off and suggested this was her affair and not his, and a silly and excessive English over-reaction.⁹⁹⁹ Shelley used her review to critique English domesticity. Although she was 'far from advocating the Italian conjugal system, which puts the axe to domestic happiness, and deeply embitters the childhood of the offspring of the divided parents', Shelley pointed out

⁹⁹⁷ M. O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (Basingstoke, 1998), *passim*. D. Laven, 'Punti di vista britannici sulla questione veneziana, 1814–49' in Alba Lazzaretto Zanolo (ed.), *La "primavera liberale" nella terraferma veneta, 1848–1849* (Venice: Marsilio, 2000), 35–51, *passim*.

⁹⁹⁸ Balzaretti, 'British Women Travellers and Italian marriages', 267.

⁹⁹⁹ Normanby, *English*, 1-220.

that an Italian woman would be equally unhappy in an English marriage.¹⁰⁰⁰ She asked her readers to consider how an Italian woman would fare with

the toils and dullness of an English home [...] her snug, but monotonous fireside, her sentry-box of a house [...] the necessity of forever wearing that thick and ample veil of propriety which we throw over every act and word.¹⁰⁰¹

To English women, Shelley wrote, such social constraint was

the music, the accompaniment by which they regulate their steps until they cannot walk without it; and the veil before spoken of is as necessary to their sense of decency as their very habiliments.¹⁰⁰²

She concluded by suggesting that Matilda, the unfortunate victim of Italian domesticity, had been offered far more freedom than would have been possible in England, yet ‘even the excess of freedom does not permit her the exact liberty she wants.’¹⁰⁰³ The implication was that English women were as entrapped by domesticity as their Italian counterparts. Matilda was so conditioned by domestic restraint that she did not know how to react to relative freedom, what to *do* with it. Yet, Shelley’s critique of stifling English domesticity sat inconsistently with her previously-discussed assertions that Italy suffered from domestic indolence and a love for *dolce far niente*. She appeared to waver between the apparent national and civic stability brought about by British domestic practices and the consequent restrictions and emotional detachment which weighed upon British wives.

Shelley’s ambivalence is reminiscent of de Staël’s in *Corinne*. Although de Staël was not a British traveller, *Corinne* was based on her Italian travel experiences. The novel’s themes were British and Italian marriage. The two central characters, Oswald and

¹⁰⁰⁰ Shelley, *English*, 328-9.

¹⁰⁰¹ Shelley, *English*, 329.

¹⁰⁰² Shelley, *English*, 329.

¹⁰⁰³ Shelley, *English*, 329.

Corinne, were taken to portray the characteristics of England and Italy.¹⁰⁰⁴ The aristocratic Oswald must decide between marriage to the talented and vivacious Italian Corinne, or a conventional and demure Englishwoman. Oswald's friend, Mr Edgarmond, whilst acknowledging Corinne's beauty and talent, exclaims 'none but English wives will do for England...of what use would she be in a house?' He continues,

now the house is everything with us, you know, at least to our wives. Can you fancy your lovely Italian remaining quietly at home, while fox-hunts or debates took you abroad? The domestic worth of our women you will never find elsewhere...where men lead active lives, the women should bloom in the shade.¹⁰⁰⁵

Where an Italian woman would be of little use in a domestic role, an Englishwoman was of little use outside of one. Shelley and de Staël offer examples of what Kathryn Walchester describes as a trope among women travellers, whereby 'women writers both manipulate the discourse of the domestic sphere and transgress its boundaries to offer various perspectives on European politics.'¹⁰⁰⁶ Both reflect on Italian domesticity to point out the restrictive aspects of British marriage. However, in doing so, both writers contribute to a configuration of Italian domestic life in which effeminate and licentious men were unable to exercise appropriate control over their households. Given freedom from domestic duties, Italian women fail to raise children to recognise their civic, political and social responsibilities. In his contemporary review of *Corinne*, Francis Jeffrey acknowledged the accuracy with which de Staël portrays 'the almost total separation of the male from the female part of [English] society'.¹⁰⁰⁷ Ultimately however, Jeffrey suggested the negative aspects of this had been exaggerated, that it was a 'necessary consequence' of a superior and politically engaged nation. Jeffrey

¹⁰⁰⁴ In fact, in terms of identity, de Staël actually weaves far more complexity into her story, with the aristocratic Oswald being of Scottish descent, whilst Corinne is half-English and half-Italian. See, E. Simpson, 'On Corinne, Or Italy', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, Dino Franco Felluga (ed.) *Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=erik-simpson-on-corinne-or-italy (accessed 14 March 2019).

¹⁰⁰⁵ A-G-L De Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* 3 Vols. (London, 1807), 127.

¹⁰⁰⁶ K. Walchester, *Our Own Fair Italy* (Bern, 2007), 7.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Jeffrey, 'Review', 192.

drew attention to what he described as de Staël's portrayal of the superiority of English men which he stated was derived from 'having some object in active life, and some concern in the government of their country.'¹⁰⁰⁸ Indeed, given her positive comments regarding the English political and diplomatic landscape generally, Simpson suggested it was unlikely that de Staël 'disputed Jeffrey's broad conclusions'.¹⁰⁰⁹ Both Shelley and de Staël revealed considerable ambivalence, vacillating between the weaknesses of both Italian and British marriage. In the absence of any other conclusion from either writer, it is easy, as Jeffrey did, to suggest that the suppression of women's expression and individuality within such a system was an unfortunate but necessary and justifiable consequence; a noble sacrifice that superior English women made for the greater political and civic good.

Back in India, given her previous criticisms of Indian domestic life, Marianne Postans had a surprisingly positive opinion of the Rahit Buckte, the principal wife of the Nawab, or ruler, of Junagarh. The Rahit was in her mid-twenties, lively in conversation, good humoured and intelligent.¹⁰¹⁰ The apartments of the harem were 'particularly inviting' and offered an 'unusual degree of comfort'.¹⁰¹¹ Perhaps to remind herself of their relative positions, coloniser and colonised, Postans quickly added a mild rebuke at, given the early hour, the overly ostentatious dress of the Rahit Buckte. Indian ladies, even those as accomplished as her new-found friend, were yet to appreciate the 'simple beauty of a morning deshabelle, which distinguishes our English taste'.¹⁰¹² With another slight barb, Postans implied captivity in a gilded cage. The comfortable surroundings, airy high ceilings, and generous windows afforded the 'fair inmate a charming view' [my emphasis].¹⁰¹³ Apart from the occasional spiteful aside, Postans warmed more and more to her hostess, finding her conversation interesting and her apartments decorated in fine taste. In the presence of such an accomplished lady, a few years younger than herself and of a nation subjugated by her own, Postans

¹⁰⁰⁸ Jeffrey, 'Review', 193.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Simpson, 'On Corinne, Or Italy', BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History. http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=erik-simpson-on-corinne-or-italy (accessed 27 Apr 2017).

¹⁰¹⁰ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 88-9.

¹⁰¹¹ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 92.

¹⁰¹² Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 91-2.

¹⁰¹³ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 92.

perhaps needed to rediscover her confidence, by reasserting, in her own mind anyway, some sense of her colonial superiority. Apparently concerned for the Rahit's welfare, or 'a little anxious on the matter of Mohammedan husbands' generosity', Postans enquired about 'the weighty affair of pin money.'¹⁰¹⁴ The Rahit responded by calling for a set of ledgers. Conceding that her hostess was a 'good woman of business', Postans was unreservedly impressed when the Rahit explained her business transactions, accounted for within her ledgers.¹⁰¹⁵ It transpired that the Rahit Buckte owned eight villages, the farming of which she managed herself, and was 'quite au fait on the subject of grain, ploughs, mangoe [sic] trees, et cetera'.¹⁰¹⁶ Once again, as if to remind herself and her readers of her colonial and cultural 'superiority', Postans quickly remarked on the separate apartments of the other wives, 'which prevents domestic bickering.'¹⁰¹⁷ Such existential crises aside, it was clearly not lost on Postans that this Indian lady possessed talents and indulged in activities rarely allowed to flourish in British women. Such were the possibilities which opened up to an educated woman, or a 'miracle of learning', as Postans described the Rahit Buckte.¹⁰¹⁸

Throughout her writing on India, Postans extolled the virtues of women's education, indeed education generally, as a driver of virtue, industry and activities associated with middle-class improvement. Typical of her exhortations in this area was the power of education 'to arouse the natives of India from their present lethargy and moral degradation'. Postans continued,

a knowledge of agriculture, and of commerce, as its necessary result, are the two first steps which must be taken by all people emerging from barbarism into civilization. These originate a change in the condition of nations, which is perfected by progressive and general improvement, until the arts, sciences,

¹⁰¹⁴ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 94.

¹⁰¹⁵ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 94-5.

¹⁰¹⁶ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 94-5.

¹⁰¹⁷ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 97.

¹⁰¹⁸ Postans, *Western India* Vol. 2, 95.

literature, and religion of civilized life, banish the horrors attendant on a barbarous state.¹⁰¹⁹

Although her comments on women's education were ostensibly aimed at *Indian* women, one suspects that Postans was fully aware that they might be equally applied to *British* women. The Rahit Buckte's achievements and talents were one example but remarks elsewhere might also have applied more broadly than to Indian women alone. Referring to both Hindu and Muslim women, Postans wrote that they 'display much greater quickness of apprehension than their lords'. She used this as a basis to argue for broader female education, noting that 'I do not think the inclination would be found wanting to profit by such opportunities if they could be provided.'¹⁰²⁰ Postans showed real sensitivity to the arduous nature of many Indian women's domestic duties, 'condemned to every description of menial drudgery'.¹⁰²¹ She was also cognisant of the lack of self-development allowed to women in non-domestic areas, the lack of education and of 'the advantages of civilized opinion.'¹⁰²² Thus restricted, a woman was never able to properly reach her full potential as a human being, 'to estimate her own worth, in creation's scale.'¹⁰²³ In this type of observation, as applicable back home as in India, there seems to be a message, a heart-felt plea even, that transcended the norms of nationality, class and gender. Ambivalent perhaps, but in her remarks on Indian women there lies a recognition that the middle-class virtues extolled by herself and other travellers, that gave force to claims of national and class superiority, were also inherently restrictive for one half of the human race. When confronted with Indian women of all classes, these difficulties were writ large and their parallels with woman-kind more broadly, become unavoidable.

Early in her Indian experience, Postans had noted various weaknesses in society which she attributed to the domestic habits of both Indian men and women. By contrast, she observed that, in Britain, 'of late years civilization has advanced with rapid power, and

¹⁰¹⁹ Postans, *Cutch*, 258.

¹⁰²⁰ Postans, *Cutch*, 230.

¹⁰²¹ Postans, *Cutch*, 276.

¹⁰²² Postans, *Cutch*, 276-7.

¹⁰²³ Postans, *Cutch*, 276.

reflection has been busy on the means of giving to it even a greater impetus.' Perhaps, in part, Postans was urging reflection, even change, regarding the education and role of women. Her hope, 'that systems will be tried, ere they are condemned; and that henceforth, none will be considered Utopian, but such as may have failed', could certainly be taken that way by her readers.¹⁰²⁴

As discussed, Emma Roberts had suggested that the challenges faced by Anglo-Indian couples made for closer relationships and marital harmony. A decade or so later, Helen Mackenzie made a similar point and, in doing so, exposed some concerns about traditional British marriages. So much more reliant on each other for conversation and company were Anglo-Indian couples than those back home, 'that they become knit much more closely than when each has a thousand distractions'. Mackenzie continued, implying that an unfortunate distance between husband and wife was a normal feature of British married life. In India, unlike in Britain,

the lady cannot spend her mornings in shopping or visiting, nor the gentleman at his club. They generally drive or ride together every evening, and many married people when separated, write to each other every day. Circumstances which tend to promote such a high degree of conjugal union and sympathy, surely cannot be considered merely as hardships.¹⁰²⁵

Mackenzie gave no indication that she was discontented with her own relationship but in her descriptions of the Indian zenana she did indulge slightly in romantic fantasy. Mackenzie regularly visited the zenana of Hasan Ali, an Afghani ex-soldier and colleague of Helen's husband, Colonel Colin Mackenzie. She met and socialised very regularly with Hasan's wives and, sometimes, with Hasan himself. Afghani men were attractive to Mackenzie, indeed, 'the handsomest race I ever saw'.¹⁰²⁶ Hasan was a particularly fine example, 'a noble-looking man, with lofty features, piercing black eyes, and a most beautiful and varying expression.'¹⁰²⁷ Mackenzie described the interest Hasan took in her in quite intimate terms, such as her faux irritation at being

¹⁰²⁴ Postans, *Cutch*, 151.

¹⁰²⁵ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 2, 269.

¹⁰²⁶ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 296.

¹⁰²⁷ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 161.

anointed by him with sandal wood oil. He carefully examined ‘my gloves, bag, purse, and handkerchief’ and she was happy to indulge his chivalry when he ‘brings me my bonnet and shawl himself’ and ‘walks by my buggy to his gate.’¹⁰²⁸ Revelling in Hasan’s demonstrative energy and ‘fiery excitement’, Mackenzie described him as ‘The Unquiet One’;¹⁰²⁹ a combination of a ‘fiery soul’ in a ‘lean and wiry frame’, whilst ‘at the same time he is full of strong affection.’¹⁰³⁰ A heady mix indeed, for the demure and respectable wife of a British officer!

Mackenzie gave her readers an example of the popular trope of the ‘Englishwomen-as-zenana-woman’, hinting at what Leask describes as the ‘possibility of a romantic intrigue with the master of the harem.’¹⁰³¹ One evening, she visited to find Hasan outside eating his supper. He called for another chair, and ‘we ate lovingly out of the same dish’. If this was not intimate enough, ‘he pick[ed] out bits of meat (very nice roasted mutton cut in small pieces) with his fingers for me.’¹⁰³² The practical information about the dish just about managed to turn the scene from inappropriate to slightly comedic. One of Hasan’s younger wives, ‘Bibi Ji’, brought them a metal container, out of which he drank.¹⁰³³ Thus, Mackenzie hinted at positioning herself as Hasan’s senior wife, being served by his more junior spouse. Mackenzie broke the spell for herself and her readers by inviting them to laugh with her at the spectacle. Still, she closed by emphasising how Hasan ‘is very polite to me, brings all I want, and always escorts me to the gate on foot.’ When she left, she did so as if she were a senior member of his household, escorted by two servants and one of Hasan’s brothers-in-law, ‘to take care of me.’¹⁰³⁴

Like other women, though, Mackenzie wrote with a certain ambivalence about Indian domestic life. She made the expected and ubiquitous disapproving comments about

¹⁰²⁸ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 206.

¹⁰²⁹ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 296.

¹⁰³⁰ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 207.

¹⁰³¹ N. Leask, *Curiosity and the aesthetics of travel writing 1770-1840* (Oxford, 2002), 166-9. See also, Roberts, *Colonial Harem*, 186.

¹⁰³² Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 214.

¹⁰³³ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 214.

¹⁰³⁴ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 214.

the evils of polygamy, typified by her observation that 'polygamy has destroyed everything like domestic and family ties'.¹⁰³⁵ Yet, her own record of her experiences show that she was aware that this was far from the case. Indeed, it is clear from her many entries on the subject that she became closely attached to Hasan's wives and the extended family and saw for herself 'how harmoniously they seem to live together.'¹⁰³⁶ When one wife became quite seriously ill, Mackenzie showed great concern, visiting her constantly and helping to nurse her back to health.¹⁰³⁷ Mackenzie was surprised to find that the regular contingent of visitors who cared for the patient were not paid attendants but friends, 'for it is the custom in case of sickness for some of the friends of the invalid to go and stay in the house, rendering all needful aid till amendment takes place, and a good custom it is.' She lamented the custom back home, where 'we can so easily buy service, that we have forgotten the privilege of rendering it.'¹⁰³⁸ Although she made numerous comments about their lack of modern medical knowledge, Mackenzie was clearly touched by the closeness of this group of family and friends and took obvious pleasure in being named as the patient's "'bahin" or sister' by them.¹⁰³⁹ It was not only the women who were demonstratively caring for each other but the male members of the household also. When the patient's brother visited, Mackenzie noted that he 'showed both delicacy and feeling in speaking of his sister's illness. He feeds her tenderly with his own hands.'¹⁰⁴⁰ When Hasan Khan, who was away on business, became aware of his wife's illness he returned with haste. Expressing her 'great amazement' that 'he must have ridden day and night from Simian directly', Mackenzie took the opportunity to watch 'Hasan Khan very closely to see how Muhammadan husbands behave.'¹⁰⁴¹ She observed him to be 'most attentive to his poor wife, raising her up, giving her water every few minutes, and holding her head'. Mackenzie was clearly touched to find how demonstrably 'very fond of her' he was.¹⁰⁴² Hasan was equally affectionate towards his children. His behaviour was

¹⁰³⁵ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 307.

¹⁰³⁶ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 200.

¹⁰³⁷ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 199.

¹⁰³⁸ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 201.

¹⁰³⁹ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 202.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 203.

¹⁰⁴¹ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 204.

¹⁰⁴² Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 204.

probably in contrast to most British fathers Mackenzie had observed. She described how 'he kisses his little child's hands, and pats her most tenderly. It is pretty to see the small thing when he desires it to keep still, sit down and lay hold of one of his feet to coax [him].'¹⁰⁴³

Fortunately, Hasan's wife recovered her health with the help of her Indian and British friends, no doubt helped along by the warmth and closeness which Mackenzie describes so fully. Shortly after, she felt first-hand the contrast of British remoteness in emotionally trying circumstances. Whilst in Loodiana [Ludhiana], Mackenzie received the sad news of the death of her father back home. She recorded the contrast between the reactions of her Indian friends and the responses of the Anglo-Indian community. Hasan Khan 'was quite moved, and repeatedly said to my husband, "comfort her, comfort her."¹⁰⁴⁴ Whether this implied that her husband was failing to do so, Mackenzie did not say but the responses of her Indian friends certainly gave her great solace. Another Indian friend and his father came to express their condolences and Mackenzie was once again clearly moved by their concern. She wrote that 'the old man, who says he considers me as his daughter, told me he had not come before, because he understood it was not customary to come immediately. They both seemed really kind'.¹⁰⁴⁵ A little later, Hasan Khan's wives paid a visit to express their 'sincere sympathy, and it was a comfort to me.'¹⁰⁴⁶

Such expressions of condolence were in direct contrast to what Mackenzie described as 'the cold English fashion, or awkwardness, whichever it is, of passing over the cause of grief, and saying nothing about it'.¹⁰⁴⁷ She noted, seemingly with some anger as well as sadness, that only two British people had shown any 'real and natural feeling on the occasion', assuring her readers 'that these wild Muhammadans have been of more comfort to me than all the Christians in Loodiana.'¹⁰⁴⁸ Suleri points out that

¹⁰⁴³ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 207.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 292.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 292-3.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 295.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 295.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission* Vol. 1, 295.

Englishwomen had been brought to India 'as a symbolic representative of the joys of an English home.'¹⁰⁴⁹ For some, their experiences in India must have left them pondering the realities of such 'joys'.

Around the time of the Mackenzie's experiences of India, and twenty years after her initial account of Italy, Mary Shelley published *Rambles in Germany and Italy*, an account of her travels in 1840, '42, and '43. David Laven suggests that Shelley had by then matured somewhat in her opinions, becoming 'a much more sympathetic and sensitive observer'.¹⁰⁵⁰ Certainly, she took to task those British travellers who parroted 'contemptuous censures of the effeminacies of the Italians'.¹⁰⁵¹ Shelley also apologetically admitted that she and her husband had been culpable of similar slanders in previous years. 'New to Italy' she wrote, 'we believed those who had lived there long. Shelley, in his letters and poems, echoes these impressions. I cannot pretend to say with what justice such opinions were formed.'¹⁰⁵² Yet, on the same page as she castigated those who peddled 'diatribes against the vice and cowardice of the nobles', Shelley lamented the 'superstition, luxury, servility, indolence, violence, vice' of the current generation of Italians.¹⁰⁵³

Still, like Helen Mackenzie, Shelley's observations of Italian domesticity allowed her to comment on the emotionally repressive nature of the English family. She noted the 'sanctity' with which 'the duties of husband and wife are observed in England.'¹⁰⁵⁴ She implied a coldness within English families, where 'family affections' were barely even extended to children once they reached adulthood. In England, the focus was on 'the married pair' which 'often degenerates after a little time into the most sordid selfishness.'¹⁰⁵⁵ Italian couples may not have exhibited the same 'self-dedication to one', but they benefited from 'wider extended family attachments, of a very warm and faithful description.'¹⁰⁵⁶ In England, younger sons were often rejected from the family

¹⁰⁴⁹ Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 76.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Laven, 'British Idea of Italy'.

¹⁰⁵¹ M. Shelley, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843* in 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1844), ix- x.

¹⁰⁵² Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 107.

¹⁰⁵³ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 1, x.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 107.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 108.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 108.

environment to live in 'straitened circumstances', whereas in Italy they remained cared for within the family home. Italy also had fewer unmarried daughters than England and girls were no longer dispatched to convents.¹⁰⁵⁷ Shelley concluded that 'this family affection nurtures many virtues [...] I am sure there is much both to respect as well as love among the Italians'.¹⁰⁵⁸

Shelley certainly appears to have had a more sensitive appreciation of Italian domesticity than most. Her observations are a touching contrast between the warmth and genuine affection of the Italian home and the frosty functionality of English domesticity. Still, the passage above opens and closes with the same observation, that 'their morality is confessedly not ours.'¹⁰⁵⁹ For all her apparent sensitivity, Shelley repeatedly returned to the same mantra, that Italians must 'cast away their *dolce far niente* [...] they must tread to earth the vices that cling to them like the ivy around their ruins.'¹⁰⁶⁰ She blamed despotic governments for restricting the opportunity to study or pursue useful careers for fear of fostering seditious ideas. Repeating old ideas, Shelley wrote that, consequently, 'as among a certain set of our present aristocracy—play is their amusement, their occupation, their ruin'.¹⁰⁶¹ Of course, this was also the repeated argument in India, that indolent inactivity was the ruin of both the domestic and public sphere. Shelley also returned to the same double-bind, an unbreakable cycle where immorality is both the cause and effect of despotic government. Italians had to reject their licentiousness to gain political and civic freedom, 'they must do this to be free', wrote Shelley, 'yet without freedom how can they?'¹⁰⁶² Indeed, Shelley wound the debate all the way back to the late-eighteenth century, to an argument rejected by Henry Moore sixty-five years previously. In a conspiracy to maintain despotic rule, barriers to moral improvement were thrown up in the guise of old institutions, 'for the governments of Italy know that to hold their own they must debase their subjects.'¹⁰⁶³ For all her apparent enlightened maturity, the problem

¹⁰⁵⁷ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 109.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 110.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 107 & 110.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 1, 86.

¹⁰⁶¹ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 2, 112.

¹⁰⁶² Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 1, 86.

¹⁰⁶³ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 1, 86.

remained the same, as did the solution. Italians must 'learn to practice the severer virtues; their youth must be brought up in more hardy and manly habits'.¹⁰⁶⁴

It is left, therefore, to our final traveller to state the situation plainly. Fanny Parks was the wife of an E. I. C. collector and lived in India for much of the period under discussion. Fanny and Charles Parks travelled to India in 1822 and, other than Fanny's return to England for four years after the death of her father, remained there until 1845.¹⁰⁶⁵ She published her account of her life in India in 1850, to generally good reviews.¹⁰⁶⁶ Given Parks' quite radical and forthright commentary on the universal state of women, this might be thought either surprising or an indicator of the changing *zeitgeist*. Parks was an ardent traveller, almost independent of her husband. Without the responsibility of children, she travelled for a year at a time without him. The latter, whom she described in warm and affectionate terms, encouraged and supported her 'vagabondizing over India' as she put it, whilst he remained mainly at his post in Allahabad.¹⁰⁶⁷ Fanny Parks reflected on the zenana in various ways. Her descriptions of the naked beauty of many of the women she found therein are examples of what Ghose describes as the 'erotic gaze', perhaps suggesting repressed and forbidden sexual desire.¹⁰⁶⁸ The lovely Mulka made a particular impression as she entered the room like a 'dazzling apparition [...] How beautiful she looked! How very beautiful!'.¹⁰⁶⁹ On retiring for the evening, 'my dreams were haunted by [...] the beautiful Begam [Royal wife] with whom I had spent the evening.'¹⁰⁷⁰ On another occasion, Parks took great pleasure in subverting gender norms. Realising that she was attired impractically for the rigours of travel, she bought for herself 'a black Paharl dress, somewhat resembling Turkish attire.'¹⁰⁷¹ Her unnamed 'fair companion',

¹⁰⁶⁴ Shelley, *Rambles* Vol. 1, 86.

¹⁰⁶⁵ J. Goldsworthy, 'Fanny Parks (1794 – 1875): her 'Grand Moving Diorama of Hindostan', her Museum, and her Cabinet of Curiosities', *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857 – UCL History* (2014), 1-23, 3-6. See also R. C. Raza, 'Parks [Parkes, nee Archer], Frances Susanna [Fanny]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Sept. 2004). <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-40907> (accessed 21 Mar 2019).

¹⁰⁶⁶ Goldsworthy, 'Fanny Parks', 8.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Raza, 'Parks', *O.D.N.B. Parks, Wanderings* Vol. 2, 192.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 56-59.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 1, 383.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 1, 388.

¹⁰⁷¹ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 302.

presumably European, was so taken with it, she bought herself a matching outfit. Walking through the bazaar in her new clothes, Parks was told by her Indian servant that the locals had asked whether she [Parks] was a man or woman. Her servant had replied that she was a man, thinking that it might afford them protection from potential thieves. Ever the practical traveller, and taking no offence at all, Parks was 'amused' by her 'stratagem'. Indeed, she took some pride in her lack of traditional femininity as she 'superintended the fixing of some brass work on a musket that was out of repair.'¹⁰⁷² Some days later, both dressed in the same attire, 'my fair friend and I roamed in the beautiful moonlight by ourselves'. The local villagers, 'excessively afraid of us', once again mistook them both for men, and Parks took pleasure in their deception, allowing the villagers to believe her 'wife' was on board the boat in which they were travelling.¹⁰⁷³ Parks, like Mackenzie, or Shelley on Italy, wrote ambivalently about the zenana and Indian domesticity. She enjoyed her interaction with Indian women and was clear that women were victims of circumstances created by men and genuinely sympathised with them. On meeting an Indian Princess, she 'bowed with as much respect as if she had been the queen of the universe.' Whilst 'others may look upon these people with contempt', she wrote, 'I cannot'.¹⁰⁷⁴ And yet, like many before her, she emphasised the apparent sexual jealousy between wives.¹⁰⁷⁵ 'A zenana' she wrote, 'is a place of intrigue, and those who live within four walls cannot pursue a straight path'.¹⁰⁷⁶ Even women who had been educated, 'neglect' their learning once married and ensconced in the zenana, which was 'full of intrigue, scandal, and chit-chat'.¹⁰⁷⁷

For some, therefore, the commentary of even relatively sympathetic travellers such as Mackenzie and Parks provided, as Goldsworthy puts it, 'grist for the mill of critics of colonialism'.¹⁰⁷⁸ Their stereotypical and hegemonic observations served the imperial project through 'an improved surveillance of the colonised', reflecting and reinforcing

¹⁰⁷² Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 302.

¹⁰⁷³ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 303.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 216.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 1, 230-1.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 1, 391.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 1, 450.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Goldsworthy, 'Fanny Parks', 8.

a hegemonic view of the inferior and backward 'other'.¹⁰⁷⁹ For Suleri for example, Parks' narrative is deliberately over-loaded with the picturesque, so much so that 'colonial history empties into vacuity'.¹⁰⁸⁰ For Ghose and Suleri, Parks juxtaposed banal commentary and flippant imagery of the exoticisms of Indian people and places with, for example, the horrors of physical deformity or disease 'to maintain her sense of racial and cultural differentiation'.¹⁰⁸¹ Other commentators take a very different view. William Dalrymple points out how often Parks was critical of the entire imperial project.¹⁰⁸² He makes the quite reasonable point that she was criticised by her contemporaries for 'going native', and now 'is under assault from the other direction', from some post-colonial critics who see Parks as "imbricated with the project of Orientalism".¹⁰⁸³ This Dalrymple contests as 'a wilful misreading of her text.'¹⁰⁸⁴

With these opinions in mind, we turn to Parks' outspoken observations of the oppressed nature of women's lives generally. Here Parks seemed to express a genuine solidarity with women everywhere. In conversation with Her Highness the ex-Queen of Gwalior, the subject turned to widowhood. The position of the Hindu widow was one of much discomfort. Whether Indian or British, they agreed that 'the fate of women and of melons is alike'. As the Hindu proverb said, "whether the melon falls on the knife or the knife on the melon, the melon is the sufferer".¹⁰⁸⁵ Parks explained to her friend that, on the death of her husband, British women were regularly turned out of their family home to make way for the male heir. The two women 'spoke of the severity of the laws of England with respect to married women, how completely by law they are the slaves of their husbands, and how little hope there is of redress.' Women were, Parks exclaimed, 'the white slaves of England'.¹⁰⁸⁶ A little later, Parks heard of

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 60.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 88.

¹⁰⁸¹ Suleri, *Rhetoric*, 89.

¹⁰⁸² W. Dalrymple, 'Porous Boundaries and Cultural Crossover: Fanny Parkes and Going Native', in S. Mohanty (ed.), *Travel Writing and Empire* (New Delhi, 2003), 43-62, 46-7.

¹⁰⁸³ Dalrymple, 'Porous Boundaries', 60. Dalrymple quotes Indira Ghose and Sara Mills in their introduction to their 2001 edition of Parks' narrative. See 'Introduction', 12.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Dalrymple, 'Porous Boundaries', 60.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 8.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 8.

the murder of two women in a zenana and knew how little chance there was of justice being served on the man who had committed the act. It was thus ever, she wrote,

the same all the world over; the women, being the weaker, are the playthings, the drudges, or the victims of the men; a woman is a slave from her birth; and the more I see of life the more I pity the condition of the women.¹⁰⁸⁷

On the subject of education, Parks subverted the usual trope of the Indian man, feminised by life in the zenana, to point up the lack of education for European women. She asked, sarcastically, why it was that people are surprised by ‘the effeminacy of the character of the Emperor’, when Indian men and women shared the same characteristics, both formed by the same educational environment, the zenana? By contrast,

in Europe men have so greatly the advantage of women from receiving a superior education, and in being made to act for, and depend upon themselves from childhood, that of course the superiority is on the male side; the women are kept under and have not fair play.¹⁰⁸⁸

Near Ghazipur, Parks came across the tombs of numerous sacrifices to the ritual of sati, the self-immolation of Hindu widows. The scene represented how ‘very horrible’ it was ‘to see how the weaker are imposed upon and it is the same all over the world, civilized or uncivilized’. Parks continued,

the laws of England relative to married women, and the state of slavery to which those laws degrade them, render the lives of some few in the higher, and of thousands in the lower ranks of life, one perpetual sati.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸⁷ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 56-7.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 216.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 420.

Perhaps the plight of relatively comfortable British women and the burning alive of Indian widows was an inappropriate comparison. Yet, Parks cut through boundaries of class, race and gender and forced the reader to question the nature of authority and what it meant to be 'civilised' and 'uncivilised'. Was the subjugation of the colonised and that of women more generally, all part of the same male despotic sway over the weak, wherever they were to be found? Considerably before Indira Ghose noted that Anglo-Indian women, although 'colonisers by race', were 'colonised by gender', Parks seemed to be saying something similar. She was insistent, however, that 'I shall never be tamed.' Back in England, Parks treated with derision the idea that she ought to be chaperoned. Not for her were 'the ideas of [the] propriety of civilised Lady Log'.¹⁰⁹⁰

Conclusion to Section Three

Men's and women's accounts of India and Italy point to the importance of domestic formations and particularly the role of women within them as key to civic and political stability and to international respect and authority. Perhaps the most visual reinforcement of that idea was the German-born painter to the French court, Franz Xaver Winterhalter's painting, *The Royal Family in 1846*.



6.1 Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *The Royal Family in 1846*.¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁹⁰ Parks, *Wanderings* Vol. 2, 334.

¹⁰⁹¹ For the history and critical reactions to Winterhalter's painting see The Royal Collection Trust. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/405413/the-royal-family-in-1846> (accessed 6 Mar 2020).

At the centre of the nation's authority was no longer the posturing monarch, replete with the traditional symbols of power, but the family, tottering children and all. Of course, it might be argued, the representation of Royal power vested in a woman was likely to be different to that of a male monarch. Yet, Queens had traditionally been represented alone, accompanied by the trappings and symbols of Royal authority. Winterhalter himself had painted contemporary European Royal and aristocratic women in such poses. This painting represents something remarkable, the ascendancy of the bourgeois values of restraint and morally-centred domesticity over raw power and Royal excess. Yet, it is a deeply ambivalent image. On the one hand, the painting positions women as naturally at the centre of national authority; no longer need power draw from purely 'male' characteristics of firm-chinned physical prowess and dramatically attired military demeanour. Yet, the apparent equality of women at the heart of national authority is qualified, the victory pyrrhic, their freedom contingent on the acceptance of a role restricted to that of wife and mother. The evidence is there in Winterhalter's painting. The central focus is on Albert, the husband and father gesturing with one hand towards his daughters, and towards his wife and son with the other. The young girls are fixated on the new-born baby, one even totters across the path of her parents to join her sisters, whilst the focus of the son is on his father. Albert and his adoring son make eye contact, oblivious to the female presences, despite his daughters' obvious commotion, the only real movement or activity in the painting. Meanwhile, Victoria, ignored, looks out to the viewer, unchallenging and accepting of her essentially passive role. The Queen herself acquiesces to the centrality of her role as wife and mother and, in so doing, concedes that compliance on behalf of *all* British women.

Winterhalter's portrait of the now-bourgeois Royal family shows precisely what Lady Morgan, Henry Matthews, John Moore, William Ward and Helen Mackenzie *et al*, had reflected in their observations of foreign domesticity, in Italy and India equally; that women's roles within British middle-class family formations were at the heart of civic and political stability at home and the nation's pre-eminence abroad. The contrast between British domesticity, British wives and mothers and those of India and Italy, the objectively observed 'evidence' of the very different moral, civic and political

realities in Britain, and in India and Italy, 'proved' these points to be true. The appropriate characteristics of women, promoted by both men and women, were order, restraint, emotional sensitivity and devotion to their duties as wives and mothers. By juxtaposing their family formations with those of the aristocratic and lower classes, middle-class travellers, as Davidoff and Hall note was the case at home, 'sought to translate their increasing economic weight into a moral and cultural authority', through 'a gendered concept of class'.¹⁰⁹² It is clear, though, that the same discourse 'explained' Britain's national and racial 'superiority'. Whilst Davidoff and Hall argue for 'the assumption that gender and class always operate together, that consciousness of class always takes a gendered form', this argument can be extended to form a single frame of analysis whereby domesticity intersects race, class and gender in Britain, India and Italy.¹⁰⁹³ In Winterhalter's portrait, the very epitome of national and racial superiority, extended over vast foreign territories, draws its authority from gendered middle-class virtue.

Many women's accounts, though, undermine these ideas by suggesting there were similar restrictions on British, Italian and Indian women. Very few were as outspoken on the subject as, for example, Fanny Parks, who railed against the universal 'slavery' of women. Most women's accounts reflected an ambivalence, a dawning awareness that the apparent superiority of their class and race was dependent on their acceptance of the restrictive discourse on their roles as women. Travellers to India and Italy, such as Marianne Postans, Helen Mackenzie, Mary Shelley and Hester Piozzi, were all awoken to awkward realities through their observations of foreign cultures. Postans tried to assert her colonial 'superiority' during her visit to the Nawab, only to be confronted with a 'good women of business' who enjoyed agency and economic responsibilities far beyond her own. Mackenzie and Shelley were made aware, through comparison between their own experiences and their observations of Indian and Italian domesticity respectively, of the emotional deficiencies in the relationships between British family members and friends. Hester Piozzi's sojourn in, and

¹⁰⁹² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 30.

¹⁰⁹³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 13.

consequent account of, Italy came about as the result of her ostracization from British society for marrying an Italian beneath her class.

And yet, none of these travellers seems able to reconcile, in writing anyway, their claims to class and racial superiority with the realisation that this came at the expense of their experiences as women. They were left repeating all the hypocrisies and stereotypes of deficient Italian and Indian domesticity. For all the warmth she observed therein, Shelley still linked Italian domestic immorality to their lack of civic and political merit. On the death of her father, Mackenzie found far more solace in the sympathies of Hasan and his wives yet continued to parrot her husband's patriarchal strictures on pliant and obedient British women as opposed to their Indian counterparts, 'whose minds are polluted with vice.' Although Piozzi was far more accepted in Italy than among the London salon-society of women who had rejected her, she still criticised Italian women's morality. Perhaps the weakest response to the agency she found among Indian women was Postans' who, in attempting to restore some colonial dominance, could only criticise her hosts' too-elaborate morning dress.

Ideologically, such experiences were an existential threat to the certainties of racial and class superiority, about which travellers were perhaps reluctant to probe too deeply. Practically, the authority of British middle-class women was predicated on their positioning as biologically suited to the domestic function of supporting their husbands' public endeavours and educating their sons and daughters to respect the same boundaries they themselves observed, between the public and private world. Middle-class claims, that their forms of domesticity were the foundation of national and international success, and women's position of moral and cultural authority within such discourse, required women's acceptance of such roles. For the many single middle-class women, such as Emma Roberts, their marriageable status was partly predicated on their respectable acquiescence.

The implication in travellers' accounts was that British women were not *necessarily* morally or civically superior to their Indian and Italian counterparts. They implied that it was in the nature of *all* unsupervised women to occupy themselves inappropriately. Unsupervised women apparently disengaged from attending to the needs of their husbands and children, became gossipy malcontents, sexually

aggressive, jealous, lazy, dishevelled and dissolute, particularly when allowed to freely mix with each other. Essentially, women were potentially 'other'. Britain's success was, travellers implied, substantially due to a system of middle-class domesticity which supervised women to ensure they were 'appropriately' occupied. Such discourse was employed opportunistically, to promote a middle-class ideology and to patrol the borders of class division at home and, despite the ambivalent gender solidarity of some women-writers, racial and national division abroad.¹⁰⁹⁴

Virtuous middle class British domesticity was predicated on the proper relationship between husband and wife; the latter were not to be held in subjugated captivity but to allow them unfettered freedom of association was equally dangerous. Women required appropriate supervision to guard them from their own weaknesses, for their own good and for that of society. Patriarchal supervision of women ensured the domestic virtues that were the bedrock of British national and international stability and success. Both the Indian and Italian domestic environments were different examples which resulted in the same disastrous ends, for morality and for civic and political virtue. Equally, British successes at home and abroad were examples of the proper supervision of women within their natural domestic roles. Observations of Italian and Indian domesticity by male and female travellers clearly mapped on to a view of immoral and ineffective British upper- and lower-class domesticity, as opposed to the virtuous middle-class. Importantly, however, the problem was not the class (or race) of the women *per se*. It was the lack of proper supervision or constructive activities within those classes.

We seem, then, to have a contradiction whereby women-writers recognised the shortcomings of a discourse which they still actively promoted, arguing that women required their activities to be directed and channelled into appropriate and valuable

¹⁰⁹⁴ Elizabeth Langland suggests that 'superior' forms of domesticity were particularly deployed by an elite upper-middle class group, to differentiate themselves from the working lower-middle classes, as much as from the lower classes and the aristocracy. Langland shows how the 'genteel bourgeoisie' utilised domestic 'signifying practices [...] not only to manage working-class dissent but to police the borders of polite society from the incursions of the vulgar middle class or the petite bourgeoisie.' E. Langland, *Nobody's Angels* (New York, 1995), 17.

domestic functions. As we have seen, empowered women acting with agency, even political radicals such as Lady Morgan in Italy were quite capable of promoting a narrative of 'natural' female duties and characteristics which were restrictive to women. As I have explored in the introduction, there are critics who, like Ghose, rightly point out that to relegate female observers of India (or, indeed, of Italy) to the role of spectators is to deny them agency and perpetuate the 'male myth' of women as 'perennially passive'.¹⁰⁹⁵ Certainly, the women I have discussed appear neither passive nor lacking in agency. Indeed, Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Morgan, Marianne Postans, Fanny Parks and Maria Graham were the very epitome of women who acted with agency: travelling widely; frequently radical; subverting norms; shaping their own lives; 'producing' observations of the 'other' which served a colonial and national agenda; often angering male reviewers. Such contradictions are more understandable when considered as intersections of race, class and gender. As Ghose notes, British women in India were 'colonised by gender but colonisers by race.'¹⁰⁹⁶ The women-writers we are considering here, in Italy as well as India, were also 'colonisers' by class, in the sense that they promoted and benefitted from a middle-class 'civilising' domestic discourse which asserted (colonised) the moral, economic, civic, and political high-ground, at home as well as abroad. It was in their interests to do so. On the one hand, it was an informed choice that women made although, on the other, what was their alternative? Such 'choices' leak out in the ambivalences in women's accounts of India and Italy. Such discourse did not require women to be kept in domestic servitude, never to venture forth in public. Indeed, it benefitted from forthright women who acted with agency to promote a gendered form of class and racial superiority. The power behind the idea of the 'separate spheres' of male and female activities was not the restriction of women to domestic servitude. Clearly, women worked and lived successfully beyond the home, travelling and writing, active in community activities, education at home and in the colonies, church and charity and so forth. The power over women came from the idea that such activities reflected and reinforced their basic caring and nurturing nature, a replication of her 'delicate' sensibilities, an extension of her domestic responsibilities; the power of asserting that

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 9.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 5.

a woman's experiences and education beyond the home still reflected and reinforced her domestic role. These ideas are writ large in women's accounts of Italy and India. Indeed, the similarities between observations of Italian and Indian women, and the life-experiences of travellers as British middle-class women shows the analytical benefits of considering Britain, India and Italy within the same frame.¹⁰⁹⁷

Despite a sense among women travellers that non-British women might actually enjoy some agency mostly denied to British women, women travellers propose few, if any, radical solutions to the issues they note. Although Italian and Indian families could sometimes seem to be emotionally warmer and more demonstrative than their repressed and restrictive British counterparts, still British women wrote about immoral and ineffective Indian and Italian manners and domesticity. A sense of ambivalence emerges in which women used their travel accounts to highlight the restrictions on middle-class women but then colluded with the very discourse they critique. Stifling the British domestic sphere may have been but, although Mary Shelley in Italy and Helen Mackenzie in India could see the flaws in English domesticity, for all its cold and restrictive nature it still appeared to them the key to political virtue at home and national success abroad. They seem to be left considering whether norms of behaviour dictated to women were unfortunate but necessary and appropriate for the greater good. It was particularly insidious to require women to self-police within a discourse which empowered them whilst, simultaneously, restricting them within a framework of patriarchal authority. Instead of celebrating female solidarity and agency where they found it, among Italian and Indian women, middle-class women travellers felt the requirement to configure such women as

¹⁰⁹⁷ The evidence from India from such accounts also seems to support Billie Melman's claims that British women travelling to the Middle East also found more points of similarity between themselves and the women they encountered than they did aspects of racial difference (B. Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East 1878-1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Basingstoke, 1992), chapter 5). See also, L. Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, 1991); H-M Teo, 'Orientalism: an Overview', *Australian Humanities Review*, 54 (May, 2013), 1-20, 14. Mary Shelley and Germaine De Stael offer similar examples from Italy. Conversely, Nair argues the opposite, that 'the importance of racial difference in India overwhelmed class divisions' (Nair, 'Uncovering the zenana', 10). The evidence, though, suggests this is a problematic conclusion. These opposite findings may be reconciled by accepting that, although women did indeed find many aspects of gender solidarity, they still often utilised racial difference to configure such women as 'other'. Indeed, doing so was often what made their own point valid, that they were being treated as 'other'.

'other'. Even among their own Anglo-Indian community, female agency had to be criticised to ensure separation between the classes.¹⁰⁹⁸ It is no surprise, for example, that Maria Graham should turn her fire on her own when she complained that Anglo-Indian women shared the vulgarities of those of English provincial country towns. In many ways, they were *not* her own at all! Like travellers' configurations of India and Italy, these are discourses which drew opportunistically from each other. The same elements applied to the 'Arabs' of St Giles in London, to the dubious class credentials of Anglo-India and to provincial English towns, just as they did to Italian villagers and colonised Indians.

As Anne Stoler notes, although racial difference is often thought to be based on models of internal class difference, 'the racial lexicon of empire...may have provided for a European language of class as often as the other way around.'¹⁰⁹⁹ The 'language of class', though, was written in a gendered vocabulary. It was here that patriarchal power resided, in an intersecting and tangled discourse. Perhaps the best demonstration of that power is the fact that the Reform Act of 1832 assumed the basic unit of constitutional representation was not the individual but the family, headed and represented by a middle-class property-owning man.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Elizabeth Langland suggests that a 'superior' form of domesticity was a discourse particularly deployed by an elite upper-middle class group, to differentiate themselves from the working lower-middle classes, as much as from the lower classes and the aristocracy. Langland shows how the 'genteel bourgeoisie' utilised domestic 'signifying practices [...] not only to manage working-class dissent but to police the borders of polite society from the incursions of the vulgar middle class or the petite bourgeoisie' (Langland, *Nobody's Angels*, 17).

¹⁰⁹⁹ A. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (London, 1995), 123.

General Conclusion - The Virtuous Race

‘Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.’

African proverb.

‘Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant’.

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 57.

‘Great Britain and Italy, the extremes of civilised Europe’

Francis Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review*, 1807.

We saw, previously, how Mary Louise Pratt reverses the Eurocentric gaze to look back at Europe from the ‘imperial frontier’; to highlight how ‘Europe’s aggressive colonial and imperial ventures’ acted ‘as models, inspirations, and testing grounds for modes of social discipline which, imported back into Europe in the eighteenth century, were adapted to construct the bourgeois order’.¹¹⁰⁰ At one level of analysis, this is precisely what we have found throughout this thesis. Travellers certainly used their observations of foreign lands, people and cultures to test their political, civic and cultural ideas and construct a blue-print for a ‘bourgeois order.’ The findings of those travellers, though, have been, perhaps, surprising. They certainly challenge a straight-forward formulation of travellers’ confidence in an essentialised and superior West as the mirror-image of an inferior East. Indeed, travellers’ accounts express all manner of anxieties and doubts in these respects.

Herein lies the problem with the assumption of geographical binaries like ‘Europe’ and ‘non-Europe’, ‘home’ and ‘away’, ‘metropole’ and ‘colony’. Such binaries are

¹¹⁰⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 35-6.

complicated by the discovery of groups within Europe, even within the metropole that apparently do not conform to the 'superior' standards that are implied as configuring one half of these binaries. If we sit, as Pratt invites us to do, and gaze back at Italy from the imperial frontier, through the eyes of travellers, it is not the superiority of Europe that we see. Concepts of 'superiority' and 'inferiority', as justification for the exercise of 'Western' power over the ineffectual 'East', is the basic point of Said's Orientalism. But if the Western 'home' is partly composed of potentially dangerous and disruptive groups of people in need of supervision and control, what is the difference between 'home' and 'away'?

Moving away from concepts of East and West, metropole and colony, and considering Italy, India and Britain within the same analytical frame, it becomes clear that it is not particularly helpful to think of geographical binaries. Instead, travellers used their accounts to test, develop, advance and challenge a range of ideas and anxieties in the construction of an 'imagined' community which apparently embodied a set of virtues deserving of political, civic and cultural authority, at home and abroad; 'imagined' in the sense that such ideas defined an ideology of power rather than a geographical space. There is often little difference between the ideas of India and Italy constructed by travellers. Indeed, visions of both were often co-constitutive. Travellers' configurations of Italy drew on ideas about India and *vice versa*. Portrayals of each, in novels, plays, poems and so forth, both took from and fed into apparently objective critiques found in contemporary historical and other scholarly accounts of India and Italy. These 'imaginative' and 'academic' accounts of India and Italy (and, indeed, Britain) came together in travel writing, a genre that was both a form of entertainment culture whilst purporting to be an objectively accurate account of foreign places and people. I will now try to bring together the themes discussed to show how travellers' accounts also stood at the intersection of race, class and gender as a key component of a middle-class bid for cultural and political authority back home.

Edward Said's configuration of a racially-based East-West binary is part of his discussion of 'imaginative geography'. Said implied not a physically fictitious or invented space but the way in which one part of the world chose (chooses) to

discursively depict another, as 'other'.¹¹⁰¹ Of course, the travellers we have considered, along with scholars and the writers of imaginative literature produced accounts of India which regularly conformed to Said's claim of a constructed hegemonic 'West' and a cowed, submissive 'East'. India and its people were ubiquitously described as premodern, immoral, exotic, licentious and superstitious. It was, wrote William Ward, Maria Graham and William Hodges *et al*, inherent characteristics such as these that prevented India developing effective and progressive political and civic institutions, leaving them vulnerable to oppression from outsiders and from their own internal religious and secular despotism. From this perspective, Said makes a good case for a discursively constructed 'Orient' as the mirror-image of a 'superior' West.

Yet, our travellers to Italy configured a very similar image of a backward people and place. The same comparisons between Britain and Italy and the same conclusions are found in the accounts of Henry Matthews, Joseph Forsyth, Lady Morgan and so on. Like Indians, Italians were described as victims of their own sexual immorality, lack of domestic virtue, religious superstition and intemperate and irrational passions. Like India, Italy's inability to contest foreign and internal oppression and form modern political and civic institutions was both symptom and cause of their lack of personal and family virtue.

The manner in which Meridianalistic visions of Europe were constructed by travellers and other writers, with its civilised and modern North and backward South, reflects very well the combination of the two forms of orientalism proposed by Said as the foundation of an East-West binary; apparently objectively-observed 'academic' evidence and the 'imaginative' form found in 'consenting' popular culture. Writers blurred the borders of travel writing to 'objectively' describe Indians and Italians, their views intersecting with 'imaginative' stereotypes born of Orientalist and Gothic fiction and Romantic poetry. All the while, these depictions fed into and drew from academic and historical depictions and explanations for the moribundity of Indian and Italian society.

¹¹⁰¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 49-73.

For the fireside traveller, accounts of India and Italy from the local library, the reviews they read in the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, with the accompanying geo-political analysis, provided excitement and entertainment, the *frisson* of experiencing, albeit second hand, 'exotic' places. They also offered a persuasive account of the foreign 'other' which 'explained' why places like India and Italy produced 'backward' societies in comparison to Britain. Travel accounts stand, therefore, very much at the intersection of the 'academic' and 'imaginative' forms of orientalism. This applied to accounts of travellers to Italy as much as to India. Such ideas flowed into all the gullies and side-streams of literate society, through travel accounts, popular periodicals, novels, poetry and academic and historical writing. Francis Jeffrey's comment above, for example, about the civilisational extremes of Europe being embodied in Britain and Italy came in his review of the novel *Corinne*. Here was a fictitious account of Italy based on the real-life travel experiences of the author, repackaged by the reviewer as socio-political evidence of British merit and the lack of Italian civic, domestic and political virtue. Jeffrey configured, for the reading public, Britain's and Italy's respective positions in the civilisational hierarchy.

One of the strong criticisms of Said's East-West binary is his implication, as Teo puts it, of 'another monolithic geo-fantasy—'the West'.¹¹⁰² Clearly, the West's division by the meridionalism of a European North-South hierarchy complicates Said's case somewhat. Complicating it further is the observation that Orientalism was intimately connected to the configuration of the British 'other': for example, women; the working classes; the aristocracy back home; the Anglo-Indian community who transgressed the norms of class to subvert their role in society.¹¹⁰³ This was reflected in the accounts of travellers in various ways. The type of language used to describe the foreign 'other' was mapped on to descriptions of groups back home. As Makdisi points out, racialised language was aimed at groups of white indigenous British people, such as the 'City Arabs' or the 'bestial' lower classes who were 'not merely being compared to savages; they were savages, pure and simple.'¹¹⁰⁴ The British sought to civilise not only the East, but also the East End. At the other end of the social scale the aristocracy were

¹¹⁰² H-M Teo, 'Orientalism', 1-20,

¹¹⁰³ Melman, *Women's Orientals*, 3-4, 7.

¹¹⁰⁴ Makdisi, *Making England Western*, xv.

‘orientalised’, seen ‘as a foreign form of tyranny that needed to be expunged from the social body.’¹¹⁰⁵ Where the movement and actions of the lower classes were frenetic, disorderly, potentially violent and dangerous, those of the aristocracy were equally fruitless, languishing in indolence and inactivity, save for their licentious gambling, drinking and so forth. Orientalist language was thus ‘weaponised’ for internal as well as external use.

Again, by no means were such ideas derived only from travellers’ accounts of the East. Maria Graham, for example, used the same discourse of circular and pointless activity to describe the Italian lower classes as she had their Indian counterparts. Among others discussed, in Joseph Forsyth’s and Jemima Kindersley’s descriptions, the Italian *cicisbeo* and the Indian *zenana* worked equally well as placeholders for general aristocratic sexual immorality and ineffective domestic arrangements. In both cases, observations of aristocratic Indian and Italian institutions acted as a critique of similar groups back home, examples of the more general immorality and ineffectiveness of aristocratic rule.

In other accounts from Italy and India, those of Mary Shelley, Lady Morgan, Fanny Parks and Helen Mackenzie for example, the whole edifice of British respectability and constitutional freedom was challenged. Such accounts obviously complicate Said’s claim that an Orientalist discourse creates a ‘superior’ West, as in these cases it was potentially doing the opposite. Yet, although Mackenzie and Parks wrote with sympathy and affection for their female Indian friends they still, to frame their own fears and fantasies, brought the ‘otherness’ of India into sharp focus. India and its people were put to work in the service of the female traveller, who used them to frame, confront and present their own concerns and dissatisfactions. For some, these were the truths of stifling British domesticity. For others, travellers and readers, the fear of confronting their own ambiguities of gender, ‘illicit’ desires and fantasies, otherwise forbidden, distasteful to some readers but no doubt of fascination to many. Helen Mackenzie turned Hasan’s hospitality into her own fantasy of herself as an object of desire. In doing so, she reinforced a stereotype of the exotic Eastern man

¹¹⁰⁵ Makdisi, *Making England Western*, xiii.

which, even if unintentional, played to the trope of the Oriental's sexual desire for the white colonial woman. The sexualisation of Mulka seems like a homoerotic fantasy entirely of Parks' making. There is no sense in which Mulka shared in it of her own accord, indeed she was given no opportunity to represent herself. Instead, Parks narratively submitted her to a continuation of the Western fantasy of polygamous Indian women and the *zenana* as essentially sexualised objects and space. Although it was not perhaps her intention, Parks supported a colonial narrative of immoral domesticity which fed a 'civilising' justification for imperial control. In her ambiguous exploration of an 'amusing' gender subversion, the local people had to be deceived, made fearful and presented as naïve and childlike. Mary Shelley and Germain de Stael did something very similar with their observations of Italy's emotional warmth and its corollary, a weakness for *dolce far niente*. It is hard to deny the sense that travelling British women were sympathetic to the plight of foreign women when it suited them to be so, to highlight their own concerns. Even then, the Indian or Italian woman must submit to totalising stereotypes without recourse to speak about their own experiences. Similarly, the ancient pasts of both Italy and India were (mis)used and interpreted in ways which sometimes lauded and at other times existentially challenged British global dominance and the Imperial project; the accounts of Reginald Heber and Lady Morgan, are examples of these contrasting views. In all of these cases, India and Italy are still 'other'. Again, we are reminded of Inden's observation that 'like or dislike' of such cultures is not the point. Travellers with diametrically opposing views, those supporting or attacking British 'superiority' or the Imperial project do not fundamentally disagree with the 'otherness' of India and Italy. Complicating matters further are complimentary descriptions of, for example, Indian lower-class sepoys whose picturesque depiction by Marianne Postans served as a didactic example of 'appropriate' behaviour for ordinary soldiers and their families, as opposed to Anglo-Indian lower orders with ideas above their station.

Said was not wrong to point out the discourse via which hegemonic views of the East were constructed. Where his analysis was problematic was his contention that Orientalism is entirely a *racial* discourse which produces an *East-West binary*, in which the *West* is civilisationally superior. Certainly, constructions of 'inferior' Eastern

societies could be juxtaposed with their constitutional, rational, industrious, domestically centred and essentially modern mirror-image counterparts such as Britain, and to justify imperialism. The evidence, though, shows conclusively that what Said called the discourse of Orientalism was also deployed between places *within* the 'West' and even divided individual nations like Britain. Equally, many travellers used their accounts to challenge, for example, the position of women back home, the legitimacy of the imperial project or, indeed, the whole concept of European superiority. How, then, should we think about Orientalism?

Instead of binary opposites across geographical space, it is more helpful to think about the presence of a certain set of 'virtues' which mark out groups of people as modern, progressive, civilised, moral and so forth. The absence of such virtues denotes the opposite. Orientalism is the process by which groups of people are hegemonically configured as *lacking* those virtues...a continent perhaps, or a country, a race, a class, a gender and so on. In some ways, this is close to the findings of Ezequiel Adamovsky, who notes how France constructed a 'liberal-bourgeois narrative of western civilisation' based around 'the *absence* of certain elements' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia; namely, the virtues of 'intermediate bodies able to check the power of the sovereign; urban development and a large bourgeoisie or middle class; and a strong and independent civil society'.¹¹⁰⁶ Adamovsky still, though, postulates a geographical binary of Eastern and Western Europe, which he terms 'Euro-Orientalism', based on 'the stereotypes and prejudices traditionally ascribed to the Orient'.¹¹⁰⁷ In a similar example, Michael Broers has noted the depictions of Italian women by French Napoleonic officials. The French prefect of Rome, Comte Camille de Tournon, for example, wrote that

¹¹⁰⁶ E. Adamovsky, 'Euro-Orientalism and the Making of the Concept of Eastern Europe in France, 1810–1880', *The Journal of Modern History*, 77, 3 (2005), 591–628, 591. (My emphasis).

¹¹⁰⁷ Adamovsky, 'Euro-Orientalism', 592.

“Putting it about” [Le 'divergondage'] - for that is the term for it - is so general, so open among the higher nobility, that I should almost never want my wife to live alone among these society women.¹¹⁰⁸

The French drew on many similar examples of sexual immorality to depict Italian society as backward and barbaric, portraying them as the mirror opposite of modern French civilisation. As Broers observes,

there is a striking similarity here to the vision of the oriental among westerners, as construed by Said, just as the French vision of themselves corresponds to that, in Said's formulation, adopted by Western imperialists.¹¹⁰⁹

In other words, Said's East-West binary is a foundational model which is re-applied to other places to create, in these instances, a North-South European meridionalism or, in the case of some the examples I mentioned in the introduction, an East-West intra-European binary. These are formulations which I would term 'vulgar Orientalism'. The 'Oriental other' was not specifically 'Oriental', but a hybrid which drew from any source, any place, any group of people characterised as lacking the virtues discussed. India and Italy are particularly useful examples of this. The characteristics of the despotic villains of the Gothic and the Oriental novel were much the same. Travellers' depictions of India and Italy reflected and reinforced these images, whilst further fictional representations drew, in a co-constitutional relationship, from travellers' observations. Descriptions of India and Italy drew from each other. Travellers certainly regularly compared religious and political aspects of Italy to the 'superstition' and 'despotism' characteristic of the 'Orient'. But William Beckford's Orientalist novel, *Vathek*, took inspiration from his Italian travel account and James Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, set under Italian skies, turns up in Maria Graham's account of India. The Venetian gondola is found in Marianne Postans' account of India; an Italian symbol of sexual impropriety redeployed to 'explain' the nature of India. Readers' 'understanding' of India drew from their 'knowledge' of Italy, and *vice versa*. Historians and academics drew from all of the above to show how pleasure-seeking,

¹¹⁰⁸ M. Broers, 'Cultural imperialism in a European context? Political culture and cultural politics in Napoleonic Italy', *Past and Present*, 170 (Feb., 2001), 152-180, 168. For further examples, see 168-9.

¹¹⁰⁹ Broers, *Cultural Imperialism*, 173.

superstitious and effeminate men were both symptom and cause of a civically and politically backward society whether from India or Italy, or even from Britain. At the same time, historical 'truths' about Italy and India influenced the way in which travellers interpreted what they saw in those places. Travellers portrayed the same dangers to Indian and Italian society from unsupervised and inappropriately-occupied women and both examples provided didactic themes for women back home; through comparison with their Indian and Italian counterparts, the wife and mother at the heart of the British domestic unit was 'proven' to be the basis for civic and political stability at home and superiority abroad. The disorderly, licentious, irrational and submissive 'other', potentially disruptive to effective society unless controlled, supervised and educated was basically the same whether Indian, Italian or British, an aristocrat or lower-class, male or female. 'Orientalism' is clearly, therefore, a misleading term given its many 'non-Oriental' applications.

Although much has been written by postcolonial historians to show how, as Stoler and Cooper put it, 'metropole and colony' should be treated as 'a single analytical field', clearly Italy should be considered as part of that frame of analysis.¹¹¹⁰ Cooper and Stoler's point was that Europe's colonies

did more than reflect the bounded universality of metropolitan political culture: they constituted an imaginary and physical space in which the inclusions and exclusions built into the notions of citizenship, sovereignty, and participation were worked out.¹¹¹¹

British travellers projected the same 'inclusions and exclusions' of 'citizenship' onto the similarly 'imaginary and physical space' they configured as Italy. These 'inclusions' are defined by precisely the 'virtues' lauded by travellers, whilst their absence constituted groups to be excluded from Stoler's and Cooper's 'notions of citizenship'. It is worth returning to Bernard Cohn's point, that in occupying India, the British 'invaded and conquered not only a territory but an epistemological space as well', creating 'forms of knowledge' which 'bound the vast social world that was India so it

¹¹¹⁰ Stoler & Cooper, *Tensions*, 3-4.

¹¹¹¹ Stoler & Cooper, *Tensions*, 3.

could be controlled.¹¹¹² This observation applies equally to Italy where, although Britain did not physically colonise, travellers did stage a kind of epistemological invasion. Travellers pillaged the 'knowledge' they needed and redeployed it to highlight the virtuous characteristics of the successful nation and its corollary, the 'other'. This is part of the same process which, in relation to European imperialism in the 'East', Said called Orientalism.

None of the above is meant to suggest that Orientalism, to wherever it was (is) applied, did not have assertions of racial or national superiority attached. Indeed, clearly it did. It is a mistake, though, to think of Orientalism as entirely a racial discourse or, indeed, consisting of any overriding or monolithic element. Consider, for example, the variety of contexts within which what I have termed 'virtues' were produced by travellers to Italy and to India. Their accounts configure spaces and people who demonstrated religious superstition rather than Protestant piety; irrational and passionate spontaneity rather than rational sobriety of thought and deed; whose activity which was either languid indolence or frenetic and misdirected, instead of industrious and purposeful; who lived in unsupervised households where inattentive women indulged their sexual jealousy and were inattentive to the needs of their off-spring, rather than morally-centred and gendered domesticity, where husbands oversaw wives who raised children to understand their respective societal roles. Although there were racial elements attached to such points, these are essentially the virtues and their opposites, identified by Davidoff and Hall, with which the nascent middle classes increasingly self-identified from the late-eighteenth century, in opposition to the upper and lower classes of Britain. This is not to suggest that Indians and Italians were not marked as lazy, licentious and so on at other times. Such ideas, though, emerged, from the late-eighteenth century, as a dominant and finely-tuned discourse, increasingly weaponised and deployed through travel writing. A successful and stable, globally dominant, progressive and constitutional Britain was configured as essentially composed of and imbued with the virtues and characteristics of a liberal-bourgeois order.

¹¹¹² Cohn, 'Colonialism', 118.

Presumably, then, we should be thinking of Orientalism as a discourse of class rather than race. I have talked throughout of the discourses emerging from the accounts of travellers as those of a would-be politically, civically and culturally dominant middle class. David Cannadine has argued that, by the mid to late-nineteenth century, a 'preracial' discourse of 'social ranking', or class, sat alongside racial difference to form 'two visions of empire [...] one centred on colour, the other on class.'¹¹¹³ Adamovsky suggests that 'the function of Euro-Orientalism as a discursive formation is mainly one of class', although he does not discount the idea that Said's Orientalism might be racially-based whereas Euro-Orientalism is class-based. This is despite accepting that such 'discursive formations [...] seem to be so closely related'.¹¹¹⁴ He argues that the 'obsession of some postcolonial scholars' has blinded them to considerations of class.¹¹¹⁵ Adamovsky makes no mention, though, of gender, for example.

Of course, considerations of class loom large in the travellers' accounts considered. So do racial themes, and those of gender. Both Cannadine and Adamovsky make, in my view, the mistake of attempting to separate out individual strands of an interwoven discourse in an attempt to find a (or *the*) 'dominant' theme, replacing one monocausal explanation with another. Rather, I argue, there is a clear sense of intersectionality displayed in the travel accounts discussed. On closer inspection, comments by travellers regarding the lack of Indian and Italian virtues, which asserted racial or national difference, co-constitutively supported middle-class authority in Britain. Yet, an important strand of that assertion of class authority was the privileging of a gendered form of British domesticity with specific 'natural' (derived from biological difference) roles for men who exercised supervision over women who submitted to their authority. These are overlapping discourses which can be deployed opportunistically, to support a variety of connected, gendered, classed and racial (national) arguments.¹¹¹⁶ In a circular argument, British racial and national 'superiority'

¹¹¹³ D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London, 2001), 8-9.

¹¹¹⁴ Adamovsky, 'Euro-Orientalism', 622-3.

¹¹¹⁵ Adamovsky, 'Euro-Orientalism', 623

¹¹¹⁶ Similarly, Cohen-Vrignaud argues that for writers such as Byron, Beckford and Shelley, the Eastern 'other' referred rather to 'a mode of governance than 'Oriental' peoples in general'. It was a system which 'denied humans in the East the same rights the British were still fighting to secure' to which they objected (G. Cohen Vrignaud, *Radical Orientalism: Reform, Rights, and Romanticism* (Cambridge, 2015), 5). Cohen-Vrignaud does not, however, note that these writers are all closely associated with writing on Italian travel and residence.

over India and Italy was the superiority of the British middle classes, confirming the authority of the latter back home. The 'other' was not only foreign, but also those in Britain not included within the boundaries of citizenship defined by possession of the virtues discussed.

A perhaps more useful way to think about the themes expressed in the travellers' accounts we have considered, is the emergence of a kind of meritocracy of virtue. As the entitlement to authority predicated on the right of noble birth was eroded, the emptying political and cultural space was refilled with authority based on 'merit': piety; morality; industriousness; sobriety; rationality; the duty of civic and political participation; 'natural' biologically-determined roles for men and women; patriarchal authority over wives and mothers at the heart of the family formation. Although these were indeed the virtues self-identified as 'middle-class', it might be more useful to think about a 'virtuous class'. Even a 'virtuous *race*', as defined by Mary Shelley in the introduction. Within a meritocracy of virtue are held together all the various themes of race, class, gender.

Teo writes that, within Said's thesis,

The Orient was depicted as a place of violence, cruelty, corruption and despotism. It was a region of political and cultural stagnation or primitivism, outside the progressive march of historical development.¹¹¹⁷

Undoubtedly, it was. But the politically and culturally stagnant might come from Italy, the Orient, Eastern Europe, or might just as likely be found in the East End or even languishing in the East Wing of an aristocratic country pile. Said *et al* have interpreted too narrowly a discourse which identified those, at home or abroad, undeserving of civic, political and cultural authority or in need of supervision and improvement as a result of their desultory performance within a 'meritocratic' order. Instead of identifying with a simple East-West binary (or, indeed, any specifically geographical binary), travellers' accounts mediate an 'identity matrix' within which the hierarchical

¹¹¹⁷ Teo, 'Orientalism', 10.

vertical divisions of class, race, gender, religion and so forth, cut through the horizontal bonds of apparent kinship which constitute a national, racial or regional identity.

In 1832, in *The Lady of Shalott*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, wrote that 'the mirror crack'd from side to side'.¹¹¹⁸ The looking-glass through which Tennyson's Lady of Shalott was cursed to view a reflection of the world beyond her captivity finally 'crack'd' when she looked away from it, fatally drawn to reality. Tennyson's mirror might also have stood for the image of 'superior' Western self-definition, seen through a glass which fractured on the realisation by many travellers that the reality of the actual 'backward' foreign world they observed first-hand was somewhat different to the perfect reflection of British superiority. Indeed, Britain is revealed, through the accounts of travellers to foreign shores, to have been a disparate collection of competing anxieties and interests.

By the 1840s, travellers' accounts reflected a cutting of the cord which directly linked the pasts of Italy, India and contemporary Britain. Britain no longer required an umbilical from the Italian past to nourish its sense of identity or justify imperial activities. Travellers equally dismissed the Indian past as irrelevant to a remaking of India in British form. There was no further need of a shared past between India and Britain, no Aryan kinship or evidence of a common language or religious origins was required to justify British authority. The child of ancient Rome was no longer imperial Britain, it was papal despotism and subjugation to foreign rule; lessons to be learned if Britain was to avoid a similar fate.

It is worth returning to that architect of discursive middle-class authority, and traveller to India and Italy, Thomas Babington Macaulay. In speeches to Parliament during the 1830s, in support of electoral reform and middle-class suffrage, he had referred repeatedly to the positive influence of the Romans on the British. In his speeches, historical writings and his poetry he used this comparison to glorify and justify Britain's presence and role in India and elsewhere. In 1840, he offered his vision

¹¹¹⁸ A. Tennyson, *The Lady of Shalott*, part III (London, 1832).

of the New Zealander. As British travellers gazed upon the ruins of ancient Rome, so too, one day, would representatives of Britain's ex-colonies, now civilised and supreme, one day continue the cycle and sit upon a broken stanchion of London Bridge to marvel at the wreckage of St Paul's. The New Zealander reflected and inspired similar themes in the accounts of other travellers to Italy and India.

Catherine Hall notes that Macaulay's 'chosen points of reference were always the writers of Greece and Rome.'¹¹¹⁹ How, then, in his 1848 *History of England*, could Macaulay so dramatically distance Britain's achievements from the influence of the ancient past by dismissing the Roman contribution to Britain as 'the scanty and superficial civilisation which the Britons had derived from their southern masters' and a 'faint tincture of Roman arts and letters'?¹¹²⁰

The 'virtues' noted by travellers, self-identified as those of the British middle classes, so apparently lacking in Italy, India and among many of the non-middle-class British, were now sufficiently established to explain success at home and abroad. Britain now stood on its own feet as an essentially *self-made* middle-class nation, ready to apply those principles to its colonial territories and its own population. The cord to the past had been cut. This triumph of the 'middle classes', those 'champions' of 'progress and liberty', was not only, as Bédarida put it, 'the smug message of Macaulay's *History of England*', it was also Macaulay's neat summary of the narrative that emerged, by the 1840s, from the accounts of travellers to Italy and India.¹¹²¹ The aristocracy and the lower classes were marginalised, in Macaulay's *History* and in the 'imagined community' created by British travellers. Women, too, were relegated to a supporting role, excluded from political citizenship.¹¹²² All were as much 'other' as the colonial people that were pushed to the margins in Macaulay's *History*, no longer a central part

¹¹¹⁹ Hall, *At Home with the Empire*, 39.

¹¹²⁰ First published as T. B Macaulay, *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* in 5 Vols. (London, 1846). Quotations from D. Jerrold (ed.), T. B. Macaulay, *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* in 4 Vols., Vol. 1 (London, 1953), 3.

¹¹²¹ F. Bédarida, *A Social History of England, 1851-1975* (Paris, 1976), 49.

¹¹²² For the role of women in Macaulay's *History*, see Hall, *At Home with the Empire*, 35-49.

of the story.¹¹²³ Macaulay's marginalisation of these groups was no more than an encapsulation of the message sent back home by travellers to India and Italy.

As David Ludden points out, 'we find Orientalism much more diverse and vital than Said makes it out to be'.¹¹²⁴ The co-constitution of power and knowledge, the intersection of apparently academic observation and the 'imaginative' construction of Indians, Italian and, indeed, Britons in the accounts of travellers was certainly vital, and far more diverse than a simple view of 'East and West'. The process of Orientalism found in these accounts makes not entirely for a 'superior' Europe but an authoritative rendering of British political, civic and cultural citizenship which was essentially male and middle-class, against which all else was found to be 'other', *wherever* it might be found. Macaulay's intention was to concretise this view for the long term. As he wrote to his friend, Charles Trevelyan, 'I have tried to do something that will be remembered; I have had the year 2000, and even the year 3000, often in my mind.'¹¹²⁵

¹¹²³ Hall describes colonial populations as 'ghostly presences' in Macaulay's *History* (35). See also, R. Guha, 'Not at Home in Empire', *Critical Inquiry*, 23 (1997), 482–93.

¹¹²⁴ D. Ludden, 'Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge', in C. A. Breckenridge & van de Veer, P. (eds), *Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament*, (University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 250-278, 252.

¹¹²⁵ Trevelyan, *Letters*, 216.

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