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Compartmentalizing the Other: Nineteenth-Century Englishwomen, Travel, and English Identity

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COMPARTMENTALIZING THE OTHER: NINETEENTH-CENTURY
ENGLISHWOMEN, TRAVEL, AND ENGLISH IDENTITY

by

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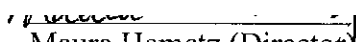
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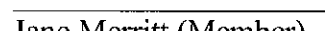
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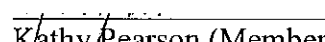
HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

COMPARTMENTALIZING THE OTHER: NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISHWOMEN, TRAVEL, AND ENGLISH IDENTITY

Amanda E. Williams
Old Dominion University, 2008
Director: Dr. Maura Hametz

The nineteenth century was an age of travel. The English traveled the globe for a variety of reasons. When not traveling for military, political, religious, or scientific reasons, they also traveled a great deal simply for pleasure. Regardless of reason, travel brought the English into contact with the Other. As a construction, the Other became an important part of English identity.

Englishwomen were particularly famous for travel. Although they were disenfranchised Others themselves in English society, Englishwomen did not identify with the Other they encountered in travels, but rather chose enfranchisement in an elite “imagined” England. This community (or the middle/upper class idea of English identity, purpose, and destiny) was solidified through compartmentalizing the Other.

Travel writing was extremely significant to the construction of English identity because it influenced non-travelers (fellow members of the “imagined” England) and provided them with a foundation on which to base their vision of English identity, purpose, and destiny. Because the Other was by nature something foreign or unknown, it had to be packaged carefully, in a way that reinforced rather than threatened the England “imagined” by travelers and their readers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Having spent years on “his” island, alone, but finally comfortable in what was once an alien environment, one day Robinson Crusoe happened upon a single footprint in the sand. The sight left him completely paralyzed – shocked that there was an Other and finally terrified – so terrified of the unknown Other that he raced back to his “castle” and stood guard all night – even going as far as to consider the footprint evidence of Satan in human form.¹

In the time that Robinson Crusoe had been on the island prior to the footprint, it had become his island. He had cultivated the land, domesticated animals, improved his standard of living, planned for old age, played the part of a penitent sinner, and been reconciled to his God. He had mastered his environment and himself – created civilization out of chaos – becoming a master in his own right. A mere footprint called every accomplishment into question. It threatened his identity as master of the island and reactivated dormant anxieties about his destiny and ability to survive.

The travels of Herodotus, Homer’s *Odyssey*, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, the journals of Captain James Cook, the Grand Tour, the coming of age “road trip,” and Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* underscore the significance of travel in the Western tradition. In *Routes*, James Clifford argues that travel is evidence of an unfinished modernity, of migratory tendencies and of urges that in some cases

This paper follows the format requirements of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* 7th edition by Kate L. Turabian.

¹ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 2004), 130-1.

evade the stasis of settlement in favor of exploration for the sake of movement.²

However, while travel implies movement, it is not displacement – it speaks to control and desire rather than forced migration or subjugation. Whether couched in terms of power and conquest or innocent curiosity, travel is something that pervades the Western consciousness.

Self-realization, the search for home, the descent into the Underworld, the exploration of the exotic or fantastic, and the quest are all common themes in Western literature. As a literary device, the journey is used to explore self-identity, purpose, and destiny. This is reflected in works like the *Aeneid* and *Candide* (1759). In other cases, the journey represents a path to moral or religious understanding as in the *Dark Night of the Soul* (16th century), *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), and the Arthurian quests so popular in the nineteenth century. The journey can also be a test that determines cultural and physical “fitness” as in *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873).

Robinson Crusoe (1719) combines all of these themes of identity, understanding, and “fitness.” The isolation of the title character turns the story into a psychological struggle more than a tale of physical survival. Alone in an alien environment, exposed to the Other, Robinson Crusoe has to reformulate and maintain his own identity, as well as try to understand his purpose and destiny. These struggles marginalize his struggle for physical survival. In essence, the way in which he imagines or constructs himself, his purpose, and his destiny are more significant than the reality of his circumstances.

The footprint episode highlights important questions that faced the English in the nineteenth century, namely: How do you deal with the Other once you know he or she is

² James Clifford, *Routes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), prologue and chap. 1.

there?³ Is the Other (the footprint) an intrusion on civilization, or is civilization an island surrounded by Others? And, particularly in a period of cultural stress, how is identity constituted or reconstituted? Robinson Crusoe's first reaction was terror. This gradually gave way to reason, although the discomfiture never really left him. This was the case with the English consciousness in the nineteenth century. Much of the fear and fantastic atrocities associated with the Other had temporarily dissolved in the Enlightenment as the Other became an object of science and reason. However, as with Robinson Crusoe, certain anxieties still remained.

Like Robinson Crusoe, the English had evidence of the Other in England – their “island.” They saw the “footprint” of the Other in ethnological collections at the British Museum, at the Crystal Palace Exhibition (1851), in art, in literature, newspapers, and eventually in photographs. The reality of the Other's presence was increasingly felt throughout English society. Like Robinson Crusoe, the English had to determine what to do with this Other once its existence was proven.⁴ English travelers responded to this question by addressing the real anxieties that prompted fears of Otherness. In their writings they (consciously and unconsciously) tackled the following questions: What was England's destiny? What did it mean to be English? And, was progress an accident of fate or the proof/result of superiority? The travelers proposed answers to these questions in the ways in which they compartmentalized the Other. In doing so, they defined England and reinforced their own perceptions of English superiority.

³ For the purposes of this paper, the travelers will be referred to as English, not British. England will be used in place of Britain because Britain was regarded as “England” in the nineteenth century due to English cultural domination. “English” was also a more exclusive middle/upper class identity because it did not include groups like the Irish or the working class.

⁴ Existence and identity are not the same things. Identity is a process by which existence is culturally defined.

THE ENGLISH, TRAVEL, AND THE FEMALE TRAVELER

Travel was a major part of the construction of English identity in the nineteenth century because the English were prolific travelers. In Spain, the traveler Frances Elliot was convinced that if you stayed long enough in the Alhambra's Court of Lions, eventually "you would see the whole English-speaking world."⁵ Lord Byron complained that Rome was "pestilent with English," while Lady Marguerite Blessington noted "twenty English to one of any other nation" listed in a guestbook near Vesuvius.⁶ This pattern continued at non-European destinations as well. In Egypt, Lady Lucie Duff Gordon and Amelia Edwards were at no loss for English society, nor was Lady Anne Blunt as removed from Cook's tourists in the Middle East as she may have wished. Even in West Africa, Mary Kingsley encountered fellow Englishmen and women. As one nineteenth-century Sieneese hotel owner reportedly explained: "We have ten *Inglesi* in tonight, four of them French, five German and a Russian."⁷ English was synonymous with travel.

Englishwomen tended to outnumber their European counterparts in all destinations. According to the *Quarterly Review*, no other country had the "same well-read, solid thinking—early-rising—sketch-loving—light-footed—trim-waisted—straw-hatted specimen of women; educated with the refinement of the highest classes, and with the usefulness of the lowest."⁸ When not being accused of being a New Woman or a travel obsessed "Globtrotteress," the female traveler was a source of pride for her

⁵ Frances Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1884), 2:148.

⁶ Lord Byron to Thomas Moore, March, 25, 1817, in *Byrons Letters and Journals* (London, 1976), 5:187; Lady Marguerite Gardner Blessington, *Lady Blessington at Naples*, ed. Edith Clay (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 102.

⁷ Graham Smith, introduction to *Britannia, Italia, Germania, Taste & Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Conference Papers, Edinburgh, November 2000*, ed. Carol Richardson and Graham Smith (Edinburgh: VARIE, 2001), 2.

⁸ [Lady Elizabeth Eastlake?], "Lady Travellers," *Quarterly Review* 151, (1845): 102.

countrymen. She represented not just her own sex, but was an emblem of the English nation.

Criticism of the travelers' gaze often results in white men being dehumanized as conquerors oblivious to the humanity of the Other, and white women being revealed as innate humanitarians. Women are privileged as less imperialistic and more likely inclined towards cultural relativism. In popular culture, Rogers and Hammerstein's Anna Leonowens and Karen Blixen in *Out of Africa* have captured the imagination of the West because it seems that they alone, barring few exceptions in the men around them, have the capacity to recognize the humanity of the Other.⁹ They seem to excel at "getting to know you," while white men appear hostile, boorish, and ignorant in their interactions with the Other.¹⁰

There is also a belief that women are better than men at writing travel narratives because their perspectives are innately insightful and not voyeuristic. To make this point, the following quote from Henry Tilney in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1803) is frequently misquoted: "Every body allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly female."¹¹ Putting this quote back into proper context however, actually reveals a more negative impression of women's writing. Tilney goes on to explain that he finds only three major faults in female writing. These being a "general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar."¹² These are no mean deficiencies and make it obvious that his first comment was hardly a

⁹ While Danish, Karen Blixen is grafted into an Anglo-American understanding of the British Empire.

¹⁰ There may be a reason for this association of women with this kind of understanding. Anthropologically, women can be "gatekeepers" because they biologically facilitate assimilation by bearing children of Others. However, in *Muslim Women in Mombasa* (1979), Margaret Strobel points out that this absorption of outsiders does not necessarily bring about "equality and homogeneity."

¹¹ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 25. One instance of this occurs in Dervla Murphy's introduction to Lady Montagu's *Embassy to Constantinople*.

¹² Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 25.

compliment. As Tilney goes on to argue however, writing is not so much a question of superiority as it is of taste.

The kind of essentialism that casts women as “good” and men as “bad,” ignores what travelers chose to write about – i.e. their taste, what they had access to, what interested them, and what the public expected of them. Women’s writings were also “posterity conscious.”¹³ Therefore, the female traveler’s voice was not a pure, unadulterated female voice, but rather part of a calculated public persona. The assertion that female travelers were not natural humanitarians any more than men were should not be conflated to mean that there were no differences in the ways in which men and women explained their environments or responded to social pressures determined by the “sphere” in which their sex was supposed to operate. Women had to protect themselves in ways that men did not, and they even had to justify their travels in ways that men did not. This played a role in their choice of subject matter.

It has been asserted that “women’s journeys are circular, not linear; determined, like their lives, by seasons and cycles, not destinations or goals.”¹⁴ According to Catherine Barnes Stevenson, men write “quest-romances,” that are goal oriented, reveal the power of their will, and involve the conquest of a foreign environment. In contrast, Stevenson argues that women write odysseys – internal quests that allow them to explore their own psychological reactions to the Other.¹⁵ Women did tend to focus more than men on their reactions to the Other, but the distinction between internal odyssey and

¹³ Dervla Murphy, introduction to *Embassy to Constantinople: The Travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Christopher Pick (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988), 7.

¹⁴ Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, “Women’s Travel Writing and the Politics of Location: Somewhere In Between,” in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 193.

¹⁵ Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Woman Travel Writers in Africa* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 8.

“quest-romance” was not so definite or really determined exclusively by sex. Female travelers may not have been saving girls from harems or fighting bandits, but they most definitely saw themselves as mastering foreign environments, accomplishing goals, and surviving the hardships of travel like any male traveler.

THE OTHER

As Edward Said argues, all societies engage in Othering, or make “representations of foreign cultures” that enable them to favorably compartmentalize the alien.¹⁶ Humans have biological and psychological needs for an identified Other. This Other helps to define Self by externalizing fears and insecurities, but can also be an object of envy or represent an alternative lifestyle. Regardless of interpretation however, Otherness is a construction of convenience. This accounts for the ambiguous but versatile nature of the construction.

In nineteenth-century England, the Other represented colonized peoples, foreigners, the “Celtic fringe,” the working class, and “women of all social orders and nationalities.”¹⁷ The Other was determined through litmus tests of geography, race, culture, religion, and class. While maps told travelers that a people were non-European or European, Enlightenment intellectualism told them that “Europe” was something more exclusive, and Protestantism drew another set of boundaries between the English and the Other. These different ways of organizing the world and its inhabitants contributed to the ambiguity and convenience of Otherness.

¹⁶ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 100.

¹⁷ Thomas William Heyck, *The Peoples of the British Isles From 1688-1870* (Chicago: Lyceum, 2002), 237.

As a genre, travel literature is an ideal source for examining the construction of Self and Other. It is comparable to memoir because the travel writer focuses on a limited period of time and has to make the reader quickly aware of the traveler's identity, while explaining a set of pivotal experiences that have encouraged that self-identity and colored perceptions of Otherness. This concentrated formula encourages the traveler to delve "through layers of self, and, in a performative way...[construct and reconstruct her] identity."¹⁸

In agreement with Edward Said, Simon Gikandi argues that the Other was an essential part of the "consolidation of a European identity and its master narratives."¹⁹ Gikandi explores how English identities were constructed in "spaces of imperial alterity."²⁰ He argues that writing about the Other, or the environment of the Other, allowed the "metropolis...[to] be drawn into the sites of what is assumed to be colonial difference" in a way that turned these spaces into "indispensable spaces of self-reflection."²¹ Travel drew the English into imperial and non-imperial spaces of alterity and forced them to self-reflectively confront and compartmentalize the Other. Whatever the arguments about what factors made England a nation, English contact with the Other played an integral role in imagining England.

In *Shopping for Pleasure*, Erika Rapport argues that shopping allowed Englishwomen in the second half of the nineteenth century to access the public sphere. She finds that their value as consumers gave them the power to reshape the public sphere.

¹⁸ Kristi Siegel, "Intersections: Women's Travel and Theory," in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 7.

¹⁹ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 5.

²⁰ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 19.

²¹ *Ibid.*, xviii.

The more they accessed the public sphere, the more they “reworked notions of gender, power, and the public sphere.”²² Rapport’s arguments have relevancy in terms of nineteenth-century travel and the formation of national identity. For Rapport, Englishwomen were simultaneously “enforcing and evading power” as they pursued pleasure, which enabled them to carve out new identities.²³ Like the shoppers, the travelers enforced and evaded their identities as Englishwomen as they traveled. Just as shoppers challenged “notions of stable class and gender identities and clearly demarcated spaces” and “confronted concerns about industrialization, urbanization, and modernity,” female travelers entered spaces of alterity – the sites of projected fears and fantasies, and used these spaces to reshape and reflect English identity, purpose, and destiny.²⁴

ENGLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE FEMALE TRAVELER

Even though the politically turbulent eighteenth century was a time when “Englishness” was being codified by “Pope’s poetry, Gibbon’s prose, Baskerville’s printing, Chippendale’s furniture, Adam’s palaces, Brindley’s bridges, [and] Wedgwood’s china,” English national identity was far from settled by the nineteenth century.²⁵ For the most part this was because England, as a nation, was an invention of the nineteenth century.²⁶

Some argue that there can be no nation without sovereign territory – that a visual link to a space is vital to identity. Others see religion, language, or ethnicity as key

²² Erika Diane Rapport, *Shopping for Pleasure* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 10. Rapport argues that shopping gave women the ability to explore, hunt, and chase, 131.

²³ Rapport, *Shopping*, 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 221.

²⁵ Murphy, introduction to *Embassy to Constantinople*, 9.

²⁶ Peter Scott, *Knowledge and Nation* (Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 168.

factors that connect individuals. These factors are helpful because they are physical markers of the nation, but they do not explain why the nation exists or the process by which national identity is constructed. As Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities*, the nation is a product of social processes, in essence, people actively participating in the construction of an “imagined community.”²⁷ In doing so, they associate themselves with that “community” and recognize the enfranchisement of others in that group – even if they never have any contact with these people, or are separated from them by time.²⁸ It is this active, willing participation in constructing group identity that animates the nation and gives things like territory, language, ethnicity, and religion resonance. Travel writing made female travelers integral, contributing members of the “imagined community” – allowing them to influence the ways in which fellow members perceived England.

DESTINATIONS AND TRAVELERS

Englishwomen’s responses to the Other in Italy, Spain, the Middle East, and West Africa will be examined in this study. These destinations were chosen based on how the English arranged their world. This world was hierarchical, based on distinctions of race, culture, religion, and separated by geographic labels heavy with meaning like “Europe” and “Africa.” At the top of the pyramid was western civilization – with those who were white, protestant, middle/upper class (the English) representing the absolute pinnacle of human civilization. As geographically “European,” Spain and Italy were members of western civilization, but occupied a distinctly lower stratum than England because of

²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991).

²⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7.

differences in religion, culture, destiny, and perhaps even “race.” This worldview effectively separated “English” from “European.” The next level of the pyramid featured the “complex but stagnant cultures” of the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia who had “accomplishments” like historical records, ancient ancestry, great buildings, technology and complex religions.²⁹ The base of the pyramid was made up of primitive cultures – those of Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands – groups of people who were considered “nonliterate, [and] technologically backward.”³⁰

Table 1 (below) profiles each of the major travel writers used in this study. The travelers were middle to upper class women – reflecting the groups most responsible for or actively in control of shaping the English “imagined community.”

²⁹ H. Alan C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1965), 74.

³⁰ Cairns, *Prelude*, 74.

Table 1. Profile of Female Travelers

TRAVELER	DESTINATION ³¹	REASON FOR TRAVEL	MARRIED	CLASS
Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762)	Turkey (1716-1717)	Pleasure, part of husband's embassy to the Porte	Yes, children	Aristocratic
Marguerite, Lady Blessington (1789-1849)	Italy (1823-1826)	Pleasure, to escape debts	Yes, twice no children.	Aristocratic
Mary Shelley (1797-1851)	Italy (1840, 1842, 1843)	Pleasure	Yes, children	Middle Class
Lady Duff Gordon (1821-1869)	Egypt (1862-1869)	Health	Yes, children	Aristocratic
Amelia Edwards (1831-1892)	Egypt (1873-1874)	Pleasure	No	Middle Class
Frances Elliot (1820-1898)	Italy, Spain (1870s -1880s)	Tourism, to write about it	No ³²	Middle Class
Lady Anne Blunt (1837-1917)	Middle East: Syria, Persia (1877-1880)	Pleasure, purchasing Arabian horses	Yes, one child	Aristocratic
Mary Kingsley (1862-1900)	West Africa: Sierra Leone, Gold Coast. (1893, 1894)	Pleasure, exploration	No	Middle Class

In *Travels in West Africa*, Mary Kingsley explained that in writing, she was “not bent on discoursing on...[her] psychological state” in relation to the alien Others and environments that she encountered while traveling.³³ Ironically, travel writing by nature is a reaction to the unusual, the Other, and the alien. Although travel writing was once regarded as a mere ethnological exercise – a cultural fact finding mission, more recently, studies of travel literature have focused on the writer's response to Otherness. This study

³¹ Many travelers made more than one trip to a destination - the dates below each destination reflect the particular trips that resulted in the writings used in this study.

³² Reviews of Elliot's writings refer to her as “Miss Elliot” as late as the 1880s.

³³ Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (New York, Barnes & Nobles Publishing, 1965), 101.

will examine how the traveler compartmentalized the Other and helped establish English identity, purpose, and destiny.

The first chapter will examine how women used the construction of a male or female Other to define their own identity as Englishwomen and demonstrate English superiority. The second chapter will explore how female travelers compartmentalized the Other's culture and character in a way that confirmed this English superiority and legitimized English "purpose" (imperial expansion/political paternalism). The last chapter explores how English travelers used the past to justify England's future destiny – the final stage of compartmentalizing Otherness that anchored English purpose and identity in time and space.

CHAPTER II

COMPARTMENTALIZING THE MALE AND FEMALE OTHER

Robinson Crusoe's most pressing question was "Who am I?" or perhaps better put: "What is my identity in this new environment?" For the female traveler, this question of self-identity was inseparable from the conception of gender identity. As Anne McClintock argues, "all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender" to legitimize power relationships and build society.¹ The division between "masculine" and "feminine" was one of the basic organizing principles of English society - a marker that defined an individual's identity and social responsibility.

The Victorian ideology of separate spheres divided pursuits and occupations into masculine (public) and feminine (private) categories. Men were thought to have a biological advantage that enabled them to function in the competitive, dangerous world of the public sphere. As a result, they appeared ideally suited to provide for and protect women, as well as able to explore and conquer the unknown. As man's counterpart and help, women operated in the private sphere, creating a refuge from the public sphere that enabled "daily recuperation from life's struggle."² While men were characterized by strength, knowledge, and independence, as the "Angel of the House," the woman was defined by beauty, innocence, and dependence.³ In light of these prescribed roles, travel by women was something that bordered on the edge of propriety and forced a reevaluation of self-identity.

¹ Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism, and the Family," *Feminist Review*, no. 44 (Summer 1993): 61.

² Heyck, *The Peoples*, 248.

³ Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (George Bell, 1890).

The ideology of separate spheres was predominately championed by the middle class, although Queen Victoria was a notable exception. Most of the female travelers in this study were aristocratic. Nevertheless, while these women had more freedom and were less inclined towards evangelicalism than middle class women, they still felt an obligation to observe the rules of “public propriety” and femininity.⁴ Lady Blessington and Lady Montagu, who traveled prior to the Victorian Period, had fairly similar concerns about propriety and female travel as those expressed by late nineteenth century travelers like Francis Elliot and Mary Kingsley.

Although as “travelers” women challenged traditional gender roles, they were in no way trying to breakdown these roles. This is evident in how they chose to contend with the sphere defying New Woman – a figure that English society regarded as undesirable, subversive, and most importantly, non-English. Because female travelers “were faced with the twin desires to remain “appropriate” and yet still enact their “inappropriate” desires,” (travel) they had to reconstruct their identity in a way that enabled them to accomplish the “inappropriate” while avoiding the label of New Woman.⁵ To do this, female travelers looked to the smallest unit of society – the individual male or female Other, and through comparison, began to construct their own identity and picture themselves as English.

⁴ Heyck, *The Peoples*, 247.

⁵ Ruth Y. Jenkins, “The Gaze of the Victorian Woman Traveler: Spectacles and Phenomena,” in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 17.

COMPARTMENTALIZING THE FEMALE OTHER

Access to a broad range of foreign women was limited to female travelers.

Prostitutes or other “public” women were accessible to male travelers, but as most men did not have the opportunity or the desire to witness domestic life in other countries, that left an entire demographic of women unstudied and unknown. In contrast, by virtue of their femininity, female travelers had access to both known and unknown women. Lady Montagu’s eighteenth century writings set canonical standards for writing about the female Other and marked the beginning of a trend in which Englishwoman actively engaged in the construction of the female Other.⁶ By the nineteenth century, female travelers were regarded as the most reliable, popular authorities on the female Other.

Many female travelers believed, as did Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, that the “learned know books...[but they knew] men and, what...[was] more difficult, women.”⁷ Similarly, Lady Montagu believed herself particularly capable of ascertaining the “true position of women” in Ottoman society.⁸ In light of separate spheres and the expertise of “sisterhood” implied by Lady Duff Gordon and Lady Montagu, it would seem logical to assume that there was a sense of collectivity among travelers and the female Other - a belief that a woman naturally understood another woman, that culture was no major obstacle to shared experiences like childbirth, marriage, or social disenfranchisement. Indeed there were momentary bursts of “sisterhood” and gender solidarity, but more often than not, female travelers limited similarities to anatomy. As travel writing

⁶ The official publication of Lady Montagu’s *Embassy Letters* occurred in 1837, nearly a century after her death. Prior to that, her writings were widely circulated throughout Europe – drawing the praise of Voltaire, Edward Gibbon, and Lord Byron.

⁷ Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, *Letters From Egypt 1862-1869*, ed. Gordon Waterfield (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969), 39.

⁸ Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Embassy to Constantinople: The Travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Christopher Peck (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988), 41.

demonstrated, being female was really a superficial qualification. It allowed access to female Others but did not necessarily encourage rapprochement.

The female Other encompassed fears about female power and sexuality as well as idealized hopes about female beauty and virtue. The ambiguity between idealized “Angel of the House” and fallen woman made the identity of the female Other difficult to qualify. This mix of characteristics, while rooted in patriarchal anxieties, was still something that female travelers had a vested interest in managing. Because of these ambiguities, there was often confusion about whether to cast the female Other as similar or innately different from an Englishwoman. Irregardless of how travelers chose to cast the female Other, the Englishwoman always benefited by comparison.

The female Other had to be owned or disowned in order to define the Englishwoman. Indira Ghose identifies two contradictory types of Othering. The first involves the assimilation of the “other as same (but lacking)” and the other involves “construction of the other as negation of self, as completely other.”⁹ Travelers disowned the female Other by making judgments about her intelligence and enfranchisement in her own society, essentially casting her as a “negation of self.” When travelers desexualized the female Other they portrayed her as “lacking” but also as a “negation of self” in order to disassociate themselves from her dangerous female sexuality. At other times, travelers laid cultural claim to what they perceived as familiar “but lacking” about the female Other. While these actions enforced and threatened traditional English conceptions of women and the private sphere, ultimately they confirmed the traveler’s English identity.

⁹ Indira Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6.

Beauty was a very basic device that travelers used to compartmentalize the female Other. Because styles and preferences changed over decades, Lady Montagu's eighteenth century idea of beauty likely differed from that of Mary Kingsley's in the late nineteenth century. Therefore, as a category to examine the construction of the Other, beauty requires definition. While it could be something physical, beauty was also a reference to a pleasant countenance, comportment, innocence, or simply good company. Equated with acceptability it was a key to whether the Other was clean or dirty, polite or rude, civilized or savage. For female travelers, what was attractive in the female Other was what was familiar, submissive, or non-threatening. Praise in this category indicated relative Englishness or the Other as familiar "but lacking."

Disappointed that many Italian women did not have the elegance she had expected of them based on her studies of the physiognomies of classical statues, Lady Blessington still insisted that Italy was a "hot-house" of female beauty.¹⁰ Like Mary Shelley though, she conceded that that the bloom quickly faded.¹¹ For every woman deemed beautiful in Italy, there were others that did not fit English expectations. Despite these disappointments, female travelers tended to dwell on beauty because it was something they could use to emphasize English superiority.

Italian women who received the most praise tended to be thought of as very English. On a visit to Florence in the late eighteenth century, Lady Elizabeth Craven observed that "all the handsome Florentine women bear a great resemblance to the

¹⁰ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 48.

¹¹ Mary Shelley, *Rambles in Germany and Italy in 1840, 1842, and 1843*, in *Travel Writing*, vol. 8 of *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*, ed. Jeanne Moskal (London: William Pickering, 1996), 125.

English.”¹² If, as in Lady Blessington’s opinion, their complexion tended to be “olive” and therefore “less brilliant than the fresh roses and lilies of the cheeks of...English ladies,” their redeeming quality was that their comportment was at least very English.¹³ In this way, the traveler laid claim to the “best” aspects of Italian women, effectively compartmentalizing the female Other as something that fell short of true Englishness – or as same “but lacking.” While geographically “European,” Italian women were clearly not Englishwomen.

In the minds of the English, Spain was a European country with an exotic, Oriental pulse.¹⁴ Like artists, female travelers were aware that the English public craved Andalusia rather than the modernity represented by Castile.¹⁵ This vision of the Orient affected perceptions of the female Other. Frances Elliot found Spain full of “dark-skinned *Gitanas*,” Jews, and Spaniards – all relatively interchangeable and exotic to the English traveler.¹⁶ Elliot chose to avoid the ethnic diversity of Spain in favor of describing the beauty of upper class Spanish women. She wrote that these women telegraphed “grace and naiveté” as well as “innocent *abandon* and childlike mirthfulness.”¹⁷ Elliot saw no reason why a Spanish man would ever want to marry outside of Spain because she thought Spanish women were so charming that they drew

¹² Lady Elizabeth Craven, *The Beautiful Lady Craven; the Original Memoirs of Elizabeth, Baroness Craven, Afterwards Margravine or Anspach and Bayreuth and Princess Berkeley of the Holy Roman Empire (1750-1828)*, eds. A.M. Broadly and Lewis Melville (New York: John Lane Company, 1913), 77.

¹³ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 30.

¹⁴ Carrie B. Douglass, *Bulls, Bullfighting, and Spanish Identities* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 107.

¹⁵ David Howarth, *The Invention of Spain: Cultural Relations between Britain and Spain, 1770-1870* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 191, 207.

¹⁶ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:25. It was difficult for her to determine ethnicity by appearance but she did perceive that members of these groups were able to recognize the differences in each other.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 199.

close to the ideal English wife.¹⁸ Like Italian women, they were a downgraded, more immature version of the Englishwoman, but they had enough of her good qualities to make them pleasant and acceptable.

Lady Montagu believed that it was impossible to find an ugly young woman in Turkey and assured her sister Lady Mar that “the Court of England (though...the fairest in Christendom) cannot show so many beauties as are under our protection here.”¹⁹

“Sweetness” was a frequent term she used to describe these women. For the most part, she found no scheming Theodora-like figures in Constantinople, just sweet, extremely vulnerable women.

One particular woman, Fatima, was described as having “large and black [eyes] with all the soft languishment of the bleu.”²⁰ Lady Montagu believed that if Fatima was: “suddenly transported upon the most polite throne of Europe, nobody would think her other than born and bred to be a queen, though educated in a country we call barbarous.”²¹ Fatima was therefore a Turkish woman who could easily be taken for a “civilized” woman. Lady Montagu eventually discovered that Fatima’s mother had been a Polish Christian.²² This confirmed Fatima’s acceptability and affirmed Lady Montagu’s confidence in her own judgment of beauty – that beauty and acceptability could at least be “European,” when not English monopolies. Similarly, in West Africa, Mary Kingsley thought that the Fernando Po women were attractive, because she

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 109.

²⁰ Ibid., 130. Bleu means fresh, pure, peaceful, or calm.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 168.

believed that their Spanish ancestry gave them delicate, non-African features.²³

Therefore, their beauty was due to being somewhat “European.”

In Egypt, Lady Duff Gordon had a very favorable view of Arab women.²⁴ She privileged them over Coptic women because she felt that Copts lacked the “thoroughbred, distingué look” of the Arabs as well as their gracefulness and superior manners.²⁵ She believed that the complexion of the Arabs did not conceal a blush – which she considered a sign of modesty and an understanding of civilized behavior. In her mind, the “coffee-brown Arab skin” revealed that Arabs had a capacity for the same proper feelings as “the fairest European.”²⁶ However, as travelers demonstrated with Italian and Spanish women, and even Fatima and the Fernando Po women, “European” did not quite meet the standard of “English.”

In comparison with women of other races, African women were regarded as more anonymous and less feminine – neither “European” nor “English.” Lady Duff Gordon never ventured past the Second Cataract of the Nile during her travels in Egypt, but did see a photograph of a young African girl from the region of the White Nile. She found the girl “splendid” and “superbly strong and majestic,” but “not perfect like the Nubians” who she thought of as ideal examples of the female form.²⁷ As “strong,” African women were thought capable of doing men’s labor – a violation of separate spheres for an

²³ Kingsley, *Travels*, 72.

²⁴ The term “Arab” will generally be used to denote Egyptians and people living in Arabia (now the Middle East). This is not meant to be a totalizing term (any more than the use of “African”) but was chosen because travelers were not always uniform in their descriptions. At times they recognized differences – such as the difference between “Arab” and “Bedouin” or “Arab” and “Egyptian,” but then they also tended to distill these different groups into the large genus “Arab.” The difference between “Turkish” and “Arab” is maintained throughout because travelers were consistent in this.

²⁵ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 63.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 115. She was speaking in this instance about a man, but it applied to women as well.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 115, 63. Nineteenth-century archaeologists – including Harvard Egyptologist George Reisner were convinced that Nubians were ethnically Egypto-Libyan not African because they believed African societies incapable of forming a powerful civilization like Kush that conquered Ancient Egypt and built monuments. Prussian archaeologist Richard Lepsius was convinced that the Kushites had been Caucasian.

Englishwoman. As “majestic,” African women were also thought of as relatively silent and unknowable.

Africans were regarded as a “generic” race in which the “individual was lost in the ‘tribe’ and the ‘tribe’ within the ‘race.’”²⁸ Mary Kingsley wrote that her preference for African women “got very scattered” because she “no sooner remember[ed] one lovely creature...[than she thought] of another.”²⁹ African women were therefore relatively interchangeable and not claimed like other women because their beauty and manners were not considered English.” If an African woman was regarded as beautiful, and this was not the result of European ancestry, she was either viewed in a utilitarian way – as a strong worker, or as something precocious that an Englishwoman “longed to steal.”³⁰

While Lady Duff Gordon’s boatmen made repairs to her boat near a village outside of Thebes, she wandered off and came upon a party of Arab women. They were “sweet graceful beings, all smiles and grace,” and she visited with them for a while.³¹ Her servant Omar eventually found her and was anxious to know if she felt safe with them. Lady Duff Gordon found his concern amusing and told him that the women were “much too pretty and kindly-looking to frighten any-one.”³² As “pretty” non-threatening creatures, she saw them as incapable of attack or of domination. This attitude reflected the female traveler’s general opinion of “beautiful female Others”: that they were vulnerable, innocent, and docile – not suited for the public sphere or to be travelers.

²⁸ Cheryl McEwan, *Gender, Geography, and Empire: Victorian Women Travellers in West Africa* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), 95.

²⁹ Kingsley, *Travels*, 72.

³⁰ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 62. The child Lady Duff Gordon is speaking of was actually a Nubian.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

³² *Ibid.*, 58-9.

Beauty could seem a benign aesthetic category, but it involved conscious or unconscious appropriation of the female Other. When travelers claimed good “but lacking” qualities in female Others, they implied that these traits were magnified in Englishwomen – that Englishwomen were beautiful, well mannered, pleasant, and graceful. By recognizing “beautiful” female Others, female travelers identified these women as vulnerable and “lacking” – women who probably needed the protection and isolation of separate spheres. In contrast, the Englishwoman appeared worldlier and less vulnerable, but still ideally feminine. When travelers did not recognize or claim the beauty of a female Other, they cast her as a “negation of self” – something that challenged the “feminine” in a way that the traveler was uncomfortable with or that did not highlight the exceptionalism of the Englishwoman.

Female Others who could not be compartmentalized as “beautiful” challenged English definitions of femininity in ways that travelers did not want to be associated with. As a “negation of self” this female Other emphasized English femininity, but also needed to be tempered and turned into something somewhat familiar but “lacking.” The ideal female Other selects herself out or voluntarily silences her own voice. Cigarette’s sacrifice in Ouida’s *Under Two Flags* (1867), Butterfly’s suicide in *Madame Butterfly* (story 1898, opera 1904), Bertha’s self-immolation in *Jane Eyre* (1847), Naturich’s suicide in *The Squaw Man* (1906), and Foulata’s death in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) are all examples of this ideal self-sacrifice found in nineteenth-century popular culture.³³ In travels however, Englishwomen encountered female Others who disrupted this idea of voluntary self-sacrifice and marginalization. These women were not submissive, easy to mediate, or they existed in environments imbued with sexuality.

³³ *The Squaw Man* represents the Anglo-American perception of the ideal female Other.

Travelers encountered characters like Bizet's Carmen in Spain or proud Hagar in the Middle East. Carmen and Hagar were particularly striking metaphors because, respectively, they represented extreme sexuality and independence.³⁴ The dangerous agency displayed by "Carmens" and "Hagars" threatened the traveler's conception of femininity and had to be repackaged. One of the easiest ways to desexualize these women was to stress the idea of intent – or to excuse sensuality as an innate quality or something that in fact did not really exist.

In Italy, Lady Blessington was struck by the expressive, demonstrative behavior of Italian women in public. In Naples she wrote of Italian women shouting greetings of "*signorina, amico, cara, and, carissimo*" from carriage to carriage in the streets.³⁵ Unlike Englishwomen, she found Italian women more likely to indulge in unguarded, public displays of affection or pleasure. These expressive actions led Lady Blessington to conclude that the "mobility of their countenance" indicated "a more than ordinary predisposition to passionate emotions."³⁶ While Lady Blessington did not necessarily regard this as a bad quality, an innate predisposition towards excess had implications in terms of sexuality and was therefore something that the traveler had to disassociate from.

Englishwomen in Italy generally felt that Italian women had a lot of sexual freedom. Mary Shelley even viewed marriage in Italy as the "prelude to a fearful liberty" amongst Italian women.³⁷ According to Francis Elliot, Italians had an "odd standard of morals," and she wrote of an Italian countess who had such a boring husband that she

³⁴ In the Bible, Hagar was supposed to be silenced after being forced out into the desert. Instead of dying however, she and her son benefited from God's covenant with Abraham. Like Hagar, the Carmen of both Mérimée (1845) and Bizet (1873) had to be forcibly silenced – essentially killed off. Even in death however, she remained a symbol of defiant sexuality.

³⁵ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁷ Shelley, *Rambles*, 114.

dismissed him as a sexual partner.³⁸ The countess then entered into a relationship with a young cavalier “who turned the honourable duo of matrimony into the dishonourable trio of cicisbeism.”³⁹ The countess’s husband got along well with the young man, who was eventually dismissed in favor of another when the woman tired of him as well. Scandalized, Elliot explained that the only reason the husband had a problem with the new lover was the fact that he kept dinner waiting.

In Mary Shelley’s “The Bride of Modern Italy,” the heroine Clorinda was reminded by her friend Teresa that she changed patron saint with each new lover she took, and that as a result, she changed saint frequently.⁴⁰ Clorinda retorted in what Mary Shelley characterized as typical, vacillating Italian behavior: “...when did I love truly until now? Believe me, never.”⁴¹ At the end of Clorinda’s romantic misadventures, Shelley explained the usual relationship between Italian men and women. She pointed out that in Italy, “either downright love is made, or the most distant coldness is preserved between the sexes.”⁴² Shelley excused Clorinda’s behavior arguing that her lack of constancy and dignity in pursuit of love was not so very different from the behavior of Englishwomen in ballrooms.⁴³ In fact, in terms of courtship, she considered the tarantella “more decent than the waltz,” due to the behavior of some English ladies.⁴⁴

The difference between Englishwomen and Italian women however was that promiscuity was regarded as the dominant trait of the Italians. For Englishwomen,

³⁸ Francis Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1872), 1:236. Elliot did not actually know if the story was true, but it seemed to her in line with what was expected of Italian women.

³⁹ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:236-7.

⁴⁰ Mary Shelley, “The Bride of Modern Italy,” in *Mary Shelley: Collected Tales and Stories*, ed. Charles E. Robinson (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 33.

⁴¹ Shelley, “The Bride of Modern Italy,” 33.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁴ Shelley, *Rambles*, 372.

promiscuity was *choice* – something that could be made to submit to civilizing Protestant values or a concern for self-preservation. Understanding the Italian woman as innately sexual and prone to infidelity made the real or imagined behavior of Italian women excusable and delightful in a kind of provincial way.

The Spanish gypsy Carmen represented the dangerous “Spanish” woman.⁴⁵ In the “Habañera,” Carmen was proud of her mercurial nature, declaring irreverently: “[I]ove is a rebellious bird that nobody can tame... a gypsy child; he has never, never obeyed the law; if you don’t love me, I love you; but if I love you, watch out for yourself.”⁴⁶ Her brazen but flirtatious rejection of admirers: “When will I love you? I swear, I don’t know. Perhaps never! Perhaps tomorrow! But not today...” echoed Clorinda’s inconstancy in Shelley’s “The Bride of Modern Italy.”⁴⁷ Like writers and artists, travelers emphasized Spain as a land of uncontrolled passions, “sun, sand, and sex.”⁴⁸

While some Spanish women were seen as “lacking” but acceptable, Frances Elliot described others as the “most inveterate chatterboxes in the world,” and she grew tired of them “rattling their words like dice.”⁴⁹ Their garrulousness, as with Italian women, led Elliot to believe that they were predisposed to flirtation and seduction. She found these women “distractingly pretty,” and was convinced that they wore their mantillas as

⁴⁵ Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet: Carmen* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 20-21. In Mérimée’s original story, on which Bizet’s *Carmen* was based, Carmen was “multiply mediated,” – given life only through the narration of others. Still, containing her was a challenge. Bizet’s colleagues and producers wanted him to tone down or at least take away some of her “dangerous” agency. He added Micaëla as a “counterweight,” but in reality she only made Carmen appear more “monstrous.”

⁴⁶ Georges Bizet, *Carmen*, libretto by Meilhac and Halévy, in *Carmen: A Performance Guide*, ed Mary Dibbern (New York: Pendragon Press, 2000), act 1, no. 5, 34-5.

⁴⁷ Bizet, *Carmen*, act 1, no. 4, 33.

⁴⁸ Howarth, *The Invention*, 191, 194.

⁴⁹ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:31.

coquettishly as possible.⁵⁰ In order to disarm these women, Elliot, like female travelers in Italy, chose to describe this kind of behavior as innate and forgivable. Even if Spanish woman shot out “glances which might [have] fire[d] Troy,” Elliot explained that for the most part, they did this with the “tender unconsciousness...of innocent babes.”⁵¹

Dance was another area that highlighted the sensuality of Spanish women.⁵²

According to Elliot, Seville had been “corrupting the cohorts” since Roman times with its *Improbæ Gaditanae*, and she devoted herself to descriptions of its modern descendents.⁵³

These dances were “performed with the body, rather than with the feet – a sort of Oriental ‘cancan,’” that Elliot declared “exceedingly naughty.”⁵⁴ Witnessing a bolero being danced in a street, Elliot characterized the female dancer as a “fascinating snake, undulating around” her partner.⁵⁵ This perceived animalistic (or reptilian) nature of the female Other was often emphasized in descriptions of dance.

According to Elliot, “pursuit and conquest” seemed to be the “moral” of Spanish dance.⁵⁶ More often than not, many of the dances she witnessed ended with female submission, but she did not characterize them as particularly feminine. Surrender was an acceptable sign of femininity, but Spanish women made it too alluring (and public) in a way that questioned who had conquered. Elliot wrote of a girl dancing an “Ole” who ended the set by “lying *couchant* on the floor, at the feet of her partner in an entrancing pose.”⁵⁷ In another dance, the same girl ended her performance in “total subjugation and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ Elliot, *Spain*, 2:256.

⁵² Dancers were usually not upper class women, therefore, less likely to be “beautiful.”

⁵³ Elliot, *Spain*, 2:60.

⁵⁴ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:177.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

surrender in another voluptuous pose.”⁵⁸ Nevertheless, none of this hindered Elliot from desexualizing the dance. She succinctly concluded her discussion of these particular dances by noting that fathers and brothers of female dancers watched the dances and did not find anything immoral or promiscuous about them.⁵⁹

It may seem odd that dance, the very medium that incited many accusations of sensuality, would be used as a way to desexualize. However, using dance was a very tactical decision by travelers, because it struck at the very heart of the issue. When confronted by a troupe of dancing girls in Egypt who wore heavy makeup and “laughed familiarly” in front of her, Amelia Edwards wrote that she had never “seen anything in female form so hideous.”⁶⁰ However, as Elliot wrote of Spanish dance: “‘*it is all in the manner*’ of it” – or at least in the reception of it.⁶¹ Like Elliot, Lady Duff Gordon suggested that there were alternative ways to interpret dance.

Lady Duff Gordon found the dancing at a fantasia “more or less graceful, [and] very wonderful as gymnastic feats.”⁶² She felt that the dances were “more realistic than the ‘fandango’, and far less coquettish, because the thing represented is *au grande sérieux*, not travestied, *gazé*, or played with....”⁶³ She saw these dancers as serious performers – even if their art was not something appropriate for an Englishwoman. She was careful to write that Arab men, who she thought of as gentleman, did not find the dances improper – and actually went to great lengths to prevent Englishmen from watching the dances because it was *Englishmen* who attached improper sexual meaning

⁵⁸ Ibid., 181.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 177.

⁶⁰ Amelia Edwards, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (New York: A.L. Burt, Publisher, 1888), 132.

⁶¹ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:199.

⁶² Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 112. Lady Duff Gordon refers to the event as a *fantasia*, although this is not in keeping with other travelers’ use of the term.

⁶³ Ibid.

to the dances.⁶⁴ By accepting these dances as alien but not as just gratuitous displays of sensuality, female travelers made it clear that it was the gaze, not the act itself that sexualized the dance.

In the Middle East, the baths and the harem were central to Orientalist fantasies and therefore drew the interest of female travelers. Lady Montagu's visit to the baths at Sophia is one of the most famous encounters in travel literature. Aware of the stigma of the baths, and really of any mass gathering of women where men were prohibited and left to wonder about the space, Lady Montagu took great pains to desexualize Turkish women. She explained to her readers that all of the women at the baths were "in a state of nature, that is in plain English stark naked...yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst 'em."⁶⁵ She went on to liken the women to Milton's description of "our General Mother," the goddesses of Guido or Titian, and even the Graces.⁶⁶ These tamer mental pictures helped to temper expectations of the baths as lascivious free-for-alls. The environment Lady Montagu described was wholesome, nurturing, relaxing, and safe. Although she wrote over a century before the "Angel of the House" mythology, she encouraged the perception of the baths as a private, domestic sphere – albeit a little more exotic.

The women at the baths wanted Lady Montagu to undress as well because they saw her as one of them. She declined and at their insistence revealed her stays, demonstrating the impossibility of their request.⁶⁷ These "cultural stays" allowed her to

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 97.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 98.

separate herself, as an Englishwoman, from them even as she desexualized them.⁶⁸ Once desexualized, the Turkish woman was no longer a “negation of self,” but still had to be subordinated as “lacking.”

Denied access to the harem, male travelers wrote about it as a forbidden, voyeuristic space “charged with erotic significance.”⁶⁹ Male travelers often sensationalized the harem as a place of mystery, cruelty, and sexuality.⁷⁰ Besides representing sexual slavery the harem was also cast as a corrective environment for women. According to Montesquieu, women in the Orient were “so susceptible to the stimuli of the heat that men had to invent the institution of the harem as a preventative in order to be safe from female molestation in the streets.”⁷¹ Lord Byron agreed that the remedial discipline of the harem benefited society.⁷² In contrast, artists like Jean-Léon Gérôme, John Frederick Lewis, and Eugène Delacroix portrayed harems as pleasant settings for idealized fantasies. However, Orientalist art was still designed to “prioritise a male visual pleasure.”⁷³ Female travelers were familiar with all of these expectations and took great pains to demystify, domesticate and desexualize the harem.

Prior to Lady Montagu’s travels, the female Other was supposed to submit to her culture (defined by white men as sexual slavery or prison), or be rescued from it by white

⁶⁸ Sukanya Banerjee, “Lady Mary Montagu and the ‘Boundaries’ of Europe,” in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 42.

⁶⁹ Shirley Foster and Sara Mills, eds., *An Anthology of Women’s Travel Writing* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 15.

⁷⁰ Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2004), 13.

⁷¹ Reinhold Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama: British Travellers in 19th Century Turkey* (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 285.

⁷² Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama*, 285.

⁷³ Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*, 143. In contrast, Orientalist art by women tended to emphasize the domesticity of the harem.

men.⁷⁴ By presenting the harem as she did the baths, Lady Montagu disrupted the Western fantasy of the Eastern woman as a captive who needed to be saved from exploitation.⁷⁵ Later travelers followed Lady Montagu's example of desexualizing the harem by domesticating it. Above all, travelers stressed that there was no male presence in the harem (at least while they were there), indicating that the harem did not exist solely for the pleasure of a master and represented a home, a refuge from the public sphere rather than a site for sexual encounters.

Nevertheless, the main obstacle to seeing the harem as domestic was the institution of polygamy. To the English, polygamy inappropriately disrupted and sexualized the family unit. For travelers, there was no better way to desexualize the harem than to clinically define polygamy as an economic or social arrangement as well as a sacrifice on the husband's part. Lady Duff Gordon argued that polygamy was not "always sensual indulgence" but a legitimate and practical social safety net for women without male relatives or for poor widows.⁷⁶ Multiple wives were expensive and had to be maintained according to Islamic law. Therefore Lady Duff Gordon concluded that polygamy was not really as widespread as thought because it was cost prohibitive.

Mary Kingsley also stressed that polygamous relationships in Africa were utilitarian in nature rather than based on lust. She believed that it was African women who preferred polygamy because it meant that work could be spread among several women.⁷⁷ For this reason, Kingsley concluded that African men tended to be driven to polygamy by their first wife who wanted someone to help her with chores and help her

⁷⁴ Teresa Heffernan, "Feminism Against the East/West Divide: Lady Mary's Turkish Embassy Letters," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 2 (2002): 205, 207.

⁷⁵ Heffernan, "Feminism," 212.

⁷⁶ Lady Duff Gordon, *Travels*, 104.

⁷⁷ Kingsley, *Travels*, 212.

expand the domestic economy. Polygamy was not the only “threat” presented by African women though.

For an Englishwoman, there were proper clothes for every situation and what you wore differentiated you in terms of class, gender, and even morality. In contrast to English modesty and attention to dress, nudity or partial nudity was something that often characterized the African Other. In Turkey, nudity was culturally sanctioned at the baths, because women were not exposed to the male gaze. In contrast, African women did not exist in an idyllic bath scene and were exposed to the male gaze. As Anna Maria Falconbridge wrote of her experiences in Sierra Leone (1791): “[s]eeing so many of my own sex, though of different complexion from myself, attired in their native garbs, was a scene equally new to me, and my delicacy, I confess, was not a little hurt at times.”⁷⁸ Mary Kingsley was not as startled as Falconbridge, but clearly differentiated herself from African women by stressing how she maintained modest, feminine dress even in the most extreme climates.⁷⁹

African women were perceived as “simultaneously sexual, fecund, and more primitive” than European women.⁸⁰ Mary Kingsley described some African women as “a forward set of minxes” who preyed on her porters.⁸¹ This kind of predatory attitude, combined with the nudity or partial nudity of African women was considered “indicative of their unrestrained sexuality.”⁸² Desexualizing the African woman was therefore difficult and in the case of Kingsley was not so much accomplished as ignored. As the

⁷⁸ Anna Maria Falconbridge, *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone (1791)*, in *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, ed. Shirley Foster and Sarah Mills (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 260-1.

⁷⁹ Kingsley, *Travels*, 270, 115. Kingsley always wore a thick skirt and a corset in her travels.

⁸⁰ McEwan, *Gender*, 109.

⁸¹ Kingsley, *Travels*, 296.

⁸² McEwan, *Gender*, 109.

most non-English female Other, desexualizing the African woman was not as essential because seeing her as hypersexual or naturally immodest made Englishwomen appear more civilized by default. As a general “negation of self” the African woman was very useful in constructing the Englishwoman.

DISENFRANCHISING THE FEMALE OTHER

Estimating the knowledge of the female Other was another way in which female travelers compartmentalized the female Other. Englishwomen took particular care to sound rational in the face of female Others, to not be seen as one of *them*, but as a scientific, authoritative observers – superior to the irrational, weak, mentally feeble female Other. Ironically, this judgment about the female Other’s ability to reason and learn was exactly one of the tenets of separate spheres that limited and disenfranchised women in England. According to Ruth Jenkins, female travelers projected fears about their own identity when they described the ignorance or irrationality of the female Other. Their depictions of these women revealed their anxieties about “being subject and object, imperial agent and androcentric horror” – essentially reflecting their concern to remain feminine but also their need to project traditional feminine qualities as inferior.⁸³

In Italy, Francis Elliot wrote of her servant Maria – one of the few Italian women that she profiled. She described Maria as pragmatic and simple, but not as intelligent or ambitious.⁸⁴ While picturesque, Maria’s lifestyle stood in contrast to Elliot’s life of observation, contemplation, and pursuit of knowledge. That Maria did not have Elliot’s leisure time was irrelevant, because Elliot did not see her as even aware that there was

⁸³ Jenkins, “The Gaze,” 21.

⁸⁴ Elliot, *Italy*, 2:213.

anything else she could aspire to. Similarly, Elliot wrote of Spanish women in terms of dancing, socializing or working but implied that they did little else – that they had little education, and what little they had, they did not try to improve on.

Lady Montagu may have enjoyed visiting harems, but for her these visits were forays into *The Arabian Nights*, not a reality that she could envision thriving in even. When hypothetically imagining herself in Turkish society, Lady Montagu wrote that she would rather be a Turkish Effendi than Sir Isaac Newton – or presumably a Turkish woman.⁸⁵ A star in the salons of Europe, Lady Montagu’s own extensive knowledge encouraged the perception that the female Other was “lacking” - a nice, exotic figure, but not a sentient being.

Another English traveler, Harriet Martineau visited harems in Cairo and Damascus in 1846 and wrote that they were worse than “deaf and dumb schools, lunatic asylums, or even prisons.”⁸⁶ She considered the women in the harem the “most injured human beings...[she] had ever seen” even though the women appeared happy and content.⁸⁷ Although the women told her that the harem indicated the value their society placed on women, Martineau could only see that the women lounged, smoked, frolicked, drank coffee, and danced all day – hardly the life an Englishwoman would be satisfied with.⁸⁸ Were Arab women of a “higher order” like Englishwomen, she was convinced that polygamy would not exist because then one woman would be able to satisfy not only the heart of a man, but his head as well.⁸⁹ Therefore, Martineau suggested that

⁸⁵ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 199.

⁸⁶ Harriet Martineau, *Eastern Life, Present and Past, 1848*, in *An Anthology of Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Shirley Foster and Sara Mills (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 36.

⁸⁷ Martineau, *Eastern Life*, 44.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 39, 44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

knowledge and femininity were not at odds in the person of an Englishwoman, but indeed, a benefit to men and society.

Among the Bedouin, Lady Anne Blunt had many opportunities to visit Bedouin women. Generally she found their society asphyxiating - completely devoid of the intelligent conversation of Arab men. Ultimately, Bedouin women never provided Lady Blunt with enough intellectual stimulation. She briefly enjoyed the company of Ghiówseh the first wife of Sheik Sotamm because she was also interested in travel. As a result, Lady Blunt characterized her as having “more wits than most Arab women” and found her able to “carry on a conversation further than is usual with them” – past the tedious topics of children and domestic life.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Ghiówseh represented an exception to Lady Blunt and was not considered representative of Arab women.

Among travelers there was never a sense that the female other had a “gaze,” or the power of discourse and the ability to construct identity. In terms of knowledge, Englishwoman judged the female Other’s ambition, intellectual capabilities, and happiness. Travelers may have unveiled unknown women, but they in no way identified with these women – particularly when they seemed ignorant or disenfranchised. As a kind of disenfranchised Other in their own society, Englishwomen found inclusion in the (white) male world of knowledge and reason a seductive possibility – and something that could be accomplished by subordinating the female Other and elevating the intellectual potential of Englishwoman. When it came to the female Other, Englishwoman ultimately chose enfranchisement in the (white) male world over sisterly solidarity with those disenfranchised.

⁹⁰ Lady Anne Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968), 2:145.

BECOMING ENGLISHWOMEN

Female travelers were not so much trying to get at the true identity of the female Other, as they were formulating the position of the Englishwoman. In order to be “beautiful,” moral, knowledgeable and free to enact their “inappropriate” desire to travel (and yet still remain “appropriate”), female travelers had to subordinate female Others. While their travel often evoked feelings of “pity, paternalism, [and] even horror” from English society, female travelers turned these same judgments on the female Other and used them to support the superiority of Englishness – an identity that gave female travelers more freedom, more responsibility, and more opportunity.⁹¹

Despite arguments about a “rhetoric of identification” in women’s writings, identification with the female Other required more than biological “likeness” because “likeness” accomplished less for an Englishwoman’s self-identity than the “rhetoric of differentiation.”⁹² Developmentally, females are characterized by “connected” object relations, while males are more likely to have “separate” object relations. Therefore, for women, separation from a preferred source of identity is supposed to be threatening. For this reason, Ruth Jenkins argues that it may have been “less psychologically disruptive [for the Englishwoman] to mimic the [English] cultural response to the non-traditional woman than to identify oneself” with the female Other.⁹³ Ultimately connection to culture or Englishness – even “male” aspects of it, was a more vital anchor for women’s self-identity than any kind of “sisterhood.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ Jenkins, “The Gaze,” 17.

⁹² Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains, French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 32. Lowe argues that Lady Montagu identified only with upper class women and then separated herself from everything else. If she identified with Turkish women to the extent that Lowe argues, this identification was still tempered by the idea of the Turkish woman as “lacking.”

⁹³ Jenkins, “The Gaze,” 23.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

On occasion, the travelers encountered women that captured their attention not as attractive, sensual, or ignorant Others, but female Others who were the “mirror of their own desires.”⁹⁵ These women were:

desexed objects, unknowable outside a clearly demarcated understanding of gender and culture...[displaying] a degree of gender transvestism as well as a degree of self-reliance and self-sufficiency...[existing] on the margins of masculine control...[and enacting] some aspect of the British female traveler’s desire for freedom of movement – not just across geographical domains but also across those of gender.⁹⁶

The Bedawee lady encountered by Lady Duff Gordon was a perfect example of this. She was the “most curious” woman that Lady Duff Gordon encountered in her travels. Lady Duff Gordon described her as: “dressed like a young man, but small and feminine and rather pretty...a virgin, and fond of travelling and of men’s society, being very clever....”⁹⁷ She sat “with the men all day and...[slept] in the harem” at night.⁹⁸ Clearly fascinated, Lady Duff Gordon asked an Egyptian if the Bedawee lady’s lifestyle was “*proper*” behavior for a woman.⁹⁹ Surprised by the question, the man explained that travel was the Bedawee lady’s prerogative because she was “a virgin and free.”¹⁰⁰

Lady Duff Gordon was anxious to meet her but never wrote of an actual meeting. It might have been an encounter between “equals.” More likely however, it would have been disturbing as contact with other female “phenomena” was often more troubling for female travelers than contact with lesser women because travelers rarely “recognized themselves nor gained pleasure from...similarly transformed women.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 110.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 111.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Jenkins, “The Gaze,” 26.

Ultimately, the Bedawee lady was the female traveler – a liminal figure with access to women, but predominately found in the company of men. Like the travelers, she was not a typical woman nor was she confined to the private sphere. Nevertheless, identification with her was impossible because it would have meant sacrificing ones identity as *Englishwoman* – an identity that was more important to female travelers than any kind of gender solidarity.

COMPARTMENTALIZING THE MALE OTHER

For most of the nineteenth century, the typical English gentleman was a product of the Rugby school or was seen as a Byronic figure. Ideally he was “handsome, dignified and amiable.”¹⁰² He was also recognized as woman’s natural protector, provider, and teacher. By the mid-nineteenth century, the philosophy of Muscular Christianity further proscribed that the ideal man should be strong, active, driven, and self-made. As independent and dominant, the Englishman was never the object of any gaze. In contrast, the male Other was an object of the female traveler’s gaze.

While the female Other represented anxieties about femininity and the proper role of women, the male Other represented a corruption of English masculinity. He was either effeminate and weak, or hypersexual and predatory. As with the female Other, the male Other’s identity was based on contradictions. One example of this ambivalence was the perception of Turkish men as “sexual demon[s]” but also as effeminate and impotent.¹⁰³ While an Englishwoman was expected to be able to relate to a female Other on some level, she was not expected to have anything in common with the male Other. There was

¹⁰² Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 115. Here she was describing Admiral Sir Henry Burrard Neale (1765-1840), Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, 1823-26, a man admired by men and women.

¹⁰³ Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama*, 255.

thought to be no possible basis for understanding between an Englishwoman and the male Other – no natural universality of experience on which to base a relationship or make a tentative connection.

During the nineteenth century, once normal processes like menstruation, birth, and menopause, became increasingly viewed as “pathological states” of a woman’s “inherently diseased body.”¹⁰⁴ As innately vulnerable and weak, women were thought to lack the constitution for travel. Their vulnerabilities did not end there. Given the predilection for assigning hyper-masculine characteristics to the male Other, a major problem facing female travelers was the issue of safety. While a privileged member of the colonial hierarchy in colonized lands, women were also considered an at-risk group, as “colonialism’s weakest point” – particularly vulnerable to sexual assault.¹⁰⁵ This perceived vulnerability was not limited to colonial lands. Every destination represented a potential threat for the traveler.

Anxieties about the safety of female travelers revolved around a fretful scenario of: “woman-alone-traveling-alone-helpless-alone-victim,” that Kristi Siegel identifies as a kind of Little Red Riding Hood syndrome.¹⁰⁶ These fears however were not attached to all women. The bodies of “ladies” of the “gentle class” were considered “valuable” which in turn “made their safety and purity of critical concern” to society.¹⁰⁷ Female travelers were most often associated with this group.

¹⁰⁴ Kristi Siegel, “Women’s Travel and the Rhetoric of Peril: It is Suicide to Be Abroad,” in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 62.

¹⁰⁵ Foster and Mills, *An Anthology*, 174.

¹⁰⁶ Siegel, “Women’s Travel,” 57.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

Despite all of this fear associated with the male Other, mentions of sexual assault or of a fear of assault remain completely absent from women's travel writing. Rather than an ignorance of the "threat," this absence of fear likely indicates compartmentalization. Female travelers adopted a "stern refusal to describe fear, sexual attack or danger" in order to remain free from the accusation of "sexual impropriety for having placed themselves in situations of potential danger."¹⁰⁸ Like the Bedawee lady described by Lady Duff Gordon, Englishwomen spent most of their travels in the company of male servants and guides. Faced with this potential danger, female travelers had to be careful about how they described the male Other. Therefore, they often stressed the chivalry of male Others or described themselves as dominating them. They also highlighted their own skills and knowledge in order to camouflage any perceived female frailty. Overall though, the easiest way to compartmentalize the male Other was to infantilize him by rejecting his masculinity.

Travelers often chose to cast the male Other as naïve and childlike – even when they had reason to believe otherwise. Omar, one of Lady Duff Gordon's servants in Egypt, figured prominently in her writings. In the first half of her series of letters, Lady Duff Gordon depicted Omar as non-sexual, simple, and devoted to her like a son – even though he often explained to her the indiscretions of other men and told her about his own marriage ceremony without "drop[ping] any curtain at all."¹⁰⁹

In the second half of Lady Duff Gordon's letters, an incident occurred that threatened Omar's childlike identity. Unbeknownst to Lady Duff Gordon, her English maid Sally had an affair and became pregnant. Lady Duff Gordon was shocked when it

¹⁰⁸ Foster and Mills, *An Anthology*, 175.

¹⁰⁹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 66.

was revealed that Omar was the father, and her safe, asexual image of Omar was shattered. Nevertheless, she rejected this version of Omar, because a virile Omar was unacceptable – a Pandora’s box of troubles for the female traveler.

Her refusal to see him in this capacity was related to two concerns. First, despite the benefits of the Egyptian climate, she was dying of consumption and did not want to be robbed of a trusted servant. This made her anxious to defend him as the victimized party and blame Sally for the seduction. While she conceded that Omar was not “quite a Joseph,” Lady Duff Gordon thought of him as “the seduced girl” while in her mind, Sally had most certainly played the part of the “regular old roué.”¹¹⁰ Lady Duff Gordon also rejected Omar’s dangerous masculinity in order to demonstrate that she herself was not in jeopardy. Although her husband’s specific concerns are unknown, her letters indicated that he harbored a certain amount of fear that Omar, having once been intimate with a white woman, might be tempted again. Therefore, she was anxious to assure her husband of Omar’s filial affection for her. She wrote of how Omar cried and was more devastated by the affair than Sally because it had disappointed his beloved “mother.” Eventually her husband agreed that Omar could stay with her and she continued to stress his identity as a “son” – although in a more preoedipal sense which was less threatening in light of his past behavior.¹¹¹

Mary Kingsley also chose to portray African men as childlike. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the predominant image of the African was that of the black “brother” or “sister” promoted by abolitionists. By mid-century however, “black” had become a “somatic presence” in the Victorian mind, a living embodiment of social

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 187-188.

¹¹¹ After the incident with Sally, Lady Duff Gordon hears little or does not write of Omar’s married life.

anxieties.¹¹² Therefore, rather than see the African as “brother” or “sister,” travelers chose to see them as “children” orphaned and without guidance. Catherine Barnes Stevenson argues that Kingsley rejected the image of the African as a child.¹¹³ This is true in the sense that Kingsley objected to exploitative, paternalistic colonial policies, but it is misleading in that Kingsley herself often chose to depict Africans in this way in order to highlight her own modesty and safety.

Mary Kingsley infantilized the African men around her by emphasizing how dependent they were on her. She likened herself to an “old hen with a brood of chickens to provide for.”¹¹⁴ She also viewed it as her primary duty to “prevent...[her] black companions from being eaten” by cannibals – a fate she felt that they could not avoid without her.¹¹⁵ During a rainstorm she wrote that she even had to order a group of African men to take cover because they were behaving like “storm-bewildered sheep.”¹¹⁶ Once under shelter, they stood there “helpless,” watching as she handed out blankets, gave them some rum, and finally went to work building a fire for them.¹¹⁷ Even after all of this, she felt that she had to stay awake to ensure that they did not fall into the fire.¹¹⁸ As a “mother” she was always vigilant.

In Kingsley’s opinion, Africans who should have been hyperaware of the dangers of their own environment were remarkably cavalier about their safety.¹¹⁹ Once when her men were sleeping in a canoe in crocodile infested waters, she wrote that they were

¹¹² Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 60.

¹¹³ Stevenson, *Victorian Woman*, 132.

¹¹⁴ Kingsley, *Travels*, 168.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 330.

¹¹⁶ Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa (1897)*, in *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, ed. Foster and Mills (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002) 203.

¹¹⁷ Kingsley, *Travels (1897)*, 203.

¹¹⁸ Ironically, she ended up falling into the fire and had to be pulled out. This did not make her feel that the Africans were any more capable or that she was any less responsible for them.

¹¹⁹ In reality, many of the men were not any more familiar in the bush than she was.

“reckless and regardless of their legs during sleep.”¹²⁰ By frequently describing them asleep, she furthered the image of them as vulnerable. Therefore, her duty was to watch endlessly over them, keep them from harm, and prevent them from being eaten by cannibals or natural predators. Ironically, most of her porters were Fans, a group thought to be the most violent, treacherous West African tribe. Although they technically represented the “enemy,” Kingsley merely emphasized how she mothered them.¹²¹

INSPIRING CHIVALRY AND ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE

As Coventry Patmore wrote in *The Angel in the House* (1854), the ideal Englishwoman was so “gentle and so good, that duty bade...[men] fall in love,” with her.¹²² In keeping with the image of the “Angel in the House,” this love was chaste and involved worship more than possession. While Patmore’s “Angel” required male guidance, female travelers transformed this idea of the “Angel,” into a quality that inspired chivalrous devotion in male Others, but that did not require dependence on them.

Many female travelers had genuine relationships with male Others that were based on mutual respect. In other cases, male Others had economic incentives to ensure the safety and happiness of the Englishwoman. The female traveler however, chose to interpret any such cares as evidence of “gentlemanly” concern for her well being. They believed that they inspired chivalrous behavior in all men who had an innate predisposition for it. When Mary Shelley engaged a particularly courteous gondolier in Venice, she was certain that his behavior derived from the vestiges of ancient Roman

¹²⁰ Kingsley, *Travels*, 93.

¹²¹ Stevenson, *Victorian Woman*, 11.

¹²² Patmore, *The Angel*, 12-13.

blood that flowed through his veins.¹²³ Nevertheless, clearly something had reactivated this dormant nobility – perhaps even her presence.

Omar's devotion to Lady Duff Gordon was a common theme in her letters – before and after the affair with Sally. She frequently related how Omar assured her and others: “Behold my Mother! Where she stays I stay, and where she goes I will go...”¹²⁴ She was pleased with this homage to Ruth and Naomi and felt that it characterized the nature of their relationship. She also wrote that Omar slept in her doorway when they were away from her home in Luxor. She saw all of these actions, as well as his comments about his married life as symbolic of his respect for her as a woman – an honored woman who commanded devotion and could be trusted with information that could injure the reputation of other women.

Like other female travelers, Lady Duff Gordon was pleased when male Others seemed to respond to her presence by trying to anticipate her needs. When she embarked on a Nile cruise, she found that all of her crew “sport[ed] new white drawers in honor” of her “supposed modesty.”¹²⁵ Later at Aswan, she was at the center of a “stupendous row” when her predominately Arab crew caught a Copt trying to spy on her as she bathed.¹²⁶ The Arabs nearly strangled him, “cursed him for a pig and an infidel,” and then threatened to maroon him “for his vile conduct towards [the] noble hareem.”¹²⁷ The way she described this event implied that there was a *noli me tangere* quality about Englishwomen that even the male Other could recognize.

¹²³ Shelley, *Rambles*, 272.

¹²⁴ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 168.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57. She noted that they would expect compensation for this but still found it charming.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

Lady Duff Gordon likened courteous Arab men to “Don Quixote...in his senses.”¹²⁸ Similarly, Lady Blunt believed that Arabs of the “best” or *asil* blood had an innate mastery of social graces as well as a protective attitude towards women.¹²⁹ Aware that the Bedouin men treated her more like a male guest than a woman, she could not help but feel that some apparent superiority on her part commanded this respect. She noted with pleasure that a sheikh thought that she was nobler than her husband Wilfrid, and that clearly she was the daughter of a great man.¹³⁰

Amelia Edwards wrote that her male servant Salame was always watching her “like a dog...ready with an umbrella as soon as the sun comes round, and replenishes a water bottle or holds a color box as deftly as through he had been to the manner born.”¹³¹ Edwards thought of Salame’s eagerness to please her as absolute devotion. Later in her travels, she was privately pleased that while she was fasting, Salame, who had some of his favorite foods, refused to eat until she broke her fast. This self-denial on his part indicated to her the disciplined nature of his respect for her.

Traveling in America, Isabella Bird had a “Rousseauic belief” in the nobility of American frontiersman and she believed that her demonstrated “pluck” engendered their admiration and made her safe in their company.¹³² In a similar fashion, Mary Kingsley believed that she had a certain amount of liberty when it came to dealing with European or African traders. She wrote: “They will take abuse from me that coming from another would mean slaughter.” She attributed her ability to criticize these men to the fact that

¹²⁸ Ibid., 292.

¹²⁹ Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 2:87. Lady Blunt defined *asil* as noble.

¹³⁰ Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 1:271.

¹³¹ Edwards, *Thousand Miles*, 147.

¹³² Lila Marz Harper, *Solitary Travelers: Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Narratives and the Scientific Vocation* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001), 161.

she was a sort of “female patron saint” to them – an object of admiration and respect.¹³³ While this affiliation did not translate to absolute power over the men, Kingsley clearly found this reverence an attractive argument about her safety and position in Africa.

The devotion of male Others was a common theme in women’s travel writing. It was the result of a need to reassure oneself that there was an innate quality in the writer that encouraged devotion. For female travelers, this enabled them to demonstrate that even as “innocents,” they were particularly well suited to survive in such “dangerous” situations. Being an “Angel” was therefore an advantage even in spaces of alterity.

Highlighting their self-sufficiency and accomplishments were other ways that female travelers circumvented or marginalized their dependence on male Others. They emphasized their skill and expertise in areas like science, medicine, religion, and history, while still maintaining a sense of their femininity. By demonstrating their superiority in terms of the male Other, female travelers were free to achieve in a traditionally male sphere without appearing unsexed.

Lady Anne Blunt’s superb horsemanship and knowledge of breeding earned her the admiration of the Bedouin. Horses were part of a shared cultural language that the Bedouin and the English could understand and appreciate. In England, by the nineteenth century, riding styles encouraged by middle class egalitarianism turned riding into a pursuit that “communicate[d] the internalized discipline and self-regulation...necessary to make a human body middle class.”¹³⁴ In England, this created a “climate in which

¹³³ Mary Kingsley to Matthew Nathan, March 8, 1899, in Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 144.

¹³⁴ Jennifer Mason, *Civilized Creatures: Urban Animals, Sentimental Culture, and American Literature, 1850-1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 37. Dressage which was associated with absolutism gave way to the more egalitarian “field” of fox hunting.

riding and femininity were increasingly seen as compatible.”¹³⁵ Books like *The Young Horsewoman’s Compendium to the Modern Art of Riding* (1827) treated riding as an essential accomplishment for a lady, while *The Young Lady’s Equestrian Manual* (1838) listed it as ““one of the most graceful, agreeable, and salutary of feminine recreations.””¹³⁶ Therefore riding was something that Lady Blunt could excel at without challenging her identity as female.

Apart from the introductions afforded via her husband Wilfred, her knowledge of horses gave her access to Bedouin men in her own right. Learning of her expertise, many men were eager to have her opinion of their own animals. She viewed this as their way of demonstrating their respect for her as an aficionada. Lady Blunt did not just know horses however, she also stressed that she knew the desert as well. She and her husband Wilfrid were always happy to abandon Damascus or Baghdad and return to their “*own desert*” – an environment they had mastered.¹³⁷ Lady Blunt was proud to relate that on route to Arak she had the longest gallop of her life on her mare Hagar. She easily outpaced Wilfrid and the men with them, covering twelve miles in about forty-five minutes of riding. In general, Eastern men were considered superior riders because they supposedly knew the terrain and because horses behaved “like water in their hands.”¹³⁸ Lady Blunt acknowledged that Wilfrid had a good ride as well, but the point was that out of all the men, *she* was the one who had the best ride.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Mason, *Civilized Creatures*, 37.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹³⁷ Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 2:17.

¹³⁸ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 245.

¹³⁹ Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 2:65. There were Turkish soldiers in this party of riders, and in her mind, that may have accounted for her victory.

In Egypt, Lady Duff Gordon found that her medical knowledge earned her the respect of many men. Her skill as a doctor was widely sought after, and it brought her into the company of local consuls, laborers, religious leaders, merchants, and Arab noblemen. She was even referred to as *sitte Noor-ala-Noor* – which she translated to mean: “God is upon thy mind” because of her ability to save lives.¹⁴⁰ It was not unusual for her to have twenty or thirty people sleeping outside of her house waiting for some kind of treatment. And it was also not unusual for these people to have traveled from up to forty miles away to seek her medical advice.¹⁴¹ Like Lady Blunt, she stressed that male Others around her tended to defer to her expertise.

All female travelers represented themselves as proficient and knowledgeable, but Amelia Edwards and Mary Kingsley adopted particularly scientific voices. This involved both “implicitly or explicitly making claims to competence within a masculine sphere.”¹⁴² They did this by emphasizing their grasp of historiography as well as their ability to scientifically analyze and theorize.¹⁴³ By overtly displaying their competency, Edwards and Kingsley worked to be taken seriously. They also tried to avoid seeming unsexed by their knowledge. However, while they often begged the indulgence of their readers on account of their feminine weaknesses, female travelers never did this in terms of the male Other. Instead they pointed out that the average male Other was less intelligent, and less competent than an Englishwoman. Therefore, being superior to a male Other was not unfeminine, but a simple result of Englishness.

¹⁴⁰ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 157.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹⁴² Foster and Mills, *An Anthology*, 89.

¹⁴³ As a “transferable method,” the scientific method was applicable to all spheres and all quests for knowledge – it was regarded as a “neutral instrument” that was perfectly acceptable for women to use. See Harper, *Solitary Travelers*, 34.

Edwards demonstrated her competency mainly in terms of her knowledge about modern Egyptian travel as well as ancient Egyptian history. When her dragoman explained that a Nile voyage was dependent on favorable winds, she found his advice “irrelevant” because having prepared for such a trip, she already knew that in “Egypt the wind is supposed to always blow from the North at this time of year.”¹⁴⁴ The dragoman may have been familiar with the Nile, but Edwards felt that her knowledge of sailing and weather patterns made her the expert.

After being in West Africa for some time, Mary Kingsley received a “little ivory half-moon” from a local chief which recognized her “ability to see [the] Bush, know it, [and] understand it.”¹⁴⁵ She tried to be modest about this recognition of her skill and knowledge, but wrote: “[p]ut me where you like in an African forrest, and as far as the forrest goes, starve me or kill me if you can.”¹⁴⁶ Like Edwards, Kingsley was not just a specialist on West Africa, she actually *knew* West Africa – perhaps even better than West Africans because she was able to complement primitive skills with European knowledge.

Kingsley was also proud of her knowledge of African psychology. In Africa she walked “a narrow line of security with gulfs of murder looming on each side” but felt as safe as if she was in England because she had “sufficient holding ground: not on rock in the bush village inhabited by murderous cannibals, but on ideas in those men’s and women’s minds.”¹⁴⁷ She proved how calculating and intelligent she was when she saved

¹⁴⁴ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, 31.

¹⁴⁵ Kingsley, *Travels*, 102.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102-3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 329.

one of her men from a cannibal debt collector. Her ability to avoid “schoolboy histrionics” was blatant evidence of her competency and rationality.¹⁴⁸

Nevertheless, despite obvious evidence of competency, like other travelers Kingsley went to great lengths to be seen as feminine. To do this, Kingsley adopted a “complex, schizophrenic narrative persona” that allowed her to slip between the comedic irrationality of “woman” and the rationality of “man.”¹⁴⁹ Female travelers stressed femininity but still filled their writings with examples of their own competency and superiority. This strategy allowed them to selectively enforce and evade their identity as women. Ultimately, like Kingsley, female travelers were “proud of being ‘one of the boys,’” but were anxious to retain the advantages of their femininity.¹⁵⁰

DUX FEMINA FACTI: THE ENGLISHWOMAN AS “SIR”

ANNA LEONOWENS. Please, do tell me, why do you keep calling me ‘Sir’?
LADY THIANG. Because you *scientific*, not lowly like woman.¹⁵¹

The title “traveler” implies independence and authority. However, English travelers were in fact very dependent on their guides and servants.¹⁵² Englishwomen were aware of this dependence but used the discourse to shape the ways in which it was understood. As Indira Ghose points out, the “traveler prefers to fantasize...herself as unique and autonomous (a Robinson Crusoe) rather than a social being.”¹⁵³ The very nature of travel writing gave the traveler the power to display herself as an authority

¹⁴⁸ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 131.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁵¹ *The King and I* (1956), DVD, Directed by Walter Lang (20th Century Fox, 1999).

¹⁵² Clifford, *Routes*, 33-4.

¹⁵³ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 131.

figure. Therefore, the traveler depicted herself as a unique individual, as opposed to the “faceless” Others who could not know or represent anything, but had to be led.¹⁵⁴

Mary Kingsley and Lady Duff Gordon traveled alone – accompanied only by male Others. Other women traveled with female companions (for the sake of privacy not named), with husbands, or with male relatives. Significantly, in women’s writings, white males were generally

omitted, incidental, occasionally harmful or helpful, but, almost always secondary. In...[doing this], women’s travel narratives rework[ed] canonical formations, which inscribe[d] the male as adventurer or quester, and the female as the one... left behind [and powerless].¹⁵⁵

By limiting the authority and appearance of white men in their writings, female travelers effectively cast themselves as Odysseus instead of Penelope. Therefore, travel writings reflected an individual – even heroic experience. The traveler planned itineraries, went where she chose, made judgments, navigated around disaster, and despite train delays, sickness, and acts of God, came through her writing as a fairly omnipotent actor. Given the exclusion of white men, it was inevitable that the male Other would be marginalized as an authority figure.

According to Catherine Barnes Stevenson, female travelers developed “strategies of accommodation, not confrontation or domination.”¹⁵⁶ In a sense, this is true – it was how they maintained their identity as women. For Kingsley, this meant persuading African men rather than compelling them with guns or whips. Accommodation however is not necessarily separate from domination. Travelers accommodated where possible,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵⁵ Macpherson, “Women’s Travel,” 193.

¹⁵⁶ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 160.

but generally tried to depict themselves as dominating the Other in spite of this accommodation.

Mary Kingsley managed every aspect of her expeditions in Africa. She controlled her men's access to food, supplies, and medical care. She even tried to regulate their access to women and sex by chaperoning them "with the vigilance of a dragon," and threatening to withhold their pay if they were caught with women.¹⁵⁷ While she may not have physically dominated them, Kingsley made it clear that she controlled all aspects of their lives.¹⁵⁸

After Omar's affair with Sally, Lady Duff Gordon asserted the power of a master over a slave. She manipulated him, hanging the threat of dismissal over his head long after she knew she would keep him. This blackmail made him more docile and submissive to her and assured that she remained his unquestioned master. Amelia Edwards took this kind of mastery a step further and objectified male Others in order to demonstrate her authority. She referred to her servant Salame as her "exclusive property."¹⁵⁹ Such outright ownership discouraged ideas of the male Other as independent.

Making male Others submit, regardless of their feelings, was another way to demonstrate authority if not ownership. In Spain, Francis Elliot took delight in making her male servant Geronimo carry her shawl and other feminine articles. Despite the fact that she knew he went to great lengths to conceal the items he carried, she consistently gave him that duty and was pleased that he submitted meekly.¹⁶⁰ Female travelers also

¹⁵⁷ Kingsley, *Travels*, 296.

¹⁵⁸ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 140.

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, 147.

¹⁶⁰ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:259.

liked to emphasize the status they held in local communities. Lady Duff Gordon's medical skill as well as her proven diplomatic skills led male Others to seek her advice.¹⁶¹ This made her an intercessor, a judge, and a community leader – something she could not be in England, nor could she achieve by mere “accommodation” of male Others.

Like the missionary Mary Slessor, Mary Kingsley's “authority...[was] exclusively male, and her femininity...[was] secondary.”¹⁶² Africa forced female travelers to be “hardy, courageous, and decisive,” instead of “cautious, dependent, [and] nervous.”¹⁶³ Travelers were often referred to as “Sir” or by other titles like “Bébe Bwana,” which indicated their ambiguous position in Africa.¹⁶⁴ In West Africa, being “white” gave Englishwomen power. Despite fears of women being colonialism's Achilles heel, Englishwomen “often became ‘honorary men’, [and] were treated no differently by Africans than were their male counterparts, and were often referred to by their African guides as ‘sir.’”¹⁶⁵ As honorary men or acknowledged authority figures, a traveler's vulnerability as a woman was concealed.

Kingsley believed that maintaining “self-respect” was the “mainspring of your power in West Africa.”¹⁶⁶ A male friend advised her to never show fear, uncertainty, or weakness – three female characteristics used to justify the necessity of the private sphere. In order to reassure her readers that she could maintain her power, Kingsley explained that she was regarded as a “Devil man.”¹⁶⁷ As a “Devil man,” her character was a mix of the best qualities of “Cardinal Richelieu, Brutus, Julius Caesar, Prince Metternich, and

¹⁶¹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 224.

¹⁶² Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 144.

¹⁶³ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 4.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ McEwan, *Gender*, 33.

¹⁶⁶ Kingsley, *Travels*, 330.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 312. This was a term used to describe traders in Africa.

Mettzofante.”¹⁶⁸ By posing this comparison, Kingsley clearly expressed to her readers that she was well suited for leadership in Africa.

Kingsley’s gallows humor also implied her mastery of every situation. Her flippant acknowledgements of near death experiences and the general dangers of Africa have been interpreted by her biographers as evidence of latent suicidal tendencies.¹⁶⁹ An alternative way to understand her reactions to danger is to see the writing of them as evidence of leadership qualities usually associated with men – such as bravery, fearlessness, resolve, and the primacy of duty over personal welfare. Like Kingsley, female travelers adopted aspects of “masculine” authority to not only secure mastery over the male Other, but to prove that they were capable of exerting such authority.

PRIORITISING THE ENGLISH IDENTITY

When dealing with men and the public nature of traveling, female travelers ultimately adopted a “decorum of indecorum, a fine balance in which they strained the conventions of femininity, but did not break them.”¹⁷⁰ To remain feminine they emphasized that it was not their femininity, but their status as English that caused them to naturally circumvent their traditional female vulnerabilities. Their status as “traveler” was also important because race and class limited the use of the label “traveler,” and in the nineteenth century, a “nonwhite person...[could] not figure as a heroic explorer, aesthetic interpreter, or scientific authority.”¹⁷¹ As female travelers determined, what you

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Giuseppe Caspar Mezzofanti was famous for his knowledge of languages.

¹⁶⁹ Stephen Gwynn, one of Kingsley’s biographers (1933), describes her as having suicidal urges – which he allows, explains why she would want to travel to Africa.

¹⁷⁰ Kristi Siegel, introduction to *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004), 3.

¹⁷¹ Clifford, *Routes*, 33.

could access, accomplish, survive, or dominate depended on your superior nature more than your sex.¹⁷² By inserting themselves in spaces of alterity, travelers demonstrated their ability to outperform and dominate the male Other. This allowed them to cast themselves as members of a superior society and make “English” genderless.

As the writings of the women travelers indicate, the “imagined community” is not constructed around gender or gender roles – it is about identification with a community rather than a sex – regardless of disenfranchisement or common experiences. As Anne McClintock argues, gender is a very important part of national identity. She sees women’s roles in nation building as often marginalized by constructions of gender. However, as Benedict Anderson argues, within the “imagined community,” even those disenfranchised can see themselves as full members in the “deep, horizontal comradeship” of the “nation.”¹⁷³ In traveling, Englishwomen became acutely aware of their English identity and participated in the construction of the “imagined community” by compartmentalizing Others.

As Robinson Crusoe concluded, he was a civilized man, not a savage – whatever the environment, whatever the challenge. By compartmentalizing the female Other, the traveler said: “I am a woman, but I am not just a woman, I am an *Englishwoman*.” By compartmentalizing the male Other, the female traveler asserted not only the superiority of the Englishwoman, but did so in a way that encouraged the perception that Englishmen were also superior. Places like West Africa may have been the white man’s grave – or in

¹⁷² Stevenson, *Victorian Woman*, 104.

¹⁷³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

Mary Kingsley's opinion "a *Belle Dame sans merci*," but Kingsley survived and dismissed it as such.¹⁷⁴ If an Englishwoman could, an Englishman could.

As Marlow explained in *Heart of Darkness*: "Anything – anything can be done in this country...nobody here, you understand, *here*, can endanger your position. And why? You stand the climate – you outlast them all."¹⁷⁵ Travelers did more than survive in Southern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. They enfranchised themselves in an "imagined community" and "proved" the superiority of this English identity even as they challenged some of the basic tenets of English society.

¹⁷⁴ Kingsley, *Travels*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), 72.

CHAPTER III

COMPARTMENTALIZING CULTURE: DISCOVERING PURPOSE AND DUTY

Describing the inefficiencies and rancor of the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados, Francis Elliot informed her readers that Spanish character could be explained by recounting a “profane” history.¹ According to Elliot, one morning, God was feeling particularly felicitous towards the nations of the Earth. The patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, and Spain were called before him so that he might bestow a favor upon each nation. St. George, “glistening in silver armour,” requested “the finest navy in the world.” This was granted to him. Next came St. Louis of France, who knelt before God and was granted the “bravest army that ever marched to battle.” St. Joseph of Italy, was granted the “Empire of Art.” Then St. Andrew of Scotland was given corn, and St. Patrick of Ireland was promised that “no poisonous serpent or reptile should ever trouble the soil.” Realizing that St. James of Spain was missing, God asked: “Where...is that lazy Spaniard St. James?” On cue, St. James galloped into the court of heaven and prostrated himself before God, begging that Spain could be the “wittiest of nations.” This was granted, and then, he asked for another favor – that Spanish women would be the most beautiful. This too was granted, but just as St. James was leaving, he whirled around and exclaimed: “I forgot to say, I also wanted to ask for the best Government.” Exasperated, God refused, declaring: “Spain shall never have any Government at all!”

¹ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:50. Elliot says the story is Spanish, but more likely it is an English invention due to the descriptions of St. George and the inclusion of Ireland and Scotland. It appears in *Spain*, 1:51-53.

This story reveals several key English expectations about identity and national character. St. George's behavior and request serve as a litmus test for the succeeding nations. In comparison, St. Louis is less commanding than St. George. St. Joseph is eloquent but is not a warrior. And St. James is quixotic and his devotion is somewhat overwrought. St. George is clearly dominant – and not just because God sees him first, but because he is depicted as strong and rational, as opposed to middling, servile, or silly. Unlike “civilized” England (or France), Italy and Spain waste the opportunity by not asking for gifts to help build a political, economic, or military empire.² The story leaves space for the request of other gifts, such as the most *victorious* army, the best citizens, or the greatest leaders. Unlike St. George though, the Others fail to ask for better gifts because they are unaware that they need them or are simply incapable of utilizing them.³

There are no Arabs or Africans represented in the story. This may stem from the fact that they were not associated with historic Christendom. However, the story is also Eurocentric for another reason – what could non-Europeans have in terms of “national” gifts or qualities that even the most impractical European nations lacked? Given the general trend in requests, it can only be assumed that had they been included, their requests would merely have served to provide a greater foil for St. George.

As Elliot's story implies, character and culture determined a people's purpose – or what role they were to play in the world. The qualities of a particular race (i.e. the English race, the Italian race, the Spanish race, the Arab race, and the African race), made

² Ireland and Scotland can be excused for asking for such trivial gifts (although historically important) because they fell within the realm of England.

³ Here the term Other refers to a generalization about the identity of a group of people rather than the more gender specific categories of the male or female Other.

up this character and culture.⁴ Just as they broke the Other into categories of men and women, female travelers turned to culture or the perceived characteristics of a race to compartmentalize the Other as a group. The categories the travelers used to examine culture and character were inspired by English values and perceptions of “civilization.” The development of fields of study in “colonial administration, economics, education, anthropology and history” encouraged the perception that “non-Western cultures were inferior to those of the West.”⁵ As evidenced by Elliot’s story, even as Western, the Spaniards and Italians did not have English purpose or character and were therefore seen as inferior.

“Civilization” or Englishness was “defined as much by what it *was not* as [by] what it *was*.”⁶ As England’s foil, the Other was ultimately characterized by inferior culture and character. Travelers linked this inferiority to laziness as well as to a predisposition for criminal activity or violence. The Other was also characterized as childlike and immature. All of these perceived inferiorities ultimately justified English rule as well as England’s duty as master, policeman, teacher, and driver of “civilization.”

⁴ Africans and Arabs did not represent national groups or even single cultural groups, but travelers often had a totalizing way of cataloguing them as such. While occasionally they identified subsets within “African or “Arab,” they always reverted back to the all encompassing labels of “African” or “Arab.”

⁵ Monica Anderson, *Women and the Politics of Travel, 1870-1914* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 50.

⁶ J. Carter Wood, *Violence and Crime in Nineteenth Century England: the Shadow of Our Refinement* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 138.

WORK ETHIC: ENGLAND'S "SACRED APPOINTMENT"

We have, simply, to carry the whole world and its businesses upon our backs, we poor united Human Species; to carry it, and shove it forward, from day to day, somehow or other, among us, or else be ground to powder under it, one and all. No light task let me tell you, even if each did his part honestly, which each doesn't by any means.

- Thomas Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse" (1849)⁷

Thomas Carlyle's quote casts work as a responsibility – particularly of the "honorable" members of the human race who willingly shoulder the difficulties of mankind's accursed inheritance. As a responsibility of the "best," work was a way for the English to distinguish a hierarchy of cultural identity based on work ethic. This hierarchy was topped by the English, the standard bearers of civilization, presumably responsible for driving progress. At the bottom of this system fell societies that were perceived as primitive or indolent, who shirked their share of duty and "contrive[d] to...be lifted" by the labor of others.⁸ This polarization of industriousness versus idleness enabled travelers to define English purpose in relation to the Other.

For the English, consciousness of time, or of the passage of time, gave a sense of urgency to all occupation. As a result, ideally the English approached work with a sense of duty, intensity, and a rather fatalistic attitude that work was a constant in life. The Protestant work ethic advanced the belief that without hard work and a proactive attitude, there could be no fulfillment, no success, and no individuality – three important things to the English.

⁷ Thomas Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," in *Latter-day Pamphlets* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 9 The "Occasional Discourse" was originally published in *Fraser's Magazine* in December 1849.

⁸ Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse," 9.

In the Protestant tradition, earthly works did not secure a pleasant afterlife, but men still had a duty to society to be productive. The evangelical environment of nineteenth-century England encouraged the belief that “absenteeism and idleness” were direct violations of man’s duty to work as well as his responsibility to his community.⁹ Work, whether mental or physical, was regarded as the “everlasting duty of all men” regardless of race or class.¹⁰ Carlyle believed that idleness was a “perpetual blister on the skin of the state,” and a direct violation of man’s “sacred appointment” on earth.¹¹ In light of the Protestant work ethic, failure to live up to this universal “sacred appointment” was evidence of non-English behavior or cultural inferiority.

There were also secular justifications of the Protestant work ethic like Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (1776), as well as Enlightenment arguments like Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759) that encouraged work as a refuge from blind optimism and fate.¹² As *Candide* eventually learns, “labour keeps...[men] from three great evils – boredom, vice, and want.”¹³ For the English, work was a purpose – a responsibility that gave meaning to life, refuge from immorality and want, as well as national direction.

This attitude towards work spilled over into attitudes about travel. Travel books were extremely popular, second only to novels among the English public. Travel writing was considered “as entertaining as romances, yet not frivolous” because it was a source of “sound information.”¹⁴ Travel was regarded as a serious intellectual and physical

⁹ Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today: 1830 to the Present* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 91. The evangelical movement was most influential mid-century, but even prior to this, Enlightenment thinking and the pressure of social conformity encouraged responsibility to community.

¹⁰ Carlyle, “Occasional Discourse,” 6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24, 6.

¹² *Candide* is obviously French, but was very popular in England. As *Candide*’s friend Martin explains, work is “the only way to make life bearable.”

¹³ Voltaire, *Candide* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), 129.

¹⁴ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 6.

endeavor – a work that was both a “labour and a virtue.”¹⁵ English travelers were “not simply having a good time, which would be trivial and somewhat undignified,” but were thought to be engaging in “something meaningful and worthy of respect.”¹⁶ This emphasis on work was a “key element in the travelers feeling of superiority to the ‘natives.’”¹⁷ Even as travelers, the English believed that their character stood out as more industrious than the Other.

A society that demanded such accountability in terms of work naturally produced travelers who believed that travel, as well as each activity or daily routine that went with it, had to be justified. From Lady Montagu, the earliest female traveler profiled here, to Mary Kingsley, the most contemporary traveler, the desire to be seen as productive and industrious remained a constant in women’s writings. Part of this impulse was the need to justify travel, but it also reflected the travelers’ perception that occupation and work were English and patriotic. Female travelers often portrayed themselves as industrious. They engaged in marathon-like sightseeing and went to great lengths to defend their travels as productive. They stressed how they pushed themselves mentally and physically, and regarded these exertions as in keeping with their English character.

Although Francis Elliot entitled her works *Diary of an Idle Woman*, she personally defined “idle” as meaning that she merely had “no special objects of inquiry, no definite call or profession, [and] no preconceived theories” about the places she was visiting.¹⁸ Travel was not purposeless on any level. Lady Blunt’s travels resulted in the

¹⁵ Smith, introduction to *Britannia*, 3-4.

¹⁶ Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, “‘Rambles in Rome’: Some 19th Century Travellers and Photographers,” in *Britannia, Italia, Germania, Taste & Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Conference Papers, Edinburgh, November 2000*, ed. Carol Richardson and Graham Smith (VARIE, 2001), 8.

¹⁷ Szegedy-Maszak, “‘Rambles in Rome,’” 8.

¹⁸ Elliot, *Italy*, 1: disclaimer before title page.

creation of the Crabbet Arabian Stud. Mary Kingsley characterized her travels as scientific expeditions, and Lady Montagu fancied herself a conduit of Arabic poetry to the West – complaining that her daily studies in Turkish and Arabic were so intense that it was hard for her to remember English.¹⁹ Even Lady Blessington who took so much pleasure in the Italian *dolce far niente* always referred to her own industriousness.

The universality of work (of any kind) made it an obvious target of comparison for travelers. If work led to progress, then an absence of progress implied laziness or some kind of cultural inferiority. The Italian *dolce far niente*, Spanish sense of time, Oriental decadence, and the absence of recognizable “civilization” building in West Africa demonstrated that the Other completely lacked the industriousness necessary to drive progress. When female travelers compared the English attitude towards work to the work ethic of the Other, they solidified the idea of Englishness as “industriousness,” and England as the source of progress.

To Lady Blessington, the “besetting sin” of Italy was the “*dolce far niente* of an Italian life.”²⁰ The perceived decadence of the *dolce far niente* located Italy on the frontier of civilization and separated Italy and England culturally. Instead of faulting the Italians for this lifestyle, Lady Blessington believed that the beauty of Italy was to blame – as it could “make the veriest plodder who ever courted Plutus abandon his toil and enjoy” a life of leisure.²¹ Due to her interest in Italian statehood, Mary Shelley had a more critical view of the *dolce far niente*. She associated it with idleness and

¹⁹ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 174.

²⁰ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 57.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

drunkenness and believed that the Italians would never reach their political or artistic potential if they did not “cast away their *dolce far niente*.”²²

Climate was one of the major factors that led Englishwomen to describe Italy as a paradise – an environment where little work was done and all pursued pleasure. Adam Smith argued that tropical and mild climates produced food easily and therefore did not encourage enterprise or advances in technology. To the English, the “Genius of Nations depended upon their Air.”²³ Mild climates were thought to produce “soft and effeminate” peoples who were “slavish, and subject to masters” while northern climates were known for “fortitude,” action, and the development of property.²⁴ These characteristics were thought to be fairly exclusive to the inhabitants of Northern Europe by the nineteenth century, while “liveliness of Imagination [was credited] to those of hot” climates.²⁵ The English drew a distinction between work that involved the imagination (the arts), and work that led to technology and progress. “Liveliness of Imagination” (or the Empire of Arts) was a nice thing to have as a characteristic, but the English did not see it as having any practical utility when compared to the virtues of “fortitude.”

Because the Italians had an illustrious heritage that was proof of accomplishments, the *dolce far niente* was frequently blamed on climate. Lady Blessington was of the opinion that continuous occupation was unnecessary in Italy – unlike in England where she felt the dreary climate required distraction as well as hard work to make the land productive.²⁶ Shelley agreed that the *dolce far niente* was a

²² Shelley, *Rambles*, 119.

²³ John Arbuthnot, *An Essay Concerning the Effects of Air on Human Bodies* (London, 1733), 148. Arbuthnot’s intent was to prove the theories of Hippocrates concerning character and environment.

²⁴ Arbuthnot, *Effects of Air*, 123.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 81.

product of the Italian environment, but found this environment to be a degenerative influence, not a blessing. She did not blame idleness on the beauty of the country, but rather on the ease with which nature provided the Italians with everything they needed. According to Shelley, who equated struggle with productivity, having a mild climate and an abundance of natural resources made the Italians dependent and careless of progress. Therefore, unlike England, Italy was not an environment conducive to enterprise.

The Spanish were also accused of inefficiencies because of their climate. Instead of the *dolce far niente*, the English believed that the Spanish failed their “sacred appointment” in a different way. According to Francis Elliot, in Spain, “you must learn to wait,” and anticipate delays because the Spanish attitude towards life was a singsong: “mañana, mañana; no use to hurry; needless to reproach; ridiculous to scold; dangerous to swear. Time is made for slaves.”²⁷ While the Englishman saw land as his property, the Spaniard regarded time as his property.²⁸ For the English, the problem with the Spanish attitude towards time was that it was not characterized by a sense of urgency that would have made work efficient and productive. Elliot even felt that the Spanish were “backward in the race of Time” in terms of history as well as progress.²⁹ This judgment confirmed the link between work ethic and progress.

Oriental society was another target of environmental comparison. A “polarization of activity and inertness represented...[the]fundamental opposition between the European and Oriental character.”³⁰ The English believed that the Eastern environment, whether natural or artificial, encouraged voluptuousness and languidness. Therefore travelers

²⁷ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:17.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 155.

³⁰ Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama*, 128.

tended to reserve their most pointed attacks about work ethic for the harem – a setting made infamous by Orientalist art as a place of indolence.

Ingres's *Le Bain turc* (1862), inspired by Lady Montagu's writings, stood in sharp contrast to *Work* (1852-65) by Ford Maddox Brown. If *Work* represented expectations about the *genus loci* of the English environment, and *Le Bain turc* represented that of Eastern life, then Englishness was clearly defined by industriousness. In Northern eyes, "lax muscles led to lax morals" – with morality being one of the prime virtues of work.³¹ The soft bodies of the Oriental harem scene implied laziness and an indifferent attitude towards work, while the strong, muscular men and self contained women in *Work* suggested that regardless of English social problems, work kept society stable.

For Harriet Martineau, the harem was the example of absolute idleness in the Middle East. Visiting one in Damascus, she noted that the women had no useful occupation and spent their days listlessly. Horrified by the lack of mental or physical exertion, Martineau thought that skipping ropes should at least be brought into the harem in order to improve the health of the women.³² Amelia Edwards was also alarmed when she visited a harem and discovered that the women had no occupation or even a garden for exercise. For female travelers, Turkish and Arab women became a metaphor for the entire East – symbols of cultural decadence and disinterest in progress.

Besides environment, religion also played a role in judgments about work ethic. Perceptions of Southern European inefficiencies involved a critique of Catholicism.

³¹ Ibid., 285. When not focusing on harem scenes, nineteenth-century English and French artists often employed themes like horses being attacked by large cats. Schiffer refers to this subject matter as "icons of unleashed violence and sexual energy," 95. While Arab warriors were also painted, they were outnumbered by harem scenes and horse/cat scenes, implying that there was "sexual energy" but no "normal" energy for work in the East.

³² Martineau, *Eastern Life*, 45.

Besides the most obvious doctrinal disputes English Protestants had with Catholicism, there were other cultural issues that seemed to reflect the negative impact of Catholicism. Unlike Protestantism and its philosophy of Muscular Christianity, Catholicism seemed to have a degenerative effect on masculinity in Southern Europe. Francis Elliot and Mary Shelley saw it as encouraging dependence. Shelley even identified a crisis of masculinity in Italy – and viewed this as one of the reasons for Italy’s lack of progress. In light of this problem, she thought it best that Italian boys be instructed in “more hardy and manly habits” – like English boys in a Rugby environment.³³

There has been much debate over how much credit to give the Protestant tradition in terms of the development of capitalism and industrialization.³⁴ Modern critics tend to reject Max Weber’s emphasis on Protestantism as the driving force behind the success of English capitalism, but they do admit that the Protestant tradition did create a favorable environment for work and individual enterprise. In the nineteenth century however, travelers viewed Protestantism as a cultural precondition that made England the center of the industrial revolution. Among female travelers in Southern Europe, religion was directly related to productivity and work ethic. In a conversation with a Cistercian monk, Frances Elliot explained that monks were fixtures in Italy, “but...[the English were] too active and busy in the North to admire them.”³⁵ In essence, the self-sufficient English did not require a mediated religious experience, and nor did they tolerate “uselessness.”

³³ Shelley, *Rambles*, 119. Jane Benham Hay’s painting *England and Italy* (1859) depicts an English boy and an Italian boy. The English boy is more “civilized,” reserved, and offers support to the Italian boy. In contrast, the Italian boy is wild looking, clearly unhappy, and looks as if he would benefit from whatever has nourished the English boy.

³⁴ Heyck, *The Peoples*, 189-190. Reluctant to credit Protestantism as an advantage over Catholicism in terms of people wanting to make money, Heyck acknowledges that it was not a *disadvantage* to the English.

³⁵ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:308.

Nineteenth-century Protestants interpreted Genesis 3:17-19 to mean: life will be suffering, work will be hard, but use your ingenuity, struggle against the odds of your unfortunate destiny, and enjoy the rewards of your toil.³⁶ In essence, nineteenth-century Protestants had a biblical injunction against passive suffering. As the narrator of *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) pointed out,

what would life be like without fighting?...From the cradle to the grave, fighting rightly understood, is the...real, highest, honestest, business of every son of man. Every one who is worth his salt has his enemies, who must be beaten, be they evil thoughts and habits in himself, or spiritual wickedness in high places, or Russians, or border ruffians, or Bill, Tom, or Harry, who will not let him live his life in quiet till he has thrashed them.³⁷

According to this passage, a willingness to fight against any circumstances was the only thing that enabled a rewarding “life in quiet.” English travelers did not see this proactive attitude in the Catholic Other, but rather saw Catholicism as breeding dependency – a character flaw which would never result in progress or help to maintain “civilization.”³⁸

Frances Elliot was convinced that the frequent train delays in Spain were absolute evidence of an inefficient society. In her opinion, the delays could only be “held as inevitable by a people still imbued with the Eastern notion of unalienable fate.”³⁹ With this comment, Elliot cast a Catholic nation as Eastern – irrational, degenerate, and slavish. The lack of a proactive attitude towards remedying these train delays was the exact opposite of Protestant ideology and Enlightenment thinking which implied that men

³⁶ Genesis 3:17-19 “Cursed is the ground for thy sake...In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground.”

³⁷ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days* (New Jersey: Watermill Press, 1988), 221.

³⁸ When Catholics did seem to be industrious, it was regarded as negative aspect of their character, i.e. the construction of the Armada, conquest of Americas, or the religious fanaticism of the Inquisition.

³⁹ Elliot, *Spain*, 2:103.

affected the outcome of their destiny through hard work and diligent application of their mental and physical skills.

Just as Catholicism was used to distinguish fundamental differences between Englishness and Otherness, travelers occasionally used Islam to explain why Middle Eastern societies seemed to lack an English work ethic. Travelers often had a more favorable view of Islam than Catholicism and Lady Duff Gordon even described Islam as Homeric and full of great heroes.⁴⁰ Although she and Lady Blunt had genuine respect for Islam, like other English travelers they ultimately felt that it offered “pre-modern political and moral precepts” better suited for tribal societies than “complex and advanced societies.”⁴¹ Furthermore, frequent declarations of *inshallah* and *mashallah* among Muslims seemed to speak to resignation. This resignation was not comparable to an Englishman’s dogged commitment to duty, but seemed to represent a belief that there was nothing kinetic about human action. Therefore, while Homeric, Islam appeared incapable of encouraging individual initiative or modern progress.⁴²

While Southern Europeans were considered neglectful of progress, and the Eastern Other was characterized by absolute apathy where progress was concerned, Africans were thought to be completely oblivious to the link between work ethic and progress. Missing this key evolutionary step, African society represented the most extreme contrast to English “civilization.” To explain these developmental differences, Mary Kingsley related an African creation story about how African’s became “black,”

⁴⁰ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 147.

⁴¹ Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama*, 196.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 197.

and Europeans became “white.”⁴³ In this creation story, God made all men “black.” After a time, God crossed a great river and called for the men to follow him. Only the “wisest and the bravest and the best” followed him and the “water washed them white” – making them the ancestors of the Europeans. Kingsley’s story implies that those who crossed the river had the drive to do so. In contrast, those who refused to cross the river were apathetic and explained: “we are comfortable here; we have our dances, and our tom-toms, and plenty to eat – we won’t risk it, we’ll stay here.”⁴⁴

In the story, white men continued to call across the water to black men, urging them to improve their lot, but they never did. Kingsley saw examples of this refusal to cross over into civilization in members of the Bubi tribe who would temporarily submit to colonial life and then simply return to their tribe. Kingsley explained that members of the tribe would:

come voluntarily and take service...submit to clothes, and rapidly pick up the ways of a house or store. And just when their owner thinks he owns a treasure...[t]he Bubi has gone, without giving a moment’s warning, and without stealing his masters property, but just softly and silently vanished away.⁴⁵

This kind of departure was confusing to Europeans because the Bubi did not even steal one single little piece of “civilization.” There was essentially nothing of value for them either in the new lifestyle or in terms of Western property so they left without regret and returned to their old lifestyle.

Mary Kingsley felt that “Africa was affected by a Dark Age,” and that this cultural void or lack of progress was perpetuated by social evils like slavery as well as

⁴³ Kingsley, *Travels*, 430-431. Kingsley did not believe that this story is actually native to the Canbindas, but thought it entered African consciousness through the Jesuits.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 431.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

congenital laziness.⁴⁶ She found “sloth and lethargy” a plague among West Africans.⁴⁷ In one instance, she compared the productivity of an entire African village to one single Irish charwoman she knew. According to Kingsley, Mrs. Harragan could drink, do “the whole week’s work of an African village in an afternoon,” and then still have the energy to torment her husband when he came home. Unfortunately, concluded Kingsley: “we have no Mrs. Harragan in Africa.”⁴⁸

Besides a lack of industriousness, Kingsley also felt that the African was inherently incapable of mastering “mechanical culture.”⁴⁹ In *Heart of Darkness*, the African fireman in charge of the steamer’s boiler appears to have mastered “mechanical culture.” Marlow believed that the man had an industrious manner born of “improving knowledge.”⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the man proved not industrious by nature, nor inclined to mechanical culture. Instead Marlow later referred to him as in “thrall to a strange witchcraft.”⁵¹ In essence, the African did not understand the science behind operating the boiler, but took a primitive approach to the task, going about his work under the impression that he was appeasing deities that resided in the boiler. This kind of “knowledge” was not the same as understanding, nor did it imply that the African would be able to improve or practically apply the technology for his own uses. This was the exact opposite of the resourcefulness of the English – particularly typified by Kingsley’s own adaptations of technology for her own use.

⁴⁶ McEwan, *Gender*, 99.

⁴⁷ Kingsley, *Travels*, 104.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁰ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 77.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Mastery of the natural environment also required work and indicated progress. The English were obsessed with the cultivation and domination of their natural environment. It was their “sacred” duty as well as a defense against savagery. It required work to hold nature at bay and the winding footpaths in Africa stood in sharp contrast to the linear (therefore purposeful) roads and railway lines that dominated the English landscape. Gardens in particular reflected a kind of siege mentality among the English. In the city, the garden guarded against “urban sprawl,” and in Africa, the garden was a bulwark of “English order,” that conflated ownership and productivity.⁵² Even Romantic style gardens that were supposed to emphasize the “wild places” of untamed nature were assiduously planned and maintained.

While the English were “accustomed to look upon the shackled form of...[the] conquered monster” in England, in Africa they saw nature “monstrous and free.”⁵³ In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad depicted Africa as an “accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil” – if mastery could be achieved at all.⁵⁴ While Kingsley challenged the dark vacuum of Africa that Conrad portrayed, she did not see any improvements in Africa being brought about by Africans themselves. To Carlyle, efforts to conquer nature in Africa would have been an example of the uneven distribution of work among mankind – of the slavery of the white man who had to not only shoulder his own burden, but master an alien environment in order to make the African’s land productive and safe.

Pointing out that the African was not going to slip into extinction like other less adaptable peoples, Carlyle argued that it was essential for the English to “find the right

⁵² McEwan, *Gender*, 80.

⁵³ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 76.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

regulation” for the African.⁵⁵ If Africans were not going to disappear, then obviously, like the English, they had a purpose. Ironically, the English concluded that the African’s purpose was labor. According to Carlyle, Africans were virtually begging: “Compel me!”⁵⁶ While not in total agreement with Carlyle, Kingsley did believe that teaching Africans an English attitude towards work would organize and benefit African society.

Kingsley’s descriptions of her own industrious nature clearly defined industry and initiative as English, and dependency and laziness as African. As Simon Gikandi argues, Kingsley made Africa penetrable, potentially viable with the right regulation, and open to progress.⁵⁷ She was essentially supporting English imperialism by demonstrating how the combined English characteristics of resourcefulness, efficiency, fortitude and industriousness could reshape stagnant African societies. This glaring difference, along with the perceived deficiencies of Spanish, Italian, and Arab Others, helped English travelers define English purpose as the pursuit of progress. For the English, cultural superiority manifested itself in the quality of one’s labor. Therefore, England’s duty was to drive progress and “find the right regulation” for the Other.

THE OTHER AS THE “CRIMINAL CLASS”

The early decades of the nineteenth century saw a rise in juvenile crime, theft, prostitution, and violent crime in England – as well as the growth of a vast criminal underworld. The century ended amid media frenzy over a devolving serial killer. It is not a coincidence that Scotland Yard (1829) and the detective Sherlock Holmes (c.1887) were each products of this century. Nor is it surprising that the nineteenth century was

⁵⁵ Carlyle, “Occasional Discourse,” 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 150.

also characterized by increasing attempts to reform legislative and judicial responses to crime and violence in England.⁵⁸

The social perception of crime and violence underwent a radical transformation or “civilizing offensive” in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Crime and violence ceased to be acknowledged as acceptable or inevitable social responses and became things that required explanation and regulation. Nineteenth-century observers identified two categories of violence that could be used to classify behavior. “Civilized” violence was accepted by the middle and upper classes as any action that submitted to the “culture of ‘refinement’” and “pursued a behavioral ideal of rationality and restraint.”⁶⁰ This could include violence in sports, efforts by authorities to subdue or punish criminals, as well as any “civilizing” actions that required force. Above all, “civilized” violence was not associated with criminality. In contrast, “customary” violence was characterized by brutality, criminality, and a disregard for other members of society. It was savage rather than civilized.

By the 1820s, because of the tendency to prosecute “quantity” crimes instead of the “quality” crimes most likely involving members of the upper classes, crime and violence became indelibly linked to the lower classes.⁶¹ While a gradual easing of social and economic tensions in the 1870s took some of this negative attention away from the

⁵⁸ Examples of this include more punitive punishments for manslaughter beginning in 1822, the Offenses Against the Person Act (1828), the outlawing of violence specifically against women and children (1853), a second Offenses Against the Person Act (1861), and other attempts to define violence and crime as well as improve social conditions thought to cause crime and violence.

⁵⁹ Wood, *Violence and Crime*, 21.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶¹ Clive Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1996), 56. According to Emsley, “quantity” crimes of the lower classes worried the English more than the less numerous instances of white collar “quality” crime.

working class, violence and crime remained associated with “marginal social groups.”⁶² Like these outsiders, whose participation in subcultures seemed to be an example of their failure to function in the dominant culture, the Other remained associated with violence and crime throughout the nineteenth century. Therefore, according to the “civilized” middle and upper classes who constructed these definitions of violence and crime, the “criminal class” was made up of the working class, social outcasts, and the Other. As members of the “civilized” class, female travelers also engaged in this “civilizing offensive” and differentiated between “civilized” and “customary violence.”

Violence played a very important role in distinguishing between the English and the Other. English people who engaged in “customary” violence were deviants because they disrupted civil society by working against “utility” or the “greatest happiness principle” best articulated by John Stuart Mill in *Utilitarianism* (1861).⁶³ In contrast, when the Other committed a crime or acted in violence, it was not thought to be the result of deviance but actually in keeping with their innate character. Casting the Other as essentially criminal and violent was risky for female travelers, but they took the focus off themselves as women by couching violence and crime in terms of Englishness or Otherness. This allowed them to compartmentalize the Other and define a humane use of force as England’s purpose – especially in terms of the Other.

Interest in the picturesque led to an idealization of Italy as a pastoral paradise by many travelers. It was the land of Virgil’s *Georgics* according to Shelley, Elliot, and Lady Blessington.⁶⁴ However, there was also a darker side of Italy in the English

⁶² Wood, *Violence and Crime*, 21.

⁶³ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2001), 7. Utilitarianism was a theory of Bentham, but John Stuart Mill refined it.

⁶⁴ Shelley, *Rambles*, 265; Elliot, *Italy*, 1:249.

imagination. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, Gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe painted Italy as a land of “rococo wickedness,” intrigue, and the sublime.⁶⁵ Italy of the Gothic novel was a primeval place – dangerous and sinister because of the savage passions it provoked. As the home of papal and Renaissance intrigue, Italy appeared in the English imagination as a land of internecine violence.

Assassination, a type of “customary” violence, was a very common theme that the English associated with Italy. While cast as “Arcadia,” Italy was also described as a land in the “shadow of the stiletto.”⁶⁶ In *A Room With a View* (1908), Lucy Honeychurch witnessed an argument between two Italians that resulted in murder. After fainting at the shock of the sight, Lucy recovered quickly and attributed the event to Italian character. To Lucy, the incident reflected unregulated, reckless Italian behavior. For female travelers, this kind of crime and violence represented the antithesis of Englishness and encouraged the perception that there was something foolish and violent in the Italian character as opposed to something rational and collected about the English.

Even prior to *A Room With a View*, assassination was such an ingrained English expectation about Italy that Lady Blessington, Mary Shelley, and Francis Elliot – who never actually witnessed an assassination, could not address Italian character without mentioning the phenomenon. In particular, Frances Elliot saw no disconnect between describing the gardens of the Villa Lodovisi as the “delectable country” in *Pilgrims Progress*, to later pointing out ideal locations for assassinations in various piazzas.⁶⁷ No matter how hard they looked, or imagined such a scene, no traveler actually experienced

⁶⁵ Roderick Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica: English Romantics and Italian Freedom* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 7.

⁶⁶ Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica*, 209.

⁶⁷ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:224; Elliot, *Italy*, 2:225-7.

this “authentic” Italy. This however, did not change their expectations about Italians as naturally inclined to violence, nor did it prevent them from using Italian behavior (even imagined) to highlight the need for English style discipline and restraint in Italy.

Attempting to interpret the “real character” of the Italians, Shelley argued that assassinations in Italy were of a different nature than such occurrences in France or England.⁶⁸ Stopping short of apologetics, she reasoned that these assassinations were “committed in the heat of the moment – [and were] never cold blooded” but spontaneous, natural responses.⁶⁹ Therefore, these murders were not pre-meditated, but merely strong evidence of the intensity of Italian passions which led to a use of “customary” violence.

Domestic disputes also seemed to be a fixture of Italian society. Francis Elliot had a servant named Maria who was married to an alcoholic who frequently beat her. Elliot however, did not believe that any sort of intervention was necessary because “a dark devil lurk[ed] in Maria’s flashing eyes,” and while she submitted meekly to the beatings, ultimately “she was an Italian” and her “hot fever-blood” made revenge inevitable.⁷⁰ According to Elliot, Maria eventually got her revenge when she sewed her drunk husband into bed and bludgeoned him within an inch of his life. He had since recovered, but “shrank away from Maria like a beaten cur.”⁷¹ Like assassination, this violence was a fault for sure, but it was not something uncorrectable – particularly if the Italians adopted English attitudes towards self-discipline.

The Spanish Other was also thought of as being in the “criminal class.” Frances Elliot described Francisco Goya as the “most Spanish of Spaniards” the painter of

⁶⁸ Shelley, *Rambles*, 65.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁷⁰ Elliot, *Italy*, 2:213-4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

“witches, briganos, contrabandistas, bull-fights, and bloodshed.”⁷² To Elliot, who ignored Goya’s role as court painter and political satirist, the “coarse power” of a Goya emphasized the violence and criminality of the Spanish character.⁷³ When describing the Puerta del Sol, Elliot emphasized: “you can stab your rival here.”⁷⁴ Unlike the Italians however, the Spanish were also associated with cruelty – not unintentional “customary” violence, but outright zest for committing “customary” violence. As a descriptive characteristic, cruelty is socially defined. To the English, cruelty did not just mean an ability to willingly cause pain and suffering. More importantly, it was understood as engaging in uncivilized behavior.⁷⁵ This non-English behavior was defined by a lack of humanity or self-control which was thought essential to a civilized people. It also distinguished “civilized” violence from “customary” savagery.

The Black Legend, which had defined Spanish national character since the sixteenth century, had always found a receptive audience in England. As a result of the Black Legend, Spanish cruelty was legendary among the English. The “orgy of sadism” associated with the conquest of the Americas was not considered consistent with “civilized” violence. However, the Americas were not the only evidence of Spanish cruelty for the English. The “massacres in Flanders, and of the harmless peasants of Portugal...the assassination of Egmont, Montigny, or Orange...the Catholics of England invited to murder...the Genoese despoiled, the Jews burned,” were all instances of

⁷² Elliot, *Spain*, 1:105.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁵ Douglass, *Bulls, Bullfighting*, 96.

sixteenth century Spanish crimes on European soil that were fresh in Frances Elliot's mind as she visited Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶

Because cruelty was not associated with Englishness, or in keeping with the idea of a civilized "Europe," Spanish atrocities were attributed to the "psychological perversion" of the Spanish race.⁷⁷ Cruelty therefore was not only rooted in Spanish character, but as Elliot saw it, was an overt cultural choice. Witnessing a bullfight in Granada, Elliot noted that the Spanish enjoyed the gruesome sport – preferring to draw out the animal's agony.⁷⁸ She labeled bullfighters "degenerate gladiators," implying that they indulged in violence for the sake of violence, and she characterized the Spanish people as innately bloodthirsty for enjoying the sport.⁷⁹ Foxhunting may have been violent and bloody, but it was thought to reflect English discipline and mastery of nature. It was controlled and "civilized" violence rather than a spectator sport involving lower classes who were thought to be inured to "customary" savagery.

Like many things associated with the Orient, crime and violence were inevitably sexualized. Lady Montagu rarely made note of violence in her letters, but did make the most of a murder that she was aware of by voyeuristically describing the body of a murdered woman and surmising that it was a crime of passion.⁸⁰ In Turkey, Lady Montagu found murder something that the authorities did not investigate – but rather left to the kin of the victim to decide on revenge murder or some other kind of satisfaction.

⁷⁶ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:86. Egmont was a Catholic nobleman in Flanders who opposed the Inquisition coming to the Netherlands. The Duke of Alba had Egmont beheaded even though he was a Catholic and loyal to Phillip II. Montigny was Floris de Montmorency who was also in the loyal opposition and subsequently beheaded by Alba.

⁷⁷ Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 23.

⁷⁸ Elliot, *Spain*, 2:200.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸⁰ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 191.

She found this lack of regulation unfortunate, but this was Turkey, not *England*. Left to passion rather than reason, the Other was therefore more prone to baser “customary” revenge.

In Egypt, Lady Duff Gordon, whose sympathies were with the *fellaheen* and gentlemanly Arabs, felt that the Ottoman government itself was a source of random violence rather than a source of “civilizing” violence. When robbed at Karnak, Lady Duff Gordon filed a complaint with a local official. Later she discovered that this official had a group of men beaten in an effort to recover her property. She was horrified at the brutality of the punishment but was even more disturbed because she was doubtful that the right men had been arrested. The local magistrate dismissed her concerns and made it clear that he would beat the whole village until the property was recovered.⁸¹ On leaving Karnak, the magistrate asked Lady Duff Gordon not to spread the story of the theft to others in Egypt, as Ismail Pasha would “take a broom and sweep away the village” for the offense.⁸² While this “official” violence was disturbing to Lady Duff Gordon, the Egyptians seemed hardened to it. In England, violence was something the authorities regulated or punished when individuals proved incapable of restraining themselves. In Egypt, Lady Duff Gordon found violence something most often associated *with* government.

Female travelers came to the conclusion that Italians needed to be better regulated, Spaniards would benefit from behavior modification, and Arabs needed protection from the violence and sadism of their ruling classes. In Africa however, at least among the Fan, it seemed that violence was absolutely inseparable from culture.

⁸¹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 141.

⁸² *Ibid.*

While Mary Kingsley was sympathetic to Africans and saw them as sentient beings at a time when the scientific community thought them biologically inferior, she did find them particularly prone to violence and crime. In Africans, unbridled passion, partial nudity, and a tendency towards violence came together in an explosive combination.

During her travels, Kingsley realized that each of her Fan porters had some kind of criminal past – whether it was murder, theft, or failure to resolve debts.⁸³ As far as she could tell, it appeared that criminal activity and violence were constants among the Fan – a tribe she characterized as extremely violent and prone to cannibalism. For the English, the nudity so prevalent in Africa was thought to be a sign of unrestrained sexuality as well as an actual trigger for cannibalism.⁸⁴ Kingsley adopted a very clinical view of cannibalism. Regarding it as a custom of certain tribes, she accepted it as horrible but normal African behavior. Therefore, it seemed that Africans had natural instincts, cultural encouragement, as well as a desire to kill and consume the flesh of others. This was “customary” violence at its most savage.

Besides cannibalism, Kingsley also found that the Fan required a “life for a life” for every murder.⁸⁵ She concluded that the “Cain and Abel killing palaver...[was] still kept going among them.”⁸⁶ According to Kingsley, this resulted in a never ending cycle of violence – long after the initial offence had been forgotten. Kingsley also believed that the only thing that deterred them from regularly killing the traders that ventured amongst them was the fact that they were “disinclined to be killed” by other Africans who would

⁸³ Kingsley, *Travels*, 287.

⁸⁴ McEwan, *Gender*, 140.

⁸⁵ Kingsley, *Travels*, 291.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

be upset over the disruption of trade.⁸⁷ This self-preservation “deterrent” was not about working towards “utility,” evidence of civil society, or even an acknowledgement of the value of human life.

As violence and crime became axiomatic parts of the Other’s identity, they were disassociated from Englishness. This did not mean the English were incapable of violence, just that the more vulgar, criminal aspects of it were not associated with Englishness. J. Carter Wood argues that societies are built around an understanding of “who may use violence and in what circumstances” as well as what the “legitimate goals of deploying physical force” are.⁸⁸ Anxieties over what Wood calls “over-civilization” encouraged “civilized” violence in England during the nineteenth century. The difference between this encouraged violence and the violence of the Other was that this “civilized” violence was deemed necessary for the survival of the civilized as well as for the discipline of the uncivilized. Therefore, broadly speaking, the English were not the “criminal class” (although the Irish and working class were), but identified themselves as a “policing class” that had the self discipline, cultural refinement, and humanity to appropriately use violence.

CHILDISHNESS

Childishness, as a marker of national or group identity, was yet another way Englishwomen compartmentalized the Other. To the English, if a people did not work hard, if they seemed to misbehave, and could not grasp what the English saw as their purpose, they were regarded as childlike. Human civilization was thought to mimic the

⁸⁷ Ibid., 315.

⁸⁸ Wood, *Violence and Crime*, 10.

developmental stages of man. In the phylogeny of the human race, there were mature, adult races typified by the middle and upper classes in England, a kind of adolescent society in semi-civilized places like Italy, and finally, primitive groups in virtual infancy in places like Africa.

Biological determinism in nineteenth-century England encouraged the belief that “delinquents, the insane, the poor, women...[and] Africans had to be controlled and managed by British men.”⁸⁹ Children were another group that qualified for this management – but they were also thought of as a group that could be controlled and managed by women as well. The characterization of childishness allowed female travelers to subvert the patriarchal authority of Englishness in favor of the traditional virtue and power of English motherhood.⁹⁰ This helped cast English political influence or colonial domination as benevolent rather than as a product of self-interest.

Imperial propaganda promoted the image of Queen Victoria as the “Great White Mother” of her non-white subjects – a provider, a protector, and a disciplinarian. In non-colonial environments like Italy, Spain, and the Ottoman Empire, Britannia was often represented as a savior, teacher, and mentor. Although poems like Rudyard Kipling’s “The Widow at Windsor” (1892) cast Queen Victoria as mother of all her English and white colonials, her rule over them was not grounded in the belief that these subjects were actually childlike and needed the rule of her government. In contrast, the Other as innately childlike either legitimized English colonial rule or invited political paternalism.

⁸⁹ McEwan, *Gender*, 104.

⁹⁰ The English have long associated maternal authority with benevolent rule as well as a warrior like mentality. Boudica, Elizabeth I, and Queen Victoria are examples of this. Britannia, the female personification of England, claims descent from Athena and is therefore depicted as warrior. However, she is also depicted as a maternal figure that compels, scolds, encourages, and protects “childlike” figures.

In Italy, Francis Elliot characterized the enthusiasm of the Sieneese for the *palio* as childlike, while Lady Blessington thought that the Neapolitan's possessed a "reckless love of pleasure and zest, that appertains only to children in other countries."⁹¹ As the "degenerate," "clownish" children of Ancient Rome, the Italians possessed an enviable heritage but were thought to have regressed in terms of development.⁹² From this point, any further Italian regression would lead to the next stage of degeneration: slavery.⁹³ As "degenerate children," the Italians needed to be guided back to maturity. Female travelers believed that this process was hindered by the Italians love of revelry.

Shelley believed that the frivolity of Italians dampened patriotism and prevented the maturation of the Italian state. To her, "*Play*...[was] the whirlpool that engulf[ed]" even the noblest Italians and located Italy in the "infancy of [European] civilisation."⁹⁴ While Lady Blessington felt that the Neapolitians were "never in a state of repose," in light of the *dolce far niente*, this energy had a childish quality to it, reflecting the Italian's passion for games and festivals but not an aptitude for the serious work of nation or empire.⁹⁵ Neither Shelley nor Lady Blessington believed the Italians capable of the kind of cohesion or political machination necessary to make Italy a viable state. Even writing after Italian Unification (1861), Francis Elliot still regarded the Italians as political children in the very advanced, complex world of the major powers.

The Spaniards were similarly regarded. Frances Elliot shared the conclusion of Enlightenment writers who saw Spain as a symbol of underdevelopment. With its *fiesta*

⁹¹ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:24; Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 79.

⁹² Elliot, *Italy*, 1:138.

⁹³ Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama*, 267. Schiffer points out that Greece represented slavery at this time.

⁹⁴ Shelley, *Rambles*, 288, 329. Being in the infancy of "European" civilization was better than infancy of non-European civilization – i.e. African infancy.

⁹⁵ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 27.

de toros, Spain was considered the “antithesis of ‘Europe’” and of the modern nation (best personified by England).⁹⁶ Fiestas and spontaneous street revelry played prominent roles in Elliot’s writings and reflected this perspective on the maturity of the Spanish people. Elliot also noted that the Spaniards were apathetic towards their ruler – a young king who she described as “Prince Charming” because of his mannerisms as well as English hopes that he would bring about constitutional reform.⁹⁷ If the young king was assassinated, which she regarded as a serious possibility, Elliot was certain that Spain would fall into “anarchy and chaos,” losing all hope for reform or enlightenment. Sadly, Elliot predicted that the childlike Spanish people would respond to such a disaster in their insouciant manner: “Who cares?...there will always be fiestas!”⁹⁸

Religion was another arena in which travelers cast the Other as childlike. Any perception of authentic devotion, or faith was generally admired by female travelers.⁹⁹ In Southern Europe, the way the English perceived Catholicism “was intimately bound up” with how they thought of themselves as English.¹⁰⁰ While Catholicism did not encourage qualities of “Englishness” like industriousness or restraint in Spaniards or Italians, non-political, personal religious devotion was regarded as proof of their childlike nature.

In Italy, female travelers like Mary Shelley, showed a marked ability to separate anti-papal and anti-catholic sentiments from their characterizations of pious Italians.¹⁰¹ This separation was possible because of the characterization of Italians as childlike. In

⁹⁶ Douglass, *Bulls, Bullfighting*, 102.

⁹⁷ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:59. The young king is probably Alfonso XII.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ This was true of monotheistic religions with the exception of Judaism. Animism, polytheism, or any system of beliefs that encouraged cannibalism, twin murder, human sacrifice, etc, were never thought of with the same sort of cultural relativism.

¹⁰⁰ Howarth, *The Invention*, 59.

¹⁰¹ Jane Stabler, “Devotion and Diversion: Early Nineteenth Century British Women Travelers in Italy and the Catholic Church,” in *Unfolding the South, Nineteenth Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 15.

fact, Shelley discovered that the “duplicitous drapery ‘hung’ round religion” in her mind disappeared when she realized what a “real comfort” Catholicism represented to many Italians who were not cynical or jaded.¹⁰² Seen through the childlike faith of ordinary Italians, Catholicism was easier to accept – particularly for *protesters* like Francis Elliot. However, this did not mean that Catholicism encouraged development.

In northern eyes, Spain was “saturated by Catholicism like blood in a sponge.”¹⁰³ The English felt that the “terrifying power of a Spanish priest” gave him the ability to manipulate his childlike flock.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the Catholic clergy were regarded as sinister and the Spaniards themselves were thought to be innocent victims of those who were supposed to protect and nurture them. Their victimization was essentially proof of their childlike nature. While not as bad a “childishness” as that associated with irresponsible or mischievous playfulness, it was still something that could benefit from English (Protestant) paternalism. With the proper encouragement, female travelers believed that Spaniards and Italians could eventually mature out of this dependent stage and become as independent as England had become - once separated from Rome.

The religious devotion of many Muslims was also viewed as childlike. Lady Duff Gordon’s friend Shaikh Yussuf had an “easy familiarity with religion” that garnered her respect and gave his devotion a childlike quality.¹⁰⁵ She thought “some medieval monks may have had the same look, but no Catholic...[she had ever seen looked] so peaceful or so unpretending” at prayer.¹⁰⁶ By describing the childlike devotion of the *fellaheen*, her servant Omar, as well as that of learned men like her friend the Shaikh, Lady Duff

¹⁰² Stabler, “Devotion and Diversion,” 33.

¹⁰³ Howarth, *The Invention*, 157.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰⁵ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 131.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Gordon portrayed Islam as something to be respected because of its ability to make the lives of Muslims bearable. She was comfortable with Islam because she viewed it “as ceasing to be a mere party flag, just as [had] occurred with Christianity” and was convinced that “all the moral part...[of Islam was] being more and more dwelt on.”¹⁰⁷

Writing almost a decade later, Lady Blunt witnessed the tension between Shia and Sunni Muslims around Baghdad and observed that Islam was still a “party flag.”¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, while she thought Shia Muslims slightly fanatical, she wrote little of these tensions, implying that they were not serious – just childlike squabbles.

Another factor that highlighted the childishness of Arabs to Lady Duff Gordon was the fact that they begged for English masters – as if they understood they needed proper guidance. Lady Duff Gordon’s friend Shaikh Yussuf told her that he prayed for European rule.¹⁰⁹ She quoted another man from Lower Egypt as saying: “I pray to the most Merciful to send us Europeans to govern us, to deliver us from...[the abuses of the Egyptian government].”¹¹⁰ Later, an Egyptian friend explained to Lady Duff Gordon that she did not have Turkish guards for her own protection, but rather because the Ottoman rulers wanted to prevent the Egyptian people from getting to know and love her.¹¹¹ Lady Duff Gordon considered this explanation probable, which in turn cast the Egyptians as affection starved children who would instinctively respond to an Englishwoman’s instruction and encouragement.

Ultimately, Southern Europeans were childish because of their dependence and the way that they avoided responsibility. Arab Others were childish because of the way

¹⁰⁷ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 182.

¹⁰⁸ Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 1:180.

¹⁰⁹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 224.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

they acted and what they seemed to crave in terms of governance. Africans were childlike for all of these reasons and, in addition, for the expectation that they needed to be protected – even from themselves. Many of the arguments supporting the characterization of Africans as childlike came from the belief that Africans were more likely to succumb to Western vices than white people, who were thought to have developed advanced responses to these temptations.¹¹²

Although Cheryl McEwan argues that Mary Kingsley rejected arguments about African childishness and its relationship to the problem of African drunkenness, in the first moments of *Travels in West Africa*, Kingsley worries about an inebriated African policeman who she fears will roll out of his boat and drown.¹¹³ It would be a mistake to accept Kingsley's self-effacing excuses about her simple, guileless writing style. She was very deliberate, and like all female travelers, understood that the first moments of contact established the balance of power between the Englishwoman and the Other. This first encounter with the drunk policeman confirmed her readers' expectations about African vulnerability and set up Kingsley as a caretaker of Africans.

The missionary Mary Slessor also rejected depictions of Africans as childlike, but as McEwan points out, Slessor's relationship with the Africans around her "was clearly one of inequality."¹¹⁴ Kingsley herself characterized Slessor as a mother figure who

¹¹² Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana 1800 to the Present* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996), 2. Anything harmful to western society was thought to have disastrous effects on Africans, but Akyeampong points out that alcohol was especially taken out of an African cultural context and turned into an issue that needed to be managed by Europeans. There are other more contemporary depictions of the vulnerability of Africans. The movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980) shows a continuing assumption that the addition of one tiny bit of Western culture completely destroys the equilibrium of an African tribe.

¹¹³ Kingsley, *Travels*, 25.

¹¹⁴ McEwan, *Gender*, 103. This echoes Said's assertion in *Orientalism* that whatever the relationships that existed between Europeans and the Other, the European always maintained superiority. Consider Flory and Dr. Veraswami in George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934).

turned Africans into obedient children.¹¹⁵ Like Slessor, Kingsley's actions and travel writings often reflected similar inequalities. She wrote of Africans wandering through the jungle chattering to themselves like children, thinking "externally instead of internally" as they tried to work out some problem.¹¹⁶ In contrast, she depicted herself as an internal thinker, more rational and self-contained – an ideal guardian for the Africans around her.

Simon Gikandi argues Kingsley made Africa "more desirable and worthy of consumption" because of the way in which she, as a woman, portrayed it.¹¹⁷ By casting Africans as lazy or criminal and violent, she demonstrated the cultural superiority of the English. By attributing these inferiorities to childishness, she then justified the necessity and usefulness of that English superiority. As children, the Africans could properly command the interest of the English because they needed guidance, protection, provision, education, and discipline. Therefore, there was a mission worth doing in Africa for the English – something that required their work ethic and their "civilized" violence – something that would simultaneously prove and utilize Englishness.

England's imperial mission may have been referred to colloquially as the "Great Game," but this did not imply childishness or lack of seriousness. In relation to the Other, the English were characterized by maturity and their authority was seen as a kind of parental privilege. While criminality/violence and laziness in the Other all proved British cultural superiority, they did not necessarily make the best case for British paternalism or rule. The characterization of the Other as a child, while it did make travel safe for female travelers, also allowed travelers to enter a political discourse and make

¹¹⁵ Kingsley, *Travels*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), 54.

¹¹⁷ Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 150.

the case for the absolute need for English rule and influence in the world. While the travelers disagreed in terms of the type of rule or the degree of influence necessary to aid the Other, they all used this perceived need for Englishness to refine English purpose.

ENGLAND'S PURPOSE

After Robinson Crusoe concluded that he was a civilized man regardless of his environment or the threats to his existence, he had to define a purpose for himself. After discovering the footprint, he found purpose in fortifying “his” island and preparing to defend “civilization” against the Other. When he saved Friday from the cannibals, he acquired another purpose – that of master and teacher. In this capacity, he also had to determine Friday’s purpose. Like Robinson Crusoe, female travelers not only defined English purpose, but used this to determine England’s relationship to the Other.

According to female travelers, the English were not lazy, criminal, or childlike. They were willing to shoulder the burdens of others, able to differentiate between violence and humane use of force, and sensitive to the vulnerability and needs of inferiors. This cast the English as benevolent saviors. Therefore, English purpose was clearly to rule – to mentor, guide, and instruct the Other. “Rule Britannia” (1776) highlighted this purpose as divinely inspired:

When Britain first at heaven’s command arose from out the azure main, this was the charter of the land, and guardian angels sung this strain: Rule Britannia, rule the waves. Britons never will be slaves. The nations not so blest as thee, must in their turn to tyrants fall: whilst thou shalt flourish great and free, the dread and envy of them all.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ David Mallet, “Rule Britannia,” (Edinburgh, 1776).

The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 also showcased English purpose and explained why English “civilization” was beneficial. It encouraged the English to continue this duty even when they felt “sloth and heathen Folly...[brought all their] hopes to nought.”¹¹⁹

The English nation was most flatteringly revealed through comparison with the Other. Peter Ackroyd describes this comparison as “an instinctive form of reassurance.”¹²⁰ By compartmentalizing the Other as inferior, the female traveler reassured the English that they were superior and meant to rule. In Anthony Hope’s *Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) and *Rupert of Hentzau* (1898), it takes an Englishman’s rule to save a foreign country from its own internal strife. Both novels revolve around the idea that no one but Mr. Rudolf Rassendyll is capable of bringing law and order to Ruritania. Reluctantly posing as King of Ruritania, the unprepared (but English) Rassendyll proves better at love, better at rule, and more princely than his cousin Rudolf V, the hereditary king of Ruritania – who could only ape Rassendyll’s persona as “King” once restored. Hope cast Rassendyll as the “true” king of Ruritania – slightly by inheritance, but mostly by right of his demonstrated ability and innate superiority. Similarly, female travelers cast English authority as legitimized by English character and cultural superiority.

¹¹⁹ Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” (1899).

¹²⁰ Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of The English Imagination* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 281.

CHAPTER IV

DESTINY: THE PAST AND THE COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF THE OTHER

MEPHISTOPHELES. are there any British around? They do a lot of traveling, seeking out battlefields, waterfalls, all kinds of ruins and musty classical places.

- Goethe, *Faust*¹

Besides solidifying his self-identity and finding daily purpose for himself (and Friday), Robinson Crusoe also tackled the problem of his destiny. Destiny's connection to self-identity and purpose is based on the fact that it poses as the solution to a sort of *quo vadis* question. It does not so much answer "where are you going" - but, especially in the context of compartmentalizing the Other, it represents what was implied by this question: where do *we* go from here?² Now that identity and purpose have been established, how can they be maintained and justified? In order to come up with answers to these questions, Robinson Crusoe turned to his past and traced the thread of providence throughout his life. Because this enabled him to locate himself in time and space and because he was able to understand his current survival (identity/purpose) in relation to this narrative, he was able to project a destiny for himself. He could envision a future in which the continuity of his identity and purpose extended indefinitely.

As a process, identity is "Janus faced" because it looks to the past and to the future for reification. "Nations, however young, have an old history," and like Robinson Crusoe, they look to the past to not only legitimize their present existence, but to

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, part 2, act 2, scene 38.

² In reference to "Quo vadis, Domine?" in which Peter asked Jesus "Where are you going, Lord?" and through Jesus's response realized his own destiny. The early church was a popular theme in literature at the end of the nineteenth century. Novels like *Ben Hur* and *Quo Vadis* (neither English, but well read by the English) dealt with the pause between the crucifixion and a realization of the destiny of the Church.

anticipate their future.³ A historical narrative is required to demonstrate this connection between past, present, and future. This narrative is a product of an “awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all of its implications of continuity, yet of ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity.”⁴ Because such gaps in “memory” occur, despite belief in the absolute continuity of the “imagined community” through time, the search for the past must begin with the “originary present” and work its way back through time – claiming pasts as they are rediscovered or reinterpreted.⁵ This amnesia allows certain histories to be privileged at the expense of other histories that do not fit the desired narrative.

Nineteenth-century English historiography was characterized by a celebratory, Whiggish belief in the progress of civilization. The grand narrative of Western civilization was therefore seen as the story of England’s rise – particularly in light of Hegel’s idea that history represented the advance of a humanistic idea of freedom.⁶ In the nineteenth century, the English could locate themselves and their purpose in “World History” and considered this ability a mark of civilized society – something that the Other lacked. According to Mary Kingsley, Africans had “no definite way of expressing duration of time,” nor did they have “any great mental idea of it.”⁷ Italians, Spaniards, and Arabs had recognizable conceptions of time, but like Africans, did not seem to have

³ Steve Reicher and Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation: Categorization, Contestation and Mobilization*, Thousand Oaks, California (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001), 138. Anticipation of the future encourages cohesion in the present.

⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 205.

⁵ *Ibid.* Anderson argues that nations have to fashion their narratives in “up time.”

⁶ Hegel’s idea of cultures moving away from despotism to constitutional monarchies replaced traditional ideas of universal history as the progression of four monarchies, i.e. the periodizations in the Book of Daniel involving Babylon, Medeo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, or the idea of four more modern empires. Hegel’s conception of history was followed by Marx’s idea of history as stages of production. See Donald R. Kelley, *Fortunes of History: Historical Inquiry from Herder to Huizinga* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 53-55.

⁷ Kingsley, *Travels*, 251.

any great awareness of it – particularly when it came to the advantages of controlling it in the form of the historical record.

It was not an accident that Greenwich became the point of reference for universal time in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Nor is it of minor importance that with their timetables, the railroads crisscrossing England made people hyperaware of the past, present, and future.⁸ With this awareness of time however, came anxieties about the fragility of empire and the future of England. The English were fascinated by “time because they were conscious of being its victims.”⁹ Due to this sense of victimization, history was something that had to be carefully managed and constructed.

In the scramble for privileged pasts that occurred during the nineteenth century, the Other was either stripped of a historical legacy, marginalized in the grand narrative, or denied historicity altogether. While female travelers were interested in the male and female Other and the culture and character of a people, they were also interested in exploring “memory.” They rejected the Other’s continuity through time and space by either claiming pasts that supported an empowering vision of destiny for the civilized, or by completely effacing the present in favor of an imagined, idyllic past.

THE CHOICE OF ONE’S ANCESTORS: CLAIMING THE PAST

Like many travelers to Egypt, Amelia Edwards caught her first glimpse of the pyramids at Giza while on the train from Alexandria to Cairo. She was unimpressed with this initial sighting, as the pyramids looked “small and shadowy, and...[were] too

⁸ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time & Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), chapter one, “The Nature of Time.” GMT was not universally accepted at the time, but it is the idea of being responsible for time that is important.

⁹ Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890* (New York: Longman, 1994), 25.

familiar to be in any way startling.”¹⁰ On closer inspection, her confidence faltered and she explained “[i]t is only in approaching them, and observing how they grow with every foot of the road, that one begins to feel they are not so familiar after all.”¹¹ Edwards retreated from this startling reality and sought refuge in her knowledge of Egyptian antiquity. She went on to explain the history of the pyramids to her readers – something she claimed the English had “known from childhood.”¹² This type of recovery was common among travelers. Observing the unfamiliar, they clinically repackaged it as something they already knew or something that could be understood comparatively. In this way, English travelers compartmentalized yet another aspect of the Other by claiming the past as something they alone had knowledge of. In essence, they were claiming authority over the “official” historical record.

The historical record was valuable because it influenced the iconography associated with identity and destiny. A nation (or group) actively engaged in recovering, interpreting, and presenting its past has ideological control over its official destiny.¹³ Those without control over the narrative “cede...[others] a key advantage in shaping reality.”¹⁴ As travelers often concluded, the Other was completely ignorant or careless of the past. This perceived apathy gave English travelers the advantage of claiming the past and “shaping reality.”

¹⁰ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Reicher and Hopkins, *Self and Nation*, 142-3. Ideally in such a system, a nation or group benefits from their historical narrative. Reicher and Hopkins use Masada (post 1948) as an example of a recovered, reinterpreted past that gives modern Israel legitimacy, power, and destiny. Benedict Anderson distinguishes between popular and official nationalism. By the nineteenth century – particularly during Queen Victorians reign, “Englishness” and English destiny were in line with official nationalism.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

In Rome, Frances Elliot came to the conclusion that modern Romans were “wholly regardless of the celebrated scene of their ancestors’ greatest triumphs.”¹⁵ She was especially critical of the “degenerate modern Romans” who referred to the Forum as the *Campo Vaccino*.¹⁶ After seeing a set of artifacts in a museum in Rome, Elliot wrote: “[h]ere I realised Rome. Fabulous story and far off history seemed, as it were, within my grasp; the great shadows of antiquity were resuscitated at my individual call...”¹⁷ When this statement is set in contrast to the inability of Italians to appropriate or appreciate the ancient Roman past, it casts Elliot as someone who *can* access the power of the past. By “proving” Italians ignorant or incapable of activating the power of this legacy, Elliot claimed this past as an English inheritance by default.

Mary Shelley and Lady Blessington also recognized a gulf between modern Italians and the classical past. To the English, the Italians difficult path to unification encouraged the perception that “Italians were born losers...[and that] [t]heir past was too daunting for them to live up to.”¹⁸ “Free Italy” (Figure 1), depicts Italy as a woman whose identity is obstructed by a mitre and whose freedom is restricted by the chains of a “helpful” suitor. There is a sense that the liberty cap would fit Italy better but that destiny does not seem to be in her foreseeable future – especially while she cannot activate the power of her heritage. Blinded by the mitre and restricted by chains, Italy is a poor representative of the classical past she is supposed to embody. Inert and helpless, she pales in comparison to her English counterpart Britannia – a manifestation of Pallas Athena often depicted as strong, confident, and righteous in the pursuit of justice, as in

¹⁵ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:143.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 138. This was a misunderstanding on Elliot’s part – she was either unaware or unimpressed with the historic nature of the designation “Campo Vaccino.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 215

¹⁸ Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica*, 6.

“Two Forces” (Figure 2).¹⁹ Unfettered and able to activate the classical legacy, Britannia, like the female traveler, usurps all claims to classical heritage and authority.



Fig. 1. “Free Italy.” Source: *Punch*, 23 July, 1859.
 Fig. 2. “Two Forces.” Source: *Punch*, 28 October, 1881.

In their writings, female travelers emphasized that the English knew what was historically valuable, that they knew how to construct a coherent narrative, and that they knew what belonged in the canon and what did not. Each place Francis Elliot visited in Spain had some historical value to her. However, like the Italians, the Spanish seemed unaware of how to use the past or how to properly remember it. In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain* (1884), Elliot recorded little information about Spanish history from the Spaniards she encountered. It is debatable whether this was a stylistic device designed to

¹⁹ Anne Helmreich, “Domesticating Britannia: Representations of the Nation in *Punch*: 1879-1880,” in *Art, Nation and Gender*, ed. Tricia Cusack (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 16-17.

showcase her knowledge or simply the reality of her experiences. Whatever the reason, it implied that the Spanish people had no power over the historical record – as if there was no native involvement in the creation and maintenance of Spanish history.²⁰ Elliot did encounter “memories” of El Cid and Phillip II, but considered this interest misguided and not true evidence of an understanding of history - i.e. who the heroes are and who the villains are. In Elliot’s mind, English history was the master narrative, and in this story, El Cid and Phillip II were not worthy of adoration.²¹ Elliot ultimately presented herself, the English traveler, as the most reliable source of Spanish history – or at least what she thought it should be.

While the links between England and the classical past, the European crusader past, and the Renaissance were relatively easy to make, English travelers also claimed non-European pasts. Oriental studies, a field that exploded in the nineteenth century, was primarily concerned with recovering and presenting the Eastern past. As with Spain and Italy, valuable Eastern histories found their way into the grand narrative that supported the rise of England. As a result, ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt become archetypes of Western civilization, while less privileged histories were ignored or marginalized. The connection between ancient Egypt and England was tenuous, but essential because ancient Egypt, with its empire and technologies, represented something too sophisticated to be left as a legacy for the primitive or degenerate.²²

²⁰ In fact, Spanish historians were actually working in the nineteenth century to locate the Reconquista within the national narrative of Spain.

²¹ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:87-8; *Spain*, 2:88

²² During the nineteenth century, the pyramid inch was put forward as proof that English metrology was superior to the metric system. It was a superior system because it was “far older, far more sacred...and, far more scientific” than any other system – inherited from ancient Egyptian engineers. Eric Michael Reisenauer, “The Battle of the Great Standards: Great Pyramid Metrology and British Identity, 1859-1890,” *The Historian* 65, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 934.

English travelers felt that they knew ancient Egypt and had an appreciation for it that contemporary Egyptians could not understand. Amelia Edwards felt she was “on terms of respectful intimacy” with Rameses II who she declared “one of the handsomest men...of all history.”²³ She dedicated large portions of her writing to the Pharaoh - comparing him to Pericles and Lorenzo the Magnificent, as well as to praising him as the “war-god of the world” for his exploits at Kadesh.²⁴ She set her knowledge of this ancient ruler in jarring contrast to the modern Egyptian’s ignorance of the ancient past.

Edwards thought Egyptians cared very little for the ancient past. She based this judgment on the fact that her guides did not understand why the English cared to travel so far just to see ruins.²⁵ According to Edwards, no “dragoman...could be made to understand the importance of historical sequence...To him, Khufu, Rameses and the Ptolemies are one. As for the monuments, they are all ancient Egyptian, and one is just as old and unintelligible as another.”²⁶ To Edwards, who saw distinct cultural and artistic periodizations in ancient Egyptian history, this would have been the equivalent of conflating the Normans, Tudors, and Hanoverians. The common consensus was that the modern Egyptians had no interest in the culture and monuments of polytheistic idolaters, and that it was only Napoleon’s invasion and the increasing interest of Europeans that made them even remotely aware of the ancient past.²⁷ Even then however, this Egyptian interest seemed primarily commercial in nature. Therefore, the recovery, preservation, and interpretation of ancient Egyptian history appeared a responsibility of the English.

²³ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, 236-7, 259.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 236, 246. She quotes the Papyrus Anastasi no. III in the British Museum for the description of Rameses as the “war-god of the world.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Donald M. Reid, *Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums, and Egypt: National Identity From Napoleon To World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 29.

Edwards was shocked that the Egyptian authorities left historic sites like the mosque of Sultan Hassan in a state of disrepair. She concluded that “nothing is ever mended in Cairo,” implying that the Egyptian/Turkish authorities did not, or could not take care of “national” treasures.²⁸ Lady Duff Gordon also believed that Cairo was falling into ruin – regardless of how enlightened Egyptian government was supposedly becoming.²⁹ Due to belief in the general apathy of Egyptians, a kind of intellectual imperialism existed in Egypt during the nineteenth century. Archaeological sites and curatorial positions in the major Egyptian museums were dominated by Europeans – many by the English.³⁰ Essentially, the English operated with the belief that they were the guardians of the monuments and treasures of human civilization. Exhibiting the same kind of rationale that defended English possession of the Elgin Marbles, Edwards believed that claiming the past was a necessary duty and right of those who “knew” the past and were able to activate its meaning.³¹

By claiming the Other’s past (or the history associated with a particular region), English travelers undercut any projection of the Other’s destiny and turned privileged pasts into an English legacy. Less privileged pasts that they did not claim were then cast either as a liability for the Other or as a minor current in the grand narrative of English civilization. Occasionally when they came into some sort of direct contact with civilization, these eddies were drawn into the wider stream of the narrative of civilization. Generally however, claiming these pasts did not serve English interests, and therefore they remained marginalized or were considered unrecoverable.

²⁸ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, 16.

²⁹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 78.

³⁰ Reid, *Whose Pharaohs*.

³¹ William St. Claire, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 57. Elgin’s supporters argued that “barbarism” justified the “rescue” or management of art and artifacts.

While the primacy of Pharaonic Egypt was evidence of the “West’s quest for its own imagined past,” Coptic and Islamic pasts were largely ignored by travelers.³² In *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (1879), Lady Blunt traveled through the Euphrates Valley and Mesopotamia (modern Syria and Iraq) and related few Babylonian, Christian, or Islamic histories for her readers.³³ While she admired the Bedouin for their strong, shared memory of bloodlines and clan identities, she felt they had no great ancient histories for her to relate. Their histories contained just a germ of what qualified as history for the English.³⁴ While she explained clan rivalries, skirmishes, and focused on the major Bedouin leaders, there was nothing about the Bedouin’s past that she claimed. Instead she emphasized how their children played in the shadows of ancient ruins – completely ignorant of the history before them.

The discovery of America and the exploration of Africa were two things that disrupted the Mediterranean/Eurocentric narrative of civilization. To keep the grand narrative a linear example of progress, the histories of the inhabitants of these places were absorbed into a narrative of conquest as part of the onward march of civilization.³⁵ Whether or not Africans had their own history was debatable in the nineteenth century. The explorer Sir Samuel Baker wrote that:

[the] Central African...is without history...we find no vestiges of the past – no ancient architecture, neither sculpture, nor even chiseled stone to prove that the Negro of this day is inferior to a remote ancestor...unchanged from the prehistoric tribes who were the original inhabitants.³⁶

³² Reid, *Whose Pharaohs*, 208. The biblical past was as important as the classical past, but few travelers profiled here spent any time in the Holy Land.

³³ Lady Blunt identified the Euphrates Valley and Mesopotamia as two separate destinations. In reality, her trip took her through a great deal of Arabia – a more inclusive designation.

³⁴ History was made up of actors, wars, and technological achievement.

³⁵ Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: Historical Inquiry From Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 156-7.

³⁶ Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism*, 86. This perception was true of West Africa as well.

Mary Kingsley did not believe there was an absence of history in Africa. She cited the eleventh century writings of Spanish geographer El Bekri as proof that Africans did have a history and pointed out that the English were “not stepping on to Africa out of Noah’s ark.”³⁷ In essence, Africa was not a new world because it had a long history of European contact.

While she did not deny the existence of African history, even Kingsley measured African historicity by its intersections with the Western narrative. Like Francis Elliot, Kingsley rarely used or wrote of using Africans as sources for her information on African history. When determining the ancestry of the Bubi tribe, she used her own observations and knowledge of ethnology and anthropology to extrapolate their origins. She never wrote of asking them where they came from – likely because she did not see them as having any credible “memory” of their past.³⁸ Furthermore, if African culture was as stagnant as thought, there was no reason to recover it. A virtual time capsule in the minds of the English, Africa represented the possibility of studying “primitive” man.

The late nineteenth-century writer Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) is most famous for her interest in the “ghosts” of the past, and her writings often invite possession by the past.³⁹ Like Lee, female travelers exhibited a yearning for the past but this was tempered by the need to compartmentalize the Other. As a result, this desire encouraged possession of the past, not possession by the past.

³⁷ McEwan, *Gender*, 99.

³⁸ Kingsley, *Travels*, 62-72.

³⁹ Catherine Maxwell, “Vernon Lee and the Ghosts of Italy,” in *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (New York: Palgrave, 2003). Lee lived most of her life in Italy. She was not a traveler and therefore it is possible that she did not feel the need to compartmentalize as much as female travelers because she was more comfortable in Italy than in England.

Although she only glimpsed Greece from her boat, Lady Montagu was filled with “memories” of ancient Greece. The sight filled her with melancholy because Greece seemed so familiar but, like Italy, disempowered in the present. To Lady Montagu, the classical legacy survived only as the “memory” of the civilized which suggested that “England could be Greece reborn.”⁴⁰ By claiming the past, England could be Troy, Greece, Rome or Ancient Egypt reborn.⁴¹ England could also take up the mantle of fallen modern empires like Spain and the Ottoman Empire. By claiming particular pasts, the English cast themselves as heirs of everything that extended or magnified power. By rejecting other pasts, they marginalized their importance in terms of the grand narrative of history and did not allow them as an alternative narrative that challenged the superiority of English civilization.

“UP TIME,” CONTINUITY, AND PROBABILITY

Claiming the past provided a basis from which to project destiny because history was considered a tool that could predict future trends. As the root of existing identity, the past was thought to reliably indicate the probability of future success. As Benedict Anderson argues, the historical narrative of identity must be fashioned in “up time” – that is, from the “originary present” back to a beginning.⁴² Therefore, the biography of a nation reads as a series of “deaths” which invert conventional models of descent.⁴³ When

⁴⁰ Efterpi Mitsi, “‘Roving Englishwoman’: Greece in Women’s Travel Writings,” *Mosaic* (Winnipeg) 35, no. 2 (June 2002): 141.

⁴¹ In fact, the English did claim descent from Aeneas – which included both Roman and Trojan legacies.

⁴² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 205. “Up time” is “towards Peking man, Java Man, King Arthur, wherever the lamp of archaeology casts its fitful gleam.”

⁴³ *Ibid.* Therefore, “World War II begets World War I; out of Sedan comes Austerlitz; the ancestor of the Warsaw Uprising is the State of Israel.”

read with the foresight of “up time,” history then becomes a teleological narrative of cause and effect or survival vs. decline.

Scholars like Adam Smith, Alfred Thayer Mahan, and Edward Gibbon, whose works were influential in the nineteenth century, examined the causal relationship between past actions and the rise or fall of empires. A linear history that registered consistent progress set a good foundation for future destiny. As Mahan argued in his treatise on naval power (1890), England would not have been an empire without its navy. In “up time,” the actions that brought about England’s navy appear defined by providential foresight. In this triumphant Whiggish narrative of the rise of English naval power, England appeared poised to continue as a major power. For nations or groups that did not have such a triumphal narrative, a post-mortem on their past proved why their destiny was so bleak. In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776), Gibbon argued that the pacifism of Christianity weakened the Roman Empire, while in *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith pointed out that Spanish decline was due in part to the inability of the Spaniards to understand the purpose of capital.⁴⁴ In “up time” the narrative of the Other proved a lack of providential foresight or “fitness.” These failings represented breaks in progress that limited future success and caused the Other to fall out of the main stream of the grand narrative.

For the most part, the travelers had a primordialist vision of the English nation. They were convinced that the essence of England had always existed and would continue

⁴⁴ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 562-3. Smith felt that the Spanish foolishly undertook “expensive and uncertain projects” based on the myth of El Dorado that “absorb[ed] both capital and profit.” When Spain did release “capital,” the gold glutted the market and was therefore devalued. According to Smith, an empire’s future depends on its use of capital.

to exist.⁴⁵ The travelers viewed modern England as the product of consistent growth – a slow but steady build of all that was necessary to be an empire, and perhaps to be the most “fit” empire in history. They saw in England a long tradition of skepticism, liberalism, and constitutionalism that could be traced in “up time” as evidence of the continuity and evolutionary progress of the English nation.⁴⁶

Occasionally, travelers like Lady Montagu were envious of laws and customs in other lands that seemed more progressive or advantageous to women. However, in the end, English evolution through time was regarded as the best example of the progress of civilization. This was not to say that the travelers believed England perfect – just that its narrative and evolution through time seemed stable and full of potential.⁴⁷ England therefore represented one single, fluid historical entity – ever progressing and improving.

Other countries however, did not exhibit this kind of continuity. To English travelers, the land of the Other was home to an unending, chaotic mix of new governments and new rulers that were constantly replacing previous regimes. They saw no evidence of providence which would indicate a positive destiny, just succession and more succession. Certainly some societies experienced periods of high civilization, but in the end, modern Italians were not recognized as ancient Romans anymore than modern Spaniards were Christian knights or Egyptians the people of the “black land.” The English however, did see themselves as Britons or Anglo Saxons, and felt that they were

⁴⁵ This is reflected even in the twentieth century with the sentiment “there’ll always be an England.” A major part of national identity is the construction of a collective “we” that is thought to be constant through time and space. Reicher and Hopkins, *Self and Nation*, 139.

⁴⁶ The most obvious example of constitutionalism is the Magna Carta. The development of English law was a very important part of English identity, as evidenced by Henry Hallam’s *Constitutional History of England* (1827).

⁴⁷ Political satires in *Punch* as well as other examples of misrule and corruption like *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* in *Bleak House* (1853) demonstrate that England was hardly considered perfect – even by English citizens.

expanding and enlarging the English legacy not failing to live up to it.⁴⁸ What “up time” implied in the case of the English was that the “originary present” was in many ways the apogee of civilization – brought on by a beneficial historical legacy and providential foresight.

Mary Shelley felt that the temporal rule of the Papacy was one of the most unfortunate events in Italian history.⁴⁹ Quoting Dante’s *Inferno*, she lamented what she saw as the tragic fate of modern Italy: “Ah, Constantine! To how much ill gave birth, [n]ot thy conversion, but that plenteous dower, [w]hich the first wealthy father gained from thee.”⁵⁰ Shelley clearly saw modern Italian history as a narrative of decline and failure with each government(s) progressively weaker, more corrupt, and less Italian, or Roman than the first. In essence, Italy represented a long line of failed states. From Roman rule, to Papal rule, to the rise of powerful city states and eventual Austrian occupation, Shelley saw no evidence that these turnovers were laying the groundwork for a modern destiny worthy of the “children” of Rome. Francis Elliot’s vision of Spain was similar. She saw nothing in the several centuries prior to the nineteenth century that encouraged her to believe that Spanish prospects would improve.

Lady Duff Gordon wrote that Egypt was a “palimpsest, in which the Bible is written over Herodotus, and the Koran over that.”⁵¹ She saw Egypt as a complicated mix of cultures and before she died, was planning to author a study on modern Egypt. While she appreciated Egypt’s modern history, like Amelia Edwards, she still thought Pharaonic

⁴⁸ Dealing with the Norman Conquest was difficult for many nineteenth-century historians because it represented a subjugation of the “English race.” Whig history solves this problem by allowing for momentary setbacks in progress, focusing instead on long term success.

⁴⁹ Shelley, *Rambles*, 358.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 359. Quoted from Dante’s *Inferno* 19:115-7.

⁵¹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 65.

Egypt represented the height of Egyptian fortunes, and that successive rulers had been unable to recapture ancient glories. Edwards, ever cataloguing and organizing facts, wanted to experience Egyptian history in proper sequence. Most of all, she wanted to witness a clear linear progression of civilization – of the arts, architecture, and of dynasties. As with Spain and Italy, there seemed to be no remarkable connection between the ancient past and the Modern Egyptian present. Therefore, Edwards concluded that the order and progress of the Egyptian narrative stopped in ancient times. Modern Egyptian history was therefore not responsible for the grand narrative.

While the Other appeared to decline at different slopes, the result was always the same – decline. If English history was perceived as evidence of consistent upward growth, then countries like Italy, Spain, and Egypt seemed to invert this model of progress, and places like Africa (with no independent narrative) seemed to register no growth at all. With the exception of moments of European contact, Kingsley described African history as cyclical instead of linear. Without differentiation between past and future, it was impossible to project African destiny independent of European destiny - a destiny that Hegel saw as clearly dominated by Germanic peoples.

ESCAPISM: THE ABSENCE OF A PRESENT

Hegelian philosophy confronted Victorian sentimentality in the nineteenth century. As the “age of memento,” this was a highly sentimental age characterized by a cultural emphasis on sacrifice, struggle, and transience.⁵² A sense of the past as a “lost

⁵² Gilmour, *Victorian Period*, 25. This is most true of the Victorian period, but existed prior to that as well.

inheritance” was even encouraged in popular works like the Arthurian legends.⁵³ At Paestum, Lady Blessington was overcome with melancholy “reflections on the instability of human greatness.”⁵⁴ Nearly a hundred years later, Virginia Woolf would write that modern Greece made her feel that: “the pageant has passed long ago, and you are come too late.”⁵⁵ Besides encouraging possession of the past, this sense of loss encouraged complete identification with the past – a type of escapism that had roots in English melancholy.

Dustsceawung, a word unique to Old English, translates to “contemplation of dust,” reflecting the English obsession with transience and destiny that came to be characterized as melancholy.⁵⁶ English melancholy was fashionable in the nineteenth century because it seemed to suggest the wisdom of a modern but ancient people. Witnessing American travelers in the Forum, Francis Elliot could not help but think: “what sympathy can youth have with decrepitude?”⁵⁷ This melancholy represented a way to respond to the civilizing yet destructive progress of industrialization. It allowed the English to maintain a connection with the past, an empathy that would help anchor their identity and purpose regardless of what occurred in the future.

“Ozymandias” (1818) by Percy Bysshe Shelley is about a shattered statue in an “antique land” that reflects the hubris of a long dead ruler. It is a Romantic exploration of the decline of empires. The poem ends:

My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!

⁵³ Ackroyd, *Albion*, 254.

⁵⁴ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 89.

⁵⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Travels with Virginia Woolf* (London: Hogarth Press, 1993), 220. Journal entry from Sept. 1906

⁵⁶ Ackroyd, *Albion*, 59. English melancholy was confirmed by their European counterparts. Ackroyd sees this phenomenon as extending from Anglo-Saxon times into the twenty-first century.

⁵⁷ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:144.

Nothing beside remains: round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.⁵⁸

On the most basic level the poem is a warning that empires end and that the passage of time is the only constant. However, a deeper Romantic interpretation of the poem identifies a yearning for the past that encourages dislocation with the present. In *Albion*, Peter Ackroyd argues that “the phantoms of an evanescent past are invoked to obscure or shade the horrors of modern civilization.”⁵⁹ The English imagination, wishing “to walk in the veiled distance and in remembered days,” achieved this escape from the present through “nostalgic antiquarianism” and a quest for the picturesque.⁶⁰

In the nineteenth century, the ability to tell the difference between myth and reality was considered one of the acquired skills of civilized society. Not to be able to make this distinction was considered evidence of a lack of development or of primitivism. And yet, the English reserved for themselves the luxury of viewing the present in ancient, medieval, and even mythological terms.⁶¹ Female travelers willingly slipped into such fantasies about the past as a refuge from the present. This allowed them to virtually ignore the present and marginalize the contemporary Other.

In 1718, Lady Montagu decided to avoid Greece after being “credibly informed...[that it was] over run with robbers,” and completely devoid of the “demi Gods and heroes” she would have liked to encounter.⁶² She never set foot in Greece, glimpsing it only from her ship. While this encounter from afar filled her with “desire, nostalgia,

⁵⁸ Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ozymandias,” (1818).

⁵⁹ Ackroyd, *Albion*, 262.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁶¹ And not just the pasts of Others, they also escaped into fantasies about their own past. Seeing England as the Realm of Logres and “believing” King Arthur would return, was a kind of messianic escapism.

⁶² Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 207.

and loss” it did not tempt her to go ashore because she was “afraid to disturb the ideal, the imaginary landscape of classical antiquity by experiencing contemporary reality.”⁶³ This did not stop her from imagining ancient Greece though. Lady Montagu’s “journey into the past by effacing the present” revealed that “in order to encounter and claim the past” the “alien, primitive, and degenerate” present had to be avoided entirely.⁶⁴

Francis Elliot begins her *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* with an account of the *palio* in Siena. Her decision to start the narrative in Siena is curious as it could not have been her point of entry into Italy. The *palio* introduces Italy as a medieval kingdom – and in fact, Elliot orients her readers by explaining: “Here we are in the midst of the republic of the Middle Ages.” The focus on Siena and the *palio* clearly sets the stage for Italy to be interpreted and understood in terms of the past, not the present. Elliot implies that Italy is locked in its medieval past because the Italians (as “Mediaeval blockheads”) have not moved on to the more civilized “clovery turf” characteristic of Ascot and The Derby.⁶⁵ Elliot also characterized Assisi as a city that had “gone to sleep after the great churches were built, and never woke up again.”⁶⁶ Essentially, there was no Italian history that fit the grand narrative after the Renaissance, and therefore Italy was trapped in time.

Travelers in Italy felt obliged to visit famous monuments and view famous works of art.⁶⁷ None of these marvels were associated with contemporary Italians. Mary Shelley was convinced that she had seen glimpses of genius in modern Italians and that the “country of Dante and Michael Angelo and Raphael” might still exist, but all of this

⁶³ Mitsi, “Roving Englishwoman,” 129-130.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁶⁵ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:24, 23.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶⁷ Szegedy-Maszak, “Rambles in Rome,” 8.

was contingent on Italians abandoning the *dolce far niente*.⁶⁸ This extreme alienation of past and present reflected the common belief in Italy's "double legacy of monumental past and disempowered present."⁶⁹ To Elliot, Rome had been "[t]wice mistress of the world," but could only ever be "queen of the past" in the modern world.⁷⁰

In places like Egypt that had strong biblical associations for travelers, it was as if time had stood still. Writing from Egypt, Lady Duff Gordon believed "all is so Scriptural in the country here."⁷¹ Dwellings, landscapes, transportation, and even the physical appearance of many Egyptians, Nubians and Bedouins seemed to confirm that Egyptian society and its material culture had remained static since biblical times – that Egypt still belonged to the past. On her way to Baghdad, Lady Blunt saw millions of acres of wasteland with scattered ruins dotting the landscape.⁷² While she preferred the nomadic lifestyle of the Bedouin to city life, she felt that this lifestyle did not leave anything behind - no technologies or even the proof of evolution associated with agrarian societies.⁷³ As a result, Bedouin society seemed static and simplistic – something timeless that Lady Blunt took a great deal of comfort from.

Besides viewing the Other as trapped in the past, female travelers also outright rejected the Other as contemporary. While never colonized, Greece was "ideologically constructed" by the English.⁷⁴ To varying degrees, Italy, Spain, and the Ottoman Empire also experienced a similar kind of possession. This ideological colonization was

⁶⁸ Shelley, *Rambles*, 119.

⁶⁹ Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler, introduction to *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 5.

⁷⁰ Elliot, *Italy*, 1:259.

⁷¹ Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 47.

⁷² Lady Blunt, *Bedouin Tribes*, 1:22.

⁷³ Agrarian societies were considered a more advanced stage of civilization – already possessing some of the preconditions for empire.

⁷⁴ Mitsi, "Roving Englishwoman," 133. Mitsi argues that Philhellenism is a kind of Orientalism that "reveals its discomfort with modern Greece, at least with modern Greece as a cultural reality," 134.

directly related to a preference for the past. Travelers “replace[d] the fallen modern nation [or region] with...images of otherness,” thereby rejecting the present in favor of a past they were more comfortable with – something they saw as valuable and worthy of cultural if not physical possession.⁷⁵

On her trip to Egypt (1849-50) Florence Nightingale wrote that she enjoyed the solitude of desolate places along the Nile because they were devoid of habitation and therefore did not remind her of “one’s fellow-creatures who contrast the past with that horrible...present.”⁷⁶ This “absence of a present” was what many travelers sought to encounter.⁷⁷ The picturesque was a manifestation of this consternation with present. In England it represented a revolt against industrialization and modernity, while in the land of the Other it was a defense against unpleasant realities. Compared to the picturesque past, the present could not compete.⁷⁸

The picturesque served as a “distancing device” in terms of the Other because it performed an “insulation function” for the traveler.⁷⁹ Cast as a scene or setting, the destinations of the travelers became stage-like environments where the Other could be explored in depth, yet at a safe distance from English society – virtually separate from England in time and space. As a scene or setting, the action in the new environment was contained and could be pleasurable because the traveler and her readers each consented to look on the action in that environment as fantasy or simply the past. Therefore, Lady

⁷⁵ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁶ Florence Nightingale, *Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile: 1849-1850* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 99.

⁷⁷ Nightingale, *Letters*, 99.

⁷⁸ In 1932, Virginia Woolf wrote of Modern Greece: “The modern Greece is so flimsy and fragile, that it goes to pieces entirely when it is confronted with the roughest fragment of the old.” In 1906 she wrote: “Like a shifting layer these loosely composed tribes of many different people lie across Greece; calling themselves Greek indeed, but bearing the same kind of relation to the old Greek that their tongue does to his...” From *Travels With Virginia Woolf*, 220, 210.

⁷⁹ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 47.

Montagu could assure her friends from Turkey that she had effortlessly adapted to “a new world where everything...[she saw appeared] a change of scene.”⁸⁰ Even Lady Blessington, who looked back on her Italian sojourn as her “golden past,” understood that she could not stay in Italy forever because it was a “land that is not our land.”⁸¹ In the end, destinations did not represent reality for the traveler who was only passing through. For the most part, this was because the picturesque was deployed as a strategy to secure detachment from the Other.⁸²

The opening scene of E.M. Forster’s *A Room with a View* (1908) provides a vivid example of English expectations about the picturesque in Italy. On arriving in Florence, Lucy Honeychurch and her chaperone discover that their rooms do not overlook the Arno as promised. Lucy’s initial disappointment does not end with the view from her room. She is devastated to find that her hotel is full of English people, and that the Signora, who has children named ‘Enery and Victorier, has a cockney accent.⁸³ This was hardly the picturesque Italy that Lucy expected to find, and was really the contemporary reality that she, like other travelers, longed to escape. Echoing Adela Quested’s “I want to see the real India,” in Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924), Lucy wondered: “Was this really Italy?”⁸⁴

In order to ignore this modern Italy (at least when it seemed dreadful), travelers escaped into fantasies about the past. Although Mary Shelley spent a great deal of time in Italy, she often used her imagination to experience the “true” Italy. Having read Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), Shelley wrote:

⁸⁰ Lady Montagu, *Embassy*, 25.

⁸¹ Lady Blessington, *Lady Blessington*, 5, 145.

⁸² Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 11.

⁸³ E.M. Forster, *A Room With a View* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1922), 13, 20.

⁸⁴ Forster, *A Room with a View*, 20.

Such is the power of the imagination. It can not only give a local inhabitation and a name to the airy creations of the fancy and the abstract ideas of the mind, but it can put soul into stones, and hang the vivid interest of our passions and our hopes otherwise vacant of name and sympathy...⁸⁵

Excavations at Pompeii during the nineteenth century gave travelers a glimpse of daily life in the ancient past. For travelers like Mary Shelley, this ancient reality was more preferable and picturesque than present realities because the ancient past inspired empathy. Therefore, because of the empathy they had for the past, travelers often felt more tied to these sites of “memory” than to the present.

The wild countryside around Madrid was so picturesque that Francis Elliot believed that “any adventure...[was] possible” in it – whether the adventure involved monsters or windmills.⁸⁶ She also viewed Spanish cities as settings and not realities. She called Seville the “abode of Don Juan and Figaro,” and thought it a virtual “set-scene in the opera.”⁸⁷ At Alcazar, she wished to encounter a “turbaned Mussulman or [a] swarthy Ethiop brandishing a club,” but instead was deeply disillusioned when challenged by a “diminutive Spanish soldier,” who cut a less picturesque figure and was disappointingly real.⁸⁸ This Spanish soldier “interrupted” Spain for her.

In contrast to Spain, in Egypt, modern Egyptians did not tend to interrupt the picturesque because they were seen as actors in the past. Refuting claims about Egypt’s modernization, Edwards believed “things and people are much less changed in Egypt than we of the present day are wont to suppose.”⁸⁹ To Edwards, there was no difference

⁸⁵ Shelley, *Rambles*, 376-7.

⁸⁶ Elliot, *Spain*, 1:79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 177, 204.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁸⁹ Edwards, *A Thousand Miles*, v.

between a contemporary *fellah* and the ancient Egyptian laborer of ancient reliefs.⁹⁰

They were equally picturesque and their way of life was equally ancient. In one instance, when Edwards and her fellow travelers saw a man operating a *shādūf* along the Nile, they thought he was “so evidently an ancient Egyptian, that we...[found] ourselves wondering how he escaped being mummified four or five thousand years ago.”⁹¹ Lady Duff Gordon had a similar experience. When she encountered a group of Nubian women wearing the same style of clothing she had seen in ancient Egyptian art, she admitted that she “felt inclined to ask them how many thousand years old they were.”⁹²

While the English chose particular pasts to engage with or return to, they escaped connections with other pasts – particularly the primitive. In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow likened his voyage in Africa to “travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings.”⁹³ There was something familiar about this “lost world” and Marlow admitted experiencing an internal quickening in response to the “wild” behavior of Africans. Nevertheless, he maintained that there was a critical distance between English and African – particularly that the English were absolutely “remote from the night of first ages.”⁹⁴ Mary Kingsley also felt that “wild” behavior and tribal drums “call[ed] up...your Neolithic man,” – but like Marlow, she believed that one’s recognition of this primal response was evidence that there was enough distance between the primitive and the civilized to prevent relapse.⁹⁵ As

⁹⁰ Ibid., vi.

⁹¹ Ibid., 69. A *shādūf* is a lever with a counterweight used to draw water – featured prominently in Egyptian artwork, particularly at Thebes.

⁹² Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters*, 62.

⁹³ Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 73.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 76.

⁹⁵ Kingsley, *West African Studies*, 55.

primitive, Africa represented a prehistory of man that had to be avoided just as much as the squalid conditions of industrial life or the disappointing realities of faded glories.

The picturesque was ultimately a way of compartmentalizing that intercepted, filtered and framed the Other in order to insulate the English from the realities of the Other.⁹⁶ As Vernon Lee wrote in “In Praise of Old Houses” (1897), there was a “spiritual advantage” to “dealing with the past instead of the present” as the present was merely “a place for the body, not for the soul.”⁹⁷ Therefore, the past was a vista that allowed for the projection of destiny as well as the erasure of present realities. By associating the Other with the past, or by denying a contemporary existence, travelers marginalized the Other. This avoidance of reality in favor of the “past” helped to cement the English narrative of historical development and its projection of destiny.

THE PAST AS A SOURCE OF SECURITY

As they claimed the past like an inheritance in abeyance, or marginalized the importance of a certain past, or even preferred the past over the present, English travelers were interpreting universal history as a validation of England and Englishness. Vernon Lee wrote that the past was so valuable to the English because it was:

the one free place for...[the] imagination. For, as to the future, it is either empty or filled only with the cast shadows of ourselves and our various machineries. The past is the unreal and the yet visible...whose unreality, unlike the unreal things with which we cram the present, can never be forced on us. *There is more behind; there may be anything.*⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ghose, *Women Travellers*, 47.

⁹⁷ Vernon Lee, “In Praise of Old Houses,” in *Limbo and Other Essays* (New York: John Lane Company, 1908), 25.

⁹⁸ Lee, “In Praise of Old Houses,” 40.

The past could therefore be a comfort, a defense, a weapon, or proof of destiny. While the English were searching for destiny or a way to maintain their identity in the future, “*anything*” was possible in the medium of the past.

Faced with internal anxieties as well as concern about the fragility of empire, the English turned to the past and the historical record to secure their future destiny. As Edward Said points out in *Culture and Imperialism*, when “you can no longer assume that Britannia will rule the waves forever, you have to reconceive reality as something that can be held together by you the artist, in history rather than in geography.”⁹⁹ The historical record and the escapism of the picturesque allowed the English traveler to hold this “reality” together in a way that ensured the future continuity of England’s identity and purpose through time and space.

Control and compartmentalization of “time,” or the historical record, was a vital part of securing contemporary “England” and any future “memory” of “England.” It is no coincidence that Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* (1907) involved an anarchist plot to blow up the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. To the English, the destruction of “time” was tantamount to the destruction of their civilization.¹⁰⁰ No other plot device could have had so much resonance for a society that compartmentalized the anxieties represented by Otherness or fears of Otherness through control of “time.”

⁹⁹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 189-90.

¹⁰⁰ Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, 16.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Although the English seemed to have an incredible self-awareness of what it meant to be English in the nineteenth century, this confidence masked internal confusion. Contradiction marked English society. According to Thomas William Heyck, the English were

a proud and even arrogant people, but they were also bedeviled by self-doubts and social concerns and divided by gender. They prided themselves on the evolution of parliamentary government, but they liked deferential behavior by the working class. They believed in individualism but were profoundly conformist. They congratulated themselves on progress but were deeply concerned that change was destroying their society. They were very religious but increasingly obsessed with their own religious doubts.¹

Only through contact with the Other could these internal contradictions and anxieties be assuaged or ignored. Domestically there were Irish or working class Others, but it was only in spaces of alterity – away from these internal Others, that England could become the England “imagined” by the middle and upper classes. While female travelers may not have been fully enfranchised in the physical community, they were certainly recognized members of this elite “imagined” England. However limited by gender, as calibrators of borders, female travelers played a major role in shaping English identity, defining English purpose, and securing English destiny.

Regardless of destination, female travelers found their “sense of self sharpened by the journey.”² In James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Stephen Dedalus constructed his consciousness of identity in this way:

¹ Heyck, *The Peoples*, 237.

Stephen Dedalus
 Class of Elements
 Clongowes College
 Sallins
 County of Kildare
 Ireland
 Europe
 The World
 The Universe³

In this system, each level of identity was essential to the next. The female traveler constructed and understood her own identity in much the same way. More simplified, it looked something like this:

The Traveler
 Englishwoman
 England
 The Other
 The Universe

Without the universe there was no existence and without the Other there was no England, etc. Travel allowed Englishwomen to produce this consciousness of identity and travel writing allowed this consciousness to be adopted by non-travelers. As English men and women devoured travel literature, they were being presented with “autobiographical and psychological insights” that suggested ways to compartmentalize the Other and to identify Self.⁴

In the preface to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Jean-Paul Sartre wrote that “the only way the European could make himself man was by fabricating slaves and monsters.”⁵ The construction of the Other was indeed a mechanism by which female travelers and their English audiences maintained their identity. The ambiguity of

² Siegel, “Intersections,” 7.

³ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York, 1948), 8.

⁴ Stevenson, *Victorian Women*, 6.

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), lviii.

the Other was not an inconvenience because ambiguities actually made any English identity possible, any English purpose justifiable, and any English destiny promising. However, rather than just casting the Other as a monster (which would have challenged the appropriateness of women's travel), the English became "English" by proving their superiority to the Other, by justifying the necessity of this superiority as their duty, and by usurping the past. In essence, subjugating the Other was not about a selfish desire to dominate another, but more about an egocentric desire to identify Self. The Other's subjugation was collateral damage in the construction of Self, rather than the intentional goal of Othering. This is not to excuse or marginalize the more horrific consequences of Othering, but should draw attention to the somewhat destructive process of solidifying and defending self-identity.

The arguments presented in this paper have implications in terms of women's travel and Othering in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Googling "women's travel" yields nearly eight million results – many about safety tips. Kristi Siegel argues that this contemporary obsession with women's travel safety should be critically examined, because travel can be dangerous for any traveler regardless of sex.⁶ However, this fear can be explained because the Other still exists and the woman remains an integral symbol of the nation – her safety is paramount and her interaction with the Other can still influence her society's response to the Other.

Women may not have to justify their travels in the same way that nineteenth-century female travelers had to, but still have to justify leaving husbands, children, and careers. However, the modern travel industry provides the latest justification.

Advertisements scream: "because you deserve it!" This is evidence that female travelers,

⁶ Siegel, "Women's Travel," 69.

like Monica Rapport's shoppers, have increasingly become a valuable demographic for the travel industry – so valuable that they have gone from having to justify their travel as beneficial to society, to “deserving” travel as something beneficial for them.

From an Anglo-American perspective, Italy and Spain remain Others - flaunted in travel guides as escapes from the modern world into old world cultures. Africa remains an escape into the wild, and the Middle East appears pre-modern and organized around tribal or religious affiliations. While Italy, Spain, and African nations have turned the *dolce far niente*, *fiesta*, and the safari into economic assets, fear of radical Islam has created a new Others who are being compartmentalized as the antithesis of Self. This demonstrates that the distinction between Self and Other is malleable and evolves in response to levels of contact and the needs of the Self. It also suggests that in an age where travel writing is not the only link to the Other, the Other can control some aspects of its image – adding a new dimension to Othering.

Robinson Crusoe eventually left “his” island but continued to travel. While his time on the island was very influential, it is likely that his sense of identity further evolved in response to these later travels. Like Robinson Crusoe, English identity continues to evolve and function as a defense mechanism. People continue to travel, write, and explore their relation to the Other. Goals and needs evolve, but the process of compartmentalizing the Other remains designed to accomplish the same objective: self-identity, confirmation of this identity, and the future continuity of this identity.

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