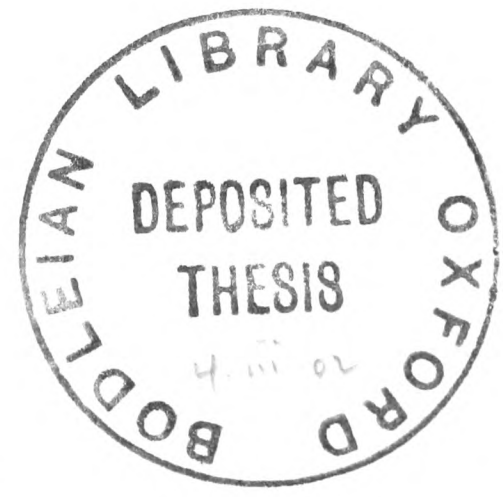
# *'Travelling to a Martyrdom'*

## The Voyages and Travels Genre and the Romantic Imagination

Carl Thompson

Trinity College, Oxford

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# *ABSTRACT*

## 'Travelling to a Martyrdom': the Voyages and Travels Genre and the Romantic Imagination

This thesis explores the influence of the voluminous travel literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on the imagination of Romantic writers such as Wordsworth and Byron, with particular reference to the theme of suffering in travel. It examines the ways in which Romantic travel, and Romantic writings about travel, are often 'scripted' by a body of prior travel literature which today is largely overlooked. The travel texts in question all foreground the elements of danger and discomfort in the travelling experience, and the thesis begins by arguing that an interest in the traveller's misadventures was an integral part of the appeal of travel writing in this period, constituting almost a mode or sub-genre within Voyages and Travels. Taking one strand of this literature of 'misadventure', the narrative of shipwreck, mutiny and other maritime misadventures, Chapter 1 explores the different rhetorical strategies used by writers to recount the sufferings of travellers. Accounts by John Newton, William Dampier, John Byron, George Shelvocke and others illustrate, broadly, a shift from Providentialism to sentimentalism in the handling of misadventure; they illustrate also the various philosophical, theological and political issues which are involved for any reader trying to make sense of the sufferings described. Chapter 2 then considers how these conventions of misadventure are borrowed by another sub-genre of Voyages and Travels, the exploration narrative. Using the accounts of James Cook, John Ross, Edward Parry, James Bruce and Mungo Park, the chapter argues that in being thus exploited by explorers, a further layer of political significance – touching on matters of empire and modernity – attaches itself to the idea of suffering in travel.

Chapters 1 and 2 illuminate positive stimuli to the Romantic interest in misadventure, showing how suffering in travel could be regarded as signifying, variously, divine election, authenticity, moral worth, political protest, and much else besides. Chapter 3 is short contextual chapter which suggests that there was also a negative stimulus to the Romantic taste for misadventure, in the form of a rapidly growing, diversifying tourism. Focussing especially on the picturesque tourist delineated by William Gilpin, and the classical Grand Tourist influenced by Joseph Addison, it suggests that Romantic writers and travellers prized discomfort and danger in travel not only for its own sake, but also because it served to distinguish them from other types of recreational traveller.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss Wordsworth and Byron respectively, showing how the conventions and attitudes explored in Chapters 1 and 2, and the use of travel as a mode of social distinction explored in Chapter 3, play out in both the writings and the actual travels of these two major Romantic figures. Both men present themselves as misadventurers, and borrow rhetorical strategies from the earlier travel literature to do so. At the same time, Wordsworth and Byron each borrow different elements from the earlier texts, or make a different inflection of the same inherited conventions. Exploring these differences, and referring to a range of texts –-notably the *Salisbury Plain* poems, *The Borderers* and the 'Analogy Passage' of *The Prelude* for Wordsworth, and *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan* Canto 2 and *The Island* for Byron – chapters 4 and 5 articulate the very different political, philosophical and aesthetic points being made by Wordsworth and Byron as they pose, both on the page and in actuality, as suffering travellers.

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# *Abbreviations*

*BCMP* *Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

*BCPW* *Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, 7 Vols., ed. Jerome McGann (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980-1993).

*BLJ* *Byron: Letters and Journals*, 13 Vols., ed. Leslie A. Marchand (London: John Murray, 1973-1994).

*CCP* *Coleridge: The Complete Poems*, ed. William Keach (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997).

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| *C Letters* | *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 Vols., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956-71). |
| *C Works* | *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 17 Vols., ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton, New Jersey and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971-2000). |
| *Hazlitt CW* | *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 21 Vols., ed. P.P. Howe (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1930-4). |
| *KCP* | *Keats: The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987). |
| *K Letters* | *The Letters of John Keats*, 2 Vols., ed. H.E. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass., and Cambridge, England: Harvard University Press, 1958). |
| *SPP* | *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York and London: Norton, 1977). |
| *WB* | *The Borderers*, ed. Robert Osborn (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982). |
| *WLB* | *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Lyrical Ballads*, eds. R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (London: Routledge, 1996). |
| *W Letters* | *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, 7 Vols., ed. Earnest de Selincourt, 2nd Edition eds. Chester L. Shaver, Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967-1988). |
| *WP* | *Wordsworth: The Prelude: The Four Texts*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995). |
| *WPrW* | *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 Vols., eds. W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974). |
| *WPW* | *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Earnest de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). |
| *WSP* | *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975). |

# *Introduction*

Travellers,

Texts,

Contexts,

1790-1830

*'Was it through books that you first thought of ships?'*
*'Reading a book, sir, made me first go abroad.'*

Wilfred Owen

*Since 'tis not to bee found at home*
*She'll travell to a martyrdome.*

Richard Crashaw

A brief snapshot in words, showing the Shelley circle in the early months of 1822, brings the principal themes of this thesis into focus. Shelley and his friends have a new hobby, which for Shelley is the culmination of a lifelong enthusiasm: they are building a sailing boat. As construction proceeds, anticipation and excitement grow, giving rise to scenes such as the following:

> With a real chart of the Mediterranean spread out before them, and with faces as grave and anxious as those of Columbus and his companions, they held councils as to the islands to be visited, coasts explored, courses steered, the amount of armament, stores, water and provisions which would be necessary. Then we would narrate instances of the daring of the old navigators, as when Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1446, with two vessels each of fifty tons burthen; or when Drake went round the world, one of his craft being only thirty tons; and of the extraordinary runs and enterprises accomplished in open boats of equal or less tonnage than the one we were building; from the earliest times to those of Commodore Bligh.[1]

This reminiscence, by Edward John Trelawny, illustrates neatly two premises which underpin this thesis. The first premise is that travel may often be a mode of *self-dramatisation*, and even, in contemporary critical parlance, of self-fashioning. This is not always the case, of course: refugees forced to flee at gun-point presumably spend little time fashioning a role for themselves as they begin their journey. Yet wherever travel is undertaken willingly, and especially when it is undertaken as a leisure activity, it is likely that some form of self-dramatising tendency will be at work in the traveller well before any travelling actually takes place. Certainly this seems to be the case with Shelley and his friends, who are clearly not just going yachting. Rather, they mean to voyage in the manner of Diaz, Drake and similar figures. They assume a seriousness of purpose even as they make their preparations: hence those 'faces as grave and anxious as those of Columbus and his companions.' Would-be adventurers and explorers, they are already styling themselves as a very distinctive set of travellers, and seeking to project a very distinctive sort of selfhood. It is all role-play, perhaps, but it is play conducted in the most earnest fashion and subsequently enacted 'for real': when the boat, the *Don Juan*, was completed, the group really did make their own voyages (albeit on a far smaller scale than those prized 'old navigators'). And if it is a game that these voyagers are playing, it was a game which had fatal consequences for three of the party. Edward Williams, Charles Vivian and Shelley all died when the *Don Juan* foundered on 8 July 1822, caught in a sudden storm at sea off Leghorn – a

[1] Edward John Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, ed. David Wright (London, 1973), p. 135.

disastrous outcome to the self-dramatisation performed by the Shelley circle which points us to the central concerns of this thesis.

Trelawny's account, then, shows a group of travellers casting themselves, *qua* travellers, in a certain sort of role. Further to this, it also conveys powerfully the extent to which that role-play is both stimulated and shaped by a body of stories told about travel. Shelley and his friends rehearse endlessly the tales of 'old navigators', and it is from these tales, clearly, that there springs the desire to go voyaging, and also an expectation and resolution as to the spirit in which such voyaging will be conducted. This relationship between the voyages conducted in the *Don Juan* and the anecdotes which precede, underwrite and in a sense even write those actual voyages, points me to the second premise with which I wish to begin this study: namely, the assertion that if travel is often a matter of self-dramatisation, such self-dramatisation can only take place in a *generic* or *intertextual* context. To invoke a metaphor that will be frequently used in this thesis, self-dramatisation implicitly requires a *script*, and such a script, for the traveller, can only be assembled on the basis of stories heard, and texts read, that touch on the travelling he or she has in mind. Thus it was 'reading a book' that made Wilfred Owen's 'navy boy' go abroad, in the first epigraph to this chapter.[2] He does not say whether it was of a particular place that he read, or of ships and the Navy, or of 'travel' in an abstract sense, but on all these issues, one can speculate, some book might have fed the young man's imagination. A wide range of expectations, aspirations and anxieties that we feel in relation to travel – not only about particular destinations, routes, and modes of transport but also more generally about the situations we expect to encounter, the experiences we feel we should value, and such like – inevitably emerge from a matrix of prior anecdotes and prior texts. Thus 'Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art' 'stamp'd' the image of Venice in Byron, whilst for Shelley, those 'instances of the daring of old navigators … from the earliest times to those of Commodore Bligh' shaped a fascination not with any one place, but with a particular style of travel.[3]

Such matrices of prior tales and texts, we may assume, worked not simply in an anticipatory fashion, to generate a set of ideas as to what the travel experience was going to be like. They would

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[2] Wilfred Owen, 'It was a navy boy, so prim, so trim', ll. 23-4, in *The Complete Poems and Fragments*, 2 Vols., ed. Jon Stallworthy (Oxford, 1985), Vol. 1, p. 79.
[3] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto 4, ll. 158-9, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2. Hereafter all canto and line numbers for *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* will be included in parentheses in the main body of the text.

also have been at work whilst the travel experience was ongoing. If at the material level they influenced routes, destinations and so forth, at the perceptual level they may also have influenced the interpretation of events, providing as it were a structure for experience. Repeating a corpus of antecedent travel texts *ad infinitum*, almost, indeed, seeming to inhabit those narratives, the members of the Shelley circle were in a sense training themselves to read their experience in a specific fashion. They were fostering the expectation that events in their voyages would unfold according to certain narrative conventions, and to some extent the expectation may have been enough to ensure that events really did unfold in this way. Later still – to point out another variation in this interplay of texts and facts – these narratives might have provided a literary framework according to which the travelling experience could be written up and recounted to others. In all these different ways, prior texts can give a shape to the travel experience, playing a crucial formative role in the traveller's self-dramatisation of him or herself as a certain sort of traveller.

These, then, are my two starting premises, and already some points of clarification are probably required. It should be apparent that I hope to encompass in the idea of 'self-dramatisation' both actual travelling and the representations that can be made of that travelling. I acknowledge from the outset, however, that a distinction will sometimes have to drawn between the actual event and the representation of it. Also, I do not mean to imply that the self-dramatising impulse, and the travel 'script' implicit in it, determines the real travel experience absolutely (although I will suggest that it can determine the experience significantly). I mean merely that it is one influence on that experience, a template applied before, during and after travel, according to which we seek to order and contain a plethora of impressions, sensations, thoughts and feelings. The experience can, of course, invalidate the template. Making sense of our journeys retrospectively, the script we apply to ourselves may be very different from that with which we anticipated the journey. We may set out as adventurers, and subsequently have to acknowledge *en route* that we are no more than tourists. In all but the most extreme situations, however, we retain a sense of the role we are playing: we simply switch between the different scripts available to us. Even in the case of those extreme situations (which will figure strongly in what follows), the self-dramatising impulse and the shaping influence of earlier texts come into play the moment we are rescued from exigency, finding ourselves in a position to reconstruct

and recount what happened to us. In these various ways, then, texts impinge deeply on our travels, but they can never wholly shape that travelling. Indeed, for a certain sort of traveller – the sort with which this thesis is most concerned – this is the very point of travel: it throws up unexpected events and testing situations. Yet there is a paradox at work here: planning on the unplanned, these travellers seem to script travel as unscripted experience, and this is a refinement to the idea of the travel script which I shall address later in this introduction.

For now, however, these premises – albeit with these qualifications – serve to map the general contours of the present study. This thesis addresses a particular set of self-dramatisations made in relation to travel, and seeks to understand these self-dramatisations through an exploration of the shaping influence, on the travellers, of a particular constellation of texts. The self-dramatisations that interest me are those made by a group of writers we conventionally label 'Romantic': Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and most especially, Wordsworth and Byron. These were all writers who liked to style themselves travellers, and who did much to realise this conception of themselves both on the page and on the road. As Wordsworth puts it in *The Prelude*: 'a traveller I am, / And all my tale is of myself'.[4] But why does Wordsworth wish to be considered a traveller? What sort of traveller does Wordsworth consider himself to be? One approach to these issues is to examine the earlier narratives that inform both Wordsworth's actual travelling and his writing-up of the travel experience: those prior texts, that is to say, which script Wordsworth's self-dramatisation as traveller. And of particular interest in this regard – although they shall not be exclusively the focus of my enquiry – are texts such as those discussed by Shelley and his friends, the narratives of earlier travellers, which form the genre known in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as 'Voyages and Travels'. To identify the travel narratives that Wordsworth, like Shelley, told himself as he planned, conducted and recounted his journeys is to grasp the web of generic influences in Wordsworth's travelling, and in his own versions of travel writing. The quotation just given, it should be noted, turns *The Prelude* into a travel narrative: Wordsworth is a 'traveller'; his 'tale' is of himself; *ergo* his tale is species of travel writing. By being attentive to this generic context to Wordsworth's travelling, we should be better

[4] *The Prelude* (1805), Book 3, ll.196-197, in *WP*. Hereafter all book and line numbers for *The Prelude* will be included in parentheses in the main body of the text: unless otherwise indicated, the reference is to the 1805 *Prelude*.

able to place Wordsworth as traveller. We can appreciate the sort of traveller he thought he was, and why this mattered.

The same principle applies to those other major Romantic writers who were also conspicuous travellers. The years 1790 to 1830 witnessed two generations of poets for whom poetic identity was bound up with questions of travel to a degree unprecedented in English literature. Think of Wordsworth walking in the Alps, Byron in Greece, Shelley in Italy (and all three in many other locations besides): are there any earlier British poets one connects so strongly with being on the move or with foreign locations? From one perspective, the poets just named travelled simply because they could: from the latter half of the eighteenth century, forces of modernisation at work both within Britain and abroad gave individuals the opportunity to travel as never before. Such material considerations are important, and will be discussed in due course, but alone they cannot wholly account for why these poets travelled. They tell us little about the spirit in which Wordsworth, Byron and their contemporaries made their journeys, and little about their sense of themselves as travellers, their expectations, aspirations and anxieties. One route to understanding these aspects of the Romantic interest in travel, as expressed both on the road and on the page, is that path which leads back, through the travel scripts these travellers felt they were acting out, to those prior narratives which shaped these scripts.

This thesis, then, has a dual agenda. It seeks on the one hand to survey a set of formative texts, and on the other hand to survey a set of responses to those texts. The first survey takes up roughly the first two-thirds of the thesis: the second, which for reasons yet to be explained focuses primarily on Wordsworth and Byron, constitutes the final third of the study. I should say at once that I do not propose to examine all the texts which exercise a shaping influence on figures such as Wordsworth and Byron, nor do I attempt to discuss every aspect of Wordsworth and Byron's travel and travel writing. Instead, I address one particular constellation of texts, and one particular aspect of Romantic travel (as I shall call it) that arises from the influence of those texts. Rather than being complete or categorical, therefore, both halves of my enquiry are deliberately skewed so as to highlight a single theme. This theme was arrived at by a process of empirical investigation. I began my research by examining the travel narratives that are alluded to either most frequently, or most conspicuously, by

Wordsworth, Byron and other contemporary writers. In attempting to analyse the appeal of these antecedent texts, and to comprehend the logic behind Romantic re-workings, in print or in action, of particular passages from these texts, I concluded that one figure especially held a fascination for the Romantic writers: namely, the traveller who suffered. In turn, surveying the travel literature available to the Romantics with an eye attuned to the significance of suffering in travel, I found a network of thematic preoccupations and stylistic patterns that effectively constitute a distinct sub-genre, or mode, within the Voyages and Travels genre. It is a sub-genre comprising a substantial number of texts in which travel is construed not so much as adventure, but as *misadventure*: a corpus of corpses and near-corpses, of storms, disasters and desolate places, in which the principal point of interest for both writer and reader is clearly the torments – or at least, discomforts – endured by the traveller. This sub-genre may be said to establish recognisable modes of writing about danger and discomfort in travel, modes that can be invoked by other sub-genres of travel writing as and when required. The exploration narrative is a case in point. Although the exploration narrative, an emergent form in this period, is largely predicated on the avoidance of what I shall term the narrative of misadventure, there were of course unfortunate explorers whose expeditions turned out disastrously. As writers, these explorers had to hand interpretative and stylistic conventions with which they could first make sense of their mishaps, and thereafter write about them.

What I shall dub the literature of misadventure thus provided a range of *topoi* for later travellers and travel writers, or alternatively, it provided the *topos* of the suffering traveller inflected in a range of different ways. Bearing in mind the idea of the travel script as outlined above, however, we may see this *topos* as shaping not just the representation of the travel experience but also, in certain subtle ways, the experience itself. In this connection, we might look again at Trelawny's account of the Shelley circle in 1822. One of the stories the group was telling itself was that of 'Commodore Bligh': in other words, the story of what happened in the aftermath of the controversial *Bounty* mutiny of 1789. The mutineers had consigned their captain and several other crew members to an open boat, and in this over-crowded vessel Bligh had made a 3,600 mile voyage across the Pacific Ocean, eventually arriving at Kupang in Timor. This was a story first told in Bligh's *Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship the Bounty* (1790), although in 1822 Shelley and his friends probably had access

to it via one of the many anthologies of voyage narratives that were then available. In whatever version they were reading it, however, Bligh's voyage would have fascinated the group in several different ways. First and foremost, of course, it represents an outstanding feat of navigation, and this was no doubt one reason for Shelley's interest in it. Yet surely no-one who has read an account of Bligh's open-boat voyage would suggest that this was the only reason for the story's appeal. Actually to read Bligh's narrative – or indeed, any of the subsequent abridged versions of it – is to realise that heroism and nautical brilliance alone do not explain the text's peculiar fascination. What grips the reader is the drama of thirst and famine, the physical disintegration of individuals and, collectively, the constant threat of a social disintegration which would tip the party into scenes of even greater horror. Issues of transgression and punishment come to the fore, authoritarianism jostles with more egalitarian impulses, and all the while we have the spectacle of extreme physical and psychological anguish. Attention ultimately centres on the harrowing image of men reduced to 'so many spectres, whose ghastly countenances, if the cause had been unknown, would rather have excited terror than pity. Our bodies were nothing but skin and bones, our limbs were full of sores, and we were cloathed in rags'.[5] Here we glimpse what is in a sense the conventional appearance of the *misadventurer*, as I shall dub him. The grotesque bodies of Bligh's companions would have been very familiar to Shelley: they are a staple of the innumerable shipwreck narratives of the day, and of several other sorts of travel narrative besides. For anyone widely read in the travel literature in this period, Bligh and his men form part of a continuum of more or less disastrous travel narratives: the descriptions of their *travails* point towards, and bring to mind, many similar descriptions in a wide range of other travel texts. And in this way, I would suggest, the story of Bligh's open-boat voyage connects us, and the Shelley circle, with that distinctive sub-genre in Voyages and Travels which is the literature of misadventure.

In suggesting that the suffering of Bligh's men is in some way conventional, I do not mean to suggest that these sailors did not suffer as described. I wish simply to shift attention from the experiences described, to the experience of *reading* those descriptions. Events that were horribly real to the actual sufferer may nevertheless, to the reader, have a conventional or generic aspect. Further

[5] William Bligh, *A Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship Bounty* (London, 1790), p. 80.

to this, moreover, we might fairly ponder the effect upon a reader of being well-versed in this genre, and in these conventions of misadventurous travel writing. In this context, indeed, what does one make of the fatal outcome to that boat-building venture of Shelley and his friends? What might otherwise seem no more than tragic misfortune is perhaps to be read somewhat differently in the light of a fondness for disastrous travel literature. On the page, at least, Shelley liked to style himself a figure from this literature: as he writes in *Adonais*, 'my spirit's bark is driven, / Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng / Whose sails were never to the tempest given'.[6] This is arguably not just a metaphorical self-dramatisation, given Shelley's eventual fate. Interestingly, just before he died, in the last sighting of the *Don Juan*, Shelley seemed to be insisting that the *Juan*'s sails be kept up – a staggeringly inappropriate course of action with a storm about to strike the boat. This may have been nautical ineptitude, or a naïve belief that the *Juan* could outrun the storm swelling behind it. Yet in a mariner fascinated, as Shelley was, by accounts of extreme conditions and terrifying situations, there could also plausibly exist a desire – perhaps not consciously felt – to encounter those conditions and situations. Did Shelley seek to the last some sublime confrontation with the elements? He may have hoped to overcome the elements: he may even have hoped, more masochistically, to be defeated by the storm and thereby to be launched on the sort of harrowing yet heroic ordeal endured by figures such at Bligh. This is all speculation, of course: we can never know what went on in the minds of the men in the *Don Juan*. Yet however tentative our conclusions must be, it is not wholly inappropriate to ask how far Shelley's response to the storm – and indeed, the very fascination with boats which led to the *Don Juan* being built in the first place – was born in part from a desire to enact in actuality certain *topoi* of misadventure.

If Shelley did indeed seek to enact in some form the *topos* of the suffering traveller, he would not have been alone among his contemporaries. Most of those writers whom we conventionally label 'Romantic' seem to evince a fascination with this *topos*, seeking to play the part of misadventurer both on the page and in actuality. Indeed, we might almost say that it is characteristic of the 'Romantic' traveller that he is a misadventurer. (In what follows, I shall use the masculine pronoun when speaking of the Romantic traveller: most of the travellers under consideration are men and for many

[6] *Adonais*, ll. 488-90, in *SPP*.

of them their travelling, with its emphasis on a certain sort of toughness, seems intimately connected with notions of masculinity.) Equally, it is characteristically the case that 'Romantic' travel is travel construed as an activity which ought to involve various degrees of hardship, danger, discomfort, abjection and alienation. This is a large claim, but it is one seemingly permissible on the basis of a story told by William Hazlitt in his *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* (1826). Touring in Italy, Hazlitt contemplates but rejects a journey into the dangerous regions south of Naples. Some of Hazlitt's fellow travellers, however, are of a different mind:

> A friend of mine said that he thought it *the only romantic thing going* [Hazlitt's emphasis], this being carried off by the banditti; that life was become too tame and insipid without such accidents, and that it would not be amiss to put oneself in the way of such an adventure, like putting in for the grand prize in the lottery.[7]

A few pages later, this taste for the 'romantic' has been carried over into real life. Despite warnings as to their safety, two Englishmen have insisted on travelling beyond Naples. As Hazlitt puts it (and again, the emphasis is his): 'they went forward – and succeeded in getting themselves into *the only remaining romantic situation*. I have not heard whether they have yet got out of it.'[8]

Here then is a conspicuously risk-taking, disaster-seeking attitude in travel, evidence of what Hazlitt terms a 'national propensity' of British travellers 'to contend with difficulty and to resist obstacles'.[9] It is an attitude that for Hazlitt seems to be linked to the idea of being 'romantic'. He talks specifically of a 'romantic situation', by which he means a situation such as one would find in a romance (pointing us again to the shaping influence of certain literary sources), but the adjective could clearly be applied just as easily to the traveller who seeks out such situations. Hazlitt's satirical tone suggests it was not a term any traveller would have used of him or herself, yet in this 'romantic' taste for danger and discomfort in travel, I would suggest, we can discover a degree of coherence amongst the so-called 'Romantic' writers under consideration in this thesis, and even a certain relevance in labelling them 'Romantic' – two topics which have provoked much debate among

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[7] *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 10, p. 253.
[8] *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 10, p. 255.
[9] *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 10, p. 255.

Romanticists, although I do not intend to engage with these debates here, beyond making this initial observation.[10]

The subject of this thesis has thus been narrowed to those Romantic self-dramatisations *à propos* travel that cast traveller or writer as misadventurer, and to those earlier texts which give rise to this particular Romantic travel script. In considering these topics, however, a more straightforward question will also be borne in mind: namely, why does the Romantic traveller adopt such a seemingly masochistic attitude? What does misadventure signify, to the traveller and to others? Tracing the genealogy, as it were, of this Romantic taste in travel is an essential first step in our understanding, yet on its own this method cannot wholly account for why the Romantics were so fascinated by the image of suffering in travel. To comprehend more fully what such suffering meant to the Romantic traveller, and to appreciate the cultural messages each individual traveller thought he was sending out by styling himself in this way, we need to cross-reference the literary traditions invoked by each traveller/writer against the specific circumstances in which those traditions are invoked. Each Romantic self-dramatisation takes place not only in a generic context, but also in a *historical* context: the *topoi* of misadventure persist over time, yet are also repeatedly being instantiated at a particular moment in time, and in a particular place. And at this intersection of genre and history, each self-dramatisation generates its own particular body of meanings. These meanings are various: a traveller may claim to seek out mishap and hardship on the basis of some aesthetic or philosophical agenda, but this does not prevent his style of travelling from also sending out powerful social and political signals. The various layers of meaning to these self-dramatisations may pull in different, even contradictory directions (and I shall argue that such contradictory impulses are indeed at work in the Romantic traveller) but this is to be expected. When each of the individuals under discussion here sets himself up as a particular sort of traveller, the process is not always wholly conscious or considered. The exception would be the explicit literary use of earlier travel accounts depicting suffering in travel: we may assume that figures such as Wordsworth and Byron knew what they were about when they reworked source material of this sort in their own poetry. But as they seek to project a certain image in their actual travelling, and in their conversation, letters and journals, what

[10] See Aidan Day, *Romanticism* (London, 1996).

we are often dealing with is a cultural practice of the type described by Pierre Bourdieu: an activity which proceeds according to a set of cultural rules which cannot be fully articulated by the practitioner, so deeply have they been absorbed.[11] The Romantic traveller may be highly self-conscious in some regards, but in other regards he may be utterly oblivious as to the deeper motives and broader ramifications of his acts of self-dramatisation: thus the meanings which attach to those self-dramatisations may be both complex and over-determined.

To give a shape to this aspect of my enquiry, I shall introduce here another metaphor which will appear frequently in this study. The title of this thesis is adapted from a phrase in Richard Crashaw's 'In Memory of the Vertuous and Learned Lady Madre de Teresa': the couplet in which this phrase appears – two lines which fascinated Coleridge around the time he was writing 'Christabel' – is given as the second epigraph to this chapter.[12] Crashaw's Teresa plans to 'travell to a martyrdome', and it is this idea of martyrdom, and of martyrdom achieved in and through travel, that I shall often invoke in the following discussion. Shelley's death in the *Don Juan*, and Byron's death in Greece, may seem the most obvious examples of Romantic travellers possibly achieving a martyrdom in travel, but we should also remember that in its proper usage the term does not strictly require the death of the 'martyr'. Etymologically speaking, a 'martyr' is a 'witness', someone whose persecution and suffering (which may or may not end in death) testify to an enduring faith in some larger cause or ideology. And this etymology prompts us to ask: to what larger cause or framework of belief do the sufferings of the Romantic traveller bear witness?

Alternatively, one might phrase this question according to the vocabulary implicit in my use of the terms *topos* and *topoi*. This is the terminology of classical rhetoric, and I use it partly to reiterate throughout my discussion the point made earlier in relation to the sufferings of Bligh's men: namely, that whilst the sufferings of many misadventurers were very real to the individuals concerned, to the reader who has read widely in such accounts the descriptions of these sufferings can take on a conventional, even stereotypical, dimension. Further to this, however, the terminology is also useful in relation to those moments in which the Romantic traveller and/or writer dramatises himself as a

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[11] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1977).
[12] Richard Crashaw, 'In Memory of the Vertuous and Learned Lady Madre de Teresa that Sought an early Martyrdome', ll. 43-4, in *Poetical Works*, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford, 1957), p. 132.

misadventurer, because it underscores the rhetorical intention of such self-dramatisations. If it is useful to think in terms of what the sufferings of the Romantic traveller bear witness to, it is also useful to pose the question thus: of what are we meant to be persuaded when we see these travellers apparently, and sometimes actually, enduring hardship and pain? What point are they making, to their readers, to their fellow-travellers and even, perhaps, to themselves, in thus insisting that their travel is matter of scrapes and escapes, dangers and discomforts?

Part of the answer to these questions may be inferred from Hazlitt's mockery of those travellers who insist on getting themselves into a 'romantic situation'. Hazlitt looks askance at his fellow travellers: their silliness, in his eyes, clearly sets them apart from more sensible and conventional tourists. And this sense of being different was probably also felt by the targets of Hazlitt's satire, those travellers who sought the 'romantic situation'. As we shall see in due course, the Romantic espousal of discomfort and danger in travel often has an oppositional aspect. It seems commonly to express a degree of discontent and self-conscious difference. The discontent is felt on one (or more) of a variety of issues which seem to impinge on the idea of travel in this period: the rise of tourism, for example, or the modernising forces at work in British society, or the growth of empire, or even, to use a term which is not as anachronistic as it might appear, globalization. There is a tension implicit here, however. These Romantic travellers were very much products of their time, responding to the unprecedented opportunities for travel in the period, yet they also felt themselves to be at odds with their time, in various ways fashioning their travelling as a form of protest against prevailing attitudes and practices. Their style of travelling at one level sets them apart from the bulk of their contemporaries, and from the general climate of opinion in the period. At another level, however, it masks a far more complicated, anxious relationship with the dominant practices and discourses of the age.

This fraught relationship persists today: on the one hand, a style of travel given to 'romantic situations'; on the other hand, a range of rival discourses and practices pertaining to travel, that the more 'romantic' traveller disdains but is nevertheless implicated in. This should not surprise us. Marilyn Butler writes that 'Romanticism' is 'a complex of responses to certain conditions which Western society has experienced and continues to experience since the middle of the eighteenth

century', and this observation holds true in the sphere of travel.[13] The social and geopolitical conditions to which Romantic travellers were responding are still with us, and accordingly those Romantic responses still shape our own attitudes. In some contexts, we continue to attach a certain worthiness to the idea of roughing it: there is still cultural capital to be gained from making the process of travel difficult rather than easy, painful rather than luxurious. According to criteria such as these we will often divide the travelling fraternity into two categories, 'traveller' and 'tourist'. Countless advertising campaigns have been predicated on the fact that the first is good, the second bad: one of the praiseworthy aspects of the former, of course, is usually a readiness to countenance discomfort and danger in travel. This 'traveller'/'tourist' distinction which seems to have come into being in the Romantic period, and indeed, to have been given its most influential early articulation in the careers of Wordsworth and Byron. James Buzard's *The Beaten Track*, the most important recent study of nineteenth-century travel and tourism, effectively takes Wordsworth and Byron as the starting point for Victorian conceptions as to what it meant to be a 'traveller' in this more prestigious sense.[14] My own enquiry moves a stage further backwards in time, exploring not the models that Wordsworth and Byron provided for later travellers, but rather the models which they themselves inherited and the processes by which they fashioned from these precursors their own distinctive style of being a 'traveller'. In so doing, it should hopefully provide a genealogy not only of Romantic attitudes to travel, but also of many of our own attitudes.

## Romantic Travel: the Literary Context

It would be impossible to produce a comprehensive survey of all the texts that exercise a shaping, scripting influence on Romantic travel, and on the Romantic writing of travel (those moments when an individual dramatises himself as traveller not in action but in words). Such a project would probably have to begin with *The Odyssey* and the Greek romances (where shipwreck plays a key role) and thereafter work systematically through the whole of Western literature. This section will

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[13] Marilyn Butler, *Romanticism, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760-1830* (Oxford, 1981), p. 184.
[14] James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 1-17 (for 'traveller' versus 'tourist'); pp. 19-30 (for Wordsworth); pp. 113-30 (for Byron).

accordingly only gesture towards the full extent of these source materials before narrowing its enquiry to one particular body of writings, those texts which comprise the Voyages and Travels genre. From this genre alone, however, the Romantic imagination is fed by a staggering volume and diversity of writing: hence the need to further delimit my enquiry by focusing, for the greater part of this thesis, on just one aspect of the Voyages and Travels genre, and on a constellation of texts which present, in various ways, the image of the suffering traveller. To appreciate fully the significance of the Romantic traveller's emulation of this class of travel narrative, however, we need to understand something of those narratives he is simultaneously choosing *not* to emulate. This section therefore seeks to convey firstly a sense of the Voyages and Travels genre in its entirety, and secondly a sense of the inter-relationship of its constituent parts.

One must first make a few remarks, however, about the mass of texts which more generally fed Romantic imaginings of travel. The great shifts in literary taste across the eighteenth century – the primitivism of Rousseau, the sentimentalism of Sterne, the increasing aesthetic appreciation of landscape found in Thomson and elsewhere – all played a part in shaping the attitudes and expectations of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travellers. Sometimes these literary influences dictated even the mode of transport adopted by a traveller. Shelley and Byron, for example, undertook in 1816 a boat voyage on Lake Geneva, from Meillerie to St Gingo, in imitation of a similar voyage which takes place in Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761). The prominence given to sailing in this and other works by Rousseau was one factor underpinning its (relatively new) popularity in the Romantic period, whilst Rousseau's espousal of walking in *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1782) helped to create the vogue for 'pedestrianism' that emerges from the 1780s onwards. (Both sailing and walking will be discussed more fully in due course: before quitting the subject here, however, one should note that Shelley and Byron's voyage, not untypically, almost ended in disaster.) But if one is interested specifically in the Romantic concern with travel as misadventure, there are two literary trends in particular which must be seen as shaping Romantic attitudes: namely, sentimentalism and the Gothic. Sentimental literature places an especial premium on heroes and heroines who are placed in positions of distress and vulnerability: Gothic accentuates these themes by incorporating more overt or extravagant elements of danger, abjection and suffering. The two

traditions are fused with particular power in the work of Anne Radcliffe, and it is seemingly a 'romance' such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) that Hazlitt's fellow travellers have in mind when they conceive of some 'romantic situation' in the dangerous regions south of Naples. Gothic writing generally, and Radcliffe in particular, turn the southern, Catholic regions of Europe into places of intrigue and ambush, populated by banditti and wolves – banditti, of course, being precisely the danger that Hazlitt's companions encounter. In this distinctively Gothic terrain, rendered, in Radcliffe's case at least, in a powerful prose style, protagonists are subjected to various misadventures and 'romantic situations', each pleasantly unpleasant on the page, although less pleasant perhaps in actuality. At some level the reader must identify with these heroes and heroines, and the genre thus caters subtly to a variety of masochistic fantasies: the example of Hazlitt's fellow travellers would suggest that such fantasies sometimes spilled over into real life, and actual travel. At the very least, Gothic scene-setting gave the Romantic traveller a vocabulary not only to describe but also, possibly, to apprehend landscape. Thus Keats inherits from Radcliffe both a lexicon, and a set of expectations, as he prepares to set out on a walk in Devon: 'I am going among Scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe – I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous sound you, and solitude you.'[15] Keats's tone here suggests that this Radcliffean travel script could seem something of a cliché, although elsewhere in his letters, especially those sent from his walking tour of the Lake District and Scotland, it would seem that this is a landscape and a vocabulary to which he himself is partial.

In addition to Radcliffe, one should also note the influence exercised on some Romantic travellers by William Beckford. Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) extended the Gothic topography customarily associated with southern Europe to the Orient. Further to this, the first edition of *Vathek* supplemented the Gothic narrative proper with a substantial scholarly apparatus by its editor, Samuel Henley. These notes attempted to demonstrate the authenticity of many of the Oriental details in Beckford's narrative. Gothic fantasy is thus packaged as knowledge, as expressive of the reality of 'Oriental' life – a combination particularly beguiling to Byron, whose imaginings of abroad generally, and the East in particular, frequently seem to owe a debt to Beckford.

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[15] *K Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 245.

Gothic fiction, then, is a contemporary literary mode which did much to shape the conceptions of the Romantic traveller, and especially a Romantic preference for travel as a dangerous, painful or abject business. There were also individual texts, or passages from texts, which seem to have played frequently in the Romantic traveller's mind, either as he travelled or later as he recounted his travels on the page. Shakespeare, as one would expect, provides several touchstones of this sort for Romantic travel. Shelley's preferred name for the boat he built in 1822 was the *Ariel* (*Don Juan* being foisted on Shelley by Byron), a reference which opens up a rich vein of allusion and symbolism. 'Ariel' itself suggests magic and creative power (Ariel being, after all, the creature who makes Prospero's magic happen). More germane to the present study, however, is the fact that *The Tempest* is a play which opens with a stirring representation of shipwreck. Significantly, this shipwreck is far from being a tragic event: rather, it is the means of entry to Prospero's island, a place of magical and redemptive possibilities. Effecting a 'sea change', as Ariel's song has it, this disaster at sea brings about wondrous, and deserved, transformations: 'those are pearls that were his eyes'.[16] Yet not all Shakespearean shipwrecks are so beguiling. In an earlier play, *Richard III*, we find a far more unsettling vision of a wreck, articulated by a character, Clarence, who is soon to be drowned himself (albeit in malmsey wine rather than sea-water):

> Oh Lord! methought what pain it was to drown:
> What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears:
> What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!
> Methoughts I saw a thousand fearful wracks;
> Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
> Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
> Inestimable stones, unvalu'd jewels,
> All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea.
> Some lay in dead men's skulls, and in the holes
> Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept –
> As 'twere in scorn of eyes – reflecting gems,
> That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep
> And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.[17]

In contrast to the consolatory, compensatory schema revealed by the wreck in *The Tempest*, here all is disorder, a debris strewn across the ocean floor in mockery of human desire and effort. Clarence's vision is one of horror rather than hope, and as a consequence it provided the Romantics with a

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[16] *The Tempest*, ed. Frank Kermode (London, 1954), I.ii.401.
[17] *Richard III*, ed. Antony Hammond (London, 1981), I.iv.21-33.

powerful alternative to *The Tempest*'s articulation of the shipwreck scenario: both Shakespearean touchstones, as we shall see, had a part to play in the scripting of Romantic travel.

There is also a key Miltonic touchstone which has a bearing on Romantic conceptions regarding travel. The famous phrase with which Milton takes leave of Adam and Eve at the end of *Paradise Lost* – 'the world was all before them' – launches many Romantic journeys, real, imagined and metaphorical.[18] 'The earth is all before me!' (1.15): with this exclamation Wordsworth, in the 'glad preamble' to *The Prelude*, begins simultaneously a walk and the larger metaphorical journey which is *The Prelude* itself. This is an allusion made so frequently in Romantic writings as to seem almost a cliché, yet one should note that the reference is to a line which admits of two subtly divergent readings (in the same way that the two Shakespearean reference-points just cited allow two different understandings of the shipwreck scenario). In isolation, Milton's phrase creates a sense of infinite possibilities ahead, evoking a joyous mood, and it is in this way that the Romantic traveller usually applies the line to himself. Yet there is also, of course, a darker aspect to the phrase when its context is remembered. The world is 'all before' Adam and Eve at the close of *Paradise Lost* because they are forced to leave Eden. Milton as he originally wrote this famous line intended us to maintain two viewpoints: on the one hand, the tragedy of the Fall and the inherent sinfulness of humanity, which compels us to exile, travel and hardship; on the other, the divine comedy of the *felix culpa*, the fortunate sin which begins a journey that will end in redemption, and that *en route* demonstrates more fully God's Providence and benevolence. The ambiguity here allows the Romantic traveller to inflect this Miltonic touchstone in different ways, as we shall see in due course.

Before concluding this highly selective survey of literary sources informing Romantic travel, one should also note the way in which the Romantics themselves contribute to this matrix of prior texts. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, for example, presents its protagonist 'alone on the wide, wide Sea', and thus is clearly one model in the mind of Childe Harold, that poetic alter ego who both is and is not Byron, as he launches himself 'into the world alone, / Upon the wide, wide sea' (1.182-3).[19] In turn, the adventurers and travellers fashioned in verse by Byron are potent models for many

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[18] *Paradise Lost*, Book 12, l. 646, in *The Poems of John Milton*, eds. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London and New York, 1968).
[19] *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798 version), l. 225, in *CCP*.

subsequent travellers and travel writers: Richard Burton, Richard Ford, A.W. Kinglake and the like. Perhaps the best example of this particular line of influence is the author of the anecdote with which I begun this thesis, Edward John Trelawny. Trelawny as he presented himself to the Shelley circle seemed a spectacularly travelled man, rendered exotic and strange by his experiences. At their first meeting in 1822, he seemed to Mary Shelley 'a kind of half Arab Englishman – whose life has been as changeful as that of Anastasius & who recounts the adventures of his youth as eloquently and well as the imagined Greek'.[20] In comparing Trelawny to a fictional character – the protagonist of Thomas Hope's novel *Anastasius: Memoirs of a Greek* (1819) – Shelley was being more perceptive than she realised: the 'adventures', such as being shipwrecked off the Patagonian coast or living as a pirate in the Indian Ocean, were mostly invented. Although Trelawny had served briefly in the Navy, and had taken part in a major assault on Java in 1811, the image he presented to the Shelley circle was largely the product of an obsessive reading of Byron's poetry, over a ten-year period spent in various tawdry boarding houses in Bath, Bristol and London. Yet Trelawny cannot simply be labelled a fraud or a liar. Again one must recognise a more complex relationship between the fictions one tells of (and to) oneself, and the facts of one's actual travelling. Dramatising himself according to a highly Byronic script, Trelawny is the Byronic word made flesh: if this self-dramatisation began in fantasy, however, it was subsequently enacted for real. Trelawny accompanied Byron on his Greek adventure, and once there he not only outlived Byron, he arguably also played out the Byronic role with more consistency and intransigence than Byron himself would have shown.

These, then, are a few key literary sources that inform Romantic travel. For the most part, however, my enquiry will focus more precisely on the influence exercised on the Romantic traveller by one particular body of texts, those which comprise the genre known at the time as Voyages and Travels. Romantic knowledge of this genre cannot be doubted: it was one of the most abundant forms of writing in the late eighteenth century, 'outrun in popularity among the reading public only by theology.'[21] As *Aikin's Annual Review* declared in 1805, travel literature appealed universally, and on many different levels:

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[20] Quoted in David Crane, *Lord Byron's Jackal: A Life of Edward John Trelawny* (London, 1999), p. 42.
[21] G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846', included in *Richard Hakluyt and his Successors*, ed. Edward Lynam (London, 1946), p. 78.

> Narratives of voyages and travels, and foreign topography, are of all books, perhaps, the best calculated to excite a strong and general interest in the reading part of the community; every class of which, from the mere lounger, to whom reading is only a creditable kind of idleness, to the philosopher, who derives from books the materials of useful contemplation, is almost equally interested in the faithful narrative of the traveller.[22]

Somewhere amongst this catholic readership, amidst the loungers and philosophers picked out by *Aikin's*, one must locate many of the major Romantic figures. Most were eager consumers of Voyages and Travels, but what precisely was it that they were consuming? The answer is not as straightforward as one might imagine. A recent study of travel writing in the 1990s notes that the genre 'is notoriously refractory to definition', and this refractoriness only increases as one moves back in time from what we now call 'travel writing' to what the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries knew as Voyages and Travels.[23] This label embraced both a great profusion of texts, and a remarkable diversity of writing: a literary realm of excitement, opportunity and even, perhaps, anxiety, it provided not only a resource but also a challenge to the Romantic reader.

An anecdote of Thomas De Quincey's, recounted in *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), reflects a contemporary sense of the prolixity of the travel writing genre in this period. De Quincey recalls how as a boy he signed at the local bookseller's for a 'general history of navigation, supported by a vast body of voyages.' It soon dawned upon him that 'such a work tended to infinity.' Panic set in – not least because the young De Quincey's purchases were being charged to his father's account without his father's knowledge – and his worst fears were seemingly realised when he tackled the bookseller's assistant on the issue:

> I described the work to him, and he understood me at once: how many volumes did he think it would extend to? There was a whimsical expression perhaps of drollery about his eyes, but which unhappily, under my preconceptions, I translated into scorn, as he replied, - "How many volumes? Oh, really I can't say, maybe a matter of 15,000, be the same more or less." "*More?*" I said in horror, altogether neglecting the contingency of "less." "Why," he said, "we can't settle these things to a nicety. But, considering the subject," [ay, *that* was the very thing which I myself considered,] "I should say, there might be some trifle over, as suppose 400 or 500 volumes, be the same more or less." What, then, here there might be supplements to supplements – the work might positively *never* end. On one pretence or another, if an author or publisher might add 500 volumes, he might add another round 15,000. Indeed, it strikes one now, that by the time all the one-legged commodores and yellow admirals of that generation had exhausted their long yarns, another generation would have grown another

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[22] *Aikin's Annual Review*, Vol. 4 (1805), p. 1. Hereafter *AAR*.
[23] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan, 1998), pp. x-xi.

> crop of the same gallant spinners. I asked no more, but slunk out of the shop, and never again entered it with cheerfulness…[24]

The assistant is teasing the boy, yet it should not surprise us to find Voyages and Travels prompting such exaggerations. Whilst there had been large multi-volume collections of travel literature ever since Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589), such collections were especially in vogue in the early decades of the nineteenth century. If there is an encyclopaedic air to Shelley and his friends as they recount sailing exploits 'from the earliest times to those of Commodore Bligh', it is probably because they had some such encyclopaedic work to hand, or were at least recalling it from memory. Recently published in 1822, and pertinent to the Shelley circle's taste in travel, was John Galt's *All the Voyages in the World* (1820): still in progress was Robert Kerr's *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels*, which would run to 18 volumes (published from 1811 to 1824). The scale of Kerr's venture was not untypical. Already available to the reading public were Sir Richard Philipps' *Collection of Modern and Contemporary Voyages and Travels* (11 volumes, 1805-1810), John Pinkerton's *General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels* (17 volumes, 1808-1814) and William Mavor's *Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries* (25 volumes, 1796-1801). Yet to come was Josiah Conder's series, *The Modern Traveller*, which ran to thirty volumes (1824-1830). Alternatively, Shelley and his friends might have been familiar with any or all of the various collections that were organised by geographical region: James Burney's *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea, or Pacific Ocean* (5 volumes, 1803-17), for example, or his *Chronological History of North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery* (1819), or John Barrow's *Chronological History of Voyages into the Arctic Regions* (1818).[25] Individual volumes, in projects such as these, could run to immense lengths, sometimes indeed adding 'supplements to supplements' as the young De Quincey feared. James Stanier Clarke's *The Progress of Maritime Discovery, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (1803) ran to almost 1000 pages in its first volume alone, 263 pages being taken up with an appendix. As one (hostile) reviewer remarked, 'long notes are everywhere annexed

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[24] Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater: and other writings*, ed. Grevel Lindop (Oxford, 1996), p. 133.

[25] I cull the titles cited in this paragraph principally from the following sources: the *Nineteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*, the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Vol. 2 (1660-1800), and Crone and Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels'.

to long digressions, like the hairs of a mole, the excresencies of an excresence, deforming deformity.'[26]

The works cited above, one should note, comprise just the *collections* of voyage and travel narratives. Such narratives were also published individually, of course, and in this area too the late eighteenth century witnessed a flood of new travel writing. As William Mavor put it in the introduction to his *Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries*, 'single Voyages and Travels have been multiplied to an amazing degree'.[27] Even these 'single Voyages and Travels' were sometimes of a fearsome length. James Bruce's experiences in Abyssinia produced the five massive volumes of *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790): the American travels of Alexander von Humboldt produced a *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent* which ran to six volumes in the English translation (1814-29). Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, moreover, is but part of a small library of texts arising directly out of Humboldt's travelling: he also published another seven treatises covering subjects such astronomy, zoology, botany and politics. Many of these works fell loosely within the Voyages and Travels genre, forming part of a field of literary production that could seem bewilderingly diverse to some contemporaries. As one reviewer of the *Personal Narrative* writes: 'we have heard M. Humboldt inconsiderately censured for dividing into so many distinct treatises the observations to which his travels had given rise.'[28] This generic diversity, and the bewilderment to which it could give rise, is a topic I shall return to shortly.

In relation to the sheer abundance of travel writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one should note also the extent to which travel writing, not to mention discussions about travel writing, travellers and the very nature of travel, filled the pages of contemporary periodicals. Major publications, such as Bruce's *Travels* or John Hawkesworth's rendering of Captain Cook's seminal first voyage in *Account of the Voyages undertaken ... by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret and Captain Cook* (1773), were often serialised in an abridged form in the magazines of the day, or else reviewed at such length that the article constituted an exhaustive précis of the text.[29] Less

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[26] *AAR*, Vol. 2 (1804), p. 20.
[27] William Mavor (ed.), *Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries, from the Time of Columbus to the Present Period*, 25 Vols. (London, 1801), Vol. 1, p. v.
[28] *Edinburgh Review* 25 (June-October, 1815), p. 87.
[29] For the prevalence of Voyages and Travels-related material in periodicals, see Betty Hagglund, 'Reviews of Travel in *The Monthly Review*, 1749-1758', in *Studies in Travel Writing*, 2 (Spring, 1998). Also Wallace Cable Brown, 'The Popularity of English Travel Books about the Near East, 1775-1825', *Philological Quarterly* XV (1936), p. 74.

significant texts were also reviewed and discussed, albeit more briefly, and in this way what one might term a general discourse of travel permeated the public sphere in this period. Whether he bought Voyages and Travels publications or not, the general reader would have been hard pushed *not* to have been familiar with travel writing in some form, and with the various political and cultural debates attendant on travel and travel writing – and once again, the nature of these debates is something to which I shall return.

It is evident that travel writing was part of the literary culture of the period to a degree which we cannot immediately comprehend today. It is thus no surprise to find that the major Romantic writers were familiar with this fertile literary form. Travel writing figures prominently in the childhood reading of Wordsworth and Byron, whilst Keats's love of reading, we are told, was first kindled by a school library which consisted, 'principally of *abridgements of all the voyages and travels of any note*; *Mavor's collection*, also his "Universal History"[my emphasis].'[30] The young De Quincey had on hand his father's library, stocked, as he later recalled, with a comprehensive collection of voyages and travels, not to mention 'a pretty complete body of local tours (such as Pennant's) and topography.'[31] (De Quincey's father, it should be noted, was himself the author of a tour narrative.) These writers were immersed in Voyages and Travels from childhood onwards. In adulthood, whether or not they actually bought the relevant publications, they would have absorbed the genre through periodicals. And many of them, of course, *were* buying Voyages and Travels publications. Wordsworth owned, by the end of his life at least, Samuel Purchas's *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (1617) and John Harris's *Navigantium atque itinerantium bibiliotheca* (1705) – both substantial collections of travel literature – not to mention four volumes of the Mavor collection. Among the individual works of travel literature he possessed were James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (in the 5 volume, first edition of 1790), Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (edition of 1816), Samuel Hearne's *Journey … to the Northern Ocean* (1795), George Shelvocke's *Voyage round the World by Way of the Great South Sea* (1726), Joseph Forsyth's *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (second edition,

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[30] C. and M. Cowden Clarke, *Recollections of Writers* (1878), quoted in Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (London, 1964), p. 25. For travel writing as part of Romantic childhood reading, see Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), p. 28; Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth; the Early Years* (Oxford, 1957), p. 9; Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, 3 Vols. (London, 1957), Vol. 1, p. 38; also *BCMP*, p. 220.
[31] Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, together with Selections from the Autobiography of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. Edward Sackville-West (London, 1950), p. 9.

1816), William Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* (second edition, 1789) and *Observations … on Several Parts of England; particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (second edition, 1788), and much else besides – I am merely picking out some of the titles which will figure over the course of this thesis.[32] Byron likewise owned, at various points in his life, all eight volumes of the second, 1804 edition of Bruce's *Travels*, the second volume of Park's *Travels*, Barrow's *History of Voyages to the Arctic Regions*, Forsyth's *Remarks on Italy*, several histories of pedestrianism, and many other works of a similar nature. Again, I cite only publications relevant to this thesis.[33]

The titles cited here indicate the diversity of material embraced by the Voyages and Travels genre. This impression is confirmed when one scans the pages of a periodical such as *Aikin's Annual Review*, which in running from 1802 to 1808 conveniently covers the central decade of my period. Here one finds, in the Voyages and Travels section, a highly heterogeneous collection of texts. Foppish continental tours (undertaken during the brief Peace of Amiens in 1802) sit next to gruelling expeditions across the Arctic wastes of northern Canada, earnest assessments of a region's economic potential next to sensationalistic compendia of shipwreck stories. Guidebooks relating information in the most objective manner jostle with the self-consciously subjective impressions of a sentimental tourist, whilst other texts – for example, Barrington's *History of New South Wales* and Morrice's *Modern France*, both reviewed (and rubbished) in 1803 – seem to have abandoned altogether the narrative framework provided by an account of the author's personal travelling (a *sine qua non*, one might have thought, of Voyages and Travels). The premise underpinning the *Aikin's* classification seems to be simply that every text must have something to do with abroad or the sea, which means that the category can expand to embrace, alongside the frivolous accounts offered by 'parties of pleasure', scholarly works that we might today tend to class as geography, anthropology, geology, zoology and the like.

Thus it is a strikingly wide range of material, and a great variety of authorial intentions and outlooks, that is contained in the *Aikin's* Voyages and Travels section - and this sense of the diversity embraced by Voyages and Travels becomes even greater when it is realised that the *Aikin's* classification also excludes a significant strand of contemporary travel literature. Narratives of

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[32] See Chester L. Shaver and Alice C. Shaver, *Wordsworth's Library: a Catalogue* (New York, 1979).
[33] See the catalogues from the sale of Byron's books in 1816 and 1827, in *BCMP*, pp. 231 ff.

journeys made within the British Isles are clearly Travels, if not Voyages, and were certainly regarded as part of the Voyages and Travels genre for much of the eighteenth century.[34] In *Aikin's*, however, they come under the heading 'British Topography and Antiquities', where they – like travels undertaken in the foreign context – merge into a much wider field of related disciplines: local history, natural history, agricultural husbandry and so forth. The distinction being made here, between travels which take place within the British Isles and those which take place beyond Britain, is also made by William Mavor, who supplemented his *Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels, and Discoveries* with *The British Tourists* (1798), a six-volume anthology of influential accounts of travels in Britain (the principal tourists being Thomas Pennant, Samuel Johnson and Arthur Young). Yet one should stress that for both Mavor and *Aikin's*, this seems to be a purely geographical distinction, an attempt perhaps to delimit an otherwise unwieldy mass of texts. Whether it occurs in the domestic or the overseas context, there seems to be little difference in the nature of the travelling undertaken, or in the nature of the travel texts produced. Or rather, more precisely, travel and travel writing in both contexts seem to reveal the same wide range of intentions, attitudes and styles. For some, travel is a polite, leisurely exercise, educational insofar as it forms taste; for others, it is a matter of hard knowledge and systematic acquisition of scientific data; for others still, it is a more pragmatic business, serving commercial ends, which relays information about regional economies and local resources. This holds true for British tours as much as journeys overseas, and in this way the British tour narrative is of a piece with, if not always regarded as strictly part of, the Voyages and Travels genre.

It may seem pedantic to quibble in this way over what is and is not part of the Voyages and Travels genre, but such ambiguities, I would suggest, correspond to contemporary uncertainties in the face of a daunting sea of texts. The Voyages and Travels genre at this date was not only a vast field of literary production, it was also a genre in a state of ferment. Its outlines are blurred, as it merges into other forms of writing which may or may not be travel writing, and within the genre itself new types of narrative are coming into being, amounting in some cases to new genres and disciplines which will soon separate off from Voyages and Travels: anthropology, for example. Yet

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[34] Thus Charles Batten, in what remains the most useful discussion of the formal aspects of the eighteenth-century tour narrative, sees no need to distinguish between tours made within the British Isles and those made overseas. See *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978).

for the time being we have a genre in transition, baggy enough to encompass all these different sorts of text and by extension, all these different sorts of traveller. As a result, travel writing from the late eighteenth century required its readers to ponder not only a great mass of information (the scale of which may in itself have prompted considerable anxiety) but also the nature of that information, the conceptual frameworks by which one regulated it, and ultimately the medium through which one encountered it.

Hence the need of reviewers in the periodicals to qualify or redefine terms (objecting to the word 'voyage', for example, in Alexander MacKenzie's *Voyages from Montreal*: 'for this mixed kind of travelling we want a word'.)[35] Hence also the need to discuss at length the various principles by which travel texts were organised. Without proper regulation, travel writing could seem unnervingly omnivorous, absorbing anything and everything within itself. Thus the objection to Golberry's *Travels in Africa* is that 'there is no connection between its parts, no form, no order; tautologies, inconsistencies, theories, facts, politics and natural history, are jumbled together in the most whimsical manner imaginable', whilst even Humboldt's acclaimed *Personal Narrative* was received with the caveat that 'every object recalls so many others with which it is connected, that the exuberance of illustration sometimes overpowers the reader'.[36] If such organisational considerations applied to the individual travel narrative, they applied even more to Voyages and Travels *en masse*. Hence those encyclopaedic publishing ventures by figures such as Mavor, Burney and Barrow: these are not just cashing in on the popularity of the form, they are also trying to delimit it, establishing canons or sub-genres within Voyages and Travels which organise the genre's vast resources according to a more narrowly defined set of interests. The relevance and success of each individual project of this type might be debatable, but it seems to have been a general understanding that some degree of systemisation was in order. As one reviewer writes: 'the utility of method and compression, to prevent irregular exuberance in so important a branch of science, is evident beyond contradiction'.[37]

Confronted with the 'irregular exuberance' of contemporary travel writing, then, the contributors to *Aikin's* are clearly exercised by questions such as: is this sort of travel writing the same as that sort

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[35] *AAR*, Vol. 1 (1803), p. 48.
[36] *AAR*, Vol. 2 (1804), p. 29; *Edinburgh Review* 25 (June-October, 1815), p. 111.
[37] *AAR*, Vol. 2 (1804), p. 3.

of travel writing? If not, which sort is preferable, more worthy or more useful? By what criteria do we judge a travel narrative – and by extension, a traveller? What was the proper business of the travel narrative and what was improper business, a waste of the writer's and the reader's time? Answering such questions, and sifting the diverse mass of Voyages and Travels material, was an urgent business. More was at stake than just a private preference for a particular style of writing or a particular form of travel narrative. The discourse of travel was informed by the larger discourses that were animating British culture in this period, discourses of Utilitarianism, modernization, science, evangelicalism and much else besides: as a consequence the Voyages and Travels genre, and the public debates interwoven with that genre, have often a politicised and antagonistic aspect. The *Aikin's* contributor, for example, typically reads travel writing for the hard facts it provides, seeing it, as in the quotation above, as 'so important a branch of science'. He often brings to bear on travel and travel writing a middle-class, commercialist agenda which yearns to see British trade dominate the whole globe. Travellers and travel texts at odds with this outlook are often reviewed frostily, a particular object of scorn being the 'milord Anglois' who tours Europe purely for pleasure.[38] This is a figure who seems the cultural descendant of the eighteenth-century Grand Tourist but who has clearly lost the cultural prestige of his predecessor. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, to these readers at least, he exemplifies a wasteful extravagance and self-indulgence: his travelling, and travel writing, seem detrimental to the national good. Yet such views did not go unopposed. To others, as we shall see, travel and travel writing were to be construed in a very different fashion, and there was much in the bullish expansionism of the typical *Aikin's* reviewer that was to be lamented and contested.

In the next section, and then more fully in chapter 3, I will look more closely at the ideologies which underpin such animosities amongst travellers and travel writers. For now, however, I wish simply to note that travel and travel writing, at this date, seem to constitute a sphere of cultural activity which required distinctions to be drawn. Familiarity with Voyages and Travels, and with the discourse of travel more generally, must have enjoined on the general reader, at a number of different levels, a certain taxonomic or classificatory urgency. And to sort out the different types of traveller and travel text was to make, consciously or unconsciously, a number of affiliations and disaffiliations.

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[38] *AAR*, Vol. 1 (1802), p. 43.

To think about travel and travel writing, to participate actively or passively in the discourse of travel, was to enter a contested cultural arena, a zone riven by a range of different aspirations and attitudes. Yet it was also an arena in which some of the key issues of the age were being thrashed out, a source of exciting new ideas, knowledge and, for the poet, images. In short, the Voyages and Travels genre in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was not only highly popular and prolific, it was also compelling. It mattered what sort of travel writing one read, and it mattered what sort of traveller one was.

It is in this complex context, then, that we need to understand the Romantic reading of travel literature, and subsequent Romantic rewritings and re-enactments of that literature. Understood just as a matter of literary influence, one can say that there are distinct and often strongly opposed modes, or sub-genres, of writing within the Voyages and Travels genre. To rewrite or re-enact any particular sub-genre is sometimes to be keenly aware that one is conspicuously *not* following another sub-genre. Yet in this negative fashion at least, those discarded sub-genres subtly shape the writing of the travel text: thus each sort of travel writing maintains within itself the discreet presence, at the very least implicit, of other sorts of travel writing. Sometimes those rival modes and sub-genres are not just implicit. Later in this thesis we shall encounter several writers who seem to struggle to make their journey tell the story they want it to tell, and whose travel narratives accordingly seem to lurch into an unwanted mode or sub-genre. In the hands of more accomplished writers, such as those Romantic travellers who are the subject of this thesis, generic tensions of this sort can be exploited deliberately. As we shall see in chapters 4 and 5, Wordsworth and Byron sometimes set one type of travel writing against another, invoking in their own writing both tour narrative and shipwreck narrative, both the narrative of scientific exploration and that of mutiny, so as to establish what has elsewhere been labelled 'intergeneric conversation'.[39] The point of such conversations, in the present context at least, is not simply a kind of free-wheeling, stylistic play. As noted above, there is an ideological edge to the various literary styles and narratives structures that comprise Voyages and Travels. The various sub-genres of travel writing are obviously not identical with a particular

[39] Judith Thompson, '"A Voice in the Representation": John Thelwell and the Enfranchisement of Literature', in Tilottama Rajan and Julia M. Wright (eds.), *Romanticism, History and the Possibilities of Genre: Re-forming Literature 1789-1837* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 133.

ideology, yet each has its own affinities and associations. Each mode to some extent expresses through its characteristic styles and structures a different outlook on the world and a different attitude as to what travel is about: figures such as Wordsworth and Byron are often fully aware of these differences as they invoke the various sorts of Voyages and Travels narrative in their own writing about travel, and in their own actual travelling.

Having stressed the intertextual, and often oppositional, nature of the diverse writings which comprise the Voyages and Travels genre, we can turn to the sub-genre of Voyages and Travels which is the particular concern of this thesis, because it seems to be the particular concern of many Romantic travellers: travel texts in which misadventure and the sufferings of the traveller seem to be the principal point of interest. William Mavor reveals that such subjects form a legitimate part of the spectrum of interests catered to by Voyages and Travels by organising his compendium of travel literature so as to include 'the most celebrated and interesting voyages, travels, discoveries and shipwrecks'.[40] Yet for those interested just in the shipwrecks, there were also more specialised anthologies, as encyclopaedic as the collections by Mavor and other editors. Examples include J.S. Clarke's *Naufragia, or, Historical Memoirs of Shipwrecks and of the Providential Deliverance of Vessels* (2 volumes, 1805; more were planned but never published), A. Duncan's *Mariner's Chronicles, or ... the History of Popular Shipwrecks* (6 volumes, 1810), and J.G. Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* (3 volumes, 1812). The latter, we should note, is a plausible candidate for the text Shelley and his friends had to hand in 1822. Byron owned a copy during his time in Italy, circumstantial evidence at least that Shelley may have had access to it: Bligh's voyage figures prominently in Volume 3. All of these publications came under the broad generic label of Voyages and Travels, and all of them may be regarded as mapping out within the genre a distinct canon, or sub-genre, of texts. They drew upon the innumerable individual accounts of wrecks and other maritime disasters which were a highly popular branch of Voyages and Travels, and which included such works as the *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno on the Coast of Arracan, in the Year 1795* – favourite reading, Thomas Moore tells us, among the boys at Byron's first school.[41] The young Byron probably had a particular interest in the shipwreck narrative: he was grandson, after all, to John Byron (also known as 'Foulweather Jack')

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[40] Mavor (ed.), *Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries,* Vol. 1, p. vi.
[41] Thomas Moore, *Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* (London, 1839), pp. 16-17.

who had survived, and subsequently written an account of, one of the most famous wrecks of the eighteenth century. John Byron's *Narrative* (1768), and the wreck of the *Wager* which it describes, will be discussed at more length in the next chapter.

That sub-genre or mode of Voyages and Travels that I am labelling misadventure, however, was not solely concerned with shipwrecks and maritime disasters. There was also a thriving tradition of captivity narratives, works which described at length, and often in harrowing detail, a traveller's imprisonment and suffering at the hands of some foreign race. The account of enslavement by the Turks had a history stretching back into the Middle Ages: more recently, the account of captivity amongst North American 'Indians' had gained a particular currency, arising from the Puritan experience in North America in the seventeenth century.[42] Such captivity narratives have much in common, thematically and stylistically, with the shipwreck narrative. Accounts of shipwreck, indeed, often seem to modulate into captivity narratives: John Byron is enslaved by the natives of Tierra del Fuego, and more than a few survivors of the shipwrecks described in Dalyell's collection end up in Moorish dungeons. But the shipwreck narrative and the captivity narrative are only the most obvious, and as it were the most fully formed, representatives of a more general tendency in many travel narratives of the day, a tendency to concentrate on – and almost indeed to revel in – the sufferings of the traveller.

Registering this sort of travel writing, it is not enough to say that such sufferings simply happened, and that the travel writing which dwells upon it arose inevitably from the tough conditions endured by many travellers. As we shall see in due course, travellers writing in some sub-genres of Voyages and Travels were often anxious to play down the hardships they had endured. Travellers operating in other modes, conversely, were eager to play up their suffering, and when they did so certain recognisable conventions usually governed their self-representation. And if there is in this way a generic aspect to the writing of misadventure, the same generic expectations could shape the reading of travel literature. Some readers turned to Voyages and Travels because they knew it was a

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[42] See Alden Vaughan and Edward Clark, *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); Michelle Burnham, *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861* (Hanover & London, 1997). Burnham dates the first English captivity narrative to 1682 (Burnham, p. 26) but she overlooks the earlier tales of captivity at the hands of Moors, Ottomans and like, in which connection see the account of '266 Christians delivered out of Turkish captivity' contained in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, in Jack Beeching (ed.), *Hakluyt: Voyages and Discoveries* (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 164-170. Also G.A. Starr, 'Escape from Barbary: A Seventeenth Century Genre', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 29 (196-6).

genre in which they could find many depictions of suffering. It was in this way, for example, that the editors of the *Terrific Register*, a sensationalistic magazine of the 1820s, seem to have read travel writing: the genre was clearly a mainstay in their search for gory, affecting stories. From Voyages and Travels they took accounts of shipwreck (grouped together under the heading 'Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea', presumably after the title of Dalyell's collection), details of the deaths of various travellers (amongst them Mungo Park and John Ledyard), and a wide range of other harrowing travel experiences: James Bruce's travails in the deserts of North Africa, for example, and from an account of travels at the North-West Frontier of India, a piece wonderfully entitled 'Sucked to Death by a Bear.'[43]

It should not surprise us that Voyages and Travels could be read in this way, as a rich source of images of human suffering. A voyeuristic interest in the sufferings of others is no doubt a fairly constant human trait, but such sensationalism in this period also has more respectable motives. Well-established Christian traditions of reading, overlaid by the sentimentalism that came into vogue in the eighteenth century, ensured that the suffering traveller presented not only a titillating but also a morally educative figure. These traditions of reading and writing about misadventure will be the subject of the next chapter: as we shall see, they could be inflected in different ways, so to make the image of the misadventurer bear radically different meanings. Yet as we consider such meanings, we also need to remember the point made earlier, that significance is also generated intertextually, by the relationship of these particular types of travel writing to the rest of the Voyages and Travels genre. In rewriting narratives of misadventure both on the page and in actuality, Romantic travellers such as Wordsworth and Byron are also rewriting, or at least resisting, other forms of travel narrative as well. In so doing, they are making generic choices which touch upon issues much larger than matters of style and structure. Britain in the years 1780 to 1830 was undergoing radical change, both within itself and in its relationship to the rest of the world: the discourses which were driving these changes permeate the discourse of travel and the Voyages and Travels genre. To understand the generic choices made by Romantic travellers as they travelled and as they wrote about travelling, we

[43] *The Terrific Register*, 2 Vols. (London, 1825), Vol. 1, p. 324.

accordingly need to address not only the generic context of that travelling/writing, but also the larger historical context in which it took place.

## Romantic Travel: the Historical Context

Articulated in the Voyages and Travels genre, and in the discourse of travel more generally in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, are a range of different ideologies, some driving and some contesting – or at least seeking to moderate – profound changes that were taking place in British society. Romantic travel needs to be understood in the context of these ideologies and these historical changes. In what follows, I shall distinguish between changes taking place within British society, and changes which take place with regard to Britain's relationship with the rest of the world. This is perhaps an artificial distinction – similar developments were underway both at home and abroad, and in both contexts similar ideologies came into play – yet I think it corresponds with two particularly useful ways of reading Romantic travel. The espousal of discomfort and danger by many Romantic travellers answers well both to a sociological, and to what I have here dubbed a *geopolitical*, line of explanation: hence the organisation of this section. Yet one should also be mindful throughout of the many points of connection between these two perspectives on Romantic travel.

### i) A Sociological Perspective

Romantic travel needs to be understood in the first place as part of an increase, in this period, in the amount of travelling generally undertaken by Britons; and in the second place, as part of a dramatic rise in one specific form of travelling, that which is undertaken as a recreational or leisure activity: in short, *tourism*. The greater mobility of British society in both regards is in turn born of a complex array of historical developments. Britain in the decades either side of 1800 was in the full throes of those changes which are today labelled the Industrial, Agricultural and Transport Revolutions. As Saree Makdisi has recently written, these Revolutions, and the responses to them, may be said to

bring about the *modernisation* of Great Britain.[44] For Makdisi, Romanticism itself is arguably generated by this modernising process, being partly complicit with it and partly resistant to it, and this complex relationship with the 'modern' is easily discerned in what I have been calling Romantic travel. To set oneself up as a Romantic traveller (whether in deed or in text) is in many ways to define oneself in relation to much broader developments in British history, and these developments thus shed some light on that characteristically Romantic preference for travel as misadventure.

The modernisation of Britain was a far from comfortable process for many of those being modernised. In the most extreme cases (most of which occurred in what are, to English eyes at least, the extremities of the British Isles) it was a process carried through by violence and by military means. In the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, the Highlands were forcibly integrated into a larger society and economy, a process which required land clearance and the suppression of native culture. The Transport Revolution first reached the Highlands in the form of new roads built to allow the rapid deployment of the army (a context which must be borne in mind when noting Wordsworth's praise for these roads in *The Excursion* (1814)). Similar policies and practices were adopted in Ireland, and from the Irish and Scottish perspective at least, the drive to a modern British nation-state, more tightly integrated and more centralised, needs to be understood as process of 'internal colonialism'.[45] Here is the first connection between the domestic context to Romantic travel and the global context discussed in the next section: Ireland and the Scottish Highlands were in a sense the testing ground for British colonial policy and practice elsewhere in the world.

As this suggests, the story of the modernisation of Britain is in many ways the story of the unification and integration of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland into a new nation-state, 'Great Britain'. The 'internal colonialism' practised in Scotland and Ireland was the most ruthless form taken by the unifying and integrative forces at work in Britain in this period, but their effects elsewhere, whilst less violent, were nonetheless radical, and often deeply unsettling. Much was improved, economically and politically speaking, but such improvements were often perceived by contemporaries to have come at a cost. The greater mobility of the British population – which

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[44] Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1-10.
[45] See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London, 1975).

underwrites the ability of the Romantic traveller to travel, and which is itself conducive to a greater integration in the nation – is one such mixed blessing. The Transport Revolution saw travel and haulage become faster, cheaper and, for the passenger, more comfortable. The canal network was greatly expanded; more pertinent still to the present study, the road network was transformed. From the 1750s, there was a dramatic increase in the construction of turnpike roads. Turnpikes were better constructed and better maintained than the roads which had preceded them, utilising technological improvements such as those made by John MacAdam with regard to road surfaces: they often also offered more direct routes between major centres. In their wake, they brought about the rationalisation and improvement of many local road systems, until by the 1820s, Britain possessed 'something more closely resembling a national network of roads … [in which] the roads now served national rather than local needs.'[46] Yet this transformation of the transport infrastructure in each locality often came as part of a greater reorganisation of the local landscape, notably in the form of Enclosure. This central component of the Agricultural Revolution saw the rationalisation of Britain's rural economy. In lowland England at least, the old communal field systems were often broken up, and the land parcelled out to be farmed by a few individual land owners. More land was also brought under cultivation, including, in many cases, the common land that previously been a resource available to the whole community. One result of such practices was that many in the lower orders of rural society found themselves dispossessed, driven to vagrancy or to seek work elsewhere. Some drifted from the countryside to the city, to provide the labour-force for the new industries, others joined the army or the navy: circumstances frequently depicted, of course, in Wordsworth's poetry. The construction of a turnpike and the enclosure of local fields often happened simultaneously: in creating a class of migrant workers and giving them the routes along which to disperse, the two developments also had a symbiotic relationship.

The dual processes of turnpiking and enclosure had not only social consequences, but also a striking visual impact. On the one hand, the countryside was increasingly criss-crossed by roads; on the other, the new field systems required far more hedges and other boundary-markers. Often, moreover, the new fields were laid out in geometrically regular units. As the old rural landscape

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[46] Philip Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), p. 41.

slowly vanished, at least in lowland England, it was increasingly recalled nostalgically. One witness to the enclosure and turnpiking of an Oxfordshire village, Bampton-in-the-Fields, talks of the earlier state of affairs as follows. When 'no stoned road of any kind led from Bampton to the neighbouring towns and villages', he writes, the locals 'were in the habit of striking across the common … and finding their way to Witney, Burford, Oxford or any other place in the best way they could, as is done to this day in the deserts of Arabia and Africa.'[47] A certain primitivism and exoticism now seems to attach to the old topography, and it was accordingly in search of such quaintly primitive, exotic scenes that some tourists in this period set out.

Turnpike roads, macadamised road surfaces, enclosed fields: in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries these were highly visible signs of the changes sweeping through British society. They come to stand as symbols of those changes in many contemporary discussions, and are often used synecdochically to represent the modernising processes at work in Britain. And the migrant, the man (or woman) on the move, similarly became an emblem of the modern, expressive of an emergent society that seemed to be characterised in equal measure by mobility and rootlessness. As Hazlitt observed in 1828: 'we now seem to exist only where we are not – to be hurrying on to what is before us, or looking back to what is behind us, never to be fixed to any spot or settled to any employment.'[48]

Of course, not all of these travellers were vagrants and displaced rural labourers. The economic restructuring brought about by the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions meant that markets more and more operated at a regional or national level: travel was increasingly part of one's job. Alongside such professional travellers, moreover, there journeyed in ever greater numbers a new sort of traveller, for whom a new word had to be coined in the 1780s: the tourist. The dictionary here is lagging a little behind events: contemporaries dated the appearance of the tourist to the 1770s. Thus William Mavor, in *The British Tourists*, cites Thomas Pennant as the figure who first created that 'general taste for home travels' which has since been 'so honourable to individuals and advantageous

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[47] J.A. Giles, *History of Bampton* (2nd Ed., 1848), p. 17; quoted in Frank Emery, *The Oxfordshire Landscape* (London, 1974), p. 146.
[48] *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 17, p. 332.

to the public': Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* and *Tour in Wales* appeared in 1774 and 1778 respectively.[49] Robert Southey, meanwhile, remarked in 1807 that in England 'a course of summer travelling is now looked upon to be as essential as ever a course of spring physic was in old times,' and he too dates this new fashion back to the 1770s.[50] 'Summer travelling', he writes, has become a habit 'within the last thirty years.'

These new tourists, of course, were one reason for the explosion of new travel writing in the late eighteenth century. There were more people writing tour narratives, and more people reading them, simply because there were more people touring. The tour narrative thus provides part of that generic context in which we must locate Romantic travel, and the tourist constitutes a figure against which we must measure the Romantic traveller. In trying to gauge the attitudes and aspirations of the tourist (and tour narrative) at this date, however, it is as well to be wary of the more pejorative connotations that are today sometimes applied to the term 'tourist'. Comparing the figures Mavor includes as 'British tourists' with the 'summer travellers' Southey has in mind, we find that tourism in the late eighteenth century is a broad church indeed, embracing a wide range of ideologies and interests. Mavor's tourists are engaged in a range of polite and tasteful pursuits, but they typically combine these activities with some far more serious undertakings. As practised by Thomas Pennant or Arthur Young, for example, tourism and the tour narrative are each an exercise in systematic information-gathering. Pennant's interests tend more to the scientific: a leading zoologist and botanist of his day, with links to Linnaeus and Joseph Banks (figures to be discussed in more detail in the next section), his tours are at one level engaged in the exploration of Britain. Young, for his part, concerns himself with gathering details of agricultural techniques and innovations, and with the dissemination of such advances around the whole country.

Tourists of this sort shade confusingly into a more professional class of traveller. Young was instrumental in the establishment of a Board of Agriculture in 1793, which despatched observers to all parts of the country: the result was a series of *General Views* on the state of agriculture in each county or region, again part of the heterogeneous material embraced by the Voyages and Travels

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[49] William Mavor, *The British Tourists; or Traveller's Pocket Companion through England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 Vols. (London, 1798), Vol. 1, p. 1.
[50] Robert Southey, *Letters from England*, ed. Jack Simmons (Oxford, 1951), p. 165.

genre in this period. Pennant's travels are of a piece with those professional scientific observers who were busy mapping the landscape, and recording the contents, of every region in the British Isles. By 1804, *Aikin's* could declare that 'almost all the counties of England have been surveyed within the last forty years.'[51] With regard to the new maps that were an important part of this surveying process, one should note that the stimulus to map the British isles in exhaustive detail came partly from local sources, from landowners great and small for whom the Enclosure Map was a vital first step in the enclosure process, but also from the state. The Ordnance Survey project was begun in 1784, under the direction of Colonel William Mudge. Originally motivated by the spirit of scientific enquiry, the Survey acquired a strategic significance with the outbreak of the French wars. Carried out to absolute cartographic standards, cutting impartially across private property and traditional local boundaries (where before maps had usually been produced for a local landowner or institution, and dealt only with one estate), the Ordanance Survey answered the needs of an increasingly centralised nation-state. It was to become another potent symbol in contemporary discourse of the modernising forces at work in British society.

The Ordnance Survey reminds us that the forces working to unify and integrate the British Isles took effect not only at a political and economic level, but also at an intellectual level, in the sphere of knowledge and science. Previously isolated regions of Britain were not only being made physically accessible, by the construction of roads and other forms of transport infrastructure, they were also becoming discursively accessible: information about every province was collected, collated and incorporated into a variety of texts, to be made available to the scientific community and reading public generally. Driving this process was a raft of utilitarian, reformist and scientific ideas, which between them might be said to constitute the ideology of 'improvement'. 'Improvement' was a buzz-word of the day. Although it was subject to a range of subtly divergent inflections, it principally denoted an earnest desire to apply the techniques of rationalisation and systematisation to every aspect of the economy, and to British society more generally.[52] A middle-class, mercantile outlook, which in time would become 'the triumphant common sense of the Victorian age', the improving

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[51] *AAR*, Vol. 3 (1805), p. 373.
[52] See Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, 1983), pp. 160-1; Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of the Novels of Jane Austen* (Oxford, 1975).

mentality looked both inwards, at Britain itself, and outwards, to the wider world, in a spirit of commercial expansionism.[53] Regulation, rationalisation and modernisation must be spread throughout the British Isles: thus transformed, the new British nation-state could set about the transformation of the world, subordinating the whole planet to its trading interests – an ambition to be discussed more fully in the next section.

William Mavor clearly understands his tourists to be engaged in the process of enlightenment and integration that is the necessary preliminary to global trading dominance. Of the travels of Pennant, Young and his other tourists, Mavor writes that 'the natives of the three kingdoms have been linked more closely in the social tie, by the intercourse which has thus taken place.'[54] The circulation of such tourists around the country, he suggests, has 'manifestly tended to lessen prejudices, to obviate error, and to extend knowledge.' Yet whilst Mavor thinks of his 'British tourists' in such 'improving' terms, Southey seems to have a rather different sort of tourist in mind when he talks of 'summer travellers'. The motives for travel he cites are more obviously those of the recreational or leisured traveller. 'Recreational' or 'leisure' travel is a loose concept implying a range of motives in the traveller – pleasure obviously, in whatever form, but also education, the conferral of certain health benefits, demonstration of status and so forth – yet the common principle here should not need over-elaboration. Leisure travel is travel that is chosen, rather than travel that is enforced by economic or political necessity, or undertaken as part of one's job. It is travel understood as an activity in its own right, and typically informed by a spirit of luxury or holiday; as Jeremy Black notes, moreover, it is also travel understood as a commodity.[55]

For the travellers in this period, the more pleasurable forms of tourism typically involve the seeking out of nature and/or simplicity – those Rousseauistic notions mentioned in the previous section – in accordance with a programme of picturesque or sentimental travel. Yet there is no hard-and-fast distinction to be made between these seemingly more frivolous and pleasure-seeking tourists, and those more earnest, serious tourists selected by Mavor. As we shall see in Chapter 3,

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[53] Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987), p. 28; p. 26.
[54] Mavor, *British Tourists*, Vol. 1, pp. vi-vii. For the corollary to domestic improvement, the improvement to world trade, see the introduction to Mavor's *Celebrated Voyages, Travels and Discoveries*.
[55] Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in Eighteenth Century* (London, 1992), p. 3.

they are all part of a single spectrum of touristic activity, and they are all participating in a vogue for tourism which is at bottom part of that 'Consumer Revolution' which begins in the eighteenth century. The Industrial Revolution and the Agricultural Revolution, and the expansion of overseas territories and markets which will be discussed in the next section, brought a new prosperity to British society: that prosperity underwrote significant new patterns of consumption. Neil McKendrick has described how 'objects which for centuries had been the privileged possessions of the rich came, within the space of a few generations, to be within the reach of a far larger part of society than ever before, and, for the first time, to be within the legitimate aspirations of almost all of it.'[56] And it was not just material 'objects' which thus came within the reach of an ever-widening portion of the population. Certain practices also became available, amongst them the conspicuous consumption of time and resources which is recreational travel. This was a pursuit not yet available to all – mass tourism was still a long way off – yet there was nevertheless a significant expansion in what I shall later call the touring classes.

The new tourism was thus the product of the Consumer Revolution, which in turn was a product of the larger transformations taking place in Britain: not surprisingly, the figure of the 'tourist' became, in contemporary discourse, as much an emblem of modernity as the turnpike, the enclosed field and other symbols previously cited. The tourist still retains this symbolic function: in our own time Dean MacCannell has claimed that '"the tourist" is one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general'.[57] In the Romantic period, however, many commentators were keenly aware that the tourist was not just a symbol of modernity, and a product of modernising forces: rather, he or she was also an active agent in the modernising process. This is obviously the case with tourists in the Arthur Young mould, who spread the gospel of improvement, but it was also indirectly the case with those tourists who simply wanted to enjoy themselves, or to satisfy less obviously utilitarian tastes. In an irony that still resonates today, tourists seeking to escape modernity by travelling to regions of the British Isles which still seemed primitive or exotic were often destroying the very thing

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[56] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982), p. 1.
[57] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; reprinted, Los Angeles and London, 1999), p. 1. See also Buzard; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, 1990); John Frow, 'Travel and the Semiotics of Nostalgia', in *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1997).

they sought. They spread metropolitan tastes and manners, corrupting the rustic virtue of these supposedly pristine communities. Equally irritatingly, they spread metropolitan prices. The inflation brought about by the injection of cash into the local economy is a common theme amongst travellers of this period: De Quincey, making a walking tour of North Wales in 1802, found that the price of dinner rose from sixpence to three shillings in the space of two months.[58] And if nothing else, simply the presence of other tourists spoiled the experience for some. On a walking tour of Scotland and the Western Isles in 1818, Keats responded to Fingal's Cave with a mixture of exhilaration and exasperation. A snatch of doggerel in a letter home conveys a movement from enchantment to disenchantment: 'all the magic of the place' has gone, now that

> 'Tis free to stupid face
> To cutters and to fashion boats
> To cravats and to Petticoats.[59]

Earlier in the tour Keats had complained of the 'disfigurement' worked on the Lake District by 'the miasma of London'. From London, he suggested, there had come 'bucks and soldiers, and women of fashion' until 'the border inhabitants [were] quite out of keeping with the romance about them, from a continual intercourse with London rank and fashion'.[60]

In a manner entirely characteristic of the Romantic traveller, Keats is here ignoring the fact that, in certain regards at least, he is just as much a tourist as his fellow-travellers. Keats, like almost all the Romantic travellers under consideration in this thesis, is at least a tourist in the sense that his travel is a recreational activity: he is not driven by political or economic exigencies. Yet this is something that Keats clearly does not want to acknowledge to himself, or to his correspondent. This need to separate himself from his fellow-travellers, and to distinguish himself from the mere 'tourist' (beginning in this way to acquire its more pejorative range of meanings), points us to a useful line of sociological explanation for the self-dramatisations characteristically made by the Romantic traveller. Rejecting the tourist and the tour narrative, at least in some of its contemporary forms, the Romantic traveller often looks to other models, choosing to script his own tours according to other sub-genres

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[58] See Grevel Lindop, *The Opium-Eater: A Life of Thomas De Quincey* (Oxford, 1985), p. 75.
[59] *K Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 350.
[60] *K Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 299.

of travel writing. In so doing, he is engaged in that complex cultural business of differentiation and self-promotion that Bourdieu has labelled 'distinction', and he is also engaged in a repudiation of certain aspects of modernity.[61] In both regards, this is not simply a rhetorical strategy: it is also put into practice. Keats, we should note, is on a walking tour, a form of travel very popular amongst Romantic travellers. As we shall see in more detail in relation to Wordsworth, in this period the 'pedestrian' is sending out some very specific cultural signals. His travel is scripted as an activity in opposition to more modern modes of transport and to more modern sorts of traveller: it is also scripted as an activity which will involve a degree of arduousness and discomfort – that is to say, it is misadventure in a milder form.

A further remark might also be made about misadventure as a characteristically Romantic strategy of distinction. Relevant here is Jonathan Culler's observation that 'to be a tourist is in part to dislike tourists (both other tourists and the fact that one is oneself a tourist).'[62] With this in mind, the Romantic espousal of suffering in travel can often seem curiously over-determined. The Romantic traveller may cast himself as a misadventurer so as to repudiate tourism, and through tourism aspects of modernity, yet the more masochistic aspects of his travel perhaps evince a guilty sense of complicity in the very processes he decries. Understood this way, the would-be Romantic traveller punishes himself for his touristic status, and for the wealth and privilege implicit in his travel – an attitude one still finds today in a certain sort of backpacker.

ii) A Geo-Political Perspective

If the period 1780 to 1830 was one of startling change in British society, it witnessed equally dramatic changes with regard to Britain's relationship with the rest of the planet. Whilst at home Britain was on its way to becoming a modern, industrial nation-state, in the global context the nation ended this period as effectively the dominant world power. As a result, it was not only within the British Isles that Britons were increasingly on the move: they were also travelling the whole world in an

[61] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London, 1984).
[62] Jonathan Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Oxford, 1988), p. 157.

unprecedented fashion, caught up in various overlapping processes of imperial expansion. De Quincey wrote of his contemporaries that everyone had an Indian uncle: one might add that almost everyone in this period seems to have a brother at sea.[63] Few of these travellers can be considered recreational travellers. Overseas tourism did not really extend beyond the traditional European circuit of the Grand Tour, and even this was closed to tourists for the bulk of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Rather they were professional travellers, employed by a variety of institutions: the government, the army and navy, trading enterprises such as the East India Company, missionary societies and the like. Yet their influence and the various ideologies which sent them out into the world shaped contemporary discourse about travel, and thus impinged on the writings and the practices of Romantic travellers. Sometimes providing a model to be emulated, and sometimes an example to be resisted, they had an important part to play in the self-dramatisations made by several Romantic travellers.

C.A. Bayly has called the half-century from 1780 to 1830 the 'imperial meridian'.[64] Although this period began with a setback, the loss of the American colonies, Britain went on to acquire most of the territories which made up the Victorian empire, in the process bringing vast numbers of people under a greater or lesser degree of British control. Saree Makdisi notes that between 1790 and 1830 more than 150,000,000 people were absorbed into the British sphere of influence.[65] By the 1830s, Bayly estimates, British territories contained some 200 million people, 26% of the world's population. By the same date, Britain accounted for a third of the world's trade. 'If not yet the workshop of the world', Bayly writes, 'Britain was already its general trader.'[66] This rapid expansion was brought about by a variety of means. Most straightforwardly, new territories had been acquired by military means. The diplomatic settlements at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 and the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 extended British influence in Canada, India, Africa, and elsewhere. In a more direct fashion, also, British territories were extended by force. In India, a decisive victory was won over Tipu Sultan at the battle of Seringapatam in 1799. Elsewhere there were often 'bandits' to be stamped out on land, and 'pirates' to be eradicated at sea, giving rise to campaigns which the

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[63] Thomas De Quincey, *Collected Writings*, 14 Vols., ed. David Masson (Edinburgh, 1889-90), Vol. 7, p. 22.
[64] C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: the British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (Harlow, 1989).
[65] Makdisi, p. xi.
[66] Bayly, p. 5.

British regarded as peace-keeping but which in effect amounted to the extension of empire. (The campaign in Java in which Trelawny participated was nominally about the suppression of piracy in the region.) Yet in the global as in the domestic context, such direct military action was only the most ruthless expression of the historical changes taking place in this period: British expansionism also adopted subtler and more peaceable methods.

Crucial in this regard, and of particular importance in the present context, was the role of a new sort of British traveller. The three voyages of Captain James Cook (1768-71, 1772-75, and 1776-80) announced the arrival of the figure today labelled the 'explorer', although this was not a term used at the time: Cook regarded himself in traditional terminology as a 'discoverer' or 'navigator'. Yet Cook was a discoverer in a new style, and his voyages constitute a watershed in British travel because of the overwhelming emphasis they put on the business of *scientific* discovery. It was not just that the principal objective of each voyage was scientific (the first had as its declared purpose the observation of the Transit of Venus from the island of Tahiti, whilst the second set out to prove or disprove the existence of the fabled southern continent, the *Terra Australis Incognita*), it was also that a rigorous scientific ethos pervaded every aspect of these expeditions. Cook's ships carried teams of scientific personnel whose role was the systematic accumulation of data at every stage of the voyage. As one observer, the British naturalist John Ellis, wrote of the first voyage:

> No people ever went to sea better fitted out for the purpose of Natural History, nor more elegantly. They have got a fine library of Natural History: they have all sorts of machines for catching and preserving insects; all kinds of nets, trawls, drags and hooks for coral fishing; they have even a curious contrivance of a telescope, by which, put into the water, you can see the bottom at a great depth, where it is clear. They have many cases of bottles with ground stoppers, of several sizes, to preserve animals in spirits. They have the several sorts of salts to surround the seeds; and wax, both bees-wax and that of the myrica; besides, there are many people whose sole business is to attend them for this very purpose. They have two painters and draughtsmen, several volunteers who have a tolerable notion of Natural History; in short, Solander assured me that this expedition would cost Mr Banks £10,000.[67]

Ellis is here writing to his intellectual mentor, the great Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné, better known as Linnaeus. The influence of Linnaeus is a key factor in shaping the new style of British, and indeed European, exploration. His *Systema Naturae* of 1735 created a surge of interest in the field of

[67] Quoted in Richard Hough, *Captain James Cook: A Biography* (London, 1994), pp. 61-2.

natural history, bringing to that previously ill-defined area of study a new discipline and rigour.[68] Linnaeus set in motion a global taxonomic project which was carried out with an almost evangelical zeal by Linnaeus's students and correspondents. The Daniel Solander referred to by Ellis is one of these students, and another, Anders Sparrman, was to travel on Cook's second voyage. Through their influence, the explorer comes into being not simply as a figure dedicated to science but also, in this period at least, as a figure dedicated to a very particular style of scientific activity. Linnaeus's work seemed to offer a classificatory tool with which to order the whole of creation: science and exploration became above all else a business of data collection and systematisation.

Cook's voyages inaugurated a great age of exploration. They created a pool of experienced officers and men, similar in their outlook and aspirations, from whom a new generation of explorers would emerge: Flinders, Vancouver, Gore, King, Ledyard and others.[69] More importantly, perhaps, they created an infrastructure which enabled subsequent expeditions, and which to a considerable extent determined the attitudes and objectives of most British explorers. A network of contacts and colleagues was established, and lines of communication between institutions and between individuals. Hugely influential in this regard was the 'Mr Banks' referred to by Ellis.[70] Joseph Banks travelled as principal naturalist on Cook's voyage: this gave him a scientific credibility which, in combination with his social status – scion of a landed family, he became Sir Joseph in 1781 – and his eminently clubbable personality, soon put him at the heart of the emerging exploration 'establishment' in Britain. Banks, indeed, may fairly be said to have created that establishment: Captain James King declared him in 1780 'the common Centre of we discoverers.'[71] *De facto* director at Kew Gardens from 1772, President of the Royal Society from 1778, prominent in a number of scientific societies – notably the 'Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa', or African Association, which he helped to found in 1788 – Banks has been labelled a 'one-man department of scientific and industrial research'.[72] He seems also to have constituted a one-man governmental

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[68] For Linnaeus, see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; English translation repr. London, 1997), Chapter 5; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), pp. 15-35; Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller: from Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (London, 1991), Chapter 7; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers* (New York, 1983); David Miller and Peter Reill (eds.), *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* (Cambridge, 1996).
[69] See David Mackay, *In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science and Empire, 1780-1801* (London, 1985).
[70] For Banks, see Miller and Reill (eds.); also John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge, 1994).
[71] Quoted in Mackay, p. 21.
[72] Mackay, p. 23.

department: he shaped policy as much as research, a role that was formalised when he was made a member of the Privy Council in 1797. It was Banks who promoted the transportation of criminals to Botany Bay, Banks who planned to ship breadfruit from the Pacific to the West Indies, so as to provide a cheap and convenient source of sustenance for the slaves there, and Banks who enlisted, in the latter enterprise, an *alumnus* of the Cook voyages, William Bligh.

Banks is thus the first of a sequence of prominent 'middle-men' in British exploration: he is followed by Sir John Barrow, Sir Roderick Murchison, Sir Clements Markham and similar figures. In the sociological terminology developed by Bruno Latour to model the modern scientific process in Europe, all these men may be said to perform the role of a 'centre of calculation': that is to say, they direct research, gather, analyse and redistribute information, and ultimately put that information to practical use so as to make it yield strategic and commercial benefits.[73] This is a role performed equally by the many scientific societies formed in this period, and most notably by the Geographical Society, created in 1830 from the union of the African Association with the Raleigh Society and several other organisations.[74] Through the interaction of these agencies, and around the central efforts of Banks, the exploration 'establishment' came into being in the decades either side of 1800. The foundation of the Geographical Society would consolidate this establishment: thereafter the R.G.S. (as it was to become) and the Admiralty would between them oversee the hey-day of British exploration, which comes to a close only with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914.[75] Already in the 1770s and 1780s, however, the exploration establishment was in a process of formation, determining the nature of British exploratory endeavour.

The new exploration claimed for itself a scientific detachment and a pure, disinterested motive: the agenda pursued by Banks and the exploration establishment, however, meant that exploration was never just about science. Cook carried secret orders to claim all previously undiscovered lands for the British crown. In this and other ways, the explorer clearly forms part of the apparatus which administered and extended the British empire. His work often provided a vital preliminary to military

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[73] See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Milton Keynes, 1987), pp. 215-257.
[74] See Ian Cameron, *To the Farthest Ends of the World: the history of the Royal Geographical Society, 1830-1980* (London, 1980); David Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition* (Oxford, 1992).
[75] For this periodisation, see John Keay's introduction to *The Robinson Book of Exploration* (London, 1993); or, for polar exploration in particular, Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (London, 1996), pp. 2-5 and L.P. Kirwan, *The White Road: A Survey of Polar Exploration* (London, 1959), p. 319.

action in a given region, and this was to become particularly the case in the years after 1815, which see the beginnings of an expansionist 'Forward' policy in many parts of the empire. According to this hawkish outlook, British territories are to be protected by the further extension of empire and influence, and by the establishment of buffer states between the empire and any perceived enemy. To this end, in India from the 1820s,

> a succession of young Indian Army officers, political agents, explorers and surveyors were to criss-cross immense areas of Central Asia, mapping the passes and deserts, tracing rivers to their source, noting strategic features, observing which routes were negotiable by artillery, studying the language and customs of the tribes, and seeking to win the confidence and friendship of the rulers.[76]

With these military and scientific travellers, the Great Game begins in Asia: in contexts such as this, the explorer is part of a flow of imperial agents to regions of the globe that are contested or unclaimed or uncharted.

Exploration shaded not only into military, but also into commercial expansionism. That Linnaean classificatory zeal, for example, frequently seems close in spirit to a kind of stock-taking. Explorers can often seem to be not so much observing dispassionately, as cataloguing covetously, the 'natural productions' of a region. Frequently they have an eye for the commercial prospects offered by each locality: thus for Wayne Franklin, an almost programmatic acquisitiveness is one of the distinguishing attributes of the 'explorer' (as opposed to earlier sorts of discoverer) in the context of the European expansion into America.[77] Here Banks's influence can again be felt: he made British exploration not only an exercise in Linnaean science but also an activity which married a supposedly 'pure' science to a keen interest in the practical and commercial benefits that could accrue from discoveries. This agenda meant that the explorer, or at least the exploration establishment that employed him, was interested not only in observing the world, but also in transforming it. A region's natural productions were to be properly managed and incorporated into a global trading network. Where appropriate, indeed, those indigenous resources were to be changed to something more profitable, or more useful, in the larger global economy. Hence the plan to have Bligh transport the breadfruit tree to the

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[76] Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (Oxford, 1990), p. 119. See also John Keay, *Explorers of the Western Himalayas, 1820-1895* (London, 1996).
[77] Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: the Diligent Writers of Early America* (London, 1979), pp. 23-4.

West Indies. If need be, moreover, it was not only crop species that could be thus transported. People could also be moved: a colony – of convicts perhaps, as in Botany Bay, or of settlers – might represent the best way to manage a region's resources.

In this way, the new exploration chimed with more mercantile interests, and with attitudes such as those expressed in *Aikin's Annual Review* by the reviewer of Sir Home Popham's *Description of Prince of Wales Island, in the Streight of Malacca.* This contributor to the debate about Britain's relationship with the wider world clearly intends that British trade should transform that world, arguing that

> the real lamp of Aladdin is that on the merchant's desk. All the genies, white, olive, or black, who people the atmosphere of earth, it puts in motion in the antipodes. It builds palaces in the wilderness and cities in the forest; and collects every splendour and every refinement of luxury, from the fingers of subservient toil. Kings of the east are slaves of the lamp: the winds blow, and the seas roll, only to work the behest of its master.[78]

It is an outlook which anticipates by several decades the attitude of that great (if fictional) Victorian trading enterprise, the firm of Dombey and Son, in Dickens' novel of that name. Increasingly, in our period, it was married not just to commercialism alone, but also to a range of more reformist and utilitarian beliefs. As noted in the last section, a culture of 'improvement' addressed itself to changing not only Britain but also the world. This improving outlook, articulated in works such as James Mill's *History of British India* (1817-36), increasingly saw the institutions and practices of alien cultures as primitive, barbarous and debased, and thus in need of radical change. An earlier style of British imperialism (to which I shall return in due course) had accorded considerable respect to sophisticated foreign cultures such as those found on the Indian sub-continent: this new style, ever more dominant as our period wore on, spoke evangelically of bringing progress and modernity, rationalisation and order, to the whole globe.

The more hard-nosed expressions of such military and/or commercial expansionism, however, did not go uncontested. The growth of British influence and power prompted much debate, and not a little moral self-questioning. The trial of Warren Hastings in 1788 led to discussions as to the legitimacy of the imperial enterprise: the slave-trade was considered a national scandal in some quarters, and generated a vociferous Abolitionist campaign, headed by figures such as Thomas

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[78] *AAR*, Vol. 4 (1806), p. 25.

Clarkson, which ultimately achieved its aim in 1833. Particularly in the beginning of this period, it was well understood that the transformations wrought upon the world by the new networks of science, trade and empire did not always work to the advantage of indigenous populations. British thinking with regard to these indigenous populations, at this date, was for the most part influenced by a mixture of Enlightenment and sentimental attitudes. This was not yet the high Victorian period, when travellers would sometimes understand their superiority to the peoples amongst whom they travelled as a matter of stark, unbridgeable racial differences (although such attitudes are beginning to appear by the end of our period). Rather, Britons in the decades either side of 1800 usually felt themselves superior to 'natives' firstly insofar as they were Christian, and secondly, insofar as they came from a more complex, economically sophisticated society, according to the stadial theories of cultural development proposed by Enlightenment thinkers such Adam Smith and John Millar.[79] Accordingly, it behoved the British traveller (and European travellers generally), to behave charitably and benevolently towards the native. However, for all that they were opposed to any rhetoric which saw the native as simply a resource to be exploited, these Enlightenment and sentimental elements in British culture were nevertheless part of that culture's expansionist tendency. In certain quarters it was increasingly regarded as a moral duty to reform the indigene, to raise his standard of living and also, more importantly still, his moral and religious standards. From the Abolitionist movement there emerged the Clapham Sect and the concept of the civilising mission, a line of cultural descent which leads in turn to Dickens's Mrs Jellyby in *Bleak House*, with her 'telescopic philanthropy' directed towards Africa.[80] Energetic factions in the British public sphere increasingly looked at the world with an evangelical eye: as Byron remarked, 'people at home are mad about Missionary Societies, and missions to the East'.[81]

This Christian piety and missionary zeal did not necessarily run counter to those commercial interests described above. Rather, this was 'improvement' understood in a moral sense, directed towards the customs and conditions of native life, and this evangelical interpretation dovetailed

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[79] See Kevin D. Hutchings, 'Writing, Commerce and Cultural Progress in Samuel Hearne's *A Journey... to the Northern Ocean*', *Ariel*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1997), pp. 53-4; George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), pp. 15-19.
[80] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (1853; Harmondsworth, 1986), p. 82.
[81] Earnest J. Lovell (ed.), *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron* (Princeton, 1966), p. 78.

neatly into 'improvement' as it was understood by more mercantile and utilitarian ideologues. Indeed, most of the evangelists – Thomas Buxton, for example, and later David Livingstone – argued that trade was precisely the mechanism through which the native would be reformed: thus Mrs Jellyby attempts to combine humanitarianism and commercial *nous* in her scheme for 'cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger'.[82] And so a certain Christian earnestness, even self-righteousness, came to inform the British outlook on the world, and also that exploration establishment sketched earlier. It was not part of Banks's thinking (in his religious beliefs he remained very much a man of the Enlightenment) but it shaped the outlook of many of the men he employed to explore.

British imperialism, then, was woven from strands of military, commercial, scientific, sentimental and evangelical aspiration. These diverse outlooks did not always sit comfortably together, and there were occasions when certain factions looked askance at the methods by which British influence was extended. What is more, this particular coalition of attitudes only slowly assumed dominance in our period. They displaced what is sometimes termed an 'Orientalist' outlook on the world, a position that is associated with such eighteenth-century figures as Sir William Jones, Warren Hastings and Edmund Burke (despite the opposition between the latter two figures at Hastings' trial). This earlier style of imperialism, often associated with an air of aristocratic insouciance which infuriated middle-class reformers, sought British political and economic control over various territories, but had little reforming zeal towards the indigenous populations. A certain relativism in the imperial outlook allowed those cultures their own internal logic, and to some extent even respected that logic. As Burke wrote with regard to Hindu beliefs and practices: 'God forbid that we should pass judgement upon people who framed their laws and institutions prior to our insect origins of yesterday.'[83] Yet by the first decade of the nineteenth century, such attitudes were becoming outdated. The 'improving' ideologies outlined above – at bottom a more middle-class, more aggressively commercialistic, and more earnestly Christian set of beliefs – adopt what has been termed, in contradistinction to the 'orientalist' outlook, an 'anglicist' position.[84] The 1813 amendment to the charter of the East India

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[82] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, p. 86.
[83] Quoted in Makdisi, p. 103.
[84] See Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 77.

Company is often regarded as a landmark in the transition from 'orientalist' to 'anglicist' attitudes: it required the Company to allow missionaries into India, and thus inaugurated an era of more active cultural intervention in British dominions.

This, then, is the play of ideologies attendant on British attitudes to the wider world: broadly a shift from an 'Orientalist' to an 'Anglicist' position over the whole course of the Romantic period, but even within the increasingly dominant 'Anglicist' attitudes a certain degree of tension between different strains of expansionist thinking. As Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh have noted, many of the discourses which addressed Britain's relationship with the rest of the world were 'still in the process of formation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'. As a result, 'anxieties are often more overt, contradictions and gaps more visible … [C]ompeting ideologies have a rougher edge, not yet codified and smoothed over as they will be at the height of the British empire later in the century.'[85]

This competition between ideologies constituted an urgent public debate with which the Romantic writers were highly familiar, and in which they themselves participated. They may not have been explorers themselves, but like most of the reading public they were well aware of what was going on all around the globe. In this connection, we should note that, amongst other things, Cook's first voyage was also a significant literary event. Dr. John Hawkesworth was given the task of writing an account of the expedition, quarrying the journals kept by Cook and Banks for his raw material: this narrative, together with accounts of earlier voyages by Captains Byron, Carteret and Wallis, was published in three volumes in 1773 as *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken … for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere.* A controversial publication (for reasons to be discussed in chapter 2), and one not typical stylistically of the emergent narrative of exploration, Hawkesworth's *Voyages* nevertheless inaugurated a flood of exploration literature. The popularity of this strand of the Voyages and Travels genre can be gauged from the immense sums publishers were prepared to pay to the authors: Hawkesworth received £6000 for his *Voyages*, and Mungo Park 1,000 guineas at the close of the

[85] Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (eds.), *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834* (Bloomington, 1996), p. 4.

century for his *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799).[86] (In comparison, Anne Radcliffe received £500 for *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and £600 for *The Italian* (1797).[87])

Thus the exploration narrative as much as the tour narrative is part of the generic context of Romantic traveller, and the explorer as much as the tourist haunted the imagination of the Romantic traveller. And at issue, as the Romantic traveller variously rejects or identifies with the explorer, are the larger political and cultural concerns outlined above. Like the tourist, the explorer can seem to embody the modernising processes at work in the world. Reflecting a drive towards rationalisation, systematisation and order, he can seem to herald a mundane, thoroughly mapped-out planet. It was in this vein that Mary Shelley lamented in 1824: 'What a different earth do we inhabit from that on which our forefathers dwelt!' She goes on to develop an elegy for a time when the world was seemingly

> encircled by a wall which paled in the bodies of men, whilst their feathered thoughts soared over the boundary; it had a brink, and in the deep profound which it overhung, men's imaginations, eagle-winged, dived and flew, and brought home strange tales to their believing auditors. Deep caverns harboured giants; cloudlike birds cast their shadows upon the plains; while far out at sea lay islands of bliss, the fair paradise of Atlantis or El Dorado sparkling with untold jewels. Where are they now? The Fortunate Isles have lost the glory that spread a halo round them; for who deems himself nearer to the golden age, because he touches at the Canaries on his voyage to India? Our only riddle is the rise of the Niger, the interior of New Holland, our only terra incognita; and our sole mare incognitum, the north-west passage. But these are tame wonders, lions in leash; we do not invest Mungo Park, or the Captain of the *Hecla*, with divine attributes; no one fancies that the waters of the unknown river bubble up from hell's fountains, no strange and weird power is supposed to guide the ice-berg, nor do we fable that a stray pick-pocket from Botany Bay has found the gardens of the Hesperides within the circuit of the Blue Mountains. What have we left to dream about?[88]

For Shelley, Mungo Park and William Parry (the 'Captain of the *Hecla*') seem to signal a tamer world; they generate a sense of encroaching 'disenchantment', understood in the Weberian sense of the term, a loss of romance, wonder and religious reverence.[89]

Shelley's tone here is playful, but so important are the issues touched on by exploration that many Romantic writers and travellers have an altogether more urgent response to the figure of the explorer. This is particularly the case when the explorer's activities involve not merely the intellectual,

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[86] See Hough, p. 320; Pratt, p. 74.
[87] Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 49.
[88] Mary Shelley, 'On Ghosts', in Jennifer Breen (ed.), *Women Romantics, 1785-1832: Writing in Prose* (London, 1996), p. 220.
[89] See H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays on Sociology* (1948; new edition with an introduction by Bryan S. Turner, London, 1991), pp. 139-56; pp. 350-1.

but also the actual appropriation of a region. Like the tourist, the explorer can stand synecdochically for the modernising processes at work in the world, but he adds to these symbolic associations further fraught questions of imperial responsibility and/or guilt. On the one hand, he is sometimes a distinctly heroic figure: he overcomes immense hardships to provide exciting new information and images, and to offer glimpses of strange new worlds. On the other, he is a powerful expression of what C.A. Bayly has termed the 'impulses of uniformity' at work in this period, and he is often complicit with mechanisms of power and control that seek to order the world not only intellectually but literally.[90] The Romantic response to the explorer, and their use of the exploration narrative in both the writing and the practice of their own travelling, is accordingly as ambivalent as their response to modernity in general.

In defining the position of the Romantic writer and traveller *vis-à-vis* the explorer (and the issues of empire, science, commercial expansion and so forth associated with the explorer) the theme of suffering in travel has an important rhetorical role. This is the second line of interpretation that I shall pursue when considering those Romantic self-dramatisations that cast an individual as a suffering traveller, a misadventurer. Such self-dramatisations, enacted both on the road and on the page, acquire meaning not only from their sociological context but also from the geo-political context just outlined. In the latter as in the former context, however, the meanings generated by the *topos* of misadventure are complex, over-determined and sometimes even contradictory. On some occasions, the image of the suffering traveller can seem to demonstrate a moral right to knowledge and even to power, thus legitimising exploration and empire (and in this way, the *topos* of suffering in travel is exploited by some explorers, as we shall see in chapter 2). Usually, however, the emphasis on suffering contests the notion that the world is simply to be appropriated, and thus constitutes a subtle rebuke to more aggressive or triumphalist forms of empire and/or science. Yet even here, the idea of suffering in travel can be inflected in different ways. Sometimes it serves just to remind the forces of empire and exploration not to presume too much: on other occasions it constitutes a radical rejection of these forces and all that they entail. Even in the latter case, however, when a sense of oneself as a suffering traveller is connected with an explicit repudiation of empire, one can

[90] Bayly, p. 14.

so that discussed at the end of the last section: a guilty self-
aw esses one is denouncing.

## Travellers and Tourists: the Rhetoric of Authenticity

Before proceeding any further with this study, and before engaging with those prior travel texts that seem to script certain aspects of Romantic travel, it is necessary to refine the notion of the travel script, and to address an objection that might legitimately be raised to the idea of the scripting of Romantic travel. Byron points us to this objection when he writes scathingly in 1823 of other British travellers in Italy. His compatriots, according to Byron, constitute a

> second-hand Society of half-pay economists – no pay dandies – separated wives, unseparated *not* wives – the Starke – or Invalid – or Forsyth – or Eustace or Hobhouse travellers – as they are called according to their Manual.[91]

In the second half of this attack, Byron alludes to a range of travel narratives and tour guides aimed at the British traveller: respectively, Mariana Starke's *Letters from Italy* (1800) and *Travels on the Continent* (1820), Henry Mathews' *The Diary of an Invalid; being the Journal of a Tour in Pursuit of Health* (1820), Joseph Forsyth's *Remarks on Antiquities, Art and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (1813), John Eustace's *A Classical Tour through Italy* (1813) and John Cam Hobhouse's *Historical Illustrations of the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold* (1818). Some of these texts will be discussed in more detail over the course of this thesis: for now, however, it is the implied relationship between such texts and the traveller that concerns me. Each of these texts, according to Byron, constitutes a 'Manual' for certain sorts of traveller, and by adopting this term Byron clearly means to ridicule these travellers. Implicitly, this is no way to travel. A manual suggests the precise following of a set of instructions: it conjures up a travel experience that is excessively mapped-out in advance, and a timid traveller who refuses to think for him- or herself. Put another way, in the terminology previously adopted in this thesis, what prompts Byron's mockery are those travellers whose travelling is all too clearly scripted –

[91] 'An Italian Carnival', in *BCMP*, p. 191.

from which we might infer that a more worthy form of travel, 'real' travel even, is that which is not excessively predetermined.

Hence, from one perspective, the problem inherent in any discussion of the 'scripting' of Romantic travel: namely, that it is often the express purpose of such travel to throw the traveller into some sort of unmediated, unconstrained existence. Hence, in the twentieth century, Louis MacNiece's exclamation: 'Travel! Travel must be "experience" at its highest'.[92] A similar attitude was in the mind of at least one Romantic traveller, or so we may infer from the mini-manifesto which Keats issues shortly before setting out on his walking tour of 1818:

> I purpose within a Month to put my knapsack at my back and make a pedestrian tour through the North of England and part of Scotland – to make a sort of Prologue to the Life I intend to pursue – that is to write, to study and to see all Europe at the lowest expence. I will clamber through the Clouds and exist.[93]

Travel for Keats, we should note, is not only an exciting prospect (this is the first significant travelling Keats has undertaken), it is also a matter of some seriousness, the starting-point of a whole new life. He will 'clamber through the Clouds *and exist*': the final verb takes on an absolute quality, proclaiming a future state which will somehow be pure, authentic being. Keats seems to anticipate a freedom from any sort of constraint, and an existence that is more intense because it is unadulterated by routine: as he puts it elsewhere, in verse, 'how crude and sore / The journey homeward to habitual self!'[94] (In which connection one might also note Hazlitt's declaration, in 'On Going A Journey': 'Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated.'[95])

Subtly at work in these pronouncements by MacNiece, Keats and Hazlitt is a rhetoric of authenticity that often still informs our thinking about travel, and our thinking about ourselves as travellers. This rhetoric bandies around, and binds together, such glib phrases as 'real travel', 'real life' and 'real experience'. These point to a supposed authenticity in travel and in experience, this authenticity being construed in broadly existential terms, as an autonomy that comes from the throwing off of all pre-determining influences. 'Real' travel is the expression of a free spirit,

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[92] Quoted in Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (Oxford, 1980), p. 20.
[93] *K Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 264.
[94] *Endymion* 2, ll. 275-6 in *KCP*.
[95] *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 8, p. 189.

unshackled by convention. Things are seen as they really are, and the real traveller is not taken in by the more superficial or meretricious pleasures that satisfy less worthy forms of traveller. This is a rather impressionistic sketch of a certain sort of outlook, but it should suffice to suggest the Romantic traveller's antipathy to the notion of 'Manuals' guiding his travelling. To approach Italy through a 'Manual' is to experience it in an explicitly mediated form. This mediated experience is structured, and thus delimited: to the extent that it is prescribed in advance, it represents a narrowing down of the full range of experience that might potentially be had by the traveller. Preferable to this, and more authentic, according to the logic I am trying to describe, are people and places that are directly apprehended, without mediation, in the course of a journey that *seems* to follow no prior script. Put another way, it is – or ought to be – the point of travel that it is unstructured and unprogrammatic, an activity in which anything and everything could happen. The Romantic traveller seeks unscripted existence. He feels, with Hazlitt's fellow travellers, that 'that life was become too tame and insipid … and that it would not be amiss to put oneself in the way of such an adventure, like putting in for the grand prize in the lottery'. A commitment to adventure implies a commitment to chance, as Hazlitt's reference to the lottery suggests. The commitment to chance implies in turn a valorisation of those experiences that seem to be unforeseen and random, and a valorisation of life lived in an improvisational way, with a constant responsiveness to the contingencies of circumstance. Travel – and life – should thus slip containment and constraint, opening the self to the full range of experience.

Arguably, this interest in 'authentic', seemingly unscripted existence commits the Romantic traveller not simply to adventure, but also to misadventure. That is to say, Romantic travel should be not just random experience but, preferably, unpleasant experience. Such unpleasantness is at one level just what would be thrown up on occasion by the randomness of travel, yet it can also seem to have its own especial appeal according to this way of thinking about travel. Dangers obviously have their sublime aspect: a sense of fear must accompany them, and terror, as Burke wrote, is the central component of sublimity.[96] Yet dangers, discomforts and unpleasantness generally can also carry connotations of authenticity. This spectrum of experiences can be claimed as 'authentic' insofar as

[96] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful; And Other Pre-Revolutionary Writings*, ed. David Womersley (Harmondsworth, 1998), p. 86.

they seem unwilled. Who would choose such experiences? And if not chosen, they represent not the imposition of the will upon the world, but rather the world acting upon us. We have not made these things happen: they have been inflicted upon us. Seemingly unadulterated by intentionality, desire or self-interest, they can be celebrated as 'real' experience.

This aspect of the rhetoric of Romantic travel is revealed by another pronouncement by Byron, this time on his own prowess as a traveller. In a letter of 1814, Byron writes:

> Scott, [Hogg] says, is gone to the Orkneys in a gale of wind;- during which wind, he affirms, the said Scott, 'he is sure, is not at his ease - to say the best of it.' Lord, Lord, if these home-keeping minstrels had crossed your Atlantic or my Mediterranean, and tasted a little open boating in a white squall – or a gale in 'the Gut' – or the 'Bay of Biscay', with no gale at all – how it would enliven them and introduce them to a few of the sensations![97]

In keeping with that line of sociological interpretation sketched earlier, here we see Byron playing the game of distinction, defining himself on the page (and earlier in action) as a different sort of traveller to Scott and those other 'home-keeping minstrels'. The criterion by which Byron judges himself to be different, we should note, is not just the extent of his travelling, but also the greater danger and discomfort attendant on the travel experience. It is the 'white squall' and the 'gale' that Byron prizes: the gut-wrenching, possibly life-threatening, experience of being in a small boat in high seas (and here one should recall the fate of Shelley). Notions of sublimity here connect with notions of authenticity. Scott, in not having had this dangerous, uncomfortable experience, is clearly little more than a pleasure-boater in Byron's eyes: he himself is the 'real' sailor, the 'real' traveller.

To this way of thinking, then, it is almost as if the bad experience has greater existential validity. In this connection one might note a further Byronic pronouncement, the injunction issued in another letter that 'a man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence'.[98] Here an equation is seemingly made between 'travel', 'turmoil' and 'existence': implicitly to travel is to 'turmoil', and it is in doing such travelling/turmoiling that one properly exists. This is a curious logic which still has force today. Thus it is with pride that Paul Fussell describes a distinctly unpleasant experience in Turkey. 'Although I have been both traveller and tourist,' he writes, 'it was as a traveller, not a tourist, that I once watched my wallet and passport slither down a Turkish toilet at Bodrum, and it

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[97] *BLJ*, Vol. 4, p. 152.
[98] De Quincey, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 284; *BLJ*, Vol. 7, p. 170.

was the arm of a traveller that reached deep, deep into that cloaca to retrieve them.'[99] A little later he describes how he planned a trip to the South Pacific in which he saw himself 'lolling at the rail unshaven in a dirty white linen suit as the crummy little ship approached Bora Bora or Fiji in a damp heat which made one wonder whether death by yaws or dengue fever might be an attractive alternative.'[100] Again, it seems that the more unpleasant an experience is, the more it is worthwhile and genuine. And again, it seems such supposedly authentic experience defines the authentic traveller and 'real' travel. According to the cultural typology which operates subtly on our modern thinking about travel – a typology and vocabulary which Fussell invokes in the first quotation above – such experience distinguishes the 'traveller' from the 'tourist'. And the Romantic traveller, it was noted earlier, is in many regards the father of the 'traveller' in this more prestigious sense.

All of the above might seem to suggest that it is pointless to investigate the scripting of Romantic travel, and particularly the scripting of Romantic misadventure, since the very point of such travel experiences is that they reveal the absence of all scripts and pre-determining influences. This in a sense is the 'official' story about Romantic travel, the version of events many Romantic writers no doubt told themselves as they either wrote about misadventure or enacted it in their own travelling. Yet the rhetoric involved here, especially that of 'authenticity', deserves closer interrogation. One could argue that a traveller can have a more or less authentic experience of a place or culture being visited, although even the more mediated, pre-packaged ways of experiencing that place or culture are still experiences. Yet the rhetoric of the Romantic traveller, and of cultural descendants of the Romantic traveller such Fussell, often seems to gesture towards an absolute and intransitive conception of experience and existence, understanding them as it were in the abstract, without reference to any particular object. What validity there is to such intransitive usages of the word 'experience' is debatable. Notions of 'real travel', 'real life' and 'real experience' mask a tautology: all travel is travel, all life is life, willed or unwilled, good or bad.

Viewed this way, distinctions between authentic and inauthentic may seem more a matter of value-judgements, of taste even, than of genuine ontological difference. In certain regards, Erik Cohen has suggested, "'authenticity" is a socially constructed concept[:] ... its social (as against

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[99] Fussell, p. 40.
[100] Fussell, p. 41.

philosophical) connotation is … not given but "negotiable".'[101] That is to say, cultures define for themselves what constitutes the authentic experience and the authentic act of travel, and so do sub-cultures within each culture. This, it seems to me, is a useful way of approaching Romantic self-dramatisations with regard to travel. The Romantics, *qua* travellers, may be considered a sub-culture of the tourist class of the period 1780 to 1830, who do not so much prize and preserve 'real' travel as choose a particular set of criteria for authenticity in their travelling. Perhaps the most prominent of these criteria, and the principal concern of this thesis, are discomfort and danger.

Discomfort and danger, then, are arguably not so much authentic in themselves, as they are the markers of an authenticity to which the Romantic traveller wishes to lay claim. And if the issue is framed thus, an alternative or supplementary question presents itself. Why should it be that these particular sorts of experience are judged to signal authenticity? There are, as I have suggested, cultural determinants at work here, and it is these which I wish to identify in this thesis. Byron's rejection of the 'Manuals' followed by less worthy travellers might seem to suggest that it is pointless to look for textual sources for the Romantic practice of travel: the whole point of a characteristically Romantic mode of 'real' travel is that it is unscripted. Yet there is clearly an element of self-deception going on here. It is paradoxical, yet surely undeniable, that certain sorts of story must have been told about travel, for there to have come into being the very association between travel and unscripted existence. Keats in 1818, for example, has not found out from experience that travel is unscripted existence. This is his first trip of this kind, yet he launches himself upon it already assured of the sort of experience he is going to have. Where can such expectations come from, other than from travel tales Keats has heard, and travel texts he has read?

Looked at more closely, Keats's statement of intent reveals certain generic influences which are informing Keats's journey even before he has set out. As it is announced in that letter of 1818, this journey towards pure being discreetly shapes itself according to patterns provided by pre-existing travel narratives. 'I will clamber through the Clouds and exist': the implied figure in this closing, climactic pronouncement is surely that of a mountain ascent. The poet's progress to 'real' existence is troped as a climb through mist-shrouded slopes (one might note Keats's comment, made whilst

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[101] Erik Cohen, 'Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15.3 (1988), p. 374.

visiting the Lake District, that 'I have an amazing partiality for mountains in the clouds'[102]). The use of the verb 'clamber' suggests the hardship and effort this achievement will involve: this is once again travel construed as misadventure. Such gruelling effort, it seems, will constitute authentic experience and such authenticity constitutes an existential triumph. So resonant is that sense of triumph, however, that one cannot help feeling that in that final clause Keats also leaves the clouds behind. Although it is not spelled out explicitly, our familiarity with certain narratives of mountain climbing is surely such that we read into Keats's 'and exist' the moment when this metaphorical mountaineer attains his mountain-top. Pushing beyond the clouds, he reaches the peak, a place associated with clear skies and vast vistas that seem congruent with the idea of greatness and purity of being. In this sublime setting, Keats, himself sublime, will stand above the world, as in a painting by David Casper Friedrich. There is a sense of heroic conquest, of courage, stamina, achievement, and even – if the mountaineer is the first ever to scale this particular peak – originality (and here one might think of the mountain peak the concludes Keats's 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer').

Thus, in a recursive fashion, the actual journey being planned by Keats is scripted in his own mind as another sort of journey, a metaphorical mountain ascent. This script is then acted out for real when Keats gets to the Lake District and Scotland, where several mountains are indeed climbed. Yet this script, for all that it is intended to culminate in some sort of pure existence, has inevitably a generic context: it points beyond itself to a matrix of other texts, all of which are in this way subtly shaping Keats's experience. For climbing mountains is not necessarily or inherently an heroic or worthy activity in the way that Keats seems to take for granted, nor are mountain peaks necessarily associated with sublimity. Petrarch, in what seems to be the first account of a mountain ascent in (post-classical) European literature, fashions a narrative very different to that seemingly rehearsed by Keats in 1818. Petrarch climbs Mount Ventoux in France only to realise – upon opening a page at random in Augustine's *Confessions* – his journey has not been glorious but vain, stimulated by a sinful *curiositas* and *cupiditas*. Rebuked, Petrarch rushes back down the mountain so that he can once again focus his mind properly on God.[103]

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[102] *K Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 300.
[103] See Petrarch, *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, trans. James Harvey Robinson (New York, 1989) and also Wes Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative in the French Renaissance: 'The Undiscovered Country'* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 28-37.

Thus Petrarch scripts mountaineering as activity which signals hubris and a wilful restlessness. This striking difference between, on the one hand, the Petrarchan travel script and on the other hand, the Keatsian (and Wordsworthian) script, is to be understood as in part reflecting the very different generic context to the two scripts. Petrarch like Keats would have been familiar with the many Biblical stories which link mountain ascents with access to prophetic vision. What he was not familiar with, however, was those texts which in the early eighteenth century mapped out notions of the sublime and the picturesque, thereby making mountains for the first time objects of aesthetic pleasure. Nor was he familiar with those texts of the late eighteenth century which effectively refigured mountaineering into a branch of Enlightenment science. In 1786, Michel Paccard climbed Mont Blanc for the first time: according to one historian, 'an event from which modern mountaineering dates'.[104] Within a year, Horace Benedict de Saussure had also climbed Mont Blanc, and had published a hugely popular account of the ascent, swiftly translated into English as a *Short Account of an Expedition to the Summit of Mont Blanc* (a text which in the English version is appended to Thomas Martyn's *Sketch of a Tour through Swisserland* (1788)).[105] Taking scientific instruments with them, recording geological, botanical, climatic and related data at every stage of their ascents, these mountaineers turned mountaineering into a mode of heroic exploration, the individual taking great risks so as to increase knowledge. And from a slightly later figure in this scientific tradition, Alexander von Humboldt, we get a comment which perhaps explains why Keats associated mountain tops with a certain purity of being. At the summit of most southern European mountains, Humboldt tells us, the mountaineer feels 'a lucid clearness in the conceptions, a serenity of the mind, [which] corresponds with the transparency of the surrounding atmosphere'.[106]

A large body of eighteenth-century writings thus served to change significantly the associations that clung to mountains and to mountaineering, and Keats is the heir to these prior writings. The travel script he fashions for himself has in this way a generic context: the quest for true existence that Keats is embarking on is to this extent shaped in advance and mediated by other texts. They may not be 'Manuals' exactly, but if we are to appreciate how the Romantic traveller understood his travelling,

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[104] Sir Gavin de Beer, *Early Travellers in the Alps* (1930; republished New York, 1967), p. 181.
[105] See de Beer, pp. 169-191.
[106] Alexander von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent*, 7 Vols. (London, 1814-26), Vol. 1, p. 182.

and the meanings conveyed by that travelling both to the traveller and to his society at large, we cannot ignore the shaping role played by these literary antecedents.

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Certain models and prior narratives, then, are at work in the Romantic traveller's mind even as he attempts to construe travelling as adventure and unscripted existence. To map this generic influence, and in particular to explore the role played by earlier writings in the Romantic scripting of travel as *misadventure*, this thesis proceeds as follows. The first two chapters survey some of the images of suffering in travel that were available to the Romantics from earlier and contemporaneous travel writing. Chapter 1 attempts to define a nebulous but undoubtedly popular sub-genre within Voyages and Travels, that which offers its readers lurid accounts of shipwreck, mutiny, piracy and other forms of what I shall term maritime misadventure. In relation to these texts I explore some of the generic conventions which are brought to bear on the idea of suffering in travel, and also some of the shifts in reading and writing habits over the course of the eighteenth century. In Chapter 2, I examine how these conventions are used within a different sub-genre of Voyages and Travels, the exploration narrative, and how in this altered generic context the suffering of the traveller takes on a new range of meanings. Chapter 3 then constitutes something of an interlude, as I look not at travellers the Romantic traveller wishes to emulate, but those he wishes to differentiate himself from: tourists. The Romantic traveller has a complex relationship with the narratives under consideration in this chapter. To some extent, he is re-enacting the touristic journeys plotted by these texts, and he is travelling in a style uncomfortably close to that recommended by a Gilpin or a Eustace. Yet to mark his difference from his fellow picturesque tourist or Grand Tourist, the Romantic traveller will often figure his own activities in terms and imagery drawn from the texts discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. This process of distinction and self-fashioning is explored in my final two chapters, which offer brief essays on Wordsworth and Byron respectively. Both men often present themselves as misadventurers, in print and in action: they do so, however, to very different effect. Borrowing different elements from the earlier travel literature, or variously inflecting the conventions they both inherit, Wordsworth and

Byron make their misadventures (real or imagined) bear witness to starkly contrasting aesthetic, political and philosophical positions.

This thesis, then, concludes with Romantic readings of misadventurous travel literature, and with Romantic rewritings and re-enactments of that literature. However, whilst these Romantic responses constitute the end-point of my enquiry, and its underlying rationale throughout, the bulk of this thesis is given over to a detailed examination of the texts and issues which so fascinated Romantic readers and travellers. I make no apology for what might seem an imbalance in the organisation of this thesis. The broader the context we bring to bear on Romantic self-dramatisations with regard to travel, the more fully we can comprehend the contemporary resonance of those self-dramatisations. Further to this, the material under consideration in the early chapters of this thesis is of interest in its own right, and relatively unfamiliar to most modern readers. To some extent, therefore, Chapters 1 to 3 are allowed to develop as self-contained essays. Whilst references forward to the Romantics are threaded through these chapters, the discussion is also sometimes extended to embrace texts which may seem to have little direct reference to Romantic travel: Ross's 1835 narrative of polar exploration, for example. Yet it will be seen that such apparent digressions are illustrative of general tendencies in the travel writing of the period, tendencies which *do* relate to the way in which Wordsworth and Byron present themselves as travellers, and specifically, as *suffering* travellers.

# 1. Misadventurers

Reading

And Writing

The Suffering Traveller

*The right way to goe unto heaven, is to saile by hell.*

William Perkins

*Experience is a Copy written by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of beleevers… And when Christ is with-drawne within the vaile, and the wings of faith clipped, and the flouds of temptation over-flow, and over-whelme the poore distressed, doubting, despairing and drowning soule: this barke keepes, and holds up the soules-head above the water, till the Arke return.*

Vavasor Powell

*My visions were of shipwreck and famine; of death or captivity among barbarian hordes; of a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears, upon some gray and desolate rock, in an ocean unapproachable and unknown. Such visions and desires – for they amounted to desires – ... I regarded … only as prophetic glimpses of a destiny which I felt myself in a measure bound to fulfill.*

Edgar Allan Poe

In the early 1820s, the *Terrific Register*, a magazine aimed principally at children, entertained and edified its readers with a piece entitled 'The Skeleton of the Wreck'. An account of actual events, 'The Skeleton of the Wreck' describes how the Naval frigate *Amethyst*, cruising in the Bay of Biscay, encountered the waterlogged remains of a merchant ship.[1] The captain sent out a long boat to investigate, and as the boat approached the wreck,

> an object resembling in appearance a bundle of clothes was observed to roll out of the cub-house against the lee shrouds of the mast. With the end of a boat hook they managed to get hold of it, and hauled it into the boat, when it proved to be the trunk of a man, bent head and knees together, and so wasted away, as scarcely to be felt within the ample clothes which had once fitted it in a state of life and strength. The boat's crew hastened back to the *Amethyst* with this miserable remnant of mortality; and so small it was in bulk, that a lad of fourteen years age was able with his own hands to lift it into the ship.[2]

On board the *Amethyst*, it is discovered with amazement that this wasted body is still alive: the survivor is heard to breathe the words, 'There is another man'. The long boat is sent out again, and this time the sailors board the wreck. In the cub-house they find

> two other human bodies, wasted like the one they had saved to the very bones, but without the least spark of life remaining. They were sitting in a shrunk-up posture, a hand of one resting on a tin-pot, in which there was about a gill of water; and a hand of the other reaching to the deck, as if to regain a bit of raw salt beef of the size of a walnut, which had dropped from its nerveless grasp.[3]

Unable to do anything for either man, the sailors retreat from this terrifying tableau to the *Amethyst*, and the frigate sails off. Within a few weeks the 'skeleton of the wreck' – the only name by which we ever know the survivor – has recovered to the extent that he can walk about the deck, where 'to the surprise of all who recollected that he had been lifted into the ship by a cabin boy, [he] presented the stately figure of a man nearly six feet high!' With this final exclamation, and after just three paragraphs, the story ends: no further comment is made on the grisly events depicted.

'The Skeleton of the Wreck' is typical of the material published in the *Terrific Register*, a periodical which specialised in the macabre and sensational, yet it is also, more surprisingly, not untypical in certain regards of the Voyages and Travels genre. The story, with its gaze firmly fixed on the

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[1] For the actual events (embellished significantly by *The Terrific Register*), see Richard Seymour, *Memoir of Sir Michael Seymour, Bart, K.C.B.* (London, 1878), pp. 81-2.
[2] *The Terrific Register*, 2 Vols. (London, 1825), Vol. 1, p. 291. Hereafter *TR*.
[3] *TR*, Vol. 1, p. 292.

suffering of some 'miserable remnant of mortality', emerges from certain well-defined traditions within the travel writing of the period. Gratuitous and voyeuristic as it assuredly is, 'The Skeleton of the Wreck' is the ill-bred heir of more respectable styles of reading and writing travel literature. The Romantic writers on whom I will focus in the final section of this thesis are equally the heirs of these styles of reading and writing travel, which find an ongoing expression in both Romantic accounts of travel and Romantic acts of travel. The styles in question serve to emphasise the suffering of the traveller: they are predicated on the understanding that such sufferings may be the principal point of interest in a passage of travel writing, or even a whole travel narrative, for both writer and reader. That is to say, writer and reader alike keep an eye not so much on the traveller's discoveries and victories, as on his disasters and defeats. In the terminology which I wish to adopt, they are attuned primarily to the elements of *misadventure* both in the original travel experience and in the ensuing travel text. Travel, they understand, is about suffering. Such shared expectations in reader, writer and even, one may assume, traveller, give rise to certain conventions in the depiction of suffering in travel: these conventions in turn subtly shape the narration of any journey, if not the actual journey. Ignoring these conventions, I would suggest, we lose touch with the way in which these texts would have been read by some, at least, of their contemporary readership.

Through most of human history, of course, a degree of discomfort and danger has been attendant on travel. The very term 'travel' can be traced back, through the French 'travailler', meaning to make a painful effort, to toil or to work, to the Latin 'trepalium', a three-pronged instrument of torture. Yet the fact that travel in actuality was often arduous and painful does not in itself explain the marked emphasis on the figure of the suffering traveller in some travel texts. Some accounts, even of the most challenging journeys, do not dwell on the hardships involved: we should bear in mind that for any *writer* of a journey, as opposed to the traveller actually undertaking the journey, the inclusion of such details is a matter of rhetorical choice. If a writer does make this choice to foreground the hardships of travel, however, the actual sufferings being described must to some extent be mediated through inherited literary techniques and rhetorical strategies. The actuality of an individual's experience inevitably merges with a range of generic determinants, and the two in combination produce the written account of suffering in travel. This generic context influences

equally the reading of the misadventurous travel account. Previous experience of the form, and a knowledge of commentaries on the form, educate the reader as to what to read for, and as to how to make sense of those elements of the text. In short, a framework of interpretative practice shapes significantly (although not wholly) both the creation and the reception of the text.

This framework of interpretative practice gives rise to particular modes of presentation with which to handle the subject of suffering in travel. These modes can be invoked as and when required by any sort of travel account, yet they may also be said to harden into distinctive sub-genres within Voyages and Travels, sub-genres in which it is understood that whole narratives will be devoted to this theme of suffering in travel. In this chapter, I shall use just one of these sub-genres to investigate the various ways in which suffering in travel was both written and read in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The sub-genre in question is that which deals with shipwreck, mutiny and other types of what I shall term *maritime misadventure*. From at least as early as the seventeenth century, the shipwreck narrative was a highly popular form of travel writing, and one which was governed to a considerable extent by certain standard formulae and techniques of presentation. Its popularity is attested not least by the frequent publication, in this period, of anthologies of shipwreck narratives, which in a sense serve to establish a canon of shipwreck literature. One of these collections, J.G. Dalyell's three-volume *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* (1812), I shall use to give a wide-ranging view of the literature of maritime misadventure. Dalyell's collection contains some eighty accounts which range in date from the fifteenth century right up to the 1810s: the over-view that Dalyell thus supplies of the whole sub-genre I shall supplement with a more detailed consideration of a few individual shipwreck narratives (some of which are *not* included in *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*), notably by Edward Hayes, John Newton, George Shelvocke and John Byron.

I concentrate on accounts of maritime misadventure in part because they constitute such a clearly defined sub-genre within Voyages and Travels, and in part because they seem to have exercised a particular fascination on Romantic writers and travellers. Yet before proceeding further I would stress that these are not the only forms of misadventurous travel writing. The various inflections of the suffering traveller *topos* made in the shipwreck literature are paralleled in many other types of travel writing. As was noted in the introduction, the captivity narrative is another well-defined sub-

genre of Voyages and Travels, and one which utilises very similar rhetorical strategies regarding the depiction of suffering. The same strategies can also appear in other forms of travel writing, even when the primary purpose of the text is not the depiction of the suffering traveller. As James Bruce was to discover (and as we shall see in the next chapter), the crossing of a wilderness or desert can produce situations remarkably similar to those encountered at sea: not surprisingly, the presentation of these situations on the page has much in common with the techniques adopted in the shipwreck narrative. (Indeed, the ease with which the conventions of misadventure shift from an oceanic to a desert setting is arguably a factor in that sense of equivalence between ocean and desert that Auden remarked as a feature of the Romantic imagination.[4]) Misadventure must be understood as not only the preserve of certain sub-genres of travel writing, but also a mode of writing available to a much wider range of sub-genres within Voyages and Travels. With Bruce, the exploration narrative exploits conventions of misadventure, in a generic cross-fertilisation which perhaps receives its most powerful expression in the travel writing of Mungo Park (who will also discussed in the next chapter). In this chapter, however, we will consider the case of William Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (1697), a hugely popular text in its day and one which is indebted to the conventions of misadventure in ways which are often overlooked by modern commentators. To understand fully how contemporaries, and later the Romantics, read Dampier's *New Voyage*, one must reconstruct the interpretative framework which governed the writing and reading of suffering in travel. When this is done, it becomes apparent that expectations of misadventure worked a more pervasive influence on travel writing of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries than is generally realised.

Misadventure, then, is generally an aspect of travel writing's appeal in this period, and informs many publications in the Voyages and Travels genre. With this caveat in place, however, I approach the fascination with misadventure through the forms it characteristically takes in the narrative of maritime misadventure. In an age of sail, when shipping was particularly dependent on wind and tide, disasters at sea were of course a fact of life for a seagoing nation like Britain. Dalyell estimated that as many as 5,000 Britons a year lost their lives at sea, whilst Terence Grocott, in a modern survey, collects details relating to some 1,500 ships that were wrecked between 1793 and 1816 (although

[4] See W.H. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood: or the Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (1951; repr. London, 1985), pp. 13-42.

these are not all British).[5] Grocott prefaces his anthology, moreover, with an acknowledgement that these 1,500 losses represent only a tiny proportion of the vessels lost at sea during even this short time-span: 2,000 wrecks a year world-wide, he suggests, is a more likely estimate.[6] Maritime misadventure, then, was not a rare or far-off event, but something that touched the lives of many Britons. It was also a matter of great economic and cultural import to the nation as a whole. British wealth derived to considerable extent from its merchant fleet; British power and security rested on the Navy, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars when for long periods the Navy was all that stood between the French army and Britain. Disasters that afflicted the Navy – defeats, shipwrecks and most notoriously the great mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797 – were accordingly of especial concern to the public in the decades either side of 1800.

In such circumstances, it is easy to see how the narrative of maritime misadventure catered at a mundane level to the interests of the reading public. Accounts of shipwreck and/or mutiny (and the two as we shall see often went hand-in-hand) functioned as news, as sources of technical information and sometimes as weapons in the legal disputes that followed many disasters. Yet it was not just the requirements of reportage which shaped such narratives. Discussing the popularity of shipwreck narratives in seventeenth-century Holland, Simon Schama suggests that shipwreck accounts had almost the status of myth in Dutch culture, and describes them as 'parables of a manifest national destiny … [following] a standard moral formula in the narrative.'[7] In what follows I hope to suggest that similar formulae, and similar issues of individual and national destiny, shaped the narrative of maritime misadventure in Britain.

However, by the late eighteenth century, in Britain if not in Holland, such narratives arguably functioned less successfully as myth. Their meanings were contested, and they gave rise to radically different readings, expressive of widely divergent interests and affiliations in the reader. This shift in reader response, and the increasing absence of consensus among readers, is not unconnected with a significant shift in the framework of interpretative practice that readers brought to bear on these

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[5] J.G. Dalyell, *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, 3 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1812), Vol. 1, p. xiii; Terence Grocott, *Shipwrecks of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era* (London, 1997).
[6] Grocott, p. vii.
[7] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1987), pp. 30-1.

narratives. Over the course of the eighteenth century, new reasons emerge as to why one writes and reads of the sufferings of some hapless mariner. The three epigraphs to this chapter give a sense of the changes that take place in the understanding of what misadventure is about. William Perkins and Vavasor Powell, authors of the first two quotations, are Puritan divines.[8] They remind us that a framework of Christian belief initially underwrites the interest in misadventure. In Britain as in Holland, the seventeenth century witnesses a proliferation of narratives of maritime misadventure: out of the eighty-one accounts collected by Dalyell, only seven date from before 1600. This seems to reflect the special appeal of the shipwreck *topos* to certain strands of Protestant thought (which also accounts for the Dutch interest in the form). To this way of thinking, which is equally a way of reading and writing, the figure of the misadventurer offers powerful religious meanings. Thus the shipwreck narrative takes shape around ideas of Providence and election: it is informed by Christian traditions – predating Protestantism but acquiring renewed vigour with Protestantism – of homily, typology and theodicy. These influence style and structure as much as the explicit interpretation made of events. There is, for example, considerable overlap between the narrative of maritime misadventure and that other literary form so closely associated with Puritanism, the spiritual autobiography (and it is in part to convey something of this autobiographical imperative, the need to search and shape one's own experience so as to provide appropriate religious meanings, that I include the quotation from Powell). It is thus religious questions which principally exercise the writer and reader of the narrative of maritime misadventure in the seventeenth century, and it is according to this religious framework of interpretation that misadventure is generally written and read throughout the subsequent century.

The eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century interest in misadventurers, then, is grounded in a web of theological preoccupations and of Christian (often specifically Protestant) exegetical practices. Yet whilst this framework of interpretative practice remains the 'official' reading, as it were, of misadventure, it is nevertheless a framework that seems increasingly to creak as the century unfolds. As a consequence, Romantic readers inherit not the stable hermeneutic that prevailed at the beginning of the century, but rather a more complex situation, and a conflicting set of readerly and

[8] These two passages are quoted in John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 457 and 107.

writerly practices. Across the whole period, appeals were routinely made to the traditional Christian rhetoric, and travel texts were routinely shaped into typological patterns and narrative structures which led travellers seemingly to martyrdom or conversion. Yet increasingly such structures and such rhetoric do not seem satisfactory. The surfeit of factual material that was one consequence of new Enlightenment imperatives in connection with travel; the new attentiveness to the individual's feelings, and to the vulnerability of his or her body, that was a consequence of Sentimentalism: such developments complicate the stable body of meanings that ought to be generated by the traditional Providential reading of the misadventurer. One result of these new reading habits is apparent in the final epigraph to this chapter.[9] Speaking in this passage is the protagonist of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838). Pym's words provide further testimony to the relationship between text and travel which is the starting point of this thesis. Fascinated by the images of suffering individuals presented in certain sorts of travel narrative – notably, it seems, shipwreck and captivity narratives – Pym yearns to enact these scenes himself: his subsequent disastrous voyage makes these fantasies a grim reality. The logic behind such masochistic impulses will be discussed in due course: for now, what concerns me is the comparison between Pym's interest in suffering and the interest shown by a religious writer like William Perkins. Pym's 'desires' clearly need to be understood according to a psychological rather than a theological frame of reference. Pym seems to thrill to pain, rather than to take a more intellectualised interest in its educative and spiritual value. Here is suffering read for more private, intimate reasons, reasons which do not necessarily accord easily with the publicly sanctioned, religious framework of beliefs whereby the suffering traveller is 'officially' interpreted. Perkins and Pym share an interest in misadventure, but misadventure clearly means one thing to Perkins and something else to Pym: something darker, more disturbing yet also, in many ways, more liberating, as we shall see.

[9] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838: Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 57.

## God's Plots: The Providential Misadventurer

The Psalm teaches that 'they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep' (Psalm 107:23-24). Such Biblical pronouncements have ensured that the metaphor of the sea voyage has always had a particular potency for the writers of sermons and homilies. The corollary to this, and the subject which I wish to address here, is that accounts of actual sea voyages have often been shaped to decidedly homiletic ends. This is particularly the case when the voyage has been a disastrous one. In a religious context, William Perkins and Vavasor Powell invoke shipwreck and other forms of maritime misadventure figuratively: the travel texts under consideration in this section attempt to make real maritime disasters yield religious meaning. For the most part, these meanings revolve around the central idea of Providence: the various suffering travellers we shall now encounter may accordingly be construed as Providential misadventurers.

At its simplest – with regard to both the religious meanings conveyed and the literary style adopted – the Providential narrative of maritime misadventure is well exemplified by the stories collected in a volume which stands as the generic precursor of Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea.* In the late seventeenth century, James Janeway assembled twenty-seven accounts of shipwreck, which were published after his death as *Mr James Janeway's Legacy to His Friends: Containing Twenty-Seven Instances of God's Providence, in and about Sea Dangers and Deliverances* (1675). This seems to be the first collection of material of this sort made in Britain. Janeway's title conveys the overwhelmingly homiletic nature of the publication, in which connection we should also note that the volume includes a sermon on the theme of shipwreck, preached by Janeway's friend John Ryther, that is as long as all the stories put together. The accounts themselves are short, and so simple as to be almost naïve in style. They show repeatedly a ship, or crew, or individual, being saved from disaster in ways that can only be explicable in terms of God's direct intervention on their behalf: that is to say, they purport to demonstrate in each case an act of Special Providence, in which God temporarily lays aside the usual laws of his creation (laws framed according to his *General* Providence) in order to help and guide a favoured few. As this suggests, Janeway's religion lays considerable emphasis on the idea

of election. Janeway's God saves the Godly: the message conveyed often seems to be this simple. Ryther's sermon, in contrast, offers a more complicated message and suggests that the path to deliverance is rather more arduous. Where Janeway often seems to imply, perhaps inadvertently, a rather mechanistic equation between Godliness and redemption, Ryther emphasises the ever-present possibility of the individual slipping from the path of righteousness and losing Grace. A constant watchfulness must be maintained, a readiness to scrutinise the self, and to interrogate all experience, for signs equally of temptation and of election. In this spirit Ryther insists that 'Dangers and Deliverances are to be carefully recorded and remembered'.[10] Failure to do so can bring about a sense of complacency, and a hardening of the heart against God.

As we shall shortly see, Ryther's sense of man's inherent sinfulness, and of the effort involved in searching out the Providential pattern in actual events, is more typical of accounts of maritime misadventure than Janeway's unproblematic faith in election. Firstly, however, one must note the full extent to which Janeway's *Legacy to His Friends* is rooted in scripture. The volume makes extensive explicit reference to appropriate Biblical stories and verses, both in the actual stories and in Ryther's sermon: further to this, however, there is also a more subtle and implicit frame of reference. Janeway assumes in his readers typological habits of mind, and typological practices of reading: that is to say, he expects of his readers an understanding that all the experiences described are at one level recapitulations of certain key Biblical events. Typology in its Biblical (as opposed to biological) sense supposes a structure of equivalence operating through all parts of the Bible, and ultimately through all history. Events anticipate or re-enact other events: narratives both in the Bible and in life take parallel paths. To the mind trained in the typological outlook, Erich Auerbach suggests,

> an occurrence on earth signifies not only itself but at the same time another, which it predicts or confirms, without prejudice to the power of its concrete reality here and now. The connection between occurrences is not regarded as primarily a chronological or causal development but as a oneness with the divine plan, of which all occurrences are parts and reflections.[11]

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[10] James Janeway, *Mr James Janeway's Legacy to His Friends: Containing Twenty-Seven Instances of God's Providence, in and about Sea Dangers and Deliverances* (London, 1675), p. 93.
[11] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, 1953), p. 555. See also Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England, 1650-1820* (Princeton, 1982).

In the context of the sea-voyage, this means that the actual tribulations of the various individual travellers are to be seen as re-enactments of, for example, Noah's survival of the Flood (Genesis, 7-9), the disciples' sea-crossing (John, 6), or St Paul's voyage to Rome (Acts, 27-28), the last being the starting-point of Ryther's sermon. This is the deeper sense in which the stories collected by Janeway are intended to confirm God's Providence: not just in the individual miraculous act but also in the fact that apparent again and again in such acts, and in the unfolding of events generally, is a divinely-sanctioned pattern. To adapt the terminology of a critic who has written on the consequences for fiction of this tradition in Puritan thought, Janeway's tales should illustrate how 'God's plot' underpins all of 'man's stories'.[12] Janeway, one sometimes suspects, is not above giving the facts in each individual case a nudge in the right direction, to make them conform more obviously to the underlying Providential pattern: thus salvation often appears on the third day of suffering. At such moments, a Biblical template serves to bring individual experience into line with a framework of belief established by centuries of scriptural exegesis and homily; it also works to narrow down the range of meanings that might be possibly drawn from each experience.

Janeway, then, gives us the Providential interpretation of maritime misadventure in its starkest, simplest form. His stories read more like homiletic parables than like actual lived experience. Their brevity, and also, perhaps, the fact that they happened to someone else rather than to himself, allows Janeway to impose the Providential template with particular effectiveness. They accordingly yield just one meaning – God preserves the Godly – and we sense that any details which might have complicated that meaning have been excised from the text. Yet this straightforward equation between Godliness and deliverance is not entirely typical of the narrative of maritime misadventure. The way in which misadventure is more usually treated can usefully be approached via a voyage narrative which predates Janeway, Edward Haye's *Voyage of Sir Humphrey Gilbert.* This account is found in the first great English collection of travel narratives, Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589): it is also included by Dalyell in *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea.* It is worth special attention here because it was clearly a narrative known to

[12] See Leopold Damrosch Jr., *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago and London, 1985), p. 2.

Wordsworth, who incorporates its concluding scene into the so-called 'Analogy Passage' which briefly formed part of *The Prelude*.

*The Voyage of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* describes an expedition, undertaken in 1583 by a fleet of five ships, under Gilbert's command, to explore and settle the American continent in the vicinity of Newfoundland. The voyage ended in disaster, with the loss of several ships and Gilbert's own death. From this apparent defeat, however, Haye conjures a moving scene and a spiritual victory. Just prior to disaster, Gilbert, on board the frigate *Squirrel* and beset by tempestuous seas, is glimpsed by the men of the *Golden Hind* (in which Haye is travelling). 'Giving forth signs of joy,' Haye writes, 'the general, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out unto us in the *Hind* (so oft as we did approach within hearing) we are as near to heaven by sea as by land.'[13] This is the last they see of Gilbert, for as the narrative immediately continues:

> The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the *Golden Hind*, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment, we lost the sight, and withal our watch cried, the general was cast away, which was too true. For in that moment, the frigate was devoured and swallowed up of the sea.[14]

Haye's narrative thus closes with a striking image which might be considered iconic in the strict religious sense of the term. Gilbert's death as presented by Hayes is almost a devotional artefact. Gilbert goes calmly to his fate secure in his faith, engrossed in a book which one assumes is the Bible. As Hayes interprets these events, moreover, they are made to bear witness to a beneficient Providence that presents Gilbert with an opportunity to prove and redeem himself. We learn that 'the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of this voyage, did correct the intemperate humours, which before we noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavoury, and less delightful his other manifold virtues.' Gilbert thus stands *in imitatio Christi*. As Christ was made 'perfect through sufferings' (1 Hebrews, 2:10), so Gilbert has been perfected in death, in the dual sense of being both finished off (Latin *perfectus est*) and also purged of his faults. Death by water, it seems, can save us: as Ryther puts it, 'some have escaped shipwreck of Soul by shipwreck of Body.'[15]

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[13] Jack Beeching (ed.), *Hakluyt: Voyages and Discoveries* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 241.
[14] Beeching, pp. 241-2.
[15] Janeway, p. 106.

Set alongside Janeway's parables, then, Haye's text adds a more unnerving aspect to the workings of Providence through misadventure. God does not simply save the elect: rather alarmingly, he saves them by inflicting hardship and tribulation upon them. Following the christomimetic logic implicit in Haye's depiction of Gilbert, the elect should expect to suffer as much as to be preserved, 'for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth' (1 Hebrews, 12:6). Ultimately, of course, such sufferings are redemptive, and in this way this particular strain of Providential rhetoric connects with that simpler version presented by Janeway. The misadventurer's tribulations prove his elected status, and they teach him to be aware of that fact and to devote himself accordingly to God. Misadventure construed this way, we should also note, is not simply evidence of the misadventurer's election. This framework of interpretation seeks to justify not only the misadventurer but also, implicitly or explicitly, God himself. That is to say, it functions subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) as theodicy. It is intended at its most profound level to incorporate all seeming discordant elements in the universe – especially that which is called by a modern work of theodicy the 'problem of pain' – into a framework of belief that is fundamentally consoling.[16] Human suffering, to this way of thinking, ultimately makes sense: it has an educative and redemptive value. In the Providential narrative of maritime misadventure, it leads the misadventurer back to God. In the words of a Biblical text much used by writers in this tradition, it teaches the traveller to 'hear … the rod, and who hath appointed it' (Micah, 6:9).

Misadventure and suffering have been understood in this way since the beginning of Christianity, yet this interest in suffering seems to have become particularly emphatic in the seventeenth century, under the influence of the gloomier strains of Protestant thought. Texts such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-84) convey powerfully a profound conviction that journeys are meant to be arduous and uncomfortable. Christian must not expect to take the smooth, easy path, but the rough, punishing route. Bunyan, of course, is using the figure of the journey allegorically, in the same way that Perkins and Powell invoke shipwreck in the course of their homilies. Yet this framework of religious belief also works a crucial formative influence on many accounts of actual travel. As a consequence, one of the most common forms of shipwreck narrative from the seventeenth century

[16] C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (1940; reprinted London, 1977).

onwards is that which takes shape as a species of spiritual autobiography, driven by the Puritan imperative of scrutinising one's past, and of searching that past for the evidence of election. The most famous product of this cross-fertilisation of genres is of course a fictional account, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and in what follows I shall make occasional reference to Crusoe. An influential, non-fictional equivalent of *Robinson Crusoe*, however, can be found in a later text, John Newton's *Authentic Narrative* (published anonymously in 1764). The *Authentic Narrative* was not included by Dalyell in *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, but it deserves attention here because it was known to both Wordsworth and Coleridge: it features explicitly in *The Prelude* and implicitly, it has been claimed, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.[17] In later life Newton was an Anglican minister and a friend of the poet Cowper, with whom he would eventually write *The Olney Hymns* (1779).[18] Such a seemingly comfortable position in society, however, had only been reached through some decidedly uncomfortable experiences, as the *Authentic Narrative* records.

The *Authentic Narrative* describes, in a sequence of fourteen letters, how Newton lost his religion, regained it, and then struggled to live according to it. The youthful Newton's career as mariner seemed at first to lead him away from God, breeding dissolute habits and a freethinking mind. He became fractious, and always resentful of the authority of his superior officers. Moving from one ship to another, he stirred up insubordination in others. The result of such behaviour, it seems, is a sequence of mishaps and disasters at sea, and also a period when Newton is virtually enslaved by a slave-trader in West Africa (an episode in which this shipwreck narrative seems to modulate into that other form so popular with the Puritan and Dissenting imagination, the captivity narrative). Yet the result of all these travails is that Newton rediscovers his faith. Looking back over the whole course of his narrative, therefore, the Providential pattern revealed by this traveller's experience seems clear enough: if Gilbert with hindsight can be seen as travelling to some sort of martyrdom, Newton's tribulations produce a conversion to the ways of the Lord, re-enacting the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus.

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[17] See Bernard Martin, *The Ancient Mariner and the Authentic Narrative* (London, 1949).
[18] For Newton's career more generally, see Douglas Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition: between the conversions of Wesley and Wilberforce* (Oxford, 1996).

This conversion is brought about by the fear Newton feels when the ship in which he is sailing is swamped by high seas, and seems on the brink of going down. Amid the hectic efforts to save the ship, Newton finds himself involuntarily calling upon God, and then – as the implications of this plea strike him – reflecting on his past conduct. At first he can only imagine that God will damn him for his actions, a sense of spiritual despair that mirrors the apparently hopeless situation of the ship at this point. But the internal and external crises proceed along parallel lines: just as it becomes apparent that the ship will *not* sink, so Newton recognises that there is hope for his soul. He is not yet redeemed or justified, but he does feel that he has been granted time to re-educate himself spiritually:

> I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favour; I began to pray – I could not utter the prayer of faith; I could not draw near to a reconciled God and call him father. My prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear.[19]

'If you would teach a man to pray, send him to sea': John Ryther quotes this proverb, and Newton, and after him Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, learn the force of it.[20] Newton draws from these events a confidence as to his own election, and writes that 'I thought it very probable that all that had befallen us was on my account. I was at last found out by the powerful hand of God, and condemned in my own breast.'[21]

It is significant that Newton's sense of his own election goes hand-in-hand with a degree of self-condemnation. In autobiographical narratives such as Newton's, the effort to read a sequence of misadventures Providentially seems a more fraught, anxious exercise than in Haye's account of Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Few passages in the *Authentic Narrative* seem expressive of profound, settled conviction that the Providential pattern has been correctly recognised, or that the elected soul is confident of its own justified status. The closest the narrative comes to this self-confidence is the following passage, which occurs in the context of Newton's enslavement in Africa:

> One thing, though strange, is most true. Though destitute of food and clothing, depressed to a degree beyond common wretchedness, I could sometimes collect my mind to mathematical studies… [Barrow's Euclid] was the only volume I brought on shore; it was always with me, and I used to take it to remote corners of the island by the sea-side, and

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[19] [John Newton], *An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable and Interesting Particulars in the Life of* ***** (London, 1765), p. 96.
[20] Janeway, p. 104.
[21] [Newton], p. 103.

> draw my *diagrams* with a long stick upon the sand. Thus I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my feeling…[22]

This is an episode which evidently fascinated Wordsworth, who incorporated it into an extended simile in *The Prelude*. His interest, as I shall discuss in a later chapter, was principally in the vision it offers of the mind transcending circumstances. An over-concentration on this passage, however, might give one a false impression of Newton's text, and of the spiritual progress it charts. For the greater part in the *Authentic Narrative*, emphasis does not fall on transcendence. There are few other passages which evince such a calm conception of an immutable, immortal realm – the realm of geometry and also, implicitly, the soul – seemingly outside the flux of time. Instead, what is emphasised much more strongly in Newton's *Narrative* is struggle, and the soul's entanglement in the historical, material world. Newton more generally charts the effort – seen as inevitable and always ongoing – to avoid back-slidings and to resist the temptations to which man is naturally prone. Newton's recognition of God's power over him, and his conversion back to Godliness, occurs a little over half way through the narrative; it begins in the seventh letter and runs through the next. This is obviously a pivotal episode in the narrative, intended to seal categorically the reading we make of the text as a whole. Yet its positioning at this mid-point also shows that prayer, and the conversion that should follow prayer, are not the end of the matter for this would-be Christian (again, something that the Ancient Mariner will discover, although in a rather different way). The struggle not to lose that elective status is ongoing, in a way that Haye's text and Janeway's brief narratives never have to recognise. Newton is repeatedly struck, even after his conversion, with the 'innate evils of [his] heart.'[23] Further suffering at sea also awaits him, most notably a harrowing period drifting in the Irish Sea with no food. The rest of the *Authentic Narrative* give ample evidence that conversion *per se* completes neither this traveller's misadventures, nor the business of spiritual enlightenment.

An extended, first-person account of shipwreck, undertaken in a Puritan spirit of autobiography, Newton's *Authentic Narrative* must negotiate to a far greater extent than Janeway or Haye the difficult business of showing the Providential pattern operating over a whole life, and a life that we must apprehend as *real*, not simply an *exemplum* of some homiletic truth. Newton's text (and Defoe's

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[22] [Newton], p. 70.
[23] [Newton], p. 108.

*Robinson Crusoe* also) must accordingly balance a need to impose pattern with the need to convey something of the texture of actual lived experience. I shall return shortly to the problems that can ensue as one thus tries to balance pattern and particularity. For now, however, we should note that Newton's and Defoe's narratives constitute not only a more complex literary form than Janeway's and Haye's texts, but also another significant variation on the theological and homiletic reading of suffering in travel. Like Haye, Newton and Defoe are prepared to read such sufferings as Providential in origin, but they make such readings in a rather different spirit to Haye. A more overtly Lutheran or Calvinist theology operates here. Gilbert may have had his faults, in Haye's account, but they are swiftly passed over. For Newton and Defoe, however, the innate sinfulness of man is a more pressing anxiety, constantly nagging at the misadventurer's sense of election. The misadventurer, it seems, has a more fraught relationship with God. Throughout the crisis that begins his conversion, Newton is called a Jonah by his captain, a scriptural analogue that inflects Newton's sufferings rather differently to Gilbert's.[24] Jonah is not simply Christ suffering so as to be made perfect (though within the typological structures of Biblical exegesis Christ may be said to recapitulate and redeem Jonah's experience). Jonah is more actively a sinner against God, and so God's treatment of Jonah must take a more active course. Jonah must be vigorously chastised, cast into the sea and swallowed by the whale, before he recognises that he must serve God's purposes.

This more active sense of human sinfulness underpins many narratives of maritime misadventure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whether or not they articulate the Providential paradigm explicitly. In the narratives assembled by Dalyell, there seems generally to be the understanding that, left to his own devices, man heads inexorably downwards, towards depravity. This is the lesson which John Newton repeatedly draws from his experience: as he declares at one point, 'I had learnt something of the evil of my heart.'[25] Many other narratives of maritime misadventure reinforce this lesson, which is also, incidentally, the lesson that the editors of the *Terrific Register* claim to be teaching when they present us with scenes of horror culled from travel writing and other sources. In the preface to the collected edition of 1825, the editors insist that the *Terrific Register* has a 'moral tendency.' It allows 'man to scrutinise his fellow in his worst estate,' from which the ultimate lesson

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[24] [Newton], pp. 84f.
[25] [Newton], p. 152.

should be that 'we are led to distrust our own natures'.[26] The shipwreck narrative is often anxious to foster the same distrust of our natural selves, having, as we shall see theological as well as sensationalistic reasons for so doing.

Luther's term for the condition which must be inflicted on a sinner before he will recognise God is *Anfechtung*, glossed by John Stachniewski as a 'state of abject terror'.[27] The convergence of the narrative of maritime misadventure and the Puritan spiritual autobiography is due in no small measure to the fact that shipwrecks and similar disasters routinely reduced the victims to such an extremity of abjection. From Janeway to Dalyell, from an explicitly Providential misadventurer like Newton to the far less religiously-minded voyagers we will encounter later in this chapter, the literature of maritime misadventure presents its readers with innumerable variations on what can often seem the same basic narrative – a narrative that requires us to contemplate scenes of the utmost horror. It is no accident that Shelley, in *Prometheus Unbound*, selects as the most extreme form of torment for his protagonist those Furies who 'close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track / Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck.'[28] As Shelley no doubt appreciated, shipwreck and its aftermath would have denoted to his readers almost a terminal point in human degradation, pain and guilt. Those readers would have been familiar in the first place with the horrors of the wreck itself, and with those terrifying scenes in which the elements tear the ship apart. In these scenes – which unfold in more or less the same fashion in almost every shipwreck narrative – panic and anarchy reign: some sailors and passengers despair, others get drunk, a few go mad. Many are killed or injured, and not just by natural causes: the shipwreck victims not infrequently inflict violence on each other. Yet all this is merely the first phase of the horrors presented by the typical narrative of maritime misadventure. As Shelley recognises, it is often what happens 'close upon Shipwreck['s] … track' that constitutes the darkest aspect of these texts. Most of the narratives assembled by Dalyell spend more of their time describing the aftermath of a wreck, than the wreck itself. Here again many standard scenes seem to recur in the various accounts. The survivors of the wreck typically cling to life on the remains of the ship, or on a raft, or on some desolate shore. There will be little to eat and

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[26] *TR*, Vol.1, pp. i-ii.
[27] Stachniewski, p. 18.
[28] *Prometheus Unbound*, Act I, ll. 501-2, in *SPP*.

drink, and soon severe hunger and thirst will set in (as Shelley recognises). In time, the survivors will eat and drink anything available to them: dogs, cats, mice, lichen, seal blubber, even old boots. Such desperate diets, compounded by the harsh environmental conditions usually endured by these unfortunates, work a grotesque effect on the misadventurers' bodies, whose limbs variously shrivel (as in 'The Skeleton of the Wreck') or swell (an indignity suffered by Bligh's companions). Lice and other vermin will often gnaw at them; fingers and toes will ulcerate or be frostbitten; vomiting and diarrhoea are commonplace.

The disintegration of the human body typically recorded by these narratives is usually paralleled by a disintegration of the human community. It is not just matter that routinely falls apart in these texts. As well as the ship, and the bodies of the victims, society and culture also fragment and collapse. The survivors find themselves pitched into a Hobbesian state of nature in which everyone looks out for himself, and where life as a consequence is 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short'.[29] The fragmentation of the ship is usually mirrored by the splintering of the crew into rival and often mutinous factions. Mutiny in some form or another, indeed, occurs so frequently in Dalyell's accounts, sometimes before a wreck but more commonly after it, that it comes to seem the inevitable accompaniment to shipwreck. Mutinous impulses, it can also seem, are also at work within the individual, as reason and restraint give way. Culturally acquired notions of taste and morality dissolve, as life simplifies sharply into a matter of finding food. As has been noted, anything and everything gets eaten over the course of the narratives collected by Dalyell, and the *ultra non plus* of this need to consume everything, and also of the breakdown of community and socialisation, is cannibalism. Cannibalism is the terminal point of horror towards which many of these accounts converge, a final symbolic step clinching the slide into bestiality and selfish depravity which these narratives are at one level so anxious to plot. It is actually practised in only a few narratives collected by Dalyell – notably in 'The Loss of the *Nottingham* Galley' and 'Famine Suffered on Board the *Peggy*' – yet it haunts many more of them. The *prospect* of cannibalism looms repeatedly, even if few of Dalyell's unfortunates actually have to resort to it. It almost occurs in the first of the stories collected by Janeway: in William Dampier and John Byron's narratives, to be discussed later in this chapter, it is likewise only

[29] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 186.

narrowly averted. For John Newton, it was a potential horror that loomed as part of his conversion experience. After almost sinking, Newton's ship drifts in the seas north of Ireland, and supplies dwindled. Their hunger-pangs were severe, Newton recalls, 'yet our sufferings were light in comparison of our just fears; we could not afford this bare allowance much longer, but had a terrible prospect of being either starved to death, or reduced to feed upon one another.'[30]

This, then, is the grisly narrative that is usually unfolding around the Providential misadventurer. Before considering why it is this that this gruesome sequence of events seems so resonant to the religious sensibility of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is worth reflecting upon the fact that it is possible to reconstruct such a standard narrative of shipwreck and mutiny in this period. As George Landow has written (and as Simon Schama seems to recognise when he talks of the mythic element and the formulae in Dutch tales of this sort), the 'different situations and structures' of each individual disaster often seem indebted to some 'hypothetical master narrative'.[31] The recurrence of such scenarios, or what I would term *topoi*, at one level reflects reality: these are events that accompanied shipwreck in this period. Whilst one acknowledges their historical basis, however, one must also acknowledge the subtle generic pressures that are sometimes at work in these dreadful episodes, and which are certainly at work in the representation of these episodes. The author of the 'Wreck of the *Juno*' (in Dalyell) feels he has to explain away why it is that he and his comrades did not eat their boots: he knows that his readers would expect this to happen, thereby revealing something of the 'master narrative', as Landow puts it, that he and his readers share.[32] This master narrative, we may assume, sometimes influenced the actual events that followed a wreck, perhaps creating self-fulfilling anxieties and expectations. The very fact that many misadventurers are so alert to the imminent possibility of cannibalism speaks of a dreadful expectation that events are going to take a certain course – an expectation created, at some level, by a familiarity with other narratives of maritime misadventure. These educated their reader to expect, under certain conditions, a descent into anarchy and bestiality. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe sees a European ship wrecked on his island and assumes that any survivors who have headed out into the ocean will find 'nothing but Misery and

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[30] [Newton], p. 102.
[31] George P. Landow, *Images of Crisis: Literary Iconology, 1750 to the Present* (London, 1982), p. 38.
[32] See Dalyell, Vol. 3, p. 271.

Perishing; and perhaps they might by this Time think of starving and being in a condition to eat one another.'[33] Similarly, John Hawkesworth takes from Joseph Banks's journal a moment of danger on board the *Endeavour*, and expands it in a revealing fashion. Banks had written of this incident that all involved 'well knew that our boats were not capable of carrying us all ashore, so that some, probably most of us, must be drowned.'[34] Hawkesworth's version runs as follows:

> We well knew that our boats were not capable of carrying us all on shore, and that when the dreadful crisis should arrive, as all command and subordination would be at an end, a contest for the preference would probably ensue, that would increase the horrors even of shipwreck, and terminate in the destruction of us all by the hands of each other.[35]

Like Crusoe, Hawkesworth assumes as all but inevitable the splintering of the crew and the consequent slide into anarchy and violence. This obviously is what human beings do in these conditions – or at least, what a certain sort of travel narrative tells you they will do.

In teaching such a profoundly bleak view of human nature, the narrative of maritime misadventure is underpinned by the more sombre strains of Protestant theology. These are texts keenly aware of Original Sin, and the fallen nature of all flesh. The extent of the depravity and horror depicted in these accounts is to be understood as an index of man's 'desertion' by God, a desertion brought about by man's wilful refusal to acknowledge his creator. Also at work here, it often seems, are Calvinist notions of double predestination. To this way of thinking, it was not only the elect whose fates were ordained by God from the very start of time: it was also the reprobate, those who were heading inexorably to hell. In many of the narratives collected by Dalyell, it is seemingly in this spirit in which we are meant to read the hideous goings-on that often followed wrecks. Participants in these events are meant to be construed not as victims or as Providential misadventurers, but rather as reprobate figures, benighted misadventurers (as I shall dub them) whose experience is in keeping with the Calvinist doctrine that the life of the reprobate would offer a foretaste of hell. Gaining no spiritual lessons from their experience, they simply degenerate, giving way to excess and violence: their eating of human flesh, where it occurs, may be read as a grotesque version of the sacrament.

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[33] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford, 1981), p. 187.
[34] Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-71*, 2 Vols., ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Sydney, 1962), Vol. 2, p. 79.
[35] John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken ... by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook*, 3 Vols. (London, 1773), Vol. 3, p. 144.

It is against these figures, in many narratives of maritime misadventure, that the Providential misadventurer defines himself. He learns from his sufferings, experiencing pain and degradation that he might discover God. Yet the sense of inherent human sinfulness noted above also dictates the extremities visited on not just the benighted, but also the Providential misadventurer. Because he too is guilty, he is to be punished: because of the extent of his guilt, he is often to be punished severely. The sufferings inflicted must be extreme, because the Providential misadventurer's inherently sinful nature leads him always to disregard God's warnings. Our natural tendency, as Ryther notes, is always to harden our hearts against God, who must therefore use an escalating scale of violence to remind us of his shaping presence in our lives. Ultimately it will require the most extreme situations to bring about the final crisis. The Providential misadventurer as well as the benighted misadventurer needs to plumb the depths of human despair. Only when he has been broken down utterly, experiencing that Lutheran state of *Anfechtung*, will he receive God's Grace. As Ryther notes: 'Salvations and Deliverances many times are not sent, until persons be left hopeless in themselves.'[36]

Most authors of shipwreck and similar narratives, of course, cast themselves as Providential rather than benighted misadventurers. In keeping with the precepts of both Ryther and Vavasor Powell, they have learnt to read their lives and travels correctly, discerning in their experience evidence of 'Salvations and Deliverances' which betoken their elective status. As a consequence, they would have their reader believe that their autobiographical travel narratives re-enact at some level the experience of Jonah, or of Paul on the road to Damascus. To insist on such typological underpinnings to their own journeys, however, involves a twofold hermeneutic effort on the part of the authors of these accounts. On the one hand, the Providential misadventurer must have read his own experience correctly, shaping it so that it yields the appropriate pattern: on the other hand, he needs also to convey the presence of that pattern successfully to his reader. The latter effort in particular is fraught with difficulties. As has been noted, if the account is to be read as a real life, and not just as an extended *exemplum* of some homiletic point, a balance must be maintained between the particularity of detail and the overall schema: in the following sections we shall encounter texts in which this balance is not successfully achieved.

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[36] Janeway, p. 93.

Further to this, difficulties are also introduced by that Lutheran and Calvinist logic whereby both the Providential and the benighted misadventurers must be reduced utterly, but to very different ends. If it is not properly constructed – equally, if it is improperly read – the tale of the Providential misadventurer can all too easily read as a tale of benighted misadventure. John Stachniewski (writing more generally of Puritan spiritual autobiographies) comments that this literary form needs to embrace two very different narratives, whilst simultaneously distinguishing scrupulously between them: 'the aim was to construct a narrative governed by a teleology of election, love, acceptance which could convincingly subordinate, while accounting for, all of the evidence of experience that seemed to document a narrative governed by a teleology of reprobation, hatred, rejection.'[37] Yet in many of these accounts of maritime misadventure, as I shall demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, the Providential narrative does not entirely succeed in subordinating the rival narratives seemingly implicit in the text. There is a degree of instability inherent in the form, and in the individual text there is often an uncanny, doubling effect, as if one line of interpretation is being haunted by an entirely different logic – and this instability and doubleness perhaps accounts for the curious fascination these narratives exercise on some readers.

Before looking at these more unsettling accounts of maritime misadventure, there are two last points to be made about misadventure understood according to this Providential frame of reference. The first point touches on a formal aspect of these narratives. Propelled as they are towards moments of conversion or martyrdom, these are highly teleological texts (as Stachniewski recognises, in the quotation above), which purport to recount highly teleological journeys. It follows that much rests, in these narratives, on those scenes which depict the actual moment of conversion or martyrdom. These scenes may be said to have a conclusive force, whether or not they occur at the end of their respective narratives (and many of them do occur at the close of a narrative). Functioning in a similar way to the moment of *anagnoresis*, or recognition, in Aristotle's theory of plot structure, they influence the conclusions, understood as inferences rather than endings, we are meant to draw from the text.[38] These conclusions should bring the whole text into shape: if satisfactorily

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[37] Stachniewski, p. 104.
[38] See Chapter 11 of Aristotle's *Poetics*, in Penelope Murray (ed.), *Classical Literary Criticism* (Harmondsworth, 2000), and also Terence Cave's elaboration of the concept in *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford, 1988).

achieved, they generate a sort of interpretative closure. We should understand and accept why things happened the way they did. Tribulation and suffering, nature's apparent indifference to man and even its active cruelty: we are meant to recognise that all these things, for this traveller at least, had both purpose and value. By extension, we should recognise that all such disturbing and inexplicable elements in God's creation have similar purpose and value. Thus the justification of the writer and the justification of God cohere in these conclusive scenes: it is at these moments that the text implicitly assumes the role of theodicy. Yet these conclusive scenes, of course, do not exist alone: they have a context established for them by the rest of the narrative. In the next sections I shall suggest that one way of understanding the curious 'doubling' of narratives within the account of maritime misadventure is to recognise that, for a variety of reasons, the relationship between the 'conclusive' scene and the rest of the text has become problematic. The delicate balance that writers like Defoe and Newton must create between Providential pattern and the particularity of experience becomes destabilised, and when this happens the Providential framework of interpretation becomes less satisfactory. Readers may not accept this Providential interpretation, detecting a resistance in both the events and the text to the pattern imposed on them: such readings, possibly mutinous in intent, will figure strongly in the rest of this chapter.

In relation to such possible formal inadequacies in the Providential narrative of misadventure, however, there also is a further homiletic point to be made. Even in those cases where the narrative of election and justification does not seem to be achieved, the resistance to Providential interpretation may still be explained satisfactorily by the appropriately instructed Christian writer and/or reader. Such difficulties in interpretation are prefigured in the Biblical book of Job, in which sufferings are heaped upon the protagonist for seemingly no reason at all. Job is consoled by an array of companions who attempt to find some Providential pattern in events, yet in comparison with the particularity and extremity of Job's sufferings there is always something inadequate about such explanations. The result is a deeply unsettling text, the ambiguities of which Jonathan Lamb has explored at length.[39] I shall discuss the more awkward implications of Job shortly; here, however, I wish only to note that the sympathetic reader, trained to read correctly, can recuperate from Job an

[39] See Jonathan Lamb, *The Rhetoric of Suffering: Reading the Book of Job in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1995).

appropriate religious message. It demonstrates the infinite nature of God's power and the inscrutable nature of his purposes: 'the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea' (Job, 11:9). In short, it demonstrates God's sublimity. A similar logic can be applied to potentially dark readings of narratives of misadventure. The very immensity of the forces at work in God's creation, their violence and even their apparent viciousness, figure the sublimity of God. The fact that these forces and their consequences cannot be contained in any straightforward explanation only compounds that sense of sublimity. The example of Job teaches (some of) us that one cannot necessarily *expect* to find evidence of a Providential pattern in one's experience: to assume that this pattern will be easily revealed would be presumptuous.

## Providence and the New Science: Dampier's *New Voyage*

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, then, a Providential framework of interpretative practice did much to make travel writing – particularly, although not exclusively, voyage narratives – a matter of discomforts and dangers. Providential habits of mind both stimulated an interest in the traveller's misadventures and provided the rationale whereby such misadventures were explicated. Inherent in the forms characteristically adopted by Providential misadventure, however, were certain tensions and instabilities, and my purpose in this section is to elaborate further on the problems these could cause the reader of the Providential travel narrative. At the same time, I shall also show that the interpretative practices sketched above worked a significant influence not only on those travel texts explicitly about travelling disasters, but also on a much wider range of travel writings. It was not merely specialised sub-genres of Voyages and Travels – the narrative of captivity or of shipwreck – that were shaped by ideas of Providence and misadventure: it was also a fundamental aspect of the genre's appeal more generally.

To illustrate this, I shall discuss the text that is generally taken as launching the great eighteenth-century vogue for travel writing: William Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (1697). For G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, it was Dampier who 'quickly fanned into flame' popular interest in the Voyages and Travels genre, whilst for Philip Edwards, Dampier is simply 'the "founder"' of the

tradition of voyage literature which is his subject in *The Story of the Voyage*.[40] The publication history of the *New Voyage* amply bears out this view: it went through three editions in the year of publication alone, and a further two editions by 1705. Thereafter it was frequently reprinted, either as part of Dampier's collected works, or as a canonical text in the numerous eighteenth-century collections of travel literature. 'Everyone was familiar with it,' remarks Edwards, and that includes the Romantic writers whose reading in travel literature forms the basis of this thesis.[41] Yet what sort of narrative was it, precisely, that they were so familiar with?

Modern commentators tend to follow the example set by Dampier himself in his Dedicatory Letter to the President of the Royal Society. Here Dampier insists that the narrative's value rests chiefly in the precision and rigour with which he observes flora, fauna, foreign peoples and the like. Dampier thus understood is a proto-scientist, a 'natural genius' with a 'scientific mind', as J.C. Beaglehole puts it, or in Philip Edwards' assessment, 'a natural Baconian scientist'.[42] The *New Voyage* seen this way inaugurates a new paradigm in travel writing. In its observational rigour, and in the sheer copiousness of information it provides, Dampier's narrative answers to the requirements of the New Science that was emerging in Britain. The Royal Society had been founded in 1660, devoted to the Baconian project of knowledge through induction: it issued from 1665 to 1666 a series of 'Directions for Seamen Bound on Long Voyages'.[43] These stressed the need for empirical data, delivered in a plain, impersonal style: they urged upon all travellers the necessity of recording their experiences and observations in a detailed and disciplined fashion. Dampier achieves this brilliantly, in passages of 'static description' (as Edwards terms them) such as the following:

> [The Guava fruit] grows on a hard scrubbed Shrub, whose Bark is smooth and whitish, the branches pretty long and small, the leaf somewhat like the leaf of a Hazel, the fruit much like a Pear, with a thin rind; it is full of small hard seeds, and it may be eaten while it is green, which is a thing most rare in the *Indies*: for most Fruit, both in the *East* or *West Indies*, is full of clammy, white, unsavory juice, before it is ripe, though pleasant enough afterwards. When this Fruit is ripe it is yellow, soft and very pleasant. It bakes as well as a Pear, and it may be coddled, and it makes good Pies. There are of divers sorts different in shape, taste and colour. The inside of some is yellow, of others red. When this Fruit is eaten green it is binding, when ripe it is loosening.[44]

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[40] G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846', in Edward Lynam (ed.), *Richard Hakluyt and his Successors* (London, 1946), p. 74; Philip Edwards, *The Story of the Voyage* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 5.
[41] Edwards, p. 17.
[42] J.C. Beaglehole, *The Exploration of the Pacific* (London, 1934), p. 166; Edwards, p. 20.
[43] See Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller: from Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York, 1991), p. 191.
[44] William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (London, 1697), p. 222.

Here one sees immediately the observational detail that the Royal Society demanded, the recording of colour, texture and the like, the noting of common properties and of variation within the species. This description is not as precise or as authoritative as later accounts will be – the language of Linnean taxonomy is not yet available to Dampier – although the passage gains as much as it loses by this absence. In the place of a more absolute precision, we have the freshness of Dampier's language, as he seeks analogies for the unknown in the domestic and familiar, in the hazel and the pear, in 'coddling' and pie-making. Such assiduous note-taking paves the way for the more systematic exploratory enterprise of the latter half of the eighteen century.

These passages were written up from notes taken during Dampier's travels, which at one point were preserved in a length of bamboo, stopped at both ends with wax. It is important to note, however, that they *were* written up later, not only after the voyage but also after the main body of the narrative had been written. At the instigation of the President of the Royal Society, Dampier expanded his 'static descriptions' and inserted them, often rather crudely, into the pre-existing narrative. And whilst the 'science' of the *New Voyage* is clearly a hugely important aspect of the text, what is too often overlooked in discussions of Dampier is the form adopted by this pre-existing narrative. Structurally and thematically, the *New Voyage* as a whole is clearly indebted to the Providential narrative of maritime misadventure. Those modern commentators who tend to pigeonhole it as a work of exploration *avant la lettre* neglect a significant part of the text's appeal in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By some readers, at least, the *New Voyage* could be read as much for the mishaps that befell a Godless traveller, and the lessons he learnt from them, as for its science: this reading of readings, as it were, will be corroborated in due course when we consider Wordsworth's use of Dampier in his 'Analogy Passage'.

To understand this aspect of Dampier's narrative, it is necessary to appreciate why it was that Dampier came to be voyaging around the world. The *New Voyage* describes a twelve-year period during which Dampier lived what he later termed a 'loose, roving way of life'.[45] This life began in 1679, when Dampier joined a group of 'privateers' at Negril Bay, Jamaica. These 'privateers', or

[45] Dampier, p. 349.

'buccaneers', were in practice little more than pirates. Dampier and his comrades lived precariously by harrying Spanish shipping in the Caribbean and South Seas, and by raiding Spanish settlements in the New World. Periodically switching ships and captains, Dampier crossed and re-crossed on foot the Isthmus of America (present-day Panama), rounded Cape Horn, sailed up and down the Pacific coast of South America, and lived for a short period in Virginia. Eventually, he crossed the Pacific to South East Asia, via the Philippines and Australia. At the Nicobar Islands, north-west of Sumatra, he broke with the privateers, embarking in an open boat for Sumatra, and thence to England, where he arrived in 1691.

Dampier's *New Voyage* is the first of a group of highly popular accounts of privateering: the other key texts in this branch of Voyages and Travels include Lionel Wafer's *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699) and Woods Rogers' *Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712), which first told the story of Alexander Selkirk, the model for Robinson Crusoe.[46] Yet what emerges very powerfully from Dampier's account is a strong sense (felt more strongly by Dampier than by most of successors) that privateering is a morally dubious business. As he writes the *New Voyage*, Dampier is clearly embarrassed, and somewhat guilty, about his involvement in the various escapades. This guiltiness informs Dampier's depiction of the privateering life, shaping his account in ways that echo the typical narrative of maritime misadventure. It is evident from the outset of the *New Voyage* that Dampier's desire is to dissociate himself from his earlier career, and from his privateering comrades. And in order to articulate his disdain for the privateers, Dampier utilises many of the formulae and *topoi* customarily applied to the benighted misadventurers, as discussed in the previous section. They are shown as anarchic and wholly self-interested, with an innate tendency to insubordination and even mutiny. Dampier explains that privateers 'are not obliged to any Ship, but free to go ashore where they please, or to go into any other Ship that will entertain them, only paying for their Provision.'[47] As a result, he notes dolefully, they are 'more wilful and less under command' than ordinary seamen.[48] Such tendencies have their utopian aspect, and I shall return in due course to the image Dampier presents of privateers drawing up charters and behaving democratically: generally,

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[46] See Edwards, pp. 32-5; 41-3.
[47] Dampier, pp. 30-31.
[48] Dampier, p. 80.

however, we are clearly meant to see such liberty as constantly shading into licence. Wilful individualism manifests itself principally in drunkenness and dissension. A stream of captains are manoeuvred in and out of command by fractious crews, whilst Dampier himself jumps ship on more than one occasion, taking up with other commanders when their plans suit him better. When matters are at their worst, 'every man did what he pleased, and encourag'd each other in his villainies.'[49] There is also an undercurrent of violence throughout the narrative. One captain whom Dampier helped to supplant was subsequently murdered by his next crew, and settlements are destroyed in seemingly gratuitous acts of destruction: as Dampier notes, with a chilling casualness, 'while we lay here at *Tabago* some of our men burnt the Town on the Island.'[50]

Dampier's privateers thus have much in common with those crews who typically disintegrate into violence and anarchic individualism either just before or just after a wreck. The same innately sinful tendencies seem to drive them: the result, in the *New Voyage* as in the more explicitly Providential narrative of misadventure, is a miserable, painful existence, with human beings merely the playthings of larger, elemental forces. Dampier's passages of 'static description' may attempt to establish a certain intellectual control over the external world, but the main body of his narrative depicts a world in which everything is treacherous. Men trick each other, often with tragic consequences, whilst the weather often flatters to deceive: storms seem to blow up whenever the privateers launch their flimsy canoes on the open sea. Death is common, caused by disease or the elements or the Spaniards. For all that they are often violent and destructive, the privateers themselves are powerless in the larger scheme of things. They are never in control of events; their plans go repeatedly awry; they are generally driven by, not driving, the action. Dampier often seems to depict them as going round in circles. On one occasion, for example, there is a spectacularly poor attempt to hijack the Spanish merchant fleet. Waking up on the morning they had planned to ambush the Spanish, the privateers find that they themselves are in a position to be ambushed:

> we found they had got the Weather-gage of us, and were coming upon us with full Sail: so we ran for it, and after a running Fight all day, and having taken a turn almost around the Bay of *Panama*, we came to anchor again at the Isle of *Pacheque*, in the very same place from whence we set out in the morning.[51]

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[49] Dampier, p. 371.
[50] Dampier, p. 205.
[51] Dampier, p. 209.

Elsewhere, an similarly ambitious project proves equally ineffectual. Attempting to steal a Spanish ship, a party of privateers

> rowed softly into *Acapulco* Harbour: and because they would not be heard, they hal'd in their Oars, and paddled as softly as if they had been seeking Manatee. They paddled close to the Castle; then struck over to the Town, and found the Ship riding between the Brestwork and the Fort, within about 100 yards of each. When they had well viewed her, and considered the danger of the design, they thought it not possible to accomplish it: therefore they paddled softly back again, till they were out of command of the Forts, and then they went to land, and fell in among a company of *Spanish* Soldiers (for the *Spaniards* having seen them the day before had set Guards along the Coast) who immediately fired at them, but did them no damage, only made them retire farther from the shore. They lay afterwards at the mouth of the Harbour till it was day to take a view of the Town and Castle, and then returned aboard again, being tired, hungry and sorry for their disappointment.[52]

Again there is a sense of circularity, as the privateers get into the harbour, decide they cannot steal the boat, and return, which is heightened by the slightly repetitious nature of Dampier's language: there is a lot of 'paddling softly' going on. It is hard to judge whether Dampier intended this effect, yet it conveys well the privateers' status as pawns, forever unable to act effectively, or to break free of their own worst natures.

Sometimes the consequences of such haplessness are more gruesome. Surprised on land by the Spanish, after having sacked a settlement, many privateers are literally shot to pieces as they attempt to break out of the town: the bodies end up 'stript, and so cut and mangled, that [their captain] scarce knew one Man.'[53] Dampier suggests that these men would have survived if they had obeyed their captain and moved in the disciplined fashion he recommended: thus the physical disintegration inflicted upon them seems to derive directly from the fragmentary tendencies operating at the social level. Later, Dampier's privateers, like so many maritime misadventurers, find themselves faced with the prospect of cannibalism, although like most crews in these narratives it is a fate that is never actually visited on them. Sailing in the seas below South East Asia, they make land just before they run completely out of supplies – a lucky circumstance, Dampier tells us, 'for as I was afterwards

[52] Dampier, p. 247.
[53] Dampier, p. 271.

informed, the men had contrived first to kill Captain *Swan* and eat him when the victuals was gone, and after him all of us who were accessory in promoting the undertaking of this Voyage.'[54]

Sketching his fellow privateers, then, Dampier follows the template established by the benighted misadventurers we find in many other voyage narratives. Like other such unfortunates, the privateers seem stuck in a Hobbesian world from which God has removed his Grace. For Dampier himself, however, matters are rather different. In deliberate contrast, perhaps, to the circular trajectories repeatedly traced by the privateers, Dampier imposes on his personal experience, and therefore on his narrative, a more linear form. The *New Voyage* moves towards a climactic moment of Pauline conversion, whereby Dampier becomes a misadventurer not in the benighted but in the Providential mode. Shortly before the close of the narrative, Dampier fashions what I earlier termed a 'conclusive' scene. On the Nicobar Islands in the Indian ocean, conduct amongst the privateers reaches its nadir. Dampier at last breaks away from them, something he claims he has been trying to do for some time. With a few companions, he sets out from the Nicobar Islands in an open canoe. A few days into their voyage there is a disturbing event, which they read as 'a very ill presage': the appearance 'of a great Circle about the Sun (5 or 6 times the Diameter of it) which seldom appears, but storms of Wind, or much Rain ensue.'[55] The storm indeed arrives, and the sailors' situation is soon perilous: 'the Sea was already roaring in a white fome about us; a dark night coming on, and no Land in sight to shelter us, and our little Ark in danger to be swallowed by every Wave; and what was worst of all, none of us thought ourselves prepared for another World.'[56]

Dampier's use of the word 'Ark' here is not insignificant. With its reference back to Noah hinting at a typological framework to Dampier's experience, it helps to signal that Dampier's journey and text have reached their moment of crisis. There have been storms before in Dampier's account, but this one is recounted with a heightened air of immediacy and urgency. As Dampier writes, 'I had been in some eminent dangers before now … but the worst of them all was but a play-game, in comparison with this.' The result for Dampier is an internal struggle, a 'great conflict of Mind', to accompany that external conflict between the elements:

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[54] Dampier, p. 283.
[55] Dampier, p. 495.
[56] Dampier, p. 496.

> I must confess that my courage, which I had hitherto kept up, failed me here; and I made very sad reflections on my former Life, and lookt back with horror and detestation, on actions which before I disliked, but now I troubled at the remembrance of. I had long repented me of that roving course of life, but never, with such concern as now. I did also call to mind the many miraculous acts of God's Providence towards me, in the whole course of my life, of which kind, I believe, few men have met with the like. For all these I returned thanks in a peculiar manner, and this once more desired God's assistance, and composed my mind, as well as I could, in the hopes of it, and, as the event shew'd, I was not disappointed of my hopes.[57]

Here Dampier seeks to impose a teleology on both his travelling and his text. The *telos* in both regards is a moment of personal reformation and conversion, which also serves – when its fuller ramifications are reflected upon – as a justification of God as well as Dampier. Dampier is trying to persuade us that he is no longer the man he was when he led his dissolute life with the privateers: the larger implication of this conclusive scene, meanwhile, is that the whole sorry sequence of mishaps and disasters that Dampier has plotted should in fact be understood as revealing an underlying cosmic order. The travails Dampier records are now implicitly to be seen as making a certain sort of sense: all that violence, human and natural, was God punishing the reprobate and prodding the elected misadventurer back to righteousness.

I am overstating matters somewhat, of course. In Dampier's hands, this conclusive moment in the Providential travel narrative is a much more muted affair. Yet Dampier's caution in this regard is revealing, and points us to certain structural instabilities in his text. Philip Edwards has shown that the congruence of external event and inner crisis given above had to be stage-managed: this passage of writing in fact brings together several different incidents.[58] So Dampier at some point wanted his text to yield a certain sort of reading, yet at the same time – when one bears in mind the understated manner in which that ending is presented – he seems to have been somewhat unsure about the appropriateness of that reading. Dampier, one senses, lacks confidence in his conclusive scene: he is aware that if it is imposed too crudely it will not seem plausible. Whether this awkward gesture towards the conventional Providential pattern is any more plausible, however, is a moot point. Arguably, the attempt to tack on a Providential ending only highlights the extent to which the greater part of Dampier's narrative does *not* fit such a conclusion, and such Providential, consolatory

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[57] Dampier, p. 497.
[58] Edwards, pp. 28-30.

conclusions (in the sense of inferences). The sheer mass of empirical data presented; the brisk flow of events which yields little sense of pattern or a movement towards a particular goal; the consistently bleak world, largely inexplicable (at least, when Dampier is not in his scientific mode), through which the privateers move: elements such as these in the main body of the text seem again and again resistant to a properly Providential interpretation. The ending accordingly seems incommensurate to all that goes before it. Such incommensuracy indicates (in Stachniewski's terminology) the failure of the Providential narrative to 'subordinate' other, rival narratives in the *New Voyage*. Dampier's text is accordingly susceptible to some very different readings. It may be read *with* Dampier, as it were, so that the reader accepts both the author's self-justification and that larger 'teleology of election, love, acceptance' (as Stachniewski has it) which takes shape around this self-justification. Or it may be read more sceptically, in a manner that is distrustful not only of Dampier himself, but also of any attempt to find God operating in that historical realm, all flux and violence and materiality, seemingly evidenced by the greater part of the *New Voyage*.

## The Strange Allure of the Benighted Misadventurer

Dampier's *New Voyage* is thus a text shaped significantly by Providential expectations, but which is unable, for a variety of reasons, to fulfil those expectations in a wholly satisfactory way. This unsatisfactoriness, with regard to the Providential reading of a traveller's misadventures, is still more pronounced in another significant strand of the literature of maritime misadventure. In this section I shall discuss George Shelvocke's *A Voyage round the World by Way of the Great South Sea* (1726) and John Byron's *Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (1768). These are two texts which have an important place in the literary history of Romanticism. It is in Shelvocke's narrative, of course, that Wordsworth read of the shooting of an albatross: he recounted the incident to Coleridge, and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* grew from it. John Byron, meanwhile, was the grandfather of the poet, who claimed to take from his antecedent an 'inheritance of storms'.[59] It was an inheritance also visited on one of Byron's fictional protagonists, Juan, whose sufferings are at one point 'comparative / To

[59] 'Epistle to Augusta', l. 17, in *BCPW*, Vol. 4.

those related in my grand-dad's narrative.'[60] As the latter reference suggests, what Byron and Wordsworth found in the narratives of Shelvocke and John Byron are, once again, striking accounts of the sufferings of voyagers: both narratives feature (in abridged form) in the canon of maritime misadventure assembled by Dalyell in *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea.* Yet with Shelvocke and Byron we find maritime misadventure rendered in a way that is very different to the treatment it receives at the hands of Haye, Newton, Defoe or similar figures. Shelvocke, like Dampier, was a privateer, engaged in the dubious business of raiding Spanish merchant ships in the seas west of the South American continent. Byron's travails took place in the same region, but he was more respectably employed in the British Navy: the *Wager* was the store-ship in a small fleet (eight vessels in all, four of them fighting ships) sent to harry Spanish shipping in the Pacific during the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1740. In both narratives, however, events unfold in a similarly grim, remorseless fashion.

George Shelvocke sailed from Gravesend on 13th February 1719, commanding his own ship, the *Speedwell*, and sailing alongside another vessel, the *Success*, commanded by Captain Clipperton. Two days, and a mere one page, later there is disagreement between the two Captains; on the 19th there is a storm which separates the two ships; on the 20th, on page 4 of the narrative, there are the first rumblings of mutiny from the crew, some of whom 'were resolv'd in being away for *England* ... [having] formed a complaint against the ship.'[61] This discontent is quelled but on the 24th, Simon Hatley, the second captain, disputes Shelvocke's command in public. Shortly afterwards, another petty officer questions Shelvocke's authority:

> *Turner Stevens* (my Gunner) very gravely made a proposal to me, in company with all the Officers (as we were drinking together) of cruising in the *Red-Sea*; for, said he, there can be no harm in robbing these *Mahometans* but (continued he) the poor *Spaniards*, they are good *Christians*, and it would, doubtless, be a sin to injure them. Upon which I immediately ordered him under confinement: after which he, in a very outragious manner, threatened often times to blow up the ship.[62]

Stevens is discharged when the *Speedwell* reaches the Canary islands, the first in a lengthy list of men quitting the ship. Some desert, others ask to leave: amongst the latter group is the boatswain, whose presence in the crew can hardly have been conducive to camaraderie. 'He [was] a very odd sort of

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[60] *Don Juan*, Canto 2, ll. 137-8, in *BCPW*, Vol. 5.
[61] George Shelvocke, *A Voyage Round the World by the Way of the Great Sea* (London, 1726), p. 4.
[62] Shelvocke, p. 12.

fellow,' Shelvocke notes, 'always incensing the people against the number of Officers, whom he term'd *Blood-Suckers*.'[63] On July 31, the most serious insubordination takes place. The crew, supported by most of the officers, refuse to go on until Shelvocke has re-negotiated the Articles governing the distribution of plunder. The Articles are duly signed, after much railing and self-justification by Shelvocke, but the voyage continues in much the same spirit as before.

Not long afterwards, having passed from the South Atlantic to the South Pacific ocean through the Straits of Magellan (where Hatley shoots the albatross), the *Speedwell* is wrecked on the island of Juan Fernandez. Now the insubordination in Shelvocke's crew grows even worse. The men fall 'prey to confusion and outragious disorder' and splinter into several camps located at different points along the shore.[64] One by one, the officers likewise desert their captain, choosing instead, as Shelvocke puts it, 'to herd with the meanest of the ship's company.'[65] Finally Shelvocke finds himself abandoned:

> I one afternoon miss'd all the people, and could see nobody but Mr *Adams*, our Surgeon, Mr *Henry*, the Agent, and my Son, and Mr *Dodd*, Lieutenant of Marines, who, for some reasons, best known to himself, had feigned lunacy, and had a mind to act the mad-man.[66]

Shelvocke's expedition thus seems to lurch quickly into dissension and near-mutiny. This sense of disunity, and the breakdown of authority and community within the crew, is constant throughout most of the subsequent narrative. As with Dampier, the overwhelming impression is of men who can control neither the elements nor their own selfish appetites: once again, intense suffering is the result. On the desolate island of Juan Fernandez, Shelvocke and his men are soon reduced to a wretched, painful existence, eating whatever they can find to survive. Matters only worsen when they set out from the island on a raft they have knocked together:

> There was not a drop of water to be had without sucking it out of the cask with the barrel of a musquet, which was made use of by every body promiscuously, and the little unsavoury morsels we daily ate, created perpetual quarrels, everyone contending for the frying pan.[67]

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[63] Shelvocke, p. 27.
[64] Shelvocke, p. 217.
[65] Shelvocke, p. 217.
[66] Shelvocke, p. 218.
[67] Shelvocke, pp. 259-60.

Without fresh water, Shelvocke and his men make do with a poor substitute: 'we constantly drank our urine, which, though it moisten'd our mouths for a time, excited our thirst the more.'[68] (This is a situation which is paralleled in several of the stories collected by Dalyell: for the reader, the drinking of urine constitutes another of the standard *topoi* of the shipwreck narrative.)

Such events, and the harrowing portrayal of the physical deterioration of the crew, form the centre-piece of Shelvocke's narrative. In time, matters improve: the closing chapters depict a relatively idyllic few months cruising off the coast of California. Yet the narrative's emphasis is clearly very much on the shipwreck, and the suffering that occurred in its aftermath. The emphasis is the same in Byron's narrative. For all that one might expect matters to be organised rather differently on a Naval vessel, Byron portrays a world almost identical to that evoked by Shelvocke, in which mad-men and mutiny feature equally prominently. The voyage begins ominously, as Byron describes how the *Wager*'s naval complement 'consisted of men press'd from long voyages to be sent upon a distant and hazardous service ... [whilst] all her land forces were no more than a poor detachment of infirm and decrepid invalids from Chelsea Hospital.'[69] The Captain prophecies 'ill success' as the *Wager* sets out: the very next paragraph announces his death, and the succession of Captain Cheap to the command. Within a few more pages, which take the *Wager* briskly from England to the South Pacific via the Straits of Magellan, the ship is separated from the rest of the squadron, damaged in a storm, and then caught on rocks and wrecked. This scene bristles with moments of horror. Many of the men go mad when the ship is first upon the rocks, and 'particularly one, in the ravings despair brought upon him, was seen stalking about the deck, flourishing a cutlass over his head, and calling himself king of the country, striking every body he came near.'[70] The Mate displays conspicuous heroism, but most other crew members break open the liquor and get drunk. One man is murdered, and no culprit is found.

Eventually the bulk of the crew reaches the island – though a mutinous element remains drinking on the doomed ship – and events unfold in much the same way as described by Shelvocke. Factions appear, and another man is murdered, being 'discovered among some bushes ... stabbed in several

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[68] Shelvocke, p. 351.
[69] John Byron, *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (London, 1768), p. 3.
[70] Byron, p. 11.

places, and shockingly mangled.'[71] It is not long, moreover, before the lack of food starts to take effect. There are desperate attempts to find sustenance:

> A boy, when no other eatables could be found, having picked up the liver of one of the drowned men (whose carcase had been torn to pieces by the force with which the sea drove it among the rocks) was with difficulty withheld from making a meal of it.[72]

In time, Byron has to eat his dog: later, when the crew is surviving on no more than 'wild sellery', 'that dreadful and last resource of men, in not much worse circumstances than ours, of consigning one man to death for the support of the rest, began to be mentioned in whispers.'[73] Eventually the crew splinters into different groups, and each sets off according to their own plan of escape. Byron and his companions are captured by Indians, who subject them to further indignities and suffering: once again, a narrative of maritime misadventure modulates into a narrative of captivity.

The precise nature of Byron's travails at the hands of his captors need not concern us. The summaries already given should suffice to convey the way in which these texts first take their readers *immediately* into a nightmarish world, and then develop that sense of nightmare with a brisk remorselessness. The nightmare is in many regards the same as that which haunts the Providential narrative of misadventure – once again we encounter the *topoi* and the moral formulae that define the world of the benighted misadventurer – but with one key qualification: in these texts there seem to be no Providential travellers, only benighted misadventurers. Byron and Shelvocke's accounts contain the same basic ingredients as are found in Newton's *Authentic Narrative* and Defoe's (fictional) *Robinson Crusoe*, but the overall effect they work on the reader is significantly different. In particular, there is a sense of woeful inadequacy about those few moments when these writers do invoke a Providential frame of reference. Byron, beginning his narrative, declares that it offers 'a relation of the extraordinary difficulties and hardships through which, by the assistance of Divine Providence, a small part of [the *Wager*'s] crew escaped to their native land'.[74] Yet one has not travelled far into Byron's narrative before one realises that this conventional nod to Providence is precisely that, conventional. It seems to bear little relation to the evidence that Byron immediately

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[71] Byron, p. 38.
[72] Byron, p. 30.
[73] Byron, p. 102.
[74] Byron, p. ii.

begins to assemble. No conclusion is ever reached which serves to bring Byron's material into line with such a Providential framework of interpretation; after this opening reference, indeed, Providence is seldom invoked again. As a result, there is little sense of any Providential narrative unfolding in Byron's text, and no teleology of election and justification to offset all the apparent evidence of human reprobation. Dampier, as we have seen, at least attempts to impose this pattern on his text: Shelvocke and Byron do not bother, and as a result we seem wholly in the realm of the benighted misadventurer.

If the Providential narrative of misadventure moves towards a coherence that is apprehended at many different levels – in the text, in the cosmos, in the relation of the traveller to the cosmos – Byron and Shelvocke's texts seem repeatedly to articulate a fundamental incoherence. To understand how this apprehension of incoherence, of fracture and disconnection operating at many different levels, is brought about, one should note in the first place the immediate historical circumstances which gave rise to these texts. If there is an absence of Providence in Byron and Shelvocke's narratives, this reflects in part the fact that justifying God, and offering appropriate spiritual lessons to the reader, are not the most pressing concern of these writers. Both are far too busy justifying themselves, in a worldly rather than theological sense. The narratives were produced as part of larger legal disputes surrounding the débâcle of each voyage. Byron's narrative was one of seven accounts reporting the events that followed the wreck of the *Wager*, the most notable rival narratives being John Bulkeley and John Cummins's *Voyage to the South Seas* (1743), Alexander Campbell's *The Sequel to Bulkeley and Cummins's Voyage to the South-Seas* (1747), Admiral Anson's *Voyage Round the World in the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV* (actually written by Richard Walter, 1748), and Isaac Morris' *Narrative of the Dangers and Distresses which Befel Isaac Morris and Seven More of the Crew, belonging to the Wager Store-ship* (1750?). Shelvocke's account was written to defend himself against accusations of incompetence which eventually found their way into print in William Betagh's *Voyage round the World* (1728): Betagh had been Shelvocke's captain of marines.[75] (Such ongoing recriminations and accusations seem generally to have followed the careers of privateers. Dampier too was mired in such controversies, an unsuccessful privateering venture in 1703 giving rise to a small body of literature. Dampier's conduct

[75] See Edwards, pp. 53-79, for the circumstances surrounding Byron's account, and p. 49, for the circumstances surrounding Shelvocke's.

on this voyage was attacked by William Funnell, in his *Voyage Round the World, Containing an Account of Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South-Seas in the Ship St. George in 1703 and 1704* (1707). Dampier responded with an angry, self-vindicatory pamphlet, which in turn prompted a riposte from John Welbe, in *An Answer to Captain Dampier's Vindication* (undated but *c.* 1707).)

In Shelvocke and Byron's case, if not in Dampier's, these pressing legal concerns are probably part of the reason why the writers show little interest in justifying the ways of God to man. Further to this, the recriminatory context is something that the reader cannot help but be aware of as he or she begins these texts. Both Shelvocke and Byron include prefaces which locate their narratives in a disputatious, ill-spirited textual arena, revealing from the outset that what we are going to read is the continuation by other means of the factionalism that bedevilled the crews during the actual voyages. Immediately, then, there is an air of suspicion and ill-will attendant on these narratives. More than this, both writers also take the opportunity to announce unequivocally the lesson that should be learnt from the subsequent narrative: that is to say, they tell the reader in no uncertain terms how exactly he or she is to read the rest of the text. Yet in both cases – and especially in the case of Shelvocke – a certain clumsiness on the part of the writer means that we cannot help being aware of a degree of overstatement, and a strident over-insistence on a particular point of view. Thus Shelvocke launches a histrionic invective against an officer of 'unparalleled wickedness'; later, he wastes pages impressing upon the reader the legitimacy of his commission as captain of privateering venture. Even as Shelvocke himself describes matters, however, this commission is palpably no more than the flimsiest excuse to plunder Spanish shipping: it is granted, after all, by the Holy Roman Emperor, and gives the recipient the right to attack Turkish vessels – a tacked-on paragraph includes the Spanish as fair targets.

In such ways, the prefaces to both Shelvocke and Byron's accounts put the reader (or at least, the modern reader) on his or her guard before the narrative proper has even begun. This readerly unease continues in the main body of the narratives, albeit for very different reasons. If the prefaces are disconcerting because of the extent to which personal animosities and bias make their presence felt in the writing, the main narratives are unsettling for the opposite reason, for the fact that any narratorial presence seems largely excised from the text (and the contrast between preface and

narrative proper constitutes in itself one of the many discontinuities and dislocations that these texts throw up). Like Dampier's *New Voyage*, Byron's and Shelvocke's accounts clearly derive both style and structure from those Royal Society directives to record events precisely. Shelvocke's narrative is evidently based on the ship's log: Byron's seems to be the product of a notebook or journal he kept at the time. As with the *New Voyage*, there is accordingly a great mass of data and detail contained in these accounts. Even compared with Dampier, however, Shelvocke and Byron do little with this material other than regurgitate it directly into print. Perhaps because of the more pressing worldly concerns which impelled them to publish, Shelvocke and Byron seem unwilling, or unable, to organise or revise their source documents: both narratives read as if they are more or less the direct transcription of log or journal entries.

Whatever the cause of this rawness to the narratives, there are some interesting consequences in terms of style and structure, consequences which are crucial to the curious experience of reading these texts. With regard to structure, there is little sense of shape or teleology to the narratives, or to the journeys they describe. In both cases, they seem to proceed by a sort of narrative parataxis that grows out of the simple paratactic syntax that these writers are most comfortable with. As clause follows clause, with the minimum of connectives or of logical subordination, so too do events follow quickly one after the other, generally without explanation or reflection on the part of the narrator. There is constantly a sense of ellipsis, and the reader is left to ponder the many gaps in the text. The causal relationships between events, and equally the narrator's reaction to events, what he thought and how he felt about things: over all these matters there is often a disconcerting silence.

It is worth pondering the contrast, in the reading experience, between a narrative shaped – or arguably, not shaped – in this way, and those more crafted narratives put together by writers such as Newton, Defoe and also Dampier, in his proto-scientific mode. Thinking initially of Dampier, one should note that Shelvocke and Byron record a variety of natural phenomena (and also, in Byron's case especially, ethnographic data) of precisely the sort that interest Dampier. Yet in Byron and Shelvocke's texts, the manner in which this information is relayed, and the effect which it consequently works on the reader, are subtly different to what is found in the *New Voyage*. Shelvocke describes at one moment an 'abundance of things appearing like white snakes' on the surface of the

sea, whilst at another moment he recalls the sea turning 'perfectly red, appearing as if vast quantities of blood had been thrown in and curdled by the water'.[76] In making these observations, Shelvocke resembles Dampier: in what is done with such observations, however, there is a striking contrast between the two writers. As has been noted, Dampier's observations are for the most part worked up into lengthy passages of 'static description', which were interpolated into the narrative at a late point in the composition process. In these passages, one senses that Dampier's writing exercises a degree of control over the phenomena it attempts to describe. In his observations, and his theorising from those observations, Dampier may not be systematic in the manner of the explorers of the late eighteenth century, nor is there much attempt in the writing to produce the effect that will characterise many later exploration narratives, that of a disembodied, transcendent eye which simply records faithfully its surroundings (an effect to be discussed more fully in the next chapter). Yet for all this, what is powerfully conveyed to the reader is an attempt to organise and interpret data, and to do so in a relatively methodical fashion. This rigour, even when it conveys strange or unsettling information, reassures and convinces the reader. It suggests that there is a solid, trustworthy world out there, which we may not understand for the time being, but which we will come to understand if we continue to gaze methodically upon it.

One might say that Dampier in his proto-scientific mode makes a certain sense to the reader, and in doing so he makes a certain sense of the world, notwithstanding local instances when he has to record his bafflement at what he has observed. With Shelvocke (and Byron too, usually) the world reads very differently. He observes strange phenomena, as we have seen, but the fact that the narrative is little more than Shelvocke's original logbook brings about a curious effect with regard to these observations. All the reader finds in the text are Shelvocke's immediate thoughts. There is no retrospective analysis, no subsequent writing up of the experience in question. Explanations and/or speculations are accordingly somewhat cursory, and tend inevitably to emphasise Shelvocke's bemusement at what is going on. With regard to those curious 'white snakes', Shelvocke proceeds thus:

[76] Shelvocke, pp. 60, 157.

> we took some of them up, but cou'd not perceive there was any life in them, nor were they formed into any shape resembling any kind of animal, they being only a long cylinder of a white sort of jelly, and may probably be the spawn of some of the larger sort of fish.

Shelvocke's somewhat vague language emphasises dissimilarities rather than similarities: the situation is hardly clarified, yet this is all the speculation Shelvocke has time for. His narrative moves swiftly on, leaving in its wake those curious, unsatisfactorily explained, 'white snakes'. With regard to those blood-red seas, equally, the logbook format only allows Shelvocke to note what (in his eyes) does *not* cause the phenomenon: 'this the *Spaniards* say, is occasioned by the spawn of *Camarones*, or *Prawns*, which, I believe, may be a mistake'. With that, his narrative drops the subject. Writer and reader are soon caught up in other events and observations, having had no time properly to ponder and make sense of what has taken place.

These may seem small details, but such moments in Shelvocke and Byron's narratives have a cumulative effect, evoking an environment which repeatedly seems resistant to authorial attempts to comprehend it. And in such an environment, which seems characterised equally by the marked absence of any Providential framework of explanation, human suffering – as noted, the most prominent feature of both accounts – comes to carry meanings very different to those conveyed by the Providential narrative of misadventure. Or rather, more precisely, in these narratives a degree of meaninglessness seems to attach itself to human suffering. Take, for example, the following small disaster (for William Camell, at least) in Shelvocke's narrative:

> At 7 in the evening, as they were furling the main-sail, one *William Camell* cry'd out, that his hands and fingers were so benumb'd that he could not hold himself, but before those that were next to him could come to his assistance, he fell down and was drown'd.[77]

Thereafter, both the ship and narrative sail smoothly on, as if Camell had never been. Read in context, one senses that, for Shelvocke, Camell's death is less an event worthy of attention in its own right, and more a useful illustration of how cold it was. The writer does not intend the death to register emotionally on the reader, in the manner of more sentimental or sensationalist writers (to be discussed in the next section). Yet if he is not sentimental or sensational, neither is Shelvocke

[77] Shelvocke, p. 72.

religious and Providential, in the manner of writers like Newton and Defoe. With the more Providential writer, an event like this would typically have been subjected to immediate interpretation, and an appropriate lesson drawn. Reference might be made back to scripture, so that the event takes on a typological significance, or else it might be made to serve as some sort of moral or spiritual *exemplum*. Thus Crusoe builds a canoe so big that he cannot transport it to the sea, and leaves it where it stands to remind him of 'the Folly of beginning a Work before we count the Cost; and before we judge rightly of our own Strength to go through with it.'[78] One might regard this tendency in Defoe and Newton as merely a stylistic tic, a habit of their age, yet it is a habit which has some profound consequences. Every event is filtered through the Providential framework: all experience is discreetly shaped and controlled, made to fit, even if only in a small way, the Providential pattern. In Shelvocke and Byron's texts, experience reads very differently. Things simply happen: we are never entirely sure why they happen, or what we are meant to think about them.

At a microcosmic level in the text, then, a constant interpretative process is at work in Newton and Defoe, but absent in Shelvocke and Byron. This absence is also evident at the macrocosmic level, with regard to the narrative as a whole. The narrative is not plotted towards any sort of conclusion or conclusive scene: there is little sense of progress being made or of a pattern emerging to events. Recalling the terminology I used earlier, one might say that there is no balance struck between pattern and particularity in these texts: there is simply a flood of information and events. For the greater part of these texts, there is too much material and too little interpretation, and accordingly, what is most unsettling about these texts is not simply the fact that they do not reveal a Providential order: rather, in many different ways, they do not seem to yield any sort of order. Shelvocke and Byron admit us into a world which seems to operate in random and inexplicable ways, and introduce us to human protagonists whose actions seem similarly arbitrary and unmotivated. The discrete nature of events, and the sense of the ellipses in the text, as the narrator fails to offer connections and explanations, works a disintegrative effect even on the narratorial consciousness. Newton and Crusoe, looking back upon the events of their lives, impose an order upon those events, making them bear a certain shape. Shelvocke and Byron convey little sense of such a unifying,

[78] Defoe, p. 128.

retrospective consciousness. Their own motives are often inadequately explained and their actions, as a consequence, mysterious. Sometimes they act in direct contradiction to all that has gone before, without offering any reason for the change of mind. One assumes that something happened that caused the change, but the details of this process have been excised from history. In the log- or notebook, and in the narrative based upon it, only the actions survive.[79] In the absence of explanation, which could so easily have been added after the event, the reader is often puzzled at apparent inconsistencies. The narrator, our only window on what can seem a distinctly treacherous universe, himself seems not to make sense. The world of these misadventurers thus starts to seem doubly untrustworthy. Not only does the narrative evoke the experience of moving through a strange, indecipherable environment, but it also becomes such an environment, full of curious indeteminacies. The reader too can feel at sea in these texts.

A certain resistance to meaning is thus fundamental to the unsettling effect produced by these narratives. The text itself seems to reveal a puzzling lack of logic, and even the authorial consciousness can seem fragmented. In exhibiting such formal – or rather, formless – properties, these texts constitute a compelling vehicle for accounts which in so many ways, as has been noted, dwell upon horrifying forces of fragmentation and disintegration. Just as meanings seem unstable in these texts, so everything solid in the world they depict seems doomed to fragment. It is worth reiterating here that the wrecked ships themselves are only the most obvious victim of disintegrative energies at work: human bodies are torn apart with equal gusto. Byron recalls 'the bodies of our drowned people thrown among the rocks, some of which were hideous spectacles, from the mangled condition they were in by the violent surf that drove in upon the coast.'[80] The living are not much more in control of their bodies. As has been noted, limbs swell and shrivel. Illustrating a common *topoi* of the genre, Captain Cheap's legs, in Byron's narrative, become 'as big as mill-posts, though his body appeared to be nothing but skin and bone.'[81] And this is just the beginning of Cheap's ordeal. Later he is so afflicted with lice that Byron can compare his body 'to nothing but an ant-hill, with thousands of those insects crawling over it.' Cheap makes no resistance to this onslaught, 'for he was

[79] Shelvocke's sudden and shortlived reconciliation with Clipperton, towards the end of his narrative, is a notable example of this disorienting tendency in the narrator. See Shelvocke, pp. 320-4.
[80] Byron, p. 26.
[81] Byron, p. 166.

now past attempting to rid himself in the least from this torment, as he had quite lost himself, not recollecting our names that were about him or even his own.'[82] Cheap, we should note, had 'quite lost himself'. Even identity, and those psychic structures by which we usually maintain our sense of who we are, seem ultimately to disintegrate in these narratives.

There is thus a correspondence between the form of these narratives and the events they recount, as they exhibit themselves a struggle between fragmentation and integrity. Such analogies and correspondences – the sense that these narratives return again and again, in a variety of literal and symbolic forms, to the same essential anxieties – are in part what Simon Schama has in mind when he talks of this genre of travel narrative having something of the quality of myth. Yet it should also be evident that the myth presented by Byron and Shelvocke's narratives has an altogether darker aspect than that offered by the more Providential account of maritime misadventure. Rather like myths and dreams, Byron and Shelvocke's accounts seem both overladen with meaning, and ultimately resistant to any single meaning. The result is unnerving, yet also fascinating: one might say of these texts what Jonathan Lamb has said of the book of Job, that they do not appeal to the reader so much as demand of them a response, challenging them and requiring an interpretation. In his discussion of Job, Lamb points out the discrepancy between the extremity of Job's sufferings, and the banality of the explanations proffered by those who wish to comfort Job. For Lamb, this discrepancy inaugurates a tension which every reader must also come to terms with. We must each of us ponder how far we side with Job, recognising the particularity of his experience, and how far we need to explain that experience, which is inevitably, to some extent, to gainsay and negate the actuality of Job's pain. The result, Lamb argues, is 'a story that provokes imitations of itself by resisting what interpreting readers want it to say, and by inviting the less prescriptive to inhabit its strange indiscipline. It is as impossible to define as it is to get quit of it.'[83]

The same 'strange indiscipline', I would suggest, is present in Shelvocke and Byron's narratives. To some readers, this makes them a compelling problem – and the presence of such problematic texts as these may also be said to make the whole sub-genre of maritime misadventure somewhat problematic to a certain sort of reader. On the one hand, we have texts such as Newton's and

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[82] Byron, p. 166.
[83] Lamb, p. 3.

Dampier's, which attempt (with varying degrees of success) to make a certain sort of sense of experience. In these narratives, the *topos* of the suffering traveller receives a Providential inflection. On the other hand, however, there is a very different inflection – more unsettling and possibly more subversive – given to misadventure by narratives such as Shelvocke's and Byron's. In one strand of the literature, human suffering reveals meaning: in the other, it reveals meaninglessness.

It is this dual inheritance which shapes Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a poem which describes the teller of a tale of maritime disaster - the Ancient Mariner – who is caught in precisely the double-bind described by Lamb. The Mariner too finds that 'it is as impossible to define [his story] as it is to get quit of it', and Coleridge himself may be seen as being trapped in the same situation. As is well-known, it is from the shooting of the albatross in Shelvocke's narrative that Coleridge's poem grew, and from one perspective Coleridge and the Mariner must be understood in an effort to make such a bleak account as Shelvocke's bear a more consolatory, Providential interpretation. Yet Coleridge/the Mariner's success in this regard is debatable. From Shelvocke's narrative, and from this strand of the literature of maritime misadventure generally, Coleridge derives not only the albatross-shooting incident, but also an abruptness, a briskness of narrative similar to that found in Shelvocke's text. It is in this spirit, one senses, that Coleridge has the crew's attitude to the mariner, immediately after he has shot the albatross, switch in successive stanzas. Later, the Mariner's colleagues will all drop dead in an instant, whilst at the poem's close, the ship itself will suddenly go down like lead. More significantly, however, the poem as a whole exhibits this quality of abruptness and disconnection. It is a bravura performance, a succession of startling incidents and images through which the reader is briskly led: event follows event in imitation of that principle of narrative parataxis which so characterises some narratives of misadventure. But what connection there is between its constituent parts is another matter. Elsewhere Coleridge wrote that

> The common end of all *narrative*, nay of *all* Poems is to convert a *series* into a *Whole*, to make those events, which in real life or imagined History move on a *strait* line, assume to our understandings a *circular* motion – the snake with its Tail in it's Mouth.[84]

[84] *C Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 545.

Whatever the author's intentions may have been, however, it is not entirely clear that *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a poem in which a 'series' thus converts neatly into a 'Whole'. The poem seems to lend itself to two diametrically-opposed readings, as articulated in seminal essays by Robert Penn Warren and Edward E. Bostetter.[85] Warren's sacramental reading insists that the *Ancient Mariner* does achieve wholeness, interpreting the poem as an expression of Coleridge's faith in the One Life, and emphasising the moral with which it seems to close: 'He prayeth best who loveth best, / All things both great and small.'[86] These lines may be likened to those conclusive scenes that I discussed in relation to Providential inflections of misadventure. If we accept them, we accept that there is a sense and a purpose to the Mariner's sufferings (and, not least, to the deaths of his companions). Just as in some of the voyage narratives I have considered, however, there is an element of inadequacy and incommensuracy in this ending. Leslie Stephen conveyed this humorously when he wrote that 'the moral, which would be that people who sympathise with a man who shoots an albatross will die in prolonged torture of thirst, is open to obvious objections.'[87] The apparent arbitrariness of events, and the excessive retribution heaped in particular upon the Mariner's crew-mates, forms the focus of Bostetter's reading of the poem: he especially draws our attention to the dice-playing of Life-in-Death, suggestive of a randomness at work in the universe which is fatal to any notion of a divine Providence. Such arbitrariness, and the sense of what John Beer has termed 'cosmic wantonness', is a prominent feature of accounts of maritime misadventure written in the Shelvocke and Byron mode.[88] It is of a piece with that 'strange indiscipline' (in Lamb's phrase) which make these texts so unyielding to certain forms of interpretation, yet simultaneously so in need of interpretation. From this unsettling resistance to the right interpretation – a resistance in his source material, and also in his own reworking of that source material – Coleridge is unable to extricate himself. Within the poem, the Mariner must keep returning to his own story, retelling it as if in an effort to make it once again make sense. Coleridge equally becomes entangled in a sequence of re-readings and re-writings, revising the poem significantly on at least three occasions as if to fix its meaning definitively.

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[85] Robert Penn Warren, 'A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading', in *Selected Essays* (New York, 1958; London, 1964), pp. 222-61; Edward E. Bostetter, 'The Nightmare World of the Ancient Mariner', in Alun R. Jones and William Tydeman (eds.), *Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner and Other Poems: A Casebook* (London, 1973), pp. 184-199.
[86] *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798 version), ll. 647-8, in *CCP*.
[87] Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 3 Vols. (London, 1892), Vol. 3, p. 359.
[88] John Beer (ed.), *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poems* (London, 1963: reprinted with appendices, 1986), p. 362.

Coleridge thus reveals himself as the sort of reader who is not simply fascinated by the bleak world of the benighted misadventurer, but whose fascination resides in his ongoing need to make sense of that world, and to incorporate it into a larger framework of meaning. Yet this is not the only response possible to these texts, and not the only form that a fascination with them might take. In this connection, one might consider a declaration made by William James (just prior to quoting a poem from the Greek Anthology explicitly about shipwreck):

> I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying 'no play'. I am willing to think the prodigal-son attitude, open to us as it is in many vicissitudes, is not the right and final attitude towards the whole of life. I am willing that there should be real losses and real losers, and no total preservation of all that is.[89]

James's exultant tone is of course in stark contrast to the grim mood of both Shelvocke and Byron, yet this statement points the way to certain pleasures offered to the readers, rather than the protagonists, of these narratives. What James calls the 'prodigal-son attitude' is more or less the framework of Providential interpretation discussed in the first half of this chapter, an assumption that our vicissitudes are divinely ordained so as to prod us back to righteousness. This attitude consoles, yet its abandonment arguably opens up the universe to more existential freedoms. Losing a world in which one can say, with Hamlet, 'there's a divinity that shapes our ends', we gain a world in which we shape our own ends.[90] If the consequences are sometimes dreadful, as these narratives of maritime disaster undoubtedly suggest, they are nevertheless, as James points out, a necessary part of genuine freedom and genuine responsibility. And it is somewhat in this spirit – sceptical and emancipatory, although also more self-consciously radical and rebellious – that the poet Byron read his grandfather's narrative and the other accounts contained in Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea.*

## Sentiment and Sensation: A Shifting Framework of Interpretative Practice

[89] William James, *Pragmatism*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Indianapolis and Cambridge, 1981), p. 132. See also Ihab Hassan, *Selves at Risk: Patterns of Quest in Contemporary American Letters* (Wisconsin and London, 1990), p. 58.
[90] *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (London, 1982), V.ii.10-11.

The previous sections have mapped out, on the one hand, a religious framework of belief and interpretation which stimulates an interest in the suffering traveller, and on the other hand, a range of travel texts which, to a greater or lesser degree, sit awkwardly with these religious expectations. Certain tensions, it seems, were always inherent in the literary treatment of suffering in travel: these tensions became ever more magnified as the eighteenth century wore on. Of particular significance in the latter regard was the rise of more sentimental attitudes and tastes in the latter half of the century. Under the influence of sentimentalism, accounts of suffering travellers were still sought out and read, yet they were read in a subtly different spirit: there is accordingly a shift in the framework of interpretative practice which shapes both the reading and the writing of misadventure.

To the more sentimentally-minded reader, tales of harrowing sea voyages, and of suffering in travel generally, are still valued, but they are valued more for the affecting scenes they contain than for the spiritual lessons they teach. This way of reading is not necessarily incompatible with more Providential habits of reading – as we shall see in the next chapter, Mungo Park combines the two tastes with great success – but it does complicate the Providential framework of interpretation. To the sentimentalist, emphasis may be said to fall more upon the suffering individual than the divine plan manifest through his or her suffering. We are meant simply to feel for the misadventurer, not to read through his or her sufferings to some larger point. The suffering of an individual becomes an ungainsayable fact. Emphasis falls less on the larger patterns that can be deduced from painful experience, and more on the particularity of that experience. There is also an increasing discomfort with a God who actively punishes his creatures, or who uses extreme violence to bring them around to his way of thinking. Karen Haltunnen has noted that one consequence of the rise of sentimental attitudes was a humanitarian sensibility which saw pain as an 'unacceptable, taboo' event: God himself, perhaps, was not exempt from the repercussions of this humanitarianism.[91]

The sentimentalist is interested in pain, but not in pain as a punishment (the etymological root of the word, from the Latin *poena*) that reveals guilt and God's chastising influence. Underpinned by new medical knowledge and influenced by a more benevolent outlook in theology and political theory, sentimentalism is interested in pain as the occasion for sympathy. This sympathy operates

[91] Karen Haltunnen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review* 100 (1995), No. 1, p. 304.

both within individuals, as a matter of physiology, and within societies, as a matter of communal fellow-feeling. For Robert Whytt, the physician who first described the nervous system, the body in general, and the suffering body in particular, exhibited 'a general sympathy which prevails through the whole system … [and] a particular and very remarkable *consent* between various parts of the body' (Whytt's emphasis).[92] For social theorists such as Shaftesbury and Adam Smith, meanwhile, it is similarly sympathy which unites society, generating 'consent' between its various members. Seeing pain in others, and comprehending it through memories of our own pain, we are naturally moved, seeking to help and to alleviate discomfort. Thus pain, and the contemplation of pain, are an integral part of human sociability. As John Hunter, one of Byron's doctors, wrote, a 'sympathy of the mind' ensures that the spectacle of pain serves 'to excite an active interest in favour of the distressed, the mind of the spectators taking on nearly the same action with that of the sufferers, and dispersing them to give relief or consolation: it is therefore one of the first of the social feelings.'[93]

This new understanding of what pain is, and why pain matters, obviously adjusts the emphasis as we read of travellers in distress. Touched by the plight of such travellers, we respond to them emotionally rather than intellectually. Compassion should well up naturally in the reader, establishing a bond between reader and misadventurer. Insofar as they promote these feelings in the reader, depictions of human suffering are morally efficacious: they provide a work-out for the heart, and train us to feel more closely our connections to our fellow creatures. And insofar as these feelings are natural to man, they point the way to a more generous understanding of human nature than prevailed in the more traditional Providential scheme. We are benevolent creatures, our natural impulses being altruistic and social rather than selfish.

The sentimental reader, then, is inclined to regard both God and the human individual in a spirit markedly different to the more moralistic, Providential reader. The bleak vision of Calvin and Hobbes is displaced by a more generous assessment of humanity, the corollary to this being a suspicion of any God who seems to be vindictive, or unjust, or excessive, in the exercise of his authority. This shift in readerly attitudes has political as well as theological ramifications, and I shall turn to these in the next section. Here, however, we should first note how sentimentalism adjusted

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[92] Quoted in Steven Bruhm, *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction* (Philadelphia, 1994), p. 11.
[93] Quoted in Hermione de Almeida, *Romantic Medicine and John Keats* (Oxford, 1991), p. 35.

not only the reading but also the writing of the narrative of maritime misadventure. In this connection, one of the later stories included by Dalyell in *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* offers a useful illustration of the influence of the new attitudes. The 'Wreck of the *Grosvenor* East Indiaman' describes how the *Grosvenor* left Ceylon in June 1782, only to strike rocks off southern Africa a few months later. 'Despair was seen in every countenance, and the utmost anarchy and confusion prevailed'[94]: nevertheless, most of the passengers and crew successfully reach the shore. Here the party's travails begin in earnest. Many of the standard *topoi* of maritime misadventure are once again replayed in actuality: disunity and factionalism, famine, thirst, the drinking of urine, the contemplation of cannibalism (or at least, in this variant, the drinking of blood). Yet there is also a new scenario which receives considerable attention in this account of disastrous events. A significant focal point in the narrative is provided by Master Low, a boy of about seven or eight years in age. The other survivors pay particular attention to looking after Low: the narrator in turn draws attention to their attentiveness. It falls first to the carpenter and then, when the carpenter dies, to the steward to look after him. Of the latter's efforts, we are told:

> He strove to alleviate his fatigues, he heard his complainings with pity, he fed him when he could obtain wherewithal to do it, and lulled his weary soul to rest. How much praise is due to such worth and generous humanity![95]

This emphasis on the compassion shown by one human being to another less capable than himself constitutes a new situation, or *topos*, in maritime misadventure, and the final exclamatory sentence here reveals a new style in which to recount sufferings.[96] The narrator of the 'Wreck of the *Grosvenor*' assumes that neither suffering nor the compassion shown towards suffering should pass without comment. Thus when Master Low himself dies, the death must be properly registered by both writer and reader: 'Poor innocent, he was summoned before his time!'[97] In this way we are prompted to feel correctly, and to make an emotional response to the text which is in stark contrast to the indifference shown by Shelvocke as William Camell falls off the rigging and out of the narrative.

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[94] Dalyell, Vol. 3, p. 5.
[95] Dalyell, Vol. 3, p. 20.
[96] For a similar 'affecting situation', see the 'Shipwreck of the *Juno*', in Dalyell, Vol. 3, pp. 273-4.
[97] Dalyell, Vol. 3, p. 27.

It would be hard to argue that Master Low's fate was deserved, and any attempt to make a theological point out of his death would have to be handled with great delicacy. In ways such as this, sentimentalism complicates the Providential framework of interpretation, to some extent making us side more with the individual who suffers than with the creator who puts his creatures through such sufferings. And sentimentalism brings in its train further complications of its own. It has a self-reflexive aspect, making us suspicious – for good sentimental reasons – of seemingly excessive or false expressions of sentiment. The last decade of the eighteenth century especially saw a reaction against sentiment in its more modish forms, and this reaction generated a certain sensitivity as to the business of representing pain. In some quarters, a distrust appears as to the motives involved in writing and reading representations of human suffering. The reason for such distrust is well revealed by Dalyell's preamble to 'The Wreck of the Grosvenor', which introduces the narrative as follows:

> Few shipwrecks have excited equal interest with that which is now about to be related ... Here a series of protracted sufferings is presented to view; delicate females of the higher ranks, accustomed to all the comforts of life, at once left destitute and exposed to insult and indignity from savages; husbands witnessing the afflictions of their wives, parents the miseries of their children.[98]

There can be few modern readers who do not feel a little unease over Dalyell's apparent relish at the distress he is about to exhibit. Suffering presented within a more strictly Providential framework of interpretation ought not to occasion such unease: in the first place, the suffering is just and divinely ordained; in the second place, it is our spiritual duty to learn from the depiction of that divinely-sanctioned suffering. Within the more affective and humanistic frame of reference created by sentimentalism, everything becomes more relative. When is it right, and when is it not right, to intrude upon the distress of others for our own moral gratification? When do we trivialise the sufferings of others by representing them?

Issues like these are touched upon by the anonymous author of *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny* (1805), who objects to the way in which 'we too often, by a strange perversion of taste, and lapse of humanity, see the distresses of the ill-fated Captain and his passengers portrayed on the TEA-TRAY, and emblazoning the screen...'[99] The *Abergavenny* went

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[98] Dalyell, Vol. 3, p. 3.
[99] 'W.D', *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny* (London, 1805), pp. 3-4.

down off the Dorset coast in 1805, with the loss of many lives: among the dead was the captain, John Wordsworth, the poet's brother. The writer of the narrative invokes Providence, but only in a muted way. Significantly, the volume takes as its epigraph two lines from Clarence's dream in *Richard III*: of the two Shakespearean touchstones for shipwreck, this is the passage that emphasises terror and disorder as opposed to the transformative possibilities in a wreck. In the absence of an explicit framework of Providential consolation, the emphasis in *The Loss of the Earl of Abergavenny* falls on the many instances of stoic fortitude that took place during the disaster. John Wordsworth heroically goes down with his ship, and a Midshipman similarly keeps his post to the last:

> When the sailors pressed ardently for a supply of liquor on the officer who guarded the spirit-room – 'Give us some grog!' exclaimed the honest Tars; 'it will be all as one an hour hence!' – the reply of the officer would have done honour to the brevity of Roman fortitude – 'I know we must die,' coolly replied the gallant Midshipman, 'but let us die like men!' – He kept his post, armed with a brace of pistols, and there staid, even whilst the ship was sinking.[100]

As the writer no doubt appreciated, moments such as these gain in significance for the reader from the knowledge that such resolution was *not* commonplace in the course of a shipwreck. The British crew and British passengers reveal their 'Roman fortitude' by their refusal to re-enact many of the stock shipwreck scenarios: for the reader, paradoxically, the stock *topoi* of the form have a ghostly presence insofar as they are so strikingly absent.

That said, there are moments when darker events are recorded, and the way in which they are recorded suggests something of the complications that beset the writing of maritime misadventure in a more sentimental age. In one incident, the narrative records,

> A Yorkshireman, one of the crew, got up to a tolerable height [in the rigging, as the ship was sinking], but his further exertions were rendered ineffectual by one of his messmates having seized him by the leg;- all remonstrance was in vain, and (shocking to relate!) self-preservation so far overcame the dictates of humanity, that the Yorkshireman unclasped his knife, and cut the poor wretch's fingers! – He fell, and was dashed to pieces![101]

In another incident, a soldier on the ship survives but is terribly scarred – physically and also, one imagines, emotionally – when 'his wife, who was with him, in the shrouds, on quitting her hold, as

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[100] 'W.D', p. 16.
[101] 'W.D', pp. 23-4.

the last struggle for her life, bit a large piece from the husband's arm, which is dreadfully lacerated.'[102] Such moments seem to take us back to that Hobbesian world of the benighted misadventurer, when individuals look out only for themselves, descending into almost animalistic behaviour, yet the overall effect in this narrative is very different. There is no theological framework established according to which we can regard these individuals as in some way removed from God's grace: rather, they are ordinary human beings afflicted by frightful circumstances. The more we consider their ordinariness, and couple that sense of a common humanity with the awareness that these events really took place, the more uncomfortable we feel with the writer's intrusion into their suffering. The exclamatory style in which the first incident is related seems calculated to excite us, to make us thrill vicariously to these sufferings. Recognising this pressure on our response we become uneasy with the writer's motives in presenting these scenes. One suspects they cater to the more sensationalistic tastes of the audience, being inserted to boost the sales of the narrative; and whilst there is no sexual element here, one might plausibly connect them to that emerging 'pornography of pain' that Karen Haltunnnen has seen as an inadvertent outgrowth of sentimental attitudes. (One should note that there *is* an element of sexual frisson in Dalyell's depiction of dishevelled, and in some cases dishonoured, women in the 'Wreck of the Grosvenor'.)

Such sensationalism points us back to the *Terrific Register*, and also to Poe, as represented by the final epigraph to this chapter. Arthur Gordon Pym's curious 'desires' suggest a more furtive, intimate range of pleasures furnished to some readers by the narrative of maritime misadventure. The demonstration and confirmation of one's election, we sense, is not what Poe is interested in: rather, there is something thrilling, even titillating, in the contemplation of suffering, and in the vicarious participation in suffering (either as victim or as perpetrator) that this allows. The element of fantasy that operates in some readings of these narratives should not be ignored. One wonders if these narratives sometimes served as the equivalent in their day to the low budget horror movie: certainly they were often published in cheap duodecimo editions which suggests a mass appeal.[103] The indignities heaped on each 'miserable remnant of mortality' (as the *Terrific Register* terms them) have a

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[102] 'W.D', p. 24.
[103] The Bodleian Library, Oxford, for example, holds a cheaply-produced, pocket-book sized 1788 edition of Byron's *Narrative*.

voyeuristic fascination, shading perhaps, in readers such as Poe, into vicarious sado-masochistic gratification. The reader is in many cases introduced to victims who are permitted, by the exigencies of their situations, to cast aside every restraint and taboo, and to lapse into a sort of primal selfishness. The misadventurer throws off the constraints of socialisation and even, in some cases, of individuation, regressing to an almost infantile state in which nothing matters but food and the satisfaction of appetite – not much fun for the misadventurer, but arguably a source of guilty pleasure for the reader.

## Authority and Mutiny: the Politics of Maritime Misadventure

This chapter has attempted to show the literature of maritime misadventure as, on the one hand, making sense within a broad framework of interpretative practice – a framework rooted in Providential and sentimental ideas – whilst on the other hand, looked at in more detail and in the full variety of its forms, repeatedly *not* making sense within that framework. That is to say, individual narratives of maritime misadventure must often have served to problematise the very assumptions which brought some readers to the form. Individual texts are often susceptible to a range of readings, and not just to the proper Providential reading which writers and readers usually sought to impose. The genre as a whole, meanwhile, combines characteristic common elements – those *topoi*, as I earlier dubbed them – with a significant diversity of styles and structural conventions. These bring with them a corresponding diversity of ways of construing such events as shipwreck and mutiny. The account that can comfortably be read according to Providential notions is brought into question by all those accounts of similar events in which no Providence seems to reveal itself. The meaning one tries to make of maritime misadventure thus becomes contested, and if this is generally the case with the genre as a whole, it is particularly and spectacularly the case with those many instances of the genre which are embroiled in ongoing disputes with other parties. The proper interpretation of events is explicitly contested in these accounts – yet to every narrative of maritime misadventure, and to the sub-genre as a whole, by the end of the eighteenth century, there attaches an implicit sense of

hermeneutic effort. Whether writer or reader, it is a struggle to make these disastrous voyages read the way one wants them to.

This tendency of maritime misadventure to give rise to divergent, even directly conflicting readings, has thus far in this chapter been construed chiefly in terms of religion and philosophy, as a matter of the sort of universe one conceives oneself to be inhabiting. In this section, I shall argue that the divergent readings of this literature, and of the tribulations of suffering mariners, also have subtle political ramifications. They articulate differences in outlook regarding not just the proper organisation of the cosmos, but also the proper organisation of society. It should not surprise us that the narrative of maritime misadventure had this potential to be read politically. Since antiquity, the ship of state has been a well-established *topos*: it held particular resonance for a maritime nation such as Britain. And in the last decade of that century, in a period of political ferment, Revolution and war, the *topos* was naturally inflected so as to emphasise the ship in danger, threatened with disaster in some form or another. Thus Coleridge begins his political lectures of 1795 by imaging the British state as a 'crazy Bark' caught 'in a Tempest', in which situation every crew member and passenger 'must contribute their Quota of Exertion.'[104] The metaphor here, which equates the preservation of a ship and the preservation of the nation, became more than just a metaphor as the 1790s wore on. Increasingly the Navy was all that stood between Britain and the forces of Revolution (and later, French imperialism): any threat to these ships *was* a threat to the state.

In this context, narratives of maritime misadventure brought into focus more than just theological and philosophical concerns: such disasters were matters of pressing urgency, which had bearing on much larger political issues. Events such as the great Naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797 must have had some bearing on the readings made of specific narratives of nautical disaster in this period, mutiny being, as we have seen, a staple ingredient of these narratives, marching hand-in-hand with shipwreck. We may assume some interplay between the larger political context, with its symbolic understanding of the ship of state and its very concrete concern with the safety of ships, and the individual voyage narrative which recounts the tragedy that actually befell some unlucky vessel. Reading the latter, in the Romantic period, it would have been hard not to have

[104] *C Works*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

been especially attentive to the issues of insubordination, factionalism and outright mutiny that they so often foreground: in making sense of these elements of these texts, a political dimension is introduced into the reading of maritime misadventure.

To grasp the way in which these texts subtly focus issues of politics, one might again usefully make a distinction between an 'official' reading of the narrative of maritime misadventure, and an 'unofficial' reading to which many of the narratives inadvertently give rise. In the political as in the religious context, most authors of these accounts profess that certain tenets of conventional wisdom have been amply illustrated by the events they describe: this is the 'official' reading, the reading that the authors attempt to impose on their own experience and to transmit to their readers. This 'official' reading is closely bound up with the 'official' religious reading of the mariner's misadventures. Suffering in the latter case is typically seen as arising out of man's wilful disobedience of God: the pattern imposed on events by the writer thus serves both to explain suffering and to justify God. The corollary to this in the social context is an interpretation of events which sees disaster originating in the innate tendency of sailors to insubordination and dissension. This interpretation seeks, implicitly or explicitly, to justify the conduct of the captain, who is both the central figure of authority on board each ship, and also the representative of some greater authority such as the British Crown. Indeed, the hierarchical chain of command and deference which the captain embodies arguably goes all the way up to God himself. As Peter L. Berger has suggested,

> If theodicy in its metaphysical sense may be the submission to an inscrutable providence, there is also the social theodicy in which men submit to evil and suffering as it is inflicted by society. The two theodicies are not unrelated. It is in the name of the metaphysical judge that the empirical executioner brings down his sword.[105]

The 'official' religious reading and the 'official' political reading of maritime misadventure thus go hand-in-hand. The sternly Calvinist and Hobbesian logic adumbrated earlier in this chapter speaks as much of social attitudes as of theological outlook (as the reference to Hobbes in particular should suggest). Newton and Defoe make it clear that dissent towards any sort of authority figure – fathers, captains and so forth – constitutes the first small rumblings of dissent against God. Authority,

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[105] Peter L. Berger, *The Precarious Vision: A Sociologist Looks at Social Fictions and Christian Faith* (Westport, Conn., 1961), p. 148. See also on this point Jacob Viner, *The Role of Providence in the Social Order: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Philadelphia, 1972), espec. Chapter 4, 'Providence and Social Inequality'.

according to this logic, is *per se* a good thing, a necessary restraint upon the individual's innate wilfulness and sinfulness. Dampier, Shelvocke and Byron all articulate matters in much the same way, although with less direct reference to God. Left to its own devices, any social group fragments: selfishness and private interests win out, usually with horrific consequences, unless a captain keeps a firm control. And when things do go out of control, blame is typically apportioned to the 'swinish multitude' (Burke's phrase for the mob, but appropriate in the present context) which fails to acknowledge the justice and the good sense of its proper master.[106] Thus John Byron's reading of his experience, in the preface to his narrative, is that it pits Captain Cheap against a 'licentious crew', an 'ungovernable herd' who refused to acknowledge 'the solidity of their captain's advice.'[107]

Ostensibly, then, almost all of these writers are on the side of authority, order and hierarchy. Yet for all that they urge this 'official' reading of events, and of their own narratives, one should not underestimate the capacity of these texts to undermine themselves, and to send out, unwittingly, messages very different from those intended by the authors. However much the 'official' line is laboured, it is often hard *not* to make an 'unofficial', and often far more subversive, reading of the incidents recounted in these texts. Sometimes this is a consequence of the formal properties of the text, and of that constant, brisk forwards momentum of the narrative, deriving from its origins in the logbook or journal: once again the failure to pause and explain, either at the time or later when the manuscript was written up, can work a disconcerting effect on the reader. On other occasions, these 'unofficial' readings are more straightforwardly the result of the rhetorical clumsiness of the writer. Shelvocke's inadequacies in this regard have already been noted. In his preface, he insists on the legitimacy of his Commission at ludicrous length, and in the narrative proper he seems to cling to that Commission, the symbol of his authority, obsessively. However desperate his predicament, this piece of paper seems to matter more to him than any member of his crew, and whenever the authority that this Commission confers on Shelvocke is questioned, he responds in a manner which seems – even as Shelvocke himself depicts events! – variously petty, petulant, arbitrary or excessive.

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[106] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 120.
[107] Byron, p. vii.

When at one point he is not shown due deference, for example, Shelvocke's response is straightforward: 'I soon drubb'd them into better manners.'[108]

Harsh discipline was a fact of life on board English ships at this date, and it would be anachronistic to suggest that such drubbings in themselves would have unduly worried readers.[109] That said, many of these narratives foreground problematic moments of official violence. In this connection, indeed, certain stock scenarios recur with such frequency that they might once again be regarded, for the reader of this sub-genre of Voyages and Travels, as almost a *topos* of the form. To this *topos*, or recurring scene, one might give the title 'the unjustified blow' or the 'excessive response'. Romantic readers recognised this moment as a staple ingredient of maritime misadventure, as we can infer from the fact that this scene features in Romantic rewritings of disastrous voyage narratives. It is a scene that I shall here approach, however, via William Bligh's account of the aftermath of the mutiny of the *Bounty*. We should note that this most famous, or notorious, of mutinies owes its iconic significance not least to the date at which it occurred: 1789, of course, marks not only the throwing off of Bligh's authority by Fletcher Christian and his comrades, but also the beginning of the French Revolution. Once again, there is a larger political context pressing on the various understandings of the *Bounty* débâcle. And once again, it should also be stressed, these various viewpoints find expression in a string of disputatious texts. Bligh's version of events came in the form of *A Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship the Bounty* (1790), which in 1792 was absorbed into the larger *A Voyage to the South Seas* (which is essentially the same text, but with a 'prequel' narrative attached describing the voyage prior to the mutiny). Bligh's reading of the mutiny, however, was contested by Edward Christian, brother to Fletcher (and lawyer to the Wordsworths). After extensive interviews with eye-witnesses, Edward Christian issued in 1794 a pamphlet defending his brother's conduct, in response to which Bligh produced an *Answer to Certain Assertions contained in the Appendix to a Pamphlet etc* (1794). Edward Christian riposted with a *Short Reply to Capt. William Bligh's Answer* (1795); shortly afterwards, a fraudulent *Letters from Fletcher Christian* (1796) appeared, which seemed to confirm

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[108] Shelvocke, p. 25.
[109] See Greg Dening, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge, 1992), especially the section entitled 'Some Cliometrics of Violence', pp. 113-123.

Bligh's version of events; this, in turn, prompted Wordsworth to write to a newspaper denouncing the letters as fake.

Each of these texts, in its own way, was concerned to contest the reading that could be made of the events that had undoubtedly taken place on the *Bounty*: they were concerned in particular to interpret such notoriously equivocal statements as Christian's last words to Bligh, as the latter was put adrift in the open boat. 'I am in hell, Mr Bligh, I am in Hell': was this a statement of guilt, as Bligh and his followers read it, or an indication of the tyrannical conditions endured by Christian under Bligh?[110] This was how Edward Christian and his supporters read the scene. This and other ambiguous statements uttered in the course of the *Bounty* affair have been brilliantly analysed by Greg Dening: all I shall add to his discussion is a generic perspective on the ambiguities that attach to the mutiny on the *Bounty*. That is to say, the literature of maritime misadventure again and again seems to present both authority and mutiny in an equivocal light, for all that the declared aim of most authors is to justify the former and castigate the latter. To illustrate this, we might begin with a scene in Bligh's *Narrative of the Mutiny* that takes place not during the mutiny proper, but rather during the subsequent open-boat voyage. Conditions were severe in the boat, and the hardships undermined the discipline of the party. As Bligh records:

> fatigue and weakness so far got the better of [the men's] sense of duty, that some of them began to mutter who had done most, and declared that they would rather be without their dinner than go in search of [provisions]. One person, in particular, went so far as to tell me, with a mutinous look, he was as good a man as myself. It was not possible for me to judge where this might have an end, if not stopped in time; I therefore determined to strike a final blow at it, and either to preserve my command or die in the attempt: and seizing a cutlass, I ordered him take hold of another and defend himself; on which he called out I was going to kill him, and began to make concessions.[111]

A very similar scene had taken place some sixty years previously on the island of Juan Fernandez, where Shelvocke and the crew of the *Speedwell* were wrecked. At one point on the island, Shelvocke gave an order to his carpenter, who responded as follows

> Suddenly turning short upon me, as I stood by him, he swore an oath and said he would not strike another stroke upon it, that *he truly would be nobody's slave and thought himself now on a*

[110] William Bligh, *A Narrative of the Mutiny on board His Majesty's Ship Bounty* (London, 1790), p. 8.
[111] Bligh, p. 55.

> *footing with myself*; this unreasonable exclamation provoked me to use him somewhat roughly with my cane.[112]

It is easy to comprehend the structural conditions, as it were, which produced such similar incidents so many years apart. At issue in both cases, and pertinent to almost every account of maritime misadventure, is the fraught question of whether the rigid hierarchy of command that pertains on board a ship still pertains when the ship itself has ceased to exist. When does one's captain cease to be one's captain? Privateers, whose activities were conducted in a much more contractual spirit, asked this question with great regularity, and in the first half of the eighteenth century it was also a question that sailors in the Navy could legitimately ask in the aftermath of a wreck. Their pay stopped when a ship was lost, so they could quite fairly consider themselves as no longer in the employ of the Navy, a ludicrous situation that was amended in the aftermath of the *Wager* disaster.

Having noted the conditions that produced such scenes, however, I wish rather to emphasise the way in which the two passages cited above ask questions of their readers. Do they constitute a brutal and excessive response on the part of Bligh and Shelvocke? Or the necessary imposition of discipline, for the good of all, in a time of crisis? What is significant in the present discussion is not so much the interpretation one makes of each incident of this sort, but the fact that these texts repeatedly provoke such questions and require interpretation. They focus with particular clarity the authoritarianism generally accepted as the norm in these texts, yet they bring that authoritarianism into conflict with egalitarian principles that are not illegitimate in the specialised conditions of a maritime disaster. At what point must every man save himself as he can, and at one point does the captain (whose incompetence may have brought the crew to their present predicament) surrender his right to command?

Perhaps the truly unsettling aspect of moments like these in Shelvocke's and Bligh's narratives is not that they raise such questions, but that their characteristic style – unreflective and simply asserting what happened – makes no attempt to engage with those questions and to resolve them. Violence, it often seems, just happens. Again and again, these narratives, as a consequence of their style and structure, create similar flashpoints, moments when the reader is left to wrestle with what

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[112] Shelvocke, p. 214.

may or may not be a legitimate exercise of power and official violence. Thus Byron, despite strenuous attempts in his preface to enlist the reader's sympathies for Captain Cheap, seems unable in the narrative itself to depict his captain without a certain degree of ambivalence. Cheap is repeatedly shown to be 'jealous to the last degree' of his authority, and a constant goad to his men.[113] On one occasion, he exercises his authority in a manner which is more arbitrary and excessive than either Bligh or Shelvocke. After the *Wager* has been wrecked, the midshipman Cozens becomes abusive and aggressive. He enters into an argument with the purser, who accuses Cozens of mutiny and fires a pistol at Cozens' head – whereupon Captain Cheap runs out of his tent 'and, without asking any questions, immediately shot [Cozens] through the head.'[114] He then refuses to allow the other crew members to move Cozens, and the unlucky midshipman is left 'to languish some days, with no other covering than a bit of canvas thrown over some bushes, where he died.'[115] It is an act that even Byron cannot condone.

Insofar as we side at such moments with the ordinary seaman, these narratives have yet again slipped out of authorial control. The justification of authority is central to the intentions of these authors, yet they are often unable to present an unproblematic portrayal of authority in action.[116] The best efforts of these writers to produce a black-and-white picture runs up against their narratorial clumsiness and the strange, distorting effect of their characteristic style. Authority begins to seem arbitrary and excessive, predicated ultimately on the exercise of violence. And so these texts, which ostensibly teach a stern authoritarianism, begin to exhibit a very different sort of appeal.[117] For all that they may stress the need for deference and obedience, many of these narratives are open to a much more radical interpretation. To a certain sort of reader, episodes such as these demonstrate the naked workings of social power, the mechanisms by which the state ensnares and brutalises the common man. Equally, if read in this spirit, those depictions of privateering crews debating the terms of their employment and sometimes voting their captains out of office – scenes found in both Dampier and Shelvocke – are no longer necessarily evidence of innate human wilfulness and licence.

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[113] Byron, p. 41.
[114] Byron, p. 40.
[115] Byron, p. 42.
[116] For a similar, although less violent, moment in Dampier's *New Voyage*, see pp. 361-2.
[117] The subversive appeal of these texts for a certain class of reader is arguably suggested by annotations to the copy of the 1788 edition of Byron's narrative held in the Bodleian. This edition was owned by one William Talbot, who declares his ownership four times on the end-pages, and twice embellishes his name with doodles and spirals – from

They have instead a utopian, libertarian aspect, stirring political fantasies of democracy and equality (to match those more private fantasies which these narratives indulge, as discussed at the end of the last section).

In these accounts, of course, these freedoms typically bring with them violence and disaster – yet what in Calvinist/Hobbesian eyes is evidence of the sinfulness of such individualism need not always be interpreted so punishingly. Rather, the violence and self-indulgence of some mutineers is to be understood as the inevitable response of men suddenly released from a brutalising, tyrannical system. Tasting freedom for the first time, it is not surprising that these sailors lurched immediately into anarchy. Read this way, there is a congruence between the interpretation of maritime misadventure and mutiny, and the interpretation often made of the French Revolution by some British radicals. To explain the Terror, writers such as Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft had argued that such monstrous events were perpetrated by men made monstrous by a corrupt social system. This logic is continued in the next generation by Percy Shelley, who ingeniously argues, in the Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*, that the disastrous course taken by the Revolution in France in fact demonstrates how much France needed a Revolution. If the population had been less brutalised, the Revolution might have been more humane affair: 'a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves from centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen as soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened'. Developing this particular narrative of the Revolution, moreover, Shelley goes on to make an interesting figurative identification, suggesting that he is also at some level thinking in terms of a narrative of maritime misadventure. It is as shipwreck victims, it seems, that we have come through the Revolutionary period: Shelley writes that there is 'a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven after the storms are past.'[118] Political turmoil and maritime misadventure (in which shipwreck and mutiny so often go hand-in-hand) are mapped across each other, in a context which suggests a reading of both narratives that is favourable to the (real and metaphorical) mutineers.

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which we can perhaps infer Talbot's youth. In the same ink we find a small stick drawing of an eighteenth century gent., in tail coat, having his hat knocked off.

[118] Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*, in *Shelley: Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1971), p. 33.

Of course, one cannot straightforwardly proclaim the many mutineers and fractious seamen in the literature of maritime misadventure as heroes. These narratives undoubtedly document scenes of great horror, and it also seems incontrovertible that anarchic impulses among the crew before, during and after wrecks contributed to the disastrous events. In many ways, what I shall term the radical reading of the narrative of maritime misadventure is as tenuous and problematic as the authoritarian reading that most of the authors seek to impose on their texts. The instability of both positions may explain something of the fascination these texts hold. Whichever viewpoint one wants to impose, whichever reading one seeks to make, one cannot but be aware that there is much in these texts that supports a very different interpretation. John Byron may declare in his Preface that 'it will be obvious to any reader' what his narrative demonstrates, but this is in fact far from being the case.[119] Hence the stridency of tone, the over-insistence and over-simplification, of many of the prefaces to these narratives. And hence the further readings and writings that these narratives spawn. The constant presence of alternative interpretations jostling with each reader's preferred interpretation means that the hermeneutic effort must be ongoing. Once again, the reader is placed in a double bind of the sort identified by Jonathan Lamb in relation to the Book of Job. In a political as well as a religious and philosophical sense, these are texts which require one to fix and define them, yet which simultaneously resist all such attempts at fixity and definition.

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This chapter has mapped a matrix of travel texts which present powerful images of suffering travellers, images which can be shown to have a shaping influence on Romantic imaginings of travel. I have limited myself to one particular strand of the Voyages and Travel genre – those accounts of shipwreck and mutiny which I have dubbed the literature of maritime misadventure – but many of the strategies of reading (or writing) of suffering in travel outlined in connection with maritime misadventure can be applied to other types of travel writing. The Providentially-understood misadventure we find in Newton, Defoe and Dampier; the sentimentally-understood suffering we

[119] Byron, p. vi.

find in Dalyell's 'Wreck of the Grosvenor'; the disconsoling, seemingly random *travails* of Shelvocke, John Byron (and, arguably, Dampier) – these illustrate just some of the ways in which travellers generally could understand their experience and structure their texts. There was thus a thriving tradition of travel texts in which the theme of suffering in travel was foregrounded, and a variety of models available to the Romantic traveller who chose to fashion himself as a misadventurer in some shape or form. Yet it must also be borne in mind that these texts, as I have attempted to demonstrate over the course of this chapter, can provoke some starkly contrasting responses amongst readers, with regard to matters of religion, philosophy, politics and even literary style. This capacity of the literature of misadventure to focus, in the Romantic period at least, such divergent readings underpins the distinction I shall make, in the last chapters of this study, between the Wordsworthian and the Byronic traveller. Both are eager to portray themselves as misadventurers: both achieve this by re-writing and/or reenacting a similar range of source materials, notably the literature of maritime misadventure that has been discussed here. Yet because this literature can be read in such very different ways, it is possible to fashion some very different scripts from the same source material. One sort of response – having affinities with William Perkins's and Vavasour Powell's way of reading misadventure – underpins the travel script characteristically assembled by the mature Wordsworth from this literature: the other sort of response – which has affinities with Pym's (and Poe's) interest in misadventure – underpins the typical Byronic script.

That said, it was not just the literature of maritime misadventure that gave the Romantic traveller potent images of suffering in travel. One other sub-genre of Voyages and Travels in particular borrowed the conventions of misadventure, and put them to significant, but subtly different, rhetorical effect. That sub-genre is the narrative of exploration, perhaps the most fertile form of travel writing in English in this period. In the context of exploration, however, the idea of suffering in one's travels acquired new meanings, meanings which are often in the Romantic traveller's mind as he dramatises himself as a misadventurer. The exploration narrative is accordingly the subject of my next chapter.

# *2. Explorers*

Rhetorics

of Science and Sacrifice

in the Narrative of Exploration,

1768 - 1835

*Is it that the explorer has the same creative sickness as the writer or the artist and that to fill in the map, as to fill in the character or features of a human being, requires the urge to surrender and self-destruction?*

Graham Greene

*Explorers are to the ordinary traveller what the Saint is to the average church congregation.*

Hugh and Pauline Massingham

On August 11th 1831, the men of the *Victory*, Captain John Ross, were hard at work in a desolate bay in Arctic Canada. Rather strangely, given the barren surroundings, they were busy stocking up on provisions. The crew of the *Victory* were helping themselves to the stores left behind when an earlier Naval expedition had had to abandon one of its ships, the *Fury*, and all its contents. From the stores of the *Fury*, Ross's men took preserved meats and vegetables, wine, spirits, sugar, bread, flour, cocoa, lime juice, pickles, candles and gunpowder. For a brief moment, one of the most hostile environments in the world was a place of spectacular bounty. The incongruity between the supplies and the setting was not lost on Ross, who later wrote:

> I need not say that it was an occurrence not less novel than interesting, to find in the abandoned region of solitude and ice, and rocks, a ready market where we could supply all our wants, and collected in one spot, all the materials for which we should have searched the warehouses of Wapping and Rotherhithe.[1]

Ross's tone here is revealing. At once expansive and understated (note those negatives: 'I need not say', 'not less novel'), the style conveys a remarkable self-assurance. Ross acknowledges the surprising transformation that has taken place in the Arctic, yet at the same time it seems as if it is entirely in the order of things that Englishmen should effect such transformations and find themselves well provided for in the Arctic wastes. British efficiency has quite naturally turned a mishap – the loss of the *Fury* – to advantage, thereby transforming a waste zone into a veritable trading emporium. The success born from careful, systematic habits of mind underpins Ross's self-confidence; it creates a firm belief in the intellectual and moral value of his work, and some equally strong convictions, as we shall see, about Britain's manifest destiny in relation to the rest of the world. Such attitudes breed in Ross a secure sense of who he is and what he is about. He knows his role, and he knows the business and the voice appropriate to that role. As a result, I would suggest, we hear in Ross the distinctive tone of a new sort of British traveller: the *explorer*.

The emergence of the explorer provides the context for this chapter. The idea of the 'explorer' as someone who *travels* in order to make scientific discoveries begins to take shape from the 1760s. The word itself, interestingly, does not begin to convey a sense of geographical discovery – the primary

[1] John Ross, *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of the North-West Passage* (London, 1835), p. 109.

understanding of 'explorer' today – until the 1810s, and Ross in the 1830s is still referring to himself in the more traditional terminology of 'discoverer' and 'navigator'.[2] Yet language here seems to lag behind the cultural practices it describes, a phenomenon we shall encounter again in the next chapter in connection with the use of 'tourist'. It seemed obvious to contemporaries from the 1760s onwards that a new type of 'discoverer' and 'navigator' had appeared. Thus James Bruce, in the preface to his *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790), establishes a contrast between an old style of discovery, and a new style which he dates from the accession of George III. Previously, Bruce suggests, discoverers were motivated only by greed, and consequently all they brought to the regions they visited was violence: 'to discover and to destroy seemed to mean the same thing; and what was still more extraordinary, the innocent sufferer was stiled the Barbarian; while the bloody, lawless invader, flattered himself with the name of Christian.'[3] But with the new reign, there began a 'golden age' of discovery. 'Humanity and science' combined to bring about 'the emancipation of discovery from … cruelty and crimes.'[4] The new explorers have hearts

> filled with the most beneficent principles, [and] with that noble persuasion, the foundation of all charity, not that all men are equal, but that they are all brethren; and that being superior to the savage in every acquirement, it was for that very reason their duty to set the example of mildness, compassion and long-suffering to a fellow-creature, because the weakest, and, by no fault of his own, the least instructed, and always perfectly in their power.[5]

Bruce, it is worth noting, does not doubt the explorer's superiority to the 'savages' he will encounter, yet that very superiority enjoins a certain sort of conduct, tolerant and sympathetic. The new explorer is thus enlightened both in his pursuit of scientific knowledge and in his benevolent morality, a combination which would seem to make exploration a peaceable activity, universally beneficial to all concerned. This peaceable image, as we shall see, is crucial to exploration's sense of itself in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: at the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that the explorer nevertheless has a part to play in the rapid expansion of British influence and power in this period, as discussed earlier in this thesis.

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[2] See the *OED*, and also John Keay (ed.), *The Robinson Book of Exploration* (London, 1993), p. xi.
[3] James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, 5 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1790), Vol. 1, p. *b*.
[4] Bruce, *Travels*, Vol. 1, pp. *b-c*. See also John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken ... for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*, 3 Vols. (London, 1773), Vol. 1, p. *b*.
[5] Bruce, *Travels*, Vol. 1, p. *d*.

In itself, however, the emergence of the explorer is not my principal subject. Instead, my concern is with certain tensions in the emerging discourse of exploration, and with certain animosities which the image of the explorer seems to have provoked in some readers of exploration narratives – prominent amongst these readers being the Romantic figures whom I wish to discuss later in this thesis. Such tensions and animosities (felt even by some explorers, with regard to certain aspects of their project) work an intriguing effect on the evolution of the exploration narrative, and on the image of the explorer. Certain presumptions embodied in the explorer, and certain implications arising from some aspects of the business of exploration, caused disquiet in observers and participants alike. To offset these troubling presumptions and implications, the exploration narrative soon develops, and thereafter consistently returns to, a very distinctive rhetoric similar to that considered in the previous chapter. Borrowing conventions from what I have labelled the misadventurous strand of contemporary Voyages and Travels narratives, this rhetoric emphasises not so much science as suffering. It focuses attention on the explorer's personal travails and hardship, inflecting the idea of exploration with notions of sacrificial and sometimes even saintly victimhood. Such sufferings become a potent part of what one historian, writing of the late nineteenth century, has termed the 'myth of the explorer'.[6] It is a myth embodied most powerfully, perhaps, by the Scott Antarctic expedition of 1912, and in particular by Captain Oates, whose famous last words mask tragedy in much the same way as John Ross in the Arctic controls his satisfaction, with understatement and a stiff upper lip.

It is to this tradition of self-sacrifice in British exploration that Graham Greene alludes in the first of the epigraphs to this chapter.[7] Unlike Greene, however, I am less concerned with the psychology of individual explorers – although this will be considered in certain cases – than with the institutional and generic factors which produce this almost masochistic strain in exploration and, more precisely, in exploration narratives. The depiction of the explorer as sufferer is to some extent a rhetorical effect: no matter how painful an explorer's actual experience may have been, it does not necessarily follow that the explorer, in subsequently writing up his experience, has to describe those

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[6] See Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer* (Oxford, 1994), which offers a detailed account of the role of the sensational press in promoting this myth in the nineteenth century.
[7] Graham Greene, 'The Explorers', in *Collected Essays* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 239.

sufferings. In many cases, he chose not to. What I shall call in the next section the secular and scientific imperatives of exploration often led him to discard such elements of personal experience as irrelevant to the business at hand. The question posed by Greene must often be answered in the negative, at least with regard to the period of emergent exploration under consideration here: many explorers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries do not evince any sort of death-wish, and do not dwell in their narratives on sufferings incurred whilst exploring.

That said, some explorers *do* emphasise their sufferings in their narratives, and it was often these figures – men like Mungo Park and John Franklin – who achieved the greatest celebrity. These are also the explorers who seem to have impinged most powerfully on the Romantic imagination, and hence the relevance of the exploration narrative to this thesis. Explorers such as James Bruce, Park and Franklin offer further inflections of the 'suffering in travel' *topos*; they provide further models which the Romantic traveller, seeking out a certain sort of suffering in his travels, can follow. Hence my second epigraph, that dictum of the Massinghams', which I am wrenching somewhat from its original context.[8] I intend it to convey a sense that for some Romantic writers and travellers, certain explorers achieve heroic status, and are thus worthy of emulation, *because* of their sufferings – sufferings which can indeed, in some cases, be likened to the martyrdoms endured by saints. Moreover, because the suffering described in certain exploration narratives happens in a very different context to the suffering described in other sorts of misadventurous travel narrative, that suffering carries subtly different meanings. The emphasis on suffering in the exploration narrative may reflect a disquiet at certain presumptions and implications of the explorer's project, and the figure of the suffering explorer often articulates a range of different responses to this disquiet. In some cases, it expresses a repudiation of many aspects of exploration, and in particular a rejection of many of the aims of what I termed in the introduction the exploration establishment. In other cases, conversely, it is used to render these unsettling aspects of exploration more palatable. It can transfer attention away from more political and mercantile concerns: it can even serve to legitimise those concerns, supposedly demonstrating the moral worth of the explorer, and by extension implying his culture's moral right to empire and influence.

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[8] Hugh and Pauline Massingham, *The Englishman Abroad* (London, 1962), p. xx.

All of these applications of the explorer's sufferings have their appeal to the Romantic imagination at various moments and in various moods. This chapter will accordingly address two striking representations of the explorer as a figure who suffers: James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* and Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*. Both of these texts can be shown to work a direct influence on Romantic travellers, yet they utilise suffering in the context of exploration in very different ways. Before considering the different uses to which the suffering traveller *topos* is put in these narratives, however, it is necessary to understand the generic context from which both Bruce and Park's texts are departures. The first section therefore considers the more characteristic style and structure of the exploration narrative in this period, and the attitudes implicit in that style and structure.

## Taxonomy and Tin Cans: Secularism and Science in Exploration

In his novel *Dombey and Son* (1844-6), Charles Dickens constructs an opposition which expresses in miniature a fundamental aspect of the ideology of exploration. Dickens's fiction oscillates between two very different commercial enterprises. In the first place, there is the 'Dombey and Son' of the title, which denotes both a family and a vast trading empire. The firm of Dombey and Son encompasses the whole globe, and it surveys that globe solely with its own interests in mind:

> The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes and had sole reference to them. A.D. had no concern with anno Domini, but stood for anno Dombei - and Son.[9]

Against the might and greed of Dombey and Son is set Sol Gill's establishment. Sol's shop – which never actually seems to sell anything, as if to further underscore a distrust of trade – bespeaks a very different attitude to the wider world. Its stock consists of 'chronometers, barometers, telescopes, compasses, charts, maps, sextants, quadrants, and specimens of every kind of instrument used in the

[9] Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1848; Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 50.

working of a ship's course, or the keeping of a ship's reckoning, or the prosecuting of a ship's discoveries.'[10] Such instruments evoke the spirit of scientific enquiry, and thus embody a much more honourable and respectable attitude to the world: here is all the apparatus needed by the heroic explorer who sets out to survey and record the globe, but not to exploit it greedily.

Dickens is here dramatising – perhaps nostalgically, from the vantage-point of a much more nakedly imperial and commercial age – an idea that was from the outset central to exploration's idea of itself: namely, the purity of motive which supposedly governs the explorer's journey. The new explorer sought not plunder or territory, but scientific knowledge. Exploration construed thus is a process of enlightenment, a virtuous practice that is disinterested in worldly considerations such as making a profit or establishing a strategic advantage in certain regions of the world. This sense of disinterestedness and detachment was what individual explorers, and the discourse of exploration more generally, typically chose to emphasise about their activities. Most conspicuous to the contemporary observer – and to many explorers themselves – were those elements of the new exploration which made it seem not so much a conquest as an 'anti-conquest', as Mary Pratt puts it: that is to say, a peacable, beneficent and morally worthy entry into a foreign land.[11]

A fundamental part of the apparatus of 'anti-conquest' was the characteristic style and structure of the exploration narrative under the new paradigm. In the main body of the narrative, the language typically works to make the explorer's travelling a detached, purely scientific affair. As Pratt has shown in connection with Anders Sparrman's *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope* (1775), William Paterson's *Narrative of Four Voyages in Land of the Hottentots and the Kaffirs* (1789) and John Barrow's *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (1801), the explorer in writing of his travels will often in effect write himself *out* of those travels. He will adopt an impassive tone, using stative verbs and intransitive constructions to minimise his own presence in a scene. Linnaeus had suggested that 'every note should be a product of number, of form, of proportion, of situation', and many explorers seem to have taken this advice to heart.[12] Hence, for example, this typical observation by Paterson: 'though this country has an extremely arid appearance, it nevertheless abounds in plants of the eupharbe

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[10] *Dombey and Son*, p. 88.
[11] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), p.7.
[12] Quoted in Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966; English translation repr. London, 1997), p. 134.

class, in *arpin*, mezembryanthium and several species of geranium.'[13] Dryly factual, invoking species and genus in the Linnaean manner, such descriptions accumulate in the exploration narrative, working in the first place to elide any sense of the explorer's physical presence in the region, and in the second place to narrow down the range of the explorer's involvement with his surroundings. It is worth contrasting this descriptive style with Dampier's passages of close description in the *New Voyage*, as discussed in the last chapter. Dampier's homely idiom, and his evident willingness to taste and touch many of the objects he is describing, bespeak a certain involvement with his environment: in the new mode, the explorer can often seem a transcendent figure. Instead of a body, we have only an eye, surveying all; instead of emotions, and a more expressive flow of thoughts and feelings, we have only the accumulation of hard data. Further to this, it should be noted that the exploration text *in toto* was increasingly much more than just the narrative of the actual travelling done. The narrative proper was often supplemented – sometimes almost displaced – by appendices, even appendices to appendices. These work methodically through the various resources of a region, often presenting data in a tabulated form, thus iconising the knowledge that has been acquired, adding to the sense that it is context-free.[14]

It is not only the physical presence of the explorer in a region that the exploration narrative elides through its characteristic style and structure. As Bruce Greenfield has noted, the increasing attention paid just to natural history can obliterate the *human* history of a region, and the legitimate presence of an indigenous population.[15] The scientific rhetoric of the narrative of exploration often refashions the place visited into a virgin scene, a blank page across which the explorer and his culture can inscribe their own stories. Alternatively, where an indigenous population *is* represented, the 'native' and his culture become themselves the objects of scientific scrutiny, to be collected and categorised like any other specimen. This is a tendency in exploration's representation of other peoples that was to develop more fully in the nineteenth century, with the advent of physical anthropology and anthropometry, yet it has its beginnings in this earlier period: Banks on the *Endeavour* voyage

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[13] Quoted in Pratt, p. 51. For general discussions of style in the exploration narrative, see Pratt, pp. 45-59; Barbara Maria Stafford, *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* (MIT, 1984), pp. 47-52.
[14] See Pratt, p. 30.
[15] Bruce Greenfield, *Narrating Discovery: the Romantic Explorer in American Literature, 1790-1855* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1-10. See also Greenfield, 'The Problem of the Discoverer's Authority in Lewis and Clark's History', in Jonathan

collected human skulls and heads.[16] From the outset of the new age of exploration, there is inscribed in the exploration narrative a wide gulf between the observer and the observed, the scientific European and the supposedly primitive 'Native'. As we shall shortly see, this was a gulf that was to widen over the period presently under discussion, with some decidedly unpleasant consequences.

Supposedly the articulation of a 'pure' scientific knowledge, in its treatment of other cultures in particular the exploration narrative will often reveal a more worldly agenda impinging on, even shaping, science. As was noted in the introduction, the veneer of scientific detachment with which many explorers regarded their enterprises conceals – sometimes even to the explorers themselves – a much more practical interest in the regions they were visiting. Even exploration's presentation of itself as an 'anti-conquest', paradoxically, goes hand-in-hand with certain expansionist and acquisitive tendencies in the explorer's home culture. 'A utopian, innocent vision of European global authority', 'anti-conquest' as Pratt defines it must be seen as a complex rhetorical strategy whereby the European traveller on the one hand denies any acquisitive interest in a region, whilst on the other, in a highly indirect fashion, he subtly endorses and authorises such acquisitions and interventions.[17] It can sometimes seem in the exploration narrative as if only the explorer and his culture have a valid form of knowledge: it can likewise seem as if only that explorer and culture can behave in a benevolent and enlightened way. An idealised image of Europe's presence in remote regions is thus offered to the reader of these narratives. Exploration seems not only a morally legitimate exercise, but also evidence of European moral superiority: this superiority, in turn, gives Europeans the right to make significant interventions in the non-European world.

Pratt's sophisticated understanding of exploration as 'anti-conquest' interrogates an eighteenth-century practice from a late-twentieth-century, post-colonial perspective. Yet the more dubious ramifications of exploratory activity, and of contact between the European and non-European worlds, were not entirely lost on contemporaries, nor even on the explorers themselves. It was recognised that even a peaceable, supposedly benevolent encounter between Europeans and non-

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Arac and Harriet Ritvo (eds.), *Macropolitics of Nineteenth-Century Literature: Nationalism, Exoticism, Imperialism* (Pennsylvania, 1991), p. 24.

[16] For this tendency in British anthropology, see George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), pp. 62-7; also James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London, 1997), pp. 140-182.

[17] Pratt, p. 39. See also p. 7.

Europeans could work devastating consequences upon the latter. Even the apparently incontrovertible technological advances and material benefits which Europe brought to more primitive peoples could arouse an ambivalent reaction. Thus Cook, leaving Tahiti for the last time in 1777 (he was to die in Hawaii shortly afterwards), wrote in his journal:

> I cannot avoid expressing it as my real opinion that it would have been far better for these poor people never to have known our superiority in the accommodation and arts that make life comfortable, than after once knowing it, to be again left and abandoned in their original incapacity of improvement. Indeed they cannot be restored to that happy mediocrity in which they lived before we discovered them, if the intercourse between us should be discontinued. It seems to me that it has become, in a manner, incumbent on the Europeans to visit them once in three or four years, in order to supply them with those conveniences which we have introduced among them, and have given them a predilection for.[18]

Other aspects of exploration were more immediately disquieting. Incidents in which Cook had to fire on an indigenous population aroused particular anxiety. One such episode, during the first voyage, in which two or three Maori were killed and more injured, Banks judged 'the most disagreeable day my life has yet seen. Black be the mark for it, and heaven send that such may never return to embitter future reflection.'[19] Cook himself wrestled with a sense of guilt, writing of this episode in his journal that 'nor do I my self think that the reason I had for seizing upon [the Maori boat] will att all justify me'.[20] Hawkesworth likewise expressed, in the introduction to *Voyages ...In the Southern Hemisphere*, 'the regret with which I have recorded the destruction of poor naked savages, by our firearms, in the course of these expeditions.'[21] He went on to consider the lawfulness of the explorer's project, offering a rather sophistical defence of exploration which need not detain us here. In the present context, it is enough to register the fact that at moments such as these in the writings of Cook, Banks and Hawkesworth, the business of exploration is obviously prompting some moral and ethical unease.

That said, there was another issue on which contemporaries arguably felt greater unease in connection with the exploration narrative, at least at the outset of our period. It was not so much the extent to which the explorer or the indigene were being written out the exploration text that most

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[18] Quoted in Alan Moorehead, *The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific, 1767-1840* (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 96.
[19] Quoted in footnote in Philip Edwards (ed.), *The Journals of Captain Cook* (Harmondsworth, 1999), p. 72.
[20] Edwards (ed.), *Journals of Captain Cook*, p. 72.
[21] Hawkesworth, Vol. 1, p. xvii.

disturbed late eighteenth-century readers, but rather, the extent to which the characteristic style and structure of the form wrote God out of events. The scientific imperative of the new exploration inevitably made it a rationalistic and secular activity. As scientist, the explorer applies himself solely to what the theologian regards as secondary causes: he seeks explanations, patterns and causalities in the natural rather than the supernatural world. This attitude alone could unsettle some readers, as Hawkesworth discovered to his cost when his *Voyages* was published in 1773. Hawkesworth's account of Cook's first voyage was soon mired in controversy. In part, the fuss was over the supposedly salacious depictions of Tahitian sexuality, but it was also over Hawkesworth and Cook's apparent scepticism about the workings of a direct or Special Providence. When Cook and his men survived tricky situations – notably when stuck on the Great Barrier Reef in 1771 – they did so by luck and their own efforts. Cook, indeed, seems to have had little truck with the whole business of Providential interpretation. Writing in his log on board the *Endeavour* in 1769, Cook complained that

> such are the disposission [*sic*] of men in general in these Voyages that they are seldom content with the hardships and dangers which will naturaly occur, but they must add others which hardly ever had existence but in their imaginations, by magnifying the most trifling accidents and Circumstances to the greatest hardships, and insurmou[n]table dangers without the imidiate [*sic*] interposition of Providence, as if the whole Merit of the Voyage consisted in the dangers and hardships they underwent, or that real ones did not happen often enough to give the mind sufficient anxiety; thus posteriety are taught to look upon these Voyages as hazardous to the highest degree.[22]

What irritates Cook, it seems, is not only a general tendency to exaggerate the 'hardships and dangers' of exploration but also, implicitly, a more specific tendency to magnify dangers so that they seem 'insurmou[n]table … without the imidiate interposition of Providence.' The religious paradigms and hermeneutics which previously worked such a significant influence on the voyage narrative – and indeed, continued to work a significant, shaping influence on some accounts – are in this way dismissed by Cook, who reveals a far more pragmatic, business-like turn of mind. The readers of the published account of his voyage, however, were not always of the same mind. As 'A.B.' declared in the *Public Advertiser*, it was a matter of

> real Concern, that in the Publication of two Accounts of Voyages round the World, Lord Anson's and that published by Dr Hawkesworth, the Providence of our God and Saviour

[22] Cook, *Endeavour Journal*, p. 461.

> should have been so insolently insulted, in the first by an utter Silence, and in the latter by an impudent Denial of it.[23]

Hawkesworth had anticipated such attacks in the introduction to *Voyages*. He insisted that he subscribed to a belief in a General Providence, and suggested that in the debate over how Providence operated the burden of proof lay with those who claimed God intervened directly in nature. 'Why,' he asked '[did] an extraordinary interposition … not take place rather to prevent the ship's striking, than to prevent her being beaten to pieces after she had struck[?]'[24] This particular discussion, however, need not detain us further. The point to be made is that this downplaying of the role of Providence is typical not only of Hawkesworth's text, but also of many subsequent exploration narratives. Their concern is often solely with the material world and with secular issues, spiritual and religious considerations clearly being judged irrelevant to the business at hand. To some readers, this could suggest a certain presumptiveness in the explorer, and in exploration generally.

However, readerly unease over the absence of any explicit Providential framework of interpretation to the exploration narrative seems to diminish over the course of the period 1780 to 1830. In part, this is because of a shift in expectations, as readers became more accustomed to, and accepting of, exploration's secular agenda. Yet it is also brought about by the fact that a certain religiosity manages to reclaim the exploration narrative by a more roundabout method, as part of the culture of 'improvement' that was coming to the fore in this period. Categorisation and systematisation in the sphere of intellectual activity went hand-in-hand with a drive towards greater efficiency and rationalisation in the spheres of business and production, and both were suffused with a good Protestant understanding of the value of work and the importance of harvesting God's bounty to its fullest extent. In this spirit, the narrative of exploration might underplay the role of direct Providence, but it was nevertheless going about God's work in making the earth productive. Here, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* provides a potent paradigm. From one perspective (as discussed in the last chapter), Defoe's novel demonstrates Providence working through disastrous events to bring about the individual's spiritual redemption. From another perspective, however, the novel also offers a colonialist – and arguably, exploratory – parable. Crusoe tames the wild, organising his island so as

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[23] *Public Advertiser*, issue 11928 (6 July 1773).
[24] Hawkesworth, Vol. 1, p. xxi.

to make it yield a harvest: God smiles on these efforts and Crusoe leaves the island a rich man. If we read the novel this way, we will not be surprised that Crusoe shows no interest in the island's aesthetic merits (something which dismayed Coleridge): the distant region visited by this traveller is more properly regarded as an opportunity for good estate management, a venture which must be made to yield the maximum profit.

A similar attitude underpins John Ross's satisfaction as an Arctic beach becomes a Wapping warehouse, in the passage which opens this chapter. Ross, indeed, makes a revealing comparison when he describes himself and his crew 'storing ourselves, somewhat like Robinson Crusoe, with whatever could be of use to us in the wreck.'[25] For the rest of this section, I shall look more closely at John Ross and the major British exploratory project of the 1810s and '20s of which he was a part, the quest for the North West Passage. Switching from Cook, Hawkesworth and contemporaries to a series of exploration narratives from the end of my period, one can perceive certain continuities in the British exploratory outlook, and also certain changes in that outlook. By the 1810s, that 'exploration establishment' described in my introduction is almost fully formed: the mainstream of British exploration enters a more overtly imperialist phase. Rather curiously, the ramifications of this new mood can be usefully approached via a consideration of one of the items with which Ross replenished his supplies in the Arctic. Surveying the stores of the *Fury* in 1831, Ross seems particularly surprised, and satisfied, to see that the tinned foodstuffs have survived the Arctic conditions. As he later noted:

> Where the preserved meats and vegetables had been deposited, we found everything entire. The canisters had all been piled up in two heaps; but though quite exposed to all the chances of the climate, for four years, they had not suffered in the slightest degree. There had been no water to rust them, and the security of the joinings had prevented the bears from smelling their contents. Had they known what was within, not much of this provision would have come to our share, and they would have had more reason than we to be thankful for Mr Donkin's patent.[26]

Ross's interest in these tin cans may seem inconsequential, yet it is of a piece with the network of concerns that I wish to consider now. The tin can, humble as it may seem to us today, at this date embodies aspirations and methods fundamental to the mainstream of British exploration.

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[25] Ross (1835), p. 111.
[26] Ross (1835), p. 108.

Before looking more closely at the tin cans of the *Fury*, one must understand something of why Ross was in the Arctic in the first place. He was standing on that barren beach in 1831 (112 years after *Robinson Crusoe* was published and some sixty years after Cook's first voyage) as part of a concerted effort by the Admiralty, in the years after the Napoleonic wars, to discover a navigable route across the top of the American continent, linking the North Atlantic with the North Pacific. This quest proceeded both by land and by sea. John Franklin headed an overland expedition to the north coast of the American continent in 1819, whilst Ross commanded the *Isabella* and the *Alexander* on the first maritime expedition in 1818. William Edward Parry commanded a second voyage in 1819, sailing the *Hecla* and the *Griper* across the meridian of 110° West, and thereby claiming a government prize of £5,000 for the partial discovery of a possible North West Passage. Under Parry the Navy developed a 'wintering-out' technique that would be used by subsequent expeditions: the *Hecla* and the *Griper* spent the winter ice-bound in the Arctic so that they were in a position to push further west the following spring. Parry led two further voyages, the first running from 1821 to 1823 and the second from 1824 to 1825. (It was in the latter voyage, that the *Fury* and its stores had to be abandoned.) Ross commanded a second Arctic expedition in 1829: this will be the final account I consider here, although the British quest for the North West Passage continued into the Victorian era, most tragically in the form of the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845.[27]

The *Isabella* and the *Alexander*, on the first of these Arctic expeditions, took by way of provisions some 9,000 pounds of tinned, preserved meat (amongst other items, of course). Such preserved meats and vegetables, and the tin cans in which they were contained, represented the convergence of two recent technological advances. The first was a new method of food preservation developed by the Frenchman Nicholas Appert. 'Appertisation', as the technique was known, consisted of the packing of a foodstuff into an impermeable container, typically a glass bottle, which was loosely corked. The bottle was then heated in a bath of hot water, causing air to be expelled, whereupon the bottle was swiftly recorked in such a way as to seal it hermetically. Appert's *The Art of Preserving All Kinds of Animal and Vegetable Substances for Several Years* was translated into English in 1811, and it was

[27] My account of these expeditions draws for the most part on the following texts: William Edward Parry, *Journal of a Voyage for a Discovery of a North-West Passage* (London, 1821); Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific* (London, 1824); Parry, *Journal of a Third Voyage for the Discovery of a North West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific* (London, 1826); John Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery*

in England that methods were swiftly developed for applying the new technique to another new technology, that of the tin canister.[28] The tin can, patented in 1812 by the Bryan Donkin referred to by Ross above, further extended the usefulness of appertisation, for it offered a storage system far more resilient and efficient than the glass bottles which Appert originally used. As the French board of inquiry into Appert's techniques noted, 'with respect to the embarkation of meat necessary for a whole crew on a long voyage', difficulties lay 'in the requisite multiplicity of bottles', bottles being both fragile and awkwardly shaped for storage in bulk.[29] Tin cans, in contrast, are both 'ever-during', as Ross elsewhere puts it, and capable of being stacked and packed in a tidy, efficient fashion. The Admiralty soon recognised their usefulness. By the late 1810s the firm of Donkin and Hall were supplying Naval expeditions in the Arctic with a range of foodstuffs preserved by appertisation and packed in tin cans. In addition to the 'Donkin's Preserved Meats' to which both Parry and Ross make several admiring references, there were also Donkin's Preserved Vegetables and Donkin's Preserved Soups, which came in tins of various sizes, up to a maximum of six pounds in weight.

The Admiralty's admiration for Donkin's Preserved Meat was well-founded. Both Parry and Ross appreciated that their voyages – and in particular the technique of wintering out pioneered by Parry – relied heavily on the new sort of supplies. To English eyes at least, the Arctic was a barren waste incapable of supporting life: one had to bring one's own provisions. Previously, British crews undertaking expeditions for this length of time used salted meat as the principal source of sustenance, but salt meat was known to weaken the men's resistance to scurvy, particularly in Arctic conditions. Donkin's Preserved Meats reduced significantly the susceptibility to scurvy, and it is in this regard that we find them chiefly discussed by both Parry and Ross.[30] Both men stress that preserved meats mean preserved men: only one crew member died on Parry's expedition, a remarkable achievement at this date for any voyage of this duration, let alone one in the Arctic.

Such is the material significance of Donkin's tinned foods: more interesting still, however, is the symbolic significance attached to the tin can, and the cultural meanings invested in it. In this regard,

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... *in His Majesty's Ships Isabella and Alexander* (London, 1819); Ross, *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of the North-West Passage* (London, 1835).

[28] The text is catalogued in the Bodleian Library as Charles [sic] Appert, *The Art of Preserving All Kinds of Animal and Vegetable Substances for Several Years* (London, 1811).

[29] Appert, pp. 161-2.

[30] For example, Parry, p. clxxii; Ross (1819), p. 196.

one should consider afresh something we now take for granted: the simple fact of food preservation itself. There have been methods of food preservation practised by man for centuries: drying, salt-curing, smoking, pickling and so forth. Traditional forms of food preservation, however, radically alter the substance being preserved; tin cans, in contrast, yield foods that have not changed in taste or texture, as if they have just been freshly cooked.[31] To the early nineteenth century, this could seem little short of miraculous – or so, at least, we may deduce from a remarkable passage in Ross's 1835 narrative. Recalling Christmas Day, 1831, when he and his men dined contentedly on tinned food taken from the *Fury*, Ross proceeds to speculate thus:

> I know not whether the preservation of this meat, thus secured, be interminable or not; but what we brought home is now, in 1835, as good as when it went out from the hands of the maker, or whatever be his designation, the Gastronome for eternity in short, in 1823. If it can be kept so long without the slightest alteration, without even the diminution of flavour in such things as hare soup and *purée* of carrots, why may it not endure forever, supposing that the vessels were themselves perdurable? Often have I imagined what we should have felt had Mr Appert's contrivance (of which, however, neither he nor his successors are the real discoverers) been known to Rome[;] could we have dug out of Herculaneum or Pompeii one of the suppers of Lucullus or the dishes of Nasidenius; the 'fat paps of a sow', a boar with one half roasted and the other boiled, or a muraena fattened on Syrian slaves; or, as might have happened, a box of sauces prepared, not by Mr Burgess, but by the very hands of Apicius himself. How much more would antiquaries, and they even more than Kitchener or Vole, have triumphed at finding a dish from the court of Amenophis or Cephrenes, in the tombs of the Pharaohs; have regaled over potted dainties of four thousand years' standing and have joyed in writing books on the cookery of the Shepherd Kings, or of him who was drowned in the Red Sea. Is it possible that this may be, some thousand years hence, that the ever-during frost of Boothia Felix may preserve the equally ever-during canisters of the Fury, and thus deliver down to a remote posterity the dinners cooked in London during the reign of George the Fourth? Happy indeed will such a day be for the antiquaries of Boothia Felix, and happy the Boothian to which such discoveries shall be reserved.[32]

It is an amusing flight of fancy, yet there is arguably more than just wonderment being expressed here. The playfulness, I would suggest, is inflected with a technological and imperial pride. 'Mr Appert's' (admittedly French) innovation in food preservation, previously only of limited usefulness, has become, in British hands, an immensely useful and profitable invention. The tin can for Ross represents progress: it is a technological achievement such as the world has never seen. The Romans and the Egyptians, we should note, could *not* preserve their banquets for posterity but Georgian Englishmen can. In so doing they not only surpass the achievement of the ancient empires, they also

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[31] See T.N. Morris, 'Management and Preservation of Food', in C. Singer, E.J. Holmyard, A.R. Hall, and T.I. Williams, *A History of Technology*, 5 Vols. (Oxford, 1958), Vol. 5.
[32] Ross (1835), pp. 619-20.

exhibit a startling new control over the interconnected agencies of time and nature. Those 'ever-during canisters' of tin arrest, seemingly forever, the processes of putrefaction: they thus demonstrate in miniature the sort of mastery over nature that the British will bring more generally to the Arctic. 'As universal knowledge 'progresses'', Ross tells us elsewhere, 'a new interest will attach to a region so robbed of 'natural rights' by nature herself…'[33] British science and technology, it seems, will correct and improve nature. The Arctic will become the 'Boothia Felix' referred to by Ross above – a name which he has only just conferred, in honour of the gin manufacturer who had provided most of the funding for the expedition. At present just a vast, desolate chunk of Arctic land-mass, Ross seems confident that one thousand years hence Boothia Felix will be a settled, populous place. And even then, it seems, Boothian antiquarians will be finding tin cans resisting time and the elements, their contents still edible.

The tin can, then, has a conspicuous place in what one might term the 'georgic' outlook of an explorer like John Ross. It encapsulates the technological – and increasingly, industrial – power that brings the wilderness into cultivation. Such cultivation of the world begins with the understanding that the world must be ordered, and this drive towards order is also embodied in the humble tin, which enables a remarkable orderliness and efficiency. Tin cans contain things with great effectiveness. In doing so – to state the obvious – they keep different things apart. What is inside does not get out, and what is outside (the air that causes putrefaction, the greedy bears who might have sniffed out the *Fury*'s preserved meats were it not for the 'security of the [tins'] joinings') does not get in. Moreover, if the tin can thus allows a safer, more hygienic preservation of foodstuffs, it also allows a more efficient storage of those provisions. Cans have the advantage over glass bottles not only in their resilience but also in the ease with which they can be packed away. *En masse*, one might say, the tin can constitutes a highly effective and versatile storage *system.*

The tin can, in short, embodies in equal measure a tendency to neatness and efficiency, and an emphasis on hygiene and health. Understood in this way, Donkin's Preserved Meats do not merely attest to the growing technological and industrial muscle of the British Empire: there are also subtly invested in the tin can assumptions as to the moral legitimacy of British expansionism. Viewed in a

[33] Ross (1835), p. 270.

certain light, Donkin's Preserved Meats almost seem to suggest the *right* of Englishmen, in what Ross terms 'this new era of rising light and spreading knowledge', to extend their influence across the world.[34] The tin can is emblematic of a certain sort of orderliness that is central to the British enterprise in the Arctic in this period. This concern with order, and a firm conviction as to the intellectual, medical and even moral benefits of orderliness, permeates every aspect of these expeditions, and is articulated powerfully in Parry and Ross's narratives. We should note that Parry and Ross are conducting what is a highly static, as opposed to mobile, mode of exploration. The wintering-out technique developed by Parry meant that for the greater part of the expedition – and consequently for the greater part of the narrative of the expedition – the main emphasis is on getting both ship and crew safely through the long Arctic winter. As a result, exploration on the Parry and Ross model becomes largely a matter of good household management, and of keeping everything in good working order. The ship itself must be scrubbed, cleaned and inspected regularly. Surveys must be made of provisions and equipment, and safeguards adopted against the various forces, inside and outside, which threaten the smooth running of this temporary home. Condensation, for example, has almost a starring role in these narratives, particularly Parry's. Systems must be put in place to counteract its dangerous effects, and experiments made to improve these systems: such are the subjects which occupy much of Parry and Ross's narratives.

If emphasis thus falls on the order maintained over the physical structure of the ship, it falls equally on the order maintained over its inhabitants, the crew. Continuing a trend in Naval policy which Cook again did much to begin, the crew's diet is monitored closely, and likewise the condition of their health and clothing. They are compelled to undertake regularly what Parry terms a 'systematic mode of exercise'.[35] With regard to the crew, moreover, a significant problem is finding something to occupy them for the prolonged period of inactivity, and in this connection one should note that the order imposed over both ship and crew is also an order imposed over time. Parry and Ross give us detailed breakdowns of both daily and weekly timetables. Reveille, scrubbing-down, exercise, mealtimes, leisure time, lights out: with these activities the day is structured and time filled.

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[34] Ross (1835), p. xvii.
[35] Parry, p. 124. For this trend generally in the Navy, see Christopher Lawrence, 'Disciplining Disease: Scurvy, Navy and Imperial Expansion, 1750-1825', in David Miller and Peter Reill (eds.), *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* (Cambridge, 1996).

Such organisation, of course, is a prerequisite of any sort of communal, especially military, activity, yet there are also some ways in which the men were organised which today seem curious, and which suggest that the imperatives underpinning this urge to orderliness are more culturally specific. The order that is to be maintained on these ships is decidedly British and middle class. It includes – in Parry's case at least – a weekly paper, *The North Georgian Gazette*, and amateur dramatics (although the Arctic cold made these performances an uncomfortable experience for both actors and audience, 'especially for those of the former who undertook to appear in female dresses').[36] More significantly, for both Parry and Ross it involved putting their crews to school, studying religious and moral topics on a Sunday and practical topics on week-days. Their intellectual and moral health is to be monitored as closely as their physical condition, and improvement is clearly expected. As Ross notes at one point:

> Under their system of education, [the men] had improved with surprising rapidity: while it was easy to perceive a decided change for the better in their moral and religious characters; even, as I have reason to believe, to that which is rendered difficult from long habits, the abolition of swearing.[37]

Such paternalism makes the men seem little more than recalcitrant children, and this is an impression that is reinforced elsewhere. Ross talks of allowing them a dance on a Saturday night because, after all, it was a 'school holiday'.[38] Parry insists that his men take their daily portion of lime juice and sugar in the presence of an officer. 'This latter precaution,' he notes, 'may appear to have been unnecessary, to those who are not aware how much sailors resemble children in all those points in which their own health and comfort are concerned.'[39]

In *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (1995), David Sibley elaborates on the idea, first developed by Basil Bernstein, of 'strongly classified space'.[40] In the strongly, as opposed to weakly classified space, Sibley and Bernstein suggest, boundaries and borders are strictly demarcated. Categories are not to be muddled, things are not to mix promiscuously, and people likewise should maintain a strict order: strongly classified spaces are thus often associated with institutions and

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[36] Parry, p. 146.
[37] Ross (1835), p. 226.
[38] Ross (1835), p. 230.
[39] Parry, p. 105.
[40] David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London, 1995), p. 78; on this topic generally see, pp. 72-81.

cultures which emphasise hierarchy over equality. The ships run by Parry and Ross very much fulfil these criteria, and the two explorers clearly understand that their crews are to be regulated and ordered as much as nature and/or the native. This was an opinion shared by other explorers of this period: thus Bligh on the *Bounty* suppressed the riotous festivities that typically took place in this period when a ship crossed the equator. (The ill-will this generated, Greg Dening has argued, may well have been a factor in the mutiny.[41])

David Sibley goes on to suggest that whatever breaches a boundary or border, or whatever seems to disregard the imperative on orderliness, will be regarded with abhorrence, and moral condemnation, by those accustomed to inhabit strongly classified spaces. This too is a conspicuous feature of Parry and Ross' outlook, as we shall see shortly in relation to their attitude towards the Inuit. For now, however, it is worth suggesting that it is perhaps no coincidence, in an expedition and narrative so fascinated with containment and (self-)control, that the only death on Parry's voyage is judged to be largely the result of 'incontinence'.[42] William Scott's death is in part the result of a literal incontinence – he wets his bed, a particularly unhealthy thing to do when temperatures are routinely sub-zero – but it is also the consequence, Parry makes clear, of a moral incontinence which is implicitly condemned. Scott's weak bladder is the result of his over-indulgence in strong liquor. The man could not contain himself when faced with temptation: he lacked self-discipline and to some extent, Parry implies, is culpable for his own death.

Thus incontinence, and disorder more generally, is not only bad practice but also a moral and medical offence. The moral good that is containment and order, meanwhile, is to be not only maintained but also extended. It is to be extended not only within the ship, and to the lower ranks, but also beyond it, out into the barren, uncharted Arctic. Parry and Ross's narratives in themselves, of course, bring some sort of order to the Arctic, converting first-hand experience of the region into a carefully marshalled form of knowledge, neatly deployed in charts and tables, in methodically structured appendices and supplements to appendices. Like Cook and Banks, but with a greater degree of ruthless efficiency, Parry and Ross approach the natural world with the trained eye and

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[41] See Greg Dening, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 77-8.
[42] Parry, p. clxxviii.

precise vocabulary of Linnaean science. Analysis and dissection are the order of the day, as a polar bear discovers to its cost during Ross's first voyage: it is systematically taken apart, and its innards right down to stomach contents recorded, before being put back together and transported to the British Museum in, as Ross puts it, 'excellent order'.[43] At moments there can be something chilling about the pursuit of such knowledge. When a hungry glutton bear wanders on board the ship and is promptly killed, Ross notes that it was

> an inhospitable reception to kill the poor starving wretch, but it was the first specimen of the creature which we had been able to obtain. Are the life and happiness of an animal to be compared with our own pleasure in seeing its skin stuffed with straw and exhibited in a glass case?[44]

In context, there seems to be no irony intended here. Orderliness, and the practical and moral improvement that comes with orderliness, brook no soppy sentiment – an attitude which can be applied in more alarming ways, as we shall see.

The results of these voyages are thus specimens on the one hand and, on the other, systematic, professionally rigorous tables of geological, botanical and biological data. At one level, this is pure science, the disinterested accumulation of information; at another, of course, there is a significantly different agenda being followed. The principal concern of these expeditions is surveying, the orderly accumulation of geographical and navigational knowledge. In thus bringing intellectual order to these previously uncharted regions of the world, however, Parry and Ross simultaneously take possession of them, claiming them for the crown and naming their every landmark. Similarly, the precise itemisation of natural resources is undertaken very much with commercial considerations in mind. Parry and Ross's fascination with what they term the 'natural productions' of a region has as its logical corollary an interest in whether each region is, or could be made to be, 'productive'. To bring intellectual and scientific order to the Arctic is simultaneously to assess its contents as so much potential property. To contemplate the Arctic as property, moreover, is to contemplate how it should be managed properly: that is to say, so as to yield a harvest of some sort, and the maximum profit. The waste land, as we have already noted, is to be transformed into Boothia Felix.

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[43] Ross (1819), p. 199.
[44] Ross (1835), p. 627.

If concepts of property and proper management thus converge, both may equally be said to be coloured by notions of propriety. It is a positive moral good, if not a religious duty, to extend order through the world; it is good, equally, to manage the world with the efficiency that follows on from this orderliness. In this connection too, the tin can and the preserved meats inside it point the way to certain key aspects of British thinking on these expeditions. Consider, for example, a scene that is enacted first on Parry's voyage, and then again on Ross's second voyage. Out with a work party that is being assisted by two Inuit men, Parry decides to break for dinner, ordering 'a tin canister of preserved meat to be opened.'[45] This is done with a mallet, an operation which fascinates the elder Inuit who

> directed his whole attention to the opening of the canister, and when this was effected, begged very hard for the mallet which had performed so useful an office, without expressing the least wish to partake of the meat, even when he saw us eating it with good appetites. Being prevailed on, however, to taste a little of it, with some biscuit, they did not seem at all to relish it, but eat a small quantity from an evident desire not to offend us, and then deposited the rest safely in their canoes.[46]

This proffering of preserved meats is repeated by Ross, who similarly found that the Inuit

> did not relish our preserved meat; but one who ate a morsel seemed to do it as a matter of obedience, saying it was very good, but admitting, on being cross-questioned by Captain Ross, that he had said what was not true; on which all the rest, on receiving permission, threw away what they had taken.[47]

These two encounters are innocent enough, and reflect well the generally cordial relationship that exists between the Inuit and the British in these expeditions. At the same time, they occupy a small but not insignificant place in a bigger context. Food, the anthropologists tell us, is one of most potent signifiers of cultural self-definition, and by extension of cultural difference. The inability of the Inuit to appreciate the wonders of Donkin's Preserved Meat acquires a deeper significance when one recognises that it adds to an overall representation of the Inuit which defines them very much in terms of what, and how, they eat.

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[45] Parry, p. 279.
[46] Parry, pp. 279-80.
[47] Ross (1835), p. 246.

Parry and Ross knew the Inuit as 'Esquimaux' – a name they did not use of themselves, and which in fact means 'raw flesh eater'.[48] It was a pejorative tag originally coined by Canadian Indians to describe the Inuit, but the British explorers, on the basis of these narratives, might just as easily have invented the label. Raw flesh figures significantly in all these accounts. Ross notes in 1818 that the Inuit he meets 'had no scruple of eating raw flesh in any state'; officers out hunting with Inuit in 1829 remark that 'they preferred their fish raw.'[49] The rawness of much of their diet, however, is just one of a number of things that the British find unsettling about Inuit eating habits. There is also, for example, the question of hygiene. 'The habits of this people appear to be filthy in the extreme,' Ross had noted in 1818, and the subsequent narratives amply bear out the British sense of Inuit filthiness.[50] Parry peers into a pot of 'sea-horse flesh' and attempts to be charitable about it: 'some ribs of this meat were by no means bad-looking, and, but for the blood mixed with the gravy, and the dirt which accompanied the cooking, might perhaps have been palatable enough.'[51] Those are significant 'buts', however, and Parry's evident distaste for what he sees is compounded when the woman cooking the food, seeing that Parry would like to keep the pot, promptly wipes it clean with the flap of her jacket. Parry's effort to be kind in spite of his own fastidiousness is typical of the man; Ross, for his part, tends to be somewhat more intolerant, particularly in his later narrative. There the British attitude to Inuit 'dirtiness' has hardened into outright repugnance, and explicit moral condemnation. The many descriptions of the Inuit eating typically employ a hyperbolic rhetoric which often bestialises the diners. Thus Ross's nephew, John Clarke Ross, enters an igloo to find

> two pairs of the inmates, each a man and his wife, in their respective beds, with a trough of boiled fish and oil between them, on which they were feeding, much like swine, their faces and hands being bedaubed with this odorous compound.[52]

Here depicted as pigs, the Inuit are elsewhere described as vultures, tigers or hyenas. The latter image features in the crescendo of moral outrage with which John Clarke Ross concludes an account of an Inuit binge:

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[48] See Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (London, 1996), p. 187.
[49] Ross (1819), p. 107; Ross (1835), p. 446.
[50] Ross (1819), p. 133.
[51] Parry, p. 286.
[52] Ross (1835), p. 391.

> Disgusting brutes! The very hyena would have filled its belly and gone to sleep: nothing but absolute incapacity to push their food beyond the top of the throat, could check the gourmandizing of these specimens of reason and humanity.[53]

Here another ingredient has entered the rhetorical recipe for British descriptions of the Inuit *à table*: their alleged gluttony. John Clarke Ross describes them eating until they were physically incapable of squeezing in any more food; a party out hunting with the Inuit finds that whilst one and a half salmon fed all the Englishmen, the Inuit ('these voracious animals') consumed two each.[54] Such observations are prominent particularly in the last of these narratives, but they continue a portrayal, sustained through all these narratives, of the Inuit as filthy, greedy eaters of raw flesh.

There is a cultural blindness at work here, albeit, in the context of the period, a quite understandable one. The Inuit were not eating huge quantities of raw meat and fish because they were savage gluttons. As would be realised by later explorers, especially the Scandinavians who were prepared to learn from the Inuit, such eating habits in fact served a vital function. The Inuit diet was principally one of meat, necessarily so given the conditions in the Arctic, and the only way to derive adequate quantities of vitamin C from meat is to eat very large amounts of it, preferably in a raw state.[55] The British explorers of the 1810s and '20s can be forgiven for not having comprehended this, but the way in which they interpreted the Inuit binges is nevertheless highly revealing of their own culture's assumptions and agenda. Two dietary styles are in a sense contrasted throughout these narratives: the Inuit characterised by excess, improvidence and dirtiness, and the British by tidiness, cleanliness and self-discipline, as they allot themselves rationed amounts of preserved meat from their remarkable, new-fangled tin canisters. It is an opposition that one might read in terms of a Levi-Straussian distinction between the raw and the cooked, nature and culture, savage and civilised (and in this regard we should note that Donkin's preserved meats are, by the process of 'appertisation', cooked not once but twice, being thus doubly removed from their natural state).[56] More pertinent still is the reading Mary Douglas makes of dirt and poor hygiene arrangements in *Purity and Danger*: namely, that dirt is chiefly 'matter out of place', matter that is not so much offensive in itself, as in

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[53] Ross (1835), p. 358.
[54] Ross (1835), p. 446.
[55] See Spufford, pp. 193-5.
[56] See Edmund Leach, *Lévi-Strauss* (London, 1970), p. 34.

the fact that it somehow contravenes a classificatory system.[57] The Inuit's greatest fault, in British eyes, is in many ways their disorderliness. When they cook, as Parry noted, blood mixes with gravy, and dirt gets into the food. When they binge, they show an inability to marshal resources properly – an inability equally to look ahead and order time – that is similarly offensive to the time-tabled, abstemious British, eking out their supplies over the Arctic winter. Inuit wastefulness with their food, moreover, epitomises the way in which the vast natural resources of the Arctic generally seem wasted on its current inhabitants. The Inuit simply drift across the landscape; they do not settle, they do not bring order, and they do not bring the productiveness, the God-given bounty, that should follow on from order.

It follows, rather sadly, that the Inuit must themselves be tidied up and put in order, for their own good, for the good of the region, and for the satisfaction of British moral, religious and commercial requirements. And in this regard the mood has changed somewhat since the days of Cook and Bruce. There is increasingly a hard edge to Parry and Ross's narratives, a cultural inflexibility that stiffens across this sequence of narratives. The genial paternalism which is the official attitude to the Inuit gives way, with greater frequency, to more intolerant outbursts. The extension of order to the world becomes an imperative that cannot be resisted, and the apparent callousness of Ross as he has that glutton bear killed and stuffed reappears in a more disturbing context. In 1819 Ross envisaged that the Inuit would, in the future, be successfully harnessed to British commercial interests. By 1835 the mood has darkened, and Ross issues a declaration in which a now familiar word resonates chillingly:

> Is it not the fate of the savage and the uncivilised on this earth to give way to the more cunning and the better informed, to knowledge and civilisation? It is the *order* of the world and the right one: nor will all the lamentations of a mawkish philanthropy, with its more absurd or censurable efforts, avail one jot against an *order* of things as wise as it is, assuredly, established [My emphasis].[58]

Such a statement is all the more shocking since it sits, without provoking any particular comment or explanation on Ross's part, alongside scenes which show that Ross clearly liked the Inuit personally. For all Parry and Ross's strictures on Inuit savagery, both men miss them when they move away.

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[57] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), p. 35.
[58] Ross (1835), p. 257.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the categorising, compartmentalising mentality that these explorers display, a mentality that is embodied, I have suggested, in the new technology of the tin can, is this capacity to separate natural, human sentiments from official, 'proper' notions of progress.

Such then is the dominant strain, and the main drift of development, in the exploration narrative between the 1770s, when it first appeared, and the 1830s, by which date it was the product of a fully-fledged exploration establishment. From Cook to Ross the emphasis is on classification, orderliness and control, although the style in which these imperatives are obeyed shifts across the period. Throughout this section I have tried to suggest ways in which these imperatives could provoke disquiet in contemporaries, and I shall conclude with one further example of this unease, that expressed in Wordsworth's sonnet of 1802, 'Where lies the Land'. Wordsworth told Henry Crabb Robinson that the poem 'expressed the delight he had felt on thinking of the first feelings of men before navigation had so completely made the world known, and while a ship exploring unknown regions was an object of high interest and sympathy.'[59] Wordsworth here seems to articulate a regret at the increasingly mapped-out world, ordered and regulated intellectually if not politically, that has been brought into being partly by exploration. The sonnet describes the poet watching a ship as it embarks on a long voyage. He acknowledges the fact that, in the modern age, 'let her travel where she may, / She finds familiar names, a beaten way / Ever before her'.[60] Despite this knowledge, however, the poet is not free of feelings more appropriate to an earlier age. The sestet runs thus:

> Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
> And, almost as it was when ships were rare
> (From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
> Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
> Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
> Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark! (9-14)

Such anxiety and excitement may be unnecessary and out-dated, yet it is clear the poet does not want to lose them. They preserve a religious significance in what has otherwise become mundane and ordinary: they preserve equally a reverence towards both God and nature which is born particularly out of a sense of their destructive potential. It is a 'reverential *fear*' that the poem invokes, and

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[59] Henry Crabb Robinson, *Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, 3 Vols., ed. E.J. Marley (London, 1938), Vol. 1, p. 94.
[60] 'Where lies the land', ll. 6-8, in *WPW*.

implicitly the sea's capacity to inflict disasters and suffering on men who might otherwise feel the world is wholly at their disposal, merely a resource to be parcelled up and doled out. In the next two sections of this chapter, however, I shall consider two explorers who allow their readers to experience vicariously some sort of 'reverential fear'. Resisting the more secular and acquisitive tendencies in exploration, they foreground their own sufferings, albeit in very different ways and to very different ends.

## Exploration and Alienation: James Bruce in Abyssinia

'In the whole course of our reading, we remember nothing more deeply and lastingly impressive than the journey of Bruce across the desert.'[61] So wrote Robert Southey in 1805. He is referring to the final section of James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, in which Bruce concludes his journey out of Abyssinia – where he has resided for over two years – with a harrowing trek across the desert of Senaar. It is as one of a party of fifteen, equipped with camels, that Bruce undertook his desert crossing. From the outset, they are aware that they are entering a dangerous, alien environment. Almost immediately, they see far off, but sometimes getting closer, towering pillars of sand, 'at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with a majestic slowness.'[62] On the second day of the journey, these pillars of sand seem about to overwhelm the party, only to retreat at the last moment, 'leaving,' Bruce writes, 'an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment.'[63] Already many of the party are suffering from the conditions, which cause their feet to swell; on only the third day, dismay and disunity seems to threaten the group. 'Subordination … was fast on the decline,' we learn; 'all was discontent, murmuring and fear.'[64] The next day, another striking natural phenomenon threatens the travellers:

> At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching … Idris cried out, with a loud voice, Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom. I saw from the S.E. a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the

[61] *Aikin's Annual Review*, Vol. 4 (1805), p. 10.
[62] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 553.
[63] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 553.
[64] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 555.

> rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over.[65]

Thus the simoom, a poisonous vapour occurring in the Sahara, enters the English language. Subsequently it will be invoked by Erasmus Darwin in *The Botanic Garden*, by Coleridge in 'Religious Musings' (the passage from Bruce's *Travels* just quoted is appended as a footnote to the poem), and by Byron in *Don Juan* and other poems.

By now the party is gripped by 'universal despondency'.[66] Bruce has lost his voice, and his body is weakening; he describes '[his] face, so swelled as scarcely to permit to see; [his] neck covered with blisters, [his] feet swelled and inflamed and bleeding with many wounds.'[67] The situation worsens rapidly. Only Bruce's strength of will and eloquence keeps the party together. There is thieving amongst the group, and harsh justice has to be doled out. Bruce's feet are 'swelled to a monstrous size and everywhere inflamed and excoriated.'[68] The camels are dying off, and they begin to pass the bodies of dead travellers: 'nothing but death was before our eyes…'[69] Soon they are almost resigned to their fate. As a very last effort, Bruce prepares to abandon everything that is encumbering him, including the notes and papers that he has painstakingly amassed over the previous years. Leaving his documents in 'an undigested heap', anxious as to whether anyone will now believe the stories he has to tell, he mourns the loss not to himself but to Britain:

> I felt for my country, that chance alone, in this age of discovery, had robbed her of the fairest garland of the kind she was ever to wear, which all her fleets, full of heroes and men of science, in all the oceans they might be destined to explore, were incapable of replacing on her brow.[70]

With this regret Bruce staggers on. The end seems imminent when suddenly Bruce sees a flock of cow birds (a sort of heron). Recognising that they are river birds, Bruce realises that the river, the Nile, must be close at hand – and with immense relief the whole party rushes forward to find water.

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[65] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 557.
[66] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 557.
[67] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 558.
[68] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 565.
[69] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 597.
[70] Bruce, Vol. 4, pp. 598-599.

Bruce himself, having drunk, slumps under a tree: 'a dullness and insensibility, a universal relaxation of spirits which I cannot describe, a kind of stupor, or palsy of the mind, had overtaken me, almost to a deprivation of understanding.'[71] But he does not forget, when suitably recovered, to travel back into the desert to retrieve his notes.

Such is Bruce's desert crossing, a passage of writing keyed and pitched in a register very different to that usually attempted by the exploration narrative in this period. The sensational reader finds much to relish in Bruce's highly dramatic account, and the *Terrific Register* took extracts from Bruce's *Travels* entitled 'Suffocating Winds and Burning Sands of Egypt' and 'Bruce's Distressing Journey in Abyssinia'.[72] In its details – the anguish of thirst, the swelling and laceration of body parts – and in its portrayal of a group disintegrating under pressure, it recalls many of the accounts of maritime misadventure that I discussed in the previous chapter. This may not be just the result of the experiences themselves being similar. Wanting to foreground the suffering he underwent whilst travelling, Bruce no doubt turned, consciously or unconsciously, to the most obvious model that existed for this sort of theme, the model provided by earlier misadventurers. In pitching the closing section of his narrative at this level, Bruce knew what he was about. It may well have been the way in which Bruce's experiences actually unfolded, but also suits Bruce's rhetorical purposes to conclude with these images of the traveller suffering yet heroically enduring. We are meant to feel for Bruce as victim and we are also meant, I think, to infer a certain symbolism. Bruce in the desert is like a prophet in the wilderness, a prophet dishonoured in his own country and driven into exile. Bruce's account of his desert crossing figures powerfully a sense of alienation – from the exploration establishment and also from his own culture more generally – and it is this element in his *Travels*, I shall suggest, that makes that narrative so appealing to the Romantic imagination.

To understand Bruce's alienation, we need to know something of his background. He was born in Stirlingshire in 1730, and was educated for a period at Harrow.[73] He considered joining the Church of England before entering the wine trade, a career which took him to Spain and Portugal where he acquired his interest in North African cultures. Financially independent from 1760, in 1763 he

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[71] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 603.
[72] *The Terrific Register*, 2 Vols. (London, 1825), Vol. 1, pp. 289-91; Vol. 2, pp. 139-40.
[73] For biographical information on Bruce, see Alexander Murray, *Account of the Life and Writings of James Bruce* (Edinburgh, 1808); Francis Head, *The Life of Bruce, the African Traveller* (London, 1830); J.M. Reid, *Traveller*

petitioned for and was granted the post of British consul in Algiers. For five years he travelled across northern Africa, mostly in search of classical remains, and in this period he became fascinated with the fabled source of the river Nile. In pursuit of one of the river's two sources, he set out in 1768 for Abyssinia, taking with him an Italian draughtsman called Luigi Balugani. Bruce and Balugani travelled up the Nile as far as Aswan, crossed overland to the Red Sea, and then sailed around the Red Sea to the port of Massowa, entry point to Abyssinia. They entered the country in late 1769, arriving in the middle of a brutal civil war. The situation required some delicate politicking on Bruce's part, but he succeeded in ingratiating himself at the Abyssinian court. In November 1770, Bruce and Balugani finally made it to the Nile's 'coy fountains': in fact, the source of the *Blue* Nile, the lesser of the two rivers which combine to produce the Nile proper, although Bruce can perhaps be forgiven for not realising this. In his own eyes, at least, he was the first European to reach the source of the Nile. The two men then returned to Gondar, the Abyssinian capital, where, with the military situation worsening, Bruce planned their return. It was another year before Bruce finally set out from Abyssinia – during which time Balugani died from illness – and a further year was spent crossing the anarchic territory of what is present-day Sudan. Eventually he reached Cairo, then Europe. After a year spent on the Mediterranean recovering his health, Bruce finally returned to London in July 1774.

These are the key events recounted in Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile.* This work runs to five massive volumes, and contains not just an account of Bruce's experiences, but also an exhaustive history of Abyssinia. The whole of Volume II, indeed, is wholly given over to this history, during which time the narrative of the actual journey is completely abandoned. Thereafter, when the reader has been brought up-to-date with Abyssinian politics, Bruce switches frequently between the two viewpoints, sometimes describing his own experience and sometimes the complexities of the overall Abyssinian situation. The narrative is also further interrupted by short essays on a range of subjects: the pros and cons of polygamy, for example, or the ethics of the slave-trade. Such interpolations are undoubtedly detrimental to the text's unity yet they add up to an enormously broad

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*Extraordinary: the Life of James Bruce of Kinnaird* (London, 1968); Miles Bredin, *The Pale Abyssinian: A Life of James Bruce, African Explorer and Adventurer* (London, 2000).

and detailed portrait of Abyssinian society (and much else besides).[74] At the same time, the narrative's frequent jumps contribute significantly to the strangely disorienting effect which is, I shall argue, a significant aspect of the work.

That Bruce's *Travels* attempts to be so massively authoritative is the result partly of Bruce's obsessive nature and partly of the reception he received in England when he returned. In London in 1774, Bruce met not with triumph but with rejection. Initial reaction was favourable enough, and he was soon made a Fellow of the Royal Society: thereafter, however, things turned sour. No further rewards were forthcoming, and some of Bruce's more extreme stories were increasingly met with disbelief – notably his claim that the Abyssinians liked to eat their beef raw, cut from the cow or ox whilst it was still alive. Scepticism in the face of such stories was compounded by Bruce's prickly, combative nature; he was an easy figure to bait, and fashionable London society soon delighted in doing so. Dr Johnson, Horace Walpole and Fanny Burney all ridicule him, whilst on the London stage he was lampooned as 'MacFable'.[75] Rudolph Raspe, creator of the archetypal liar Baron Münchausen, dedicated a volume of the Baron's adventures to the hapless traveller. In the face of such provocations, Bruce retired to the family estate in Scotland. There he nursed his resentment, occasionally bullying incredulous dinner guests until they ate raw steak in the best Abyssinian manner.[76]

Bruce's embitterment shapes significantly his text, and especially the image he projects of himself and of the Abyssinians. Dealing Bruce's own persona first, one must begin by noting a discrepancy between Bruce's declared intentions in this regard, and his actual practice. Earlier I used Bruce to suggest the contemporary awareness that a new sort of explorer had emerged with Captain Cook. In his dedicatory letter to George III, Bruce describes the present 'golden age' of discovery, characterised by science and enlightened conduct. His intention, one senses, is to suggest that he himself is as much the originator of the new style of exploration as Cook, Bruce's journey being more or less contemporaneous with Cook's first two voyages. If the Preface projects Bruce as an

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[74] C.F. Beckingham, in the most recent (and much abridged!) edition of the *Travels*, suggests that the material ought properly to have been split into three separate works. See Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, ed. C.F. Beckingham (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 18.
[75] For these and subsequent details of Bruce's defamation at the hands of London society, see Percy G. Adams, *Travellers and Travel Liars* (1962: reprinted, New York, 1980) p. 210 f.
[76] For the bullying incident, see Head, pp. 531-2.

explorer, however, this self-identification is rather belied by the Bruce that actually appears in the main substance of his narrative. For all that Bruce would like to style himself along such lines, he is clearly not interested in, or comfortable with, many of the attitudes implicit in the role of explorer.

One might begin with his science, which can hardly be termed rigorous or professional. There is certainly a lot of fuss made about scientific intentions in his introduction, and considerable space is devoted to an itemisation of the many scientific instruments – not least a *camera obscura* the size of a small summer house – that Bruce took with him. He boasts equally a plethora of impeccable scientific motives: he planned, like Cook, to observe the Transit of Venus; he hoped simultaneously to collect information regarding both the natural and the human history of the region; ultimately, of course, he meant to ascertain the location of the Nile's source. Yet for all this there is a distinct sense of the amateur about Bruce's pose as a scientist. There is little in his *Travels* in the way of hard data arising from the expedition. Volume V, it is true, consists entirely of a catalogue of the animals, plants and minerals encountered in northern Africa, but even here Bruce maintains an idiosyncratic stance. He gruffly declares that he will classify the various specimens he has encountered as he sees fit, and not according to any abstract schema. The Linnæan school he seems to regard as some sort of vast Scandinavian conspiracy: he talks grumpily of Anders Sparrman 'stealing' discoveries for Sweden.[77] More congenial to his tastes is Buffon, the French naturalist whose belief, as paraphrased by Foucault, was that nature 'is too rich and various to be fitted within so rigid a framework [as Linnaean taxonomy]'.[78] Characteristically, however, Bruce does not develop with any rigour an argument in favour of Buffon.

This resistance to the systematisation and rigour of the Linnaean school, and of exploration narratives written under the Linnaean influence, is more powerfully felt in the main body of the narrative. Here Bruce presents information in a digressive, essayistic style, ranging far and wide through all areas of study but with marked emphasis on the Bible and the classics as the ultimate sources of authority. Bruce is bookish and antiquarian as much as he is empirical and scientific, surveying vast tracts of classical literature more readily than he measures the precise dimensions of any actual place in Abyssinia. His very presence in North Africa, his introduction makes clear,

[77] Bruce, Vol. 5, pp. 129-130.
[78] Foucault, p. 126.

emerged as much out of an interest in the heritage of classical Europe as from an interest in the indigenous culture or natural history of the region. For the five years of his Algerian consulship, Bruce busied himself assiduously recording Roman and Greek remains. As he later wrote: 'I believe I may confidently say, there is not either in the territories of Algiers or Tunis, a fragment of good taste of which I have not brought a drawing to Britain.'[79] At such moments, one hears in Bruce the voice not of an explorer, but of a Grand Tourist, merely pursuing his customary enthusiasms beyond the usual European circuit. Running through Bruce's writing there is more than a hint of aristocratic hauteur, and it accompanies attitudes which are revealing of Bruce's social background, and of his historical moment. It is useful to compare Bruce with his contemporary, Sir Joseph Banks, whom John Gascoigne has recently described as the product of what he terms a 'virtuoso' culture. This was a milieu which looked upon science as a pastime for those of liberal means, for aristocrats and leisured gentlemen.[80] The virtuoso's activities were often highly learned, but they were also resolutely amateur, and somewhat dilettante. More interested in the accumulation than the analysis of specimens and artefacts, the virtuoso in particular had no interest in the practical applications of any knowledge he gleaned: such issues were beneath the dignity of the gentleman. Gascoigne illustrates convincingly the paradoxical fact that Banks seems to have never quite shaken off these attitudes with regard to himself, whilst being at the same time instrumental in creating a very different scientific and exploratory culture, a culture that is professional, rigorous, systematic, practically-minded – in short, the exploration establishment sketched earlier. Bruce's background aligns him very much with Banks. Unlike Banks, however, Bruce has no place in the new establishment. He remains an outsider, conscious of his difference and of what he perceives as his victimisation, and his idiosyncratic science is one way in which this sense of exile is articulated.

Bruce's science may be individualistic, but elsewhere in his narrative one feels not so much individualism as isolation. There is a striking oscillation of mood and style, as if Bruce was simultaneously unsure of his audience and of himself – two anxieties, of course, which to an extent go hand in hand. One aspect of this narratorial uncertainty is a rather conspicuous concentration on

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[79] Bruce, Vol. 1, p. xxxvi.
[80] John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 57-73.

the impression he is making. There is an ostentatiousness to many of his actions which suggests an element of theatre, and a distinctly heroic self-fashioning, both in the original event and in the subsequent depiction of it. A typical example is the incident when Bruce, travelling with the Abyssinian army, rides out early one morning to impress his comrades with his horsemanship and marksmanship:

> There was then, as there always is, a vast number of kites following the camp, which are quite familiar and live upon the carrion; choosing two gliding near me, I shot first one on the right, then one on the left; they both fell dead on the ground; a great shout immediately followed from the spectators below, to which I seemingly paid no attention, pretending absolute indifference, as if nothing extraordinary had been done.[81]

Such braggadocio recurs in Bruce's *Travels*, and at these moments one cannot help feeling that Bruce's quest, or at least his representation of it, is quite blatantly all about personal fantasy. Bruce presents himself as a larger-than-life character, boozing and brawling yet always (a little unconvincingly) the model of Christian forbearance. This epic self-projection has little in common with the more impersonal tones of the typical exploration narrative.

Whenever Bruce's status as 'discoverer' of the source of the Nile is in question, his self-obsession becomes particularly apparent. His prose slips into an over-wrought rhetoric which attempts the most naked self-aggrandisement. Standing at the Nile's source, he adopts a not untypical grandiloquence:

> It is easier to guess than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment – standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry and inquiry of both ancients and moderns, for the course of near three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last, only by the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly, and without exception, followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour, had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of those myriads these princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off this stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography. Though a mere private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over kings and their armies…[82]

Bruce being Bruce, several chapters are then devoted to an exhaustive detailing of who exactly it is that he has triumphed over. Such over-writing seems to have its roots in a sense of belatedness, and

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[81] Bruce, Vol. 3, pp. 519-520.
[82] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 597.

in the anxiety born from the fact that a European *had* in fact already reached the source of the Blue Nile. The Jesuit Jerome Lobo's narrative of a mission to Abyssinia in the sixteenth century relays the account of another Jesuit, Pedro Paez, in which Paez visits and describes the Nile's source. (Lobo's text had been translated into English by Samuel Johnson, another factor, perhaps, in the hostile response Bruce met in London in 1774). Paez's description of the source is accurate, as Bruce must have recognised, but from what seems to be a combination of nationalistic, religious and personal motives, he always refused to acknowledge the Jesuit's status as the source's 'discoverer'. Instead there is a constant, rather shrill insistence on his own achievement – an over-insistence that seems particularly culpable when one realises the extent to which Bruce has written Balugani out of his narrative. The Italian is barely mentioned in Bruce's text, the main reference to him serving only to record his death. The narrative claims that this happened before the source was reached. In fact, Balugani died afterwards; indeed, he travelled to the source with Bruce. This alteration of the facts is explicable only with reference to Bruce's prickly egotism: it could not be admitted that any other European had seen the source.

Thus far one might be forgiven for thinking Bruce one of the least likeable of travellers, yet this would be unfair. The rejection he experienced in London arguably shapes not only the histrionic pitch just noted but also some more sympathetic aspects of Bruce's character. For all that he vaunts his own achievements, his egotism seems with equal frequency to implode, and to send him plummeting into profound dejection. The egotistical sublime all too often yields to what is termed at one point 'a temporary alienation of mind'.[83] Traveller and text seem locked into a boom-and-bust economy. The passage of epic self-fashioning just cited, as Bruce stands at the source of the Nile, modulates quickly into something more sombre. Within minutes of reaching the source, Bruce claims, he 'found a despondency gaining ground fast upon me'.[84] As if to offset this mood, there follows a bizarre scene of farcical banter, as Bruce and his Greek servant Strates trade humorous insults. Bruce comes over all mock-heroic, styling himself as Don Quixote. Such curious clowning, however, cannot long forestall Bruce's depression. Shortly afterwards we find the following passage:

[83] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 427.
[84] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 598.

> I was, at that very moment, in possession of what had, for many years, been the principal object of my ambition and wishes: indifference, which from the usual infirmity of human nature follows, at least for a time, complete enjoyment, had taken place of it. The marsh, and the fountains, upon comparison with the rise of many of our rivers, became now a trifling object in my sight. I remembered that magnificent scene in my own native country, where the Tweed, Clyde and Annan rise in one hill; three rivers, as I now thought, not inferior to the Nile in beauty, preferable to it in the cultivation of those countries through which they flow; superior, vastly superior to it in the virtues and qualities of the inhabitants, and in the beauty of its flocks, crowding its pastures in peace, without fear of violence from man or beast. I had seen the rise of the Rhine and Rhône, and the more magnificent sources of the Soâne; I began, in my sorrow, to treat the inquiry about the source of the Nile as a violent effort of a distempered fancy –
>
> > What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> > That he should weep for her?
>
> Grief or despondency now rolling upon me like a torrent; relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, I started from my bed in the utmost agony; I went to the door of my tent; every thing was still; the Nile, at whose head I stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt my slumbers, but the coolness and serenity of the night braced my nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented me.[85]

By the close of this passage, Bruce has recovered his equanimity, but the psychological progression it records is a characteristic one. Aspiration is fulfilled, but fulfilment provides only disappointment: thus, in an earlier passage, Bruce is initially overawed by the magnificence of the Great Cataract on the Blue Nile, but then finds his spirits 'sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened … more than was expected before.'[86] Such melancholia recurs throughout *Travels*, and the result is a narrative that is self-consciously epic, yet simultaneously shot through with a sense of the futility of the whole exercise. Repeatedly in Bruce one feels a poignant awareness of the discrepancy between the imagined moment of achievement and grandeur, and its actual realisation.

At one level, then, Bruce's text records a cycle of sublimity and bathos, of overweening self-confidence and guttering despondency. At the same time, there is often also a more aggressive edge to Bruce's writing, a sense of the author turning upon his audience and upon that community of experts back in London who dismissed him so unfairly. On occasion, Bruce is master of a heavily ironic and frankly downright sarcastic style. His most amusing sally in this vein comes in one of his many assaults on the reputation of Jerome Lobo. Perpetuating European myths about cannibalism in north-eastern Africa, Lobo claimed to have landed among cannibals – as Bruce remarks, 'a very

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[85] Bruce, Vol. 3, pp. 640-641.
[86] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 436.

whimsical choice of a place to land strangers in, among man-eaters.'[87] Bruce proceeds to debunk the accusations of cannibalism, building up to the conclusion that

> one would be almost tempted to believe that Jerome Lobo was a man-eater himself, and had taught this custom to these savages. They had it not before his coming; they have never had it since; and it must have been with some sinister intention like this, that a stranger would voluntarily seek a nation of man-eaters.[88]

There is something almost Swiftian about Bruce at such moments. His energies are directed back at his readership, as he endeavours not so much to fit the Abyssinians into European categories as to explode those categories. A similar mood of antagonism towards his audience underpins Bruce's whole portrayal of Abyssinian culture. Abyssinia, we should recall, was a place where Bruce *was* successful, and a considerable affection for the people is evident in *Travels*, as we shall shortly see. At the same time, however, it was also a place of horrific violence, and Bruce spares us none of the details of Abyssinian bloodthirstiness. Bruce's Abyssinia is a place of massacres, summary executions and a variety of forms of brutal death: one general is flayed alive and turned into a giant leather bottle. At such moments one senses not so much a desire to characterise the Abyssinians as brutal savages, as a desire to shock the reader with the sheer strangeness and difference of Abyssinia. Bruce rails repeatedly at the complacency of London society, and at the fact that people who have never travelled out of their own country dictate what is and is not regarded as true.[89] He urges instead the need for a more relativistic outlook. People only need to read more, he suggests, to realise that humanity embraces a vast variety of customs and cultures.[90] Diversity is all part of God's plan: Bruce cannot accept that God would have placed any strictures on the eating of raw flesh when there are, as he believes, cultures which do not know how to use fire.[91] A similar argument supports Bruce's refusal to be outraged by polygamy: he suggests that 'it would be unworthy of the wisdom of God, and an unevenness in his ways, which we shall never see, to subject two nations, under such different circumstances, absolutely to the same observances.'[92] This is a curious position for a Scottish laird

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[87] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 136.
[88] Bruce, Vol. 3, pp. 137-8.
[89] See Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 144.
[90] See Bruce, Vol. 3, pp. 300-301.
[91] See Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 296.
[92] Bruce, Vol. 1, p. 288.

and one-time candidate for the Anglican church. God is invoked not to underwrite the established order and 'proper' behaviour, but rather to enable a pronounced cultural relativism.

The result, ultimately, of this relativism is a portrait of Abyssinia that is as complex and as various as the persona Bruce fashions for himself. The reader finds in Bruce's representation of the Abyssinians an unsettling interplay of similarity and difference, of affection and abhorrence. In part this is the result of complexities intrinsic to Abyssinia itself. A predominantly Christian state, boasting the second oldest national church in the world, Abyssinia could not be so straightforwardly represented as alien and 'other' in the way that Islamic culture could, or the pagan cultures elsewhere in Africa. Instead, the European Christian has a more difficult evaluation to make. There are heresies a-plenty, but there are also moments when the Abyssinians rebuke Bruce from a Christian perspective. When Bruce revels in the spectacle provided by the battle of Serbraxos, his Abyssinian lieutenant directs Bruce to the Bible: 'David,' he points out, 'curses those that delight in war'.[93] Furthermore, Abyssinia is not only a Christian culture, it is also a culture of great sophistication, with a history that can be traced as far back as Solomon. Bruce goes to enormous lengths to trace this history. Before the reader gets to the account of Abyssinia itself, he has to pass through the seven-hundred daunting pages of Volume II; having done so, he can certainly not regard the Abyssinians as a 'people without history', in Eric Wolf's famous phrase.[94] Nor can Abyssinia be construed as the sort of 'virgin scene' that one more typically finds in the exploration narrative. It may be essential to Bruce that the Nile source itself is depicted as a blank page for Europeans, but the rest of Abyssinia has both past and present politics inscribed all over its landscape. Particularly evident is not only Bruce's scholarship, but also his practical experience of courtly machinations. He relays details and anecdotes to his reader not in a studious way, keeping his subjects at arm's length, as it were, but with immediacy and excitement. There is little sense of anything primitive or crude about Abyssinian court politics. This could be St James's as easily as Gondar, a point Bruce makes explicitly when he writes that 'man is the same creature everywhere, although different in colour: the court of London and that of Abyssinia are, in their principles, one.'[95]

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[93] Bruce, Vol. 4, pp. 165-6.
[94] See Eric R. Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, 1982).
[95] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 59.

Bruce's interest in Abyssinia is thus different in kind from the interest Joseph Banks and similar figures took in far-off places. Banks always emphasised the ways a region could be harnessed to promote British commercial interests. Bruce, however, is not concerned with 'improving' Abyssinia, or with profiting from it: one might say that he makes no claim on the region. It is not even entirely true to say that he is just using Abyssinia for satiric purposes, for one often senses, in his portrayal of Abyssinia, an engagement with that culture that springs not just from a negative *rejection* (of London society) but also from a positive *attraction*. It may seem a strange thing to say, after noting the atrocities that the narrative records, but Bruce's Abyssinia is also a place of laughter, good humour and seemingly genuine affection. The buffoonery which at the Nile's source is shot through with melancholy often emerges much more straightforwardly. As he writes of one hunting jaunt: 'all resolved itself into mirth and joke.'[96] Bruce himself is party to this good humour: sometimes, indeed, he is willingly the butt of the joke. Take, for example, the moment when he visits the King after having been plied with drink. He is trying to conceal this state of affairs when Prince George steps forward and announces that 'before you allow Yagoube [*ie* Bruce] to kneel, you should first provide two men to lift him again, for Ozoro Esther has given him so much wine that he will never be able to do it himself.'[97]

The people that Bruce depicts – be they Abyssinian, Arab or Egyptian – are thus allowed to be funny, and funny at Bruce's expense. This may seem trivial, but it encapsulates a narratorial generosity exhibited more generally in the text. Bruce's Abyssinians are often articulate, subtle and sophisticated in their dialogue; in their actions they can be every bit as intelligent or courageous as Europeans.[98] As Bruce notes, 'whatever country, or whatever distance of time and place heroes live at, their hearts are always in unison, and speak the same language on similar and great occasions.'[99] Bruce allows himself to be repeatedly surprised by his companions, and his narrative often dramatises the moment in which an earlier, prejudicial assessment must be re-assessed. In the following passage, for example, Bruce describes the Lamb, the commander of the Galla bodyguard

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[96] Bruce, Vol. 4, p. 311.
[97] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 395.
[98] The distinctly colloquial dialogue, which helps in no small way to convey the sense of similarity between the Abyssinian and the European, may be in part the result of Bruce's anecdotal style of composition. See Beckingham, pp. 12-13.
[99] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 415.

ensuring Bruce's safe conduct to the Nile's source. (The Galla are a race, sub-Saharan in origin and pagan rather than Christian in religion, who inhabited southern Abyssinia). The Lamb appeared to be doing nothing for much of the journey, but amazed Bruce with his alacrity when danger suddenly seemed imminent. As Bruce writes:

> this man who, according to our ideas, seemed in understanding inferior to most of the brute creation, had yet, in executing his orders, a discernment, punctuality, activity and sense of duty equal to any Christian officer who should have had a like commission; he now appeared to us in a quite different light than when we first had met him; and his inattention, when we were with him, was the more agreeable, as it left as at our entire liberty, without teasing or molesting us, when he could be of no real service … On the other hand, his alacrity and resolution in the moment he thought us in danger, exhibited him in our view as having on both occasions just the qualities we could have desired. We now, therefore, shewed him the utmost civility, spread a table cloth on the ground by the brook, mixed our honey and liquid butter together in a plate, and laid plenty of teff bread beside it. We invited the Lamb to sit down and breakfast with us, which he did, each of us dipping our hand with pieces of bread alternately into the dish which contained the honey; but Strates, whose heart was open, for he felt very gratefully the Lamb's attention to save him from being murdered by the Agows, pulled out a large piece of raw beef… This he gave to the Lamb…[100]

'According to *our* ideas': in context, the second person pronoun refers not to a community of European readers, as one might assume, but to the mixed bag of Christians (Abyssinian, Catholic, Greek Orthodox and C. of E.) which forms Bruce's party. There are many such moments when we see Bruce identifying himself with, rather than distinguishing himself from, the peoples amongst whom he is travelling – and doing so, one senses, with pride and affection. It is not merely to bolster his own claims to authenticity that Bruce has Tecla Mariam pronounce: 'You are now no stranger, but one of us,' or that the Ayto Engedan declares, 'Yagoube is one of us, he is our brother.'[101] This identification with the Abyssinians was one that Bruce was to go on making throughout his life. In retirement at Kinnaird, his first biographer writes, Bruce

> was often seen dressed in a turban, and reclining in eastern costume; and in those moments it may easily be conceived that his thoughts flew with eager pleasure to the mountains of Abyssinia – that Ozoro Esther, Ras Michael, Gusho, Powussen, Fasil, Tecla Mariam, were before his eyes, and that, in their society, beloved, respected, and admired, he was once again – Yagoube, the white man![102]

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[100] Bruce, Vol. 3, pp. 556-7.
[101] Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 364; Vol. 4, p. 161.
[102] Head, p. 531.

There are two key points to be made about this description of Bruce. The first regards the act of cultural cross-dressing, so to speak, that it records. Bruce's dressing up here reprises several episodes in his travels when he had to adopt local costume. It reflects a real immersion in the cultures visited, and so, with Bruce as perhaps with Richard Burton and T.E. Lawrence after him, we accordingly feel that the traveller has earned some right to play this part. Bruce is no mere tourist posing in front of the ruins of Baalbek. This may seem a naïve reading on my part, but it rests to some extent on the second point I wish to make. This regards that list of names, of 'characters' if you will, with which Head regales his reader: Ozoro Esther, Ras Michael and so forth. The extent to which these figures are alive and charismatic to Head is the extent to which Bruce as writer, and earlier as traveller, genuinely engages with them. The Abyssinians in Bruce are allowed their difference from European convention and expectation. They have a voice of their own, and an energy and vivacity that one does not usually associate with the objects of ethnographic study in this period.

It would be possible to overstate this aspect of Bruce's text. One must always remember that these generous strands in Bruce's writing co-exist with a lot of patriotic bluster, and a lot of talk about personal and national glory. Yet the very grandiosity with which he conceives of his project, the very rhetoric of 'glory' and 'honour', sets it significantly apart from other narratives of exploration, more accustomed at this date to think in terms of trade, improvement, colonisation and so forth. *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* is ultimately a bewildering, disorienting text in many ways at odds with the emerging discourse of exploration, a text which challenges its reader as much as it supports his or her assumptions of cultural superiority. Head wrote that when Bruce first 'brought his picture [of Abyssinia] to the civilised world, people all cried out that it was too large!' The real problem, Head suggests, was that the minds of those who attacked Bruce were 'like the Vicar of Wakefield's fusty room, … too small to contain the picture.'[103] The narrative's unsettling aspect can equally be inferred from some curious mathematics on the part of Southey, who describes Bruce's Abyssinians as 'a people half Jews, half Christians; half savage, half civilised; half black, half white, half cannibals.'[104] The arithmetic here seems finally to indicate Southey's need to dismiss the

[103] Head, p. 523.
[104] *AAR* (1805), Vol. 4, p. 9.

awkward, discomforting ambiguity of the Abyssinians – yet this very discomfiture, I would suggest, represents a significant rhetorical and ethnographical achievement on Bruce's part.

Southey was reviewing the second edition, published in 1804, of Bruce's *Travels*. This eight-volume edition was supervised by Alexander Murray, who expanded Bruce's text to include extra source-material which corroborated many of Bruce's claims (including, ironically, a letter of Balugani's which proved that he and Bruce had visited the Nile's source together). Murray's work vindicated Bruce, and went some way towards restoring his reputation, although this was too late to be any benefit to Bruce himself: he had died in 1794 after falling down the stairs at Kinnaird. For Southey, Bruce is a hero, and in this assessment most of the Romantics seem to have concurred. Literary society in the 1770s rejected Bruce: in the 1800s, it thrilled to him. As Charles Lamb – not normally a fan of travel literature – wrote to Hazlitt in 1806:

> we had just read thro' Bruce's *Travels*, with infinite delight where all is alive & *novel* & about kings & Queens & fabulous Heads of Rivers & Abyssinian wars & the Line of Solomon & he's a fine dashing fellow & intrigues with Empresses & gets into Harems of Black Women & was himself descended from Kings of Scotland: rot farmers & mechanics & industry...[105]

That 'rot farmers' jibe is worth noting: a reference to Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), which Lamb has also just been reading, it seems also to suggest Lamb's sense of Bruce's difference from the improving mentality sketched earlier, and his delight in that difference. Coleridge too enjoyed Bruce's *Travels*, and maintained a lifelong interest in the traveller. Bruce's text is a discreet presence in 'Kubla Khan', as Livingstone Lowes long ago demonstrated; a decade later, in 1807, we find Dorothy Wordsworth telling Lady Beaumont that 'Coleridge says that the last edition of Bruce's *Travels* is a book that you ought by all means to have.'[106] As late as 1826, the poet was still arguing the traveller's case: Bruce was 'a great and for a long time most ungratefully calumniated man', according to Coleridge, who disagreed with his views on polygamy and the slave trade but nevertheless felt that 'these ... are but Specks in a Diamond.'[107] And on Wordsworth and Byron too, as I shall show in my concluding chapters, Bruce works a subtle but significant influence.

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[105] Edwin W. Marrs (ed.), *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 2 Vols. (London, 1976), Vol. 2, p. 199.
[106] Quoted in John Livingstone Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927; second edition, London, 1951), p. 134.
[107] *C Letters*, Vol. 6, p. 651.

Bruce, however, was not the only explorer who conspicuously dramatised his own sufferings in his writing. Another exploration narrative of the period – a narrative which we know to have been read, and on at least one significant occasion reworked, by Romantic writers – similarly foregrounds the hardships and *travails* of the traveller. Its intentions in so doing, however, are very different to those of Bruce's text, and the results also are very different, as we shall now see.

## The Explorer as Saint: Mungo Park in West Africa

In *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799), recalling his experience of wandering destitute and alone in West Africa, the explorer Mungo Park writes;

> I do not recollect a single instance of hardheartedness towards me in the women. In all my wanderings and wretchedness, I found them uniformly kind and compassionate: and I can truly say, as my predecessor Mr. Ledyard has eloquently said before me; 'To a woman, I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry, or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate, like the men, to perform a generous action. In so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief; that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry, I eat [*sic*] the coarsest morsel with a double relish.'[108]

I begin with this passage because it signals a tradition, and an inheritance of attitudes, that runs within the discourse of exploration, yet which is not wholly aligned with the main drift of that discourse, at least at the time that Park is writing. The 'Mr. Ledyard' referred to here is the American John Ledyard, who preceded Park in being employed by Joseph Banks's African Association to explore the region around the Niger river. (Like most of the African Association's employees Ledyard came to an untimely end, dying of fever in Cairo before he had even reached West Africa.[109]) Yet Ledyard is not simply a predecessor to Park in terms of the job he held: he must also be considered Park's predecessor in terms of the spirit in which he conducted his explorations. Ledyard was another *alumnus* of the Cook voyages, having served as Corporal of Marines on Cook's third voyage. On this expedition, however, he was clearly something of an oddity. He had taken with him a complete set of Laurence Sterne's fiction, and Sterne's influence on him was evidently

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[108] Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (London, 1799), p. 263.
[109] On the misfortune which dogged explorers in West Africa, see Fergus Fleming, *Barrow's Boys* (London, 1998).

profound. To his colleagues, Ledyard was a conspicuously *sentimental* explorer. As James Burney (Fanny's brother, who was an officer on Cook's third voyage and subsequently a historian of exploration) recalled, his 'ideas were thought too sentimental, and his language too florid. No-one, however, doubted that his feelings were in accord with his expressions.'[110] His sentimentalism, it seems, is respected, but nevertheless sets Ledyard apart from his fellow explorers; with Park, however, the relationship between sentimentalism and the mainstream of exploration is significantly adjusted. Park inherits from Ledyard his sentimental attitudes and, in his writing, his sentimental techniques – yet in Park's hands these elements are successfully grafted to the more characteristic agenda of exploration and the exploration narrative. The result was the hugely popular *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, the first edition of which, appearing in April 1799, sold out in a month: two more editions were required that year, to be followed by an American edition, and French and German translations, by 1800. As this suggests, Park's *Travels* successfully tapped the late eighteenth-century taste for sentiment: in so doing it overlaid the image of the explorer with a cluster of associations and expectations which were to serve exploration well throughout the nineteenth century. More significantly, in the present context, it also offered a further potent image of the explorer as someone who suffers, and it is in this role that Park worked a powerful influence on certain Romantic imaginations.

Park travelled to West Africa in 1795, despatched by the African Association to ascertain the course of the river Niger. After acclimatising on the banks of the Gambia – and having recovered from his first bout of fever – he headed inland, accompanied by two African servants, Johnson and Dembe. His narrative describes a journey that is at first all a matter of delicate negotiations with the chiefs of the districts through which he is passing: gifts must be presented, tariffs paid, and sometimes acts of outright theft acceded to. The tenor of the expedition shifts significantly, however, when Park is captured by Moors who imprison him and treat him cruelly. Eventually he escapes, but he is now on his own, Johnson having felt it was too dangerous to try to get away and Dembe having been sold into slavery by the Moors. Thereafter he wanders through West Africa, sometimes alone and sometimes joining other travellers, precariously clinging to life and dependent on the charity

[110] Quoted in Donald Davie, 'John Ledyard: The American Traveler and his Sentimental Journeys', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 4 (1970-71), p. 66.

shown him in the villages through which he passes. In the course of these wanderings he manages at least to glimpse the Niger and to see the direction in which it flows; deciding that he can do no more, he turns back. Ultimately he falls in with a *coffle*, or slave train, heading to the British factory, and in their company he reaches the coast. Park returned to England in 1797, one of the few explorers sent out by the African Association to survive the experience – although he too was to die on a second expedition to the region in 1805.

As this outline should suggest, the most striking aspect of Park's narrative of his journey is the downwards trajectory it seems to trace. As Park travels inland, his stock of items to trade steadily dwindles, for fair reasons and foul; from his traumatic encounter with the Moors he emerges utterly destitute; finally we find him in the position almost of surrogate slave, travelling with real slaves and sharing their discomforts. Working in a sentimental register, Park offers an account of exploration that is highly personalised and attentive to his own physical presence in the landscape. His very syntax may be distinguished from that of many fellow explorers of this period by the emphasis it puts on things in relation to Park himself, and by the many passive constructions which stress Park as 'a receptor, not an initiator' of action.[111] His writing often seeks to convey the sensations experienced by the traveller's body. Given the particular conditions of Park's journey, these are usually sensations of pain and discomfort. Hot winds burn his hands, whilst the harsh treatment doled out by the Moors forces Park to explore hunger and thirst at some length. Thus we learn that 'hunger, at first, is certainly a very painful sensation; but when it has continued for some time, this pain is succeeded by languor and debility …'[112] Such details are related modestly, yet the overall image they generate of the suffering traveller is obviously intended to arouse the reader's sympathies. And those sympathies are to be aroused, one senses, simply because they can be. Park's *Travels* needs at one level to be seen in the context provided by fictions such as Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and (with allowance for a more ironic element) Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768), novels which believe that to elicit an emotional response from the reader is in itself a moral good. Their stock scenario, of the weak and sensitive helping those still weaker than themselves, is deployed to great effect by Park. A nexus interweaving sympathy and gratitude is repeatedly established: as Park, indigent and vagrant, arouses

[111] Pratt, p. 78. On this point generally, see Pratt, pp. 75-8.
[112] Park, p. 142.

pity and receives charity from Africans, so the reader, simultaneously, feels for the traveller and thanks the almsgiver. The poignancy of it all is heightened by the fact that it is usually the least powerful members of African society who give most generously. Help typically comes from slaves or from women (especially old women), as suggested by the passage which begins this section. They have least to give, and so their charity is all the more striking: at the same time, our sense of the extent of Park's vulnerability and dependence is heightened. Even the lowliest members of African society stand in a position of relative superiority to this European explorer.

Thus, through his *travails*, Park demonstrates a basic sentimental truth (or truism): 'in Africa, as well as in Europe, hospitality does not always prefer the highest dwelling.'[113] In its yoking of Africa and Europe, this observation encapsulates one of the most appealing aspects of the sentimental outlook: its faith in certain universal human attributes. In the passage from Ledyard which Park cites in my opening quotation, Ledyard is in fact describing the women of Siberia. His observations, however, are also pertinent to West Africa: in both regions women reveal a common human nature which responds spontaneously to the weak and needy. Ledyard and Park's sentimentalism has thus an engagingly egalitarian aspect: it asserts that human beings are at bottom all the same, and that racial and cultural differences are not absolute. As Park writes, describing the reunion of a mother and her son in one village, 'whatever difference there is between the Negro and the European in the conformation of the nose and the colour of the skin, there is none in the genuine sympathies and characteristic feelings of our common nature.'[114] This egalitarianism underpins a narratorial point of view that is refreshingly willing to be surprised – and to be pleasantly surprised – by African culture. The lawyers that Park finds working in West Africa are just one aspect of a society that is often, as Park acknowledges, more complex and sophisticated than had been imagined. The town of Sego, for example, is populous and bustling: 'the numerous canoes upon the river; the crowded population, and the cultivated state of the surrounding country, formed altogether a prospect of civilisation and magnificence, which I little expected to find in the bosom of Africa.'[115] If Park's Africa is thus surprisingly like Europe in certain regards, that equivalence extends even to some of the region's less

[113] Park, p. 180.
[114] Park, p. 82.
[115] Park, p. 196.

admirable characteristics. Certainly, he was swindled and robbed on several occasions during his journey – but 'let us suppose', Park suggests,

> a black merchant of Hindostan to have found his way into the centre of England, with a box of jewels at his back; and that the laws of the kingdom afforded him no security; in such a case, the wonder would be, not that the stranger was robbed of any part of his riches, but that any part was left for a second predator.[116]

This is a conceit that will be reworked by Joseph Conrad, and which to some extent turns the European gaze back upon itself.[117] Elsewhere, he undercuts European expectations of superiority. Such moments show a generosity in Park, and a receptivity to cultural difference, that has quite rightly been remarked by many critics.[118]

Park, then, suffers – or, more precisely, chooses that his narrative will dramatise his suffering – so as to bear witness to causes significantly different to those espoused by James Bruce. Bruce suffers principally to justify himself, as if to make the literary and scientific worlds remorseful for the way they treated him; Park's suffering, on the page if not in actuality, is intended to justify and to promote a faith in innate human benevolence. Yet just as Bruce's conspicuous hardships arguably have implications beyond mere egotism, reflecting a rejection of the exploration establishment and an accompanying delight in the difference of the Abyssinians, so too do Park's *travails* serve more than one rhetorical function. As Mary Pratt recognises in her excellent (although to my mind somewhat incomplete) chapter on the traveller, Park suffers in more than just the cause of benevolent sentimentality. There is an air of professionalism about Park's narrative that is largely absent from Bruce's more maverick publication. Park's patron in the exploration world was Sir Joseph Banks, his employer, as he travelled to West Africa, the African Association. In keeping with the outlook of the Banksian exploration establishment discussed earlier, the African Association's business was not only science, but also, according to its inaugural address, the 'practicability and utility' of all such knowledge.[119] Central West Africa was to be opened up for 'legitimate commerce', which Pratt glosses as: 'not colonisation or settlement, and above all not the slave trade.' Pratt over-emphasises

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[116] Park, p. 262.
[117] See Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902; Harmondsworth, 1983), p. 48.
[118] See Pratt, p. 84; Ashton Nicholls, 'Mumbo Jumbo: Mungo Park and the Rhetoric of Romantic Africa', in Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (eds.), *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture, 1780-1834* (Bloomington, 1996), p. 94; Graham Greene, *Collected Essays*, p. 240.
[119] Quoted in Pratt, p. 70.

the Abolitionist tendency in the African Association: Banks never decided decisively against the trade and even Park's position, on the basis of *Travels* at least, is not entirely clear-cut.[120] Yet she is certainly right to stress the way in which sentimentalism and sound commercial *nous* are closely entwined at every level of Park's text.

In keeping with this more pragmatic agenda, Park's narrative functions effectively as a report back to his employers and patron. The sentimental vignettes sit next to a mass of practical information, methodically presented. At various stages of his journey he offers an overview of the towns, nations and races encountered, giving a few remarks on language, culture and such like where relevant, but emphasising chiefly what commodities are traded, or might be traded, and with whom. 'The chief productions are…': so Park sums up a town.[121] It is an outlook that is complemented well by Park's scientifically trained eye, capable where necessary of identifying exactly what the local produce is. *Tamberangs*, for example, are 'small farinaceous berries, of a yellow colour and delicious taste, which I know to be the fruit of *rhamus lotus* of Linnaeus.'[122] Such precision was no doubt useful for those such as Banks, for whom commercial and botanical interests – as we have seen *à propos* Bligh, the *Bounty* and the breadfruit – went hand-in-hand. Yet Park also helps to promote British trade in ways more subtle than this. That generosity towards African cultures, which many have rightly admired, was in its own way also part of an ongoing effort to stimulate commercial links with this region. As Pratt recognises, a shift was taking place in this period in the way central West Africa was depicted by European writers. Where once it had been seen as a barren zone in which people lived only in brutalising squalor, it was now acknowledged that the interior was heavily populated, with large towns and a network of trading routes – a changing representation that Park both reflects and promotes through his description of towns such as Sego. Closely connected with this changing image of the region was a shift in the European attitude to the inhabitants, who were increasingly seen not as a commodity in themselves – that is, as potential slaves – but rather as a potential market for British goods on the one hand, and as the providers of a variety of raw materials and finished products on the other. Park's narrative continues this adjustment of the European perception of the

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[120] See Park, p. 298.
[121] Park, p. 34.
[122] Park, p. 99.

region; and if this is at one level a generous recognition of the sophistication of African life, it is also intended to alert the mercantile community (including the policy makers in the relevant government departments) to a new area of opportunity and potential profit.

Such commercial interests do not simply co-exist with Park's sentimental interests. The two points of view complement each other well, and are indeed tightly interwoven. In this regard, consider the passage in which Park, turning back at last towards the coast, summarises his observations on the African interior. Firstly he itemises the various natural resources and articles of trade that he has observed in the region: indigo, cotton-wool, different sorts of grain and so forth. Then he goes on to reflect:

> but of all of these (which can only be obtained by cultivation and labour), the natives raise sufficient only for their own immediate expenditure; nor, under the present system of their laws, manners, trade and government, can anything further be expected from them. It cannot, however, admit of a doubt, that all the rich and valuable productions, both of the East and West Indies, might easily be naturalized, and brought to the utmost perfection, in the tropical parts of this immense continent. Nothing is wanted to this end, but example, to enlighten the minds of the natives; and instruction, to enable them to direct their industry to proper objects. It was not possible for me to behold the wonderful fertility of the soil, the vast herds of cattle, proper both for labour and for food, and a variety of other circumstances favourable to colonization and agriculture; and reflect withal, on the means which presented themselves of a vast inland navigation, without lamenting that a country, so abundantly gifted and favoured by nature, should remain in its present savage and neglected state. Much more did I lament, that a people of manners and dispositions so gentle and benevolent, should either be left as they now are, immersed in the gross and uncomfortable blindness of Pagan superstition, or permitted to become converts to a system of bigotry and fanaticism; which, without enlightening the mind, often debases the heart.[123]

The 'system of bigotry and fanaticism' referred to at the end of this quotation is the Islam of the Moors, to which I shall return shortly. Of more significance at present, however, is the difficulty in separating Park's commercial and sentimental motives as he surveys the landscape and the peoples of Africa. Park wishes a complete overhaul of 'the present system of their laws, manners, trade and government', but he does so for a complex tangle of reasons. He wishes to help and enlighten the indigenous population, raising their standard of living and rescuing them from what he seems as the 'blindness of Pagan superstition', yet at the same time he makes it clear that the British, in helping the locals, would be helping themselves (in every sense of the phrase). Park evidently has intentions on

[123] Park, pp. 311-2.

central West Africa of a sort that Bruce never has for Abyssinia. If it is not actually to be settled by the British – although contrary to Pratt's interpretation of 'legitimate commerce', there *is* talk of 'colonization' here – the region is certainly to be raised from its 'present savage and neglected state' and incorporated into a global network of resources. In a Banksian vein, Park urges the introduction of crops and products from elsewhere in the empire: West Africa is to be refashioned according to Britain's world-wide economic strategy. Implicit in Park's vocabulary, moreover, is the understanding that such rationalisations and improvements are morally correct: native 'industry' should have 'proper objects', and a 'proper' usage similarly seems to attach to fertile soil and the abundance of cattle. The West African landscape, one infers, is 'properly' to be treated as a business concern.

The Africans themselves are clearly not capable of developing the region in the 'proper' way, which is the 'improving' way: therefore they need to be guided and controlled, given 'example' and 'instruction'. Park's Africans may be human beings just like himself, with the same fundamental decency at heart, but they nevertheless need improvement and civilisation before they can match Europeans for either material or moral achievements. This is the other side of Park's sentimental depiction of the African. Writerly and readerly sympathy is extended towards the indigenous population just as that population extends it towards Park the traveller, from a position of relative superiority. Even the Africans, in Park's text, recognise the higher achievements of the Europeans. Karfa, the African merchant who helps Park get back to the coast, is amazed when he reaches the European settlement: 'observing the improved state of our manufactures, and our manifest superiority in the arts of civilised life, he would sometimes appear pensive, and exclaim with an involuntary sigh, *fato fing inta feng*, "black men are nothing".'[124] African society as Park depicts it is such that the African remains trapped in ignorance, fear and poverty. From these factors, Park suggests, a corruption of manners and morals must necessarily follow. In this regard consider the emphasis given, in Park's representation of African society, to what he terms 'the wonderful contagion of superstition.'[125] The superstitious credulity of the African is, in Park's account, almost the defining characteristic of African culture, being given a prominence which Pratt does not discuss. Park relates at some length, for example, the cruel rite of the local god 'Mumbo-Jumbo'; through an

[124] Park, p. 359.
[125] Park, p. 39.

accumulation of such incidents, the impression overwhelmingly created is that Africans observe ludicrous pagan rites, living their lives according to a parcel of unquestionable, irrational beliefs handed down by their ancestors. It is to save them from themselves that Park urges the need for British educational and religious initiatives in the region. As he declares early in his narrative: 'How greatly is it to be wished, that the minds of a people so determined and faithful, could be softened and civilised, by the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity!'[126] Yet if to 'civilise' these people is to free their souls from spiritual darkness, it is also to lift the clogs which prevent economic and social reform, for at present 'a firm attachment to the customs of their ancestors, makes them view with an eye of prejudice everything that looks like innovation.'[127]

Park's sentimentalism and commercialism are thus mutually supportive. Improve the agriculture and the trading network, and one helps the people; improve the people, by educating them appropriately in religious and other matters, and one helps the economy and increases one's own trading opportunities. Park stands in that tradition of commercial evangelicalism discussed in my introduction, and to some extent illustrated already by Parry and Ross, which sees trade as a powerful civilising influence, improving the material and moral lot of native peoples. It claimed a humanitarian motive which must not be discounted – yet it was also a humanitarianism which conveniently marched hand-in-hand with the requirements of Britain's increasingly global economy.

This tangle of moral and material considerations provides a context within which one must adjust significantly one's reading of Park's sufferings. At one level his *travails* bear witness to the universal human feelings of pity and benevolence, yet at another level they also work to render Park the most supremely *unthreatening* of explorers. Here is as potent demonstration as one can find of Pratt's concept of 'anti-conquest': how could this feeble figure be exploiting or endangering the peoples through whom he passes? These were particularly pressing questions in the 1790s, a decade in which European exploration was undergoing what Pratt terms a 'legitimation crisis'.[128] (She lists several factors creating this uneasiness, the chief among them being the egalitarian ideology and rhetoric given currency by the French Revolution. Such ideas forced even those opposed to them to

[126] Park, p. 16.
[127] Park, p. 62.
[128] Pratt, p. 74.

scrutinise their own practices and their own dealings with supposedly more primitive cultures.) The abjection endured by Park thus serves – when it appears in print, at least – a further rhetorical function beyond the demonstration of sentimental truisms. It defends exploration from certain accusations; indeed, when other aspects of the narrative are taken into account, it may be said that this explorer's sufferings work not simply to legitimate, but also actively to promote exploration. Of crucial importance in this regard is Park's depiction of the Moors. If the indigenous population are viewed through the filtering lens of sentimental convention (albeit a sentimentalism closely bound up with some more pragmatic commercial considerations), the Moors are portrayed according to a very different set of literary conventions. In depicting Park's captors, his *Travels* seems to switch its stylistic allegiance from the sentimental novel of Mackenzie and Sterne to the captivity narratives which have elsewhere been touched upon this thesis, and which were in many ways a companion form, within the Voyages and Travels genre, to the narrative of maritime misadventure.

This is the aspect of Park's narrative dealt with least satisfactorily by Pratt. She largely obscures – since it does not fit with the somewhat charitable reading she makes of Park's *Travels* – the fact that Park's frequently condemns the Moors unequivocally and vehemently. For Park, the Moors are 'a subtle and treacherous race … [who] … take every opportunity of cheating and plundering the credulous and unsuspecting negroes.'[129] Distinguished by 'rudeness, ferocity and fanaticism', they 'study mischief as science, and exult in the miseries and misfortunes of their fellow-creatures.'[130] In short, they are 'at once the vainest and proudest, and, perhaps, the most bigoted, ferocious and intolerant of all the nations on the earth: combining in their character, the blind superstition of the Negro, with the savage cruelty and treachery of the Arab.'[131] Elsewhere Park suggests that one can detect their moral condition in their physical appearance:

> I fancied that I discovered in the features of most of them, a disposition towards cruelty and cunning; and I could never contemplate their physiognomy without feeling sensible uneasiness. From the staring wildness of their eyes, a stranger would immediately set them down as a nation of lunatics.[132]

[129] Park, pp. 112-3.
[130] Park, p. 125.
[131] Park, p. 160.
[132] Park, p. 158.

It is a passage which is feeling its way, regrettably, towards the theories of racial and criminal types formulated by Galton, Lombroso and similar late-nineteenth-century figures. If such attitudes seem to sit awkwardly alongside the sentimentalism that Park elsewhere espouses, one should also note another point at which this traveller's benevolence is ruffled. Park's attitude to Ali, the despotic leader of the Moorish party, raises a slight but significant qualification to Pratt's reading of Park's journey as the exemplary anti-conquest. The explorer whose pacifism is elsewhere so important to his self-representation finds himself contemplating violence. 'There is something in the form of a tyrant,' he writes, 'which raises the most secret emotions of the heart: I could not suppress my feelings; and for once entertained a malignant wish to rid the world of such a master.'[133]

Park evidently had good reason to harbour such 'secret emotions' towards the Moors who had so mistreated him, yet in his readers, one may speculate, a subtly different range of 'secret emotions' was aroused by this representation of the Moors. The Moors, Park's narrative makes clear, are very much the rivals of the British in the region. Like the British, they trade with the indigenous population; at this date, indeed, they are also like the British insofar as they trade *in* the indigenous population, in slaves. The Moors are also already promoting education and religion in West Africa. In short, they are doing just what Park thinks the British should be doing, and they are doing it very well: Park is dismayed to find a mosque and an Islamic school in almost every village he visits. Depicted thus, the Moors become rather more than just rivals to the British: they also mirror them, constituting a dark, threatening 'double' to the improving, potentially colonising British presence in the region. In the vocabulary of latter-day military strategists, both cultures are clearly to be seen as engaged in a battle for the 'hearts and minds' of the people of West Africa. And it is worth reflecting just whose 'hearts and minds' Park is hoping to sway with his narrative. He obviously did not expect his account to be read by Africans or Moors themselves: his intended audience is a British one. Park's demonising of the Moors reminds the reader powerfully that there is a third party in the region which must be resisted, an external threat which legitimates the absorption of West Africa into the British sphere of influence. The Moors thus serve the function, in Gayatri Spivak's terminology, of an 'absolute

[133] Park, p. 163.

other'.[134] Park's *Travels* seeks to convey to its readers not only the moral legitimacy, but also to the moral obligation of the British civilising/trading mission in West Africa. The kind, simple and credulous Africans cannot be left to such masters; conversely, the desirability of British influence is demonstrated throughout by Park's exemplary conduct, his courage and, particularly, his enlightened forbearance. Thus Park's captivity and treatment at the hands of the Moors is a central aspect of a text that may well relate actual experience, but which also serves to rally support and sympathy for British expansionism among his readership.

The use of conventions drawn from captivity narratives and other forms of misadventurous travel writing adds subtly but significantly to this effect. Taunted because of his Christianity and threatened with what is nearly a literal martyrdom by the brutal Moors, this explorer takes on an almost saintly aspect. His escape from the Moors seems to indicate a Providential deliverance, and this is reinforced by two key climactic scenes in the narrative. Both occur towards the end of the narrative: both also have a conclusive force insofar as they are the two lowest points Park reaches in his downwards trajectory toward destitution and utter dependence. The first occurs just after Park has escaped from the Moors. Travelling alone, in desperate need of food and water, Park climbs a tree to try to find some sign of human habitation in the landscape. There is none, and the narrative proceeds thus:

> Descending from the tree, I found my horse devouring the stubble and brushwood with great avidity; and as I was now too faint to attempt walking, and my horse too much fatigued to carry me, I thought it but an act of humanity, and perhaps the last I should ever have it in my power to perform, to take off his bridle and let him shift for himself; in doing which I was suddenly affected with sickness and giddiness; and falling upon the sand, felt as if the hour of death was fast approaching. 'Here then, thought I, after a short but ineffectual struggle, terminate all my hopes of being useful in my day and generation: here must the short span of my life come to an end.' I cast (as I believed) a last look on the surrounding scene, and whilst I reflected on the awful change that was about to take place, this world with its enjoyments seemed to vanish from my recollection. Nature, however, at length resumed its functions; and on recovering my senses, I found myself stretched upon the sand, with the bridle still in my hand, and the sun just sinking behind the trees. I now summoned all my resolution, and determined to make another effort to prolong my existence...[135]

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[134] See Gayatri Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', in Francis Barker et al. (eds.), *Europe and its Others*, 2 vols. (Colchester, 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 128-151, and also the discussion in John Barrell's *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism* (London, 1991), pp. 8-11.
[135] Park, pp. 177-8.

It is almost an exemplary end for a Sentimental hero. Park's last action is an altruistic act to an animal, his last thought one of regret about his inability to do greater good. Yet it is not quite the end. Nature 'resumed its functions'; working through Nature, it soon transpires, is God. It rains, and Park at last can drink; stumbling upon a village, he is given food by an old woman:

> Overcome with joy at so unexpected a deliverance, I lifted up my eyes to heaven, and whilst my heart swelled with gratitude, I returned thanks to that gracious and bountiful Being, whose power had supported me under so many dangers, and had now spread for me a table in the Wilderness.[136]

Park here cites Psalm 78, verse 19: 'Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' (and also perhaps recalls Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my shepherd', which declares: 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies'.) It is one of many Biblical allusions or echoes in the text, and at these moments Park seems to be continuing those traditions of typological interpretation, and of typological narrative structure, that I outlined in the previous chapter. These devices serve, for Park as for many earlier writers of shipwreck and captivity accounts, to generate a sense of personal election, a sense that God has ordained these sufferings and that God watches over the traveller even as he makes him suffer. The same conviction as to his own election is articulated a little later in Park's *Travels*, in what became the most famous incident in the whole narrative. Having been robbed again, and stripped of all his clothes, Park collapses in despair – only to have his spirits lifted, and his resolve strengthened, when

> the extraordinary beauty of a small moss, in fructification, irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to shew from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves and capsula, without admiration. Can that Being (thought I), who planted, watered and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? – surely not! Reflections like these, would not allow me to despair. I started up, and disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forwards, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed.[137]

This passage incorporates into its Providential rhetoric that very different discourse which so defines exploration: science. Pratt curiously finds in this passage evidence of science and religion in

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[136] Park, p. 181.
[137] Park, p. 244.

opposition; she suggests that Park 'looks *through* the language of science [her emphasis]' to find 'the alternative spiritual understanding of nature'.[138] It seems to me, however, that the passage in fact shows the scientific and spiritual impulses operating in tandem. As with the earlier scene, God is operating through Nature – and here it is the trained eye and precise vocabulary of Linnaean science that take us closer to His workings. Recognising a moss 'in fructification', picking out 'roots, leaves and capsula', they allow us to perceive divine order in the tiny yet miraculous details of the natural world.

Significantly, it is *between* the two moments just described that Park glimpses the principal object of his journey, 'the long sought for, majestic Niger, glittering to the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and flowing slowly *to the eastward.*'[139] The emphasis here is Park's. Together with that slight elevation of Park's otherwise homespun style (in the use of 'majestic' and 'glittering'), it helps to bring a sense of climax to what is after all the conclusion of Park's secular, scientific mission. Yet it is only a modest climax, particularly when located in its proper context between those two scenes which stress the explorer's vulnerability and weakness. These two framing events offset any hubris that might attach to the explorer's worldly achievements, transferring attention from secular to spiritual considerations. More than that, however, these two framing scenes serve structurally in the same way as the 'conclusive scenes' as I called them, in the narrative of Providential misadventure. They constitute an epiphany for the reader as well as the traveller. Park's survival demonstrates to both that Providence is on this traveller's side. God, it seems, endorses this particular explorer's project. Since the explorer may be said to stand synecdochically for his culture, God can also seem to be endorsing – more than that, demanding – a British presence in West Africa, a region which just happens, fortuitously, to be ripe with commercial possibilities.

* * *

In Sol Gill's shop, in *Dombey and Son*, Sol himself and his nephew Walter Gay live surrounded by all the apparatus necessary for the scientific business of maritime exploration. When they come to tell

[138] Pratt, p. 78.
[139] Park, p. 194.

each other stories, however, it is not science or discovery that they talk about, but shipwreck. They recount the disasters that befell the *Charming Sally*, the *George the Second*, and the *Polyphemus* in ritualistic fashion, feeding each other lines.[140] Sol and Walter are not unusual in thus preferring to discuss sufferings and misadventures rather than the science or commerce attendant on exploration. In the previous two sections I have shown how both Bruce and Park choose to make their *travails* a principal point of focus in their narratives. At the same time, however, I have also shown how they do so for very different reasons – or at least, with very different results, when their texts are placed in the wider cultural context that would have been understood by their contemporaries. Bruce's sufferings and Park's sufferings signify different things, and in this way they may be said to rework, in significantly different ways, the *topos* of suffering in travel. Both men as writers inherit this *topos* – Bruce indebted particularly to shipwreck narratives and Park to captivity narratives – and the instantiation each makes of it in his narrative inflects the *topos* in new ways, bringing a new range of implication to the image of the suffering traveller. They invest the theme of misadventure with potential meanings which may be said to have a geo-political resonance. Bruce's sufferings, figuring a sense of exile and alienation, seem to constitute a rejection of certain modes of British expansionism whilst Park's, in contrast, seem ultimately to offer a powerful endorsement of his culture, generating almost a sense of manifest national destiny. They thus provide two very different models for subsequent travellers and writers seeking to inflect their own distressing experiences (real or imagined!) with a broader range of significance. Both Wordsworth and Byron, as we shall see, must be included amongst these later travellers and writers.

The use of the misadventure *topos* in the context of exploration, therefore, gives that *topos* a geo-political aspect. Conversely, this rhetoric of suffering adjusts the discourse of exploration in some intriguing ways. At one level, it simply allows the narrative of exploration to tap the huge popular market for sensationalistic horror. The most famous figure to emerge from the Navy's Arctic expeditions of the 1810s and 1820s, it is worth noting, was not Parry or Ross but John Franklin, who commanded the overland expedition which lasted from 1819 to 1822. Franklin's subsequent *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (1823) is for the most part a fairly typical exploration narrative,

[140] *Dombey and Son*, pp. 95-96.

but it comes dramatically alive in its final chapter. Disaster almost strikes the party as they cross the Barren Grounds during a period of dreadful cold, and Franklin's account of the distressing events, like Bruce's account of the Sahara crossing, seems indebted to the conventions of maritime misadventure described earlier in this thesis. Hunger, thirst and hideously emaciated bodies; dissension and disunity; accusations of murder and cannibalism, and an act of arbitrary justice: these are the events that stand out in Franklin's *Narrative*. They brought the text an enormous readership, and the explorer great celebrity: on the basis of one particular incident, Franklin became known as the 'man who ate his boots'.[141] Yet as well as generating a certain grisly fascination, accounts such as Franklin's – and Bruce's and Park's – may be said to have taken exploration in other important directions. The sacrificial and sensationalistic element that was thus grafted on to the discourse of exploration arguably encouraged a certain sort of explorer, and here we return to the question posed by Graham Greene in the first epigraph to this chapter. That 'urge to surrender and self-destruction' postulated by Greene may not have been inherent to exploration at its inception, but it came in time to be an important part of exploration's appeal. One might cite in this connection Roald Amundsen, who wrote of Franklin's 1819 expedition that 'oddly enough it was the sufferings that Sir John and his men had to go through which attracted me most in his narrative. A strange urge made me wish that I too would go through the same thing.'[142] The peculiar psychological drives here hinted at by a Scandinavian explorer (who in this regard brings to mind Poe's protagonist, Arthur Gordon Pym) seem if anything to have been more powerfully felt by British explorers. It can be plausibly argued that in the British tradition of exploration – and particularly of Arctic exploration – certain sorts of defeat are honoured, and are looked for, far more than certain sorts of victory. One thinks of Scott in 1912, and of the Franklin Expedition of 1845, in which the largest force ever sent out by the British Navy for the purposes of exploration vanished almost without trace (undone to a considerable extent, it is worth noting, by a botched consignment of tin cans).[143]

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[141] See John Franklin, *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819, 20, 21, and 22* (London, 1823), p. 429; also Riffenburgh, p. 17.
[142] Quoted in Owen Beattie and John Geiger, *Frozen in Time: the Fate of the Franklin Expedition* (1987: repr. London, 1993), p. 49.
[143] See Beattie and Geiger.

For all this, however, it must not be forgotten that exploration's principal agenda is something very different from these romantic notions of heroic martyrdom. In this connection, I shall conclude as I began with John Ross in the Arctic in the early 1830s. For all its emphasis on orderliness and discipline, this expedition came close to disaster. For three successive years the ice did not thaw enough to allow the British ships to leave their winter harbours; in the end, with supplies running out, the ships had to be abandoned and the crew marched across the ice to the open sea in the hope of being picked up by a passing vessel. Conditions were dreadful and there seem to have been occasional mutterings of discontent, but Ross for the most part suppresses all these elements from his written account.[144] One senses that Ross as writer was in something of a dilemma: on the one hand he does not want to portray things going too far out of control, since this might suggest poor preparation and bad management, whilst on the other he wishes to show some degree of risk and suffering in order to suggest the heroism of the party. Ross's uncertainties, and the decision he seems ultimately to have made *not* to include the details of the hardships undergone by his expedition, remind us that exploration has as its most important imperative order and control, not suffering and sacrifice. The depiction of the explorer as misadventurer is not necessarily a direct reflection of actual experience: it is always the result of certain rhetorical choices by the writer of the exploration narrative. But it was the writers who made these particular choices, and who invoked the *topos* of misadventure in connection with exploration, who most appealed to the Romantic imagination.

[144] For the actual conditions, see the report made to the committee investigating the conduct of expedition, anonymously published as *Narrative of the Second Voyage of Captain Ross in the Arctic Regions* (London, 1834), espec. p. 89.

# 3. Tourists

Diversification

and Distinction in

Leisure Travel,

1760 - 1830

*These Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live*
*A profitable life: some glance along,*
*Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,*
*And they were butterflies to wheel about*
*Long as their summer lasted; some, as wise,*
*Upon the forehead of a jutting crag*
*Sit perch'd with book and pencil on their knee,*
*And look and scribble, scribble on and look,*
*Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,*
*Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.*

William Wordsworth

*The tourist is the other fellow.*

Evelyn Waugh

This chapter constitutes an interlude. I have so far discussed some of the most striking images of suffering travellers available to the Romantic reader, images which may fairly be said to have informed Romantic notions as to what it meant to suffer in travel. Here, however, I am not concerned with further instances of the misadventure *topos*, nor with travellers whom the Romantic traveller sought to emulate: rather, my subject is a class of traveller, and of travel narrative, which the Romantic traveller typically professed to disdain. In the passage discussed in my introduction, Byron ridicules the so-called 'Starke', 'Forsyth', 'Eustace' and 'Hobhouse' travellers whom he sees around him in Italy: it is these travellers, and the 'Manuals' (in Byron's phrase) that script their travels, that presently concern me. The Romantic traveller both is and is not (in his own eyes at least) a part of this greater touristic mass: only by knowing something of the 'Eustace' traveller, to take just one example, can we fully appreciate why it is that Romantic travellers would typically rather see themselves as 'Bruce travellers' or 'Park travellers'.

The subject of this chapter is thus the *tourist*, a term which to this day can conjure contempt in some quarters. 'Tourist' is a word coined in the late eighteenth century to describe a new sort of traveller. The OED's first citation dates from 1780; the second, Samuel Pegge's observation in 1800 that 'a Traveller is now-a-days called a Tour-ist', conveys the new-fangledness of the term.[1] Pegge assumes a simple equivalence between the words 'traveller' and 'tourist', and the OED does not record a differentiation between the words, and any sense of denigration clinging to 'tourist', until 1849, when *Fraser's Magazine* noted that a particular individual 'was rather a tourist than a traveller.' James Buzard, however, has found evidence of 'tourist' being used pejoratively as early as the 1790s. He quotes Adam Walker's attack on the 'rattling Tourist', made in 1792, and from 1799 the exclamation with which Wordsworth opens 'The Brothers' – 'these Tourists, heaven preserve us!' – in a passage which serves as the first epigraph to this chapter.[2] To these examples one might also add the complaint made by Mrs Piozzi, in 1800, about the sudden popularity of her Welsh estate: 'Brynbella is the fashion. We have people coming to take views of it and travellers out of number – Tourists, as the silly word is.'[3]

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[1] Quoted in James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993), p. 1. The other examples of the use of 'tourist' are also from Buzard, unless otherwise stated.
[2] 'The Brothers', ll. 1-10, in *WLB*.
[3] Quoted in B. Sprague Allen, *Tides in English Taste*, 2 Vols. (New York, 1958), Vol. 2, p. 204.

In all these examples, the language is registering two key developments with regard to travel in British society. The first is the appearance, in the late eighteenth century, of travellers in significant numbers who undertook their travelling as a leisure activity. Travelling of this sort had of course existed at an earlier date, in the form of the Grand Tour (and since the traditional Grand Tour shapes later attitudes to recreational travel it is accordingly the subject of the first section of this chapter). What is new after 1760, however, is the number of people engaged in this pursuit, and the relative diversity of their social backgrounds. One must exercise some caution here: as John Brewer has noted, in this period touring was still 'a minority, not a mass, recreation, an expensive hobby for those with ample leisure time and a purse to match.'[4] What expansion there was in the touring class, however, was enough to generate differences of outlook, and from such differences there emerged a cultural typology that we still recognise today. This brings us to the second development recorded in the shifting semantic field of the word 'tourist'. Articulated in the seemingly pejorative usage of the term is the emergence of what Buzard has called an 'anti-touristic' outlook. By 'anti-tourism', Buzard means both the attitude which causes some tourists to feel that they are better than others, and the strategies devised, on the page and in practice, to express this sense of superiority.[5] As commentators such as Buzard and Culler have shown, discussing anti-tourism from the early nineteenth century right up to the present day, anti-touristic rhetoric has always involved the invention of a caricatured traveller who is somehow unworthy and whose influence is allegedly pernicious.[6] The 'tourist', as that term is understood sneeringly, is thus a figure who serves as a foil to the self-styled 'traveller', in a relationship neatly captured by Evelyn Waugh in the second epigraph to this chapter.[7]

On to Waugh's 'other fellow' can be projected all that a traveller likes least about his culture and his compatriots; on to the 'tourist', equally, can be projected any guiltiness, on the part of the traveller, with regard to his own complicity in touristic practices. For anti-tourism – including that practised by Romantic travellers – is typically predicated on a paradox: namely, the fact that those who protest must usually be understood as just as much tourists, in the neutral sense of the term, as those they attack. Wordsworth, Byron and the other figures whom we usually regard as Romantic

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[4] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), p. 638.
[5] Buzard, pp. 1-17.
[6] See Jonathan Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Oxford, 1988).
[7] Evelyn Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (London, 1930), p. 44.

were not usually travelling because they had to, nor were they employed to travel. They chose to travel, and were enabled to do so by a certain freedom from economic necessity. The Romantic traveller has typically elected to spend his free time and spare cash in this fashion: it was to raise money for a walking tour, we should remember, that Wordsworth and Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads*.

The Romantic traveller's typical acts of self-fashioning, and especially his espousal of discomfort and danger, need to be situated in this dual context, the expansion and diversification of tourism on the one hand and the emergence of the anti-touristic impulse on the other. The two phenomena are symbiotically related. The paradox just remarked, that the anti-tourist is usually himself in some form a tourist, is ultimately no paradox. A certain critical mass of tourists needs to be reached before one group of tourists, sensing that their attitudes, aspirations and actions differ from those of their fellow tourists, begins to ponder anxiously this unsettling interplay of similarity and difference. A touring class, sharing a consensus of attitudes about their touring, must give way to what one might term – with a nod to Veblen's classic work of sociology – the touring classes: this accordingly is the development described in this chapter.[8] The first section discusses the shared framework of routes and destinations, beliefs and practices, which governed the traditional Grand Tour; the second describes the various ways in which that earlier framework was expanded, transformed, rebelled against and abandoned from the 1760s onwards. With this diversification of tourism, recreational travel became an area of cultural practice admitting of strategies of differentiation and distinction. In ways which are often subtle and covert, one could use one's travelling (indeed, one could not help but use it) to signal cultural affiliations and disaffiliations. There are as it were different *styles* of tourist, each style saying something slightly different about the individual who adopts it. Many of these styles initially complement rather than conflict with each other: over the course of my period, however, they become increasingly antagonistic. Certain styles of tourism come in for particular attack amongst contemporaries; pejorative meanings begin to cling subtly to the very word 'tourist', as we have seen; some tourists strive more strenuously than ever to distinguish themselves from their fellow tourists. This, in part, is the context in which we need to locate those frequent Romantic self-

[8] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Classes* (New York, 1926); note also Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; reprinted, Los Angeles and London, 1999).

fashionings, both on the page and in action, which express a taste for misadventure. This chapter thus describes the social stimuli to the Romantic interest in discomfort and danger: it maps a sociological context for Romantic travel which needs to be set alongside – and in places connected with – the geo-political context that I described in the last chapter.

## A Touring Class: The Traditional Grand Tour

In 1802, a tourist stood on the shore of Lake Garda, in northern Italy. With the lake in front of him, he later recalled, 'it was impossible not to exclaim, "Teque / Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace, marine".'[9] A century earlier, another tourist had also surveyed Lake Garda, writing subsequently that the lake was

> was so rough with tempests when we passed by it, that it brought to my mind *Virgil's* noble description of it:
>
> *Adde lacus tantos, te Lari maxime, teque*
> *Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace, marine.*
> Here vex'd by winter storms *Benacus* raves,
> Confus'd with working sands and rolling waves;
> Rough and tumultuous like a sea it lyes,
> So loud the tempest roars, so high the billows rise.[10]

The nineteenth-century tourist is the Reverend John Chetwode Eustace, writing in his *Classical Tour through Italy* (1813); his eighteenth-century predecessor is Joseph Addison, writing in *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705). Although a hundred years separate the two travellers, it would seem that their itineraries are the same, and also, more strikingly, their response to certain key sites on that itinerary. Across a hundred years, a degree of community is thus established between the two men, and it is in the establishment of this community that the Grand Tour – the most prestigious pattern of leisure travel inherited by the Romantic traveller – has its *raison d'être*, as this section will show. This is a community, and a set of rules for travel, that the Romantic traveller typically rejects, as we shall see in the last two chapters of this thesis – but if we are to understand why the Romantic

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[9] John Chetwode Eustace, *A Classical Tour Through Italy*, 2 Vols. (London, 1813), Vol. 1, p. 95.
[10] Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, in *Miscellaneous Works II: Prose*, ed. A.C. Guthkelch (London, 1914), p. 41

traveller, and especially the Byronic traveller, often dramatises himself in opposition to the Grand Tour, we must know something of its practices and attitudes.

For the greater part of the eighteenth century, the Grand Tour was the only form of recreational travel practised. In an earlier age, pilgrimage had provided the rationale and the infrastructure whereby a comparatively wide cross-section of the British population undertook travel in a spirit not far removed from leisure. The Reformation, however, had put an end to pilgrimage, and Protestant Britain quickly lost touch with these medieval traditions of travel.[11] (Although there were of course hardy and exceptional individuals – Fynes Morison, for example, who visited Jerusalem in the 1590s – who continued to travel to sites both within and beyond the British Isles.) Between the demise of pilgrimage, and the rise of alternative forms of tourism in the late eighteenth century, the Grand Tour was the only form of leisure travel practised regularly and to a significant extent. The Tour had first started to take shape in the late sixteenth century, as a means of training aristocrats for careers at court and in diplomatic service overseas. Young noblemen travelled abroad, on a route that took in Paris, Rome and the most powerful Italian city-states, so that they might learn languages and make useful contacts in foreign courts. On to this courtly itinerary and agenda, the New Science of the late seventeenth century grafted more practical and empirical concerns. Bacon in his essay 'On Travel' (1625) and subsequently figures such as Boyle, in his *General Heads for the Natural History of a Country, Great and Small* (1692), stressed the importance of the tour as an information-gathering exercise: they gave precise instructions as to what travellers should look out for, and encouraged a dispassionate, empirical outlook and style. Through these two stimuli a well-established route across Europe came into being: Paris and Rome, as already noted, and also a circuit around the major Italian cities, Turin, Milan, Genoa, Florence and the like. Few Grand Tourists departed from this prescribed itinerary. Within Italy, few went further south than Naples – for John Evelyn the 'Non ultra of my Travells'[12] – nor were there many travellers who ventured to countries other than France, Italy, Switzerland (a necessary stopping point *en route* from France to Italy, and of interest in its own right for its Protestantism) and later, the German principalities along the Rhine (added to the standard itinerary

[11] See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 406-8.
[12] John Evelyn, *Diary*, 6 Vols., ed. E.S. de Beer (London, 1955), Vol. 2, p. 354.

when the Thirty Years War was safely over). To this circuit, Richard Lassells gave the label the 'Grand Tour' in his *Italian Voyage* (1670).

The Grand Tour, then, had come into being, and had been named, by 1700. Its heyday, however, was the fifty or so years after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the period of the Whig Ascendancy in Britain. For Jeremy Black, this is the age of 'the classical Grand Tour', which he defines as 'young men travelling with tutors for several years to Paris and Italy in order to finish their education.'[13] These young men – and they were almost invariably young men – were drawn from the upper echelons of society, the aristocracy and the wealthier gentry. The Tour was thus very much the preserve of a male elite, although the 'bear leaders', as their tutors were known, often came from a slightly lower social class. The many tour narratives which emerged from their travels reveal that the two agenda outlined above continued to operate in the eighteenth-century Grand Tour. These Tourists typically concern themselves with a range of practical topics: local economies and produce, road systems, town planning, fortifications and so forth, all in accordance with the precise instructions for British travellers to Europe laid out by authorities such as Bacon.[14] In Nice in 1764, Smollett went so far as contemplate writing 'a complete natural history of the town and county'.[15] Deciding he was unequal to the task, he opted to write a tour narrative instead – yet his *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) still offers an almost encyclopaedic account of Nissard life, trade, natural resources, fauna and flora, right down to a systematic Register of the Weather, detailing climatic conditions on every day over a fourteen month period. The Royal Society's legacy of empirical enquiry and inductive method pervades the accounts of traditional Grand Tourists. It was in this spirit that Dr Johnson (who never made the Tour himself) advised that 'no man should travel unprovided with instruments for taking heights and distances': Smollett, lacking such instruments, made do with a pack-thread to measure the ruins at Cemenelion.[16] At the same time, however, there are also moments when this spirit of empirical enquiry becomes almost an affectation, or a style of behaviour the tourist is seemingly stuck in. Thus Addison in 1703 visits the *Grotto del Cani* near

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[13] Black, p. 300.
[14] See 'Of Travell', in *Francis Bacon: The Essays*, ed. John Pitcher (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp. 113-14.
[15] Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy* (1766; Oxford, 1979), p. 177.
[16] Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. Peter Levi (1775 and 1786 respectively; Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 139; Smollett, p. 140.

Naples, a cave 'famous for the poisonous steams which float within a foot of its surface', and records his own experiments as follows:

> A Dog, that has his nose held in the vapour, loses all signs of life in a very little time; but if conveyed into the open air, or thrown into a neighbouring lake, he immediately recovers, if he is not quite gone... I observed how long a Dog was in expiring the first time, and after his recovery, and found no sensible difference. A Viper bore it nine minutes the first time we put it in, and ten the second. When we brought it out after the first trial, it took such a Vast quantity of air into its lungs, that it swelled almost twice as big as before; and it was perhaps on this stock of air that it lived a minute longer the second time.[17]

The exploratory attitude here, and the stress on accuracy and precise information ('nine minutes the first time ... ten the second'), is curiously applied to a phenomenon, and a site, that was by this date already a cliché of the Grand Tour. In 1640s, John Evelyn had done much the same experiments (although Evelyn had spared the snake), as had countless tourists between Evelyn and Addison. A similar interplay of exploratory enquiry on the one hand, and ritualistic repetition on the other, is displayed by Boswell in his Grand Tour, as he repeats earlier experiments by Addison (such as firing a pistol in a building near Milan and counting the number of echoes) and compares the results.[18] Such moments remind us that the science of these Grand Tourists is often very much an amateur science, undertaken in that generalist, virtuoso manner discussed in the last chapter.

That Royal Society influence still persisted, then, in the eighteenth-century Grand Tour. Similarly, the original Elizabethan objective of obtaining useful social skills still had currency in the eighteenth century. Gibbon recalled that the 'principal end' of his tour, undertaken from 1763 to '65, was 'to enjoy the society of a polished and amiable people', whilst Boswell, preparing in 1764 to make the circuit of the German and later the Italian courts, promised Lord Kames that he would soon 'be company for you in a better style'.[19] Yet this originating impulse for the Grand Tour had undergone a significant mutation in the late seventeenth century. The manners, comportment and facility in languages which the Tour sought to foster had traditionally been embraced as 'courtliness': after 1688, however, they were increasingly understood in terms of 'politeness'. There is, as Lawrence

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[17] Addison, pp. 112-113.
[18] James Boswell, *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Italy, Corsica and France, 1765-1766*, eds. Frank Brady and Frederick A. Pottle (London, 1955), p. 45.
[19] Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Betty Radice (Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 135; James Boswell, *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany and Switzerland, 1764*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (London, 1953), p. 107.

Klein has shown, a pronounced cultural politics at work in this apparently small change of terminology.[20] The new vocabulary derives from Whig ideologues such as Shaftesbury; infusing the old notions of courtliness with a discourse of civic humanism, it maps out a gentlemanly class which insists that fitness to rule has no necessary connection with the court, and which thereby asserts its own political and cultural power.

This subtle shift in the eighteenth-century conception of the Grand Tour can be clarified further if one considers a significant new element which seems to have first entered the tour in the early eighteenth century. Joseph Addison undertook his Grand Tour between 1699 and 1703, later describing his experience in *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705). This was one of the most popular and influential tour narratives of the century, running through ten editions before 1770. (Thereafter its popularity seems to have waned, a fall from favour which possibly reflects the demographic shift in tourism that I shall discuss in the next section.) Addison's *Remarks* established the template for the traditional Grand Tourist, who is largely what Byron might have termed an 'Addison traveller'. It was template or 'Manual' that encompassed, alongside the dual interest in empirical data and politeness outlined above, a more pronounced interest in Italy's classical legacy. As preparation for his travelling, Addison tells us, he 'took care to refresh my memory among the *Classic* Authors, and to make such collections out of them as I might have occasion for'.[21] Occasions certainly seem to have arisen. Addison's Italy can seem not so much a place as an anthology: site after site takes the traveller back to a passage of writing in Latin or (less commonly) Greek. The legacy of the Roman and Greek past had of course been important to the earlier tourists (although, significantly, Lassells felt he had to answer the charge 'that I fill my books with too much *Latin*') but for Addison it becomes arguably the principal interest.[22] It is thus Addison more than anyone else who establishes the practice, common throughout the eighteenth-century, whereby the Italian landscape is read exhaustively in terms of its depiction in classical texts. This is an agenda that is to be followed by innumerable subsequent tourists. Gibbon, for example, equipped himself for his Italian tour by reading firstly 'the

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[20] See Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994); John Barrell, 'The public prospect and the private view: the politics of taste in eighteenth century Britain', in Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape: country – city – capital* (Manchester, 1990).
[21] Addison, p. 18.
[22] Richard Lassells, *An Italian Voyage* (London, 1670), sig a$^{v}$.

elaborate treatises of Nardini, Donatus, etc., which fill the fourth volume of the *Roman Antiquities* of Graevius,' then 'the *Italia Antiqua* of Cluverius, a learned native of Prussia, who had measured on foot every spot, and has compiled and digested every passage of the ancient writers,' before finally addressing himself to 'the descriptions of Italy by Strabo, Pliny and Pomponius Mela, the Catalogues of the Epic poets, the itineraries of Wesseling's Antoninus, and the coasting voyage of Rutilius Numatianus.'[23] Gibbon's appetite for classical learning was of course exceptional, but even less scholarly tourists travelled with the classical authors not only in mind, but also to hand. As Boswell recorded in 1765, in the journal of his Italian tour: 'yesterday came to Terni. Took horses and rode to Cascade of Velino. Prodigious wild. Read Virgil's description thrice; was quite in *Aeneid*...'[24]

With Addison's *Remarks*, therefore, the Grand Tour acquires a greater element of classicism. This new emphasis did not conflict with the Tour's other agenda: if anything, indeed, it meshed easily with them and further heightened the Tour's normative aspect. It consolidated the traditional fixed route of the Tour, at least in Italy, with Rome remaining 'the great object of our pilgrimage', as Gibbon put it, and Naples the *non plus ultra* that it had been for Evelyn (its interest for the classically-minded subsequently increased by the discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii, in 1738 and '48 respectively).[25] In between these traditional sites derived from the Tour's courtly and polite agenda, however, the Addisonian influence established a further network of prescribed stops and obligatory visits, in the form of those sites, monuments and landscapes that figure prominently in the work of classical authors: Lake Garda, which we have already seen visited by Addison and Eustace, the falls at Terni, as visited by Boswell, and many others. In adding these sites of classical interest to the Grand Tour, Addison's influence not only heightened the prescriptive nature of the Tour's itinerary of the Grand Tour, it also further standardised the Tourist's responses to those sites. Countless Grand Tourists visited the falls at Terni as Boswell did, and countless Tourists responded to the falls in the way he did, by turning to Virgil. Since this juxtaposition of text and place is entirely characteristic of the Addisonian Grand Tourist, and of the Addisonian tour narrative, it is worth pondering a little further its rhetorical intentions and implications. Addison himself had claimed that his classical

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[23] Gibbon, p. 140.
[24] Boswell, *Italy, Corsica and France*, p. 52.
[25] Gibbon, p. 140.

emphasis was merely a way of finding an original approach to a literary subject – the Italian tour – which already seemed exhausted by 1705.[26] Without discounting Addison's immediate motive for this shift in emphasis, one can also suggest that more subtle ideological purposes were being served by this constant reference to the classical past.

Having sought out, in accordance with the standardised route discussed above, precisely those places which have been described by the ancients, the Addisonian tour narrative typically proceeds to give the reader both the Tourist's own experience of the place, and the classical author's description of it. The result, in most cases, is the same. Repeatedly the reader is made to feel that there is a perfect 'fit', as it were, between the place and the poetry. Discrepancies between a scene and its classical depiction are sometimes found, and are duly noted in the narrative, but such moments are rare. More characteristic are passages such as the following, in which Addison, anticipating Boswell by some sixty years, is visiting Terni. More particularly, he is reflecting on the intersection of two rivers, the Velino and the Nera, just above the falls:

> The channel of this last river [the Nera] is white with rocks, and the surface of it, for a long space, covered with froth and bubbles; for it runs all along upon the fret, and is still breaking against the stones that oppose its passage: so that for these reasons, as well as for the mixture of sulphur in its waters, it is very well described by *Virgil*, in that verse which mentions these two rivers in their old *Roman* names.
>
> *Tartaream intendit vocem, qua protinus omne*
> *Contremuit nemus, et sylvae intonere profundae*
> *Audiit et longe Triviae lacus, audiit omnis*
> *Sulfurea Nar albus aqua, fontesque Velini*
>
> *The sacred lake of Trivia from afar,*
> *The Veline fountains, and sulphureous Nar,*
> *Shake at the baleful blast, the signal of the war.*
>
> *[Dryden]*
>
> He makes the sound of the Fury's trumpet run up the Nera to the very sources of Velino, which agrees extremely well with the situations of these rivers.[27]

Virgil's poetry, we should note, 'agrees extremely well with the situations of these rivers'. A connection is being made, and a closure, that is as resonant as Dryden's full rhymes here, or elsewhere the heroic couplets from either Dryden or Pope that Addison usually selects to translate

[26] See Addison, p. 18.
[27] Addison, pp. 83-84.

his Latin originals. Fundamentally, perhaps, this connection and closure has an epistemological significance. It serves to confirm and to authorise a certain *way* of knowing, and indeed a whole system of knowledge. The narrator's presence at this riverbank can confirm that the place surveyed is still as the ancient author described it and conversely, that the classical description is appropriate to the place described. The traveller proves for himself, and tests with his own senses, the accuracy of a description made centuries previously. In each local instance, this may not seem very remarkable but cumulatively, across the course of a narrative which throws a dense net of classical allusion across the Italian countryside, the effect is more powerful. The many points of correspondence between real, present-day places, and the texts of classical authors, ultimately seems to demonstrate a deep-felt certainty that the world, and our knowledge of the world, is fixed and stable. The world has not changed: not having changed, it confirms in turn the accuracy and wisdom of the classical *auctores*. Nature and the classical author seem to merge into each other – as John Eustace puts it at one point, 'Virgil's description now seemed nature itself' – and each seem to offer an authoritative basis for knowledge.[28] Every instance of the congruence between classical *topos* and literal place has accordingly a talismanic quality: it provides a touchstone which serves to confirm this larger truth about the stability of the world and the enduring ways in which we know that world.

These characteristic moments in the Addisonian tour narrative both reflect and foster a deep-felt conviction that there are enduring truths and unchanging principles at work in the world, encoded both in nature and in the classical *auctores*. We should remember, moreover, that the landscape and the classical poem are not the only parties involved in this transaction: there is also, of course, the necessary presence of the Tourist himself, the figure who is able to make this connection between text and place. Understanding the role and the perceived capabilities of the Tourist as he makes these connections, one begins to see how the landscape through which the classical Grand Tourist moves has a character that is not only poetic, but also moral and political.

Primarily, of course, one must register the simple fact that such moments allow the Tourist to display conspicuously his classical education. This is an education few were privileged to have, and which makes the Tourist the conduit between ancient and modern. Something of the prestige,

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[28] Eustace, Vol. 1, p. 95.

grandeur and authority of classical Rome, and of the classical *auctores*, thus pass to the Tourist, as he conveys enduring truths to less enlightened contemporaries. In this connection, moreover, one should note which parts of classical past the Tourist usually considers himself heir to. Most Tourists declare a strong preference for republican as opposed to imperial Rome. Again, this taste is largely a matter of cultural politics. It does not usually reflect full-blooded republicanism in the Tourist. Rather, it articulates an antipathy to an over-strong ruler (which leads, or so Roman history would suggest, to despotism, decadence and corruption), and is thus part of the Whig commitment to a mixed constitution.[29] Augustus, who established the empire, is a figure to be rebuked, and 'Augustan' in this era is for the most part a term of disapproval, associated (in the British context) with the absolutist Stuart court that had been swept away in 1688.[30] (The reverence most tourists feel for Virgil and Horace, the poets of Augustan Rome, might seem a contradiction here, but it is typically overcome by claiming both writers as products of the Republic, and as figures whose influence did much to dilute Augustus' tyrannical impulses.[31])

In part, then, it is a classical education, and all that a classical education brings with it in this era, that is paraded when the Grand Tourist displays his ability to read Italian landscapes in terms of Latin or Greek poetry. Yet it is also not insignificant that it is often *landscape* that is being read in this way. Responses to landscape were heavily laden with political significance in this period. As John Barrell puts it, 'a correct taste ... especially for landscape and landscape art, was used ... as a means of legitimating political authority, particularly but not exclusively within the terms of the discourse of civic humanism.'[32] The importance of a taste for landscape and landscape art grew out of the pivotal role of land-ownership in the eighteenth-century conception of political 'freedom' and political rights. Land being fixed, immovable and enduring – in contrast to capital which is always circulating – it was land-ownership alone which was felt to confer a genuine interest in the ongoing stability of the state. Furthermore, land-ownership bred a certain fitness to rule. The land-owner, it was argued, was freed by his estates from the more mercenary business of earning a living; he belonged to no

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[29] See Klein, p. 171; pp. 185-94.
[30] See Howard Weinbrot, *Augustus Caesar in 'Augustan' England* (Princeton, 1978), p. 51; Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (London, 1983), pp. 254-5.
[31] See Erskine-Hill, p. 254.
[32] Barrell, 'The Public Prospect and the Private View', p. 19.

profession or trade, and was not tied to any particular economic interest. His alleged economic disinterestedness meant he could act for the interest of the nation as a whole, ignoring ephemeral issues to take the long view of the political scene.[33] Translated into the cultural sphere, this political philosophy was a powerful stimulus to a neo-classical aesthetic which looks through the particularities of nature to see its essential, unchanging aspect – and this, of course, is just what the Addisonian Grand Tourist shows himself capable of.[34] Again and again, he demonstrates how landscapes have not changed over some seventeen centuries: simultaneously, he demonstrates his own ability to look through ephemera to see the underlying principles and eternal truths which shape the social landscape.

It was evidently no common traveller, and no casual bystander, who was equipped to thus read classical text and contemporary Italian landscape in terms of each other. John Eustace's *Classical Tour* – an attempt to keep alive, in a century that had arguably outgrown them, the Addisonian itinerary and values – is 'addressed solely to persons of a liberal education', and Eustace's use of the adjective 'liberal' here is significant.[35] Again, this is a keyword in the Whig rhetoric of the early eighteenth century (although its definition is more awkward in the early nineteenth century, causing Eustace problems I shall address in the next section). It is a term drawn from the political writings of Renaissance republicans such as Machiavelli, and along with notions of 'politeness' it forms part of the discourse of civic humanism developed by the Whigs.[36] Still intimately associated with its Latin root, *liber* or 'free', 'liberal' denoted the attributes, qualifications and requirements pertaining to the 'free man': that is to say, the man who had the right to exercise political power in the state, the right to vote or to hold office. Their education and their wealthy, land-owning status – both demonstrated by undertaking the Grand Tour – conferred this right upon the aristocracy and gentry: it did not reside solely with the monarch. At the same time, however, it was not a right generally available to the population. All Britons were free in one sense of the term – there were no serfs in eighteenth-century Britain – but not all were free in this more specialised sense of the word.

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[33] In addition to Klein and to Barrell, 'The Public Prospect and the Private View', see also Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge, 1996), Chapter 1.
[34] For neo-classicism and nature, see Hugh Honour, *Neo-Classicism* (Harmondsworth, 1991), pp. 101-114.
[35] Eustace, Vol. 1, p. xix.
[36] Barrell, 'The public prospect and the private view', p. 26.

In this context, the Addisonian set-piece which unites landscape and classical text enacts a closure which relates to caste. It defines an elite community of those who are culturally and politically enfranchised, and it excludes all those who are unable to make such connections. The Grand Tour, in completing the 'liberal education' required of a young gentleman in this period, provides a potent point of entry into the cultural and political oligarchy of the time. (And whilst the tenets on which that oligarchy was constructed were originally Whiggish in sentiment, over time, and particularly after the defeat of Jacobitism, they become more generally shared amongst the political and cultural establishment. Tories of the later eighteenth century – Johnson, for example – were the heir, as much as any Whig, to an understanding that the Tour's function was to train not the courtier, but the gentleman.) This is an elite, it is further worth noting, which is also very much predicated on gender. The 'liberal education', and the Grand Tour which concluded that education, were the preserve of the sons of the nobility and squirearchy. Prior to the Tour, the greater part of the education of these young men, in most cases, would have taken place at home, in a domestic setting in which women exercised a strong influence. Not the least part of the Tour's rationale was that it freed young men from such influences. As Richard Lassells, inventor of the term 'Grand Tour', put it: 'travelling preserves my yong nobleman from surfeiting of his parents, and weanes him from the dangerous fondness of his mother.'[37]

The Tour, then, made a man of the Tourist, and not just any sort of man. In this context it is worth considering further the characteristic style of the Addisonian tour narrative. As Charles Batten has noted in *Pleasurable Instruction* – an account of the eighteenth-century tour narrative that begins and ends with Addison – the writers of these accounts clearly favour the informational over the expressive aspects of their writing.[38] Personal thoughts and feelings are played down, and the more insignificant moments of the travelling experience elided from the text. Enough incidental material must be included to make the narrative easier to read and the information more palatable: a quotient of personal experience also serves to validate the veracity of the tourist, convincing the reader that he really has been to the places described. Beyond this, however, the Addisonian tour writer eschews

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[37] Quoted in Michele Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1996), p. 36.
[38] Charles Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978).

personal detail so as to repel charges of egotism. Neither he nor his writing must draw too much attention to themselves. He must write elegantly, of course, yet that which is 'dulce' in his writing (to invoke the Horatian formula so popular in this period) may accompany but must ultimately not obscure that which is 'utile'. This chastened style derives in part from the imperatives of the Royal Society and the influence of the New Science, yet it also constitutes a coaching in a particular sort of manliness. As Chloe Chard and Michele Cohen have discussed, an excessive responsiveness in either behaviour or language was seen in this period as a decidedly feminine trait.[39] In a man, it signalled affectation or effeminacy. The dispassionate manner and restrained manner of the typical Grand Tour narrative, in contrast, both achieves and demonstrates a properly masculine decorum. This is an effect further heightened, moreover, by the ritualised responses of those Addisonian tourists, who all reach for the same piece of Latin verse when encountering any given scene. The Tourist thus filters personal thoughts and feelings, and an individuality of response, through an external third party: he speaks not his own words, but those of an established authority.

From the coming together of all these different elements, there emerges the powerful sense of closure that characterises such moments as Addison's visit to the falls at Terni. When Addison, Boswell or Eustace inspect a key site on the classical itinerary – and when, conversely, that key site and the corresponding classical text inspect the Tourist for his response – connections and confirmations are being sought that relate to epistemology and authority, caste and gender. It was with good reason that Dr Johnson – who, as noted, did not make the Tour – remarked to Boswell that 'a man who has never been to Italy is always conscious of an inferiority from not having seen what it is supposed a man should see.'[40] Yet for all that the Tour is the means to, and confirmation of, cultural privilege, it has also another aspect which may seem to contradict, or at least complicate, that air of privilege. As we have seen with regard to style and responsiveness, there is also a profoundly anti-individualist element to the Tour. The persona the Tourist must adopt, in print at least, constitutes a very chastened and restrained form of selfhood and masculinity. As Dennis Porter puts it, the Tour functions as 'an instrument of social reproduction' whereby sons are trained to

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[39] Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester, 1999), p. 36; Cohen, p. 32.
[40] James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. Pat Rogers (Oxford, 1980), p. 742.

follow their fathers by being exposed to a 'monumental patriarchal order' embodied most emphatically in the remains of classical Rome.[41] It is thus an exercise in subordination as much as empowerment. There is a further element of closure unwittingly taking place in those stock responses to the conventional sites, as the Tourist locks himself not only into a prescribed route (a slight deviation from which prompts an apology in Addison) but also into prescribed, orthodox attitudes. The Grand Tour is in subtle ways as repressive as it is exclusive.

The traditional Grand Tourist, then, is being trained to command, but he is nevertheless being *trained.* He must acquire through the Tour, and subsequently demonstrate – possibly by writing a narrative of his experiences – attributes such as the '*correct* and exquisite eye' (my emphasis) that Gibbon demands of the Tourist.[42] Officially at least, the Tour is very much concerned with issues of correctness and duty. In practice, this was usually not all that a Tourist got up to, and a covert acceptance that some wild oats would be sown whilst abroad fits with the sense of the Tour as a male (and heterosexual) rite of passage. Yet the Tour also afforded access to more alarming pleasures, and to far greater transgressions of its authoritarian and masculine ethos. A voluminous anti-Tour literature emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, inveighing against the physical and moral dangers posed by travel overseas. It was claimed that France and especially Italy exposed the unwary traveller to both literal and metaphorical forms of infection, from malaria, venereal disease, Catholicism, affectation, effeminacy, homosexuality and the like.[43] In the present context, what should be noted is that it was this anti-Tour literature which largely set the tone even for those writers who held the opposite view. Works such as Richard Hurd's *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel* (1764) typically offered a highly qualified defence of travel, couching their arguments cautiously and seeking always to emphasise what the Tourist must *not* do, and what must be avoided. Hence, also, the constant stress on the *use* of travel: it is not an activity to be enjoyed, but one that must yield an array of tangible benefits.

There is accordingly a paradox about the Grand Tour, to be remembered when we deal in the last two chapters of this thesis with Romantic reworkings of the Tour such as *Childe Harold.* This is

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[41] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, 1991), p. 35, p. 140.
[42] Gibbon, p. 143.
[43] See Chard, pp. 27-30; Black, pp. 287-303.

clearly a highly privileged form of tourism, bespeaking one's elite status in society. At the same time, it is informed everywhere by a patriarchal authoritarianism: its public face is one of dutiful obedience rather than private pleasure. This is a combination which will be rejected in different ways by different Romantic travellers. The youthful Wordsworth and Coleridge will object to the Grand Tourist's air of exclusivity; Byron, in contrast, will bridle more at the suppression of individualism. All three figures, however, are to be understood as styling themselves in crucial regards in opposition to the Grand Tourist, and *against* the Grand Tour in its traditional form.

## The Touring Classes: Diversification and Distrust in Tourism

When the European continent reopened to British travellers after the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 (and when it had been closed and then opened again after the brief hiatus of Napoleon's Hundred Days campaign), thousands of British tourists flocked to recreate the traditional Grand Tour undertaken by their fathers and grandfathers. Their 'Manual', as Byron would have it, was often John Eustace's *Classical Tour* (1813), which went through six editions by 1821. Recounting a tour made during the brief Peace of Amiens of 1802, the *Classical Tour* renders European travel a conspicuously Addisonian exercise. Indeed, there is often a sense that it is too self-consciously an exercise in the Addisonian manner, so that it comes to seem excessively backward-looking and reactionary. The traditional filtering of the tourist's personal sensations and emotions through the voice of classical authority is taken by Eustace to faintly ludicrous extremes. A stiff walk on a hot day prompts the following passage:

> O quis me gelidis sub vallibus Haemi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra
>
> is a wish which often bursts from the lips of a traveller panting up the acclivities of the Apennines under the beams of the meridian sun.[44]

Eustace clings too rigidly to his classicism: striving too hard to maintain the old outlook, he paradoxically contrives to present only a caricature or a fossilised version of it. J.R. Hale has called

[44] Eustace, Vol. 2, p.12.

the decade after 1814 'the Indian summer of the Grand Tour': Eustace's *Classical Tour* confirms Hale's suggestion of both continuation yet also, implicitly, a dying-away in the practice of the traditional, Addisonian Tour.[45]

The traditional Grand Tour was giving way to a much greater variety of touristic practices, and a greater diversity of tourists, drawn from an ever-widening spectrum of British society. When the continent reopened in 1814, this diversity very quickly became apparent, bewildering and unsettling many contemporary observers. In a rather uninspired squib on the phenomenon, Coleridge in 1824 urged his reader to

> Keep moving! Steam or Gas or Stage,
> Hold, cabin, steerage, hencoop's cage –
> Tour, Journey, Voyage, Lounge, Ride, Walk,
> Skim, Sketch, Excursion, Travel-talk –
> For move you must! 'Tis now the rage,
> The law and fashion of the Age.[46]

The jumble and squeeze of nouns here seems intended to suggest the cramped conditions on board those stage-coaches, packet-ships and the like. They convey a sense of the sheer numbers currently travelling: in addition, they evoke a baffling heterogeneity, and suggest the diversity of the new tourists and the new sorts of tourism. 'Tour, Journey, Voyage, Lounge, Ride, Walk, / Skim, Sketch, Excursion, Travel-talk': these terms, all clearly related to each other yet all different, imply a confusing hodge-podge of touristic activity. In the same year, the *Westminster Review* creates a similar impression when it describes British tourists in Rome. These tourists, it is claimed, comprise:

> all classes, ages, sexes, and conditions…; the first of our nobility with the last of our citizens … crossing and justling each other in every corner; talking, writing, wondering, displaying, and rhapsodizing:- lion-hunting, husband-hunting, time-killing, money-spending, view-taking, and book-making… English in short of every description – high and low – wise and foolish – rich and poor – black, brown and fair.[47]

It is unlikely that the British tourists in Rome in 1824 really came from 'all classes'. A truly mass tourism would only begin to emerge a few decades later, with Thomas Cook's invention of the

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[45] J.R. Hale (ed.), Introduction to *The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers* (London, 1956), p. 9.
[46] 'The Delinquent Travellers', ll. 16-21, in *CCP*.
[47] Quoted in Buzard, p. 83.

package tour in the 1840s.[48] To some extent, however, it is the contemporary perception of events that matters most here. By the 1820s, tourism had clearly mixed up the classes and muddled traditional social distinctions in a manner that was unprecedented. A certain threshold of social diversity had been crossed, and a critical mass of tourists achieved, that enabled the emergence of pronounced forms of anti-tourism – amongst them the subtle and not-so-subtle forms of distinction typically practised by the Romantic traveller.

Whilst this critical mass of tourists had certainly been reached by the 1820s, the process of diversification had actually begun much earlier. Patterns of leisure travel first began to change significantly in the 1760s, as the Industrial Revolution made new sections of society wealthy, and the Consumer Revolution bred new aspirations. From this decade until the closing of the continent to Britons in the 1790s, the traditional 'English milord' was still a conspicuous presence in Europe, but increasingly he found himself amongst 'travellers not on their first trip, women, older tourists, families, [and] those of the 'middling sort' who tended to make short visits.'[49] The new tourists, whilst often wishing to feel that they partook at some level of the prestige of the traditional Grand Tour, also brought with them attitudes, expectations, itineraries (and not least, budgets) significantly different to those of the traditional Tourist. From such differences there emerged ultimately a degree of distrust among tourists, and a sense that the 'other fellow', as Waugh has it, was not engaged in the same business as oneself.

Within the traditional touring class, the new demography of tourism seems sometimes to have prompted a desire to abandon the conventional Grand Tour route, and to push further afield. Richard Hurd, in his *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel*, defends the usefulness of travel, albeit in the heavily qualified fashion discussed in the last section, yet he is also clearly feels that the traditional Tour has become a somewhat otiose exercise. One of the interlocutors in the *Dialogues* claims that 'sauntring within a circle of the grand Tour' is no longer much use to either the tourist or society.[50] Instead, if he is 'to study HUMAN NATURE to purpose, a Traveller must enlarge his circuit beyond the bounds of *Europe*. He must go and catch Her undressed, nay quite naked in *North-America* and at

[48] See Withey, Chapter 5; Buzard, pp. 48-65.
[49] Black, p. 300.
[50] [Richard Hurd], *Dialogues on the Uses of Foreign Travel* (London, 1764), p. 25.

the Cape of *Good Hope.*'[51] This continues the traditional Tour's emphasis on empirical enquiry and Baconian induction (the speaker here, significantly, is Locke), but harnesses it to a primitivist rather than classicist agenda. In this spirit, Boswell journeyed to Corsica in 1766 and Patrick Brydone to Sicily and Malta in 1770 (Brydone's subsequent account of his tour being one of the most popular travel texts of the period).[52] Other travellers from the traditional touring class, meanwhile, maintained the interest in classicism whilst still pushing beyond the 'circle of the grand Tour'. It was in the 1760s that James Bruce was recording classical remains in northern Africa, and the same decade also saw an increase in the number of British travellers who moved beyond Italy to take in Greece (although the numbers involved are still small, something which must be borne in mind when reflecting upon Byron's choice of route in 1809).[53] From one perspective, all of these more adventurous tourists were staying true to the Grand Tour's origins in the New Science of the late seventeenth century. Whilst they were clearly seeking new and useful information in regions less well-described than France and Italy, however, they also sometimes seem to have motivated by a desire to distinguish themselves from more ordinary sorts of tourist. Boswell 'wished for something more than just the common course of what is called the tour of Europe.'[54] Joseph Banks, meanwhile, declared emphatically of the orthodox Tour, 'every blockhead does that.' For himself, he announced, 'my Grand Tour shall be one round the whole globe' – shortly afterwards he was sailing on Cook's first voyage.[55]

Brydone, Boswell and Banks were exceptional: the vast majority of tourists travelling overseas continued to follow the traditional route, visiting the conventional sites and parrotting the conventional responses. Yet it was also from the 1760s that an alternative to the traditional European tour began to be widely practised by British tourists: the domestic tour. Cheaper than the foreign tour, touring within the British Isles could be seen as more patriotic, and certainly just as useful in this age of improvement and national integration. This was tourism for the emergent middle classes, although as it became more fashionable it was also taken up by the traditional touring class,

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[51] [Hurd], p. 155.
[52] See the *Account of Corsica* (1768) in Boswell, *Italy, Corsica and France*, and Patrick Brydone, *A Tour Through Sicily and Malta* (1773). For the popularity of Brydone's tour, see Batten, p. 1.
[53] For the expansion, yet still distinctly limited nature, of travel to Greece, see David Constantine, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal* (Cambridge, 1984), esp. p. 204; Hugh Tregaskis, *Beyond the Grand Tour: The Levant Lunatics* (London, 1979).
[54] Boswell, *Italy*, p. 156.
[55] Quoted in John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 61.

particularly in the years between 1793 and 1814 when the French wars prevented travel to Europe. Much of this domestic tourism was conducted in a spirit very similar to that shown by the information-gathering Grand Tourist, and similar also to the endeavours of the new sort of explorer that was beginning to emerge in the 1760s. As was discussed in the introduction, it was Thomas Pennant, Arthur Young and similar figures who did much to stimulate domestic tourism in this period. In their hands, tourism often seems to shade into more professional forms of travel, yet one should also not forget these writers also made such seriousness of purpose highly fashionable. In Pennant's wake, an army of antiquarians and amateur gentleman-scientists fanned out over Wales, Scotland and the other remote regions of Britain, some of them accumulating specimens in the manner of the Herbalist and the Geologist described patronisingly in Wordsworth's *Excursion*.[56] Under Young's influence, meanwhile, it became fashionable for the tourist to act as Edward Topham described in 1776, playing 'the part of a Farmer … [as] he enquires after the crops, turns over the soil, and tastes the manure, for the benefit of his countrymen.'[57] As this suggests, Pennant and Young travellers (in Byron's idiom) often displayed a somewhat modish practicality, and even when this aspect of the touristic enterprise was undertaken earnestly it did not preclude the enjoyment of less obviously useful pursuits. Pennant and Young themselves will pause to discuss a grand or elegant country house, or a good view: their tourism is undoubtedly an exercise in enlightenment and improvement, but it is enlightenment and improvement conducted in a genteel manner that embraces the respectable pleasures of polite society.

Thus those domestic tourists who appeared in increasing numbers from the 1760s typically combined pragmatic, utilitarian concerns with more frivolous pursuits such as the country house visit (such as that made to Pemberley by Lizzie Bennett and her uncle and aunt, in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)). Whilst we are sketching the more overtly pleasurable side of tourism, moreover, we must also register the extent to which two fashions in particular increasingly impinged upon the tourist in this period, in both the domestic and the overseas context. The first fashion is the sentimentalism brought into vogue most famously by Laurence Sterne, whose *Sentimental Journey* (1768) offered a hugely influential, albeit fictional, account of a tour through France. Sterne's tourist, Yorick, discards

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[56] *Excursion*, Bk. 3, ll. 160-193, in *WPW*.
[57] Edward Topham, *Letters from Edinburgh* (London, 1776), p. 368; quoted in Batten, p. 96.

the traditional Addisonian manner insofar as he is interested in people – himself especially – rather than places. Striking a very different balance between personal and impersonal elements to that adopted by Addison, Sterne's prose shows a traveller exploring his own feelings, and seeking evidence in himself, in his dealings with other individuals, of charitable, benevolent impulses. In this regard, Sterne's fictional traveller proved a model for many real travellers: John Ledyard (and through Ledyard, Mungo Park) was one such, as discussed in the last chapter, and another was Samuel Paterson. In *Another Traveller! or Cursory Remarks and Tritical Observations made upon a Journey through Part of the Netherlands* (published in 1768 but dated 1767 so as to seem to predate Sterne's work), Paterson declares himself 'a whimsical traveller'.[58] His prose wanders digressively over matters that are mostly inconsequential, adopting a Shandean style, all dashes and exclamations and broken sentences, and a Shandean self-consciousness about the construction of the travel text. As with Sterne, moreover, his sentimental exchanges with women and paupers, and his delicate exploration of his own finer feelings, are intended to serve a moral purpose: they aim 'to remove the prejudices of some of my readers, and to laugh away the childish notions of others.'[59] Paterson, indeed, displays rather more moral earnestness than Sterne himself: *Another Traveller!* does not have the undercurrent of irony and eroticism that one finds in *A Sentimental Journey*.[60]

In certain regards, the sentimental agenda thus adopted by some tourists sits easily with that more primitivist agenda which seems in certain travellers to displace the earlier emphasis on the classical past. What took many tourists to the more backward regions of Britain and Europe was a desire to encounter the native inhabitants of these regions, populations who seemingly maintained a more simple, natural mode of existence. In other regards, however, primitivism and sentimentalism could find themselves at odds. Boswell sought out the primitive in Corsica (shortly after having visited Rousseau in Switzerland) and later, in 1773 with Dr Johnson, in Scotland, where the two tourists hoped to 'contemplate a system of life almost totally different from what we had been accustomed to see; and, to find simplicity and wildness, and all the circumstances of remote time or

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[58] Coriat Junior [Samuel Paterson], *Another Traveller! or Cursory Remarks and Tritical Observations made upon a Journey through Part of the Netherlands*, 2 Vols. (London, 1767), Vol. 1, p. 57.
[59] [Paterson], Vol.1, p. 33.
[60] See Katherine Turner, 'At the Boundaries of Fiction: Samuel Paterson's *Another Traveller!*', p. 147, in Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (eds.), *Tradition in Transition: Woman Writers, Marginal Texts and the Eighteenth Century Canon* (Oxford, 1996).

place'.[61] For both men, however, 'simplicity and wildness' was to be responded to rationally and critically, rather than emotionally. Their verdict on the imminent demise of the traditional Highland way of life was that it was a good thing, albeit with some regrettable aspects. Savagery and insularity, and all that followed from them, were being replaced by civilisation and enlightenment. It was a judgement which prompted a much more modishly sentimental tourist to make her journey to Scotland so as to refute Johnson's many criticism's of the Scottish people. *En route* to Scotland, Mary Anne Hanway instructed her postilion not to 'pass briskly … or rattle rapidly', but rather, wherever possible, to 'go *sentimentally.*'[62] And once in Scotland, predictably enough, she contrived to prove in conventional sentimental fashion the innate benevolence and generosity of a simple peasant folk.

The oppositional aspect of Hanway's tour, contesting as it does the Johnsonian attitude, is worth dwelling upon. Sterne's Yorick, it will be recalled, has likewise a subtly antagonistic aspect, setting himself up against the splenetic Smollett who is famously caricatured as 'the learned Smelfungus'.[63] Here we see one consequence of the erosion of the consensus that governed the traditional touring class and the old-fashioned Grand Tour: a sense that there exist alternative modes of tourism which some tourists are anxious to disavow. The animus felt by Hanway, Yorick and like-minded tourists for travellers of the stamp of Johnson and Smollett reflects that opening-up of tourism to a wider spectrum of British society. Rejecting Johnson and Smollett, at one level Hanway and Yorick reject the older, more exclusive style of tourism. The strongly rationalist and empiricist attitude, which finds expression in the chastened, Addisonian prose style, gives way to a more impressionistic, individualistic response. It is not the correct, classically informed reading of a site that matters, so much as what he or she feels. Late in our period, Charlotte Eaton chooses to acknowledge her lack of a certain sort of knowledge in a way that is possibly intended as a deliberate affront to the earlier tourists, for whom the display of erudition was simultaneously an exercise in exclusivity. The gates of the Florentine baptistery, Eaton writes in *Continental Adventures* (1826), were built by Ghiberto 'who flourished in the – I am sorry I cannot remember positively what century, but I believe the

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[61] Johnson and Boswell, p. 161.
[62] [Mary Ann Hanway], *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland, with Occasional Remarks on Dr. Johnson's Tour* (London, 1777), pp. vii-viii.
[63] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey* (1768; Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 51.

fourteenth'.[64] Is this ignorance or a fashionable pose of spontaneity? The fact that *Continental Adventures* went through five editions suggests the latter. Eaton writes after the watershed formed by the closing of the continent during the French wars, but Sterne and Hanway show us that already by the 1770s there were new attitudes amongst tourists which sat awkwardly with the traditional manner of the Grand Tourist. The awkwardness is equally a matter of class – it was more and more the case that not every tourist had had the 'liberal education' required to tour in the style of Addison and Eustace – and of gender. More women were touring, and more women were writing tour narratives.[65] As Chloe Chard has argued, this new female constituency amongst the readers of tour guides and narratives was a significant factor in bringing about a change 'from a commentary of scholarly compilation to a commentary of viewing', the latter stressing not correct knowledge but the 'ability to respond emotionally to the objects of commentary.'[66]

If sentimentalism is one new fashion which generates differences of outlook among tourists in the late eighteenth century, the other key development in this regard is the remarkable popularity of the picturesque. Again, this is a fashion which seems very much to date from the 1760s. Thomas Gray, often credited by contemporaries as the first tourist to travel in Britain specifically in search of natural beauty, made visits to the Lake District in 1767 and 1769. Gray's essay, 'A Tour of the Lakes', was published posthumously in 1778 as an appendix to Thomas West's hugely popular *Guide to the Lakes*, which went through seven editions by the end of the century. Joseph Cradock popularised the beauties of Wales in his *Letters from Snowdon* (1770), whilst William Gilpin made journeys to the Wye valley, to the Lake District and to Scotland in the 1770s, publishing his *Observations ... Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* on each of these regions in 1782, '86 and '89 respectively. It was Gilpin more than anyone who formalised and brought into being the idea of the picturesque tour, announcing in the first of his narratives, *Observations on the River Wye* a new agenda for the tourist:

> We travel for various purposes; to explore the culture of soils; to view the curiosities of art; to survey the beauties of nature; to search for her productions; and to learn the manners of men; their different politics and modes of life ... The following little work proposes a new object of

[64] Quoted in Hale (ed.), p. 73.
[65] See Chard, p. 35.
[66] Chard, pp. 35-6.

> pursuit; that of not barely examining the face of a country; but of examining it by the rules of picturesque beauty.[67]

It seems an innocuous manifesto: one suspects that Gilpin predicted neither the enormous popularity of his 'new object of pursuit', nor the intense hostility it would arouse in some quarters (and indeed, continues to arouse).

The project of the picturesque tour, and the project of the traditional Grand Tour, are in some regards very similar. Gilpin's picturesque tour, like the European tour of Addison, Eustace and countless figures in between, is a highly prescriptive exercise. Both offer, with varying degrees of explicitness, a set of templates to which the individual tourist must fit his experience. The Grand Tourist learns to recognise, in the physical landscape of Italy, the poetic landscapes of Virgil and Horace, whilst the picturesque tourist learns to perceive, in an actual landscape, the ideal visual representation of that landscape. The criteria brought to bear on the scene in front of the tourist derive from painting, not poetry: he or she learns to look for scenes such as might be seen in a picture – hence the term 'picturesque'. It was, moreover, the likeness of a very particular sort of picture that was sought: that is to say, a similarity to the landscapes painted by Claude or Poussin, in whose work, it was felt, the neo-classical values of permanence, stability and eternal, ideal form were best articulated. Seen from one perspective, then, the Gilpin traveller and the Addison traveller are engaged in much the same enterprise – and in this connection one should note that Gilpin just as much as Addison expects real scenery to correspond to its depictions in classical verse. He quotes repeatedly from the classical authors and claims, to take just one particular example, that there is 'scarce any disposition of ground, that belongs to a mountainous country, of which Virgil has not taken notice.'[68]

For both Grand and picturesque tourists, then, a correct reading of landscape is paramount, and what Gilpin at one point terms 'the correct knowledge of objects'.[69] For both sorts of tourists, moreover, correctness in these matters was informed by a neo-classical aesthetic. To appreciate

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[67] William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, and the Several Parts of South Wales, &c., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (London, 1782), pp. 1-2. For my discussion of Gilpin I draw chiefly on this and the following works by Gilpin: *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty ...On Several Parts of England, Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland*, 2 Vols. (London, 1786); *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London, 1792).
[68] Gilpin, *Cumberland and Westmoreland*, Vol. 2, p. 79.
[69] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p. 51.

where the Gilpin and Addison travellers diverge, however, and to understand the very different reactions to the picturesque as opposed to the traditional Grand Tour, one must begin by acknowledging Gilpin's success in popularising the picturesque. Not only that, he popularised the picturesque *tour*. There were other writers on the picturesque in this period – Repton and Price, for example – but they addressed themselves to the business of creating picturesque effects in large gardens. To follow Repton and Price in dallying with the picturesque, therefore, one needed wealth and land. To follow Gilpin on the picturesque tour, however, one needed only sufficient money and leisure to make a tour. As we have seen already, such resources were available to an ever-widening portion of the population: the picturesque tour increasingly became a luxury in which the middle orders could indulge. Indulge in it they did: the picturesque tour became hugely popular and a veritable industry of guide-books and travelling knick-knacks sprang up around it.[70] This industry served in many cases to heighten further the prescriptive aspects of the picturesque tour. Guide-books mapped out standard routes and dictated the precise spot, or 'station', from which each scene was to be viewed: nothing was required of the tourist other than that he make his way obediently to each station. Once at the station, moreover, the tourist was often instructed in no uncertain terms how to reconstruct the scene in front of him. One writer advises his reader to perform the following amendments in order to obtain the perfect view of Llarghane Castle:

> Bring the Castle exactly *within the angle* made by the sloping hill and woody steep *before* it. Then ascend or descend, till the *water* and *three* of the promontories appear above the castle. In this station the sea bounds the distance. Nature's compositions are seldom complete or correct; but here nothing seems in the wrong place, and little which one would wish away. The only liberties necessary to be taken are, a tree or stump, planted at the *left* corner, and the uniformity of the long hedge in the right of the foreground somewhat broken.[71]

Alternatively, the tourist could use an artificial aid to help him correctly compose the scene. The so-called 'Claude glass' was a convex mirror which allowed the tourist to focus and miniaturise the view, shrinking distances and obscuring smaller details: the glass of the mirror was also often tinted, so that the scene it pictured acquired the distinctive colouring of a painting by Claude.

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[70] See Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot, 1989), especially Section 4.
[71] R.H. Newell, *Letters on the Scenery of Wales* (1821), p. 50, quoted in Andrews, p. 30.

The prescriptiveness of such responses is a topic to which I shall return shortly, but firstly one must reflect on the complications engendered in Gilpin's picturesque project by the fact of its very popularity. Engaged in on such an extensive scale, the picturesque tour obviously runs counter to the oligarchical attitudes which were closely associated with the neo-classicism of the traditional Grand Tour. Taste in landscape, as we saw in the last section, was a cultural arena fraught with highly political implications. Gilpin's version of the picturesque, it is interesting to note, is very much an aesthetic of mediation: it seeks to combine elements of beauty and sublimity, uniting both into a more satisfying whole. (It is a mistake, as we shall see, to over-emphasise Gilpin's occasional hankerings for the unadulterated sublime.) One should never force political meanings too crudely on to aesthetic tastes, but it seems to me not entirely inappropriate to suggest an analogy between this aesthetic of mediation, of compromise even, and the fact that the picturesque tour in practice seems to amount to an attempt to admit new members to that class which is culturally enfranchised to make 'correct' readings of landscape. Like many compromises, however, Gilpin's picturesque tours gave offence in all directions. In bringing into a locality, and on to the land of a local landowner, tourists of the middling sort who presumed to 'correct' the scenes they found there, they provoked animosity in a widely divergent range of commentators.[72] To the landed gentry across whose property they traipsed, the picturesque tourists were an upstart bunch. From this perspective, there was a dangerous levelling tendency implicit in the notorious 'mallet' which Gilpin invoked as a metaphor for the way in which the tourist should adjust mentally the scene before him (in one instance of this image, we should note, it is used to knock blocks off a Palladian villa so as to create a more attractive ruin).[73] To commentators of an improving outlook, meanwhile, that mallet was not real enough. In being only a playful, imaginative adjustment of the landscape (as Kim Ian Michasiw has emphasised in recent times), Gilpin's metaphorical mallet-swinging was part of an exercise that could seem frivolous and affected to some viewers.[74] To yet another strand of contemporary opinion, meanwhile, that same mallet could be an emblem of the picturesque's apparent collusion with the forces of improvement which were reshaping the landscape and in the process uprooting many of

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[72] See Fulford, pp. 141-3.
[73] For the mallet, see *River Wye*, pp. 32-33, and for the demolition of the manor, *Three Essays*, p. 7.
[74] See Kim Ian Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque' in *Representations* 38 (Spring 1992).

the rural poor. Amongst radicals (such as Wordsworth and Coleridge in their early careers), the picturesque tourist could earn rebuke for an apparent indifference to such social issues.[75]

The gap between picturesque considerations and any practical or political engagement with the countryside was something Gilpin himself clung to. He stressed, for example, that 'moral, and picturesque ideas do not always coincide': productive cornfields were not in themselves aesthetically pleasing.[76] This refusal to countenance anything other than the aesthetic aspects of places and landscapes possibly reflects Gilpin's own awareness of the complications and contradictions implicit in his picturesque tours. One might see this narrowing of the tourist's view point almost as a defence mechanism. Similarly expressive of a certain unease about his project are those moments in Gilpin's writing when he seems to wish to cast aside the very artistic rules he elsewhere propounds so earnestly. At times, Gilpin seems to yearn for a very different engagement with the natural scene. At such moments, however, he is usually aware that he is breaking his own 'rules of picturesque beauty'. Witness, for example, the following passage:

> Tho the *eye* therefore might take more pleasure in a view (*considered merely in a picturesque light*) when a little adorned by the hand of art; yet I much doubt, whether such a view would have that strong effect on the *imagination*; as when rough with all its bold irregularities about it; when beauty, and deformity, grandeur and horror, mingled together, strike the mind with a thousand opposing ideas; and like chymical infusions of an opposite nature, produce an effervesence, which no harmonious mixtures could produce.[77]

In declaring a preference here for the *disharmonious* mixture of opposites, Gilpin knows he is contravening his own precepts (note that initial parenthesis). Interestingly, he draws a distinction between the eye, seeking the picturesque, and the imagination, which is evidently more attuned to the sublime, which anticipates Wordsworth's criticism, in *The Prelude*, of the picturesque as a state in which 'the eye was master of the heart' (11.171). It is tempting to see such moments in Gilpin as proto-Romantic. Certainly they suggest a response to nature that is very different from the cool, analytical attitude that Gilpin more generally adopts. In the following passage, for example, the

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[75] See Fulford, p. 142; Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (eds.), *The Politics of the Picturesque* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 5-7.
[76] Gilpin, *Cumberland and Westmoreland*, Vol. 2, p. 44.
[77] Gilpin, *Cumberland and Westmoreland*, Vol. 1, p. 122.

sublime has a remarkable effect on Gilpin. Having discussed at length the principles on which landscapes will be analysed, he continues:

> But it is not from this scientifical employment, that we derive our chief pleasure. We are most delighted when some grand scene, tho perhaps of incorrect composition, rising before our eyes, strikes us beyond the power of thought – when the *vox faucibus haeret*; and every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads it, previous to any examination by the rules of art.[78]

Again, Gilpin seems perfectly aware that the sentiments expressed here are *not* in accordance with his own rules of picturesque beauty. The scene imagined is one of 'incorrect composition', which works its effect on the mind 'previous to any examination by the rules of art.' Yet that incorrect scene clearly offers Gilpin an ecstatic melting into, and merging with, the landscape, in a '*deliquium* of the soul.' More usually, however, the picturesque tourist moves in the opposite direction. Metaphorically, as he engages in the 'scientifical employment' that is the main business of Gilpin's narratives, and sometimes literally, if he has to look away from the scene to see its reflected image in a Claude glass, the picturesque tourist disengages from the landscape in front of him. He keeps a distance from nature as it is, the better to fashion an image of nature as it ought to be.

As Wordsworth and Coleridge abandoned their youthful radicalism, it was more and more in aesthetic and philosophical terms that they expressed their distaste for what *The Prelude* terms 'a strong infection of the age' (11.156). And it is crucially this element of disengagement from the actual scene that underpinned their aesthetic and philosophical objections to the picturesque. Teaching the aficionado to apply 'rules of mimic art' to 'things above all art' (*Prelude*, 11.154-5), the picturesque discourages the close observation of nature as it really is. The result, in the eyes of many Romantic writers and travellers, was an overly-mediated engagement with nature, and a response that was attenuated and imprecise. Hence the opinion of that fictional Romantic, Marianne Dashwood, that 'admiration of landscape scenery is become a mere jargon'.[79] And the picturesque *tour* further heightened the elements of mediation, prescription and constraint. The picturesque tourist was concerned solely with his stations, and not with the process of travelling between; once arrived at

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[78] Gilpin, *Three Essays*, pp. 49-50.
[79] Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811; Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 122.

these fixed stopping points on his tour, he was concerned not so much with the scene that really presented itself before him, but with the imagined, and highly conventional scene, that Gilpin has taught him to look for.

Gilpin's withdrawal from any real encounter with nature or the sublime, then, perturbs many Romantic readers. Gilpin's caution in this regard is of a piece with the caution with which he refuses to engage with anything than the aesthetic implications of the scenes through which he travels. Gilpin is a curiously neutral, if not neutered, form of traveller. The disengagement from all issues other than the aesthetic lends to his writing a curious quality of what one might term 'thinness'. Gilpin fairly glides across the countryside. It does not impinge on him in any way other than its visual impact. 'From Wallingford to Oxford, the road scarce affords one good view': a short distance, and a trivial example, but one which demonstrates in miniature the exclusive nature of Gilpin's interests.[80] Elsewhere he tells us: 'I mean not to enter into the history of Carlisle: it concerns me only as an object of beauty.'[81] Nor, we sense, does Gilpin want to engage with the landscapes around him in any other way. Throughout his travelling, he remains deliberately uninvolved. His writing does not entangle itself in the complexities of local life, its politics, history or natural history, just as his persona does not let the landscape and the elements encroach upon him physically. Gilpin is a remarkably disembodied presence in his own narrative. The process of travel, its vagaries and inconveniences, are for the most part edited out of the text, in a way that again seems to reflect a disengagement or uninvolvement. In this connection, it is instructive to compare Gilpin's work with that of Thomas Pennant. Pennant, in comparison, has an omnivorous appetite. His densely written narratives, which draw on his own experience and also on other sources of documentary and oral evidence, become highly entangled in the specifics of local custom. And if Pennant's narrative is thus entangled, involving itself with the places through which he passes, so too does his narrator display a solidity that is lacking in Gilpin's work. Pennant dismounts and remounts his horse; he returns 'safe, yet sufficiently wet and weary' from the summit of Snowdon when the mountain was engulfed in cloud; and he recalls an earlier visit to Snowdon when 'the day proved so excessively hot, that my

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[80] Gilpin, *River Wye*, p. 3.
[81] Gilpin, *Cumberland and Westmoreland*, Vol. 2, p. 95.

journey cost me the skin of the lower part of my face.'[82] If we may assume that Pennant was a more attractive travel writer to Wordsworth than Gilpin – the picturesque being frequently disparaged by Wordsworth, as we have seen, whilst Pennant was sought out when Wordsworth made his own visit to Snowdon – I would suggest that it is this ruggedness, and the greater readiness to embrace a locality in all its diverse aspects, which is the basis of the preference.[83]

I have dwelt at some length on the picturesque tourist and the animus he or she provokes among some contemporary commentators (amongst them, many Romantic figures) for two reasons. In the first place, the picturesque tour for Wordsworth, like the traditional Grand Tour for Byron, is a context within which the Romantic traveller travels yet which he is also usually anxious to repudiate. Wordsworth's travelling is often close in practice to picturesque tourism, yet he usually takes care to signal that it is very different in spirit. In the second place, and more pertinent to the present discussion, by the end of the eighteenth century it is especially the hapless picturesque traveller who seems to focus the mutual distrust increasingly felt among the new touring classes, and among commentators on the relatively recent phenomenon of much greater tourism. This section has shown that by the 1780s one could already have anticipated Byron's comments on his fellow travellers and talked of Pennant, Young, Sterne, Gilpin and other travellers. Initially at least, the different tastes and enthusiasms implicit in these labels were not necessarily exclusive. Many tourists and many tour narratives exhibit the ability to combine these various outlooks, or to oscillate between them. Arthur Young's first account of a 'farming tour' announces that whilst husbandry is the principal theme, the writer will nevertheless attend to a variety of other interests: the reader is asked to 'accept the medley, and not be too criticising on any jumble of heterogeneous parts.'[84] In similar vein, De Quincey's father produced *A Short Tour in the Midland Counties of England* (1775) that embraced, according to his son, a 'tolerably miscellaneous' set of interests, its 'double purpose' being to emphasise the 'Fine Arts' and the 'Mechanic Arts' in equal measure.[85] However, one thing that *is* missing from his father's tour narrative, or so it seems from De Quincey's later perspective, is

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[82] Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, 1770*, 2 Vols. (London, 1788), pp. 164-5.
[83] For Wordsworth's visit to Pennant, see Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), p. 50.
[84] Arthur Young, *A Six Weeks Tour Through the Southern Counties of England and Wales* (London, 1768), p. 2.
[85] Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, together with Selections from the Autobiography of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. Edward Sackville-West (London, 1950), pp. 6-7.

politics. For the son, this is 'perhaps because it was written before the French Revolution'.[86] It is a revealing comment, which suggests a key reason why the interrelationship between the various strains of touristic taste began to become more fraught from the 1790s. In the sphere of tourism as in so much else, the French Revolution and the subsequent war with France served to polarise opinions.

One sign of the more antagonistic mood was Gilpin's last publication on the picturesque, a theoretical treatise entitled *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (1792). This is a highly defensive work, clearly aware that the picturesque, and picturesque tourism especially, is much attacked: as Gilpin rather plaintively puts it at one point, 'in what then do we offend?'[87] He might have been answered by Henry Redhead Yorke, who declared that he had 'but little regard to the narratives of those who travel for personal gratification merely, and not with a view for national benefit.'[88] He is confident that the reader of his account of a French tour made in 1802 'would rather see a rich corn field than muse over the ruins of churches and chapel'.[89] This is a tourist of an improving stamp rejecting the apparent superficiality of the picturesque agenda. Others who shared this improving outlook would increasingly have little time for the older style of aristocratic Grand Tourist. One reviewer in *Aiken's Annual Review*, for example, targets the 'Milord Anglois who for a month together spends his money, and goes to sleep at the magnificent Hotel Grange Bateliere'.[90] Another, in what appears to be a swipe at the Addisonian classical influence in tourism, laments the time when 'our travellers began to quote the classics, to catalogue pictures, to copy inscriptions, and men of enterprise and observation were followed by antiquarians and dilletanti.'[91] Yet this improving faction, if one may so dub it, was not the only voice in the increasingly polarised discourse, and practice, of tourism. From the late 1780s there emerged a vogue for pedestrian tourism (to be discussed more fully in the next chapter in connection with Wordsworth). The pedestrian tourist, in the early 1790s at least, was often a self-consciously radical figure, styling himself in opposition to the privilege of the Grand Tourist and (in some cases) to the

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[86] De Quincey, *Confessions and Autobiography*, p. 7.
[87] William Gilpin, *Three Essays*, p. iii.
[88] Henry Redhead Yorke, *Letters from France in 1802* (London, 1804), p. 122.
[89] Yorke, p. 98.
[90] *Aiken's Annual Review*, Vol. 1 (1802), p. 43.
[91] *AAR*, Vol. 1 (1802), p. 18.

superficiality of the picturesque tourist. And these earnest walkers in turn provoked mockery and distaste in differently-minded travellers and commentators, as we shall soon see.

By the end of the eighteenth century, then, there was an ever greater divergence of attitudes, itineraries and practices among British tourists, whilst the shifting political and cultural scene outside the sphere of tourism served to sharpen the differences within it. It is this shifting political context which seems especially to confound Eustace's *Classical Tour through Italy*. On the one hand, this clings to the traditional Addisonian attitudes, which include the Whig insistence on the supremacy of the Roman republic over the Roman empire. Yet this rhetoric seems a little muddled when set against Eustace's vehement denunciation of republicanism on the contemporary French model (Eustace travelled in 1802, it will be recalled, before Napoleon had established his empire) and his support for the legitimacy of Austrian imperial rule in the region. Eustace's tour, indeed, is a much more reactionary exercise than its Addisonian precursor, emphasising the permanence of the Italian landscape explicitly so as to rebuke revolutionary notions. We are told that earthquakes are 'the only species of revolution that can permanently alter the great features of nature', but also that earthquakes have spared Italy.[92] Its unchanged countryside thus attests everywhere to a conviction that the fundamental – and conservative – principles of politics and society are self-evident and immutable.

Interlaced as it is with such political sentiments, it is easy to see how Eustace's *Classical Tour* was viewed disdainfully by a more radical traveller such as John Cam Hobhouse. Hobhouse toured Italy with Byron in 1817, and later produced, to accompany Byron's poetic rendering of the tour in *Childe Harold* 4, his *Historical Illustrations of the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold* (1818; this is the Hobhouse 'manual' alluded to by Byron). Here and in the footnotes he supplied for *Child Harold 4* itself, Hobhouse is disparaging of Eustace, lamenting his 'Antigallican philippics' and saying that he 'appears never to have seen anything as it is.'[93] More congenial to his tastes was Joseph Forsyth, author of *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (1813) and for Hobhouse 'our most intelligent modern traveller.'[94] (This was an assessment with which Byron and Wordsworth

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[92] Eustace, Vol. 1, p. liii.
[93] John Cam Hobhouse, Note to *CHP* 4, l. 1566, in *BCPW* Vol. 2, p. 263; Hobhouse, *Historical Illustrations of the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold* (London, 1818), p. 240.
[94] Hobhouse, p. 55.

may have concurred: both owned copies of the Forsyth 'manual'.[95]) Forsyth's appeal is understandable. His style – of travelling and of writing – combines a considerable but not excessive degree of learning with a more individualistic, occasionally even iconoclastic outlook. His interests are more eclectic than Eustace's, and he has a feel for sensuous detail and concrete particularities: opening his narrative with his arrival at the shores of the Mediterranean, he records oranges glowing in gardens and mosquito-nets shrouding beds. There is also a rather romantic, even misadventurous, aspect to Forsyth's account. Like Eustace, he had travelled in Italy during the Peace of Amiens in 1802: unlike Eustace, he had not made it home safely when that peace came to an end. As the closing sentences of his *Remarks* put it: 'I arrived at Turin on the 25th of May, 1803. The next day I was arrested as a British subject, and I am now passing the TENTH YEAR OF MY CAPTIVITY.'[96]

I have tried in the last few paragraphs to convey the jangle of different voices that was debating tourism, and how, why and where one should tour, by the close of the eighteenth century. This sense of constantly rubbing shoulders, in inns or stage-coaches or packet-ships, with tourists who were different from oneself created the conditions whereby tourism became a social game of differentiation and distinction. This in turn made anti-tourism an essential element of tourism, as Buzard and Culler have argued. There was no one particular sort of tourist or style of tourism which generated the pejorative associations that increasingly cling to the 'tourist': each individual tourist had his own 'other fellow', in Waugh's phrase, his own rival version of himself who incurred his disdain. To some, the old traditional style of Grand Tourist; to others, the new middle-class (and possibly female) tourist who did not make the correct responses to the correct sites; to others again, anyone whose travelling was put to no practical purpose, notably by following the picturesque programme: the 'tourist' in the pejorative sense was all these things and more.

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[95] See Chester L. Shaver and Alice C. Shaver, *Wordsworth's Library: a Catalogue* (New York, 1979); *BCMP*, pp 231 ff.
[96] Joseph Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (London, 1813), pp. 306-7.

This chapter is positioned as it is, just prior to more detailed discussions of Wordsworth and Byron as travellers, since it sketches the immediate social context in which they travelled. The distinctive choices made by Romantic travellers – with regard to destinations, the modes of transport, and desired experiences – must be seen as part of a general diversification of what I have called *styles* of tourism. The fact that the choices made by Romantic travellers frequently seem to have an oppositional aspect must also be understood as a result of this diversification in tourism. In practice and on the page, in the way he actually travelled and in the way he subsequently described those travels and projected himself as 'traveller', the Romantic traveller wished to signal his difference from those 'other fellows' who were also tourists. He did so partly for reasons of snobbery and self-aggrandisement, but also partly for reasons which have to do with an ambivalence, or an outright rejection, with regard to larger processes of change and modernization at work in British society, processes with which tourism seems to have a complex but significant connection. (It is here that the social context for Romantic travel described in this chapter overlaps with the geo-political context discussed in the last chapter.)

The Romantic traveller, then, espouses misadventure, and a taste for discomfort and danger in his travelling, in part as a mode of social distinction. My final chapters will look in a more detailed way at what this entailed for two prominent Romantic figures, Wordsworth and Byron – both men who were famous for being travellers, in their very different ways, as well as for being poets. I explore the inflections Wordsworth and Byron make of the suffering traveller *topos*, and the various ways in which they rework the images, themes and narrative structures found in the texts which were the subject of Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. In so doing I stress mostly their positive attraction to misadventure, and the heightened or more intense experiences that suffering in travel is thought to generate. Yet the social context for misadventure described in this chapter – as it were the negative stimulus towards roughing it, the desire simply to travel in a way that other people do not want to travel – must also be borne in mind. Putting the matter a little simplistically, one might say that Wordsworth travels in the shadow of the picturesque tourist, whilst Byron travels in the shadow of the traditional Grand Tourist (although both are of course aware, and frequently just as disapproving, of other sorts of more conventional tourist). This chapter has accordingly discussed these two

particular 'significant others' to the Romantic traveller at a little length. It is to show that they are not merely picturesque or Grand tourists that Wordsworth and Byron appropriate for themselves the role of misadventurer. As they do so, however, it is worth keeping in mind the hypothesis made earlier in relation to Keats: namely, that the punishing aspects of typically Romantic styles of travel may reflect an uneasy awareness on the part of the traveller that he is just as much a tourist as any 'other fellow' he sees around him, whatever his protestations otherwise.

# 4. The Romantic Traveller I

Wordsworthian

Patterns of Travel

and Travel Writing

*Whenever it is possible, these Lakes and Vallies should be approached from the foot; otherwise, most things will come upon the Spectator to great disadvantage. Conistone, Windermere & Ulswater – these Lakes, in particular, suffer almost as much, at a first sight, in being approached from the head as an affecting Story would do, should the Reader begin with the last Chapter & read the whole backwards.*

William Wordsworth

*Walking, then, is a perpetual falling with a perpetual self-recovery.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

In 1820, Edward Trelawney, travelling in the Alps, encountered a group of tourists whose appearance was clearly worthy of comment. As Trelawney later put it:

> I saw by their utilitarian garb, as well as by the blisters and blotches on their cheeks, lips and noses, that they were pedestrian tourists, fresh from the snow-covered mountains, the blazing sun and frosty air having acted on their unseasoned skins as boiling water does on the lobster, by dying his dark coat scarlet.[1]

These travellers, evidently somewhat ludicrous in Trelawney's eyes, were William, Mary and Dorothy Wordsworth, midway through their continental tour of 1820. The sketch is intended as a lampoon, but its animus does not obscure – if anything, indeed, it brings into sharper focus – the image projected by the Wordsworths as they travelled. The Wordsworths are *walkers*, proudly and almost ostentatiously so. More than that, they are conspicuously walkers who have *suffered* (and who were presumably still suffering from sunburn when Trelawney saw them). Their commitment to walking in the mountains is evidently a commitment to a gruelling mode of travel which requires them to endure discomfort and extreme conditions: the 'blisters and blotches' on their faces are in a sense the badges which signal this commitment. These physical marks simultaneously record the arduous, challenging journeys performed by the Wordsworths, and display the performance of such journeys to their fellow travellers. Marks of distinction, these sun-burnt, frost-pinched faces convey the Wordsworths' difference from other tourists and implicitly, one senses, their superiority to them. The party projects, in a subtle form of one-up-manship that is perhaps the spur to Trelawney's distaste, a mixture of self-righteousness and bohemianism (and in connection with the latter element one might note that Dorothy's sunburn will no doubt lead in time to that racy 'Gypsy tan' remarked by both her brother and De Quincey).[2] In short, the Wordsworths are setting themselves up as 'travellers', as that term is understood within the cultural typology discussed in the previous chapter, and they are basing that claim to be a superior sort of tourist largely on the discomforts they have experienced.

This chapter will explore these overlapping themes of discomfort and distinction, and their role in generating a sense of being a 'traveller', as they are played out in both the life and the writing of William Wordsworth. More precisely, I shall trace in some detail the web of connections between the

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[1] Edward John Trelawney, *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author*; ed. David Wright (1878; Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 58.
[2] See Elizabeth A. Fay, *Becoming Wordsworthian: a Performative Aesthetics* (Massachusetts, 1995), p. 49.

following three elements: Wordsworth's actual travelling; Wordsworth's writing about travel (as performed both by himself and by other travellers); and Wordsworth's reading in travel literature. The first epigraph to this chapter – directions for a tour route which were unpublished in Wordsworth's lifetime – should serve to remind us of the premise with which I began this thesis: namely, that journeys as much as texts have a narrative structure, and can accordingly be plotted so as to form, as Wordsworth puts it, an 'affecting Story'.[3] In the metaphor established in my introduction, both the travel experience and the representation of that experience are always to some extent scripted. That said, not all travellers select the same scripts, and it is my concern in this chapter to trace the particular sorts of 'affecting Story' that seem to have appealed to Wordsworth as he travelled, and which certainly inform his poetic representations of those travels.

The passage by Trelawney conveys powerfully the way in which issues of suffering, distinction and being a 'traveller' were closely bound up, in Wordsworth's case, with the practice of walking. Wordsworth's 'pedestrianism', to use a contemporary term, was legendary in his own lifetime: De Quincey famously estimated that Wordsworth's legs had over the course of his life carried him some 175,000 miles.[4] Wordsworth's walking is accordingly a topic that is threaded through the following discussion, and even when walking is not being explicitly discussed it should be borne in mind that Wordsworth the traveller is more often than not Wordsworth the walker. He used other modes of transport, of course, yet throughout his adult life he rambled regularly – almost programmatically – on foot, and all of his more extensive tours and journeys involved significant amounts of walking. Following on from this, it should also be borne in mind that Wordsworth's walking typically involved a degree of strenuousness, and a physical challenge of the sort implicit in Trelawney's account. The spirit in which walking is undertaken, and the way in which it is understood and subsequently represented by Wordsworth, changes dramatically over the course of Wordsworth's life, yet always there is the sense that walking, and walking *hard*, is a good thing, physically and morally beneficial to the practitioner. This seems to have been a fundamental tenet of the Wordsworth circle, as the letters of Dorothy in particular make clear, and it was a message that they spread with something

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[3] *WPrW*, Vol. 2, p. 293.
[4] Thomas De Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*, ed. David Wright (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 135.

approaching missionary zeal. Indeed, as Wordsworth's reputation grew in the nineteenth century, such vigorous walking came to mark one as Wordsworthian: it may be regarded as part of the 'performative aesthetics', as Elizabeth Fay has put it, that the personal example of Wordsworth transmitted to his acolytes.[5]

For Wordsworth, then, strenuous walking is good. The precise reasons why it is good, however, evolve significantly. In these changes we may see the script, or 'affecting Story', with which Wordsworth plots his walks undergoing adjustment. The changes, I will suggest, are not so much in the source material from which the basic Wordsworthian travel script is generated, as they are in the reading that is made of this source material. Certain elements recur in Wordsworth's travelling, and in his writing of that travelling; specifically, it is from the literature of maritime misadventure, with its staple elements of shipwreck and mutiny, that Wordsworth repeatedly creates a 'Story' which at some level he re-enacts in his own journeys. Narratives of sea-voyaging and shipwreck, and the accounts of figures such as Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Mungo Park and William Dampier are reworked frequently in Wordsworth's poetry, often at climactic moments. At different stages of his career, however, this material is reworked in different ways; the variety of reworkings reflects not only a changing response to the literature of maritime misadventure but also a changing attitude to his own travelling.

Wordsworth's own journeys, of course, are typically of much narrower compass than those undertaken in most voyage narratives. He is famously the poet of the familiar, local landscape, his imagination being rooted in his much-loved Lake District. Yet Wordsworth's Lake District is also inhabited, metaphorically at least, by 'Greenland bears' (in fact, sheep) and wolves 'howling round the Bothnic main' (the sound of ice splitting on the lakes).[6] Abstracted thus, such images seem comic, but *in situ* their effect is altogether more uncanny. Wordsworth's poetry may be said to achieve repeatedly a doubling both of setting and of situation: landscapes become both local *and* exotic, familiar *and* strange, whilst the traveller in those landscapes can find himself not simply walking a lake's shore but encountering the aftermath of shipwreck. At these moments, Wordsworth is subtly obtruding other sorts of travel narrative into his own travel narrative. On other occasions,

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[5] See Fay, *Becoming Wordsworthian*.
[6] *Prelude* (1805), Bk. 8, l. 402 and 1.570, in *WP*. All references to *The Prelude* are to the 1805 version, unless otherwise stated.

the external influence is more explicit. Charles Coe, in his seminal study *Wordsworth and the Literature of Travel* (1953), proves Wordsworth to have been an exhaustive reader of travel literature, and a remarkably frequent borrower from the genre. Coe tells us that some thirty-eight different travel narratives inform Wordsworth's poetry: he identifies sixty-four instances, in forty-two separate poems, when a clear debt to a travel text can be established.[7] Yet these passages are only the most obvious examples of the shaping influence exercised by travel literature on Wordsworth. Coe misses some of the more covert relationships, such as that between Book 6 of *The Prelude* and James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, and also some of the more subtle generic pressures applied by certain sorts of travel account with regard to narrative form, conventional *topoi* and the like. It is these generic influences, as much as the specific borrowings, I shall explore here. Wherever possible, moreover, I shall connect Wordsworth's reading and writing of travel back to his actual practice of travel, something that falls beyond the scope of Coe's study.

Firstly, however, it is perhaps permissible to make a few reflections on how walking as a physical activity might enable this scripting of one's own experience. Walking, or at least walking performed in the disciplined, gruelling fashion so characteristic of Wordsworth, seems an almost ascetic exercise, and in this connection one might consider some observations made by Geoffrey Galt Harpham on the nature of ascesis.[8] As Harpham describes it, ascesis is fundamentally, and powerfully, a paradoxical endeavour. One pole of its paradoxical intention is the desire to liberate mind or soul from the body, and from the raggedness and contingency of the physical life. Liberated thus from the unruly flesh, mind or soul can write themselves into their preferred narratives, into narratives of transcendence, absolute self-knowledge, total self-possession. In a sense, this is what Wordsworth is doing whenever he writes himself, in the course of his own walking, into some alternative travel narrative – and this is especially what Wordsworth is doing whenever he writes himself, as is increasingly his wont, into a travel narrative that concludes with a powerful scene of revelation, salvation or the like. The other pole of the ascetic paradox, however, is equally pertinent to Wordsworth's habitual walking. As Harpham makes clear, for all that the ascetic seeks to deny or transcend the body, that body is also essential to his enterprise. The body is the site of the ascetic's

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[7] Charles Coe, *Wordsworth and the Literature of Travel* (New York, 1953), pp. 101-7.
[8] See Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* (Chicago and London, 1987).

constant struggle, the realm in which he must constantly exercise his spiritual strength. He needs the body in order to feel temptation, for in a way it is better that this temptation is not simply removed, but rather that it is repeatedly felt and repeatedly overcome. Ascesis has thus a dialectic aspect: it manifests a constant twofold movement backwards and forwards between body and soul, temptation and (self-)conquest.

A similar rhythm is present in the action of walking, or at least in walking as it is described by the American physician and *litterateur* Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the second epigraph to this chapter.[9] 'Fall', then 'self-recovery': more than the dual action itself, it is the vocabulary here which seems to connect walking with ascesis. Charged with theological implication, it implicitly scripts the act of walking according to a Christian narrative. In so doing, it seems particularly pertinent to the business of Wordsworthian walking and Wordsworthian travel, which from the mid-1790s, I shall argue, is significantly informed by Christian beliefs, traditions and practices, even when the express purpose or goal of the travelling is secular in spirit. We shall see that the Wordsworthian journey, in his maturity at least, is very much a teleological exercise, although the *telos* is not initially recognition or justification of God. That the Wordsworthian journey reveals this distinctive shape (not only on the page but also, one may to some extent infer, in actuality) owes much to Wordsworth's reading of the literature of misadventure. Episodes and images from this literature recur in Wordsworth's representations of travellers (including himself), and in thus appearing they not only often serve to give a shape to the journeys Wordsworth is describing, they also make apparent the way in which Wordsworth habitually read the narrative of misadventure. Wordsworth seems usually to have read narratives of the sort described in chapters 1 and 2 according to the Providential logic that was earlier discussed. He read into them a teleological pattern pointing ultimately towards personal election: shaping his own experience according to the templates thus provided by this literature, he writes this teleology into his own travelling.

That said, it was not seemingly in this teleological (and later, explicitly religious) spirit that Wordsworth understood both misadventure and walking at the outset of his career. In the early

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[9] From 'The Physiology of Walking' (1883). I have stolen this epigraph from Celeste Langan's *Romantic Vagrancy: Wordsworth and the Simulation of Vagrancy* (Cambridge, 1995). Having used this quotation as an epigraph, Langan makes very little use of it, and what she does have to say differs radically from my reading. See pp. 1-7.

1' ) period of Wordsworth's life, walking seems to have

c: e it would later bear, and the literature of misadventure seems likewise to have been read in a subtly different fashion. It is accordingly with this period of youthful turmoil and anxiety that I begin my discussion of the Wordsworthian traveller.

## Radicalism and Repetition: The Wordsworthian Journey in the 1790s

In the early 1790s, Wordsworth made arguably the most important journeys of his life. Several of them he was to return to and repeat, both in actuality and in writing, throughout his career. A walking tour across France and the Alps, undertaken in 1790, gave rise directly to *Descriptive Sketches* (1792) and Book 6 of *The Prelude* (written 1804), and indirectly, since the Wordsworths' continental tour of 1820 was partly intended to recreate the earlier journey, to *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* (1822).[10] A walking tour of North Wales in 1791 led to the account of the ascent of Snowdon which concludes *The Prelude* (written 1804), whilst from the 1793 walking tour which took Wordsworth across Salisbury Plain, and ultimately to the Wye Valley, there came firstly the *Salisbury Plain* poems; subsequently, when Wordsworth retraced part of the route five years later, 'Tintern Abbey'; and later still, in a further poetic revisiting of the route, sections of Book 12 of the 1805 *Prelude*.[11]

As this suggests, much of Wordsworth's poetry – and some of it his greatest – arises from this early travelling. Returning to the journeys made at this formative stage of his career, retracing those earlier routes, Wordsworth reveals a recurrent need to dramatise himself anew, to give to the journey and the travel experience a new shape. With each retelling or re-enactment, the travelling is made to reveal a subtly different 'affecting Story'. This revisionary agenda – which, as Theresa Kelley has shown, is more generally part of Wordsworth's habits of composition[12] – has its origins in the original 'affecting Story' which Wordsworth seems to have carried in his head as he made those

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[10] For the 1820 tour as a recreation of 1791, see Dorothy Wordsworth, *A Tour on the Continent*, pp. 225; 245; 260-1 *etc.*, in *The Continental Journals, 1798-1820*, ed. Helen Boden (Bristol, 1995).
[11] For an outline of Wordsworth's actual journeys, see Donald Hayden, *Wordsworth's Walking Tour of 1790* (Tulsa, 1983); *Wordsworth's Travels in Wales and Ireland* (Oxford, 1984); *Wordsworth's Travels in Scotland* (Tulsa, 1985); *Wordsworth's Travels in Europe* (Tulsa, 1988). Also David McCracken, *Wordsworth and the Lake District: A Guide to the Poems and their Places* (Oxford, 1984).
[12] See Theresa M. Kelley, *Wordsworth's Revisionary Aesthetics* (Cambridge, 1988).

formative journeys. The story of Wordsworth's youthful idealism and radicalism, and then his abandonment of that political position, is familiar to every student of the poet: what is less familiar, perhaps, is that this political reorientation bears considerably on the spirit and style in which Wordsworth travelled. A metaphorical 'fellow-traveller' with the French cause, Wordsworth made his actual travelling bear witness in certain key regards to his politics. Subsequently, disaffected with the Revolution, and with other circumstances in his life changing by the late 1790s, Wordsworth adjusts his travelling persona, dramatising himself according to a different travel script. The personae and scripts characteristically adopted by the mature Wordsworth will be the subject of the next sections of this chapter. Here, however, I shall describe the original script, the 'affecting Story' which subsequent journeys must seek to erase and revise out of history, and the beginnings of the process of revision. To achieve this, I shall focus in particular on the 1793 walking tour, and on the *Salisbury Plain* poems which were the first poetic response to that journey. The latter give us a powerful insight into the political attitudes attendant on Wordsworth's travelling, and particularly on his walking, in this period; more surprisingly, perhaps, they also suggest the significant part played by images and narratives of maritime misadventure in this interlacing of travel and political radicalism. The constellation of texts discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis can be seen to script in subtle ways both Wordsworth's experience and his poetry. The importance of this source material as a vehicle in which Wordsworth articulates his politics is further borne out by a subsequent work which will also be discussed here, the verse drama *The Borderers*. *The Borderers* has less direct relation to Wordsworth's actual travelling than the *Salisbury Plain* poems, but in it we can see certain elements which clearly script the young Wordsworth's travels, informing the 'affecting Story' according to which he plotted the early walking tours, undergoing revision. The adjustment in Wordsworth's attitudes, practices and (self-)representations pertaining to travel is not unconnected with an adjustment that Wordsworth simultaneously seems to make in the reading of maritime misadventure.

In July 1793, having returned from a lengthy stay in France in December 1792, Wordsworth embarked on a tour of the West Country. He was initially accompanied by William Calvert, but the plan to travel in company 'was put a stop to by an accident which might have had fatal

consequences': the carriage the men were travelling went into a ditch and was broken.[13] The two travellers then parted, Wordsworth taking to what Dorothy described as his 'firm Friends, a pair of stout legs [which] supported him from Salisbury, through South into North Wales'.[14] The first part of this journey took Wordsworth across Salisbury Plain, and as he traversed this barren region a fierce storm raged. The result, he recalled aged seventy-three, was 'imaginative impressions, the force of which I have felt to this day.'[15] These impressions first found expression in 'Salisbury Plain' (written 1793-4), which is one of Wordsworth's darkest works. This may be one reason why Wordsworth returned to it so often, rewriting it in the later 1790s as 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain', in 1841 as 'Incidents on Salisbury Plain' and in 1842 as 'Guilt and Sorrow'. (One should also note that part of the poem was extracted and published as 'The Female Vagrant' in *Lyrical Ballads*.) In its initial form, 'Salisbury Plain' tells of an unidentified traveller walking across the dreary waste of the plain. Wordsworth's style is lurid and phantasmagoric: Salisbury Plain becomes a place of nightmare where the traveller hears ominous voices and witnesses terrifying visions of druidic human sacrifice. He meets a female vagrant who tells him her story, a tale of economic upheaval and war causing displacement from home and the loss of her family: its outcome is that the Female Vagrant, like the traveller, is now a lonely walker across the plain. Hearing her story, however, seems in some way to console the traveller: although the narrator goes on to launch a final angry denunciation of the society which has abandoned this 'friendless hope-forsaken pair' (SP, 415), when we last see the two travellers themselves they are preparing to travel together, seemingly offering each other some support. This (very) muted note of consolation, however, is excised in Wordsworth's subsequent revision of the poem. 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' (written 1795-99) is a more ambitious and far gloomier work. The Female Vagrant's story, in essence the same, is still at the core of the poem, but around this tale Wordsworth greatly expands the narrative and especially the role of the traveller. From the outset, he is revealed as a Sailor, and also a murderer: it is to escape justice that he has become a vagrant. Thereafter, incidents and characters accumulate, the latter mostly a cast of displaced, broken individuals. Salisbury Plain becomes a place of random, harrowing encounters.

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[13] *W Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 109.
[14] *W Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 109.
[15] Quoted in *WSP*, p. 221.

Amongst others, the Sailor meets a discharged soldier, a body swinging in a gibbet, the Female Vagrant (with whom he subsequently travels), a family headed by a brutal father, and another impoverished woman at the point of death. These 'events so various' (ASP, 803) culminate with the Sailor's own dead body swinging in the gibbet at the poem's close – a grisly outcome to be discussed more fully in due course.

These two outlines should suffice to show the strong element of social protest running through both *Salisbury Plain* poems. The plain as Wordsworth fashions it on the page is a place to which society's rejects and victims come – and of particular significance in the present context is that this was a place where Wordsworth himself had been. The cast of characters Wordsworth assembles on the plain offers some clue as to the self-dramatisation Wordsworth may have made as he originally traversed the region. Registering the uncharacteristically Gothic tone of the poems, some biographers have speculated that Wordsworth made the 1793 walking tour in a state of anger, alienation and deep emotional trauma. Stephen Gill suggests that Wordsworth at this date was in a condition close to nervous breakdown, due to a combination of factors: the enforced abandonment of his lover, Annette Vallon, and their child in France in 1792; growing disillusionment with the course the French Revolution was taking; the outbreak of war between France and England, which gave rise to deeply conflicting loyalties (as memorably described in *The Prelude*).[16] More straightforwardly, Wordsworth had also arrived back from France with little means and few prospects of employment. Yet whilst all these factors were no doubt important in shaping Wordsworth's sense of himself, and of his travelling, as he crossed Salisbury Plain, I would suggest that there was also a more conscious, explicit script being enacted as Wordsworth made this journey. This script dictated a commitment to accidents such as that which actually befell Wordsworth and Calvert, and it dictated the mode of transport eventually adopted by Wordsworth when he travelled alone, walking. It is the latter element in Wordsworth's early travelling that I shall emphasise here. All of the formative journeys cited above, it will have been noted, take the form of *walking* tours: the Sailor and the Female Vagrant are conspicuously *walkers* across Salisbury Plain. When Wordsworth's own walking is put in its contemporary context, and when that contextual evidence is in turn read through the filter of the

[16] Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989), p. 78.

*Salisbury Plain* poems, we can grasp more clearly the 'affecting Story' that Wordsworth was telling to himself and his contemporaries in walking across Salisbury Plain.

Today, walking may seem the most ordinary and unnoticeable form of travel, but in the late eighteenth century, as recent work by Anne D. Wallace and Robin Jarvis has shown, it was highly noticeable, arousing responses which might surprise us.[17] Trelawney in 1820 clearly finds 'pedestrianism' worthy of comment: in the 1780s and 1790s, it provoked even more powerful reactions. At this date, Wallace and Jarvis demonstrate, walking could shock and disturb. It was still very much an activity that marked one as poor, and potentially as criminal. In the eyes of society in general, no-one walked unless they had to, and people driven to such extremity could probably not be trusted. Such, at least, were the preconceptions in Britain: walking seems to have become fashionable at a slightly earlier date in Germany, but when Carl Philip Moritz, a German clergyman, travelled on foot in Britain in 1782, he found that 'a pedestrian seems in this country to be a sort of beast of passage – stared at, pitied, suspected and shunned by everybody who meets him.'[18] Coleridge and Southey had a similar experience during a walking tour undertaken in the autumn of 1794. Having spent a night in a tavern – as Southey relates the story – 'in the morning [Coleridge and I] rose - and lo - we were fastened in! They certainly took us for footpads and had bolted the door on the outside for fear we should rob the house.'[19]

Moritz might be regarded as a foreigner unfamiliar with British culture, but in Coleridge and Southey's walking we encounter something that seems, superficially at least, surprising. These are travellers who choose to walk even though they know it is an activity which will arouse hostile, or at least bemused, reactions. It is a choice that begins to make sense, however, once we recognise that part of walking's appeal is this very fact that it creates a stir, inviting misidentifications and to a certain extent dramatising the walker. There is a certain glee in Southey's tone as he describes being taken for a footpad, and Wordsworth too clearly enjoyed looking odd in his French tour of 1790: in France as well as Britain, it seems, walking was an activity that marked one out as being, at the very

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[17] See Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke and London, 1997); Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture: the Origin and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1993).
[18] Quoted in Wallace, p. 31.
[19] Kenneth Curry (ed.), *New Letters of Robert Southey*, 2 Vols. (New York and London, 1965), Vol. 1, pp. 68-9.

least, eccentric.[20] At this juncture, it is perhaps worth noting that Wordsworth in 1790, and Southey and Coleridge in 1794, are students. There is more than a hint of adolescent rebelliousness about their walking, and an excitement generated from the fact that it shocks parental sensibilities and establishment attitudes. At one level it is a mere game that they are playing: it is worth noting that when one of Wordsworth's friends actually wanted to throw up his prospects and to become a tramp for real, Wordsworth persuaded him otherwise.[21] In keeping with this playfulness, we should note that walking also seems suffused with a certain competitiveness amongst the student walkers. Thus Coleridge, on another walking tour in 1794, is delighted to find a pair of would-be 'rival pedestrians' actually travelling in a chaise (the reason being, Coleridge gleefully suggests, that both have got the clap).[22]

That said, to read the walking of these Romantic figures at this stage of their careers as simply a form of back-packing *avant le jour* would be to trivialise matters considerably. As Jarvis in particular has shown, this pedestrian sub-culture was infused with distinctly radical attitudes. Other walkers in this period included William Frend, the Cambridge don who became a focus of radical protest when he was dismissed for his Unitarian beliefs; John Thelwell, radical politician, sometime prisoner of the state, and the author of *The Peripatetic; or, Sketches of the Heart, of Nature and Society* (1793); and, at the more lunatic fringes of the radical/pedestrian sub-culture, figures such as John 'Walking' Stewart. Stewart had walked in India and other far-flung regions of the world, and his fame in this regard went hand-in-hand with a certain notoriety for his authorship of philosophical and political tracts of a highly idealistic nature, such as *Opus Maximus: or, The great essay to reduce the moral world from contingency to system* (1803) and *Roll of a tennis ball, through the moral world, a series of contemplations, by a solitary traveller* (1812). This association of walking with idealism and radicalism was recognised by contemporaries. One of the early uses of the word 'pedestrian' cited in the OED is that made by the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1802, which talks sniffily of 'Pedestrians (under which name the moralizing travellers of the present day are well described)'. In 1804, *Aiken's Annual Review* passed the following exasperated

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[20] See *W Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 37.
[21] See *W Letters*, Vol. 1, pp. 58-9.
[22] *C Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 89.

comment on John Bristed's *Pedestrian Tour through Part of the Highlands of Scotland in 1801*, undertaken with a friend in the guise of American sailors:

> they roam the country *in forma pauperum*, descant loudly on the luxuries of the great and the miseries of the poor, go from pot-house to pot-house for half a bed, complain of the jealousy of the police because they are taken up for spies, and of the frequent inhospitality of the Scots, because they were not welcomed as gentlemen![23]

An attitude similar to Bristed's motivated Coleridge in his 1794 walking tour of Wales. The letters from this tour reveal Coleridge at his most passionate and exuberant, fired up by talk of democracy, fraternity and Pantisocracy. Or as Coleridge himself puts it, yoking his political idealism and his mode of travel, 'I have done nothing but dream of the System of no Property every step of the Way.'[24]

When we locate the *Salisbury Plain* poems in this context, it becomes easier to gauge the spirit in which many of these pedestrians conducted their walking and to read, as it were, the points being made and the signals sent out by the practice of pedestrianism. To walk is to identify with the Sailor and the Female Vagrant, to share their pains and discomforts as a protest against social injustice. It is to take on a symbolic role, but to seek to literalise that symbolism by really feeling in one's body what it is to be indigent and vagrant. Hence the care taken by some pedestrians to emphasise the unpleasant aspects of the walking experience. In this spirit Coleridge pens a few lines on his Welsh walking tour which begin thus: 'The Dust flies smothering, as on clatt'ring Wheels / Loath'd Aristocracy careers along.'[25] The poet, implicitly travelling on foot, is harassed by the 'clatt'ring Wheels' and the 'smothering' dust. In other regards too he is hot and bothered: a stone wall is 'scorching to th'unwary Traveller's touch', and the lines were ultimately given the title 'Perspiration: An Ecologue'. Elsewhere in this tour, Coleridge was similarly keen to play up the extremes of heat and thirst that he endured: a subsequent letter describes how

> from Llanvunnog we walked over the mountains to Bala – most sublimely terrible! It was scorchingly hot – I applied my mouth ever and anon to the side of the Rocks and sucked in draughts of water cold as Ice, and clear as infant Diamonds in the embryo Dew![26]

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[23] *Aiken's Annual Review*, Vol. 3 (1804), p. 408.
[24] *C Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 90.
[25] *C Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 84.
[26] *C Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

The espousal of such discomforts, it will be noted, serves in Coleridge's mind not only to fashion an identity with fellow sufferers, but also to establish a distinction, and to set the more misadventurous traveller in opposition to certain other sorts of traveller. It is 'loath'd Aristocracy' which is careering along in the coach, inconveniencing the pedestrian whose hardships are clearly preferable morally, if not physically. This is the other key aspect of the pedestrian enterprise for recreational travellers who have chose to walk, as Wordsworth and Coleridge did: it not only identifies you with the dispossessed, it also differentiates you from other tourists. Thus Wordsworth like Coleridge establishes a contrast between travellers in the prefatory letter to *Descriptive Sketches*, his first poetic account of the 1790 walking tour in France:

> how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter![27]

Once again it is the arduousness of the walker's travelling that is subtly emphasised here. The 'plodding' of the pedestrians conveys the effort involved, an effort which seems to rebuke those travelling in a post-chaise – 'lolling' suggests that these are pampered tourists, and hints faintly, perhaps, at an aristocratic hauteur. Once again, moreover, there is an interplay of distinction and identification taking place in this strenuous walking: if it marks them off from less worthy travellers, walking simultaneously creates a bond between the sturdy, independent pedestrians. Their shared hardships forge a model relationship, the enactment in miniature, perhaps, of the *egalité* and *fraternité* that Wordsworth and his associates, at this stage of their careers, sought more generally for society.

Walking is thus an activity invested with some highly charged cultural meanings. These meanings, we should note, do not necessarily arise naturally out of the act of walking. They must be read into walking – or, when one of these radical walkers comes to describe his endeavours, written into it. We should not assume that walking actually was more uncomfortable than riding in a carriage, which is what both Wordsworth and Coleridge repeatedly seem to suggest. Suspension systems on coaches at this time were poor (the elliptical spring was not invented until 1804), as were many road surfaces. It has been suggested that in almost all weather conditions walking was more pleasant than being

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[27] Prefatory Letter to *Descriptive Sketches*, in *WPW*, p. 8.

thrown about in a cramped, stuffy space that was probably either far too hot or far too cold.[28] Whatever the facts of the case, this alternative point of view should serve to remind us that Wordsworth's and Coleridge's status as suffering travellers is to some extent a rhetorical construct. It is particular elements of their travelling that they take pride in, and these elements which they therefore choose to emphasise – and possibly invent – in recounting their travels to others. At such moments, Wordsworth and Coleridge are scripting their travelling: they are not simply telling us how it was, but rather, consciously or unconsciously, they are adopting what I have termed the *topos* of the suffering traveller.

These young pedestrians, then, are playing themselves as misadventurers. Whilst to some extent they really are exposing themselves to fatigue, discomfort, accidents and the like, this element in their travelling is also the literalisation of a certain role they wish to adopt. And if 'the walker' is itself one self-dramatisation these travellers are making, part of the attraction of that persona seems to be the extent to which it allows further roles to be played out. As was noted earlier, walking seems to enable a certain fluidity of identity, and a movement between different conceptions of oneself. (In this vein De Quincey, on a pedestrian tour of Wales in 1802, made 'periodic transmigrations' between the roles of walker and gentleman.[29]) And it is as part of this play of personae that other types of travel narrative seem subtly to inform the narrative of the pedestrian tour. The figure of the impoverished tramp – perhaps the primary referent in the minds of many pedestrians in this period – merges with the image of other suffering or down-trodden travellers: the walker envisages himself as struggling across a barren desert, or as surviving on some desolate shore in the aftermath of a shipwreck. It is the last image, of course, which is most pertinent in the present context: it points us to the way in which those narratives of maritime misadventure discussed in Chapter 1 work discreetly to script the pedestrian travel narrative of the young Wordsworth.

David Collings has recently talked of a constant 'underlying figural structure', a recurrent 'tropological dynamic', which he sees as shaping much of Wordsworth's poetry in the early and middle years. This 'figural structure' he sees as comprised of the following elements: the lost traveller, 'the turn on to the wrong path, unreadable or disfiguring violence, the crossroads, the uninhabitable

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[28] Jarvis, pp. 20-2; also Philip S. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), p. 48.
[29] Thomas De Quincey, *Collected Writings*, 14 Vols., ed. David Masson (Edinburgh, 1889-90), Vol. 3, p. 336.

shelter.'[30] One might add to this list the *topos* of shipwreck, and the other stock situations of maritime misadventure. A 'tropological dynamic' derived from the constellation of texts discussed in Chapter 1 seems to underpin many of Wordsworth's poetic representations of travel, and specifically, walking. It also seems to inform the actual experience of some of Wordsworth's fellow pedestrians. It is implicitly into a narrative of maritime misadventure (and also, interestingly, a narrative of mountain ascent) that Coleridge jokingly writes himself during his Welsh walking tour, in correspondence with Southey. Advising Southey not to sink into despondency, Coleridge declares: 'I once shipwrecked my frail bark on that rock – a friendly plank was vouchsafed me. Be you wise by my experience – and receive unhurt the Flower, which I have climbed Precipices to pluck.'[31] Coleridge the walker, who has traversed the 'most sublimely terrible' mountains between Llanvunnog and Bala, metamorphoses into Coleridge the shipwreck survivor and Coleridge the mountaineer. This is a light-hearted example, perhaps, but it should be connected to the more considered use of the shipwreck *topos* made by Coleridge in his political lectures (as discussed in Chapter 1). Implicit in the shipwreck *topos* is a sense of crisis. Sometimes that crisis can seem vague and unspecified, so that the mobilisation of the narrative of maritime misadventure seems excessively or parodically self-dramatising, as in Coleridge's remarks to Southey. In the background, however, in the early 1790s, is the long-established 'ship of state' metaphor, and the very real political crises in France and Britain.

That maritime misadventure formed part of the 'affecting Story' that walkers such as Wordsworth and Coleridge told themselves is also subtly reflected in the *Salisbury Plain* poems. Here too maritime misadventure forms part of the 'affecting Story' presented to readers, and the manner in which elements of shipwreck and so forth are discreetly interwoven into these poems allows us to glean something of the manner in which these radical walkers rehearsed the commonplaces of maritime misadventure to themselves. That is to say, the *Salisbury Plain* poems subtly point us to the reading Wordsworth seems to have made of the literature of maritime misadventure at this point in his career, a reading that he will later come to revise.

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[30] David Collings, *Wordsworthian Errancies: The Poetics of Cultural Dismemberment* (Baltimore, 1994), pp. 1-2. It is also worth noting here that Collings' study is in some ways just a more sophisticated, theoretically informed version of Bernard Blackstone's equally useful *The Lost Travellers: A Romantic Theme with Variations* (London, 1962).
[31] *C Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 85.

At one level, a maritime element is obviously present in both 'Salisbury Plain' and 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain': the protagonist in the latter version is a Sailor, whilst in both versions the Female Vagrant makes two highly harrowing voyages, to America and back. More important than these details, however, is what happens at the level of metaphoric reference in the two poems. Both transform Salisbury Plain into an oceanic setting (and also, though I shall not dwell on this here, into a desert setting), a place of immeasurable vastness, utter vacancy and awesome natural violence. In 'Adventures', the plain was 'dark and void as ocean's watry realm / Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom' (ASP, 174-5): across this ocean, the protagonists make their voyages. 'Salisbury Plain', meanwhile, images the life every individual leads in society as a voyage across the sea: 'men in various vessels roam the deep / Of social life, and turns of chance prevail / Various and sad' (SP, 32-4). For the traveller/Sailor and the Female Vagrant, the 'turn' that the voyage has taken is obvious: 'Adventures' spells it out explicitly when the Female Vagrant describes how, on her return to England, 'by grief enfeebled was I turned adrift / Helpless as sailor cast on desart rock' (ASP, 469-70). The general implication is clear: the Sailor, the Female Vagrant and the other hapless individuals who traverse Salisbury Plain (Wordsworth among them?) are at some level all shipwrecked or marooned figures.

That they should be considered thus, and that the narrative of maritime misadventure should be at some deep level shaping Wordsworth's imagination as it ranges across Salisbury Plain, is not merely incidental. There are some potent points of congruence between the message Wordsworth wishes to convey in the poems and the archetypal account of maritime misadventure. Most especially, there is that recurrent sense in the voyage literature – if one makes the more radical reading of that literature, as discussed in Chapter 1 – that the ship is an authoritarian, restrictive social entity which almost seems to engender violence and insubordination. This radical reading of the typical account of shipwreck and/or mutiny (and the two usually go together in some way) stresses those scenes which seem to show excessive force on the part of the captain: Bligh and Shelvocke threatening or beating their subordinates, for example. Read in this spirit, voyage literature can often seem to show a miniature society which brutalises its members, driving them to crimes the

ferocity of which cannot be condoned, but for which equally they cannot be seen as wholly responsible. Violence by authority breeds violence in return, in an escalating cycle of brutality.

If this is one way of reading the narrative of maritime misadventure (and equally, as was noted, one way of reading the narrative of the French Revolution), it is also very much the way in which we are invited to read the misadventures of the principal characters in the *Salisbury Plain* poems, especially 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain'. The later poem was written during the period of Wordsworth's strongest attachment to Godwinian political thought, and in the spirit of Godwin Wordsworth takes pains to show the social and economic factors that drive the Female Vagrant into vagrancy and the Sailor to murder. They are not outside society, as they wander the plain: they are rather the products and victims of the social order. Understood thus, Salisbury Plain itself is not simply a place of wildness, where man lives in a state of nature: more disturbingly, it is a wild place *within* society. As the elaborate contrast drawn in the first four stanzas of 'Salisbury Plain' insists, a true state of savagery would in fact be preferable to the condition or predicament in which the vagrants find themselves. 'Homeless near a thousand homes' (SP, 386), their anger and capacity for violence has been sharpened, indeed generated, by society. Their enforced involvement in the state's wars – the Sailor fighting directly, the Female Vagrant being camp-follower to her soldier-husband in America – has brutalised them. Rather than being a place outside society, then, Salisbury Plain is the dark heart within it. In its barrenness, the plain strips the social mechanisms down to their crudest, most essential form. In 'Salisbury Plain', the druidic nightmare prompted by Stonehenge expresses this grim vision most luridly: henge and, by implication, the whole plain are a 'sacrificial altar fed / With living men' (SP, 184-5). This somewhat extravagant image is updated and given more force in 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' by the body in the gibbet which the Sailor encounters at the beginning of the poem. Here the state parades its power to enact vengeance on those who offend its laws by making a 'spectacle' of the offender (ASP, 118). Yet the efficacy of this spectacle, and its success in teaching those who see it a lesson in deference, seem somewhat undercut by the tragedy that inexorably unfolds in Wordsworth's poem. As the 'events so various' are recounted, the Sailor himself moves from spectator to spectacle. When the poem ends it is now his body that is hanging from the gibbet for others to view. Yet to the reader, a further spectator to the gibbet, it is far from

clear that there was any justice exercised in the execution of the Sailor. The poem has shown how harsh economic and social circumstances, notably being press-ganged twice in short succession, led to the Sailor committing murder. With his own death, a cycle of violence reaches conclusion: the state inflicts a lethal retribution on those it has driven to rebel.

If the logic of the *Salisbury Plain* poems thus seems haunted by the radical reading that one can all too easily make of most narratives of maritime misadventure, so too does its form seem subtly indebted to that unsettling manner in which a writer like Shelvocke or John Byron presents information. Wordsworth himself recognised that the sequence of 'events so various' (and in general, so grisly) had a disconcerting effect, remarking to Isabella Fenwick that the poem's episodes 'do only in a small degree produce each other, and [the poem] deviates accordingly from the general rule by which narrative pieces ought to be governed.'[32] In its 'ungoverned' aspect (ungovernable, even?), 'Adventures' bears comparison with Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, written at about the same time and similarly comprised of a somewhat disconnected series of lurid or harrowing moments. In Chapter 1, I suggested that one generic influence on Coleridge's poem is the narrative of maritime misadventure, which can often waver disturbingly between a seriality of incident, which seems to reveal only a chaotic universe, and a 'wholeness' effected by the imposition of a Providential interpretation of events. 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain' may not be explicitly about a sea-voyage, but in more subtle ways the same generic influence seems to inform it: one way in which this influence manifests itself, perhaps, is in this stark, serial presentation of distressing scenes.

It should not surprise us to find subtle echoes, possibly unconscious, of maritime misadventure in 'Adventures on Salisbury Plain', since it was written during the period of Wordsworth's greatest involvement with the aftermath of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. (It was also in this period, incidentally, that we know Wordsworth to have read Shelvocke, passing on the detail about the shooting of the albatross to Coleridge in late 1797.[33]) The Christians were a Cockermouth family known to the Wordsworths, and Edward Christian, Fletcher's brother, on various occasions acted as the Wordsworth family solicitor. Wordsworth in turn helped the Christians when in 1796 he wrote to the *Weekly Examiner* to expose the recently published *Letters from Fletcher Christian* – which cast Fletcher in

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[32] Quoted in *WSP*, p. 221.
[33] See Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 126.

a decidedly unsavoury light – as frauds. When this background is known, one might plausibly ask whether Wordsworth, in closing 'Adventures' with a sailor's body swinging from a gibbet, had in mind the executions of Thomas Ellison, Thomas Burkitt and John Millward, the condemned *Bounty* mutineers, whose bodies swung from the yard-arm of H.M.S. *Brunswick* on 18 September 1792. It is an hypothesis impossible to prove or disprove, but it is worth raising, at least, when one considers that Wordsworth certainly had the *Bounty* mutiny in mind when he composed a work that in many ways stands as a riposte to the radicalism of the *Salisbury Plain* poems. *The Borderers* (1797-99) famously marks Wordsworth's abandonment of his youthful Godwinianism. More importantly for the purposes of the present discussion, however, this political and philosophical repudiation, because it is articulated using similar source-material as that which subtly informs the *Salisbury Plain* poems, also constitutes a re-reading and re-writing of the narrative of maritime misadventure. In *The Borderers*, Wordsworth once again establishes a connection between a wasteland within the British Isles and a ship far removed from British shores, yet the conclusions which we are meant to draw from the narrative of maritime misadventure thus interpolated into the domestic setting seem very different from those drawn in the earlier poems.

The immediate setting of *The Borderers* is Cumbria and Westmoreland at the time of Henry III, but its action is driven by events which took place years earlier during a sea-voyage in the Mediterranean. At the period in which the play is set, Westmoreland and Cumbria are a disputed region, fought over by England and Scotland, and answerable to the laws of neither state. In this border zone, the chief protagonist Mortimer leads a band of outlaws. An innately virtuous character, Mortimer maintains a degree of lawfulness in his party and in the region. His lieutenant Rivers, however, is an Iago-like figure who engineers the plot (in both senses of the word) of the play. Perhaps the key points to be made about Rivers are, firstly, that he has become the man he is because of events on the sea-voyage already alluded to, and secondly, that his chief purpose in the play seems to be to lure Mortimer into recreating these events back in England. The events in question – the foundational narrative, as it were, of the play – are recounted at length in Act IV Scene ii of the play. There Rivers describes how, after a promising start, his life took a fateful course when he embarked on a voyage to Syria. In the Mediterranean, the ship was becalmed. In the claustrophobic atmosphere

that ensued, Rivers became convinced that the captain was plotting against him. Matters came to a head when the ship passed 'a bare rock, narrow and white and bare', on which a party landed to dig for water (IV ii 23). Rivers and the captain quarrelled. As Rivers recounts events, the captain's 'temper was imperious, and he struck me - / A blow!' (IV ii 32-3). Rivers was enraged, but restrained himself from killing his enemy immediately. Instead, he persuaded the crew to abandon the captain on the island: the ship sailed off, leaving the captain to a certain death.

This is a narrative which draws generally upon the literature of maritime misadventure for its ingredients. Geoffrey Sanborn has traced in detail the parallels with the *Bounty* affair, but perhaps overstates his case: the key elements are also staple features of this sub-genre of Voyages and Travels.[34] Rivers' captain is abandoned alone on an island: Bligh was abandoned, with companions, in an open boat, but we can find plenty of solitary abandonments on islands in Dampier's narratives, Selkirk's marooning being just the most famous example. A further discrepancy between the *Bounty* affair and Wordsworth's narrative which Sanborn feels he has to explain away is that all eye-witnesses agree that Bligh never actually struck Fletcher Christian. As was noted in Chapter 1, however, such incidents were commonplace in this literature, constituting what I earlier termed – with Rivers' experience very much in mind – the *topos* of the unjustified blow.

The prominence given this 'Blow' by Rivers (and Wordsworth) is worth dwelling upon. In the original texts, I suggested earlier, these moments of arbitrary violence constitute flash-points which focus sharply the relationship between authority and individual freedom, and which force readers to decide who they side with in these events, the captain or the crewman. They make the reader commit to a particular reading of the whole text: typically, either an authoritarian, establishment reading which justifies the captain, or a radical, libertarian reading which justifies the individual sailor. *The Borderers*, interestingly, seems to include within itself a sense that these pivotal events are open to such starkly contrasting readings. As he describes events to Mortimer, Rivers is at pains to stress that he did wrong, and that his actions were a crime: he exclaims that the captain 'was famished, and was innocent!' (IV ii 63). At the same time, Rivers' suggestion that the captain had an 'imperious' temper

[34] Geoffrey Sanborn, 'The Madness of Mutiny: Wordsworth, the *Bounty* and *The Borderers*' in *The Wordsworth Circle* 23, 1 (Winter, 1992).

subtly directs Mortimer's response towards a more anti-authoritarian reading: Mortimer duly seeks to reassure Rivers that the captain brought his fate upon himself.

Thus Rivers, in a wild English setting that recalls the barrenness of Salisbury Plain, tells a narrative of misadventures in a maritime setting. As he does so, the reader is witness to fascinating layers of psychological complexity and duplicity. Insofar as River is admitting his guilt, and seemingly showing some remorse, he is a highly attractive figure (almost a Byronic hero ahead of his time): certainly he wins Mortimer's sympathy. Yet in the larger context of the play, we know that winning Mortimer over to his purposes is precisely what Rivers is trying to do. His contrition has a Machiavellian intent. Upon reflection, it is hard not to feel that this professed 'guilty' reading of his actions is in fact only meant as a disguise for the reading he really makes of that sea-voyage. For Rivers' narration of his own story goes on after the captain's abandonment, describing what happened when the ship finally reached Syria. There the crew, although they shared the crime, make it known that Rivers was chiefly to blame. His reputation ruined, Rivers brooded upon events and made solitary treks through the remote regions of the Middle East. In so doing, he reached a new understanding of the earlier events. Now they are read not as a crime but a liberation, the casting off of repressive conventional morality and oppressive social ties:

> I felt I had been fettered by a straw,
> I stood astonished at my self – my brain
> Was light and giddy, and it teemed with projects
> Which seemed to have no limit. (IV ii 114-7)

Or as Rivers subsequently puts it:

> I seemed a being who had passed alone
> Beyond the visible barriers of the world
> And travelled into things to come. (IV ii 133-5)

This new version of the voyage fashions the voyager as a transcendent being, a traveller journeying beyond all constraints. Such at least is Rivers' reading of his experience: Wordsworth intends the reader to recognise a different interpretation. Wordsworth's version of the voyage is one in which Rivers' crossing of boundaries, real and metaphorical, takes the voyager into morally repugnant territory. What to the voyager seems a journey into sublimity and freedom is actually, the play as a

whole suggests, a descent into cynical, self-serving amoralism. Claiming to reject conventional morality in the name of reason, Rivers is in fact driven simply by expediency and egotism: the mutineer here is very much the villain, rather than the victim, in his story.

Between the *Salisbury Plain* poems and *The Borderers*, then, there seems to have been a marked shift in Wordsworth's reading of the narrative of maritime misadventure, at least as one can reconstruct that reading from the rewriting he effects, in his own poetry, of this sub-genre of travel writing. In the *Salisbury Plain* poems, we have a metaphoric substructure which turns walkers into shipwreck victims, and which gives them certain affinities with mutineers whilst still finding them largely sympathetic. By the time of *The Borderers*, however, we have moved to a more explicit reading and rewriting of maritime misadventure which clearly condemns the mutineer, and which stresses the danger – although also the dangerous attraction – of such anarchic impulses. As Sanborn notes, it is as if Wordsworth in *The Borderers* is repudiating not only his earlier Godwinianism, but also his own involvement in the *Bounty* affair, which led him to side with Edward and Fletcher Christian.[35] It is a repudiation which seems also to have consequences more generally for the way in which Wordsworth depicts travellers, and arguably even for the way in which he himself travels. Hereafter in Wordsworth's writing, an air of contagion or pollution seems to cling to long voyages and remote regions. Those who travel in these parts of the world face moral as much as physical dangers, and risk a Rivers-like fall into corruption or madness: think of the youth in 'Ruth', and later the Solitary in *The Excursion* (to be discussed in more detail later). Often, moreover, this is specifically a madness that takes the form of excessive idealism, a revolutionary fervour that works itself out in violence. It is in this spirit that Wordsworth, revisiting and rewriting *The Borderers* in 1842, changed the name of Rivers to Oswald. The new name is a reference to John Oswald, another notorious 'fellow-traveller' in the French Revolutionary cause. Although he had served in the British army in India, Oswald's political radicalism took him to France in the early 1790s (where Wordsworth may have met him). There he fought, and died, for the Revolution.[36] The British press generally portrayed him as a bloodthirsty, treacherous villain, identifying one cause of his fall into political madness as his

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[35] See Sanborn, p. 35.
[36] David Erdman, *Commerce Des Lumieres: John Oswald and the British in Paris* (Columbia, 1986). Oswald was also a fervent vegetarian, another practice that combined exoticism with political radicalism in the eyes of many: see Timothy Morton's *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge, 1994).

exposure to exotic influences during his time in India. One contemporary recalled that 'he lived a considerable time with some Brahmins, who turned his head.'[37] The *European Magazine* wrote:

> In the year 1783 he left India, and returned by land to England. His predominant passion for travel, and burning avidity to survey mankind under various points of view, determined him to trace out for himself a new route. He directed his course to the more northern and mountainous parts of Turkey, and pitched his tent for some time among the barbarous hordes of Turkomans and Curdees, whom for many years no traveller has visited except himself and the celebrated *walking Stuart*.[38]

Recalling the discussion earlier in this section, one should note here Oswald's connection with the 'celebrated *walking Stuart*'. The 'passion for travel' which took Oswald, and presumably Stuart, to India seems to this writer a dangerous thing, and with this verdict the mature Wordsworth would probably have agreed. If one is to talk, as David Collings does, of underlying 'figural structures' in Wordsworth's writing, one should acknowledge from the late 1790s a recurrent sense of the menace of the long, ambitious journey: the far-flung voyage becomes frequently a trope for the journey into political extremism and personal madness.

This shift in the 'figural structure' or 'tropological dynamic' underpinning Wordworth's poetry can also be understood as a shift in the script which Wordsworth brings to bear on both his own travelling and that of his poetic travellers. With regard to his own travelling, the changing Wordsworthian travel script reveals itself in the abandonment of those youthful walking tours, which were often such major undertakings. As Robin Jarvis has noted, the early tours are different in character from the tours and travels Wordsworth tends to make in his maturity.[39] The earlier journeys have a more overtly restless, adventurous quality, and an open-ended aspect, since Wordsworth as he makes them has not yet settled definitively in any part of England (indeed, he has not yet settled definitively into any chosen career). In France in 1790, or in Wales in 1791, Wordsworth travelled with only an obscure sense of what he would be returning to, and with an uncertain sense of 'home'. From 1799, of course, the return to the Lake District famously recorded in *Home at Grasmere* (written 1800) does provide the traveller with this fixed point of origin, and with a home where all subsequent journeys will both begin and end. As *Home at Grasmere* would have it,

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[37] Henry Redhead Yorke, *Letters from France in 1802* (London, 1804), p. 161.
[38] Quoted in Erdman, p. 32.
[39] See Jarvis, p. 90.

the poet had been reunited in 1794, another key factor in

s life – walk back to Grasmere to discover almost an

*omphalos*, a still point at the centre of the turning world. Grasmere is

> A termination and a last retreat,
> A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
> A whole without dependence or defect,
> Made for itself and happy in itself,
> Perfect contentment, Unity entire.[40]

The return to Grasmere evinces a circularity and completeness in the life, as Wordsworth comes back to the place of his childhood, and this temporal circle is echoed spatially, as Wordsworth positions himself 'within the bounds of this huge Concave' which is the Vale of Grasmere. In contrast to the wilful transgressiveness of Rivers, 'bounds' are here construed as sheltering and protective, necessary limits beyond which lay extremity (and extremism). This is a new understanding which scripts not only Wordsworth's writing of journeys, but also his actual travelling. The first poem of the *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803* closes by pointing us to a 'way … / That winds into itself for sweet return'.[41] Hereafter, Wordsworthian journeys are predicated on such returns: his tours have a circular quality, and are thus in a sense more genuinely touristic, given the etymology of the word 'tour'.

From extremism to moderation, from the linear to the circular journey, from the crossing of boundaries to the celebration of them: all such formulations of the shift in Wordsworth's thinking and practice can be usefully embraced within the thesis advanced by Theresa Kelley in *Wordsworth's Revisionary Aesthetics*. Kelley emphasises the turn in Wordsworth from the sublime to the beautiful. Against the line of Apocalyptic readings by figures such as Harold Bloom, M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Hartman, who describe a Wordsworth wholly committed to a sublime self-fashioning, Kelley argues that 'beauty's capacity to supplant the sublime is the critical point in Wordsworth's aesthetics … Although first and necessary to the mind, the sublime is succeeded by the beautiful, which promotes the categories and limits of conscious life and poetic expression.'[42] As Kelley sees it,

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[40] *Home at Grasmere*, ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca, New York, 1977), Ms. B, ll. 166-70.
[41] 'Departure From the Vale of Grasmere', ll. 31-2, in *WPW*.
[42] Kelley, p. 42.

Wordsworth increasingly conforms to the injunction that he gives himself in *Home at Grasmere*: 'be mild and love all gentle things' (943). Obeying this imperative, however, is not always as straightforward as it might seem. Wordsworth may now eschew the extremism of his earlier political, poetical and travelling self, but his writing from this date also makes amply clear that the turn to the beautiful from the sublime can never be a once-and-for-all decision, neatly settled and done with. In the remarks just cited, Kelley arguably overstates her case. It is not, perhaps, in the nature of the sublime to be so easily accommodated within the beautiful, nor is the sublime simply *prior* to the beautiful in Wordsworth's poetry. *Home at Grasmere* is a case in point. Against that injunction, towards the close of the poem, to 'be mild and love all gentle things,' one must set the claim made shortly afterwards, that even within the clearly delimited boundaries of Grasmere there remain 'bounds to be leapt and darkness to explore' (948). As the poem continues:

> That which enflamed thy infant heart – the love,
> The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest –
> These shall survive, though changed their office, these
> Shall live. (949-52)

Within the boundedness of the beautiful, there exists a pressure pushing against those bounds. The implicit linearity of the 'undaunted quest' informs, and renders more complex, the circular trajectory of Wordsworth's subsequent tours. It is this creative tension that inaugurates the characteristic doubling, discussed at the outset of this chapter, of place and situation. Whilst Wordsworth's travelling – his daily rambles, his longer excursive tours to Scotland, the Continent and Italy, in 1803, 1820 and 1837 respectively – may increasingly be construed in terms circumspection and circumscription, within the circularity described by the Wordsworthian traveller remote settings and extreme situations retain a figurative presence. The metaphoricity of these settings and situations functions as a sort of *cordon sanitaire* around them; the fact that the figures exist at all constitutes a continuing engagement with other sorts of travel narrative, and an ongoing self-dramatisation into alternative travel personae. And in this way the situations of maritime misadventure, and the figure of the misadventurer in all his various forms, maintain a shaping, scripting presence in Wordsworth's travel, and in his representations of travel.

Another way of putting this would be to suggest that while Wordsworth begins to fashion for himself another travel script in the late 1790s, it is often still a travel script assembled from the same source material as the earlier script. Wordsworth seeks to make his travelling bear a very different meaning, but he typically articulates those new meanings through the same *topoi* and images that he used previously. Wordsworth's refusal to let go of the narrative of maritime misadventure speaks of the sheer power of that genre over his imagination; it speaks also of the capacity of the genre to lend itself to two highly contrasting readings, as discussed in Chapter 1. Yet it also perhaps speaks of certain elements of guilt and complicity in Wordsworth himself. In *The Excursion*, the Solitary, who had once been a fervent supporter of the French Revolution, ponders anxiously what might have happened had he left Britain for France:

> The tranquil shores
> Of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps
> I might have been entangled among deeds,
> Which now, as infamous, I should abhor –
> Despise, as senseless.[43]

Wordsworth himself, of course, had left those circumscribing 'tranquil shores', had been a fellow-traveller in the French cause, and had issued at the close of 'Salisbury Plain' what comes dangerously close to a call to arms. To the mature Wordsworth, these were all perhaps actions requiring a degree of expiation. This element of guiltiness arguably adds a new layer of meaning to Wordsworth's ritualistic, repetitive walking in later life: there is perhaps a penance to be paid, and shriving to be sought, in the gruelling, ascetic practice of Wordsworthian walking. Further to this, in the representation of those walks there is an ongoing negotiation to be made with the imagery and narratives that originally scripted Wordsworth's travelling. The travel narratives, literal and figurative, of Wordsworth's early career must be rewritten, and made to reveal new shapes and to bear new meanings. Wordsworth sticks with the persona of the misadventurer not just to punish himself, but also to fashion anew what it means to be a misadventurer. By the 1810s, travelling in this uncomfortable manner seems to bear political meanings which are almost diametrically opposed to

[43] *The Excursion*, Book 3, ll. 812-26, in *WPW*.

the politics Wordsworth espoused in the early 1790s. *En route* to this political turn-around, however, Wordsworth seems to read and write the figure of the misadventurer in ways which are conspicuously *a*-political – although such a purging of politics can, of course, be in itself a resoundingly political act.

## Shipwreck, Providence and Poetic Election: *The Prelude*

*The Prelude* is at many levels a poem about travel. First and foremost, of course, it is the poem of Wordsworth's own life, but it is a life largely told as a sequence of actual journeys, ranging in scale from the great treks across the Alps and up Snowdon, in Books 6 and 13 respectively, to the many small incidents which are said to have occurred as Wordsworth was walking the Cumbrian countryside. Further to this, metaphors of travel are frequently invoked to describe the course of Wordsworth's life, and also the course of the poem in both composition and narration. As a result, there is repeatedly in *The Prelude* a fusion of literal and symbolic travelling. To explicate all of these, in all their layers of meaning, would be a daunting task: my aim in this section is simply to show how *The Prelude* and the journeys described in it, are haunted by earlier travellers, and in particular, by earlier misadventurers. In *The Prelude* as in *The Borderers*, we find a continuing engagement with accounts of shipwreck and similar travelling disasters, yet also a subtle modification of that source material so as to make it bear new meanings. A new shape is thus brought to Wordsworth's life, and to the journeys that he makes both in actuality and on the page.

To see how Wordsworth's travelling in *The Prelude* is haunted by other travellers, it is best to begin at the end, with the ascent of Snowdon that provides the conclusion to all versions of the poem after it was expanded from its early two part form. Behind this mountain ascent, of course, stands that mass of subtle generic pressures that were discussed in my introduction in relation to Keats's desire to climb mountains: the Biblical example of Moses, the more recent triumphs of Enlightenment mountaineers and the like. Yet a subtly different generic influence, and a different sort of travel narrative, also haunts the conclusion to *The Prelude*, as one can see when one looks at what was supposed to happen *after* the ascent of Snowdon, in the first expanded version of *The*

*Prelude*. When first written in 1804, the Snowdon episode modulated into a long sequence known today as the 'Analogy Passage'. Preserved in MS. W, this fragment of some 140 lines consists for about half its length of a detailed reworking of incidents in the travels of Columbus, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Mungo Park and William Dampier. These incidents Wordsworth took from accounts of Columbus and Gilbert contained in Awnsham and Churchill's *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704) and Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589) respectively, and from Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799) and Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (1697). The Analogy Passage is thus the most sustained, explicit and revealing use of travel literature in Wordsworth's writing. That this was material that mattered to Wordsworth may be deduced from the 'considerable care', as editor Duncan Wu puts it, that was spent in the revision of the whole passage: at the same time, it seems to have been the section dealing with travel that Wordsworth particularly valued.[44] After revision, it was the lines describing Columbus, Gilbert and Park that were recopied into MS W, which would suggest that it was these lines which were for the longest period destined for *The Prelude*. Eventually, however, the entire passage was jettisoned by Wordsworth, and the Analogy Passage was consigned to a ghostly fate as the conclusion that *The Prelude* never had – an idea I shall elaborate upon in what follows.[45]

The purpose of the Analogy Passage is to expand upon the nature of the 'higher mind' (13.90) that Wordsworth has had revealed to him at the summit of Snowdon. That mind is further described by Wordsworth finding analogies, or 'living pictures' (AP, 32), for the way it works, firstly from his own experience and secondly from experiences that he has read about, the experiences of Columbus, Gilbert, Park and Dampier. The precise nature of the higher mind's operations need not concern us: what is most pertinent for my thesis is another level of analogy at work here. Wordsworth's own travel experiences modulate easily into the experiences of other travellers, experiences available to Wordsworth through earlier travel texts. From the arduous climb up Snowdon, in which Wordsworth 'panted up', 'with forehead bent / Earthward, as in opposition set / Against an enemy'

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[44] Duncan Wu (ed.), *The Five-Book Prelude* (Oxford, 1997), p. 197.
[45] As these introductory remarks suggest, the Analogy Passage has a complex textual history. It was first published by de Selincourt in 1926, who based his version on the revised and recopied form of the passage. Abrams, Wordsworth and Gill in the Norton *Prelude* offer a reconstruction of the base text or unrevised version; more recently Duncan Wu's edition of *The Five-Book Prelude* follows de Selincourt in attempting to present the more finished version. In what follows, I use the version of the passage found in Wu.

(13.29-31), we move to the memory of a horse ride in the Lake District, during which the poet witnessed a rainbow above a storm-tossed Lake Coniston, then to a memory of a walk 'in the public way', revealing a strange vision of a horse eerily lit by moonlight, and thence to the episodes in the travels of Columbus and the others. Wordsworth's own travelling and that of these more celebrated travellers are thus seemingly of a piece. Analogous with these prior texts, Wordsworth's own experience has implicitly the same shape, and should yield the same meanings.

To understand the meaning thus being sought in the travel experience, it is necessary to look more closely at the scenes Wordsworth chooses to rework from the earlier travel narratives. For convenience, I will quote this part of the Analogy Passage in full, supplying line numbers according to the Wu edition:

> To these appearances which Nature thrusts
> Upon our notice – her own naked work,
> Self-wrought, unaided by the human mind –
> Add others more imperious, those I mean
> Which on our sight she forces, calling man
> To give new grandeur to her ministry,
> Man suffering or enjoying. Meanest minds
> Want not these monuments, though overlooked
> And little prized, and books are full of them.
> Such power – to pass at once from daily life,
> And our inevitable sympathy
> With passions mingled up before our eyes –
> Such presence is acknowledged when we trace
> The history of Columbus. Think of him
> And of his followers when, in unknown seas
> Far travelled, they first saw the needle take
> Another course and, faltering in its office,
> Turn from the Pole. Such object doth present
> (To those who read the story at their ease)
> Sir Humphrey Gilbert, that bold voyager,
> When after one disastrous wreck he took
> His station in the pinnace, for the sake
> Of honour and her crew's encouragement,
> And they who followed in the second ship,
> The larger brigantine which he had left,
> Beheld him while amid the storm he sate
> Upon the open deck of his small bark
> In calmness with a book upon his knee –
> To use the language of the Chronicle,
> A soldier of Christ Jesus, undismayed –
> The ship and he, a moment afterwards,
> Engulfed and seen no more.
> Like spectacle
> Doth that traveller, living yet, appear
> To the mind's eye, when, from the Moors escaped,

Alone, and in the heart of Africa,
And, having sunk to earth, worn out with pain
And weariness that took at length away
The sense of life, he found when he awaked
His horse in quiet, standing at his side,
His arm within the bridle, and the sun
Setting upon the desert. Kindred power
Is with us, in the suffering of that time,
When, flying in his Nicobar canoe
With three Malayan helpers, Dampier saw
Well in those portents (the broken wheel
Girding the sun, and afterwards the sea
Roaring and whitening at the night's approach),
And danger coming on – not in a shape
Which, in the heat and mettle of the blood,
He oft had welcomed, but considerate,
With dread and leisurely solemnity.
Bitter repentance for his roving life
Seized then upon the vent'rous mariner,
Made calm at length by prayer and trust in God.
Meanwhile the bark went forward like an arrow,
Shot from a bow, the wind for many hours
Her steersman, but a slackening of the storm
Encouraged them at length to cast a look
Upon the compass, by a lighted match
Made visible, which they in their distress
Kept burning for the purpose. Thus they fared
Sitting all night upon the lap of death
In wet and starveling plight, wishing for dawn,
A dawn that came at length, with gloomy clouds
Covering the horizon, the first glimpses
Far from the horizon's edge, high up in heaven –
High dawn, prognosticating winds as high.[46]

There are two main points to be made about the episodes selected by Wordsworth for this passage, episodes which his own travelling has at some level re-enacted. Firstly, one should note that at the conclusion of his poem and at a moment potentially of triumph, when the poet stands on top of Snowdon and seems to glimpse the possibility of transcendence, Wordsworth eschews more straightforward scenes of accomplishment in travel. From Columbus, he might have chosen the discovery of America: from Park, the glimpse of the Niger which in terms of worldly goals resolves his quest. Wordsworth's interest, however, is elsewhere, in moments of panic and suffering and in scenes of natural violence: in short, in travel construed as misadventure. This emphasis is congruous with his own experience as he has fashioned it here, according to which the ascent of Snowdon is

[46] Printed as Appendix 1 of Wu, *Five-Book Prelude*.

highly strenuous, and the storm over Lake Coniston terrifying in its violence: leaves were 'rent' from leaves, 'horse and rider staggered in the blast' and the like. Travelling is construed as a difficult and often dangerous business, and Wordsworth's own travelling as much as that of the more celebrated travellers bears witness, albeit in a more muted manner, to this fact.

The second point to made, of course, runs somewhat counter to the first. If these are not moments of overt triumph, they are more subtly scenes of spiritual victory. From Gilbert, Park and Dampier at least, Wordsworth has selected passages which constitute, in my earlier phrase, conclusive scenes, scenes which establish conclusions not only in the sense of endings but also in the sense of inferences. In all three of these narratives, both the life and the text fall into place at the scenes selected by Wordsworth. Gilbert's death perfects the life: Park and Dampier's life-threatening experiences reveal to them the proper shape of their lives, and the shaping influence of Providence in those lives (an influence that Dampier for one has been scandalously neglecting up to this point). As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, these are accordingly moments of revelation for both traveller and reader, moments when the personal travel narrative is incorporated into the larger narrative which is the spiritual journey of mankind. In that larger narrative, the individual's suffering is revealed as God's chastisement, a chastisement only made of those in whom he takes a special interest. Suffering becomes a mark of election, and election a guarantee that the traveller will survive. He may not survive in this world, of course. Park and Dampier face their ends and struggle on: Gilbert's example reminds us that one may have to meet one's end in this world to achieve immortality in the next.

This, then, is the template into which Wordsworth in *The Prelude* wants to fit his own travelling, both that undertaken literally on Snowdon and that undertaken metaphorically in a life construed as a journey. Reverting to the terminology of my first epigraph, it would seem that here the accounts of Columbus, Gilbert, Park and Dampier are the 'affecting Stories' Wordsworth wishes to re-enact, and the apocalyptic denouements of the latter three, at least, are conclusive 'last Chapters' that he wishes to journey towards. That said, one should note that Wordsworth at this stage of his career borrows the template, rather than the full Christian substance, of the Providential travel narrative. As Wordsworth puts it in 1805, the 'mighty mind' that he imagines is one

> that feeds upon infinity,

That is exalted by an underpresence,
The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
Or vast in its own being. (13.70-3)

Those alternatives maintain a little distance between Wordsworth and an orthodox Christian viewpoint: they allow the possibility that the mind's transcendence owes nothing to a supernatural deity but rather derives from its own sublime and supernatural faculties. Indeed, whilst Wordsworth is undoubtedly interested in using the Providential template to signal his own survival through all vicissitudes, one might plausibly argue that the poetry itself, as much as any God, will be the agency that achieves that immortality. In this vein, it is a somewhat de-Christianised moment of salvation that Wordsworth fashions when he reworks another highly Providential travel narrative, John Newton's *Authentic Narrative*. In Book 6, Wordsworth creates the following extended simile from Newton's travails:

And as I have read of one by shipwreck thrown
With fellow sufferers whom the waves had spared
Upon a region uninhabited,
An island of the deep, who having brought
To land a single volume and no more –
A treatise of geometry – was used,
Although of food and clothing destitute,
And beyond common wretchedness depressed,
To part from company and take this book ,
Then first a self-taught pupil in those truths,
To spots remote and corners of the isle
By the seaside, and draw his diagrams
With a long stick upon the sand, and thus
Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
Forget his feeling: even so [...] (6.160-74)

Again, it is the traveller's suffering which Wordsworth recalls from his reading in travel literature, and again this suffering is contemplated in connection with the mind's capacity to transcend and resist it. In Wordsworth's version, however, that transcendence is not expressed in an explicitly Christian rhetoric. It is a Platonic realm of abstract, ideal forms that is emphasised: this is literally true to this specific passage, but it is less true, perhaps, to the Evangelical spirit of that Newton's text as a whole.

It is thus not so much traces of Christian election that Wordsworth is anxious to read, and to write, into his own arduous travel experience, as it is poetic election. Arguably, this is one reason why

Wordsworth was climbing Snowdon in 1791 in the first place. As Wordsworth would have known from Thomas Pennant, whom he made a point of visiting on this tour, local tradition claimed that a night spent on this 'Parnassus' of the Ancient Britons conferred poetic genius.[47] Understanding the ascent of Snowdon thus, as a pilgrimage performed to his art rather than to God, helps to explain Wordsworth's decision to drop the Analogy Passage from the expanded 1805 version of *The Prelude*. A more orthodox religious quest would not be weakened by finding evidence of the same underlying typological pattern in the lives of other travellers: a quest for personal creativity and originality, however, is somewhat diminished once one perceives the presence of prior texts shaping the artist's supposedly unmediated vision. Further to this, there are also perhaps stresses apparent in the passage itself which for Wordsworth necessitated its omission. In the adaptation of Dampier, in particular, there is a sense in which Wordsworth seems to be drawn excessively into his source material. The poet arguably becomes entangled with Dampier's *New Voyage*, rather than imposing a meaning on it and using that meaning, in turn, to impose form on his own text. The reason for this may lie in the rather unsatisfactory nature of Dampier's conclusive scene as it stands in the context of his whole narrative. As has been discussed already, this scene was something of a fabrication on Dampier's part, fashioned to create the appropriate ending for a rambling and morally questionable sequence of events. Perhaps as a result, there is something inadequate about it, an inadequacy that one can feel as a reader whether or not one knows the details of its composition. It feels tacked on, and seems incommensurate with the sprawl of detail and event that has preceded it. The typological structure Dampier suddenly invokes cannot contain the experiences hitherto described: because of this, perhaps, Wordsworth too is somewhat at sea here poetically. Repetition and tautology in explication, Jonathan Lamb has suggested in connection with Job's sufferings in the Bible, can signal a failure or unwillingness to impose interpretation: the commentator cannot (or will not) abandon the particularity of the experience described so as to identify a more abstract pattern which supposedly makes sense of it.[48] Wordsworth similarly seems unable to extricate himself from the particularity of Dampier's experience in the Analogy Passage. Displaying within itself an uneasiness with conclusions, Wordsworth's adaptation of Dampier works up to Dampier's contrition and conversion

[47] See Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, 1770*, 2 Vols. (London, 1778), Vol. 2, p. 168.
[48] Jonathan Lamb, *The Rhetoric of Suffering: Reading the Book of Job in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1995).

– but then goes on. When the passage breaks off, one storm has been weathered, but another is on its way: what correspondence, therefore, between the inward spiritual state and the outward state of nature? An account attempting to convey a conclusive moment in a life modulates into a detailed retelling of the events of that life; the verse becomes entangled in the mere repetitiousness of existence, a repetitiousness mirrored verbally in those closing lines when 'dawn' follows 'dawn', 'horizon' 'horizon' and so forth. Another form of repetition is also taking place: many phrases here are taken directly from Dampier's account, causing some critics to speculate that Wordsworth must have had a copy of the *New Voyage* open before him as he wrote. Insofar as Wordsworth can only repeat Dampier's travails, rather than explicate them, however, he is unable to find solace in, nor to solace his reader with, a postulated Providential order – and so the passage simply breaks off.

For this reason, perhaps, Wordsworth did not recopy the Dampier section of the Analogy Passage into MS. W. In time, the whole passage was dropped, the principal reason being, I have suggested, that it weakens the force of Wordsworth's own experience by revealing the rhetorical and narrative structures shaping the representation of that experience. Yet whilst the antecedents are suppressed, they clearly exercise a shaping influence on this narration of a journey. When he retraced in 1804 his 1791 tour – and possibly when he conducted that tour in the first place – Wordsworth plotted that journey as the analogue of a narrative of Providential misadventure, intending it to reveal, as the 'last Chapter' of an 'affecting Story', a moment in which the self achieves transcendence through suffering.

This 'last Chapter', however, is constantly being deferred and forestalled as Wordsworth revisits *The Prelude* over the course of his life. When Wordsworth dropped the Analogy Passage, he also expanded the projected five-book *Prelude* into 13 books. Subsequently, the 13-book *Prelude* would grow to the 14 books of the 1850 version. Expanding the work, significantly, Wordsworth does not simply continue the narrative *after* the ascent of Snowdon. Rather, this scene, shorn of the Analogy Passage, remains the poem's conclusion, and it is the body of the narrative, leading up to this conclusive scene, that keeps being added to. There are certain affinities here with Wordsworth's plotting of journeys as described in the first epigraph to this chapter. There is a conclusion to be reached, and a crucial 'last Chapter' to the 'affecting Story', but that ending must have been prepared

for by a proper attentiveness to the process of getting there. In the epigraph, one cannot easily decide which matters more to Wordsworth: the route, or the place to which the route leads the traveller, and this dual emphasis in Wordsworth necessitates a qualification of Geoffrey Hartman's famous reading of Wordsworth's poetry in terms of the motif of the 'halted traveller'.[49] It is the effort to get there as much as the halt that matters, the journey as much as the destination. The expansion of *The Prelude* may be said to enact this dual emphasis. On the one hand, there is the fixed, prescribed ending to be written towards, the moment of apocalyptic revelation (in the somewhat secularised Providential framework Wordsworth adopts) and of *anagnoresis* (to invoke an Aristotlean framework). On the other hand, that ending is to be deferred as the narrative attempts always to assimilate more and more matter, bringing more and more potentially contingent, unruly experience into the pattern that it creates. Incorporating this experience into the overall pattern may prove difficult: it may be resistant to that pattern, and to the meanings the poet seeks to impose upon it. This is the sort of ongoing effort, a constant need to risk (but therein to demonstrate) a writerly or imaginative strength, that leads Geoffrey Galt Harpham to identify powerful ascetic impulses in certain modes of composition.[50] Within the terms of my own discussion, however, one might more usefully consider it the analogue in writing to the difficult, gruelling and sometimes dangerous process Wordsworth seeks in travel: it is arguably poetic composition construed as misadventure.

Nowhere are these tensions, and this effort, more apparent than in the crossing of the Alps episode in Book 6. Written in 1804, not long after the Analogy Passage, and constituting a second poetic retracing of Wordsworth's 1790 tour with Robert Jones (after *Descriptive Sketches*), the crossing of the Alps is in some ways a climactic moment in the poem: as Alan Liu has said, it is 'one of a handful of paradigms capable of representing the poet's work'.[51] In other ways, however, it is no climax at all. Located at the mid-point of the poem and prefiguring the ascent of Snowdon in the final book, the passage gives greater weight to the poem's conclusion by showing us a mountain ascent that was not conclusive in the expected way, an ascent that in fact was powerfully anti-climactic. Anticipating a moment of sublimity and conquest as they stand atop the Alps, Wordsworth

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[49] Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry*, pp. 3-30.
[50] See Harpham, pp.
[51] Alan Liu, 'The History in "Imagination"', in Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: a Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1995), p. 85.

and Jones are dismayed to discover that they have crossed the Alps inadvertently. There has been no crowning moment of glory. The journey in actuality has not revealed the shape desired either by traveller or poet: it has not followed the prescribed script.

However, this is not the end of the matter. From this apparent defeat, Wordsworth conjures victory in his famous apostrophe to the Imagination. Viewing the episode retrospectively, he makes it bear a shape that accords with the patterns he is seeking to impose on his life as a whole. Imagination, working with hindsight, makes the incident a testament to its own power of passing beyond the natural world to imagine things that cannot be. 'Hope', 'effort', 'expectation', 'desire' and the sense of 'something evermore about to be': from these aspiring faculties, destined always to be disappointed in this world, we learn that 'our destiny, our nature, and our home / Is with infinitude, and only there' (6.538-42). It is a subtle point, and a circuitous method by which to assimilate, into the pattern of one's life, a moment which does not reveal that pattern: it might be thought of as an inverted or antithetical typology. Be that as it may, a defeat is worked through and made to yield a victory. Invoking Oliver Wendell Holmes again, one might talk of a 'fall' followed by a 'self-recovery'. Further to this, moreover, the logic advanced by Wordsworth here is one which makes such defeats and falls the inevitable feature of experience in general, and of the travel experience in particular. It is precisely these defeats in this world that paradoxically betoken survival in the next – although again one should note that this is not explicitly survival with God, but rather the survival of sublime human faculties, principally the imagination.

The crossing of the Alps thus possesses the same internal logic as the Analogy Passage, construing misadventure and setback in travel as marks of our special status, the inevitable and ennobling consequence of our possession of immortal, transcendent faculties. Unlike the Analogy Passage, Wordsworth does not invoke directly the literature of misadventure, choosing not to bolster (or dilute?) his own experience with reference back to a prior text. Yet there is an earlier traveller haunting this section of *The Prelude*, as Columbus, Gilbert, Park and Dampier may be said to haunt the final book of the poem. Interestingly, if the latter four travellers provide a template into which Wordsworth attempts to fit his own experience, the traveller that ghosts Book 6 seems to be more of

an influence that Wordsworth is trying to disavow. An example that Wordsworth is writing *against*, his narrative provides a script for the travel experience that Wordsworth is anxious *not* to re-enact.

The traveller in question is James Bruce. In 1804, as Wordsworth was writing Book 6, the second edition of Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* was published. As was discussed in Chapter 2, this edition did much to salvage Bruce's reputation, and at the very least re-established Bruce as a topic for contemporary debate. Southey, living close by Wordsworth in Keswick, was preparing a lengthy review of the new edition for *Aikin's Annual Review* even as Wordsworth was composing the crossing of the Alps. For these reasons (and others outlined by Alan Liu) it seems highly likely that Wordsworth in 1804 was familiar with Bruce's story and reputation. Given this familiarity, one might suspect that Wordsworth, at some level, had Bruce in mind when he closed his apostrophe to the Imagination with the following reference to the Nile:

> The mind beneath such banners militant
> Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
> That may attest its own prowess, blest in thoughts
> That are their own perfection and reward –
> Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
> Which hides it like the overflowing Nile. (6.543-8)

This is a reference that is expanded, and made more explicitly about the Nile's source, in the 1850 *Prelude*, where we read of 'the mighty flood of Nile / Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds / To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain' (6.614-6). The possible connection with Bruce here is strengthened when one recognises that there are striking analogies between Bruce's discovery of the Nile's source, the 'climactic' moment of his narrative, and the would-be climax that is Wordsworth's crossing of the Alps, crucially in the fact that both are powerfully *anti*-climactic passages. Bruce finds the source only to label himself a Don Quixote and to banter with his servant. Left to himself, he falls into melancholy. Thereafter, there is of course the sorry tale of Bruce's reception in England, which adds further ironies to the supposedly heroic discovery. Bruce, in short, is a traveller whose expectations are cruelly deflated: thus far, at least, his experience may be said to underwrite Wordsworth's experience in crossing the Alps.

Yet Wordsworth, as we have seen, fashions a victory from this defeat, and in so doing, I would suggest, he subtly rejects the model provided by Bruce. Bruce's narrative, I argued in Chapter 2, is a

highly unstable edifice. It oscillates wildly in tone, slipping occasionally into sarcasm whilst fluctuating principally between a self-promoting grandiloquence and a self-abasing melancholia. It is somewhat histrionic, a term I use deliberately and with attention to its etymology: Bruce's *Travels* is a text that one could describe as having certain supposedly feminine attributes, as those were understood at the time. It evinces a constantly changing mood, and a mood that is constantly prone to excess, tendencies which establish, I shall suggest in the next chapter, some fascinating affinities between Bruce and Byron. Wordsworth's attitude towards such habits of mind (and travel), however, is very different from Byron's. As he declares in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, that manifesto on how the Imagination should be exercised: 'I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject'.[52] The apostrophe on Imagination that follows the crossing of the Alps is the product of this steady gaze, the disciplined application of 'habits of meditation' and of reflecting 'long and deeply' on the original experience.[53] A control is imposed, and the extravagance and waywardness of Bruce's example avoided – and the vaingloriousness of Bruce's more hubristic moments, we should note, could plausibly be what Wordsworth is thinking of when he rejects the mind that parades 'spoils and trophies' and thinks only of 'aught / That may attest its prowess'.

There is a further nuance to Wordsworth's rejection of Bruce that should also be mentioned. Alan Liu has discussed in some detail the scene in which Bruce, having just 'discovered' the Nile's source, becomes dejected and begins to compare the Nile unfavourably to rivers back home in Scotland. Liu suggests that the passage to some extent converts Bruce's journey from quest to tour. The object of the 'quest' is revealed as delusory and inadequate, and the mind recoils in a circular trajectory back to where it started from: nothing momentous has been achieved, and there will be no lasting change in the traveller. Wordsworth works in the opposite direction, making a seemingly touristic moment, potentially quotidian and banal, yield a more epic meaning. Tour gives way to quest – and in this regard we might recall the lines from *Home at Grasmere* which closed the last section, and which suggested that within sheltering bounds and strategies of containment there will persist the 'undaunted quest … though changed [its] office'.

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[52] *WLB*, p. 251.
[53] *WLB*, p. 246.

To conclude this section, we should note that it is not simply the Wordsworthian quest that has 'changed [its] office'. Travel literature of the misadventurous sort, and especially the account of maritime misadventure, clearly remains a powerful influence on Wordsworth's writing, and implicitly on his travelling as well. Still his poetry works to fashion the sense that Wordsworth as traveller recapitulates in some way the sufferings of travellers in more remote regions and more extreme situations. Yet the manner in which this source material is reworked, and the meanings drawn from it, are significantly different. Increasingly Wordsworth looks to the Providential strand of misadventure, or makes the Providential reading of ambiguous texts such as Dampier's, albeit in a somewhat secularised fashion at this stage of his career. In the process, Wordsworth's reading, and writing, of the narrative of misadventure becomes depoliticised: gone are the radical implications of the suffering traveller that were implicit in the early to mid-1790s. In time, and in later Wordsworthian texts such as *The Excursion*, political meanings will again accrue to this *topos*. At this later point in his career, however, it is a very different political position that Wordsworth articulates through the discipline of arduous travel.

## Cultivation, Colonialism and Christianity: Wordsworth's Later Travelling

In this section I shall discuss the characteristic patterns of Wordsworth's travelling, and writing about travel, in the years after his return to the Lake District. In particular, I shall explore the various and sometimes conflicting meanings seemingly invested in the act of walking. I stress a degree of contradiction from the outset, because we should not forget that walking constitutes a 'practice', as Bourdieu has discussed that term, rather than a fully conscious process. That said, it is possible to map out the most characteristic meanings that Wordsworth applied to his walking, and to his travelling more generally, and a useful way to approach these meanings – the scripts, as it were, that Wordsworth applied to his walks – is through the poem 'When, to the attractions of the busy world'. Begun in 1800 and completed in 1802, this poem was intended to form part of the sequence 'Poems on the Naming of Places' – in the present context, a resonant title and theme.

In 'When, to the attractions of the busy world', the poet recalls a winter during which he would often resort, during his daily walks, to a nearby fir-grove, where he would shelter from the elements and muse. His enjoyment of the grove was hampered in one regard, however, for whilst there was room enough to stand amidst the trees, there was not space to walk. The trees were 'so thickly planted' and so grown together in 'perplexed and intricate array' that there was no way to pass between them.[54] Frustrated by this sense of constraint, the poet in time ceased to frequent the grove. Returning in spring, however, he is surprised to find 'a hoary pathway traced between the trees, / [...] winding on with such an easy line / Along a natural opening' (48-50). Its existence is soon explained. The poet's brother – here a 'Sailor' and in actuality John Wordsworth, captain of the *Abergavenny* – has recently been staying with him, and must have created the new track.

> He had surveyed it with a finer eye,
> A heart more wakeful; and had worn the track
> By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
> In that habitual restlessness of foot
> That haunts the Sailor, measuring o'er and o'er
> His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
> While she pursues her course through the dreary sea. (60-66)

Here again we see a characteristic doubling of situation in the Wordsworthian landscape. The Sailor's walking in the fir-grove recapitulates his walking on his ship, as that ship voyages in some far-away sea. Here, however, this doubling seems to produce a much more optimistic range of meanings than those I have earlier discussed. The Sailor's influence in the domestic landscape is clearly beneficial: having 'surveyed' the grove, he goes on to open it up, through his walking, for his brother's pleasure. A domestic version of exploration is implicitly taking place here, but it is exploration construed not as violent acquisition or aggressive penetration, but as a respectful attentiveness to the potentialities of place. And if the doubling effect of Wordsworth's poetry moves one way, to make the walk in the grove a re-enactment of the Sailor's more extensive voyaging, it also moves the other way, to make the Sailor's voyages the repetition of the gentle, improving process enacted in the grove. This connection is strengthened in the poem's closing section, in which the poet couples himself and the Sailor so that they move in parallel:

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[54] 'When, to the attractions of the busy world', ll. 34-5 in *WPW*.

while Thou,
Muttering the verses which I muttered first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path; - for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine. (98-106)

By the poem's close, it is also worth noting, the roles performed by Poet and Sailor have seemingly merged. The latter has been declared 'a *silent* Poet' (80) whilst the poet not only walks in step with his voyaging, exploratory brother, but has also taken upon himself that definitive act of exploration, the conferring of a name upon a place:

Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
Could I withhold thy honoured name, - and now
I love the fir-grove with a perfect love. (85-7)

Hence, of course, the poem's presence in the sequence 'Poems on the Naming of Places'. The act of naming that connects all the poems can be construed in various ways, and has several layers of meaning: Geoffrey Hartman has considered it in the context of poetic inscription, and Jonathan Bate in relation to the Adamic precedent in Genesis.[55] Yet the context provided by exploration, in this period of vigorous British expansion across the globe, is arguably a far more obvious influence on the sequence: as Michael Wiley has recently argued, these poems establish Wordsworth very much as the explorer of his own, local landscape.[56]

It is worth dwelling on the spirit in which such Wordsworthian explorations are conducted. It is our post-colonial tendency to move swiftly from talk of 'exploration' to talk of 'imperialism' and 'colonialism', and these are certainly ideas which will have to be invoked at some point in a discussion of Wordsworth's thinking about travel. At the same time, however, Wordsworth's walking-as-exploration also has some very different implications and outcomes, and must be understood in a much more nuanced way. That path fashioned by the Sailor in the fir-grove seems to

[55] See Geoffrey Hartman, 'Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry' in *Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays, 1958-1970* (New Haven, 1970), pp. 206-30; Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, pp. 91ff.
[56] Michael Wiley, *Romantic Geography: Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces* (London, 1998), pp. 81-5.

open easily 'along a natural opening': his walking seems a gentle, almost loving process that improves, but does not necessarily exploit, the landscape. It is this aspect of the Wordsworthian project that Jonathan Bate and Anne D. Wallace have recently sought to emphasise. Wallace's thesis, bearing as it does especially on Wordsworth's walking, has particular relevance here. Wallace reminds us that we need to add, to the layers of meaning and the scripts already established for Wordsworthian walking, an understanding of that walking as work. It has a georgic aspect: that is to say, it concerns itself with the business of making a land useful and productive. In its original Virgilian form, georgic poetry addresses itself to making the land productive in a very literal and material sense: the land is to be brought under the plough and into cultivation, and thereby yield a harvest. Wordsworth' s poetry – much of which Wallace wants to class under a new generic label, 'peripatetic' – seeks to bring the land into cultivation in a more metaphorical sense.[57] The walks described in so many of Wordsworth's poems, and particularly in the 'Poems on the Naming of Places', effect the incorporation of the landscape into a domestic sphere, familiar and familial.

The ecological respect and loving care attendant on Wordsworth's walking, and on his poetry of walking, qualify any excessively or simplistically 'politically correct' reading one might want to make of Wordsworth as explorer of his own landscape. At the same time, however, one must also acknowledge that the georgic strain in Wordsworth's thinking *does* shade into attitudes not far removed from the outlook of Crusoe on his island, in Defoe's fiction, or from the dutiful zeal that drives real explorers such as Park, Parry and Ross. More crucially still, for the purposes of this thesis, this tendency in Wordsworth increasingly seems to shape his understanding of his own travelling. A key document in this regard is *The Excursion* (1814), in which the poem's central character, the Wanderer, offers the following vision of Britain's ever-extending global reach:

> the wide waters, open to the power,
> The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
> Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
> Her swarms, and in succession send them forth;
> Bound to establish new communities
> On every shore whose aspect favours hope
> Or bold adventure.[58]

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[57] Wallace, p. 11.
[58] *Excursion*, Bk. 9, ll. 375-8, in *WPW*.

Admittedly, the Wanderer stresses that Britain will not be in this position to expand until she has reformed herself in certain key regards, and I shall come back to this slight but significant qualification. Even granting this qualification, however, this is clearly a manifesto for imperialism and colonialism. It mobilises georgic convention – Wordsworth takes those 'swarms', which are of bees, directly from Virgil's poem – in order to stress that British expansionism brings the wild and the waste into cultivation. Britain civilises the world, making it productive and profitable. As the Wanderer goes on to predict, the improving, reforming processes in Britain will ripple out

> Even till the smallest habitable rock,
> Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
> Of humanised society; and bloom
> With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,
> A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven [...]
> – Vast the circumference of hope – and ye
> Are at its centre, British Lawgivers[.] (9.386-91; 398-9)

As with 'When, to the attractions of the busy world', this is a movement outwards by Britons that is very much mirrored, and perhaps prepared for, by acts of travel within the British Isles. The Wanderer's forward- and outward-looking pronouncements on Britain's destiny are reached only after a series of peregrinations on the part of the poem's three central characters, the Wanderer, the Poet (who is narrating the poem) and the Solitary (to whom I shall return). These walks have served to educate the Poet and the Solitary. More particularly, it has disciplined their thinking, correcting intellectual and imaginative habits which are lazy or inappropriate: hence, for example, the title of Book 4, 'Despondency Corrected'. The arduous walk, arguably, is to be understood as the physical analogue of this disciplining, corrective process. When we first meet the Poet, at the very outset of the poem, we are told that

> Across a bare wide Common [he] was toiling
> With languid steps that by the slippery turf
> Were baffled. (1.21-3)

'Languid' in his steps, the Poet is walking inappropriately across the terrain: the Wanderer, whom he is walking to meet, will teach him both to walk and think correctly. Further to this, one might note that at the culmination of the poem, when the lessons of the Wanderer have been learnt, the party

that has assembled around the three central figures disperses so as to enact in miniature the Wanderer's vision. At the nearby lake they board a 'Pinnace' and then, 'coasting creek and bay, / Glades [they] behold, and into thickets peep' (9.561-2). When the ship has 'pursued her voyage', they land and wander separately over what is seemingly virgin territory, 'each / Not seldom over anxious to make known / His own discoveries' (9.567; 583-5).

Journeys in the domestic context, by boat and on foot, thus enact in miniature those larger-scale voyages made in the name of exploration and empire. Wordsworth's own travels, in his constant perambulations around the Lake District, seem likewise to have had in his own mind this grander dimension, or so at least one may deduce from a poem such as 'View from the Top of Black Comb', written in 1813. Again, Wordsworth's poetry tracks the ascent of a mountain peak; once again, moreover, that ascent culminates in a 'revelation infinite'.[59] Yet this revelation is very different from that which capped an earlier mountain ascent and poem. The ascent of Snowdon in *The Prelude*, with which 'View from the Top Black Comb' invites comparison, closed with a vision of personal poetic election. The later poem, however, reveals a vision of national destiny, a 'Display august of man's inheritance, / Of Britain's calm felicity and power!' (33-4). 'August' is a subtly resonant word here, revealing the influence of Virgil (poet of Augustus and of the Augustan empire) working in not a georgic but a more overtly imperialist mode. This mountain top is an 'imperial station' from which the poet-traveller looks with a commanding gaze. It is ascended, and the ascent narrated, because from its summit one has 'the amplest range / Of unobstructed prospect … / That British ground commands' (3-5). As Michael Wiley has shown, Wordsworth knew this because Colonel William Mudge, the cartographer in charge of the Ordnance Survey project, had recently surveyed the mountain and come to this conclusion about the view it offered. Ascending the mountain, Wiley argues, Wordsworth is being guided not only by Mudge, but also by the ideologies which drove the Ordnance Survey project: a centralising and bureaucratic agenda which harnessed an ever-more exhaustive scientific knowledge of the British Isles to military and economic ends, and to the fashioning of an imperial world-power.[60]

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[59] 'View from the Top of Black Comb', l. 32, in *WPW*.
[60] Wiley, pp. 160-9.

There are some major qualifications to be made to Wiley's thesis, as we shall see, but the examples of *The Excursion* and 'View from the Top of Black Comb' nevertheless illustrate a significant new way in which Wordsworth seems to script his walks, dating at least from the 1810s. Invested with imperialist and colonialist meanings, walking equips the walker with the mental and physical habits necessary for civilising the world. Given such associations, one can see why Kim, in Kipling's novel of that name, is simultaneously advised to read *The Excursion* and to learn, in connection with the business of mensuration, 'the precise length of his own foot-pace'.[61] Knowing the latter makes walking literally a tool for surveying, and thus for expanding and administering empire: a careful consideration of Wordsworth's poem would similarly teach the would-be imperialist preparing to launch himself on the 'Great Game' the usefulness of walking.

Thus the patterns formed by Wordsworth's travelling, and by his writing about that travelling, begin to some degree to arrange themselves around a nationalist and imperialist point of view. That said, one must take care to distinguish the distinctive alignment of Wordsworth's thinking on these matters. As discussed in the introduction, British imperialism moved over the course of this period from an 'Orientalist' to an 'Anglicist' outlook, a key point in this transition being the 1813 Amendment to the East India Act. This amendment established a new era of more active cultural intervention, an interventionism which is endorsed, Marilyn Butler suggests, by Wordsworth in *The Excursion*, published a year after the change to the East India Act.[62] Whilst it is correct to identify Wordsworth, at this point in his career, with the Anglicist outlook in imperial matters, one must not underplay the subtle tensions attendant on the new ideology. As was also discussed in the introduction, this loose coalition of interests comprised diverse strands, being most obviously split between utilitarian refomers and modernisers on the one hand, and Christian evangelists on the other. Wordsworth was not unaware of the tensions arising from this slight divergence of interests: many of his poems, indeed, articulate these tensions, sometimes deliberately, sometimes inadvertently. Recognition of this fact must qualify Wiley's thesis about Wordsworth's identification with the agencies that were surveying Britain and the world. Wordsworth always maintained

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[61] Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901: Harmondsworth, 1987), p. 211.
[62] See Marilyn Butler, 'Byron and the Empire in the East', in Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Byron: Augustan and Romantic* (London, 1990).

reservations about the modernising agenda implicit in the Ordnance Survey and other mapping projects. It is in part the purpose of *The Excursion* to educate us out of a scientific gaze that is too materialistic and utilitarian. Further to this, Wordsworth is always wary of any excessive triumphalism on the part of this scientific, materialistic and modernising outlook. From the increasingly religious perspective adopted by Wordsworth as he grew older, such secular attitudes could smack of presumption. 'Universal empire', they assume, will come inevitably and by right, the product of inexorable forces of improvement and rationalisation set in motion by Englishmen. Against this naïve over-confidence, Wordsworth sets a more Christian understanding of empire as something granted by God, and earned through moral conduct (an argument that Kipling will also later advance, in his poem 'Recessional'). Disasters await those who forget this fact, priding themselves solely on their own strength. Further to this, moreover, disasters may be sent to try the empire-builder, simultaneously testing and proving his elect status.

Recognising this shape to Wordsworth's thinking, one can see that Wiley's discussion addresses only part of the story. Wiley explores the increasing emphasis placed, in the poetry, on mapped spaces and on the process of mapping, yet alongside this emphasis one must also note that Wordsworth retains a strong interest in blank and vacant settings. As Jonathan Bate points out, the imperious survey enacted in 'View from the Top of Black Comb' needs to be set alongside the scene fashioned in a companion poem, 'Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain of Black Comb'.[63] Here a would-be surveyor, a 'geographic Labourer [...] / With books supplied and instruments of art, / To measure height and distance', is unable to carry out his work because of a sudden darkness that falls upon the mountain.[64] Secular processes alone, it seems, cannot guarantee the commanding view.

Wordsworth's imperialism, then, does not exclude a tendency to rebuke and to challenge more materialistic forms of British imperialism, and in particular certain aspects of the modernising tendency as it operates both inside and outside Britain. Hence the continuing presence of shipwreck in the Wordsworthian landscape, and the enduring influence of the narrative of maritime

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[63] Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London and New York, 1991), p. 85.
[64] 'Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain of Black Comb', ll. 14-16, in *WPW*.

misadventure in Wordsworth's scripting of his own and other people's travel. Something of this sort we have seen already in the sonnet 'Where lies the land', discussed in Chapter 1, in which Wordsworth clearly wishes to maintain a sense of the sea as a threatening place, never entirely tamed by modern technological advances. A similar theme is manifested, I would suggest, in the poem 'A narrow girdle of rough crags and stones'. This is another of the 'Poems on the Naming of Places', and thus needs to be set alongside 'When, to the attractions of the busy world': the two poems in relationship create a far more complex picture of Wordsworth's attitudes *vis-à-vis* travel, empire and colonialism (and in this spirit I would suggest that 'When, to the attractions of the busy world' also needs to be set against a poem like 'Nutting', which shows Wordsworth's guilty awareness that there could be very different forms of penetration into a secluded grove).

'A narrow girdle of rough crags and stones' describes the Wordsworth circle taking one of their habitual local walks in the Lake District. It is harvest-time: skirting a lake, the party is surprised to see some distance away a 'Peasant' standing idly by the lake, whilst his fellows are busy labouring in a field nearby.[65] Comments are made about the Peasant's improvidence and recklessness, only to be retracted when the group draw closer to the Peasant and are able to see his wasted physical condition, which prevents him from working. As a result, the Wordsworth household gives to the place where the Peasant was spotted

> a memorial name, uncouth indeed
> As e'er by Mariner was giv'n to Bay
> Or Foreland on a new-discover'd coast,
> And, POINT RASH-JUDGEMENT is the Name it bears. (83-6)

Whilst this act of naming obviously continues the idea of Wordsworth as explorer of his local environment, it is also worth noting that it is subtly different in tone from the naming performed in 'When, to the attractions of the busy world'. The name itself deserves attention: such overtly allegorical names are sometimes coined by explorers under normal circumstances, but they are more frequently used to register scenes of disaster or narrow escape. Thus the headland off which Cook's ship struck the Great Barrier Reef was named 'Cape Tribulation', whilst John Byron's companions

[65] 'A narrow girdle of rough crags and stones', l. 61, in *WLB*.

name the hill on the island where they are wrecked 'Mount Misery'.[66] Accordingly, I would suggest that it is a narrative of misadventure, rather than of straightforward exploration, that is implicitly unfolding in this representation of Wordsworth's travel experience. This is supported by the setting for the poem's central encounter, which takes place at the shore-line of the lake, a shore cluttered with

> Such objects as the waves had toss'd ashore,
> Feather, or leaf, or weed, or wither'd bough,
> Each on the other heap'd along the line
> Of the dry wreck (13-16)

It is in this liminal zone, the site of wrecks and of debris heaped in an indiscriminate and disordered fashion, that the Peasant is subsequently seen, 'beside the margin of the lake'. Given this positioning, it seems that Wordsworth intends the Peasant to be regarded metaphorically as also the debris from a wreck, a human victim of some disastrous voyage abandoned, like the Female Vagrant before him, on some desolate shore. His physical condition, 'worn down / By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks / And wasted limbs' (64-8), certainly mirrors that of many such unfortunates.

A narrative of maritime misadventure, still carrying a faint charge of social protest, is thus subtly present in 'A narrow girdle of rough crags and stones'. The poem as a whole, of course, seeks to trace a more touristic experience, and to describe an excursion with a party of friends that is made from and then back to home. Its intention, moreover, to draw part of the wider landscape thus traversed into the circle of domesticity: it is, after all, intended to assign a private name to a public place. Yet this name, 'POINT RASH-JUDGEMENT', does not entirely effect the accommodation of outer into inner landscape that is seemingly the premise of the poem. It opens up a more awkward perspective: the tourist has encountered a victim of shipwreck, and two different forms of travel experience and travel narrative have collided. Each asks questions of the other: does the presence of the metaphorically shipwrecked Peasant rebuke the excursive tour of Wordsworth and his party, or does it justify it? The answer, perhaps, arises from a negotiation between the two viewpoints, and must be reached independently by each reader.

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[66] John Byron, *The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (London, 1768), p. 22.

A narrative of maritime misadventure is also inserted into *The Excursion*, in the form of the Solitary's story. The Solitary is introduced to us as a shipwreck victim. In the draft versions of the poem, he enters his cabin like 'a lonely shipwrecked Man', whilst in the poem as it stands, the dell where the Solitary lives is marked by

> A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
> Right at the foot of that moist precipice
> A stranded ship, with keel upturned[.] (3.52-4)

Subsequently, the story told by the Solitary is very much a reprise of Rivers' experience in *The Borderers*. He too has made a disastrous voyage (to America, like the Female Vagrant in the *Salisbury Plain* poems) and for the Solitary as for Rivers this voyage has had a dangerous, destabilising influence. In both cases, moreover, Wordsworth clearly intends a connection between the restless voyaging into remote regions and the espousal of revolutionary political views. If this connection is implicit in Rivers' case, it is spelled out explicitly in the case of the Solitary, who followed the Revolution in France fervently. As was noted earlier, he was lucky that he was not able actually to travel to France, being only able to watch as the Revolution failed to take the course he had hoped for. He was thrown into despondency, and it was this despondency which took him to America. There he found no satisfaction: returning to the dell in which the Poet and the Wanderer find him, he now lives alone, his despondency unabated.

Once again, then, the Wordsworthian landscape throws up a character who is metaphorically in the situation of shipwreck victim. Once again, we have issues of complicity and guilt, of political radicalism, moral corruption and personal suffering, all woven together in a metaphoric narrative of maritime misadventure. Whilst these elements recall the *Salisbury Plain* poems, however, they are here given a significantly different inflection. Located as it is within *The Excursion* as a whole, the Solitary's shipwrecked state of mind should ultimately seem not so much an absolute disaster as a temporary setback. The Solitary's narrative is a deliberately interpolated challenge to the narrative as a whole: it is something that the Wanderer, and Wordsworth, must re-interpret and overcome. The shipwreck scenario thus re-interpreted – that is, read correctly in the context of *The Excursion* – will illustrate not so much a brutalising society and capricious cosmos, but rather the need for strength of character. It

explores not so much the dissolution of society and self as their regulation, the ability of the self not to give in and to resist the fall into abjection. This is similar to what Wordsworth was doing at the conclusion of *The Prelude*, but here we have an attempt to modulate the private vision of the earlier poem into something more public. Although Wordsworth climbs Snowdon in company, the other travellers are soon dropped by the narrative, and the outcome is very much an understanding of the individual's election. In *The Excursion*, the hills and dales of the Lake District are travelled by a band of walkers, a small but growing community who gain insight from each other and from the people and places they encounter: the Solitary's story of maritime misadventure, real and metaphorical, has something to teach them all.

Shipwreck, then, and more generally the *topos* of the suffering traveller, retains a place in the more imperialist terrain of Wordsworth's later poetry. It rebukes triumphalism and complacency; it challenges, providing a test of strength of character; whenever that test is passed, it can even seem to provide proof of fitness to rule. Following this line of thought, indeed, one can easily move from the initial proposition, that shipwreck rebukes the presumptuous empire-builder, to the almost contrary suggestion that shipwreck, provided it is responded to correctly, signals the election of the nation which has its vessels wrecked. All of these possibilities come into play – and also, of course, those various meanings of a more personal nature which I discussed in relation to *The Prelude* – at the numerous disparate moments in Wordsworth's writing when a traveller in a local landscape finds himself confronted with a scene of metaphorical shipwreck. To give just one instance of such a scene, consider the following passage from the second *Essay on Epitaphs*:

> Amid the quiet of a Church-yard thus decorated as it seemed by the hand of Memory, and shining, if I may so say, in the light of love, I have been affected by sensations akin to those which have risen in my mind while I have been standing by the side of a smooth Sea, on a Summer's day. It is such a happiness to have, in an unkind World, one Enclosure where the voice of detraction is not heard; where the traces of evil inclinations are unknown; where contentment prevails, and there is no jarring tone in the peaceful Concert of amity and gratitude. I have been rouzed from this reverie by a consciousness, suddenly flashing upon me, of the anxieties, the perturbations, and, in many instances, the vices and rancorous dispositions, by which the hearts of those who lie under so smooth and so fair an outside must have been agitated. The image of an unruffled Sea has still remained; but my fancy has penetrated into the depths of that Sea – with accompanying thoughts of Shipwreck, of the destruction of the Mariner's hopes, the bones of drowned Men heaped together, monsters of the deep, and all the hideous and confused sights which Clarence saw in his Dream![67]

[67] *WPrW*, Vol. 2, pp. 63-4.

Here is a further illustration of Wordsworth's characteristic doubling of setting and situation. At the same time, it also displays an imaginative movement that runs somewhat counter to that described by Theresa Kelley. As Wordsworth invokes Clarence's nightmarish vision of shipwreck from *Richard III* – the less consoling of the two key Shakespearean touchstones *vis-à-vis* shipwreck – we move not from the sublime to the beautiful, but from the beautiful to the sublime. Within the 'Enclosure' of the graveyard, chaos erupts, and wild, unsettling images which trespass on the domain of the beautiful. Such moments of apparent menace – and we might add to the recurrent images of shipwreck those still more common images which convert the local, familiar landscape into somewhere remote, hostile and sublime – provide a challenge to the traveller. They threaten him with a potential 'fall', a fall, however, which the strong traveller will resist, or else make constant 'self-recovery'. They require discipline in the traveller, a discipline akin to that shown by John Wordsworth when tragically he was shipwrecked in reality, in the disaster that struck the *Abergavenny* in 1805. The rest of the family drew solace from the knowledge that John had kept his post to the last: the lesson William in particular seems to have learnt from this painfully personal shipwreck narrative was once again one of duty, discipline and the regulation of the self. As he puts it in a poem on the subject of John's death, 'Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle': 'I have submitted to a new control'.[68]

Thus shipwreck and rough conditions generally keep their place in the Wordsworthian landscape. The Wordsworthian traveller, both on the page and in actuality, may increasingly be an imperial traveller, but he is seldom overtly imperious: it is still very much the endurance of discomforts and dangers that give him authority. This emphasis arises, I have suggested, from a concern on Wordsworth's part with empire as a Christian rather than a utilitarian undertaking, and the suspicion that is accordingly evinced for aspects of the modernising project is worth dwelling on. This suspicion of modernity has important ramifications for Wordsworth's travels, both literary and actual, and in the process works to invest the act of walking with further layers of meaning.

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[68] 'Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle', l. 34, in *WPW*.

A key text here is the handbook that Wordsworth himself wrote for travellers to the Lake District, a work which went through various mutations but which is best known today under its 1842 title, *A Complete Guide to the Lakes*. Jonathan Bate has written provocatively of the *Guide* that it is 'without question the most widely read work of the most admired English poet of the first half of the nineteenth century.'[69] Its influence was considerable, and the *Guide* may be regarded as one of the means by which Wordsworthian ideas about how one should travel were transmitted to an audience beyond the immediate Wordsworth circle and their correspondents. In this connection, we should note the strong emphasis the *Guide* puts on getting off the main road, and by implication out of one's carriage. If the Wordsworthian traveller is to follow the many routes Wordsworth proposes, he will have to ride or, more frequently still, walk. Thus at one point, the *Guide* recommends a road which 'can only be taken on foot, or on horseback, or in a cart'; the course of the Lowther similarly 'can only be followed by the Pedestrian'.[70] Another route in the 'Unpublished Tour', meanwhile, requires that the traveller be 'a stout Pedestrian' since 'the road is so long and steep that the horse must be led a considerable part of it.'[71]

*A Complete Guide to the Lakes*, then, is a work which urges walking on the would-be Wordsworthian traveller. This is something I shall return to, but for now I am more concerned with a different aspect of the image Wordsworth presents of himself in the *Guide*. As a handbook for the tourist, Bate has remarked, the *Guide* differs significantly from other handbooks by the emphasis it places on the writer not as visitor to the region, a tourist like the tourists who will follow him, but rather, as resident in the region. As a consequence, Wordsworth adopts what Bate terms a 'holistic' approach to his topic: he aims to show the region in its totality, and as the product and ongoing site of a complex array of natural and historical forces.[72] An organicist rhetoric is repeatedly invoked, together with images of unity and self-containment, to fashion a sense that the Lake District is inhabited by close-knit communities who live harmoniously amongst themselves and with nature. At least, this is the way things should be: the *Guide* also conveys powerfully a sense that this blessed state of organic inter-connectedness is currently under threat. Wordsworth's refrain in the *Guide* is 'till

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[69] Bate, p. 41.
[70] *WPrW*, Vol. 2, pp. 165; 169.
[71] *WPrW*, Vol. 2, p. 298.
[72] Bate, p. 45.

within the last sixty years…'[73] What the last sixty years have witnessed is modernity in its various guises: transport improvements, agricultural rationalisation, the Picturesque tour and the like. All are viewed bleakly by Wordsworth, and shown as having deleterious consequences for the landscapes and communities of the Lake District.

This understanding of Wordsworth, as not so much the explorer as the indigene in the Lake District landscape, lends a different tone to the innumerable Wordsworthian walks that are recorded in *A Complete Guide to the Lakes*. They are a form of resistance to the new and the modern, and in this connection we should perhaps read the act of walking as a deliberately primitive mode of transport. Carriages (particularly those with greatly improved suspension systems after 1804) and later, of course, steam trains (the introduction of which to the Lake District Wordsworth opposed in the 1840s) represent the height of technological advancement. The walker travels as man has always travelled. What is more, he can travel routes that are otherwise vanishing in modern Britain. As the Wanderer puts it in *The Excursion*:

> The footpath faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
> And formidable length of plashy lane,
> (Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
> Or easier links connecting place with place)
> Have vanished – swallowed up by stately roads
> Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
> Of Britain's farthest glens. (8.105-111)

The Wanderer is supposedly speaking in praise of these changes, but his praise is clearly laced with regret and nostalgia for what has been lost, and anxiety over the voracity (note that 'swallowed up') of the modernising process. Here and elsewhere in Wordsworth's mature poetry we sense an ambivalence about modernity, based on a strong awareness of a paradox attendant on it. At the national level, the country is being unified, increasingly interconnected by those 'stately roads' and thus forged into a new sort of centralised nation-state: it is these reforms which will equip Britain to establish an empire that spans the globe, and to this extent these processes are perceived as a good thing. At the local level, however, Wordsworth is keenly aware that the changes are not so much

[73] See *WPrW*, Vol. 2, pp. 200, 203, 206 etc.

effecting connection as disconnection: communities are being broken, and likewise the proper relationship between man and nature.

In this context, walking the old routes takes on an air of commemoration, becoming a ritual performed so as to preserve or restore the old organic cohesion between man and man, and man and nature. We should note that it is not merely in poetic accounts of walking that Wordsworth makes the activity bear this weight of meaning. In real life too he enacted this programme of resistance and restoration through walking, or so at least we may judge from an anecdote dating from the poet's later years. In 1836, John Taylor Coleridge took a walk with Wordsworth which was clearly embarrassing to Coleridge as a respectable Justice of the Peace and pillar of the establishment:

> I remember well, asking him if we were not trespassing on private pleasure-grounds here. He said, no; the walks, had, indeed, been inclosed, but he remembered them open to the public, and he always went through them when he chose. At Lowther, we found among the visitors, the late Lord W---; and describing our walk, *he* made the same observation, that we had been trespassing; but Wordsworth maintained his point with somewhat more warmth than I either liked, or could well account for. But afterwards, when we were alone, he told me he had purposely answered Lord W--- stoutly and warmly, because he had done a similar thing with regard to some grounds in the neighbourhood of Penrith, and excluded the people of Penrith from walking where they had always enjoyed the right before. He had evidently a pleasure in vindicating these rights, and seemed to think it a duty.[74]

Wordsworth's walking here clearly serves a communal function: it maintains the rights of a community against more individualistic, commercial pressures. And insofar as those pressures were brought into the region by outsiders, and by encroaching forces of modernity, one might conceivably suggest that walking for Wordsworth had in this local context an anti-colonial aspect, in sharp contrast with its more colonialist ramifications in the global context.

The late tour poems – *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* (1822) and *Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837* (1842) – for the most part confirm this understanding of walking as commemorative act, although it is also usually scripted as a practice bearing aesthetic rather than political meanings. To walk becomes a way of looking at one's surroundings steadily and continuously, taking in the whole terrain along every step of the way, rather than receiving the brief fleeting glimpses that other modes of transport allow. Thus in poem IX of the *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820*, Wordsworth will

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[74] Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 Vols. (London, 1876), Vol. 3, p. 425 and note.

talk of seeing from a carriage only a 'dance of objects' that makes the heart feel saddened and 'defrauded'.[75] Thereafter, the poem rhymes 'reels' and 'wheels' to convey a sense of giddy, unsatisfactory motion in the carriage. In the sonnet's sestet, however, the poet's mood changes as he consoles himself with the prospect of a slower style of travel which will allow him 'to muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze - / Such sweet wayfaring' (11-12). As the phrase 'sweet wayfaring' suggests, walking, and travel more generally, have for the most part ceased to be construed in terms of discomfort and danger by Wordsworth. This is a traveller who describes how 'with pleasure dancing through the frame / We journeyed'.[76] Yet this is still travel undertaken with a religious, or quasi-religious, seriousness that implicitly sets the Wordsworthian traveller apart from many of his contemporaries. The poems arising from the 1820 and 1837 tours typically revolve around a moment, or a site, which has allowed the traveller to glimpse, below or beyond the bustle of the modern world, a deeper calm. At such moments – as 'Musings Near Aquapendente', from the 1837 tour, puts it – 'over all did brood / A pure poetic Spirit' (233-4). Touched by this Spirit, the world, and the journey, grant the traveller momentary access to an atemporal, eternal realm which links past to present, and which stands as a corrective to the more destructive changes wrought by modernity. In this way the Wordsworthian tour as it is rendered in these poems reveals repeatedly local points of *telos*, each one standing as the muted continuation of that 'undaunted quest' towards vision sought earlier in both the poetry and the travelling. Yet there is now little sense that the quest really requires the traveller to be 'undaunted'. Wordsworth does occasionally fashion figures which continue the old self-dramatisation of his travelling self. Describing how he got awkwardly out of a 'frail bark' in Genoa harbour in 1837, for example, Wordsworth compares himself with Columbus, who must have similarly 'tried his spirit's strength / And grasp of purpose' in this harbour.[77] For the most part, however, the old understanding that Wordsworthian travel is matter of discomforts and dangers, and that the traveller is either literally or figuratively a misadventurer, has gone. The implicit politics of these journeys has also undergone a major transformation from Wordsworth's first walking of these routes in the early 1790s. At one level a mode of travel and travel writing which eschews politics for

[75] 'In a Carriage, Upon the Banks of the Rhine', ll. 1-2, in *WPW*.
[76] Poem 23, ll. 14-15 of *Memorials of a Tour ... 1820*, in *WPW*.
[77] 'Musings near Aquapendente', ll 120 and 128-9, from *Memorials of a Tour ... 1837*, in *WPW*.

religion, at another level these tour poems, with their conservative emphasis on commemoration and restoration, are congruent with the political restorations that have taken place all over Europe. The break with the past represented by both the French Revolution and modernity is to be effaced; an underlying order is to be recognised and maintained. There is still a sense in the Wordsworth circle that the community of walkers is an ideal community: witness Dorothy's comments during the 1820 tour when she describes a group of walkers 'forming different companies – or sometimes solitary – the peculiar charm of pedestrian travelling, especially when the party is large – fresh society always ready – and solitude to be taken at will.'[78] But it is a carefully delimited ideal community, its boundaries defined against the world, and the masses, beyond itself. The utopian dreams of Wordsworth and Robert Jones in 1790, a dream for the transformation of the whole of society which was enacted in miniature by two walkers, has receded. The Wordsworths in 1820 may have been retracing the route first walked in 1790, but in so doing they were in a sense rewriting that earlier walking.[79]

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In this chapter I have tried to illustrate certain continuities and discontinuities in Wordsworth's attitudes to travel, to travel literature and to his own writing of travel. Amongst the continuities, we should note that Wordsworth remains consistently a walker throughout his life; that he consistently writes about that walking, and about his own travel more generally; and that he is drawn with equal consistency to read and rewrite the travel accounts of other travellers, and especially those travel accounts in which elements of misadventure figure strongly. Yet the reading he makes of these precursor travellers and prior travel texts clearly shifts significantly over the course of his career, running in parallel with the well-charted shifts in Wordsworth's political outlook. As I have tried to suggest, these changes in Wordsworth's reading of the narrative of misadventure have more than just

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[78] Dorothy Wordsworth, *Continental Journals*, p. 262.
[79] This is a necessarily brief summary of the later tours: for a more detailed consideration of them, see John Wyatt, *Wordsworth's Poems of Travel, 1819-42: 'Such Sweet Wayfaring'* (Basingstoke, 1999).

literary consequences: they adjust not only the way in which Wordsworth uses such material in his writing, but also, more subtly, his conception of himself as traveller and the image he projects to subsequent Wordsworthian travellers.

To conclude, however, it is as well to remember a continuity in Wordsworth's sense of himself as traveller which underpins this chapter: the fact that Wordsworth always sought in his own travel a degree of strenuousness and even danger. Dorothy Wordsworth gives us a penetrating glimpse of this in a letter of 1812. Describing a recent climb in the Lake District, she wrote:

> Ours was a most grand ascent; but when we had clamb to a considerable height, just above Dove Crag, I unfortunately turned my head round; became giddy and trembled; and if anything had happened to my Brother so as to disable him from assisting me by following close to me and taking hold of me, I must have perished – at least so I believe. At the top of the Mountain we had the noblest prospect I ever beheld, and when the fear was passed, I felt very glad that we had gone by that road; though I should not be willing to take it again.[80]

It seems that even the local Cumbrian terrain encompasses danger, and the risk of a potentially fatal falls. Dorothy, the female traveller, panics at these dangers, but William – 'a Mountaineer by habit', as he later styles himself – displays steadiness and quiet endurance, subduing fear both in himself and in others.[81] The mental fall which is panic, the mind letting the traveller down, is overcome by Wordsworth: he effects a self-recovery in others, having implicitly made such a recovery in himself. Steadied thus, William and Dorothy can push on to that 'noblest prospect' at 'the top of the Mountain'. What such summits meant to Wordsworth has been discussed already in relation to Snowdon and the Alps: one might add here that the incident recorded above also suggests that the sturdy progress to those summits functions as distinctly masculine self-fashioning, distinguishing Wordsworth from his more histrionic sister. An understated but clearly understood manliness overcomes the discomforts and dangers of travel, thereby taking the traveller to mountain tops, to moments of vision and to a sense of personal election.

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[80] *W Letters*, Vol. 2, Part 2, p. 36.
[81] 'Musings Near Aquapendente', l. 4, in *WPW*.

# 5. The Romantic Traveller II

Byronic

Patterns Of Travel

And Travel Writing

*A thing of dark imaginings, that shap'd*
*By choice the perils he by chance escaped*

Lord Byron

*You don't like my 'restless' doctrines – I should be very sorry if you did - but I can't stagnate nevertheless – if I must sail let it be on the ocean no matter how stormy – anything but a dull cruise on a level lake without ever losing sight of the same insipid shores by which it is surrounded.*

Lord Byron

*Which of us here has not observed this, or maybe experienced something of that feeling in his own person – this extreme weariness of emotions, the vanity of effort, the yearning for rest? Those striving with unreasonable forces know it well, – the shipwrecked castaways in boats, wanderers lost in a desert, men battling against the unthinking might of nature, or the stupid brutality of crowds.*

Joseph Conrad

> Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war owing to the ignorance of the captain & crew though the storm was not violent. – Fletcher yelled after his wife, the Greeks called on all the Saints, the Mussulmen on Alla, the Captain burst into tears & ran below deck telling us to call on God, the sails were split, the mainyard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, & all our chance was to make Corfu which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher *pathetically* termed it) 'a *watery* grave.' – I did what I could to console Fletcher but finding him incorrigible wrapped myself up in my Albanian capote (an immense cloak) & lay down on deck to await the worst, I have learnt to philosophise on my travels, & if I had not, complaint was useless.[1]

So wrote Byron in a letter of 1809, recreating – and to some extent, therefore, creating – a scene that was far from unique in his life. Like Wordsworth's, Byron's is a career and an *oeuvre* very much predicated on travel, and on the poet's status as traveller: like Wordsworth, moreover, Byron in his travelling seems conspicuously to have courted dangers and discomforts. His taste for danger, indeed, seems to have taken him well beyond anything ever attempted by Wordsworth in actuality. The incident recounted above is not the only near-shipwreck in Byron's travelling career, nor was shipwreck the only risk Byron ran in his travels. A traveller seemingly threatened as much by human as by natural violence, Byron had narrow escapes from Greek banditti, Portuguese assassins, truculent Austrian Hussars and many others. Hence Goethe's declaration that 'properly speaking, [Byron] lived perpetually in a state of nature, and with his mode of existence the necessity for self-defence floated daily before his eyes.'[2] To see Byron as some Hobbesian natural man is perhaps a little silly, but the degree of over-statement here in itself demonstrates Byron's success in fostering a certain image of himself. Not so much mad, bad and dangerous to know as rough, tough and knowingly in danger: this for the most part is the image projected by Byron the traveller.

It is, of course, only an image. Neither the 'whole' Byron nor the 'real' Byron, this rough, tough persona is one of several roles played by a highly mercurial individual. Goethe's conception of Byron is the product to some extent of Byron's actual travelling, but to a far greater extent it derives from his subsequent recreation of his travel experiences in a variety of textual and non-textual forms: letters, journals, conversation, poetry, footnotes to poetry and so forth. In both public and private spheres, Byron played himself as a traveller, and as a certain sort of traveller (and in Byron's case, we should note, the usual public/private distinction blurs since this was a life lived so much in the glare

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[1] *BLJ*, Vol. 1, p. 229.
[2] Quoted in Earnest J. Lovell (ed.), *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron* (Princeton, 1966), p. 16.

of publicity: many of Byron's private conversations, for example, were quickly published to the wider world). This is not to say that the role he thus adopted was wholly false or fictitious. Like Wordsworth, and indeed far more than Wordsworth, Byron travelled to an extent, and in a manner, that was remarkable for his day. The image he fashioned of himself was born out of real experience – and in certain ways, more intriguingly, however, Byron's concern with his image may also have shaped his actual journeys.

Dramatising himself in action and in writing as a certain sort of traveller, Byron was inevitably indebted, at some level, to earlier travellers and to earlier accounts of travel. His familiarity with this source material is well-attested. Like Wordsworth, Byron was well-read, and well-read from an early age, in the Voyages and Travels genre. He later claimed that 'all travels or histories, or books upon the East, I could meet with, I had read, as well as Ricaut[']s *Historie of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*], before I was ten years old'.[3] Orientalism and the East were topics of special interest to Byron, but we know him to have been equally interested in other regions of the world – he read Park and Bruce on Africa, for example – and with other sub-genres of Voyages and Travels. The account of maritime misadventure in particular held an enduring fascination. He read the *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno* at school; scoured J.G. Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* for details to be used in the shipwreck episode of *Don Juan*; and of course was familiar with his grandfather's account of the wreck of the *Wager*. Recognising Byron's taste for this sort of travel narrative, one might plausibly suggest that the disasters or near-disasters mentioned above were not wholly a matter of accident. We might say of this traveller what he himself says of one of his own fictional travellers, Lara, in a passage that stands as the first epigraph to this chapter: namely, that he 'shap'd / By choice the perils he by chance escaped'.[4] The element of 'choice' here attests to a deeper scripting of experience even as the traveller commits himself, at one level, to 'chance'. A similar underlying matrix of expectation and self-dramatisation – derived from texts such as those discussed in chapters 1 and 2 of this study – operates equally in Byron's own risky travelling. From the literature of

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[3] *BCMP*, p. 220.
[4] *Lara*, Canto 1, ll. 317-8, in *BCPW*, Vol. 3.

maritime misadventure especially, he derived *topoi* which to some degree he sought to enact in actuality, and which he brought to bear on the representation of his own experience.

In constructing his own travel script from these sources, Byron is eschewing (as Wordsworth often eschews) a range of more orthodox styles of travel and travel narrative: he is rejecting, in short, the habits, attitudes and literary devices of that growing group of leisure travellers who were increasingly being labelled, pejoratively, 'tourists'. A need to distinguish himself from the mass is revealed very strongly in Byron's first great period of travelling, from 1809 to 1811, which took him through the Iberian peninsula, Greece, Albania and Turkey. It is a misnomer to consider this Byron's 'Grand Tour'. Rather, the route constitutes a rejection of the Grand Tour, or at least an extension and a more adventurous version of it: Byron's 'Grander' Tour, as one critic has it.[5] Byron planned his itinerary in precisely this spirit of self-conscious difference, anticipating in 1807 that 'I shall travel not over France & Italy the common *Turnpike* of coxcombs and *virtuosos*, but into Greece & Turkey in Europe, Russia & at which parts of our Globe, I have a singular propensity to investigate.'[6] It was a route that he knew would lead him into dangers and discomforts. Spain and Portugal were a war-zone, the site of a major military campaign between Britain and France, whilst Albania was a region barely explored by Western Europeans. Byron was later to recall Gibbon's comment that Albania was a land 'within sight of Italy [which] is less known than the interior of America', adding with pride, with regard to his own endeavours, that 'with the exception of Major Leake, then officially resident at Joannina, no other Englishmen have ever advanced beyond the capital into the interior.'[7] Greece and Turkey were perhaps less surprising destinations at this date, but they were still unusual enough for Byron to talk in 1810 of joining a select band of 'Levant Lunatics'.[8] Travelling in all these regions required the endurance of dangers and discomforts that had for the most part been eradicated on the conventional European circuit (as Byron noted at the conclusion of this tour, 'two years travel has tolerably seasoned me to privations'): it should no longer seem a paradox that such dangers and discomforts were precisely part of the attraction of the route for a traveller like Byron.[9]

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[5] Rosemary Bechler, 'Lord Byron's Grander Tour', in Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon (eds.), *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1800* (London, 1996).
[6] *BLJ*, Supplementary Volume, p. 4.
[7] *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 192.
[8] *BLJ*, Vol. 1, p. 23.
[9] *BLJ*, Vol. 2, p. 57.

These early travels were the making of Byron, in more ways than one. They provide the subject matter for the poems which made Byron famous: Cantos 1 and 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), which drew directly on Byron's experience, and the 'Turkish Tales' – *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair*(1814), and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816) – which drew more loosely on Byron's familiarity with the Eastern Mediterranean. More generally they may be said to have established the Byronic persona, which in many regards is Byron's persona as traveller. Byron's creation of this identity for himself ensured that when Byron did follow more conventional touristic routes, he did so in a spirit markedly different – indeed, self-consciously and ostentatiously different – from his fellow travellers. Byron's second great period of travelling, from 1816 to his death in 1824, may seem at one level to be tracking, at least until the final Greek adventure, the conventional Grand Tour which at this date was enjoying an Indian Summer. The scandal of his separation from his wife in 1816 drove Byron to the continent, and there he led a nomadic life, settling for periods in various parts of Switzerland and Italy until 1823, when he set out for Greece. As he travelled around western Europe, however, Byron kept in mind – and was keen to have his readers and listeners keep in mind – the broader perspective he brought to the major European sites as a result of his earlier travels. This was just one way in which Byron distinguished himself from the majority of his compatriots abroad. He was also conscious of the fact that he was living on the continent, rather than just passing over it, and he typically chose to live in places that lay somewhat off the usual tourist circuit. Strange as it may seem to us today, this was part of the attraction of Venice, Byron's principal place of residence between November 1816 and December 1820. As Byron put it, 'Venice is not a place where the English are gregarious – their pigeon-houses are Florence – Naples – Rome &c'.[10] (Of course, Venice had plenty of attractions in its own right, respectable and otherwise.)

From what has been said so far, the general affinities between Wordsworth and Byron's travelling should be obvious. For both men, as travellers and as writers about travel, an emphasis on elements of danger and discomfort in travel is bound up with issues of distinction, signalling the difference between the 'traveller' and the mere 'tourist'. Yet there are also important distinctions to be made between these two Romantic travellers. Byron seems to have been conscious that he had to define

[10] *BLJ*, Vol. 5, p. 191. This was also the attraction of Ravenna: see Lovell (ed.), *Medwin's Conversations*, p. 25.

himself, *qua* traveller, against the example established by Wordsworth. In the second epigraph to this chapter, Byron declares a commitment to 'restless doctrines', and in so doing he is subtly rejecting certain Wordsworthian attitudes to travel and travel writing.[11] There is possibly a dig at Wordsworth in that scorn for the notion of cruising 'on a level lake without ever losing sight of the same insipid shores by which it is surrounded.' For Byron, Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge were the 'Lakers': sometimes, more disparagingly, they were the 'pond poets'.[12] Such labels were intended to convey the limited outlook, as Byron saw it, of the older generation of poets. The accusation of geographical circumscription – also made in that letter to Hogg, discussed in the introduction, in which Byron declares his disdain for 'home-keeping minstrels' – carried with it implications of constraint, and of poetic and political circumspection. In Byron's eyes, the Lakers were turncoat poets who had sold out. They claimed a visionary status, but to Byron this was just an obfuscatory device to disguise a highly reactionary stance in politics and religion. The patterns they saw in nature and in their own experience – the patterns equally that the Wordsworthian traveller seeks to detect in his own journey – were not the true shape of things, but rather a falsification, serving to constrain and delimit. Byronic travel claims to contest these limits, refusing to settle into a cosy or comforting understanding of one's own experience. Byron looks not to the bounded lake, but to the sea: he seeks not the fixity of some artificial pattern, but rather aspires to be forever in flux, his travel open-ended, his restlessness unending. For political, philosophical and aesthetic reasons, Byron dramatises himself as very different traveller to Wordsworth: in so doing, as we shall see, he implicitly makes a very different reading of the literature of maritime misadventure.

Byronic restlessness is not only to be celebrated, it is also to be promoted programmatically, or so we may infer from Byron's talk of 'restless *doctrines*'. At the same time, however, such restlessness clearly has a dual aspect. It is also sometimes a curse, a mark of alienation and the fate of such deeply flawed Byronic protagonists as Cain. Whilst Byron's poetry constitutes on the one hand a constant urging to action and to movement, it also remains poignantly aware of the futility of all such energetic gestures. It is for this reason that I take as my final epigraph to this chapter a passage from Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900), which speaks of a deep yearning in those wrestling with insuperable forces

[11] *BLJ*, Vol. 3, p. 119.

for some place of calm and stasis, away from the struggle.[13] The examples Conrad chooses to exemplify such struggle are quintessentially Byronic. Shipwreck victim, desert wanderer, and lone individual against the (touristic?) mass: these are all masks worn, figuratively at least, by Byron the traveller, all ways in which Byron liked to style himself on the page and in actuality. In adopting these roles, Byron is interested for the most part in conveying, and celebrating, a sense of constant ongoing struggle, and superficially the text from Conrad might seem inappropriate to our discussion of Byronic travel. Yet even as Byron reiterates the need to keep on keeping on, to be restless and to move incessantly, there is also a certain world-weariness about the whole exercise. A yearning for stasis often emerges antithetically, not voiced explicitly but implicit in the sense, conveyed repeatedly and powerfully by Byron, that nothing can ever come of the constant struggle. In this way one might plausibly talk of something akin to a death-wish driving Byron – and also, more persuasively still, Shelley – to travel, and to travel dangerously. At one level there is a simple seeking out of sensation for its own sake, but at a deeper level there is also a hankering after some calm or consummation which is not to be expected in this world.

That said, there are occasional moments when Byron allows himself to imagine the possibility of stepping outside the agonistic flux of human history, conceiving of places which might allow rest and which might thus be properly regarded as destinations in what is otherwise an endless journey. Venice, at certain times and in certain aspects, is one such place, and another is found in Byron's last major work, *The Island* (1823). This poem is the principal subject of the final section of this chapter. *The Island* provides an appropriate destination or point of conclusion to this chapter, and indeed to this thesis, because in it Byron offers a major rewriting of the narrative of maritime misadventure. It is a rewriting that both continues certain traditions within this sub-genre of Voyages and Travels yet which also writes across, or against, other conventions in the handling of the theme of misadventure. Byron fuses the account of mutiny with a very different strand of travel writing, creating a poem which from the generic point of view has a composite, hybrid aspect. The result is a fragile imagining of a possible point of rest, and the framing of a destination to which Byronic travel, and the Byronic

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[12] See *BLJ*, Vol. 5, p. 13; Vol. 6, p. 10; Vol. 7, p. 83.
[13] Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (1900; Harmondsworth, 1994), pp. 71-2.

narrative of travel, *might* lead the traveller. It is a rare utopian moment in a career otherwise committed to restlessness, misadventure and the belief that 'a man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence'.[14]

## Misadventure, Sensationalism, Skepticism: *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* 2

> Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
> And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
> That knows his rider. Welcome, to their roar!
> Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
> Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
> And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
> Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
> Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
> Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail.[15]

With this stanza, Byron relaunches *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* after a gap of six years. Cantos 1 and 2 of the poem had been published in 1812 to immediate acclaim, establishing the Byronic persona firmly in the public mind, but a third Canto did not follow until 1816. In part, this interval testifies to the extent to which *Childe Harold* is rooted in Byron's personal travelling. Cantos 1 and 2 trace the route of Byron's own 'Grander Tour' of 1809-11. Although the thoughts and feelings expressed in the poem are nominally attributed to a fictional protagonist, Harold, many individual episodes were written by Byron as he actually stood 'amidst the scenes which [the poem] attempts to describe.'[16] This last quotation is from the Preface to Cantos 1 and 2: here and in the many footnotes to the poem, Byron took care to advertise the fact that the poem was rooted in real experience and that it really could be regarded, from one perspective, as a travelogue. Not surprisingly, therefore, the poem was not continued until Byron himself had once again travelled to a significant extent. When in 1816, he again quit Britain to track the route of the conventional Grand Tour, his poetic surrogate in turn tracked this route in Cantos 3 and 4 of *Childe Harold.*

Like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, then, *Childe Harold* is a highly autobiographical poem, and very much a poem of travel. The mode of autobiographical self-presentation in Byron's poem, however, differs

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[14] *BLJ*, Vol. 7, p. 120.
[15] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 3, ll. 10-18, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2.
[16] Preface to *Childe Harold* 1 and 2, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 3.

significantly from that adopted by Wordsworth in *The Prelude*. The Byronic traveller presented over the course of *Childe Harold* – Harold in Cantos 1, 2 and 3, and in Canto 4, when the poet had wearied 'of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive', Byron speaking *in propria persona* – both is and is not Byron himself.[17] The poem's progress, emotional and intellectual as well as geographical, clearly correlates to the poet's own progress, and it is intended that the reader recognise this fact. Hence the extensive apparatus of footnotes that emphasise that the author himself has seen these places and had these experiences. At the same time, however, it is clear that the author maintains a degree of ironic distance between himself and the traveller that the poem presents. Harold in Cantos 1 to 3, and the 'Byron' of Canto 4, are also, in certain regards, figures we are meant to critique. If from one perspective they are self-dramatisations whereby Byron publicises himself as a certain sort of traveller, from another perspective they are fictive travellers revealing habits of mind Byron seeks to rebuke. The element of ambiguity here is significant. It is just the first of many ways in which *Childe Harold* articulates a more protean, fluid sensibility than that found in *The Prelude*, a sensibility which understands selfhood, experience, poetry and even the cosmos in ways that are radically different to the way that Wordsworth understands these issues. And to think differently on all these matters is to think very differently about what it means to travel, and to be a traveller. The Byronic traveller is accordingly a very different creature to the Wordsworthian traveller, as this section seeks to demonstrate.

That said, there are superficially some similarities between the two sorts, and one of these similarities is especially relevant in the present context. The Byronic traveller, like the Wordsworthian traveller, is frequently a voyager, either literally or figuratively. More than this, both are often figures voyaging towards disaster: they are maritime misadventurers. This, subtly, is one of the self-dramatisations with which *Childe Harold* is resumed in 1816. *Childe Harold*, in the stanza cited above, commences as literal voyage in which the voyager is initially imaged as an equestrian riding the waves. This degree of control is soon lost, however. The mast is 'strain'd', the sails 'rent', and the traveller becomes as passive as seaweed, wholly in the grip of the elements. *Childe Harold* thus resumes with Harold/Byron as the victim of some shipwreck, and with the Byronic travel poem at some level a

[17] Preface to *Childe Harold* 4, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 122.

narrative of maritime misadventure. In so doing, it maintains a persona that was clearly established in the fist two cantos of the poem, where Harold re-enacts the voyages that Byron himself had actually undertaken. This, of course, is one key difference between Wordsworth and Byron. Byron really has voyaged, making extensive journeys of the sort that seem to have alarmed the mature Wordsworth, and he takes care in his poetry to trade on this personal experience. Footnotes and a knowing narratorial voice impress upon the reader the fact that Harold's voyage from Falmouth to Lisbon, in Canto 1, and from Cadiz to the eastern Mediterranean, in Canto 2, correlate with the poet's own experience. Equally the property of both Harold and Byron are the dangers which ensued in the course of these voyages. Sailing along the Greek coast, for example,

> It chanc'd that adverse winds once drove his bark
> Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
> When all around was desolate and dark;
> To land was perilous, to sojourn more. (2.595-8)

Here no footnote specifies directly that this was also Byron's experience, but the poem's technique generally means that by this point in *Childe Harold* we assume an identity between the fictional and the actual traveller. (Byron's travelling companion, John Cam Hobhouse, had anyway put the details of the episode in the public sphere in his *Journey through Albania* (1813).) It is with a degree of authority and authenticity that the Byronic traveller of *Child Harold* presented as voyager and maritime misadventurer. Even in Cantos 3 and 4, in the setting of mainland Europe, this is still a poem of actual voyages, and of voyages which entail some risk for the traveller. Boat journeys up the Rhine and across Lake Leman figure prominently in Canto 3, where Byron also informs us, via a footnote, that

> In July 1816, I made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva … [having] the fortune (good or evil as it might be) to sail from Meillerie (where we landed for some time) to St Gingo during a lake storm, which added to the magnificence of all around, although occasionally accompanied by danger to the boat, which was small and overloaded.[18]

In the mainland setting of Cantos 3 and 4, however, the Byronic traveller must become to a far greater extent a metaphorical, as opposed to literal, seafarer. Here it increasingly becomes the

[18] *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 312.

imagery, rather than the actuality, that fashions Harold/Byron as voyager and misadventurer, although images of this sort also occur in the earlier cantos. Surveying Beckford's old residence in Portugal, for example, the poet reflects 'how / Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied, / Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!' (1.285-7). As this suggests, the Byronic like the Wordsworthian *land*scape is often simultaneously a *sea*scape, and a place of shipwreck.

Those moments when Byron, like Wordsworth, understands the travelling depicted in his poetry as some sort of metaphorical voyage are often the moments when we can most clearly see other types of travel narrative scripting the travel of Harold/Byron. However, whilst both Wordsworth and Byron may seek in this fashion to incorporate a broadly similar range of generic precursors into their own travel accounts, the manner in which they rework this source material is significantly different. It is a different class of voyager and voyage text that scripts Harold/Byron's experience, or else it is the texts of voyagers such as Dampier read in a spirit markedly different to Wordsworth. For the mature Wordsworth, suffering in travel is invoked largely with reference to those moments when that suffering is transcended, or at least, comprehended, so that the self gains a degree of control over the distressing experience. In the terminology borrowed from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wordsworthian travel is a dialectic in which a 'fall' is set against a 'self-recovery', yet it is also a dialectic which seems repeatedly to reach some sort of resolution. More emphasis ultimately attaches to the 'self-recovery' than to the 'fall'. Seeking analogies for his own experience, accordingly, Wordsworth is drawn to those moments in a certain sort of travel narrative which seem to reveal purpose and meaning in the traveller's *travails* – conclusive scenes, as I dubbed them. In contrast, Byron as traveller and as travel writer seems resistant to, if not actively suspicious of, the sort of 'conclusiveness' repeatedly evinced by Wordsworth. Traversing the landscapes and/or seascapes of Byron's poem are voyagers whose journeys seem more usually to yield no conclusions nor, indeed, to ever reach conclusion. Some are 'wanderers o'er Eternity / Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be' (3.669-70). For others, meanwhile,

> The Earth … was as a rolling bark
> Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
> The ocean round, but had no time to mark
> The motions of their vessel. (4.568-71)

These voyagers will sail forever, it seems. Conclusions understood as endings are not to be expected, nor are conclusions in the sense of inferences ever attained. In the latter regard, it is worth considering again the stanza with which Byron resumes *Childe Harold* 3, and the distinctly unWordsworthian trajectory described in that stanza. Metamorphosing from sailor to equestrian to shipwreck victim, the Byronic traveller moves not from misadventure to some sort of transcendence or comprehension, in a progression which can be understood as a movement from powerlessness to a degree of power and control over the distressing experience. Rather, the Byronic traveller begins confidently but ends up enfeebled: suffering and abjection is what he arrives at, not something he works through to yield a moment of vision or *anagnoresis*.

The examples just cited enact in miniature a resistance to Wordsworthian conclusiveness which is entirely characteristic of Byronic travel, and indeed of Byron's poetry. The contrast between the Byronic and Wordsworthian conception of travel (and poetry) is best seen in Canto 3 of *Childe Harold*, which is paradoxically the most Wordsworthian section of the poem. It was written amidst the sublime scenery of the Alps, during a period when Byron was being immersed in Wordsworth's poetry by his new friend Shelley. The result is poetry which Wordsworth himself regarded as little more than a sustained plagiarism, echoing as it does the rhythms, phrasing and sentiment of 'Tintern Abbey'. The Byronic traveller is here a figure seeking consolation in 'Maternal Nature' (3.408). He is someone to whom 'high mountains are a feeling' (3.682), who reflects generally on the grandeur of the Alps and who witnesses, in the final section of the canto, an awesome storm over Lake Leman (stanzas 92-98). In outline, this seems very much a Wordsworthian repertory of themes and *topoi*, and Byron's handling of such set-pieces clearly shows Wordsworth's influence. Threaded through all these passages is the desire to find in Nature an authorising power, to identify – and identify with – an immanent force that seems to betoken individual transcendence. As articulated by Byron, however, such ruminations resolve themselves not into Wordsworthian self-confidence, nor into the elder poet's conviction as to deeper patterns operating in the life and the work.

Repeatedly in *Childe Harold* 3, journeys seem unable to reach the appropriate Wordsworthian conclusion. We might begin by noting some journeys that do *not* take place in this canto. Despite the Alpine setting, no mountains are climbed: instead, in a stanza that rewrites the end of *The Prelude*

rather in the fashion that Shelley's *Mont Blanc* rewrites Coleridge's *Hymn Before Sun-rise in the Vale of Chamouni*, Byron seems to figure such mountain climbs as acts of overweening hubris.[19] The journeys that are undertaken, meanwhile, fail to produce moments of visionary insight. The boat voyage up the Rhine, for example, yields no moment of revelation. The Byronic traveller ruminates on Nature, but Nature is seemingly not enough to stop other thoughts and other moods intruding on the Byronic traveller. It is not possible to forget the painful human history that has taken place on the banks of the Rhine, and in particular the slaughter perpetrated in the course of many battles. In the context thus established, the river offers few lessons or consolations: 'o'er the blacken'd memory's blighting dream / Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem' (3.458-9). Memory here is invoked in a manner highly unWordsworthian, but characteristically Byronic: it is an instrument not of restoration but of alienation, 'blighting' consciousness. Another boat voyage, over Lake Leman, similarly refuses to take a properly Wordsworthian shape. A brief sense of universal calm is soon displaced by a storm, which serves ultimately only to make the traveller deeply uncertain about both Nature and himself:

> Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
> With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
> To make these felt and feeling, well may be
> Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
> Of your departing voices, is the knoll
> Of what in me is sleepless, - if I rest.
> But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?
> Are ye like those within the human breast?
> Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?
>
> Could I embody and unbosom now
> That which is most within me, - could I wreak
> My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
> Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
> All that I would have sought, and all that I seek,
> Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe – into *one* word,
> And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
> But as it is, I live and die unheard,
> With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword. (3.905-22)

The storm over Lake Leman seems ultimately neither to ennoble the poet nor to figure his supernatural endurance of natural violence, two strategies which one can imagine Wordsworth

[19] See *CHP* 3, stanza 45.

adopting. Instead, it prompts awkward rhetorical questions, and finally a sense of inadequacy. The first stanza here ends in puzzlement, the second in a failure to speak which is implicitly also a failure to act heroically: Harold and/or Byron unsheathe no swords, literal or metaphorical. It is an ostentatiously masculine, not to say macho, image, yet it is deployed very much in a deflation of masculine heroism. Both the showiness and the undercutting are at odds with Wordsworth's tendency, as traveller and as poet, to adopt an attitude of modest but steadfast endurance, making a constant overcoming of small difficulties: this contrast, between a masculinity that is quietly heroic on the one hand, and on the other somewhat histrionic, variously vaunting and self-abasing, seems to me to point to the influence of James Bruce on Byron – a topic to which I shall return.

For the time being, we should note that the journeys within Canto 3 ultimately fail to reach Wordsworthian conclusions, for all that this is Byron writing in his most Wordsworthian manner. As Michael Cooke has noted, one leaves the canto with a sense that 'Byron does not so much aspire to Wordsworthian naturalism as he experiments with it in his particular crisis.'[20] It is, however, an experiment that clearly fails. The Byronic journey – literal, philosophical and poetical – must go on. From Lake Leman we are moved briskly on to new sites, each betokening a new possible route to transcendence or knowledge or fulfillment: 'Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!' (3.923); 'Lausanne! and Ferney!' (3.977); and finally, only gestured towards in this canto, 'Italia! too, Italia!' (3.1022). There is a restless, iterative logic to the travelling, a sense that there is always another place to visit, a further term in a potentially infinite series. And if the travelling thus resists conclusion, this is also a feature of the poetry. The Lake Leman episode is the nearest thing the canto has to a conclusion, yet it is also, in many ways, no conclusion at all. Ultimately it seems that the canto simply breaks off, rather than effecting any proper closure. We have travelled a considerable distance, but it is not clear what substantive lesson has been learnt, other than that we must keep travelling.

This is more generally the lesson that *Childe Harold*, and travel as depicted in *Childe Harold*, seems to teach. To travel, and to suffer in travel, is an endless process, not a process which the traveller endures so as to arrive at some ultimate destination. As is declared in Canto 2: 'the scene was savage

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[20] Michael Cooke, *The Blind Man Traces the Circle: On the Patterns and Philosophy of Byron's Poetry* (Princeton, 1969), p. 47.

ceaseless toil of travel sweet' (2.385-6). By definition,

remain new: the 'ceaseless toil' must be ongoing. Byronic

. Unlike Wordsworthian travel, it does not lead anywhere.

This directionless quality to the travel in *Childe Harold* arguably corresponds with certain aspects of Byron's actual travelling: certainly, it reflects the very unWordsworthian manner in which the poem was written. Discussing *Don Juan*, Jerome McGann has emphasised the *ad hoc*, unplanned quality both of Byron's actual travelling, and of the composition process by which Byron made poetry from that travel.[21] A similar point can be made about *Childe Harold*, which like *Don Juan* was simply continued, picked up as and when Byron felt it appropriate. As a whole, the poem is not the result of a deliberate process of composition, and there was no overall plan being brought to bear on its every part. Again, the contrast with *The Prelude* is significant. Wordsworth wrote the ending of *The Prelude*, the ascent of Snowdon, at an early stage of composition: thereafter the poem grew by expanding what led up to this conclusion. Wordsworth thus has the end of his journeying, both literal and metaphorical, always in sight, maintaining a shaping pressure on all that comes before. Byron, in contrast, conducts a more open-ended poetic journey. As he wrote Cantos 1 and 2, and even perhaps Canto 3, he did not have Canto 4 in mind as the conclusion towards which he was working. And whilst Canto 4 was undertaken as the conclusion to the poem as it then stood, we need not accept that it marked definitively the end of the poem. As he set out for the last time to Greece in 1823, Byron suggested to Trelawny that the expedition might provide another canto for either *Childe Harold* or *Don Juan*, depending on how events unfolded.[22] *Childe Harold* records a journey, and in a sense *is* a journey, that need not have ended in Italy and Canto 4: that no further canto ever came is testament to that fact that the path trodden by Harold, and by *Childe Harold*, is the result of a far more contingent process of composition than Wordsworth's construction of *The Prelude*.

A further consequence of this compositional history is that there is no retrospective viewpoint in *Childe Harold*, and no Wordsworthian *re*-visiting, either of a place or of an experience. The manner of the poem's composition constitutes a refusal to step back from the immediacy of the traveller's

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[21] Jerome J. McGann, *Don Juan in Context* (London, 1976), p. 8.
[22] Edward John Trelawny, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, ed. David Wright (Harmondsworth, 1973), p. 240.

sensations, in accordance with Byron's statement that 'poetry is in itself passion, and does not systematize. It assails, but does not argue; it may be wrong, but it does not assume pretensions to Optimism.'[23] The refusal to 'systematize' is a refusal to unify and order the literary work around a single point of vision or any one philosophical outlook, since to do so would be to falsify the flux and plurality of life as it is lived passionately. The more disciplined imaginative habits of Wordsworth, the effort to look steadily at his object, are eschewed, along with the quieter, more contemplative tone characteristic of the mature Wordsworth. Byron is deliberately a more histrionic figure, caught up in constant cycles of feeling and sensation, and expressing those fluctuations in a less measured, more grandiloquent voice. The reading of *Childe Harold* is intentionally a more hectic experience than the reading of *The Prelude*. The poem, like the travel it describes, is restless, digressive and ultimately open-ended. It effects a conclusion of sorts in the stanzas of canto 4 that describe St Peters, but this is a qualified conclusion which stresses that all knowledge must remain 'piecemeal'. Only by acknowledging this limitation of vision can we begin to approach any degree of sublimity. Further to this, this section's status as 'conclusion' is also compromised by the extent to which the poem has already seemed to offer a plethora of *almost* conclusive moments. As Brian Nellist has noted, *Childe Harold* generally seems to contain 'too much', offering its reader any number of moments which seem about to provide a 'centre … from which to read the whole poem'.[24] These apparent moments of apocalypse and *anagnoresis*, when the narrative ought properly to fall into a shape that authorises the narrator's transcendent status, are rendered provisional by their recurrence, and by the poet's protean readiness to seek transcendence through a variety of routes. Arriving at St Peter's, accordingly, the reader cannot but help feeling that he or she has been here before. We recall those earlier moments when the canto has seemed poised on the brink of a rousing finale: the clarion call to Freedom, with its banner 'torn, but flying / … *against* the wind' (4.874-5); the epic simile fashioned at Metella's tomb, by which Byron figuratively launches himself on an endless voyage battling forever against the elements (sts. 104-6, which I shall come back to); and the Forgiveness-Curse of stanzas 133-8. Nor does the poem come to rest, as on some Wordsworthian mountain top,

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[23] *BLJ*, Vol. 5, p. 582.
[24] Brian Nellist, 'Lyrical Presence in Byron from the *Tales* to *Don Juan*', in Beatty and Newey (eds.), pp. 39; 41.

on the 'fountain of sublimity' (4.1429) that is St Peter's. It moves briskly on to consider other sites, before ending – rather, perhaps, than concluding – with an extended paean to the sea. And the Byronic seascape here (to be contrasted with that mapping out of *land*scapes so characteristic of the later Wordsworth) celebrates flux and mutability, not fixity and transcendence.

Wordsworthian conclusiveness, in travel and in the writing up of the travel experience, may be regarded as a systematisation of the sort rejected by Byron in the statement above. It represents the imposition of a pattern upon both experience and text (although from the Wordsworthian point of view, of course, the pattern is not imposed so much as recognised). With conclusion, the Wordworthian journey acquires a shape. That shape is one usually which points beyond itself, a typological structure that suggests that events in this world are ultimately underwritten by a supernatural or divine frame of reference. Not only is the Wordsworthian journey highly teleological, the *telos* towards which it moves is, implicitly or explicitly, a recognition of the Providential pattern that operate throughout nature and experience. Thus the system, the pattern, implicit in the Wordsworthian representation of travel does indeed have 'pretensions to Optimism': the conclusions to Wordsworth's journeys seem ultimately to betoken the transcendent, elect status of the traveller.

There are patterns revealed by Byronic travel, but they are of a very different order to the consolatory cosmic order seemingly revealed to the Wordsworthian traveller. If *Childe Harold* has on the one hand a remorselessly serial logic, a sense that travel is simply a process that goes on and on, it has also, on the other hand, an equally remorseless cyclical quality, a sense that the traveller is trapped forever in the same recurring moods and sensations. The poem takes us briskly from place to place, but it does so in Spenserian stanzas that seem constantly to return upon themselves. And the pattern that is thus revealed at all points in the poem is that which we have seen already in connection with stanza 2 of Canto 3: a movement from control to lack of control, from activity to passivity. Repeatedly the Byronic traveller seeks to soar, but ends up slumping, 'droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wings' (3.129). The poem proceeds for the most part by a sequence of deflations and falls. Such moments of bathos have a crucial part to play in Wordsworthian travel – in the crossing of the Alps, for example – but there are two key regards in which Byron's handling of such moments is to be distinguished from Wordsworth's. In the first place, the Wordsworthian traveller becomes abject

or dejected only to pull through, and ultimately to triumph. Working through his defeats and disappointments, he strikes a pose of dogged endurance that will culminate in victory, even if it is a victory that can only be recognised years after the event (as in the crossing of the Alps episode). With Byron, the traveller's movement is repeatedly in the opposite direction. He essays his strength only to have to acknowledge his weakness. This first point of difference between the Wordsworthian and Byronic use of bathos leads into the second, more significant difference. The cycle of disillusionment in Wordsworth, the sense that the natural world lets us down repeatedly, refusing to live up to expectations or more violently assailing us through storms and disasters, is broken by appeal to a realm beyond nature. But in Byron no such appeal is ever wholly successful. There seems to be no stable reference point beyond the traveller's mind as it moves, bewildered, through 'the labyrinth of external objects'.[25] That is to say, whilst there are patterns to be discerned in this traveller's progress, they can only be psychological and historical patterns. Byron/Harold's journey ultimately reveals no route to another, transcendent realm, but rather our inescapable involvement in the processes of this world.

Byron's poem, then, is organised psychologically rather than Providentially. It aims to show us the mind of a traveller gripped by what Byron will later term 'mobility'. This condition is defined in a footnote to *Don Juan* as an 'excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions – at the same time without *losing* the past.' Although 'sometimes apparently useful to the possessor', we are told that it is 'a most painful and unhappy attribute.'[26] The heightened responsiveness to people and places is seemingly unstoppable. The traveller cannot step out of the constant flow of sensory data so as to impose order on it: he cannot halt – the motif so characteristic of Wordsworth – so as to look back, sift and compare. Furthermore, the fact that the victim of 'mobility' maintains an 'excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions ... without *losing* the past' introduces a fatal relativistic taint. Once again, memory acts to alienate rather than to console. Every high is compromised by the knowledge that there have been such highs before, and that necessarily they have not lasted. The Byronic traveller exhibiting 'mobility' is thus cursed with ironic self-consciousness.

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[25] Preface to *Childe Harold* 4, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 122.
[26] *BCPW*, Vol. 5, p. 769.

That said, the response to this implicit self-ironising, in *Childe Harold* at least, seems not to be a crippling inertia of the sort that the Romantics saw in Hamlet, but rather a more frenzied seeking after sensation. This was a theme reiterated by Byron. He insisted to Annabella Milbanke in 1813 that 'the great object of life is Sensation – to feel that we exist – even though in pain – it is this "craving void" which drives us to Gaming – to Battle – to Travel.'[27] That 'even though in pain' is a little disingenuous on Byron's part: other Byronic pronouncements would suggest that is especially in pain that we can be sure we exist. As I suggested in my introduction, a degree of existential authenticity can be attributed to the uncomfortable experience: hence the Byronic credo that 'a man must travel, and turmoil, or there is no existence.' It is this interest in heightened or extreme experience, one senses, that underpins Byron's frequent desire to identify himself as shipwreck victim, as the protagonist in some narrative of maritime misadventure. For example, as Harold sets out on his travels again at the start of Canto 3, he is described as being in the grip of profound despair, a despair that induces recklessness akin to that displayed

> as on the plunder'd wreck
> When mariners would madly meet their doom
> With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck. (3.141-4)

It is a scene that Byron probably took from John Byron's account of the wreck of the *Wager*, although one should also note that such scenes occurred often enough to constitute a *topos* in the narrative of shipwreck.[28] In picking out this *topos* from the narratives of maritime misadventure, and in selecting this scene from the archetypal shipwreck narrative, Byron is emphasising a very different aspect of the shipwreck experience to Wordsworth. Where Wordsworth, as we saw in relation to the Analogy Passage of *The Prelude*, leans habitually towards the moment of deliverance, or at least, the moment in which deliverance is vouchsafed, Byron significantly looks to a moment of frenzy, a moment which traditionally in the shipwreck narrative has a nightmarish quality. The prospects for the ship seem hopeless, and facing imminent death the discipline of the crew – the self-discipline, equally, of individual sailors – disintegrates. The sailors set about drinking themselves into sottish

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[27] *BLJ*, Vol. 3, p. 109.
[28] John Byron, *Narrative of the Honourable John Byron* (London, 1768), p. 15.

oblivion, some go mad (at least in John Byron's account) and anarchy is loosed upon the ship. In such scenes, the shipwreck narrative is at its most sensationalistic, in the more casual sense of that term. And it is no accident that it is at this moment of excess – in the events represented and also in the manner of representation – that Byron chooses to locate his traveller within the narrative of maritime misadventure. In their combination of intoxication and hopelessness, these doomed sailors encapsulate in heightened form the condition of the Byronic traveller, who knows he must expect only disappointment and the failure of his aspirations, but who nevertheless seeks to blot out that knowledge with a constant flow of new and intense sensation.

From Byron's allusions to shipwreck literature elsewhere, one senses that for Byron there are two phases to the shipwreck experience. These are, in the first place, the wreck itself, in which the crew make frantic efforts either to save themselves or else, in the panic of the moment, surrender themselves to their fate and to a few last moments of pleasure; and in the second place, a survival which is no real redemption, but rather a protracted agony, as one endures hunger and thirst on some barren shore or flimsy raft. It is very much the latter phase of shipwreck which is truly horrible to Byron, those moments when, as he puts it in 'Lines (On Hearing that Lady Byron was Ill)',

> the mind recoils
> Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies cold,
> While heaviness collects the shatter'd spoils
> It is not in the storm nor in the strife
> We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no more,
> But in the after-silence on the shore,
> When all is lost, except a little life.[29]

The second phase of the shipwreck experience figures for Byron the inevitable failure of all human endeavours, and our bitter knowledge of such failures: the first phase, however, is to be relished insofar as it blots out such knowledge, wholly occupying body and mind with the stimulant either of action or of alcohol. A similar distinction was made – in a slightly different way, but again in connection with shipwreck – in conversation with Trelawny, to whom Byron declared:

> I have been reading of men's sufferings after a wreck; they were nothing to what I have gone through in a country house, imprisoned with a family of Puritans, the only divertissement

[29] 'Lines (On Hearing that Lady Byron was Ill)', ll. 6-12, in *BCPW*, Vol. 4.

> prayers and discourses on propriety and morality. A wreck must stir the blood, mine stagnated.[30]

Once again, there is a sense that vigorous action, even pain, rescues one from the real anguish which is felt in inactivity. Stasis and stagnation for Byron seem cognate with introspection, remorse, ennui and similar moods. To offset these, the Byronic traveller seeks a release of adrenalin: as in that letter about Scott cited in the introduction, he yearns for danger and a rough sea so as to be introduced 'to a few of the sensations'. Physical pain, it seems, can be preferable to emotional anguish.

According to the Byronic notion of 'mobility', of course, such sensationalism is as much a problem as a solution to the traveller's angst. The Byronic traveller is ultimately as skeptical about himself as he is about any possible route to transcendence that lies beyond himself. There is a constant mutability to his own moods and sensations: worse still, the Byronic traveller knows this about himself, his knowledge compromising the respite – necessarily only a temporary respite – offered by an energetic, and possibly painful, engagement with the elements. Yet he keeps on going, forever throwing himself anew into adventures and misadventures: a profound vein of irony runs through all his endeavours, but it is a Romantic irony, of the sort adumbrated by Anne Mellor, that from one perspective seems to delight in flux and instability.[31] As a result, Byronic travel can seem in many regards a curious fusion of contraries. A serial itinerary seemingly extending *ad infinitum* proceeds as a fixed cycle of events, sensations, moods: enthusiasm and disillusionment maintain an equal partnership. Amongst these paradoxes, one must note the way in which Byronic travel contrives to marry both a highly sentimental and a highly rationalistic agenda. As we read the Byronic traveller as a figure cursed with mobility, we are meant both to reprimand him for the capriciousness of his nature, yet also, ultimately, to sympathise with him for the predicament he finds himself in. The Byronic traveller cuts a poignant figure as he repeatedly essays new experiences in the full knowledge that they will only lead, once again, to dejection. In this way, *Childe Harold* seems to present us with very much a Sentimental hero: not simply the Man of Feeling, but rather, as Jerome McGann has it, the Lord of Feeling.[32] Read thus, Byron's dramatisation of himself lays claim to some

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[30] Trelawny, p. 96.
[31] Anne Mellor, *English Romantic Irony* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1980), p. 31.
[32] McGann, Jerome J., *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford, 1988), p. 257.

sorts of authority even as it surrenders other sorts of authorial control. The Byronic traveller cannot impose a coherence and retrospective meaning on his travels in the way that Wordsworth does. In being so caught up in his own travels and travails, however, he does reveal the immediacy and intensity of his feelings. The *weltschmerz* of this traveller points up the heightened state of his sensibility.

Yet Byron deploys these rhetorical strategies in a manner significantly different from earlier sentimental travellers such as the fictional Yorick and, in real life, John Ledyard and Mungo Park. Far more than the earlier sentimental travellers, Byron connects this flux and restlessness of feelings with a flux and restlessness of the intellect, and to an almost programmatic spirit of skepticism. Alongside the authority of powerful impressions, the Byronic traveller lays claim to the authority of the well-travelled man, the man who has seen it all and who has witnessed diversity and extremity in both human and natural affairs. Byron thus contrives, somewhat surprisingly, to combine sentimental traditions in travel and travel writing with some rather harder-nosed, rationalistic Enlightenment traditions, the tradition of Voltaire's *Candide* and Johnson's *Rasselas*. Drawing on an Enlightenment discourse on travel that stressed not so much attachment to the place of one's origin – the burden of the Wordsworthian outlook – as cosmopolitanism, Byron selects as epigraph to *Childe Harold* 1 and 2 a passage from de Monbron's *Le Cosmopolite, ou le Citoyen du Monde* (1753).[33] In translation this runs as follows:

> The universe is a kind of book of which one has read only the first page when one has seen only one's own country. I have leafed through a large enough number, which I have found equally bad. This examination was not at all fruitless for me. I hated my country. All the impertinences of the different peoples among whom I have lived have reconciled me to her. If I had not drawn any other benefit from my travels than that, I would regret neither the expense nor the fatigue.[34]

It is worth noting here that for Byron, as for Wordsworth, travel is figured in terms of textuality: if Wordsworthian journeys run in parallel with an 'affecting Story', Byronic journeys constitute further readings in the book of the world. Arguably, moreover, it is discomfort and inconvenience that

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[33] See Alan D. McKillop, 'Local Attachment and Cosmopolitanism – the Eighteenth-Century Pattern', in Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (eds.), *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Fredrick A. Pottle* (Oxford, 1965).
[34] *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 3.

matter most in this reading/travelling experience: the 'impertinences' the traveller receives are the key part of travel's educative process. They teach the traveller that all lands and all nations are as bad as each other, and this, paradoxically, has the effect of raising the traveller's homeland in his eyes: home is not deserving of any especial hatred. It is, however, an ambiguous lesson. Emphasis might fall on the reconciliation with home, or it might fall on the less consoling idea of being equally alienated from all nations. With the Byronic traveller, one tends to make the latter reading: the Byronic hero is very much the universal exile, forever restless, alienated from all peoples and even, as 'outlaw of his own dark mind' (3.20), from himself. As early as 1812, it seems, Byron was scripting himself on the page as a traveller in exile: the separation controversy and departure from England in 1816 gave him the opportunity to play out this role for real.

The Byronic traveller, then, inherits both sentimental and rationalistic traditions. He seeks in travel new (and unusually uncomfortable) sensations whereby to demonstrate his sensibility and also, when these discomforts and disappointment are comprehended rather than just felt, to liberate himself from local attachment. Travel breeds a more relativistic outlook, and this in turn breeds a skepticism about home, its complacency and frequent Panglossian tendency. The political edge this brings to the business of Byronic travel is a subject I shall address in the next section. Firstly, however, I wish also to note that travel, as Byron construes and constructs it, goes hand-in-hand with theological and philosophical skepticism. And here again the literature of maritime misadventure plays a significant part in shaping Byron's conception both of himself and of the cosmos. We can see this particularly if we make a brief excursus from *Childe Harold* to that later poem which takes its protagonist on a 'Grander Tour' which loosely parallels Byron's own progress, *Don Juan.* In Canto 2, when Juan sails from Spain to the eastern Mediterranean (as Byron and Harold did before him), Byron effects his most notorious reworking of the shipwreck motif. Here, in poetry which is often sensationalistic in the most straightforward sense of the term, Byron systematically unpicks and ironises the Providential and typological frame of reference.

As Juan's voyage commences, the poet takes care to introduce Biblical allusions of the sort that were commonplace in many accounts of maritime misadventure. The ship that will carry Juan is 'the

most holy *Trinidada*'.[35] The personal salvation it offers Juan (escaping from scandal in Spain) is figured in religious terms:

> As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
> To wean him from the wickedness of earth
> And send him like a dove of promise forth. (2.62-4)

Yet with these foundations a typological edifice is raised only to be knocked down. When this would-be Noah's ark really confronts the deluge, Byron takes delight in emphasising not so much the broader cosmic patterns at work in events, but rather the facticity of what happens. We are given a detailed and precise enumeration of circumstances, complete with times ('At one o'clock …' (2.209)) and technical information ('main and mizen' masts (2.250), 'foremast and bowsprit' (2.253), pumps manufactured by Mr Mann of London (2.232)). Byron took such details from his grandfather's narrative, from Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, and also, Frederick Shilstone has argued, from the recent events surrounding the wreck of the *Medusa*, a disaster too late to be included in Dalyell's collection but which was very much the subject of conversation at the time of this canto's composition.[36] Realism in such matters was tremendously important to Byron: he insisted to Murray 'that [there] was not a *single circumstance* of [Juan's shipwreck] – *not* taken from *fact* – not indeed from any *single* shipwreck – but all from *actual* facts of different wrecks.'[37] Such realism is part of a more general tendency in this episode to confound the ideal with the actual, thereby displaying in a most extreme form that characteristic Byronic theme, the fatal pressure placed on human aspiration by the exigencies of our material existence. All claims as to the higher nature of humanity are undercut in the shipwreck of the *Trinidada* by overriding imperatives of physical appetite, and the undercutting is typically achieved by a bathetic movement akin to those so often seen in *Childe Harold.* Again and again Byron shifts from the lofty sentiment to the pressing physical requirement, as in that couplet which so distressed the reviewer in *Blackwoods*: 'They grieved for those who perished with the cutter, / And also for the biscuit casks and butter' (2.487-8).[38]

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[35] *Don Juan*, Canto 2, l. 185, in *BCPW*, Vol. 5.
[36] See Frederick W. Shilstone, 'A Grandfather, A Raft, A Tradition: the Shipwreck Scene in Byron's *Don Juan*', in *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 25 (1980).
[37] *BLJ*, Vol. 8, p. 186.
[38] See Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Byron: The Critical Heritage* (London, 1973), p. 173.

It is important to note that Byron, in thus subjecting human nobility and self-esteem to comic scrutiny, is not simply ridiculing his shipwreck victims. The reader of this episode is made awkward not least by the frequent shifts in tone as Byron moves quickly from savage irony to genuine compassion. As the ship goes down, and we hear first a 'universal shriek' (2.417), then silence, and then at intervals 'a solitary shriek, the bubbling cry / Of some strong swimmer in his agony' (2.423-4), Byron's poetry is imbued not with mockery but with pathos. Another moving set-piece is taken from the more sentimental strand of shipwreck literature: two fathers watch their young sons die, an incident taken directly from the *Wreck of the Juno*, and also recalling the poignant presence of Master Low in the 'Wreck of the *Grosvenor*'. Once again Byron treats his subject with due decorum. This apparent inconsistency in the narratorial voice bemused contemporary reviewers, yet in a sense it may read as part of a strategy to make us question the narratives we construct around such events of real suffering. And for some narratives, it seems, Byron has nothing but scorn. His antagonism towards human vanity may be qualified with compassion for the actual suffering of individual human beings, but his antipathy against certain ways of reading that suffering seems to be thorough-going.

Byron's shipwreck is thus fashioned expressly to rebuke the Providential system and its typological technique. It is not just that he labours to make this a realistic shipwreck: he also takes care to signal explicitly the failure of potentially Providential moments. Those survivors who make it to the open boat find that a calm falls on the third day, as if echoing Christ's resurrection: salvation, however, is delusory, and the brief lull has the disastrous result that the survivors wolf down the remaining rations. 'The seventh day and no wind' (2.569), begins stanza 72, but this seventh day carries no echoes of Genesis and no suggestion of the Sabbath: rather, this is the day on which 'the longings of the cannibal arise' (2.575). After the sentimental set-piece in which the two fathers lose their two sons, a rainbow appears: again, this is no sign betokening salvation but merely a natural phenomenon. In its very nature the rainbow is inconstant, waxing and waning before ultimately it 'forsook the dim eyes of these shipwrecked men' (2.728). It is a 'heavenly cameleon' (2.729), but the adjective here is subtly ironic. It is laden with the bitter knowledge that the rainbow can only be 'heavenly' in a metaphorical sense, in that it occurs in the sky: there is no heaven in the proper religious sense. A 'beautiful white bird' (2.745) that passes the open boat is similarly seized upon as a

pc , however, Byron scotches such optimism in no uncertain

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> But in this case I also must remark,
> 'Twas well this bird of promise did not perch,
> Because the tackle of our shattered bark
> Was not so safe for roosting as a church,
> And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
> Returning there from her successful search,
> Which in their way that moment chanced to fall,
> They would have eat her, olive branch and all. (2.753-760)

The typological reference back to Noah, the key Biblical archetype for survival on stormy waters, is here introduced only to be ridiculed. There is to be no deliverance for this crew: with the sole exception of Juan himself, they all succumb to a variety of forms of agonising death. Those who survive the longest merely suffer the most cruelly, reduced to hungry, thirsty skeletons in the manner recounted in so many narratives of maritime misadventure.

Juan himself survives, of course. When the open boat is overturned in a desperate effort to reach the shore, and the rest of the remaining survivors are drowned or carried off by sharks, Juan clings to an oar just at the moment his strength is about to give out. Yet it is surely with considerable irony that Byron talks of this oar being washed 'providentially' into Juan's arms (2.850). The reader of *Don Juan* 2 is entitled to ask, with the reader of the *Ancient Mariner*, just why it is that this providence seems to be extended to one man, and not to many others. In the 'nautical existence' (2.96) on which Juan is launched in this canto, it is clearly chance alone which governs events: as Byron puts it in the first stages of the disaster, 'their salvation was an even bet' (2.222). All other philosophical systems, whatever their 'pretensions to Optimism', are fraudulent. That said, one must distinguish again between Byron's frequent sympathy for those who actually suffer, and his critique of the ways in which these sufferings are interpreted by others, and thereby incorporated into a more systematic view of the world. Discussing the rainbow, that 'heavenly cameleon', Byron does not ridicule the fact that the sailors themselves cling to the belief that it carries the promise of deliverance. To do so is only natural, and may have the practical benefit of making one strive a little longer for survival. As Byron writes

> It is as well to think so now and then.
> 'Twas an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
> And may become of great advantage when
> Folks are discouraged; and most surely no men
> Had greater need to nerve themselves again
> Than these, and so this rainbow looked like hope,
> Quite a celestial kaleidoscope. (2.730-44)

At the same time, the episode as a whole makes it clear that one needs to maintain a dual perspective on such faith. It may serve a purpose in the narrower context, but in the broader context it is an illusory comfort, and just another way of concealing from oneself the true horror of the situation. Understood thus, the religious sensibility is just as much an intoxicant, or an anaesthetic, as the alcohol gulped down by some sailors. As Byron puts it at one point early in the episode:

> There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
> As rum and true religion; thus it was,
> Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms. (2.265-7)

Between 'rum and true religion', it seems, there is little to choose: one is as much use as the other in the context of a wreck. The only genuinely consoling attribute acknowledged is self-discipline, individual stoicism and fortitude of the sort Byron himself displayed in that Turkish vessel in 1809, in the passage with which this chapter began. Thus Juan stands guard over the store of spirits on the *Trinidada*. Reprising the role of the trusty midshipman in the actual wreck of the *Abergavenny*, he insists that they should all 'die like men, not sink below / Like brutes' (2.284-5). Later, it is Juan alone who refuses to partake cannibalistically of Pedrillo, a decision which saves him from the madness and death that befalls those 'who were most ravenous in the act' (2.627). Juan's self-control saves him here. In the final denouement of the survivors' tragedy, however, when the last few men are thrown from the boat as they attempt to beach it, it is seemingly chance alone that prevails.

The skeptical, materialist vision of world rendered explicitly and exultantly in *Don Juan* Canto 2 is implicit in Byron's earlier poem of travel, *Childe Harold*. Here too the Byronic traveller/voyager must move through a random world in which the constants shaping experience seem to be his own psychology and the cycles through which human history moves (to be discussed more fully in the next section). No appeal to realms beyond this temporal, psychological flux can ever succeed, and no typological or otherwise supernaturally-sanctioned pattern can ever be revealed by travel. The

Byronic traveller's adventures end always as misadventures. And so the Byronic traveller of this poem, although the poem's fuller title is *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, ultimately constitutes a somewhat unorthodox pilgrim. Byron/Harold is clearly not to be considered a pilgrim in the conventional sense of the term – or rather, the Byronic pilgrim conducts a pilgrimage one step removed from our usual conception of pilgrimage. The object of Byron's pilgrimage is to find an appropriate object of pilgrimage, and his personal travel experience teaches him that any such object can only be understood in a provisional sense. Yet it is a feature of that condition of 'mobility' in the Byronic traveller that one continues to seek out such valid objects of pilgrimage, throwing oneself into the pursuit of them with a full-blooded vehemence.

This seems to have been a feature of the real, as much as the fictional, traveller. Interwoven with the sense of exile and alienation was a desire to find purpose. The drifting, restless progress of Byron's journeys coexists with, and perhaps generates, a constant desire to find some great quest for himself, in Africa, South America or some similar region. The final Greek adventure, for which Byron quit Italy in July 1823, was one such project. Like the self-styled 'exile' of 1816, this was a journey which Byron had mapped out for himself on the page long before he ever undertook it in actuality. In stanza 73 of *Childe Harold* 2, probably written in 1809, Byron had posed, in a variety of forms, the question of who would liberate Greece: in a draft version of the stanza, he wrote his own name against every version of the question.[39] Sailing to Greece in 1823, Byron was playing out a script that he had already began to assemble in 1809. It can be argued that this script did not unfold as planned, and that Byron's adventure was a failure.[40] The glorious army of Greek liberators was in fact characterised by division, incompetence and corruption: in keeping with this spirit of ineptitude, Byron died not in battle but in the swampy conditions of Missolonghi, killed off by fever and over-zealous doctors. Yet one might equally suggest that this very process of disillusionment and deflation, and the bathos that attaches to Byron's death, enacts more truly the real Byronic travel script. Byronic travel, in conscious opposition to Wordsworthian travel, teaches us that there can be no victories, and no straightforward achievement of sublimity. There is only the sublimity that is won as

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[39] See Jerome J. McGann, *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development* (Chicago and London, 1968), pp. 27-8.
[40] See Malcolm Kelsall, *Byron's Politics* (Brighton, 1987), p. 2.

it were negatively, in an ongoing attempt, always ultimately doomed to failure, to forestall defeat. Byron is always energetic, but seldom hopeful, in his travels – or else, he is hopeful only in the rather specialised sense articulated by his friend Shelley at the end of *Prometheus Unbound*: the Byronic traveller must 'hope, till Hope creates / From its own wreck the thing it contemplates'.[41]

## Bruce and Byron: The Contradictory Politics of Byronic Travel

The lone (and lucky) survivor of the *Trinidada*, Juan is washed up on an isolated beach. Staying on that beach, however, is no easy matter:

> There breathless, with his digging nails he clung
> Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave
> From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
> Should suck him back to her insatiate grave. (2.857-60)

Juan's 'digging nails' are a small detail, but a detail, significantly, which is *not* drawn from John Byron's narrative, nor from any of the narratives in Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*. Rather, they recall the account of being wrecked on the north African coast (an account thrilling in its immediacy and attention to physical detail) presented by James Bruce in the introduction to *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*. Bruce's struggle with the sea comes to an end when 'at last, finding my hands and knees upon the sands, I fixed my nails into it, and obstinately resisted being carried back at all, crawling a few feet when the sea had retired...'[42] Behind Juan's travails, it seems, stands the ghostly presence of James Bruce, and this presence can also be felt elsewhere in Byron's travelling and especially, in Byron's writing of travel. This was no accident: the earlier traveller – like Byron, an aristocrat, an Anglo-Scot and an old Harrovian – provides a potent model for the Byronic traveller. Tracing this line of influence, we gain insight into the characteristic style and psychology of the Byronic traveller; more than this, in registering the affinities between Bruce and Byron we can also illuminate the attitude to other cultures, and to his own culture, that for Byron are attendant on the business of travel. Put another way, Bruce provides a useful starting-point from which to

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[41] *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, ll. 573-4, in *SPP*.
[42] James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, 5 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1790), Vol. 1, p. xliv.

comprehend the curious, and ultimately somewhat contradictory, politics that is being played out, for Byron, in the act of travel.

Until 1816 Byron owned a full eight-volume set of Murray's 1804 edition of Bruce's *Travels*. We may assume he read it. Incidents from Bruce's adventures and misadventures reappear in Byron's own writings, and even, *mutatis mutandis*, in his own travels. The simoom makes an appearance in *The Giaour*, *Manfred* and *Don Juan*, whilst in *The Siege of Corinth* Byron fashions a scene eerily reminiscent of Bruce's experiences in Gondar, the Abyssinian capital.[43] In Gondar, Bruce's dogs brought human limbs into the courtyard of his house: beneath the walls of Corinth, as Byron describes it, 'lean dogs' strip the flesh of human bodies and crunch human skulls.[44] A footnote lends an authoritative gloss to such sensational details. Byron tells us that this is something he has actually seen, 'beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock … The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.'[45] Yet an eye for such details, both in actuality and on the page, may plausibly be traced back to that air of *grand guignol* with which Bruce invests Abyssinia. It is, in part, through relaying such horrors that Bruce presents himself as misadventurer, a figure who has taken great risks and endured immense hardships in the course of his epic quest. Such toughness in itself would have appealed to Byron, and Bruce's greatest tribulation, that final desert crossing, is probably an influence on those figurative desert travellers who are almost as common in Byron's writing as ocean voyagers. (To take just one example, Torquil in *The Island* (1823) is actually a sailor and mutineer, but 'placed in the Arab's clime',

> he would have been
> As bold a rover as the sands have seen,
> And braved their thirst with as enduring lip
> As Ishmael, wafted on his desart-ship.[46]

Like the Wordsworthian traveller, the Byronic traveller often moves through a setting which shifts metaphorically from an ocean to a desert topography, further confirming that Romantic sense of equivalence between the two locales remarked by Auden.)

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[43] *The Giaour*, l. 282, in *BCPW*, Vol. 3; *Manfred*, Act 3, Scene 2, l. 128, in *BCPW*, Vol. 4; *Don Juan*, 4.57.8, in *BCPW*, Vol. 5.
[44] *The Siege of Corinth*, l. 409, in *BCPW*, Vol. 3.
[45] *BCPW*, Vol. 3, p. 485.
[46] *The Island*, Canto 2, ll. 179-82, in *BCPW*, Vol. 7.

One could extend considerably a list of individual moments of correspondence between Bruce's *Travels* and the travails of various Byronic travellers (including Byron himself). More important than these individual details, however, is an underlying affinity between the two travellers in terms of psychology and style. Both men make a constant modulation between personae, and between different tones and registers of language. They shift quickly from grandiloquence to self-pity, from heroism to mock-heroism, and to many other moods besides. For Bruce, these mood-swings were the result of his rejection at the hands of the English establishment. The constant cycling between sublimity and bathos evinced in Bruce's *Travels* reflects on the one hand his need to assert his individual achievement, and on the other his awareness that all such self-assertions have proved pointless. This is a duality of vision that Byron inherits, and one can easily imagine Bruce saying, with Byron in *Don Juan*, that 'the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk / Turns what was once romantic to burlesque' (4.23-4). Bruce's strange clowning when he discovers the source of the Nile – a scene probably informed by Bruce's retrospective awareness of the anticlimactic reception he received back in England – enacts in a very literal sense this shift from romance to burlesque. (One should note also Bruce's identification of himself in this episode as a latter-day Quixote: Cervantes' mock-heroic epic, which was also admired by Byron, stands as a generic precursor to both *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* and *Don Juan*.) Yet for both Bruce and Byron the shift to 'burlesque' does not wholly invalidate the element of romance, and the passion with which the quest is undertaken. Bruce is somehow both virile and histrionic, and it is in this combination of elements that Bruce seems a particularly potent influence on Byron, not only in *Don Juan* but also in *Childe Harold* and the Turkish Tales. Bruce scripts Byronic travel insofar as he is the model for a style of travel and travel writing which exhibits constantly an antithetical aspect. As has been discussed, Bruce's peculiar career produced a self-dramatisation in which the traveller is keenly aware of the vanity of all human achievement, yet equally keen to *achieve*, in the most worldly sense. Borrowing again from *Don Juan*, we might say that Bruce's *Travels* reveals 'such a life as was / At once adventurous and contemplative' (4.849-50) – the contemplation serving to invest the adventure with a considerable degree of irony, yet never wholly discrediting it. This combination of adventure and irony is crucial to Byron's travel and travel writing across the whole course of his career: all that changes is that the irony is inflected

in a melancholic fashion in *Childe Harold*, and in a comic fashion in *Don Juan*. Simultaneously a great hero and a great failure, his journey both an epic quest and a huge irrelevance, Bruce's shadow falls across both works, ghost-writing a predicament that is mourned in the earlier work and relished in the later, yet which in both cases points us to the true nature of the world. For as Byron puts it jauntily in *Don Juan*: 'if a writer should be quite consistent, / How could he possibly show things existent?' (15.695-6).

Bruce, then, provides a potent model both for the characteristic psychological structure of a poem such as *Childe Harold*, and also for those oscillations of tone that are so offensive to Wordsworthian conceptions of sincerity. Further to this – and more pertinent to the political ramifications of Byron's Brucean inheritance – we should also recall firstly the way in which such psychological and stylistic instabilities are the result of a deeply alienated sensibility, and secondly, the way in which Bruce's sense of alienation at home seems to impel him into a closer identity with the people among whom he travelled, the Abyssinians. The latter tendency in Bruce makes *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* a monumental work of scholarship that is in many ways very generous to the Abyssinians, alert to their sophistication and achievements as well as to the undoubted brutality of Abyssinian life. Bruce seen in this scholarly light has further attractions to Byron. A traveller who liked to claim that by the age of ten he had read Knolles' *General Historie of the Turkes*, Rycaut's *History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, De Tott's *Memoirs … Of the Turks and the Tartars*, Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters … Written during her Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*, Mignot's *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* and other similar works, Byron in one of his travelling personae was something close to an ethnographer, presenting his readers with authoritative facts about foreign cultures. In a letter to Murray, defending the authenticity of the information offered in a footnote to *Childe Harold*, Byron cites in support of his note 'Jones – D'Herbelot – Vathek – [and] the Notes to the Arabian Ns': that is to say, the great Orientalist scholar Sir William Jones, d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*, Beckford's *Vathek* (published with extensive scholarly apparatus by Henley) and the notes accompanying *The Arabian Nights*.[47] It is in this eighteenth-century tradition of Orientalism that Byron, at certain

[47] *BLJ*, Vol. 3, p. 164.

moments, liked to locate himself: on occasion, indeed, he even went so far as to claim that his poetry was far less important than the ethnographic information it served to relay to its British audience.

From one perspective, such self-deprecating disclaimers are Byron striking an aristocratic pose, professing to disdain mere poetry and wanting instead to perform a service to his country. Yet there is also a more transgressive edge to Byron's insistence on his own genuine engagement with foreign cultures. Byron's Orientalism, indebted as it undoubtedly is to figures such as Sir William Jones, is also informed by figures like Bruce who felt themselves to be outside the intellectual and exploratory establishment of the late eighteenth century. Like Bruce, moreover, Byron's Orientalism is informed by a personal experience of the regions under discussion (something many eighteenth-century Orientalists lacked). As a result, Byron's Orientalism must be seen as having its own distinctive tenor. It is not wholly aligned with that monolithic, hegemonic exercise that is Edward Said's understanding of 'Orientalism'.[48] Rather, as Mohammed Sharafuddin has argued persuasively (though occasionally a little too generously), Byron – and Bruce too, I would argue – must be aligned with a tradition of 'realistic orientalism'.[49] By the somewhat oxymoronic label of 'realistic orientalism' is meant a project whereby the Western observer genuinely seeks to grasp the actualities of alien cultures, and to grasp them for their own sake. It is a project that is inevitably compromised by its own representational strategies, and its own discursive myopia, but it at least makes real efforts to recognise what lies beyond its inherited intellectual structures. In Byron's case, indeed, it is expressly undertaken as a rebuke to those inherited habits of mind, and as an attempt to contest the complacency and smugness of a 'tight little island' – Byron's favourite label for his homeland.[50]

Thus the scholarly apparatus which accompanies *Childe Harold* 1 and 2 and the Turkish Tales may be understood as an attempt to educate an English audience in the actual practices and persuasions of a foreign culture. To foster a cultural relativism, and in turn to contest any unquestioning or unexamined belief in British superiority, Byron provides a more enlightened image of the cultural Other. In the footnotes to *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, for example, he refutes the fallacious

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[48] See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978: reprinted with a new afterword, Harmondsworth, 1995.
[49] Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London, 1994), p. 229.
[50] See *BLJ*, p. 136.

belief that in Islam women were regarded as having no souls. Elsewhere in the notes to *The Giaour*, he informs the reader 'that Charity and Hospitality are the first duties enjoined by Mahomet; and to say truth, very generally practised by his disciples'.[51] Another note, to *The Bride of Abydos*, emphasises the common heritage shared by Christian and Moslem culture:

> every allusion to any things or personage in the Old Testament, such as the Ark, or Cain, is equally the privilege of Mussulman and Jew: indeed, the former profess to be much better acquainted with the lives, true and fabulous, of the patriarchs, than is warranted by our own sacred writ; and not content with Adam, they have a biography of Pre-Adamites.[52]

Byron called such factual elements in his Turkish Tales their 'costume'.[53] It is hard to decide whether the term conveys merely a theatrical tendency in Byron, a delight in playing the part of the Oriental, or a more profound identification with an alien cultural viewpoint. In later life, Byron recalled that in Turkey he 'was oftener tempted to turn Mussulman than poet & … often regretted since that [he] did not'.[54] There seems to have been a real affinity between Byron and the Islamic cultures of the Middle East, not least because of the opportunities that arose in these regions for Byron to express his bisexuality.[55] Yet whatever the degree of real connection or identity between Byron and the peoples of the Middle East, in the complex self-fashioning which Byron subsequently enacts on the basis of these early travels, there is much stress placed on the sense of a real contact having been made with a foreign culture. This is not simply a matter of claiming to know authoritatively facts about that culture, although it includes this claim to authenticity of 'costume': more than that, Byron often presents himself as someone who has been shaped profoundly and enduringly by his exposure to the Other. One element in Byron's mercurial play of personae is a renegade tendency which dons 'costumes' to suggest that this is a traveller who has crossed over, taking on an alien, or at least a hybridised, identity. This image of Byron finds its most famous expression in Thomas Philipps' portrait of Byron in full Albanian dress, painted in 1814. Here, perhaps, is the poet presenting himself to his public in the guise of the Other, cross-dressing (rather as James Bruce cross-dressed)

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[51] *BCPW*, Vol. 3, pp. 417-8.
[52] *BCPW*, Vol. 3, p. 440.
[53] See *BLJ*, Vol. 3, p. 191.
[54] *BCMP*, p. 220.
[55] See Louis Crompton, *Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in Nineteenth Century England* (Swaffham, 1998).

into another culture, espousing foreign styles and attitudes, and rejecting the conventions of his own culture.

From another perspective, of course, the portrait is just Byron posing. I shall elaborate on this view of Byron shortly, but before doing so one should note that Byron's stance of cultural renegade, or at least, of Orientalist in an alienated or 'realistic' mode, does correspond with the more explicit political position taken up by Byron in life, and presented obliquely in some of the Turkish Tales. This position is a denunciation of imperialism in all its forms, whether practised by the powers of Europe or by the Ottoman Empire. It was in this spirit, we should note, that Byron named the boat he built in Italy: where Shelley chose *Ariel*, Byron chose *Bolivar*, after the great liberator of South America from European imperialism. And it is in this spirit, Jerome McGann and Marilyn Butler have argued, that *The Giaour* must be read, as an allegory of the fate of Greece as she is squabbled over by the European powers and the Ottoman Empire.[56] The protagonists of the poem, Hassan and the Giaour – an Eastern and a Western figure, Moslem and Christian respectively – achieve only the death of the Circassian girl they profess to love. As the tragic sequence of events unfolds – told through a kaleidoscope of different voices and perspectives – neither man can claim any moral superiority: at the poem's close, indeed, Byron has the Giaour, seemingly the hero of the piece, manifest the same possessive, destructive mentality as Hassan. East and West stand revealed as identical to each other.

In *The Giaour*, it can seem that various levels of political and cultural intention dovetail neatly into each other. At one level, there is the denunciation of imperialism allegorised in the story; at another level, there is in the poem's scholarly apparatus – which manifests a 'realistic Orientalism' of the sort discussed earlier – an attempt to whittle away at a reader's sense of his or her religious and moral superiority (a sense of superiority that might authorise acts of European imperialism). Elsewhere in Byron's Oriental poems, however, it is not always the case that the various elements of the poem cohere so effectively. Nigel Leask has noted that Byron's Turkish Tales arise out of, and manifest repeatedly, a 'discursive contradiction'.[57] The contradictions attendant on the poetry, and on Byronic

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[56] See McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections*, p. 263; Marilyn Butler, 'The Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*', in Beatty and Newey (eds.).
[57] Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 17.

Orientalism, are not simply a matter of individual moments when Byron may seem to contradict the political positions he elsewhere adopts: for example, the footnote in *Childe Harold* 2 when Byron seems to suggest that Greece should become a British protectorate.[58] The ambiguities of Byron's attitude to the East, and to other cultures generally, run deeper than this, and to grasp this is one might usefully return to the Philipps' portrait of Byron in Albanian costume. Looking closely at the picture, and recognising a certain self-satisfaction in the face of the traveller, it is hard not to feel that Byron here is striking a fashionable pose rather than making any deep identification with Albania. This is a man on the way to a society masquerade (and indeed, the costume was passed on to a friend to be used in this way). One can say something similar about the so-called 'costume' in which Byron dressed his Turkish Tales. Such 'costumes', literal and metaphorical, are part of a programme that is both political and commercial, and anxious in the latter regard to cash in on current vogues amongst the reading public. This aspect of Byronic Orientalism often serves to compromise Byron's avowed aims in playing himself as a certain sort of renegade, or at least, oppositional traveller. Byron may wish his poems and personae to constitute a rebuke to the 'tight little island', and to loosen up that island, but even in its overtly transgressive elements Byron's poetry reveals a mixture of motives not all of which sit easily with each other. For example, the Byronic travel poem often seems to be as much about sexual politics as politics *per se*, and here Byron's agenda becomes more problematic. The Eastern settings, whilst undoubtedly grounded in a strong sense of these places as real social and political entities (as Butler and McGann have insisted), also seem to exist as places of fantasy. They allow Byron to titillate the reader (and himself) with topics that would be taboo in a more familiar, domestic setting.

This is the Beckfordian influence on Byronic travel, prompting the poet to invest the foreign place with homoerotic or incestuous possibilities (as in *Lara* and *The Bride of Abydos* respectively). From one perspective, this libidinous energy to the poems is a further part of Byron's strategy of loosening up the 'tight little island': a repressive sexual primness was an attribute of the new improving, evangelising attitudes gaining sway in Britain in the 1810s and 1820s. Once again, one senses, Byron is cutting a figure which owes much to late eighteenth-century precursors, establishing

[58] See Note to *CHP* 2, stanza 73, in *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 201.

himself not only in an Orientalist but also in a libertine tradition that one associates with figures such as John Wilkes and with organisations such as the Society of Dilettanti (and which will subsequently be continued by travellers such as Richard Burton). According to this tradition, which looks to Classical Greek and Roman writings on sex and liberty rather than to Christian pronouncements, sexual freedoms and political freedoms are inseparably bound up with each other.[59] In Byron's poetry, however, it can often seem that these two emancipatory agenda do not co-exist happily. Byron's exotic locales often exist most powerfully for their readers as realms of fantasy, and the overt eroticism arguably blunts the political edge that Byron intends the poems to have. Invested with a libidinal rather than a political energy, Byron's Turkish Tales map the region as a place where the individual's deepest desires can find full expression. And thus, for all their avowed anti-imperialism, they may more often work to kindle the 'dreams of adventure' which lead to 'deeds of empire' (to borrow the title of Martin Green's study of British imperial literature).[60] One such adventurer and imperialist is worth noting here, to illustrate the way in which Byron's representations of travel often led their readers in directions somewhat contrary to those intended by the author. In 1838, James Brooke sailed from Greenwich to south-east Asia in the yacht, the *Royalist* – a vessel, but not a name, very much in the spirit of Byron and Shelley. Arriving at Sarawak in Borneo, Brooke in time took control of the region and eventually, as Rajah Brooke, brought it within the Victorian empire. This is a real story of adventure which underpins various subsequent fictions – Kipling's 'The Man Who Would Be King' invokes Brooke, for example, whilst Conrad's *Lord Jim* reworks his story ironically – but what is more significant in the present context is the way in which the real events were themselves underpinned by earlier fictions, and in particular, by Byronic imaginings of the self and of the world. In the 1820s, bored and seeking for some really fulfilling career, Brooke had written poetry, only one stanza of which survives: not coincidentally, it is a stanza, cast in the Spenserian form used by Byron in *Childe Harold*, which speaks in the Byronic manner of restlessness and alienation.[61] Brooke in a sense takes the Byronic travel script and acts it out: in its enactment, however, Byronic Orientalism takes on an imperialist aspect.

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[59] See Randolph Trumbach, 'Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism in Enlightenment England', in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The Invention of Pornography* (New York, 1993).
[60] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London, 1980).
[61] See Robert Payne, *The White Rajahs of Sarawak* (1960: reprinted Oxford, 1985), p. 19.

Insofar as it deals with foreign cultures, then, Byron's Orientalism, then, has certain contradictions, or at least ambiguities, attendant on it. Without ignoring these contradictions, however, Byron's Orientalism must also be understood not only in relation to the cultures it surveys, but also in relation to the British cultural situation in this period of burgeoning imperialism. In this context, there is a certain radical charge to Byron's fashioning of himself as a traveller in the Orientalist, even libertine, tradition. As Nigel Leask and Marilyn Butler have shown, Byron's identification with Bruce, Sir William Jones and other Orientalists of the late eighteenth century had considerable political resonance in the 1810s and 1820s. As was noted in the introduction, this was a period when the consensus of British opinion *vis-à-vis* British dominions (and the rest of the globe) was shifting from Orientalist to an Anglicist outlook. Increasingly, Britain viewed the world with eyes attuned to the possibility of 'improving' it, both economically and morally. British expansion is more and more construed as a georgic, civilising process: the business of exploration, as we saw in connection with figures such as Mungo Park, Edward Parry and John Ross, becomes invested with an evangelical earnestness. These new attitudes, moreover, brought with them a shift in the way in which the British regarded alien cultures, especially the indigenous populations of those regions the explorer was so anxious to improve. As was noted in Chapter 2, in connection with the Inuit, the rhetoric invoked to describe indigenous populations was growing more lurid. In the Indian context, Burke's (qualified) acknowledgement of the venerable nature of Hindu culture was gone, replaced by accounts which depicted the Hindu as variously debased, dirty, corrupt and/or primitive. This is the burden of Mill's *History of British India*, and it is also the attitude of Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). Southey's poem, alongside Wordsworth's *Excursion* (1814), with its vision of 'British Lawgivers' (9.399) spreading civilisation around the world, constitute the poetic context in which we need to locate Byron's very different depictions of Oriental lands in poems such as *Childe Harold* 1 and 2, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair* and *The Siege of Corinth*. It is a context which allows us to appreciate the full contemporary force of that moment at the end of *The Giaour* when Byron reveals the Giaour and Hassan to be virtually mirror-images of each other: *contra* the message increasingly preached by Southey, Christianity does not lend any moral superiority to the Giaour.

It will be apparent that Byron's interest in the foreign and the Other – rather like Bruce's interest in the Abyssinians – has little to do with the georgic, 'improving' notions of Southey and Wordworth. From Byron's comments elsewhere, indeed, we may infer that these notions, to Byron, smacked of a secular presumption akin to that exhibited in the spiritual sphere by earnest Providential travellers such as Wordworth and John Newton. The journey again exhibits a delusory teleology, although now its trajectory is described in terms of 'progress' and modernity. As Byron puts it in *Don Juan*,

> Tombuctoo travels, voyages to the poles
> Are ways to benefit mankind, as true
> Perhaps as shooting them at Waterloo. (1.1054-6)

'Tombuctoo [ie Timbuctoo] travels' points us to Park (and to those explorers who had followed Park into West Africa in the first decades of the nineteenth century) whilst those 'voyages to the poles' are almost certainly those conducted by Ross and Parry in search of the North West Passage (since Parry is mentioned explicitly elsewhere in *Don Juan*).[62] Such endeavours here seem irrelevant, if not actively duplicitous, whatever their claims to be 'ways to benefit mankind'. The advocates of improvement and modernity, in this 'patent age of new inventions / For killing bodies, and for saving souls' (1.1049-50), may trumpet their achievements and their high moral purpose, but history clearly proceeds as it has always done: as an unpalatable business of power struggles, enforced most nakedly on battlefields such as Waterloo.

Byron's 'Orientalist' agenda can be viewed in many lights, then, but an important part of its rationale was the desire to contest the narrowing of outlook, and the assumption of British superiority, implicit in these ideas of modernisation and improvement. This continues even in the European setting of *Childe Harold* 3 and 4. The anti-touristic disdain which ripples through *Childe Harold* 3 and 4, and through Byron's letters and journals during the period of his European 'exile', is not simply a matter of snobbery. Scorning the tourist even as he stands alongside him – 'in the crowd / They could not deem me one of such; I stood / Among them but not of them' (*CHP*, 3.1053-5) – the Byronic traveller claims at each site to confound the tourist's narrow, insular gaze. The tourist

[62] *Don Juan*, 13.309 and 14.172.

can comprehend things only in terms of 'home' and Britain: Byron, however, can recall sites that lie well beyond the conventional Grand Tour. Byron has seen much more than his fellow tourists: in both private correspondence and the public pronouncements of *Childe Harold*, he is eager to remind us of this fact. In a letter to Hobhouse, he noted that 'the Plain of Waterloo is a fine one - but not much after Marathon & Troy - Cheronea & Platea'.[63] In the corresponding footnote to *Childe Harold*, this dismissal is watered down somewhat, but we are still powerfully reminded of the extra-European perspective:

> As a plain, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination: I have viewed with attention those of Platea, Troy, Mantinean, Leuctra, Chaeronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little but a better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except, perhaps, the last mentioned.[64]

Such cool judgements have a twofold aspect. On the one hand, they are clearly a form of one-up-manship, a self-promoting tactic whereby Byron shows himself to be no mere 'tourist'. On the other hand, however, they have also a more worthy intention. They seek to remind the reader that Europe is not the world, and that the great events in recent European affairs are not the be-all and end-all of world history. In their small way, such verdicts contest a narrow, Eurocentric outlook. In this connection, moreover, we should note Byron's regret, mentioned almost in passing and easily missed, that Waterloo was not fought in a 'better cause'. Byron's skeptical relativism carries a political edge, and is at odds with British complacency and triumphalism in the aftermath of victory in the Napoleonic Wars.

This resistance to the orthodox British outlook, and to the establishment values enshrined in that orthodoxy, also runs through Byron's use of the *topoi* of voyage, shipwreck and maritime misadventure. This is particularly the case in Canto 4 of *Childe Harold*, where Byron interweaves figures of voyaging and shipwreck in far more systematic fashion than in any of the previous cantos. There is little literal voyaging being undertaken by the Byronic traveller in Canto 4, but a metaphoric substructure to the canto is nevertheless established, a substructure which works to put the traveller

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[63] *BLJ*, Vol. 5, p. 76.
[64] *BCPW*, Vol. 2, p. 303.

in the position of shipwreck victim on some desolate shore. This is the result not just of the more explicit invocations of the situation of shipwreck and sea-voyage, but also of the constant subtle reference to 'shores' and 'tides' and 'wrecks' which arise naturally in what might be called the most aquatic of *Childe Harold*'s four cantos. Canto 4 begins and ends with the sea (Venice at the start, the encomium to the ocean at the close) and in between it exhibits a particular fascination with water features: the falls at Terni, the springs of Clitumnus, Egeria, and the like. The ebb and flow of water, and a liminal position on the edge of water, are thus kept constantly in the reader's mind, even when the immediate context has little connection with shipwreck or the sea-voyage. In similar fashion, Byron talks habitually of 'wrecks' when describing the ruins all around him in Italy: 'thy wreck a glory' (4.233), for example, or 'wrecks of another world' (4.414). In themselves such word choices would be unremarkable, but in the context established by more explicit figures of shipwreck and sea-voyaging – to be discussed shortly – they serve to keep this range of metaphoric reference alive the reader's mind.

Byron's intention in thus casting himself in the role of shipwreck survivor is not hard to gauge, and is seemingly in the spirit of the anti-authoritarian reading of the literature of maritime misadventure. The *topoi* Byron takes from this literature are often intended to convey not just an existential condition, as outlined in the previous section, but also a specific social and cultural condition, the condition that Europe finds itself in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Here one must recall Byron's characteristic reading of the shipwreck narrative, which seems to break the shipwreck into two key phases: the first a period of frenzied action, the second a more profoundly horrifying period, as Byron sees it, of famine, enfeeblement and abjection as the misadventurer wastes away. It is the latter phase which corresponds with Byron's perception of Europe after 1815. The Napoleonic Wars had torn Europe apart as the elements tear apart a ship: in the aftermath of Napoleon, however, the reactionary grip of the Holy Alliance was effecting a remorseless draining away of life and energy, akin to that suffered by so many survivors of shipwreck. It is with an implicit narrative of this sort in his mind that Byron fashions the following gesture of defiance as he stands at Metella's tomb in Rome:

> Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone

Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

Then let the winds hurl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music... (4.934-47)

This call to action, to quit the slow death on the beach for a more stirring struggle with the sea, picks up the depiction of Freedom slightly earlier in the poem. Freedom, like the Byronic voyager, struggles conspicuously against the prevailing elements: Freedom's banner is 'torn, but flying / … *against* the wind' (4.874-5).

Thus Byron politicises the *topoi* of shipwreck and sea-voyage, investing them with libertarian and anti-authoritarian implications. At the same time, he also invokes the Biblical precursors to these *topoi*, in a manner which superficially seems to suggest a typological frame of reference to the Byronic experience. St Peters, for example, appears as 'this eternal ark of worship undefiled' (4.1386), an image which seems to pick up, and provide some conclusion to, a more elaborate typology earlier in the poem. Denouncing the futility of imperial ambition, and with Napoleon clearly the principal target in mind, Byron had earlier described how

the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! (4.824-8)

Recognising this tragic, ongoing situation, the Byronic traveller issues the plea: 'Renew thy rainbow, God!' (4.828). This imagery of arks and rainbows, here and elsewhere in Canto 4, may suggest that Byron's own experience, and the current political landscape through which he moves, are to be construed typologically, in a manner that implies ultimately an assurance that God will deliver us from the 'deluge' as he delivered Noah. Yet typology as Byron uses it is appealed to, rather than

actually apprehended. Just as the storm over Lake Leman only gives rise to awkward rhetorical questions, so that 'universal flood' of tears / And blood' prompts an urgent plea rather than an assurance: there is no ark to be seen, and an air of desperation in that 'Renew thy rainbow, God!' The ultimate frame of reference in *Childe Harold* is not Providential, but historical. The corollary to the psychological cycles through which the Byronic traveller moves endlessly are grand historical cycles in which mankind generally seems trapped. History, Byron tells elsewhere in Canto 4, 'hath but *one* page' (4.969): that is to say, the same narrative is told and retold. Napoleon may be the immediate referent in the denunciation of tyranny just quoted, but Napoleon is presented as only the most recent in an ongoing cycle of would-be conquerors. At some figurative level, one may surmise from Canto 4 of *Childe Harold*, the grand narrative that history writes again and again is a narrative of maritime misadventure, a constant cycling between the stirring violence of the wreck itself and then the more truly horrifying aftermath of wreck. Shipwreck then famine, storm then stagnation: this was the narrative seemingly playing out in Europe, as 1815 brought the return of the *ancien regime* all across Europe and thirty years of violent, revolutionary change seemed to have changed nothing. It is a moot point whether this is a consoling or disconsoling reading of the historical process. Storm and sea will eventually break up every ship of state, mocking the ambitions of every would-be tyrant or repressive administration: this is Byron's message in the paean to the ocean at the close of *Childe Harold* 4. Yet to what larger purpose are these vessels wrecked? Byron's bleak view of history can seemingly only comprehend a lapse into anarchy, to be followed eventually by the return of some tyrannical government. The cycle seems inescapable, and in this context the voyage that Byron seeks to make on that 'bark of hope' at Metella's tomb is hopeless. If the voyage has any value, it is chiefly in what one might term, somewhat paradoxically, its anaesthetic aspect: it allows the voyager to blot out, through vigorous action, the true recognition of his situation.

Thus Byron's politics, and with it the travelling that in so many regards is intended to make a political point, reaches an *impassse*. This *impasse* with regard to domestic politics is the corollary to the 'discursive contradiction' identified by Leask with regard to Byron's engagement with exotic, alien cultures. Malcom Kelsall and others have argued that it reflects the curious ideological position

Byron found himself in as an aristocratic Whig somewhat out of his time.[65] Traditional Whig rhetoric made the Whigs the party of liberty, protecting the people's freedoms from the oppression of the monarch – but the same rhetoric also insisted that these freedoms should properly be administered by the aristocracy, the natural governing class. If this were not done, the only alternative to tyranny was anarchy and violent mob rule, as witnessed by the Terror in France (and as documented in numerous accounts of mutiny on board ship). In the years after 1815, however, this outlook was increasingly seeming anachronistic, as the real pressure for social change and political reform came from groups outside the traditional political elite, and as the Tory government became steadily more reactionary in response. The traditional Whig role was falling into a fissure opened up by the widening of the political spectrum, and the response from figures such as Byron was a political stance born of frustration and failure. Strong on resisting, on protesting against what it does *not* like, traditional Whiggism in the early decades of the nineteenth century is somewhat unnerved when it comes to offering any sort of substantive programme of reform. Thus Byron spoke avidly of liberty and reform in the abstract, but his enthusiasm for more concrete manifestations of these human rights was dampened, in the British context at least, by his aristocratic disdain for the plebeian origins for many of the agitators for reform.

This curious, somewhat muddled, relationship with his own caste and country reveals itself in many ways in Byron's career, not least in his travelling and in his writing about travel. In this connection, one might note that whilst Byron takes pain to make his travels suggest, and stimulate, a degree of free-thinking unorthodoxy, such individualism was many regards the traditional prerogative of his class.[66] While Byron's 'Grander Tour' of 1809-1811 is properly to be understood as a rebuke to the more traditional Grand Tour, it was a rebuke that was being made by other members of the gentry and aristocracy from the 1760s onwards. As was noted in Chapter 3, both Bruce's and Boswell's travels were in certain regards the extension of the Grand Tour beyond its usual boundaries, whilst Byron's scorn for France and Italy as 'the common *Turnpike* of coxcombs and *virtuosos*' might usefully be compared with Joseph Banks's comment on the European tour: 'every

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[65] See Kelsall, *Byron's Politics*, and Abraham Kriegel, 'Liberty and Whiggery in Early Nineteenth Century England', *Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980).
[66] See J. Michael Robertson, 'Aristocratic Individualism in Byron's *Don Juan*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 17 (1977).

blockhead does that …my Grand Tour shall be one round the whole globe.'[67] Further to this, if we reflect on Byron's sense of himself as an exile from his homeland, the reasons he presents for having fled the 'tight little island' can often seem somewhat ambiguous. Consider the somewhat derogatory reference to the 'common *Turnpike*' in the quotation just given. Byron seldom refers to turnpikes without using a degree of sarcasm or suspicion: they typically seem to figure an array of unwelcome changes that are taking place in Britain. But the reasons why Byron does not welcome these changes are revealing, and again seem expressive of mixed motives in this traveller. In part, Byron laments the social upheavals caused by the modernising processes embodied in the turnpike, and he seeks restitution for those lower orders who have been dispossessed by these changes: thus one of his Byron's speeches in the Lords was in defence of the frame-breakers who had responded to the loss of their traditional livelihoods by smashing the new machines. Yet threaded through these social protests is also a rather more private understanding of these changes as an increasing curtailment of the liberties and privileges proper to the aristocrat. Hence the following outburst:

> I am very fond of riding and always *was out* of England - but I hate your Hyde Park - and your turnpike roads - & must have forests - downs - or deserts to expatiate in - I detest *knowing* the road - one is to go, - and being interrupted by your damned fingerposts, or a blackguard roaring for two pence at a turnpike.[68]

Here is a rationale for travel, and an explanation for the need to escape the 'tight little island', but it is one which seems to proclaim more loudly a sense of personal irritation than social injustice. The problem with turnpikes, those potent symbols of modernity in this period, seems to be not so much the damage they are doing local communities, but rather the fact that they require Byron to make a grubby financial transaction with some oik.

This may seem a trivial incident, but the self-consciousness it reveals as to matters of class had important ramifications both for Byron's politics, and for his travelling. Whilst Byron spoke a radical language in certain contexts, when it came to the sphere of practical politics, he found radicals highly distasteful. Men such as Cobbett and 'Orator' Hunt were too common and plebeian. Byron saw them as dangerous demagogues rather than real political figures, and scolded Hobhouse for associating

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[67] Quoted in John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 61.
[68] *BLJ*, Vol. 6, p. 186.

with them.[69] One result of such tensions was that it was easier for Byron to identify with revolutionary or radical political movements in other countries than in Britain. And hence, perhaps, one attraction of travel for Byron: abroad, the political issues which he felt were the proper business of a man of his station – much more so than poetry – simplified sharply. There were none of the complications and multiple allegiances that he clearly felt when he contemplated domestic politics. This tangle of beliefs and commitments, and an understanding that travel is a means of resolving or evading these contradictions, is revealed in a letter of January 1820, written from Italy to his sister in Britain. In Britain, the Peterloo Massacre had not long taken place: there was much popular unrest in the country, fuelled by radicals such as Hunt, and a widespread expectation that a more concerted uprising was on the way. This is a possibility which clearly puts Byron in a profound quandary. As he writes: 'if you but knew how I despise and abhor all these men, and all these things, you would easily suppose how reluctantly I contemplate being called upon to act with or against any of these parties.' But one way out of the quandary, it seems, would simply be to distance himself further from the British political scene. As he put it slightly earlier in the letter:

> There is nothing which I should dread more than to trust to my own temper, or to have to act in such scenes as I think must soon ensue in England. It is this made me think of S[ou]th. America, or the Cape, or Turkey, or any where, so that I can but preserve my independence of means to live withal.[70]

The adventure overseas, it would seem, can sometimes serve as an escape from the complexities of home, and specifically, in Byron's case, from the political complexities of the British situation in the 1810s and '20s. Further to this, one might also speculate as to the extent to which a sense of such mixed allegiances drove this traveller to seek not only adventure, but also misadventure. The traveller who yearns to make with his travelling some grand political gesture, yet who is also, at some level, aware that his travelling is an escape from real politics, might plausibly choose to construe travel as *travail*, or as a sensationalism that serves as an 'anaesthetic' not only to mundane existence, but also to more profound uncertainties. To launch oneself into dangerous and uncomfortable travels in the Byronic manner is possibly to seek simultaneously a thrill, a punishment and a shriving.

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[69] See *BLJ*, Vol. 7, p. 81.
[70] *BLJ*, Vol. 7, p. 15.

## From a Common to an Uncommon Place: *Beppo* and *The Island*

The previous section argued that whilst there is very much a political edge to Byron's travel, and to his travel-derived writings, there are also contradictions and ambiguities running through the politics of Byronic travel. These tensions – with regard to the way Byron wants to treat foreign, and especially Oriental cultures, and with regard to Byron's relationship with Britain – lend to both the politics and the travel a self-defeating aspect. Yet in the final stages of his career, poetically if not politically, Byron perhaps finds a route out of this *impasse*. The fact that it is a poetic rather than a political solution should not be understated: in some ways, it is no solution at all to the problems outlined earlier, since it remains purely an aesthetic solution. But from *Beppo* onwards, Byron seems to regard such aesthetic responses in a new way, imagining as it were a new relationship between imagination and actuality, between poetry and history. In certain works of this late phase, it seems as if the fictive can contain the historical, yet also move beyond it: poetry proffers idealistic, optimistic possibilities which may work an effect in reality, adjusting in some small way the grim cycles of history. Under this more hopeful, comic dispensation, certain Byronic travellers seem at last able to conduct journeys which do not end in defeat, disaster and disillusionment.

One such traveller is Beppo, in the poem of that name. Written in the conversational, digressive style which will ultimately be put to greatest effect in *Don Juan*, *Beppo* (1818) tells the story of a Venetian merchant who is lost at sea in the Eastern Mediterranean ('about where Troy once stood').[71] Washed ashore, he becomes a slave; escaping from slavery, he becomes a pirate; becoming rich, he travels back to Venice, surviving further mishaps on the way. Stirring stuff, one might think: very much the ingredients from which Byron might have fashioned another *Corsair*. Yet the story as outlined here, although this *is* what happens to Beppo himself, is in fact a story Byron chooses not tell in this poem. Although the title points us towards the merchant, the main focus of the narrative – when it is not wandering elsewhere in its many digressions – is Laura, Beppo's wife. She stays in Venice; believing her husband lost at sea, she takes a Count as a 'Cavalier Servente' in the Italian manner; with this consort, she has a happy arrangement for some six years. Laura's story only

[71] *Beppo*, l. 747, in *BCPW*, Vol. 4.

becomes Beppo's story again at the end of the poem. In stanza 70 (of 99), Laura and the Count encounter a Turk at a masquerade in Venice; in stanza 89, the Turk is revealed to be Beppo, who has thus cross-dressed into another culture like several Byronic travellers before him (including Byron). And it is only now, in brief summary, that we get the account of Beppo's adventures and misadventures, as sketched above.

The divergence between the poem's title and the main focus of its attention seems to suggest a subtle shift in Byron's earlier understanding, as expressed in *Childe Harold*, that history 'hath but one page.' In some regards Byron continues to hold to this view – as we shall see shortly in relation to *The Island* – yet he also seems to add to it a new understanding that are many ways of telling and/or reading the story that is written on that page. The same events read variously, and will be written differently, according to the various protagonists in the events. They will also read and be written differently according to the different narrative expectations and generic forms one brings to bear on them. *Beppo* could easily have been constructed as a narrative of maritime misadventure, or as a captivity narrative, or as an account of piracy. The outline we get of Beppo's *travails* at the end of the poem alerts us of this fact, making us aware of the stories *not* told, the genres not adopted, in this particular version of events. In so doing, the poem contrives to both exclude and include a range of alternative story lines and generic conventions. We become aware of this story not only as it is, but also as it might have been. In this and other ways, *Beppo* seems to embrace plurality, acknowledging the diverse ways of reading and writing the story written on history's page. The narrator acknowledges, for example, that some might read, and thereafter write, into the account of Beppo's survival a Providential conclusion. This, indeed, is Beppo's own reading of events: '*He* said that *Providence* protected him – / For my part, I say nothing, lest we clash / In our opinions' (764-6; Byron's emphasis). The narrator, it is clear, is skeptical, but Beppo's interpretation is at least alluded to. The poem, it seems, is aware of the alternative forms it might have taken: the reader is meant to recognise these, and to question their relationship to the form that is adopted by the poem.

There is thus an inclusiveness to *Beppo*, an inclusiveness that is of course fundamental to the poem's digressive style, which conveys a sense that there is almost no subject which cannot be worked into the poem. And the inclusiveness in *Beppo* extends even to Byron's own earlier self, and

to his earlier representations of travel in the Turkish Tales. Beppo's re-appearance in Turkish costume, it has been noted, reprises several earlier Byronic travellers, including Byron himself, but in so doing it seems to cast an ironic eye on the earlier transformations. Back in Venice, Beppo passes 'for a true Turkey-merchant, trading / With goods of various names' (770-1). It is tempting to connect this fake Turk peddling his wares with the Byron of 1813 who advised Tom Moore that to 'stick to the East' was the 'only poetical policy': the sole competition, after all, was Southey's 'unsaleables'.[72] As Nigel Leask has remarked, Byron speaks here more as a merchant than a cultural renegade.[73] That Byron held the same view of his own earlier self is suggested by the lines midway through *Beppo*, when the narrator announces that he would like to print

> A Grecian, Syrian, or *As*syrian tale;
> And sell you, mix'd with Western sentimentalism
> Some samples of the finest Orientalism. (406-8)

Again, an alternative form that the poem might have taken is acknowledged, thereby being both excluded and included in this particular story. Given the author of these lines, fixed forever in the public imagination as the author of *Childe Harold* and *The Corsair*, it is surely the case that we are meant to recognise Byron's Turkish Tales in those 'samples of the finest Orientalism' – poems which are here understood just as commercial product, 'samples' the poet will 'sell you'.

Once again, therefore, *Beppo* suggests alternative versions of itself. From one perspective, it does this so as to critique these alternative versions: from another perspective, however, it is useful to think of such moments of critique as also allowing the co-existence, within the poem, of different strategies of writing and reading. The critique offered of the stories that *Beppo* might have been is genial: the narrator does not contest Beppo's Providential reading too strongly, preferring not to 'clash'. Arguably, the plurality of forms and perspectives and interpretations is highlighted so as to make the reader move among the different versions, reflecting for him or herself upon the points of congruity and incongruity. Such a sense of co-existence seems to me true to the conclusion of *Beppo*, which once again hinges on the reader's recognition that a certain sort of story is *not* being told. As

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[72] *BLJ*, Vol. 3, p. 101.
[73] Leask, p. 13.

has been noted, Beppo, Laura, and the Count who is Laura's 'Cavalier Servente' all come together at a masquerade in Venice. And that is that, more or less: Beppo and Laura are reunited, the Count moves courteously aside, and all three remain friendly for years to come (give or take some marital rows). There is no jealousy, no duels, and no fatalities. The three protagonists happily co-exist, refusing to act out the scripts of revenge or thwarted passion that another author might have prepared for them.

Thus Beppo is a traveller whose travels resolve themselves without disaster. This happy outcome is in many ways made possible by the place to which he returns, Venice, a city of great sophistication and liberality in sexual matters. In presenting Venice thus, Byron is in a further sense rewriting the conventions of British travel writing. Venice lay off the conventional route of the Grand Tour, in part because of its lack of classical remains, and in part because of its reputation for vice. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the possibilities for corruption in Italy were much deplored by commentators on the Grand Tour in the eighteenth-century, even by advocates for the Tour, and part of Byron's epigraph to *Beppo* comes from a Renaissance commentary in this tradition, describing Venice as 'the seat of all dissoluteness'. In another writer's hands, Laura's decision to take a 'Cavalier Servente' might have supported this verdict. As Byron writes it, however, Venice is a place which humanely grants such freedoms. Reproaching the moral primness of his native 'tight little island', Byron reconstructs the louche – as contemporary Anglo-Saxon *mores* have it– as the supremely civilised.

For Byron, Venice was '(next to the East) the greenest island of my imagination', and it is to another *Island* – Byron's poem of that name – that one must look for a similarly optimistic working-out of the themes of travel and misadventure, exoticism and exchange between cultures.[74] *The Island* (1823) is Byron's last major work. In 4 cantos, it retells the story of the mutiny of the *Bounty*. In the present context, it is perhaps the element of *re*-telling that is most important about the poem. Byron consciously and conspicuously positions the poem within a much wider array of literary traditions and discourses. That Byron thought himself to be writing both within, and also, in certain regards, *against* certain conventions is suggested by his own commentary on the poem, in a letter to Leigh Hunt. To Hunt Byron declared:

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[74] *BLJ*, Vol. 5, p. 129.

> I have two things to avoid – the first that of running foul of my own 'Corsair' and style – so as to produce repetition and monotony – and the other *not* to run counter to the reigning stupidity altogether – otherwise they will say I am eulogizing *Mutiny*. – This must produce tameness in some degree – but recollect that I am merely trying to write a poem a little above the usual run of periodical poesy – and I hope it will at least be that; - You think higher of readers than I do – but I will bet you a flask of Falernum that the most *stilted* parts of the political 'Age of Bronze' – and the most *pamby* portions of the <South Sea> Toobonai Islanders – will be the most agreeable to the enlightened Public; - though I shall sprinkle some *uncommon* place here and there nevertheless.[75]

With some subtlety, Byron thus locates his poem in a number of different contexts: in relation to his own previous work; in relation to the prevailing wisdom, and conventional discourse, about mutiny; in relation to the literary ephemera that is 'periodical poesy'. In so doing, he hopes to 'sprinkle some *uncommon* place here and there'. In connection with *The Island*, at least, that phrase 'uncommon place' is to be understood in both a literal and a literary sense. Ultimately the poem takes us to what is indeed a very uncommon, almost magical place: a secret cave hidden deep within a seemingly barren South Sea island. But it is only able to take us there, I would suggest, by Byron's creation of '*uncommon* places' in the other sense of the phrase: transformations of the commonplace, of the conventional, clichéd or stereotypical. This transformative dynamic operates not only in the poem's relationship with its generic antecedents but also internally, within the poem, as certain words and phrases circulate, taking on new meanings with each reappearance, meanings which question, without necessarily supplanting, the old meanings. That is to say, the transformations effected by *The Island* work not simply to subvert the commonplace with the uncommonplace. Rather, as the somewhat clumsy formulation itself suggests, the commonplace is always present within the uncommonplace. Alternative meanings, and alternative readings of such controversial events as the mutiny on the *Bounty*, are allowed to co-exist. *The Island* seeks to embrace a plurality of interpretations and outlooks, and in so doing it becomes itself a remarkable, if fragile, place, both uncommon and utopian.

To make such claims about the poem, it is necessary to map the literary traditions within which Byron takes care to locate *The Island*. Two sources are clearly signalled by the headnote to the poem, which tells the reader that 'the foundation of the following Story will be found partly in the account of the Mutiny of the Bounty in the South Seas (in 1789) and partly in "Mariner's Account of the

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[75] *BLJ*, Vol. 10, p. 90.

Tonga Islands".[76] The texts referred to here are William Bligh's *Voyage to the South Seas* (1792) and William Mariner's *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* (1817). Bligh's narrative was also used, in the early editions of *The Island*, to provide a substantial appendix to the poem: some 14 pages long, this presented Bligh's account of the mutiny of Fletcher Christian and his comrades. Byron's poem thus sits almost literally within Bligh's text, which must be considered the primary source for *The Island*. Sitting within Bligh's narrative, *The Island* is located in two subtly different forms of Voyage and Travel writing, since Bligh's *Voyage* is a somewhat hybrid text. Bligh first described the events on the *Bounty* in his *Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship the Bounty* (1790). Two years later, this narrative was absorbed into the larger *Voyage*, which essentially just adds a prequel narrative (although a few small amendments were made to the original account: these appear in the appendix to *The Island*, from which we know that Byron was using the 1792 *Voyage*, rather than the 1790 *Narrative*). Between the two parts of Bligh's *Voyage*, there are marked differences in content, style and tone. The first part, if not quite an account of exploration in the usual sense, certainly reads as an exercise in Banksian improvement: the *Bounty*'s business is the relocation of the breadfruit to another part of the British trading empire, and Bligh recounts this enterprise in a disciplined, scholarly manner that begins with the very first account of the breadfruit tree by Dampier. The second part, meanwhile, reads as an account of maritime misadventure, as Bligh describes first the mutiny itself, and then the harrowing open boat voyage to Timor.

Flowing around Byron's *Island* by way of Bligh's *Voyage*, then, are two subtly different – although not necessarily antagonistic – traditions within contemporary travel writing. On the one hand, there is the account of Banksian exploration and improvement, which by the 1820s was articulating an ever more bullish sense of British superiority to the rest of the world: on the other, the account of maritime misadventure, with its characteristically authoritarian logic, Calvinist and Hobbesian in tone, and its Providential, typological rhetoric. In connection with the latter strand of travel writing, moreover, one must also recall that it was commonplace for such accounts of shipwreck and mutiny to find themselves embroiled in controversy, and thus to engender further texts. Bligh's narrative was no exception in this regard, spawning in its wake a trail of documents which begins with Edward

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[76] *BCPW*, Vol. 7, p. 26.

Christian's pamphlet and Bligh's *Answer to Certain Assertions*, and which continues up to the present day, taking in Wordsworth's letter to the *Weekly Examiner* along the way. Given this complex pre-history to the poem, one wonders whether there is any irony intended when Byron writes, in *The Island*, that 'volumes lurked below [Christian's] fierce farewell'[77] – after all, much of the discussion in the texts just cited revolved around Fletcher Christian's notoriously ambiguous last words, 'I am in Hell'. Be this as it may, Byron's poem must certainly be regarded as a continuation of this ongoing controversy in print, and as further evidence (after Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Wordsworth's 'Analogy Passage') of a Romantic desire to engage imaginatively with the awkward questions provoked by the narrative of maritime misadventure.

Given the notoriety of the *Bounty* mutiny in this period, the headnote and the appendix between them would have helped most readers to place the poem in a generic context heavily indebted to the discourses of maritime misadventure and Banksian exploration. The second source alluded to in the headnote, however, was less well-known. William Mariner's *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* constitutes another variant of contemporary travel writing. Not coincidentally, perhaps, it is again a somewhat hybrid text. The narrative records the experiences of a young sailor, William Mariner, who was shipwrecked off Tonga and captured by the Tongans. What begins as a narrative of misadventure and captivity, however, soon modulates into something rather different, since Mariner is treated well by the Tongans, becoming a great favourite of their king, Finow. Mariner lived for several years in relative contentment among the Tongans (although it should be noted that when a chance came to return to Britain, Mariner killed a Tongan so as to escape), and the result of this period spent among the Tongans was a generous account of their culture, in many ways deeply sympathetic to the native population. This account was related by Mariner to John Martin, a doctor, who wrote down the information Mariner provided and added his own, more educated interpretation of events: thus there is a further element of hybridity or duality about the text, insofar as Mariner's own voice is often clearly being translated into Martin's more scientific idiom. (Martin also introduces the narrative, and sums up the information assembled at the end.) Martin's scientific style, however, in certain regards seems out of step with his times, and this may in part account for Byron's

[77] *The Island*, Canto 1, l. 168, in *BCPW*, Vol. 7.

attraction to this text. Martin, following Mariner, seems more interested in the Tongans for their own sake, than in the possibilities of 'improving' or exploiting them. His narrative, indeed, often seems to define itself *against* a more overtly improving mentality, and especially against the missionary activity that was already underway in the Pacific. Whilst not attacking the civilising notions of his culture *per se*, Martin repeatedly laments the fact that native traditions in other islands have vanished before they have been probably recorded and understood; at times, moreover, one detects a more straightforward animus against missionary activity.[78] It seems that 'improvement', as that term was understood in the 1810s, is not altogether to Martin's taste.

There is thus a subtle tension between Byron's two declared sources for *The Island*, and also, arguably, certain tensions within each of those sources. Byron's poem contrives to foreground these tensions, seeking to foster a sense that there is more than one way of viewing the mutiny on the *Bounty*, and more than one way of construing the relationship between Britain and an indigenous population on the other side of the globe. And whilst this multiplicity of perspectives explicitly includes the orthodox, establishment view on these matters – the 'reigning stupidity' on mutiny, for example – implicitly it contests that dominant viewpoint by pointing out that there are alternative positions that may be taken.

This attempt to maintain a plurality of outlook is revealed most importantly in connection with Bligh and the mutineers. Neither party in this fracas is endorsed categorically, and neither side is wholly condemned. The mutiny itself takes place in Canto 1 of the poem, and here Byron for the most part follows Bligh's version of events (as given, in the original edition, in the appendix). Bligh first appears as the 'gallant Chief' (1.17). He is in his cabin as the mutiny begins, dreaming of the rewards he has justly earned – and as Byron asks, 'why should not his slumber be secure?' (1.24). Carefully posed, as befits Byron's delicate balancing of viewpoints in this canto, this is almost but not quite a rhetorical question. All that leads up to it, the initial account of Bligh, might suggest to the reader that there is no reason why the captain should not sleep securely. What follows immediately afterwards, however, begins to modify that view. We learn that the *Bounty*'s decks are trod by 'unwilling feet', its sails worked by 'wilder hands' (1.25-6). The crew, it emerges, are dreaming of an

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[78] See, for example, William Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, 2nd ed. (London, 1818), p. xvi

easier life: having visited Tahiti (as the reader familiar with Bligh's narrative knows), they now imagine an island rich in 'gushing fruits that Nature gave untilled' (1.33), over which 'promiscuous plenty poured / Her horn' (1.35-6). They imagine that in this 'sunny isle' (1.27) they would be free, each man having 'no master save his mood' (1.38). It is these imaginings that spur the mutineers to their rebellion: because of these of these dreams, and this fantasy island, Bligh cannot sleep securely.

One should note that Byron, in sketching the psychology of the mutineers over the thirty or so lines of Section 2 of Canto 1, subtly adjusts our view of the mutineers. Whilst those initial references to 'unwilling feet' and 'wilder hands' do not necessarily run counter to the bleak logic of more commonplace retellings of maritime misadventure, as Byron develops this theme the 'sunny isle' takes on a far more idealised quality. The influence of Rousseau and the glowing report Mariner gave of Tonga combine to produce a dream of a natural paradise which exhibits a harmony between man and man, and between man and his environment. This is 'the equal land without a lord' (1.36), and a 'general garden, where all steps may roam' (1.42). The dream island has a utopian, even Edenic quality; it increasingly seems to reflect a hunger for innocence in the mutineers, rather than a base desire for self-indulgence and vicious pleasures (as the commonplace view of mutineers would usually have us believe).

This subtle shift in Byron's account of the fantasy island does not clear the mutineers of blame – as we shall see, he later insists that they have incurred guilt by their actions – but it does require an adjustment in the reader's perception of them. Such adjustments, I would suggest, are central to this poem, both in its relationship with prior texts and in its method within itself. In the latter regard, consider the knock-on effect of recognising a certain yearning for virtue and innocence in the mutineers. Insofar as the island they imagine takes on an Edenic quality, it prompts a reassessment of Byron's use of a key Romantic touchstone for travel that appears at the very start of the poem. In the opening lines, we are told that 'the waters with their world were all before' the *Bounty* (1.5) – a reference, of course, to *Paradise Lost*, and the situation of Adam and Eve as that poem closes. Initially the echo of Milton's famous phrase seems only to convey a joyful sense of adventure (rather as it does at the start of Wordsworth's *Prelude*). If we come to feel that the mutineers are searching for a

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and footnote to p. xx.

real Eden, however, the darker implications of this allusion are activated. The sailors on the *Bounty* are traversing the globe because, like Adam and Eve, they are cast out from paradise. They are fallen men, and the representatives of a fallen culture that seeks, by sending out ships such as the *Bounty*, to extend its influence to unfallen races. Here, implicitly, is the *Bounty*'s voyage, and indeed the whole business of Banksian exploration, construed in a manner very different to the commonplace understanding of exploration as 'improvement' or as civilising process. What is going on here is the corruption, rather the enlightenment of native peoples – and in case this reading of exploration is *too* implicit, Byron picks it out with more precision a little later when he describes the mutineers' dream island having only an '*unexploring* navy' in the form of 'the canoe' (1.46, my emphasis).

Readjustments like this are central to the internal dynamic of *The Island*. To some extent, the poem proceeds by circulating within itself key words and phrases, and by bringing to each use of that word or phrase a new range of meanings or implications. The Miltonic touchstone just discussed, for example, will reappear in Canto 3. By now the mutineers are having to face the full consequences of their actions. Canto 1 related the mutiny itself, and saw Bligh launched in his open boat, whilst Canto 2 constituted an idyllic interlude in which the mutineers do arrive at a South Sea island, Toobonai, which to some extent realises their dreams. (This interlude will be discussed in more detail shortly.) At the end of Canto 2, however, a British Naval vessel has been spotted, coming to enact justice – or, from another point of view, vengeance – on the mutineers. And in the third canto, we see the aftermath of a shortlived struggle with the forces of the British state. Only a few mutineers remain. In two canoes, they flee Toobonai; as they do so, we are told 'in vain the world before them lay' (3.44). Now echoing not only Milton, but also *The Island*'s own earlier use of the phrase, the line establishes a degree of equivalence between Bligh's *Bounty*, on its business of global improvement, and the vessels carrying these guilty fugitives. In similar fashion, the word 'ark' – with all its weight of Providential and typological implication, as was commonplace in the literature of maritime misadventure – is used both for Bligh's open boat (1.166) and for the vessels in which the mutineers flee the Navy at the end of canto 3. (That Byron intends us to be alert to the full Biblical resonance of 'ark', moreover, is suggested by the lines which close Canto 1, which talk of the mutineers setting

off in their 'rebel bark', fleeing their own country 'as the raven fled the ark; / And yet they seek to nestle with the dove' (1.231-3).) Such recurring words and phrases prompt a process of re-assessment in the reader, as noted: they also effect a certain mirroring of the Navy and the mutineers, and of Bligh and Fletcher Christian, the chief architect of the mutiny. Here is another version of those eerily similar antagonists that we find repeatedly in Byron's Turkish Tales (the Giaour and Hassan, for example). Both sides have their guilty aspect in this poem. The mutineers may have had a vision of innocence and utopian existence, but that vision cannot be realised without being compromised and incurring guilt. Thus in Canto 1, Byron makes a point of following Bligh in his reading of Fletcher Christian's last words to his captain. Byron's Christian is pricked by 'remorse for the black deed' (1.157), especially when Bligh asks 'where / Was now his grateful sense of former care?' (1.159-60). This is the context, in *The Island*, that Fletcher utters his famous words, 'I am in Hell! in Hell!' (1.164), and it brings to those words a meaning significantly different to that supplied by Edward Christian. Here at least Byron follows the Bligh line in his retelling of the mutiny on the *Bounty*.

Thus Fletcher Christian and the mutineers achieve only a 'guilt-won paradise' (3.39). It is a paradise tarnished in the attainment, since it can only be won through the crime of violent rebellion. It is also a paradise which, if it is to be achieved in actuality, must necessarily exist in the real world. The very reality of the island the mutineers do find, Toobonai, problematises and compromises their original fantasy. Since Toobonai exists in the real world, it exists for the British Navy to find: it could never be, in actuality, a place where the canoe was the only 'unexploring navy'. The mutineers must expect to feel 'the vengeance of their country's law' (3.38). 'Vengeance', however, is a more troubling term than 'justice', and as he describes the official response to the mutiny in Cantos 3 and 4, Byron does little to reassure us that it is justice rather than vengeance that is being exacted. There is an air of brutality about the state's actions. The government troops hunt down the mutineers as if they were wild beasts; when they catch up with Christian the soldiers will be described as 'vultures' (4.240). The Naval vessel despatched to Toobonai is a 'sullen ship', 'a floating dungeon' (4.403-4). The mutineers may be guilty, but the state, it seems, is scarcely more admirable. And Fletcher Christian may be the most guilty of the mutineers – as he himself acknowledges, it is his 'madness' that has brought all the others to their deaths – but by the end of the poem one wonders how wrong

he was to instigate such a rebellion. In that characteristically Byronic paradigm, both adversaries seem as bad as each other. Christian reprises those many Byronic heroes, and those figures revered by Byron such as Cromwell, who find themselves caught in a double-bind. Bondage is intolerable, but the casting off of bondage is invariably a dangerous, morally dubious act. All such actions play out in the real, historical world, the murky world of war and politics, which is inevitably a fallen world. As was discussed in the last section, the historical process is a cycle of violence and repression, storm and stagnation. And just as the traveller in *Childe Harold* 4 seems to stand metaphorically on some barren coastline, enduring the aftermath of shipwreck, so too is this a setting to which Christian must inexorably travel. Having imagined a dream island, having found in actuality Toobonai and been forced to flee it, Christian voyages to yet another island. This is a bleak place, a 'wild but narrow scene' (4.253), which in its narrowness reflects the way real history constrains the individual, allowing no latitude for idealism, heroism and significant action. Here Christian meets his fate, shot down by British troops.

Yet the bleak island on which Christian dies is not the only destination that *The Island* is heading towards. Another mutineer, Torquil, will be led to a very different island, and to a very different outcome. We are first introduced to Torquil in Canto 2, a canto which as earlier remarked constitutes a significant interlude in the poem. Here Byron's mode and manner, as he retells the mutiny on the *Bounty*, undergo a marked change. The grin cycle of rebellion and retribution is broken for a short period as Byron, allowing himself a degree of generic hybridity, entertains a pastoral, and even burlesque, mood. Canto 2 begins with the beguiling song of the Toobonai Islanders; thereafter, it continues the depiction of Toobonai in terms drawn more from Rousseau and Mariner than from the commonplace contemporary account of exploration. If these are savages, they are very much noble savages (in contradistinction also to the debased indigenes who increasingly populate Southey's exotic epics). Indeed, it is questionable how far we are to consider the Islanders as being in any way savage or primitive. 'Civilised' is another term which becomes, like 'ark', a field of variable meaning as it circulates within *The Island*. We see it used first in connection with the crew of the *Bounty*, who have been 'half uncivilised' (1.31) by long absence from home. This maps Britain as the site of civilisation. In the Canto 2, however, we find that the influence of the Toobonai Islanders has done

'more than Europe's discipline had done, / And civilized civilization's son!' (2.271-2). The paradox is sharply fashioned: it pricks us to ponder which is the real locus of civilisation.

It is in this Rousseauistic register that Byron introduces us first to Neuha, a local woman, and then to Torquil, the mutineer whom Neuha has taken as her husband. Torquil and Neuha as Byron depicts them have the innate nobility and grace of a prince and princess playing at being rustics in a Shakespearean tragicomedy. Torquil may be a 'truant mutineer' (2.209) but in any other historical circumstances, Byron insists, he would have been as great a hero as one could wish for. And for this canto at least, *The Island* grants Torquil something of this heroism, whilst to the other mutineers it grants an conception of human nature more generous than that customarily displayed in the narrative of maritime misadventure. These mutineers have not lapsed into anarchy and violence, as was usual in this literature, but have settled down and married. Until the British Navy reappear, all seems to have been genuinely idyllic on the (fictional) island of Toobonai.

Describing this briefly happy existence, Byron's poem becomes a significantly different place, at least for the duration of Canto 2. It has not only a pastoral aspect, but also moments of broader comedy. The narrator seems to unbutton: he becomes conversational and digressive, and allows himself to crack jokes even as the Navy's vengeful ships hove into view (in the very last two lines of the canto, for example). If Torquil and Neuha remind us of a Shakespearian prince and princess, another of the mutineers, Ben Bunting, has something of the air of a rude mechanical. He appears

> fantastically arrayed
> A seaman in savage masquerade;
> Such as appears to rise out from the deep,
> When o'er the line the merry vessels sweep,
> And the rough Saturnalia of the Tar
> Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrowed car. (2.462-7)

Byron's use of the term 'Saturnalia' here is worth noting, providing as it does another instance of the circulation of key words within the poem. In Canto 1, the poem speaks of 'the first dawning of the drunken hour, / The Saturnalia of unhop'd for power' (1.83-4) – by which it means the mutiny itself. Here is a darker understanding of the word than that found in Canto 2, and a usage which looks back to those lines in *Childe Harold* 4 describing the French Revolution, in which France 'got drunk with blood to vomit crime': 'fatal have her Saturnalia been / To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime'

(4.865-7). Canto 2 of *The Island*, however, prompts us to consider more legitimate and praiseworthy forms of Saturnalia. The reference is to the ceremonies that take place when a ship crosses the equator, which to this day involve initiation rites, dressing up and an inversion of rank. Bligh, it will be recalled, suppressed these celebrations on the *Bounty*, doing away with the usual vent for built-up tensions on a long voyage. Bligh's actions may or may not have been in Byron's mind here: what is more certainly the case is that here we have Saturnalia understood in the spirit of play and of carnival. And in entertaining this version of Saturnalia, Byron's poem has itself become a place of carnival. The sombre decorum one might expect of a mutiny narrative, and which Byron for most part maintains in the other three cantos, is briefly breached, as Byron makes jokes and waxes lyrical. In its own form of Saturnalia, Canto 2 overturns convention and expectation, and takes us to significantly different poetic territory.

As in *Beppo*, there is a sense that this alternative imagining, and styling, of a tale of maritime misadventure is licensed only by an acknowledgement of the alternative versions that one might more usually expect to find. In Canto 1, Byron makes a point of telling us that he will not be telling us Bligh's version of the aftermath of the wreck. He signals that his narrative will *not* be going with Bligh into the open boat (an alternative sequence of events which is anyway supplied by the appendix to the poem). 'Tis not mine to tell their tale of grief' (1.177), he declares, but goes on to offer a brief thirty line summary of the ordeal which contrives to both include and exclude this alternative narrative line. We are reminded how Bligh and his comrades were reduced by hunger and thirst to

> ghastly spectres which were doomed at last
> To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
> As ever the dark annals of the deep
> Disclosed for man to dread or woman weep.

Here is a reference to that canon of disastrous sea narratives assembled in such 'dark annals' as Dalyell's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea* and Clarke's *Naufragia*. Directing us to these earlier accounts, Byron both reminds us of the way these events customarily play out, and points up the fact that his own version of events constitutes a breach of what is customary, as we move not into scenes of greater horror but into the comparative idyll of Canto 2 of *The Island*.

By the close of Canto 2, of course, the mood is once again darkening (although, as noted, the comic mode is maintained right up the final couplet). The pastoral moment of Canto 2 exists in a world of historical realities, a world of exploration, industrial fire power and encroaching modernity. Yet as an alternative imagining of how things might have been, and as an experiment in the application of a different set of literary conventions of the narrative of mutiny, Canto 2 offers Byron a route out of the characteristic Byronic *impasse* discussed in the previous section. Travelling this route, Byron allows himself to imagine, and asks his reader to imagine with him, at least one optimistic outcome to his poem, and to the *Bounty* débâcle. Torquil and Neuha, fleeing the British Navy, do not travel to the same island as Fletcher Christian. Instead, they approach an island that seems at first sight similar to the island Christian finds (similar also to any number of islands in the literature of maritime misadventure in which hapless survivors eke out a miserable existence), being a 'black rock' chiefly comprised of

> One bleak precipice, as e'er
> Gave mariners a shelter and despair,
> A spot to make the saved regret the deck
> Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck. (4.25-8)

Here again is a signalling of the expectations of genre, a simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of the other narratives that might have played out here. What follows, however, is not the story of a cruel wasting away that one might expect. Once again, we are reminded of a generic commonplace only to have that commonplace significantly adjusted. This particular island is literally a very uncommon place. Hidden within it, nested within the barren rock rather as Canto 2 sits within the tragedy of the other three cantos (and rather as *The Island* as a whole sits within Bligh's authoritarian reading of the mutiny on the *Bounty*) is a cave which can only be reached by diving into the sea. Torquil and Neuha take this plunge; inside the cave, they hide successfully until the Navy has finished its grisly business and departed.

Crucially, this salvific cave – depicted in a register of romance and religion as resembling 'some old cathedral' (4.133), within which 'All … / Was Love' (4.221-2) – is not wholly a fantastic imagining on Byron's part. Mariner describes just such an island with a cave hidden inside it, and tells the story of two Tongans who used this cave to escape persecution. This outcome to *The Island*, then,

is optimistic, but it is not completely utopian – 'utopia' properly signifying, of course, 'no place'. Yet whilst two real individuals might thus have reached a place in which they found that, as Mariner puts it, 'tyrannic power now no longer reached them', Byron in retelling this story certainly adds more idealistic and utopian elements.[79] Adjusting his source, Byron fashions further significant transfomations of generic conventions and readerly expectation. It is not two locals who escape to the cave, but a Toobonai Islander *and* a European mutineer, signifying a bond between the two cultures. The 'tyrannic power' from which they flee is not some local despot but the British state, confounding customary notions of British moral superiority. It is Neuha rather than Torquil who leads the way to the cave, confounding contemporary notions both of gender and of race. When Torquil and Neuha return to Toobonai, after the Navy has departed, their return is recounted in a Providential idiom (the 'rainbow' of line 184, the 'slender ark' of 400): once again, this constitutes a subtle stylistic appropriation and subversion on Byron's part, since this is not the idiom in which one would customarily depict the survival of a mutineer. Finally, moreover, we leave the poem with the knowledge that 'a new tradition gave / Their sanctuary the name of 'Neuha's Cave'' (4.413-4). Here is Byron's version of Wordsworth's 'Poems on the Naming of Places'; his version also of one of the most commonplace, if not defining, moments in the contemporary narrative of exploration. This act of naming, however, is an uncommonplace insofar as it is a name conferred by the local population, not by the explorer: it celebrates not the achievement of an exploring navy, but rather, a deliverance from it.

Thus Byron adapts the commonplace accounts of exploration and maritime misadventure, rewriting these forms in both senses of 'rewriting': in one sense, he reproduces the attitudes and conventions of the earlier texts, whilst in another sense, he adapts and subverts those attitudes and conventions. Bligh's account of exploration and mutiny is transformed by interpolating into it material from a subtly different sort of travel text, Mariner's *Account of the Natives of Tonga.* The result is a reworking of the narrative of maritime misadventure that is implicitly, if not explicitly, in line with the subversive tendencies so often inherent in the form. Narratives such as Dampier's, Shelvocke's, John Byron's and Bligh's always had the potential to be read in ways other than their

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[79] Mariner, p. 221.

authors intended: the official meanings imposed on these texts was never wholly stable. Byron in *The Island* deliberately opens out this multiplicity of meanings, rather than closing interpretation down. The title itself, we should note, offers a plurality of readings. There are at least four islands in the poem, some real and some imagined. There is the island the mutineers dream of in section 2 of Canto 1, born from memories of Tahiti (as a reading of the paratextual material from Bligh will attest) but nevertheless largely the paradisical imaginings of hard-worked sailors. There is the island of Toobonai – in fact a fiction, invented by Byron – to which the mutineers flee, and which seems to realise for a time their fantasies of freedom. Quitting this island when reality catches up with them, readers and mutineers travel on both to the island on which Neuha and Torquil successfully hide out – a place which seems fantastical, but which apparently has some basis in actuality – and also to the barren rock where Christian meets his end. Which of these is *the* island, as referred to in the title? Arguably, the Byronic island is all of them, somehow held together in an impossible balance: it is itself an island of imaginative possibilities some distance from the grim actualities of history. By including all the possible frameworks of interpretation, moreover, the poem is licensed to include the most optimistic – or alternatively, subversive – reading one might make of mutiny. This version of the mutiny on the Bounty – one among many versions, as Byron takes care to signal – takes poet and reader to a utopian fictive space in which realism and idealism can be combined, and combined so as to show, amidst many tragic conclusions, at least one redemptive outcome.

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In general, of course, Byron held that poetry should not assume 'pretensions to Optimism.' Human history he saw as an island like the one on which Fletcher Christian met his end, 'a wild but narrow scene' shaped by inexorable cycles of repression, revolt and defeat. He more typically read the literature of misadventure in such a way as to confirm this dismal truth, yet also to re-affirm the need to keep on struggling. To remind ourselves of the more characteristic aspects of Byronic travel and the Byronic traveller, and to remind ourselves, moreover, how a taste for travelling disasters carried over into Byron's actual travelling, it is appropriate to conclude as I began, with Byron coming close

to real shipwreck. One of several such incidents was the episode mentioned earlier, when Byron and Shelley came close to disaster on Lake Geneva. It is worth noting the very different responses of the two travellers to this imminent catastrophe. As Byron tells the story, they were caught

> in a gale of Wind in a small boat right under the rocks between Meillerie & St. Gingo – we were five in the boat – a servant – two boatmen - & ourselves. The Sail was mismanaged & the boat was filling fast – [Shelley] can't swim – I stripped off my coat – made him strip off his - & take hold of an oar – telling him that I thought (being myself an expert swimmer) I could save him if he would not struggle when I took hold of him – unless we got smashed against the rocks which were high & sharp with an awkward Surf on them at that minute;- we were then about a hundred yards from shore – and the boat in peril. – He answered me with the greatest coolness – 'that he had no notion of being saved - & that I would have enough to do to save myself, and begged not to trouble me'.[80]

Shelley's resignation is fascinating, and seems close in spirit almost to a death-wish: certainly it sheds an interesting light on his eventual fate, as discussed at the start of this thesis. More pertinent to this chapter, however, is the equally revealing self-dramatisation made by Byron himself. As events unfolded, and as he retells it in this breathless style, all hurried ellipses, he is supremely the man of action, taking control and relishing, one senses, the challenge. This is more truly characteristic of Byron as misadventurer, and as reader of misadventure, than the subtle variations he plays on this theme in *The Island*. Suffering in travel for Byron is a sensationalistic thrill and a microcosm of how the whole cosmos functions, which is as an agonistic realm of competing energies, protean and anarchic, revealing no fixed points or absolute principles. Viewed more suspiciously, Byronic misadventure may also seem an escape from the complexities of domestic life, and especially domestic politics, and simultaneously a punishment inflicted on the traveller for making that escape. Whichever reading one adopts, Byronic journeys typically reach no conclusion nor come to any conclusions, in contrast to Wordsworth, for whom misadventure ultimately confirms the deep patterns operating in the universe, and the individual traveller's place in those patterns.

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[80] *BLJ*, Vol. 6, p. 126.

# *Conclusion*

*[Eustace's]* Classical Tour *has every characteristic of a mere compilation of former notices, strung together upon a very slender thread of personal observation, and swelled out by those decorations which are so easily supplied by a systematic adoption of all the common places of praise, applied to everything, and therefore signifying nothing.*

John Cam Hobhouse

*In Rome you are for the most part lost in a mass of tawdry, fulsome* common-places.

William Hazlitt

In the two epigraphs to this chapter, Hobhouse and Hazlitt – like Byron in connection with *The Island* – talk in their various ways of 'commonplaces'.[1] Hobhouse uses the word in its literary sense: he is complaining that John Eustace's *Classical Tour through Italy* is no more than a bundle of well-worn phrases, its language exhausted from use in innumerable earlier travel guides and travel narratives. Hazlitt, meanwhile, talks of '*common-places*' in a more literal sense. He too is complaining, but his complaint is about a real place, Rome, which has failed to live up to his expectations. He had hoped that Rome, still considered in Hazlitt's day the most prestigious destination for the British tourist, would reveal everywhere 'works immoveable, immortal, inimitable on earth, … lifting the soul half way to heaven'. The reality is more mundane: 'narrow, vulgar-looking streets … [,] the smell of garlic …[,] dingy, melancholy flat fronts of modern-built houses' and so forth. It is the sheer ordinariness of what he finds that really distresses Hazlitt. As he himself notes, he would not have cavilled so much at scenes of squalor and decay – 'a dunghill, an outhouse …[,] weeds growing under an imperial arch' – as at the banality of what he actually discovers. The places Hazlitt surveys are 'common' not in the sense that they are lowly (in which case Hazlitt's radical sensibility might have looked more favourably on them) but in that they are ubiquitous and over-familiar. They present to the traveller scenes which he has seen before, scenes from which he can draw no new insight or experience. Rome, like Eustace's *Classical Tour*, is full of clichés. The city has become like the text, the travel experience like the reading experience: both are trapped in the 'commonplace'.

Thus this one word, 'commonplace', encapsulates and enables a slippage between the literary and the literal, between travels as they are written (and read) and travels as they are actually performed. Such slippages have been my underlying concern throughout this thesis, which has attempted to outline one particular set of interactions between texts and travellers, between reading experiences and travelling experiences. I began with the premise that much of travel experience, if not of all experience, is not so much felt and expressed directly, as mediated through prior texts. In the metaphor used throughout the thesis, travel is often *scripted*, shaped by one's prior reading as it is planned, as it is experienced, and as it is subsequently recounted. Yet

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[1] John Cam Hobhouse, Note to *CHP* 4, l. 1566, in *BCPW* Vol. 2, p. 262; William Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey*

not every traveller chooses the same script: different travellers will draw on different models, and different source materials, to assemble their own travel scripts. The bulk of this thesis has accordingly been given over to a close examination of the prior travel texts which seem to have most appealed to Romantic travellers such as Wordsworth and Byron, texts which seem to have shaped at a deep level both Romantic acts of travel and Romantic writings about travel. Yet I have also attempted, in my introduction and in Chapter 3 especially, to give a sense of the larger context in which this particular subset of British travellers looked to this particular subset of the voluminous Voyage and Travel genre. Within this larger context, it can be seen that the Romantic traveller is often doing what Hobhouse and Hazlitt are doing in the quotations above, rejecting what are perceived as more commonplace forms of travel writing, travel practice and travel experience. In particular, the Romantic traveller characteristically rejects the picturesque tour and the Grand Tour (in both its older, more aristocratic form and in its post-1815, bourgeois incarnation). Rejecting the practices and values of these forms of leisure travel, and also the travel narratives and guides that transmit those practices and values, he looks instead to a different class of travel narrative: from these preferred narratives, he draws a sense of the superior value of very different sorts of travel experience.

The texts and the experiences in question, of course, are those which embrace a conspicuous element of what I have dubbed *misadventure*: that is to say, a spectrum of distressing travel experiences encompassing discomfort, danger, abjection, disaster and death. In the rejection of more commonplace modes of travel and travel literature, we see as it were the negative stimulus to the Romantic taste for misadventure: if we view travel, or at least, the recreational travel conducted by figures such as Wordsworth and Byron, as an arena for strategies of social distinction, the espousal of suffering and hardship in travel can be read as a way of signalling one's difference to other travellers. Yet whilst this understanding of 'Romantic' travel as a form of social distinction constitutes the overarching argument of this thesis, I have also attempted to elucidate what actively attracts some readers and travellers to the figure of the suffering traveller – the positive stimuli, as it were, to the Romantic adoption of this role. When Wordsworth and

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*through France and Italy* in *Hazlitt CW*, Vol. 10.

Byron cast themselves, in practice and in print, as suffering travellers, they did so with a range of earlier models in mind, models such as John Newton, Sir Humphry Gilbert, John Byron, James Bruce and Mungo Park. These and other travel writers, in presenting a variety of travelling calamities, attach meaning to the idea of suffering in travel. They each generate, in various ways, a sense of why such sufferings took place; they each articulate, implicitly or explicitly, a view as to what it says about the traveller that he or she suffers, and as to what it says about the world that it is a place of such sufferings. A variety of philosophical, theological and political meanings thus attach to the figure of the misadventurer, meanings which broadly speaking polarise into one of two positions. On the one hand, there is the Providential view that suffering in travel has some larger purpose, the view that it reveals cosmic order, moral worth and personal election (albeit by way of punishing the traveller for his unworthiness and apparent disregard for his elective status). On the other hand, there is the anti-Providential view that understands the traveller's *travails* as inherently meaningless, evidence not of any larger pattern in the cosmos but rather of its randomness: this position can be inflected in a variety of ways, revealing either a savagely ironic nihilism or a sentimental compassion for the reality and particularity of the individual's pain.

This is to over-schematise a highly complex set of inter-relationships between the various texts discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, and between each text and the particular historical circumstances which produced it. It is useful, however, insofar as it allows an understanding of the subtly different ways in which Wordsworth and Byron develop the persona of *misadventurer*. As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, Wordsworth tends to the former camp in the interpretation of misadventure, and Byron to the latter. At issue as they do so, in this age of European revolution and British imperial expansion, are not just matters of religion and philosophy. Wordsworth's adoption of certain conventions of misadventure, enacted both on the page and in actuality, seems to suggest an affinity between the Providential understanding of misadventure and a nationalist and imperialist viewpoint in politics (in this period at least: one can imagine that in other periods the relationship might be different). Tropes, conventions and narrative patterns drawn from the literature of Providential misadventure can be deployed to figure the election not only of an individual, but also of a nation. They can be used to suggest a moral worthiness in

travellers, and by extension in the culture which they represent. A separate but closely related tendency, as Wordsworth demonstrates, is to make that specialised form of misadventurous travel narrative, the narrative of mutiny and shipwreck, bear a distinctly authoritarian interpretation. Yet it is a curious feature of that constellation of travel texts mapped in Chapters 1 and 2 that all such attempts to fix the meanings of these texts, and thus the meaning of misadventure, are inherently unsatisfactory. This instability in orthodox or 'official' readings of misadventure is gleefully exploited by Byron, notably in the second canto of *Don Juan* and in *The Island.* Elsewhere, meanwhile, Byron makes misadventurers (who include Byron himself, as he acts out many of the *topoi* of misadventure) signal not so much the manifest destiny of nations and individuals, as a rebellion against all such authoritarian, imperialising tendencies (in both the self and the state). Emphasising the anti-Providential implications of the earlier literature, Byronic misadventure bears witness – albeit in a somewhat confused fashion – to political radicalism, to a sense of alienation and exile, and to discontent with the domestic *status quo.* These impulses in Byron are accompanied by a much more cosmopolitan, culturally relativistic outlook. Byronic travel is also a matter of costume changes, and of opening oneself to exotic influences. Here too there is a contrast to be made with Wordsworthian travel, and with the Wordsworthian inflection of misadventure, which can often seem close in spirit to a stiff-upper-lipped Englishness which refuses to unbutton, adapt or give in, never mind the consequences.

I advance these conclusions tentatively, for a variety of reasons. In the first place, to generalise thus is to ignore the intrinsic complexity of the various images of suffering travellers available to the Romantic traveller, and the equal complexity of each individual moment when a Romantic figure re-enacts a *topos* of misadventure in either his writing or his travelling. In the second place, one also comes away from this enquiry with a sense that Wordsworth and Byron were not always wholly conscious of the reasons why they wanted to appear as misadventurers, or of the full ramifications of the personae they were thus constructing. There are moments, on the page especially, when these are clearly great writers completely in control of their material, utilising images and narrative conventions from a lesser known sub-genre of travel writing precisely so as to overturn more commonplace ideas of travel. When Wordsworth and Byron

play out these roles for real, however, a conscious desire to distinguish themselves from more commonplace travellers (understood increasingly as 'tourists' in the pejorative sense of the term) often seems to be only part of what is impelling the misadventurer. There seems sometimes to be unconscious motives at work in the traveller: in particular, I have suggested at various points in this thesis, one can occasionally detect in the Romantic traveller a desire to punish himself precisely because he is not adequately '*un*commonplace'. These Romantic travellers are also not always able to control the way their writings, and more generally the persona they develop through both writings and actions, are interpreted. Somewhat contrary to his overt intentions, Byron's alienated pose, tinged with an alluring exoticism, seems to have to have spurred imperialist impulses in many readers. And this is another reason, perhaps, for a certain underlying guilt motivating the misadventurer's desire to suffer: he senses that he is not only more commonplace than he would like to think, but also that he is complicit with many of the processes he is implicitly seeking to denounce by travelling as he does.

With these caveats in place, and with the important differences between Wordsworthian and Byronic misadventure also noted, I shall draw three general conclusions about the Romantic taste for misadventure. Firstly, it seems in all incarnations to register some degree of protest at what are perceived as modernising tendencies at work in society, tendencies which are thought to bring with them greater levels of luxury, security, regulation and systematisation. The espousal of misadventure in either its milder or more extreme forms, the willing endurance of discomforts or the more active seeking out of dangers, is in many ways a back-to-basics attitude to travel. It is a repudiation of the technologies and infrastructures that make travel seemingly too easy for other contemporary travellers: in the Romantic period, macadamised road surfaces, coaches with improved suspension systems, over protective and prescriptive travel guides, and so forth. It goes hand-in-hand with a certain primitivism, both in that it often takes the misadventurer to less developed regions (either in his own country or elsewhere in the world) and also in that it is often understood as being in itself a way of getting back to older conditions of travel. By so doing, it restores to travel a serious of purpose that it is otherwise deemed to have lost in the 'modern' age – an existential seriousness in Byron's case, and in the case of the mature Wordsworth, a

seriousness that is increasingly connected with religion. This religious, evangelical strain in Wordsworth, it should be noted, is often linked to an expansionist, imperialist agenda, and Wordsworth's deployment of images of misadventure in the latter cause may seem to contradict the claim that misadventure is usually a repudiation of modernity. Yet I would suggest that Wordsworth (following the lead of explorers like Mungo Park), fashions misadventurers in part to qualify and modify the more aggressively modernising, utilitarian aspects of British imperialism. Wordsworthian misadventurers (including Wordsworth himself) are often intended to bear witness to the fact that empire is earned through fortitude, sacrifice and exemplary moral conduct: it is not the inevitable result of processes of rationalisation and economic improvement. And in this way even the more bullish Wordsworthian inflections of misadventure perhaps maintain a resistance to certain aspects of the 'modern'.

In the second place – and this is to introduce a topic for further research rather than a conclusion – I would suggest that another way to understand the distinctive style, and the very different antecedents, adopted by the Romantic traveller is to think in terms of a 'remasculinizing' of travel. Robin Jarvis broaches the possibility that the need of a traveller like Wordsworth constantly to define himself *against* the picturesque may reflect an anxiety that in picturesque tourism the traveller is subtly feminised.[2] Similar anxieties may have been prompted, in some travellers, in connection with the other contemporary forms of recreational travel. From the late eighteenth century, tourism was increasingly an activity in which women could participate, as travellers and as travel writers. Hence the need, perhaps, for some male travellers to figure their activities in more overtly heroic, masculine imagery. This claim would have to be made with some caution, however, and with an eye to the full complexity of the rhetorical strategies adopted by the Wordsworthian and Byronic traveller, since one could also argue that both figures espouse a mixture of masculine and feminine traits as they dramatise themselves as travellers. Wordsworth's readiness to countenance drudgery and discomfort in travel – the milder spectrum of the experiences I have grouped together as misadventure – can be construed as an effort to be humble, rather than grand or heroic; understood thus, it is perhaps the corollary in

[2] Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 60-1.

travelling practice to the aesthetic impulse that prompts Wordsworth so often to prize (feminine) beauty, with its emphasis on limits and containment, over (masculine) sublimity, with its emphasis on transcendence. A proper understanding of Wordsworth, both as traveller and as poet, requires a recognition of the co-existence of impulses to both beauty and sublimity, to both the feminine and the masculine (*contra* Hartman and Abrams on the one hand, and *contra* Kelley on the other). At the same time, if one puts William, *qua* traveller, next to Dorothy Wordsworth – a useful way to advance this particular enquiry – one might suggest that the very quietness of (William) Wordsworth's endurance of discomforts and dangers bespeaks a certain masculine reserve and restraint. The Dorothy who emerges from the pages of her *Continental Journals* is more noisily pleased with not fainting, not getting dizzy and similar signs of fortitude, than William ever is. In this she resembles Byron, who is from one perspective a far more obviously swaggering, macho misadventurer than Wordsworth, yet who is also, from another perspective, a traveller who trumpets his acts of endurance and survival rather too loudly, thus tending more towards the feminine than the masculine according to contemporary standards of behaviour and discourse. There are thus tricky issues of tone, and of the contemporary reception of tone, to be borne in mind if one continues this line of enquiry – with this qualification, however, one might usefully discuss Romantic misadventure as a mode both of fashioning and of demonstrating a certain sort of masculinity.

A final point must take us back to the idea of the 'commonplace', and back also to the paradox in this strain of Romantic thinking that was discussed in the last section of my introduction. In the quotation above, Hazlitt uses 'common-place' in a literal sense, but the word also brings with it a suggestion of its literary application. As a result, we cannot but feel that part of Hazlitt's problem with Rome is that a legacy of platitudes and clichéd praise stand between the traveller and the direct apprehension of this most famous of cities (in this connection, we should note that Hazlitt talks of '<u>fulsome</u> *common-places*'). The traveller comes trailing clouds of dead language, and a litter of old travel texts, when what he wants to do is to *really* feel, to apprehend intensely, passionately and without any sort of mediation. Such real sensations, and authentic experiences, are of course what misadventure supremely allows – or at least, seems to allow.

Misadventure would seem to involve a heightened awareness of one's body, and of one's sensations: it is about feeling fatigue, pain, fear, or the adrenalin rush that accompanies danger, in ways that cannot be understood as fake, and that do not seem to have been learnt beforehand from guidebooks. In key regards, therefore, the misadventurer does not think of himself as simply replacing a commonplace itinerary and agenda with an itinerary and agenda that is shaped by less familiar travel texts; rather, he thinks of himself as doing away with all such guides, travel narratives and 'Manuals' – in Byron's disparaging phrase – to get to raw, unmediated experience.

This notion, of touching the 'real' through having uncomfortable or unpleasant experiences, still has potency today. As James Buzard, Anne D. Wallace and others have suggested, Wordsworth and Byron perhaps did as much as any two individuals to shape subsequent British attitudes and practices with regard to travel and tourism.[3] Wordsworthian attitudes regarding walking, mountaineering and the like were embraced by the Victorian intellectual elite – figures like Leslie Stephen, for example – and thence transmitted more generally through society. Byronic attitudes (in a somewhat sanitised form) were transmitted through the use of extensive quotations from Byron's poetry in John Murray's guidebooks. One of the less familiar ways in which this Wordsworthian and Byronic influence worked, I would suggest, is in promoting powerfully a sense of the worthiness of travelling uncomfortably, painfully or dangerously. Midway between their time and our own, Evelyn Waugh observed a tendency in some contemporary travellers to take 'a peculiar relish in discomfort', and this relish for roughing it and risking it has not gone away.[4] It takes a variety of different forms, some mild and some extreme, and can be part of some highly contrasting political and cultural positions: it is present, to some degree, in both the rambler in the British countryside who prides himself on the honest, arduous graft of his walking, and the backpacker in India who thinks he is seeing real life (and somehow, perhaps, redressing inequalities between First and Third Worlds) by sleeping in a room full of cockroaches. All such travellers continue and maintain the Wordsworthian and Byronic interest

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[3] See James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993); Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture: the Origin and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1993)

[4] Evelyn Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (London, 1930), p. 43.

in misadventure, an interest which was in turn shaped by the rich literary traditions which have been the main focus of this thesis.

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