

Performing the Self: Identity-Formation in the Travel Accounts of
Nineteenth-Century British Women in Italy

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ABSTRACT

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From the adventures of Odysseus to those of the male Grand Tourist, travel has often been regarded as an important rite of masculine self-fashioning. However, as this thesis argues, travel and travel writing also provided a valuable opportunity for women's self-fashioning: journeys offered women a means of altering themselves, enabling them to assume a novel identity abroad and in text, whether it be a subversive or idealised version of themselves. Drawing upon Judith Butler's and Sidonie Smith's theories of performativity, this thesis investigates Victorian women travel writers' impulse to self-fashioning, and argues for travel writing as a performative act of identity-formation. Drawing on Butler's notion of subversive repetition, this thesis also demonstrates the ways in which the instability of women authors' narrative identities gives them a potential for agency, enabling authors to unsettle prescribed gender boundaries and challenge cultural constructions of femininity.

In particular, I examine the constructed textual travel identities of the following nineteenth-century British women: Anna Jameson, Susan Horner, Emily Lowe, and Frances Minto Elliot. I highlight the discursive strategies that these four authors use in order to create certain images of themselves for their readers in their travelogues about Italy, all published (or, in the case of Horner, written) between the years 1826 and 1881. Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot also reconfigure traditional notions of travel and gender in their travelogues to articulate and perform definitions of selves that are not necessarily exemplary – at least not at first glance. I examine the ways in which these nineteenth-century authors adopt apparently undesirable selfhoods ('ill', 'intellectual', 'unprotected', and 'idle') and turn supposed weaknesses into strengths.

This thesis also analyses the significance of Italy for the travel narrators and their self-representation in relation to the peninsula. Italy signalled a meaningful difference from Britain, and these authors represent it as a positive space for healing, intellectual growth, pleasure, fulfilment, and self-determination. The constructed identities of these four authors result in ‘travel performances’ that aim to persuade readers of the narrators’ aptitude for travel and of their especially meaningful attachment to, experience of, and understanding of Italy. This thesis does not only provide a space for voices which have until now been little recognised in contemporary scholarship. It also sheds light on an important form of Victorian women’s writing that was a valuable route towards cultural and intellectual authority and self-empowerment, as well as a means of personal and professional self-fashioning.

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INTRODUCTION

The Journey Begins

Historically, the discourse of absence is carried on by the Woman: Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises). It is Woman who gives shape to absence, elaborates its fiction, for she has time to do so; she weaves and she sings; the Spinning Songs express both immobility (by the hum of the Wheel) and absence (far away, rhythms of travel, sea surges, cavalcades).¹

In *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977), Roland Barthes highlights perhaps the most enduring narrative of the gendering of travel, a narrative which conflates travel and absence in the experience of Penelope, who is left behind while Odysseus journeys abroad.² Barthes' statement underlines the traditional assumption that a woman's true place is at home. For men, the wheel is associated with movement, travel, and adventure: it is a means of transporting them from the familiar to the foreign, evoking novelty and change. For women, however, Barthes' wheel symbolises stasis, routine, and a mode of housewifely productivity: it is a means of reinscribing women within the domestic sphere.

What happens, then, when Penelope travels abroad and gives shape to her *own* journey and absence from home? Contemporary scholars have frequently argued for the inherently transgressive nature of women's travel and travel writing. If, as Barthes declares, women are 'sedentary' and 'faithful', then to travel, critics suggest, is to breach the line dividing home from abroad, and to become volatile and untrustworthy. However, although women have historically been associated with restriction and immobility, as modes of transportation improved and as tourism became increasingly widespread and popular from the late eighteenth century onwards, the opportunities for women who could afford to travel solely for pleasure steadily increased. During this period, women accompanied their husbands, fathers, and brothers on journeys throughout the Continent

¹ Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 2002 [1977]), pp. 13-14.

² Karen Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. ix.

and around the world. In the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of the ‘lady traveller’, who often travelled independently of men, fully emerged.³ Travelling women have also produced over the centuries a substantial body of travel writing. As women’s literacy increased dramatically in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a growing number of women travellers became travel *writers*. Usually, however, their travel accounts were intended for private rather than public consumption.⁴ Only in the nineteenth century did the number of published travel texts by women rise dramatically, providing models and inspiration for future women travel writers.⁵ Travel writing imbued women with agency: it enabled them to rework canonical formations which inscribe the male as the adventurer and the female as the one who is left behind.⁶ In their travel narratives, women combined the figures of Penelope and Odysseus, as they wove stories about their own journeys on the page.

From the adventures of Odysseus to those of the male Grand Tourist, travel has often been regarded as an important rite of masculine self-fashioning, in which journeys are construed as a test or a demonstration of manhood.⁷ However, as this thesis argues, travel and travel writing also provided a valuable opportunity for women’s self-fashioning:

³ Ruth Y. Jenkins, ‘The Gaze of the Victorian Woman Traveler: Spectacles and Phenomena’, in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. by Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 15-30 (p. 15).

⁴ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 170-71.

⁵ The popularity of reading and writing about travel to Italy is evident from the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, which included each month a list of forthcoming publications. There were more than eighty books published about Italy between 1820 and 1845. Women authors formed a small part of the authors whose texts were published during the first part of this period. However, in the later part of the period, between 1835 and 1845, a greater proportion of women published texts about travels to Italy than had done so in the earlier part of the century; although only about twenty-five texts about Italy were published, eight of the authors were women. See Kathryn Walchester, *‘Our Own Fair Italy’: Nineteenth-Century Women’s Travel Writing and Italy, 1800-1844* (Oxford; Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 21. My research has confirmed that the number of women’s Italian travel texts published between 1845 and the end of the century amounts to around forty volumes, whereas the number of volumes by men amounts to around seventy. (Some texts were published anonymously or pseudonymously, making it difficult to ascertain whether the author is male or female.)

⁶ Heidi Slettedahl Macpherson, ‘Women’s Travel Writing and the Politics of Location: Somewhere In-Between’, in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. by Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 193-208 (p. 193).

⁷ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, pp. 173-74; Susan Bassnett, ‘Travel Writing and Gender’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 225-41 (p. 225). The European Grand Tour, which usually encompassed France, Italy, Switzerland, and sometimes Germany, had a significant role to play in the construction of British elite masculinity from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. It was considered essential for wealthy British men’s education, and was aimed at cultivating masculine aesthetic taste, as well as moral and political knowledge.

journeys offered women a means of altering themselves, enabling them to assume a novel identity abroad and in text, whether it be a subversive or idealised version of themselves. Drawing upon Judith Butler's and Sidonie Smith's theories of performativity, this thesis investigates Victorian women travel writers' impulse to self-fashioning, and argues for travel writing as a performative act of identity-formation. In particular, I examine the constructed textual travel identities of the following nineteenth-century British women: Anna Jameson, Susan Horner, Emily Lowe, and Frances Minto Elliot. I highlight some of the discursive strategies that these four authors use in order to create certain images of themselves for their readers in their travelogues about Italy, all published (or, in the case of Horner, written) between the years 1826 and 1881. This thesis also analyses the significance of Italy for the travel narrators and their self-representation in relation to the peninsula. For travel writing enables authors to develop a dialogic sense of self, as a relational identity defined against or linked with contact with the foreign 'other'.⁸

I have chosen to focus on the travel accounts of Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot for three reasons. First, these women's travelogues are marked out from other texts about Italy because a significant focus of their accounts is the narrator's textual selfhood, rather than simply Italy itself. In many instances, the travellers' constructed identities become as much the object of the reader's attention as the Italian sights described. Other nineteenth-century women travel writers do not fashion or perform sustained or overtly self-conscious travel identities to the same extent as the women discussed in this thesis. Second, as part of a narrative strategy, these four women's travel identities serve to legitimate their travel writing, highlight their roles as knowing and responsive travellers, and suggest a

⁸ Mirella Agorni, *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century: Women, Translation, and Travel Writing, 1739-1797* (Manchester: St. Jerome Pub., 2002), p. 100.

meaningful connection with and authoritative understanding of Italy to an extent not present in other contemporary travel narratives.⁹

Third, Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot also reconfigure traditional notions of travel and gender in their travelogues to articulate and perform definitions of selves that are not necessarily exemplary – at least not at first glance. By relocating ideological transgressions to a distant land, beyond the immediate scrutiny of one's own society, travel writing could allow authors greater freedom to enact potentially contentious identities.¹⁰ These four authors take full advantage of this freedom, adopting distinctive textual identities – 'ill', 'intellectual', 'unprotected', and 'idle' – that could be considered examples of weak, undesirable, foolish, and transgressive attributes of women in Britain, and even abroad. No one would be likely to expect an ill or an idle woman to be a reliable authority as a travel guide; travelling as an 'unprotected female' was often perceived as foolish and inappropriate; and an intellectual woman's journal challenged any notion that women's travelogues should be filled with feminised and emotional responses, or declarations of modesty. These women do not merely challenge the boundaries of what was acceptable or expected of them as women; in their practice of self-representation, the four authors in this thesis also distinguish themselves from other travel writers because they adopt apparently undesirable selfhoods and turn supposed weaknesses into strengths. These presumed deficiencies are depicted by the authors as surprisingly advantageous attributes while travelling – especially while travelling to Italy.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 sets out my theoretical framework and considers the relationship between travel writing and theories of performativity, closely examining aspects of British women travel writers' self-fashioned

⁹ Throughout this thesis it is important to recall that any claims by travel narrators to credibility, authority, and insightfulness are narrative strategies aimed at persuasion; these qualities are 'effects' of performance rather than evidence of 'real' circumstances.

¹⁰ Chu-Chueh Cheng, 'Frances Trollope's America and Anna Leonowens's Siam: Questionable Travel and Problematic Writing', in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, ed. by Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 123-65 (p. 125).

identities and gendered travel performances. Since, as I suggest, the 'I' is multiply coded in a range of discourses, women travel writers often enact various narratorial roles throughout their texts. I also argue that the performative nature of gender provides the potential for agency and transgression in travel writing, enabling authors to unsettle prescribed gender boundaries and challenge cultural constructions of femininity. In addition, this chapter interprets travel accounts as textual artefacts, or types of dramatic scripts, carefully constructed with an audience in mind, and written both to inform and entertain.

Chapter 2 focuses on the strong connection between British women and Italy in the nineteenth century, determining the reasons why British women travel writers were especially drawn to the peninsula. This chapter argues that, as the idealised locus for women's artistic creation, expression, and performance, Italy became perceived as an ideal place for women to fashion and perform constructed travel characters. Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot all demonstrate the liberating and beneficial effects of Italy for themselves. Italy signalled a meaningful difference from Britain, and these authors represent it as a positive space for healing, intellectual growth, pleasure, fulfilment, self-determination, and self-fashioning.

The following four chapters of this thesis are arranged according to the order in which the travelogues were published, or, in the case of Horner's journals, composed. The chapters progress from the figure of the ill and sentimental female traveller, to the intellectual traveller, to the unprotected traveller, and finally to the idle traveller. The third chapter begins this series of case studies with an analysis of Anna Jameson's popular travel narrative, *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826). Jameson's publication demonstrates that illness and melancholy are not always left behind when one enters the realm of travel and mobility; moreover, they can shape a narrator's identity and travel text in significant ways, and provide her with special insight into Italian culture and experiences. By considering the constructed textual travel identity of Jameson's fictional invalid narrator, this chapter

demonstrates how the narrator's heightened sorrows not only aim to make her account more compelling and intensify her dramatic presence, but also apparently imbue her journey to Italy with more worth and validity than a healthy, pleasant, or undemanding travel experience.

Chapter 4 shifts its focus from the published diary to the unpublished travel journal. Employing archival material from the British Institute of Florence, this chapter investigates the travel diaries of Susan Horner. Horner wrote two meticulously organised journals about her sojourns in Italy from 1847 to 1848, as well as from 1861 to 1862, when her family lived in Florence. Her journals provide a valuable space for research that was later used in her published writings, thus complicating the boundaries between published and unpublished texts. Through an examination of both text and image, this chapter analyses Horner's self-representation as an avid intellectual traveller in Italy. In their depiction of an erudite traveller, Horner's journals display a remarkable professionalism, analytical approach, and concern for factual accuracy. Horner's presentation of an intellectual self is also a discursive feature aimed at bolstering the author's credibility and underlining her authoritative knowledge of Italy.

Chapter 5 examines Emily Lowe's *Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna* (1859), which documents her travels with her mother through southern Italy. This chapter highlights the staged nature of Lowe's account, including the ways in which Lowe performs the role of an independent, determined, and intrepid traveller, often flaunting her unprotected status. She frequently plays up her eccentricity, agency, self-awareness, and independence from male travellers, as well as a willingness to face and conquer 'dangers', such as Mount Etna, which are traditionally associated with masculine experience. However, this chapter also addresses the manner in which Lowe retains an image of respectable feminine propriety, enacting the roles of 'the serpent and

the dove'.¹¹ Drawing from a rich array of nineteenth-century sources documenting the figure of the 'unprotected female', I consider the ways in which Lowe negotiates this popular trope: she demonstrates that unprotected women could in fact be brave and successful travellers and travel writers, rather than weak and flustered victims struggling with simple daily tasks.

The final chapter of this thesis interrogates the little-known travel accounts of Frances Minto Elliot, author of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* (1871) and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily* (1881). It interprets Elliot's Italian travelogues as spaces for the performative act of identity-formation, and examines Elliot's subjectivity as an idle female traveller. I argue that her textual idle identity, which is not simply a straightforward expression of the author's lived identity, serves a valuable professional and practical purpose. In her travel accounts, Elliot presents idleness as a valuable tool that enhances her imagination and improves her ability to observe and to write accurately about her travels. She challenges contemporary negative notions of idleness by suggesting that an idle traveller is an especially valuable travel guide and author. Idle travel also purportedly enables the author to experience an 'authentic' Italy that most British tourists do not encounter.

By the nineteenth century, many versions of Italy had been created in the wealth of literature published in the preceding centuries: these constituted what Kathryn Walchester has termed a 'literary Italy'.¹² Travel writing, much like autobiography, is a textual artefact that invests the past and the self with coherence and meaning that may not have been evident before the act of writing itself.¹³ In a similar manner, the above travel accounts invest Italy with coherence and meaning, artfully defining and shaping images of the peninsula; for places are in fact constructions in which discourses of memory, identity, and

¹¹ Emily Lowe, *Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna* (London: Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1859), p. 20. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

¹² Walchester, p. 39.

¹³ Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 45.

desire interact.¹⁴ These travelogues do not simply reflect Italy as it really is, but instead create and maintain certain versions of the region. The ‘real’ Italy remains a discursive construction, which is every bit as much a rhetorical structure as the performed selfhoods fashioned in the travelogues. In other words, Italy, like the travel narrators themselves, represents a type of ‘fictive structure’ in travel writing.¹⁵ All travelogues provide not so much a representation of the world as it really is, as a representation of one particular perspective on and construction of the world, as viewed, interpreted, and created by the travel writer.¹⁶ As cultural mediators, travel writers do not simply mirror ‘reality’ in their works, but instead actively shape perceptions of this ‘reality’, often to suit various travel performances on the page.

Jameson’s narrator intends to capture Italy’s elusive *genius loci* (‘spirit of place’) by describing its appealing climate and healing properties. She also associates a genuine Italy with its famous sights and artwork from the past. Horner aims to experience an authentic Italy by becoming familiar with its present-day artwork, political situation, and social issues, and by interacting with Italian locals. Lowe only experiences the supposedly true Italy upon journeying off the beaten track to the more rugged destinations of Calabria and Sicily. In contrast with Horner, both Lowe and Elliot depict the real Italy as a pastoral and Edenic region untouched by industrialisation, despite the fact that the peninsula was desperate to become modernised for the sake of its inhabitants. While the travellers discussed in this thesis sometimes show similar perceptions of Italy, each traveller’s conception of the ‘true’ Italy is often strikingly different.

In depicting various versions of Italy, these authors produce an assortment of travel accounts, ranging from fictional narratives to published and unpublished journals, that

¹⁴ Georgia Alù, ‘Fabricating Home: Performances of Belonging and Domesticity in Contemporary Women’s Travel Writing in English about Italy’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 14 (2010), 285-302 (p. 289).

¹⁵ Paul John Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 3.

¹⁶ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 71; Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 36.

represent the multifarious styles and forms of travel writing. Just as ‘travel writing’ does not represent a monolithic genre, travel writing by women in the nineteenth century cannot be divided into distinct categories. For instance, *Diary of an Ennuyée* crosses generic boundaries: it is an account based on a real-life tour of Italy, presented as a fictional novel. Horner’s journals represent a diary, memoir, and record for future publications. Lowe’s accounts evince a mixture of memoir and travel guide, and Elliot’s *Diaries* employ the diary form, combined with a travel guide and history of Italy. Several of the accounts also contain passages reminiscent of Romantic poetry and Gothic novels. Not only do the travel accounts considered in this thesis often record a traveller’s visit to famous and previously visited Italian sights, but they also refer to other travel writing traditions, either incorporating or rejecting previously written texts; therefore, they display a performance of repetition or difference, or, in many cases, a mixture of both.

Aside from demonstrating its diversity, the case studies in this thesis also indicate the development of women’s travel writing. The period upon which I focus in this thesis is one in which a number of women travel writers made significant contributions to the diverse genre of travel writing. Between the 1820s and the 1880s, British women travel writers’ production of travel accounts about Italy flourished, before shifting towards more ethnographic, historical, and art historical studies, such as those by Rachel Harriette Busk, Margaret Oliphant, and Julia Cartwright.¹⁷ The 1820s to the 1880s also represent decades during which Italy underwent a profound political transformation due to its project of nation-building; likewise, women travel writers transformed their own status as authors throughout this period. Although women had travelled to Italy in the eighteenth century, in

¹⁷ Publications such as Rachel Harriette Busk’s *The Folk-Lore of Rome* (1874) and *The Folk-Songs of Italy* (1887), Margaret Oliphant’s *The Makers of Florence* (1876), *The Makers of Venice* (1887), and *The Makers of Modern Rome* (1895), and Julia Cartwright’s *Raphael in Rome* (1895) all exhibit a burgeoning interest in objectively exploring the ethnography, history and art history of Italy; the focus in these accounts becomes one of surroundings rather than of self.

the nineteenth century their writings gained a more powerful impact.¹⁸ They increasingly became perceived as travel authorities, as evident in 1845, when the Victorian art critic and art historian Elizabeth Eastlake noted ‘the peculiar power in ladies’ eyes’.¹⁹ Women writers became recognised as a distinctive group whose opinions, individual voices, and observations about Italy (and elsewhere) were not only worth reading about, but also worth taking seriously. Critics often praised women travel writers for their aptitude rather than condemning them for their infringement of the public sphere through travelling. However, while women’s travel writing became increasingly widespread and authoritative throughout the Victorian period, women travel writers continued to challenge and transgress the boundaries of the ‘acceptable’ in many ways. The four authors discussed in this thesis often attempt to move beyond the ever-widening notion of ‘appropriate’ women’s behaviour by enacting potentially controversial and subversive identities, and by challenging the ‘naturalness’ of gender in various ways.

The case studies in this thesis also illustrate how women’s travel accounts themselves ‘travel’ and evolve over these important decades for women’s travel writing. The accounts about Italy that I examine show women’s growing self-assurance in their identities as travel writers, and signal an age in which women’s literary independence and mobility were increasing. These works demonstrate the various manners in which women travel writers gained agency, confidence, and a newfound sense of professionalism. The century witnessed the evolution of women’s travel writing from an exceptional occurrence that necessitated an apology, to a popular and celebrated form of writing that required little, if any, justification for its publication. It was common in the early part of the century for women travellers to adopt an epistolary or diary format, as Jameson does, implying that

¹⁸ Sharon Ouditt and Loredana Polezzi, ‘Introduction: Italy as Place and Space’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 16 (2012), 97-105 (p. 100).

¹⁹ Elizabeth Eastlake, ‘Lady Travellers’, *The Quarterly Review*, 76 (1845), 98-137 (p. 98). Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

their observations were never intended for publication.²⁰ As the century progressed, however, an increasing number of travel accounts lacked the self-critical, apologetic, and defensive tone typical of women's travelogues written earlier in the century. Horner, Lowe, and Elliot, for example, refused to downplay or apologise for their writings, and instead took evident delight in travelling and in recording their adventures. Women authors, such as Lowe and Elliot, also increasingly suggested that the practices of both travel and travel writing were acceptable, even admirable, activities for women. They often encouraged women to relinquish the role of armchair traveller and instead follow in their footsteps. Thus, their travel writing not only documented their own journeys and performative acts of identity-formation, but also paved the way for new ones.

Lowe's and Elliot's travel accounts demonstrate the growing confidence and agency of women travellers for other reasons as well. Both travelled as 'unprotected females' who were removed from the protective environment of the family. Lowe's and Elliot's overt declarations of literary travel identities, such as 'unprotected woman' and 'idle woman', in the titles of their published travel accounts suggest that they meant to publish from the outset. The repeated use of these constructed selfhoods also reflected the growing professionalisation of women's travel writing throughout the century. They represented strategic marketing tools aimed at enhancing women's position within the literary travel marketplace and attracting a sizable readership. That Elliot published many travel articles and books demonstrates the extent to which travel writing was a powerful platform upon which a woman in the latter half of the nineteenth century could build a respectable and successful literary career.

The steady growth of critical attention towards women's travel writing suggests a continued relevance for the topic today, since factors such as globalisation, the internet, and more efficient and affordable modes of transportation have all contributed to a twenty-

²⁰ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 180.

first-century travel boom. Women writers continue to make an extensive contribution to the travel writing genre in its various forms; many modern-day women travellers have published narratives about their travel adventures, suggesting that such an endeavour has retained an element of novelty. The desire to document the journeys of independent women is evident by books such as Maureen Jenkins' *Lone Voyager: One Woman's Journey of Self-Discovery* (2000), Alice Steinbach's *Without Reservations: The Travels of an Independent Woman* (2001), and Liz Dowler's *Unassisted Passage* (2007). *Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy* (1997), a memoir by Frances Mayes, was a New York Times bestseller for over two years. A decade later, Elizabeth Gilbert published her bestselling travel memoir *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything* (2007). Evidently, the reading public still considers women's travels to be exciting, romantic, and inspirational. In addition, these authors' formation of distinctive subjectivities continues to bring an element of individuality and entertainment to travel narratives, setting their work apart from previous travel books. Moreover the image of a woman traveller as 'the serpent and the dove', to use Lowe's phrase, has been replaced with her 'wanderlust and lipstick' (the title of a series of travel guides dedicated to women travellers), suggesting that in her travel performance, the woman traveller can still enact a mutable identity, alternating between the adventurous and 'masculine', and the proper and 'feminine'.²¹

In analysing the role of literary travel identities and performances in travel accounts, I myself engage in a type of 'performance', since literary interpretation itself is a performative act.²² Yet, I hope it proves to be an instructive and insightful one that gives visibility to some little-known women travellers and demonstrates the possibilities of further research into the topic of travel writing and performance. By examining the rich texture of nineteenth-century women's travel writing through the lenses of performativity

²¹ Beth Whitman, *Wanderlust and Lipstick: Your Destination for Women's Travel* <<http://wanderlustandlipstick.com/>> [accessed 21 January 2015].

²² K. M. Newton, 'Performing Literary Interpretation', in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 475-85.

and gender, this thesis aims to show how women authors no longer gave 'shape to absence', but, rather, were able to shape their own subjectivities and travel experiences. It also intends to illuminate the rich diversity of travel writers' constructed selves, demonstrating the liberating sense of dramatisation, empowerment, and agency that emerges from the performative process of identity-formation in Victorian women's travel writing.

CHAPTER 1

Travel Writing and Performance

I shall approach nineteenth-century British women's travel writing about Italy through the lenses of Judith Butler's and Sidonie Smith's work on performativity, and the theories I address here will inform my readings in subsequent chapters. A summary of Butler's and Smith's work acts as a springboard for the broader examination of several issues in this chapter, including the performed nature of the self in travel writing, and the travel writer's repetition and revision of past travel performances and travel 'scripts'. Moreover, I investigate the reasons for creating and performing identities in travel accounts. I also discuss the issue of gender performativity in nineteenth-century travel writing, before questioning the extent to which women's travel writing was considered to be intrinsically transgressive. Finally, I address the complexity of travel identities, which often contain overlapping or conflicting voices, as well as the fluidity and instability of travel narrators' performed identities. Each of these topics is significant for the analysis of women's travel writing through the prism of self-fashioning and performance, and, as this thesis shall demonstrate, travel writing in the nineteenth century provided women writers with plentiful opportunities for cultivating and performing distinctive travel selves in their written accounts. These various performances enabled women travel writers to experiment with subject positions which were not always endorsed by nineteenth-century social conventions, to challenge the Victorian notion of biologically derived gender identities, and to create noteworthy travel selfhoods that made their travelogues stand out amongst an already crowded market of travelogues about Italy.

Performativity in Literary Theory

In her influential work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Judith Butler develops a performative reading of gender identity on the premise, adapted from Nietzsche, that ‘there need not to be a “doer behind the deed,” but that the “doer” is variably constructed in and through the deed’.¹ Following this assumption, Butler puts forward her thesis of performativity, whereby she questions the ‘fixity of gender identity as an interior depth that is said to be externalized in various forms of “expression”’.² Instead, she conceives gender identity as a signifying practice that operates through incessant reiterated acting. Crucially, however, instead of being caught in a spiral of normative repetitions, individuals are capable of identity transgression through subversive reiterations. Butler argues that the

injunction *to be* a given gender produces necessary failures, a variety of incoherent configurations that in their multiplicity exceed and defy the injunction by which they are generated. Further, the very injunction to be a given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once.³

Accordingly, it is through these ‘failures’ and concurring manifoldness that disruptive re-enactments of norms are possible.

Butler’s notion of the performed identity of the self in everyday life can also be applied to the textual identity of the self created through writing. Contemporary discussions of life narrative as performative are often informed by Butler’s deconstruction of a binary gender system and by her assertion that gender is performative.⁴ Throughout her influential work on autobiography, Sidonie Smith argues that what Butler says of

¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990), p. 195.

² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁴ See for example Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography*; Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women’s Self-Representation* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994); Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds, *Woman, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

gender performativity can be reframed in terms of autobiographical (textual) performativity. Smith proposes a performative reading of self-narrating as a way of unpacking the implications of the autobiographical project in terms of identity-formation. She argues for the constructed nature of identities, which emerge from language and are discursive. She contends that ‘autobiographical telling is not a “self-expressive” act’ where ‘self-identity emerges from a psychic interiority, located somewhere “inside” the narrating subject’, and is ‘translated into the metaphorical equivalence in language’.⁵ For, in her view, ‘[t]here is no essential, original, coherent autobiographical self before the moment of narrating’.⁶ Responding to Butler’s assertion that ‘the “I” neither precedes nor follows the process of [...] gendering, but emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves’, Smith argues that interiority (the self that is said to be prior to the autobiographical expression) is ‘an *effect* of autobiographical storytelling’.⁷ Smith suggests that the self of autobiography is not *a priori* essence, but rather a cultural and linguistic ‘fiction’ constituted through historical ideologies of selfhood and the process of our storytelling.⁸ Following Butler’s notion of ‘subversive repetition’, Smith also discusses the multiple selves that arise in the telling of one’s own story, where ‘the autobiographical subject finds him/herself on multiple stages simultaneously’, trapped in multiple demands to which he or she fails fully to conform. These ‘multiple calls never align perfectly’, according to Smith, but ‘create spaces or gaps, ruptures, unstable boundaries’, whereby transgression becomes possible.⁹

Following Butler’s and Smith’s theories, I suggest that nineteenth-century women’s travel writing (in both published and unpublished forms) can also be understood as a performative act of identity-formation, whereby the self is constructed through narration,

⁵ Sidonie Smith, ‘Performativity, Autobiographical Practice, Resistance’, in *Woman, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 108-115 (p. 108).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (New York; London: Routledge, 1993), p. 7; Smith, ‘Performativity’, p. 109.

⁸ Smith, *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography*, p. 45.

⁹ Smith, ‘Performativity’, p. 110.

rather than merely existing prior to the act of recording travel experiences. The performative enacts or produces that which it names: the deed (narration) constructs the identity of the doer (narrator). I therefore argue that travel writing is not simply an unmediated expression of the self; it is important to make a distinction between women's lived identities and their identities as travel narrators – women in 'real life' and women written into text.

I also interpret Butler's and Smith's performance theories as opening up possibilities for agency.¹⁰ For Butler, agency signifies the potential for subverting the law against itself to radical and political ends. Repetition is central to my notion of performativity in women's travel writing. Performativity is always a recitation of conventions rather than a single act of constitution through which the subject is brought into being. Speaking of gender as a compulsory performance in travel accounts, I locate agency in the variations of action, the possibilities of variation in repetition that carry meaning and create identity. Gender is both a mechanism of control and subjection, and, simultaneously, a productive power of resistance. Agency can be found in gender – in the “doing” that produces the gendered subject’.¹¹ I argue that the multiple demands that occur in identity construction – to be a female traveller – and the simultaneous discursive routes through which it takes place – the set of gendered prescriptions associated with being a female traveller – permit women travel writers to take advantage of ‘unstable

¹⁰ *Gender Trouble* has precipitated numerous debates amongst philosophers, feminists, sociologists, and theorists of gender, sex, and identity, who continue to debate the meaning of ‘performativity’, whether it enables or forecloses agency, and whether Butler does indeed sound the death knell of the subject. For instance, contrary to my interpretation, Dúnlaith Bird argues that ‘[t]he ability to “subvert” gender norms in *Gender Trouble* comes not from individual agency but as a failure of the internally coherent gender laws to correctly repeat’. Dúnlaith Bird, *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women's Oriental Travelogues, 1850-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 24. The fact that Butler's description of gender identity has raised so many questions is a testament to its force and to its importance.

¹¹ Ros Hague, *Autonomy and Identity: The Politics of Who We Are* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 3.

boundaries', reappropriating normative discourses to enact a distinctive identity and to produce a versatile self-projection.¹²

The Self-Fashioned Identity in Travel Writing Criticism

Literary scholars from Stephen Greenblatt to Sidonie Smith have examined the significance of literary self-fashioning, and have drawn attention to writing as a critical means of identity-formation.¹³ Greenblatt and Smith focus on the structure of selfhood as evidenced in major literary figures of the English Renaissance and in authors of autobiography, respectively; however, their focus on the shaping of one's own literary identity has anticipated some key scholarly works on nineteenth-century travel writing, which have also recognised that the genre provides a rich arena for male and female self-fashioning and identity construction. Since the early 1990s there has been a growing interest in the study of travel writing from the Romantic era to the present, focusing on the narrative structure of the text and on the self-crafted persona of the traveller-protagonist.

In her significant work *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991), Sara Mills engages with the field of travel writing by combining Foucault's theories, colonial discourse, and feminist theories to produce an analytical framework. Her point of departure consists of the narratives produced by British women who, during the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries, travelled to colonised countries. Hers was the first book to situate women travellers within the colonial context and to analyse the relation of women's travel writing to colonial discourse. Her work is

¹² Meritxell Simon-Martin, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's Travel Letters: Performative Identity-Formation in Epistolary Narratives', *Women's History Review*, 2 (2013), 225-238 (p. 231). Simon-Martin applies a similar argument to Bodichon's letters.

¹³ In his influential *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980), Greenblatt assesses the ways in which the sixteenth century witnessed an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable and artful process. For Greenblatt, self-fashioning is a construction, a performance produced in relation to an alien 'other'. He argues that the sixteenth century to the present represents an extended period in which the concept of the modern 'self' has been constructed and refined through philosophical and literary debate. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 [1980]), p. 2.

also important since it was among the first to examine the link between women's self-fashioning and travel writing. Mills locates women's travel narratives and their constructed travel identities within larger structures of both material and symbolic power to stress the importance of the articulations of travel, gender, and sexuality within travel culture. She argues that women's travel writing exhibits a concern with displaying the self, and she examines the various narrative roles that women travel writers construct.¹⁴

Mary Louise Pratt's oft-cited *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) examines the intersections between travel writing and empire, providing a thorough investigation of the ways in which travel writing helped to produce subject positions for diverse individuals within imperialism. She examines the ways in which travellers throughout the past centuries have formed their identities within particular 'contact zones', as well as arguing for the reciprocal character of the negotiation of identities in these contact zones.¹⁵ Pratt also looks at how writers use their colonial (and neocolonial) positions as points of reference for the negotiation of identity and the presentation of self.

In his seminal work *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (1993), which studies the relationship between tourism, literature, and culture in Europe, James Buzard likewise focuses on the relationship between travel writing and imperialism. He does so by outlining the connections between imperial and tourist vocabularies of British authors in Egypt and India. Moreover, Buzard examines how nineteenth-century travel encouraged the fashioning of identities.¹⁶ He

¹⁴ Mills, p. 19. Other works that acknowledge women's travel writing as a space for identity-formation include Sidonie Smith, *Moving Lives: Twentieth-Century Women's Travel Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Shirley Foster and Sara Mills, eds, *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Caroline Franklin, ed., *Women's Travel Writing, 1750-1850* (London: Routledge, 2005-2006); Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman, *Travelling Economies: American Women's Travel Writing* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007); Kristi Siegel, ed., *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

¹⁵ Pratt identifies the 'contact zone' as 'the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict'. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008 [1992]), p. 8.

¹⁶ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 81.

demonstrates the ways in which travellers, such as Lord Byron and Benjamin Disraeli, fashioned themselves as particular types of travellers on the Continent. He also analyses the manner in which travel behaviour was highly self-conscious: travellers fashioned identities aimed at distinguishing themselves from the masses of tourists who never ventured off the beaten track. Buzard claims that the self-aggrandising anti-touristic gesture needed to be made just as noticeable as the reviled touristic one: ‘it needed a theatre, a script, an audience’.¹⁷ Such gestures could be exhibited while on tour or displayed in written travel accounts.

Carl Thompson has also drawn attention to the constructed nature of travel writing in *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (2007), where he proposes the notion of a travel ‘script’, defined as the narrative one expects to see played out in the course of travelling.¹⁸ Thompson suggests that some sort of script, born of an array of prior expectations and associations pertaining to the type of travel in which one is engaged, will always be at work in travelling, shaping one’s experience, and forming an important part of how one perceives oneself and portrays oneself to others. More recently, in *Travel Writing* (2011), Thompson asserts that all travel texts are constructed textual artefacts, which enable their authors to craft certain travel identities. For Thompson, all travel writing involves the act of highly stylised self-fashioning.

My research builds on all of these studies insofar as it focuses on the discursive and constructed nature of travel writing. Although I do not analyse travel writing within a colonial context, I draw on the work of Mills in considering issues of gender, genre, and domestic/foreign boundaries in nineteenth-century women’s travel writing. In the manner of Pratt, I examine the ways in which nineteenth-century travel writers often dramatise the interactions that occur between self and ‘other’, albeit within a non-imperial context. My work builds upon that of Buzard in interweaving historical research with literary analysis.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁸ Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 1.

In a similar vein to this thesis, Buzard considers travel identities to be actively rather than passively shaped, proclaiming that ‘[t]ravel, like culture, offers an imaginative freedom not as a rule available in modern social life; it encourages the fashioning of special identities, good for the duration of the journey and afterwards – identities privately and intensely possessed, which are congruent with that freedom’.¹⁹ Yet the four travel identities this thesis investigates are not ‘privately and intensely possessed’, but rather openly displayed and enacted throughout published or privately circulated travel accounts.

Performative Identity-Formation in Travel Writing

Furthermore, this thesis considers specific examples of travel writing to be not only a source of self-fashioning, but also of performative identity-formation. Unlike the work of Mills, Pratt, Buzard, and Thompson, I draw on Butler’s and Smith’s theories of performativity with regards to gender and autobiography, respectively, in my consideration of the travel narrator as a fundamentally dramatic being. I examine the ways in which Anna Jameson, Susan Horner, Emily Lowe, and Frances Minto Elliot forge and perform their identities as women travellers in Italy, and how this identity performance relates back to the literary context at home in Britain.

My thesis also departs from the studies above in its emphasis on the intersection between the genres of travel writing and autobiography, thus demonstrating that Smith’s examination of the performative nature of identity in life narratives is applicable to travel writing as well. As a form of ‘life writing’, travel writing is often considered to have many parallels with and even to be one form of the autobiography genre.²⁰ Travel writing

¹⁹ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 81.

²⁰ On the relationship between travel writing and autobiography see Ineke Bockting, ‘Travel Writing as Autobiography: The Case of Eddy L. Harris’, in *Writing Lives: American Biography and Autobiography*, ed. by Hans Bak and Hans Krabbedam (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Press, 1998), pp. 146-55; Richard van Leeuwen, ‘Autobiography, Travelogue and Identity’, in *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*, ed. by Robin Ostle, Ed de Moor, and Stefan Wild (London: Saqi, 1998), pp. 27-

represents the autobiographical subject in transit and its encounter with the foreign, and, like autobiography, it ‘becomes both the process and the product of assigning meaning to a series of experiences, after they have taken place, by means of emphasis, juxtaposition, commentary, omission’.²¹ Just as autobiography, according to John Sturrock, is ‘charged with turning life into a Life’, so too is travel writing concerned with turning a journey into a Journey.²² Both autobiography and travel writing enable authors to take real-life experiences and emotions and turn them into a literary performance and a staging of themselves, rather than simply to offer a faithful and unmediated record of the past.²³ In the same manner as the travel writer, it is only retrospectively that the autobiographer, according to William Howarth, ‘artfully defines, restricts, or shapes that life into a self-portrait – one far different from his original model, resembling life but actually composed and framed as an artful invention’.²⁴ Like autobiography, travel writing requires self-fashioning through selectivity and arrangement.²⁵

In contrast to the work of the scholars cited in the previous section of this chapter, some early twentieth-century critics mistakenly suggested that travel writing is a highly revelatory account of the subject’s inner life. Expounding his theories on the relationship between fiction and travel in 1901, one periodical contributor proclaims: ‘[The travel writer] literally gives himself away. He may produce many novels, and still withhold much of himself; but let him narrate his experience of a bad hotel, and you have him; let him fall ill in that hotel, and he is revealed like an intimate acquaintance.’²⁶ Thus, by supposedly

29; Vesna Goldsworthy, ‘Travel Writing as Autobiography: Rebecca West’s Journey of Self-Discovery’, in *Representing Lives: Women and Auto/Biography*, ed. by Alison and Pauline Polkey (New York: Macmillan; St. Martin’s, 2000), pp. 87-95; Lloyd Davis, ‘Self-Representation and Travel Autobiographies in Early Modern England’, in *Mapping the Self: Space, Identity, Discourse in British Auto/Biography*, ed. by Frédéric Regard (Saint-Etienne: Université de Saint-Etienne, 2003), pp. 55-71; Zoë Kinsley, *Women Writing the Home Tour, 1682-1812* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 64.

²¹ Smith, *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography*, p. 45.

²² John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography: Studies in the First Person Singular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 4.

²³ Greenblatt, p. xii.

²⁴ William L. Howarth, ‘Some Principles of Autobiography’, in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. by James Olney (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 84-114 (p. 86).

²⁵ Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 188.

²⁶ Anon, ‘Fiction in the Light of Travel’, *The Academy*, 1520 (1901), 535-36 (p. 535).

enabling the reader to claim access to the author's elusive *true* self, travel writing is perceived as a highly revealing and personal practice that is appealing because of the intimacy it creates between author and reader. Contemporary scholars have also highlighted the supposed confessional elements of travel writing, often suggesting that such texts provide access to the author's true self. Paul Fussell's *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (1980) was an important study of travel writing that did much to focus critical attention on a genre often previously dismissed as insignificant and sub-literary. *Abroad*, along with Fussell's *The Norton Book of Travel* (1987), introduced into the scholarly discussion of travel writing an influential set of taxonomical distinctions and categories that are still widely used today. Yet Fussell equates 'true' travel writing with the personal and revelatory, failing to note that even first-person travel accounts based on actual events are constructed texts in which the author constructs a stylised narratorial self.²⁷

The perception of travel writing as a confessional form of writing that reveals an 'authentic' self has particularly strong implications for women authors. The first consequence concerns the evaluation of women's writing: by assuming that travelogues are straightforward transcriptions of the lives of women travellers, one reduces women's travel texts to biographical studies of exceptional and daring spinsters.²⁸ Considering this genre to be a mere transcription of women's experiences and emotions can be seen as an attempt to deny women the status of 'creators of cultural artefacts', or creators of texts with literary value.²⁹ The second implication relates to the assessment of the 'feminist' content of their texts: women's retreat into the domain of the private and supposedly revelatory has been approved enthusiastically by certain feminist approaches, which consider women's private

²⁷ Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 203.

²⁸ Mills, p. 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

narratives as genuine expressions of a hidden female self.³⁰ Since many women have been silenced or written out of history, some feminist critics have been eager to interpret travel accounts as texts that reveal the ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ lives and emotions experienced by hitherto forgotten or ignored women.³¹ As a result, women’s travel writing has often been viewed as a revealing source of factual and historical material instead of a valuable form of literature and an artistic production in its own right.

However, nineteenth-century women travel writers frequently demonstrate that, as a performative act, travel writing does not present a faithful, unmediated representation of the author. In her travel narrative, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), Frances Trollope employs a metacompositional discourse about the revisions she made while staying in Maryland, declaring: ‘While reading and transcribing my notes, I underwent a strict self-examination. I passed in review all I had seen, all I had felt, and scrupulously challenged every expression of disapprobation; the result was, that I omitted in transcription much that I had written’.³² Trollope describes her account as a textual artefact and a rhetorical project, which privileges certain narrative details and words over others, enabling her to present herself as an unbiased traveller. Near the end of the century, Mary Kingsley reveals how she shaped her textual identity in her famous travel account *Travels in West Africa* (1897). In a letter to the Irish author and politician Stephen Gwynn, Kingsley wrote of her personal feelings regarding her African journey: ‘I keep them out of print just as I keep them out of almost all of my conduct [...] for they are savage things that would make people [...] shrink from me’.³³ Both Trollope and Kingsley reveal the

³⁰ Agorni, p. 98.

³¹ See for example Mary Morris, ‘Introduction’, *The Illustrated Virago Book of Women Travellers*, ed. by Mary Morris and Larry O’Connor, new edn (London: Virago, 2002 [2000]), pp. 8-11; Dea Birkett, *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Jane Robinson, *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 [1994]).

³² Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Whittaker, Treacher & Co., 1832), II, p. 127.

³³ Quoted in Stephen Gwynn, *Garden Wisdom; or, From One Generation to Another* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1921), p. 93. Gwynn does not provide a date for the letter extract.

amount of editing involved in creating the narrator of a travel account, much like editing a script for a theatrical performance.

In their Italian travelogues, the four women discussed in this thesis also demonstrate the performative nature of the self in nineteenth-century travel writing; however, the self-conscious identities that emerge in their travel narratives vary in degree of dramatisation and fictionalisation. Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* most openly demonstrates that travel writing enables the author to redefine, or even invent, him or herself. Jameson's text ends abruptly after the melancholic and ill narrator (and supposed author of the work) dies in France, en route back home to England from Italy. That the *Diary* was largely a fictional work was unknown at the time of its initial publication, as the book was published anonymously. The assumption of autobiographical authenticity, of a shared identity between the text's 'I' and the author's self, is often a sort of 'default setting' for travel writing, albeit a problematic one.³⁴ The effects can be explosive when the authorial and textual 'I' do not cohere in this expected way.³⁵

Susan Horner's two unpublished journals about her sojourns in Italy also bring into play issues of self-construction and performance, in addition to the connections between, and different effects of, manuscript diary records and published texts. As Horner's journals demonstrate, even unpublished diaries require careful selection, arrangement, and editing, as well as the creation of an authorial selfhood. While Horner does not fictionalise herself as Jameson does, her journals enable her to perform an idealised and intensified version of herself. Her travel accounts not only offer a space for mediating Italy, but also provide a space in which she can mould an intellectual self into text – an identity that could be approved of and admired by her scholarly family and the intellectual social circles in which she moved.

³⁴ Susan Lanser, 'The "I" of the Beholder: Equivocal Attachments and the Limits of Structuralist Narratology', in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. by James Phalen and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), pp. 206-219 (p. 213).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Emily Lowe's *Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna* presents one of the most overtly dramatic narrators discussed in this thesis. In her text, Lowe brazenly fashions herself as an unprotected woman traveller, deriving her travel performance from the popular nineteenth-century trope of the 'unprotected female'. As an unprotected woman abroad, Lowe plays up her role as an adventurous traveller who is as much the object of the reader's attention as the Italian sights that she visits. Yet some contemporary authors questioned the truthfulness of her travel writing, revealing the unclear boundary between fact and fiction in travelogues that is evident with Jameson's publication as well.

Frances Minto Elliot's *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* also shows the importance for readers of carefully distinguishing between the authorial and textual 'I'. While Elliot the textual narrator enacts the role of a wealthy, idle traveller who journeys to Italy with no specific purpose, Elliot the author travelled and wrote about her travels to make a living and to support her family. Elliot's image as an 'Idle Woman' is not simply an unmediated reflection of her real character or circumstances; rather, her appropriation of idleness is a constructed performance and a strategic marketing tool aimed at making her a noteworthy and successful author. Elliot, like Jameson, Horner, and Lowe, demonstrates the various ways in which nineteenth-century women travel writers actively shaped their textual identities, and serves as a reminder that travel accounts do not provide straightforward access to their authors.

The Scripted Nature of (Textual) Travel Performances

Any travel style, no matter how seemingly new, is typically built on earlier travel traditions and performances.³⁶ The tendency of travel to draw on previous traditions, to whatever

³⁶ Judith Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (1989), 1366-91 (p. 1373). Adler examines the performance of travel from a sociological perspective. Although this thesis

degree, illustrates its ritualistic nature. As Richard Schechner argues throughout his influential *Performance Theory* (1988), performance is deeply linked to ritual, which is also an integral element of travel and tourism.³⁷ The sociologist Erving Goffman has defined ritual as a ‘perfunctory, conventionalized act through which an individual portrays his respect and regard for some object of ultimate value to that object of ultimate value or to its stand-in’.³⁸ This is translated into the individual consciousness as a sense of duty, albeit one that is lovingly performed.³⁹ While travel performances may involve a period of play and enjoyment away from the quotidian, the enacting of certain expected and ‘appropriate’ duties (things that *must* be seen) speaks of the routines and compulsions that are typical of performance.⁴⁰

Since Italy was already so thoroughly explored, Italian travel throughout the nineteenth century was particularly ritualistic. Many travellers largely conformed to well-established travel patterns and rituals: there were certain ‘tourist actions’ one should perform, specific sights one must see and meditate upon, and particular literary and historical references one must make in Italy. Much like travellers in previous centuries, nineteenth-century British travellers tended to visit Rome around Holy Week, witnessing Mass at St Peter’s Basilica as well as various religious processions through the city streets. Visiting the Colosseum by moonlight, musing upon the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and exploring the Campagna were also popular activities for travellers in nineteenth-century Rome. Florence required a visit to the Uffizi Gallery, where thorough descriptions of art were typically recorded in travelogues. The theatrical and melancholic city of Venice encouraged travellers to go to an opera or ballet, to wander through its narrow streets, and

explores the literary representations of travel performances in travel accounts, Adler’s work provides useful insights into the study of travel writing.

³⁷ Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory*, rev. and expanded edn (London; New York: Routledge, 2003 [1988]), p. 143.

³⁸ Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 62.

³⁹ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1999 [1976]), p. 42.

⁴⁰ Tim Edensor, ‘Staging Tourism: Tourists as Performers’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27 (2000), 322-344 (p. 334).

to reflect upon its fragile beauty. In remoter parts of Italy, such as Calabria or Sicily, travel writers, like Lowe and Elliot, tended to comment on the traditional appearances of the peasantry and their rustic (and sometimes unsavoury) way of life.

Journeys sharing a certain travel style act as, in Judith Adler's words, 'composites, revivals, modifications, and quotations' of previous travel performances.⁴¹ Just as voyages are always built on earlier travel traditions and performances, travel writing also perpetually absorbs and reflects previous (and contemporary) types of writing and expression.⁴² A 'travel script' is, in Thompson's words, 'the narrative we expect to see playing out in the course of our travelling', which is 'born of an array of prior expectations and associations pertaining to the type of travel we are engaged in'.⁴³ Travel texts are types of palimpsests, which continually repeat, revise, paraphrase, and reinvent preceding literature after which they are modelled.⁴⁴

As part of travel scripts, constructed travel identities frequently represent performances of repetition. Smith argues that people 'tell stories of their lives through the cultural scripts available to them'.⁴⁵ In a similar vein, travel writers often create travel identities based on generic models of identity culturally available to them. Sometimes travel writers, like autobiographers, obsessively work to conform their self-representation to particular identity frames.⁴⁶ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan note that many travel writers present the self through a series of stock postures and personae, thus shaping the self so that it fits a desired template.⁴⁷ When it came to fashioning a narratorial identity in their travel accounts, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writers had many stock roles from which to choose. In Laurence Sterne's novel-cum-travelogue *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), for example, the travel narrator, the Reverend

⁴¹ Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', p. 1374.

⁴² Alù, 'Fabricating Home', p. 286.

⁴³ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, pp. 1, 10.

⁴⁴ Cheng, p. 159.

⁴⁵ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁷ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 17.

Mr Yorick, categorises British travellers on the Continent into the following groups: ‘Simple Travellers’, ‘Idle Travellers’, ‘Inquisitive Travellers’, ‘Lying Travellers’, ‘Proud Travellers’, ‘Vain Travellers’, ‘Splenetic Travellers’, ‘Travellers of Necessity’, ‘The delinquent and felonious Traveller’, ‘The unfortunate and innocent Traveller’, and finally ‘The Sentimental Traveller’, whom Yorick represents.⁴⁸ Almost a century later, in his *Travelling Sketches* (1866), Anthony Trollope devotes each chapter to the following types of travellers: ‘The Family that goes Abroad because it’s the Thing to Do’, ‘The Man who Travels Alone’, ‘The Unprotected Female Tourist’, ‘The United Englishmen who Travel for Fun’, ‘The Art Tourist’, ‘The Tourist in Search of Knowledge’, ‘The Alpine Club Man’, and ‘Tourists who Don’t Like their Travels’.⁴⁹ Although there is no proof that they read these texts, all four of the women discussed in this thesis construct a travel narrator that is a version of one or more of these travel types outlined above.

Many nineteenth-century travel writers look back to earlier accounts of travel that, to varying extents, serve as guiding texts, or scripts, for their own travel narratives. They often rely upon a variety of scripts within a single travel account, and in many instances, guiding texts help these authors create and perform their textual selfhoods. Constructed identities are often derived from a matrix of prior texts, and from a range of fictional and factual accounts, that are in turn influenced by a wide range of other texts.⁵⁰ Travel writers, including the four in this thesis, use previous texts as templates to help them understand and describe Italian sights, and these guiding scripts act as filters through which these authors comprehend and experience their travels. In some cases, while seeking a distinctively enriched and genuine experience, they rely on mediating texts to tell them what their travel experience should feel like and how they should react to the foreign.

⁴⁸ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, ed. by Graham Petrie (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967 [1768]), pp. 34-35.

⁴⁹ Anthony Trollope, *Travelling Sketches* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1866).

⁵⁰ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 26-27.

Chloe Chard emphasises the importance of ‘on-the-spot composition’ for travel writers, claiming that it contributed to the travelogue’s sense of authority.⁵¹ Yet reading travel texts and reciting memorable lines about Italy on location was equally important for those journeying abroad, intensifying their experience of the peninsula, enhancing their travel performance, and enabling them to live out certain literary visions and fantasies. By making direct references to previous authors of travel narratives, travel writers reproduced and perpetuated certain cultural scripts and models of identity. Moreover, borrowing descriptions from well-known novels, poems, and travelogues enabled these authors strategically to insert themselves into an already well-established literary and travel writing tradition. The rewritings of these guiding texts can be seen as an attempt for women travel writers to secure for themselves a portion of popularity through the association between their writing and that of certain fashionable authors.⁵² The allusion to and repetition of passages by celebrated British authors blurred temporal boundaries between texts, created an image of shared coherence, and invoked a kind of cultural and literary prestige. Furthermore, such repetition could evoke a kind of comforting familiarity for readers who took pleasure in associating them with other beloved texts. This chapter shall now turn to the most important texts in relation to the travelogues and issues of performance discussed in this thesis, and will examine these guiding texts through the prism of performance.

Influential Travel Scripts

Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* begins as an account of a tour by coach through France and Italy, but results in a medley of dramatic sketches, pathetic and ironic incidents,

⁵¹ Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 96. Chard defines ‘on-the-spot composition’ as ‘an exclamatory, loosely structured syntax that mimics the informality of speech, and so produces the effect of a reaction voiced in the actual presence of the objects of commentary – particularly when combined with words such as *here* and *now*’ (p. 96).

⁵² Walchester, p. 41.

philosophical and sentimental musings, reminiscences, and anecdotes. More importantly, the book reflected a growing tendency in eighteenth-century travel writing to foreground the constructed narratorial self. In fact, Yorick and his misadventures take centre stage for most of the book, which rarely mentions instances of traditional sightseeing. The text inspired emulative ‘sentimental’ journeys in the late eighteenth century and beyond. In particular, Sterne’s work influenced women travel writers and was a popular model for them to follow and imitate. In *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick describes his travels from a sentimental point of view, inspiring the emotionally charged and impressionistic responses of early nineteenth-century authors, such as Anna Jameson and Fanny Kemble. *A Sentimental Journey* also served as a model for subsequent women’s travelogues in its emphasis on a subjective approach to Continental travel, prioritising discussions of taste, manners, and morals over that of Classical learning. Much like Sterne’s text, *Diary of an Ennuyée* foregrounds the narrator’s impressionistic responses, intensified emotional involvement, and dramatic responses to challenging situations.

The stage for women’s literary travel performances was also set by Gothic romances.⁵³ Gothic literature popularised foreign locations, chiefly southern Europe, which continued as a popular travel destination throughout the nineteenth century. Although Gothic literature had ceased to be a dominant genre by the beginning of the Victorian period, women travel writers continued to borrow from Gothic fiction conventions throughout the century, such as when they incorporated descriptive passages that illustrated the traveller’s sense of pleasurable fearfulness. By borrowing from Gothic literary conventions, travel writers like Jameson and Lowe positioned themselves within a literary convention that, due to Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe, became strongly associated with

⁵³ Conversely, since the eighteenth century authors of fiction have relied upon travel guidebooks for descriptions of foreign lands in order to heighten the realistic nature of their novels. While writing her Gothic novels, Ann Radcliffe showed an interest in the accurate treatment of landscape by familiarising herself with travel texts such as Pierre Jean Grosley’s *New Observations on Italy and its Inhabitants* (1769). Radcliffe’s *The Italian* (1797) is framed within a short travel narrative, which describes an event experienced by a group of English travellers in Italy.

female authorship, and aligned their performed travel selves with the heroines of Gothic romances.

In his travel book *Italian Hours* (1909), Henry James suggests that to travel anywhere is ‘as it were, to go to the play, to attend a spectacle’, especially among the Italians who show, at least to the foreign spectator, such an ‘enviable ability not to be depressed by circumstances’.⁵⁴ However, I suggest that to travel is also to *perform* in a type of spectacle. In 1822, Lord and Lady Blessington, along with several acquaintances and servants, began a Continental tour with multiple carriages and vast amounts of luggage, demonstrating a type of aristocratic travel performance. This mobile theatrical spectacle that journeyed throughout Italy and France was known as ‘The Blessington Circus’.⁵⁵ To borrow Chard’s phraseology, sometimes nineteenth-century travellers, like the Blessingtons, sought to be as much ‘travel attraction’ as traveller, as much ‘spectacle’ as spectator.⁵⁶ For these types of travellers, journeys ‘link representations of reality with deliberately cultivated forms of subjectivity, throwing the traveler as a figure into relief as well as charting the ground against which the figure moves’.⁵⁷ At certain points, the travel writers discussed in this thesis also ‘stage’ their travels, whereby they situate themselves textually at places of social, historical, and cultural importance, often depicting themselves as the centre of dramatic scenes or pictorial tableaux.

The special significance of Italy as a stage, throwing ‘into relief’ nineteenth-century travellers and travel writers, was strongly influenced by Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-18). Byron’s four-part narrative poem chronicles the travels of a world-weary man looking for amusement in foreign climes. Theatricality became a predominant

⁵⁴ Henry James, *Italian Hours*, ed. with introd. and notes by John Auchard (New York: Penguin Books, 1992 [1909]), p. 106. This book combines a series of essays on travels in Italy written by James between 1872 and 1909.

⁵⁵ These journeys provided material for Lady Blessington’s travel books *The Idler in Italy* (1839) and *The Idler in France* (1841).

⁵⁶ Chloe Chard, ‘Women Who Transmutate into Tourist Attractions: Spectator and Spectacle on the Grand Tour’, in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844*, ed. by Amanda Gilroy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 109-26.

⁵⁷ Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1384.

feature of Byron's fame and a key element in the poet's allure for Continental travellers.⁵⁸ On his own journeys, Byron became a type of moving spectacle, watched closely by voyeurs and gossiping travellers. The overriding impression of Byron's work and constructed identity was that of a grand subjectivity making travel into an opportunity for highly stylised self-staging.⁵⁹ *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* became essential for nineteenth-century readers looking to express 'correct' emotional responses to sights on the Continent. It also provided a travelling persona that could be momentarily appropriated with the smallest gesture or quotation.⁶⁰

The fourth canto of Byron's poem documents the narrator's journey through Venice, Arquà, Ferrara, Florence, and Rome, and draws on Italian lyric poetry to comment on Italy's present subjection to foreign powers. *Canto IV* also acts as a type of 'stage director', instructing travellers on where to stand and how to respond to Italian sights. The canto opens with the famous lines, 'I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs; | A palace and a prison on each hand', whereby the bridge becomes a stage for the poet's responses to his surroundings.⁶¹ Barbara Schaff suggests that these opening lines were immensely attractive to nineteenth-century travellers since they invited theatrical emulation. For a moment, travellers 'could rehearse the pose of the poet and the protagonist in a performative speech act on the spot'.⁶² By standing exactly where he stood, travellers could consume the visual sights of Venice through Byron's eyes, staging their journey in a Byronesque manner. The fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was rapidly adopted as a kind of guidebook, whose quotable commentaries on art, mythology, and landscape expressed the traveller's response to Italy more clearly and eloquently than the traveller could him or herself. Moreover, British travellers felt that by visiting Byron's Italy through

⁵⁸ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 116.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶¹ George Gordon Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 19-206, (4. 1).

⁶² Barbara Schaff, 'Italianised Byron – Byronised Italy', in *Performing National Identity: Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, ed. by Ralf Hertel and Manfred Pfister (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 103-21 (p. 108).

the use of his poem, they would not only become more familiar with the places that he wrote about, but also with Byron himself.

Byron's poem also acted as a script for subsequent travel writers, many of whom were women. The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* repeatedly refers to Byron, reinforcing the narrative's association with the Romantic poet's works and sensibility.⁶³ She draws upon Byron's poetry on several occasions, such as when, quoting from *Canto IV* of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, she describes Venice as 'a gorgeous exhalation from the bosom of the ocean' (68), which will unfortunately one day sink "'into the slime of her own canals'" (69). While settled in Genoa for four months, the Blessingtons met Byron on several occasions, providing Lady Blessington with material for her *Conversations of Lord Byron* (1834). In *The Idler in Italy* (1839), Lady Blessington also refers to Byron dozens of times, often citing his poetry at great length. In Rome, after quoting two stanzas from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, she writes:

Byron has afforded a better notion of the Coliseum, in his exquisite lines on it in the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, than all who have written on it, before or since. He gives us the reflections of it, in the mirror of his own mind, so powerfully, so beautifully depicted, that no one acquainted with our language, or capable of appreciating our poetry, can ever visit the Coliseum without remembering the verses, and feeling their truths.⁶⁴

In a later edition of her Italian travelogue, Lady Blessington notes: 'I could no more pass the Rialto without thinking of Shakespeare, than I could see the Bridge of Sighs without remembering Byron'.⁶⁵ As Lady Blessington demonstrates, many sights in Italy, ranging from those in Rome to Venice, had become 'quintessentially Byronic' and thoroughly scripted in a Byronic manner.⁶⁶ In quoting passages from Byron's poetry in their own travel narratives, authors like Jameson and Lady Blessington reveal that travel writing is

⁶³ See for example Anna Jameson, *Diary of an Ennuyée* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), pp. 35, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 83, 136, and 195. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

⁶⁴ Marguerite Gardiner, The Countess of Blessington, *The Idler in Italy*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), II, p. 168. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

⁶⁵ Marguerite Gardiner, The Countess of Blessington, *The Idler in Italy: New Series*, 2 vols (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1841), I, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 117.

often a performance of repetition in which specific roles, choreographies, and cues are followed.

Nineteenth-century travel handbooks, which represent another type of textual ‘stage director’, likewise provided scripted commentary and suggested locations for performing specific gazes. Like organised tours, these guidebooks were instrumental in choreographing the movement of nineteenth-century tourists, chaperoning them along prescribed paths, and discouraging travellers from straying from assigned routes.⁶⁷ In the 1830s, John Murray III began to publish his famous series of ‘Handbooks’ for travellers, which launched a new means of disseminating densely presented cultural information.⁶⁸ Murray, and later his firm, published a series of regularly updated handbooks for various countries in Europe, northern Africa, and parts of Asia. Each volume provided thorough outlines of travel itineraries and historical facts, information about the most popular sights, and assimilated cultural responses. Karl Baedeker’s popular German travel guidebooks, which contained similar information to Murray’s handbooks, were first translated for the English-language market in 1861. Murray and Baedeker’s handbooks stood for functionality, thoroughness, accuracy, exhaustive rational planning, and the relentless pursuit of truth.⁶⁹

However, in the travel roles that these guidebooks offered there was little room for reflexivity or improvisation, or for the discourse of ‘sentiment’ or subjectivity, given the narrow repertoire and rigid script around which these guidebooks’ performances were organised.⁷⁰ The wide dissemination of these handbooks resulted in their position as objects of high cultural scorn. Over time, worship of the guidebook began to mark out British travellers as incapable of articulating a genuine, meaningful, or individual response

⁶⁷ Edensor, p. 326.

⁶⁸ Murray’s first published handbook was *A Handbook for Travellers in Switzerland* (1837).

⁶⁹ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 65.

⁷⁰ Edensor, p. 334.

to the sights in front of them.⁷¹ Such guidebooks were gently mocked in fiction ranging from Charles Lever's *The Dodd Family Abroad* (1854) to E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908). Throughout their texts, nineteenth-century women travel writers frequently asserted their independence from a variety of male-authored handbooks.⁷² For instance, Lady Sydney Morgan attacks John Chetwode Eustace's seminal text *A Classical Tour through Italy* (1802), describing his comments about Turin as 'false, flimsy, and pompous', revealing 'his utter ignorance of Italy'.⁷³ Elliot repeatedly berates Murray's guidebooks for their ineptitude and dullness, referring to the 'dry bones' of the volumes in comparison to her own lively observations.⁷⁴ She also defiantly declares: 'I have no notion of admiring a picture because it is celebrated and praised by Murray' (*Italy*, I, 108). Instead, she confidently asserts her own views on various works of art and architecture.⁷⁵ In distinguishing their travelogues from male-authored travel texts, women suggested that not only did they not need to rely on such traditional guides, but also that their own travel accounts were more authoritative and original. They also implied that travel writing was not merely a male mode of writing, and combatted the notion that female travellers were not as competent as their more 'serious' male counterparts.⁷⁶

Therefore, travel narratives often incorporate a mixture of both repetition (adhering strictly to a previous script) and improvisation (diverging from that script). In other words, the relationship between travel performances and the conventions guiding their production

⁷¹ Ouditt and Polezzi, p. 100.

⁷² Nineteenth-century travel handbooks were not exclusively authored by men. Mariana Starke's *Travels on the Continent* (1820), Anna Jameson's *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and Near London* (1842), Louisa Stuart Costello's *A Tour to and from Venice* (1846), and Susan and Joanna Horner's *Walks in Florence and its Environs* (1873) represent popular guidebooks that provided practical information for travellers both in Britain and on the Continent. Although women travel writers in this period refer to other texts by women, their criticisms are predominantly directed at male-authored handbooks.

⁷³ Lady Sydney Morgan, *Italy*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1821), I, p. 57.

⁷⁴ Frances Minto Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, 2 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1871), I, p. 254. Hereinafter cited as *Italy* and included in the main body of the text.

⁷⁵ Describing the ascent of the cupola of St Peter's Basilica, Elliot declares: 'I conceive myself – minnow though I be – entitled to an opinion among the great tritons of the goose-tail' (*Italy*, I, p. 91).

⁷⁶ Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (New York; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p. 6.

and interpretation is variable, ranging from ritualistic adherence to deliberate change.⁷⁷ A theatrical script requires both adherence and interpretation, enabling the actor to enact various interpretations within the confines of already existing instructions.⁷⁸ In a similar manner, travel texts rely on contexts and instructions (previous travel texts, novels, or poetry) to provide a broad framework within which some improvisation might take place.⁷⁹ As Edensor notes, journeys to unfamiliar destinations usually require more improvisation than those to familiar ones.⁸⁰ Adventurous travellers who move off the beaten track tend to expose themselves to unscripted situations, engaging in improvised performances within unbounded spaces.⁸¹ For instance, Lowe's travel performance, which occurs in the lesser-known regions of Sicily and Calabria, appears to be more improvisatory than that of Jameson's narrator, who, for the most part, follows a conventional Italian tour. Lowe makes no reference to traditional travel guidebooks and, unlike Jameson and Lady Blessington, she never refers to famous authors like Byron. Yet even when claiming to reject all scripts and travel manuals (supposed hindrances to an 'authentic' journey), nineteenth-century journeys and travel accounts are to some degree always informed by prior associations, images, and expectations, and travellers are always to some extent externally directed by travel conventions.⁸²

⁷⁷ Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', p. 1369.

⁷⁸ Butler discusses this blend between acts of repetition and improvisation in relation to gender performance, linking the act of improvisation with a breach of gender convention. She states: 'Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives.' Judith Butler, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. by Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 270-82 (p. 277).

⁷⁹ Edensor, p. 335.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁸¹ Thompson argues in *The Suffering Traveller* that the Romantics did much to foster the attitude that the 'real' or 'authentic' traveller exposes him or herself to chance and to unscripted eventualities (pp. 21-22).

⁸² Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 23. For instance, Lowe's travel performance is informed by the figure of the 'unprotected female'.

Why Create and Perform Travel Identities?

While travel narratives can both invoke or distinguish themselves from previous travel texts, and can combine the scripted with the improvisatory, many nineteenth-century travel writers laboured under what Eric Savoy has called ‘the *burden* of prior travel writing’, fearing the impossibility of original inscription.⁸³ Rose Macaulay writes in her travel novel *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956) that the ‘trouble with countries is that, once people begin travelling in them [...] they are apt to get over-written’.⁸⁴ During the post-Napoleonic period, in which Continental travel was revived, the sense of having been preceded reached new heights.⁸⁵ In the well-travelled region of Italy, all experience seemed to become particularly predictable and repetitive in the nineteenth century. Numerous Italian travel books, as well as plentiful Italian references and settings in other genres, such as poetry and fiction, helped to create and maintain the impression of Italy as a fully scripted environment, in which original travel performances were unlikely if not impossible.⁸⁶

In *Two Journeys through Italy and Switzerland* (1835), William Thomson declares in his preface:

Another volume of Travels may appear an unnecessary addition to the mass, already accumulated, of this description of literature – more especially as the path along which the reader of the following pages will be conducted is by no means an unbeaten one. I have visited no unknown regions, met with no surprising adventures, and discovered no remarkable objects which have not already been described by abler pens. Yet I publish this volume, believing, notwithstanding these disadvantages, that its contents may be found not altogether destitute of interest.⁸⁷

Likewise, in his preface to *Excursions in Italy* (1838), C. Fenimore Cooper writes:

If the author were required to give a reason why he has written these volumes on a country so well known as Italy, he might be puzzled to give any other answer than that he loved the subject, and has been indulging his own recollections possibly more than he will please his readers.

⁸³ Eric Savoy, ‘The Subverted Gaze: Hawthorne, Howells, James and the Discourse of Travel’, *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 21 (1990), 287-300 (p. 288).

⁸⁴ Rose Macaulay, *The Towers of Trebizond* (London: Fontana, 1956), p. 72.

⁸⁵ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 158.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸⁷ William Thomson, *Two Journeys through Italy and Switzerland* (London: John Macrone, 1835), p. iii.

As this, like most other books, must speak for itself, the author has little to add, in the way of Preface, to what has already been published in the work with which his travels will commence. He has endeavoured to avoid a pretension which his research would not justify, while he hopes some may be glad to go over again, even this beaten road, in his company.⁸⁸

In these prefaces, both Thomson and Cooper refer to the beaten track paved by previous Italian travelogues, noting that records of their Italian journeys are joining a mass of preceding literature. Because the attempt to justify the publication of one's book was a common one, these authors' prefaces also represent scripted and dramatic gestures that highlight the ritualistic nature of travel writing.

Several nineteenth-century women travel writers also dutifully acknowledged that their Italian travel narratives were entering an already crowded market. As early as 1820, in *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome*, Maria Graham writes: 'When there are so many travellers in Italy, and when so many travellers have published tours, picturesque and classical, and have exhibited that "fair and fervid" land in all her various aspects [...] it may appear presumptuous in one not capable of adding any thing to what is already known on any of these points, to write at all upon that country'.⁸⁹ Catherine Taylor's *Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister* (1840) opens with the challenge: 'Italy has been the theme of so many able and distinguished writers [...] that the present work may seem an unnecessary, if not a presumptuous undertaking, and many will ask, "Can anything new be said of Italy?"'⁹⁰ In *A Visit to Italy* (1842), Frances Trollope begins with the perception that it is common to write about an Italian tour:

How, my dear friend, can I hope to make letters from Italy interesting to you? how dare I venture to attempt it after the rich multitude of descriptive travellers who have gone before me? [...] Basil Hall says, 'In this poor exhausted Italy, countless classical scholars, men of wit and fancy, Blues, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Poets, Painters, Philosophers, with ten thousand others of all persuasions, capacities, politics, tastes, and experiences, have worried and scourged the land till

⁸⁸ C. Fenimore Cooper, *Excursions in Italy*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), I, pp. v-vi.

⁸⁹ Maria Graham, *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome, During the Year 1819* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820), p. iii.

⁹⁰ Catherine Taylor, *Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1840), I, p. iii.

it will scarcely bear a blade of decent grass or even a thistle for any stray donkey that may be passing'.⁹¹

Even Trollope's acknowledgement that her subject is exhausted by earlier accounts involves the generous borrowing of someone else's words.⁹² Likewise, the fictional narrator of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* begins her travel journal by proclaiming:

What young lady, travelling for the first time on the continent, does not write a 'Diary'? [...] wherein we are to record and preserve all the striking, profound, and original observations – the classical reminiscences – the thread-bare raptures – the poetical effusions – in short, all the never-sufficiently-to-be-exhausted topics of sentiment and enthusiasm, which must necessarily suggest themselves while posting from Paris to Naples. (1)

The diarist pokes fun at the numerous accounts written of Continental travels, wryly hinting that the sheer volume of 'striking, profound, and original observations' in fact undermines their ingenuity.

Throughout the century, there were many complaints levelled against male and female travel writers on the grounds that their travel accounts lacked flair or novelty. In an *Athenaeum* article entitled 'Books of Travel' (1884), the author criticises the form of contemporary travel accounts, arguing that older travel books were more concise and readable, and thus more enjoyable. The author complains that 'country gentlemen' believe that letters written to friends and family while abroad make suitable travel books, when they are in fact uninteresting. The article also argues that many travelogues merely summarise that which has already been written about in previous travel texts.⁹³ Critics tended to find fault with travel accounts of Italy in particular, declaring that they had become too common and mundane. The 1846 article 'Travels and Travellers in Italy' aims to counter the claim that 'Italy is a hackneyed subject', instead arguing that it is not the subject that is at fault but rather the incompetence and ignorance of the travellers.⁹⁴ The author of this article rails against the substance of Italian travel accounts, asserting each

⁹¹ Frances Trollope, *A Visit to Italy*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1842), I, pp. 1-2.

⁹² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 164.

⁹³ Anon, 'Books of Travel', *The Athenaeum*, 2956 (1884), 790-91 (p. 790).

⁹⁴ Mrs. Austin, 'Travels and Travellers in Italy', *Bentley's Miscellany*, 20 (1846), 244-52 (p. 244).

traveller merely ‘follows in the same track as his predecessors’ and therefore engages in a performance of repetition.⁹⁵

An awareness of the weight of literary tradition behind travel writers resulted in a certain ‘anxiety of influence’, and a major concern in the nineteenth century was therefore how to be an individual in a crowded market of ‘distinctive’ travel accounts. Although they still participated in established travel narrative traditions, nineteenth-century travel writers simultaneously aimed to set themselves apart from prevalent travel accounts in creative and sometimes unexpected ways. In fact, the emphasis on producing an individual travel account, for a specific purpose or with a distinctive voice, became the impetus for numerous nineteenth-century travelogues. The search for the novel during this period remained an ideal of travel writers and their publishers, who continued to believe that readers would be attracted to accounts that offered, if not new places, at least new insights and new ways of experiencing the familiar.⁹⁶ As Buzard suggests, where the eighteenth-century Grand Tourist had enacted a ritual of classicism and class solidarity, his nineteenth-century counterpart, self-consciously treading the Grand Tourist’s well-beaten path, laid claim to superiority of inner feeling and the projection of an ideology of originality and difference.⁹⁷ While travel accounts continued to make references to earlier travel texts or scripts, self-differentiation, not imitation, became a key focus of the nineteenth-century travel writer to a greater extent than in previous centuries.

Nineteenth-century travel writers aimed to distinguish their accounts from the ‘textual morass’ in various ways.⁹⁸ Some suggested that each individual’s experience possesses an inherent novelty, and one’s impressions are always distinctive enough to

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁹⁶ Broadly speaking, travel accounts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries emphasised emotional detachment and scrupulous habits of careful observation, invoking a self capable of encompassing a vast multiplicity of external ‘things’ without being overwhelmed. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travel writing witnessed a shift from a world/object to mind/subject emphasis, whereby the emotions, thoughts, and personal quirks of the narrator became more dominant rhetorical devices within the travel narrative.

⁹⁷ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, pp. 121-22.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

write about. Others carved out a niche for themselves by emphasising an original approach to their Italian travels. For example, in *Two Journeys through Italy and Switzerland*, Thomson proclaims that ‘an equal quantity of information on the subject of the fine arts in [Italy] is nowhere to be found in so small a compass’.⁹⁹ Charles Dickens suggests that *Pictures from Italy* (1846) is singular in its very lack of focus on Italian history or art. Rather than regurgitate the ‘stock of information’ provided by previous travel accounts, Dickens singles his book out for its distinctive reflections, impressions, and descriptions that are ‘penned in the fulness of the subject, and with the liveliest impressions of novelty and freshness’.¹⁰⁰

Like men, women travel writers aimed to bring something new to their travel accounts as well. The subtitle of Mariana Starke’s *Travels in Italy* (1802), ‘with *Instructions for the Use of Invalids and Families*’, indicates the market niche she has chosen. In *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome*, Graham distinguishes her book by avoiding the traditional Grand Tour itinerary and by studying a previously unexplored part of Italy. Lady Sydney Morgan’s ethical focus and strong political insights establish *Italy* (1821) as noteworthy. In *Protestant Vigils* (1829), Harriet Morton engages in a distinctively scholarly approach to her travels, and her work is further distinguished by its overtly Protestant consciousness. Like Dickens, Trollope disclaims mimetic authority in *A Visit to Italy*, and instead offers a rich uniqueness of personal impressions recorded directly from experience. Mary Shelley’s originality comes from the claim that she expresses an authentic personal experience in *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844): Italy is a place of loss and memory for Shelley, whose daughter Clara died there in 1818. Mills argues that the very fact of being female was considered to be one of the elements that made travel worthwhile enough to write about.¹⁰¹ Yet while being a woman may have been

⁹⁹ Thomson, *Two Journeys*, p. v.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, ed. with introd. and notes by Kate Flint (London: Penguin Books, 1998 [1846]), pp. 5-6. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

¹⁰¹ Mills, p. 84.

considered justification for writing about Italy early in the nineteenth century, it became important to enhance the originality of one's account in new and creative ways, due to the fact that, with every new publication, women's travel writing became increasingly common as the century progressed. Some authors evidently felt that it was no longer enough to be a woman: they wanted to bring an original perspective to published accounts by offering an individual voice and by presenting a distinctive narratorial self.

In striving for novelty, the Italian travel accounts mentioned above tend to focus on Italy rather than on the travel narrator. Other travel writers, however, sought to bring an element of novelty and entertainment to travel narratives through the creation of distinctive identities or voices, even if informed by previous voices and scripts. Throughout the nineteenth century, several men and women drew attention to the performative selves articulated in their Italian travelogues by foregrounding them in their works' titles. This is evident in men's travel titles such as *The Diary of an Invalid* (1820), *The Philosophical Rambler* (1834), *Notes of a Residence at Rome [...] By a Protestant Clergyman* (1847), and *The Rambles of a Naturalist* (1857), as well as women's publications including *A Spinster's Tour* (1828), *The Idler in Italy* (1839), and *A Ride on Horseback to Florence [...] By a Lady* (1842). The four authors discussed in this thesis also offer thoughtfully constructed presentations of the self, but they do so in noteworthy ways. They differ from other male and female travel writers who write about Italy in that they construct self-conscious, overtly performed, and potentially undesirable travel identities, and emphasise the individuality and subjectivity of their voices to a greater degree than other travel authors. The travel identities that these authors forge also serve to legitimate their travel writing and to persuade readers of their strong connection with and understanding of Italy to an extent not present in other contemporary travel narratives.

The fashioning of travel identities in nineteenth-century travel writing not only distinguished one's writing from previous travel texts, but also enabled an author to create

an ‘ideal’ self or an ‘other’ self, unknown in everyday life at home.¹⁰² Where travel is undertaken willingly, the journey becomes, in Thompson’s words, ‘the means by which we seek to cut a distinctive figure, and the medium in which we work to fashion some ideal version of ourselves’.¹⁰³ Early in the nineteenth century, William Hazlitt suggested that travellers craft ennobling identities for themselves, writing that travel ‘demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity [...] We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country’.¹⁰⁴ The image of the self in travel accounts could have an aspirational aspect, form an important part of the traveller’s larger bid for authority and social advancement, or show that he or she possessed a range of desirable attributes and accomplishments, such as courage, taste, and spiritual enlightenment. Writing about Isabella Bird and Mary Kingsley, Susan Bassnett observes that ‘the woman at home appears barely recognizable as the woman abroad’, and that travel afforded the space necessary for these two women to assert themselves, and to re-fashion themselves and their life stories as assertive, inquisitive, and adventurous – as ideal versions of themselves.¹⁰⁵

The process of creating and performing certain selfhoods in travel writing also emerges from the negotiation between self and ‘other’ that is brought about through travel, and which helps to form a travel writer’s identity on the page. Travel writing displays the outcomes of contact between different cultures, as well as the crossing of social, personal, and physical boundaries. The demands placed upon the traveller in situations of boundary crossing, unfamiliarity, and dislocation produce a scene in which the struggle for identity comes clearly into view.¹⁰⁶ Subordinating other aspects of the writer’s life, travel narratives typically chronicle or reconstruct the narrator’s experience of displacement, encounter, and

¹⁰² Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1385.

¹⁰³ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ William Hazlitt, *Table-Talk; or, Original Essays*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1983 [1821-22]), pp. 260-61.

¹⁰⁵ Susan Bassnett, ‘The Empire, Travel Writing, and British Studies’, in *Travel Writing and the Empire*, ed. by Sachindananda Mohanty (New Delhi: Katha, 2003), pp. 1-21 (p. 10).

¹⁰⁶ Frances Bartkowski, *Travelers, Immigrants, Inmates: Essays in Estrangement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

travail, and his or her observations of the unknown, the foreign, and the ‘other’. In this way, as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson also argue, they become occasions for the reimagining of identity.¹⁰⁷ While working to depict the identity of the foreign, discourses of travel can also transform, or rewrite, the identity of the familiar or of the self, sometimes with unpredictable results.¹⁰⁸

In his discussion of identity fashioning in the Renaissance, Greenblatt argues that the single self (the affirmation of wholeness) is a rhetorical construct designed to enhance the speaker’s power, allay his fear, disguise his need, and create a superior self in the face of a supposedly threatening or inferior ‘other’.¹⁰⁹ The nineteenth-century travel writer’s act of fashioning an ideal self also often proceeds by a logic of differentiation, whereby the ‘other’ is constructed as a foil or counterpart to the supposedly heroic/civilised/cultured protagonist.¹¹⁰ Travel writing frequently empowers and elevates an ideal narratorial self at the expense of a denigrated ‘other’. Thus, Pratt’s notion of ‘contact zones’ for imperial encounters can be extended: for the desired image of the self to be maintained, the travel writer can also exercise a similar discrimination with regard to everything that is ‘other’ to the narratorial self within a non-imperial context, such as Italy.

In *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, for instance, Lowe frequently objectifies and ‘others’ the Italian South, reinforcing the boundaries between exemplary self and inferior ‘other’. Despite professing an admiration for Sicilian friendliness, openness, and generosity, Lowe often portrays the locals in a negative light, reinforcing cultural stereotypes and highlighting her own superior English identity. She repeatedly professes England to be a better nation, especially in terms of its values. In one instance, she declares that although she deeply feels ‘the thousand delicate kindnesses of these foreigners towards us, I cannot be blind to the fact, that in the great test of character – truth – the English stand

¹⁰⁷ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 207.

¹⁰⁸ Agorni, pp. 94-95.

¹⁰⁹ Greenblatt, p. 141.

¹¹⁰ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 119; Regina Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 8.

pre-eminent' (247). By emphasising the supposedly English quality of truthfulness, Lowe implicitly reassures readers of the truthfulness of her own gaze and of her credibility and integrity as travel narrator. Lowe is also critical of Italian Catholicism, including its clergy, relics, and idols. By representing certain Catholic practices as the ultimate form of unacceptable behaviour, Lowe makes her own potentially subversive behaviour (unprotectedness) appear tame in comparison, and her anti-Catholic rhetoric serves to intensify her 'proper' English religious beliefs. In such instances as these, travel writing is not only a project of self-dramatisation, but also of self-promotion, self-aggrandisement, and cultural chauvinism.¹¹¹

While Pratt's depiction of the contact zone suggests a negative encounter, I argue that such a space can also have positive connotations, and can lead to sympathetic understanding rather than differentiation. In contrast to Lowe, whose self-dramatisation is sustained by highlighting the inequality between the traveller and her surroundings, Horner depicts her travels in Italy as inspiring and educational: her interactions with Italian locals and with Italian culture afford her opportunities for intellectual growth and self-improvement. Horner's journals also reveal the self-fashioning that occurs when the traveller finds herself adopting the manners, customs, and language of Italy, demonstrating her facility in adapting to her surroundings. While Lowe often highlights the uncompromising rectitude with which personal identity is maintained after its habitual props have been removed, Horner fashions a selfhood that is capable of flexibility, growth, and meaningful transformation by foreign experience.¹¹² As Horner's journals demonstrate, contact zones can be a positive source of transcultural communication, resulting in a richly productive exchange between traveller and local.

However, control of travel selfhoods does not rest exclusively with the performers: like autobiographers, travel writers incorporate and reproduce models of identity in their

¹¹¹ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 121.

¹¹² Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', p. 1385.

narratives as ways to represent themselves *to the reader*.¹¹³ When Kingsley writes that she kept her feelings ‘out of print’, it shows that she felt pressure to conform textually and to tailor her travel performance to an audience’s presumed wishes, and to perform a proper femininity on the page.¹¹⁴ Kingsley also omitted several parts of *Travels in West Africa* for fear of not being believed, for example, the sections in which she helped villagers to kill a man-eating crocodile, and an incident where she kept a hippopotamus at bay with her umbrella.¹¹⁵ In removing these sections, Kingsley aimed to strengthen her performance as a reliable and credible narrator who would gain the audience’s trust and respect. Anticipation of audience responses plays a constitutive role in the production of travel accounts and in the performance of fashioned selfhoods.¹¹⁶ As Heidi Macpherson states, ‘[t]o travel is to invent not only the destination, but also the traveler, as identity becomes a performance that tailors itself to whatever audience it encounters.’¹¹⁷

The meanings created through travel performances are neither independent of their audiences and contexts or reception, nor necessarily stable.¹¹⁸ As Smith points out, the audience comes to expect a certain kind of performativity that conforms relatively comfortably to criteria of intelligibility.¹¹⁹ Both nineteenth-century women’s and men’s travel identities were to a certain extent influenced by a desire to cater to a particular audience of readers and to produce a successful and marketable travel piece. Authors’ travel identities are not only performed for an audience, but also rely on the audience’s complicity in the performance. Rather than being fixed, ‘performance is an interactive and contingent process: it succeeds according to the skill of the actors, the context within which it is performed, and the way in which it is interpreted by an audience’.¹²⁰ The efficacy of a performance relies upon the ability of the audience to share the meaning (and

¹¹³ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 34.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Gwynn, p. 93.

¹¹⁵ Mills, p. 121.

¹¹⁶ Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1378.

¹¹⁷ Macpherson, ‘Women’s Travel Writing’, p. 195.

¹¹⁸ Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1369.

¹¹⁹ Smith, ‘Performativity’, p. 110.

¹²⁰ Edensor, p. 24.

to understand the message) that the actor hopes to transmit, as well as to suspend disbelief.¹²¹ For although travel writing may have roots in reality, its success relies on a great deal of make-believe, on part of both the performer (travel writer) and audience (reader).¹²² Part of the performance of travel writing is in the very casting of the reader: the assumed reader is often as carefully constructed by the writer as his or her written selfhood. Such performances also rely on the reader's genuine interest in the identity of the travel narrator. Complaining about the mundaneness of contemporary travel writing, one nineteenth-century critic declares: 'The only variety this walk of literature [...] presents, is in the character and position of the traveller himself'.¹²³ Likewise, Eastlake argues that the personality of the author is often 'the highest attraction' (137) of travel writing, demonstrating the nineteenth-century notion that the subjectivity of the traveller could be just as compelling as the foreign land he or she represented. These comments highlight the importance of the constructed travel character for the reader.

Performing a Gendered Travel Identity

In analysing the 'character and position' of the female travel writer, it is important to be sensitive to the significance of gender for her travel performance. As this thesis shall demonstrate, in some instances the four authors I examine challenge the Victorian notion of biological sexuality and the traditional definition of sexual difference by drawing attention to the performed, even exaggerated, quality of their gendered behaviour, or by consciously alternating between traditionally 'feminine' and 'masculine' voices. In doing so, they anticipate the work of Judith Butler and Mary Poovey. Butler's research on gender theory underlines the artificial, proscribed, and performative nature of gender identity: she

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹²² Erik Cohen, 'Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15 (1988), 371-386 (p. 383).

¹²³ Anon, 'Travels and Travellers', *Dublin University Magazine*, 22 (1843), 154-76 (p. 154).

questions the belief that certain gendered behaviours are natural, illustrating the ways in which one's gendered behaviour (normally associated with 'femininity' and 'masculinity') is a performance of sorts, and one that is imposed (or determined) by normative heterosexuality. She goes so far as to argue that gender, as an objective and natural entity, may not exist, stating: 'Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed'.¹²⁴ Significantly, according to Butler, 'if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief'.¹²⁵ Thus, the authors of gender become entranced by their own fictions, whereby the construction compels one's belief in its necessity and naturalness.¹²⁶ Poovey draws on Butler's theory to argue that, contrary to the belief of many Victorians, 'the representation of biological sexuality, the definition of sexual difference, and the social organisation of sexual relations are social, not natural, phenomena'.¹²⁷

Just as the body, according to Butler, becomes its gender 'through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time', so too do 'masculine' and 'feminine' forms of travel writing become considered 'natural' through a series of textual acts, which are rehearsed, repeated, and reinforced over time.¹²⁸ There were various postures and styles traditionally marked out as appropriately 'masculine' and 'feminine', which were repeatedly actualised and reproduced in nineteenth-century travel writing.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 278.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹²⁶ Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 273.

¹²⁷ Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 2

¹²⁸ Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 274.

¹²⁹ Men's travel writing of the period was identified with conquest, connoisseurship, and taming the wild, and with the language of colonial and imperialist discourse. Brian Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Flamingo, 2002), p. 11. Shirley Foster has argued that the use of a seemingly objective style, careful documentation, and the 'othering' of a foreign country are also intrinsic elements of the masculine travel writing tradition (p.

Travel writing of this period was often subject to the gendered concept of ‘separate spheres’, whereby the ‘male’ sphere included scholarship, politics, and all elements of public life, and the ‘female’ sphere governed the domestic and private world.¹³⁰ Yet in several instances, the performative nature of women’s travel texts made it easier for authors to document their experiences abroad and to challenge the Victorian notion of separate spheres. By shaping a narrative identity, such as the ‘invalid’, ‘unprotected’ or ‘idle’ woman, the travel writer could avoid self-exposure while inhabiting and negotiating the public sphere; the creation of a literary selfhood provided a form of protection for the ‘private’ individual, allowing authors to be bolder in print than they might otherwise have chosen to be. In some instances, the creation of these women’s travel characters had the ability to conceal, or at least moderate, the travelogues’ more subversive elements, while also enabling the authors to address ‘masculine’ and thus potentially controversial issues from a ‘safer’ distance. Thus, in a manner redolent of Butler’s notion of gender performativity, these authors’ performances allowed for the possibility of agency.

Shirley Foster and Sara Mills aptly suggest that representations in travel writing which might be considered typically female (or male), may be the result of strategic policy – especially if the writers wanted to get published – rather than a specifically gendered orientation. ‘Womanly’ (or ‘manly’) subject matter must not be used as proof of gender specificity, nor must it be seen solely as biologically derived.¹³¹ Travel writers reinforced ‘appropriate’ gendered positions as a conscious response to earlier travel writing traditions, or for thematic or rhetorical effect. They also did so to offset potentially transgressive or

18). According to Thompson, men were expected to adopt a pose of dispassionate rational enquiry, and a narrative voice that eschews excessive emotionalism in favour of precise, empirical observation (*Travel Writing*, p. 176). Matters of commerce, science, and the public affairs of foreign nations were regarded as factual topics that men were particularly qualified to discuss in their travel writing, in order to evince an appropriately masculine seriousness of purpose (*Travel Writing*, p. 175). Nineteenth-century critical opinion also created a set of criteria for ‘appropriately’ feminine writing, which included emotional and moral directives about ‘feeling’ and ‘women’s sensibility’ (Foster and Mills, p. 11). Women travel writers were encouraged to focus on the appearance, costume, manners, and status of foreign women, as well as the domestic environments of the places they visited. They were also admired for the wealth of detail that they supposedly included in their travelogues, as well as for their sentimental responsiveness.

¹³⁰ Walchester, p. 25.

¹³¹ Foster and Mills, p. 11.

controversial elements in their travel accounts. Moreover, as demonstrated by Kingsley, they often did so to comply with social expectations, reinforcing Butler's argument that one's most personal acts are, in fact, continually being scripted by hegemonic social conventions and ideologies. Often travel writers would enact an articulation of a 'suitably' gendered identity in accordance with a publisher's demands. When Lady Sydney Morgan travelled to Italy with her husband in the early part of the nineteenth century, her publisher specified that she should write on the morals and manners of the region, while her husband should tackle the more 'masculine' subjects of laws and government institutions.¹³² The adventurous worldwide traveller Isabella Bird was forced to exclude certain material from her account *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (1883) because the publishers considered it to be unfeminine.¹³³ Rather than prove that women are inherently more interested in personal relations than men, these examples demonstrate how women were often pressured into a position of writing about the private sphere on their travels, just as men were expected to write about the public sphere.¹³⁴ Nineteenth-century women travel writers often shifted the grounds of self-representation to respond to cultural expectations about appropriate female speech and behaviour.

Women travel writers rarely omit feminine conduct in their travelogues altogether, usually engaging in a feminine self-fashioning of some kind in order to imitate a feminine ideal or norm.¹³⁵ Authors such as Starke, Eaton, Morgan, and Shelley construct 'domestic' selfhoods in their travelogues, which demonstrate features of conventional femininity. Sometimes women also wrote about traditionally male topics in a 'feminine' style. As

¹³² Foster, p. 36.

¹³³ Mills, p. 116.

¹³⁴ Mills, p. 95.

¹³⁵ Lillias Campbell Davidson's *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad* (1889) serves as a further reminder that women travellers and travel writers were often dominated by a self-consciousness about their identity and status as women. Davidson's book contains advice on how to maintain feminine propriety while travelling, thus demonstrating the ways in which Victorian femininity was constructed. The book covers topics including how women should handle dangerous situations, what they should pack, and how they should dress (with an emphasis on how to look respectable). The book urges women travellers to enact an appropriately 'feminine' performance which is suitable for both a British and foreign audience. Notably, there is no comparable book for Victorian male travellers advising them on travel conduct.

Kathryn Walchester outlines, some women travel writers employ ‘domestic’ rhetoric in their texts to offer a model for Italian government and to present their travels through a suitable feminine narrative identity.¹³⁶ The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* also fashions an overtly ‘feminine’ selfhood in several instances, responding to Italian sights in a highly emotional and sentimental manner. Often even the most audacious and hardy of travellers insist that feminine decorum has been maintained during their journeys; they exhibit selfhoods produced by, rather than constructed against, consensual belief systems.¹³⁷ Despite being an intrepid explorer of West Africa, Kingsley wrote letters to the press, stressing her passion for babies and cooking. Bird insisted that her riding dress was entirely womanly.¹³⁸ In her travel accounts, Elliot occasionally shows concern for her appearance as well, demonstrating conventions of feminine modesty. These women understood that their readers would read them as ‘woman’, causing them to inflect their narratives with patriarchal expectations of woman’s identity and to embrace conventional nineteenth-century forms of female selfhood to varying degrees. Even when travelling outside of the home, women travel writers often displayed many of the conventional characteristics of women within the home.¹³⁹

Other women travel writers engaged in a feminine self-fashioning by imbuing their texts with a strongly humble, even apologetic, tone. In her *Journal of A Short Residence in Chile* (1824), Maria Graham apologises for her lack of botanical knowledge, complaining about the alienating nomenclature of botany, in which ‘harsh syllabled names’ are used to describe ‘such lovely things as roses, jasmines, and violets’.¹⁴⁰ Graham thus performs the role of a hobbyist, fashioning the image of someone who relishes the beauty of plants rather than takes a rigorous scientific interest in them. Yet there was a serious scientific

¹³⁶ Walchester, p. 37.

¹³⁷ Andrew Hammond, ‘Memoirs of Conflict: British Women Travellers in the Balkans’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 14 (2010), 57-75 (p. 58).

¹³⁸ Foster, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁹ Mills, p. 34.

¹⁴⁰ Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in Chile*, ed. by Jennifer Hayward (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003 [1824]), p. 35.

dimension to Graham's travels in Latin America that is barely evident from the self that she constructs in her published travelogue. Graham was actually engaged, during her time in Chile and Brazil, in assiduously collecting, drying, and sketching plant and seed specimens; the specimens she accumulated were subsequently sent to leading figures in the botanical world such as Sir William Hooker.¹⁴¹ Thompson argues that Graham's reluctance to demonstrate her sophisticated and advanced knowledge of botany in print is symptomatic of a more general problem facing women travel writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the problem of 'how to establish any sort of narrative authority in their texts'.¹⁴² However, I suggest that this humble and confessional tone could also represent an aspect of the performance of travel writing. Graham in fact uses those 'harsh hundred syllabled names' on enough occasions to show that she is thoroughly conversant with the botanical classificatory system. Her apology therefore could have been an ironic, dramatic gesture that addresses the popular notion of women as inexperienced amateurs.

Women travellers in the nineteenth century often employ humility topoi, and begin their accounts with an apology that affirmed their status as modest and proper ladies, and that served to reassure readers that they were not competing with men. Authors tended to apologise for writing in the first person, for engaging in the activity of travel, or for bothering readers with their trivial endeavours.¹⁴³ In the preface to her *Journal of a Tour in France, Switzerland, and Italy* (1823), Marianne Colston gently mocks such apologetic tendencies, noting that humble excuses and apologies are worn 'threadbare', and 'serve only to aggravate demerit' and evoke an 'anticipated feeling of ennui' in the reader.¹⁴⁴ She also alludes to the performed, scripted nature of such humble prefaces, likening them to

¹⁴¹ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 183-84.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁴³ Kristi Siegel, 'Intersections: Women's Travel and Theory', in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, ed. by Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 1-11 (p. 3).

¹⁴⁴ Marianne Colston, *Journal of a Tour in France, Switzerland, and Italy, During the Years 1819, 20, and 21*, 2 vols (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823), I, pp. vii-viii.

‘the ceremony of a bow or courtesy [*sic*] [when entering] a drawing-room’.¹⁴⁵ Beneath the self-effacement of such apologies and humble prefaces there may lurk genuine uneasiness about the public revelation of private feelings and experiences. However, as in Graham’s case, these apologies represent ambiguous gestures that at the same time provide lip service to the notion of appropriate feminine roles, and can also be interpreted as examples of diplomatic mock-modesty.¹⁴⁶ Thus, they could represent rhetorical devices – sometimes tongue-in-cheek ones – that contemporary readers may have recognised as modes of an exaggerated femininity that actually concealed a confident and independent tone, and that were not meant to be taken entirely seriously. The declaration of modesty could be enacted either in a serious or ironic manner (or a mixture of both), while always appearing to remain within the boundaries of what was expected of women authors. The reader becomes an integral part of this performance, left to interpret such ambiguous gestures how he or she chooses. Crucially, these humble, apologetic gestures demonstrate how performance in travel writing opens up the space for transgression: texts can perform a proper notion of femininity, but can also move beyond it at the same time. Nineteenth-century women travel writers provide various interpretations within the confines of what is a traditionally ‘female’ textual space, engaging in ‘improvisation within a scene of constraint’.¹⁴⁷

Yet Victorian women do not only employ a traditionally ‘feminine’ voice in their travelogues: many use travel writing as a vehicle for challenging and evading gender restrictions. Butler challenges biological assumptions about the differences between men and women by arguing that gender is a social construction and a fiction, and one that is therefore open to change and contestation. She asserts that the body becomes its gender through a series of acts that are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time.¹⁴⁸

According to Butler:

¹⁴⁵ Colston, I, p. vii.

¹⁴⁶ Foster, p. 20.

¹⁴⁷ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Butler, ‘Performative Acts’, p. 274.

If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.¹⁴⁹

In line with Butler's argument, I suggest that nineteenth-century travel texts often invoke gendered modes through the stylised repetition of acts. This construction of gender norms through repetition appears to be a conservative practice; however, authors can switch between both gendered identities, enacting a type of 'textual gender transformation' through a new kind of repetition, which can be both empowering and liberating. Gender is not a stable identity in nineteenth-century travel accounts: it is a stylised, performative, and internally discontinuous act that enables travel writers who are aware of 'the possibility of a different sort of repeating' to invoke 'masculine' and 'feminine' voices, and to switch between both, often repeatedly, within a single text. Thus, the performative nature of gender provides the potential for agency in travel writing, enabling authors to challenge the Victorian belief in the biological nature of sex differences.

By focusing on the mechanisms and strategies at play in women's self-representation in their travelogues, one can see that women authors claim many identities not necessarily or consistently pertaining to the realm of the feminine.¹⁵⁰ Specifically, women often consciously vacillate between 'feminine' (domestic) and 'masculine' (scientific and political) voices within a single text. In *Letters from Italy* (1800), Mariana Starke embodies both a nurse to her invalid travelling companions and a knowledgeable travel guide who takes a strong interest in Italian politics. Thus, her travel account incorporates both travel memoir and travel guidebook, and her 'proper' domestic (and feminine) role of caregiver contrasts with the non-conservative (and masculine) political views that she frequently expresses.¹⁵¹ In *Rome in the Nineteenth Century* (1820),

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁵⁰ Bénédicte Monicat, 'Autobiography and Women's Travel Writings in Nineteenth-Century France: Journeys through Self-Representation', *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 1 (1994), 61-70 (p. 63).

¹⁵¹ Contrary to popular British opinion, Starke was an admirer of Napoleon.

Charlotte Eaton alternates between a reserved, timid voice that endorses the domestic role of women, and a courageous, masculine voice that promotes political opinions.¹⁵² Her narrator negotiates between a bold, confident account of her work and a series of apologies and allusions to the domestic sphere. Similarly, Lady Sydney Morgan incorporates a mixture of traditionally masculine and feminine elements into *Italy*. As an Irish patriot and supporter of revolutionary politics, she engages in the public realm of politics by expressing contentious political views; however, she also describes the domestic spaces of Italy at great length and underlines the popular image of Italy as a domestic and maternal figure.¹⁵³ Moreover, in Lowe's *Unprotected Females in Sicily* there frequently exist clear assertions of 'femininity', even when placed alongside travel characteristics reminiscent of her male counterparts. While Lowe sometimes performs the role of the bold adventuring hero (recalling male travel texts), she also enacts roles that reinforce a vision of her narrator's femininity.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Walchester, p. 27.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁵⁴ Just as it is vital to recognise the diversity within women's travel writing, it is equally necessary to challenge the 'mammoth monologism of "male discourse"'. James Buzard, 'Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire', *Victorian Studies*, 36 (1993), 443-53 (p. 447). In Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick at one point exclaims 'I am as weak as a woman', after theatrically bursting 'into a flood of tears' by Father Lorenzo's grave (p. 45). As this example demonstrates, in performing their fashioned selfhoods male travel writers also transition between gendered voices, and their travelogues sometimes incorporate elements typical of a perceivably feminine style. As Chard points out, a key form of authority in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writing by both men and women was the claim to have responded emotionally to the objects described. The male subject of sincere responsiveness adopted a complicated gender configuration, performing a feminised yet manly role, and responding from the heart as well as from the head. Chloe Chard, 'Scholarship and Sensibility: Anna Jameson and Sydney Morgan in Siren Land', in *Women, Scholarship and Criticism: Gender and Knowledge, c. 1790-1900*, ed. by Joan Bellamy, Anne Laurence, and Gill Perry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 58-75 (pp. 60-61). In the late eighteenth century, the picturesque tourism pioneered by William Gilpin was also considered to evince a distinctly feminised form of travel and travel writing, since it encouraged travellers to consider landscapes primarily in an aesthetic, rather than scientific, light (*Travel Writing*, p. 175). Additionally, although men were encouraged to write about political topics in their travelogues, several male authors chose to avoid the subject altogether. Dickens begins his *Pictures from Italy* by declaring that he has no intention of discussing Italian politics; indeed, he avoids the topic throughout the text (p. 5).

Women's Travel Writing: Inherently Transgressive?

According to Butler, gender is a performance with 'clearly punitive consequences'.¹⁵⁵ Several recent scholars have suggested that nineteenth-century audiences were particularly quick to criticise travel accounts by women who, to use Butler's words, '[failed] to do their gender right'.¹⁵⁶ Discussing the perceived moral and social dangers of nineteenth-century women leaving the domestic sphere to journey abroad, Bénédicte Monicat argues that travel writing in the nineteenth century was viewed as a predominantly 'masculine literary genre'.¹⁵⁷ Likewise, Smith and Watson maintain that nineteenth-century travel was coded as a male activity.¹⁵⁸ Walchester declares that for a woman to publish in this period was 'to breach confines of modesty and domesticity'. She continues: 'By publishing their work, women writers transgressed the boundaries of the private sphere and attracted scrutiny in the public domain.'¹⁵⁹ Thompson suggests that women travel writers twice placed themselves in the public sphere: not only did they subvert contemporary norms by leaving the domestic and the national sphere, he argues, but they were doubly transgressive in that they entered the predominantly male realm of publishing.¹⁶⁰ In addition, citing Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa*, Marni Stanley observes that women travellers struggled with conflicting identities – woman and traveller – in their own consciousness, which is reflected in their writings.¹⁶¹ Foster highlights the moral associations of women's travel by comparing female travellers to Eve, who also demanded the liberty to roam.¹⁶² Karen Lawrence argues that women have traditionally been identified with remaining at home rather than with travelling, pointing out the culturally resonant story rendered by Homer in

¹⁵⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 139.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁷ Monicat, p. 61.

¹⁵⁸ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 101.

¹⁵⁹ Walchester, p. 25.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 180.

¹⁶¹ Marni Stanley, 'Skirting the Issue: Addressing and Dressing in Victorian Women's Travel Narratives', *Victorian Review*, 23 (1997), 147-67 (pp. 147-48).

¹⁶² Foster, p. 8.

which Penelope waits while Odysseus voyages abroad.¹⁶³ Thus, she asserts, Victorians often regarded women's movement outside the domestic sphere as a dangerous, even promiscuous, act.¹⁶⁴ Linking these arguments back to the theme of performance, if to write 'is to come out of the wings, and to appear, however briefly, center stage', as Nancy K. Miller states, then for a woman to write about her travels was apparently to appear on an inhospitable stage in front of an unsympathetic audience.¹⁶⁵

The titles of several studies by modern critics, such as Jane Robinson's *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (1990) and *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers* (1994), often highlight the inherent otherness and transgressiveness of women travellers. The title of Leo Hamalian's edited volume *Ladies on the Loose: Women Travellers of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (1981) purposely confuses issues of mobility and morality, suggesting that women travellers' sexual propriety and morality were called into question. Other anthologies, such as Mary Russell's *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt* and Dea Birkett's *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers* (1989), underline the supposedly eccentric nature of these women who apparently diverged from middle-class ideology rather pointedly.¹⁶⁶ These authors portray women travellers as doubly different: not only from more orthodox and socially conformist women, but also from male travellers. Books belonging to this strand of scholarship depict women travellers as intrepid and yet slightly eccentric in their transgressions of the norms of Victorian femininity.¹⁶⁷

Yet were women who travelled abroad in the nineteenth century really considered as inherently transgressive as the above titles have suggested? True, there were grumbling complaints and humorous jabs in the nineteenth-century periodical press resulting from

¹⁶³ Lawrence, p. ix.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁵ Nancy K. Miller, 'Women's Autobiography in France: For a Dialectics of Identification', in *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, ed. by Sally McConnell-Ginet, Rutherford Borker, and Nelly Furman (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 258-73 (p. 266).

¹⁶⁶ Bassnett, 'Travel Writing', p. 226.

¹⁶⁷ Buzard, 'Victorian Women', p. 443.

women's increasing tendency to travel further abroad. As late as 1893, *Punch* published the following verse:

A Lady an explorer? a traveller in skirts?
The notion's just a trifle too seraphic:
Let them stay and mind the babies, or hem our ragged shirts;
But they mustn't, can't, and shan't be geographic.¹⁶⁸

These lines satirised the Royal Geographical Society's refusal to enable women's membership in 1892, and also pointed towards a broader reluctance to support women travellers. However, even the existence of genuinely negative comments about women travelling suggests that women's travel was a fairly common event rather than a rare venture undertaken by the eccentric few. In many cases, such criticism merely indicated a conservative response to the unprecedented expansion of female travel that came about due to improved modes of transportation and the loosening of restrictions on their movements. Moreover, such reactionary criticisms did not necessarily reflect the majority of public opinion. That so many women were referred to as '*lady* travellers' in contemporary reviews indicates that women were able to maintain an image of feminine respectability and middle- or upper-class propriety while travelling abroad.

For the most part, nineteenth-century opinion tended to be divided regarding the propriety of women travelling abroad.¹⁶⁹ Critics' perception of women's travel was complex, instead of blatantly negative, and was often influenced by specific circumstances. In an 1873 article about the history of women's travel throughout the centuries, one author takes the female traveller's marital status into account when determining the propriety of women's travel abroad. The author declares that

if all women took the fancy into their heads to be explorers, the world would have a right to complain; but there are those who, like Madame Ida Pfeiffer, have no home-ties, who are bound to their country by no duty, and these cannot be blamed for following the desire of their hearts, cherished from their very infancy.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Anon, 'To the Royal Geographic Society', *Punch*, 104 (1893), 269 (p. 269).

¹⁶⁹ So says the anonymous author of 'Lady Travellers', *Chambers Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*, 491 (1873), 328-31 (p. 328).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Travel destinations also affected the perceived appropriateness of journeys. Italy's frequent personification as a female entity by British authors (which shall be discussed in the following chapter), combined with its position as a relatively safe and well-travelled tourist destination, made it a far more common and acceptable travel destination wherein women could stage their travel performances than other more 'exotic' or 'dangerous' regions, such as Africa or the Middle East. Although a conservative patriarchal ideology of separate spheres suggested that nineteenth-century women automatically entered a public 'masculine' realm when they travelled, this notion of a uniform male domain was undermined by the fact that not all destinations represented a predominantly masculine or dangerous public space.

Monicat argues that in publicly writing about their innermost selves in their travel accounts, women travel writers transgressed the rule of feminine decency.¹⁷¹ However, typically considered examples of innocent entertainment, many women's travel accounts were also favourably reviewed in the periodical press. In some cases, women authors may have even drawn attention to their gender, and even played up the performance of femininity, in their travel accounts because they were perceived as being especially accomplished at travel and travel writing in many ways. Charles Darwin observes in *The Descent of Man* (1871) that 'it is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, of rapid perception [...] are more strongly marked than in man', thereby rooting sex differences in biological fact.¹⁷² Due to their perceived biological nature, women were viewed as particularly intuitive and perceptive travel writers, who were often superior authors to men. Distinguishing women's travel writing from that of men, Eastlake valorises women's supposedly distinctive literary style by declaring:

[W]ho does not know the difference between their books – especially their books of travels – the gentleman's either dull and matter-of-fact, or off-hand and superficial, with a heavy disquisition where we look for a light touch, or a foolish pun where

¹⁷¹ Monicat, p. 64.

¹⁷² Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1871), II, p. 326.

we expect a reverential sentiment, either requiring too much trouble of the reader, or showing too much carelessness in the writer – and the lady’s – all ease, animation, vivacity, with the tact to dwell upon what you most want to know, and the sense to pass over what she does not know herself; neither suggesting authorly effort, nor requiring any conscious attention, yet leaving many a clear picture traced on the memory, and many a solid truth impressed on the mind? (99)

Eastlake bases her defence of women travel writers on an assertion of difference, suggesting that women possess greater literary sensibility and judgement. She argues that women’s travel books are not only more lively, enjoyable, and tactful, but also more accurate and reliable by impressing ‘many a solid truth’ upon the mind. The adjective ‘solid’ not only provides a reassuring counterbalance to the ‘light touch’ of women’s travel writing, but also emphasises the particularly dependable nature of women’s truthfulness. Likewise, the author of ‘Voyages and Travels’ (1861) suggests that women ‘make a better business of [travel writing] than men do’. The author later asserts that ‘women are quicker observers than men. They catch many traits of manners which often furnish the proper key to the real character of the peoples they visit’.¹⁷³ In a similar manner, the author of ‘A Lady’s Travels Round the World’ (1883) admires women travellers’ ‘eager and impressionable sympathies, their incessantly observant and insatiable curiosity, their penetrating insight, their confident pertinacity, their opportunities of seeing and hearing much that escapes or is denied to the scrutiny of the rougher sex’.¹⁷⁴ In many ways, nineteenth-century women were considered by the very nature of their gender to be more successful travellers than men. Although Kristi Siegel argues that the cultural taboos surrounding women’s travel frequently ensured that their writings would attract an audience, I suggest that women’s supposed aptitude for travel and travel writing also contributed towards their popularity.¹⁷⁵

Predominant belief of the period also maintained that travel writing did not have the same corrupting influence as certain types of fiction and provided far more suitable

¹⁷³ Anon, ‘Voyages and Travels’, *The Critic*, 23 (August 1861), 175-76 (p. 175).

¹⁷⁴ Anon, ‘A Lady’s Travels Round the World’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 55 (1883), 569-71 (p. 569).

¹⁷⁵ Siegel, ‘Intersections’, p. 5.

reading material for women.¹⁷⁶ In *Friendly Hints to our Girls* (1889), E. A. Walker accuses her addressees of consuming solely fictional tales, or ‘sugar plums’, in magazines. She instead encourages girls to read biographies and travel books which, unlike fictional stories, are useful and intellectual.¹⁷⁷ Travel writing was considered to represent one of the more civilising influences of literary culture due to its supposed reliance on factual occurrences, rather than on fanciful and unhealthy imaginings. Travel literature was not merely viewed as an entertaining genre, but also an educational one that provided readers with access to valuable ‘cultural capital’, to use Pierre Bourdieu’s term.¹⁷⁸ While travel writing fulfilled readers’ imaginative desires for travel, it also answered their need for practical information. Thus, while travel writing could offer escapism, it did so within an educational and informative context. Unlike sensation novels, travel books represented relatively benign, even beneficial, forms of reading, encouraging self-improvement, fortitude, and self-reliance. Many nineteenth-century advice books for girls recommended reading travel texts to improve oneself and one’s conversational skills, depicting travel accounts as useful scripts for a woman’s self-fashioning.

It is thus possible to exaggerate the notion of women travellers and travel writers as inherently transgressive.¹⁷⁹ As Maria Frawley has observed, that so much travel writing of the period was by women suggests that publishing houses and editors were willing and eager to capitalise on the ostensibly different perspectives that women were able to bring to travelogues. Women travellers, in turn, were keen to capitalise on the publicity that their

¹⁷⁶ Nineteenth-century society propelled fears of women’s reading practices, raising concerns over women readers’ vulnerability to textual influences, as well as their moral fragility and subsequent ability to be corrupted by immoral texts, particularly by the ‘sensation novels’ of the 1860s and by the so-called ‘New Woman’ fiction of the 1890s.

¹⁷⁷ E. A. Walker, *Friendly Hints to our Girls* (London: William Hunt & Co., 1889), pp. 12-13.

¹⁷⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, in *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education* (British Sociological Association), ed. by Richard Brown (London: Tavistock, 1973), pp. 71-112.

¹⁷⁹ This is not to say that there was nothing transgressive or exceptional about travel writing in the nineteenth century, as exemplified by Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot. Each of these travel writers enacts a form of self-representation which serves to provide the narrators with an especially novel and, at times, eccentric travel experience. These authors challenge the ever-widening boundaries of women’s travel writing by adopting potentially contentious identities that could be considered examples of inappropriate attributes of British women.

activities abroad could bring.¹⁸⁰ Buzard points out that many current books about women's travel writing are aimed at 'letting the silenced speak'; yet far from being silenced, nineteenth-century women travel writers were evidently a popular and well-read group.¹⁸¹ In addition, most women who travelled did not publish travel accounts, and therefore their travels have gone unrecorded. Because only a score or so of women's travel accounts remain in print today (and fewer are well-known), they may seem more unconventional to us now than they did in their own day.¹⁸²

The Complexity of Travel Identities

Butler's conception of identity is aimed not only at empowering subjects but also at overcoming cultural imperatives that sustain fictions of coherence. If subjects are irreducibly multiple, as Butler has observed, prioritising one identification, such as gender, at the expense of others is not only reductive but paralysing. Instead, identities are imbricated in and constituted by one another.¹⁸³ The majority of nineteenth-century women who wrote travel accounts either allude to or directly address the issue of travel writing in relation to their gender.¹⁸⁴ However, gender is not the only aspect worth examining in women's travel writing; there are many other influences at work.¹⁸⁵ Although scholars

¹⁸⁰ Maria Frawley, *A Wider Range: Travel Writing by Women in Victorian England* (London: Associated University Presses, 1994), p. 28.

¹⁸¹ Buzard, 'Victorian Women', p. 444.

¹⁸² Stanley, p. 148.

¹⁸³ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 117.

¹⁸⁴ Monicat, p. 64.

¹⁸⁵ The complexities of the gendered speaking self have been the subject of considerable study in recent decades by theorists such as Felicity Nussbaum, Julia Watson, Sidonie Smith, and Leigh Gilmore, who have argued that the stories women tell of their own lives and experiences often reveal a particularly complicated negotiation between multiple selves and multiple layers of self. See for example Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Julia Watson and Sidonie Smith, *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); and Gilmore's *Autobiographics*. More recently, Siegel has aptly argued that although gender matters, it matters in a way that is irreducibly complex ('Intersections', p. 1). She states: 'Though gender inevitably affects genre, it is nearly impossible to construct a set of commonalities that would cut across lines of race and class' ('Intersections', p. 5). Foster and Mills similarly declare their support for a more nuanced model of gender and the way it interacts with other factors (p. 3).

often point to the freedom for women that came with travel, those who travelled (including the four women discussed in this thesis) were already relatively liberated through circumstances such as free will, wealth, class, age, race, national identity, education, and political ideals.¹⁸⁶ Factors such as taste and interests, home and family environment, travel companions, and reasons for travelling further affected the way in which women travelled and wrote, and all played roles in their constructed selfhoods and travel performances.¹⁸⁷ In other words, these authors do not merely ‘see and react as women’, but also as individuals influenced by a range of factors.¹⁸⁸ The multifarious influences inherent in a literary undertaking like travel writing make it impossible to isolate any one overriding impulse of articulation across all women’s travel writing.¹⁸⁹ Although patterns can be traced, I suggest, in agreement with Mills, that a woman’s travel experience must be situated within a specific context.¹⁹⁰

While I am concerned with elements that the texts by Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot share, such as their gender and privileged social positions, I also consider what distinguishes them from one another. In examining these travel writers’ constructions of particular travel identities and the strategies at play in their representations of self and ‘other’, I shall situate these authors within the historical, social, and personal contexts that fostered the production of their texts. In doing so, this thesis seeks to treat them as individual authors with distinct approaches to their travel writing. These four authors’ varied tastes and interests, for instance, are evident in Jameson’s expertise in art history; in

¹⁸⁶ Siegel, ‘Intersections’, p. 2. Travel beyond Britain first became available to wealthy middle-class travellers (such as the Ruskins), then to the comfortable middle classes (say, the Meagleses of Dicken’s *Little Dorrit*), and then to the less well-off. The advent of Cook’s Tours was a distinctive sign of the growing democratisation of travel: Cook’s Tours marked the extension of travel to the working class. The first tour (to Paris) was in 1855. See Michael Cotsell, ‘Introduction’, in *English Literature and the Wider World: Creditable Warriors, 1830-1876*, ed. by Michael Cotsell (London: Ashfield, 1990), pp. 1-51 (p. 11).

¹⁸⁷ For instance, a woman and her husband travelling with colonial objectives and a woman travelling by herself for scientific purposes approached travel in vastly different manners. Likewise, a woman like Horner travelling within the matrix of the family experienced Italy differently from an ‘unprotected female’ like Lowe.

¹⁸⁸ Foster, p. viii.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹⁰ Mills, p. 36.

Horner's ability to engage in a vast range of scientific, political, educational, and artistic subjects; in Lowe's references to Classical mythology; and in Elliot's thorough knowledge of Classical history. The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* exhibits the most consistently sentimental responses to Italy of any of the women addressed in this thesis. While Horner's journals do not document the emotional growth so prevalent in Jameson's text, they do reveal her intellectual maturation. References throughout both of her journals to her changing feelings towards particular works of art illustrate the development of her taste. Yet, unlike Jameson, Horner avoids overtly emotional reactions to Italian sights. In contrast to Jameson and Horner, Lowe's and Elliot's accounts illustrate the travels of stock, overtly dramatic characters who do not experience any significant inner development or self-discovery. However, unlike the authors of previous travelogues of the period, Lowe and Elliot emphasise the humour of the travellers' adventures and interpretations of Italy. They do not feel the need to justify their journeys by suggesting that they have grown or matured: the experience of travelling is itself sufficient.

Nineteenth-century travelogues encompass a plethora of contradictions, and travel writers (both male and female) rarely fashion and perform coherent identities. While travel writers may bend aspects of the travel narrative to support a prevailing identity and, in doing so, 'will' the unity of their travel narrator, few present an entirely consistent and coherent fashioned self.¹⁹¹ Smith and Watson contend that the 'stuff of autobiographical storytelling [...] is drawn from multiple, disparate, and discontinuous experiences and the multiple identities constructed from and constituting those experiences'.¹⁹² Indeed, travel texts are produced in situations where there are numerous textual, economic, social, political, historical, and personal forces at work, which impinge on the writing process and result in the creation of heterogeneous texts and narrators.¹⁹³ Because, as Smith and Watson argue, in life writing there 'is no coherent "self" that predates stories about

¹⁹¹ Sturrock argues that autobiography 'wills the unity of its subject' (p. 5).

¹⁹² Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 35.

¹⁹³ Mills, p. 68.

identity, about “who” one is’, travel writing becomes a process through which a narrator struggles to shape an ‘identity’ out of an amorphous experience of subjectivity.¹⁹⁴ Smith suggests that the autobiographical subject (much like the travel writer) is often incoherent and heterogeneous, since identities are not fixed attributes of subjects but rather fluid and unstable.¹⁹⁵ As a result, these identities often contain conflicts and contradictions, of which the author may or may not be aware.¹⁹⁶

In women’s travel writing the narrator is frequently constructed as a composite figure, describing her reactions to the region in a range of styles, and in contrasting and overlapping voices. Moreover, as the vacillation between traditionally ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ voices in travel accounts indicates, while examining the identities created by women travel writers it is vital to recall that all individuals assume plural identities: thus, these women consistently avoid simplified categorisations and instead highlight the complexity of self-fashioning.¹⁹⁷ While this thesis focuses on the most prevalent identities performed in four women’s travel accounts, it also recognises that these women do not present consistent selfhoods: they enact various narratorial roles throughout their texts. The narrator of Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée* vacillates between a melancholic and invalid woman abroad who indulges in her emotional and physical pain, and an ambitious and energetic traveller who makes no reference to her illness. In addition, the narrator performs both the role of the sentimental and somewhat self-indulgent diarist, and that of a

¹⁹⁴ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, pp. 47; 125.

¹⁹⁵ Smith, ‘Performativity’, p. 110. Thompson also notes that identity is a fluid construct, forever being performatively constituted in response to events and circumstances (*Travel Writing*, pp. 127-28).

¹⁹⁶ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ Cheng, p. 159; Stanley, p. 149. Much recent scholarship on women’s travel writing has productively mined travel accounts for moments of contradiction, confusion, and discontinuity in the narratorial self, gleaning insights into the tensions of self-fashioned identities. Mills summarises the variegated expressions of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in women’s travel literature as a set of ‘discourses in conflict’, arguing that it is possible to prove by selected reading that these writers were alternatively proto-feminist, anti-feminist, colonial, and anti-colonial (pp. 20, 4). Russell notes that ‘each traveller is a conundrum, a tapestry of experiences whose pattern is so complex as to defy [...] simple definition’ (p. 15). In a similar manner, Walchester states that the narrator is always constructed as a composite figure who describes her reactions to Italy in a range of styles and contrasting voices (p. 27). In addition, Eva-Marie Kröller argues that one should avoid reading travel texts for any ‘one ideological discourse’. Instead, the reader must listen to the ‘multiple voices’ that emerge in the text, rather than impose monologism. Eva-Marie Kröller, ‘First Impressions: Rhetorical Strategies in Travel Writing by Victorian Women’, *Ariel*, 21 (1990), 87-99 (pp. 88, 98).

knowledgeable art critic and travel guide. While Horner places the greatest emphasis on her intellectual identity in her journals, she also presents herself as a doting (and mourning) daughter with a sentimental attachment to Italy, as well as a semi-invalid who frequently complains about various aches and pains. As an unprotected woman in Italy, Lowe's narrator proclaims her self-sufficiency; yet she also refers to numerous occasions during which she and her mother are protected by male locals. Thus, she paradoxically depicts herself both as an independent and dependent woman traveller. Furthermore, Lowe fashions a narrator who is humorous, self-centred, and irreverent, but also intelligent and knowledgeable about Classical history. Finally, although Elliot performs the role of an idle, carefree wanderer, she also depicts herself as an ambitious traveller and professional author with a full itinerary. Moreover, proclamations of her deep love and respect for Italy are counterbalanced by complaints about its supposed lack of cleanliness, profusion of beggars, uncivilised inhabitants, and dubious Catholic practices – especially in the South.

Multiple identities in women's travel accounts could be seen as a weakness of travel writing. However, the ability to enact various identities, or to embrace 'the polyphonic possibilities of selfhood', expresses the playfulness and flexibility of the travel-writing act, in which one's selfhood can be shaped by both fact and imagination.¹⁹⁸ It can also destabilise binary notions of male and female difference and challenge the 'prevalent and compelling social fictions' of gender (such as 'natural sex' and a 'real woman'), rendering gender ideology an elusive concept.¹⁹⁹ The awareness of the creation of gender through acts which are internally discontinuous represents the potential for agency, empowerment, and change. In the case of nineteenth-century travel writing, this awareness gave women authors the opportunity to experiment with different literary styles, enact alternative travel selfhoods, and engage with a variety of travel writing traditions. Above

¹⁹⁸ Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 140; Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*, p. 59.

all, the instability and fluidity of identity-formation enhance the rich complexity of women's textual travel performances.

CHAPTER 2

Travel Writing and Performance: The Significance of Italy for British Women

In its analysis of the performative nature of nineteenth-century women's travel writing, this thesis is not only concerned with the fashioned identities of travel writers, but also with the relationship between their textual identities and the places in which they perform them. In the case of Anna Jameson, Susan Horner, Emily Lowe, and Frances Minto Elliot, a sense of identity-making and belonging is strongly connected to their various configurations of space and depictions of place. The travel selfhoods fashioned by these four authors overlap with personifications of Italy in significant ways, resulting in identities that both shape and are shaped by constructions of the peninsula. In these women's travel accounts, representations of Italy are imagined and sustained through their relation to the subject's own constructed identity, experiences, and history.

This chapter examines the strong nineteenth-century connection between Italy and the British imagination, considering the ways in which perceptions of Italy were shaped by literature and travel writing. This chapter also considers why Italy speaks specifically to women travel writers of the period. Certain texts contributed to the special significance of Italy for British women, making the region a powerful magnet for British women travellers and writers. I also address the ways in which women authors idealised Italy: these writers not only identified Italy as an escape from repressive British society, but also viewed the peninsula as the locus of intellectual growth and empowerment for British women. Because Italy is so integral to Jameson's, Horner's, Lowe's, and Elliot's travel identities and travel performances, this chapter also addresses the historical and topographical specificity of the peninsula in the nineteenth century, as well as women's relation to its actual circumstances and to the symbolic associations of its different regions.

Italy and the British Imagination

If, as Michel de Certeau suggests, ‘space is a practiced place’ and that place becomes a space when it is actualised ‘by the ensemble of movements deployed within it’, when ‘one takes into consideration vectors of directions, velocities, and time variables’, then Italy owes much of its identity to travel and to its narration, to journeys, stories, and histories told about it.¹ Having been depicted in novels, poetry, and travel writing of the eighteenth century, by the beginning of the nineteenth century Italy’s romantic image was deeply established in Britain’s cultural consciousness. Italy became mythologised as a place of enchantment and spiritual transformation, as well as the home of great works of art and famous sights.² Italy was perceived as a region in which the traveller could cultivate his or her knowledge of the heritage of Western civilisation and of the artistic marvels of the Renaissance. In the early part of the nineteenth century, a visit to Italy also became enshrined as an intellectual experience, and an occasion for growth and self-discovery.³

A new wave of travellers after the Napoleonic Wars experienced the peninsula through what Maura O’Connor calls a ‘prism of imagined and idealized Italy’, which was constructed in several popular fictional texts.⁴ Publications that influenced the ways in which British men and women understood the peninsula included Gothic novels and *Canto IV* of Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which was published after the re-opening of the Continent. The imaginative interest in Italy among the British was further broadened and intensified by the Romantic poetry of Keats and Shelley, ‘with its sensuous appreciation of the Italian scenery, its passion for the Mediterranean spirit of freedom and its nostalgic

¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 177; Ouditt and Polezzi, p. 97.

² Foster, p. 29.

³ Alù, ‘Fabricating Home’, p. 287.

⁴ Maura O’Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998), p. 21.

dwelling on the bygone splendours of a past-haunted land'.⁵ As travel accounts ranging from Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* to Elliot's *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily* demonstrate, these early nineteenth-century romanticised accounts, or travel scripts, influenced travel writing about Italy throughout the century. C. P. Brand argues that 'Italo-mania', or the Italianate fashion and obsession with all things Italian, significantly decreased in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶ On the contrary, while the British interest in Germany and France did grow from the 1830s onwards, I argue that Britain and Italy sustained a strong relationship throughout the nineteenth century, and Italy remained a popular topic for British authors and artists during this period.⁷

Due to the key role Italy played in British literary and visual culture, British travellers were usually familiar with various representations of the peninsula before ever setting foot there. Certain Italian scenes, fantasies, and imaginative geographies had often formed in some detail in their minds, and travellers often proceeded to map these preconceptions onto the terrain.⁸ Jack Lynch has suggested that it was impossible for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers to see Italy with a fresh eye. He writes that

⁵ Foster, p. 30.

⁶ C. P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: The Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. ix-x.

⁷ The importance of Italy to Victorian culture is evident in the poems and paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), and Algernon Charles Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise* (1871). The following works also show the significance of Italy for authors of poetry, fiction, and historical works throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth century: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), *Aurora Leigh* (1857), and *Poems Before Congress* (1860); Robert Browning's *Men and Women* (1855); George Eliot's *Romola* (1863) and *Middlemarch* (1871-72); Wilkie Collins' *The Haunted Hotel: A Mystery of Modern Venice* (1879); Margaret Oliphant's *The Makers of Florence* (1876) and *The Makers of Modern Rome* (1895); Vernon Lee's *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (1880); John Addington Symonds' seven-volume *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-1886); and E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908). More significantly for the purposes of this thesis, a plethora of British women published Italian travel books throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. See for instance Julia Kavanagh's *A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies* (1858); Mabel Sharman Crawford's *Life in Tuscany* (1859); Mrs G. Gretton's *The Englishwoman in Italy* (1860); Theodosia Trollope's *Social Aspects of the Italian Revolution* (1861); Elizabeth Sewell's *Impressions of Rome, Florence, and Turin* (1862); Frances Power Cobbe's *Italics: Brief Notes of Politics, People, and Places in Italy* (1864); Amelia Edwards' *Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys: A Midsummer Ramble in the Dolomites* (1873); and Janet Ross's *The Land of Manfred, Prince of Tarentum and King of Sicily: Rambles in Remote Parts of Southern Italy* (1889), in addition to the works by Horner, Lowe, and Elliot.

⁸ Sharon Ouditt, *Impressions of Southern Italy: British Travel Writing from Henry Swinburne to Norman Douglas* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 1.

‘[n]o one sees Italy for the first time: every traveler who sets foot on Italian soil brings with him the accumulated experience of both Classical writers and previous travelers, and if the mind is to be figured as a *tabula*, it must be one already thoroughly marked up’.⁹ Thus, when Elliot highlights her idle selfhood by writing at the beginning of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* that she ‘went to Italy with a perfectly disengaged mind, with no special objects of inquiry, no definite call or profession, no preconceived theories’ (*Italy*, I, vii), the reader should perhaps question Elliot’s claim to complete impartiality.

Building on Lynch’s argument, I suggest that travel to Italy involved the experience of both familiarity and novelty. Goethe’s *Italian Journey (Italienische Reise)* (1816-17), which depicts the journey South as an escape from the spiritual and imaginative stultification of the North, illustrates the tendency for travellers to confront an Italy that is both imagined and real. Describing a mind and world that are correspondingly refreshed, Goethe writes that, ‘[w]herever I walk [...] I come upon familiar objects in an unfamiliar world; everything is just as I imagined it, yet everything is new’.¹⁰ This mixture between familiarity and newness is further captured in Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée*. Upon first arriving in Venice, the narrator writes:

I feel while I gaze round me, as if I had seen Venice in my dreams – as if it were itself the vision of a dream. We have been here two days; and I have not yet recovered from my first surprise. All is yet enchantment: all is novel, extraordinary, affecting from the many associations and remembrances excited in the mind. (68)

Her amazement upon finally arriving in the city she has previously dreamt about and encountered in her imagination is reminiscent of Goethe’s experience in Italy. Even unromantic and practical Horner draws upon dream imagery when describing her first view of the Roman Forum, writing: ‘I have seen all this so often in engravings that nothing was new to me, but like the realization of a dream which made one rub one’s eyes to be

⁹ Jack Lynch, “‘Observation, with Extensive View?’ English-Italian Travel Narratives, 1700-1820”, *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies*, 4 (1995), 11-28 (p. 15).

¹⁰ J. W. Goethe, *Italian Journey, 1786-1788*, trans. by W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982 [1816-17]), p. 116. Quoted in Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 113.

sure they are awake'.¹¹ For these authors, Italy yields what is expected because images and books have told them what to seek; yet it simultaneously yields what is new because the travellers are new to it, and are at last actually standing on those long-awaited sights and witnessing them at first hand. If one views travel as a type of performance, then travellers often rehearsed the production in their minds for many years before actually performing on the Italian stage. The twin forces of recollection and discovery, rehearsal and 'live' performance, in turn provided travellers with a deep emotional link to the peninsula, since an Italian journey became a journey into one's own past.

Reading widely about Italy before seeing it in person could also result in disappointment, however. When viewing famous Italian landmarks for the first time, there was sometimes a discrepancy between the fictionalising imagination and real, first-hand experience. Preconceptions about Italy could often lead to dissatisfaction when certain sights did not live up to travellers' expectations. The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* frequently expresses her disillusionment with Italian sights, such as when she admits, 'I had been unfortunately, too well prepared by previous reading [...] to be astonished by any thing except the Museum of the Vatican' (141). Upon her arrival at Naples, she reveals: 'I was disappointed because Vesuvius did not smoke so much as I had been led to expect from pictures and descriptions' (237). The diarist's disappointment also extends to the illumination of the Girandola in St Peter's Basilica, the fountain of the Acqua Felice, and Michelangelo's statue of Moses in Rome, Palladio's buildings in Padua, and the synagogue in Leghorn. In her first travel journal, Horner notes several occasions upon which she is disappointed by paintings, sculptures, and the interiors of Italian churches. Likewise, Elliot's *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* begins on a note of discontentment, and Elliot repeatedly expresses her frustration when sights do not live up to her expectations. On the first page she writes: 'I have seen St. Peter's, and, truth to say, am sorely disappointed!'

¹¹ Susan Horner, Florence, The British Institute of Florence, Archive, MS Susan Horner Diary 1847-48, fol. 49^r. Hereinafter cited as I and included in the main body of the text.

(*Italy*, I, 1). She is particularly unimpressed with its appearance and with the swarms of noisy and disrespectful tourists within. Lowe, by contrast, never mentions any disappointed expectations, because the South of Italy offered less familiar views, ones many travellers had not seen or read as much about before. Since these southern sights were not entrenched in the British psyche to the same degree as landmarks such as, for instance, St Peter's Basilica, they are fresh for Lowe, and therefore enable her to create her own improvisatory vision of place. Heightened expectations were more common with famous works of art, buildings, and monuments, since many had been reproduced as popular images or described in travel accounts, as Jameson's diarist points out with Mount Vesuvius. Leigh Hunt once admitted that 'we have the best part of Italy in books, be what it may; and this we can enjoy in England'.¹² For some travellers, Italy was at its best when it remained as an ideal within the imagination.

British Women and an Idealised Italy

Journeying to Naples, Jameson's diarist recalls the texts that have influenced her perceptions of Italy. After declaring that 'the country round is famed in classic and poetic lore' (218), she states: 'here was the region of the Lestrygons, and the scene of part of the Aeneid and Odyssey; and Corinne has superadded romantic and charming associations quite as delightful, and quite as *true*' (218-19). This latter text, Madame de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807), was a key script for nineteenth-century British women authors and strongly influenced their perceptions of Italy as a space especially suited to female experience. Staël's novel not only recounts a love affair between Lord Nelvil and the beautiful and talented Corinne, but also pays homage to Italy's landscape, literature, and art. Moreover, *Corinne* depicts Italy as the idealised locus of women's artistic creation,

¹² Leigh Hunt, *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), p. 500.

expression, and performance. In Staël's novel, Corinne is famous for her intellectual and creative nature, and, as poet, writer, and *improvisatrice*, she publishes and performs for eager audiences.¹³ Extraordinarily talented and constantly in the public eye, she is an inspirational figure in her ability to take centre stage and to sway the crowd with her articulate and passionate words. From her first appearance in the novel, being crowned at the Capitol, to her last, performing her 'swan song', Corinne plays out her story on the public Roman stage.¹⁴

Throughout the novel, the reader not only encounters Corinne as performer, but also Corinne as travel guide, who relays to Lord Nelvil her intimate knowledge of Italy's customs, language, and literature, and who advises him about what to see and where to stand on certain Roman sites. The roles of performer and travel guide are frequently blurred and mutually reinforcing in Staël's text. For instance, the poetic descriptions Corinne relays to Lord Nelvil while showing him Roman art and architecture mirror her improvisational poems spoken in public. During her speech to commemorate her crowning at the Capitol, Corinne proclaims:

Is Rome not now the land of tombs? The Colosseum, the obelisks, all the wonders which are collected here from the depths of Egypt and Greece, from the most distant centuries, from Romulus right up to Leo X, as if greatness attracted greatness, and as if one place had to contain everything man could shield from the ravages of time, all these wonders are in honour of the dead. Our idle way of life is barely noticed; the silence of the living pays homage to the dead. They endure and we pass on.¹⁵

With its references to specific monuments and to historical events, combined with broader themes ranging from idleness to mortality, this passage resembles both Corinne's speeches as travel guide and the travelogues of the four authors analysed in this thesis. As both *improvisatrice* and travel guide, Corinne speaks in a poetical and passionate manner,

¹³ An *improvisatrice* refers to a female version of the Italian *improvisatore* – one who improvises poetry, usually as part of a performance. As an artist, Corinne has won distinction in numerous forms: poetry, poetic improvisation, dramatic recitation, painting, music, dance, and pantomime.

¹⁴ Nancy K. Miller, 'Politics, Feminism, and Patriarchy: Rereading *Corinne*', in *Germaine de Staël: Crossing the Borders*, ed. by Avriel H. Goldberger, Madelyn Gutwirth, and Karyna Szmurlo (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 193-98 (p. 193).

¹⁵ Germaine de Staël, *Corinne, or Italy*, trans. by Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 [1807]), p. 32. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

combining emotion and enthusiasm with intelligence and judgement. The spontaneity which imbues Corinne's public performances is also well-suited to her position as travel guide to Lord Nelvil, and travel writing itself is a genre associated with and admired for its supposed spontaneous commentary and fluidity of form, as well as its ability to capture 'the most fleeting and subtle impressions' (*Corinne*, 26).¹⁶ Just as Corinne's performances as *improvisatrice* and travel guide evince 'a kind of natural, involuntary charm' (25), so too do travelogues, which often combine reportage and storytelling, fact and imagination.

Corinne exerted a powerful hold on nineteenth-century women writers, whether they travelled to Italy or only imagined it. Felicia Hemans, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning demonstrated that the novel was myth enough to be the subject of reverential homage or playful parody.¹⁷ As an example of the former, Barrett Browning declared that *Corinne* was 'an immortal book' that 'deserves to be read three score and ten times – that is, once every year in the age of man'.¹⁸ Thus, for Barrett Browning, the book represents a type of script that should be memorised and internalised.¹⁹ Drawing on Butler's concept of gender performance, I suggest that nineteenth-century women travel writers often enact their experience of Italy through a reiterative enunciation or citation of Staël's fictional text.²⁰ Through scenes in which Corinne guides Lord Nelvil around Rome, Staël's novel ushered in a new travel sensibility, exemplified by its protagonists who 'banish the present appearances of Roman sites from the mind in order to invoke their past glories to an inner eye and [...] model a new fashion for nocturnal, moonlit sightseeing which leaves visual impressions muted and ambiguous'.²¹ Thanks in part to *Corinne*, visiting the Colosseum by moonlight became an especially popular ritual in Rome for

¹⁶ Similarly, Dickens writes that his *Pictures from Italy* captures 'a series of faint reflections – mere shadows in the water – of places to which the imaginations of most people are attracted [...]' (p. 5).

¹⁷ Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler, 'Introduction', in *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. by Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 1-14 (pp. 1-2).

¹⁸ Philip Kelly and Ronald Hudson, eds, *The Brownings' Correspondence*, 20 vols (Winfield, KS: Wedgestone Press, 1984), III, p. 25.

¹⁹ *Corinne* also inspired Barrett Browning's epic novel/poem *Aurora Leigh* (1856).

²⁰ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 2.

²¹ Judith Adler, 'Origins of Sightseeing', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 16 (1989), 7-29 (p. 23).

nineteenth-century women travel writers, ranging from Lady Blessington to Elliot, who depict it in their travel accounts as a type of private theatrical set, usually devoid of other people. The narrator in Jameson's *Diary* also visits the Colosseum by moonlight, yet comes away disappointed because her performed reverie has been interrupted by 'the empty and tasteless and misplaced flippancy' (144) of two obnoxious Classical scholars.

Corinne also offered travellers (through emulation) a means of imagining and dramatising a distinctively female travel experience. Women authors could identify with the conflicted relationship between Corinne's identity as woman and artist. Moreover, Corinne's identity as both performer and travel guide provided a role model for women travel writers. Yet Corinne also exemplified the ability to shift between gendered voices, as well as between the private and public sphere. The character of Corinne frequently embodies both 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits. She is a product of the feminine South (Italy represents the land of the mother) and the masculine North (England represents the land of the father), she acts as both a sibyl and a prophet, she represents both the beautiful and the sublime, she feels pulled towards both love (the private, female sphere) and independence (the public, masculine sphere), and she is a role model for both women and men in Italy. Like Corinne, the four nineteenth-century travel writers in this thesis frequently perform various (gendered) roles within a single text, resisting, to use Butler's argument, fictional coherence.

Ellen Moers has argued that Staël's *Corinne* shows that life in Italy is free in a way unknown to more advanced and politically liberated nations, such as Britain, and is therefore more suited to women of artistic or literary talent.²² The character of Corinne represents the ultimate independent woman: she lives alone and supports herself financially; she moves about society without an escort; she chooses her own lovers and friends; and she is famous in her own right for her own work. At the age of 26, she

²² Ellen Moers, *Literary Women*, repr. with a new introduction (London: Women's Press, 1986 [1976]), p. 203.

possesses an impressive knowledge of Italian history and art, and is fluent in three languages. By contrast, Corinne is emotionally and intellectually suppressed by British society, which encourages women's timidity, domesticity, and seclusion, demonstrating the stark contrast perceived between the North and the South.

Staël's novel gave British women readers a desire for an existence of independence and, as Fanny Kemble wrote, 'a passionate longing to go to Italy'.²³ Thanks in part to *Corinne*, Italy became perceived as an especially liberating space in which British women travellers could study, wander, and grow. Many nineteenth-century women authors portray an idealised Italy in their texts, depicting the peninsula as a type of utopia for women travellers and writers. For instance, Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and Vernon Lee's *Genius Loci: Notes on Places* (1899) all depict Italy as a brilliant and sensual world that is quite remote from Britain and British female experience. Here women could be in touch with their more passionate selfhoods and experience an intensified awareness of place that was perhaps repressed at home.²⁴ Nineteenth-century Italy also embodied for women the ultimate intellectual and artistic destination.²⁵ The peninsula enabled women's agency, empowerment, and fulfilment, as well as intellectual, emotional, and social freedom. Italy also offered the prospect of independent life and a less rigid social space outside the northern domestic sphere.

Although Jameson's text is the only one that refers directly to *Corinne*, on various occasions the four women in this thesis all depict Italy as a utopian space imbued with intellectual freedom and opportunity, as well as a place that offers an alternative to traditional gender structures at home in Britain. The journey to Italy undertaken by Jameson's narrator enables her to escape from anxiety and pain caused by a broken relationship in England. For the diarist, Italy also represents a dreamlike haven in which she can refine her taste and improve her knowledge of art. Horner's journal depicts Italy as

²³ Fanny Kemble, *Record of a Girlhood*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1878), I, p. 202.

²⁴ Foster, p. 30.

²⁵ Chapman and Stabler, p. 4.

a place of intellectual transformation in which the diarist can cultivate an erudite self. The rugged and unbeaten path of the South enables Lowe to perform the role of independent and adventurous woman traveller who is removed from the traditional matrix of the family and from the oppressive confines of British patriarchal society. Italy provided Elliot with an escape from Britain where, following dramatic marital troubles, she was ostracised by the upper-middle-class society in which she had moved. In her travel accounts, Elliot depicts Italy as a land of freedom in which she can cultivate an idle identity and explore the country as an independent woman. In imaginative terms, Italy represented an idyllic space in which these four women could perform a range of selfhoods.

Another way in which women authors suggested the significance of Italy was to emphasise a close personal bond with the region. Buzard explains how Italy's metaphorical status as female resulted in male travellers, including Henry James, describing the region in terms of sexual longing, jealousy, and conquest.²⁶ The claim to enjoy a metaphorical sexual or marital relation with the peninsula became, for men, a way of indicating that they had truly appropriated Italy.²⁷ Women's relationship with Italy became one of idealised sisterhood, friendship, equality, and mutual understanding, rather than one of appropriation/submission. Christina Rossetti, for instance, calls Italy a 'Sister-land of Paradise'.²⁸ The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* repeatedly refers to Italy as her dear friend in order to privilege her knowledge and understanding of the nation. As Jameson's narrator demonstrates, while nineteenth-century women travellers typically viewed the same Italian sights as men (with the exception of monasteries), some responded to them in a highly gendered manner in their travel accounts, highlighting a distinctively nurturing connection with a female Italy.

²⁶ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 135.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁸ Christina Rossetti, 'En Route', in *The Poetical Works of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: MacMillan, 1904), p. 377.

The Nineteenth-Century Italian Political Situation



2.1 Map of Italy in 1810.



2.2 Map of Italy in 1815.



2.3 The Unification of Italy.

Italy's complex and evolving political landscape also captivated the British public's imagination, and was a particularly meaningful topic for many women travel writers. As the three maps above illustrate, throughout the nineteenth century Italy experienced a series of immense social and political changes, as it progressed from a fragmented peninsula to an independent, unified nation – from an object of oppression to a subject of liberation [Figures 2.1 to 2.3]. Following the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the settlement of Europe, which was drawn up at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, Italy was divided among a number of absolutist states consisting of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and the Duchies of Parma and Modena. In addition, Lombardy, Venice, and Milan were ruled by the Austrian Empire, and the Pope controlled Rome and large tracts of central Italy. Between 1848 and 1849, during the liberal revolutions that swept through Europe, Italy experienced a series of uprisings and revolts. The 1850s witnessed the development of a constitutional government in Piedmont, and a series of revolutions and wars between 1859 and 1860 led to the unification of most of the peninsula. In 1861, due to the efforts of Giuseppe

Garibaldi, the military leader who led the drive for unification in Naples and Sicily, the Sardinian government led by the Count of Cavour declared an Italian kingdom. However, the unification of the nation only became complete when Rome and Venice were incorporated into the new state in 1866 and 1870 respectively, resulting in the full achievement of the *Risorgimento*.²⁹

For the British people, the *Risorgimento* represented perhaps the grandest and most compelling instance of nation-building of the period.³⁰ Lucy Riall argues that a crucial reason for the high profile of the Italian question in Britain was the presence of Giuseppe Mazzini, an Italian politician, journalist, and activist for the unification of Italy.³¹ He lived in exile for some time in London, mobilising and organising public opinion in favour of an Italy free from papal and Austrian oppression, assisted in his activities by fellow exiles.³² Together they employed letters, articles in the press, pamphlets, petitions, lecture tours, and the establishment of patriotic societies to further their aims, raising significant amounts of money that indicated a considerable level of British support.³³ As Maurizio Isabella has persuasively argued, the presence of exiles and patriotic societies in Britain further

²⁹ For a thorough examination of the Italian *Risorgimento*, see Lucy Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society, and National Unification* (London: Routledge, 1994) and Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg, eds, *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

³⁰ Matthew Reynolds, *The Realms of Verse, 1830-1870: English Poetry in a Time of Nation-Building* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 38. Scholars have suggested various reasons for the British fascination with Italian unification. Reynolds argues that British observers gauged implications which events in Italy might have for the multinational state in which they themselves lived (p. 31). In *The Romance of Italy and the English Imagination*, O'Connor contends that Italy was influential in the project of imagining a bourgeois, liberal and, above all, English social order during critical historical period when class society was being reconfigured and parameters of national identity were being renegotiated in Britain (p. 1). John A. Davis suggests that Italian unification found enthusiastic acclaims amongst British Protestants, since it signified the collapse of the political power of the papacy. John A. Davis, 'Introduction: Italy's Difficult Modernization', in *The Short Oxford History of Italy: Italy in the Nineteenth Century, 1796-1900*, ed. by John A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1-24 (p. 3).

³¹ Lucy Riall, *Garibaldi: Invention of a Hero* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 142.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* Mazzini established the Society of the Friends of Italy; however, the significance of Italy within Victorian culture was also evident in other groups formed in the 1850s, such as the Emancipation of Italy Fund Committee and the Garibaldi Fund Committee. All three groups had offices and affiliations in provincial centres as well as in London.

indicates the dynamic interaction and dialogue between the two cultures, especially leading up to Italian unification.³⁴

The traditionally ‘masculine’ topic of politics is frequently present in nineteenth-century British women’s travelogues about Italy. Some women, such as Mary Charlton Pasqualino, Theodosia Trollope, and Frances Power Cobbe, even made the Italian political situation the entire focus of their work.³⁵ Women authors may have felt liberated to speak in their writings about Italian politics before and during the various stages of the unification process for several reasons. First, some women describe the Italian political situation through domestic rhetoric in their travelogues. For example, Lady Sydney Morgan offers a critique of the current governance of Italy through an account of its domestic environments, denouncing the Italian concern with social display over domestic matters.³⁶ In doing so, Morgan incorporates a suitably feminine analogy into political discourse and writes in a ‘double sense’: she writes material of a controversial or typically masculine nature through a medium which was considered to be a more acceptable female genre.³⁷ Gary Kelly argues that the male ‘gatekeepers’, or publishers, and their tight grip on access to the nineteenth-century literary market meant that women writers often had to find new modes of writing in a ‘double sense’.³⁸ Second, as O’Connor suggests, Italy represented a safe platform upon which women could express their political perspectives, in part because the country before the *Risorgimento* had no reality except as an ideal.³⁹ At the Congress of Vienna, for example, the Austrian chancellor, Metternich, famously

³⁴ Maurizio Isabella, ‘Italian Exiles and British Politics before and after 1848’, in *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England*, ed. by Sabine Freitag (Oxford; New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), pp. 59-87 (p. 60).

³⁵ Mary Charlton Pasqualino, *Letters from Sicily, Containing Some Account of the Political Events in that Island During the Spring of 1849* (1850); Theodosia Trollope, *Social Aspects of the Italian Revolution, in a Series of Letters from Florence* (1861); Frances Power Cobbe, *Italics: Brief Notes of Politics, People, and Places in Italy* (1864).

³⁶ Walchester, p. 169.

³⁷ Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 179.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ O’Connor, p. 109.

labelled Italy as a mere ‘geographical expression’.⁴⁰ It was easier for women to discuss the politics of a nebulous country, a nation yet not a nation, where their comments would carry less weight, than those of an actual national power.



2.4 John Tenniel, ‘Garibaldi the Liberator; Or, The Modern Perseus’, *Punch*, 1860.

Finally, Italy’s political situation in the pre-*Risorgimento* nineteenth century became imbued with profound personal meaning for many women authors, as the politics of subjected nationalities and the politics of women’s subjection became symbolically entwined. In various nineteenth-century texts and periodical illustrations about the region, Italy was represented as a helpless woman who, subjugated and disempowered by Austrian forces and regional absolutist rulers seeking to dominate her, was desperate for liberation

⁴⁰ Maria Antonella Pelizzari, *Photography and Italy* (London: Reaktion, 2011), p. 31.

[Figure 2.4].⁴¹ Given the British government's policy of non-intervention, political sympathy for Italy among the British public, which often remained within the written form, frequently contained a tone of benign condescension. The proverbial feminisation of Italy, rendered in strains at once pathetic and damning, was central to this ambivalent attitude.⁴² Frequently perceived as wounded, yet culpable, Italy was feminised both by liberal sympathisers and by those who blamed Italy for her own degradation.⁴³ An early example of such depictions is a sonnet by the seventeenth-century Florentine poet Vincenzo da Filicaia, who imagines 'Italia' as a helpless naked seductress. Filicaia's seventeenth-century sonnet 'Italia, Italia, o tu, cui feo la sorte' is rendered by Byron in these lines from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: 'Italia! oh Italia! Thou who hast | The fatal gift of beauty, which became | A funeral dower of present woes and past, | On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame, | And annals graved in characters of flame'.⁴⁴ This passage suggests that Italy's 'fatal gift of beauty' is one reason for her present domination by foreign rulers.

Several women authors also embraced the conventional rhetorical associations of Italy with the feminine. Staël's *Corinne* makes clear the connections between Italy and the figure of a woman by asking readers to project the tragedy of a gifted woman artist allegorically onto a geographically whole but, as yet, politically unstable nation.⁴⁵ Likewise, in their reworking of the familiar trope of Italy as a woman, nineteenth-century travel writers, including Mariana Starke, Charlotte Eaton, and Lady Sydney Morgan, constructed a number of parallels between the figurative representation of the Italian

⁴¹ See for example the illustration glorifying Garibaldi as a liberator of the Italian people from their oppressive rulers. He appears as Perseus, the mythical Greek hero who rescued Andromeda (here, Sicily) from a sea monster (here, 'Bomba', King Ferdinand II of Sicily). John Tenniel, 'Garibaldi the Liberator; Or, The Modern Perseus', *Punch*, 38 (16 June 1860), 243.

⁴² Esther Schor, 'The "Warm South"', in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. by James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 224-45 (p. 231); Sandra Gilbert, 'From *Patria* to *Matria*: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Risorgimento*', *PMLA*, 99 (1984), 194-211 (pp. 195-96).

⁴³ O'Connor, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Vincenzo da Filicaia, 'Italia, Italia, o tu, cui feo la sorte', in *An Anthology of Italian Poems, 13th – 19th Century*, ed. and trans. by Lorna De' Lucchi (London: W. Heinemann, 1922), p. 170; Byron, 4.42.

⁴⁵ Chapman and Stabler, p. 3.

peninsula and their own tenuous status in the literary marketplace.⁴⁶ These women revised and revitalised the metaphor of gender applied to Italy, linking Italy as a subjected political state to the problematic condition of British femaleness.⁴⁷ However, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning demonstrates in her poem *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), the gendered portrait of Italy as a passive woman in distress was a disturbing image for other women writers and artists, many of whom were battling against their own fear of failure, and to some extent internalising the critical bias of male social commentators.⁴⁸ Italy's position as a nation yet not a nation reflected the ambiguities of the status of women authors as well as women's social and political status in Britain.⁴⁹ The writings of Barrett Browning, Felicia Hemans, Mary Shelley, and Janet Hamilton illustrate a determined effort to revise the historical view of Italy's passivity at the hands of her captors, and in prose and verse these writers articulate their own bids for freedom.⁵⁰ By redeeming Italy, these women authors believed that they could redeem themselves.⁵¹

Although Horner does not draw parallels between the ambivalent status of subjugated Italy and the ambiguous status of the woman author, in performing the role of an intellectual traveller in her travel journals she likewise demonstrates a deep engagement with Italian politics. Her diaries were composed during key political years for Italy: her first voyage coincided with growing civil unrest that resulted in the revolutions of 1848 and 1849, and her second stay dovetailed with the creation of the Kingdom of Italy. Horner's first diary underlines the author's sophisticated interest in contemporary Italian politics, devoting much consideration to the 'present state of Italy' (I, 23^r). This journal also highlights Italy's propensity for theatrical and staged scenes in relation to politics. Horner notes that after a political gain in Naples, 'Genoa is in the greatest excitement [...].

⁴⁶ Walchester, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, p. 196.

⁴⁸ Chapman and Stabler, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Walchester, p. 8.

⁵⁰ Chapman and Stabler, p. 6.

⁵¹ Gilbert, p. 196.

Processions of hundreds of people are parading the principle streets, singing the National Hymns in full chorus, and shouting “Viva la Costituzione Neapolitana” (I, 22^v).⁵² These demonstrations theatrically transform Italian streets into a stage.⁵³ All of Genoa becomes a theatre, in which the ‘[l]amps enclosed in white or coloured papers [standing] on the marble balconies, and rows of small candles’ (I, 22^v) act as types of stage lights. Her second journal indicates Horner’s continued interest in political and social issues, particularly through its selection of extratextual materials, including newspaper cuttings and photographs.

While she does not discuss Italian politics to the same extent as Horner, Lowe similarly recognised that the issues of foreign rule and political discord were keeping Italy from reaching its full potential. In her 1859 account, she describes Sicily as dirty and uncivilised, partly due to its political situation, characterising the island as ‘possessing everything, enjoying nothing; where Plenty’s horn pours out squalor on the land which, under her present rulers, is “a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout”’ (198). It could be argued that Horner and Lowe address political issues in their travelogues largely because they visited Italy during key political periods leading up to Italian unification. However, even when surrounded by significant political events or conversations, other women travel writers openly avoided the subject.

Despite writing during a period of early revolutionary activity in Italy, the narrator of Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée* exclaims: ‘I meddle not with politics, and with all my heart abhor them’ (227). Later on, she vehemently asserts: ‘How I detest politics and discord! How I hate the discussion of politics in Italy! and, above all, the discussion of Italian politics, which offer no point upon which the mind can dwell with pleasure’ (308). The narrator demonstrates a detachment from Italy’s political climate, often preferring to

⁵² Similarly, Barrett Browning maintains the position of observer in *Casa Guidi Windows*, watching a civic procession in the city street. She is impressed by the passionate crowd of Florentines who give a type of splendid improvised performance through cheering and singing.

⁵³ Edensor, p. 332.

focus on the region's art and scenery. Rather than discuss specific Italian political events or offer her own political opinions, as Horner does, the narrator highlights her emotional response to the image of Italy as a suffering, subjugated female, whose 'heart-sickening realities' (308) echo her own illness and unhappiness, from which she hopes to escape on her journey.⁵⁴ When the narrator notes that she is unaware of a 'cure' (308) for the peninsula's weakened state, she underlines Italy's status as a diseased or 'invalid' nation. In doing so, the invalid diarist aligns her own identity with that of Italy, and suggests that she has a particularly meaningful connection with the peninsula.

Not all women travel writers were caught up in the fervour surrounding Italian unification, as evidenced by Elliot. Although the 1870 unification of Italy occurred one year before the publication of her first Italian travelogue, Elliot mentions politics only briefly in her travel account. A typical example of her attitude towards Italian politics occurs when she notes her impatience at hearing a fellow British traveller's incessant talk of revolution, declaring: 'Knowing his one idea, and suffering intensely from it, I got up a tremendous fit of coughing and withdrew, leaving Mr. B— in the midst of a grand oration about Mazzini' (*Italy*, II, 293). Writing of her arrival in Sicily in her later travelogue, she declares: 'But what matters [...] Garibaldi, or patriotism, or anything, with entrancing, fantastic Sicily dazzling my eyes in front?' (*Sicily*, I, p. 5). Despite Italy's unification, Elliot's perception of the geography and ethnography of the country differs little from earlier travel accounts. Her lack of interest in Italian politics enhances her performance as a privileged and idle traveller who treats Italy as a vast, open-air museum in which she admires the country's art, architecture, history, and artefacts, but frequently disdains its politics, religion, and population.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Instances in which Jameson's narrator personifies Italy as a tragic woman include comments such as: Genoa 'is like a noble matron, blooming in years, and dignified in decay' and 'Rome sits crowned upon the grave of her power, widowed indeed, and desolate' (p. 370).

⁵⁵ To a certain extent, the Elliot's self-presentation as a wealthy and idle traveller is similar to that provided by the eighteenth-century Grand Tourist (Ouditt and Polezzi, p. 99).

The Italian Climate

Butler asserts that the body is not a ‘mute facticity’, *i.e.*, a fact of nature, but like gender it is produced by certain discourses; in other words, there is no ‘natural body’ that pre-exists its cultural inscription.⁵⁶ She argues that the body suffers a certain cultural construction, not only through the ‘act’ or performance that one’s body is, but also in the tacit conventions that structure the way in which the body is culturally perceived.⁵⁷ Stanley suggests that the physical independence of travel for nineteenth-century women ‘stretched the muscles and made a woman conscious of her body in ways that the bourgeois Victorian construction of the female as virtual invalid had severely discouraged’.⁵⁸ The cultural conventions that sanctioned and proscribed how one ‘acts’ one’s body purportedly differed strongly between Italy and Britain. In large part due to Italy’s climate, nineteenth-century women travelling from Britain to Italy often experienced a newfound, liberating awareness of their own bodies, as well as a new sense of healthiness and a renewed enthusiasm for life.

While their willingness to enter a discussion about Italy’s unfolding political drama varied greatly, most women travel writers openly admired the peninsula’s alluring climate. For centuries, Italy’s relatively warm and dry weather had appealed to travellers from more Northern countries. British travellers frequently sought the sunshine of Italy’s Mediterranean regions because it signalled health and vitality, and represented an oasis from Britain’s damp, rainy climes. In the style of *Corinne*, many nineteenth-century British travel accounts depict Italy as a utopia of open air and sunshine that is particularly appealing to women.⁵⁹ The climate’s ability to heighten women’s senses, bolster their strength, and instigate their healing reinforced the notion of Italy as an idyllic space for

⁵⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 129.

⁵⁷ Butler, ‘Performative Acts’, pp. 274-75.

⁵⁸ Stanley, p. 159.

⁵⁹ Moers, pp. 201-03.

women. The four authors discussed in this thesis all present Italy as a place in which women can be more comfortable with and secure in their bodies. In journeying South, away from the gloominess of Britain and from a place associated with women's modesty and restricted movement, these travel writers often moved from reflection to intuition, from the intellect to the senses, from the mind to the body. Depicted as a place of appealing warmth and sensual indulgence, Italy inscribed itself on these narrators' bodies, enabled them to stylise and 'do' their bodies in new ways, and influenced their textual travel performances.⁶⁰

In *Diary of an Ennuyée*, the ill narrator reveals her increased physical awareness when she writes:

In the morning I was ill: in the afternoon we drove to the Cascina; and while the rest walked, I spread my shawl upon the bank and basked like a lizard in the sunshine. [...] While I sat to-day, on my green bank – languid, indeed, but free from pain – and looked round upon a scene which has lost its novelty, but none of its beauty, where Florence, with its glittering domes and its back-ground of sunny hills, terminated my view on one side, and the Appenines [*sic*], tinted with rose colour and gold, bounded it on the other, I felt not only pleasure, but a deep thankfulness that such pleasures were yet left to me. (103)

In Rome, she also captures the region's sensuality by declaring that she enjoyed 'the luxurious temperature of the atmosphere, the purity and brilliance of the skies, the delicious security with which I threw myself down on the turf without fear of damp or cold' (293). She experiences enjoyment from these instances of sunbathing and the beauty of the surrounding scenery all the more intensely because her weakened body has become particularly receptive to the 'luxurious' Italian climate and topography. The narrator also depicts the female body as free from any societal constraints or confinements in Italy: rather, she experiences a languid, carefree state, liberated by the surrounding scene.

Horner's second journal reveals that the author also experienced a significant physical transformation in Italy. She repeatedly notes the beneficial, almost miraculous,

⁶⁰ Butler writes: 'One is not simply a body, but, in some very key senses, one does one's body and, indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well' ('Performative Acts', p. 272). Thus, Butler suggests that the body is both matter *and* materialising.

effect that the climate has on improving her health. Early on after her arrival in Florence, her journal entry begins: ‘Another lovely day – the air delicious. I begin to feel that return of strength and youth I felt in Italy in 1848 – and to walk without fatigue’.⁶¹ Later, she cheerfully reports: ‘I have got quite strong and no pain in my back or weariness – Even Mamma remarked, “How blooming you look through my spectacles!” and it is not often she makes these remarks’ (II, 23^r). She also observes that the ‘air here has certainly a wonderful effect on me, and even Papa remarks it, and all that those at home would scarcely know me’ (II, 51^v). The return of Horner’s health and youthful radiance brings about a positive awareness of her body, and throughout her journal, the author frequently notes her physical response to changes in temperature and to bouts of exercise in Florence.

Imbued with a newfound bodily awareness and invigorated by the ‘pure air’ (143), Lowe challenges both the conventional inscription of the woman’s body and the traditionally held perception that men are the stronger sex by suggesting that alpine adventures could be a natural and acceptable part of a woman’s travel itinerary. As Chapter 5 shall discuss, Lowe’s account of her ascent of Mount Etna in *Unprotected Females in Sicily* exemplifies both a determination and physical strength that challenge traditional Victorian assumptions about gender.

Like Jameson’s narrator, Horner, and Lowe, Elliot repeatedly alludes to her heightened bodily senses in the warm Italian climate, as she experiences a liberating responsiveness to qualities of light, colour, and texture. In Italy, she inhales the air in ‘a little valley, where thousands of violets scented the air’ (*Italy*, I, 151), feels the ‘heavenly breezes that came wafted to me, fresh and cool as the breath of morning’ (*Italy*, II, 132-33), and listens to ‘the ripe acorns drop from the evergreen oaks among the dry leaves’ (*Italy*, II, 269). Italy’s enticing climate encourages the author to take several walks around cities

⁶¹ Susan Horner, Florence, The British Institute of Florence, Archive, MS Susan Horner Diary 1861-62, fol. 14^r. Hereinafter cited as II and included in the main body of the text.

and the countryside; thus, her journey throughout Italy is associated with movement, freedom, and discovery.

The Diversity of Italy

In writing about women's experience of nineteenth-century Italy, it is important to emphasise that Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot represent a variety of geographical experiences and show the immense diversity of the Italian peninsula that was captured by many travel writers of the period.⁶² Reactions by British travel writers to Italy largely depended on their geographical destination. The Alps and the Apennines typically offered images of the sublime, and descriptions of journeys across these mountain ranges often draw upon Gothic novels, as those beloved texts come alive for the travellers. For instance, Jane Waldie notes of her journey across the Italian Alps that the 'whole scene very frequently reminded me of the descriptions of this mode of travelling in some of Mrs. Radcliffe's celebrated romances'.⁶³ In her *Continental Adventures* (1826), Eaton describes her Alpine surroundings as 'a scene from one of Mrs. Radcliffe's terrific romances'.⁶⁴ Likewise, describing the scenery of the Apennines, the narrator of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* exclaims: 'O for the pencil of Salvator, or the pen of a Radcliffe!' (88) The diarist also sums up the contrasting nature of such mountainous regions when she writes of the Apennines' 'splendid combinations of beauty and brightness, gloom and grandeur' (88). For these women travel writers, such dramatic mountain landscapes offered a frisson of

⁶² It is beyond the scope of this project to examine all of Italy's geographical specificities. Instead, I focus on comparing reactions to locations visited by the four women under special consideration in this thesis. Moreover, I concentrate in more detail on Italy's South, particularly Sicily. Much has been written by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British travel writers on the most common tourist destinations that were part of the typical Grand Tour, including Venice, Florence, and Rome. However, it was less common for British travellers in the nineteenth century to travel south of Naples, and even less usual for women to do so. Since Lowe and Elliot both visited Sicily, it is instructive to examine their relation to the actual circumstances of this region.

⁶³ Jane Waldie, *Sketches Descriptive of Italy in the Years 1816 and 1817*, 4 vols (London: John Murray, 1820), I, p. 157.

⁶⁴ Charlotte Eaton, *Continental Adventures*, 2 vols (London: Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1826), I, p. 199.

danger and excitement, and a sense of thrilling adventure. They also provided an appealing topographical otherness, offering awe-inspiring scenery that was unlike anything present in Britain.

Venice was often associated with ‘the East’ and with Orientalist stereotypes of languorous sensuality.⁶⁵ Various women travel writers identify the watery city as solemn, melancholic, mysterious, and beautiful. Jameson’s narrator is inspired by the city’s ‘melancholy interest’ (68), and refers to Venice as ‘the proper region of the fantastic’ (69), which is filled with ‘poetry’ and ‘romance’ (70). In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, Elliot notes the ‘love’, ‘intrigue’, and ‘mystery’ of Venice (*Italy*, I, 166), and is fascinated by the ‘Byzantine’, ‘eccentric’, and ‘strange’ (*Italy*, I, 6-7) nature of Venetian architecture. The city offered British women travel writers glimpses of exotic otherness and luxurious idleness, and inspired imaginative reveries amongst its visitors. Due to its annual Carnival, it was also perceived as a place especially steeped in spectacle, ritual, and performance. Moreover, the gloomy image of Venice as a decaying city became especially vivid in the nineteenth century because it was believed that its foundations would soon collapse.

Nineteenth-century travel writers tended to describe Florence as a lively and joyful city, far removed from the melancholy and mystery of Venice. Jameson’s narrator refers to the city as a ‘delightful residence: it is gay without tumult – quiet, yet not dull’ (122). Upon her first entrance into the city, Horner observes that the Lung’Arno was ‘crowded with gaily dressed people’ (I, 38^f), and notes the traditional Florentine welcome in which local girls throw flowers to new visitors. Thus, Florentine society was demonstrative in a way that pleasantly countered British reserve. With its countless examples of fine art and architecture, the city was also associated with the Renaissance and with artistic renewal and rebirth. Both Jameson’s diarist and Horner spend pages recounting their trips to various Florentine churches and museums, describing the artwork in great detail. For

⁶⁵ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 136.

women travel writers, Florence offered aesthetic stimulation, a valuable educational experience, and a place in which women could experience their own intellectual rebirth and renewal as well as physical regeneration. Nineteenth-century Florence also played host to a vibrant and thriving community of American and British expatriates. In *The Golden Ring: The Anglo-Florentines, 1847-1862*, Giuliana Artom Treves notes that in this period Florence was a favourite destination amongst travellers for a prolonged stay abroad.⁶⁶ The attraction was not only the city's low cost of living, but also its liberal attitude towards both male and female visitors.⁶⁷ Treves compares the city to a welcoming friend who is 'easy with her guests and open-armed, asking no questions or credentials'.⁶⁸

Rome was typically associated with ancient tombs and decaying splendour, which inspired feelings of melancholic delight in British women travel writers. Landmarks in the ruin-haunted city, such as the Colosseum and the Forum, were saturated with historical significance and emotive power for various authors. Lady Blessington, for example, writes that she experienced the solemnness of Rome 'when driving round the everlasting city, and gazing on the wrecks of her fallen grandeur; and not even the bright and cloudless skies that canopied them [...] could dispel the mournful reflections to which they gave birth' (*Italy*, II, p. 47). The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée*, Horner, and Elliot also all refer to the gloomy grandeur of the 'Eternal City'. Elliot, who dedicates most of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* to her adventures in Rome, sums up the conventional nineteenth-century images of the ancient city when she refers to its

dim memories looming through the chasm of bygone ages, its frowning palaces, its deeply-shadowed cavernous streets, its classical population (wanting only the toga to make proper senators with such chiselled features and majestic forms), its religious displays, pious associations, popes, cardinals, churches, ruins, relics, palaces, sculptures, and mosaics [...]. (*Italy*, I, p. 226)

⁶⁶ Giuliana Artom Treves, *The Golden Ring: The Anglo-Florentines, 1847-1862*, trans. by Sylvia Sprigge (London: Longmans, Green, 1956), p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

For many women travel writers, Rome represented a place of revelation and Classical learning. It offered women the opportunity to view a broad sweep of history that was far removed from the detail-oriented nature of their daily domestic routines in Britain.

As the seat of Roman Catholicism, the city was also an object both of fascination and repulsion for British Protestant travellers. Elliot imbues her descriptions of Easter and Christmas processions in Rome with hints of pagan exoticism. As exemplified by Elliot, travel writers were often in awe of such processions, which demonstrate ‘the transcendent aesthetic possibilities of music, art and communal festive joy’.⁶⁹ However, awe was often mingled with a certain amount of scepticism, and a sense of delight was tempered by a feeling of bewilderment. British travel writers were particularly critical of the visual elements of Catholic religious practices in Rome (and elsewhere in Italy), frequently conflating the boundary between artistic and religious spectacle. Describing a procession of the Pope, Jameson’s narrator observes that it ‘was so arranged as to produce the most striking theatrical effect’ (198). Of the Pope’s role in the festivities, she muses: ‘it was the most admirable acting I ever saw: I wish all his attendants had performed their parts as well’ (199). In *Pictures from Italy*, Dickens’ first impression of St Peter’s Basilica is altered by the fact that, due to preparations for a festa, ‘the pillars of stately marble were swathed in some impertinent frippery of red and yellow; the alter, and entrance to the subterranean chapel [...] were like a goldsmith’s shop, or one of the opening scenes in a very lavish pantomime’ (117).

Both male and female travel writers often considered the theatrical properties of Catholicism to be a source of superstition, an incentive to hypocrisy, and the primary reason for the supposed backwardness of the Italian nation.⁷⁰ To depict the Catholic

⁶⁹ Jane Stabler, ‘Devotion and Diversion: Early Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Italy and the Catholic Church’, in *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. by Alison Chapman and Jane Stabler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 15-34 (p. 16).

⁷⁰ Bruno P. F. Wanrooij, ‘“Exchanging Glances”: Florentines and the Anglo-American Community in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century’, in *Otherness: Anglo-American Women in 19th and 20th Century Florence*, ed. by Bruno P. F. Wanrooij (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2001), pp. 69-90 (p. 73).

Church as a theatrical show was to demystify it, to reduce its sacred symbolism to mere costumes and stage props, and to suggest the folly and superficiality of Catholic beliefs. By emphasising a cool detachment from the visual and performative aspects of Catholic custom, Protestant travel writers also emphasised their own Englishness and ‘correct’ religious beliefs. As Linda Colley has shown, in all its disgust at the stylised outward manifestations of the Catholic religion, this Protestantism gave England a sense of unity and identity: identity established, above all, in contradistinction to internally divided, Catholic Italy.⁷¹

Considered to be remote and distant, southern Italy remained outside the conventional route of the Grand Tour. Few travellers ventured beyond Naples, and, for travel purposes, Italy was considered by many to end at this city. Beyond Naples, it was assumed by travellers, lay violent disorder and a physically volatile landscape: a realm plagued by earthquakes, malaria, bandits, and limited roads, not to mention appalling food.⁷² Compared with the more industrialised Italian North, the South, which acted as a foil for the rest of Italy, was perceived as primitive, irrational, and superstitious.⁷³ Even to Neapolitans, the South was as unknown and unknowable as it was to Europeans generally.⁷⁴ Tuscany and Lombardy frequently offered themselves as an image of contrast with the Italian *Mezzogiorno*.⁷⁵ Impoverished Italians in the South, with their dark skin and apparently negligent appearance, were depicted by British travel writers, such as Lowe and Elliot, as the uncivilised ‘other’. Due to their poverty, these Italians were often portrayed in paintings, photographs, and travel accounts as indolent, culturally backward, and even animalistic. Images in the *Illustrated London News*, for instance, frequently depicted idle and dishevelled southern Italians lounging in bare feet surrounded by picturesque

⁷¹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 11-54.

⁷² Ouditt, p. 1.

⁷³ John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900* (Basingstoke; New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 1.

⁷⁴ Ouditt, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Dickie, p. 7. The *Mezzogiorno* refers to a region in southern Italy encompassing Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Sardinia, and Sicily. It forms the ‘boot’ of the Italian peninsula.

landscapes.⁷⁶ Even after its unification, when Italy was no longer politically divided, there was still an imagined divide between the North and South of Italy.

Sicily, in particular, represented a type of extreme ‘otherness’ within the ‘other’ of Italy as a whole. Nineteenth-century travel accounts frequently offer an image of Sicily as a more savage and ‘extreme’ version of Italy. Lowe depicts the region as ‘other’, consistently setting it in opposition to her own constructed (and supposedly superior) identity and depicting it as inferior to England. For example, she proclaims that Sicilians are ‘faulty’ and ‘uneducated’ (14). She also encourages her readers to ‘be not too severe in condemning the Sicilians: all nations have their barbarous customs’ (30). In addition, the author points to ways in which Sicilians could be improved, proclaiming: ‘Could their high spirit be but properly directed, the world would gaze with jealousy on its achievements, as the sun above them is just hot enough to warm to ardour, not weaken to langour [*sic*]’ (27). She suggests that Sicilians are capable of civilisation and improvement only when encouraged by more civilised nations, such as England. She also reveals that, due to Sicilian peasants’ lack of cleanliness, southern pastoral life ‘has around it an armour of dirt, impenetrable to an Englishman’ (82). By setting the English traveller apart from the surrounding grime, she privileges the English nation as one that is ‘clean’ and implicitly more advanced.

In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, Elliot’s negative depictions of the South recall those of Lowe, and she similarly focuses on the spectacle of the Southern Italian ‘other’. Elliot writes near the beginning of her travel account: ‘Hunger, ignorance, swarthy skins, volubility, savage familiarity, a minimum of clothes, and a maximum of gesture, dirt, noise, and fleas, announce the sunny south, all the world over’.⁷⁷ Depicting Sicilian sailors as types of savages, Elliot refers to ‘ragged men, clustering as thick as bees, large-eyed,

⁷⁶ Annemarie McAllister, ‘Italy Illustrated: Risorgimento Landscapes as Presented to the English’, presented at *The Risorgimento and Italian Unification in Global Perspective Conference* (Rome: John Cabot University, 2011).

⁷⁷ Frances Minto Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1881), I, p. 26. Hereinafter cited as *Sicily* and included in the main body of the text.

shock-headed, fierce, casting their brown limbs about, like branches swept by storms' (*Sicily*, I, 26). She notes the sailors' 'grappling hands', 'naked feet', and 'broad arms' (*Sicily*, I, 27), which reduce their bodies to the status of composite objects. In addition, Elliot describes 'reeking' and 'offensive' Sicilian beggars as 'fever-stricken wretches clustering in festering corners' (*Sicily*, I, 34). She also points out several occasions upon which she is confronted by squalid towns and 'dirty hovels' (*Sicily*, I, 49), which she views as a synecdoche for all aspects of Sicilian life. In such instances as these, Elliot, like Lowe, works to establish her difference from and superiority to the Sicilians, making them act as a foil for a narrator who performs the role of organic, stable, and unified traveller.⁷⁸

As Georgia Alù has suggested, Sicily was considered to be a liminal land on the border between Africa and Europe.⁷⁹ By travelling to Sicily, women travel writers could have a taste of Africa without having to incur the risks of actually travelling there. Africa is mentioned a handful of times in Lowe's work, enhancing the alluring exoticism and otherness of her travel destination. Upon arriving in Palermo, Lowe feels 'the last heave of the tired sirocco from Africa's sands, stir the balmy air' (1), reminding readers from the outset of Sicily's proximity to the African continent. She also describes the two temples at ancient Agrigento as 'clear against the African sky' (65). In these cases, Lowe's references to Africa present romantic images of Sicily's dramatic and barren landscape. Lowe's and Elliot's references to the dark facial features of the Sicilians further recall the perceived connections between Sicily and the African continent, evoking more negative connotations of southern 'primitiveness'. To a certain extent there is an inbuilt ambiguity in these African comparisons: Sicily is represented as a place that is striking and beautiful, but also somewhat out of place in Italy.

In his *Italian Journey*, Goethe declares: 'To have seen Italy without having seen

⁷⁸ Mills, p. 90.

⁷⁹ Georgia Alù, *Beyond the Traveller's Gaze: Expatriate Ladies Writing in Sicily (1848-1910)* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), p. 22.

Sicily is not to have seen Italy at all, for Sicily is the clue to everything.’⁸⁰ As this statement demonstrates, Sicily was not only depicted as an unattractive and backward place, but also as a land of ancient civilisations, history, and romance. The first edition of Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Sicily* (1864) argues that Sicily far surpasses the rest of Italy ‘in one point of interest – in the grand relics of Hellenic architecture she retains’.⁸¹ For nineteenth-century travellers who viewed the region in a more positive light, Sicily represented a romantic land steeped in history and myth. Despite her criticisms, Lowe repeatedly notes the rugged beauty of the ‘isle beloved of all the gods’ (2). Elliot also depicts Sicily as a type of romantic paradise at the beginning of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*. As she approaches the island, she emphasises its dazzling beauty and mythical associations, stating: ‘As each moment brings me nearer, the more does the beauty of that Sicilian shore grow upon me. Where the gods lived and walked like men, cannot surely be a mere work-a-day world like any other’ (*Sicily*, I, p. 3). In both Lowe’s and Elliot’s travel accounts, descriptions of Sicily’s breathtaking scenery and rich history are juxtaposed with negative depictions of the locals. For these authors, Sicily appears in its best light when it is unpeopled and devoid of any reminders of current human habitation.

For travellers like Lowe and Elliot, Sicily also offered a more untouched version of Italy. As journeys abroad increased throughout the nineteenth century, successful travel came to depend upon the assurance that one’s experience was distinctly meaningful and ‘authentic’; this was especially the case with the well-trodden destination of Italy.⁸² The authentic culture of places – the *genius loci* – was often represented by nineteenth-century travel writers as lurking in secret precincts off the beaten track, where it could be discovered only by the perceptive traveller, not the vulgar tourist.⁸³ In his seminal work *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), Dean MacCannell identifies six

⁸⁰ Goethe, p. 240.

⁸¹ John Murray (Firm), *A Handbook for Travellers in Sicily* (London: John Murray, 1864), p. xxiv.

⁸² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 96.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

stages in the progression towards authentic travel. The first is the ‘front region’, which travellers attempt to overcome or get behind. The sixth and final region is the ultimate space that motivates the traveller’s imagination: it is an uncontaminated, ideal ‘back region’.⁸⁴ Many travellers believed that access to the real Italy lay behind the scenes, in the private ‘back regions’, which was an advantage granted only to the special observer and dedicated traveller.⁸⁵

For many nineteenth-century travel writers, premodern, simple, and unspoilt Sicily represented the ideal ‘back region’. It presented images of pleasing otherness, offering idealistic, pastoral scenes that were far removed from industrialised Britain. In *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, Lowe highlights the rarity of her travel destination by recalling: ‘Whilst I was drawing, a gentleman came from a garden to offer a nosegay of roses, showing by that little action how delightfully untravelled the country must be’ (216). Positioning herself as an intrepid traveller, Lowe makes a great show of the arduous journey through the ‘back region’ of Italy, avoiding both tourists and the infrastructure that supports them. In her Italian travelogue, Lowe rarely mentions other travellers, British or otherwise, in order to emphasise the novelty of her journey. It is primarily by venturing into territory that is unknown and untouched by masses of tourists that Lowe suggests she is able to access the authentic ‘other’ and to visit people and places still relatively unaffected by modernity. By emphasising her isolation on her journeys, Lowe portrays her journey as an important, original, and genuine form of exploration, rather than as a hackneyed tour that has been written about countless times before. She also indicates that women’s travel narratives could be a valuable form of exploration literature, a genre that was traditionally associated with men.

⁸⁴ MacCannell, *The Tourist*, pp. 101-02. Drawing on Goffman’s *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, MacCannell argues that tourist settings can be arranged in a continuum starting from the front and ending at the back. The second stage is a touristic front region that has been decorated to appear, in some of its particulars, like a back region. The third stage is a front region that is totally organised to look like a back region. The fourth stage is a back region that is open to outsiders. The fifth stage is a back region that may be cleaned up or slightly altered because tourists are permitted an occasional glimpse in. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, pp. 101-02.

⁸⁵ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 259.

British portrayals of both northern and southern Italy in nineteenth-century travel writing often draw on contradictory terms: Italy represented an Edenic state of plenty, pastoral charm, and tranquillity, yet also a place of brigandage, heated passions, dirt, disease, illiteracy, and superstition. It was considered to be a place of innocence and beauty, corruption and fallenness. It is thus important to recall that throughout the nineteenth century, representations of Italy were neither fixed nor unitary, illustrating the fact that Italy was a challenging and elusive region to define.⁸⁶ Due to the vast diversity of texts and images about Italy that had accumulated over the centuries, varying constructed versions of the peninsula emerged within the British popular imagination. Italy's natural landscape, with its huge variety of scenery, provided travellers and artists with no single predetermined ideal; thus, much could be projected onto the topography.⁸⁷ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the region also lacked an 'essential Italian identity' due to its political fragmentation.⁸⁸ Since it was open to numerous interpretations, Italy was an especially accommodating place to describe in nineteenth-century women's travelogues. Much as the metaphorical space of Italy itself refuses immutable identifications, the authors discussed in this thesis resist simple characterisations, enacting various, often contradictory, identities.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Walchester, p. 9.

⁸⁷ O'Connor, p. 18.

⁸⁸ Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg, 'Introduction: Nationalism and the Uses of Risorgimento Culture', in *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, ed. by Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 1-26 (pp. 1-3).

⁸⁹ Chapman and Stabler, pp. 8-11.

CHAPTER 3

Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*: The Pains and Privileges of Being an Invalid Traveller

In 1851, the author Janet Robinson wrote:

Journeys are generally undertaken in agreeable circumstances; and tourists usually set off by pleasant and picturesque routes, in easy conveyances, with well-filled purses, light hearts, and merry companions. [...] My purse was rather light, and my heart was very heavy; for I went alone to a strange land, to a house of sickness and gloom – a gloom that presaged death.¹

Although nineteenth-century travel narratives often depict travel as a pleasurable escape from the mundane and the familiar, several fictional and non-fictional travel accounts document journeys propelled by physical and psychological ailments, by 'sickness and gloom'.² While these travelogues emphasise the value of Mediterranean travel for illness, few explore the converse side of the relationship between illness and travel – the beneficial impact of illness on one's travel experience. Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826) illuminates not only the transformative power of travel, but also the transformative power of illness. In doing so, it exhibits an act of improvisation within the confines of the invalid travel narrative tradition, demonstrating that travel accounts often rely upon both guiding scripts and individual interpretation.

This chapter argues for the textual significance of Jameson's creation of a fictional ill and heartbroken heroine: the travel narrator's physical and psychological malaise signals a crucial type of narrative self-consciousness, and represents a performance aimed at drawing the reader into a riveting emotional drama. By considering the constructed literary travel identity of the invalid narrator, I examine the ways in which Jameson depicts

¹ Janet Robertson, *Lights and Shades on a Traveller's Path; or, Scenes in Foreign Lands* (London: Hope & Co., 1851), pp. 1-2.

² A selection of travel accounts, both in prose and verse, documenting the peregrinations of ill travellers include Barbara Hofland's *The Young Northern Traveller; or, The Invalid Restored* (1829); William Beattie's *The Heliotrope; or, Pilgrim in Pursuit of Health* (1833); William Bullar's *Letters from Abroad, from a Physician in Search of Health* (1861); John Strang's *Travelling Notes in France, Italy and Switzerland of an Invalid* (1863); J. D. A.'s *Curiosities in Curses: Being the Experiences of a Lady in Search of Health* (1895); and Alexander Malcolm's *Letters of an Invalid from Italy, Malta, and the South of France* (1897).

her narrator as a sympathetic yet ultimately privileged traveller. The diarist's illness acts as a guiding frame of reference for her travels, and a lens through which she views Italy. Rather than represent an overwhelming drawback, as one might expect, the protagonist's ill health and unhappiness are part of a key narrative strategy aimed at suggesting that she has particularly innovative and perceptive responses to Italian art, culture, and scenery, and that she is imbued with powers of perspective beyond the grasp of healthy travellers. This chapter also argues for the particular significance of Italy for the invalid traveller, and analyses the diarist's self-representation in relation to the peninsula. Ultimately, Italy becomes a place of physical liberation and healing for the diarist, temporarily alleviating the symptoms of her illness and compelling her to act her body in new ways.

Setting the Stage

Anna Jameson (1794-1860) was a well-known author who published twenty-nine books ranging from works of literary criticism to treatises on the social condition of women. Her circle of influential friends included such eminent authors as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and Elizabeth Gaskell, in addition to the actress and author Fanny Kemble. Significant among Jameson's works are her travelogues, which document her European journeys and a brief residence and travels in Eastern Canada. Influential accounts of Jameson's life and work include Clara Thomas's *Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson* (1967) and Judith Johnston's *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters* (1997). More recently, several scholars have focused on Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*. In 'Our Own Fair Italy': *Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Writing and Italy, 1800-1844* (2007), Kathryn Walchester considers Jameson's construction of a sensitive female narrator and her relationship with a feminised Italy. Chloe Chard has investigated the narrator's rhetoric of feminised responsiveness with

regards to her commentary on art in *Diary of an Ennuyée*.³ In her recently published *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman* (2014), Hilary Fraser examines the role of Jameson's publications in developing a discourse of art notable for its complexity, cultural power, and professionalisation.⁴ She considers Jameson's *Diary* to represent the author's first foray into art criticism, enabling her to position herself as a keen observer and interpreter of art. Several scholars have also highlighted the generic instability of Jameson's *Diary*, and critics including Valerie Sanders, Dorothy Mermin, and Judith Johnston have analysed the double-voiced narrative in the text.⁵ None, however, has offered a sustained critical reading of the significant role of illness in Jameson's travel account.

Diary of an Ennuyée, Jameson's first-ever publication, is a fictionalised travel-biography masquerading as a real-life diary, which chronicles a young woman's experience of travelling to the Continent for the first time.⁶ The narrator's illness and unhappiness are apparently the result of a broken heart; therefore, the voyage abroad represents as much an escape from the misery of home as a valuable opportunity for experiencing another culture. The narrator's unknown malady, combined with her anonymity, contribute to the mystery and romance surrounding the diary. She journeys with a group of companions to whom she rarely refers, thereby augmenting her role as a heroine who is isolated in her suffering. *Diary of an Ennuyée* frequently vacillates between sentimental and romantic novel and practical travel guide, and, in the manner of a real diary, the text is constructed as a series of dated entries in which the traveller documents

³ Chard, 'Scholarship and Sensibility'.

⁴ Hilary Fraser, *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). According to Fraser, Jameson's authoring of travel books provided a stepping stone to higher forms of art criticism and history (pp. 65-66).

⁵ See Valerie Sanders, *The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989); Dorothy Mermin, *Godiva's Ride: Women of Letters in England, 1830-1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); and Judith Johnston, 'Fracturing Perspectives of Italy in Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*', *Women's Writing*, 11 (2004), 11-24.

⁶ Jameson's travelogue was originally published anonymously under the title *A Lady's Diary* (1826).

her sightseeing and her emotional reactions to various Italian works of art and sights. Yet the diarist's journal ends abruptly due to her tragic death.

Nowhere does Jameson admit that her work is fiction, and in order to enhance the realism of the journal and legitimise the text, the voice of a fictitious male 'Editor' (written by Jameson herself) emerges periodically throughout the volume.⁷ In the *Diary's* preface the Editor expresses his fascination with the author:

The following Diary is published exactly as it was found after the death of the Author; varied only by the omission of certain names. As a real picture of natural and feminine feeling, the Editor hopes that it may interest others as much as it has interested him. The asterisks mark the places where one or more leaves had been torn away by the writer; and where there may sometimes appear a want of continuity. The little Poems interspersed were found in another volume, the companion of her travels; and have been inserted with regard to their dates, when dated, or to some evident connection with the feelings expressed in the Diary. (i)

The manuscript has apparently been defaced in several places due to the overpowering emotion of the diarist. If, in the spirit of this chapter, one views the role of the Editor in a medical light, he embodies a type of textual doctor who has put the incomplete and 'broken' text back together to form a relatively healthy, although far from complete, volume.

Diary of an Ennuyée was the product of a real situation, and was therefore a fictional representation of factual events. According to Jameson's niece Gerardine Bate Macpherson, author of *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson* (1878), Jameson's account was largely based on her own real-life private journals, documenting a journey to France and Italy from 1821 to 1822.⁸ Jameson, who was at this point the unmarried 'Anna Brownell Murphy', travelled to Italy as a governess to the wealthy and well-connected Rowles family.⁹ Much like the narrator of the published *Diary*, Jameson was apparently

⁷ Additions by the Editor include a table of contents and a handful of scholarly footnotes for the erudite reader.

⁸ While hundreds of letters written to and from Jameson throughout her lifetime have survived, the whereabouts of her private journals, if they still exist, are unknown. For information concerning the whereabouts of various manuscript letters written to and from Jameson, see Clara Thomas, *Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. viii-ix.

⁹ Gerardine Macpherson, *Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1878), p. 26; Johnston, 'Fracturing Perspectives', p. 11.

desolate during the Italian voyage due to a recent broken engagement with Robert Jameson (with whom she later entered into an unhappy marriage).¹⁰ Jameson published her *Diary* five years after the start of her original voyage. Macpherson argues that, for the most part, the highly effusive melancholic and sentimental musings of the *Diary*'s narrator remain faithful to what Jameson actually wrote in her own travel journals. She does concede, however, that her aunt occasionally exaggerated her narrator's emotional responses, and the seriousness of her poor health, for dramatic effect.¹¹

The Performed Self in *Diary of an Ennuyée*

In *Love and Work Enough*, Thomas quotes several letters from Jameson that suggest that she enjoyed self-dramatisation. In letters sent home from Italy, the governess evidently took pleasure from fashioning herself as a suffering, heartbroken heroine to which she later gave full treatment in *Diary of an Ennuyée*.¹² In one letter from Italy, Jameson wryly assures her mother: 'I shall live to return to England in spite of prognostics and astonish you all with the wonders I have seen.'¹³ Once again fixating on her physical and mental health, Jameson notes: 'I continue better in health and have reason to be grateful for it; I have suffered so very much, I cannot well bear fatigue, but I take care never to utter the least complaint and to be as cheerful as possible'.¹⁴ Such comments involve her family in her emotional drama and presumably keep up the sympathies already engaged in the romantic *Sturm und Drang* of their eldest daughter.¹⁵ As forms of autobiographical writing, even Jameson's private letters represent performative modes of self-narration – a self

¹⁰ Macpherson, *Memoirs*, p. 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

¹² Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 24.

¹³ Beatrice Erskine, ed., *Anna Jameson, Letters and Friendships, 1812-1860* (London: T. F. Unwin, Ltd., 1915), p. 41. Quoted in Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 24.

¹⁴ Erskine, p. 48. Quoted in Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 24.

¹⁵ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 24.

constituted in discourse – in which the author’s true self can never be discovered, unmasked, or revealed because its core is ‘an infinite regress’.¹⁶

Thomas suggests that self-dramatisation and self-pity were deeply engrained in Jameson’s nature, since the depiction of herself as a suffering heroine occurred repeatedly in letters and publications throughout her lifetime.¹⁷ To a considerable extent, she argues, Jameson ‘was guilty of playing the Ennuyée all her life’, dramatising herself and her woes.¹⁸ This compulsive love of self-dramatisation serves as a reminder that Jameson’s role as an illness-racked commentator in *Diary of an Ennuyée* is a self-conscious narrative strategy rather than an unmediated articulation of personal circumstances. Indeed, the conventional aristocratic tour that the ennuyée follows implies that she is a woman of independence, leisure, and wealth – ‘a nameless sort of person, a mere bird of passage’ (309) – not a paid employee like her author.¹⁹ It is also important to recall that the narrator’s intensified emotional responsiveness (due to her illness) is a performed act: the author constructs and manipulates material for conscious effect.

As a textual performance with a sentimental, ill, and ultimately tragic heroine at its centre, *Diary of an Ennuyée* draws on a number of popular sources, or scripts, each of which documents the figure of the sentimental, melancholic, or invalid traveller abroad. Perhaps the earliest script for Jameson’s *Diary* was Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey*. Just as Jameson uses a fictional narrator to mask her own voice, Sterne employs Yorick as a narrator who represents a type of alter ego. Like Sterne, Jameson also draws on the eighteenth-century ‘Cult of Sensibility’ in her book, employing melodramatic exaggeration and the staging of emotion for powerful effect. With her emphasis on the heightened emotions of pity, grief, melancholy, and nostalgia, the ennuyée, like Yorick, becomes the epitome of sensibility. The highly gendered manners of sensibility encouraged women to

¹⁶ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 132.

¹⁷ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁹ Caroline Franklin, *The Female Romantics: Nineteenth-Century Women Novelists and Byronism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 32.

show their delicacy through bodily affect in the forms of crying, blushing, and fainting.²⁰ Likewise, Jameson's narrator is 'softened' by her illness, which intensifies her physical weakness, emotional responses, and femininity. Like Yorick, the heroine of Jameson's *Diary* also claims a 'subjective' authority, demonstrating the appropriateness of her own feelings and opinions. In the style of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, the focus in *Diary of an Ennuyée* becomes the narrator's responses to her tour rather than Italy itself.²¹ The special character of the perceiver is a source of originality in Jameson's travel account: even if Jameson's narrator visits the same places many others have visited and makes use of a form so hackneyed as to have lost much of its power of expression, she brings her own original feminine sensibility and responsiveness to bear on these familiar places and literary forms.²²

With its framed narrative (a story of personal suffering embedded within a broader travel narrative) coupled with the eventual death of the narrator, Jameson's *Diary* also contains strong Gothic overtones. The convention of the recovered manuscript and pretend editor is also widespread in Gothic literature. Moreover, the diarist's dramatic reactions reflect those of sentimental heroines in Gothic novels who often become faint with terror. For instance, the diarist repeatedly draws attention to her intense visceral, physical, and even exaggerated responses to realistic depictions of violent scenes in Italian art, such as when she refers to 'loathing, shuddering, sickening' (334) in reaction to a gruesome painting displayed in a Milanese palace. Likewise, when the diarist describes the 'wildly romantic, barren and bleak' (89) scenery near Covigliaio, the Italian landscape affects her inner being in much the same way that landscape descriptions appear to reflect the inner world and intimate thoughts of the Gothic heroine.²³ She depicts the Inn of Covigliaio as a type of Gothic building: 'an uncouth dreary edifice, situated in a lonely and desolate spot,

²⁰ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 251.

²¹ Walchester, p. 178.

²² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 162.

²³ Agorni, p. 26.

some miles from any other habitation' (89). Enacting the part of a heroine from one of Radcliffe's novels, Jameson's narrator passes a fearful night in the inn, noting that the 'whispered voices and hard breathing of the men who slept in the corridor, from whom only a slight door divided me, disturbed and fevered my nerves; horrible imaginings were all around me' (92). Echoing Gothic texts, this passage hints at the narrator's sexual and psychological vulnerability. Despite the mysterious and fantastical tones of such passages, however, Jameson's text never ventures into the supernatural realm, always retaining the objective reality of her narrator's travels.

While there is no evidence that Jameson read Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), *Diary of an Ennuyée* often resembles the account of Wollstonecraft's unhappy journey. Much like Jameson's heartbroken diarist, Wollstonecraft presents herself as a traveller unhappy in love and, in detailing her efforts to overcome her sorrow in foreign places, draws the reader into the emotional drama of which her journey plays a significant part. Both travelogues set up a structure of *mise-en-abyme*, encouraging the reader's absorption in the sorrows of a vulnerable and victimised woman who is utterly absorbed in them herself. Moreover, both texts place great emphasis on the power of suffering to accentuate the traveller's responsiveness to places visited.²⁴ For these two authors, suffering represents more than mere physical weakness: it also denotes a form of dramatic possibility.

The narrator of Jameson's *Diary* recalls another suffering female figure in the form of Corinne.²⁵ Jameson's travelogue is one of the first books, after Charlotte Eaton's *Rome*

²⁴ Chard, 'Scholarship and Sensibility', p. 58.

²⁵ In turn, Staël's *Corinne* renders a revised and up-to-date version of the story of Sappho, the ancient Greek lyric poet. Jameson's travel account both thematically and structurally evokes Sappho's writings. Sappho's position as a contemplative woman who writes about tragic love mirrors the unhappy diarist; just as Sappho's poetry equates the experience of love with dying, the *Diary*'s narrator purportedly dies from a broken heart. Like all but two of Sappho's poems, the *Diary* is fragmented, despite the attempts of the Editor to put it back together. In mirroring the form of Sappho's fractured texts, Jameson invokes a kind of cultural and literary prestige associated with the famous fragments.

in the Nineteenth Century, to draw heavily on Staël's *Corinne* for inspiration.²⁶ Like Staël's novel, Jameson's text mixes the 'prosaic' and the 'poetic', blending descriptive detail with evocative romance, fact with fiction.²⁷ Moreover, the diarist's apparently spontaneous outpouring of emotion on the pages of her journal mirrors Corinne's articulate yet unconstrained overflowing of speech both as *improvisatrice* and travel guide. However, instead of pronouncing her feelings to a large crowd, as Staël's Corinne does, the *Diary's* narrator writes in a private journal – a more 'appropriate' nineteenth-century mode of expression for British women.²⁸ The passionate, emotional, and intellectual character of Corinne also inspired the characterisation of Jameson's romantic heroine. Like Corinne, Jameson's narrator dies at the age of twenty-six, presumably from a broken heart. Moreover, Jameson's narrator follows Corinne in reinforcing the rhetorical associations between Italy and the feminine. The narrator's alignment with Staël's heroine, a woman who is intimately acquainted with Italian culture and who symbolises Italy itself, suggests that Jameson's heroine is also closely linked with Italy. Through this literary connection she implies that she has a special insight into the peninsula.

At one point, Jameson's narrator professes herself to be even more sensitive than Staël's protagonist, declaring:

'Corinne' I find is a fashionable vade mecum for sentimental travellers in Italy; and that I too might be *à la mode*, I brought it from Molini's to-day, with the intention of reading on the spot, those admirable and affecting passages which relate to Florence; but when I began to cut the leaves, a kind of terror seized me, and I threw it down, resolved not to open it again. I know myself weak – I feel myself unhappy; and to find my own feelings reflected from the pages of a book, in a language too deeply and eloquently true, is not good for me. (115-16)

This passage provides another example of *mise-en-abyme*, in which a book is reflected within a book. The narrator hopes to find in *Corinne* a useful script, which will enable her

²⁶ In letters home, Jameson also depicts *Corinne* as a valued guidebook and Staël's methods of description as superbly effective (Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 30).

²⁷ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 167.

²⁸ The ennuyée indicates that her diary contains her unmediated thoughts and feelings put into words, writing: 'my little Diary [...] has gradually become not only the faithful depository of my recollections, but the confidante of my feelings, and the sole witness of my tears' (pp. 128-29). In this case the diary itself assumes the role of ideal audience: 'she' is always listening, available, and empathetic, and never judgemental.

to emulate the character of Corinne ‘on the spot’. Staël’s influential character represented the archetypal nineteenth-century figure of female suffering and vulnerability, and Jameson’s narrator sees in Corinne an overpowering image of her own plight as unrequited lover.²⁹ But the diarist is unable to read Staël’s novel: the coincidence of reading her own feelings in the pages of the novel evokes a kind of Gothic horror within the narrator. As a heartbroken young woman, the diarist finds in Staël’s novel an uncanny representation of her own situation that she fears will perpetuate, rather than cure, her illness.

The character of Corinne represented the female counterpart to Byron’s traveller in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, providing an example for nineteenth-century women travellers of how to respond emotionally to Italy. Jameson’s diarist enacts a version of Byron’s Harold, undertaking a similar journey across the Continent as a result of a broken heart. The reference to ennui in the title of Jameson’s travelogue associates the diarist with the aristocratic Romanticism that Byron embodied.³⁰ The Childe Harold motif is further recognisable in the mystery that surrounds the heroine’s unhappiness, such as when her sentences are ‘so blotted as to be illegible’ (45).³¹ Poetic lines referring to the narrator’s ‘pains and pleasures’ (4), burning spirit, and unforgettable grief also allude to a type of Byronic suffering. Much like Byron, Jameson’s diarist often depicts herself as a spectacle at the centre of Italian sites, transforming them into a theatre for her own feelings and impressions, which are staged and recorded with meticulous care.³² For instance, in Venice the ennuyée depicts herself as an isolated and melancholic traveller who is constantly surrounded by the ‘solemn and strange’ (69) stillness of the watery city. Venice provides a stage for the narrator’s uncontaminated performance, in which she presents herself as an actor cultivating her feminine sensibility in the midst of a timeless scene.³³ Furthermore, *Diary of an Ennuyée* openly pays homage to Byron’s narrative poem by quoting various

²⁹ Chapman and Stabler, p. 2.

³⁰ Franklin, p. 31.

³¹ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 30.

³² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 177.

³³ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 181.

excerpts, and the name of Lord Byron is shrewdly kept before the reader throughout the text.³⁴

The diarist also refers to Henry Matthews' purportedly autobiographical *Diary of an Invalid* (1820), declaring it to be 'the best of all diaries since old Evelyn's' (2).³⁵ Throughout their texts, Jameson's and Matthews' narrators both intersperse descriptions of their personal suffering with detailed and factual accounts of the places they visit, often directly addressing the reader. These factual accounts embody early versions of the traveller's handbook. In Florence's Santa Croce, for instance, Jameson's diarist notifies the reader: 'The finest figure on the tomb of Michel Angelo [*sic*] is Architecture. It should be contemplated from the left, to be seen to advantage. The effect of Alfieri's monument depends much on the position of the spectator' (121). This description anticipates Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy* (1861), in which the author describes the famous tomb of Michelangelo in a similar manner, noting that the 'figure of Architecture is the finest' and referring directly to the reader and potential future spectator.³⁶ Much like Murray, the narrators in both Jameson's and Matthews' texts intermittently adopt the image of an authoritative travel guide, or 'stage director', who informs how and what the public should see.

Yet Matthews' portrayal of his malady in *Diary of an Invalid* contrasts strongly with that of Jameson's diarist. While references to Matthews' poor health abound, the descriptions of his illness are more succinct and factual than those of the ennuyée. He provides specific details of his symptoms and even describes various doctors' visits, thus rooting his text within contemporary medical discourse and heightening his diary's realism. By contrast, because the particulars of her medical condition are purposefully left vague, Jameson's narrator disassociates herself from the traditional medical model of

³⁴ See for instance *Diary of an Ennuyée*, pp. 35, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 83, 136, and 195.

³⁵ John Evelyn (1620-1706) was an English writer and diarist whose memoirs are largely contemporaneous with those of Samuel Pepys.

³⁶ John Murray (Firm), *A Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy*, 5th edn (London: John Murray, 1861 [1843]), p. 102.

symptom, diagnosis, treatment, and response.³⁷ Instead, her illness contributes to a highly dramatic and emotional depiction of suffering. Matthews also remains more optimistic than Jameson's protagonist: in spite of his suffering, he manages to 'maintain a cheerful smile', and his journey aims 'to scare away blue devils' and to rid him of his malady.³⁸ He imbues his work with the overtone of self-help, repeatedly pointing to his own resourcefulness in seeking medical treatment. By contrast, Jameson's narrator proclaims that her journal is 'the DIARY OF A BLUE DEVIL' (2), defiantly announcing her own melancholic temperament and also aiming to inspire others to melancholy.³⁹ While Matthews considers illness as an antagonist to be defeated, Jameson's diarist often indulges in her state of illness and unhappiness as part of her travel performance.

Although, through their textual travel performances, both authors depict themselves as authoritative travel guides with a genuine knowledge of Italy, they do so in different ways. While the ennuyée's illness is intrinsic to her travel identity, Matthews aims to create a reliable travel identity *in spite of* his poor health. The heroine's illness purportedly enhances her emotional responsiveness to and connection with Italy, both vital to her position as a dependable travel guide. By contrast, Matthews presents emotional detachment and level-headedness as qualities of the credible traveller. Despite his physical debilitation and spiritual demoralisation, Matthews portrays himself as a sensible traveller who consistently demonstrates good judgement and mental clarity. The differences between these texts reinscribe a gendered approach to illness in the nineteenth century. Considering positive attitudes towards industrialism and productivity in this period, illness could be perceived as an effeminate force that curtailed masculine strength. Thus, men's experience with illness often entailed a troubling confrontation with their masculine

³⁷ Maria Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 4.

³⁸ Henry Matthews, *The Diary of an Invalid: Being a Journal of a Tour in Pursuit of Health in Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, and France in the Years 1817, 1818, and 1819*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1820 [1820]), pp. 165 and 167.

³⁹ Walchester, p. 177.

identity. Matthews' resistance to his condition and repeated demonstration of a masculine resourcefulness point to the negative associations between men and invalidism as well as to his desire to overcome the supposedly feminising effects of illness.

As the above examples have demonstrated, Jameson forged her narrator's identity in the shadow of multiple authors, repeating and adapting previous travel performances. Thus, as Caroline Franklin points out, a 'sense of belatedness pervades as she traces the steps of others'.⁴⁰ When the narrator defers to Byron's descriptions of the tomb of Cecilia Metella and the Fountain of Egeria, or records a discussion with the former servant of Staël, she indicates that others have been to this 'scripted' Continent before, and that others have performed on this stage. In paying reverential homage to previous travellers and authors, *Diary of an Ennuyée* underlines the ritualistic nature of travel and travel writing, in which each journey and travel account builds upon the last. In addition, Jameson's text suggests that Italian sights are not only famous in their own right, but also worth seeing for their associations with beloved authors, artists, and celebrities who have visited them previously. Such sights act as a connection between the past and the present, the historical and the personal. By employing the categorically recognisable identity of the invalid, and by inserting her text within a cultural heritage of travel accounts about similar travellers, Jameson heightened the familiarity, legitimacy, and marketability of her narrative. By incorporating influences from famous authors, she also anticipated her own literary celebrity which was to emerge after the publication of her text.

The diarist's travel performance is not only influenced by the guiding texts discussed above, but also strongly inflected by gender. Butler argues that gender is not something one *is*; it is something one *does*, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a 'doing' rather than a 'being'.⁴¹ The narrator of *Diary of an Ennuyée* frequently emphasises her feminine identity, turning her diary into 'a real picture

⁴⁰ Franklin, p. 31.

⁴¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 25.

of natural and feminine feeling' (i) through a sequence of textual acts. For instance, she advertises her compliance with feminine decorum by conspicuously attacking her predecessor Lady Sydney Morgan for exceeding the bounds of the feminine in using travel writing to propagate her views on national politics.⁴² According to the ennuyée, Morgan's political 'observations and inferences are coloured by her peculiar and rather unfeminine habits of thinking' (153). By contrast, Jameson's narrator proclaims a lack of interest in Italian politics, a topic which she prefers to leave to men to discuss.

The diarist's performance of femininity is further evident with regards to her interpretation of Italian art. Her art criticism does not attempt to recreate the visual structure of paintings, but rather focuses on their emotional impact, which contrasts with a more masculine approach exemplified by John Ruskin's severe, disciplining eye.⁴³ The diarist persistently stresses the value of feminine feeling, rather than that of technical expertise, when it comes to judging and appreciating works of art, referring to the 'certain effects, peculiarities, and excellencies' of paintings which she 'felt, rather than understood' (330). She argues that a purely technical appreciation of art, as opposed to an emotional interpretation, diverts the mind from appreciating its overall effect and instead fixes it 'on petty details of execution' (331). By contrast, feeling enables a more profound awareness of the 'power of art' (50).

The narrator contends that her emotional response to art should be a model for other travellers, claiming: 'I do not know how *men* think, and feel, [...] I can only see with woman's eyes, and think and feel as I believe every woman *must*, whatever may be her love for the arts' (333-34). Thus, her diary represents a guide to appropriate feminine interpretations of art and, more broadly, to feminine sensibility and morality. By way of example, she applies this discernment to textual depictions of her own illness. Just as she admires scenes in paintings 'wherein all that is revolting in circumstances or character is

⁴² Franklin, p. 31.

⁴³ Laurie Kane Lew, 'Cultural Anxiety in Anna Jameson's Art Criticism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36 (1996), 829-56 (p. 829).

judiciously kept from view, where human suffering is dignified by the moral lesson it is made to convey', she never offers details about the nature of her illness, and keeps 'her infirmities and deformities from view' (335-36). Furthermore, the diarist stresses the authority of the female gaze and the validity of the female viewing subject. Her reactions to works of art even serve as a model for male travellers. For instance, she suggests that men too would 'shrink away disgusted and sickened' (333) from violence in Italian art. While stating that men *may* react in this manner, she actually suggests that this is how they *should* respond: in other words, they should adopt aspects of women's travel performances. By foregrounding the narrator's feminine consciousness in passages ranging from Italian politics to art, Jameson makes her diarist's 'appropriate' gendered responses the objects of readers' contemplation. Instances in which the narrator highlights feminine responsiveness as a type of learned performance (one that can even be learned and enacted by men) also anticipate Butler's notion of gender performativity, in which gender is not something one *is*, but rather something one *does*.

Performativity is not only apparent in terms of gender, but also in the way travel writers incorporate and reproduce models of identity in their narratives in order to represent themselves to an audience of readers. Jameson's letters home to her family demonstrate that the author was astutely aware of her audience and fashioned her identity with readers in mind. Jameson reported in a letter to her family from Rome: 'I have collected material which, if I live and Heaven grants me health and the peace to which I have long been a stranger, I will turn to good account'.⁴⁴ Evidently the young governess knew her adventures as a melancholy traveller would make an entertaining and marketable travel narrative, and she aimed to transform her unhappiness into a riveting performance. Indeed, the narrator's illness and unhappiness in Jameson's published travelogue contributed to a compelling and entertaining perspective on her travel experiences. The

⁴⁴ Quoted in Erskine, p. 65.

fact that Colburn republished *A Lady's Diary* as *Diary of an Ennuyée*, highlighting the narrator's melancholy, indicates the importance of the diarist's identity for the travel account. Contemporary reviewers recognised the narrator's unhealthy and unhappy state as a significant part of the text's appeal. One reviewer notes that the diarist's ill health and ultimate death give 'an interest to the little work that it would otherwise want'.⁴⁵ Initially believing the work to be real, Mary Shelley writes in 'The English in Italy' (1826) that the sensitive, dying diarist demanded 'our deepest interest'.⁴⁶ Years later, Macpherson wrote of Jameson's *Diary* that few suffering women 'have been able to make their sorrows so interesting'.⁴⁷

Fanny Kemble famously expressed her disappointment upon seeing that the author of the anonymously published travelogue lived. Reflecting on her first meeting with Jameson, she writes: 'The *Ennuyée*, one is given to understand, dies; and it was a little vexatious to behold her sitting on a sofa, in a very becoming state of blooming *plumptitude*'.⁴⁸ Even once she becomes aware that the *Diary* is fictional, Kemble persists in conflating the identity of Jameson with that of her narrator. In her 1826 review essay, Shelley declares that upon 'having discovered that the sensitive, heartbroken, dying, dead diarist is a fictitious personage, we are angry at the trick of art that excited our real sympathy'.⁴⁹ In her memoirs, Macpherson also notes: 'the public in general is said to have been flatteringly disgusted by the discovery that it had been cheated, as it were, out of its sympathy, and that the author had not pined and died, and was buried in no convent garden'.⁵⁰ As these reactions indicate, readers often interpret travel accounts as extensions or embodiments of the historical writer, attaching the author to the whole of the text.

Persuasion to belief is fundamental to the agreement between the narrator and the reader of

⁴⁵ Anon, 'Diary of an Ennuyée', *The Literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, 478 (1826), 161-62 (p. 161).

⁴⁶ Mary Shelley, 'The English in Italy', *Westminster Review*, 6 (1826), 325-41 (p. 340).

⁴⁷ Macpherson, *Memoirs*, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁸ Kemble, *Record of a Girlhood*, I, p. 208.

⁴⁹ Shelley, 'The English in Italy', p. 340.

⁵⁰ Macpherson, *Memoirs*, p. 43.

a travel account.⁵¹ The ‘I’ of travel accounts is for the most part assumed by readers to be the author of the work; therefore, there usually exists in travel writing a type of ‘autobiographical pact’ between author and reader.⁵² Readers of Jameson’s text felt betrayed upon the discovery that this ‘autobiographical pact’ had been broken. Nonetheless, the work proved to be a commercial success, resulting in several editions. It even inspired a literary spin-off entitled *Diary of a Desennuyée* (1836), which documents the journey of a wealthy widow through Paris and London.⁵³ Despite the popularity of her publication, however, *Diary of an Ennuyée* was the only fictional work Jameson ever published.⁵⁴

The Benefits of Enacting the Role of Invalid Traveller

Recent scholarship has outlined the ways in which nineteenth-century women were associated with physical and psychological maladies, including hysteria, boredom, and melancholy.⁵⁵ While, as Matthews’ *Diary of an Invalid* demonstrates, health was linked to the masculine qualities of strength and virility, women were considered to be appropriately feminine and even especially attractive when they exhibited signs of physical weakness and reliance on men. Because women’s passive bodies were not considered to be

⁵¹ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 28.

⁵² Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 44.

⁵³ *The Diary of a Desennuyée* was written by Catherine Gore.

⁵⁴ According to Thomas, Jameson felt a continued embarrassment at having begun her rise to literary fame by the use of a broken-hearted heroine mask in her *Diary (Love and Work Enough)*, p. 37). Before its republication in the collection entitled *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* (1834), she prefixed the following polite and conventional apology (which may not be entirely sincere), performing the role of modest author:

If I have cheated some gentle readers out of much superfluous sympathy – as it has been averred – it was certainly without design. I can but repeat here the excuse already inserted in another place, ‘that the work in question was *not* written for publication, nor would ever have been printed but for accidental circumstances [...]’ I regret that even this deception was practiced, but would plead in excuse that the basis of that little book was truth, that it was, in reality, what it assumed to be, ‘a true picture of natural and feminine feeling.’

Anna Jameson, *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad: With Tales and Miscellanies Now First Collected, and a New Edition of the ‘Diary of an Ennuyée’*, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834), I, pp. 8-9).

⁵⁵ See Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity*; and Lee Anna Maynard, *Beautiful Boredom: Idleness and Feminine Self-Realization in the Victorian Novel* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2009).

compatible with any kind of substantial physical exertion or athletic activity, illness was perceived to be less threatening for women than for men. In some cases, invalidism even represented a type of carefully cultivated performance that reinforced women's gendered physical roles.

Shirley Foster argues that suitably feminine weakness, although an indulgence and possible source of power and respect for women at home, had no role to play in the life of mobility and adventure; instead, energy and resilience became essential qualities for women on the foreign tour.⁵⁶ Throughout the nineteenth century, male and female British travellers often approached the act of travel as a type of demanding job. Many engaged in copious amounts of research and preparation even before the start of the journey, participating in a type of rigorous rehearsal before an equalling arduous travel performance. In doing so, they adhered to the notion of travel as it was considered prior to the Enlightenment: the original definition of the word *travel* emerged from the Old French root *travailler*, meaning 'to labour'. With the emergence of Murray's and Baedeker's handbooks, travellers resolved to see as many sights listed in these travel guides as possible. John Pemble observes that 'the remorseless regime of museums, galleries, monuments, ruins, and churches' that nineteenth-century sightseers underwent required immense amounts of stamina.⁵⁷ Because ill travellers were compelled to limit their activities, many experienced a strong sense of disappointment and inadequacy, and a failure to be 'proper' travellers.

While in Italy, Jameson's narrator is occasionally vexed at her inability to see all that she would like. In Brescia she laments that she 'saw nothing, – being too ill and too low for the slightest exertion' (60). She refuses to describe her time in Bologna, declaring that 'the few days I have spent here have been to me days of acute suffering, in more ways than I wish to remember, and therefore dare not dwell upon' (88). Illness and emotional

⁵⁶ Foster, pp. 14, 49.

⁵⁷ John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 68.

pain not only diminish the traveller's ability to explore these cities properly, but also her willingness to reflect upon and write about them. Illness could be perceived as an obstacle to the narrator's role as a reliable traveller and travel guide, as the variability of the narrator's condition contributes to the instability of the text as a whole. When Jameson's narrator cannot find the physical or emotional strength to write, her malaise restricts her from documenting her travel experiences fully and accurately. Her diary is filled with gaps between days and even, as the Editor states in his preface, has pages missing which were torn out by the diarist in fits of melancholy. Due to the diary's omissions, gaps, and silences, the impression of narrative coherence and authority breaks down. The fracturing of the text could prove frustrating for a reader hoping for a thorough account of these Italian cities and sights. The narrator even lacks control over when and how her diary ends, and, due to her death, is unable to keep her diary private as she has supposedly intended.

However, Jameson's creation of an invalid travel narrator in Italy does far more than exemplify the drawbacks of invalidism abroad. Her travel narrative also exploits the power and symbolic significance of invalidism, and demonstrates the ways in which illness could imbue the sufferer with agency and insight, rather than with inactivity and passivity. The diarist's intense self-involvement, self-dramatisation, and 'absorbing, heart-rending compassion' (102) for her own suffering might at first seem to threaten her claim to one of the forms of authority that assumes a central role in contemporary travel discourses: the authority of an eyewitness who has carefully scrutinised foreign objects of commentary on the spot.⁵⁸ Yet the narrator indicates that illness is a powerful lens that can in fact heighten one's awareness of the surrounding environment. Jameson's *Diary* demonstrates the ability of illness to augment one's observational skills – a useful quality for the travel narrator who strives for credibility, since the 'eye' was believed to yield direct, unmediated, and personally verified experience.⁵⁹ She reveals that people are so accustomed to '[my] pale

⁵⁸ Chard, 'Scholarship and Sensibility', p. 59.

⁵⁹ Adler, 'Origins of Sightseeing', p. 11. Jameson's narrator refers to the 'eye' forty-four times in her diary.

face' and 'languid indifference' that 'I believe they are scarcely sensible of my presence: so I sit, and look, and listen, secure and harboured in my apparent dullness' (100-01). Illness acts as a type of cover, enabling her to observe her surroundings carefully without the threat of interruption. During the Carnival celebration in Naples, Jameson's narrator openly declares her advantage, proclaiming: 'I could not enter into all this with much spirit: [...] but I was an amused, though a quiet spectator; and sometimes saw much more than those who were actually engaged in the battle' (229). Likewise, after watching a performance at a private party in Rome, she observes a romantic glance passed between the singer and her lover, declaring that 'I was the only person who had witnessed this little by-scene; and it gave me pleasant thoughts and interest for the rest of the evening' (207). As a particularly astute spectator who often remains isolated from her fellow travellers, the narrator witnesses scenes that others do not. Despite following the well-trodden path of the conventional Grand Tour, she presents herself as one who can still glimpse the hidden realities of her Italian surroundings, to which her illness gives her privileged access.

An intrinsic part of the diarist's illness is her state of melancholy, to which she refers thirty times throughout her journal. Over the past several centuries, the terms *melancholy* and *melancholia* have adopted a variety of forms and meanings. Central to most of these has been the association between melancholic genius and creative energy, which emerged with the Italian humanism of the Renaissance and died out by the early eighteenth century.⁶⁰ The nineteenth century, however, witnessed a revival of the idea that melancholy brings moods of energy, creativity, and brilliance.⁶¹ Literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reintroduced the concept that melancholic suffering was associated with greatness; it was idealised as inherently valuable and even pleasurable, although dark and painful. As evident in Keats's writing, exalted pleasures

⁶⁰ Jennifer Radden, ed., *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 18, 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

were reserved for those subject to the suffering of melancholy.⁶² With her emphasis on the pleasures of melancholy and the inherent value of suffering for her narrator's travels, Jameson situates *Diary of an Ennuyée* within a melancholic literary tradition that ranges from Milton's 'Il Penseroso' (1645) to Keats's 'Ode on Melancholy' (1819). Just as the melancholic man in these works was one who felt more deeply, saw more clearly, and came closer to the sublime than did ordinary mortals, Jameson's narrator depicts her melancholic state as one that enables her to experience Italy on a more profound level.

The impact of the narrator's intense feelings on readers is illustrated by Shelley's lauding of Jameson's *Diary* for its expression of 'intelligence and feeling'.⁶³ Similarly, a reviewer in *The Literary Gazette* praised the diarist's poems for their 'real feeling'.⁶⁴ Chard argues that in nineteenth-century travel writing, the display of powerful feeling was supposed to testify to the on-the-spot immediacy of the traveller's encounter with the foreign, and thus reinforce the authenticity of his or her account.⁶⁵ Jameson's narrator places great emphasis on the power of suffering to accentuate her emotional responsiveness to places visited. She indicates that her perceptive abilities are not limited to her observational skills alone: 'All that I see, I *feel* – all that I *feel*, sinks so deep into my heart and my memory! the deeper because I suffer' (93). Likewise, she asserts: 'It is sorrow which makes our experience; it is sorrow which teaches us to feel properly for ourselves and for others. We must feel deeply before we can think rightly' (102). She also indicates her heightened powers of perception when she writes of her Roman surroundings: 'the commonest object has some interest attached to it, the commonest action is dignified by sentiment, the language around us is music, and the air we breathe is poetry' (192). As a vital element of her travel performance, the diarist's intense emotional

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶³ Shelley, 'The English in Italy', p. 340.

⁶⁴ Anon, 'Diary of an Ennuyée', p. 162.

⁶⁵ Chard, 'Scholarship and Sensibility', p. 59.

responsiveness allows her to claim additional authority by demonstrating her ability to perceive the deeper significance and beauty of the foreign.

Just as the narrator's heightened emotional responses induced by her suffering play a crucial role in altering her perceptions of Italian cities and scenery, they also play a significant part in shaping her artistic taste and provide her with a singular form of critical artistic insight and credibility. According to Macpherson, her aunt's suffering merely added 'but a delicacy the more to the visionary intellectual delights of an inexperienced mind fresh launched upon the great and varied splendid world of art and intellectual beauty'.⁶⁶ Macpherson continues by declaring that 'this interlude of travel at so critical a moment of her life did much to quicken the natural powers and cultivate the special tastes of the young Englishwoman who wandered so sadly through all the galleries, thinking that she found in every *Musée* and princely collection only the shadow of her own deep-seated sorrow'.⁶⁷ Similarly, Jameson's narrator is often drawn to the depiction of melancholy in art, interpreting Italy's artistic heritage in melancholic terms. When she focuses on despondent expressions in artwork, she suggests that she possesses a greater understanding of the 'tragic scenes [...] of human suffering' (336) portrayed due to her own experience of sorrow. The narrator notes that a painting of 'The Magdalen' by Guido contains 'in it a touch of melancholy, "all sorrow's softness charmed from its despair," which is quite exquisite' (160-61). She also admires the artist for the 'extremely affecting' (340) look of melancholy that he gave to his Madonnas. Jameson's narrator suggests she is only able fully to grasp these elements of Italian painting and relate to these suffering female figures due to her own condition. The narrator's descriptions of art in *Diary of an Ennuyée* imply that good artistic judgement and insight derive from challenging life experiences, in the form of illness and emotional hardship. Suffering can lead to inner development, which can apparently refine one's taste, understanding, and ability to feel significantly more than

⁶⁶ Macpherson, *Memoirs*, pp. 26-7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

can traditional modes of learning or connoisseurship. Moreover, the diarist views melancholy as a source of aesthetic pleasure: she perceives something beautiful and gratifying in these depictions of suffering and, by implication, in her own.

At one point, Jameson's *ennuyée* overtly states that her suffering is not in vain.

Considering the greater benefits brought about by her misfortune, she observes:

It is not in the tempest and storm of passions we can reflect, – but afterwards when *the waters have gone over our soul*; and like the precious gems and the rich merchandize which the wild wave casts on the shore out of the wreck it has made – such are the thoughts left by retiring passions. (102)

The 'precious gems' and 'rich merchandize' symbolise the intensified perception and feelings that the narrator experiences in Italy. She later repeats that her sorrow has a greater purpose. Declaring that the 'great Being [...] inflicts nothing in vain, and if I have suffered much, I have also learned much' (170), she suggests that her suffering has brought about a spiritual transformation. Rather than merely adopt the rhetoric of resignation, which is typical of Christian-focused invalid narratives, however, the diarist asserts her agency by suggesting throughout her journal that illness has both emotional and intellectual benefits that have increased her effectiveness as travel guide.⁶⁸

The Significance of Italy for the Invalid Traveller

Just as the diarist's ill selfhood shapes her understanding and experience of her travel destination, Italy shapes both her identity and her text in return. At the time of the publication of *Diary of an Ennuyée*, the prospect of any unified Italian country was uncertain, and Italy's national identity was continually being forged, contested, and reforged. Italy was therefore a particularly symbolic destination for the invalid traveller

⁶⁸ Thompson points out that the suffering traveller was also highly esteemed by Romantic poets; Wordsworth and Byron, for instance, conferred a cultural prestige upon seemingly disagreeable and undesirable travel experiences. Often the authority and authenticity of Romantic poetry was predicated on the claim that the travelling that produced it was arduous (*The Suffering Traveller*, pp. 5-7). Jameson's invalid diarist participates in a Romantic understanding of the traveller which included a valorisation of unpleasant, as opposed to pleasant, travel.

during this period: as a politically and culturally fragmented region that was ruled by foreign powers until 1861, the peninsula experienced its own fair share of afflictions and ailments. Italy exhibited a type of ‘invalidism’ in two senses of the term. First, it represented an ‘unhealthy’ region, in that it was politically and economically weak and incapacitated. It was also associated with poverty, violence, robbery, and disease, particularly in the South. Second, Italy was an ‘invalid’ nation, in the sense that it was ‘without validation’ and not a country in the eyes of the law. As a collection of provinces ruled by foreign authorities, it only existed as a nation in the imaginations of Italians and other supporters of a united Italy throughout Britain and the rest of Europe. Thus, the *Risorgimento* aptly alluded not only to the country’s rebirth, but also to its revival and recovery from a period of prolonged invalidism.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the gendered portrait of Italy as an unhappy woman in distress was prevalent in British culture in the decades leading up to Italian unification. Several nineteenth-century authors, ranging from Staël to Barrett Browning, personified Italy as a friendless, powerless, victimised, invalid, and even deceased woman.⁶⁹ Jameson’s narrator suggests that she can relate to Italy on a deeper emotional level, since it is a region that has also experienced loss and suffering, with ‘her laurel crown | Torn and defaced, and soiled with blood and tears’ (223). The narrator emphasises a strong emotional attachment to the land by repeatedly comparing Italy to a beloved female companion, such as when she writes that one leaves Rome ‘as we would bid adieu to an old and dear-loved friend’ (324), and that she loves all of Italy as ‘the face of a friend’ (379), bidding farewell to ‘her bright blue seas’ and ‘her fervid skies’ (348). By claiming Italy’s role as an intimate friend, the narrator privileges her knowledge and understanding

⁶⁹ Corinne proclaims that Italy is filled with a ‘grief which our consoling sky cannot wipe away’ (p. 32). She also tells Lord Nelvil that ‘perhaps you will come to feel an affection for this beautiful land which nature seems to have adorned like a victim’ (p. 54). In her poem, ‘Napoleon III in Italy’, Barrett Browning writes: ‘But Italy, my Italy, | Can it last, this gleam? | Can she live and be strong, | Or is it another dream | Like the rest we have dreamed so long?’. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Poems Before Congress* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1860), pp. 5-6. In the same poem, she also refers to Italy with ‘a wound in her breast’, ‘a flower in her hand’, and ‘a grave-stone under her head’ (p. 6).

of the peninsula. Therefore, she can frequently speak about Italy from an insider's perspective, and her ability to empathise and identify with the image of Italy as another invalid female makes her statements about the suffering region appear all the more credible.

Nineteenth-century Italy was not only symbolically associated with invalidism. In the Victorian era, 'ordering South' became a standard medical prescription for the well-to-do in search of healthier climates. Climatotherapy, or the use of climate as a curative agent, was based on the belief that climate could determine a patient's measure of fresh air and exercise, and act as a depressant or stimulant. In particular, Pisa, Rome, and Naples were frequently visited by the British for therapeutic reasons.⁷⁰ In his guide for invalid travellers abroad, Dr Madden records that in 1864 the number of English invalids (the majority of whom were consumptive patients) wintering in the South was calculated at between seven and eight thousand.⁷¹ However, Italy's warm and supposedly Edenic climate was not always conducive to healing, and invalids who visited the region were not always cured. Sandra Gilbert insightfully describes nineteenth-century Italy as a paradoxical space where one could glimpse the original moment (paradise) and the simultaneous fall from that moment (the grave).⁷² For many travellers, Italy represented a place of both beauty and decay, healing and deterioration. In an 1829 article in *The Medico-Chirurgical Review and Journal of Practical Medicine*, the author argues that the Italian climate, 'though beautiful to the eye and genial to the senses, is not the paradise which it is thought to be'.⁷³ Dr John Hennen, an eminent medical author and inspector of military hospitals, wrote in 1830 that the entire Mediterranean was 'immersed in the noisome vapour of untrodden marshes, and

⁷⁰ For a more in-depth discussion on nineteenth-century invalids abroad, see Pemble, pp. 84-92.

⁷¹ Thomas More Madden, *On Change of Climate: A Guide for Travellers in Pursuit of Health* (London: T. C. Newby, 1864), p. 32.

⁷² Gilbert, p. 195.

⁷³ Anon, 'Dr. Clark on the Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Diseases', *The Medico-Chirurgical Review, and Journal of Practical Medicine*, 11 (1829), 121-41 (p. 136).

fanned by no zephyrs but those which scatter disease and death from their wings'.⁷⁴ Until the late nineteenth century, most of the major cities and seaports in the Mediterranean were notorious among British medical men for their defective sanitation. Indeed, the politician and author Lord Ronald Gower declared in 1879 that both Rome and Naples 'resemble beautiful corpses, outwardly yet lovely, but internally full of death, decomposition, and decay'.⁷⁵

Italian cemeteries filled with British graves not only served as reminders of Italy's association with death and decay, but also provided British travellers with a particularly meaningful (albeit sombre) connection with Italy. Arthur Hugh Clough and Elizabeth Barrett Browning were buried in Florence. John Keats, John Addington Symonds, Augustus Hare, John Gibson, and William and Mary Howitt were buried in Rome. Naples contains the grave of Mary Somerville, and Bagni di Lucca that of Ouida. The communities of living British expatriates and travellers that existed in Italy continued on into death in the form of 'cemetery communities', such as the English Cemetery (*Cimitero degli Inglesi*) in Florence, and the Protestant Cemetery (*Cimitero Protestante* – now called the *Cimitero Acattolico*) in Rome. British travellers in Italy not only went in search of ancient tombs, but also of the graves of their recently deceased countrymen and family members. In a foreign region filled with an unfamiliar language, British graves provided travellers with a dose of familiarity. The average traveller who did not understand the Classical Latin inscribed on ancient Roman tombs could find comfort in reading inscriptions in a familiar language. Thus, although an excursion to a Protestant Cemetery was a melancholic one, it also provided travellers with a 'homecoming' of sorts. Surrounded by the tombs of fellow Britons and by English inscriptions on the graves, one could almost imagine oneself at home in Britain. Protestant cemeteries may have also evoked a sense of patriotism in British visitors. Tombs such as those belonging to Keats

⁷⁴ John Hennen, *Sketches of the Medical Topography of the Mediterranean* (London: T. and G. Underwood, 1830), p. 1.

⁷⁵ Lord Ronald Gower, *My Reminiscences*, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., 1883), II, p. 282.

and Shelley reminded travellers of the power of British talent, intellect, and imagination, and were a source of national pride.

In *Diary of an Ennuyée*, the diarist visits the Pyramid of Caius Cestius in Rome, which overlooks the nearby Protestant Cemetery. She observes that: '[a]round the base of the Pyramid lies the burying ground of strangers and heretics. Many of the monuments are elegant, and their frail materials and diminutive forms are in affecting contrast with the lofty and solid pile which towers above them' (171). The adjectives 'elegant', 'frail', and 'diminutive' portray the cemetery as a vulnerable and feminised space in contrast with the more 'masculine' and imposing Classical monument that towers above it. The frail tombstones encourage the narrator to reflect upon her own weakened condition, and the cemetery acts as a type of solemn stage upon which she can meaningfully perform the role of melancholic traveller. She continues: 'The tombs lie around in a small space "amicably close," like brothers in exile, and as I gazed I felt a kindred feeling with all; for I too am a wanderer, a stranger, and a heretic; and it is probable that my place of rest may be among them' (171). The diarist feels a strong connection with the tombs because her infirmity means that death in Italy is a likely possibility, and she too may one day be buried amongst these 'brothers in exile'.

British travellers who journeyed to Italy were not only confronted with their own and others' mortality, but also with Italy's perceived cultural and physical decay. Between 1775 and 1825, Joseph Luzzi argues, a process occurred that can be described as Italy's transition from Europe's 'museum' to its 'mausoleum'.⁷⁶ In other words, modern Italy came to embody a type of silent tomb, reminding visitors of its more glorious (living) past. In 1819, Percy Shelley wrote to his lifelong friend Amelia Curran that Rome 'is more like a sepulchre than a city; beautiful, but the abode of death'.⁷⁷ In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,

⁷⁶ Joseph Luzzi, 'Italy without Italians: Literary Origins of a Romantic Myth', *MLN*, 117 (2002), 48-83 (p. 50).

⁷⁷ Percy Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, p. 159.

Byron describes Italy as a ‘funeral dower of present woes and past’.⁷⁸ Jameson’s narrator also refers to Italy as a tomb, wishing to ‘worship as a pilgrim at the tomb of her departed glories’ (309).⁷⁹ For the diarist, as with many travellers, Italy’s magnificent cultural residue from its monumental past overwhelmed any signs of cultural activity in modern Italy. Jameson often presents her diarist as an enchanted, but superior, traveller, and as a knowledgeable commentator on Italy’s past, but never as an intimate of its living, present-day population.⁸⁰

Descriptions of British graves in the Protestant Cemetery and of Italy’s image as a tomb foreshadow the narrator’s own ‘grave’ state. While nineteenth-century invalid narratives are typically structured around the paradigms of crisis and recovery, Jameson resists and subverts this pattern.⁸¹ After the abrupt conclusion of her journal, in which the ennuyée writes, ‘—St. Albin. We arrived here yesterday’ (380), the Editor’s voice reappears. He explains: ‘The few sentences which follow, are not legible. Four days after the date of the last paragraph, the writer died at Autun in her 26th year, and was buried in the garden of the Capuchin Monastery, near that city’ (380). According to Walchester, the diarist’s death in Autun has political significance. Autun was a French town in which Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord was Bishop between 1789 and 1791. He was one of the main navigators at the Congress of Vienna, and was considered by many, including Lady Sydney Morgan and Charlotte Eaton, to have betrayed Italian interests by allowing Austria to gain control of Northern Italy. Walchester concludes that by setting the diarist’s death in Autun, Jameson’s parallel of a female Italy with the narrator reaches ‘a desolate vision of its present situation’.⁸² The diarist’s burial place is a bleak reminder of Italy’s

⁷⁸ Byron, 4.42.

⁷⁹ The word ‘tomb’ occurs seventeen times in her account.

⁸⁰ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 76.

⁸¹ Harriet Martineau, *Life in the Sick-Room*, ed. with introd. and notes by Maria H. Frawley (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003 [1844]), p. 27.

⁸² Walchester, p. 201.

fragmentary political and social condition. Just as her narrator has died, Jameson suggests that Italy, her counterpart, has little hope for the future.

Although Walchester's argument is compelling, I suggest that where Jameson's narrator does *not* die is equally significant. The fact that she does not die in Italy reinforces Italy's role in her journey as nurturing carer and healer and foregrounds the revivifying and invigorating power of Italian travel for the weary soul.⁸³ While Jameson's protagonist sees a reflection of her situation in Italy's images of invalidism, death, decay, and tombs, she simultaneously draws strength from Italy's rejuvenating atmosphere, which keeps her alive throughout her travels there. Just as her suffering has the capacity to enrich her travel experience, her journey to Italy gradually improves her physical and mental health, providing temporary restoration and relief. In Rome, she writes: 'The day has been perfectly lovely; the sky intensely blue without a single cloud; and though I was weak and far from well, I felt the influence of the soft sunshine in every nerve: the pure elastic air seemed to penetrate my whole frame, and made my spirits bound and my heart beat quicker' (201). She also writes that while visiting Mola di Gaeta, 'the sea breeze which blew against my temples, new strung every nerve' (278). These passages demonstrate that the diarist's senses become heightened in Italy, and her body is transformed into a particularly acute filter for sensual experience. The narrator's poems also indicate that her health improves as her journey progresses. Tricia Lootens explains that at first the *Diary's* poetic passages speak almost exclusively of the author's deep, personal sorrow; in time, however, 'increasingly seduced by imagined histories of national greatness as called forth by feminised Italian landscapes, the diarist becomes distracted from her project of languishing'.⁸⁴ As her diary proceeds, the poems look beyond the author's self-absorbed suffering and become odes dedicated to Italy, praising the land's 'blue luxurious skies' and

⁸³ Frawley, *Invalidism and Identity*, p. 137.

⁸⁴ Tricia Lootens, 'Fear of *Corinne*: Anna Jameson, Englishness and the "Triste Plaisir" of Italy', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 39 (2003), 178-89 (p. 183).

‘[s]parkling fountains’ (295). This shift in poetic passages illustrates not only the deepening love the diarist feels for Italy, but also the land’s healing powers.

Jameson’s *Diary* also presents Italian travel as a physically transformative experience, which imbues the narrator with instances of newfound bodily strength. Italy’s healing nature gradually enables the ennuyée to challenge physical boundaries, stylising her body in new ways and demonstrating that the body is a dramatic entity that is, according to Butler, not merely matter but a continual and incessant materialising of possibilities.⁸⁵ In the first half of the text, Jameson’s narrator frequently affirms herself as a delicate invalid who is easily fatigued, and her invalidism acts as an index of the degree of her femininity.⁸⁶ As the length of her stay in Italy increases, however, the physical symptoms of her illness disappear for increasingly substantial periods of time. The delicate narrator in Jameson’s *Diary* is increasingly able to exhibit feats of energy and physical strength, such as when climbing up the dome of St Peter’s, hiking to the top of a ruined castle, and ascending Mount Vesuvius during an eruption. She repeatedly refers to incidents that test her physical capability, such as when she pushes the door of the ruined castle open ‘with all [her] strength’ (364) or runs back down to the shore from the castle so quickly that she arrives ‘out of breath’ (367). Exhibiting a boldness of spirit, the narrator states that when faced with the option of continuing towards the top the erupting Vesuvius or turning back, ‘I was of course one of those who advanced’ (243). She also notes that she hiked onwards with ‘confidence’ (245), performing the role of male adventurous explorer. The day after the lengthy climb up Vesuvius she even boasts that ‘I rose this morning at my usual hour, and do not feel much fatigued’ (248), stressing her body’s newfound capability and strength. Her ascent of the dome of St Peter’s provides her with a ‘sublime’ (187) prospect; the view from the top of the ruined castle bestows upon her a ‘feeling of

⁸⁵ Butler, ‘Performative Acts’, p. 272.

⁸⁶ The narrator repeatedly refers to excessive fatigue and feelings of faintness. See for example pp. 158 and 307. It is often during her weakest moments that the diarist exhibits the greatest femininity, fashioning herself as a suitably delicate victim of her illness.

rapture' (365); and the climb up Vesuvius presents her with a 'tremendous scene' (249). It is only after testing the limits of her strength and 'performing' her body in new ways that the diarist experiences the most improvisatory and exhilarating moments of her journey. Enacting an alternative type of travel script/identity – one associated with physical capability and an adventurous spirit rather than with feminine weakness and timidity – represents the potential for newfound empowerment and gratification for Jameson's narrator.

Only after she leaves Italy, passing through France en route to Britain, does the narrator's health take a serious turn for the worse. Her final substantial diary entry records her arrival in Lyon, and noting the 'smoking manufactories' (227) of that industrial city, the narrator indicates that Lyon lacks the remarkable sights and culture so prevalent in Italy. The factories are hubs of mass-production – the antithesis of the precious hand-made works of art admired by the diarist on her Italian travels. Moreover, while the diarist associates Italian cities with spontaneous and enthusiastic musical performances, Lyon's 'whining organ' (227) music represents a type of soulless, mechanical performance. Unlike Italy, the French city does not represent a place in which the narrator can perform the role of emotionally responsive traveller; the 'dirty streets' do not provide a fitting stage upon which she can play out a meaningful emotional drama. By the time the narrator leaves this city, the metamorphosis from vigour and strength back to frailty and illness is complete.

Italy is not only a significant travel destination for Jameson as travel narrator; as a site of women's artistic creation, expression, and performance, it inspired Jameson as author to engage in the greatest degree of self-dramatisation. Crucially, *Diary of an Ennuyée* is more focused on travel (and travel writing) as a form of performance than Jameson's other travelogues; it presents the most overtly staged travel persona of her three travel accounts, creating a romantic heroine in the form of a 'governess apotheosized into a

romantic high-born young lady'.⁸⁷ Jameson's subsequent travel publications – *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* (1834) and *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838) – eschew the sentimental posturings of a fictional protagonist for an open traveller apparently willing to share all she sees with her readership.⁸⁸ In *Visits and Sketches*, which describes Jameson's travels in Germany, the author discards the fictional approach of her *Diary* in favour of the popular criticism of society, literature, and art. While *Diary of an Ennuyée* documents the struggles of an invalid narrator, Jameson's travels through Germany in *Visits and Sketches* occur under more favourable circumstances. Jameson's *Winter Studies* keeps the author emphatically centre-stage; however, unlike her Italian travelogue, Jameson's Canadian is noteworthy 'for the frankness of its tone and the exactness of its detail and at the same time insisting on its author's complete responsibility for the opinions she expresses'.⁸⁹ Jameson presents her relation to Canada as transient, and she aims to engage in a distanced and ostensibly objective gaze when focusing on Canadian culture. This approach differs from the strong emotional attachment Jameson's diarist purportedly feels for Italy. These latter two travel texts strive to be informative and objective accounts, and lack an emphasis on the narrator's highly sentimental responses and personal growth. Sights and social issues, as opposed to the narrator, become the focus of Jameson's German and Canadian travel narratives, and intense yet ultimately beneficial suffering has no role to play in these travel performances.

⁸⁷ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, p. 30.

⁸⁸ Johnston, 'Fracturing Perspectives', p. 22.

⁸⁹ Thomas, *Love and Work Enough*, pp. 126-27.

CHAPTER 4

Susan Horner's Journeys, Journals, and Gems: The Unpublished Travel Accounts of an Intellectual Woman in Italy

Susan Horner refers to her friend Anna Jameson several times in her second of two Italian travel journals, written over three decades after the publication of *Diary of an Ennuyée*.¹ After a day spent exploring Pisa, Horner mentions reading 'Mrs Jameson, Murray, and the *Gazzetta del Popolo*' (II, 12^v).² She also notes a meeting with 'Mrs Sherwin (Mrs Jameson's sister)' (II, 56^f), remarks on a recently completed bust of Jameson (II, 63^r), and compares the 'remarkable' headmistress of an Italian school to 'a young Mrs Jameson' (II, 69^f).³ It is clear from her journal that Horner greatly admired the author and strongly associated her with Italy. Her comments about Jameson also point to the presence of a close-knit network of nineteenth-century British compatriots who travelled to and wrote about Italy.⁴ Moreover, Horner's references to Jameson reinforce the notion of travel and travel writing as ritualistic activities, which engage in performances of repetition and adaptation, and which carry with them traces of previous journeys and travel accounts.⁵ In a manner that is reminiscent of many travelogues by invalids abroad, Horner's second journal demonstrates the traveller's strong concern for the health of her family and herself, recording ailments ranging from headaches to indigestion. In spite of occasional physical complaints, however, Horner's journal also describes the activities of an ambitious

¹ Following Geneva Cobb-Moore, I employ the terms 'journal' and 'diary' interchangeably. See Geneva Cobb-Moore, 'When Meanings Meet: *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*', in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. by Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 139-55 (p. 140).

² Because she too is in Italy, it is possible that Horner is reading Jameson's *Diary*.

³ Horner commissioned this bust and an accompanying plinth (upon which is written a lengthy inscription) for Jameson after her death. Her friend, the sculptor John Gibson, agreed to produce the bust at a low price out of his respect for Jameson, while his fellow sculptor William Theed created the plinth. See Peter Funnell, 'Anna Jameson's Plinth', <http://www.npg.org.uk/blog/anna-jamesons-plinth.php?tags=19th_century> [accessed 26 August 2014]. For further evidence of the connection between Jameson and the Horner family, see Erskine, pp. 295 and 338.

⁴ As further confirmation of the network of British writers abroad, Anna Jameson was acquainted with Samuel Rogers, the author of the popular poem *Italy* (1822), and the Brownings. Horner notes in her journal that her family's maid in Florence 'was once maid to Mrs Browning' (II, 59^v).

⁵ Lengthy quotations from John Milton and Samuel Rogers in Horner's first travel journal further indicate the tendency of travel writing to draw upon other works of literature, or scripts.

sightseer, whose deep interest in Italian art is reminiscent of Jameson's diarist. Similarly, her journals are vessels for the performative act of identity-formation. Yet her approach to travel writing differs from that of her friend in several ways: namely, Horner does not fictionalise her journals as Jameson does.

Much work remains to be done on the study of women's unpublished travelogues, which challenge the boundaries between public and private writing, and which mediate the travel experience in distinctive ways. As Suzanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff argue, diaries' place within the literary canon has been marginal, and diaries have often been ignored compared to more visible forms of writing.⁶ The lack of critical attention paid to unpublished travel accounts may in part be explained by the fact that many such accounts are now lost or difficult to find. It may also be due to the notion that unpublished women's writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was considered to be less rebellious and intriguing because it did not 'dare' to enter the male sphere of publishing. Therefore its lack of 'boldness' may be seen to reduce its impact value for scholarship.

This chapter foregrounds the rich content of Horner's two unpublished diaries, currently housed in the British Institute of Florence, which document the author's two separate voyages to Italy and represent important literary and historical documents. Pamela Corpron Parker argues that 'albums of any kind, whether photo albums or family scrapbooks, provide illuminating representations of their creators' self-fashioning, and thus provide productive sources of analysis'.⁷ In a similar vein, my study of Horner's travel journals brings into play issues of self-construction alongside the construction of material objects. This chapter explores Horner's self-fashioning through her travel journals, as she performs the role of an intellectual and authoritative traveller. Her journals indicate the

⁶ Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff, 'Issues in Studying Women's Diaries: A Theoretical and Critical Introduction', in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. by Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 1-20 (p. 2).

⁷ Pamela Corpron Parker, 'Woman of Letters: Elizabeth Gaskell's Autograph Collection and Victorian Celebrity', in *Material Women, 1750-1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices*, ed. by Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 265-78 (p. 266).

presence of an imaginary reader who always hovers at the edge of any written document, regardless of whether or not it is written for publication. The study of Horner's travel diaries also brings into play the connections between manuscript diary records and published travelogues; her journals challenge the dichotomies between public and private, published and unpublished texts. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which Horner's journals provide a space for mediating the author's version of Italy. They depict Florence in particular as an ideal intellectual haven in which Horner could cultivate her erudite identity to the fullest.

Setting the Stage



Fig. 4.1 Undated photograph of Susan Horner taken during her final sojourn in Florence.

The third of six daughters, Susan Horner (1816-1900) [Figure 4.1] was born into a politically and philanthropically engaged Scottish family imbued with a firm Protestant work ethic. Her uncle, Francis Horner, was a politician and cofounder of the *Edinburgh Review*. Susan Horner's diverse scholarly pursuits, interest in foreign cultures, and concern for social issues, such as education, were strongly influenced by her father, Leonard Horner, who was a formidable intellectual force in his daughters' lives and who encouraged them to challenge the conventional nineteenth-century 'idea of "woman"', to use Butler's words.⁸ Elected Fellow of the Royal Society at the age of twenty-eight, Mr Horner was an eminent and respected social reformer and geologist who engaged in scientific debates and discussions with his famous geologist friends Charles Darwin and Charles Lyell. He was twice president of the Geological Society, was a strong advocate of part-time education for working-class children, and became one of the most influential of the first English factory inspectors, following the Factory Act of 1833.⁹ Leonard Horner's interest in education and his role as factory inspector made his daughters socially aware from an early age.

The Horner sisters were educated as thoroughly as if they had been boys, and letters indicate that their father treated them as intellectual equals, instilling a sense of agency in his daughters from early on.¹⁰ All six were authors and/or translators, and their publications ranged from botanical to historical treatises, but avoided fiction altogether. In 1854, Susan Horner published an anonymous memoir of Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian president ousted from power a few years earlier and at that time living in exile in England.¹¹ She then translated Pietro Colletta's *History of the Kingdom of Naples, 1734-*

⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 273. The fact that Horner's intellectual behaviour was so strongly influenced by her father demonstrates Greenblatt's argument that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions (such as the family) are inseparably intertwined (Greenblatt, p. 256).

⁹ According to Bernice Martin, Mr Horner introduced the admission of women to the society's meetings in his second Presidency of the Geological Society (1860-62). The rule was reversed after his presidency and women were not readmitted to the society until 1904. Bernice Martin, 'Leonard Horner: A Portrait of an Inspector of Factories', *International Review of Social History*, 14 (1969), 412-43 (p. 417).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

¹¹ Janet Browne, *Charles Darwin*, 2 vols (London: Pimlico, 2003), I, p. 357.

1825 (1858). She also penned the biographical and historical accounts *A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily* (1860) and *The Tuscan Poet Giuseppe Giusti, and his Times* (1864). Horner and her sister Joanna published a popular two-volume travel guide entitled *Walks in Florence and its Environs* (1873), of which several editions were produced. Near the end of her life, Horner wrote an educational treatise on Greek vases in the Louvre and British Museum (1897). Horner's publications are extremely detailed and thoroughly researched, mirroring the meticulous nature of her unpublished travel diaries.

Despite their intellectual accomplishments and eminent connections, the Horners have remained almost entirely neglected in contemporary scholarship. Throughout the past decades, scholars such as Bernice Martin and Colin Brown have focused solely on the accomplishments of Leonard Horner, including his contribution to education and his role as English factory inspector.¹² Yet neither Susan Horner nor her sisters have been the subject of a published book or article to this date. Thus far, the Horner daughters have only been cited in relation to their connection with Darwin, and authors have portrayed the Horner girls as potential romantic objects rather than compelling individuals in their own right.¹³ According to Janet Browne's 2003 biography of Darwin, the natural historian and geologist was a potential suitor for the girls, and Mr and Mrs Horner were keen to have him as a son-in-law.¹⁴ Deborah Heiligman's novel also depicts Darwin as a prospective husband for one of the Horner sisters, whom the author describes as 'clever young women, well-read and educated, with promising intellectual futures'.¹⁵ However, Darwin's role as a

¹² Colin Brown, 'Leonard Horner, 1785-1864: His Contribution to Education', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 17 (1985), 1-10.

¹³ Susan and her sister Joanna never married; however, the other four sisters all married scholarly men. Horner's eldest sister Mary married Charles Lyell. Frances married the English naturalist Sir Charles James Fox Bunbury, and founded two schools on her husband's estate. Katherine married Colonel Henry Lyell, younger brother of Charles. Leonora married the historian Chevalier George Pertz of Berlin (Martin, 'Leonard Horner', p. 422, note 3).

¹⁴ Browne, I, p. 357.

¹⁵ Deborah Heiligman, *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), p. 7.

suitor is largely a matter of interpretation; in an 1837 letter written to Mrs Horner he merely refers to the 'pure brotherly affection' he feels for her daughters.¹⁶

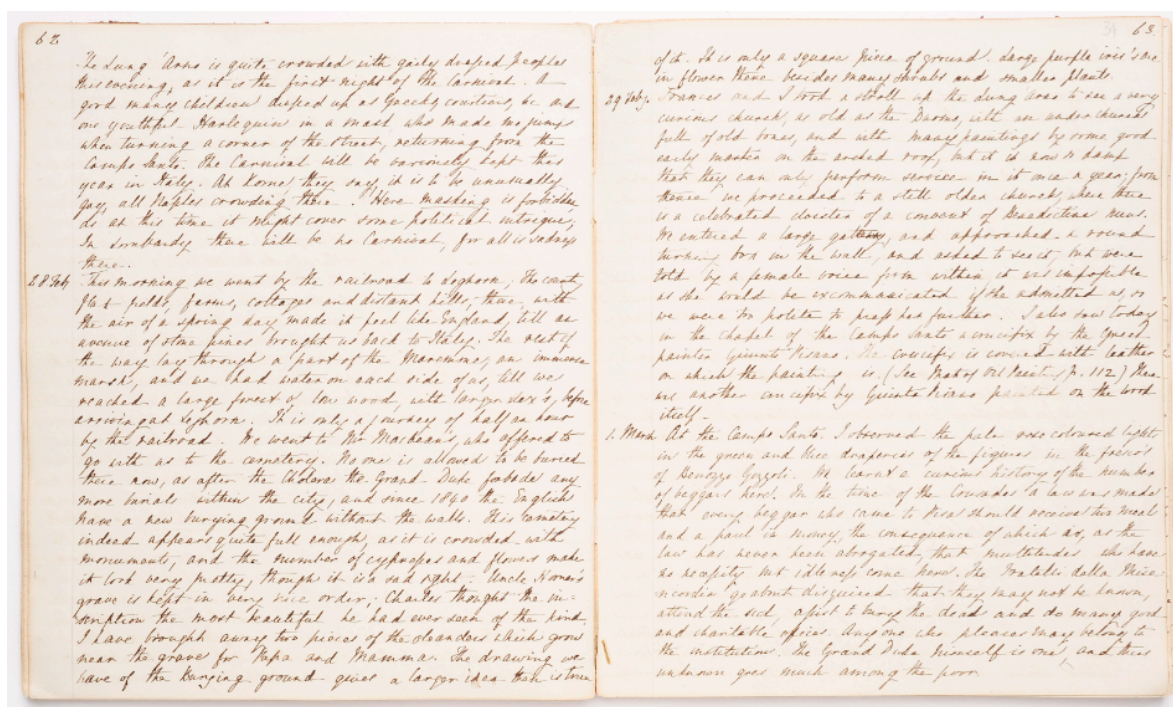


Fig. 4.2 Detail of two pages from Horner's first Italian journal

Horner's first travel journal provides a record of her Italian voyage from 1847 to 1848, when she toured Italy for the first time, aged thirty-one, accompanied by her sister Frances and brother-in-law Charles [Figure 4.2]. The journal measures nineteen by twenty-two centimetres, and includes a hardboard leather cover and sixty-four leaves.¹⁷ It is labelled *Journal of a Tour in France and Italy*, recalling the generic titles of many nineteenth-century published travelogues.¹⁸ In contrast to her second journal, this one consists solely of text and, in the manner of a published guidebook, includes a comprehensive index of the cities and sights discussed in the volume. The diary focuses primarily on the Italian art Horner studied closely in public galleries and in artists' private studios. Almost every entry describes at least one work of art, focusing on its shading,

¹⁶ Charles Darwin, letter to Horner, A. S., 9 August 1837 (Letter 372), in *Darwin Correspondence Project* (University of Cambridge, 2013) <<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-372>> [accessed 21 January 2015].

¹⁷ For both journals I refer to leaf numbers, rather than to pages numbering on both sides of each leaf. The manuscript was recently restored, but not given a new cover.

¹⁸ While it recounts her journey through France on her way to Italy, the majority of Horner's journal focuses on her time in Italy.

colouring, and composition. Due to the nature of her first voyage, in which she visits several cities in France and Italy, Horner's journal draws from the model of published Grand Tour journals, being written in the form of linear narrative.

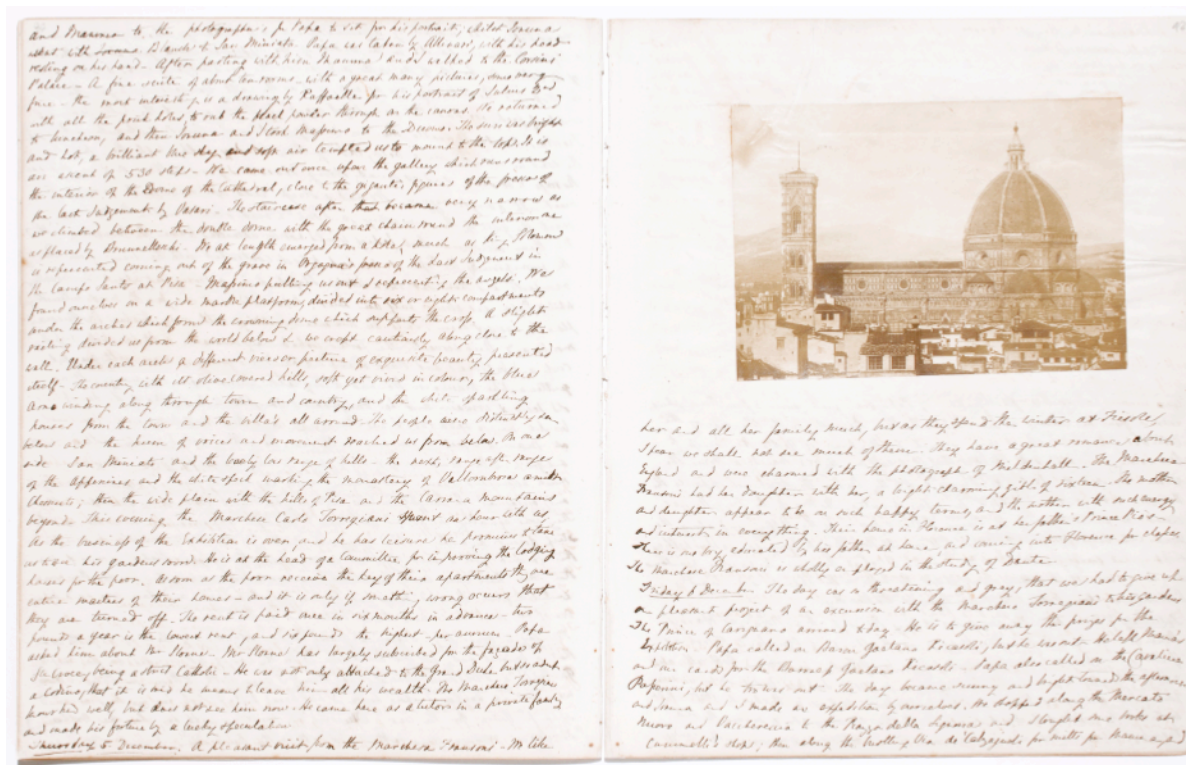


Fig. 4.3 Detail of two pages from Horner's second Italian journal, including a photograph of the Duomo at eye level to the upper story and dome.

The second, untitled journal documents Horner's eight-month sojourn in Florence with her parents and sister Joanna from 1861 to 1862 [Figure 4.3]. The family moved to the city to improve the health of the ailing Mrs Horner, thus embracing the nineteenth-century health trend discussed in the previous chapter.¹⁹ This diary is larger than the first, measuring twenty-four by thirty centimetres and containing ninety-three leaves.²⁰ Although Horner views several works of art during her second Italian visit, they receive less attention than in her first journal; as part of her intensified interest in social reform, Horner

¹⁹ Near the end of the journal, shortly before the family's departure from Florence, Horner records the unexpected death of her mother. Thus, Florence is not only an intellectually significant space for the author, but also an emotionally meaningful one. For Horner, the city represents a place of transformation and fulfilment, as well as sadness and loss.

²⁰ According to British Institute archivist Alyson Price, it was rebound and given a new cover following accession to the British Institute, probably in the 1960s. It was restored and given a new leather cover and slipcase a few years ago. Alyson Price, 'Horner Questions', private email to Hannah Sikstrom, 12 December 2011.

combines cultural sightseeing with philanthropic excursions, such as visits to various schools. The journal is an elaborate scrapbook or 'travel album', which includes photographs and drawings that range from portraits of family members, friends, and important Italian political figures, to images of Florentine sites. It also contains Italian poems, songs, and newspaper cuttings. Thus, her second journal represents a textual *and* visual travel chronicle, which is punctuated with images representing various sights and points of interest. These extratextual elements not only reshape and extend the written commentary, but also contribute to the shaping of Horner's travel identity. The text records habitual activities, such as errands, visits with neighbouring acquaintances, and weekly excursions to the Uffizi Gallery; its cyclical nature contrasts with the first journal's linearity.

Horner's second diary is also noteworthy because it provides insight into the habits of both the expatriate and Italian communities in Florence. In the manner of their compatriots, the Horners formed many non-Italian acquaintances during their extended stay in Florence. The family was close friends with the poet Arthur Hugh Clough and his wife, and Horner's journal documents Clough's illness, death, and burial in the English Cemetery in Florence. The Horners visited the scientist and astronomer Mary Somerville, who was living in Italy. They were close friends with the Pulszkys, an esteemed Hungarian family living in Florence. In addition, they attended popular receptions at the Palazzo Pitti, where they mingled with fellow expatriates.

However, the Horner family was remarkable because they also interacted with and befriended local Italians, many of whom they met through Somerville and the Pulszkys. Due to Leonard Horner's eminent reputation, the Horners were well connected in intellectually and politically liberal Italian circles. The family became acquainted with many prominent Florentines, including Baron Ricàoli, the Tuscan Minister of the Interior; Professor Migliarini, an antiquarian, professor, linguist, and author who, in his old age,

worked at the Uffizi Gallery; Filippo Parlatore of the Natural History Museum; the statesmen and historians Marchese Capponi and Pasquale Villari; Marchese Sauli, the governor of Tuscany; the astronomer and mathematician Giovanni Plana; the politician Carlo Torrigiani; and even the *Risorgimento* hero Giuseppe Garibaldi, with whom the Horners dined before their return to England.

The Performed Self in Horner's Journals

Horner's travel journals act as significant spaces for identity-formation and offer a carefully constructed depiction of the author by means of reiteration. Throughout both diaries, Horner consistently performs the part of an intellectual and dedicated traveller, who repeatedly observes, analyses, questions, and explores her surroundings. Evidently Horner's love of learning was not limited to her travels alone and she engaged in a lifelong practice of staging herself as an intellectual. Her obituary in *The Athenaeum* defines the author 'by her enthusiasm for all things beautiful and honest; by her keen and, to the very last, almost childlike interest in all that was going on around her, in every new work of art, in every fresh development of science'.²¹ In presenting herself as a studious traveller in Italy, Horner constructs a more intensified version of her social identity in daily life.

Horner's passion for knowledge is emphasised by the sheer number of activities that she records in her Italian travelogues. Her first journal describes the author's countless visits to museums, art galleries, and artists' studios, which are interspersed with periods of sketching, reading, and political discussions. Throughout her second journal, Horner documents and describes the books about Italy which she has published or is in the process of writing; her keen interest in contemporary issues concerning Italian politics and education; the various local schools she visits; the scholarly lectures she attends with her

²¹ Anon, 'Miss Ann Susan Horner', *The Athenaeum*, 3816 (1900), 793-94 (p. 794).

father; and the professors, politicians, statesmen, and authors whom she and her family befriend. In particular, Horner spends a great deal of time in the Uffizi with the learned Professor Migliarini, with whom she shared a broad range of intellectual interests. Her diary records the vast array of subjects the two discuss, including art, politics, mythology, religion, history, and literature.

In the spirit of Victorians who treated travel as an all-consuming job, Horner's diaries portray a traveller who does not waste a single moment. Describing a day in Florence in her first journal, she writes: 'This has been a most busy day, and full of interest' (I, 43^r). Horner's energy and dedication are also evident in her second journal when she writes that after a morning of pouring rain: 'Joanna and I trudged under umbrellas to the Nat. History Museum, and she looked at fossils and I at the specimens of precious stones' (II, 63^r). As if that were not enough, she ends her day by running errands, reading a historical treatise on Venice, and writing letters. Horner's desire to make the most of her time abroad evidently stemmed from her upbringing. Leonard Horner's capacity for sustained and often unrelenting hard work strongly influenced his children. He once advised his daughter Mary in a letter:

Do not allow yourself to look back vaguely on the past, and accuse yourself of mis-spent time; when you are undressing for bed, review each day, and if you are satisfied upon the close review, that what you did amiss arose from circumstances which you could not avoid, you need have no cause for self-reproach.²²

According to her two journals, Horner could certainly not be accused of mispending her time. The diaries may have acted as vessels for self-examination in which Horner could assess her productivity and provide an accurate record of the various tasks and activities that she accomplished.

Notably, in her construction of a travel selfhood Horner rarely draws attention to her position as a *female* traveller, and thus offers a different example of a traveller from the three other authors discussed in this thesis. Because she is writing an unpublished account,

²² Katherine M. Lyell, ed., *Memoir of Leonard Horner: Consisting of Letters to his Family and Some of his Friends*, 2 vols (London: Women's Printing Society, 1890), I, p. 221.

she does not need to negotiate gendered literary conventions or cater to the expectations of publishers who encouraged the ‘forcible citation’ of heterosexual norms.²³ Even when she occasionally includes ‘feminine’ details, such as references to clothing, errands, or domestic routines, these do not so much represent overt performances of ‘appropriate’ female behaviour, as examples of Horner’s desire to be precise, thorough, and truthful in her records. In many instances, Horner’s brief references to clothing or errands merely illustrate what Rebecca Hogan has described as the paratactic form of a diary, by which she means that in its grammar, syntax, and content the diary operates on the same principle as grammatical parataxis, in which clauses are joined without connectives that would suggest how items are related.²⁴ When Horner writes that ‘I wasted my morning in a vain attempt to make up a bonnet. I translated some of Migliarini’s pamphlet for about an hour and a half’ (II, 70^v-71^r), she illustrates the inclusive nature of the diary form, where, as Hogan puts it, ‘there is no subordination to suggest that one idea or event is more important than another’.²⁵ Passages such as this indicate Horner’s desire to relay as much information as possible and to paint a complete picture of her time spent abroad.

Horner’s lack of focus on her femininity underlines my argument that women travel writers are a product of other factors than merely their gender. For, as Smith argues, the autobiographical subject (including the travel writer) finds him or herself on multiple stages simultaneously, called to heterogeneous recitations of identity.²⁶ Horner’s textual identity appears to be influenced by her liberal, middle-class background, strong work ethic, and pursuit of knowledge, more than by her position as a woman. Rather than foreground a distinctly feminine self, she prefers to focus on her surroundings and provide dispassionate, intellectual responses to these sights. Her adoption of a position of rational enquiry is evident by the large number of questions Horner asks of locals, and a narrative

²³ Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 232.

²⁴ Rebecca Hogan, ‘Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form’, in *Autobiography and Questions of Gender*, ed. by Shirley Neuman (Portland: Frank Cass, 1991), pp. 95-107 (pp. 102-03).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

²⁶ Smith, ‘Performativity’, p. 110.

voice that eschews excessive emotionalism in favour of precise, empirical observation.²⁷

Thus, her journals exhibit a more ‘masculine’ voice by nineteenth-century standards, challenging the biological ‘fixity’ of gender identity and normative Victorian gender codes.²⁸

Another important vehicle in the process of Horner’s self-fashioning is the audience of her travel accounts. The importance of an audience, real or implied, conscious or unconscious, of any written text, regardless of whether or not it is intended for publication, cannot be overstated.²⁹ As stressed by Lynn Bloom, it is a mistake to think of diaries as a genre composed primarily of ‘private’ writings. She claims that it is the real or imagined audience ‘hovering at the edge of the page that for the sophisticated diarist facilitates the work’s ultimate focus’, providing the incentive either for initial writing or for transforming casual or fragmented notes into a carefully crafted and coherent work.³⁰ The presence of a sense of audience in diaries, as in all forms of writing, has a crucial impact on what is said and how it is said.³¹ More importantly, it also influences the diarist’s performance of self on the page. The audience of Horner’s Italian journals may have only been imagined. Horner could have also been partly writing for herself, as a personal record. As a professional writer, however, it is likely that Horner had a real audience in mind when composing her texts.³²

Laurie Kane Lew notes that the nineteenth-century sketch and journal circulated largely among private audiences, and could be seen as gendered practices that opened up

²⁷ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 176.

²⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 202.

²⁹ Margo Culley, ‘Introduction to *A Day at a Time: Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to 1985*’, in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 217-221 (p. 218). Although Culley’s work examines the diaries of American women throughout a broad time period, her emphasis on the construction of the self and the presence of a sense of an audience in unpublished forms of writing is relevant to my own work on Horner.

³⁰ Lynn Z. Bloom, ‘“I Write for Myself and Strangers”: Private Diaries as Public Documents’, in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women’s Diaries*, ed. by Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) pp. 23-37 (pp. 23-24).

³¹ Culley, p. 218.

³² Bloom contends that ‘for a professional writer there are no private writings’; a professional writer ‘is never off-duty’ (pp. 24-25).

possibilities for women as creators and observers.³³ While there is no concrete evidence that Horner's journals were ever privately circulated, I suggest that these writings represented a source of agency and provided a space in which she could mould an intellectual self into text – a self that could be approved of and admired by her scholarly family and the erudite social circles in which she moved. According to Horner's diaries and Leonard Horner's letters, the Horners were communicative about their work and interests, frequently sharing their studies and writings with one another, and critiquing and editing each other's work. Horner likely showed her meticulously constructed travel journals to close family members and friends in a domestic setting (parts of the journals may even have been read aloud in the process of or after their creation), which would have been a means of consolidating familial and personal bonds. The readers of her journals would have also played an active and significant role in interpreting them. Since her journals are in manuscript form, and evidently leave out certain details, readers would have made decisions about how to read the texts' 'abbreviations, gaps, silences, and equivocalities', thus giving them a certain amount of precedence over the author.³⁴ In addition, the paratactic elements of Horner's journals would engage readers in making meaningful connections within and across various diary entries. Moreover, her parents and sisters would have brought their own Italian experiences to their reading, and Horner's journals would have provided an excellent source of both nostalgic reminiscences and erudite discussions.

³³ Lew, p. 843.

³⁴ Theresa Tinkle, 'The Wife of Bath's Textual/ Sexual Lives', in *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*, ed. by George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 55-88 (p. 67).



Fig. 4.4 Pencil drawing labelled 'Sketch of Savonarola taken from the picture by Fra Bartolomeo in the Accademia'.



Fig. 4.5 Pen and ink drawing labelled 'Professor Minichini'.



Fig. 4.6 Pen and ink drawing of the monument at Quarto, with the inscription copied out. Below is the preserved plant gathered by Horner at Quarto.

Horner's awareness of an audience is evident in the process of careful selection and arrangement of detail in her texts. Her journals demonstrate that even unpublished travel texts are constructed artefacts, which should never be read as simply a 'transparent window' on the world.³⁵ Beneath the title of her first travel journal, Horner writes that the text is 'extracted from my Letters Home and Notebooks' and written in 1849, a year after her return.³⁶ This suggests that Horner was both an author and an editor with narrative licence, carefully choosing which details and words to privilege over others. By revealing the delayed nature of her account, Horner also avoids any claim to 'on-the-spot' composition.³⁷ Her journals, both of which were compiled at home in England, represent

³⁵ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 30.

³⁶ Unfortunately, the whereabouts of these original texts, if they still exist, remain unknown.

³⁷ Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, p. 96.

pronounced acts of reflection, recollection, and invention, which frequently shift between the past and present tense. Their delayed creation must have given Horner the gratifying opportunity of reliving her travels in textual and pictorial form. The neatness of her handwriting in both journals further attests to their meticulous construction and to the evident pride that she took in creating the documents. In order to present a layout of visual material surrounded by pristine text in her second journal, Horner would have thought carefully about the exact placement of each picture, sketch, and newspaper clipping [Figures 4.4 and 4.5]. The carefully constructed nature of these journals indicates the presence of a reader who hovers at the edge of any text.

Throughout history, travellers have gone abroad to *see* new places, often providing those back at home with visual records of their adventures, or visualisations of their mobility, as well as with visible evidence of the encounter between self and ‘other’. Early Modern explorers rendered maps of their travels, while during the eighteenth-century Grand Tour, wealthy male travellers acquired costly works of Italian art to be displayed in their British homes. Horner, however, hoarded valuable facts and ideas: with its plethora of photographs, diagrams, sketches, and cuttings, her second diary is a type of paginated cabinet containing erudite treasures and records of her time abroad. By incorporating photographs of Florence and sketches of famous works of art into her second journal, Horner makes Florentine architecture and art materially accessible to readers of her account, democratising her travel experience. On a practical level, such images would have also been useful modes of instruction for readers, and hand-written labels under the images lend the journal a didactic tone. Moreover, these images enhance the journal’s handmade, tactile quality, providing a sense of intimacy between author and reader. In the early part of her second journal, Horner pasted in a dried plant that she collected at Quarto, the spot from where Garibaldi left with his one thousand volunteers for Sicily in 1860 [Figure 4.6]. The plant, which is placed under Horner’s sketch of the monument at Quarto,

not only serves as a concrete reminder and physical proof of Horner's second Italian journey, but also adds physical texture to an otherwise print-based object. Its ability to be touched enhances the interactive quality of the journal and enables readers to connect with a piece of Italy physically, without ever travelling there themselves. Such visual elements further suggest that Horner had a readership in mind, thereby challenging the perceived dichotomy between public and private texts.

One perception of women's diaries in the nineteenth century was that they were meant to be situated within a confessional and emotional framework. In 1865, a contributor to the *London Review* proclaimed that women's diaries typically chronicle one's innermost feelings, contain 'glowing effusions', and often include information which one would be ashamed to publish.³⁸ Kate Summerscale has also argued that the nineteenth-century diary was considered to be the purest and most truthful of literary narratives, as it was associated with honest confessions and inwardness.³⁹ Susan Gubar suggests that the attraction of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers to this supposedly revelatory form of expression points to the effect of a life experienced as an art or an art experienced as a kind of life.⁴⁰ Drawing on Foucault's notion of the confessional, Mills suggests that women have, since the eighteenth century, been encouraged to 'reveal' the self in diaries, by disclosing their innermost feelings and ideas.⁴¹ Moreover, according to Mills, women's diaries (a traditionally 'acceptable' form of female writing) were not to contain overtly serious, factual, or scientific topics, or an authoritative tone.⁴²

However, the diary was not only perceived as a confessional, private space, and it was not unusual for women to use their journals to explore more than mere feeling. The act of diary-keeping also upheld key values of nineteenth-century society, including self-

³⁸ Anon, 'Ladies' Diaries', *The London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art, and Science*, 10 (1865), 58-59 (p. 59).

³⁹ Kate Summerscale, *Mrs Robinson's Disgrace: The Private Diary of a Victorian Lady* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 151.

⁴⁰ Susan Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity", *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1981), 243-63 (pp. 251-52).

⁴¹ Mills, pp. 42 and 71.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

reliance and practicality. Liz Rohan notes that women have traditionally kept private diaries as a means of recording, reflecting upon, and subsequently improving their behaviour, by helping them to recognise when they have ‘come up short’ in the past and by encouraging them to improve in the future.⁴³ Nineteenth-century journals were also epistemologically linked to record-keeping and recollection processes. According to Rohan, a belief emerged in the nineteenth century that memory needed to be ‘housed outside the mind – elsewhere, in things’.⁴⁴ Diaries could be used to aid a poor memory, to record significant historical events, or to serve as an educational device for future readers.

Horner’s Italian travel journals reflect the latter notion of nineteenth-century women’s diaries, demonstrating that the unpublished journal form was propitious to intellectual discourse and was not merely a private outlet for one’s emotions. In her article in *The Quarterly Review*, Eastlake refers to the liberating effect of travel writing when she declares: ‘[T]here is an advantage in the very nature of a book of travels peculiarly favourable to a woman’s feelings – the almost total absence of responsibility. It is merely the editorship of her own journal, undertaken for the amusement of her children, or the improvement of a younger sister’ (100). Contrary to Eastlake’s assertion, Horner did not feel an ‘absence of responsibility’ while creating her travel texts, since she used them to document detailed facts and observations that could later be incorporated into her published guidebook on Florence. Thus, her diaries represented professional modes of ‘memory-keeping’.⁴⁵ Just as Jameson’s letters home from Italy acted as the starting point for fashioning herself as an ill and melancholic traveller (a performance which came to fruition in her published *Diary*), Horner’s unpublished journals provided spaces in which

⁴³ Liz Rohan, ‘I Remember Mamma: Material Rhetoric, Mnemonic Activity, and One Woman’s Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Quilt’, *Rhetoric Review*, 23 (2004), 368-87 (p. 369). In a similar manner to the quilt Rohan discusses in her article, Horner’s journals represent mnemonic devices and examples of material rhetoric.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

she could begin to perform the role of intellectual and authoritative travel guide – a role that would be fully enacted in *Walks in Florence*.

It appears that Horner had publication in mind as early as her first journal, in which several comprehensive descriptions of art anticipate those in *Walks in Florence*. For instance, she writes:

A painting by Giotto of the Garden of Gethsemane is extremely beautiful. The Saviour kneels with clasped hands in simple earnest devotion. The expression of his face mild and holy, without any feebleness. The disciples are sleeping in natural attitudes, the colouring is dark and warm. It is strikingly contrasted with the pale fresh colour of the Sieneese with their green shadows. There the complexions are fair, the expressions mild, perhaps more spiritual, but less forcible than in the Giottesque school. (I, 39^f)

Walks in Florence describes the same painting, making strikingly similar points about Christ's expression and position, the postures of the sleeping disciples, and the colours of the image. In both her journal and published work, thorough descriptions of art are reminiscent of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*, although they lack the invalid narrator's sentimental responses. They attempt to recreate textually the accurate visual structure of paintings, revealing highly detailed examinations of colour and form, and contributing to Horner's self-depiction as an observant and reliable travel writer. Such passages also show how the language of professional art history can permeate unpublished documents, exemplifying a more flexible and inclusive model of what constitutes art historical writing in the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

Horner's second journal documents her studies of engraved gems in an equally precise manner. She refers to the gems housed in the Uffizi Gallery, which she sketches and catalogues, at least fifty times throughout her sojourn. In one diary entry she writes: 'I went to the Uffizi at 11 and worked till half past two – with an interval of half an hour's talk with Migliarini – who gave me useful information on the stones' (II, 52^f). In another, she notes: 'I hurried to the Uffizi at twelve, and copied from the gem of Savonarola [...],

⁴⁶ Fraser, *Women Writing Art History*, p. i.

enlarging it. I worked steadily until three' (II, 61^r). References to the exact times she works on these gems are reminiscent of a type of modern-day 'clocking in' and 'clocking out', and this reiteration of her studies contributes to the author's presentation of herself as an industrious traveller. In instances such as these, Horner practices a form of 'career writing', in that she professionalises her travels and depicts her activities as part of a serious, scholarly occupation. She even frequently refers to 'my gems', suggesting intellectual ownership and authority.

This keen interest in the Uffizi gems was more than a personal hobby: it was also a publishable topic. *Walks in Florence* includes a chapter on the subject, titled 'Uffizi Gallery – Intagli and Camei'. Several facts about the gems that Horner mentions in her second diary are recorded in *Walks in Florence* as well. She writes in her journal: 'I was asking Professor Migliarini about the Hercules in jade, which is said to have been the seal of the Republic – He considers it a very true work of art, but not an antique gem. The gem cutter was probably one who now lies buried in Santa Maria Novella of the time of Cosimo the Pater Patriae, but the only inscription on his grave is Incisore di gemme' (II, 19^v). This is similar to the following passage in *Walks in Florence*:

There are likewise some fine examples of wood-carving, and the old seal of the Republic, Hercules, engraved on a green jade. This gem was at one time supposed to be a genuine antique, but the defective drawing of the arms and various inequalities in the workmanship, not to be found in intagli of fine Greek or Roman gems, have decided connoisseurs to assign this stone to an artist of the mediaeval period. He was, however, probably a gem-cutter of some reputation, and perhaps the artist patronised by Cosimo the Pater Patriae, who [...] has his tomb in Sta. Maria Novella.⁴⁷

Once again, Horner's journal provides a way of recording not only initial impressions, but also facts that can be used in later publications; therefore, it acts as a research tool, memory aid, and type of working draft, in addition to a personal token of a meaningful journey.

The close attention to detail that studying and cataloguing the gems entailed particularly appealed to Horner, and her approach to studying material culture (the gems)

⁴⁷ Susan and Joanna Horner, *Walks in Florence and its Environs*, 2 vols (London: Strahan & Co., 1873), I, pp. 443-44.

reflects her practice of producing material culture (her journals). Her determination to catalogue dozens of gems points towards the methodical nature of her travel texts. In addition, her interest in these objects underlines her intellectual identity and exemplifies the diligence with which she approaches numerous topics, including art and politics, in her travel accounts. The minute detail of the images on the gems which Horner sketches is suggestive of the attention to subtle detail exemplified throughout her journals, and Horner's focus on these intricate objects contrasts with the sweeping, picturesque Italian panoramas described (often in generic terms) by authors like Jameson and Lowe. The gems' combination of image and engraved text also mirrors the multifaceted quality of Horner's travelogues. Moreover, their one-of-a-kind nature parallels the journals' individuality: since they are handmade manuscripts, her diaries are equally irreplaceable. Just as the Uffizi gems were hidden away from public view, Horner treats her travel journals as types of gems, keeping them in manuscript form in order to control access to them. Thus, she further preserves the 'preciousness' of her journals against the demands of the literary marketplace. Furthermore, Horner's desire to study and decipher each gem is reminiscent of her eagerness to examine and comprehend the city of Florence. Coincidentally, Florence is described as a gem of 'purest ray' in Samuel Rogers' poem *Italy* (1822).⁴⁸ It is therefore fitting that Horner takes such a strong interest in objects that came to symbolise the 'glorious lustre' of the city itself.⁴⁹

As demonstrated by her descriptions of gems, the pursuit of acute observation and documentary veracity are vital aspects of Horner's performance as an intellectual traveller. Not content with a nebulous process of recollection, she writes in her first journal: 'I hope I have been exact in my figures [...]. I believe I am correct' (I, 5^v). She also notes the precise measurements of various buildings in France and Italy, in the manner of an official travel

⁴⁸ In an entry in her first journal describing her departure from Florence, Horner quotes the following stanza from Rogers's poem: 'Of all the fairest cities of the Earth | None is so fair as Florence. It's a gem | Of purest ray; and what a light broke forth | When it emerged from darkness' (I, 45^v).

⁴⁹ Samuel Rogers, *Italy, A Poem* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822), p. 131.

handbook. This preoccupation with factual accuracy reflects a type of eighteenth-century Enlightenment approach to learning brought about by her father's strong influence. Martin describes how Mr Horner was a product of the Scottish Enlightenment, from which he 'inherited a splendid tradition of wide scholarship and the assumption that the chief end of learning was to pursue truth'.⁵⁰ His daughter's concern for factual accuracy in her travel diaries does not only align her behaviour with the values of her family, but also anticipates her future publications. Reviewers frequently referred to Susan and Joanna Horner as credible, accurate, and attentive travel guides in *Walks in Florence*, which provides an exhaustive record of the history, art, and architecture of the city. One review notes the guidebook's 'trustworthy' nature.⁵¹ In another review the author praises the sisters' observational skills, declaring: 'Nothing escapes their notice'.⁵² Such reviews could just as easily describe Horner's travel texts.

The similarities between Horner's unpublished and published travel accounts suggest that there is not always a significant difference between a journal that is a conscious piece of literary construction and one that actually goes into print. So many nineteenth-century women's travel accounts are purportedly published versions of private journals that the boundary between what is 'public' and what is 'private' in a genre that melds self-revelation and artefact is often blurred. If, as this thesis argues, travel writing is a performative act, then Horner's unpublished journals can be interpreted as texts in rehearsal, providing the author with the opportunity to try out and cultivate a particular identity. While the previous chapter examined the guiding texts that influenced the invalid diarist's travel identity, the content of Horner's journals and her presentation of an intellectual, professional persona served as scripts for *Walks in Florence*. With their combination of hand-written text and hand-drawn/pasted images, her journals merit an

⁵⁰ Martin, 'Leonard Horner', p. 415.

⁵¹ Anon, 'Walks in Florence', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 36 (1873), 62-63 (p. 62).

⁵² Anon, 'Walks in Florence', *The Athenaeum*, 2366 (1873), 277-78 (p. 278).

examination not only as travelogues, but also as physical objects which illustrate the process of creating a travel account. These diaries illustrate Horner's thought processes, creative impulses, ideas, and interests before emerging in a published text, and they show the transitional stages of her writing and research. In addition, they present a self in progress, one who is constantly evolving and acquiring new information about Italy, and one who uses the act of diary writing as a significant mode of identity-formation.

The Benefits of Enacting the Role of Intellectual Traveller

Horner penned her journals at a time when women's public voices and political commitment were increasing.⁵³ Georgia Alù contends that a nineteenth-century interest in ethnography, archaeology, and historiography, as well as in geographical, sociological, and biological knowledge in travel writing offered women an opportunity to escape from the narrow confines of their typical social roles and common images.⁵⁴ Examples of women's texts which explore the above-mentioned topics include Maria Graham's accounts of Brazil and Chile, Theodosia Trollope's *Social Aspects of the Italian Revolution* (1861), and ethnographic works by folklorist Rachel Harriette Busk. Travel writing was also a valuable genre for budding art historians, such as Jameson. For nineteenth-century women, the pretence for travel and leisure often safely obscured the intention for work and study.⁵⁵ A significant number of Victorian women writers emphasised their position as leisured travellers when they were actually investigating social, political, or religious issues abroad.⁵⁶ Travel writing enabled women to voice their views on current events in an acceptable manner that veiled their participation in public forums, as well as to approach

⁵³ Alù, *Beyond the Traveller's Gaze*, p. 225.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 'Fabricating Home', p. 287.

⁵⁵ Cheng, p. 129.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26.

traditionally masculine topics and scholarly subjects through seemingly personal accounts and subjective forms.

Women often downplayed their intellectual pursuits in their travel accounts and engaged in appropriately feminine self-fashioning by imbuing their writing with a humble, even apologetic, tone. In *Rome, in the Nineteenth Century*, for instance, Eaton affects an acceptable reluctance at discussing history, science, or politics before delving into these subjects in significant detail. In her *Impressions of Rome, Florence, and Turin* (1862), Elizabeth Sewell repeatedly refers to her own ‘ignorance’, such as when she declares: ‘My eyes were very unlearned ones, and if it were not that many persons are in a like condition of ignorance, my wish would be merely to mention it, and then leave it without comment.’⁵⁷ She then proceeds to outline ‘what little I understood’ about the Roman Forum for several pages.⁵⁸ Even in an 1891 edition of *The Makers of Florence*, the erudite Margaret Oliphant refers to ‘the fragmentary efforts contained in this volume’.⁵⁹ Horner, by contrast, does not engage in this performance of feminine modesty in her travel diaries and does not suggest that women’s intellectual behaviour should be downplayed or apologised for; instead, she employs a confident and knowledgeable voice.⁶⁰ Through both image and text, she emphasises the value of intellectual travel, suggesting that it is beneficial for both men *and* women, and that it contributes to a more informative, credible, and authoritative travel account.

Both of Horner’s travel accounts record the activities of a highly inquisitive woman who strives for learning, accuracy, and truth. With its dozens of photographs and sketches, however, her second travel account places a particularly strong emphasis on the importance of accurate documentation. These images mark her experience as authentic by

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Sewell, *Impressions of Rome, Florence, and Turin* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 69.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Margaret Oliphant, *The Makers of Florence: Dante, Giotto, Savonarola, and their City* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1891), p. xiii.

⁶⁰ It could be argued that Horner avoids rhetorical gestures of modesty in her unpublished travel accounts because they do not need to answer to the requirements of a publisher or wider audience. Yet even *Walks in Florence* exudes a confident tone, and its authors make no apology for their undertaking.

confirming that objects, signs, and elements have been seen by the travel writer.⁶¹

Photographs were perceived as especially authoritative travel records during this period, and Horner capitalised on this modern technology during her extended stay in Florence.

Unlike drawings, photographs were considered to be unmediated forms of representation of the foreign – naturally begotten, rather than artificially constructed. As Alù has argued, photographs record images of distant realms through a seemingly objective and clear lens. Images of famous historical sights, already familiar from paintings and engravings, were expected to gain new authenticity through the camera's gaze. In contrast to painting, the 'objectivity' and 'accuracy' of the camera could visually confirm or contest perceived ideas about people's different physical features and dress in foreign countries.⁶² Likewise, the photographs in Horner's journal, which contain a documentary factor that hand-drawn images do not, are intended to capture the 'true' and 'natural' aspect of places, and to bolster her text's objectivity and authority.



Fig. 4.7 Print labelled 'Vue de la Métropolitaine de Florence', with Horner's labels added.

⁶¹ Alù, *Beyond the Traveller's Gaze*, p. 131.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

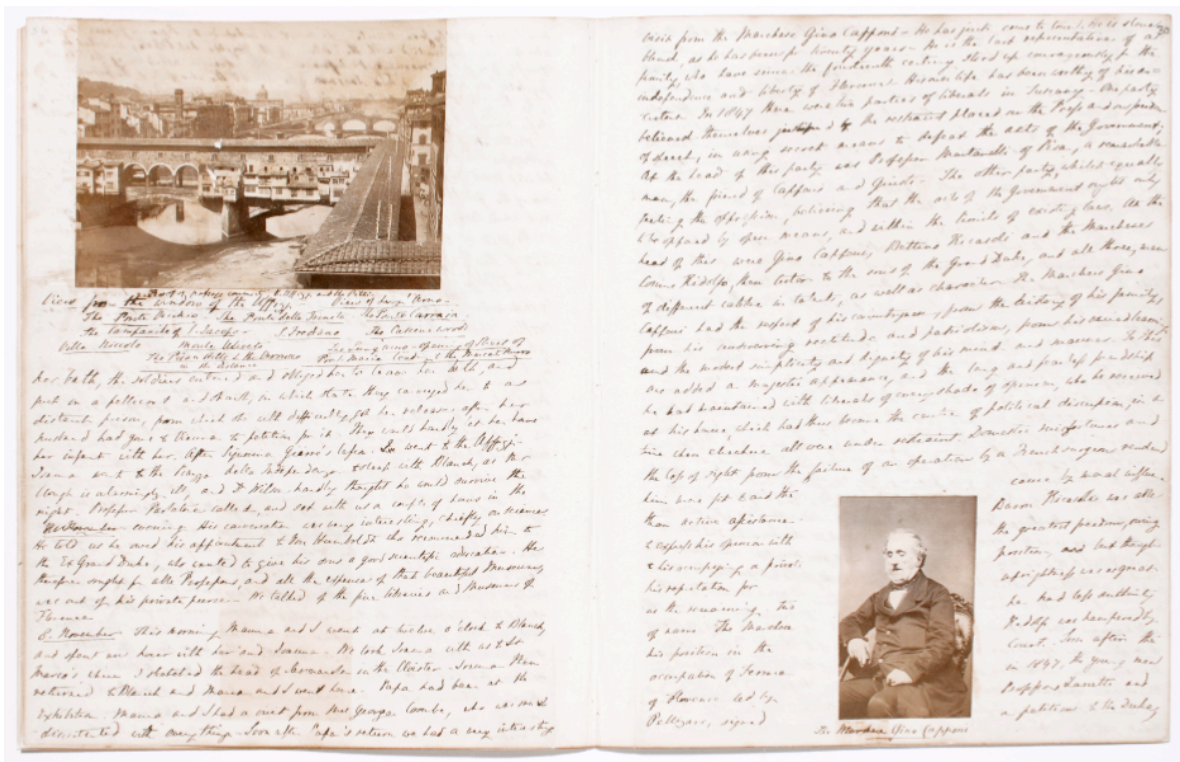


Fig. 4.8 Top left photograph labelled 'View from the window of the Uffizi', with labels of details within the photograph.



Fig. 4.9 Detail of photograph labelled 'View from the window of the Uffizi'.

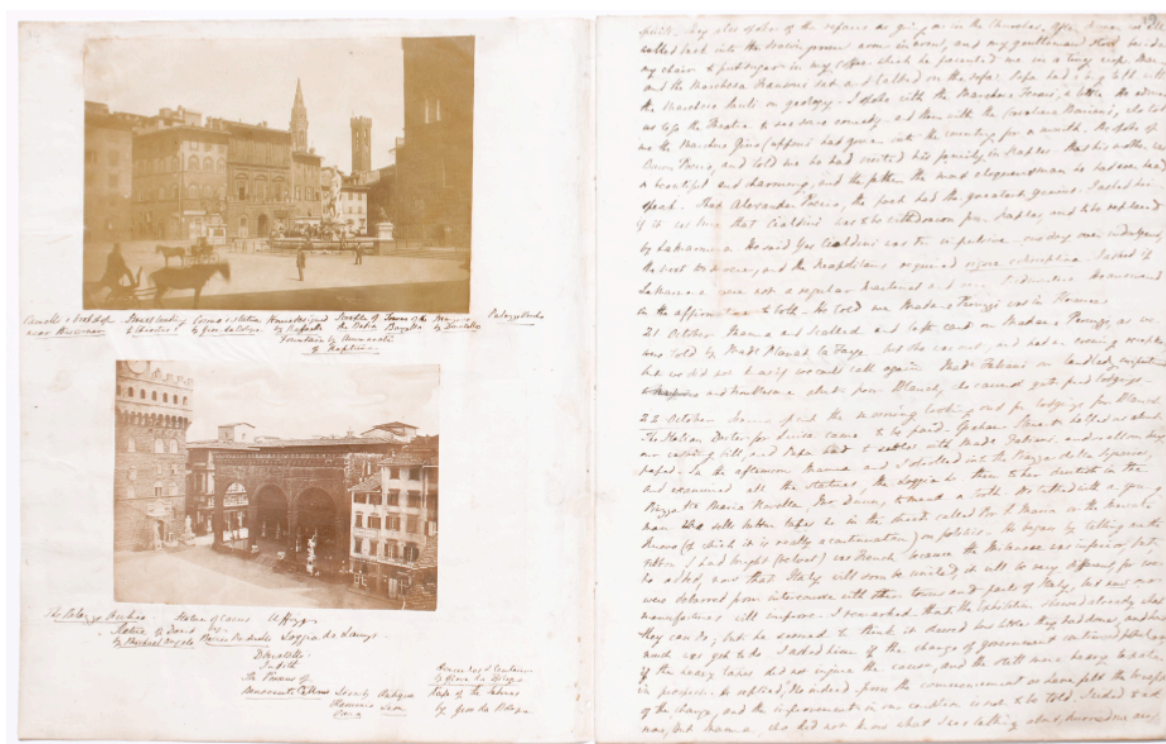


Fig. 4.10 Two photographs of the Piazza della Signoria, each with various sights labelled.

In her second journal, Horner indicates her familiarity with Florence through the act of labelling images of the famous sights she has visited. Such labelling is a way of emphasising that she has actually seen and understood the sights in person, and of claiming ‘authority of experience’.⁶³ Beneath a sketch entitled ‘Vue de la Métropolitaine de Florence’ [Figure 4.7], for instance, she labels the various buildings in the picture, carefully underlining each name (II, 22^v). She does the same with a photograph of the Ponte Vecchio taken from the window of the Uffizi Gallery, as well as with images of the Piazza della Signoria [Figures 4.8 to 4.10]. For Horner, travel involves familiarising the unfamiliar through categorising and naming objects. Florence is a city that must be mapped and labelled to be understood fully. Detailed descriptions and labels of images turn Horner’s journal into a type of guidebook, establishing the narrator’s own orientation within and understanding of Florence.

⁶³ The narrator’s investment in the ‘authority of experience’ serves a variety of rhetorical purposes. It invites or compels the reader’s belief in the story and the veracity of the narrator; it persuades the reader of the narrative’s authenticity; it validates certain claims as truthful; and it justifies writing and publishing the travel account (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 27).

In other nineteenth-century travelogues, travel narrators such as Jameson's ennuyée and Elliot experience immense delight in becoming familiar with the famous sights of Italy's 'past-haunted land', and in treading in the footsteps of ancient Romans.⁶⁴ Horner, by contrast, presents herself as a traveller who is fascinated by the significant current events being played out in the peninsula and by contemporary aspects of Italian culture and daily life, as much as by the events of the past. For her, an authentic Italy is analogous to a modern one, and both of her travel journals demonstrate a firm rootedness in current events. Horner depicts Italy as an intellectually and socially vibrant culture that has much to offer in its present state and has great potential. Her attitude towards modern-day Italy is neatly exemplified by a diary entry that describes Florence as 'so attaching – so soothing in its loveliness, and yet not the dead feeling of a country town in England – Life everywhere, in the sun, in the river, in the hills with their thousand villas – in the living present – in the living past' (II, 44^f). While the narrator in *Diary of an Ennuyée* often associates Italy with tombs and ruins, for Horner Italy's past is very much alive and, by contrast, England represents death and stagnation. Horner's interest in the city's 'living present' (in addition to its past) suggests that, unlike other travel writers, she has an especially comprehensive knowledge of Florence.

Rather than merely focus her attention on Roman ruins, musing on Rome's romanticised Classical past, Horner also focuses on the city's contemporary artwork in her travel journals. This approach to Italy contrasts with Jameson's diarist, as well as with male travellers who undertook the Grand Tour for an education in antiquity. Horner declares:

Rome has this advantage over Florence, it is filled with artists at work, several of whose studio's [*sic*] I have visited, and to see new thoughts embodied in painting and sculpture round me, to see works of living genius, seems to give fresh ardour and stimulus to all my studies, and to enable me to appreciate more fully the work of those who are gone' (I, 53^f).⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Foster, p. 30.

⁶⁵ The artists' studios in Rome to whom Horner refers include those of the Italian painters Tommaso Minardi (1787-1871), Luigi Cochetti (1802-84), and Alessandro Capalti (1807-68); the Italian sculptor Pietro

Horner's awareness of the present apparently better informs her knowledge of the past. She also argues that, while sculpture 'has gone as far as she can go', painting can still improve, and 'however great may have been the performance of past ages, the work is not accomplished, the art is not perfected like that of sculpture, and that there may be something more excellent yet' (I, 53^r). Rather than solely look towards Italy's artistic past, Horner also focuses on 'the performance' of its future; she criticises artists for merely copying great artwork of times gone by. Horner's admiration for ingenuity in Italian art reflects the innovative approach to travel writing in her own journal, with its portrayal of a convincingly realistic, contemporary Italy.

In her travelogues, Horner also stresses her genuine connection with the present-day Italy through her acquaintance with its inhabitants. Many travellers who remained within the closed circuit of the touristic journey found it difficult to meet Italians, as Frances Trollope laments throughout *A Visit to Italy* (1842).⁶⁶ Writing to Grace Norton in 1874, Henry James admits: 'I have been nearly a year in Italy and have hardly spoken a word to an Italian creature save washerwomen and waiters.'⁶⁷ Several British travellers who either visited or lived in Florence, including Dickens and the Brownings (all of whom were invested in the cause of Italian liberation), interacted primarily with compatriots. The only Italians with whom the Brownings had a passing acquaintance were their servants.⁶⁸ Ironically, the Italy with which Jameson's diarist feels such a close affiliation is for the most part an unpeopled one. She admits: 'I have not many opportunities of studying the national character; I have no dealings with the lower classes, little intercourse with the higher' (309). The narrator instead prefers to admire 'these rich delicious skies' and 'genial

Tenerani (1789-1869); the Welsh painter Penry Williams (1798-1885); the Welsh Sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866); the Irish sculptor Henry Timbrell (1806-49); the German painter Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869); and the American sculptor Hiram Powers (1805-73). These examples exemplify the richness and diversity of the international artistic community that flourished in nineteenth-century Rome.

⁶⁶ Writing of the Bagni di Lucca, Trollope exclaims: 'But here again we found scarcely any but English people!' (I, p. 308).

⁶⁷ Henry James, letter to Grace Norton, 14 January 1874, in *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. by Percy Lubbock, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1920), I, p. 36.

⁶⁸ Chapman and Stabler, p. 12.

sunshine' (309), as well as 'all the treasures of art and nature which are poured forth around me' (310). In her second journal, Horner notes that their English doctor 'is so full of prejudice against and fear of the Italians he is of very little use' (II, 19^v). In another diary entry, Horner mentions a Mr Webb Smith who 'has lived fifteen years in Florence', yet 'scarcely appears to know any Italians in society' (II, 32^r). By contrast, Horner repeatedly emphasises the importance of interacting with Italians. Numerous acquaintances with Italian locals mentioned throughout her journals underline Horner's intimate knowledge of Italian culture and daily life that remain outside the typical tourist routine.

According to Horner's journals, the Horners were keen to learn Italian in order to interact with locals and to understand the nuances of Italian current events. During their sojourn in Florence, they befriended and took language lessons from Signorina Giarré, 'an ardent patriot and poetess' (II, 28^r) with whom they discussed politics and education, in addition to vocabulary and grammar. Throughout her second diary, Horner repeatedly mentions her growing proficiency in Italian, such as when she proudly notes of an Italian church service: 'Our ears have now got [so] accustomed to Italian [that] we had no difficulty in following the preacher' (II, 31^v). Several of the labels under the pictures in her second journal are written entirely in Italian by Horner. She also employs Italian words and phrases more frequently as the journal progresses: the 'Room of Niobe' in the Uffizi becomes the 'Stanza of Niobe' halfway through her journal, thus linguistically revealing a process of acculturation and demonstrating the fluid quality of her records. Her proficiency in Italian is further evident in her inclusion of contemporary Italian songs, poems, and newspaper cuttings.⁶⁹ Just as travel requires one to negotiate between similarity and difference, Horner's journal code-switches between English and Italian, contributing to its *bricolage* effect. Travel requires one to cross physical, cultural, and imagined borders; likewise, Horner's journal crosses linguistic boundaries, demonstrating her mediation

⁶⁹ The fact that the newspaper articles correspond to what Horner writes in English indicates that she could understand them.

between cultures. This text would have provided a satisfying personal record of Horner's growing competence in Italian.

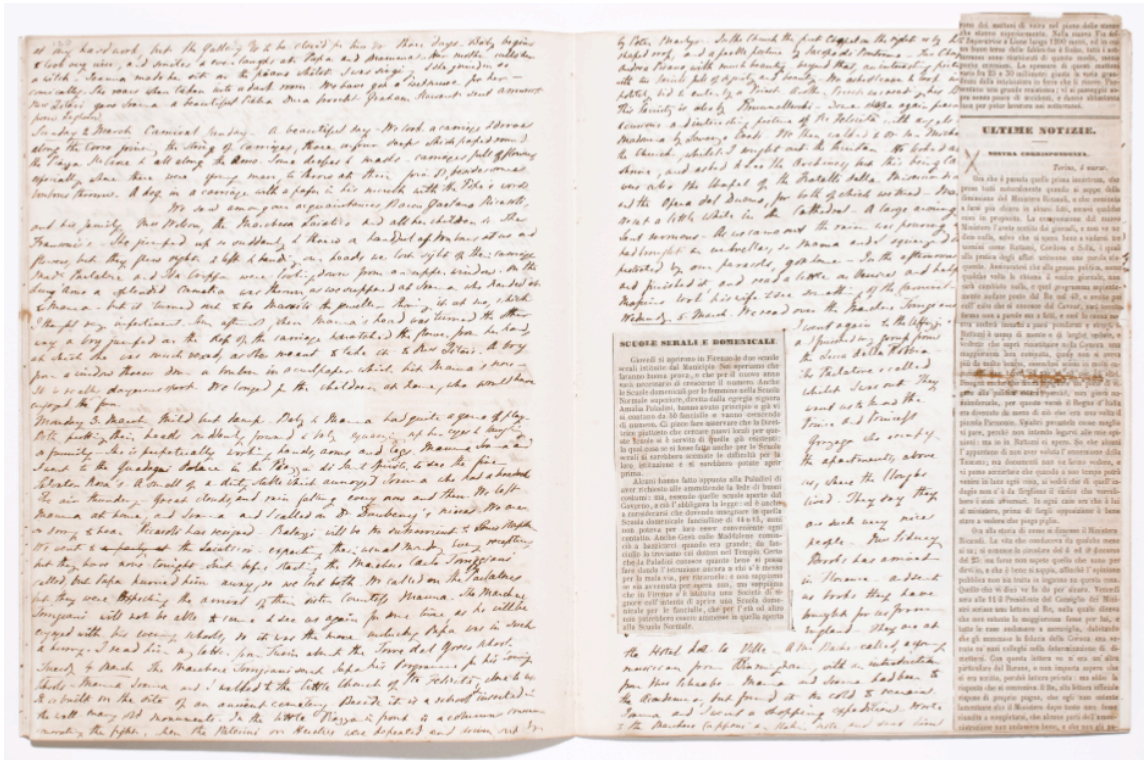


Fig. 4.11 Two Italian newspaper cuttings: one is on schools in Florence, and the other on the resignation of the Baron Ricàsoli.



Fig. 4.12 Right-hand page: Prints of Veduta della Vigna della Regina and Veduta del Ponte del Po, and photographs of General Garibaldi, Nino Bixio, and Pulszky.



Fig. 4.13 Prints of the Palazzo Vecchio and La Superga, and photographs of Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele, Ricàsoli, Mammiani, Farini, and Azeglio.

As evident by her discussions with Signorina Giarré, Horner also demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of modern-day Italy and its inhabitants through her focus on Italian political and social issues in her journals. Her first diary devotes much consideration to the ‘present state of Italy’ (I, 23^r), discussing current topics relating to education, the movement towards Italian unification, and the state of the Catholic Church. Her second journal indicates an intensified focus on political and social issues, particularly through its selection of extratextual materials. Cuttings from Italian newspapers range from an article on the state of schools in Florence to the resignation of Baron Ricàsoli [Figure 4.11]. Horner also pasted dozens of photographs of Italian politicians into her journal, including images of Garibaldi, the Count of Cavour, and Vittorio Emanuele [Figures 4.12 and 4.13].⁷⁰ Huff contends that the inclusion of newspaper clippings and political photographs

⁷⁰ These images of politicians represent *cartes de visite* – inexpensive photographs, established in France in the late 1850s, that were roughly the size of calling cards. They were traded among friends and visitors; one’s portrait could be handed out to a dozen friends and, in exchange, portraits of others were accepted and pasted into an album. The immense popularity of these card photographs led to the publication and collection of

pushes the space occupied by the diary text from the merely personal into the more factual realms of public and political history.⁷¹ Following in the vein of Huff's argument, I suggest that the images of prominent Italian politicians in Horner's second journal extend its spatial boundaries into a political and documentary realm, and lend public credence and verification to her writing.⁷²

A noteworthy aspect of her political interests is Horner's decision to discuss Italian politics, not with members of the expatriate community in Florence, but rather with those who have the best insight into the peninsula's situation: the Italians themselves. Horner also notably discusses political issues with both men and women, and Italians of various classes, including members of the nobility, professors, and tradesmen.⁷³ In her second journal, Horner notes a conversation with a man who sells button tapes about the situation of manufacturing, production, and taxation in Italy. She and her sister Joanna also discuss politics with a Florentine shoemaker and with a pastry-shop clerk. O'Connor argues that many nineteenth-century travel writers emphasised what they could teach Italians, implying their superiority over the southern population.⁷⁴ Horner, however, does not observe Italians from a distance, objectifying them as 'other' or treating them as a foil for her own exemplary behaviour. Instead, she interacts with them as equals, listening to and learning from them; in her travel writing she presents these interactions with locals as integral to her intellectual growth, thorough understanding of the city, and credibility as a travel guide.

photographs of prominent persons. Alan Thomas, *Time in a Frame: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), p. 82.

⁷¹ Cynthia Huff, 'Textual Boundaries: Space in Nineteenth-Century Women's Manuscript Diaries', in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. by Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 123-38 (p. 136).

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷³ For instance, as noted in her first journal, she has a long talk with 'a sensible old lady, who has lived thirty years in Genoa' (I, 27^v) about class issues and the Italian liberal movement.

⁷⁴ O'Connor, p. 18.

The Significance of Florence for the Intellectual Traveller

Horner's obituary in *The Athenaeum* highlights the erudite nature of one who 'lived in familiar intercourse with all that was most cultivated in scientific and literary society, and had rare opportunities of pursuing what would seem to her an ideal, continuous education'.⁷⁵ Her two journals demonstrate how Italy provided a valuable and exciting setting in which Horner could pursue this 'ideal, continuous education'. Travel to Italy represented for Horner, as it did for many women, the ability to enlarge one's ideas and understanding, and to cultivate a deep bond with the peninsula. In her first travel diary, Horner exhibits more enthusiasm for sightseeing in Florence than in any other Italian city. Her arrival in the city is marked with the announcement, 'Here [we] are in Florence!' (I, 37^v) – one of the rare occasions upon which she employs an exclamation mark. Horner then proceeds to note that 'Florence does indeed exceed all my expectations' (I, 38^f). Her description of her departure from the city is filled with regret, and she writes that 'we left hoping we might see it again' (I, 45^v). Horner's second journal briefly describes her journey through Genoa and Pisa; however, the majority of her diary focuses on the period spent in Florence, underlining the family's attachment to the city and the numerous intellectual connections that they fostered there. While Jameson's diarist emphasises her meaningful relationship with Italy as a whole, both of Horner's journals illustrate her passion for Florence in particular and show how Florence molded Horner's travel identity in significant ways.

With its abundance of art and architecture, vibrant cafés, and literary salons, Florence was an especially rewarding Italian destination for the learned traveller. During the nineteenth century, the city was home to a rich source of print culture for expatriates and Italians, producing liberal, English-language journals like *The Tuscan Athenaeum*

⁷⁵ Anon, 'Miss Ann Susan Horner', p. 793.

(1847-48), and local daily papers such as *La Nazione* (founded in 1859) and *La Gazzetta del Popolo* (1848-1983). Florence also contained an abundance of booksellers and libraries. Perhaps the most famous library was the *Gabinetto Vieusseux*, founded in 1819, which linked Italian culture with that of other European countries, and which also played a vital role among intellectuals in the liberal movement in Tuscany during the 1840s. It was described by the Italian poet Giuseppe Giusti as a place ‘ove si dava lettura d’ogni libro e d’ogni giornale che uscisse in Europa, e ove s’incontravano i dotti e i notabili d’ogni maniera che da tutta l’Europa capitavano in Firenze’.⁷⁶ According to Horner’s latter journal, the Florentine culture of learning, conversation, and the exchange of ideas strongly appealed to the Horner family and shaped their experience of the city. Horner’s father admired the city, as it comprised everything ‘wanted for study and pleasure and all so easy to access’ (II, 59^r). Similarly, Horner remarks on ‘how many fine private libraries there are in Florence, and the number of booksellers. They are very liberal lending their books. Professore [*sic*] Parlatore has just sent me a fresh supply’ (II, 45^r). Leonard Horner’s reputation and erudite connections provided intellectual opportunities for the family that other families visiting Florence may not necessarily have had. Many of the Horner family’s Italian acquaintances provided the family with special treatment and with valuable access to the ‘back regions’ of the city.⁷⁷

Horner’s second travel journal depicts a traveller who is not only drawn to the scholarly community of Florence, but also to its buildings and monuments – to the character of the city itself. In one diary entry she notes that after looking for some books, she and Joanna ‘took a historical walk home’ (II, 63^r).⁷⁸ This ‘historical’ walk is not the meandering and aimless stroll of self-proclaimed idle women, such Lady Blessington or

⁷⁶ A place ‘where one could read every book and newspaper published in Europe, and meet the learned and the notable of all kinds from all over Europe, who had arrived in Florence’. Giuseppe Giusti, *Memorie inedite, 1845-49*, ed. by F. Martini (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1890), p. 94.

⁷⁷ For instance, the Marchese Feroni, the director of the Uffizi Gallery, gave Horner ‘free access to the gems, bronzes and vases at all times, and permission to make pencil notes from the pictures, and access to the books on art in the Uffizi with a letter to the librarian of the Palazzo Pitti’ (II, 16^v). Likewise, Professor Migliarini showed Horner gems that were ‘not shewn to the public’ (II, 68^v).

⁷⁸ This is one of the few instances in her second diary in which Horner underlines a word.

Elliot. Instead, it has a firm intellectual purpose: to enable the sisters to study and reflect upon the history of the route they choose. In addition, it suggests that Florence is a type of three-dimensional book to be read, interpreted, memorised, and even internalised. The treatment of the world as a book, and of travel through it as a commentary on other texts or even as a democratic alternative to textual learning, can be traced to Plotinus and Augustine, who interpreted the Book of Nature as a commentary on Scripture.⁷⁹ Moreover, many nineteenth-century British novelists and poets, including Gibbon, Byron, Ruskin, and Eliot, treated the Italian landscape as a symbolic text.⁸⁰ For instance, in *Middlemarch* Eliot writes of ‘the gigantic broken revelations’ of Rome.⁸¹ While the Horner sisters’ walks through Florence lack the emotional weight and symbolic significance of Dorothea’s experience in Rome, they too believe that the city has revelatory potential. Florence also had practical potential for the sisters: it provided material for their published guidebook, and their walks represent a type of rehearsal, anticipating the future *Walks in Florence*.

While Horner’s first journal documents an enjoyable yet relatively brief time spent in Florence as a traveller who is merely passing through the city, her second journal offers a glimpse into the status and condition of a family of ‘insiders’ acquired in the host country.⁸² Florence is depicted as especially meaningful for Horner in this diary because it not only provides an intellectual haven, but also a temporary home. The single most methodical and detailed section of Horner’s second journal is the compelling hand-drawn floor plan of the Horners’ Florentine house that they rented during their stay [Figure 4.14]. The diagram is located early on in the journal, immediately following entries describing the Horners’ arrival in Florence. Each room in the house is labelled with letters of the alphabet ranging from ‘A’ to ‘O’ (II, 13^f). Alongside her floor plan, Horner has written a corresponding list of rooms labelled from ‘A’ to ‘O’, with a numerical records of items of

⁷⁹ Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1376.

⁸⁰ Gilbert, p. 195.

⁸¹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994 [1871-72]), p. 193.

⁸² Alù, *Beyond the Traveller’s Gaze*, p. 137.

furniture in each room. For example, Horner includes the following objects in her mother's room:

A. Mamma's Room

1. Long glass and chair where she dressed
2. Armchair
3. Table beside her bed
4. Columns dividing the room

For the drawing room, she writes:

B. Drawing room

1. Sofa Mamma laid on
2. Great armchair on which Mamma sat every day after dinner playing with baby
3. Where Mamma sat writing
4. Where the Marchese Capponi generally sat when he called
5. Marchese Feroni's large picture and the sofa
- b. Marchese Feroni's small picture and console which held Mamma's photographs in a drawer. Also my copies of Lucca [*sic*] della Robbia & the photograph of Mildenhall against the looking glass

In her succinct descriptions of the rooms, Horner also notes her father's 'writing corner' and the specific location where Mrs Zileri's baby was dressed.⁸³ Thus, the spatial order of the floor plan is translated into temporal sequence, defining key events and daily routines in the Horner home. The floor plan acts as a type of textual stage that sets the scene for events of the following months; it describes dramatic incidents that have not yet been described in the journal, including the birth of Mrs Zileri's baby and a kitchen fire.

The diagram of the family's abode indicates that, for Horner, the house is layered with meaning and memory.⁸⁴ By visually reconstructing the details of daily life, Horner stresses the comfort she felt while living in Florence, and depicts an experience of the city that offers fixity, continuity, routine, and rootedness. In a way, the pieces of furniture drawn in the diagram would have held as much meaning for Horner as all the famous works of art she viewed, sketched, and studied in Florence, since they evoke important

⁸³ Mrs Zileri was a servant of the Horner family in Florence and England. After the death of Mrs Zileri and her husband, Susan and Joanna Horner adopted their two children. Susan Horner Zileri, the youngest child, donated Horner's two travel journals to the British Institute of Florence sometime between 1950 and 1964.

⁸⁴ Horner writes beneath the floor plan: 'In this house we spent eight happy months ending in greatest sorrow – and leaving a sweet but sad memory' (II, 13^f). Many of her diagram's descriptions relate to her mother's activities in the house, and indicate a daughter's desire to remember her mother's daily routine before her death as accurately as possible, and even to memorialise her.

1890.⁸⁵ Yet no personal records exist from the sisters' final habitation in Florence. It is therefore fortunate that these two journals have survived, since they show the value of noncanonical travel writing, demonstrate the ability of the unpublished travel journal to challenge the boundaries between public and private texts, and exemplify the role of the diary as a vehicle for self-fashioning. From a historical point of view, they also offer a valuable record of Italy as an intellectually vibrant culture and as part of a modern Europe in the making, rather than simply a place 'wrapped in its own past'.⁸⁶ Ultimately, Horner's journals are themselves two gems for the academic study of travel literature and, more broadly, nineteenth-century women's writing.

⁸⁵ According to Price, the sisters returned to Florence sometime after their father's death in 1864. Records show that they left for Paris in 1890 (private email).

⁸⁶ Alù, 'Fabricating Home', p. 289.

CHAPTER 5

Enacting the ‘Serpent and the Dove’: The Adventures of an Unprotected Female in Southern Italy

As Anna Jameson and Susan Horner exemplify, many nineteenth-century British women journeyed within the protective matrix of the family, especially in the first half of the century.¹ Buzard notes that during this period women travelling at any distance alone were rarely encountered, and those who did were looked at askance.² However, as Mabel Sharman Crawford notes in her 1863 travelogue *Through Algeria*:

In bygone days, the rule that no lady should travel without a gentleman by her side, was doubtless rational; but in a period of easy locomotion, and with abundant evidence to prove that ladies can travel by themselves in foreign countries with perfect safety, the maintenance of that rule certainly savours of injustice.³

As the improvement of transportation made travel more accessible, women increasingly travelled independently from men. The travel writers Charlotte Eaton, Frances Trollope, Fanny Kemble, Barbara Bodichon, Elizabeth Sewell, Marianne North, Isabella Bird, Ethel Brilliana Tweedie, and Mary Kingsley all travelled as so-called ‘unprotected females’, venturing outside of the expatriated domestic environment. To be ‘unprotected’ did not necessarily mean to travel completely by oneself; instead, it indicated the act of travelling without a male chaperone. Some unprotected females journeyed abroad in groups of women, while others travelled with a maid or female relative. By 1889, as Lillias Campbell Davidson observes, ‘[c]ontinental travel has been so thrown open to women, that it is the most ordinary of experiences now to find abroad ladies travelling alone, or in parties of twos and threes, and the sight is too common even to excite remark.’⁴ Yet the fact that Davidson comments on the proliferation of unescorted women travellers suggests that,

¹ Pemble, p. 77.

² Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 149.

³ Mabel Sharman Crawford, *Through Algeria* (London: Richard Bentley, 1863), p. xi.

⁴ Lillias Campbell Davidson, *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad* (London: Iliffe & Son, 1889), pp. 254-55.

even in the final years of the century, such an endeavour still evoked a frisson of novelty and transgression.

Emily Lowe capitalised on the nineteenth-century interest in unprotected female travellers, publishing *Unprotected Females in Norway; or, the Pleasantest Way of Travelling there, Passing through Denmark and Sweden* (1857) and *Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna* (1859). Lowe is the only author of this period to draw attention to her unprotected status in the titles of her travel accounts. And, compared with other unprotected female travellers who wrote about Italy, such as Eaton, Trollope, Kemble, and Sewell, Lowe most openly articulates her subjectivity as an unprotected female throughout her travel narratives.⁵ The chapter follows Butler's and Smith's theories of performativity by interpreting Lowe's Italian travelogue as a space for the performative act of identity-formation, whereby the gendered self is constructed through narration. It stresses the staged nature of Lowe's account, including the ways in which Lowe enacts the role of independent, determined, and intrepid traveller, often flaunting her unprotected status. This chapter also emphasises the inconsistency of Lowe's travel performance, highlighting the fluidity of her constructed identity with its contrasting and overlapping voices. By way of historical background, I investigate the mid-nineteenth-century trope of the 'unprotected female' and examine an array of contemporary sources that shaped the humorous yet negative stereotypes associated with this figure. Focusing on Lowe's Italian travelogue, I consider the ways in which she engages with and subverts this popular trope. In particular, Lowe suggests that unprotectedness contributes to a more valuable travel experience and travel account. She depicts female unprotectedness not as a shameful, improper act, but as a distinctly English privilege.

⁵ In *Rome in the Nineteenth Century*, Eaton maintains her propriety by avoiding any allusion to the fact that she and her sister (Jane Waldie) travelled alone on the Continent (Walchester, p. 107). In their Italian travel accounts, Trollope (*A Visit to Italy*), Kemble (*A Year of Consolation*), and Sewell (*Impressions of Rome*) rarely, if ever, draw attention to their position as unprotected females abroad.

Setting the Stage

Despite her current status as an obscure Victorian traveller, Emily Lowe was a prominent enough figure in her lifetime to be included in the volume titled *People of the Period* (1897), a compilation of the biographies of six thousand ‘Living Celebrities’.⁶ The book’s brief biography of Lowe offers a tantalising glimpse into the subject’s life, portraying her as a type of modern Renaissance woman of many talents: sailor, architect, explorer, and author. The biography appropriately refers to Lowe as ‘a woman of strong character’.⁷ An accomplished yachtswoman, Lowe apparently became the first woman in England to obtain a captain’s certificate, positioning herself in the public, ‘masculine’ realm of navigation.⁸ She even navigated a 350-tonne yacht through the Mediterranean with a crew entirely under her own orders. Evidently Lowe also enjoyed asserting her authority in the domestic domain. The biography states that her London abode, which she inhabited with her husband (Sir Spencer Clifford, the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod), ‘was built on plans designed by herself, without the assistance of any architect’.⁹ In addition, *People of the Period* refers to Lowe’s success as a traveller and author, depicting her as an avid explorer and trailblazer who is not content to remain on the beaten track. Before her marriage, Lowe was ‘an ardent pioneer in travel’ and ‘the first to travel over Norway in carriages at a time when travel even in that country was not so simple a matter as it is now’.¹⁰ The entry ends by noting that Lowe, a frequent contributor to *The Athenaeum*,

⁶ Alfred T. Camden Pratt, ed., *People of the Period: Being a Collection of the Biographies of Upwards of Six Thousand Living Celebrities*, 2 vols (London: Neville Beeman, 1897).

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 232.

⁸ Stefania Arcara, ‘“The Serpent and the Dove”: Emily Lowe, an Unprotected Victorian Traveller in No Need of Protection’, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 3 (1994), 77-85 (p. 82). Arcara is the only scholar who has written at any length on Lowe’s Italian travel account. Kathryn Walchester has examined the role of clothing in Lowe’s Scandinavian travelogue. See: Kathryn Walchester, ‘“Every article of my dress was a wonder to them”: Reflexivity in Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts by British Women Travellers in Norway’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 9 (2012), 151-65.

⁹ Pratt, *People of the Period*, I, p. 233. Lowe is listed in the volume as ‘Lady Spencer Clifford’. She married Sir Spencer Clifford in 1869, ten years after the publication of her second travel book. According to *People of the Period*, Lowe was the daughter of the late R. A. Lowe, ‘an Indian judge’ (I, p. 232).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 233.

remains best known for her two travel volumes.¹¹ In the manner of her constructed travel selfhood, Lowe emerges in this piece as a determined and independent character who engages in both ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ experiences, and inhabits public and domestic spaces.

Lowe’s first travel account depicts the author’s tour with her mother through Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. In this travelogue, initially published anonymously, Lowe presents herself as an enterprising, ambitious, and capable woman.¹² As one reviewer put it, her book ‘seems to have been written for the purpose of showing that ladies [...] may travel anywhere by themselves, and will even get on much better than if accompanied by gentlemen’.¹³ Lowe frequently underlines the hardships and discomforts of her Scandinavian journey in order to stress her bravery and resilience. The brazen behaviour which Lowe projects throughout her account often challenges gendered norms, such as when she wears bright red trousers, rides astride a horse in the manner of a man, and admits to enjoying hearty meals. Many reviewers considered the text to be a lively and amusing travelogue, and responded warmly to its ‘dash of harmless eccentricity’.¹⁴ Others, however, criticised Lowe’s unfeminine attire (especially her trousers and hobnail boots), complained about her supposed poor grammar and unladylike use of slang, and advised readers to consult Murray’s more ‘serious’ handbooks instead.¹⁵

Other authors doubted the truthfulness of Lowe’s Scandinavian account, illustrating the tendency of travel writing to encourage the asking of questions about fact and fiction, and about the relations of reality and the text. In *Norway in 1858, Lindesnaes to the*

¹¹ The biography makes no mention of what types of articles she wrote, and there is no reference to Lowe or any variation of her married name in any nineteenth-century periodicals database. Thus, Lowe likely published these articles anonymously.

¹² Lowe’s anonymity in both travel publications provided her with greater freedom to label herself as an unprotected traveller and to depict herself as a bold and, at times, transgressive character. It is unknown exactly at what point before the publication of *People of the Period* Lowe’s name became attached to her books.

¹³ Anon, ‘Unprotected Females in Norway’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 4 (1857), 113-14 (p. 113).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ One reviewer wrote that no one should take *Unprotected Females in Norway* ‘as a serious *guide de voyage*’. Anon, ‘Travelling in Norway’, *The Eclectic Review*, 6 (1864), 674-93 (p. 693).

Midnight Sun (1859), the Poplewells treat Lowe's travelogue with considerable scepticism:

Mr. A— saw a good deal of Miss Lowe (the unprotected female) in Christiana, and told us many amusing things about her. There is no doubt her book is an entirely made-up thing, and she writes of many things as having happened to herself which had been told her by fellow-travellers, some of them having taken place years ago. Mr. A— took her to dine with a friend of his in Christiana. The gentleman said of Miss Lowe, 'Well, I am very glad indeed to have spent an hour with such a woman, it is quite a treat, but heaven defend me from such a woman as a wife!'¹⁶

In this passage, two accusations are brought against Lowe, both of which indicate defects of character that undermine her credibility. First, the authors present her book as a work of fiction, challenging the connection between her textual identity and her lived identity. Second, her supposed inability to be a proper woman and wife is noted with a wry sense of humour.¹⁷ Lowe may have been accused of lying because her representation of an autonomous woman traveller did not align with the stereotypical codes for the representation of women in the mid-nineteenth century. As Mills points out, strong women narrator figures in travel accounts conflicted with cultural norms for women in this period.¹⁸ The stronger the narrator figure was in a woman's text, the more likely it was for the work to be considered 'false' or exaggerated, since it did not adhere to dominant discursive models.¹⁹

Despite the criticism and doubt surrounding her first travel account, Lowe reprised her role as an unprotected female traveller in *Unprotected Females in Sicily*. This travelogue, also published anonymously, documents Lowe's travels with her mother through Sicily and Calabria, only briefly noting their journeys through Genoa, Naples, Rome, and Florence. In the manner of her first publication, Lowe emphasises the rugged landscape of southern Italy as well as the physical challenges of her journey. Lowe's

¹⁶ John Benjamin and Sarah Poplewell, *Norway in 1858, Lindesnaes to the Midnight Sun: And Nordkap to Christiana* (Printed for Private Circulation by Wm. Byles, Observer Office, Bradford, 1859), p. 36. Quoted in Peter Fjågesund and Ruth A. Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), p. 62.

¹⁷ Fjågesund and Symes, p. 62.

¹⁸ Mills, p. 110.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

ascent of Mount Etna plays a pivotal part in her book: the mountain not only represents the lofty pinnacle that she successfully climbs, but also the climax of the book's narrative trajectory, and contemporary reviews often quoted passages about Lowe's ascent at great length. Lowe's conquest of Etna also acts as a symbol of independent womanhood and is indicative of her self-formation as a strong and ambitious narrator throughout her travel account. Alluding to the dramatic nature of Lowe's book, in which Lowe and her mother remain the primary objects of the reader's gaze, one reviewer states:

We have the same characters before us: the same grave and sedate matron, whose difficulty in keeping in order the same clever but somewhat fast daughter appears to have been undiminished; the same independence, self-reliance, *espi'eglerie*, and shrewdness.²⁰

The critic's description of Lowe tempers admiration with a hint of disapproval: the adjective 'fast' suggests a disregard for feminine decorum.²¹ Much like those of Lowe's first travelogue, several reviews of *Unprotected Females in Sicily* intermingle praise for Lowe's courage and intrepidity with criticism of her occasional lack of 'ladylike' writing and taste.²² Regardless of their opinions, however, most critics acknowledge the centrality of Lowe's bold identity to her travel narratives.

The Performed Self in *Unprotected Females in Sicily*

As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue, nineteenth-century women authors have often expressed difficulty with asserting themselves with the personal pronoun 'I'.²³ In *A Summer and Winter in Two Sicilies* (1858), for instance, Julia Kavanagh (who also

²⁰ Anon, 'The Unprotected Females in Italy', *The Critic*, 18 (1859), 152 (p. 152).

²¹ 'fast, adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68420?p=emailAScGHs7nAgH6I&d=68420>> [accessed 26 August 2014].

²² See for example Anon, 'Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna', *The British Quarterly Review*, 58 (1859), 548-49, and 'Anon', 'Lady-Tourists in the Two Sicilies', *Dublin University Magazine*, 53 (1859), 185.

²³ Gilbert and Gubar argue that 'the creative "I AM" cannot be uttered if the "I" knows not what it is'. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 17.

travelled alone with her mother) displays an ‘anxiety of authorship’ when she meekly admits her reluctance to publish.²⁴ Adopting an aura of humility, she laments that ‘in a personal narrative, the unfortunate pronoun “I” must necessarily occur oftener than I cared to use it’.²⁵ Yet the author of an 1853 article about travel entitled ‘By Land and Sea’ contends that ‘[g]ood travel-writing requires a certain sort of egotism. It is indeed autobiography – a narrative of personal adventure. The little monosyllable must be bold, and forward, and familiar. Shyness, hauteur, and fastidiousness are no garb for the pilgrim *ego*.’²⁶ Without the slightest self-justification, Lowe’s self-centred text is liberally peppered with the pronoun ‘I’. The author’s dramatic self-presentation is repeatedly thrust into forefront of the narrative, and the unflinching self-awareness of Lowe’s publication distinguishes it from other travelogues by unprotected travellers of the period.

In a manner reminiscent of ‘The Blessington Circus’, Lowe presents herself as much ‘travel attraction’ as traveller, as much ‘spectacle’ as spectator.²⁷ In her Italian narrative, she frequently draws attention to both her mother and herself, repeatedly noting the fascination that they afford the southern Italians. The travellers’ unchaperoned journey evokes a variety of responses, ranging from shock and horror to admiration and awe. According to Lowe, ‘to see ladies travel alone in Sicily is as uncommon as in Norway; the countenance of a native alone could express the dismay at women who “*Girare senza esser accompagnate!!*” (“Travel unaccompanied!!”)’ (41). Later on she writes that ‘everybody was in a state of tittering excitement at the arrival of “*due donne sole*”’ (56). Lowe also muses that the sight of two English ladies travelling alone was ‘a greater novelty to the natives than any they could show us’ (81), and that their journey produced a ‘shocking sensation’ (81) amongst the locals. Summarising a discussion with a Sicilian

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49. Gilbert and Gubar declare that, as opposed to the male author’s ‘anxiety of influence’, the nineteenth-century female author experienced an ‘anxiety of authorship’ – a radical fear that she could not create, or that the act of writing would isolate or destroy her.

²⁵ Julia Kavanagh, *A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies*, 2 vols (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1858), I, p. iii.

²⁶ Anon, ‘By Land and Sea’, *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 48 (1853), 251-64 (p. 251).

²⁷ Chard, ‘Women Who Transmutate into Tourist Attractions’, pp. 109-26.

gentleman, Lowe notes that '[t]alking of the independence of English ladies, he said nothing in his life had made so great an impression on him' (117). She even records instances in which inhabitants write songs and poems dedicated to 'Donna Emilia' (214), the 'lively English girl' (214), and 'Ladies visiting their Calabria' (210).

Lowe repeatedly emphasises the travellers' positions as objects of the Italian gaze and depicts their journey as a type of staged production. She notes that she and her mother are followed by a curious crowd of onlookers wherever they go. She also remarks upon their private accommodation, declaring: 'the whole house, and numbers of people from without, were standing in the passage to get a peep whenever our door was opened' (56). Their meals even evoke a type of theatrical performance for locals. In Canicattì, Lowe states that 'we were surrounded by a crowd of interested spectators, who went into fits of excitement when we began to eat the contents of our basket' (63). At one point the travellers sit on a balcony, in 'royalty fashion' (63), to afford the Sicilians a better view. Lowe later admits to becoming 'completely inured to feeding before an audience' (101). Rather than merely depict the Italian inhabitants as 'other', Lowe also presents herself and her mother as a type of 'other', as viewed by the locals. There are potentially risqué sexual undertones in constructing such a textual spectacle around herself.²⁸ Yet, Lowe's position as spectacle and 'other' is also empowering: by emphasising their position as spectacle, Lowe reinscribes the separation between the observers (the Italians) and the observed, setting herself and her mother apart from and above the Italian inhabitants. Lowe evidently enjoys flouting convention and relishes the reactions of those shocked by the appearance of unprotected women travellers. She also expresses pride in the attention she attracts because it signals the novelty of her journey. Furthermore, by depicting herself as the object of the

²⁸ In one instance, Lowe writes of their Sicilian hotel room:

The doors were as riddled as the houses; various eyes had early taken telescopic glances through the holes, which we tried to stop up with little rolls of paper; but the current ideas of peeping being very primitive, they thought nothing of slipping these out, taking a look, and screwing them back in again [...]. (239)

Italian gaze she consciously positions her mother and herself as the focus of the reader's attention and keeps her unprotected identity at the forefront of the narrative.

In performing the role of unprotected female traveller, Lowe not only draws attention to her position as spectacle, but also to what Smith calls the 'polyphonic possibilities' of her dramatic selfhood.²⁹ Throughout *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, Lowe alternately opposes and conforms to the prevailing feminine discourses of the time, and the different voices that emerge on the page represent a shift between gendered identities. In arguing for the versatile articulation of Lowe's gendered identity, I draw on Butler's notion of subversive repetition, in conjunction with Smith's understanding of autobiographical writing as a site for resistance. Instead of being caught in a spiral of normative repetitions, Lowe is capable of identity transgression through subversive reiterations. As Martha Vicinus contends, women 'are never passive participants in the larger culture but actively transform and redefine their external constraints'.³⁰ Like other women travel writers, Lowe demonstrates that the metamorphic ability to enact varying (even opposing) roles is one of the liberties that travel writing affords.

On several occasions in her travelogue, Lowe engages critically with discursive traditions and challenges prevailing notions of femininity. The author not only implicitly subverts hegemonic ideology by depicting herself as an unprotected, autonomous female traveller, but also by repeatedly projecting the 'masculine' virtues of decisiveness, initiative, and intrepidity. Such qualities are evident when Lowe refuses to ride side-saddle to view ruins at Agrigento, confidently gallops past a group of peasants and, like a conquering general, forms them 'into a square as soldiers' (123), and fearlessly journeys with former brigands through the Sicilian countryside. Lowe also presents herself as a woman who stops at nothing to get what she wants. She emerges as a strong-willed traveller when she writes: 'For do you think, reader, I had relinquished or was at all

²⁹ Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*, p. 58.

³⁰ Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 7.

doubtful about the ascending project? no, no, more determined than ever! and persuaded mamma to wait till the weather cleared up' (114). Her mother's reluctance to climb Mount Etna, combined with several days of poor weather, only strengthen Lowe's resolve to scale the mountain.

When Dickens proclaimed in his 1865 article 'Foreign Climbs' that mountaineering 'is not womanly', he indicated that such physical exertion was unsuitable for ladies.³¹ Paula Garrett points to the Victorian aversion to women's exercise of any kind, asserting that although Victorian women were able to endure childbirth, they were commonly deemed to be delicate figures who were unsuited to masculine sport.³² An 1843 editorial in *The New Mirror* satirises women's athleticism by juxtaposing the words 'gynesian' and 'gymnasium', and by implying that the two are incongruent. In other words, the editorial suggests that women's anatomy is incompatible with physical exercise.³³ As Emily Martin points out, by the nineteenth century the scientific 'proof' that men and women were fundamentally and biologically different solidified and defined their social roles, since these differences 'were grounded in nature, virtue of the dictates of their bodies'.³⁴ Therefore, a woman who rejected being relegated to the domestic sphere and who, for instance, chose to climb mountains, supposedly opposed 'Nature' itself and could therefore be deemed 'unnatural'.³⁵

Lowe's self-fashioning as a brave traveller who denies the conventional script of women's travel is particularly evident in the chapter documenting her ascent of Mount Etna. Highlighting the difficulty and danger of the expedition, and reiterating her position as spectacle, Lowe notes that the locals who watch the travellers depart 'look solemn and livid, try some farewell advice, and stand in ominous attitudes watching us out of sight'

³¹ Charles Dickens, 'Foreign Climbs', *All the Year Round*, 14 (1865), 135-37 (p. 137). Quoted in Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 107.

³² Paula K. Garrett, 'An "Unprotected" Pilgrim; or, a New Woman in the Old World: Grace Greenwood's Self-Sexualization in the Popular Press 1875-76, 1878-79', *Women's Writing*, 11 (2004), 303-23 (p. 305).

³³ Anon, 'Jottings', *The New Mirror*, 2 (1843), 159 (p. 159).

³⁴ Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), p. 32.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

(107). During the initial stages of her ascent, Lowe stresses her capability, walking with such ‘perfect facility’ (131) that she ‘could easily have walked up the Himalayas with plenty of time’ (130). Even when the climb becomes ‘inexpressibly painful’ (132) and ‘very, very hard work’ (134), Lowe depicts herself as a strong-willed individual who can overcome any obstacle to reach the summit. Upon the achievement of her goal, the author proudly remarks that the local mountain guides never thought it possible that the female travellers would succeed. She states that ‘they never expected we could possibly reach the column; the few who thought of trying the ascent in winter generally giving way an hour below’ (133), and later reiterates that the guides had never ‘dreamt of taking ladies through such snow; of the very few men who try it hardly one in a winter reaches the forge’ (142). Lowe’s repeated emphasis on the challenges of the trek, even for men, makes her achievement appear all the more impressive. In drawing attention to the mountain’s position as a rarely explored region, she foregrounds the novelty of her journey and presents a selfhood in accordance with the ‘dominant image of the male traveller who seeks to boldly go where no man has gone before’.³⁶ Moreover, by stressing her physical strength and endurance, Lowe demonstrates the position of ‘science’ and ‘naturalness’ as mere discursive constructs. She challenges traditional Victorian perceptions of women’s bodies, calls into question the notion of gender as a function of biology, and suggests that alpine challenges could in fact be a natural and acceptable part of a woman’s travel itinerary.³⁷

While Lowe undermines the notion of the mountain climber as a solely male figure, she simultaneously appropriates the ‘masculine’ language and imagery of an adventurous

³⁶ Bassnett, ‘Travel Writing’, p. 225.

³⁷ Only a couple of years after the publication of *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, a contributor to *The Critic* observed that women – many of them classed as unprotected females – were climbing mountains and navigating oceans ‘with an endurance and perseverance with which men have never excelled’. Anon, ‘Voyages and Travels’, p. 175. In 1872, Isabella Bird climbed Hawaii’s Mauna Loa, the world’s largest volcano. She also undertook numerous climbing expeditions in the North American Rocky Mountains. Amelia Edwards’ *Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys: A Midsummer Ramble in the Dolomites* (1873) documents her journey through the rugged Dolomites in southeastern Tyrol. Ann Colley asserts that female mountaineering became fairly common, socially acceptable, and even positively regarded throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains*, p. 117.

quest; the description of her climb up the mountain is imbued with heroic self-fashioning. As though sizing up an enemy before combat, Lowe proclaims that ‘the moment was come when two of the wonders of creation, a snowy volcano and a woman’s curiosity, were to try their ardour against each other, though the former had placed its crater 11,000 feet out of reach’ (129). Another allusion to a battle occurs when Lowe notes that she and her mother ‘set off with a conquering step’ (129). When the climb becomes more challenging, she remains undaunted, exclaiming: ‘No, heat! you shall not vanquish! Though, unexpected, determined, and ferocious, you find us without even the shade of a tiny umbrella against your attacks!’ (132). Forceful verbs such as ‘vanquish’ and ‘conquer’ imply that Lowe is participating in a type of knightly battle and is assuming the role of male hero and brave adventurer. Lowe’s appropriation of masculine language contains a strong element of parody, since she deploys the language of militarism (perhaps even empire) in a debased, comical context. Such militaristic parlance also undermines Margaret Strobel’s assertion that, compared to accounts by Victorian men, ‘women’s travel narratives incline less toward domination and more toward discovery’.³⁸

Lowe’s descriptions of her travel attire, both on Mount Etna and elsewhere, are also vital to her literary construction of gender identity, and further challenge conventions of femininity. Unlike Mary Kingsley and Isabella Bird, Lowe urges practicality and necessity over feminine propriety when it comes to clothing. Although she does not wear trousers in Sicily, as she does in Norway, descriptions of her Italian travel clothes similarly point to functionality and comfort. She wears a dress of cotton, ‘strong enough to be washed’ (41), over a warm petticoat. From her side, notes Lowe, ‘hung an infallible defence against being touched by dirty beggars and children, – a stuffed fox’s head’ (41-42), which reveals the traveller’s flair for theatrical self-presentation and eccentricity. In preparation for the ascent of Mount Etna, Lowe indicates the benefits of short petticoats, thick boots, and

³⁸ Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 36.

woollen stockings; however, she unapologetically declares that while climbing the mountain, shawls and petticoats were ‘thrown off [...] till the poor guides were quite disguised with bearing the extra garments’ (132).³⁹ By shedding her garments, Lowe suggests that it is not women’s physical weakness that hinders them during challenging feats, but rather the impracticalities and restrictions of European women’s clothing. When she dons trousers in Norway and removes her petticoats while mountain climbing, Lowe implies that she is able to move more easily through the world, and to escape ‘the limitations and the vulnerabilities of female identity and life scripts’.⁴⁰ Her adoption of alternative modes of dress also speaks of a departure from the physical and psychological vulnerabilities of female dependency.⁴¹

Furthermore, Lowe’s choice of clothing illustrates the mutability and ambiguity of her textual travel selfhood. Butler writes in *Gender Trouble*: ‘If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity.’⁴² Likewise, in drawing attention to her unfeminine attire in both travel accounts, Lowe questions the notion of a stable female identity and emphasises the performative nature of gender. Through the use of clothing, Lowe illustrates that it is possible to ‘act’ one’s gender in ways that draw attention to the constructedness of heterosexual identities. Although Lowe’s gender performance in her travelogues is not as overtly subversive as the drag performances discussed by Butler in *Gender Trouble*, Lowe appears to take similar pleasure in her

³⁹ By comparison, Davidson criticises ‘the modern feminine costume for mountaineering and deer-stalking, where the skirt is a mere polite apology – an inch or two below the knee, and the result is hardly consistent with a high ideal of womanhood’ (p. 152).

⁴⁰ Smith, *Poetics of Women’s Autobiography*, p. 112.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 136.

unusual choice of dress and likewise ‘*reveals the imitative structure of gender itself*’ as well as the contingent nature of her own femininity.⁴³

While Lowe frequently uses ‘spaces’, ‘gaps’, and ‘ruptures’ to challenge traditional notions of feminine behaviour, she never discards feminine self-fashioning entirely, and intermittently adopts a lexicon associated with feminine experience. Unlike Jameson or Horner, Lowe repeatedly addresses ‘lady’ readers in her Italian travelogue, and frequently turns her book into a guide in matters of gender. She reports on the comfortable interiors of Palermo palaces for any ‘[f]uture young ladies’ (20) who are intending to visit Sicily and perhaps settle there – a statement which brings with it implications of marriage and domesticity. Moreover, when warning ‘lady readers [...] against buying Sicilian silk’ (95) due to its poor quality, she caters to a female audience concerned with fashion. In a style reminiscent of Jameson’s narrator, Lowe periodically presents herself as a romantic woman fascinated with the picturesque, such as when she describes the lights reflected in Palermo’s bay at night, musing: ‘So rare a scene, it was surely to celebrate some mermaid’s bridal!’ (25). Avoiding historical diatribes that draw on traditionally male-authored sources, Lowe prefers to make lively and rather superficial comments about the past. For instance, when describing her visit to an Italian church, she notes the ‘delight’ she felt ‘in this little peep back upon the Middle Ages!’ (12), emphasising her emotional response to the sight.

At times, Lowe also presents herself as an unprotected Gothic heroine, further demonstrating the scripted nature of travel writing. She describes a night passed in an unlocked hotel room in Sicily, hinting at potential peril and her sexual vulnerability in her ‘defenceless state’ by noting that ‘all the door locks were out of order, and the rickety [*sic*] cactus-fibre chairs made but poor barricades’ (43).⁴⁴ Although there is no evidence that Lowe read *Diary of an Ennuyée*, this passage is redolent of the diarist’s description of her

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-38.

⁴⁴ Although exaggerated, this episode of the unlocked room also serves as a vivid reminder of the actual dangers to which travel exposed people, especially women.

stay at the Inn of Covigliaio. Lowe also enacts the role of a feeble and forlorn Gothic heroine when, hungry and desolate, she admits: ‘had the floor been marble instead of brick, I should have fainted away’ (56). When depicting herself as a Gothic heroine, Lowe employs an exaggerated, even parodic, performance of femininity that hints at the artifice of her self-fashioning.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Eastlake argues that the ‘peculiar power in ladies’ eyes’ (99) is that of observation, which has been perfected through their attention to minute domestic details. Lowe often draws attention to domestic details in *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, commenting on the quality of the food and accommodation that the travellers encounter, and on the style of locals’ clothing. She also carefully describes the interiors of hotel rooms and local homes; her praise of neatness and cleanliness indicates an awareness of the elements involved in running a household and reiterates her own domestic competence. Additionally, in several instances the author uses female-related comparisons in order to reduce the strange and foreign to the familiar and domestic, placing the unfamiliar within a feminine cultural framework.⁴⁵ For instance, Lowe likens the extinct, snowy craters of Mount Etna to ‘colossal porcelain wash-hand basins’ (130-31) and notes that oxen ‘gracefully bear their own hides on rows of starting ribs, like hoops of crinoline’ (46). Considering that this latter comment is situated in a passage complaining about Italian cruelty towards animals, it could also be interpreted as subtle criticism against the impracticality of women’s contemporary fashions – especially when it comes to travelling in rugged places.

As the examples above have shown, Lowe frequently shifts between gendered identities in her travel narrative, demonstrating the mutability, fluidity, and possibilities of agency involved in self-fashioning. However, it is also important to recall that Lowe fashioned her unprotected selfhood with an audience in mind, and her presentation of

⁴⁵ Arcara, p. 83.

contradictory identities served as a useful marketing tool. By incorporating the ‘unprotected female’ phrase into the title of her travelogues, she exploited the sexual threat to women travelling alone in order to entice her readers and thus market her travel writing.⁴⁶ Mary Schriber postulates that by emphasising the act of travelling alone, women, like Lowe, created a type of entrepreneurial ‘hook’, which suggested a seduction motif, to lure escalating numbers of female travellers and readers.⁴⁷ However, Lowe’s periodic insistence on her feminine propriety was also aimed at satisfying a readership. Siegel explains the strategy behind such conflicting identities, asserting: ‘To get an audience, a woman needed to provide material that was reasonably exciting; to keep an audience, she needed to remain a lady.’⁴⁸ The fine line between the reader’s desire for adventurousness and decorum is illustrated by the following review of Lowe’s Scandinavian travelogue:

We hope, and indeed believe, that the Unprotected, notwithstanding her demonstrations of mental strength, does not set up to be an emancipated female. Any suspicion of the contrary being the case would effectually banish those amicable feelings which we have towards her, and awaken in their stead our liveliest detestation.⁴⁹

In a review of her Italian account, another critic praises Lowe for achieving a balance between boldness and respectability, for the travelogue is ‘a little dashing and rattling, but never vulgar or unfeminine’.⁵⁰ Lowe may have retained an image of feminine propriety to remain at least somewhat within the boundaries of ‘appropriate’ feminine behaviour and therefore to satisfy her critics and broader reading public. However, I also interpret instances of Lowe’s purported vulnerability and femininity as a tongue-in-cheek act – a playful wink at readers that asks for their complicity in her travel performance.

⁴⁶ Garrett, p. 308. Garrett’s argument about the nineteenth-century American journalist and unprotected traveller Grace Greenwood also applies to Lowe.

⁴⁷ Mary Suzanne Schriber, ed., *Telling Travels: Selected Writings by Nineteenth-Century American Women Abroad* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), p. xxix.

⁴⁸ Siegel, ‘Intersections’, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Anon, ‘Unprotected Females in Norway’, p. 113.

⁵⁰ Anon, ‘Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna’, *The Literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts*, 2 (1859), 76-77 (p. 76).

The Benefits of Enacting the Role of Unprotected Female Traveller

In performing the role of unprotected female traveller, Lowe drew upon a popular cultural script of identity, albeit one with many negative connotations. In the nineteenth century, the term ‘unprotected females’ suggested the scientific objectification of a type of species, since these women were considered to be a kind of eccentric strain, representing a sub-category within the broader category of women. While the term ‘unprotected’ suggests that one is defenceless against outside dangers, nineteenth-century portrayals of the unprotected female imply that often the greatest danger to this woman is herself, due to her supposed inability to cope with even the simplest tasks. Several Victorian articles represent the figure of the unprotected female as a rather pathetic character who elicited the public’s sympathy. One such article, published in 1870, depicts unprotected women as unfortunate, sad souls. According to the author, the phrase ‘unprotected females’ conjures up images of ‘desolation and defencelessness, of struggle, of toil, of mental sorrow’, and these ‘[f]riendless and fortuneless’ women supposedly drift ‘upon the great stream of social life – swept to and fro by the ebb and flow of circumstances’.⁵¹ The author also laments: ‘Unprotected females! there is a natural sadness in the expression’, which conjures up ‘the two-fold associations of physical tenderness, and utter undefence, that is, or should be, touching.’ And yet, the author adds, ‘this condition, so redolent of deep pathos, so sacred in itself [...] is sometimes made the jest of ribaldry’.⁵²

Indeed, several images and written accounts poke fun at the figure of the unprotected female, emphasising her tendency to be overwhelmed by basic domestic responsibilities and errands. It is worth noting that the majority of this material was written by men, and thus contains a notable element of misogyny. These accounts are meant to amuse readers by playing up the supposedly ridiculous nature of the unprotected female;

⁵¹ Anon, ‘Unprotected Females’, *Bow Bells: A Magazine of General Literature and Art for Family Reading*, 12 (1870), 238 (p. 238).

⁵² *Ibid.*

however, this humour can also be interpreted as a way of handling men's discomfort about the unmarried woman's unnatural role within society. The unmarried and unprotected female implicitly challenged marital and family values as well as other traditional codes of conduct, and hence called into question society's 'necessary' structures.⁵³

In an 1850 letter to George Smith, Charlotte Brontë, whose own *Villette* (1853) documents the adventures of the unprotected Lucy Snowe abroad, humorously notes: 'I wait in all reasonable patience and resignation — looking with docility to that model of active self-helpfulness Punch kindly offers the "Women of England" in his "Unprotected Female"'.⁵⁴ Brontë refers to a series of comical sketches by Tom Taylor that ran in *Punch* from 3 November 1849 to 20 April 1850. The sketches, entitled 'Scenes from the Life of an Unprotected Female', are comprised of a series of twenty satirical and dramatic scenes depicting the adventures of an unprotected woman overwhelmed by the complexity of the modern Victorian world. The woman's name is, aptly, Miss Martha Struggles; however, throughout the sketches she is merely referred to as the 'Unprotected Female', reiterating the notion that all unprotected women are alike. Her misadventures range from catching the wrong train, omnibus, and cab, to losing her luggage, getting lost in London, and failing to take out dividends at the bank. The final sketch ends with her marriage, suggesting that the only way to fix the 'problem' of the unprotected female is to marry her off.

The 'Scenes from the Life of an Unprotected Female' often depict Miss Martha Struggles as a flustered and incapable woman who is accompanied by excessive amounts of baggage. In an episode in which she travels on a local train, she is encumbered with an assortment of trunks, baskets, bags, and parcels, in addition to articles of clothing, food, and even furniture.⁵⁵ These items represent a form of protection, providing a physical

⁵³ Flint, p. 294.

⁵⁴ Charlotte Brontë, *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995–2004), II, p. 359.

⁵⁵ Tom Taylor, 'The Unprotected Female in Want of a Cab', *Punch*, 25 (July-December 1853), 57 (p. 57).

barrier between herself and the apparently dangerous outside world. At the same time, such baggage implicitly offers a form of companionship for the single woman who has no husband or children. Her tendency to carry food, plants, and items of clothing represents an attempt to bring as much of the domestic sphere with her as possible. It also points to a certain compulsiveness in her nature, and an inability to set reasonable limits when it comes to purchasing, collecting, and packing. Moreover, it indicates her obliviousness to social norms: she is unaware of the inconvenience of taking up an unnatural and irritating amount of space on public transportation, and of the unfairness of asking porters and cab drivers to transport a vast amount of luggage at a moment's notice. Just as the single unprotected female is associated with excess baggage in these *Punch* sketches, Rita Kranidis argues that unmarried Victorian women were portrayed as culturally 'superfluous' in nineteenth-century literature and the popular press. She asserts that Britain apparently had little use (or space) for spinsters, who were in turn encouraged to emigrate to British colonies abroad. Their removal came to be considered essential not only for their own well-being but for that of Britain as well.⁵⁶

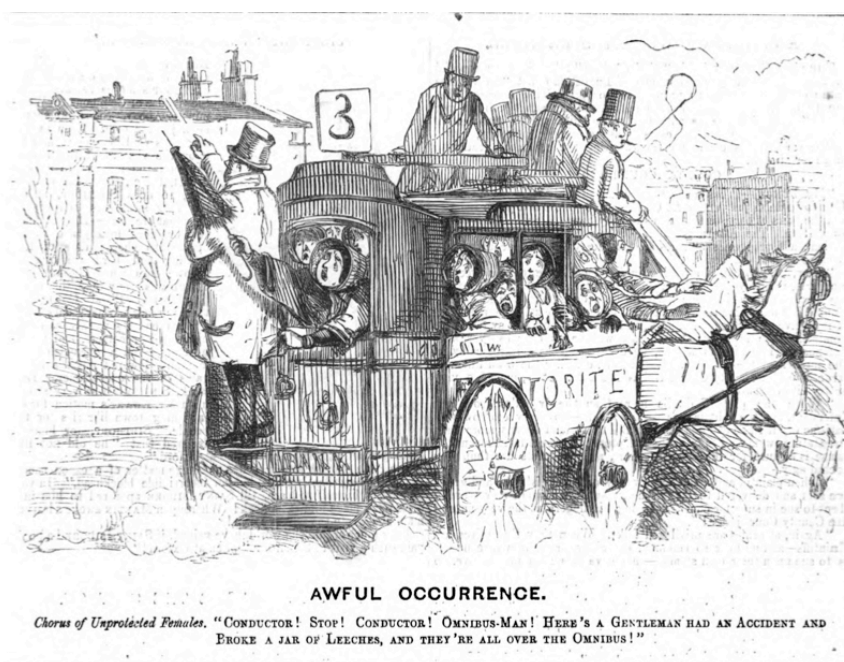


Fig. 5.1 John Leech, 'Awful Occurrence', *Punch*, 1850.

⁵⁶ Rita Kranidis, *The Victorian Spinster and Colonial Emigration: Contested Subjects* (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 3-5.



Fig. 5.2 Front cover of Henry Walker's 'The Unprotected Female: Celebrated Pathetic Ballad', 1859.

Other Victorian sources stressed the helplessness of unprotected women who took public transportation. *Punch*'s 'Awful Occurrence' (1850) records the desperate pleas of a 'Chorus of Unprotected Females' [Figure 5.1].⁵⁷ The word 'chorus' situates unprotected women within the realm of the theatrical and the melodramatic, indicating that they are sources of entertainment for others. It also suggests the uniformity of all unprotected females: all are apparently plagued by misfortune when travelling. They are even dressed identically and their faces display the same alarmed expressions. In addition, the cartoon implies that unprotected women tend to travel together in a pack for the purpose of solidarity, thus putting forward an ironic take on the term 'unprotected'. Years later, Henry Walker's 'The Unprotected Female: Celebrated Pathetic Ballad' (1858) documented the trials and tribulations of an unprotected female who struggles with taking cabs and omnibuses, in addition to shopping and going to the bank. The chorus of the ballad, which emphasises the unprotected woman's passive nature, sarcastically bemoans 'the sorrows,

⁵⁷ John Leech, 'Awful Occurrence', *Punch*, 18 (January-June 1850), p. 120. Later entitled 'Alarming Occurrence'. *John Leech's Pictures of Life and Character: From the Collection of 'Mr. Punch,' 1842-1864*, 3 vols (London: Bradbury, Agnew & Co., 1887), I, p. 11.

and hardships poor females must endure!'.⁵⁸ Walker's ballad was performed by the British actress and singer Mrs Howard Paul in an 1858 show entitled 'Patchwork'. The comical nature of the character is summed up by the cover page of the musical score, which depicts Paul in character as a rather unattractive, unstylish, and indignant-looking woman [Figure 5.2]. The performance of the song onstage further demonstrates the dramatic potential of the unprotected female.

The figure of the unprotected female traveller abroad was also prevalent in Victorian literature and periodicals. Anthony Trollope's Miss Todd, a character in *The Bertrams* (1859) supposedly based on Frances Power Cobbe, and Miss Dawkins, from 'An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids' (1860), represent two examples of the conventional comical figure.⁵⁹ The latter is always alert for an opportunity to latch onto a party that is going to a spot she wishes to visit. Miss Dawkins eventually attaches herself to a man and his family during a trip to the Pyramids, to the family's great dismay. Here Trollope calls attention to the unprotected female's purportedly irritating and clinging nature. Helen Hay, the Countess of Gifford, also made an unprotected female traveller the heroine of *Lispings from Low Latitudes; or, Extracts from the Journal of the Hon. Impulsia Gushington* (1863). The book satirises female travel writers, while also parodying *Letters from High Latitudes* (1857).⁶⁰ Miss Gushington, a spinster who is encouraged by her doctor to travel abroad for the sake of her health, ends up journeying to Egypt. True to her name, the heroine gushes at length about famous sights that inspire her with awe. During her voyage, Miss Gushington enlists the protection of benevolent locals and British expatriates wherever she goes, and attempts to maintain an 'exquisite sense of feminine decorum'.⁶¹ By contrast, the author of the article 'Knight-Errantry in the Nineteenth Century' (1865)

⁵⁸ Henry H. Walker, 'The Unprotected Female: Celebrated Pathetic Ballad' (London: Metzler & Co., 1859), p. 2.

⁵⁹ Anthony Trollope, *The Bertrams*, 3 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1859); 'An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids', in *Tales of All Countries* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1861), pp. 235-78.

⁶⁰ *Letters From High Latitudes* (1857), written by Lord Dufferin, recounts his journey to Iceland, Jan Mayen, and Spitzbergen.

⁶¹ Helen Selina Hay, *The Countess of Gifford, Lispings from Low Latitudes; or, Extracts from the Journal of the Hon. Impulsia Gushington* (London: John Murray, 1863), p. 68.

portrays unprotected female travellers as unattractive, unfashionable, and unfeminine beings who ‘are short-sighted, and wear thick boots and spectacles, very little crinoline, with what there is of it rather long’.⁶² The author notes that ‘in almost every country I had visited, I had been preceded by some unprotected female tourist, who had inspired terror and dismay by the sternness of her aspect, her thirst for information, and her invincible determination to engage in impracticable or dangerous enterprises’.⁶³

This image of a fierce and fearsome unprotected woman, which is the opposite of *Punch*’s depiction of a helpless victim, foreshadows scornful depictions of the New Woman, the significant cultural icon of the *fin de siècle*, in the press and in popular fiction. The New Woman ideology of the 1880s and 1890s played a significant role in complex social changes that led to the redefinition of gender roles, the consolidation of women’s rights, and the protest against masculine supremacy. The figure of the unprotected female lacked the political complexity and cultural iconicity of the New Woman, since she did not directly address issues of suffrage or employment. However, in a manner reminiscent of the New Woman, certain depictions of the unprotected female presented her as educated, emancipated, independent, and self-supporting. In addition, both figures were associated with women’s increased mobility away from the domestic sphere, in the form of independent travel.

Lowe’s travelogues rely upon both guiding texts and improvisation, enacting interpretations within the confines of already existing traditions relating to the unprotected female. Lowe deliberately appropriates gendered stereotypes of the unprotected female in order to subvert them. This textual strategy involves a great deal of parody, and is reminiscent of Butler, who writes about parody as a strategy of gender subversion. Questioning the naturalness of the unprotected female’s gendered behaviour, Lowe repeatedly redresses the ironic caricatures of the figure as weak and vulnerable: instead,

⁶² Anon, ‘Knight-Errantry in the Nineteenth Century’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 97 (1865), 176-91 (p. 177).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

her textual performance suggests that the unprotected female could actually be an intelligent and authoritative traveller and author.

When Lowe advises ‘adventurous young ladies’ to ‘follow our steps’ (148), she indicates that even remote and dangerous locations are valid spaces for unprotected women travellers. By setting an example of how an unprotected woman should travel and behave abroad, Lowe’s depiction of the unprotected female offers to the female reader a whole new ‘model of active self-helpfulness’, to use Brontë’s phrase. Early on in *Unprotected Females in Norway*, Lowe proclaims that ‘ladies *alone* get on in travelling much better than with gentlemen: they set about things in a quieter manner, and always have their own way; while men are sure to go into passions and make rows, if things are not right immediately’.⁶⁴ This assertion contrasts with the advice of Davidson who proclaims in *Hints to Lady Travellers at Home and Abroad*: ‘It is so much an instinct with the stronger sex to protect and look after the weaker, that [...] if there is a man at the head of affairs, he had better be left to manage matters without the hampering interference of feminine physical weakness.’⁶⁵ Davidson’s remark has two effects: it equates travel with inevitable danger, and portrays women as innately frail and dependent upon men for protection.⁶⁶ By claiming that *male* travel escorts are a nuisance, Lowe challenges the Victorian patriarchal order upheld by authors like Davidson. Rather than represent unprotectedness as an unfortunate state over which a woman has no control, Lowe presents the unprotected female as an empowered figure and argues for the benefits of women’s independent travel.

Distinguishing herself from the depiction of unprotected women as financially inept, Lowe claims to handle money successfully while abroad and comfortably places herself within the traditionally masculine sphere of finance. Throughout *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, Lowe performs the role of an astute traveller who can act calmly and

⁶⁴ Emily Lowe, *Unprotected Females in Norway; or, the Pleasantest Way of Travelling there, Passing through Denmark and Sweden. With Scandinavian Sketches from Nature* (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1857), p. 3. Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

⁶⁵ Davidson, p. 12.

⁶⁶ Mills, p. 100.

efficiently in any financial situation. She refuses to give money to beggars in Palermo so that she will not be followed by them for the remainder of her stay. Nor does she allow herself to be cheated by scheming locals or cab drivers as Miss Martha Struggles does. In Naples, she and her mother refuse to be coerced by the landlord into paying too much money. Lowe also frequently refers to the cost of food, accommodation, and transportation, urging readers to travel shrewdly and economically. At one point in her Italian account, she suggests that the traveller ‘should get a notion how much things ought to be charged from some native, then name his own price to whoever he is dealing with’ (35). This advice demonstrates Lowe’s sense of ease in her surroundings and her willingness to learn about local customs; such practical advice also augments her role as a knowledgeable travel guide.

In both travel accounts, Lowe also challenges the stereotype of an unprotected female laden with luggage. At the start of *Unprotected Females in Norway*, she proclaims: ‘The only use of a gentleman in travelling is to look after the luggage, and we take care to have no luggage’ (3). Thus, she treats men as porters instead of valuable travel companions. She exhibits practicality and good judgement by declaring: “‘The Unprotected’” should never go beyond one portable carpetbag. This, if properly managed, will contain a complete change of everything; and what is the use of more in a country where dress and finery would be in the worst taste?’ (3). Throughout *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, the author also repeatedly refers to ‘our two modest little bags’ (170). Lowe implies that, in contrast to Miss Martha Struggles, she is a fearless traveller who does not require luggage for protection. Moreover, her compact luggage indicates that Lowe is a shrewd and experienced traveller who demonstrates restraint and efficiency, and who can journey from place to place with ease and independence.

Lowe not only depicts herself as a shrewd traveller, but also as an attractive young woman, in spite of her practical attire. In a review of her Italian travelogue, one critic states

that ‘with a proper womanly respect for flirting, and a womanly consciousness of her own personal beauties, the Unprotected Female, *fille*, is just as charming and delightful among the orange groves of Southern Italy as she was in the pine forests of Norway’.⁶⁷ The reviewer also muses on the traveller’s ability to ‘[rouse] whole villages to adoration’, observing that *everyone* falls in love, or goes near to falling in love with Lowe throughout her books.⁶⁸ Throughout *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, Lowe describes several incidents in which Sicilian locals who come to the travellers’ aid jealously compete to give the women the most attention. A male servant, who aids the women in Catania, pays the travellers ‘kind attentions’ with ‘a spice of flirtation’ (117). In another instance, widely cited in contemporary reviews, Lowe receives a love letter from an Italian who, having seen her from a distance in Palermo, becomes filled with ‘infatuation’ (19). She records the contents of the letter in both Italian and English, but refuses to disclose the author’s ‘noble and honourable name’ (19). By emphasising her own attractiveness and femininity, Lowe subverts the notion of the unprotected female as a dowdy spinster. Moreover, she implies her role as a sexual object, and also hints at the pleasures of flirtation and of romantic opportunities potentially afforded by unprotected women’s travel – opportunities that were once primarily associated with young gentlemen on the Grand Tour.⁶⁹

Gender was intrinsically linked with the notion of being unprotected: only single Victorian *women* were labelled as such. Yet, paradoxically, the very fact of being an unprotected female could also make her more likely to gain protection, as illustrated by the character of Miss Gushington.⁷⁰ Drawing attention to the discrepancy between the

⁶⁷ Anon, ‘Unprotected Females in Sicily, Calabria, and on the Top of Mount Etna’, *The Literary Gazette*, p. 76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ The educational programme of the Grand Tour typically included sexual initiation and development, and men were encouraged to take advantage of sexual opportunities. The discourses surrounding the Grand Tour, therefore, often constructed France and Italy as offering opportunities to experience sexual pursuits.

⁷⁰ Class played a vital role in safeguarding Victorian unprotected women. Middle- to upper-class women were primarily those addressed in dire warnings about women travelling alone. As Siegel points out, society considered upper-class women to be a more valuable commodity, which, in turn, made their safety and sexual purity of critical concern. Due to financial privileges and valuable social connections, however, these women were often the ones least at risk. Kristi Siegel, ‘Women’s Travel and the Rhetoric of Peril: It is

unprotected female traveller's supposed status and her actual situation, one periodical contributor claims that her success is not due to natural self-dependence, but to 'the helplessness of her sex'.⁷¹ The author of an 1865 article defiantly entitled 'Not Unprotected Females' remarks that 'the whole world combines so unanimously to protect her, that she can go where she chooses, and do just as she likes – and she chooses some queer places, and does some strange things'.⁷² He continues by declaring that the unprotected female 'claims and receives the protection of the world – good, honest, hearty protection and sympathy'.⁷³ Another author argues that women's 'assumed physical weakness serves them as a sort of tutelary power where man's aggressive strength invites resistance and attack'.⁷⁴ Lowe is likewise aware of the paradoxical advantage of being an unprotected female traveller abroad, stating in her Norwegian account: 'Should ladies have no escort with them, then every one is so civil, and trying of what use they can be; while, when there is a gentleman of the party, no one thinks of interfering, but all take it for granted they are well provided for' (3).

However, Lowe goes further by suggesting that unprotected women should actively play a part to win power and attention, engaging in a type of shrewd survival strategy. In *Unprotected Females in Norway*, she reveals her formula for successful unchaperoned travel which also serves her throughout her Italian journey: 'It is astonishing, if ladies look perfectly helpless and innocent, how people fall into the trap, and exert to serve them. "Unprotecteds" cannot do better than keep firm to the old combination of the qualities of the serpent and the dove' (20). The serpent symbolises a sly, treacherous person who exploits a position of trust in order to betray it. Initially, it may seem strange that Lowe presents herself as the creature that supposedly corrupted Eve and womankind. Yet Lowe's

Suicide to be Abroad', in *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*, ed. by Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 55-72 (p. 60).

⁷¹ Anon, 'Her Grace of the Hobnails', *Household Words Conducted by Charles Dickens*, 16 (1857), 310-12 (p. 312).

⁷² Anon, 'Not Unprotected Females', *The London Review of Politics, Society, Literature, Art, and Science*, 11 (1865), 353-54 (p. 353).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁷⁴ Anon, 'A Lady's Travels Round the World', p. 569.

use of the serpent image implies a reversal of gender roles: now it is time for men to be tempted and entrapped by a woman who skilfully enlists their help. Lowe also compares herself to a dove – the symbol of a gentle, innocent, and loving woman and an ideal Victorian wife. In biblical tradition, the dove also represents the Holy Spirit who is a messenger of peace. Therefore, Lowe indicates that her travel performance incorporates both the devilish and the holy, the cunning and the good. Perhaps the most significant benefit of travelling as an unprotected female, according to Lowe, is her ability to influence and manipulate others, and to gain protection through her chameleon-like behaviour and mutable travel identity.

In her famous book *The Women of England* (1839), which addresses the ‘Woman Question’ and the moral education of women, Sarah Stickney Ellis emphasises the importance of women’s secret influence on men, suggesting that women have a duty to civilise their husbands, brothers, and fathers who have become brutish due to the stress of economic competition. Ellis also claims that an unprotected woman ‘must endeavour to ensure [protection] by secondary means’, and that ‘the protection of man is best ensured by recommending herself to his admiration’.⁷⁵ In a similar manner, Lowe demonstrates that she obtains protection from men through her pleasing appearance and manner, declaring that if ‘you prove *simpatico* (attractive)’ to Sicilians, ‘you will have everything your own way’ (14). However, while Ellis’s work focuses on women’s influence within the English domestic sphere, Lowe’s tactic of influence more boldly occurs outside of the domestic environment and concerns strangers abroad.

Using Ellis’s writings on the role of women in England as an example, Judith Lowder Newton argues that a crisis of confidence for middle-class women emerged in the 1830s and 1840s, in which they became increasingly anxious about their status, power, and

⁷⁵ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1839), p. 302.

influence.⁷⁶ According to Newton, although nineteenth-century male authors often rejected the notion that women had power, they did admit that they had influence – albeit ‘secret’, ‘unobserved’, and ‘below the surface’.⁷⁷ Lowe suggests in her travel accounts that influence and power are in fact related. Her influence over others empowers her, as she has the ability to influence how others perceive her and manipulate them into coming to her aid. Lowe demonstrates that power can be even more effective when it appears inconsequential and insignificant.⁷⁸

Lowe indicates that her position as an unprotected female, when combined with an innocent and vulnerable appearance, acts as a powerful asset, allowing her through a type of ‘secret influence’ and serpent-like cunning to enlist male locals into helping both mother and daughter. Lowe exhibits the power of feminine influence during a scene in which she and her mother induce a group of Italian men to put out their cigars, proudly declaring: ‘On turning up our noses slightly, the cigars were sacrificed to the movement’ (60). By capitalising on her unprotectedness and assuming a guise of helplessness, Lowe also receives protection and sympathy throughout her Italian travels. In Sicily and Calabria, numerous gentlemanly barons aid the unprotected travellers, providing them with letters of introduction to other barons. The men whom the ladies encounter throughout southern Italy offer gifts and food, procure safe modes of transportation, arrange accommodation, and act as travel escorts, even providing a ‘guard of honour’ (50). Moreover, although Lowe takes great pride in her ascent of Mount Etna, it is important to recall that, due to their ‘deceitfully delicate’ (129) appearances, she and her mother are aided the entire way by local mountain guides.

According to *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, the help the women receive from locals provides them with a more comfortable, safe, and enjoyable journey than they

⁷⁶ Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860* (New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 8.

otherwise might have experienced while travelling with British male companions.

Furthermore, unprotected travel enables the women to venture off the beaten track and to interact with a number of inhabitants whom they would otherwise never have met. In contrast with tourists who only have dealings with compatriots, this interaction with Italians and a glimpse of the true 'Sicilian character' (57) supposedly enables Lowe to access the 'back regions' of Italy and to create a distinctive and insightful travelogue. Yet the frequent shifts between Lowe's presentation of herself as an independent traveller who journeys alone with her mother and one who is protected by benevolent locals reveal the inconsistency of her travel performance on the page, and remind readers of the artifice and instability inherent in every constructed travel identity.

The Significance of Southern Italy for the Unprotected Female Traveller

Lowe enacts the role of heroic, unprotected female throughout both of her travel accounts, presenting herself as a shrewd and capable traveller who benefits from journeying without the aid of her fellow countrymen. However, there are significant differences between Lowe's portrayal of Scandinavia and southern Italy, indicating an especially strong link between her identity-construction and depiction of the South. First, while Lowe describes both Scandinavia and southern Italy as rugged destinations that lay off the beaten track, she presents southern Italy as a far more dangerous space. Despite noting its magnificent scenery and impressive architectural relics, frequent references to aggressive beggars, dramatic duels, violent robberies, mysterious abductions, and the threat of floods, earthquakes, and volcanoes point to the South's image as 'the North's ugly sister, liminal to Italy and to Europe; a defunct kingdom, a worrisome appendage'.⁷⁹ Lowe's references to danger recall those in Gothic novels, such as Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*

⁷⁹ Ouditt, p. 2.

(1790), which portrays the South as a realm of banditti, uncurbed passions, attempted rape and poisoning, and untamed landscapes. By playing up the supposed hazards of the region, Lowe also enhances the text's sense of excitement and adventure, and bolsters her image as a brave traveller. Moreover, her courage in the face of such dangers gives the impression that she can write about her adventures with authority and superiority.

Second, Lowe depicts Italy as a far more theatrical destination than the northern countries described in her first travelogue, frequently likening places in Italy to dramatic entities. Aside from noting that 'no draggled-tailed tragedy queen could look more wretched than Northern Italy' (7) in the rain, she personifies Milan and Turin as jealous rivals, likens the Bay of Naples to a 'fair mask on a foul face' (7), characterises Naples as a '[p]oetical heroine' (249), and describes Sicily as the 'Venus of Nature' (180). Lowe also draws attention to the drama and spectacle that permeate various other aspects of Italian life. She compares an episode in which Sicilian gentlemen aid the travellers to 'a scene of olden drama' (57). While musing on the ruins of Agrigentum, she becomes aware of 'ancient ages in stupendous drama rising' (68). Sicilians tell Lowe that no 'spectacle in the world is so grand as [Mount Etna's] blazing lava' (119). Even a Sicilian letter is, according to Lowe, 'an old-fashioned shaped thing, like those brought on the stage in a play' (87-88). By emphasising the theatrical nature of Italy, Lowe suggests that the region is a natural place in which to perform a distinctive travel identity, and the drama and 'romance' (57) of her surroundings often reinforce and heighten the dramatic nature of her own textual travel performance. In some instances, Lowe even depicts Italy as a staged and picturesque backdrop, while reducing the native Italians and surrounding sights to the role of props. A scene of 'rocks, grass, goats, shepherds, and stretches of distant peaks' (5) is flattened into a panoramic landscape in which Lowe lends animate and inanimate objects equal prominence. When noting boatfuls of 'red-capped peasants' (6) and crowds of 'dense and ragged' (23) locals, she similarly depicts Italian inhabitants not as individuals, but as

indistinguishable masses that enhance the region's picturesque nature and throw the eccentric figure of the unprotected female traveller into relief.

Third, Lowe draws attention to her travel identity to a greater degree in *Unprotected Females in Sicily* than in her Scandinavian travel account. She makes it especially clear in her Italian travelogue that she is fiercely proud of her unprotected status, and she depicts southern Italy as a suitable foil for her unprotected identity. Lowe's juxtaposition of her own unprotectedness and independence with the restricted position of southern Italian women is evident when she notes that an escort is 'as indispensable as money to an Italian lady unhappy enough to be able to travel twenty miles' (41) and that there are no words to express the 'horrible impropriety' (59) of Sicilian women walking unaccompanied.⁸⁰ As Lowe was well aware, Italian women's freedom of movement was highly restricted, particularly in the South; public space was usually not assigned to them, and their access to it was strictly monitored.⁸¹ According to Alù, family constraints and rules of etiquette often prevented Italian women from travelling, especially on their own.⁸² In addition, social prejudices against Italian unmarried women were rife; tradition assigned all advantages of social prestige to married women. A strong emphasis on motherhood in Italy made the life of an Italian single woman all the more difficult.⁸³ As Laura Ciolkowski asserts, in leaving home, 'the English traveler also quite literally rediscovered it', and travel to the South encourages Lowe to reflect upon her home as much as her destination.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Likewise, Marianne North notes that 'it was not "the thing" for women to walk in Sicily, and the English were looked upon as rather mad for doing so'. Marianne North, *Some Further Recollections of a Happy Life: Selected from the Journals of Marianne North, Chiefly Between the Years 1859 and 1869*, ed. by Mrs. J. A. Symonds (London: Macmillan & Co., 1893), p. 235.

⁸¹ It is ironic that Italy, the site of Italian women's oppression, is a place associated with nineteenth-century British women's freedom and growth.

⁸² Alù, *Beyond the Traveller's Gaze*, p. 34. For a more in-depth discussion of the repressed condition (both physical and intellectual) of Italian women in this period, see Lucia Re, 'Passion and Sexual Difference: The Risorgimento and the Gendering of Writing in Nineteenth-Century Italy', in *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento*, ed. by Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 155-202.

⁸³ Wanrooij, p. 79. The reality of life for single Italian women was remarkably different from that of the fictional Corinne.

⁸⁴ Laura Ciolkowski, 'Travelers' Tales: Empire, Victorian Travel, and the Spectacle of English Womanhood in Mary Kingsley's "Travels in West Africa"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 26 (1998), 337-66 (p. 338).

While Thompson notes that exposure to other cultures could alert women travellers to the rights and liberties they lacked at home, Lowe's travelogue conversely indicates that travel could remind English women of certain privileges they possessed.⁸⁵ Lowe repeatedly suggests that English women's ability to travel as unprotected females reflects the courage, freedom, and independence of the English nation; she depicts female unprotectedness as a noteworthy and admirable English privilege.

Lowe therefore not only highlights her unprotected selfhood, but also her national identity, and on several occasions Lowe foregrounds Italians' admiration for her native country. Early on in *Unprotected Females in Sicily*, she points out that the noblemen in a café in Palermo whisper '*Inglese*' (18) as the mother and daughter pass by. Later on, she records an incident in which two Italian gentlemen happily exclaim: 'I am sure those must be English ladies!' (48). Comments such as these make it clear that the women exhibit their Englishness throughout their Italian travels and also remind the reader that Lowe and her mother are being observed as much as they are observing others. Elsewhere in her travelogue she writes that 'there is quite a mania for England in Calabria; our country appears to them as a fair mirage of bliss on a distant sea presided over by an angel' (235). One gentleman declares that 'England was a country he venerated, and it had always been his wish to show kindness to some of her children' (244). While some contemporary critics chastised Lowe for her unprotected state, they could not fault her for a lack of English pride or for her constant assurance of the superiority of England over Italy. Lowe enacts a national identity that anchors her travel narrative and that remains unaltered, even intensified, by foreign experience; she aims to present an English self that is organic, unified, and stable, even in the face of transformative experiences abroad.⁸⁶ Lowe's self-presentation as a markedly English traveller represents a narrative strategy, a discursive

⁸⁵ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 194.

⁸⁶ Marguerite Helmers and Tilar Mazzeo, 'Unraveling the Traveling Self', in *The Traveling and Writing Self*, ed. by Marguerite Helmers and Tilar Mazzeo (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 1-18 (p. 9).

feature whereby Lowe not only emphasises her position as the subject of Italian admiration, but also aligns herself with her English readers so that they will better relate to and trust her travel narrative.

By creating a travel narrative within the frame of a specific regional area like southern Italy, Lowe distinguishes her text from other nineteenth-century travel accounts, which often describe adventures all over the peninsula. The South of Italy offered a set of images quite distinct from cities and regions in the North: since she spends the majority of her journey in Sicily and Calabria, Lowe's experience of Italy is distinct from that of Jameson and Horner, and she often presents a strikingly different picture of Italy from the region depicted by the two authors previously discussed in this thesis. Jameson and Horner frequently evoke the comforting familiarity of the Italy they visit, while Lowe highlights the South's foreignness and otherness. Furthermore, Jameson and Horner depict Italy as a cradle of culture, writing about the artwork, architecture, sights, and pastoral landscapes of the northern and central parts of the peninsula. Lowe, however, focuses on the isolation and ruggedness of the scenery in southern Italy as well as the region's eccentricities, superstitions, and challenges for the unprotected woman traveller. In addition, Lowe's Sicily lacks the cultural prestige of central and northern Italy, and her descriptions of southern Italy's beauty are frequently juxtaposed with descriptions of its filthiness and backwardness. As is the case with Jameson and Horner, Lowe fashions a travel identity to legitimate her writing about travel, often in unexpected ways. However, while Jameson and Horner demonstrate an especially meaningful emotional and intellectual connection with Italy, Lowe uses southern Italy as a foil to enhance her travel performance and to make her unprotected, intrepid, and distinctly English identity all the more conspicuous and admirable.

CHAPTER 6

‘I went where fancy or accident led me’: Idleness in Frances Minto Elliot’s Diaries of an ‘Idle Woman’

Discussing an outing on the island of Sicily, Emily Lowe writes that ‘a thousand fragrances float in the mountain air, whose delicate sharpness is a stimulant in the *dolce far niente* feeling creeping over us, as we lean back in the carriage and for three hours live in contemplation of Etna’ (108). This passage is one of a multitude in nineteenth-century travel accounts by men and women, including those by Anna Jameson, Charlotte Eaton, Lady Blessington, Mary Shelley, and Charles Dickens, which refer to the idleness that supposedly permeated Italian life, and the pensive, dreamy raptures that consumed British travellers who journeyed to the peninsula. As exemplified by Lowe, Italian idleness was often referred to as *il dolce far niente*, which translates as ‘the sweetness of doing nothing’ or ‘sweet idleness’. Many authors depicted this *dolce far niente* as a pleasurable vice that was inescapable when visiting a land with such a luxurious climate; however, few demonstrated at any length the benefits of embracing idle behaviour while in Italy.

This chapter is concerned with one author’s distinctive emphasis on the *value* of idle travel. Throughout her Italian travel books, Frances Minto Elliot, who, like Lowe, also travelled as an ‘unprotected female’ abroad, repeatedly suggests that idleness is an asset for a traveller, particularly in Italy. Examining Elliot’s texts through the lens of Butler’s theory on gender performativity, this chapter focuses on the ways in which Elliot gives written expression to her subjectivity as an idle female traveller in *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* (1871) and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily* (1881). Interpreting Elliot’s travel writing as a source of performative self-construction, I argue that her textual idle identity, which is not simply a straightforward expression of the author’s lived identity, serves a valuable professional and practical purpose. Following the notion of travel writing as a type of performance, I also examine the staged nature of the author’s travelogues in which

she both views herself from the imagined position of those around her and occasionally presents herself as a type of character in a play. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates how Elliot's textual performance counters contemporary negative notions of idleness by suggesting that an idle traveller is an especially authoritative travel guide and author. Due to its associations with *il dolce far niente*, Elliot depicts Italy as a particularly suitable region in which to perform the role of idle traveller.

Setting the Stage

Frances Minto Elliot (1820-1898), whose literary friends included Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, and Wilkie Collins, was a prolific author in the latter half of the nineteenth century. She was particularly fascinated by Italian culture and history: several of her articles and books are set in Italy, and many were also written there. She first travelled to Rome around 1852, and while residing in the Eternal City she produced several short literary pieces and serialised travel sketches about Italy for leading periodicals, including *Bentley's Miscellany* and *The New Monthly Magazine*.¹ Most of these short travel accounts were later incorporated into her travel books. Later on in her career, Elliot began writing novels, producing four melodramatic and rather mediocre romances.² She also published social histories of Italy, Spain, and France, and travel accounts of Italy, Spain, and Turkey. Elliot's preoccupation with idle travel is clear from the titles of her travelogues: *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*; *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*; *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain* (1884); and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* (1893). Throughout her lifetime and even early into the twentieth century, her travel books were

¹ In *Roman Gossip*, she writes: 'My own recollections carry me back to about 1852. When I first came to Rome the city was in full French occupation'. Frances Minto Elliot, *Roman Gossip* (London: John Murray, 1894), p. 275. Elliot contributed to periodicals under the pseudonyms of 'Florentia' and 'Florentine'.

² See *The Italians* (1875), *The Red Cardinal* (1884), *The Ill-Tempered Cousin* (1885), and *The Story of Sophia* (1891).

reprinted several times in Britain, Europe, and the United States, demonstrating the extent to which travel writing enabled women to build a successful literary career.

Despite her literary success, Elliot's private life was the object of criticism and public censure. Born 'Frances Vickress Dickinson', Elliot married John Edward Geils from Glasgow at the age of eighteen. The couple had four daughters, yet after seven years of marriage Elliot left her husband, alleging his adultery with two of their maids and his violence towards her.³ In turn, he attempted to deny her access to their daughters and sued her for a 'restitution of conjugal rights'.⁴ These legal battles resulted in a scandalous public affair that reached the House of Lords. Fortunately for Elliot, Geils was a Scotsman, and since their residence was in Scotland, she was able to obtain a Scottish divorce in 1855, two years before the passing of the first English Divorce Act. She was also able to reclaim her children.⁵ In total, ten years passed from the date when Elliot left her husband until the time when she was at last legally free.⁶ However, only eight years after leaving Geils, she married for a second time, wedding the Very Reverend Gilbert Elliot, the Dean of Bristol. Within three years, however, this marriage was also in trouble, and Elliot separated from the Dean. After her two failed marriages, she often resided abroad, spending time in France and Spain, but most of all, in Italy. As both a divorced and separated woman, Eliot did not comply with Victorian gender conventions; living abroad provided a liberating escape from Britain, where, following her marital troubles, she was ostracised by the upper-middle-class society in which she had moved. Italy eventually became Elliot's permanent

³ Samuel J. Rogal, 'Frances Minto (Dickinson) Elliot (6 March 1820 – 26 October 1898)', in *British Travel Writers, 1837-75*, ed. by Barbara Brothers and Julie Marie Gergits (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), CLXVI, pp. 165-69 (165), in *Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online* <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2141/servlet/DLBC_Online/oxford/BK1499325017> [accessed 21 January 2015].

⁴ Charles Clark, 'Geils v. Geils', in *The House of Lords Cases on Appeals and Writs of Error, Claims of Peerage, and Divorces: During the Sessions 1847-1866*, 12 vols (London: Spettigue and Farrance, 1853), III, 280-92 (p. 280).

⁵ Catherine Peters, 'Secondary Lives: Biography in Context', in *The Art of Literary Biography*, ed. by John Batchelor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 43-56 (p. 52).

⁶ *Ibid.*

home: she spent the remaining three years of her life in Rome, and was buried in the city's Protestant Cemetery.

Few scholars to date have examined in any detail Elliot's extensive collection of publications. Catherine Peters admits to being intrigued by Elliot's 'rackety and inconsistent' existence, which was 'suited to the heroine of a sensation novel'.⁷ Yet, she almost apologises for her interest in Elliot's life, admitting that she spent far too long researching it. Peters shows the author's influence on Wilkie Collins's writing, claiming that the drama of her divorce kindled Collins's interest in the legal tangles of marriage laws and their unfairness to women.⁸ She argues that Elliot inspired much of the content in Marian Halcombe's conversations in Collins's *The Woman in White*.⁹ However, Peters does not mention Elliot's own writing or the author's own sources of inspiration. In his introduction to the Broadview Edition of Collins's *The Evil Genius*, Graham Law introduces Elliot as the 'dedicatee of *Poor Miss Finch*' (also written by Collins), who provided the author with 'his best model of overt oppression within the bourgeois family'.¹⁰ Law discusses Elliot's famous divorce case, but fails to note that she was also an author. Critics have tended to mine Elliot's travel accounts for supposed personal impressions, as well as biographical or historical details, rather than to examine them as valuable literary works in their own right.¹¹

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 217. Peters does not mention how she has reached this conclusion. One passage in Marian Halcombe's account that may allude to Elliot occurs when a friend writes of Halcombe's diary: 'Yes! these pages are amazing. The tact which I find here, the discretion, the rare courage, the wonderful power of memory, the accurate observation of character, the easy grace of style, the charming outbursts of womanly feeling, have all inexpressibly increased my admiration of this sublime creature, of this magnificent Marian.' This quotation reads like positive reviews of Elliot's own publications, which praised her accurate observations and charming style. See Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, ed. by Harvey Peter Sucksmith (London: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1860]), p. 308.

¹⁰ Wilkie Collins, *The Evil Genius*, ed. by Graham Law (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1994 [1886]), p. 15.

¹¹ For instance, in addition to Peters' 'Secondary Lives', see Pemble, pp. 66, 213, and 214.

The Performed Self in Elliot's Italian Travel Accounts

Travel accounts, like other forms of autobiography, are texts (verbal constructs) in which one's textual identity often diverges from one's lived identity. Although critics did not question the factuality of Elliot's publications, as they did with the writings of Jameson or Lowe, it is essential to recall that Elliot constituted her idle identity through the act of writing her travel accounts; moreover, her constructed travel identity served a professional and financial purpose. On the cover of her books, the author refers to herself as Frances 'Minto' Elliot, despite her estrangement from her second husband (a relation of the Earls of Minto), to suggest an elite social status. The implication that she was a wealthy woman lent her an aura of respectability that was perhaps intended to compensate for her sullied reputation after two failed marriages. However, despite the upper-class implications of idleness, as a single mother of four, Elliot in fact travelled to publish her writings and to earn a living for her family. It is likely no coincidence that her first written pieces for *The New Monthly Magazine* appeared soon after her divorce from her first husband. Although she claims in her preface to *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* that she travelled with 'no definite call or profession' (*Italy*, I, vii), she, like many nineteenth-century travel writers, evidently had publication in mind from the outset.

In an 1857 article entitled 'The Baths of Lucca', Elliot underlines her position as a productive, ambitious, and successful author:

But we must now return to the house, and to a certain dear little boudoir, appropriated especially to literature. A divan runs along one side, and this is strewn with manuscripts, all waiting the fiat of the 'great man of New Burlington-street.' All speaks of hard quill-driving – old pens, a dirty inkstand that has seen some service, open books, long strips of notes, and piles of half-finished sheets.¹²

This 'dear little boudoir' is in effect Elliot's office, and she presents herself as a hardworking author who records her Italian travel experiences in order to send them to

¹² [Frances Minto Elliot] Florentia, 'The Baths of Lucca', *The New Monthly Magazine*, 109 (1857), 333-54 (p. 343). Hereinafter cited by page number in the main body of the text.

New Burlington Street for publication.¹³ Years later, she concludes her preface to *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* by noting that some of her chapters have appeared in ‘leading periodicals’ (*Italy*, I, 7). This statement highlights her ingenuity and productivity as an industrious author, and emphasises that these are *leading* periodicals in order to play up her literary talent and popularity. Thus, the image of ‘Idle Woman’ was not simply an honest personal description; rather, Elliot’s appropriation of idleness represented a strategic marketing tool, and the claim to idleness acted as a type of cover for her industry. She adopted idleness as part of her public, professional identity; idleness became a type of brand for Elliot in order to assert and strengthen her position within the literary marketplace and to gain a strong readership.

Elliot’s travel books repeatedly demonstrate that the author wrote with a keen awareness of her audience. In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, she describes the ‘Greek Theatre’ in Taormina, observing that the ‘deep red of the bricks, may lend themselves to *painting* but are fatal to prose. How can I make “*bricks*” interesting?’ (*Sicily*, I, 128). Elliot suggests that she is not merely an idle traveller taking in the sights for her own pleasure; instead, she is an author who is constantly in search of original material to make an interesting and marketable publication. In both of her Italian travel narratives, Elliot also frequently shifts between offering personal reflections about her journey and practical advice for readers, referring directly to ‘my readers’ on several occasions.¹⁴ Recording her travels through Sicily, the author directly refers to her audience when she states: ‘I am just returned from a drive, escorted by a hoary rascal of a cicerone, with a swollen face, and grizzly beard. Beware of him!’ (*Sicily*, I, 235). This admonition is reminiscent of those used in traditional travel handbooks, and serves as a reminder that Elliot’s books are aimed at potential travellers who may one day see for themselves the sights she describes.

¹³ This ‘great man’ probably refers to the nineteenth-century publisher Richard Bentley, who established the profitable and popular literary magazine, *Bentley’s Miscellany*. He also published Elliot’s *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*.

¹⁴ See for example *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, II, pp. 108, 206, and 317.

Writing with an audience in mind, Elliot occasionally stages her narrative in a manner that focuses on the centrality of the self, presenting the traveller as the primary object of the reader's gaze. In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, for instance, she draws attention to her dishevelled appearance upon arriving at the abode of her friends (a Duke and Duchess) in Maniace, lamenting: 'The whole party are so smart and trim, that I am suddenly overcome with shame at my own appearance – my wind-scorched face, my old torn dress, my battered hat, with the feathers all on end, and that indescribable all-pervading "crumpledness" consequent on a long journey' (*Sicily*, I, 151). She writes of her preparations for dinner: 'This affair of my hair depresses me, also the redness of my nose' (*Sicily*, I, 154-55). Elliot even views herself from the imagined position of those around her, writing: 'I hear the Duke and Duchess in the next room laughing heartily. Are they laughing at *me*? At my *hair*? my old black dress?' (*Sicily*, I, 155). In presenting herself as intensely conscious of her difference from those around her, Elliot imbues these pages of her travelogue with a strong sense of her own 'otherness'. She presents herself as a type of comedic spectacle, and her comical self-deprecation subverts the sense of self-importance and self-aggrandisement inherent in the traditional male-authored adventure travel narrative.

The passages in which Elliot laments her dishevelled appearance also emphasise her performed subjectivity as a *female* traveller. By indicating the difficulty of maintaining 'proper' standards of dress, Elliot indicates the particular challenges of travel for women. While Elliot depicts travel to Italy as a transformative and liberating experience, she does not portray the alteration in her physical appearance caused by travel in such positive terms. Unlike Lowe, who underlines her eccentric appearance in order to challenge gendered distinctions, Elliot indicates in the instances above a desire for feminine propriety and an urge to conform to 'an historical "idea"' of woman, to use Butler's phrase.¹⁵ Elliot's

¹⁵ Judith Butler, 'Gendering the Body: Beauvoir's Philosophical Contribution', in *Woman, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, ed. by Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (Boston: Unwin

presentation of herself as an awkward and vulnerable female traveller concerned with her appearance contrasts with other instances in which she emphasises her position as an intrepid and independent traveller and author. Thus, Elliot provides another example of a travel writer who vacillates between identities, performing an incoherent and heterogeneous selfhood.

Throughout *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, Elliot overtly stages her textual identity and travel experiences.. Her desperate attempt to dress quickly for dinner upon her arrival in Maniace, ‘shovel[ling]’ off her clothes before emerging ‘well shaken up and dusted’ (*Sicily*, I, 154), represents a type of exaggerated, farcical performance in which she is the main character. Elliot also likens her travel adventures to a type of theatrical performance when she describes a day with her friends in Maniace as a play, employing stage directions such as ‘Exeunt into the garden’, ‘Scene changes’, ‘Scene closes’, and ‘Scene opens’ (*Sicily*, I, 165-66). Before describing a picnic organised in her honour, she even lists the attendees as ‘*Dramatis personae*’ (*Sicily*, I, 172). Here Elliot indicates that her travel account is a type of script, which is meant to entertain as much as to inform. Elliot also compares the ‘busy swarming streets’ of Messina to ‘a scene from “Gil Blas,” or the “Barber of Seville”’ (*Sicily*, I, 38), before proceeding to compare various inhabitants to famous opera characters. For Elliot, southern Italy in particular is closely associated with the notion of theatrical spectacle and performance; she implies that it is an especially suitable place in which to fashion a dramatic travel selfhood.

Elliot’s Italian travelogues also demonstrate that the author was influenced by previous travel scripts that inform her textual travel performance. For instance, in *A Sentimental Journey* Sterne introduced techniques for the representation of the self, such as advocating the intensity of personal response, that are evident in Elliot’s travel accounts.

Yorick often appears shallow and self-absorbed, and greatly touched by distress, much like

Hyman, 1989), pp. 253-62 (p. 254). Performative reinscriptions of Elliot’s femininity occur elsewhere in her Sicilian travelogue as well, such as when she admires a friend’s ‘well-turned ankles in the neatest of walking-boots’ (*Sicily*, I, 168), or declares: ‘I feel I eat too much, and I resolve to reform’ (*Sicily*, I, 166).

Elliot's depiction of herself in Maniace. Like Sterne's book, Elliot's Italian travel accounts also contain a mixture of satire and sentimentality, humour and pathos. For instance, a comedic scene in which Elliot and her maid are 'engaged in a free fight' (*Sicily*, I, 27) for their luggage with Sicilian locals is closely followed by a passage in which she laments a driver's aggressive behaviour towards his horse:

If the little horse could understand me, I would explain to him that we are all victims of an adverse fate, four-footed creatures and otherwise.

It seems to me, I also have been cruelly beaten in my time, when I did not deserve it.

My heart bleeds for you, unhappy little horse [...]. (*Sicily*, I, 50)

This strongly sentimental reaction to the abuse of an animal recalls passages in which Yorick shows impulses of sympathy and benevolence for a caged starling and a dead donkey.¹⁶ However, like Yorick, Elliot emerges as a volatile narrator in whom one emotion quickly passes into another, and the scene with the horse is quickly forgotten.

Sterne produced a much more digressive and wide-ranging travelogue than had been published previously, presenting a narrative focus that often wanders far away from the actual scenes in front of the traveller.¹⁷ In *A Sentimental Journey*, Yorick is far from an ambitious traveller or travel narrator. Town after town is passed without even the mention of their names, and Yorick rarely describes the famous sights he sees in each city, instead focusing on trivial details, including descriptions of women he admires and arguments in which he is involved. Like Sterne's narrator, Elliot frequently inserts information that is not necessarily relevant to her travel itinerary, including references to her dishevelled appearance, gossip anecdotes about locals, and long passages about the history of particular places or people that blend imaginative musing with factual detail.¹⁸ For instance, after dedicating a chapter to the history of the Hellenised leader Ducetius, the

¹⁶ This passage is one of the few that allude to Elliot's personal life; in this case, Elliot likely refers to her husband's violence towards her.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 112.

¹⁸ In both Italian travelogues, Elliot sometimes devotes entire chapters to the mythological associations of places, or to their Classical and Medieval history, before returning to accounts of her sightseeing. In her historical digressions, Elliot tends to incorporate imagined dialogue between historical figures, turning her text into a type of historical drama.

founder of an ancient, united Sicilian state, Elliot refuses to apologise ‘for this long digression (so well does it fit in with the story of the land)’ (*Sicily*, I, 115). Much like Sterne, Elliot’s personal tone of voice, digressions, and lengthy sentences (which are punctuated by numerous colons, semi-colons, dashes, exclamation marks, and snippets of dialogue) replicate the flow of informal, intimate conversation and create the impression of a close and genuine connection with her readers.¹⁹

Other passages in Elliot’s Italian travelogues recall the Gothic literature of the previous century. References to sublime Salvator Rosaesque landscapes, imposing castles, ‘impregnable haunt[s] of banditti’ (*Sicily*, I, 114), and a church’s ‘wildest visions of chaotic gloom’ (*Italy*, II, 75) hark back to Gothic novels. By incorporating elements of Gothic fiction into travel accounts, Elliot, like Jameson and Lowe, taps into a familiar dramatic tradition, enhances the literary nature of her account, and positions herself as a type of Gothic heroine. Such Gothic allusions lend a frisson of excitement to her travelogues and introduce elements of danger and suspense. Gothic references also blur the boundaries between fact and fiction in Elliot’s travel accounts; while the instances she describes may be rooted in fact, their dramatic depiction recalls fictional stories. Moreover, they blur stylistic and temporal boundaries, and remind readers that travel writing often follows in the footsteps of earlier literary traditions, retracing literary journeys and travel performances that have been made before.

An important precedent for Elliot’s fictionalisation of a female idle travel persona was Lady Blessington, author of *The Idler in Italy* (1839) and *The Idler in France* (1841). Like Lady Blessington, Elliot capitalised on the notion that idle travel connotes privilege and leisure, suggesting that she is a member of the upper classes (the ‘idle rich’) who could afford the luxury of mobility for pleasure. In their travelogues, both authors also highlight the idleness of Italian daily life and its strong influence on the travellers, although Elliot

¹⁹ A. Alvarez, ‘Introduction’, in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, ed. by Graham Petrie (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 7-19 (p. 9).

draws attention to her idle identity to a much greater extent. Moreover, some of Elliot's descriptions of the Italian landscape are reminiscent of Lady Blessington's travelogue. In *The Idler in Italy*, Lady Blessington promises never to attempt to describe scenery, 'for all the descriptions that I have ever read, however accurate they may have been, have generally produced only a vague indistinct mass of images on my brain, rather fatiguing, than gratifying' (I, 46).²⁰ Yet her own writing often fails to convey anything more distinct, as exemplified by her description of Lake Geneva. She remarks: 'This beautiful lake is bounded by verdant lawns, adorned with umbrageous trees, and flowering shrubs, and interspersed with picturesque villas; each of which looks the *beau idéal* of a delicious solitude' (I, 49).²¹ This vague passage could describe any Continental sight, and does not advance the reader's perception of the region.

Likewise, Elliot employs outworn vocabulary and offers generic descriptions in certain representations of the Italian landscape. While visiting the Roman Campagna, the author muses on the view, declaring:

The distant mountain-tops, still white with snow, melted lovingly into the fleecy clouds that broke the empyrean blue of the heavens, leaving one in doubt which was land and which was vapour – lending a visionary and mystic frame to the prospect, and leading the mind away to unreal worlds high up in the distant heavens, or to the voiceless solitudes of primaeval forests among the Alban Hills. How merrily the sun did shine, making all nature glow and palpitate with renewed life at the jocund burst of spring! (*Italy*, I, 180-01)

Aside from its reference to the geographically specific 'Alban Hills', this poetical passage gives no sense of a distinctive scene perceived by Elliot. Like Lady Blessington's description above, it could refer to one of countless settings, and indeed any mountainous area on the Continent. Rather than enhance the reader's knowledge of a particular aspect of Italian geography, this passage's conventional style and subject-matter act as a type of filler, recalling the *Diary of an Ennuyée*'s reference to the content of women's diaries as '[v]erbiage, emptiness, and affectation!' (1).

²⁰ Quoted in Foster, p. 57.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Lady Blessington's and Elliot's well-worn and clichéd descriptions and tropes not only indicate travel writing's performance of scripted repetition, but also represent an 'idle' style of writing, due to a tendency to slip into derivative descriptions rather than to comment on sights in innovative ways. In fact, many nineteenth-century travel accounts represent an 'idle' mode of writing in the sense that they are often futile: they frequently struggle in vain to depict real sights effectively, precisely, and originally, and thus rarely achieve their goal of accurately chronicling the idiosyncracies of the foreign. As Foster has pointed out, the representation of natural scenery is one area of commentary where uninventiveness and lack of original vision are particularly evident in such travel narratives.²² This lack of originality was also a result of external pressures related to publication.²³ Travel writers were driven by market demands and a wish to cater to readers, as much as by a rich personal vision and a desire for self-expression. By employing a derivative, literary approach to scenery, authors like Lady Blessington and Elliot catered to the demands of a public who expected to read picturesque, poetic, and 'feminine' passages in women's travel accounts.

However, while Elliot draws on earlier modes of travel writing and literature, she also escapes the inscription of other conventional frameworks by emphasising her individual receptiveness to foreign topography; thus, her textual travel performance includes a combination of both tradition and innovation. In particular, she frequently departs from standard male-authored accounts of Italian history, and presents facts that differ from traditional, predominantly male views. Unlike other travel writers, including Mariana Starke and Charlotte Eaton, Elliot does not direct her readers to famous male historians and art historians (ranging from Edward Gibbon to John Ruskin) in order to highlight her books' credibility. In fact, she openly finds fault with male figures of authority, as evident by defiant declarations such as, 'I do not care what antiquarians say. I

²² Foster, p. 56.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

throw down my glove to all of them. I can read Virgil as well as they' (*Italy*, II, 77), and, 'I will not admire a statue because Winckelman [*sic*] praises it, or fall into raptures over tottering walls and clumsy pillars because they bear high-sounding names (*Italy*, II, 1)'. In such instances, which represent just two of many, Elliot highlights her shrewd ability to discern which Italian sights or works of art are truly important, and indicates the value of female understanding and sensibility.

Rather than become entangled in the minute, factual details about ancient ruins that are common amongst Classical historians, Elliot argues for the charms of their mystery instead of their familiarity. In particular, the idle traveller frequently invokes imaginative responses to ancient Italian ruins. Referring to the Circus of Maxentius in Rome, Elliot writes: 'I studied the place till my imagination built up the ruins and filled the vast arena with spectators. I fancied the solemn procession advancing before the commencement of the games, headed by the emperor, seated on a superb car' (*Italy*, I, 222-23). She then proceeds to describe this detailed, imaginary procession for two pages. Recalling an idle stroll through the Roman countryside, she notes: 'Solitude feeds these fancies. I was alone, and gave free rein to my imagination; built up every ruined altar and decaying temple whose ruins now strew that verdant plain' (*Italy*, I, 237). Such imaginative descriptions distinguish Elliot's approach to travel writing from John Murray's Italian handbooks, which order and classify historical ruins in a logical yet 'dry-as-dust' (*Italy*, I, 254) manner. She affirms her own ability to derive aesthetic pleasure from the topography without embroiling herself in the rhetorical dangers of 'shew-knowledge', as Shelley labels it.²⁴

The absence of references to other sources could suggest a lack of research and effort that is in keeping with typical idle behaviour. However, by employing a confident

²⁴ In an 1819 letter to Thomas Love Peacock, Percy Shelley writes of Rome: 'Hobhouse, Eustace, & Forsyth will tell all the shew-knowledge about it'. See Shelley, II, p. 89. In *Diary of an Ennuyée*, Jameson's narrator also affirms her own superiority over the 'endless disputes' of ignorant antiquarians and instead takes pleasure in the 'mysterious veil which hangs like a cloud upon the objects around us' (p. 190).

and erudite tone, Elliot's very lack of references to primary sources is paradoxically meant to enhance her claim to authority and legitimacy, since she suggests that her own thorough historical knowledge provides ample proof of her veracity.²⁵ Far from taking a nonchalant approach to history, the author dismantles prejudices against women as valid sources of expertise by emphasising her extensive and reliable knowledge of the Classical past, and her familiarity with Greek and Latin texts. Moreover, by projecting her imaginative visions onto the Italian landscape, Elliot creates an idealised image of the past that is implicitly more truthful in capturing the essence of a bygone era than the objective facts offered by historians and antiquarians. Thus, she envisages a form of subjective truth that is more genuine than objective truth. Through offering fresh, alternative perspectives on Italian history, Elliot also emphasises the individual and improvisatory aspects of her travel performance. She not only points to her intellectual credibility, but also creates her own brand of authority and enhances the novelty and marketability of her publications.

Elliot conveys to her audience the accuracy and originality of her historical commentary early on in her Italian *Diary*. Professing her truthfulness at the start of the second volume, she declares:

Congreve makes one of his *dramatis personae* declare 'that his name is Truth, and that he has very few acquaintances.' Had I lived nearer his time I should have thought he had an eye to me, for I have all my life steadfastly proposed to tell the truth, and have rendered myself unaccountably unpopular by so doing. I also propose to tell the truth in this rough Diary – its only merit. (*Italy*, II, 1)

By noting the unpopularity of her true declarations, Elliot wryly hints at her infamous legal battle with her first husband. Elliot's concern with others' perceptions of her private life is justifiable, for in attacking a female author's personal life, critics could also undercut her public persona and her voice of authority.²⁶ Her willingness to assert the 'truth' in the face of adversity strengthens the image of a woman who is steadfastly committed to veracity (both in her personal and public life) at all costs. Elliot stresses in this passage, and

²⁵ Alù, *Beyond the Traveller's Gaze*, p. 79. Alù argues the same for Mary Charlton Pasqualino's travelogue *Letters from Sicily* (1850).

²⁶ Cheng, p. 158.

elsewhere, such as when she refers to herself as a ‘truth-teller’ (*Italy*, II, 1), that readers should not merely read her work for her distinctive impressions, but also for the reliability of her statements. Yet, Elliot’s reference to Congreve’s dramatic character of ‘Truth’ also serves as a reminder that even the claim to truth is always to some extent a rhetorical effect, another form of theatrical self-presentation.

The Benefits of Enacting the Role of Idle Traveller

Throughout the nineteenth century, many prominent British authors castigated idle behaviour, revealing anxieties about idleness in their daily lives and instead emphasising the importance of hard work and productivity. The British Empire was built on industrial power, and Britain’s public virtues were ideally expected to be adopted by its inhabitants on a private level. In his famous 1859 volume *Self-Help*, the Scottish author Samuel Smiles contrasts idleness with the concepts of industry and productivity throughout the text.²⁷ In 1870, Thomas Carlyle noted the misery that idleness could induce, declaring that ‘in Idleness alone there is perpetual despair’.²⁸ According to other Victorian authors, idleness not only leads to unhappiness, but is also representative of religious transgression. The English educator and historian Thomas Arnold asserts in Sermon VI of *Christian Life* (1841) that ‘every idle moment is treason’, suggesting that those who are idle betray Christian values.²⁹ Writings such as these promoted the strong Protestant work ethic so highly valued among nineteenth-century British families like the Horners. They also propagated the perception that idleness was not only unproductive and unhealthy for society, but also immoral and damaging for the soul. While male members of the aristocracy could be perceived as idle and even effeminate because they tended not to

²⁷ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1859).

²⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), p. 244.

²⁹ Thomas Arnold, *Christian Life: its Courses, its Hindrances, and its Helps* (London: B. Fellowes, 1841), p. 61.

work, middle-class men worked not only to provide for their families, but also to affirm their masculinity and Britain's industrial values.

Nineteenth-century women's relationship with idleness in Britain was perhaps more complicated. On the one hand, the possession of leisure could contribute to the ideology that supported the ideal of a respectable middle- or upper-class home. In this case, female idleness represented a valuable display of financial security, and women assumed leisure as a sort of badge of privilege. Due to its associations with inactivity, stasis, and confinement, women's domestic idleness also constituted a bourgeois ideal of femininity and delicacy.³⁰ On the other hand, idleness could be regarded as a source of moral decadence as well as a dangerously useless thief of time, which might be spent more practically on housewifely duties.³¹ Ellis affirms this latter perception of idleness in *The Women of England*, urging women to 'employ themselves in the business of their fathers and their husbands, rather than to remain idle and dependent'.³² For Ellis, industrious women are morally upright and admirable, and therefore make better daughters and wives.

Both male and female authors in the nineteenth century often regarded idleness in the South as inherently immoral; alongside their enjoyable experience of languidness, a sense of guilt emerged amongst British travellers. Jameson's diarist wryly admits that after idly leaning on her elbow and staring at an Italian view for a long time, 'my arm has been stiff all day in consequence'.³³ George Eliot writes about idleness in the 'warm South' in her poem *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), when one character states: 'And so in travelling | I shape myself betimes to idleness | And take fools' pleasures'.³⁴ Even the self-proclaimed 'Idler', Lady Blessington, writes in her Italian travelogue:

It is now many days since my journal has been opened; for idleness, the besetting sin of this place, has taken possession of me. I shall journalize no more; but merely write down, whenever in the humour, what occurs, or what I see. O the *dolce far*'

³⁰ Maynard, p. 7.

³¹ Flint, p. 11.

³² Ellis, p. 345.

³³ Jameson, *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1836), p. 116.

³⁴ George Eliot, *The Spanish Gypsy* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), p. 33.

niente of an Italian life! Who can resist its influence? – not I, at least. (II, pp. 265-66)

The author describes Italy as a land of luxurious temptation, and depicts her idle behaviour as a form of pleasurable yet illicit indulgence. She rebukes herself for ceasing to write for days at a time, blaming her laxity on her surrounding environment. Those who engaged too deeply in idle pursuits either suffered the physical consequences, as Jameson's ennuyée wryly demonstrates, or acted as fools or sinners, as noted by Eliot and Lady Blessington, respectively.

Because they viewed Italy's supposedly idle way of life in a negative light, several British authors were eager to distinguish themselves from lethargic locals. In *A Visit to Italy*, for example, Frances Trollope criticises the Venetians for socialising at their cafés 'till what seems to me an extremely late hour for such al fresco occupation'.³⁵ Ironically, however, she has been idly watching them until this late hour, and yet avoids noting this point. In an 1845 letter to his father, Ruskin complained that everyone in Florence is 'idle, and therefore they are always in the way. The square is full of listless, chattering, smoking vagabonds, who are always moving every way at once, just fast enough to make it disagreeable and inevitable to run against them'.³⁶ It initially appears as though Ruskin only dislikes the idle, wandering vagabonds because they disrupt his own explorative and implicitly productive wandering, and create confusion in the square. Yet this quotation also illustrates a suppressed feeling of recognition: Ruskin sees his own wandering mirrored in that of the Italians, and he is uncomfortable with this sameness. By criticising the wandering Italians, he hopes to distinguish his own style of wandering from theirs and to separate his Northernness from their Southernness.

Elliot's emphasis on the value of idleness in her travelogues makes her travel performance distinctive. While other travel writers were keen to suppress or apologise for

³⁵ Trollope, *A Visit to Italy*, II, p. 93.

³⁶ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin: The Letters of John Ruskin, 1827-1869*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1909), XXXVI, p. 48.

their idle behaviour, Elliot openly positions herself as an idle traveller from the outset of

Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy. In her preface, she explains:

When I call these volumes ‘The Diary of an Idle Woman,’ I do so because I went to Italy with a perfectly disengaged mind, with no special objects of inquiry, no definite call or profession, no preconceived theories. I was idle in that I went where fancy or accident led me; otherwise I hope my readers will not consider me ‘an idle woman.’ (*Italy*, I, vii)

Elliot’s self-projection as an idle traveller challenges common understandings of the term. She indicates that she is not an ‘idle woman’ in the negative sense of the expression: she is not an indolent or morally weak female traveller. Rather, she is careful to gloss her idleness more positively as disinterestedness and open-mindedness. In her preface, Elliot depicts her mind as a type of *tabula rasa* – a blank slate waiting to be filled by her travel experiences and impressions.³⁷ She implies that idle travel opens the mind and frees it from preconceptions about places, cultures, and traditions, allowing her to gain a more accurate and unbiased picture of Italy. The reference to ‘fancy’ suggests that Elliot is a type of free spirit, willing to follow her whims while travelling, and the word ‘accident’ indicates that Elliot’s journey may be shaped by external forces beyond her control; thus, she indicates a certain passivity and trustfulness, and an inclination to leave her journey up to fate. Elliot’s proclamation that she will be led by fancy also expresses a desire for a spontaneous and carefree travel performance, and suggests that she is open to unscripted, unplanned, and unexpected adventures. It also suggests that she is a ‘true’ traveller who is willing to journey beyond the beaten track, rather than a tourist whose journey is pre-scripted or prescribed.³⁸ Many travel writers in the nineteenth century claimed to venture forth on their journeys with a firm purpose in mind, since both British men and women often approached travel in an ambitious and industrious manner. Elliot, however, asserts that she travelled

³⁷ John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) became a sort of bible for those who espoused a ‘blank slate’ conception of human consciousness and held that all knowledge is produced from the impressions drawn in through the five senses. James Buzard, ‘The Grand Tour and After (1660-1840)’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 37-52 (p. 37).

³⁸ Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller*, p. 20.

purely for pleasure; she presents her idle journey as a means of gratifying an urge to be abroad, implying that travel does not have to be taken as seriously as other Victorian travellers have suggested.

According to Elliot, idleness is also a useful tool that can improve the receptiveness of the mind and deepen one's mental faculties. She indicates that idleness can be productive while travelling because it provides an impulse towards discovery and the acquisition of knowledge. Elliot begins a subsequent edition of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy* by claiming to enjoy 'those idle days when one learns so much'.³⁹ Idleness relieves one of the practical concerns of everyday life, allowing the mind to absorb more knowledge. Elliot similarly notes her increased ability to think and study in 'The Baths of Lucca'. She describes the room 'where I first tasted the enchantment of Italian life and climate – where I sat rapt whole days in delicious musings – where I read and studied the history of the land of poetry I inhabit' (339). Describing the room in more detail, she writes:

[T]here are oceans of books strewn about on the various tables – the best Italian histories, and travels, and guide-books, and maps, and poems, and all and everything calculated to enlighten the mind about Italy [...]. Then there is a heterogeneous collection of all kinds of arm-chairs, from gaunt mahogany, scarlet lined, magisterial seats, to easy, comfortable, modern bergères and duchesses. I am really afraid the Trebiliani must be very lazy people ever to have devised such a lounging saloon, where it is absolutely impossible to sit bolt upright. (339-40)

In her study, idle musings and intellectual study are not mutually exclusive. Rather, Elliot's idle and peaceful days allow her better to assimilate Italian history and literature because her mind is cleared of the practical matters of the outside world.

The above description of comfortable and sumptuous surroundings that tempt one to lounge evokes typical images of idle scenes painted during the course of Elliot's career. Paintings such as William Holman Hunt's *Il Dolce Far Niente* (1866), John William Waterhouse's *Dolce Far Niente* (1880), and Frederick Goodall's *Dolce Far Niente* (*A*

³⁹ Frances Minto Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1872), I, p. 13.

Dream of Paradise) (1889) all depict wealthy, idle women reclining in luxurious and exotic settings [Figures 6.1 to 6.3]. These pictures stage scenes of opulent idleness, and each portrays a beautiful woman who is implicitly created by the male gaze and transformed into an inactive *objet d'art*. Idleness in the context of these paintings is associated with femininity and beauty, and each presents the captivating effect of a woman's gender on display. Yet such images also contain potentially risqué sexual undertones that could challenge notions of Victorian feminine propriety. The positions of the women in the latter two paintings are suggestive of the sensual poses of women in nude portraits and Classical sculpture, thus imbuing the images with sexual connotations by depicting idle women as passive, erotic, and sexualised spectacles.



Fig. 6.1 William Holman Hunt, *Il Dolce Far Niente*, 1866.

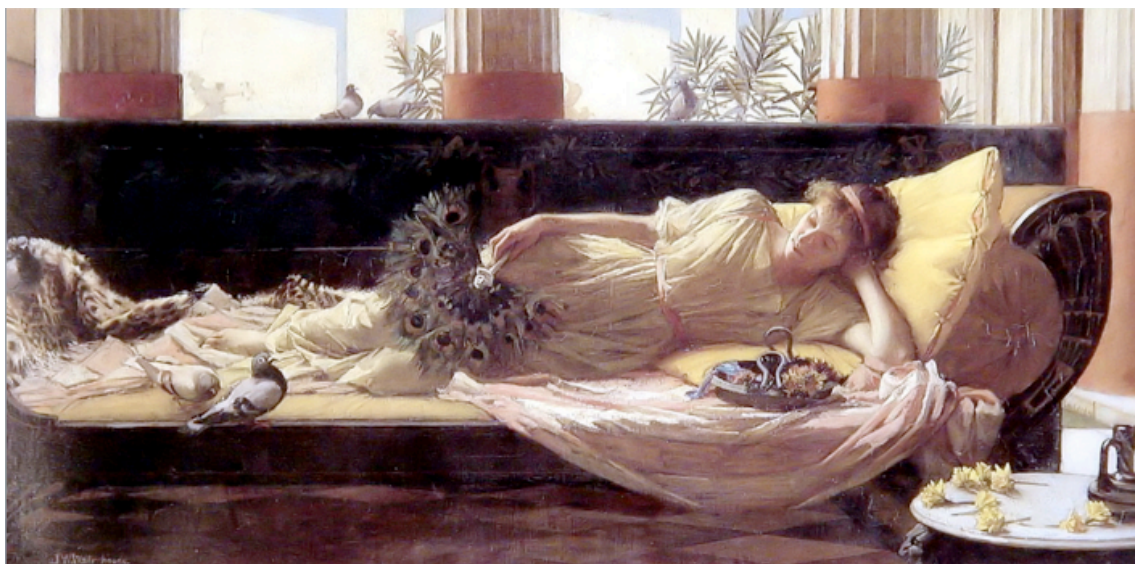


Fig. 6.2 John William Waterhouse, *Dolce Far Niente*, 1880.



Fig. 6.3 Frederick Goodall, *Dolce Far Niente (A Dream of Paradise)*, 1889.

However, in her textual depiction of female idleness, Elliot avoids turning herself into a potentially sexualised spectacle. The ‘all-pervading “crumpledness”’ (*Sicily*, I, 151) of her appearance, mentioned earlier, suggests that she lacks the grace and sensuality of the women in these paintings. Elliot also distinguishes herself from potentially transgressive images of idle women and challenges gendered understandings of idleness by emphasising the beneficial and intellectual purpose of her idle lounging: the mind, not the body, is the focus of the passages from ‘The Baths of Lucca’. Elliot fashions herself as an active,

intelligent subject rather than as the passive, decorated object of contemporary paintings. She is especially careful to specify the types of books she is reading and to affirm their useful function, since many Victorians perceived novel-reading as a form of unhealthy idleness for young women. Critical discourse on the subject frequently employed the trope of a passive, languorous female displaying herself on the sofa and neglecting domestic duties as she ‘devoured’ inappropriate novels.⁴⁰ By contrast, Elliot affirms that her reading material in Italy avoids a tendency towards escapism, self-indulgence, and, above all, impropriety.

In a manner that recalls the diarist’s depiction of illness in *Diary of an Ennuyée*, Elliot also portrays idleness as a positive attribute that enables the traveller to absorb more accurately the minute details of her surroundings. When she is idle, her senses are purportedly enriched and she becomes a keen observer and recorder – key traits of any reliable travel writer. Idleness enhances the power of the female gaze, transforming Elliot into an astute, observing subject with agency, rather than merely an exotic, passive object, as depicted in the paintings above. In her record of a visit to the Borghese Palace in Rome, she does not refer to her active and careful study of works of art in the gallery, as Jameson’s diarist and Horner do, but rather to her pleasant hours of idle musing, which enable her to become a keen observer and to recall details for the future. Even when Elliot is occasionally forced to be idle, she apparently makes the most of her situation. In a passage describing a long wait for an audience with the Pope in Rome, she declares that she ‘had abundant time to observe the crowd of ladies and ecclesiastics amongst whom I found myself landed’, before proceeding to describe the surrounding scene in detail (*Italy*, I, 61). Idleness evidently also aids the process of writing. Describing one outing in Sicily, she states: ‘I will set down my thoughts as they came to me, musing idly, on my favourite seat – a marble bench under a palm – upon the Marina’ (*Sicily*, II, 152). Idle contemplation

⁴⁰ Ina Ferris, ‘From Trope to Code: The Novel and the Rhetoric of Gender in Nineteenth-Century Critical Discourse’, in *Rewriting the Victorians: Theory, History, and the Politics of Gender*, ed. by Linda M. Shires (New York; London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 18-30 (p. 18).

while enjoying the view is the most productive way for Elliot to begin writing. Elliot implies that without the opportunity to be idle she would not have had the ability to write her travel books in the first place: paradoxically, idleness ensures productivity.

‘To idle’ implies to do nothing, to be inactive, to loiter, or to languish; this is evident in the *Dolce Far Niente* paintings and in Elliot’s descriptions of languid Italians who sit in local cafés and gossip for hours on end, or who sleep away the sultry afternoons. This is also apparent when Lowe admits to contemplating Mount Etna for three hours, while idly lounging in a carriage. Elliot, however, turns idleness into an endeavour associated with movement, freedom, and discovery; thus, to a certain extent she ‘neutralises’ the typical experience of idleness.⁴¹ Her own idle performance involves not only musing at length in one spot, but also moving from place to place, in the form of walking. As Elliot declares in her Sicilian travelogue, when given the choice between walking and driving, ‘I prefer walking at all times’ (*Sicily*, I, 163).

Moers argues for the act of walking as a symbol of independent womanhood in nineteenth-century novels by authors such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë. She even asserts that a ‘whole history of literary feminism might be told in terms of the metaphor of walking’.⁴² Likewise, Elliot’s walks in Italy symbolise autonomy and physical freedom. While Britain presented itself as a country of marital happiness and domestic virtues, Italy became seen as a place where British women could experience love and freedom outside of marital and domestic ties, and could ‘act’ their bodies in new ways.⁴³ Walking in Italy could also be a more liberating, ‘unscripted’ experience for women than in Britain.⁴⁴

⁴¹ In *Beautiful Boredom*, Maynard describes productive boredom as ‘fluid’ and unproductive boredom as ‘solid’ (p. 10). In a similar manner, Elliot demonstrates a type of productive or ‘fluid’ idleness, which involves movement.

⁴² Moers, p. 130.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 203. In Staël’s novel, Corinne writes to Oswald: ‘In England, domestic virtues constitute the glory and happiness of women, but if there are countries where love continues to exist outside the sacred bonds of marriage, Italy is the one, of all those countries, in which women’s happiness is best fostered (p. 101).

⁴⁴ Nineteenth-century British women who walked were frequently sexualised and encountered moral scrutiny, particularly when walking alone or with unmarried men. For a discussion of the ways in which nineteenth-century women have been routinely punished for walking alone, see Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Verso, 2001), pp. 233-36.

According to Peters, Elliot hints in one of her Italian articles of an affair with a local doctor ‘with whom she took long, unchaperoned walks in the countryside’.⁴⁵ After one excursion, Elliot writes: ‘the doctor was, as he ever is, most agreeable, and we parted at the Ponte equally pleased with each other and with our excursion’ (‘Baths of Lucca’, 337). There is no evidence to suggest that Elliot is referring to a romantic relationship. In any case, because Italy provided a type of non-judgemental, even empowering, sanctuary for the independent foreign woman, it is unlikely that Elliot was castigated for these unchaperoned walks.

In her Italian travelogues, Elliot does not only exert her independence through walking, but also through *wandering*. Walking implies the physical movement of putting one foot in front of the other. It is a practical means of getting from one point to another, purposefully moving between origin and destination. Wandering, however, involves strolling or meandering in a relaxed manner, and does not necessarily have a clear purpose; thus, it represents an idle form of walking. Vigorous walking or hiking involves a definite and sometimes ambitious objective, such as reaching the summit of the mountain, and it is generally considered to be a productive activity in which a specific goal is achieved. It also involves a large amount of energy and physical exertion, and is therefore not desirable for the average idle person. Conversely, people tend to wander, not in order to reach a specific destination, but rather to experience the pleasure of wandering itself. Wandering is not a means to an end; it becomes an end in itself. Wandering does not require a large amount of effort, and Elliot openly admits her dislike of physically demanding exercise, writing: ‘As an “Idle woman,” these mountains on the whole rather overwhelm me. I hate climbing, and I prefer the beautiful to the terrible in nature’ (*Sicily*, I, 120). Her attitude towards mountains provides a striking contrast to that of Lowe, and acts as a marker of both her idleness and femininity.

⁴⁵ Peters, ‘Secondary Lives’, p. 54.

Jeffrey Robinson notes that Romanticism made walking ‘an idyllic pastime’, and Elliot’s meandering strolls follow in the rich literary tradition of wandering Romantic poets.⁴⁶ In his *Prelude* (1850), Wordsworth not only emphasises the joys of wandering, but also of leaving the city behind. Robinson argues that the Wordsworthian walk reverses the direction of the Miltonic one. Whereas Adam and Eve head towards history and the world’s future cities, Wordsworth leaves history and urban civilisation for the supposed timelessness of nature.⁴⁷ Likewise, Elliot’s strolls throughout Italy lead her away from tourist-infested cities and into the countryside. Some of her most poetic descriptions of picturesque scenes emerge from occasions when she is wandering on foot, such as when she remarks:

The woods too, those primaeval fortresses of ancient trees, are painted with every tint and shade of green, and vocal with innumerable nightingales, whose soft songs invite one to wander under the chequered shade, beside cool bubbling brooks and splashing fountains, all overarched by the heavens, serenely, beautifully blue.
(*Italy*, I, 163-64)

Nature connects Elliot, like Wordsworth, with the ‘ancient’ past in ways that cities cannot. By mapping Romantic descriptions of pastoral Britain onto Italian scenes, she implies that the Italian countryside represents an authentic, untouched, and Edenic ‘back region’ that recalls a past Britain which is now lost. This passage also indicates Elliot’s desire to explore seemingly undiscovered pastoral spaces and thereby to establish a more intimate and meaningful connection with Italy. For Romantic poets, such as Wordsworth and Keats, the word ‘untrodden’ represents the most sacred space of all.⁴⁸ Likewise, when describing Mount Etna in *Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily*, Elliot muses: ‘What scenes of idyllic loveliness these untrodden valleys hold, who can say?’ (*Sicily*, I, 160). The word ‘untrodden’ evokes Wordsworth’s ‘She dwelt among the untrodden ways’ (1798). As is the case with Lowe in Sicily, it is Elliot’s duty to wander beyond the beaten track in order to

⁴⁶ Jeffrey C. Robinson, *The Walk: Notes on a Romantic Image* (Norman; London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), p. 39.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

grant her readers privileged access to lesser-known parts of Italy. Thus, despite its apparent aimlessness, her idle wandering evidently does have a practical purpose: to make Elliot a valuable travel guide and narrator.

In Wordsworth's poetry, rambling is not only depicted as a pleasurable activity; it also productively inspires the poet's creative mind. In a similar manner, wandering for Elliot represents an intensely imaginative activity, which, as Tom Hodgkinson suggests, enables one to generate ideas more effectively.⁴⁹ For instance, Elliot notes that while strolling past a harbour in Sicily, she recreates in her mind famous battles involving the Greeks. She writes: 'I wander on, stupid with wonder. To this moment the whole scene comes to me like a dream' (*Sicily*, II, 166). Her idle roaming allows her to wonder, to conjure up famous historical scenes in her imagination, and to make history come alive. To wander and to wonder not only sound similar, but they also represent a mutually constitutive relationship, and in Elliot's travelogues physical *wandering* is frequently accompanied by mental *wondering*.

Elliot's idle wanderings recall another eminent male literary tradition: that of the *flâneur*, or 'stroller' and 'lounger', who features in Baudelaire's poetry. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, during which a rich set of meanings surrounding the *flâneur* took shape, the art of *flânerie* was connected with an urban experience. The *flâneur* represented a keen spectator who witnessed the ever-changing city landscape, observed the modern metropolis's boulevards, cafés, and shops, and had a keen eye for the dazzling, even surrealistic, spectacle of urban life. The *flâneur*, who engaged in a type of metropolitan performance, stood for one who was bourgeois, and one who had the money, leisure, and class distinction to move freely within and across borders. This figure did not typically travel out of necessity, but, rather, from a need to fuel his desire for pleasure and experience.⁵⁰ Expounding upon the significance of the *flâneur*, Hodgkinson has proclaimed

⁴⁹ Tom Hodgkinson, *How to be Idle* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 101.

⁵⁰ Helmers and Mazzeo, p. 10.

that the ‘pedestrian is the highest and most mighty of beings; he walks for pleasure, he observes but does not interfere, he is not in a hurry, he is happy in the company of his own mind, he wanders detached, wise and merry, godlike. He is free’.⁵¹

In her textual travel performance, Elliot emerges as a type of *flâneur* in several ways. First, the title ‘Minto’ implies that the author possesses money, leisure, and class distinction. Second, according to Elliot’s travelogues her relaxed strolls bring about a sense of immense freedom and pleasure.⁵² For example, a promenade around the Roman Colosseum imbues her with ‘unspeakable hope and peace’ (*Italy*, II, 20), while a wander through some woods enables her to experience a sense of ‘solemn enchantment’ (*Italy*, II, 86). Third, Elliot derives the authority of her wanderings from her supposed impartiality; her status as a traveller with ‘a perfectly disengaged mind’ (*Italy*, I, vii) purportedly enables her to be a more unbiased and effective observer. However, Elliot also feminises the male phenomenon of the *flâneur*. For instance, she records an amusing incident in which she tears her dress during a walk in Sicily, reminding readers of the female inconveniences of walking and, more generally, of travel (*Sicily*, I, 168). Furthermore, Elliot maps the urban experience of *flânerie* onto the Italian countryside, demonstrating the value of a woman’s response to a rich variety of Italian pastoral scenes.

When abroad, the aristocratic figure of the *flâneur* connected notions of movement and individuality, and stood out against the democratisation of travel marked by Thomas Cook’s first tour in 1841.⁵³ Similarly, Elliot’s references to her (often solitary) idle wandering emphasise the individuality of her travel performance, and differentiate her from the ‘most uncompromising and unsympathetic’ (*Italy*, II, 60) British crowds, whom she associates with ‘scuffling, crushing, and pushing’ (*Italy*, II, 117). In addition, the self-

⁵¹ Hodgkinson, p. 99.

⁵² Similarly, in *Pictures from Italy* Dickens describes an enjoyable, liberating idleness that releases one from any sense of obligation. Remarking on his stay in Genoa, he declares: ‘You can lose your way (what a comfort that is, when you are idle!) twenty times a day, if you like’ (p. 38). For Dickens, idleness enables one to wander, and even to get lost, without feeling guilty or foolish. When one is an idle traveller, the rigorous schedule of daily life no longer exists.

⁵³ Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, ‘Introduction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-13 (p. 7).

styled idle traveller frequently contrasts her own implicitly productive idle and imaginative musings on the Italian topography with the frivolous activity and unproductive busyness of other tourists. Elliot recognises British tourists visiting the Roman Forum by their ‘trivial and restless curiosity, the questions they ask, and the ignorance they betray’ (*Italy*, II, 18).

She laments:

Carriage after carriage may be seen driving up, and party after party of extravagantly-dressed ladies may be seen dismounting in the dirt at various points of peculiar interest, only to peep and peer about as did the famous Davis for pickles in the vases of Pompeii. This vexatious mass of nameless temples particularly engages their attention, and they stand, ‘Murray’ in hand, resolutely decided on understanding what is not understandable. When I see these antiquarian butterflies, attended generally by a servant in livery and a pet spaniel, I confess I am disgusted. (*Italy*, II, 18)

These tourists are solely concerned with regurgitating facts from rigid scripts like Murray’s handbooks, rather than with actively engaging with their surroundings in spontaneous and meaningful ways, as Elliot purportedly does. Due to her relevant historical knowledge and idle, imaginative reveries, Elliot considers herself to be a ‘true’ traveller, in contrast with the absurd spectacle of superficial tourists who perform meaningless travel rituals. Elliot’s emphasis on her valuable approach to Italian travel foreshadows Edith Wharton’s insistence, years later, that Italy is ‘a foreground and a background. The foreground is the property of the guide-book and of its product, the mechanical sight-seer; the background, that of the dawdler, the dreamer and the serious student of Italy’.⁵⁴ In contrast to the ‘vexatious mass’ of ‘mechanical’ British tourists, Elliot fashions herself as a ‘dawdler’ and ‘dreamer’ who embraces the idle way of Italian life, absorbs her Italian surroundings to the fullest, and experiences the untrodden ‘background’ of Italy.

⁵⁴ Edith Wharton, *Italian Backgrounds* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 177. Wharton’s comment anticipates MacCannell’s discussion of the front and back regions of travel destinations, considered in Chapter 2.

The Significance of Italy for the Idle Traveller

Although Elliot occasionally disparages certain aspects of both northern and southern Italy, overall she writes far more positively about the country than about Spain or Constantinople in her 'Idle Woman' travelogues.⁵⁵ Throughout *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain*, Elliot describes numerous Spanish cities and towns as backwards, uncivilised, and ugly, and repeatedly depicts the country as an inferior version of Italy. Complaining about the Spanish language, Elliot argues that '[a]fter Italian there is no music in the sound' and that Spanish merely sounds like 'corrupt Italian'.⁵⁶ Recalling her visit to El Escorial, she criticises the decor, observing that 'the only artistic thing in the whole vast pile is the library [...], painted and decorated by an Italian' (*Spain*, I, 82). Elliot writes of the Toledo cathedral: 'there is an absolute want of the exquisite unity and finish of the Italian churches' (*Spain*, I, 119). Moreover, she declares that 'Italian art was perfected with a skill and beauty undreamt of in backward Spain' (*Spain*, I, 164). Due to its associations with Islam and the Oriental 'other', Elliot is even more disapproving of Turkey. In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople*, she describes the city as common, bland, and even revolting, and filled with squalor and 'sordid ruin'.⁵⁷ Criticising the state of its cemeteries, she even goes so far as to declare that 'Turkey is of all nations the most uncivilised' (*Constantinople*, 25). Elliot also expresses disappointment at her first glimpse of the Sea of Marmora: she admits to feeling 'no spasm of delight at the ruined city walls, at this point

⁵⁵ Elliot is especially critical of Italian beggars, since for her they are most representative of unproductive idleness. She compares Roman 'beggars and idlers' to 'a motley assemblage of bronzed, half-naked savages, sullen-eyed and heavy-featured – clad in sheep-skin, the fur turned outwards' (*Italy*, I, p. 184). In addition, she depicts the elderly Syracusan women as '[h]airless, foul, and horrible; oftener asleep or begging than at work' (*Sicily*, II, p. 31). In a manner reminiscent of Lowe, Elliot describes these figures as indolent, culturally backward, primitive, and even animal-like. She also condemns Italian monks, who not only lead an idle existence, but whose entire purpose is idle, or futile, since their penances serve no useful role, according to the Protestant traveller. It could be argued that Elliot, like many British authors, considers Catholicism to be an 'idle', or superficial, religion, and she depicts the religion as one that puts an unhealthy emphasis on relics and idols. (Coincidentally, 'idol' even sounds similar to the word 'idle'.) These examples are exceptions to Elliot's romanticised perception of Italy's *dolce far niente*.

⁵⁶ Frances Minto Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain*, 2 vols (London: White & Co., 1884), I, p. 22. Hereinafter cited as *Spain* and included in the main body of the text.

⁵⁷ Frances Minto Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* (London: John Murray, 1893), p. 12. Hereinafter cited as *Constantinople* and included in the main body of the text.

so inferior in colour and picturesqueness to those of Rome' (*Constantinople*, 2). For the most part, Elliot is extremely critical of Spain and Turkey and repeatedly notes her disappointment, annoyance, and disgust upon travelling through both countries. In these latter travelogues, Elliot spends far more time elaborating upon her frustration and disappointment, as well as the multitude of inconveniences that she encounters, than on any enjoyable idle experiences.

In *Italian Hours*, James asserts that the 'way to enjoy Venice is to follow the example of these people and make the most of simple pleasures'.⁵⁸ In a similar fashion, Elliot implies that the best way to appreciate Italy is to 'do as the locals do' and to embrace the pleasures afforded by *il dolce far niente*. Elliot's travelogues suggest that Italy's relaxed atmosphere, warm climate, and idyllic scenery enable Elliot to perform her idle identity to the fullest when in that country, and her idle selfhood plays its most prominent role in these travel narratives. They are the only texts in which Elliot repeatedly refers to herself in the third person as an 'Idle Woman', highlighting her idle persona. By contrast, the author rarely draws attention to her performed idle selfhood in *Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain* and *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople*. In these two volumes she emerges as a less relaxed and more impatient character than in her Italian travelogues. Unlike her other travel accounts, Elliot's Italian travelogues depict a woman who engages in imaginative musings and who frequently wanders off the beaten track, encountering idyllic spaces. Rather than merely examine and critique the local 'other' from a distance, as she does in Spain or Constantinople, Elliot aligns herself with Italians to a certain degree by claiming to adopt their idle lifestyle, and by living amongst them for extended periods of time. She could claim an intimate knowledge of the Italian people, including their characteristics, customs, and way of life, which set her apart from other travel writers (such as Jameson and Lowe) who were simply passing through. Thus, Elliot is able to present

⁵⁸ James, *Italian Hours*, p. 9.

herself as a valuable cultural intermediary and translator between Italians and the British readers for whom she is writing.

In Elliot's Italian travel narratives, images of self and setting reciprocally reinforce one another to a greater extent than in her other travelogues. Just as Elliot's idyllic Italian surroundings inspire her idle behaviour, it is during her most idle moments in Italy that she tends to idealise her surroundings and muse at length on 'wild idyllic solitudes' (*Italy*, I, 236). It is worth noting the similarity between the words 'idle' and 'idyll'. Elliot is not the only author to exploit the likeness between the terms: the relationship between idle and idyll is also implied in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1856-85), in which the word 'Idylls' is pronounced as 'Idles'. Tennyson's series of tales narrates the downfall of an ideal monarchy, indicating that such idyllic states are not lasting. Many nineteenth-century travel writers viewed Italy as a type of mythical and pastoral idyll, much like Camelot was perceived. Like other authors, Elliot frequently portrays Italy as a picturesque region characterised by its lack of industrialisation and modernity. Any sign of modernisation in Italy angers Elliot, such as when she complains that the interior of a church in Rome has been completely modernised, or writes of the Circus Maximus in Rome:

Alas for the utilitarian nineteenth century! the site of this once superb arena is now converted into a gasometer, as red and as flaunting and ill-odoured as any gasometer in any little country town; and there is a pert little white house in the centre of the yard, and a cast-iron railing in front fresh from Birmingham, desecrating the soil where kings, dictators, and Caesars held their imperial state [...]. (*Italy*, I, 150)

Apparently even romantic, pastoral Italy cannot always escape from modernity. As an idyll, Italy represents an idealised, picturesque scene that is not always sustainable.

Just as her idealistic expectations of Italy are not always upheld, Elliot also demonstrates that her idle behaviour is not sustainable, especially when the romance of musing upon an idyllic Italy is interrupted by more mundane concerns. In *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, for instance, Elliot recalls that her meditation on Italy's beauty is interrupted by bodily hunger. She writes: 'But the happiest dreams must end. Our classical

rhapsodies were rudely broken by discovering the lateness of the hour, and [...] by the humiliating fact *that we were hungry*' (*Italy*, II, 91). In addition, Elliot's idle state is interrupted by other people who do not share her taste for idle wandering. She notes that, while standing at the edge of a lake near the small town of Castel Gandolfo, 'I could have wished to wander for hours on that peaceful shore, populated by thick-coming fancies and poetic memories; but H—s, now become practical as I had grown fanciful, hurried us on, and we were fain to follow' (*Italy*, I, 281-82). A similar event occurs in 'The Baths of Lucca', when she writes: 'Altogether, this station was so beautiful that I wished to linger under the shade of the trees had my companion permitted it; but he insisted that we still had too far to go to allow [for] loitering' (335). Evidently Elliot's idle musings during her journeys are not always maintained, since reality and practicality have a habit of interfering.

At the conclusion of *Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy*, Elliot proclaims:

And with this excursion my Diary ends [...]. I am suddenly called back to England, and 'the idle woman' (who was not so very idle, after all) has now laid aside her pen, and become once more 'the woman of the period' – with *really* nothing to do! (*Italy*, II, 329)

By stating that she is in fact 'not so very idle' in her travel account, Elliot admits to the instability of her narrative identity. As I have argued throughout this thesis, travel writing frequently entails a heterogeneous discourse in which the narrator negotiates different subject positions. Elliot's constructed selfhood is marked by 'gaps and inconsistencies', alternating between the roles of idle traveller and hardworking author and travel guide, self-conscious lady and confident wanderer.⁵⁹ In addition, although Elliot claims to enjoy periods of relaxation and inactivity during her Italian travels, this quotation indicates that beneficial idleness as a lived experience is unsustainable. Following the concept of travel writing as a performative act of identity-formation, this chapter has demonstrated the ways in which Elliot articulates her subjectivity as a female idle traveller, presenting her travel

⁵⁹ Mills, p. 54.

adventures as productive and exciting. As a travel writer imbued with agency, Elliot can cultivate a positive idle identity that contributes to entertaining, informative, and successful Italian travel narratives. Yet the role of 'woman of the period' is apparently less valuable to Elliot than the role of traveller and author. When Elliot declares that at home she has '*really* nothing to do', she does not necessarily mean that she will be idle, but rather forced to undergo a type of pointless activity, or at least busyness that does not fulfil her in the same way as travelling and travel writing do. As travel writers, women like Elliot had the ability to enact their own itineraries, following 'fancy' and 'accident'; as women living in Victorian Britain, however, they often had to follow 'appropriate' agendas set out for them and to endure an oppressive idleness. In her travel accounts, Elliot fashions herself as a traveller whose idleness heightens her awareness and understanding of Italy. However, once Elliot 'has laid aside her pen', she suggests that she must face a life of enforced, unproductive idleness experienced by many Victorian women.

CONCLUSION

The Journey Continues

Just as William Butler Yeats maintained that to make art one needed to wear a mask, authors of travel accounts construct their own façades, fashioning their travel identities as types of aesthetic artefacts.¹ This thesis has argued for the importance of interpreting travelogues as carefully fashioned texts, rather than as unconstructed and straightforward reflections of life experience. As spontaneous, improvisatory, and revelatory as travel texts may appear, they do not so much present a revealing of the self, as a construction of the self in a narratorial space. When viewed as a performative art, travel writing becomes not only a means of ‘worldmaking’, to use Nelson Goodman’s term, but also ‘selfmaking’.²

Following Judith Butler’s and Sidonie Smith’s concepts of performativity, this thesis has analysed the performative practice of self-representation in the travel accounts of four nineteenth-century British women in Italy. In their Italian travelogues, published (or, in the case of Susan Horner, written) between 1826 and 1881, Anna Jameson, Susan Horner, Emily Lowe, and Frances Minto Elliot articulate distinctive subjectivities as part of a narrative strategy, a discursive feature whereby each writer exploits her role as a knowledgeable and responsive traveller who pursues a valuable cultural experience. These travel writers convert elements often perceived as signs of weakness or subversive behaviour (illness, over-intellectualism, a lack of male protection, and idleness) into strengths: their performed travel identities aim to persuade readers of the narrators’ aptitude for travel and of their especially insightful and meaningful Italian journeys. Their fashioned selfhoods are predominantly intended to strengthen their connection with Italy’s sights, landscapes, art, buildings, cultural traditions, and, in Horner’s case, inhabitants. Just as Italy came to embody ‘rebirth’ in the nineteenth century due to the *Risorgimento*, these

¹ See Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (New York; London: Norton, 1999).

² Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), p. 7.

four travellers in Italy openly portray a kind of ‘rebirth’ or redefinition of the self through the shaping of their textual travel identities.

When it comes to the construction of travel selfhoods, however, I have argued that control should not be presumed to rest exclusively with the performers. The anticipated reader for whom travel writers perform is constitutive in the formation of travel accounts and travel identities. Issues of audience expectation also shape the content, genre, and rhetorical language of travel texts. By playing up a particular travel identity, nineteenth-century women travel writers presented a distinctive perspective to an audience craving a novel approach to a familiar, even ‘over-performed’, peninsula. The formation of travel identities provided Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot with especially novel and, at times, eccentric travel experiences that distinguished their texts from other accounts of Italy. Thus, these identities often represented a valuable marketing strategy, turning travelogues into publishable commodities.

In their Italian travel narratives, nineteenth-century British travellers, including Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot, often consciously perform for their readers. Some even depict themselves at the centre of dramatic scenes, as though they are the focal point on a stage as viewed by the audience. In their texts, these authors therefore become as much travel attraction as traveller, as much spectacle as spectator. Authors such as Lowe also underline the performed nature of their travels by emphasising their position as objects of the Italian gaze. The transformation to the object of fascination by curious Italian locals or other travellers could be profoundly unsettling or empowering for the woman travel writer, yet it seemed entirely fitting in a peninsula so saturated with theatrical display and performance.

Schechner has suggested that travel and travel writing are as rule-bound by conventions and ‘networks of reciprocal expectations and obligations’ as any theatrical

performance.³ However, while this thesis has demonstrated the ways in which travel writing is highly conventionalised, examining key scripts in the construction of various textual travel identities, it has also exhibited how nineteenth-century travel writers adapted and subverted past travel performances, challenging boundaries and creating new travel performances. The scripted nature of travel writing still allows room for an individual writer's freedom: as types of scripts, guiding travel texts can be revised, changed, and reinscribed by authors. As the travel texts analysed in this thesis have illustrated, travel narratives often contain both scripted and improvisatory elements.

According to Butler, the acts by which gender is constituted also bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts:

The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again.⁴

Butler suggests that gender, as a performance, is an act, a social construction, and a fiction, and one that is therefore open to change, contestation, and improvisation. Likewise, gender is in no way a stable identity in nineteenth-century travel accounts: women travel writers often consciously incorporate both traditionally 'feminine' (domestic) and 'masculine' (scientific and political) voices within a single text. In analysing Victorian women's travel writing, it is important to be sensitive to the significance of gender for travel writing performances, and to be aware of the use of travel writing as a vehicle for subverting and evading gender restrictions, and for challenging the nineteenth-century belief in the biological nature of sex differences.

However, the extent to which each author's travel identity is influenced by forces beyond her gender is also a significant consideration. While I have been concerned with elements that travel texts share, I have been equally interested in what distinguishes them

³ Schechner, p. 296.

⁴ Butler, 'Performative Acts', p. 277.

from one another. As this thesis has argued, it is important to bear in mind travel writing's diversity, which is exemplified by women's manifold relations to such constitutive elements as time, class, race, culture, and place. The sheer variety of women's travel writing resists simple categorisations: the insistence that all women write in a similar manner undermines the variety and complexity of the travel writings they produce, which are often infused with conflicting voices. Indeed, travel writing rarely presents a unified self. As Smith argues, identity is not given or fixed: an author may create several, sometimes competing, stories about or versions of herself as her subjectivity is displaced by one or multiple textual representations.⁵ The ability to assume plural identities was one of the liberating possibilities that travel writing afforded nineteenth-century authors, enabling women's agency, empowerment, and change.

As a performative act, travel writing bestows a certain degree of creative licence upon travel writers, allowing them to blend the imagined with the real, artful invention with fact, amusement with instruction. Travel experience is crafted into travel text; this crafting of experience inevitably introduces into the text a fictive or literary element.⁶ The generic distinctions between fiction and non-fiction are complicated in travel writing, often unravelling entirely. In many ways, the constructed nature of travel writing is not only redolent of autobiography, but also of fictional genres such as the novel.⁷ Considering the connection between travel writing and the novel, it is unsurprising that several nineteenth-century women authors, including Mary Shelley, Frances Trollope, Julia Kavanagh, and Frances Minto Elliot, fashioned careers out of writing both novels and travel accounts, constructing various selfhoods and characters in each form. The process of selection and arrangement of detail in a travel text raises an array of 'literary' questions, including questions of voice, audience (real or implied), the shape and structure of the narrative, and

⁵ Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*, p. 47.

⁶ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, pp. 28-29.

⁷ For more on the relationship between autobiography (including travel writing) and fiction, see: Flint, p. 188; Paul John Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 3; and Hulme and Youngs, p. 6.

imagistic and thematic repetition. For travel writers, the freedom to interweave storytelling, character-making, and performance with reportage is part of the attraction of the form.⁸ Just as travel involves crossing various boundaries, whether they be geographical, political, or cultural, travel writing itself crosses generic boundaries. The freedom that comes with roaming translates into a freedom that comes with writing about one's roamings and performing one's journey on the page.

Fictional narratives emulate 'reality'; likewise, non-fictional travel writing contains a considerable amount of fictionalisation of the self. The self that is performed at the centre of the travel narrative represents a type of 'fictive structure', to use Paul John Eakin's term.⁹ In her examination of women's travel writing, Bassnett argues that many of the works by women travellers are 'self-conscious fictions', in which 'the persona who emerges from the pages is as much a character as a woman in a novel'.¹⁰ Many nineteenth-century travel accounts by women chart the inner growth and progress of the narratorial self abroad, mirroring the inner journey with the outer one, and recalling the *Bildungsroman* – the 'education' or 'formation' novel. The *Bildungsroman* attempts to construct a coherent sense of self against the adversities of life, and in a similar manner, the strong female central narrator of a travelogue often aims to produce a coherent self in opposition to the foreign 'other'. Both women travel writers and novelists often suggest through their texts that in order to have a meaningful journey one must evolve in a significant way.

Considering their significant contribution to genres ranging from travel writing and the novel, to journalism and poetry, nineteenth-century British women writers constituted a talented, diverse, and prolific group. However, suspicions of female purity and propriety shadowed the careers of many nineteenth-century women authors, who made claims to publicity and self-assertion. In 1837, Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, famously rebuked

⁸ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, p. 29.

⁹ Eakin, p. 3.

¹⁰ Bassnett, 'Travel Writing', p. 234.

the writerly aspirations of an unknown Charlotte Brontë, asserting: ‘Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life, and it ought not to be.’¹¹ It is worth asking, however, whether Southey’s condemnatory statement would have also applied to travel writing.

Despite their similarities, there are also notable differences between the travelogue and the fictional novel, particularly with regards to readers’ expectations. Travel writing usually represents a rhetorical project embedded in a concrete material situation; often at the core of the practice of travel writing is a personal story of a journey that really happened, albeit one that is mediated through discourse and text.¹² Although travel writing can partake of the nature of fiction, it often purports to be factual. Quoting Hayden White, Holland and Huggan assess travelogues as essentially ‘fictions of factual representation’, which claim validity by referring to actual places and events, but then assimilate those places and events to a highly personal vision.¹³ One often reads travel accounts with the assumption that the travel writer has attempted a factual account, comprised perhaps of errors but not outright lies. As demonstrated by Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée*, an audience believes (or pretends to believe) that the author will be grounding his or her travel narrative in ‘reality’. Readers not only want to accept specific travel activities as narrative truths, but also want to attribute the narrator’s thoughts, feelings, and opinions to the author: they equate the narrator’s self with the author’s self. Due to its supposed reliance on factual occurrences, nineteenth-century travel writing was considered to represent one of the more edifying influences of women’s literary culture. Travelogues could offer escapism; however, they often did so within an educational and informative context, which lent them a certain degree of respectability and a supposed seriousness of purpose.

Almost one hundred years after Southey criticised women for writing literature, Virginia Woolf accused many nineteenth-century women’s novels of being ‘a dumping-

¹¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Penguin Books, 1997 [1857]), p. 117.

¹² Gagnier, p. 7.

¹³ Hayden White, ‘Fictions of Factual Representation’, in *The Literature of Fact*, ed. by Angus Fletcher (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 21-44; Holland and Huggan, p. 10.

ground for the personal emotions' because of their focus on the personal and their analysis of individual lives and feelings.¹⁴ While travel writing could provide an outlet for '[v]erbiage, emptiness, and affection' (1), to use the words of Jameson's diarist, it also provided a space for erudite and perceptive reflections. Travel writing not only gave women the opportunity to fashion particular selfhoods and to focus inwards, but also brought women out of their daily domestic routines, encouraging them to examine the impersonal, the foreign, and the 'other'. It enabled women to analyse more than 'personal emotions' and individual lives: travel writing offered a stage upon which authors could offer social and political commentary, and highlight their intellectual integrity.

Furthermore, nineteenth-century travel writing conferred on women a measure of cultural authority that derived not simply from education but also from direct experience. The travelogue's emphasis on first-hand participation and observation set it apart from traditional forms of male scholarly practice, which relied on a privileged, male educational background, and were predicated on the notion of history being 'produced as man's truth'.¹⁵ The popular titles of nineteenth-century women's travel accounts often refer to 'impressions', 'sketches', 'reminiscences', and 'recollections', suggesting an impressionistic approach to travel which belies the concreteness and precision of scholarship, as well as its claims to exhaustive research, documentation, and scholastic discourse.¹⁶ Instead, they encourage readers to place their trust in the author's vision of place and in her position as eyewitness.

In their Italian travelogues, Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot all aim to establish authority and cultural credibility by offering a rich distinctiveness of personal impressions

¹⁴ Virginia Woolf, 'Women and Fiction', in *Selected Essays*, ed. by David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1929]), pp. 132-39 (pp. 137-8).

¹⁵ Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History: Victorians and 'The Woman Question'* (New York; London: Routledge, 1991). p. 1.

¹⁶ See for example Marianne Baillie's *First Impressions on a Tour Upon the Continent in the Summer of 1818* (1819); Jane Waldie's *Sketches Descriptive of Italy* (1820); Mary Boddington's *Slight Reminiscences of The Rhine, Switzerland, and a Corner of Italy* (1834); Elizabeth Sewell's *Impressions of Rome, Florence, and Turin* (1862); and Mrs Staley's *Autumn Rambles; or, Fireside Recollections of Belgium, the Rhine, the Moselle, German Spas, Switzerland, the Italian Lakes, Mont Blanc, and Paris, by a Lady* (1863).

recorded ‘directly’ from experience and observation. As eyewitnesses, these authors present themselves as authoritative mediators between the reader and the foreign. Many nineteenth-century women travel writers fashioned professional identities as sociologists, ethnologists, historians, and art historians by placing value on their first-hand experience of places abroad. For instance, the Italian historical writings of ‘Vernon Lee’ (Violet Paget) exemplify the value placed upon first-hand impressions, and her accounts of Italy’s history and art are rooted in her response to the peninsula’s material presence.¹⁷ Lee wrote sketches of Italian towns, landscapes, and gardens, which detail her emotional responsiveness, and which also seek to capture the psychological effects of places rather than to catalogue particular facts. In *Euphorion* (1884), her first book on the Italian Renaissance, she explains:

[T]he Renaissance has been to me [...] not so much a series of studies as a series of impressions. I have not mastered the history and literature of the Renaissance (first-hand or second-hand, perfectly or imperfectly), abstract and exact, and then sought out the places and things which would make that abstraction somewhat more concrete in my mind; I have seen the concrete things, and what I might call the concrete realities of thought and feeling left behind by the Renaissance, and then tried to obtain from books some notion of the original shape and manner of wearing these relics, rags and tatters of a past civilization.¹⁸

This passage neatly captures the impulse behind many nineteenth-century travel narratives by British women, with their stress on the importance of immediate observations in establishing narrative authority. As Lee demonstrates, as opposed to relying exclusively upon the authority of original documents in historical archives or of the work of other historians to substantiate their historical narratives and make large historical claims, women travel writers could claim veracity due to their authority as eyewitnesses, directly experiencing the sites relevant to the events and lives about which they wrote.

Travel writing also provided a space in which Victorian women could influence public culture and opinion: through their writings, they could determine what future

¹⁷ Hilary Fraser, ‘Women and the Ends of Art History: Vision and Corporeality in Nineteenth-Century Critical Discourse’, *Victorian Studies*, 42 (1998), 77-100 (p. 90).

¹⁸ Vernon Lee, *Euphorion: Being Studies of the Antique and the Medieval in the Renaissance*, 2 vols (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1884), I, p. 16.

travellers saw, encourage them to respond to and interpret sites in particular ways, and shape what constituted ‘good taste’. In addition, women travel writers had an impact on so-called ‘armchair travellers’ who read their books but could not afford to journey abroad: travelogues influenced how readers perceived foreign cultures, and, by way of comparison, British culture at home. Moreover, they acted as models of female mobility and guides to future women travellers, impacting the manner in which women travellers conducted their journeys. In writing about Italy, the four women discussed in this thesis reinforced the strong nineteenth-century connection between Britain and the peninsula, emphasising Italy’s role in British women’s intellectual and physical liberation, and influencing readers’ impressions of Italy’s religion, history, politics, art, landscape, and climate. Their travelogues encouraged readers to visit the well-travelled region (even if only in their imaginations) and to construct their own versions of self and ‘other’ abroad.

While attempting to reach the ‘back regions’ of Italy, British travel writers often aimed to witness the routine aspects of local life, and to depict life as it was ‘really’ lived. However, in analysing the work of Jameson, Horner, Lowe, and Elliot, it is important to recall that all travelogues provide not so much a representation of the world as it truly is, as the representation of one particular perspective on the world. In many instances, travel writing produces images of the foreign which are a result of an asymmetric relationship between the perceiver (who belongs to the target culture) and perceived (who belongs to the source culture), generally filtered through an opaque cultural lens.¹⁹ In other words, just as the self is a textual artefact, the ‘other’ is also a textual construction in travel accounts. One can never depict the foreign with complete faithfulness; instead, the foreign is typically portrayed through a distorted lens.

Scholars of travel writing tend to look at what the traveller feels to be ‘authentic’ or meaningful, rather than which traits of their own culture locals consider to be significant.

¹⁹ Agorni, p. 4.

In its analysis of the performative nature of nineteenth-century British women's travel writing, this thesis has focused on the voices of British travel writers, rather than on those of the Italian locals whom they encountered. A promising avenue for further scholarship would be to examine nineteenth-century Italian sources for Italians' perceptions of what constituted 'authentic' Italian culture, as well as what they thought of the British travellers who visited their peninsula. Authors such as Jameson, Lowe, and Elliot periodically relegate Italian locals to the role of picturesque 'extras' or stage props in their travel accounts. It would be worth placing Italians 'centre stage' and examining how they constructed their own identities in relation to surrounding British tourists. More work could also be done on the travel accounts of Italians who travelled to Victorian Britain and performed their own travel selfhoods on a British stage.

When considering the significant number of British women who wrote travel accounts throughout the century, it is also critical to recall that canonical and well-known travel writers do not provide the whole picture, and should not be seen as wholly encompassing the practice of women's travel writing of the period. It is therefore important to examine the works of marginalised travel writers, in addition to the more established ones, in order to develop a broader and more nuanced view of nineteenth-century women's travel writing. The fact that little research has considered Horner, Lowe, or Elliot is a testament to the volume of women travel writers of the period, and suggests that there are many more British women writers who have yet to be studied.

However, this thesis has not simply endeavoured to provide a space for voices which have until now been little recognised in contemporary scholarship. It has also uncovered specific features of published and unpublished travel accounts which can shed light on the significance of authors' various modes of self-representation, the types of rhetorical strategies and scripts which are embedded within travellers' discourses, and the perceptions of selfhood, agency, and performance that underline their identification as

women travel writers. Far from remain at home, like Penelope in *The Odyssey*, these Victorian authors wove tales of their adventures in new environments, demonstrating that travel writing was a valuable route towards cultural authority and self-empowerment, as well as a means of personal and professional self-fashioning. And, judging by the popularity of women's twenty-first-century travel accounts noted at the beginning of this thesis, there will be many more tales of women's travel and identity-formation to come.

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