

**When the Wandering Traveler Speaks:  
The Narrative Poetics of Early Anglo-Indian Women's Travel Writing**

by

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## Abstract

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women who traveled to and wrote about India have been examined and analyzed as many things—imperial colluders, pseudo-feminists, ethnographers, missionaries, and sexual objects—but rarely as literary writers. My dissertation examines these writers’ contributions to the development and evolution of the travel writing genre, one of the most popular literary forms in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain.

Between 1757 and 1857, the period that is widely referred to as “the century of East India Company rule,” the travel writing genre underwent an enormous shift in its purpose and production. Prior to 1757, the travel writing field was dominated by scientific explorers, economic explorers, and wealthy leisure travelers, almost all of whom were men. These travelers prided themselves on writing depersonalized accounts that minimized the role of the individual and instead focused on presenting objective information. Gradually, as even distant lands became well-traveled, writers had to become more creative in how they marketed and presented their narratives. Borrowing and adapting techniques and strategies employed in fiction and other literary genres, Anglo-Indian women travelers, including Maria Graham, Fanny Parks, and Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, began emphasizing people over place by focusing on individuals they met and developing their own narrative personas, which would have been considered egotistical earlier in the period. The traditional non-fiction travel narrative, typically composed of letters or journal entries, also became more structured and plot-driven as women moved away from forms of immediate writing towards more retrospective forms, such as the

chapter memoir. Women travel writers also used paratextual components, such as title pages, tables of contents, and descriptive page headers, to establish their authority and credibility as reliable narrators; to emphasize the truth, utility, and originality of their narratives; and to exhibit their knowledge and understanding of the genre's literary roots. While early in the century women tended to publish less personal forms of writing, such as fiction and drama, about India rather than travel writing, by the mid-nineteenth century, travel accounts dominated the Anglo-Indian literary market.

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## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms Anglo-India and Anglo-Indian as the British used them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anglo-India referred to all areas of the Indian subcontinent that were under British control, and British citizens who lived or were born on the subcontinent were called Anglo-Indians. The women writers I am discussing are therefore referred to as Anglo-Indians. The Anglo-Indian community developed a culture of its own, separate and apart from that of the British, with its own social etiquette, customs, and traditions, so the classifications British and Anglo-Indian are not synonymous.

Because most of the writers of this time spelled Indian words and places phonetically, spellings can vary wildly. In my own writing, I have tried to use the acceptable modern spellings of these words and places to avoid confusion. Therefore, I have used Karle in place of Carli, Arjun in place of Arjoon, puja in place of poojah, etc., except when I am quoting from an historical text. The primary exception is that I have retained the use of Calcutta for Kolkata and Bombay for Mumbai, both of which had a definite spelling during this period. The names Calcutta and Bombay evoke the colonial history and atmosphere of this time in a way Kolkata and Mumbai do not, and Calcutta and Bombay continue to be the preferred choice of historians and other scholars when referencing the colonial period.

## INTRODUCTION

*“How much there is to delight the eye in this bright, this beautiful world! Roaming about with a good tent and a good Arab, one might be happy for ever in India: a man might possibly enjoy this sort of life more than a woman; he has his dog, his gun, and his beaters, with an open country to shoot over.... I have a pencil instead of a gun, and believe it affords me satisfaction equal, if not greater than the sportsman derives from his Manton.” ~ Fanny Parks<sup>1</sup>*

For Fanny Parks, author of the massive two-volume travel narrative *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, living in India proved to be a formative experience, affording her freedoms she never knew in England. She was able to travel independently, to interact freely with women and men of higher and lower classes, to participate in Hindu religious ceremonies and festivals, to learn Eastern languages, and to ride astride horses with her “sister,” Baiza Ba’i, queen of Gwalior and matriarch of the powerful Scindia family.<sup>2</sup> Along with her love for the “pleasure of vagabondizing over India,” Parks found great joy in writing about her travels, stating, “My journal is a constant source of pleasure; it not only amuses me to record passing events, but in writing it I perform a promise given ere I quitted England.”<sup>3</sup> This promise, to record her experiences and impressions for friends and family, was one that no doubt most colonial travelers made before journeying abroad, and it was a promise that Parks not only honored but improved upon by publishing her private journals and thereby contributing one of the most fascinating travel narratives of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim, in Search of the Picturesque, during Four-and-Twenty Years in the East; With Revelations of Life in the Zenana*, 2 vols. (London: Pelham Richardson, 1850), 2:191.

<sup>2</sup> The Scindia clan ruled the Indian kingdom of Gwalior, in central India, until India’s independence in 1947. Parks’ friendship with Baiza Ba’i will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup> Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 2:192, 147.



Like Parks, many of the British women who called colonial India home in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found pleasure and solace in writing, an occupation that was not only enjoyable and personally gratifying but also encouraged by the British populace, who were enthralled by stories and descriptions of the “jewel” of the empire. What often began as private journal entries, casual musings, and personal letters home could sometimes evolve into published works released for all of Britain or Anglo-India to enjoy. These women bravely bared their innermost thoughts, desires, observations, and beliefs even when doing so meant risking public ridicule or censure. India gave these women a voice and a platform from which some were able to launch successful writing careers and others were at least able to contribute a single memoir or travelogue, ensuring that their voices would be heard by generations of scholars, historians, and travel enthusiasts.

During the past few decades, women’s travel writing on India has become increasingly popular with literary scholars, especially as the field of travel writing criticism and theory has expanded in the wake of postcolonial and globalization studies and a renewed interest in “literary” travel writing. Such notable scholars as Pat Barr, Margaret McMillan, Indira Ghose, and Rosemary Raza<sup>4</sup> have contributed to our knowledge and understanding of Anglo-Indian women travelers, and many texts from colonial India are readily available in facsimile online or in anthologies, such as R. V. Vernede’s *British Life in India: An Anthology of Humorous and Other Writings by the British in India 1750-1950* (1995), Indira Ghose’s *Memsahibs Abroad:*

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<sup>4</sup> See Pat Barr’s *The Memsahibs: The Women of Victorian India* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976), Margaret MacMillan’s *Women of the Raj* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), Indira Ghose’s *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), and Rosemary Raza’s *In Their Own Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

*Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India* (1998), Máire ní Fhlathúin's *The Poetry of British India, 1780-1905* (2011), Mary Ellis Gibson's *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780-1913: A Critical Anthology* (2011), and Tim Keirn and Norbert Schürer's *British Encounters with India, 1750-1830* (2011). Some Anglo-Indian travel narratives have been published in modern editions, including Emily Eden's *Up the Country* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India* (Routledge, 2006; and New York Review Books, 2010). The most popular writers have also been the subject of extensive biographical study, and full-length biographies of Maria Graham and Lola Montez—two of the most ambitious female travelers—were published in 2009.

James Duncan and Derek Gregory have attributed this growing scholarly interest in travel writing to contemporary travel writers such as Pico Iyer and Bruce Chatwin, authors they credit with giving travel writing “both a new popularity and a new critical respectability.”<sup>5</sup> However, the literary elements that give these travel tomes “respectability” are typically neglected in scholarship on early Anglo-Indian travel writing, which often focuses on the colonial commentary in the texts without examining the literary structures, styles, and devices that make those messages possible. These studies are often conducted by feminist and postcolonial critics, eager to restore women's voices and investigate whether women colluded with or criticized British imperial projects. But scholars of women's travel writing often approach the texts more as historical or cultural curiosities than as works of literature, and even the authors of groundbreaking, critically acclaimed monographs, such as Rosemary Raza in *In Their Own*

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<sup>5</sup> James Duncan and Derek Gregory, introduction to *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, ed. James Duncan and Derek Gregory (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.

*Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857*, often confess that they are “interested in the written word as a vehicle for conveying information, and not for its literary qualities.”<sup>6</sup>

Raza’s monograph is noteworthy because to date it is the most comprehensive examination of Anglo-Indian women writers from the pre-Mutiny period. Unlike most scholars, who have focused almost entirely on a handful of the most prolific, professional writers, including Maria Graham, Emma Roberts, and Emily Eden, Raza is interested in this group as a whole, and she places the experiences of these notable women alongside their less recognizable compatriots, including Harriette Ashmore, Ann Deane, and Eliza Clemons. Although Raza examines Graham, Roberts, Eden, and dozens of others as well, she does not privilege one woman’s story over another’s because she is focused primarily on the historical value of these texts rather than their literary contributions. She is less interested in travel writing as a genre than she is in what these women’s narratives can tell us about life in colonial India and especially about the lives of British women who called the subcontinent home. However, by introducing these seemingly minor writers to a wider audience, Raza opens the door for literary scholars to take notice not only of the historical content of these narratives but also of their forms, structures, styles, and devices.

Nigel Leask has argued that the “twentieth-century predilection for the sort of travel book that sits on the parlour table has perhaps been detrimental to our sense of the importance of the *other sort* in the period covered here.”<sup>7</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, well-written

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<sup>6</sup> Rosemary Raza, *In Their Own Words*, xiv.

<sup>7</sup> Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: ‘From an Antique Land’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11. Italics are Leask’s. Leask cites two texts whose “damning indictment of modern travel writing” perhaps contributed to the marginalization of the travel writing genre in scholarship: Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by J. Weightman and D. Weightman (1955; New York: The Modern Library,

non-fiction travel narratives were often considered *belles-lettres*, an artistic category that at the time privileged knowledge as much as it did precise writing. French thinker Jean Tarrasson explained *belles-lettres* in this way: “The exact mind discovers truth, and taste finds the way of saying it well. Such exactness is the fruit of philosophy applied to belles-lettres.”<sup>8</sup> At the time, *belles-lettres* included “all the ‘sciences,’ especially historical learning,” a group to which much travel writing could fall.<sup>9</sup> Although not all travel writing was considered *belles-lettres*, certain texts, including Joseph Addison’s *Remarks on Italy* (1705), Daniel Defoe’s *A Tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-1726), and, later in the century, James Boswell’s travel narratives, were certainly valued as such. While these texts have always enjoyed a certain amount of esteem—in part because of the names attached to them—many women wrote non-fiction travel books on par with these more famous works.<sup>10</sup> These texts, including many by Anglo-Indian women travelers, have literary value because they adhere to contemporary standards for the genre while also pushing its boundaries in interesting and progressive ways.<sup>11</sup>

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1997); and Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan’s *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> From Jean Tarrasson’s *La philosophie applicable à tous les objets de l’esprit et de la raison ouvrage en réflexions détachées* (Paris, 1754), 120; quoted in Douglas Lane Patey, “Ancients and Moderns,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume IV: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (1997; New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 55.

<sup>9</sup> Patey, “Introduction: Criticism and Tradition,” 46.

<sup>10</sup> Leo Hamalian has even argued that “women were the first masters of the genre of travel writing,” in Hamalian, introduction to *Ladies on the Loose: Women Travellers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Leo Hamalian (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1981), xii.

<sup>11</sup> In *English Travel Writing: From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, arguably the book that comes closest to formulating a poetics of English travel writing, Barbara Korte discards “[t]he view that travel writing is only literature if couched in ‘literary’ language or ‘poetic prose’” for being too “restrictive,” and she argues that confining literary discussions of travel writing to texts “whose style strikes one as particularly ‘literary’ . . . makes the scholar blind to important developments and general generic features.” See Korte, *English Travel Writing: From Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, trans. Catherine Matthias (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 14-15.

More books and articles on early travel narratives are being published than ever before, but the number of scholars researching or teaching travel writing continues to lag far behind those working on the novel, poetry, and drama, and most texts, especially those by women, remain obscure to all but the most specialized enthusiasts. This lack of interest in seemingly less “creative” forms of literature, such as travel writing, minimizes the contributions of innovative travel writers to literary history and ignores the fact that travel writers often appropriate and rework narrative techniques and strategies employed in other established or developing forms, such as the novel. As Tim Youngs relates, travel writing “is a literary form that draws on the conventions of other literary genres. Narrators, characters, plots and dialogue are all shaped accordingly.”<sup>12</sup> Youngs lists as an example Henry Morton Stanley, who was affected by his reading of Milton, Shakespeare, and James Fenimore Cooper, as well as his own background in journalism, when writing *Through the Dark Continent* (1878).<sup>13</sup> The frequency with which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers mention or quote poetry, novels, classical texts, and other travel writers demonstrates the intertextuality of the genre, something that is rarely mentioned by scholars when discussing Anglo-Indian travel writing.

Several excellent histories and critical examinations of the political and ideological components of travel writing have been published in recent years, including Carl Thompson’s *Travel Writing* (2011), Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst’s *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (2008), and Debbie Lisle’s *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (2006), all of which informed and inspired this dissertation. However, even when “form” and “poetics” are stressed in titles, scholars often tend to frame

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<sup>12</sup> Tim Youngs, “Introduction: Filling the Blank Spaces,” in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, ed. Tim Youngs (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Youngs, “Introduction,” 3.

their discussions from the standpoint of postcolonial and globalization studies and minimize their discussions of the narrative structures and devices used in travel writing. Lisle's *Global Politics* contributes substantially to our understanding of travel writing's "'in-between' position" on the borders of fact and fiction, but at its core the text is really about "the production of difference," with emphasis on how even contemporary travelers cannot "avoid being tainted by the colonial and patriarchal heritage they are trying to overcome."<sup>14</sup> Some of the chapters in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire* explore the physical forms and common literary tropes of travel writing, but the majority of the essays are more concerned with ideological critiques of gender and imperialism than with narrative poetics. While it is impossible to escape at least some consideration of ideology when analyzing colonial travel writing, and especially colonial women's travel writing, the development of form and the influence of other genres on travel writing needs to be prioritized in studies that claim to emphasize poetics. Anglo-Indian travel writing is a particularly fruitful place to begin such a conversation on form and genre because there is such a large body of texts available for consideration and comparison.

To scholars of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature, critical examination of the development and intertextuality of travel writing should seem even more urgent because the marginalization of travel writing in scholarship and in the classroom ignores the genre's literary standing during the period as well as the popularity of non-fiction travel writing with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British readers. Between 1773 and 1784, the book borrowed most frequently from the Bristol library was *Account of the Voyages undertaken by the Order of his Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere* (1773), edited by John Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth was a well-known writer and an editor for the *Gentleman's*

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<sup>14</sup> Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31, 71, 105.

*Magazine*, and he sold *Account of the Voyages* to publishers Strahan and Cadell for the enormous sum of £6000. The narrative was borrowed from the Bristol library an astounding 201 times, while *Tristram Shandy* and Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* were borrowed only 127 and 92 times respectively. The second most popular travel narrative was Patrick Brydone's *Tour through Sicily and Malta* (1774), which was borrowed an impressive 192 times, and borrowings from the "History, Antiquities and Geography" section of the library, which included travel, far exceeded those from any other section.<sup>15</sup> Scholarly neglect of these travel writers has not gone unnoticed, and in her biographical entry for Hawkesworth, Karina Williamson writes, "as a man of versatile talents who was widely read and leading figure in the cultural life of eighteenth-century London, his virtual eclipse in the twentieth century seems curious."<sup>16</sup> Unlike *Tristram Shandy* and *Lives of the Poets*, to this day Hawkesworth's and Brydone's volumes remain unfamiliar to most scholars and are unlikely to appear on all but the most specialized course syllabi.

At the time Hawkesworth's and Brydone's travel narratives were published, women's travel writing was still in its infancy. The first two-thirds of the eighteenth century saw the publication of only two major travelogues by British women—Elizabeth Justice's *A Voyage to Russia* (1739) and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*, published posthumously in 1763—but by 1800, these two pioneering women had been joined by at least eighteen other women travelers, including Jemima Kindersley, whose *Letters from the Island of*

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<sup>15</sup> Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'From an Antique Land'* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12-13. Here Leask is citing information from Paul Kaufmann's *Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1773-1784: A Unique Record of Reading Vogues* (1960). The Bristol library is unique in that it is the only late eighteenth-century circulating or subscription library from which such detailed lending records have survived.

<sup>16</sup> Karina Williamson, "Hawkesworth, John (bap. 1720, d. 1773)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, May 2006, accessed 16 September 2014, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12658>, accessed 16 Sept 2014.

*Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies* was published in 1777, and such well-known writers and thinkers as Mary Wollstonecraft, Helen Maria Williams, and Ann Radcliffe. By 1830, another twenty-five to thirty women had published travel writing, many of them women who, unlike Wollstonecraft, Williams, and Radcliffe, had never published before and would never publish in any other genre.<sup>17</sup> As Katherine Turner relates, “After 1815, more exotic destinations, such as Russia, Egypt, and India were both safer and fashionable, and increasingly accessible to the wives of those merchants, diplomats, and military men who were sowing the seeds of empire overseas.”<sup>18</sup> More and more often, these women, who represented a wide range of educational and social backgrounds, published versions of their letters, journals, and sketches upon returning home to England, and some, like Eliza Fay’s *Original Letters from India* (1817), were published exclusively by Anglo-Indian presses.

By 1845, women travel writers were common enough that the *Quarterly Review* devoted an entire essay to reviewing works by recent “Lady Travellers.” In this essay, critic Elizabeth Rigby addresses the distinction between men’s and women’s travel writing—and therefore potential reasons for the growing scholarly interest in women’s travel writing—in her discussion of twelve recent publications by women travelers. “There are peculiar powers inherent in ladies’ eyes,” Rigby states. “We mean that power of observation which, so long as it remains at home counting canvass stitches by the fireside, we are apt to consider no shrewder than our own, but which once removed from the familiar scene, and returned to us in the shape of letters or books, seldom fails to prove its superiority.”<sup>19</sup> According to Rigby, men’s travel writing tended to be

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<sup>17</sup> I am grateful here for Katherine Turner’s careful cataloging of titles. See Turner, “Women’s Travel Writing, 1750-1830,” in *The History of British Women’s Writing, 1750-1830*, vol. 5, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 48.

<sup>18</sup> Turner, “Women’s Travel Writing, 1750-1830,” 49.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Rigby, “Lady Travellers,” *Quarterly Review* 76 (June 1845), 98.



“either dull and matter-of-fact, or off-hand and superficial,” while women’s travel writing was distinguished by its “ease, animation, vivacity” and “the tact to dwell upon what you most want to know, and the sense to pass over what she does not know herself.”<sup>20</sup>

With so many women entering the field, Rigby could distinguish between three different kinds of women travel writers: women who traveled with the sole purpose of writing about their experiences; women with social agendas who wrote “to express those private opinions” they wished to make public; and “lady tourists,” who were more likely to travel without “a particular object in view” and to be “less troubled with preconceived notions.”<sup>21</sup> Unlike “lady tourists,” Rigby found that the first two groups were hindered by the fact that they “travel with an object, and it is apparent in every line they write.” Professional women travel writers, that “systematic set of travellers who regularly make a tour in order to make a book,” were criticized for their lack of authenticity. Whereas the “individual character” of the lady tourist is “fully portrayed” and “visible,” in the works of professional women travel writers, Rigby laments, “Instead of seeing the woman, we only discover the authoress.”<sup>22</sup> In Rigby’s opinion, the most exciting kind of travel writing, the most inventive and observant, belonged to the wandering vagabonds like Fanny Parks, who traveled more for the joy of new experiences than to promote a political or social agenda or to sustain a writing career. For these women, writing was often secondary to traveling, but the freedom they found in itinerant travel also freed them to write honestly, without the self-censoring instinctual to the professional writer or to the government-sponsored explorer. This kind of authenticity allowed these writers to emphasize their individual voices and personalities in a way most eighteenth-century and earlier travelers had avoided doing.

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<sup>20</sup> Rigby, “Lady Travellers,” 99.

<sup>21</sup> Rigby, “Lady Travellers,” 100-101.

<sup>22</sup> Rigby, “Lady Travellers,” 100-101.

It should not seem surprising, then, that many of the works by “lady tourists” were just as popular in their day (and ours) as the books by professional travel writers, and some of these vagabond tourists used their success with Indian travel writing to launch prolific writing careers. When Maria Graham accompanied her father and siblings to India in 1808, most likely she did not embark with the intention of using her private journals to start a literary career, but upon returning to England, she did just that, publishing two critically acclaimed travel books about the subcontinent. Over the next twenty years, she went on to publish histories, ethnographies, travel writing on South America, art criticism, and even a best-selling history textbook for children. Emma Roberts had published one volume of history before accompanying her sister and brother-in-law to India in 1828, but she used her experiences in India to build a career as a poet and travel journalist, editing and writing for various Anglo-Indian periodicals, including the *Oriental Observer*. The success of her first travel narrative, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan* (1835), inspired her to return to India with the expressed purpose of writing about her travels as well as to write political commentary on the presidency and the employment of Indian women. While these later writings would fall into the two groups of women’s travel writing with which Rigby found fault, it was only by first publishing as a “lady tourist” that Roberts was given the opportunity to recreate herself as an “authoress.”

British women had been writing professionally for well over a century, but Roberts and other early Anglo-Indian women travel writers benefitted in particular from the literary, historical, and cultural moment in which they lived. For a century prior to the so-called Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the institution of the British Raj in 1858, the East India Company controlled

large portions of the Indian subcontinent,<sup>23</sup> and India was a near constant topic of conversation in newspapers and journals, in coffeehouses, in Parliament, and even in private homes, since nearly everyone knew someone who had been to the subcontinent or was stationed there. Many women writers took advantage of Britain's interest in India by incorporating the Indian landscape and India's political and social issues into their writing and marketing their work to a particular readership. Until the early nineteenth century, the majority of women's writing on India was in the form of novels, plays, and poetry, with only one major non-fiction travel narrative published before the turn of the century. After 1800, however, more and more women who had been to India began publishing their personal letters and journals, and later some began turning those letters and journals into memoirs and autobiographies. Some women also published travel guides for women going to India, including lists of what to bring (and not to bring) on the journey, glossaries of important Indian words, and tips on how to integrate into Anglo-Indian society. As their knowledge of South Asian culture, literature, and religion grew, some women also began publishing translations of Sanskrit texts, accounts of Indian history, and illustrated guides to understanding Islamic and Hindu religious traditions. Despite being separated from their homes, families, and friends for years and sometimes even decades, these women took advantage of their positions to record meaningful accounts of life in India that are still of historical and literary value today.

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<sup>23</sup>Also called the Indian Rebellion or Sepoy Rebellion or, sometimes, India's First War of Independence, this conflict began with the mutiny of sepoys, or native Indian soldiers, who were stationed in the British cantonment at Meerut. Forced repeatedly to compromise their religious beliefs, a group of sepoys violently rebelled, freeing some of their comrades who had been imprisoned and hacking to death anyone—including women and children—who got in their way or got too close. Violent uprisings were sparked across the subcontinent, most famously in Lucknow and Cawnpore. The following year the East Indian Company was disbanded and rule over India transferred to the British crown.

Of course, after the Indian Mutiny, women continued to write about their experiences, perhaps even in greater numbers than before, but for the purposes of this study, limitations must be imposed. Since my interest is in the evolution of the travel writing genre as it relates to Anglo-Indian women writers, I have chosen to concentrate on women's writing published prior to the end of East India Company rule in August 1858. Although I will occasionally reference texts published in later years, especially if the women who wrote them lived in India during the period in question, I will not examine them with as much depth or detail as those published prior to 1858. This date was primarily chosen for its political and historical significance, but it also coincides with what I consider to be the most significant developments in the travel genre and in Anglo-Indian women's travel writing. The period begins with the first book-length travel narrative about India by a British woman, Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies* (1777), a text that strongly reflects eighteenth-century ideals that privileged accuracy and objectivity in travel writing over individual experience and narrative voice. The period then culminates in one of the most important literary and historical events in British colonial history. When word of the Indian Mutiny reached England, the British were hungrier than ever for salacious news and sensational accounts of battle-torn life, and dozens of women who had witnessed the atrocities at Cawnpore and Lucknow published travel narratives, poetry collections, and songs highlighting their personal experiences. During this period, some of the most innovative and novelistic travel accounts, including those by Katherine Bartrum and Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, were published. These writers in particular experimented with narrative structure, voice, and dialogue in order to make their stories more sympathetic, or humorous, or emotionally resonant. Although women continued to publish travel accounts about India later in the century, the Indian

Mutiny marked an explosive moment in Indian-British relations that was never again duplicated on the page.

### **A Company Rules a Subcontinent, 1757-1858<sup>24</sup>**

Prior to the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the British East India Company was just one of three powerful European trading entities in India and was under constant threat from the rival Dutch and French companies. The Dutch controlled territories on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, while the French held strongholds in Pondicherry in southeast India, near the British factory at Madras. Tensions between the French and the British, in particular, were high, with a war breaking out between them in 1744. Instead of bringing lasting peace, the truce called in 1748 led the warring companies into a local power struggle, with both sides establishing alliances with local nawabs and building powerful armies combining European and Indian soldiers. Along with the imminent threat of war with France, the British also had to contend with Mughal rivalries and Indian political conflicts that frequently threatened British presence and financial success in India. These tensions combined in June 1757 when Siraj-ud-Daula, the new nawab of Bengal, dismissed most of his predecessor's British-friendly officials, including General Mir Jafar, and seized the British factory at Calcutta when his demands for money were not met. Robert Clive, president of Madras, had an army already prepared to engage with France as part of the Seven Years War, but instead mobilized the troops for Bengal. On June 23, 1757,

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<sup>24</sup> For the historical information in this section, I am deeply indebted to the following texts: Michael Edwardes, *Plassey: The Founding of an Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969); John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (New York: Macmillan, 1991); Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London and New York: Longman, 1993); John McLeod, *The History of India* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002); Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India* (New Delhi and London: Orient Longmans, 2004); and Douglas M. Peers, *India under Colonial Rule 1700-1885* (London: Pearson Longman, 2006).

the armies met at Plassey. In the ensuing battle, Siraj-ud-Daula was killed, and afterward Mir Jafar was installed as nawab of Bengal.

Although the events of 1757 did not end competition between the three European trading companies, Britain dominated Indian trade thereafter. Despite the region remaining technically under native authority, after the Battle of Plassey the Company made clear that the natives ruled only with its permission and that it would not tolerate rebellion of any kind. When Mir Jafar attempted to establish a relationship with the Dutch in 1760, he was swiftly deposed by British forces and replaced with his son-in-law, Mir Qasim. Although Mir Qasim initially welcomed the British into Bengal and lavished gifts upon them, he too grew tired of their interference and sought to limit their power and monopolized trading in his region. In 1764, he joined forces with Shuja-ud-Daula, the nawab of Oudh, and Shah Alam II, the Mughal emperor, in an attempt to eliminate British control in the region, but all three rulers were defeated by Company troops in the Battle of Buxar, a decisive battle that awarded the *diwani*, or overlordship, of Bengal to the British East India Company. Although the Company restored Mir Jafar to the throne, he was given only judiciary powers, and in 1765 Robert Clive, the hero of the Battle of Plassey, took over as governor of Calcutta.

From the beginning, there were questions as to how the Company could rule such an expansive foreign region and how Parliament could regulate Company actions. The constant warring with Indian and European forces took its toll on Company finances, and despite Clive's attempts to eliminate extortion and misrule, there was a consistent shortfall in revenue. Eventually, the Company was forced to ask the British government for a loan, which was given to them on the condition that the Company would hereafter be regulated by Parliament. The Regulating Act in 1773 created both a governing Council and the new position of Governor-

General. The Governor-General, an official selected by the Company's Court of Directors, was to replace the Calcutta governor as head of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal and also to supervise Company operations in the Madras, Bombay, and Benkulen presidencies. Certainly the most famous Governor-General was also the first, Warren Hastings, who served from 1773 to 1785. Between 1773 and 1858—the year in which the Company was dissolved and control of India transferred to the British Crown—fifteen men served as Governor-General, including Lord Auckland, brother of Emily Eden; Sir Charles Metcalfe, father of Emily Metcalfe; and Charles Canning, husband of Charlotte Canning, three women who left behind extensive accounts of their time in India.

Although Eden, Metcalfe, and Canning were in India to support their family members' political positions, the majority of women who went to India before 1858 accompanied military husbands, fathers, or brothers who were stationed there. Although decisive, the Battle of Buxar did not end conflict between the Company and Indians and other Europeans, and a large military presence in India became not only prudent but necessary. Lady Alicia Scott reported that “During the Forty Years' Peace in Europe [after the fall of Napoleon in 1815], there was no work for the army but in India.”<sup>25</sup> Every Governor-General from 1773 to 1858 contended with at least one war, many of which lasted for multiple years, and even when peace agreements were reached, they usually did not last, as seen in the cases of the Anglo-Maratha Wars (1777-1783, 1803-1805, 1817-1818), the Anglo-Mysore Wars (1780-1784, 1789-1792, 1798-1799), and the Anglo-Burmese Wars (1823-1826, 1852-1853). Throughout this period, the British continued to

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<sup>25</sup> Lady Alicia Scott, *A Lady's Narrative of a Residence in India in 1834* (London: Webster and Larkin, 1874), 11.

defeat more Indian rajahs and annex new trading regions, but Company profits suffered from supporting so many costly military campaigns.

Until 1833, the Company also controlled immigration to India, so British women without some connection, such as a male relative assigned to India, would have had difficulty gaining access to the subcontinent. With the help of friends, however, some unattached women were able to make the journey on their own terms. For example, Eliza Fay's first trip to India was in support of her husband, a barrister who was granted a position with the Supreme Court of Calcutta. Her subsequent solo trips to India, however, were inspired by her own entrepreneurial ambitions and her desire to make herself independent, an opportunity not afforded her in her home country. In the early decades of EIC rule, India became synonymous with economic opportunity and prosperity, as revealed in the opening paragraph of Phebe Gibbes' novel *Hartly House, Calcutta*, where the heroine acknowledges, "the eastern world *is*...the grave of thousands; but is it not also a mine of exhaustless wealth! the center of unimaginable magnificence! an ever blooming, an ever brilliant scene?"<sup>26</sup> In these lines, Gibbes makes a case for the prevailing view of India at the end of the eighteenth century—that it was a dangerous, at times inhospitable place, but that the benefits of traveling there far outweighed the risks. Coming from a woman whose own son had died in India, this view is difficult to dispute, and it is certainly a stance with which the East India Company overseers, who poured their finances into maintaining control of subcontinental trade no matter what the economic or human cost, would have agreed.

Rosemary Raza relates that prior to 1833 the East India Company could have denied British women "permission to set sail" to the subcontinent but instead "encouraged their

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<sup>26</sup> Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta* (London, 1789), 1.



presence.”<sup>27</sup> Women were considered the importers and protectors of domestic life, so their presence was all the more necessary to guard the Anglo-Indian community against the purported dangers of cultural and sexual miscegenation. In her groundbreaking study of British India, *Reading the East India Company, 1720-1840*, Betty Joseph argues, “In the eighteenth century, the figure of woman often operated as the general equivalent by which respective cultures were evaluated and assigned their place in the order of civilizations, thus hitching the role and status of women to the level of progress a culture and people had reached.”<sup>28</sup> The British, of course, considered themselves to be at the pinnacle of civilization and used the accomplishments and freedoms of British women as an example of their superiority over other European and non-European cultures. From nearly the beginning of the East India Company’s hundred-year rule in India, British women played an important role in the imperialist project. They went to India for a variety of reasons—as support for husbands, fathers, or brothers; in hopes of finding a husband; as missionaries or aid workers; to fulfill their own entrepreneurial ambitions or travel goals—but no matter what their reasons for going, they were expected to uphold certain English values and to be the upholders of domestic life.<sup>29</sup> It was this burden that modern critics have condemned them for, and especially the way in which they often subscribed to dominant, imperialist ideologies. But even the women themselves often found their roles problematic, and many used their seemingly dominant position to critique their own society and especially the subjugation of women in both British and Indian cultures. Although these women often went to India with the goal of staying as “English” as possible, they were all indelibly changed by their encounters with the people, customs, and landscape of India.

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<sup>27</sup> Raza, *In Their Own Words*, 30.

<sup>28</sup> Betty Joseph, *Reading the East India Company, 1720-1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Raza, *In Their Own Words*, xi.

Change is never easy, and these women recall honest and often brutal first impressions of the dry, deserted landscape; the underdressed and underfed masses; the oppressive heat; and their horror at Islamic and Hindu religious and cultural practices, especially the ones that oppressed women and the poor. As the years and sometimes decades passed, however, many of these women began to think of India as home, to accept and even appreciate the idiosyncrasies of life there. Seeing how Indian women were treated often made them feel superior initially, but as their experience and understanding grew some began to see the same oppressive tendencies in the treatment of women back home. In India they often enjoyed a freedom that their sisters in England never experienced—to go where they wanted to go, to explore, to associate with those of other classes or from different backgrounds. It is no surprise, then, that some women returning to England after years spent in India had a difficult time readjusting to the restrictions and social expectations placed on women in Britain. Many of them found themselves feeling “homeless,” caught between cultures and feeling isolated and misunderstood. Some of them tried to rectify this situation by returning to India, where there were more entrepreneurial opportunities available for single women. Others simply wrote about their experiences and published them, wanting to share their “home” with a wider audience, sometimes decades after they had returned to England.

As the century of Company rule progressed, it became more acceptable for women to write about their own personal experiences, and the number of autobiographical novels and plays dropped off in favor of travel narratives and guidebooks, many of which became very popular and/or useful to women going to India later in the century. Of interest to me is how the travel writing genre developed in these women’s hands, what prompted them to shift from the fictional to the personal, and how they brought the personal to life using an assortment of literary tools

that had previously been ignored or disparaged in traditional travel writing. By the end of this period, travel writing had evolved from the impersonal, passive genre of economists and imperialists into the personal, immersive genre it is today.

### **Plan for the Dissertation**

In “Poetics, Criticism, Science,” Benjamin Hrushovski defines poetics as “the systematic study of literature as literature” and says that as such it deals with certain questions, such as “What are the forms and kinds of literature? What is the nature of one literary genre or trend?...How is a story made?”<sup>30</sup> Although Hrushovski lists many other questions taken up by students of poetics, these three constitute the primary foundation for the current study.

In this dissertation, I recognize non-fiction travel writing to be a literary genre that was esteemed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but that has since slipped down the literary hierarchy as seemingly more “creative” genres, such as fiction, poetry, and drama, have come to be viewed as the literary apex for scholars and readers alike. Each of the four chapters in this study focuses on a particular transitional moment in the history of Anglo-Indian letters: in chapter 1, we will find a shift from women representing India and their own experiences in fiction, drama, and poetry towards women sharing their personal stories in non-fiction travel narratives; in chapter 2, we will learn about eighteenth-century travel writing’s literary mandate to “please and instruct” and the growing divide in the nineteenth century between travel literature meant merely to instruct (such as travel guides) and entertaining travel narratives that still had to prove their utility and accuracy; in chapter 3, we will witness a shift from narrative forms that privileged immediacy to those that adopted retrospective structures; and in chapter 4, we will see a

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<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Hrushovski, “Poetics, Criticism, Science: Remarks on the Fields and Responsibilities of the Study of Literature,” *Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976): xv.

movement from purportedly objective to subjective narrative point of view, from the narrator as passive observer to active participant in the narrative, and from people as background to people as central characters in the story.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, curiosity, concern, and controversy made India a popular subject in every literary genre. Although my focus throughout this study will be on women's published travel writing before the institution of the British Raj (1858), the first chapter of this study will discuss women's writing on India more broadly, including examining novels, poetry, plays, histories and ethnographic studies, religious pamphlets and propaganda, children's books, manuscript letters and journals, and non-fiction travel narratives. This chapter will situate these texts within their larger cultural contexts, mapping the ever-fluctuating British interest in India by examining not only what contemporary reviews tell us about the reception of individual texts but also about opinions towards Anglo-Indian writing and travel narratives in general.<sup>31</sup> How reception of women's travel writing differed from that of male travelers will also be addressed, as well as how these various genres mixed and mingled, making the line between fact and fiction, novel and memoir, sometimes difficult to determine. The hybridity and intertextuality of travel writing and its status as a border genre will be established in this chapter, as well as the criteria by which critics judged the travel writing of the time.

The next three chapters will focus exclusively on book-length, published travel writing and investigate the key components and common tropes inherent in the form and how they evolved in the century prior to the institution of the British Raj. In the eighteenth century, critically acclaimed travel narratives were respected and admired for their adherence to the

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<sup>31</sup> Although scholarship and even modern reviews exist on some of these texts, my focus in this chapter will be on the critical reception of these works at their times of publication. Modern scholarship will also be presented when appropriate.

Horatian concept of *utile dulci*, or what scholar Charles Batten translates as “pleasurable instruction.” Literary, as opposed to mandated, travel writing was expected to both delight and instruct the reader while also adhering to the strict rules of the form and prioritizing truth and accuracy. Chapter 2 examines how Anglo-Indian women travel writers used paratexts<sup>32</sup> to establish their authority and credibility; emphasize the truth, utility, and originality of their narratives; and exhibit their knowledge and understanding of the genre. In this chapter, I establish the importance and prestige of travel writing in eighteenth-century Britain and provide reasoning for why women writers avoided the genre for so long. The non-fiction travel narrative was always closely monitored by critics and readers, who were eager to find fault or declare something untrue, and writers quickly learned how damaging a negative review or accusations of perfidy could be to their careers or personal lives. Most Anglo-Indian women travel writers adhered to established guidelines, which governed everything from the role of the author-narrator to narrative structure to paratextual elements, while also finding subtle ways to progress the genre. An examination of paratextual elements, including titles, prefaces, and tables of contents, reveals what these writers were trying to achieve, the kind of readership they desired, and the strategies they employed to make their writing seem relevant and necessary in an increasingly saturated market.

An examination of tables of contents highlights the array of topics women’s travel writing covered and how useful these narratives were, but it also reveals trends in narrative structure, such as a shift from chronological storytelling towards subject-based organization. Chapter 3 examines the different structures and forms Anglo-Indian women selected for their

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<sup>32</sup> Paratexts are one of five types of textual relations, or modes of “textual transcendence,” that John Pier has outlined as a “key notion in [Gérard] Genette’s poetics,” in John Pier, “Gérard Genette’s Evolving Narrative Poetics,” *Narrative* 18, no. 1 (January 2010): 12.

narratives and how these choices affect reader response to the texts. Many adopted the traditional epistolary frame (and used both authentic and staged letters) for their narratives or published their personal journals or diaries. These immediate forms of writing allowed for greater reader immersion in the texts while also placing these writers in an esteemed literary tradition. In the nineteenth century, however, travel writers tended to choose retrospective narrative forms, such as the chronological chapter narrative, the essay collection, and the sketch book, which typically combined short, loosely related personal vignettes with second-hand anecdotes. Of interest to me are the potential reasons for and consequences of the shift from immediate forms of writing like letters and journals to retrospective narratives written months or years after returning to England. This chapter will also examine novelistic techniques women writers employed to spark reader interest and build narrative suspense, and it will investigate travel writing trends throughout the period to show how these writers responded and contributed to the evolving travel writing genre.

Finally, chapter 4 explores character development in travel writing and the growing emphasis on people over place in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women's travel narratives. Characterizing the self and people met while traveling allowed writers to create more original, entertaining narratives and to differentiate their own travelogues from those that had been published previously. Writers began dedicating more space to the construction of their own narrative personas, and they emphasized their individual interests, personalities, literary educations, and subjective experiences, which allowed them to live on the page as more than just traditional stock travelers. Use of humor and tone also allowed some of these writers, including Eliza Fay and Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, to develop individual, recognizable voices. Many Anglo-Indian women writers also devoted much time and space to developing the characters of the Anglo-Indians and native Indians they encountered. Instead of merely

describing other people, as most earlier travelers had done, they used narration and dialogue as a means of showing people in action. This chapter discusses the political and social implications of this new way of portraying the self and others, and it chronicles the development of the travel narrative into the personal, introspective, people-oriented genre that it is today.

As travel writing has become increasingly popular with scholars, many nineteenth-century women travelers, including Isabella Bird, Harriett Martineau, and Mary Kingsley, have become well known and frequently studied, but their literary ancestors continue to be neglected, at least as anything other than colonial informants. When studying any literary genre, it is important to understand what came before the artist at hand, to understand the tradition in which he or she is writing, and that is why continued investigation into the narrative strategies employed by these women, some of the earliest British women travel writers, is so important.

## CHAPTER 1

### FROM BRITAIN TO BENGAL: WOMEN WRITING INDIA

*“Though India has certainly been visited by a greater number of intelligent Englishmen than any other foreign country, and has been the subject of innumerable publications, it is remarkable that there is no work in our language containing such a popular and comprehensive view of its scenery and monuments, and of the manners and habits of its natives and resident colonists, as we are commonly furnished with by travellers in countries incomparably less deserving of notice.”*  
~Maria Graham<sup>33</sup>

In nearly every known portrait of Maria Graham (later, Lady Callcott), the author is plainly dressed, her dark hair tucked beneath a simple turban with a few short strands curling against her temples.<sup>34</sup> Although turbans were popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most British women chose to decorate them with pearls, tassels, ostrich feathers, or bird-of-paradise tails.<sup>35</sup> Their turbans were elaborate constructions meant to be worn with eveningwear, to orientalize the wearer and call attention to her wealth and sartorial prowess. Graham’s turbans, simple wraps that almost entirely hide her hair, do neither. Instead, they

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<sup>33</sup> Maria Graham, preface to *Journal of a Residence in India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1812; Edinburgh, 1813), n.p. Graham (1785-1842) authored fifteen books during her distinguished career, including works of travel writing, histories, art criticism, and children’s literature. Her first two books, *Journal of a Residence in India* and *Letters from India*, recall her experiences during a two-year stay on the subcontinent.

<sup>34</sup> The National Portrait Gallery in London holds record of eight portraits, an unusually large number even considering Maria Graham’s class and status. These portraits range from a simple sketch to a detailed etching to multiple large, colorful oil paintings. Although the majority of the portraits are undated, Graham appears very young in many of them; one is recorded as “drawn at Rome 1818,” when Graham would have been thirty-three; and the oldest of them, painted by her second husband, could have been painted no earlier than 1826, although Graham appears much older in it.

<sup>35</sup> For more information on turbans and period fashion, see Lynn McMasters, “Turban Headdresses of European Women in the Late 18<sup>th</sup> and the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” last modified 17 April 2009, accessed 26 June 2012, <http://lynnmcmasters.com/Turban.html>.



androgenize her and present her as a scholar, as someone uninterested in material pursuits (see fig. 1.1). In all but one portrait,<sup>36</sup> her gaze is directed away from the artist, focused on some point of interest outside the painting—up, down, left, or right, but always away from the viewer. Her pose seems to suggest that she is not sitting for the viewer’s enjoyment, but rather to show the viewer how little interest she has in such things.

These portraits were painted over a period of several decades, and although the woman in them ages and evolves, her pose and fashion choices do not. With the exception of the last two paintings—both by her second husband, Royal Academy painter Sir Augustus Wall Callcott—all of these portraits were painted or drawn by a different artist, so it would seem that this representation of Graham had more to do with how she saw herself (or wanted to be seen) than with how the artists saw her. Although Graham did not discuss her portraiture in the memoir she was dictating at the time of her death, her various writings reveal a woman who considered concern with physical appearances to be frivolous and intellectual ability and curiosity to be rare qualities more women ought to cultivate. In “Reminiscences,” she states, “There is no class of life in which literary knowledge and taste can be a disadvantage to a woman. They render her independent of what are termed the pleasures of the world.”<sup>37</sup> Graham’s desire to be viewed as

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<sup>36</sup> This painting is the one most unlike the others. Painted by Sir David Wilkie, it is almost impressionistic in its use of the abstract, with Graham’s dress only loosely interpreted and the entire canvas, other than Graham’s eyes, coated in thick strokes of paint. Graham retains her simple turban headdress, but while she seems to be sitting in all of her other portraits, in this one she appears to be standing and even caught in motion, with only her eyes frozen and staring penetratingly forward. A clear, pure face among shadows, the portrait captures an active, mysterious woman.

<sup>37</sup> Maria Graham, “Reminiscences,” MSS Typescript (dictated to C. Fox), 2282:31, Bodleian Library, Oxford.



**FIGURE 1.1**  
Portrait of Maria Graham, "Lady Callcott," by John Jackson, from the Collection of Mrs. Graham of Fintry. National Portrait Gallery Ref. 6092.

an intellectual prompted her to take advantage of every educational opportunity available to her, including reading her uncle's "many books of history...some portions of Natural history...and books of travels into all parts of the world."<sup>38</sup> Perhaps it was her choice in reading material that gave her the idea to pursue a similar career, to spend her life constructing an identity as a writer, traveler, and public intellectual. Just a few years later, Graham found that opportunity when she accompanied her father, George Dundas, and two younger siblings to India. She spent two years traveling the subcontinent either alone, with her family, or in the company of her new husband, Thomas Graham, whom she met on the voyage over. During that time, she kept a detailed journal recording her thoughts and impressions of the places she visited, the people she met or observed, and the ceremonies and other events she attended. Graham was also a talented artist, and she was often inspired to sketch her surroundings or capture the landscape in watercolor. When she returned to England, she used her journal and sketches as the foundation for her first published travel narrative, *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812). The book was an "instant success"<sup>39</sup> that paved the way for Anglo-Indian women who wished to be taken seriously as travel writers.

Graham was far from the first woman to visit India and publish her impressions of it, but she was one of the first to carve out a career as a professional writer based on her travel writing, and *Journal of a Residence in India* was one of the first accounts of Anglo-Indian travel to win over critics and prove the necessity of more information on the subcontinent. In the preface to the book, Graham questions why India, a country that had been visited by thousands of Englishmen and women and that was so important to British economics and politics, should have

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<sup>38</sup> Graham, "Reminiscences," 59.

<sup>39</sup> Regina Akel, *Maria Graham: A Literary Biography* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2009), xiii.

so few books of popular interest devoted to describing its scenery, monuments, and inhabitants. Despite the growing body of literature on Indian trade and military history, Graham argues:

there still seemed to be room for a more popular work on the subject of this great country,--a work which, without entangling its readers in the thorny walk of politics or commercial speculation, should bring before them much of what strikes the eye and the mind of an observant stranger,--and addressing itself rather to the general reader than to those who are professionally connected with the regions it describes, should perform the same humble but useful office as to India, which tolerably well written books of travels have done as to most of the other countries of the world.<sup>40</sup>

The London papers, it seems, agreed with Graham and welcomed her book, with *The Quarterly Review* agreeing that before Graham's *Journal*, there had been "no popular and comprehensive view of the manners, customs, condition, and real state of society among the great mass of the people, nor indeed of the English and other foreign residents of the country."<sup>41</sup> The following year, *The Eclectic Review* echoed these sentiments in their own review of Graham's *Journal* and added, "We agree with the fair writer of this volume in thinking, that most of our countrymen who have given us accounts of India, might have been, if not more instructive, at any rate a little more entertaining."<sup>42</sup> These comments and the positive reviews they accompanied revealed a real need and desire for information on India, opening the door for other women to share their stories, contribute to the travel writing genre, or use India as a backdrop in their plays, poetry, and fiction.

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<sup>40</sup> Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, vi.

<sup>41</sup> *Quarterly Review* 8 (Sept.-Dec. 1812): 407.

<sup>42</sup> *Eclectic Review* 10 (July-Dec. 1813): 569.

## British Interest in India

In the early nineteenth century, when Graham published her *Journal*, the information most readily available on India was largely concerned with military history, trade and business opportunities, geography, and antiquities, so a book of popular interest like Graham's was long overdue. Such a book had been published previously, in the form of Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (1777), but after forty years such a work was dated and seemingly forgotten by Graham's reviewers. Most of the other accounts of India by women during the preceding decades had been fictional, so these critics were hungry for current information on the subcontinent, first-hand experience and personal observation, vivid descriptions and honest portraits of native and Anglo-Indian life. As the *Eclectic Review* remarked, everyone returning from India was full of opinions, but few returned "with any considerable stock of knowledge respecting the region."<sup>43</sup> Graham's account, therefore, was all the more valuable and satisfying, and even when her reviewers found certain descriptions "scanty" or "imperfect," they were forced to admit that her book was still "far superior to any thing that...has hitherto appeared on the subject."<sup>44</sup>

Maria Graham's *Journal* and her follow-up publication, *Letters from India* (1814), were considered the definitive works on India until the early 1830s, despite several other personal narratives by male and female travelers appearing during that time. Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India* (1817) was published only in Calcutta, and although it was popular enough to warrant a second edition in 1821, it received no critical attention in either the Calcutta or London papers. Other works, such as Ann Deane's *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823), were forgotten nearly as soon as they were published, and while critics remained interested and

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<sup>43</sup> *Eclectic Review* 10 (July-Dec. 1813): 569-570.

<sup>44</sup> *Quarterly Review* 8 (Sept.-Dec. 1812): 419-420.

called for more information on India, the general population appeared apathetic towards learning anything of intellectual substance about Anglo-Indian affairs. When the *Oriental Herald* reviewed Robert Rickards' *India; or, Facts to Illustrate the Character and Condition of the People of India* in 1828, the critic complimented Rickards on continuing "to persevere in the benevolent object... [of] opening the eyes of the people of England to the condition of their fellow-men and fellow-subjects in India." According to the critic, it was the "general ignorance of his countrymen on all topics connected with the history and condition of that part of our empire" that had compelled Rickards to write the book in the first place.<sup>45</sup> By 1830, however, Rickards' account and all those that preceded him in the previous two decades were seemingly forgotten to the writer of "English Society in India," an article in the *Asiatic Journal & Monthly Register*, who wrote, "I must repeat then, the subject of English society in India has been uniformly neglected by all who have visited Hindustan, with the exception of perhaps Maria Graham."<sup>46</sup> Apparently unbeknownst to that writer, earlier that year Anne Katherine Elwood had published her *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India* (1830), a two-volume travel narrative that was favorably reviewed by the *London Literary Gazette*, *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, and other publications, including the critic's own *Asiatic Journal*.

Over the next few years, opinions about the quantity and quality of writing on India varied from periodical to periodical. Just four years after bemoaning the lack of popular writing by returning Anglo-Indians, the *Asiatic Journal* described a "growing effectual demand" for any information on India and reported that any "work relating to India, if it be tolerably

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<sup>45</sup> *Oriental Herald* 19 (Oct.-Dec. 1828): 97.

<sup>46</sup> "English Society in India," *Asiatic Journal & Monthly Register* 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1830): 42.

readable...instead of sinking at once into the vast abyss in which so much intellectual labour is continually lost, now floats, for a time at least, upon the tide of popular esteem, and finds its way even into reading clubs and circulating libraries.”<sup>47</sup> According to the *Asiatic Journal*, the reason publications on India had previously failed to make an impact in Britain was because the British lacked the basic education required for understanding and appreciating the information on India being presented to them. Once these “elementary parts” had been properly instilled, the British could absorb more “[p]rofound and elaborate treatises upon Indian topics” with knowledgeable enthusiasm.<sup>48</sup>

Not every British periodical was as optimistic about the state of British interest in India, however. In a review of Emma Roberts *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan* in 1835, just one year after the *Asiatic Journal* article appeared, a critic for *The Times* reflected on the “indifference of English readers towards East Indian topics” and regretted that “the interest of Englishmen should be so estranged from British India.”<sup>49</sup> In another review of Roberts’ *Scenes*, published in the *Eclectic Review*, the critic commented that “the mass of the public take extremely little interest” in Indian affairs, and that works like Roberts’ were needed to bridge that gap and educate British readers on what was at stake in political debates on the treatment of Indians. Twenty years later, however, just as the Indian Mutiny was beginning, British interest in India was seemingly stagnant, with a writer for the *Calcutta Review* lamenting that “India, to most Englishmen at home, is still almost the India of Hastings and Burke,” and that “England has now no firmer grasp, no more vivid conception, no more real knowledge of India, than she had

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<sup>47</sup> “Native Indian Character: ‘The Baboo,’” *Asiatic Journal & Monthly Register* 8 (1834): 86.

<sup>48</sup> “Native Indian Character: ‘The Baboo,’” 86.

<sup>49</sup> *The Times*, Sat., 22 August 1835: 6.

before the introduction of steam.”<sup>50</sup> Almost simultaneously, the writer confesses to being “tired” of the multitude of books “written by men who have resided for a few years or months in one corner of a Presidency, and of travels published solely because so many miles of country had been travelled over, and so many remarkable cities and places had been hurriedly visited,” and he longs for more discerning, tactful “men” to contribute to British knowledge of India.<sup>51</sup>

The constant reference to “men” throughout this essay, to what men ought to be writing and contributing, was not unusual for this time, but it does call attention to one reason that the press might have disagreed so frequently on the status of Anglo-Indian writing. Too often these papers and journals concentrated on what male writers had failed to contribute on the topic and ignored the dozens of works by women writers on India that had been produced since the eighteenth century, most written by women who had lived in India for years, women who were familiar with the seasons of heat and rain, the Hindu castes, the myths and legends behind obscure temples and monuments, the religious festivals and traditions. In general, these texts were written by women who had more time and liberty to travel and explore than their male counterparts, who were often off fighting or strategizing. These women were able to get to know their Indian servants and the local rajahs, and especially the wives of rulers, in a way most male travelers were never able.

Although these texts usually garnered positive attention when first published, few (other than Graham’s *Journal*) remained long on the critical radar. Some scholars might attribute the reviewers’ forgetfulness to some failure on the part of the texts, arguing that the writing, descriptions, and information contained therein did not warrant literary longevity, but frequently these works, as will be discussed in later chapters, met and exceeded the very criteria critics

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<sup>50</sup> “India in England,” *Calcutta Review* 28, no. 61 (June 1857): 335-336.

<sup>51</sup> “India in England,” 359.



claimed to desire: “abundant materials, considerable discrimination, tact in selection, and something of style...copious details and anecdotes,” as well as descriptions of “the tombs and mosques, the minarets and mountains, the falls, and the passes, the thronged cities, and the regal edifices.”<sup>52</sup> Even though women had been contributing writing on India for some time, and in nearly every genre, the prevailing attitude seemed to regard women’s writing as fleeting, forgettable, and insubstantial, no matter how much it fulfilled the critical wish list. This attitude, rooted as it was in patriarchal ideas about the rights and place of women, did not stop women writers from entering into ongoing discussions on Indian affairs, and they did so in increasingly brazen ways. While most of the women who wrote about India prior to Graham’s *Journal* disguised their political and social commentary as fiction or drama, after Graham the number of personal travel narratives by Anglo-Indian women eclipsed those works published in more traditional literary genres.

### **Women Writing India**

The first known woman to have published about her Indian travels, Jane Smart, released her *Letter from a Lady at Madras to her Friends in London* anonymously in 1743 and seemingly never published again. The eight-page booklet, printed and sold by bookseller H. Piers, was ignored by critics, with *The Gentleman’s Magazine* merely listing its existence alongside seven other “Historical and Philological” texts published in April 1743.<sup>53</sup> Thirty-four years later, the publication of Jemima Kindersley’s *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (1777) drew far more critical interest. *The London Chronicle* reprinted four of Kindersley’s letters. *The Critical Review* praised her “easy and agreeable

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<sup>52</sup> “India in England,” 359-60.

<sup>53</sup> *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 13 (April 1743): 224.

manner” of writing and acknowledged that her book “appear[ed] to great advantage” because it was the only one published “under the name of a female voyager” in recent memory.<sup>54</sup> However, her *Letters* were strongly censured by the Rev. Henry Hodgson, who published multiple inflammatory letters to her in the *London Chronicle* and then, at the encouragement of his friends, reissued those letters under the title *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley* (1778).<sup>55</sup>

Hodgson, like the reviewers for the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*, found that Kindersley had “gained thoroughly the happy art of trifling with ease, elegance, and sweetness.” But it was precisely this ease and elegance, and especially her ability to entertain and amuse, that made her letters “the more dangerous,” with Hodgson proclaiming that they “ought to be read with great caution.”<sup>56</sup> What had Kindersley written that was considered “dangerous” enough to inspire Hodgson to write and publish four letters to her—twice? In a description of Brazilian slaves, she observed, “They are all made Christians as soon as bought; and it is amazing to see the effect the pageantry of the Roman Catholic religion has upon their uninformed minds; it inspires them with all the *enthusiasm* of devotion.”<sup>57</sup> It was the “Papist” idea that conversion to Catholicism made one Christian and the suggestion that “pageantry could kindle any rational devotion” that compelled Hodgson to publish a thirty-page tirade against Kindersley. In the first letter, he commands her to “Blush, Madam, at the recollection of having ever written a word which could be even twisted to praise such a system as popery,” before going on to call her a

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<sup>54</sup> *London Chronicle*, issue 3227 (August 9-12, 1777); and *Critical Review* 43 (1777): 442. The critic for the *Monthly Review* found Kindersley’s *Letters* to be unoriginal but well-written, stating that “the writer relates a variety of amusing particulars with much ease and simplicity, and with every mark of fidelity,” in *Monthly Review* 57 (1777): 243.

<sup>55</sup> Henry Hodgson, *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley* (Lincoln, 1778), iii.

<sup>56</sup> Hodgson, *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley*, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, 1777), 50. The passage is also quoted in Hodgson, *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley*, 6.

Papist. In the second letter, Hodgson suggests that Kindersley was not properly educated and accuses her of blasphemy, and in the final letter he attempts to use the Catholic encounters of her fellow travel writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu against her, stating that Montagu, too, “though professedly a Protestant, seems to have been of no religion.”<sup>58</sup> Kindersley’s writing career endured this attack—she went on to publish a translation of Antoine Léonard Thomas’s *Essai sur le caractère, les mœurs et l’esprit des femmes dans les différents siècles* (*An Essay on the Character, the Manners, and the Understanding of Women, in Different Ages*) in 1781, to which she appended two of her own essays on the freedom and education of women—but she never published anything as personal as *Letters* again.

After such a public attack against Kindersley’s faith, values, and status in British society, all because of a single, seemingly innocuous description in her *Letters*, it is no wonder that no other British woman published her personal account of India until Maria Graham’s *Journal of a Residence in India* appeared in 1812. Although several women in the late eighteenth century used their knowledge of India as inspiration for poetry, plays, and novels, Phebe Gibbes’s *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789) was the closest text to an Indian travel narrative published by a British woman during the thirty-five year interim between Kindersley’s and Graham’s books.<sup>59</sup> *Hartly House*, a three-volume epistolary novel, is composed entirely of letters from Gibbes’s protagonist, Sophia Goldborne, to her friend Arabella in England, but the detail, immediacy, and

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<sup>58</sup> Hodgson, *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley*, 6, 10, 11-12, 32. Although Montagu describes Catholic cathedrals, iconography, and conversations with priests in her letters, here Hodgson refers to Montagu’s account of a portrait of Jesus (“or saint Somebody”) to which people made pilgrimages because it “bled when cut” (32).

<sup>59</sup> Examples include Mariana Starke’s plays *The Sword of Peace* (1789) and *The Widow of Malabar* (1791), *The Poems of Anna Maria* (1794), and Elizabeth Hamilton’s novel *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796). All of these texts will be discussed later in the chapter.

mundanity of the letters has the ring of truth, leading most scholars to conclude that the letters are not entirely fictional.<sup>60</sup>

Although little is known about Gibbes, most critics agree that it is unlikely she ever made the voyage to India herself.<sup>61</sup> The few biographical details we know come almost exclusively from the application for financial support she made to the Royal Literary Fund in 1804, in which she claimed to be “a domestic woman,” a widow, the mother of a son who had died in India, and the writer of twenty-two novels, including *Hartly House, Calcutta*.<sup>62</sup> Because the details and descriptions of India in *Hartly House* seem so genuine and accurate, it is probable that Gibbes used real letters from her son as a basis for Sophia Goldborne’s letters.<sup>63</sup> Even reviewers in Gibbes’s time could not believe the letters were entirely fictional, with *The European Magazine and London Review* referring to the novel as “a supposed epistolary correspondence” and the *Critical Review* commending “these volumes; for, in the guise of a novel, they will convey much information.” Both of these journals recognized that the chief contribution of *Hartly House*, which lacks any sort of cohesive plot, was in the “solid and useful information” conveyed about India and especially Calcutta, but they also praised the writer’s “elegant and easy” style and “faithful and lively descriptions,” deeming the work “pleasing” and “accurate.”<sup>64</sup> Some journals were so convinced that the letters in *Hartly House* were genuine that they republished them as

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<sup>60</sup> See Isobel Grundy, “‘The barbarous character we give them’: White Women Travellers Report on Other Races,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 22 (1992): 79; and Nicole Reynolds, “Phebe Gibbes, Edmund Burke, and the Trials of Empire,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20, no. 2 (Winter 2007-8): 155.

<sup>61</sup> Michael J. Franklin, introduction to *Hartly House, Calcutta*, by Phebe Gibbes (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), xx.

<sup>62</sup> Franklin, introduction to *Hartly House, Calcutta*, xii-xiii. See also *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to Present*, ed. Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy (London: Batsford, 1990), 420.

<sup>63</sup> See Grundy and Reynolds.

<sup>64</sup> *The European Magazine and London Review* 17 (Feb. 1790): 118; and *Critical Review: or, Annals of Literature* 68 (1789): 164.

news from India, something that was still relatively scarce and difficult to obtain in Gibbes's day. On July 2, 1789, *The Aberdeen Magazine* reprinted—or plagiarized—all of Letter VI under the title “*Picture of the Mode of living at Calcutta. In a letter from a Lady to her friend in England,*” without so much as suggesting that the letter had been taken from another source. The following year, *The New Annual Register* published her description of Mubarak ud-Daula's sumptuous procession from Chitpur to Calcutta alongside military news from India, again without attributing it to any source and therefore presenting it as fact, not a novel excerpt.<sup>65</sup>

Other reviewers were able to praise the accuracy of Gibbes's descriptions without outright proclaiming them to be non-fiction. William Enfield called the novel “a lively and elegant, and, as far as we are informed, a just picture of the manners of the Europeans residing in the East Indies,” and Mary Wollstonecraft, writing for the *Analytical Review*, described *Hartly House* as “[a]n entertaining account of Calcutta, and the different inhabitants of the country, apparently sketched by a person who had been forcibly impressed by the scenes described.” She went on to give one of the novel's most positive reviews, calling the style “easy,” the reflections “pertinent,” and the letters themselves “amusing” and instructive.<sup>66</sup> Even if these reviewers had had anything critical to say about Gibbes, however, they would have been unable to attack her directly because she, like so many early women writers, chose to publish her novel anonymously.

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<sup>65</sup> *The New Annual Register, or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1790* (London, 1791): 21-22. More than a century later, some were still convinced the letters were genuine; an article in *Eclectic Magazine* recreating “historical moments of Calcutta” used *Hartly House* as a source in its section on funerals and cemeteries, attributing the book to its narrator, Sophia Goldborne. See *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Arts*, Vol. 65 of New Series (June 1897): 738.

<sup>66</sup> *Monthly Review* 1 (March 1790): 332; and *Analytical Review* 4 (June 1789): 145-7.

Prior to releasing *Hartly House*, Gibbes published thirteen other novels, all of them anonymous except *The Niece; or the History of Sukey Thornby* (1788), her last before *Hartly House*. The title page of *The Niece* attributes the novel to “Mrs. P. Gibbes, Author of the History of Lady Louisa Stroud,” placing two novels firmly in Gibbes’s oeuvre and suggesting that she was becoming more open to building a literary reputation for herself. The reviews of *The Niece*, though critical of Gibbes’s grammar, were nowhere near as negative as some Gibbes had experienced in the past. Reviews for *Louisa Stroud* had been mixed, with the *Monthly Review* commenting that there was “nothing very great in this novel,” but praising the tale for being “simple, decent, and moral” and noting that it was “written in a natural and easy stile; even with a degree of elegance.”<sup>67</sup> Why Gibbes decided to go back to publishing anonymously after finally receiving recognition under her real name is unclear, but perhaps the personal content of *Hartly House*, which even critics could tell was more fact than fiction, made her wary of taking credit for it. Had critics known who she was, they likely would not have stopped at suggesting that the “solid and useful information” in her novel is its greatest strength but would have interrogated who she was and how she gained such accurate knowledge of the subcontinent. Inevitably, such examinations would have led back to her son and her relationship and correspondence with him, which could have been extremely painful for a mother who had recently lost her child. *Hartly House*’s reception history illustrates that the line between fictional and non-fictional travel

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<sup>67</sup> See *The Monthly Review* 78 (May 1788): 441; and *The Monthly Review* 30 (March 1764): 244. Gibbes was no stranger to criticism. Her first novel, *The Life and Adventures of Mr. Francis Clive*, was described as “[l]ow, dull, and absurd” by *The Monthly Review*, but in that case the critic mistook the anonymous text for having been written by a man, stating that the “Author seems to possess neither the powers of genius, nor the manners of a gentleman,” in *Monthly Review* 30 (March 1764): 243. Later novels fared better, with *The History of Miss Eliza Musgrove* hailed as “equal in genius to Lennox, Brookes, and Scott,” in *Critical Review* 27 (1769): 452.

narratives was so thin that, especially for women writers, even taking credit for travel *novels* could be a great risk and could bring their personal lives, beliefs, and knowledge into question.

The reception of *Hartly House* and the excerpting or plagiarism of any passages that seemed true demonstrates that the time was right for a woman author to contribute a new volume of East Indian travel writing. In the last decades of the century, women's travel writing had gained respectability, with such well-known writers and thinkers as Helen Maria Williams, Ann Radcliffe, and Mary Wollstonecraft herself contributing to the field. But despite this seemingly newfound openness to women's travel experiences, twenty-three years passed between the publication of *Hartly House* and Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812). In the interim, many women continued to portray India in drama, fiction, and poetry and to use British curiosity about the subcontinent to build their own careers. Graham's *Journal* was instrumental in encouraging women to publish their own travel accounts, but these other genres and more continued to flourish throughout the century of Company rule, and writers who had been to the subcontinent or who had merely learned of it from careful study or family experience continued to incorporate informative, non-fictional content into even more "creative" genres. The hybridity, intertextuality, and popularity of women's writing on India will be considered in the following examination of popular genres.

### *Drama*

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the growing interest in India, sparked by Fox's East India Bill (1783) and the controversial impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings, inspired

several women playwrights, both renowned and aspiring, to set their plays in or near India<sup>68</sup> or represent Indian characters in an English setting.<sup>69</sup> Presenting their often subversive political messages and social commentary as comedies and farces, these playwrights conceded to audience preference and capitalized on the growing desire for spectacle and “synthetic experience,”<sup>70</sup> which allowed these writers to either build careers based on their India plays or

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<sup>68</sup> As Salman Rushdie has noted, there was no such “political entity” as India prior to its independence from Britain in 1947. (See Rushdie, “The Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987,” in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* [London: Granta Books, 1991], 27.) Throughout this dissertation, I use India to refer to the nation as we know it today, including all the parts of the subcontinent that were under British control from 1757-1947. Occasionally during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, writers wrote of “Indians” and Indian politics but set their works in other parts of the East Indies, such as Indonesia or Southeast Asia. An example of this kind of work would be Elizabeth Inchbald’s *Such Things Are*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>69</sup> For more on how these plays relate to the Hastings trial and contemporary Parliamentary debates, see Noel Chevalier, “Redeeming the Nabob: Frances Burney, Warren Hastings and the Cultural Construction of India in *A Busy Day*,” *The Burney Journal* 2 (1999): 24-39; Marianna D’Ezio, “Colonialism, Slavery, and Religion on Stage: Late Eighteenth-Century Women Dramatists, the Hastings Trial, and the Making of British India,” in *New Readings in the Literature of British India, c. 1780-1947*, ed. Shafquat Towheed (Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag, 2007), 11-39; Jeanne Moskal, “English National Identity in Mariana Starke’s ‘The Sword of Peace’: India, Abolition, and the Rights of Women,” in *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance, and Society, 1790-1840*, ed. Catherine Burroughs (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102-131; and Daniel O’Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

<sup>70</sup> Synthetic experience, as Joseph Roach uses the term, “is that which is fabricated to imitate or replace more mundane realities, and its success as a substitute for whatever passes for real life renders it a highly marketable but volatile commodity.” The realization that “people will part with good money to experience experience (by living through someone else’s performance of it)” was one of the great discoveries of the theater during the eighteenth century. Many actors and actresses became famous for their satiric representations of real people of class or distinction, as well as for performances of fictional characters in unusual or exotic situations. As contact with other races and cultures grew through imperialism, so too did interest in plays illustrating life in these distant regions and the indigenous people who lived there. Playwrights and theater managers soon discovered that the synthetic experience of travel was “one of the most successful...vicarious experiences” they could offer, and vicarious tourism became a staple of the eighteenth-century stage. By the 1770s and 1780s, a number of recent events—including “the expansion and consolidation of empire as a result of the Seven Years War; of epoch-making enterprises such as the Cook voyages; of a consumption-driven economy at home and rampant



use their status as popular writers to call attention to political and social issues of importance to them.

Elizabeth Inchbald, who spent most of the 1770s as a struggling actress, turned to writing at the end of the decade, but her first novel went unpublished<sup>71</sup> and her first farces were refused by theater managers Thomas Harris and George Colman the Elder. She finally found success with *The Mogul Tale; or, the Descent of the Balloon*.<sup>72</sup> In this brief two-act play, three English characters—a doctor, a cobbler, and the cobbler’s wife—mistakenly land their hot-air balloon in the seraglio gardens of the Indian Great Mogul. The Great Mogul decides “to have some diversion with them” and has one of his eunuchs paint him as “the abstract of cruelty, the essence of tyranny” to the fallen companions<sup>73</sup>—in essence, the kind of despotic ruler the Mughals were stereotyped as in Britain. In an attempt to save themselves, the bumbling travelers go along with the eunuch’s suggestion that they assume identities “of consequence,” and the cobbler, Johnny, professes himself to be “Pope Johnny the twelfth”; his wife, Fanny, to be a nun from Italy; and the doctor to be the King of England’s royal ambassador.<sup>74</sup> The Mogul forces Fanny into his seraglio and threatens “Pope Johnny” and the ambassador with execution until they finally admit their true identities, after which he frees all three of them and states that it was “your

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speculation in places such as India; and...the loss of the American colonies”—increased the popularity of staged tourism, and theater became one of the dominant means of fulfilling “the human need...to experience the world vicariously as well as directly.” See Joseph Roach, “Vicarious: Theater and the Rise of Synthetic Experience,” in *Theorizing Practice*, ed. W. B. Worthen and Peter Holland (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121-22; and Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability, and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.

<sup>71</sup> Inchbald’s attempts to get this novel published in 1779 failed, although the novel may have served as an early version of her first published novel, *A Simple Story* (1791). See Jane Spencer, “Inchbald, Elizabeth (1753-1821),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14374>.

<sup>72</sup> Spencer, “Inchbald, Elizabeth (1753-1821).”

<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth Inchbald, *The Mogul Tale; or, the Descent of the Balloon* (London, 1788), 7.

<sup>74</sup> Inchbald, *The Mogul Tale*, 8-10.

countrymen's cruelty to the poor Gentoos<sup>75</sup> [that] has shewn me tyranny in so foul a light, that I was determined henceforth to be only mild, just and merciful."<sup>76</sup>

In her portrayal of Mughal India, Inchbald satirizes both Indian knowledge of the West and British representations of India while simultaneously critiquing her own government and its imperialist agenda. At a time when theater companies were reluctant to stage anti-imperialist plays—including Samuel Foote's *The Nabob*—*The Mogul Tale* was vetted by the Lord Chamberlain's office and approved by critics and audiences alike, with the reviewer for the *European Magazine* acknowledging that "[t]he Farce was introduced with becoming expence and attention, and the Performers succeeded in affording the Galleries a hearty laugh."<sup>77</sup> The farce had a successful run of ten performances in July and August 1784 and continued to be performed every year save one for the rest of the century.<sup>78</sup> The success of *The Mogul Tale* convinced Colman to accept a comedy Inchbald had previously submitted to him, effectively launching her career as a playwright and affording her the ability to retire from acting five years later.

Colonial politics remained a theme in Inchbald's plays throughout her career, perhaps most noticeably in *Such Things Are*, a sentimental comedy first performed on February 10, 1787—three days before Warren Hastings' impeachment trial began.<sup>79</sup> Although this play is set in Sumatra, not on the Indian subcontinent, Inchbald blurs geographical boundaries by incorporating many of the satirical elements found in India plays and by depicting many of the

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<sup>75</sup> Gentoos is an English corruption of "Hindu," although it can also refer to any non-Muslim Indian. See OED.

<sup>76</sup> Inchbald, *The Mogul Tale*, 20.

<sup>77</sup> *European Magazine and London Review* 6 (July 1784): 74.

<sup>78</sup> Katherine Green, "Balloon and Seraglio: Burkean Anti-Imperialism in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Mogul Tale*," *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 6.

<sup>79</sup> O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, 144.

same problems British colonists in India faced. The British characters in this play (including Sir Luke and Lady Tremor, Lord Flint, and Mr. Haswell) are of a much higher class than the characters presented in *The Mogul Tale* and are a better representation of the kinds of British subjects stationed in India during this time. Inchbald uses these characters to satirize the Indian marriage market (Lady Tremor, having no fortune or connections, goes to the East Indies to find a husband), Englishmen groveling at the feet of Indian rulers (the EIC was known for buying the support and military backing of local rulers with presents and favors, which Inchbald represents in the character of Lord Flint), and the dubious character of adventuring nabobs-to-be (Mr. Twineall recreates himself and his beliefs to match those of whichever British subject is closest and has the most influence). The moral center of the play, though, is Mr. Haswell, whom Inchbald depicts as the antithesis to Anglo-Indian greed, corruption, and frivolity. When visiting the inmates of a Sumatran prison, Haswell generously gives them money, treats them with kindness and respect, and promises to advocate for their release.<sup>80</sup> It is through Haswell's actions that the major themes of the play, forgiveness and reconciliation, can take root in the hearts of those around him and reform the egocentric British expatriates, corrupt Sumatrans, and despotic sultan.

A year after *Such Things Are* was first performed, another struggling playwright achieved success by satirizing similar Anglo-Indian themes. Mariana Starke was twenty-five when her sentimental comedy *The Sword of Peace; or, A Voyage of Love* was first performed at the

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<sup>80</sup> For more on Haswell and his real-life counterpart, John Howard, see Betsy Bolton, *Women, Nationalism, and the Romantic Stage: Theater and Politics in Britain, 1780-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 157-159.

Haymarket Theatre on August 9, 1788.<sup>81</sup> The play, set on the Coromandel coast in southeast India, depicts the experiences of two young English cousins, Eliza and Louisa Moreton, who have arrived in India following the death of Eliza's father. Eliza is there to claim her inheritance and possibly reunite with an old beau, while Louisa is on a mission to buy back the sword of Sir Thomas Clairville's late nephew from the young soldier's best friend. Other central characters include a corrupt politician, a number of female adventurers, an Indian creditor, and an African slave—a rare depiction on the eighteenth-century stage.<sup>82</sup> The show enjoyed a modest six night run and was revived in the summer of 1789 for an additional four shows.<sup>83</sup> Although the play received mixed reviews, Mary Julia Young recorded that the actors were especially good and the play met with applause from the crowded playhouse.<sup>84</sup>

Starke's next play, *The Widow of Malabar*, an adaptation of the French tragedy *La Veuve du Malabar* by Antoine Le Mierre, was even more successful.<sup>85</sup> Set in "a Sea-port City on the

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<sup>81</sup> Unless otherwise noted, throughout this chapter any information on the various seasons is taken from *The London Stage, 1660-1800, Part 5, 1776-1800*, ed. Charles Beecher Hogan (Carbondale, IL.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968).

<sup>82</sup> See D'Ezio, "Colonialism, Slavery, and Religion on Stage: Late Eighteenth-Century Women Dramatists, the Hastings Trial, and the Making of British India," 32. Here D'Ezio references recent scholarship on the subject by Julia Carlson, Jane Moody, and Daniel O'Quinn.

<sup>83</sup> The only other new main piece that summer, *Ways and Means* by George Colman, ran for nine nights, and the play that enjoyed the longest run at the Haymarket that summer was a revival of Colman's *Inkle and Yarico* (1787), which received nineteen performances. See Jeffrey N. Cox, "Headnote to Mariana Starke's *The Sword of Peace*, in Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period," in *British Women Playwrights around 1800*, 15 January 2000, accessed 22 April 2009, [http://www.etang.umontreal.ca/bwp1800/essays/cox\\_sword\\_headnote.html](http://www.etang.umontreal.ca/bwp1800/essays/cox_sword_headnote.html).

<sup>84</sup> Mary Julia Young, *Memoirs of Mrs. Crouch, including a retrospect of the stage during the years she performed*, 2 vols. (London, 1806), 2:45.

<sup>85</sup> Despite its success with audiences, *The Widow of Malabar* too suffered from mixed critical reviews, with the *Monthly Review* critic claiming it "has merit enough to justify us in allowing it some degree of praise: much it will not bear." The critic for *The English Review* complained that the play was "new and pretty, but neither interesting nor instructive" because it was "contrary to the customs it pretends to describe; that the widow, instead of *requesting* to be burnt, is *forced* to comply"; the critic either purposely or obviously fails to note the calculated,

Malabar Coast,” *The Widow of Malabar*’s central characters include Indamora, a widow who, in accordance with Hindu custom, is about to be sacrificed upon the body of her dead husband; a Young Bramin torn between custom and moral obligation; the Chief Bramin, who refuses to forsake tradition; and Indamora’s long lost lover, Raymond, an English general determined to save the widow even before he realizes she is Indamora. Mounted at Covent Garden in 1790, *The Widow of Malabar* proved to be highly popular, with revivals during five of the next eight theater seasons and at least seventeen performances. During the 1790-91 season in particular, *The Widow of Malabar* repeatedly grossed more money in ticket sales than the plays mounted at rival theater Drury Lane, including productions of *Twelfth Night* and *The School for Scandal*. During the 1797-98 season, the play was even specially performed at the request of the Turkish Ambassador, and the 1795-96 season found it outselling other travel and colonial-related plays, such as *A Trip to Scarborough* and *Oroonoko*. Further attesting to the play’s popularity, a number of actresses and actors selected the play for their benefit nights, including Miss Brunton on May 6, 1790, and Macready, Richardson, and Townsend on June 5, 1794.

Both of Starke’s early plays, although extremely different in terms of tone, plot, and character construction, share a common setting on the coasts of India. Although there is no evidence that Starke herself ever visited India, her father Richard was born in Madras and served

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proto-feminist reasons for this change. Modern critics have noted that the widow’s lack of agency in her situation calls attention simultaneously to the plight of Hindu widows and the oppression of British women. In an analysis of the differences between Starke’s play and the play upon which it was based, Marie A. Dakessian writes, “While their male counterparts may assume that the widows willingly sacrifice themselves... women poets, playwrights, and diarists exhibit a keen awareness of the social, religious, and ethical constraints imposed upon a woman who ‘decides’ to die on her husband’s funeral pyre.” See reviews of *The Widow of Malabar* in *English Review* 17 (May 1791): 387; and *Monthly Review* 5 (May 1791): 104-105. See also Dakessian, “Envisioning the Indian Sati: Mariana Starke’s *The Widow of Malabar* and Antoine Le Mierre’s *La Veuve du Malabar*,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 36, no. 2 (1999): 110-111.

as the governor of Fort St. George from 1752 to 1756.<sup>86</sup> No doubt Starke was inspired by her father's stories of Anglo-Indian life and saw the advantage of using such a backdrop on the eighteenth-century English stage. Not only did the Indian setting and characters allow Starke to write safely about such controversial political topics as imperialism and women's rights, but by locating her plays in exotic settings, she was able to adhere to the current stage conventions and play to popular taste. Although Starke's theatrical career did not continue long past *The Widow of Malabar* (her third play, *The Tournament* (1800), was also her last), she continued to write about distant places, establishing a successful travel writing career and becoming one of the first travel guide writers. In fact, it was Starke's travel guides that later inspired her publisher, John Murray, to launch his series of famous guides, using the same format Starke had created.<sup>87</sup>

Unlike Inchbald and Starke, Frances Burney was already a successful novelist when she wrote *A Busy Day* (1800-01), a five-act comedy that follows a young unmarried couple on the day that they return home from India. The heroine, Eliza Watts, is the daughter of a former city merchant and the ward of a wealthy nabob who recently died, leaving her an inheritance of £80,000. While in India, Eliza was courted by Cleveland, the nephew of Sir Marmaduke Tylney, who sent his nephew to India to earn his fortune. Cleveland is called home before he is able to do so, and since Eliza has recently lost her guardian, the two board the same ship for England, intending to announce their engagement (or for Cleveland to ask her father for her hand) once

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<sup>86</sup> Until recently, scholars were unable to find documentation of Starke's birth and believed that she spent her childhood in India. New information discovered in 2011 proves that she was born in September 1762 and baptized in Epsom, Surrey. Richard Starke left the subcontinent for good in 1756, with no record of the family traveling to India after that time. Mariana Starke's ODNB entry has been updated to reflect this new information. See Elizabeth Baigent, "Starke, Mariana (1762-1838)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, May 2011, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26314>.

<sup>87</sup> Baigent, "Starke, Mariana (1762-1838)."

they arrive in London. A series of unfortunate occurrences immediately separate the two, including Cleveland learning he has been promised to the ridiculous (but wealthy) Miss Percival; his brother Frank learning of Eliza's fortune and scheming to marry her; and Eliza's family acting so absurdly in front of the Tylneys that Lady Wilhelmina swears she will never be joined with such a low-bred family. The plot closely follows that of earlier merchant comedies, and in the end the couple is reconciled and allowed to wed, but in the process Burney creates an opportunity for social commentary on the current status of the aristocracy and the *nouveau-riche*, as well as prevailing attitudes toward India and "black" servants.<sup>88</sup>

Of the five plays discussed here, *A Busy Day* is the only one set in London, starring returning Anglo-Indians, but this setting allows Burney to critique British attitudes at home towards India and its people—native Indian, European, and Anglo-Indian. In such a lengthy play, it would be easy to get caught up in the plot and the host of delightfully ridiculous characters and forget the opening scene, which exposes and refutes British attitudes towards Indians, but Burney obviously intended the scene to resonate with her audience. The play (like most of Burney's others) was never performed during her lifetime,<sup>89</sup> but a fair copy of the play written in her husband Alexandre d'Arblay's hand has survived, complete with Burney's corrections and revisions. These revisions, though seemingly slight, allow Burney to make her intentions clear, especially in how she contrasts British and Indian servants.

Although much of the literature of the time depicted Indian servants as lazy and insubordinate, Burney turns this trope upside down by having Eliza call her Indian servant "the

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<sup>88</sup> At the time, both Indian and African servants were often referred to as black, so black essentially meant "non-white." See D'Ezio, "Colonialism, Slavery, and Religion on Stage," 32.

<sup>89</sup> The first performance of the play was at the Hen and Chicken pub theater in Bristol, on 29 September 1993. For more on the history of the play, see Peter Sabor's introduction to the play in Frances Burney, *A Busy Day*, in *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, vol. 1, ed. Peter Sabor (London: Pickering, 1995), 289-292.

best creature living,” while painting English servants as snobby and unreliable. Early in Act I of the play, Cleveland, who has just arrived from India, requests a pen and ink for Eliza so that she may write to her father:

1<sup>ST</sup> WAITER. Your commands, sir?

CLEVELAND. A pen and ink for this lady.

ELIZA. And pray be so good as to contradict the orders I gave for a carriage.

1<sup>ST</sup> WAITER. A carriage, meme?

ELIZA. Yes; I begged you to let me have me one immediately.

1<sup>ST</sup> WAITER. Did you, meme? What wine did you say sir?

CLEVELAND. Wine? I said pen and ink.

1<sup>ST</sup> WAITER. Pen and ink sir?

CLEVELAND. Yes; make haste.

1<sup>ST</sup> WAITER. Certainly, sir. I wonder I don't. (*aside, and exit loiteringly*) Pen and ink indeed!<sup>90</sup>

In the fair hand copy of *A Busy Day*, Burney removes the First Waiter's single line that reveals any semblance of care for adhering to the mistress's wishes. Instead of saying, "Did you, meme?", Burney originally wrote for the First Waiter to say, "I believe you did. I had quite forgot it."<sup>91</sup> Deleting this line makes the waiter's forgetfulness seem more deliberate and defiant. After Cleveland has to ask for a pen and ink a second time, Eliza's faithful maidservant Deborah says she "was better served by half of Calcutta" than by the servants in England. Throughout the play, Burney makes it clear that Eliza and Cleveland, who have spent the past few years in India, are the only honest, true, and unprejudiced people in the play. Despite the reputation of nabobs and Anglo-Indian women (who were often viewed as desperate husband hunters) in late eighteenth-century England, all of the greedy, desperate, narrow-minded people in Burney's play are British, including both Cleveland's and Eliza's families.

Throughout the play, the British characters' references to India reveal their limited knowledge of the subcontinent, how they have been prejudiced by stereotypical depictions of

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<sup>90</sup> Burney, *A Busy Day*, 298.

<sup>91</sup> Burney, *A Busy Day*, 298.



Indians, and how they have no real understanding of Anglo-Indian politics or economics, other than to know that people (men) go there to make money. Although the play was never staged during Burney's lifetime, and therefore was never viewed by the audience she wished to educate, her words and revisions reveal how important she believed a better understanding of India to be, and that she hoped to contribute to that understanding.

### *Fiction*

None of the aforementioned women playwrights had ever visited India, and likewise most of the early women writers of India-set fiction had no personal experience with the subcontinent from which to draw. Instead, they relied on extensive research and family history. Seven years after Phebe Gibbes's *Hartly House, Calcutta* appeared, Elizabeth Hamilton published *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796).<sup>92</sup> Both novels adopt the epistolary format, but Gibbes's correspondent is a young British woman who has just arrived in India, while Hamilton's is Zaarmilla, an Indian rajah writing letters to his countrymen. Zaarmilla's letters recount his travels around India to various British military encampments, his sea voyage to England, and his impressions of the people, politics, and culture of that country. Using an Indian narrator allows Hamilton to critique social and political ills she sees in her own society from an outsider's point of view, a technique with a long history in British prose.

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<sup>92</sup> More so than most of the writers discussed here, Elizabeth Hamilton has received intense critical interest in recent decades. For examples of postcolonial and feminist perspectives on *Translations*, see Claire Grogan, "Crossing Genre, Gender and Race in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Studies in the Novel* 34 (2002): 21-42; Anne K. Mellor, "Romantic Orientalism Begins at Home: Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Studies in Romanticism* 44 (Summer 2005): 151-164; and Susan B. Taylor, "Feminism and Orientalism in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Women's Studies* 29 (2000): 555-81.

As early as the 1730s, novels and short fiction such as George Lyttleton's *Letters from a Persian in England, to his Friend at Ispahan* (1735) and the anonymously published *Letters from a Moor at London to his Friend at Tunis* (1736) used a similar format to satirize British life.<sup>93</sup> By professing that their works are translations, Hamilton and these earlier writers distance themselves from the criticism contained therein and boldly enter into debates on British imperialism, politics, religion, and even gender. Hamilton's *Zaarmilla* insists that the English could convert the Hindus with their virtue, but instead they appall with their brutality. He recounts in particular one occasion when he was visiting a military camp and, as he had "yet seen no appearance of any religious ceremony among them," he was drawn to a procession, believing it to be "in honour of their Dewtah."<sup>94</sup> Instead, he witnesses a soldier being stripped naked and lashed a thousand times for stealing a few rupees. *Zaarmilla* is horrified at the severity of the punishment for a seemingly minor offense. At the same time, he is not wholly condemnatory of the British, for he reasons that "the morals of the people must be very pure" if they believe so small a crime to warrant such a violent punishment. He even insists that the colonizing mission is a benevolent one, and that they have traversed oceans in order "To disseminate the love of virtue and freedom...and to rescue *our* nation from the hands of the oppressor." The fact that he still

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<sup>93</sup> These works are part of the legacy of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721), which recounts the experiences of two Persian noblemen traveling through France. It is more likely that Hamilton was familiar with Montesquieu or with Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1760; a series of fictional letters by a Chinese traveler in England) than with these early British texts, but their often overlooked existence reveals the long history of the form in Britain. For more on these texts and the so-called "Persian letters" epistolary form, see Lacy Marschalk, Mallory Anne Porch, and Paula Backscheider, "The Empty Decade? English Fiction in the 1730s," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 26, no. 3 (Spring 2014): 375-426, especially 394-397.

<sup>94</sup> In the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, "Dewtah" was a popular English corruption of the Sanskrit word *devata*, or deity. See Shankara Bharadwaj Khanavalli, "Devata," *Hindupedia*, last modified 10 December 2008, accessed 24 August 2012, <http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Devata>.

views the British as a well-intentioned, “brave, and generous people” tempers his criticism and makes him a more sympathetic narrator.<sup>95</sup>

If Zaarmilla had relentlessly criticized the British throughout his letters, it would be difficult to imagine the English audience continuing to read Hamilton’s book. But because her narrator often flatters the British and even believes them to be better than they are, Hamilton is able to shame the public rather than enrage it. She uses this technique throughout the work to espouse on topics as far ranging as false versions of Christianity (those who proselytize under the name but do not practice what they preach), current practices in female education (and where they fall short), and the prevalence of gambling and card playing, especially among women. What Hamilton has produced is a critical snapshot of her world as she sees it at the end of the eighteenth century, of a country that has abandoned faith in favor of philosophy, that desires entertainment before instruction, and that in general lacks morality and consideration of others. In the end, her well-traveled narrator concludes,

Thou wilt observe, that to extend our knowledge of the world, is but to become acquainted with new modes of pride, vanity, and folly. Thou wilt perceive that in Europe, as in Asia, an affected singularity often passes for superior wisdom; bold assertion for truth; and sickly fastidiousness for true delicacy of sentiment. Thou wilt see that the passions of men are every where the same....<sup>96</sup>

Although this conclusion, that people everywhere are the same, echoes Enlightenment ideas and Spinoza’s philosophical claim that human nature is universal,<sup>97</sup> it comes as a harsh reminder to

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<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, ed. Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell (Ontario: Broadview, 1999), 84.

<sup>96</sup> Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, 306.

<sup>97</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 274.

the British people, who typically viewed themselves and their culture to be superior to that of the races they subjugated.

Although the bulk of Hamilton's novel is concerned with studying British culture in both India and England, the work also required a substantial amount of research on India, a land she had never visited. The book, Hamilton's first, is in many ways a tribute to her late brother Charles, an Orientalist who translated Islamic and Hindu religious and legal texts. Charles traveled to India with the East India Company in 1772, and, according to Pam Perkins, for a while there was a possibility that Hamilton would join him there.<sup>98</sup> No doubt Charles's death in 1792 devastated Hamilton, who had lived with him while he was on leave from 1788 to 1791, and she began her own research on India not long afterward. In order to write *Hindoo Rajah*, she studied and quoted from a variety of popular and Orientalist texts from the late eighteenth century, including Sir William Jones's translation of *Sakuntala* (1789), Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Hitopadesa* (1787), Thomas Maurice's *Indian Antiquities* (1793-94), and William Hodges' *Travels in India* (1793).<sup>99</sup>

More than a decade later, popular writer Sydney Owenson studied similar texts when she began to write her own Indian novel, *The Missionary* (1811). Primarily set in seventeenth-century Kashmir, the tale chronicles a forbidden love affair between Hilarion, a Portuguese priest, and Luxima, a Hindu Brachmachira (religious leader who has taken a vow of celibacy). Once the affair is discovered, the priest is accused of heresy and sentenced to die by *auto-de-fé*,

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<sup>98</sup> For biographical information on Hamilton, see Pam Perkins, "Hamilton, Elizabeth (1756?-1816)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 27 July 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12062>; and Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell, introduction to *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, by Elizabeth Hamilton (Ontario: Broadview, 1999).

<sup>99</sup> Perkins and Russell, introduction to *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, 30-31.

and Luxima is sentenced to the life of a Chancalas, or outcast, and confined to a nunnery. On the night of the *auto-de-fé*, Luxima escapes and throws herself upon Hilarion's funeral pyre, a not unproblematic representation of the Hindu practice of sati. Although Luxima dies for love, not because of religious tradition or duty, her death raises a number of questions about the custom, which was hotly debated in Britain and India at the time. Although the British were understandably horrified by the practice, which called for Hindu women to die upon their husband's funeral pyres, the EIC was reluctant to place outright bans on local traditions and settled for regulating the practice by declaring it illegal to force a woman into compliance through the use of drugs or bindings. Of course, these restrictions did not prevent other kinds of coercion, such as public shunning and ridicule. Owenson was no doubt aware of how Luxima's sacrificial death would appear in the light of the contemporary debates and controversy.<sup>100</sup>

Like Owenson's earlier novel *The Novice of St. Dominick* (1805), *The Missionary* is heavily annotated and reveals an author who had thoroughly researched her topic before engaging with it. Owenson drew from a number of seventeenth-century travel accounts, as well as translated works on Indian history and culture. As other scholars have noted, most likely she gathered her sources from the Oriental Library of Charles Ormsby, with whom she was involved.<sup>101</sup> Although Owenson never visited the subcontinent herself, she used what

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<sup>100</sup> For more on Owenson's representation of sati, see Frances Botkin, "Burning Down the [Big] House: Sati in Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary*," *COLLOQUY text theory critique* 15 (2008): 36-51.

<sup>101</sup> For biographical information on Owenson, see Dennis R. Dean, "Morgan, Sydney, Lady Morgan (*bp.* 1783, *d.* 1859)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, accessed 27 July 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19234>. For more on Owenson's sources, see Botkin, "Burning Down the [Big] House," 39-40; and John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 242.

information was available to her to engage with controversial subjects of popular interest, increasing her novel's readership both in her time and ours.

The following year, Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* was published, marking an enormous shift in the kinds of writing women published on India. After the publication of Graham's *Journal*, publication of women's novels on India dropped off in favor of travel writing, but there were still quite a few novels published prior to the Indian Mutiny and institution of the British Raj (1857-58), and many more were published afterward by women who had lived in India during the first half of the century.<sup>102</sup> Most of these works received less critical attention—both in their day and ours—than their predecessors, but unlike the novels by Gibbes, Hamilton, and Owenson, these novels were mostly written by women who had first-hand knowledge of India and used their own personal experiences as a foundation for fiction.

Anne Catherine Monkland's experiences in India led to the publication of two three-volume novels, *Life in India; or, the English in Calcutta* (1828) and *The Nabob at Home: or, the Return to England* (1842).<sup>103</sup> Although little is known about Monkland, the reviewer for the *Oriental Herald* reported that *Life in India* "is said to be from the pen of a lady who had resided eleven years in India."<sup>104</sup> Although the review is quite critical of the work's perceived lack of plot, "prominent events," and "striking characters," the novel is commended for its "many

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<sup>102</sup> One of the most prolific times in Anglo-Indian fiction occurred between 1858 and the end of the century, when so-called memsahib fiction abounded. This was a shift back towards fiction writing, although travel writing on India continued to be published. For more on memsahib fiction, see Pat Barr's *The Mem-Sahibs: The Women of Victorian India* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976), and for examples of memsahib travel writing, see *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India*, ed. Indira Ghose (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>103</sup> In 1842, *The Nabob at Home* was published by both Harper & Brothers in New York and Henry Colburn in New York. The New York edition of the book was published as a single volume, while the London edition was divided into three volumes.

<sup>104</sup> *Oriental Herald* 19 (Nov. 1828): 340.

striking chapters, and some detached descriptions of considerable force and beauty.”<sup>105</sup> What’s more, the author is commended for her choice of genre. Although the reviewer believed the novel to be too closely related to the author’s own journal, to which she has tried to add characters and a plot, the decision to publish the text as a novel and not as another travel narrative is applauded. The reviewer states,

Works descriptive of distant countries, and containing only observations founded on fact, and given forth to the world as real and *bona fide* truths...have little or no chance of sale among the reading public of England; while, if the very same matter be dressed in the garb of fiction, and given forth as the creation of imagination...it will command the instant attention of all the Circulating Libraries in the kingdom as a *New Novel*....<sup>106</sup>

Although fiction was a less desirable genre for many Anglo-Indian writers during this time, novels were increasingly popular in England, where fiction sales were dominated by the works of Sir Walter Scott and fashionable novels depicting the lives of the upper classes. Monkland’s decision to fictionalize her journal and market her experiences as invention made economic sense and was in keeping with current trends in British publishing. What is more, it highlights the hybridity of the novel and travel writing genres; the line between fiction and non-fiction is almost impossible to determine because truth and imagination inspire one another.

Sometimes women turned to writing fiction about India after trying more personal genres first. In the 1850s, Florence Marryat spent seven years in India supporting her officer husband, but she waited half a dozen years after returning home to publish “*Gup*”: *Sketches of Anglo-*

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<sup>105</sup> *Oriental Herald* 19 (Nov. 1828): 340, 342.

<sup>106</sup> *Oriental Herald* 19 (Nov. 1828): 341.

*Indian Life and Character* (1868). *Gup*, Marryat tells us, means “gossip” in Hindustani,<sup>107</sup> and gossip is precisely what she promises her readers. Although Marryat’s sketches include many interesting observations of Indian people and landscapes, the bulk of her material is composed of anecdotes about her fellow colonists. It was these often unflattering portraits that no doubt inspired the hostile criticism the book received, especially in Madras, where Marryat had lived. Although she published no other non-fiction accounts of life in India, Marryat was undeterred by her narrative’s negative reception. In 1870, she returned to the subject of India via her novel *Véronique*, which was far better received by critics and readers. The *Calcutta Review* called Véronique “one of the most loveable characters we have met with in fiction for some time,” and instead of publishing lengthy excerpts as most reviews of the time did, it encouraged readers “to peruse *Véronique* for themselves, confident as we are that they will not regard the time as mispent.”<sup>108</sup> The critics had not forgotten Marryat’s earlier foray into Anglo-Indian writing, but they were willing to forgive her indiscretions in light of her new novel, one of the few about Anglo-India that they believed to have merit.<sup>109</sup> After finding success with *Véronique*, Marryat went on to have a successful literary career, including editing the monthly periodical *London Society* and publishing more than eighty books, including a memoir of her father, a travel narrative about her time in the United States, personal accounts about her experiences with mediums and séances, and dozens more novels, including well-received children’s books.<sup>110</sup>

Although Marryat did not choose India as the setting for her children’s books, many other women who traveled to the subcontinent did, for a variety of reasons. The most famous of these

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<sup>107</sup> Before Indian Partition, “Hindustani,” a form of Hindi, commonly referred to what we call Urdu today. See OED entry.

<sup>108</sup> *Calcutta Review* 50, no. 99 (1870): 187-8.

<sup>109</sup> *Calcutta Review* 50, no. 99 (1870): 182.

<sup>110</sup> “Christmas Books,” *The Times*, issue 27878 (Sat., 20 Dec. 1873): 7.



women, Mary Martha Sherwood, lived in India from 1805-1816 and spent much of her long career using it as a setting in such works as *The Indian Pilgrim* (1818), *The History of George Desmond* (1821), *The Indian Orphans* (1839), and *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer* (1815), one of her most famous books. Originally sold to Mr. Hazard of Wellington for £5, *Little Henry* reached its thirty-seventh edition by mid-century, and it was translated into such disparate languages as French, Spanish, Chinese, and Sinhalese.<sup>111</sup> A tale of friendship and conversion, the narrative stars Henry, an orphaned Anglo-Indian boy, and his closest friend, his Indian bearer Boosy. Because both of Henry's parents died when he was a baby, Boosy is as close to a parent as Henry has ever had, and Boosy treats him as his own, never leaving his bedside when he is sick, teaching him his own language, and dressing him in native Indian garments. The problem—at least for Sherwood and the young missionary woman she introduces into the story—is that Boosy has also exposed Henry to his religion, and Henry has come to regard the gods of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity as equally good. The young woman makes it her mission to teach Henry about the Bible and about all aspects of Christian doctrine, from sin to salvation. When little Henry's conversion is complete, the young lady leaves him with a mission of his own: "to make Boosy a Christian."<sup>112</sup> The second half of the book, which ends with Boosy renouncing caste and declaring himself Christian, is less a narrative than a step-by-step guide on how to convert Indians. And in case Sherwood's youthful audience initially failed to realize her

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<sup>111</sup> Patricia Demers, "Sherwood, Mary Martha (1775–1851)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2011, accessed 24 July 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25397>.

<sup>112</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Wellington, Salop; 1816), 59.

message, the story concludes, “Little children in India, remember Henry L--, and go and do likewise.”<sup>113</sup>

Although not all of Sherwood’s India fiction targeted children or was so blatantly evangelical, many of her stories and tracts, such as *The Ayah and Lady: An Indian Story* (1822) and *The History of Little Lucy and Her Dhaye* (1823), share similar or nearly identical themes. Like Henry, young Lucy is essentially raised by her wet nurse after the death of her mother, and although her father is living, he neglects giving her any sort of Christian or English education. Unlike Henry, however, Lucy’s conversion follows a traumatic separation from her *dhaye*; the two are forced apart when Lucy is sent to England, but the girl is consoled by Mrs. Courteney, an evangelical Christian who teaches Lucy scripture, assists her assimilation into English life, and eventually marries Lucy’s father. The *dhaye* is effectively replaced with a more appropriate mother figure.

Although Sherwood obviously had evangelical reasons for writing these two books for children, she was also compelled by a more personal reason: the lack of suitable reading material for Anglo-Indian children. Although there were plenty of books and textbooks available to the India-born children of British subjects, such as Charlotte Smith’s *Conversations Introducing Poetry, Chiefly on the Subjects of Natural History, for the Use of Young Persons* (1804), most of these texts were about places and experiences that were as foreign to them as the landscape of India was to children in England. Since no books to which these children could relate existed, it was up to their mothers to write them, and that is precisely what Sherwood did, first writing stories for her own children and the children of her cantonment before sending them to her sister in England for British publication. Throughout the century, women continued writing “with a

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<sup>113</sup> Sherwood, *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*, 138.

view to the instruction and amusement of young people” in India, as the anonymous woman author of *Alfred in India, or, Scenes in Hindostan* (1848) related.<sup>114</sup>

Books for children could serve multiple purposes. The anonymous author of *First Years of a Little Girl in Bengal* (1829) wanted her book to be a reader from which her daughter could learn new words and about the dual cultures in which she was growing up. Like Sherwood, this author wanted to give her daughter a book to which she could relate. In the opening dedication, she states:

At the early age of two years you shewed such a love for books, and such an aptness to learn, that I was induced to begin even then to teach you to read....I found, however, that the little English books, though very good for children of your age in England, afforded no one [des-cription] or idea to which your infant mind could attach it-self. It occurred to me therefore, to put together for you some scenes and conversations, [illustra-tive] of the country in which you were born, and of what was continually [pass-ing] around you.<sup>115</sup>

No doubt with her daughter in mind, the author makes the protagonist of *First Years* a curious little Anglo-Indian girl named Rosamond. Although Rosamond dresses like other English girls and plays with English toys (including a doll in a blue silk gown, a tea set with cups and saucers, and wooden blocks), even within her own home her experiences are different from those of British children. She snacks on plantains, buys toys from a traveling “Kil-lo-na wal-lah” (toy dealer), and counts her exotic toy birds, including “a My-nah, a Loo-ry, two Bul-buls, and four

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<sup>114</sup> Introduction to *Alfred in India, or, Scenes in Hindostan* (Edinburgh, 1848), n.p. For an example even later in the century, see *Childhood in India; or, English Children in the East: A Narrative for the Young* (London, 1865).

<sup>115</sup> *First Years of a Little Girl in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1829), n.p. All brackets are the author’s.

Doves.”<sup>116</sup> When Rosamond takes a ride in the “tan-jan” to a nearby farm, she sees pomegranate trees, chili plants, and a “Mally” bird nest.<sup>117</sup> After eating lunch, Rosamond naps on a straw mat with her bearer sitting beside her, fanning her with a *punkah*.<sup>118</sup> All of Rosamond’s experiences have a uniquely Indian spin to them, and the author carefully annotates each of the foreign words. The book is also designed to do more than entertain a child with familiar experiences; throughout the text, Rosamond counts, learns about animals, practices reading, and asks questions about nature and Indian and British cultures, which her parents patiently and thoroughly answer (e.g. where salt and coffee come from, how a toddy is made, how the Bengali write on palm leaves). Perhaps most importantly, the foreign words are hyphenated into syllables (as demonstrated in the quotes above) and often spelled phonetically, allowing the book’s young audience to sound out words and practice their reading skills.

Some children’s books were not meant for instruction or evangelism, however; they were merely meant to entertain and delight. Lady Henrietta Lushington’s novel *Almeria’s Castle* (1865), a more traditional narrative story, straddles the line between fiction for children and for adults. The protagonist is Clarissa Almeria Grantham, a lonely, imaginative seven-year-old girl who lives in a “rambling, half-ruinous” house near Bombay.<sup>119</sup> Clary, as the girl is called, spends most of her time exploring old Tom Stubbs’ lighthouse and listening to Tom and her father spin stories—of Bandicoot, the Rat-King, who wore a gold crown and held court over all the rats in the house; of the Fairy-Princess, Almeria, with whom she shares a name; and of a host of other delightful characters. When she forms a friendship with Miss Anne Clay, her new neighbor,

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<sup>116</sup> *First Years of a Little Girl in Bengal*, 2, 37.

<sup>117</sup> *First Years of a Little Girl in Bengal*, 2-4.

<sup>118</sup> *First Years of a Little Girl in Bengal*, 16.

<sup>119</sup> Lady Henrietta Lushington, *Almeria’s Castle; or, My Early Life in India and in England* (London: Griffith and Farran, 1865), 2.

Clary is given the opportunity to travel beyond her small world, to see more of Bombay and the Poonah Hills, and to discover that not all of her father's stories are fiction. *The Spectator* called the novel "a charming story, which will please young and old alike" and gave Lady Lushington "the place of honour among the caterers for the rising generation this Christmas," promoting her book over another new children's fantasy released that holiday season—Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.<sup>120</sup>

Lushington, whose husband was superintendent of the Indian navy from 1848-52, is believed to have based the story on her own childhood in Bombay.<sup>121</sup> *Almeria's Castle* has a similar relationship to autobiography as that found in other Anglo-Indian novels, such as Harriett Keatinge's *English Homes in India* (1869) and Mary Ann Hartley's *Indian Life: A Tale of the Carnatic* (1840). Hartley's novel is important because it gives insight into the Portuguese Jewish community, about which little else was written or known, and Keatinge's *English Homes* is something highly experimental—a two-volume "novel" that actually contains two unrelated stories. The first narrative—"The Three Loves," a novel in itself—spans the first volume and part of the second, and it follows a young woman accompanying her sister and brother-in-law to Bombay in the 1850s—a situation the author knew well from her own life. However, the second story, "The Wrong Turning," recounts the experiences of a young man in the Bengal Presidency in the 1840s and could not be more distant from the author's own experiences. The novel emulates earlier Anglo-Indian novels by women that narrate the lives of men, such as Sherwood's *History of George Desmond* (1821), which recounts the exploits and downfall of a young Anglo-Indian man who becomes involved with a dancer.

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<sup>120</sup> *The Spectator* 38 (23 December 1865): 1441.

<sup>121</sup> Rosemary Raza, *In Their Own Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13.

No matter what the subject or lesson on which a woman wanted to write, there was ample inspiration in Anglo-India, where a microcosm of British society dwelled in conditions that pushed people to reveal who they truly were. All of these fictions expose the abundance of material available to women writers in India, who, far from merely sitting at home and playing the role of the proper domestic wife and mother, were living, learning, and sharing their knowledge with readers on two continents. Their unique positions within the empire gave them a collective voice that demanded to be heard, and by choosing to write about a place as foreign and enigmatic as India, they continued to find an audience.

### *Poetry*

India proved a popular subject with poets who had never been to the subcontinent, including Amelia Opie, who published both *Twelve Hindoo Airs* and *A Second Set of Hindoo Airs* in 1800. Anglo-Indian women were active poets as well, and while they chose to write on a variety of subjects, from motherhood to the loss of loved ones, many incorporated their Indian experiences into their writing. Although less than a dozen women published poetry collections in or about India during that time, some Anglo-Indian publications, such as the *Bengal Annual*, are known to have published poems by women. Unfortunately, most of the women who published in periodicals did so anonymously, and the authors of most poems have not been identified.<sup>122</sup> In most cases, those women writers whom we know published in the periodicals have been identified because they published a poetry collection, including poems that had previously appeared anonymously.

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<sup>122</sup> Raza, *In Their Own Words*, 16.

Most likely the first to follow this path was the unidentified Anna Maria,<sup>123</sup> whose collection *Poems of Anna Maria* (1793) was well-received by British critics. Many of Anna Maria's poems first appeared in the *Asiatic Mirror* and *Calcutta Morning Post*, and her collection was first published in Calcutta before appearing in London. Most of Anna Maria's poetry contains little reference to India, and instead reveals a writer who was "painfully attuned to the latest literary developments in London but uncomfortably distant from them."<sup>124</sup> However, those poems that reference India reveal a woman who was not unhappy there, such as in "Adieu to India":

Adieu to INDIA'S fertile Plains,  
 Where *Brahma's* holy Doctrine reigns;  
 Whose virt'ous Principles still bind  
 The *Hindoo's* meek untainted Mind;  
 .....  
 Yet ere I go—a grateful Pain  
 Involves the Muse's parting Strain;  
 The sad Regret my Mind imbues,  
 And fills with Grief—*my last Adieus!*  
 .....  
 Alas!—fond Mem'ry weeps the Vision past,  
 "For ever fled, like yonder sweeping Blast:"  
 Those Hours of Bliss, those Scenes of soft Delight,  
 Vanish like Mists before the Rays of Light:  
 But still Remembrance holds the Objects dear.  
 And bathes their *Shadows* with Regret's pure Tear:  
 Nor shall th'oblivious Pow'r of Time subdue,

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<sup>123</sup> Although some critics have identified Anna Maria as Anna Maria Jones, the wife of Sir William Jones, Anna Maria herself attaches dates to some poems that do not correspond with what we know of Anna Maria Jones, and Sir William Jones and his wife are both listed as subscribers to the collection. It would have been quite unusual for an author to list herself and her husband as subscribers of her own work. Mary Ellis Gibson suggests that Anna Maria could have been a pseudonym taken by a woman writer who greatly respected Anna Maria Jones or Anna Maria Hastings, Warren Hastings' second wife, or by an author who wished to attach herself to the Della Cruscan poets in London, after whom many of her poems are styled. See Gibson, *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780-1913: A Critical Anthology* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), 52-53.

<sup>124</sup> Gibson, *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780-1913*, 53.

The painful Feelings of the last—ADIEU!<sup>125</sup>

“Adieu to India” reveals the poet’s ambivalence about leaving a land where she had found many “Hours of Bliss,” a region not without its poetic advantages. Even though Anna Maria longs to be part of a more cultured society, to be a part of poetry circles and improve her craft, she recognizes the importance of foreign experience to developing the poet’s eye for observation and knowledge of the world. Although some critics wished Anna Maria would “abandon the Gothic ornament” and Della Cruscan style, her imagination and knowledge were applauded, and the critic for the *Monthly Review* referred to her as an “ingenious young Poetess,” praise that no doubt Anna Maria, who wished “*to merit the applause of a polished people,*” would have appreciated.<sup>126</sup>

Anna Maria’s greatest fault, it seems, is that she did not mine the Indian landscape in her poetry as thoroughly as her critics would have liked, a charge with which Anglo-Indian women poets contended throughout the century. When Mary Carshore published *Songs of the East* in 1855, the *Calcutta Review* criticized her for the scarcity of poems related to India and Orientalism, proclaiming, “She does not add much to the stock of even stranger’s knowledge of Indian manners and customs.”<sup>127</sup> Such criticism must have been difficult for Carshore to hear, as she was born and raised in India and several of her poems, such as “The Beara Festival” and “Rock of Jungeera,” were based on her personal experiences with Indian customs and places. *The Calcutta Review* compared “Beara Festival” to Thomas Moore’s *Lalla Rookh* (1817) and Robert Southey’s *Curse of Kehama* (1811), both by men who had never been to India, and found Carshore’s poem fell short, going as far as to proclaim that Moore “had at least more book-

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<sup>125</sup> Gibson, *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780-1913*, 58-59.

<sup>126</sup> See reviews in *English Review* 24 (1794): 144-146, and *Monthly Review* 15 (1794): 352. The “polished people” line is quoted in the *Monthly Review*; italics are theirs.

<sup>127</sup> *Calcutta Review* 23 (1854): xxii.



knowledge and more heart-knowledge of the East than herself,” and to suggest that in future poetic endeavors Carshore “confine herself to the expression of her pure womanly heart-feelings” and “leave descriptive pieces.”<sup>128</sup> It is no wonder that after receiving such criticism Carshore never published another collection.

At times the London presses were more amenable to India-less poetry—if that poetry captured England instead. When Mary Leslie’s *Ina and Other Poems* was published in London and Calcutta in 1856, the Calcutta papers essentially ignored the collection, while the London-based *Eclectic Review* praised her descriptions of the English landscape, which were “so correct and vivid.”<sup>129</sup> Like Carshore, Leslie was born in India, and it was the only home she had ever known. As a child, she had spent a few months in England, and she chose it as her major setting in her first collection; besides a few references to Eastern skies, she does not take India as setting or subject. However, the events of 1857 inspired Leslie to write about her birthland, and in 1858 she released her second poetry collection, *Sorrow, Aspirations, and Legends, from India*. The “Sorrows and Aspirations” section of the book boldly captures the horrors of the Indian Mutiny and massacres, and Leslie dedicates sonnets to the events at Cawnpore, Lucknow, Allahabad, and Delhi, as well as individual poems to fallen officers and other “heroes,” such as in “Major Skene and his Wife,” “Death of Sir H. M. Lawrence,” “The Band of Heroes,” “General Neill,” “The Heroines of Lucknow,” and “The Heroes of Lucknow.”

In the second half of the collection, “Legends,” Leslie abandons the sonnet form and composes ten long poems on legendary Indian people and places, including “The Taj Majal,” “The Queen of Ganore,” and “The Wife of Baz Bahadoor.” “Legends” begins with a lengthy prelude describing and personifying the Indian landscape as only one intimately connected with

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<sup>128</sup> *Calcutta Review* 23 (1854): xxii, xxiv.

<sup>129</sup> *Eclectic Review* 1 (Jan.-June 1857): 103.

the land could do. However, it is clear from these verses that Leslie was shaken by the recent bloodshed and unsure of where she stood as a person of British blood born and raised in India.

She writes,

Heavily weighs the pen within my hand;  
My heart is very mournful, and the tears  
Unshed hang on my eyelids all the day.  
.....  
O wretched, frantic India! why hast thou  
In thy first fevered stirrings seized the sword,  
And plunged it in the hearts of those who stood,  
And watched, and prayed around thee? why hast thou  
Retarded thus the coming years of bliss,  
And caused thy robes thus to be overflowed  
With the blood of sinless babes, of brave, true men,  
Of women fair and gentle as the eve?<sup>130</sup>

Leslie's portrayal of colonialism is problematic, for it is clear that she believes colonization to have been a positive experience for all involved, and that the British are there to help, not to exploit or hurt, native Indians. She portrays the British as passive observers, when the majority of those sent to India were soldiers. However, it is clear from these lines how painful she finds the bloodshed in her birth land to be and how fearful the Mutiny has made her, as she now knows how fragile her position in this world is. Her life and those of other women and children are not as sacrosanct as she once believed.

Using her own experiences in India as inspiration for her poetry proved beneficial for Leslie. The *Calcutta Review* critics were far more receptive of her second collection. Although they ignored the "Legends" section completely in their review, choosing instead to focus on her sonnets, they found these to be some of the best they had encountered, stating, "Above all the poetry on [the Mutiny] hitherto published, and above all the poetry of Anglo-Indians...we would place this little work. Mary Leslie has proved her right to enter the sacred and jealously guarded

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<sup>130</sup> Mary Leslie, *Sorrows, Aspirations, and Legends, from India* (London, 1858), 46-47.

temple of the Muses.”<sup>131</sup> The significance of such high praise would not have been lost on Leslie, who must have been familiar with those Anglo-Indian writers who had come before her and to whom she was being compared, including Emma Roberts.

To this day Roberts remains one of the most famous Anglo-Indian writers, and her many articles and books were well received in both England and Anglo-India. The *Calcutta Literary Gazette* even said that her *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan* (1835) “have never been surpassed in any book of travels that is at this moment present to our memory.”<sup>132</sup> Roberts was better known as a travel writer than a poet, but her first book-length publication on India was a poetry collection, *Oriental Scenes, Dramatic Sketches and Tales, with Other Poems* (1830). Roberts’ collection, published years before her earliest travel narrative, was popular with critics and was discussed favorably by the *Calcutta Review* as late as 1881.<sup>133</sup> When the collection was first published, the *London Literary Gazette and Journal* praised the “graceful volume” for its authenticity, accurate descriptions, and “gorgeous scenes,” and even mistakenly believed it to be “the first attempt made by a European female to embody her Indian reminiscences in verse.”<sup>134</sup> Unlike Carshore and Leslie, Roberts was born in Britain and traveled to India as an adult, as a companion to her sister, who was married to Captain Robert Adair McNaghten of the 61<sup>st</sup> Bengal infantry. She was one of the first women to build a successful writing career based solely on her Indian publications, and she combines her knowledge of her homeland and English literature

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<sup>131</sup> *Calcutta Review* 31 (July-December 1856): 349.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in the posthumous memoir that prefaced Emma Roberts’ *Notes of an Overland Journey* (London, 1841), xxviii.

<sup>133</sup> See “Art. III: Part II: Henry Louis Vivian Derozio,” *Calcutta Review* 72 (May 1881): 40.

<sup>134</sup> *London Literary Gazette and Journal*, no. 821 (Sat., 13 October 1832): 644-645. Although *Oriental Scenes* was published in Calcutta in 1830, it was not published in London until 1832. Several excellent poems were added to this new edition, including *The Hindoo Girl*, *An Evening Scene in Hindoostan*, *Indian Graves*, and *Sunset at Agra*.

with a natural curiosity regarding all things Indian. Perhaps it is because of her curiosity that her descriptions of “oriental scenes” possess something that the India-born poets were so often accused of lacking. Everything in India was new to Roberts, and she could see the people, customs, and landscape with the eye of an outsider. She listened to stories and legends that Carshore and Leslie had probably heard dozens of times, and instead of ignoring them, she captured them in dramatic dialogues and ballads. It was not until after the events of 1857 that Leslie too was able to adopt this outsider perspective and see and write about the subcontinent with a more critical and observant eye.

Physical distance from India also proved beneficial for Lady Henrietta Lushington, the author of *Almeria's Castle*. Nearly two decades before that novel was published, Lushington was better known as a poet. She published more than twenty poems in *Fraser's Magazine* before compiling those poems and adding ten more to create her collection *The Sea-Spirit and Other Poems* (1850). Although the majority of Lushington's poetry is not specifically about life in India, one of the new poems she added describes her pilgrimage to the legendary Elephanta Caves near Bombay, and her second longest poem, *Reminiscences of the 'Overland Trip,'* takes the journey to India as its subject, including sections on such diverse landscapes as “The First Sight of the Nile,” “The Desert,” “A Sunset in the Red Sea,” and “An Indian Home.” The poem, and even its title, mirrors the journey many women recorded in their travelogues. Lushington describes similar experiences to those had by Eliza Fay, Anne Katherine Elwood, and others, but she does so in a more limiting form. Additionally, her final section offers a different perspective on first seeing the shores of India: “How beautiful! how calm!”<sup>135</sup> After being away in England,

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<sup>135</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, Henrietta Lushington was born in India. See Lushington, *Reminiscences of the 'Overland Trip,'* in *The Sea-Spirit and Other Poems* (London, 1850), 145-154. Quotation is from 153.

time and distance allow her to see the land more clearly than she had before leaving it, and she realizes that India is not just her birthland, but her home.

Other poetry collections in which Anglo-Indian women writers depict India include Mary Johnson Jourdan's *Mind's Mirror: Poetical Sketches* (1856) and Ella Haggard's *Myra; or The Rose of the East* (1857), which was written immediately after the Mutiny as a record of the author's early years, before "the prevailing sense of order" was interrupted by rebellion.<sup>136</sup> Both of these collections are difficult to obtain today, but some of the best of Jourdan's and Haggard's poetry has been anthologized in Máire ní Fhlathúin's *The Poetry of British India, 1780-1905* (2011). Such anthologies also make available the poetry of Anglo-Indian women writers who embedded their poetry into travel narratives or unpublished letters and journals, such as Lady Maria Nugent, who folded several poems into her travel narrative *A Journal from the Year 1811 till the Year 1815* (1839), again demonstrating the intertextuality of the travel genre. Interpolated poetry was common in published fiction and travel writing, and it is often found in unpublished travel diaries and journals as well. Honoria Lawrence's journals went unpublished during her lifetime but were released in several different editions in the twentieth century, and her interpolated poetry has become well respected by critics.<sup>137</sup> Mary Ellis Gibson even chose several of Lawrence's individual poems and fragments for inclusion in the anthology *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780-1913*, in which Lawrence's poems are placed alongside poetry by such notable authors as Sir William Jones, Rudyard Kipling, and Rabindranath Tagore, as well as Nugent, Roberts, Carshore, and Anna Maria.

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<sup>136</sup> Anindyo Roy, "'Gold and Bracelet, Water and Wave': Signature and Translation in the Indian Poetry of Adela Cory Nicholson," in *Depicting Desire: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe: Literary and Artistic Perspectives*, ed. Rachael Langford (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 212.

<sup>137</sup> See Gibson, *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India*, 20.

Lawrence's situation is not unusual; many unpublished journals by Anglo-Indian women have been released by scholars in the past century, including ones by Fanny Eden, Emily Metcalfe, and Charlotte Canning, all women who held important positions within Anglo-Indian society. The publication of these journals gives historians and feminist and postcolonial scholars additional historical and cultural information and commentary from the period, but perhaps more importantly, the newfound accessibility of these previously unpublished writings provides scholars interested in the travel writing form with the ability to compare women's private and published travel writing. These journals and the various other forms in which women wrote and made a name for themselves in Anglo-Indian literature will be the focus of the next section.

### *Miscellaneous Works*

Although fiction and poetry were the most popular genres—other than travel writing—in which Anglo-Indian women wrote, they were far from the only kinds of writing women did. From missionary pamphlets to Indian histories, women used their experiences and knowledge to create an enormous body of literature representative of all aspects of life in India. Much of this writing was not originally intended for public consumption but was written for the self or for interested friends and family back in England. Some of it was published posthumously by husbands or admirers wishing to share writing they deemed valuable or pay homage to women they loved and respected. Other journals and letters went unpublished for more than a century, only to be found and released by interested scholars or family members generations later. We cannot presume to know what the writers would think of students and scholars reading and analyzing their private thoughts and observations, but we can learn just as much—and perhaps more—about life in British India from these works that were never intended for publication.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about these texts is that they often complement more well-known, published accounts. When Emily and Fanny Eden accompanied their brother George, the newly appointed governor-general, to India in 1836, they both kept detailed journals of the nearly six years they spent living in Calcutta and traveling the northern regions. However, Emily was the one with publishing ambitions, and along with a collection of Indian portraits and two popular novels on British suburbia, she published *Up the Country* (1866), a classic work of Anglo-Indian travel writing that is still frequently discussed by scholars today.<sup>138</sup> A few years after Emily's death, her niece Eleanor compiled Emily's other Indian letters and published them as *Letters from India* (1872), but Fanny Eden's journals were seemingly forgotten until the twentieth century. Janet Dunbar used the manuscripts when writing the biography *Golden Interlude: The Edens in India, 1836-1842* (1956), combining the accounts from Emily's and Fanny's letters and journals, but it was not until 1988 that Fanny's surviving journals were published as *Tigers, Durbars, and Kings: Fanny Eden's Indian Journals, 1837-1838*, finally making Fanny's words available to more than the privileged specialist. This volume covers the same time span as Emily Eden's *Up the Country*, providing a contrasting perspective on camp life and travel in India. Unsurprisingly, Fanny and Emily write about many of the same events, including visits to ruins and temples, visits with rajahs, and tiger-hunting expeditions. Comparing the two confirms what most readers of travel writing suspect—how truly subjective travel accounts can be. Reading the two together gives a more complete picture of what life in a traveling caravan was like as well as sheds light on the individual personalities of the sisters,

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<sup>138</sup> For a few examples, see chapter 4 of Indira Ghose's *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Angelia Poon's "Seeing Double: Performing English Identity and Imperial Duty in Emily Eden's *Up the Country* and Harriet Martineau's *British Rule of India*," *Women's Writing* 12, no. 3 (2005): 453-70; and Pablo Mukherjee's "Touring the Dead Lands: Emily Eden, Victorian Famines, and Colonial Picturesque," *Critical Survey* 21, no. 1 (2009): 24-38.

who often differed in their interpretations of events or their portrayals of people they met. Fanny may never have intended her journals to be read or compared with her more famous sister's, but reading them alongside *Up the Country* adds a depth and color to Emily's anecdotes that might otherwise be missing.

Sometimes, we are simply fortunate that unpublished writings fell into the right hands. For more than a century, Sir Thomas Metcalfe's carefully compiled but unpublished "Reminiscences of Imperial Delhie" and his daughter Emily's journal, her own record of their life in Delhi, were passed down through generations of descendants. They finally found their way to Metcalfe's great-great-grandson, Lieutenant-Colonel John Mildmay Ricketts, who enlisted the help of scholar M. M. Kaye to edit the two accounts together and publish them as *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi* (1980).<sup>139</sup> When artist Charlotte Canning died suddenly in India in 1861, it is unlikely that she imagined her letters and journals ever being published, but in the hands of her biographer kinsman, Augustus Hare, they became the basis for *The Story of Two Noble Lives* (1893), which combines her story with that of Lady Waterford. Because Canning was also a close personal friend of Queen Victoria and other women of the British aristocracy, a number of her India letters to these women were reprinted in letter collections such as *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (1907-32) and *Letters of the Hon. Mrs. Edward Twisleton* (1928).<sup>140</sup> Harriet Tytler, who wrote several memoirs, including "An Englishwoman in India; the Memoirs of Harriet Tytler 1828-1858," unfortunately never saw her

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<sup>139</sup> See Ricketts' introduction to *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi: Reminiscences by Emily, Lady Clive Bayley, and by Her Father, Sir Thomas Metcalfe*, ed. M. M. Kaye (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 5-12.

<sup>140</sup> For biographical information on Canning, see K. D. Reynolds, "Canning, Charlotte Elizabeth, Countess Canning (1817-1861)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, last modified October 2005, accessed 24 August 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/42027>.



words published during her lifetime. However, her India memoir was later found and recognized as an important historical document, and it was published in *Chambers Journal* in 1931 and then in a more scholarly edition by Oxford University Press in 1986.<sup>141</sup>

While these works were all published by kinsman and scholars who either recognized the historical value of these accounts or wanted to celebrate the lives and voices of these women, it was also common in the nineteenth century to publish the posthumous memoirs of Anglo-Indian women, especially those of missionaries, for evangelical purposes.<sup>142</sup> Although many female missionaries chose to publish their letters and memoirs during their lifetimes (e.g. Martha Weitbrecht, *Female Missionaries in India: Letters from a Missionary's Wife Abroad to a Friend in England* [1843]; and Helen Mackenzie, *Life in the Mission, the Camp, and the Zenana; or, Six Years in India* [1853]), many were published posthumously by grieving husbands wishing to commemorate beloved wives, or by clergymen who used these women's accounts to encourage and build the spirituality of their congregations in England. The Rev. Alfred Barrett used the private journal and personal correspondence of Mary Cryer to reconstruct missionary life in southeast India, which he published as *Holy Living: Exemplified in the Life of Mrs. Mary Cryer, Wife of the Rev. Thomas Cryer, Wesleyan Missionary in the South of India, with Extracts from her Papers and Correspondance* (1845). Cryer's journal and letters are a testament to how difficult missionary life could be in the rural areas, far from the company of other Anglo-Indians,

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<sup>141</sup> The Orlando Project, edited by Susan Brown, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy, is a good source of information on Harriet Tytler, a little-known writer and artist.

<sup>142</sup> For more information on women missionaries in nineteenth-century India and their writings, see Geraldine H. Forbes, "In Search of the 'Pure Heathen': Missionary Women in Nineteenth Century India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21, no. 17 (26 April 1986): WS2-WS8; and Raza, *In Their Own Words*. For more on the female missionary's role in India, see Georgina Endfield and David J. Nash, "'Happy is the bride the rain falls on': Climate, Health and 'the Woman Question' in Nineteenth-Century Missionary Documentation," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 368-386.

as well as how difficult the task of converting Hindus was. Throughout her trials, though, Cryer remains steadfast, faithful, and dedicated to Christ and her work, which Barrett no doubt meant readers to interpret as an example of the ideal missionary.

Andrew Leslie, a Baptist missionary devastated by the death of his wife Eliza, was moved to contemplate the afterlife in *The Vision of the Heavenly World; to which is Prefixed a Memoir of Mrs. Eliza Leslie, late of Monghyr, Hindostan, with Extracts from her Correspondence* (1828). Leslie prefaces his meditations on the spiritual world with sixty-four pages of excerpts from his wife's memoir and correspondence. Some missionary wives paid homage to their husbands in a similar way, as Amelia Heber did after the death of her husband Reginald, perhaps the most famous missionary to ever call India home. Reginald Heber was well-known for his hymns and for his philanthropic work with Indian education, especially for young women and the biracial children of British soldiers, but his journal and letters might have been lost if his wife Amelia had not edited and published them as *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825* in 1828.

Other missionaries or those with mission experience wrote pamphlets on mission life to raise awareness of the difficulties missionaries faced or the needs of the Indian people. Maria Charlesworth's *India and the East; or, a Voice from the Zenana* (1860) called for greater support from the women of Britain for the missionary work in India, especially that being done with Indian women and children in the zenanas.<sup>143</sup> Poet Mary Leslie, who spent some time working with Indian women in Calcutta, called attention to mission work being performed in Hindu

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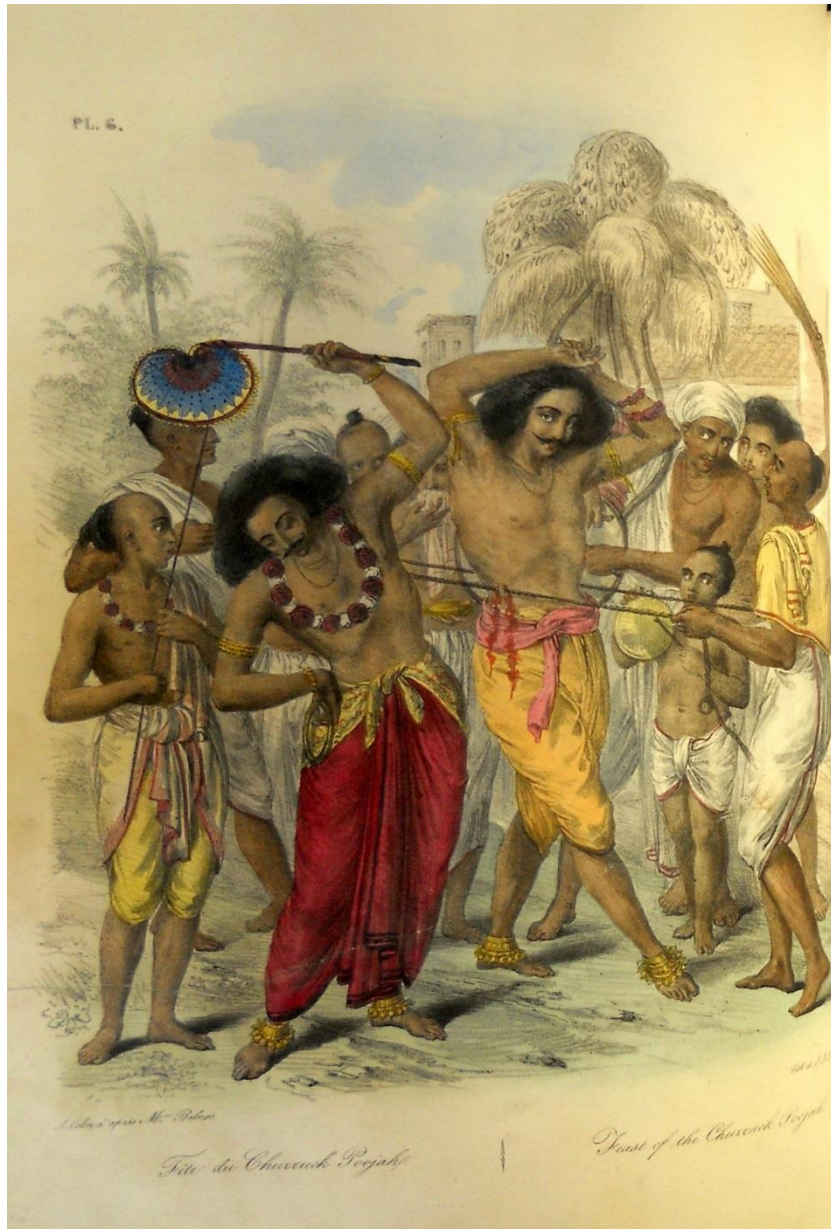
<sup>143</sup> Indian zenanas, like Middle Eastern seraglios, were sections of residences where the wives and children of important men were cloistered. Men outside the immediate family were not permitted to enter the zenana, and even women had to receive special permission to visit, so many British women made it their mission to obtain entrance and to report what they learned and saw. See OED.

homes with her fictional pamphlet *The Dawn of Light: A Story of the Zenana Mission* (1868). Conversion narratives, such as Martha Weitbrecht's *An Indian Blossom Which Bore Fruit* (1849) and Sarah Tucker's *The Brier and the Myrtle* (1857), were also popular, as were recruiting materials published for children, such as Hannah Mullens' *Missionary Pictures; or, Word-paintings of Scenes in India, for the Young* (1858).

Not all Anglo-Indian women were so set on converting India to Christianity, however. Some were more interested in learning about Eastern religions and sharing that knowledge with their British compatriots. Sophia Charlotte Belnos authored two collections of her own annotated drawings that illustrate Hindu life and culture. The first, *Twenty-Four Plates Illustrative of Hindoo and European Manners in Bengal* (1832), is a captivating collection of full-color illustrations, each showing some aspect of Hindu life. Belnos represents customs as disparate as the practice of throwing the dead bodies of the poor into the Ganges; the celebration of the “Feast of the Churruck Poojah” (*Charak Puja*), a festival in honor of Shiva (see fig. 1.2); the process for receiving absolution; and the importance of the village “Gooroo” (guru) to Hindu society. Each plate is accompanied by a thoughtful, detailed description of the rite or custom it captures. Nearly two decades later, Belnos published a second collection, *The Sundhya or the Daily Prayers of the Brahmins, Illustrated in a Series of Original Drawings from Nature* (1851), which focuses exclusively on hand gestures, facial expressions, and poses used in religious ceremonies and “poojah.”<sup>144</sup> Each painting is accompanied by text that explains the importance of the depicted action to the ceremony or ritual, followed by an English translation of the part of the prayer to which the motion or pose relates. Many critics might dismiss *Twenty-Four Plates*

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<sup>144</sup> Poojah, or *puja*, refers to a kind of Hindu religious ceremony performed in honor or worship of a deity. See OED.



**FIGURE 1.2.**

Belnos’s illustration of the “Feast of the Churruck Poojah.” Her caption reads, “This Festival in honour of Shiva, is celebrated in the month of March, when many of the Hindoos assume the name of *Sunyassées*, and inflict on themselves the greatest cruelties. Some of the chief *Sunyassées*, purify themselves for a month previous to these ceremonies. On the third day from the commencement of the Pooja, they dance about the streets in groups, their tongues, sides and different parts of their body, bored with spits ropes, canes, etc.; these tortures are inflicted by those who have made vows to the goddess *Callée*, on rising from a dangerous illness or returning safe from a perilous voyage or journey, etc.” See *Twenty-Four Plates Illustrative of Hindoo and European Manners in Bengal* (London, 1832), Plate 6, n.p.

and *The Sundhya* as art books, not scholarship, but together they compose one of the most detailed and informative examinations of Hindu religious practice published by a British subject.

Although most women's Anglo-Indian writing was based, by necessity, on personal experience, some women were inspired by life in India to research and rewrite history instead. While living in Calcutta, Charlotte Speir Manning and her husband felt compelled to read whatever they could on the country in which they were living, but they found the information in the histories they read to be outdated and unreliable. After her husband's death, Manning dedicated herself to writing a new history, *Life in Ancient India* (1856), updating old information with new archaeological evidence and translations of ancient texts. It was unusual for such a text to be written by a woman, as women were excluded from membership in the Asiatic Society, but Manning was given the rare opportunity to work within the Asiatic Society libraries and the East India House, and her work is one of the most accessible and meticulously researched histories to come out of British India.<sup>145</sup>

Writing history does not always mean writing about the distant past, however, as the women who survived the Indian Mutiny of 1857 learned. These women realized the historical significance of the events through which they had lived, and they recorded their individual experiences in mutiny memoirs, first-hand accounts of life under siege. Although such accounts also exist in travel writing from this time (some of which will be discussed in subsequent chapters), these memoirs differ in their narrow focus on life during mutiny, with no detailed reflection on Indian travel before and after. Most of these memoirs appeared just months after the

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<sup>145</sup> See preface to Charlotte Speir Manning's *Life in Ancient India* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1856), vii-viii. Later in the century, a second edition of the book was desired, and Manning revised *Life in Ancient India* with updated information, sources, and translations and published it as *Ancient and Mediaeval India* (London: Allen & Co., 1869). For more on Manning's revision process, see her preface, v-ix.

conflict had cooled and the transition from EIC rule to governance by the crown was complete, and they capitalized on public interest and desire for information on the events. Most of them centered around “the Siege of Lucknow” and used the phrase prominently in their titles (Katherine Bartrum, *A Widow’s Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow* (1858); G. Harris, *A Lady’s Diary of the Siege of Lucknow* (1858); Julia Inglis, *The Siege of Lucknow* (1892); and L. E. Rees, *A Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow* (1858), with excerpts from Lady Inglis’s journal), while others included a contrasting depiction of the calm before the storm, or the year or so leading up to the mutinies, such as Georgiana Paget’s *Camp and Cantonment: A Journal of Life in India in 1857-1859* (1865); and Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop’s *The Timely Retreat; or, a Year in Bengal before the Mutinies* (1858).<sup>146</sup>

The sheer number of women who published their journals and memoirs immediately after the event, combined with the women whose journals were found and published later in the century and in the twentieth century, indicates that writing was an extremely popular activity with women in colonial India, and there are probably dozens if not hundreds more journals and accounts from this time that have been lost or discarded over time. These accounts are fascinating because there is nothing else like them in British history—an enormous body of literature by women chronicling an epic historic event, one that shaped the future of British India and the British empire—and most of these texts are fairly accessible to scholars and students today. In many ways, the mutiny memoir was a new genre established by Anglo-Indian women,

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<sup>146</sup> For more on women’s journals from the Indian Mutinies, see Alison Blunt, “The Flight from Lucknow,” in *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, ed. James S. Duncan and Derek Gregory (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 92-113; Alison Blunt, “Embodying War: British Women and Domestic Defilement in the Indian Mutiny, 1857-8,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 3 (July 2000): 403-428; Alison Blunt, “Spatial Stories under Siege: British Women Writing from Lucknow in 1857,” *Gender, Place & Culture* 7, no. 3 (2000): 229-246; and Indira Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 88-106.

and we find its descendants in the poetry and memoirs of cataclysmic events of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, including World War I poetry, World War II memoirs, and stories from 9/11.

Another genre reenvisioned by women writers was the lifestyle/travel guide for the outbound traveler. Unlike travel guides that appeared earlier in the century, which primarily focused on where to stay and what to do in certain regions (similar to today's Frommer's or Lonely Planet guides), these guides were more concerned with getting to India and establishing a home there, on what to bring and how to make the journey as comfortable as possible. The genre began with appendices in the backs of travel narratives, such as Sarah Lushington's *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by Way of Egypt, in the Years 1827 and 1828* (1829) and Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India* (1830). Elwood's appendix includes a detailed day-to-day itinerary for the overland journey, fees required for passages and posts, a money conversion table, discussion of the pros and cons of various overland routes to India, and general hints and rules of thumb for travelers, including advice to bring "[l]etters of introduction and recommendation to the Consuls, principal merchants, and bankers in the Mediterranean and in Egypt," and "[a] Spanish saddle, or a side saddle for a donkey" because "nothing of the sort can be procured in Egypt."<sup>147</sup> Lushington gives a similar itinerary for travel to India, but she follows it with advice to travelers leaving Bengal for Egypt and offers a list of necessary supplies for camping comfortably in the desert. Instead of suggesting travelers bring their own guidebooks for the regions they will encounter, she provides what she sees as the most important information

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<sup>147</sup> Anne Katherine Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India; Including a Residence There, and Voyage Home, in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28* (London, 1830), 2:387, 390.

on Egypt from two noted sourcebooks, William Hamilton's *Egyptiaca* (1809) and Robert Richardson's *Travels along the Mediterranean and Parts Adjacent* (1822), including their descriptions of Luxor, Karnak, and Medinet Habu. Elwood, on the other hand, recommends travelers consult the "latest edition of Mrs. [Mariana] Starke's admirable work" on European travel and "The Modern Traveller" for information on Egypt and Arabia, as well as "Galignani's Guides, for France and Italy, Vasi's Rome, and a Pocket Gazetteer."<sup>148</sup> This extensive list of travel guides reveals how popular and prevalent the genre had become as Britain's growing middle class increasingly had the time and resources to travel abroad.

As the century progressed, women writers saw a need for more than just a brief appendix on travel there. Emma Roberts wrote a series of articles for *Parbury's Oriental Herald* offering advice to the outbound voyager, attempting to prepare ill-equipped settlers for the circumstances they would meet upon arrival. These articles were eventually compiled and published as *The East India Voyager, or Ten Minutes' Advice to the Outward Bound* (1839). In these articles, Roberts offers advice on topics as diverse as how to pick a cabin for the voyage ("To ladies, whether married or single, the upper, or poop-cabins are certainly the most desirable"), what clothes to bring ("French stays are the best adapted to the climate; and as there is generally some difficulty in obtaining these articles, not fewer than six pairs should be provided"), and how best to educate children who will eventually be sent to join their parents in India ("Floricultural and horticultural knowledge will be found extremely useful").<sup>149</sup> In an article to "Outward Bound Cadets," she even offers career advice on how to move up in the EIC and how to occupy one's

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<sup>148</sup> Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England*, 2:387-388.

<sup>149</sup> See Emma Roberts's "East India Voyager" articles: "No. I: Choice of a Cabin," *Parbury's Oriental Herald* 1, no. 1 (1837): 1; "No. II: Ladies' Outfit," *Parbury's Oriental Herald* 1, no. 2 (1837): 73; and "No. III: Desultory Remarks," *Parbury's Oriental Herald* 1, no. 3 (1837): 178.



free time: “The first thing to which a cadet should apply himself is the study of the language in common use...since without a competent knowledge of Hindostanee he can never hope to succeed in any public department.”<sup>150</sup> The book was adored by readers and critics, with the *Naval and Military Gazette* quoted as saying, “With Miss Roberts’s book in hand, we cannot fancy a more agreeable mode of passing the voyage out.”<sup>151</sup> Roberts’ *East India Voyager* was particularly important to travelers because even John Murray’s publishing company did not publish a guide to India until 1859, and the companies of the two other notable nineteenth-century travel guide publishers, Karl Baedeker and Thomas Cook, did not publish guides to India until the twentieth century.<sup>152</sup>

In 1864, the ultimate guide to living in India, *The Englishwoman in India*, was published by an anonymous “Lady Resident.” *The Englishwoman* contains chapters on everything from how to furnish an Indian bungalow, to what clothes to pack for the whole family, to how to treat bites from various native insects. The book includes a detailed dictionary of Indian servant titles and a guide to stable management because, as the author notes, “India is probably the only country in the world in which the management of the stable falls as a matter of course to the lady

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<sup>150</sup> Emma Roberts, “The East India Voyager No. V—Advice to Outward Bound Cadets—Part 2,” *Parbury’s Oriental Herald* 1, no. 5 (1837): 396.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in an advertisement for *East-India Voyager*, in *The Edinburgh Review: or, Critical Journal* (April 1844): 5.

<sup>152</sup> The first of Murray’s Handbooks for Travellers was published in the late 1830s, not long before Robert’s *East India Voyager* was published, but its first *Handbook for India* was not published until 1859. Additional and updated Murray guides were published later in the century, including guides to Madras, Bombay, and Bengal in the 1880s. Thomas Cook & Son published *India, Burma, Ceylon and South Africa* in 1904, and Baedeker’s *Indien*, which includes Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, was published in German only in 1914. Even more interestingly, the first guides for Indians traveling to England were published in 1840-41, long before those by Murray. See Kathleen R. Epelde, “Travel Guidebooks to India: A Century and a Half of Orientalism,” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wollongong, 2004); and Michael Fisher, “Early Indian Travel Guides to Britain,” in *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces*, ed. Tim Youngs (London and New York: Anthem Press, 2006), 87-106.

of the house.”<sup>153</sup> Perhaps the most interesting part of *The Englishwoman* is the Indian cookbook, which contains English recipes with an Indian spin (for occasions when typical English ingredients are difficult to obtain), as well as recipes for Indian staples such as Madras curry paste, mint chutney, and mango fool. The guide concludes with a month-long plan of five-course family dinners, so readers never have to eat the same meal twice the entire month.

These guides, like the novels, poems, and plays that came before them, helped close the gap in the public’s knowledge of India. These women saw opportunities to contribute to the literary market in new and important ways, and when existing genres did not accommodate the kinds of information they wished to share, they adapted them or invented new ones. Travel writing may have been one of the most popular and pervasive genres on the subcontinent, but it certainly was not the only genre that benefitted from increased travel to India. If women wished to write and have their voices heard, they had more opportunities to do so than ever before, and with active publishers on two continents, they could market and sell their writing to audiences in both Anglo-India and England. However, more opportunities to publish also meant more exposure to critics, and the more popular these women’s works became, the more frequently their words were critiqued and their writing disparaged. Too often negative reviews were tied to gender, with critics censoring language that was deemed too feminine or subject matter that was considered inappropriate for the “fair” sex. Because they wrote about their own lives and experiences, travel writers in particular faced criticism when they ventured beyond the domestic sphere to explore independently or when they were critical of British and Anglo-Indian politics, economics, or social justice. Despite such criticisms, women continued to write and publish, and

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<sup>153</sup> *The Englishwoman in India: Containing Information for the Use of Ladies Proceeding to, or Residing in, the East Indies, on the Subject of Their Outfit, Furniture, Housekeeping, the Rearing of Children, Duties and Wages of Servants, Management of Stables and Arrangements for Travelling. To Which are Added Receipts for Indian Cookery* (London, 1864), 77.

many of them did so under their own names, thereby rejecting the “anonymous” and “by a lady” designations Jane Smart, Phebe Gibbes, and others had used and accepting credit for their work, faults and all.

### **Reception of Women’s Travel Writing**

Even when women chose not to publish under their full names, reviewers took pride in their ability to determine the sex of a book’s author. When Ann Deane published *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823), she used only her initials, A.D., to claim authorship, but the critic for the *Gentleman’s Magazine* immediately identified the author as a woman, stating:

Either they are philosophizing, or statesmanizing, or antiquarianizing, or botanizing, or some other izing, which always shows the author to have a beard, sometimes to wear a wig; but there is a lively brilliancy of prattlement, a subtle tact and delicacy which often distinguishes the sentiment of women, and which the rude minds of men could not meddle with, without spoiling or breaking. Such is the fair authoress of this tour, which is minute and full of interest.<sup>154</sup>

Frequently there was little crossover between activities men and women in India participated in and described, so the reviewer is not wrong in determining that anonymous or semi-anonymous authorship is often easy to decode simply from the content of the work. However, there is a subtle sexism that threads throughout this review and others which undermines women’s writing. Even in a positive review such as this one, where the reviewer obviously enjoyed the book, women’s writing is described as “prattlement,” as a delicate construction men could easily break.

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<sup>154</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine* 94 (Feb. 1824): 144.

This description is both dismissive and condescending, even if the reviewer did not mean it to be, and this sort of word choice was all too frequent in reviews of women's travel writing.

Seven years later, a reviewer of Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India* (1830) described her narrative in a similar fashion, calling it:

Two pleasant, chatting volumes, just such as an intelligent and 'inquiring' lady...might be expected to produce. Many matters, to be sure, appeared to be of consequence to her, which a male traveler would have galloped over unnoticed; but then, we are not bored with pedantry and philosophy, nor is a touch of nursling science intruded upon us through the whole peregrination.<sup>155</sup>

This reviewer characterizes Elwood's writing as "chatting," just as the *Gentleman's Magazine* called Ann Deane's (and women's writing in general) "prattlement." These word choices suggest that women simply write as they think or speak, without editing or crafting their words into fluent prose. Although Elwood's narrative was obviously enjoyed, the reviewer describes the work in condescending terms and with a hint of sarcasm, hinting that Elwood's writing lacks depth and that she should have been more selective in which observations she chose to include. The reviewer tries to make it appear that her lack of scientific knowledge and philosophy improves her book, but in both reviews it is made clear that these aspects of critical thinking are reserved for works by men.

Not all reviews were so critical of Elwood's writing style and voice, but even positive reviews frequently attributed her abilities to her sex rather than her talent or carefully honed writing skills. *The Edinburgh Literary Journal* praised her work for its gendered feminine

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<sup>155</sup> *The London Literary Gazette*, no. 709 (Sat., 21 August 1830): 538.

qualities, stating, “After all, women have a knack of communicating an interest to the occurrences of every-day life, by the delicate grace and truth of their narrative, which men never can attain.”<sup>156</sup> *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* was even more complimentary, stating, “It is seldom that we have read a more agreeable narrative than Mrs. Elwood’s...the book is written with considerable elegance, the descriptions are neat and often felicitous; the occurrences are given with sprightliness.”<sup>157</sup> Unfortunately, the reviewer finds the book to be *too* good, too well-researched and too well-written, and argues that the “fair author” must have had some assistance—from a male writer, of course. Her scientific descriptions of zoology are determined to be “much more...than might be expected from a lady’s pen,” and her knowledge of Hindu religion and literature are also believed to be beyond a woman’s ability, despite Elwood’s acknowledgment of the research she conducted. Here the reviewer writes, “we suspect that some able masculine pen assisted in the compilation. If our conjecture is erroneous, Mrs. Elwood will not be displeased at the commendation which it implies.”<sup>158</sup> The reviewer suggests that for a woman’s writing to be compared to a man’s is a compliment, that men’s writing is superior to women’s in knowledge and content. This “compliment” undermines all of the hard work women writers did to make their writing well researched and knowledgeable, despite limited access to formal education and research libraries.

Although complimentary of women’s writing, critics seemed determined to relegate women writers to a single kind of travel writing and appeared disturbed when women dared write outside those boundaries. As long as women wrote delightful, trifling sketches of Anglo-Indian manners and descriptions of scenery, the critics were happy; when they dared

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<sup>156</sup> *The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, no. 96 (Sat., 11 Sept. 1830): 168.

<sup>157</sup> *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1830): 196.

<sup>158</sup> *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* 3 (Sept.-Dec. 1830): 204.

philosophize or ask the reader to think about certain conditions they encountered, their words were considered tedious. In regards to Harriette Ashmore's *Narrative of a Three Months' March in India; and a Residence in the Dooah* (1841), the *Monthly Review* wrote, "her sketches of what she witnessed in her March have the vividness and the lightness which are characteristic of a female writer, but that several of her deductions, or when she undertakes to lecture, are not so happy."<sup>159</sup> Ashmore's ruminations on the British treatment of Indians, and especially Indian women, were apparently too much for this reviewer, who preferred women to write with "lightness."

Women who dared describe unseemly conditions or connect with Indian people and religions met with similar criticism. Fanny Parks, author of one of the most popular Indian travel narratives of the nineteenth century, was one of the women writers most strongly censured by critics because she did not always see things from an Anglocentric, Christian worldview. The *Calcutta Review* had some of the strongest criticism for Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, calling her opening invocation to the Hindu god Ganesha "a foul and hateful thing" and wishing that the "flippancy and levity...with which she refers to her own faith...be all expunged from a second edition."<sup>160</sup> The critic claimed that the twenty-two years Parks lived in India corrupted her good manners, for "she appears to have forgotten the dignity and delicacy of a woman in any grade respectable English Society."<sup>161</sup> Parks rides astride horses, climbs mountains, befriends horsewomen, visits zenanas, participates in Hindu festivals and ceremonies, builds her own furniture, and adopts a menagerie of exotic pets. It is her eccentricity, incorrigibility, and intrepidity that have bewitched generations of readers in her day and ours, but she was

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<sup>159</sup> *Monthly Review* 1, no. 1 (1840): 43.

<sup>160</sup> *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 476.

<sup>161</sup> *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 476-77.

simultaneously praised and criticized for these qualities in the *Calcutta Review*. “In future editions,” the critic writes, “we trust to see every thing undeniably indecent or profane carefully expunged from the work; and we shall then have no hesitation in recommending it as the most pleasant, truthful, and delightfully gossiping book, that has ever been written about India.”<sup>162</sup>

This critic’s use of the word “truthful” is especially ironic because truth is exactly what the critic wishes to censor. Instead of allowing Parks to see the world through her own eyes, to experience other religions and cultures as she desires, the critic wishes for her to play the role of a proper Englishwoman, something Parks never claimed or wished to be. According to this review, women’s place as travel writers is to supply delightful gossip, not to experiment or explore in any way that might disparage British culture or call into question the imperialist mission or Christian belief.

The *Calcutta Review* seemingly could not forget the effrontery of Parks’ book (which was reissued in multiple editions), and two years later they were still using it as an example of how women ought *not* to write. In a review of Helen Mackenzie’s *Life in the Mission, the Camp, and the Zenana; or, Six Years in India* (1853), the *Calcutta Review* praises Mackenzie’s work, but mostly because she does not appear to be the kind of woman Parks is:

In spite of our admiration of Mrs. Parks’s book, we rise from its perusal with a sad and painful impression, by no means flattering to that lively lady; while, in Mrs. Mackenzie’s pages, amidst much that is commonplace...we come now and then on rich and deep veins of thought, to which Mrs. Parks could never have attained, and on the unstudied utterances of high and noble principle, of sweet

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<sup>162</sup> *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 477.

womanly sympathy...and we close the book with the conviction that it is written by a noble, gifted and high-minded woman, one of 'the excellent of the earth.'<sup>163</sup>

It would seem from this review that “commonplace” descriptions (descriptions of places that were well-trod) in women’s writing were preferable to reading about women who ventured beyond the circumscribed path, especially if that journey led them to explore religions other than Christianity. A comparison of Mackenzie’s “rich and deep” thoughts with Parks’ suggests that it was Mackenzie’s spiritual ruminations on the mission to convert Hindus that this reviewer approved of so highly. Similarly, Mackenzie is praised for how she chooses to spend her time—“There is something very pleasing in the never-tiring delight she took in visiting the various missionary institutions, and in the warm sympathy she felt and expressed in all that concerned them”—while Parks is faulted for not having enough concern for the “advancement” and conversion of Hindus.<sup>164</sup> Such praises and criticisms are particularly striking because of how they correspond to the kinds of excerpts critics selected for inclusion in their reviews—the praise-worthy missionary accounts and spiritual meditations are rarely included, while passages on Hindu temples and rituals abound.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, book reviews differed from those found in today’s newspapers, online magazines, and academic journals in their dependence on lengthy excerpts. These excerpts could occupy as much as seventy-five percent or more of a review, and journal reviews were often dozens of pages long. The subjects of the included excerpts speak to the interests of contemporary readers, and the topics do not vary much over time. As early as 1777, the *London Chronicle* excerpted four letters from Jemima Kindersley’s *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies*, all on the Hindu religion

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<sup>163</sup> *Calcutta Review* 21 (July-Dec. 1853): 525.

<sup>164</sup> *Calcutta Review* 21 (July-Dec. 1853): 530, and *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 500.



and people, and Hinduism proved a popular subject for excerpt throughout the century of EIC rule. Even when the *Calcutta Review* excerpted from Mackenzie's book, the critic chose a passage describing a Hindu temple, and of the nearly eleven pages of excerpts in the review, only one page is devoted to descriptions of a Baptist church at Agra and a missionary's wife. The other ten pages are full of descriptions of Indian life and culture, including two pages on the zenana and nearly a page describing a nautch.<sup>165</sup>

In general, review excerpts show that the British were interested in reading about experiences that were completely foreign to them. Although there are occasional passages describing European churches, government buildings, and cantonments, Anglo-Indian life does not figure prominently in the excerpts from any paper, on either continent. British and Anglo-Indian readers appear to have been more interested in reading passages about Indian people, exotic animals and plants, colorful performances, picturesque landscapes, and even natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and dust storms, all of which women writers supplied in abundance. In particular, these readers were interested in foreign women, on zenana life and what those shuttered Indian women were like, which only women writers could share with them. It is rare to find a review of women's travel writing during this time period that does not contain at least one excerpt on Indian women or the zenana, and most also contain a description of a cobra or snake charmer and some kind of Indian festival or performance (fire-eaters were particularly popular).

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<sup>165</sup> A nautch was a kind of professional dance performed by a group "dancing girls," popular in India at the time. These dances were typically performed in the houses of prominent men, including rajahs, for the entertainment of dinner or party guests. The OED lists Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from...the East Indies* (1777) as the first text to mention a nautch. See OED for more.

The repetition of these kinds of passages throughout the century must have encouraged women to write more of them, and such experiences became staples of the Anglo-Indian itinerary; a woman's visit to India was not complete until she had visited a zenana and sketched a crumbling jungle temple. However, while the itinerary may have been determined before these women stepped ashore, how they chose to communicate their experiences presented a unique challenge. They had to find new methods of storytelling to make a trip to the Elephanta caves, described by dozens of earlier travelers, seem fresh and exciting. They had to create new and interesting characters to make their narratives distinctive, which often required leaving the comfort of their caravans and befriending native Indians. And most importantly, they had to create a narrative voice that was knowledgeable without being condescending, brave without sounding unfeminine, adventurous without appearing undignified. They had to try to appease their families, publishers, readers, and critics simultaneously, even though this was rarely possible. These women radically transformed the travel writing genre over the century, and yet their creativity and their skills as storytellers have long been underappreciated. In 1870, a reviewer of Florence Marryat's novel *Véronique* complained that "[p]rosaic facts are dearer to [Anglo-Indian writers] than the most inimitable creations of the imagination" and applauded her decision to abandon travel writing in favor of novel writing.<sup>166</sup> As the women travel writers of India showed, though, personal writing did not have to equal mundane writing, and the powers of imagination could be just as useful and just as apparent in travel writing as in any other genre.

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<sup>166</sup> *Calcutta Review* 50, no. 99 (1870): 182.

## CHAPTER 2

### PLOTTING PARATEXTS: TRUTH, *UTILE DULCI*, AND THE MARKETING OF ANGLO-INDIAN WOMEN'S TRAVEL WRITING

*“Delusion is abroad; tourists write, and artists paint, heedless of fact; anxious only to bathe a favourite spot in all the light of graceful beauty, and the bright hues their own glowing and poetic imaginations suggest. But surely...it were better, where facts really exist, that ornament should be deemed superfluous and ill placed; and I have no doubt that, as real knowledge increases, its vanities will be seen, and the simple and vivid delineation of truth be held in most esteem, and constitute the real triumph of literature and the fine arts.”*  
~Marianna Postans<sup>167</sup>

For Marianna Postans, the author of two works of travel writing on India,<sup>168</sup> truth in travel writing was more important than ornate language, elaborate description, or excessive sentimentality, trends in eighteenth and nineteenth-century travel writing that rose and ebbed in correlation with the popularity and availability of the genre and that were influenced by movements in poetry and fiction. In emphasizing the importance of truth, Postans' primary purpose was not to denigrate fellow travel writers and artists, nor was she merely attempting to submit her work as a counter to those by popular picturesque travel writers. Instead, she was making a case for the literary potential of travel writing, an argument for a return to traditional travel writing values. Although beautiful writing had always been a hallmark of literary travel writing, Postans realized—as did many who came before her—that beauty in travel writing could

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<sup>167</sup> Marianna Postans, *Cutch, or Random Sketches Taken During a Residence in One of the Northern Provinces of Western India* (London, 1839), 93.

<sup>168</sup> Postans' *Western India in 1838*, the follow-up to *Cutch*, was also published in 1839. A third work, the three-volume *Facts and Fictions, Illustrative of Oriental Character* (1844), fictionalizes Postans' experiences and observations while in Sind, a region in present-day Pakistan that once belonged to British India. In all, Postans spent more than ten years in India, where her husband was an officer in the Bombay native infantry.

not exist merely for its own sake, but that it must be tempered with truth and usefulness. In other words, it must fulfill Horace's famous maxim that poetry should *prodesse et delectare* (please and instruct), or possess *utile dulci* (sweet utility).

As Charles L. Batten, Jr., has cogently argued, eighteenth-century travel writers' adherence to *utile dulci* (which he translates as "pleasurable instruction") "elevated the genre to the rank of poesy," placing it alongside such prestigious literary forms as "epic, tragedy, and comedy."<sup>169</sup> Today travel writing is a marginalized genre, typically relegated to a few shelves in the travel guide section of bookstores, or housed under the broad category of "non-fiction" on book lists and in reviews, but its role and influence in the literary marketplace was not always so negligible. In the eighteenth century, travel writing was honored and acknowledged by critics as a literary genre unto itself, one that was ranked alongside poetry and was elevated above fiction, and by century's end it was second only to novels in popularity among readers.<sup>170</sup> The prestige and intellectual esteem that well-written travels could bring to a writer's oeuvre inspired many critically revered authors to contribute to the genre, including Joseph Addison, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Samuel Johnson. The literary travel narratives these writers published hardly resemble the personal, introspective, plot-driven travel writing published today, but instead shared more in common with geographical sketches and political histories. Although such writing may seem dry by today's standards—and even Fielding referred to most travel writing as a "heap of dullness"<sup>171</sup>—the literary stature of travel writing was obtained not by its

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<sup>169</sup> Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 25.

<sup>170</sup> "Preface by the Editor," *Travels of Carl Philipp Moritz in England in 1782*, intro. P. E. Matheson (1795; London: H. Milford, 1926), 3.

<sup>171</sup> Henry Fielding, *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (London, 1755), vii. Although Fielding considered poorly written travels to be dull, he also asserted that there was no "more

ability to captivate and divert readers, but by its adherence to the rigorously enforced traditions of the genre and its aspirations toward achieving *utile dulci*.

In the eighteenth century, part of the appeal of strictly enforced genre guidelines lay in the belief that “decorum to some extent governed each literary form” and that “authors could accomplish certain objectives in one kind of literature which they scarcely could achieve in another.”<sup>172</sup> Although non-fiction travel accounts had existed for centuries, if not millennia, eighteenth-century writers tended to view literary travel writing as something defined and perfected during their own time, something completely separate from the voyages of uneducated sailors or accounts of government-sponsored exploration that had long dominated the field. This new kind of travel writing privileged leisure travel and demanded writers have an intellectual understanding and awareness of genre conventions. The writer of literary travels had to possess knowledge of the guidelines that governed everything from the role of the author-narrator, to acceptable kinds of description, to narrative structure and paratextual elements, such as titles, prefaces, and tables of contents.<sup>173</sup> In some ways, the structure of eighteenth-century travel writing was more rigorously regulated than that of novels or even plays, with as many rules and restrictions governing their shape as those dictating the composition of a Shakespearean sonnet. Although the eighteenth-century literati, including Fielding and Smollett, found subtle ways to

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pleasant, or profitable study... than that of travels or voyages, if they were writ, as they might be, and ought to be, with a joint view to the entertainment and information of mankind,” i.

<sup>172</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 31.

<sup>173</sup> In his introduction to the literary concept of the paratext, Gérard Genette states that the “text rarely appears in its naked state, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations.” These “productions” are all examples of paratexts, or the parts of a published work that surround the author’s text, including book covers, title pages, and tables of contents. Paratexts are typically created or written by editors, publishers, designers, and printers, although authors may influence their presentation. See Genette, “Introduction to the Paratext,” trans. Marie Maclean, *New Literary History* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 261.

alter the genre for their purposes, they were also critical of travel writers who defied or rejected these conventions outright, which increased pressure on anyone wishing to publish literary travel writing and discouraged many, including women, from entering the field.<sup>174</sup>

Despite the potential risks to their reputations, women writers began to embrace the genre towards the end of the century. They were entering the market at an exciting and volatile time, just as the old guard was dying and new trends and guidelines were altering the shape, content, and style of travel writing. While the majority of women travelers to be examined here found subtle ways to challenge expectation and shift the genre's strict boundaries, these writers were also careful not to deviate too far from the norm, and in some cases they held fast to early eighteenth-century literary standards for the genre, even after these had fallen out of fashion. As relative newcomers to a genre long dominated by men, these women had to walk a careful line between the established and the experimental, while also protecting their reputations and their precarious positions as women writers. Any changes they made to the formula had to be introduced strategically and balanced with an authoritative understanding of travel writing conventions and adoption of other genre standards. By knowing when to adhere to formula and when to break with tradition, these writers reveal their knowledge of travel writing, their commitment to its literary requirements, and their awareness of the limits and possibilities of the genre.

All published travel writing, regardless of the period in which it was written, contains four essential ingredients: paratexts, including all of the extrinsic materials that make a book a

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<sup>174</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 3, 5. See also Eliza Fay, *Original Letters from India* (1817; New York: New York Review Books, 2010). Fay will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter, but in her preface, she suggests that the reason more women are publishing travel writing in the nineteenth century than did in the eighteenth is because “[t]he wit of Fielding is no longer held over them in terrorem, and the delineations of Smollet would apply to them in vain,” 29.

book, such as the title page and table of contents; narrative structure and style, which determines the shape of the book and how it is plotted; characters, including the author-narrator and anyone the author-narrator met or observed; and setting, or descriptions of the places the traveler visits. Setting, of course, is the most pervasive and necessary component of travel writing, but in many ways, it is also the least changing. As the travel writing market became more crowded and more people travelled to and described the same places, the role of setting description ebbed and authors relied more on paratexts, form and structure, and individual voice and characterizations to make their writing stand out and seem more original. Each of these elements will be discussed in the next three chapters as they relate to the Anglo-Indian women travelers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, beginning in this chapter with an examination of how these writers used and manipulated paratexts—and, in particular, titles, bylines, prefaces, and tables of contents—in response to reader interest, market saturation, and the genre’s evolving literary standing. Through the use of paratexts, these women travel writers emphasized the truth, utility, and originality of their narratives in order to attract more readers, exhibit an educated understanding of the past and present history of the genre, and make their writing appear more literary and more authoritative, in some cases even after such conventions had disappeared from mainstream travel writing.

### **Changing Tides in Travel Writing**

By the nineteenth century, the literary status of travel writing was beginning to erode, in part because the tradition of *utile dulci* was disappearing and travel writers were choosing to privilege one criterion over the other, especially as the division between picturesque travel writing and informative travel guides widened. Even in the eighteenth century, many works of

travel writing excelled at one of Horace's ideals more than the other, focusing more on instruction than entertainment or vice versa, but most of the works that received literary acclaim struck an artful balance between the two. As one reviewer for the *Critical Review* suggested, the best travel books were those in which "every page...is equally curious and instructive."<sup>175</sup> In the same issue, a review of *The Beauties of Nature and Art Displayed: In a Tour through the World* (1763-1764) outlined the differences between fiction and travel writing, and found travel writing to be superior for this very reason, stating:

the youthful reader will find nothing in the regions of romance or fiction that can give him greater pleasure than what a real description of Nature herself can offer. In the one case, the mind is generally crowded with images that, even allowing them to be innocent, we ought to banish, as they take up that room which more useful subjects require. On the other hand, in reading the amusing accounts of Nature, under her own or human guidance, we fill up many disagreeable intervals of time with a study which will always entertain and improve the understanding.<sup>176</sup>

At the time this review was written, travel writing was considered a substantive form of literature because of its ability to provide more than entertainment. Most modern students of literature would insist that the best fiction has that ability as well, but this reviewer's attitude, which favored travel writing and disparaged fiction, was common in the eighteenth century, when novels were often viewed as a corrupting influence, especially upon young women. The travel account, which was frequently recommended to women and young people by reviewers, was viewed as the antidote to such influence, molding and instructing youthful minds and inspiring

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<sup>175</sup> *Critical Review* 18 (1764): 375.

<sup>176</sup> *Critical Review* 18 (1764): 376.



them to seek knowledge and further educate themselves.<sup>177</sup> However, the knowledge and instruction contained in travel writing could only be valued if it could be trusted, which is why Marianna Postans and so many other travel writers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including many Anglo-Indian women travelers, insisted that truth and accuracy were the most important components of the genre.

The travel writer's insistence on truth was made all the more important by the prevalence of what Percy G. Adams calls *travel liars*.<sup>178</sup> The growing popularity of travel writing prompted many would-be authors to write fictional travel narratives and publish them as authentic accounts, or to pad their actual travels with entertaining fictional stories. These travel lies differed from imaginary voyages,<sup>179</sup> such as *Gulliver's Travels*, and works of fiction that made no claim to authenticity but were mistaken for truth, such as Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta*, in that they aspired to convince critics and readers that what they were reading was truth. The travel liars, or fireside travelers,<sup>180</sup> followed the rules and conventions of travel writing in order to make their accounts appear genuine. Many were accepted as authentic accounts for

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<sup>177</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 27-28.

<sup>178</sup> Adams defines the travel lie as "a tale told by a traveler or pseudo traveler with the intent to deceive." See Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 1.

<sup>179</sup> I have taken the literary classification "imaginary voyage," as it is here used, from Philip Babcock Gove's *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction* (London: Holland Press, 1961).

<sup>180</sup> The idea of the fireside traveler existed as early as 1766, when the *Critical Review* spoke of John Northall (*Travels through Italy*; 1766) as an author who had never left "his elbow-chair or his fire-side," and suggested that Northall might be related to Charles Thompson, "who travelled through half the globe, without stirring out of the sound of Bow-Bell." See *Critical Review* 21 (1766): 280-281. Because the authorship of many of these accounts was never determined—and the authors, therefore, had no reason to fear damage to their reputations—travel lies continued to be published and read throughout the century. As Charles Batten relates, "Fireside travels, in spite of such attacks, must have been relatively popular—and therefore profitable—since they not infrequently provided, as one reviewer indicated, more entertainment than authentic accounts," in *Pleasurable Instruction*, 60-61. See also *Gentlemen's Magazine* 18 (1748): 563.

years or even decades, including Captain William Symson's *New Voyage to the East-Indies* (1715), which was republished three times over seventeen years. Captain Symson is even believed to have inspired Swift's "Captain Sympson" in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726),<sup>181</sup> while in fact Symson was a fictional character, created by an unknown author, and his account was merely a carefully crafted amalgam of earlier accounts of the East Indies, such as those by Pyrard de Laval and John Ovington.<sup>182</sup> Such literary fraudulence and plagiarism was not unusual in the eighteenth century, and even such well-known, canonical writers as Daniel Defoe and Tobias Smollett were guilty of fabricating travels or incorporating the accounts of others into their travel writing without acknowledging the sources from which these excerpts were taken. Although travel lies by these authors were popular, their prevalence adversely affected non-fiction travel writing; because lies were often difficult to distinguish from true accounts, readers began questioning the credibility of all travel writing. As a reviewer of Joseph Baretti's *A Journey from London to Genoa* (1770) complained, "Because there have been lying travellers, the veracity of almost every traveler is suspected."<sup>183</sup>

Just a few years earlier, readers and critics had been more willing to accept the authenticity of even larger-than-life travel tales, such as the description of eight-foot-tall Patagonian giants found in *A Voyage round the World, in his Majesty's ship the Dolphin, commanded by the Hon. Comm. Byron* (1767). The *Gentleman's Magazine* even went as far as to proclaim the giants description to be genuine and to reprint the passage word for word.<sup>184</sup> However, because readers and critics were deceived by such stories earlier in the century, by late

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<sup>181</sup> This supposition dates back to at least R.W. Frantz's article, "Gulliver's 'Cousin Sympson,'" *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (April 1938): 329-334.

<sup>182</sup> Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars*, 250-251.

<sup>183</sup> *Critical Review* 30 (1770): 196.

<sup>184</sup> Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars*, 31.

century even genuine accounts became suspect if they contained events that seemed too bizarre to be believable. One of the most widely read eighteenth-century travelers, James Bruce, was attacked, satirized, and lampooned for more than two decades because his tales from Abyssinia (and in particular a story about eating raw meat cut from living cows) were believed to be too tall to be true. Even before his *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1790) was published, Bruce's stories, which he had shared with Samuel Johnson, were made public and ridiculed, with Horace Walpole mocking Bruce in a series of letters and the *Gentleman's Magazine* stating that Johnson, a respected authority on Abyssinia, had not believed Bruce really visited the region.<sup>185</sup> Bruce was undeterred and included the live cow story in his published account, but it was only after travelers at the beginning of the nineteenth century visited Abyssinia and confirmed Bruce's description that his reputation was restored.<sup>186</sup>

When a travel writer's entire reputation could be wrecked based upon the reception and alleged prevarication of one controversial account, it is no wonder that many travel writers were reluctant to deviate from prescribed itineraries and that many women were wary of publishing altogether. Although British women had contributed substantially to fiction, poetry, and drama prior to and throughout the eighteenth century, they arrived rather late on the travel writing scene, with only a handful of women publishing travels in the first two-thirds of the century.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Johnson spent a considerable portion of his career reading and studying accounts of Africa, which culminated in his own African tale, *Rasselas*, and prompted him to write multiple critiques of imperialism. As Thomas M. Curley relates, "The fame of *Rasselas* alone earned him the sobriquet of 'Abyssinia's Johnson' and a deserved reputation for being an authority on Africa in his lifetime," in *Samuel Johnson in the Age of Travel* (1976; Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 23.

<sup>186</sup> Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars*, 210-222.

<sup>187</sup> See Katherine Turner, "Women's Travel Writing, 1750-1830," in *The History of British Women's Writing, 1750-1830*, vol. 5, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 48. Although only a handful of women are known to have published book-length works of travel writing by this point, most likely many other women contributed smaller

Part of this delay was likely due to the comparative scarcity of travel opportunities for women as well as the personal nature of the travel writing genre. While Addison, Fielding, and other male writers could tour the continent alone without raising a single eyebrow, independent travel was far more difficult and dangerous—physically, economically, and socially—for women. The few women who chose to publish travel writing had mostly traveled as companions to male relatives (typically husbands or fathers), and even then they had to be careful how they represented themselves and their travel ambitions to the British public. Although the guidelines for eighteenth-century literary travel writing required all authors to limit their personal presence in the narrative, playing the role of detached, passive observers rather than active, engaged participants, women writers in particular had to be careful what they revealed about themselves and their thoughts and opinions in order to safeguard their reputations, as well as those of their friends and families.

The success of some women's travel writing, especially Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters... Written, during her Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa* (1763), or so-called *Embassy Letters*, encouraged other women to publish their travels. *Embassy Letters* was well-received by critics and readers alike, and it had a lasting influence on both male and female travel writers,

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pieces or published anonymously. As Virginia Woolf said, "I would venture to guess that Anon., who wrote many poems without signing them, was often a woman," in *A Room of One's Own* (1929; Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2001), 59. A simple perusal of Tim Keirn and Norbert Schurer's *British Encounters with India, 1750-1830* reveals excerpts from sixteen anonymous documents on India published in the eighteenth century, many of which could have been written by women. Some center around Anglo-Indian and Indian women's rights and issues, including sati and the care of orphaned girls, and one poem is even entitled "A Letter, From a LADY in CALCUTTA, to her FRIEND in ENGLAND." Even this small sample reveals that the extent and influence of women's travel writing—on India or any other location—has been underestimated, and we may never know with certainty how many women were contributing during this time.

especially those who visited the Middle East.<sup>188</sup> Montagu's success did not guarantee that those who followed her would escape scandal, however, and some women endured intense scrutiny and personal attacks for publishing their travel accounts, including Jemima Kindersley, whose *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (1777), although favored by critics, was maligned by the Rev. Henry Hodgson. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kindersley's account of the conversion of slaves in Brazil to Catholicism inspired Hodgson to embark on a lengthy public tirade against her, during which he also attacked Montagu for her account of a religious portrait that bled when cut.<sup>189</sup> Although Kindersley and many writers like her continued to publish even when faced with harsh criticism, some women were deterred by the hostile critiques that often confronted late eighteenth-century travelers.

Eliza Fay, Kindersley's near-contemporary, visited India for the first time in 1779 but withheld publication of her *Original Letters from India* until 1817, in part because of the public criticism some women travel writers in the eighteenth century received. In the preface to *Original Letters*, Fay admits that she was previously unwilling to publish because of the "pains and penalties' then, generally, inflicted on female authorships" and her own "fear of criticism and aversion to publicity."<sup>190</sup> As demonstrated with the case of Kindersley, and even with James Bruce, Fay's fears were not unwarranted, especially when her own narrative contains a harrowing account of imprisonment in India and controversial depictions of several important

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<sup>188</sup> The *Critical Review* was so impressed with Montagu's *Letters* that its reviewer declared, "we are certain [her letters] were never excelled, ... never equaled by any letter-writer of any sex, age, or nation. They are, to say the truth, so bewitchingly entertaining." Among Montagu's many literary accomplishments in *Embassy Letters*, including her "purity of...style," the reviewer notes her adherence to truth, emphasizing that "the reader will find a more true and accurate account of the customs and manners of the several nations, with whom this lady conversed, than he can in any other author," *Critical Review* 15 (1763): 426.

<sup>189</sup> Henry Hodgson, *Letters to Mrs. Kindersley* (Lincoln, 1778), 6, 32.

<sup>190</sup> Fay, *Original Letters from India*, 28.

historical figures, including Warren Hastings, as well as sympathetic portrayals of people of other religions, such as Jews in India and Hindu women. Fay's preface, written long after the Kindersley scandal and after Bruce's account had been corroborated, reveals changing attitudes towards women's travel writing and travel content in general, for she acknowledges that, despite some opposition, a number of women bravely "venture to launch their little barks on the vast ocean through which *amusement or instruction* is conveyed to a reading public."<sup>191</sup> Fay's use of the word "or" is notable because it emphasizes that the purpose of travel writing had shifted by the early nineteenth century; instead of providing both amusement *and* instruction, travel writing could now provide just one or the other and still be viewed favorably.

The movement away from *utile dulci*-unified travel writing began in the 1780s and 1790s when the publication of picturesque travel narratives, such as those by William Gilpin and John Hassell, increased interest in the entertainment value of travel writing and diminished the demand for informative content. Instead of educating readers, the descriptions of places and people found in these accounts were meant to provoke "an emotional response" from readers and highlight the "sublime pleasures" of nature.<sup>192</sup> Although this new style of travel writing drew criticism from purists and traditionalists, it grew increasingly popular with readers, effectively ending the long-standing union of information and amusement in travel writing. By the early nineteenth century, the genre had essentially split into two disparate subgenres: the entertaining travel narrative and the informative travel guide.<sup>193</sup> The split pleased readers, making it easier to access the information future travelers needed while also making vicarious tourism more

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<sup>191</sup> Fay, *Original Letters from India*, 28-29. Italics are mine.

<sup>192</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 29.

<sup>193</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 29-30.

enjoyable; however, it also had the unintended consequence of making the genre appear less *belles lettres*.

This split into informative and entertaining travel writing would seem to be a permanent one, as even today travel guides and travel narratives compete for shelf space in travel sections of bookstores and libraries. However, not every nineteenth-century traveler was so quick to abandon the literary standards for travel writing, as demonstrated by the opening quote from Marianna Postans' *Cutch*. Some attempts to unite the pleasurable and the instructive, such as those by Mariana Starke,<sup>194</sup> failed, but many Anglo-Indian women travel writers were successful at navigating the changing publishing landscape and releasing works that both adhered to the earlier literary guidelines while enacting subtle changes upon them, improving the entertainment quality of the eighteenth-century form while also insisting on truth, accuracy, and utility as literary benchmarks. Some writers, such as Anne Katherine Elwood, Sarah Lushington, and Ann Deane, combined the amusing and instructive by simply appending short travel guides to their narratives, ensuring that both forms could be found within a single work, but others carefully integrated the two so that they more closely resembled the literary travel writing of the previous century.

Those nineteenth-century travel writers who wished for their works to be touted as literary achievements had to balance the new reader expectations for the travel narrative with an understanding of the literary guidelines of the previous century. Their recognition of how the

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<sup>194</sup> Early editions of Starke's *Letters from Italy* and *Travels in Europe* were criticized for being either too informative or not informative enough—essentially, for not adhering strictly to the travel guide or the travel narrative forms. Starke revised her books to fit more closely the travel guide mold, erasing personal and narrative details and establishing the format that John Murray, her publisher, would use for his series of guides after 1836. See Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 30; and Elizabeth Baigent, "Starke, Mariana (1762-1838)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, May 2011, accessed 20 June 2012, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26314>.

genre was evolving is especially evident in the paratextual elements of these writers' books, in the guidelines for titles, bylines, prefaces, tables of contents, and textual presentation that altered and persisted throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and even beyond. The inclusion and manipulation of standard travel writing paratexts, which were more rigorously controlled than those attached to fiction or poetry, allowed writers to build relationships with prospective readers and persuade skeptics of the quality and content of their narratives. As Margaret Ezell relates, the format of books during this time created "a specific [reading] environment" that the reader encountered "with certain expectations, predisposed to like, admire, and perhaps even emulate the contents."<sup>195</sup> Readers and critics, craving familiarity and structural predictability, looked to paratexts to establish a reading environment with which they felt comfortable. To some extent, readers even wanted similarity of content, which was why so many travel writers kept to the established itineraries, sometimes visiting certain villages or landmarks not because they were of any particular interest to these travelers, but because the audience would be expecting a description of those locations as proof that the writer had actually been to that region or country.<sup>196</sup> At the same time, readers needed to know what made this account of India or France or the Scottish Highlands different from the dozens that had preceded it, and what made this author's book more worthy of their time than the hundreds written by more seasoned writers, explorers, or public personalities. As marketing tools, paratexts became the means by which authors and publishers could make a case for the originality and necessity of individual accounts, arguing that their books were better written; more authoritative, truthful, useful, and original; and more literary than any of the competing narratives.

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<sup>195</sup> Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 107-108.

<sup>196</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 4.



## The Paratexts of Anglo-Indian Women's Travel Writing

As Gérard Genette has argued, paratexts are worth examination because they are the elements “by which a text makes a book of itself.”<sup>197</sup> A text presented unadorned could easily be overlooked or dismissed by prospective readers, so in order for a book to find an audience, it needs an introduction to the public: a title that calls attention to its message and purpose, a byline that inspires confidence, a preface that introduces the author and invites the reader into the world of the book, a table of contents that rouses excitement and suspense, and a familiar layout that makes perusing the work effortless. These paratexts work “to *make* [the book] *present*, to assure its presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and its consumption.”<sup>198</sup> Together, these different paratextual elements create the bridge that joins the outside world with the one within the book—that turns a potential reader into a reader-buyer. Paratexts are typically the last parts of a book to be created and assembled, but they are the first that we as readers encounter, so they will also be the first structural elements of women's travel writing to be examined in this dissertation.

To the general reader, the structures and contents of these paratexts may seem rather formulaic, but they were also far from static. A closer examination of paratextual conventions will show the myriad ways Anglo-Indian women travel writers found they could brand their work as their own while still adhering to tradition and reassuring readers that their expectations would be met and exceeded. The evolution and alteration of paratexts at this time had as much to do with writers wanting to carve out their own identities and take ownership of their work as it did with the growth of the genre and market competition. Understandably, titles were among the first paratextual elements to respond to market pressure, since they were typically the first contact texts made with potential readers.

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<sup>197</sup> Genette, “Introduction to the Paratext,” 261.

<sup>198</sup> Genette, “Introduction to the Paratext,” 261. Italics are the author's.

### *Travel Writing Titles*

Early travel books could find success with simplistic titles, such as Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705), John Green's *Journey from Aleppo to Damascus* (1736), Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy* (1766), and Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland, 1769* (1771). Unlike the titles of novels or plays, these titles were not necessarily meant to raise excitement, suspense, or even curiosity; instead, they matter-of-factly announce their genre and summarize what readers can expect to find inside their pages. Such titles almost always included a list of the places to which the writer had traveled, and many also stressed the method of narration, such as "remarks," "observations," or "reflections." Specifying that an account was written as "letters" or a "journal" was also popular. Typically, some sort of travel-related action was incorporated into the title, such as "travels," "tour," "journey," or "voyage." Although "travels" and "journey" meant little more than that a trip of some sort had been taken, the use of "tour" in a title suggested a circuitous route, beginning and ending in the same place, and "voyage" typically signified a trip by sea, although the use of such terminology in a title did not necessarily ensure that the contents of the book would reflect the title.<sup>199</sup>

The first titles of Anglo-Indian women's travel writing were simple and direct as well. On the surface, the title of Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (1777) is merely a declaration of narrative form and a general itinerary, as are Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* (1811) and *Letters on India* (1814) and Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India* (1817). Although the differences between these titles may seem minor, the word choices these writers and their publishers made

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<sup>199</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 38. Here Batten gives the examples of Richard Lassels, who "spends no time on a ship in his *Voyage of Italy* (1670)," and John Ferrar, who does not return to Ireland in *Tour from Dublin to London* (1796).

are strategic and clever, revealing an astute knowledge of travel writing conventions and reader expectations. The title of Kindersley's *Letters* focuses primarily on the places she visited during her voyage to India, but by listing her itinerary, she ensures that her book appeals to a broader audience and draws in readers with more than just an interest in the subcontinent. On the other hand, Eliza Fay's title focuses exclusively on India, even though a substantial portion of her narrative is devoted to the overland journey—across Europe and Egypt—she took to get there. The differences in these titles are not about differences in narrative structure, then, but about understanding and appealing to the interests of their respective audiences. Kindersley's narrative was published in London in 1777, when travel writing by women was still rare and no woman had commented extensively on any of the places she lists, but Fay's letters were published exclusively in Calcutta for an Anglo-Indian audience that was all too familiar with the means and trials of travel to India. For this audience, the appeal of her letters lay in the local gossip and strong opinions of the Anglo-Indian community that Fay openly shared, and especially in the historical element, as the letters primarily chronicle life in late eighteenth-century India, when the community was much smaller but riddled with controversy and scandal. By stating that the letters are "original," the title also emphasizes their authenticity as historical documents—they have not been revised and therefore have not been exposed to the inaccuracies that could alter decades-old memories.

Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* has a similarly short, matter-of-fact title that holds far more connotative meaning than initially suggested. All three of these women lived in India for some time—and Fay far longer than the others—yet Graham is the only one to label her visit a "residence." Including this word in her title improves her credibility and authority by marking her as not just another tourist, but as someone who lived on the subcontinent, an

important distinction for readers looking for authentic, insightful, truthful accounts. Like Fay's *Original Letters*, Graham's title also focuses exclusively on India. However, unlike Kindersley's and Fay's travel narratives, Graham's *Journal* does not begin until after her arrival in India, so it may seem logical that the title mentions no other places. Graham does, however, record the voyage back to England, including detailed descriptions of Cape Town and St. Helena, and she could easily have included these locations and others in her title to draw in readers interested in those places. Instead, Graham (or her publisher) chose to focus the title exclusively on India, perhaps as a means of promoting her aspirations for the book. While accounts like Kindersley's filled the need for information on life at sea and different ports of interest, Graham wanted her narrative to provide a much-needed examination of life in India, something she felt was long overdue and necessary for improving British understanding of the subcontinent. Although travel writing on India was not difficult to obtain by the beginning of the nineteenth century, most of the available accounts were more concerned with military strategy and economic opportunity than on "the manners and habits of its natives and resident colonists," and in the preface to her narrative, Graham expresses her hope that her *Journal* will provide "a more popular work on the subject of this great country" than previously existed.<sup>200</sup> Her emphasis on the importance of her *Journal* to the body of work on India suggests that the narrow focus of her title was strategic.

The popularity of these texts, especially Graham's *Journal*, forced subsequent writers and publishers to become more detailed and specific in naming their travel narratives, which led to such long, unwieldy titles as Ann Deane's *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan; Comprising a Period Between the Years 1804 and 1814: with Remarks and Authentic Anecdotes. To which is Annexed a Guide up the River Ganges with a Map from the Source of the Mouth*

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<sup>200</sup> Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1811; Edinburgh, 1813), v-vi.

(1823) and Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India; Including a Residence There, and Voyage Home, in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28* (1830). Such titles were meant to emphasize what was new and original about these accounts while also establishing the credibility of the authors. Instead of simply calling her book *Tour of India* or something equally straightforward, Deane uses her title to highlight the specific region in which she traveled, the extended time that she spent there, and the special features of her book, including a map and guide to the Ganges. Elwood's title includes a comprehensive description of the course she took to India and the years she lived there. Additionally, both titles stress their authors' reliability, with Deane's title explicitly stating that her anecdotes are "authentic" and Elwood's title echoing Graham's *Journal* in its use of the word "residence." Both words subtly reinforce the supposition that these authors are authoritative sources who have experienced life in India firsthand.

By stating that Elwood's narrative includes the overland journey to India, "residence there," and "voyage home," her title reveals her understanding of the traditional cycle of "departure, adventure, and return" that critic Casey Blanton suggests made travel writing such a compelling form of storytelling.<sup>201</sup> Most likely, Elwood or her publisher chose to stress that she took the overland journey because she believed herself to be unique in having had that experience. Early in her narrative, she declares, "we were fully aware this was a route but little frequented even by gentlemen, and that *no* lady had ever attempted."<sup>202</sup> In actuality, Elwood was far from the first woman to take the overland route to India, as Fay's earlier account attests, but because Fay's *Original Letters* had not been published in England, many of Elwood's readers

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<sup>201</sup> Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York: Twayne, 1997), 2.

<sup>202</sup> Anne Katherine Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India; Including a Residence There, and Voyage Home, in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28* (London, 1830), 3. Italics are Elwood's.

may not have even noticed her error and some may have even bought her book precisely because of her account of the overland journey.<sup>203</sup> At the very least, underscoring such a dangerous and unusual route to India would have made Elwood's narrative appealing to people tired of reading about the endless days at sea described in most travels to India.

Besides length, perhaps the most striking difference between the earlier titles and Deane's and Elwood's is that these later titles specify the years in which these women lived in India. This practice dates back to at least the 1770s, when travel writers began emphasizing the duration of their visits in order to prevent accusations of "haste." Some eighteenth-century travelers—most notably Arthur Young—were criticized for traveling too quickly, for not allowing themselves adequate time to get to know a place before moving on. Too short a visit was believed to lead to misrepresentation and inaccuracy, and it was preferable to date a trip in terms of years rather than weeks or months; the longer the visit, the more trustworthy the account was believed to be.<sup>204</sup> Beginning in the 1770s, titles such as John Hawkesworth's *A New Voyage, Round the World in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770 and 1771* (1774), George Forster's *A Voyage Round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop Resolution, Commanded by Capt. James Cook, During the Years 1772, 3, 4 and 5* (1777), and William Hodges' *Travels in India, During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (1794) began stressing, more than anything, the

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<sup>203</sup> A year before Elwood's narrative was published, Sarah Lushington's *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by Way of Egypt, in the Years 1827 and 1828* (London, 1829) appeared. Although Lushington's title technically follows the standard formula, she does not emphasize the overland portion of her journey the way that Elwood does. Elwood's statements lead me to believe that she was unaware of this additional account of the overland (albeit reversed) journey, and although Lushington's narrative reached a second edition, the lack of reviews and critical commentary on her book suggests that the account was not widely known. Elwood's narrative, on the other hand, received reviews in several prominent papers and journals, including the *London Literary Gazette*, *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, and the *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*.

<sup>204</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 66-67.

prolonged time span of their authors' travels.<sup>205</sup> Although Maria Graham did not specify how long she was in India in the titles of her *Journal of a Residence* and *Letters from India*, even she abided this trend in her later account of South America, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil, and Residence There, During Part of the Years 1821, 22, 23* (1824), where she again emphasized that she not only visited the country but lived there temporarily. By calculating the length of their stays in terms of years rather than days or months, Deane's and Elwood's titles are right in keeping with those of contemporaneous travel writers, but more importantly, they are promises to readers that their narratives offer more than just passing glimpses of India.

Indeed, Anglo-Indian travel writers had an advantage over traditional travel writers in that they were not just tourists on holiday or wealthy young aristocrats on the Grand Tour but settler-travelers who called the subcontinent home for years or even decades. Although many of these women went to India as support for their fathers, husbands, or brothers and some professed no real desire to see or experience the subcontinent—knowing as they did that a voyage to India would mean years away from their homes, friends, and families—they also made the best of their situations by keeping record of their observations and experiences and preserving their impressions for publication. In this way, those with even the humblest literary ambitions were able to enter a field and possess a voice that otherwise would have been denied them. As settler-travelers, many of these women were representative of a group who rarely contributed to literary travel writing—those without the wealth or power to go off and travel for years on their own. Since literary travel writing required both time and resources for leisurely travel, many of these

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<sup>205</sup> Of course, listing the years spent traveling in one's title was not a new practice and was not exclusive to British travelers. European travel writers also frequently included the time frame of their travels, such as in Francois Bernier's *Travels in the Mogul Empire, A.D. 1656-1668*. However, in the first part of the eighteenth century this practice fell away and was only resurrected in the 1770s because of the increased pressure on travelers to prove that their travels were genuine and sufficiently long enough to justify a book-length narrative of them.

women—the sisters, wives, and daughters of soldiers, military officers, and low-level East India Company employees—could never have afforded such an opportunity had they stayed in Britain, and even if they were wealthy enough to afford travel, most would have been impeded from traveling on their own by social conventions.

As Leo Hamalian relates, most British women at this time were barred from independent travel “by the iron hoops of convention.”<sup>206</sup> In India, however, Anglo-Indian women found themselves with more freedom, time, and economic opportunity than available to them back home in Britain. Even the poorest Anglo-Indian families had a multitude of servants to oversee the household and attend any children, and most women had no responsibilities other than to manage the household staff and entertain visitors. Many took advantage of absent husbands, who were frequently off fighting in distant provinces, and used their free time to visit places closed to men, such as the zenanas, and to learn more about indigenous cultures, religions, and people. Their experiences allowed them to see the country in a more honest way, free of the economic desire or political concern that often pervaded accounts by Anglo-Indian men, and to model more closely the literary travel writing of the past. Although the settler-traveler mission was different from that of the leisure traveler and these women recognized their imperial positions, few of them viewed themselves as true colonizers; most dreamed of the day when they would be reunited with their homes and families back in England and viewed their residencies in India as temporary rather than permanent. Still, the very fact that they were residents of the subcontinent allowed them to experience life there in a way denied to the common traveler, while also allowing them abundant leisure time to see and experience the kinds of sites popularized by

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<sup>206</sup> Leo Hamalian, introduction to *Ladies on the Loose: Women Travellers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Leo Hamalian (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1981), x.



travel writing: historical monuments and temples, cultural festivals and religious ceremonies, natural landmarks and diverse landscapes.

Like Deane and Elwood, many other women used their book titles to emphasize their settler-traveler status and to highlight their unusual experiences and insights into life on the subcontinent. The title of Fanny Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim, in Search of the Picturesque, during Four-and-Twenty Years in the East; With Revelations of Life in the Zenana* (1850) privileges her experiences in the zenana—a favorite curiosity of British readers—as well as the itinerant nature of her travels (“wanderings”), her almost religious devotion to new experiences (calling herself “a Pilgrim”), and the extraordinary length of her stay in India. The title of Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations on the Musselmauns of India: Descriptive of Their Manners, Customs, Habits and Religious Opinions, Made During a Twelve Years' Residence in Their Immediate Society* (1832) stresses the length of her residence and the unusual circumstances of her life in India. An Englishwoman who met and married an Indian noble while he was visiting London, Ali accompanied her husband back to India, but after twelve years she returned alone to England, officially because of her health and presumably because she grew tired of his polygamous lifestyle.<sup>207</sup> Her two-volume *Observations* offers a unique, insider's look into the private, everyday life of a Muslim household, on which the title capitalizes by declaring her residence to have been in their *immediate* society.

The standard title formula of “narrative format + time spent in India + specific place or region” continued to be popular with women writers, including Lady Maria Nugent (*A Journal from the Year 1811 till the Year 1815, Including a Voyage to and Residence in India, with a Tour*

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<sup>207</sup> W. Crooke, introduction to *Observations on the Musselmauns of India: Descriptive of Their Manners, Customs, Habits, and Religious Opinions, Made During a Twelve Years' Residence in Their Immediate Society*, by Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1832; London: Oxford University Press, 1917), xiii.

to the North-western parts of the British Possessions in that Country, under the Bengal Government; 1839), Harriette Ashmore (*Narrative of a Three Months' March in India; and a Residence in the Dooah*; 1841), and Julia Maitland (*Letters from Madras, During the Years 1836-1839*; 1843). Others took this formula and added a list of special features contained in their books, such as the handbook for young men appended to Eliza Clemons' *The Manners and Customs of Society in India; Including Scenes in the Mofussil Stations; Interspersed with Characteristic Tales and Anecdotes: and Reminiscences of the late Burmese War. To which are added Instructions for the Guidance of Cadets, and other Young Gentlemen, During their First Year's Residence in India* (1841) and the battle narrative written by her husband that Georgiana Paget attached to her *Camp and Cantonment: A Journal of Life in India in 1857-1859, with some Account of the Way Thither. To Which is Added, a Short Narrative of the Pursuit of the Rebels in Central India, by Major Paget, R.H.A* (1865). Highlighting these additional features, which were obviously targeted towards male readers, helped broaden Clemons' and Paget's audience appeal and reassure readers that they would be getting more than typically expected from a single-author travel book.

Paget's *Camp and Cantonment* is also indicative of another trend among Anglo-Indian women writers that began toward mid-century. Although titles were still lengthy and packed with information, more and more often they were being prefaced with shorter, snappier phrases, or primary titles, that were more memorable and more likely to spark reader interest than traditional titles. These primary titles made abbreviating titles simpler, enabling readers to more quickly reference and discuss works of travel writing. Lady Amelia Falkland adopted this style as well as the clever alliteration of Paget's title in her *Chow-Chow; Being Selections from a Journal Kept in India, Egypt, and Syria* (1857), which takes its name from the "Chow-Chow basket" of Indian

peddlers. In her preface, Falkland defines Chow-Chow as “Odds and Ends,” which is how she views her narrative—as a series of fragments, or sketches, on her life in India.<sup>208</sup> In the nineteenth century, the sketch form was becoming increasingly popular as a narrative style and was often highlighted in the titles of Anglo-Indian travel books, such as in Elizabeth Elton Smith’s *The East India Sketch-book: Comprising an Account of the Present State of Society in Calcutta, Bombay, etc.* (1832) and Emma Roberts’ *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1835). Marianna Postans combined these two trends—the short primary title and the sketch narrative—in her *Cutch, or, Random Sketches, Taken During a Residence in One of the Northern Provinces of Western India; Interspersed with Legends and Traditions* (1839). Others who embraced the primary title format included Madeline and Rosaline Wallace-Dunlop (*The Timely Retreat; or, a Year in Bengal before the Mutinies*; 1858) and also Emily Eden (*Up the Country: Letters Written to Her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India*; 1866), whose book is almost exclusively referred to as *Up the Country* in modern critical studies. The use of the two-part, primary title format allowed these writers to give their books titles that were memorable and novelistic, sparking reader interest and distinguishing their works from all the *Journals of...* and *Letters from...* and *Travels to...* being published by other travel writers at that time.

Throughout the period, the titles of Anglo-Indian men’s travel writing closely resembled those by women. Men adopted the same language, terminology, and formulas in their titles, referring to their narratives as journals, letters, and sketches, emphasizing the individual places they traveled and the length of time they spent abroad, and using words such as “residence” to

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<sup>208</sup> Lady Amelia Falkland, preface to *Chow-Chow; Being Selections from a Journal Kept in India, Egypt, and Syria* (London, 1857), 1:n.p.

build their credibility.<sup>209</sup> A few authors even adopted the short primary title formula, such as Sir Alexander Burnes, whose *Cabool: Being a Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City, in the years 1836, 7, and 8* (1842) closely modeled Marianna Postans' *Cutch* (1839) in its emphasis on an individual place. However, many of these trends, including the two-part, primary title, faded in both men and women's travel writing during the second half of the nineteenth century. As published writing again became a goal, rather than a consequence, of travel, titles began to shorten to resemble those of the early eighteenth century, with most focusing only on the genre and place of travel. These late nineteenth-century travelers seemed to be more heavily influenced by eighteenth-century travel narratives and contemporary career writers, such as Charles Dickens and Robert Lewis Stevenson,<sup>210</sup> than by the Anglo-Indian women discussed here, yet some travel writers continued to see the benefits of having a catchy primary title and informative subtitle.

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<sup>209</sup> For examples, see George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England, through the Northern Part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Persia, and into Russia, by the Caspian-Sea*, 2 vols. (London, 1798), an early title similar to Jemima Kindersley's in the specificity of its itinerary; Thomas Duer Broughton, *Letters Written in a Mahratta Camp during the Year 1809, Descriptive of the Character, Manners, Domestic Habits and Religious Ceremonies of the Mahrattas* (London, 1813); and Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India; Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore, and Cashmeer, during the years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831. Undertaken by the order of the French Government*, trans. from French (London, 1835).

<sup>210</sup> Many of the travel writers towards the end of the century were career writers who either devoted their lives to travel writing or to the written word in general and who could sell their books based on their names alone. Even at mid-century, Charles Dickens' *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) and *Pictures from Italy* (1846) were titled in such a way that they did not reveal anything about how his works were different from any others on the United States or Italy but instead relied on the prestige of the author to attract readers. This trend continued among more well-established writers, such as Robert Lewis Stevenson (*Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*; 1879) and Isabella Bird (*Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*; 1891), and perhaps continued to influence writers with less literary influence, such as Mary Kingsley (*Travels in West Africa*; 1897).

The two-part, primary title format has seemingly had a stronger impact on the titles of contemporary travel narratives than the title styles of Addison, Fielding, and Dickens have. J. Maarten Troost adopted the two-part title for each of his four humorous travel books, *The Sex Lives of Cannibals: Adrift in the Equatorial Pacific* (2004), *Getting Stoned with Savages: A Trip through the Islands of Fiji and Vanuatu* (2006), *Lost on Planet China: The Strange and True Story of One Man's Attempt to Understand the World's Most Mystifying Nation, or How He Became Comfortable Eating Live Squid* (2008), and *Headhunters on My Doorstep: A True Treasure Island Ghost Story* (2013), and some of the most well-known contemporary travel writers, including Pico Iyer, Paul Theroux, William Dalrymple, and bestsellers Elizabeth Gilbert and Cheryl Strayed, have used the two-part title for their narratives and even adopt other trends discussed here, such as emphasizing the length of their trips and what made their journeys unique, such as the itinerary or method of travel.<sup>211</sup> It would be difficult to say definitively that any of these trends were initiated by Anglo-Indian women travel writers, but they were certainly among the first to use the primary title format. Even more importantly, while many travelers were looking to the past rather than the future as inspiration for their titles, these women recognized which title components would make their books the most marketable and the most memorable and avoided the simplicity of eighteenth-century titles. They identified the title strategies that would continue to be successful more than a hundred years later, revealing that

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<sup>211</sup> See, for examples, Pico Iyer's *The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto* (1991), Paul Theroux's *Dark Star Safari: Overland from Cairo to Capetown* (2004) and *The Old Patagonian Express: By Train through the Americas* (1989), William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (1993), Alice Steinbach's *Without Reservations: The Travels of an Independent Woman* (2000), Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia* (2006), and Cheryl Strayed's *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Coast Trail* (2012).

they were not only intrepid travelers and promising writers, but that they were also forward-thinking businesswomen who understood the needs of an evolving genre.

### *Bylines*

With the exception perhaps of pseudonyms, authors' bylines have received little attention from scholars and are one of the most overlooked but important paratexts related to women's writing. While in most men's writing the selection of a byline is seemingly clear-cut (first name, last name, and occasionally title), for women the issue of how to refer to oneself publically has always been more complex. To adopt a public name is to adopt a public identity, and as such a woman writer's choice of byline can often be viewed as a political act. More so than male writers, women had to take into consideration their positions and titles, as well as those of their husbands and families, when deciding what name to use on publications. Because the byline is a title page element, it can also be an important marketing tool, so women writers also had to consider their literary ambitions and how they could use their names to gain audience interest and approval. Emphasizing marital status, prior publications, and social position in the byline was about more than just convention for these women; it was also about enticing readers, establishing credibility, and taking those social and genre conventions that helped them become more marketable and using them to construct their own literary identities.

Underscoring marital status in particular helped justify a woman's travels by assuring readers that the woman had traveled either in the company of her husband or with his approval. Jemima Kindersley therefore becomes "Mrs. Kindersley" on the title page of her book, Georgiana Paget is listed as "Mrs. Leopold Paget," and Sarah Lushington is "Mrs. Charles Lushington." At this time, the independent woman traveler, and in many ways the independent

woman in general, was still an object of suspicion, with little authority or respectability in British society. Women traveling, writing, or living on their own called into question gendered expectations about the roles of women and what was considered acceptable behavior, and women traveling without proper supervision risked being accused of having loose morals. This issue might be sidestepped, at least initially, by presenting oneself as a respectable married woman, as each of these women did. Although their narratives often reveal how independently minded they were and that, once in India, they frequently traveled the countryside without their husbands or male chaperones, by calling attention to their marital status and husbands' names in their bylines, these women are able to draw on the authority automatically attributed to their husbands just for being men. In some cases, they even continued to use their married names in their bylines long after separating from or divorcing their husbands, perhaps in part because of the status that being married could give them. Eliza Fay, who had been legally separated from her husband for more than thirty years when she started preparing the manuscript for *Original Letters from India*, is referred to as "Mrs. Fay" on her title page, which allows her to retain the credibility and authority of a married woman despite her independent status.

Women whose husbands were military officers had the added benefit of being able to use their husbands' titles in their bylines, as seen in the cases of Anne Katherine Elwood ("Mrs. Colonel Elwood"), Eliza Clemons ("Mrs. Major Clemons"), and Mary Ann Hartley ("Mrs. Colonel Hartley"). By emphasizing their husbands' positions, these women affirm their own social and political standing and suggest to readers that they can offer an informed perspective on Anglo-Indian relations and events. The British military played an instrumental role in maintaining British control of important trading grounds and settlements, and the regiments were frequently drawn into battle, first against the rival French and Dutch trading companies, and later

against Indian forces who opposed British domination of their homeland. Because the wives of soldiers and military officers often accompanied their husbands to military encampments and traveled with them to different settlements, these women could offer more diverse and in some ways more authentic portraits of India than their compatriots living in Calcutta, Madras, or other insular Anglo-Indian communities could. By using their husbands' names and titles rather than their own, these women suggest that they are dutiful, proper wives upholding convention, but they also reveal themselves to be shrewd businesswomen, positioning their books for success by establishing their own credibility and authority based upon that of their husbands.

Although readers at that time may have been able to figure out the women's individual identities from these designations, the fact that these women used their husbands' names instead of their own has, in some cases, made identification difficult for scholars today. The true identity of Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali is still unknown, which makes her background and status in English society impossible to determine, especially because her narrative reveals so little about her own history. From a historical and scholarly point of view, the fact that we do not know Ali's identity is frustrating, but when examined from an early nineteenth-century perspective, her adoption of her husband's name is both a protection and clever marketing. Because we still do not know the actual identity of Ali even today, it is safe to say that few during her own time knew it either, or at least those that did know her did not make that knowledge public. As a Christian, English woman who had married an Indian Muslim and eventually left him to return to her home country, Ali protects herself from gossip and controversy by never revealing her true identity. Not only does she protect her own identity and reputation to some degree, but her foreign name could be an enticement for readers. A book by a Jane Smith or Eliza Jones would have brought far less attention than one with a foreign name, which gives her credibility as someone who not



only lived on the subcontinent, but in some respects “went native” and could report on the customs of Muslims with a thorough understanding of both English and Indian customs and ways of life.

Not every woman writer relied on her husband’s name or title to establish her credibility, however. Some had their own titles, either by marriage or birth, which elevated them above the common military officer’s wife and promised readers they would receive a more exclusive perspective on Anglo-Indian life. The title page of *Chow-Chow* introduces Lady Amelia Falkland as “The Viscountess Falkland,” and *A Journal from the Year 1811 till the Year 1815* (1839) is proclaimed to be by “Maria, Lady Nugent.” Although Maria Nugent’s husband, George, served as the military commander-in-chief in India, instead of emphasizing his military position in her byline, she chooses to highlight her social title instead. Emily Eden, the daughter of William Eden, first Baron Auckland, was referred to as “the Hon. Emily Eden” on her title pages, and her literary renown was also noted. Because she had had some success with fiction prior to publishing her Indian letters, the title page to *Up the Country* refers to her as “the Hon. Emily Eden, Authoress of ‘The Semi-Detached House’ and ‘The Semi-Attached Couple.’”

For women who desired a literary career or who had had previous success in publishing, it was not uncommon to refer to one’s other publications. Marianna Postans, who published all of her works as “Mrs. Postans” or, after she remarried, “Mrs. Young,” chose to highlight her previous publications after the success of her first travel narrative, *Cutch*. Her two subsequent works on India, *Western India in 1838* (1839) and *Facts and Fictions, Illustrative of Oriental Character* (1844), both bore the byline “By Mrs. Postans, Author of ‘Cutch,’” giving her authority as both a married woman and as an established and trusted author. Maria Graham, who had a long and successful literary career, chose a more subversive path by publishing her first

book of Anglo-Indian travel writing and most of her later books as simply “Maria Graham.” Even though “Graham” was her married name, she never prefixed her name with “Mrs.” Instead, she chose to build her credibility through her writing, not through any social conventions concerned with women and their marital status. Because “Maria Graham” had found success with *Journal of a Residence* based entirely on her merit as a writer, she emphasizes that success on the title page of her second work on India, where she gives her byline as “Maria Graham, Author of ‘Journal of a Residence in India.’” Similarly, Emma Roberts, the author of multiple works of history, poetry, plays, journalism, and travel writing, was known as either “Emma Roberts,” or, early in her Anglo-Indian writing career, “Emma Roberts, Author of *Memoirs of the Rival Houses of York and Lancaster—Conrad, A Tragedy—The Kinsman of Naples, A Tragedy, &c. &c. &c.*” The list of published works attached to her name changed with each new book, but it always emphasized the diversity of her work and the highlights of her career, and most included *Memoirs of the Rival Houses of York and Lancaster*, which perhaps helped add gravitas to her literary credentials. It was not until after Roberts died that her publishers began calling attention to the fact that she was unmarried, publishing subsequent works under the byline “By the Late Miss Emma Roberts.”

Although some Anglo-Indian women travelers were more cryptic in revealing their identities in their bylines, few adopted outright pseudonyms. The title page of Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop’s *The Timely Retreat; or, a Year in Bengal before the Mutinies* (1858) states only that it was written by “Two Sisters,” but their names appear at the end of the opening dedication, swiftly ending any mystery as to who the two sisters were. However, by using “Two Sisters” as their byline instead of their names, the Wallace-Dunlops create an image and an identity to present potential readers, branding themselves as modest young women uninterested

in attention or prestige. Towards the end of the century, Matilda Ouvry used her initials, “M. H. Ouvry,” in the byline to her travel narrative, *A Lady’s Diary Before and During the Indian Mutiny* (1892), but unlike some women who have used initials to disguise their sex, Ouvry’s title makes clear that her book was written by a woman. The use of her initials, then, allows her to enjoy slightly more anonymity and control over her identity, while also keeping her marital status and social standing ambiguous.

The most unusual and subversive byline, however, belongs to Fanny Parks, who, instead of listing one of the various English iterations of her name on the title page of *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* (1850), chose to sign her name in Persian (see fig. 2.1). Parks uses her Persian signature throughout the text, at the ends of the dedication and the introduction, never referring to herself by her English name. Although the authorship of *Wanderings* was never in question—Parks is identified by name throughout contemporary reviews of the book—the deliberate choice to sign her name in Persian emphasizes her “cross-cultural identity,” as Nandini Sengupta has argued.<sup>212</sup> At a time when British nationalism was intensifying, Parks flouts convention and makes no attempt to reconcile her British heritage with her Anglo-Indian identity, indicating with her choice of byline that, as Gérard Gâcon suggests, “some form of assimilation has been voluntarily performed.”<sup>213</sup> Representing her hybrid identity in such a way was a bold decision, for by positioning herself as an outsider, especially one who had forsaken her British roots in favor of

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<sup>212</sup> Nandini Sengupta, “The British Woman Traveller in India: Cultural Intimacy and Interracial Kinship in Fanny Parks’s *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*,” in *New Readings in the Literature of British India, c. 1780-1947*, ed. Shafquat Towheed (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007), 97.

<sup>213</sup> Gérard Gâcon, “An Emancipated View of the Other: Fanny Parks in India,” in *In-Between Two Worlds: Narratives by Female Explorers and Travellers (1850-1945)*, ed. Béatrice Bijon and Gérard Gâcon (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 81.

*Fanny Parks*  
WANDERINGS OF A PILGRIM,

IN SEARCH OF

**The Picturesque,**

DURING FOUR-AND-TWENTY YEARS IN THE EAST;

WITH

REVELATIONS OF LIFE

IN

THE ZENĀNA.

BY

فاني پارکس  
*Fanny Parks*

ILLUSTRATED WITH SKETCHES FROM NATURE.

“ Let the result be what it may, I have launched my boat.”

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PELHAM RICHARDSON, 23, CORNHILL.

1850.

**FIGURE 2.1.** Original title page of Fanny Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, with her Persian signature.

an Eastern identity, she risked alienating her audience and displeasing conventional readers. At the same time, however, the very foreignness of the byline—and the fact that it was untranslatable to all but Persian experts—adds an exoticism to the work that would have been appreciated by cosmopolitan readers, the same ones who might have been drawn to Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's book.

Parks' Persian signature reflects the possibilities of the byline, that for those authors willing to take the risk, the byline could be more than just a staid statement of name; it could be a chance to construct an identity. We typically have little choice when it comes to our names; we are given them at birth and rarely change them except in the case of marriage. But for writers like Parks, the opportunity to choose a name and declare it publically could mean the chance to challenge convention, subvert expectations, raise questions, and create new ways of thinking about the role names play in shaping and guiding perceptions. For all of these women, selecting a byline was a choice, a chance to control how potential readers would see them, and a means by which they might assure their audiences of their credibility, reliability, and individuality as writers and travelers.

### *Prefaces*

For travel writers, there was no stronger means of establishing credibility than the preface. In her study of nineteenth-century women's prefaces, Elizabeth Howells dates the preface back to the public orators of Aristotle's day, likening this written form to the exordium section of speeches, during which speakers would introduce their topics and attempt to establish

ethos.<sup>214</sup> Similarly, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, writers in all genres used the preface to build rapport with the audience, indicate their authority and credibility, and justify the need for their work. The preface was not merely a social convention, but it was an important piece of rhetoric, requiring a keen audience awareness as it established the character of the author/narrator. A document written solely for publication, the preface was usually the only chance a writer had to speak directly to the audience, to anticipate reader questions and to defend his or her work against potential critics. It was essential that a writer maintain a tone that was self-assured yet humble, authoritative yet open to correction. Because the preface was the only chance a writer might have to make a good first impression on readers, in many ways it was the most important book component that an author would write.

Of all the paratexts associated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writing, prefaces have received the most attention from scholars, but too often prefaces are examined without regard to the kinds of writing to which they were attached. A scholar might read eighteenth-century prefaces to women's poetry, fiction, and non-fiction and draw inferences about women's prefaces or the status of the woman writer at that time, failing to account for the fact that these women were not only justifying their public presence in the literary marketplace but also responding to the conventions of the individual genres in which they were writing. Although the prefaces might share some characteristics across genre—and reveal much about the position of women writers and how they viewed their marginalized roles—by examining the prefaces of both men and women writing within a specific context (time period, audience, and genre), we will discover that many justifications, excuses, and apologies found in women's prefaces also

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<sup>214</sup> Elizabeth Howells, "Apologizing for Authority: The Rhetoric of the Prefaces of Eliza Cook, Isabelle [sic] Bird, and Hannah More," in *Professing Rhetoric: Selected Papers from the 2000 Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, ed. Frederick J. Antczak, Cinda Coggins, and Geoffrey D. Klinger (Mahwah, NJ; London: Erlbaum, 2002), 134-135.

appeared in those written by men. Since men and women travel writers often use similar vocabulary and tropes in their prefaces to situate, justify, and defend their narratives, a comparison of the two reveals more about reader expectations and the requirements of the genre than they do about women's prefaces in general. By comparing the prefaces of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel narratives, we learn more about the guidelines that governed their structure, content, and presentation and how, when, and where writers could bend these rules in order to make the genre their own.

Although the travel narrative preface shared many qualities with the prefaces of other genres, the specific demands and expectations of travel writing required writers to adhere to a fairly specific formula when constructing their prefaces. Along with establishing credibility, authors had to justify their choice of narrative structure, explaining why they chose to publish their narratives as journals, letters, or sketches. They had to emphasize their commitment to truth and the ways in which they had ensured that their descriptions and representations were as accurate as possible. They had to apologize for any errors that might be found and make excuses for desired information that might be missing. For those writers publishing years or even decades after the journey was over, explaining why the book was necessary now or why publication was delayed was important. And, in an over-saturated market, authors had to rationalize the publication of another book on a well-trod place and highlight what their text offered that others had not.

At first glance, the prefaces to women's travel writing, like those that introduced women's novels and poetry, might appear to be a study in polite apology. The apology form of the preface was popular with women in all genres because it allowed them to negotiate their roles as writers and justify their presumption in entering a profession that was traditionally dominated

by men. Howells argues that the apology became for women “a powerful rhetorical device for simultaneously deflecting and asserting one’s authority.”<sup>215</sup> By acknowledging the fact that they were overstepping their social place by allowing their thoughts and words to be read publicly, woman writers could both accept responsibility for their transgression and dismiss it as necessary, “gesture[ing] to and conceded[ing] to these appropriate behaviors in order to make their work marketable.”<sup>216</sup> Many women denied any literary ambition by declaring that they had written only to entertain and inform friends and family about their travels, and they insisted that they would never have been so bold as to publish their journals and letters if it were not for the encouragement of friends. In the advertisement to *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823), Ann Deane states that the “following pages were not originally intended for the public eye,” but that her journal “was composed during her tour, and designed only for the future amusement of her friends.”<sup>217</sup> Sarah Lushington, in her third-person preface to *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe* (1829), claims that she was driven to publish because she kept a journal for friends and, upon returning to England, received frequent questions and requests for information about her travels, which “induced her to think that a narrative of her Journey, in a plain and unpretending form, might be presented to the Public, and her engagements to her distant friends be thus fulfilled.”<sup>218</sup> Lushington presents publication as almost a burden, a debt to be repaid, rather than a privilege or pleasure, and she absolves herself of any blame for overstepping her place as a woman by claiming that she is simply giving the

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<sup>215</sup> Howells, “Apologizing for Authority,” 136.

<sup>216</sup> Howells, “Apologizing for Authority,” 134.

<sup>217</sup> Ann Deane, *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan; Comprising a Period Between the Years 1804 and 1814: with Remarks and Authentic Anecdotes. To which is Annexed a Guide up the River Ganges with a Map from the Source of the Mouth* (London, 1823), iii-iv. Here Deane’s advertisement serves the same function as the prefaces found in other travel narratives. In some cases, dedications and introductions also fulfilled the same purpose.

<sup>218</sup> Lushington, *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by Way of Egypt*, ix-x.



public what it wants. Both she and Deane insist that their sole reason for writing in the first place was to please their friends.

Howells argues that by making their writing “communal,” and less about individual ambition, women were embracing the “idea of woman as caretaker, as about community betterment rather than self-aggrandizement.”<sup>219</sup> The apology form of the preface suited them because it allowed them to derive authority, not from asserting it, but from doing the opposite—from acknowledging their role in society and insisting that they were only overstepping it for the good of others. Howells’ theory works well when women’s prefaces are compared across genre, but it must be reevaluated when men’s and women’s travel writing prefaces are compared. In travel writing, the apology preface was the standard for both men and women, and had been for some time. In *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* (1790), William Beckford apologizes for his “presumption in intruding the following Work upon the patience of the Public,” and in *Travel in India, During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, & 1783* (1783), William Hodges claims that his notes were “chiefly intended for my own amusement, and to enable me to explain to my friends a number of drawings which I had made.” He concludes that his decision to publish is “owing entirely to the influence and persuasion of my most justly esteemed friend, Henry James Pye, Esq. Poet Laureat.”<sup>220</sup> Although Hodges had the benefit here of mentioning he was publishing with the approbation of a noted literary figure, something not every woman traveler would have been able to say, in some cases women (and men) used dedications to a similar effect. The practice of dedicating one’s work to a high-ranking person was fashionable when patrons were necessary to publication, but that practice gradually desisted between the

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<sup>219</sup> Howells, “Apologizing for Authority,” 133.

<sup>220</sup> William Beckford, *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1790), 1:v; and William Hodges, *Travel in India, During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, & 1783* (London, 1783), iv.

sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>221</sup> In travel writing, however, some writers continued the practice as a means of legitimating their decision to publish. In the dedication to *Cutch*, Marianna Postans thanks the Earl of Clare for the “honour” of being allowed to “prefix” his name to the book, and instead of writing a traditional preface, Emily Eden opens *Up the Country* with a letter to her nephew, Lord William Godolphin Osborne.<sup>222</sup> In the cases of Hodges, Postans, and Eden, the authors establish their own credibility by referring to the authority and position of someone important who encouraged them to publish, in the same way that authors today might have complimentary blurbs from other writers or reviewers on their covers or opening pages.

If most men and women travel writers were reluctant to claim any personal stake in publication, they were equally averse to bragging about their literary talents. It was common for travel writers to adopt a self-deprecating tone in their prefaces, downplaying their writing abilities or the amount of effort that had gone into turning their notes, letters, and journals, into something that could be read, understood, and appreciated by the general population. Beckford apologizes for routinely getting off track in his writing, for what he calls the “digressions and reflections that occasionally arose in my mind,” and William Ellis, in the preface to *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii, or, Owhyhee* (1827), asks for readers to “pass over all the defects in the execution of the work,” for “it was prepared amidst a variety of

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<sup>221</sup> See Helen Elizabeth Howells, “Facing the Page: A Study of the Prefaces of Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers,” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina-Greensboro, 2001), 4; and Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, Print, and Politics in Britain 1590-1660* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>222</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, v; and Emily Eden, *Up the Country: Letters Written to her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India* (1866; London, 1983), 1:n.p.

engagements, and under the pressure of the severe domestic affliction.”<sup>223</sup> Arthur Young chose to minimize his education and achievements in his preface, where he states, “No reader, if he knows any thing of my situation, will expect, in this work, what the advantages of rank and fortune are necessary to produce—of such I had none to exert.”<sup>224</sup> Among the women who adopted a similar tone in excusing potential faults in their writing were Postans, who, like Beckford, apologized for those moments when she “diverged from the immediate subject,” and Eliza Clemons, who introduced her narrative as a collection of sketches, “for no better name do they deserve.” Harriette Ashmore made a similar claim to Ellis’s “domestic affliction” when she asked for “lenity to those imperfections which the distractions attendant upon a numerous family, and the faults of an inexperienced author, have necessarily induced.”<sup>225</sup> Although sometimes women more strongly insisted on the flaws in their narratives and their need for forgiveness or “lenity”—perhaps in part because of a perceived need to uphold a certain idea of womanhood and downplay their professionalization as writers—they were also writing within a firmly established tradition of apology that included men as well. In some ways, the travel writing genre might have even appealed to them *because* it required humility and self-deprecation, qualities that women were expected to have anyway. By adopting a diffident attitude in their prefaces, they were playing the role of dutiful, “good” women, but they were also revealing their

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<sup>223</sup> Beckford, *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica*, v; William Ellis, *Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii, or, Owhyhee*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1827), n.p.; ix.

<sup>224</sup> Arthur Young, *Travels during the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789, Undertaken More Particularly with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Resources, and National Prosperity, of the Kingdom of France*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1793), 1:ix.

<sup>225</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, vii; Eliza Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India; Including Scenes in the Mofussil Stations; Interspersed with Characteristic Tales and Anecdotes: and Reminiscences of the late Burmese War. To which are added Instructions for the Guidance of Cadets, and other Young Gentlemen, During their First Year’s Residence in India* (London, 1841), vii; and Harriette Ashmore, *Narrative of a Three Months’ March in India; and a Residence in the Dooab* (London, 1841), vi.

knowledge of the genre's traditions. They recognized that by constructing an identity that was in line with both social norms and genre expectations, they would be earning their readers' trust and even admiration, which would improve their authority.

Because there was so much speculation about the veracity and authenticity of travel narratives at this time, writers also used diffidence as a means of convincing readers that their accounts were as true and authentic as possible. The preface became a site upon which travel writers could swear the faithfulness of their narratives and assuage the fears of suspicious readers by calling attention to the simplicity of their writing. In *Travel in India* (1783), William Hodges assures readers that his "few plain observations" were "noted down upon the spot, in the simple garb of truth, without the smallest embellishment from fiction, or from fancy."<sup>226</sup> Alexander Mackenzie concluded his lengthy preface to *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793* (1795) with both a warning and a promise of authenticity, stating:

I must beg leave to inform my readers, that they are not to expect the charms of embellished narrative, or animated description; the approbation due to simplicity and to truth, is all I presume to claim; and I am not without the hope that this claim will be allowed me. I have described whatever I saw with the impressions of the moment which presented it to me."<sup>227</sup>

Insisting that their accounts were written "on the spot" helped distance these writers from the fireside travelers, among whom were not only writers who fabricated entire journeys, but writers who wrote their accounts long after their journeys had ended, when memories had softened and

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<sup>226</sup> William Hodges, *Travel in India, During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, & 1783*, iv.

<sup>227</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793* (1795; New York: New Amsterdam Book Company, 1903), 1:xii-xiii.

errors and fictions were more likely to slip into their narratives.<sup>228</sup> By claiming that observations were written immediately, typically in the form of letters, journal entries, or notes, genuine travel writers helped minimize doubt that their descriptions were accurate.<sup>229</sup> Such claims also provided writers with an excuse whenever their grammar was deemed imperfect, their style unliterary, or their narratives poorly constructed.

For women travel writers, the prefatory claim to immediate writing could be used to build their credibility and authority as reliable travel witnesses. Many of the women travelers to India included such remarks in their prefaces, heralding the authenticity and reliability of their narratives while simultaneously downplaying their writing talent. In the preface to *Cutch* (1839), Marianna Postans underscores the reliability of her narrative by stating that it was developed from “a series of notes, taken during a residence of some years in Cutch”;<sup>230</sup> Emily Eden’s *Up the Country* (1866) swears in the prefatory letter to her nephew that the letters included “are true and that they were written on the spot”;<sup>231</sup> the preface of Alicia Scott’s *A Lady’s Narrative of a Residence in India in 1834* (1874) promises that the narrative was “compiled from journals written faithfully”;<sup>232</sup> and in *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823), Ann Deane echoed Hodges and Mackenzie in her insistence that her writing was not embellished, and

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<sup>228</sup> For more on these kinds of fireside travelers, see Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars*, 80-90.

<sup>229</sup> Of course, as Barbara Korte has argued, the “actual experience of a journey is reconstructed, and therefore fictionalized, in the moment of being told,” regardless of whether the account is written immediately as a letter or journal entry, or years afterward as a travel memoir. It is not my purpose here to argue the philosophic differences between the nature of reality and what the eye sees and the individual perceives, but merely to point to the eighteenth century reader’s expectations and understanding of reliable narrative and truth in travel writing. See Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, trans. Catherine Matthias (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>230</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, viii.

<sup>231</sup> Eden, *Up the Country*, 1:n.p.

<sup>232</sup> Lady Alicia Scott, *A Lady’s Narrative of a Residence in India in 1834* (London, 1874), vii.

“the reader must not therefore expect a finished and elaborate performance; but a plain, simple narrative of facts, committed while their impression was yet fresh on the mind of the author.”<sup>233</sup>

Each of these writers takes care to emphasize the integrity and reliability of their narratives, while also justifying the structural forms (e.g. epistolary, journal) in which their stories are told. As demonstrated with the prefaces by William Hodges and Alexander Mackenzie, addressing authenticity and the immediacy of the writing was an essential part of the preface formula for all travelers, not just women, and adherence to this convention reveals these women’s knowledge of the genre and their commitment to its literary requirements.

The need to address authenticity allowed women to both defend their chosen narrative structures and justify publishing works that may have been considered flawed in some way. By insisting that their narratives were authentic and true, they could subtly reveal their understanding of reader concerns and genre standards and give their words authority. When Ann Deane states that her work is “neither the production of a philosopher, nor a man of genius; but of a lady, who has witnessed all that she describes, and whose chief claim on the indulgence of her reader is authenticity,”<sup>234</sup> she is adopting an appropriately self-deprecating tone while also making a sound case for the importance of her narrative. Since authenticity was one of the most important qualities readers looked for in a travel narrative, by highlighting that specific quality, Deane is insisting on her book’s value and that if her audience wants to read truth, she can provide it. The preface was a chance for women to connect with their readers as writers, to assure them that their experiences were just as valuable, interesting, and informative as those written by men, and that if readers were willing to give them a chance, they would not be disappointed.

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<sup>233</sup> Deane, *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan*, iii-iv.

<sup>234</sup> Deane, *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan*, iii.

## *Tables of Contents*

No matter what narrative format a travel writer selected (e.g. epistolary, journal, sketch), tables of contents were nearly as ubiquitous as prefaces. Although two of the earliest works, Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (1777) and Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* (1811), contained neither a preface nor a table of contents, most works from later in the period—including Graham's *Letters on India* (1814; see fig. 2.2), Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India* (1830), Marianna Postans' *Cutch* (1839; see fig. 2.3), Harriette Ashmore's *Narrative of a Three Months' March in India* (1841), and Lady Amelia Falkland's *Chow-Chow* (1857)—contained both. As we have seen in the case of travel writing titles, early writers could trust that readers would be interested in their texts solely because travel narratives on India written by women were rare. After the publication of Graham's *Journal*, however, writers had to find new ways to make their work stand out, and the table of contents was one of the most effective means of doing so.

Today tables of contents are likely to provide only page numbers and titles of chapters, but most of the tables of contents that accompanied early travel narratives—and even some early novels, such as *Tom Jones*—interpreted “contents” more broadly, providing index-like summaries of all of the major events, sights, and travels included in a text. Sometimes these summaries were exactly that—chapter-by-chapter or letter-by-letter abstracts of the events contained in the narrative, created to build reader curiosity and help undecided buyers decide whether or not the contents were interesting, informative, or entertaining enough to warrant purchasing. These summaries were an opportunity for writers and publishers to highlight the specific incidents and descriptions that made a work exciting and unique. But in most travel

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**FIGURE 2.2.** First page of the table of contents for Maria Graham’s *Letters on India* (1814), one of the earliest examples of an Anglo-Indian woman using a table of contents in her travel writing.



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**FIGURE 2.3.** First page of Marianna Postans' table of contents from *Cutch* (1839). Notice that unlike Graham, Postans has given each of her chapters an individual name to help the reader find and sort information even more easily.

narratives, content summaries also served a more practical purpose: to enable readers to find particular passages quickly and easily.

Today if we were to pick up a travel narrative on India and wanted to read only the excerpts about animals, we might flip to the index and skim to find the entry for tiger or cobra or elephant, where we would undoubtedly find a list of the pages on which those animals were discussed. For most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and even earlier), this information would not have been listed alphabetically at the back as it would be today, but it would be listed chronologically in the chapter summaries. To make perusing these index-like summaries easier, they were not written in complete sentences but as lists that made finding the desired information simpler. If I were to open Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India* (1832) and wished to read, not about her Muslim family, but about Indian animals, a quick scan of the table of contents would bring me to Letter XVIII, which promises "Frogs.—Flies.—Blains.—Musquitoes.—The White Ant.—The Red Ant.—Their destructive habits.—A Tarantula.—Black Ants.—Locusts," among other "Evils attending a residence in India." On the next page, I would find an entire letter, XXII, dedicated to monkeys, including such information as "Instances of their sagacity.—Rooted animosity of the Monkey tribe to the snake.—Cruelty to each other when maimed.—The female remarkable for affection to its young" (see fig. 2.4).<sup>235</sup> If monkey motherhood struck me as an interesting subject, I would now have a clear shortcut to find that information within seconds. While no individual page numbers accompany these content summaries or keywords, they each reference something almost equally useful: descriptive headers that run along the tops of every page. To find Ali's passage on the

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<sup>235</sup> Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations on the Musselmauns of India: Descriptive of Their Manners, Customs, Habits and Religious Opinions. Made During a Twelve Years' Residence in Their Immediate Society* (1832; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974), xxiii-xxiv.

## LETTER XIX

Kannoge.—Formerly the capital of Hindoostaun.—Ancient castle.—Durability of the bricks made by the aborigines.—Prospect from the Killaah (castle).—Ruins.—Treasures found therein.—The Durgah Baallee Peer Kee.—Mukhburras.—Ancient Mosque.—Singular structure of some stone pillars.—The Durgah Mukdoom Jhaunneer.—Conversions to the Mussulmaun Faith.—Anecdote.—Ignorance of the Hindoos.—Sculpture of the Ancients.—Mosque inhabited by thieves.—Discovery of Nitre.—Method of extracting it.—Conjectures of its produce.—Residence in the castle.—Reflections. . . . Page 274

## LETTER XX

Delhi.—Description of the city.—Marble hall.—The Queen's Mahul (palace).—Audience with the King and Queen.—Conversation with them.—Character of their Majesties.—Visit to a Muckburrah.—Soobadhaars.—The nature of the office.—Durgah of Shah Nizaam ood deen.—Tomb of Shah Allum.—Ruins in the vicinity of Delhi.—Antique pillars (Kootub).—Prospect from its galleries.—Anecdotes of Juangheer and Khareem Zund. . . . . Page 289

## LETTER XXI

Natural Productions of India.—Trees, shrubs, plants, fruits, &c.—Their different uses and medicinal qualities.—The Rose.—Native medical practice.—Antidote to Hydrophobia.—Remedy for the venom of the Snake.—The Chitcherah (Inverted thorn).—The Neam-tree.—The Hurrundh (Castor-tree).—The Umultass (Cassia-tree).—The Myrtle.—The Pomegranate.—The Tamarind.—The Jahmun.—The Mango.—The Sherrefah.—White and red Guavers.—The Damascus Fig.—The Peach, and other Fruits.—The Mahdhaar (Fire-plant).—The Sirkakee and Sainturh (Jungle-grass).—The Bamboo, and its various uses enumerated. . . . . Page 304

## LETTER XXII

Monkeys.—Hindoo opinions of their Nature.—Instances of their sagacity.—Rooted animosity of the Monkey tribe to the snake.—Cruelty to each other when maimed.—The female remarkable for affection to its young.—Anecdotes descriptive of the belief of the Natives in the Monkey being endowed with reason.—The Monkeys and the Alligator.—The Traveller and the Monkeys.—The Hindoo and the Monkey. . . . . Page 324

FIGURE 2.4. Page from the table of contents of Ali's *Observations on the Musselmauns of India*, including Letter XXII's summary on monkeys.

The husbandman, whose land is in the vicinity of a forest, and the abode of monkeys, secures safety to his crops, by planting a patch of ground with that species of grain which these animals are known to prefer. Here they assemble, as appetite calls, and feast themselves upon their own allotment; and, as if they appreciated the hospitality of the landlord, not a blade is broken, or a seed destroyed in the fields of corn to the right and left of their plantation. But woe to the farmer who neglects this provision; his fields will not only be visited by the marauders, but their vengeance will be displayed in the wasteful destruction of his cultivation. This undoubtedly looks more like reason than instinct; and if credit could be given to half the extraordinary tales that are told of them, the monkeys of India might justly be entitled to a higher claim than that of instinct for their actions.

Monkeys seem to be aware that snakes are their natural enemies. They never advance in pursuit of, yet they rarely run from a snake; unless its size renders it too formidable an object for their strength and courage to attack with anything like a prospect of success in destroying it. So great is the animosity of the monkey race to these reptiles, that they attack them systematically, after the following manner:—

When a snake is observed by a monkey, he depends on his remarkable agility as a safeguard from the enemy. At the most favourable opportunity he seizes the reptile just below the head with a firm grasp, then springs to a tree, if available, or to any hard substance near at hand, on which he rubs the snake's head with all his strength until life is extinct; at intervals smelling the fresh blood as it oozes from the wounds of his victim. When success has crowned his labour, the monkey capers about his prostrate enemy, as if in triumph at the victory he has won; developing, as the Natives say, in this, a striking resemblance to man.

Very few monkeys, in their wild state, ever recover from inflicted wounds; the reason assigned by those who have studied their usual habits is, that whenever a poor monkey has been wounded, even in the most trifling way, his associates visit him by turns, when each visitor, without a single exception, is observed to scratch the wound smartly with their

**FIGURE 2.5.** Example of a running head in Ali's *Observations on the Musselmauns of India* that corresponds with Letter XXII's summary.

sagacity of the monkey,” I would simply flip to Letter XXII (page 324) and begin skimming page headers until I found the passage I wished to read (page 325; see fig. 2.5).

These headers, similar to those found in many bibles, would not have been nearly as useful if it were not for the tables of contents that indexed them. Despite the movement away from *utile dulci* in nineteenth-century travel writing, headers emphasized information and showed the utility of travel narratives even after the division between informative travel guides and entertaining travel narratives had been solidified. Readers could scan the table of contents to see if the kinds of information provided by the author were of interest to them, and then they could find the desired information easily without having to read the entire narrative. In this way, descriptive headers allowed travel narratives to be appreciated for two distinct reasons: for their easily accessed informative content and, when read from beginning to end, for their entertaining narratives that allowed readers to travel vicariously. Although Kindersley’s and Graham’s first narratives had no tables of contents and therefore no descriptive headers, by the late 1820s, both of these paratextual elements were seemingly a requirement of the genre. For almost the next forty years, no work of Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing would be published without detailed content descriptions that referenced page headers.

Graham’s *Letters on India* (1814) was the first of the Anglo-Indian narratives to have a table of contents, although the lists of keywords provided under each of her letters had no headers to which they corresponded. The keywords gave an impression of the book’s contents and a rough page range in which those topics could be found, but they were not nearly as helpful at tracking down information as the later books that had descriptive headers. Ann Deane’s *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823) had a similarly detailed table of contents

with no headers, but after its publication, all other works by Anglo-Indian women travelers contained both.

Although works such as Sarah Lushington's *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe* (1829) and Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India* (1830) included detailed tables of contents and descriptive headers, individual chapters and letters were still identified by number, not by name. Most of the early narratives were written while the author was traveling, not upon returning to England, and they were broken up according to how they were originally written—as individual letters or journal entries. The narratives were presented in the order in which events happened, so rarely did the chapters and letters have distinct subjects under which a collection of related keywords could be grouped. Instead a single chapter or letter might contain as many disparate subjects as “Franks at Alexandria.—Cleopatra's Needle.—Costume of Egyptian Women.—Flies.—Native Music.—Camseen.—Plague.—Public Baths.—Visit from the Aga of Alexandria.—Curiosities from Thebes.—Mr. Salt.”<sup>236</sup> Readers interested in a particular subject, such as the lives of foreign women, had to scan the entire table of contents to make sure they found all of the different scattered accounts and references.

Within a decade, trends in narrative structure began to shift, and more travel writers began to write their accounts after returning home. Although these writers excerpted heavily from their own journals, letters, and notes in order to make their narratives more accurate, their accounts resembled modern memoirs more than early travel writing, and they could more easily group their thoughts and reflections into topics and give their chapters names. For example, Marianna Postans' *Cutch* (1839) contains twenty-two titled chapters, each of which revolves

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<sup>236</sup> Keyword summary from Letter XIV, in Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India*, ix.

around a singular theme, such as “The Harem” (Chapter IV), “Suttee” (Chapter VII), or “Castles in Cutch” (Chapter XII).<sup>237</sup> This new way of organizing and narrating information made specific subjects easier for readers to find, especially because chapters were still assigned a keyword summary that corresponded to page headings. A reader interested in harems would find listed under that chapter title many topics related to that theme and Indian women in general, including “Wives of the Rao.—Guard of Eunuchs.—The Author’s Visit.—Dowry of the Ladies.—The Rao’s Mother.—Beauty of the Soodah Women....Moral and Intellectual state of Women in the East.”<sup>238</sup> Instead of these subjects being spread out across the narrative as they would have been in the past, readers could gather a more thoughtful and comprehensive understanding of an individual topic by reading a single chapter.

Some authors still kept their narratives chronological rather than thematic, but even these writers divided their chapters according to the section of the journey or individual place about which they were writing and named them accordingly. The chapters in Emma Roberts’ *Notes of an Overland Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay* (1841) bear names like “London to Paris” (Chapter I), “Cairo” (Chapter V), “The Desert” (Chapter VI), and “Bombay” (Chapter IX), making information on those various places easy to locate.<sup>239</sup> Eliza Clemons’ *The Manners and Customs of Society in India* (1841) contains a mixture of the two kinds of titles, with some, such as “Madras” (Chapter II) and “Hyderabad” (Chapter III), named after particular places, and others, such as “The Suttee” (Chapter IX) and “Servants—Children—Cooking” (Chapter XXI), focused topically.<sup>240</sup> Chapters focused on location could help prospective travelers to understand

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<sup>237</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, x, xii.

<sup>238</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, xii.

<sup>239</sup> Emma Roberts, *Notes of an Overland Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay* (London, 1841), iii,v,vi, vii.

<sup>240</sup> Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India*, ix-xi.

more about a specific region in the same way that a travel guide could, while chapters on individual topics acted more like encyclopedia entries, with an author divulging all of her knowledge on a single subject.

Throughout the period, the table of contents proved to be one of the most useful and adaptable paratexts available to travel writers, and each of these women used this feature to help advertise the originality and utility of their narratives. Although the official purpose and literary status of travel writing shifted around the turn of the century, these examples show that some travelers wished to brand their writing as more than just a collection of picturesque images and descriptions. These women wanted their writing to be not only insightful and enjoyable, but also useful. As Marianna Postans states in the opening quotation, “the real triumph of literature and the fine arts” is not in “ornament,” but in “the simple and vivid delineation of truth,” truth that these women worked to honor and emphasize in every paratext, from their titles to their tables of contents.<sup>241</sup> Even though new narrative structures, such as the sketch, began to dominate the field, and the older epistolary and journal forms became less common, the heart of travel writing—truth, utility, and pleasure—remained the same, and these women used their prefaces, tables of contents, and other paratexts to show that their commitment to these values, the hallmarks of eighteenth-century literary travel, was unwavering.

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<sup>241</sup> Postans, *Cutch*, 93.



## CHAPTER 3

### “THE NARRATION OF PLEASURE”: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND FORM IN ANGLO-INDIAN WOMEN’S TRAVEL WRITING

*“The intellectual community of India seems yet to have to learn the advantage of placing all that relates to it in a clear, succinct, and popular form, and of bringing works before the British public which will entertain as well as instruct, and lead those who are employed in legislating for our Eastern territories to inquire more deeply into those subjects which so materially affect its political, moral, and commercial prosperity.” ~Emma Roberts<sup>242</sup>*

By the time Emma Roberts published *Notes on an Overland Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay* (1841), her fourth and final book on India,<sup>243</sup> the subcontinent was well-trod ground in histories, novels, poetry, ethnographic studies, and travel books. It had been nearly thirty years since Maria Graham had opined about the severe drought of popular books on India, and in the meantime a host of Anglo-Indian women had published their travel narratives, including Ann Deane, Sarah Lushington, and Anne Katherine Elwood. However, despite these substantive contributions to British knowledge of Anglo-Indian life, the majority of works on India were so rambling, incomprehensible, or ill-informed that they exacerbated Britain’s miseducation and apathy towards Anglo-Indian affairs. Roberts relates, “One great bar to

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<sup>242</sup> Emma Roberts, *Notes on an Overland Journey through France and Egypt to Bombay* (London, 1841), 332-33.

<sup>243</sup> Roberts’ earlier books on India are *Oriental Scenes, Dramatic Sketches and Tales, with other Poems* (1830; reissued 1832); *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1835); and *The East-India Voyager, or Ten Minutes Advice to the Outward Bound* (1839). She also edited or contributed to volumes by other Anglo-Indian writers, including *Views in India, China, and on the Shores of the Red Sea. Drawn by Prout, Stanfield, Cattermole, Purser, Cox, Austen, etc. From Original Sketches by Commander Robert Elliott, R.N. With Descriptions by Emma Roberts* (1835); and *Views in India, Chiefly among the Himalaya Mountains, by Lieut. George Francis White, of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment. Edited by Emma Roberts* (1838).

improvement consists, I am told, of the voluminous nature of the reports upon all subjects, which are heaped together until they become so hopelessly bulky, that nobody can be prevailed upon to wade through them.”<sup>244</sup> In response to this problem, Roberts offers her own account as an example of the kind of “clear, succinct, and popular form” she extols in this chapter’s opening quotation, with which her book concludes. In this passage, Roberts argues that writing about India in a way that is not only instructive but also entertaining will better educate politicians and the general population alike and will ensure Britain’s—and the East India Company’s—prosperity.

Throughout the century of Company rule, many Anglo-Indian travel writers were as concerned with making their narratives interesting and entertaining as they were with highlighting their originality, informative content, and intellectual contributions. Creating a more pleasurable experience for the reader meant revising traditional definitions of the author-narrator function; developing secondary characters; and adopting a clear, consistent, and appealing voice—all aspects of Anglo-Indian travel writing that will be discussed in the next chapter. The focus of this chapter, however, will be on an equally important narrative component that required knowledge, flexibility, and ingenuity: narrative structure and form. If Roberts’ argument is accepted, form—and the careful structuring, revising, and plotting that adhering to certain forms required—was essential to creating entertaining, informative, *useful* travel narratives.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travel writers adopted and experimented with a variety of traditional and emerging structural forms, including the journal/diary,<sup>245</sup> epistle, and chapter narrative, as well as composite structures combining these

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<sup>244</sup> Roberts, *Notes on an Overland Journey*, 332.

<sup>245</sup> The words “diary” and “journal” are synonyms and share fundamentally similar definitions, both corresponding to the practice of recording personal experiences, observations,

forms. It would be rare today to find a travel book composed entirely of journal entries or letters, but, in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, these forms and their various hybrid counterparts were common in travel writing. Some narratives were composed entirely of letters from the author to friends or family members, complete with dates, locations, salutations, and closing regards. Travel journals were usually transcribed from dated diary entries, and the amount of editing or elaboration varied from author to author, with some seemingly published verbatim, and others containing substantial abridgement, polishing, or embellishment. Unlike the epistolary and journal forms, chapter narratives were typically written after the journey was completed, and writers often structured them around events, themes, and places rather than daily experiences. For reasons that will become clear later in this chapter, early women travel writers were particularly drawn to the journal/diary and epistolary forms, and, as it became more acceptable for women to publish travel writing, and as works on India became less scarce, women writers began experimenting more with the chapter and composite forms.

Despite growing critical interest in travel writing during the last few decades, form and structure have been largely ignored by scholars, at least those who work in the Anglophone tradition. In *New Approaches to Twentieth-Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory*, Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, and Siobhán Shilton argue that while scholars of Francophone travel writing have historically emphasized narratology and genre theory, Anglophone scholarship, “heavily influenced by postcolonialism and notions of (neo)colonial discourse, has focused on travel literature’s ideological taintedness to the detriment of

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opinions, and feelings. Their connotative meanings have often differed, with diary becoming increasingly feminized during the twentieth century. However, for the purposes of this discussion, the two words will be used interchangeably to include all recurrent autobiographical writing used to record conditions, events, and experiences as they occur.

considerations of the text's literariness."<sup>246</sup> Forsdick, Basu, and Shilton encourage scholars to combine the two approaches, not ignoring ideology and the historical effects of travel writing, but also considering the more literary and technical aspects of the genre. Other critics, including Grzegorz Moroz, have echoed this call and have also articulated some of the hurdles such studies must overcome, including defining a genre that defies easy categorization and has no singular form.<sup>247</sup>

As Jonathan Raban relates, "As a literary form, travel writing is a notoriously raffish open house where different genres are likely to end up in the same bed. It accommodates the private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the rough note, and polished table talk with indiscriminate hospitality. It freely mixes narrative and discursive writing."<sup>248</sup> Raban's description is particularly interesting because he sees travel writing as a form that comes in many different genres, not as a genre that can be composed in multiple forms. Jan Borm makes a similar case in his essay "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology," in which he argues that travel writing is not a genre, "but a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel," and these include all of the various names we apply to this body of literature, including "'travel book', 'travel narrative', 'journeywork', 'travel memoir', 'travel story', 'travelogue', 'metatravelogue', 'traveller's tale', 'travel journal', 'travels' but also 'travel writing', 'travel literature', 'the literature of travel' and

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<sup>246</sup> Charles Forsdick, Feroza Basu, and Siobhán Shilton, *New Approaches to Twentieth Century Travel Literature in French: Genre, History, Theory* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 14-15.

<sup>247</sup> See Grzegorz Moroz, "Travel Book as a Genre in the Anglophone Literary Tradition," in *Metamorphoses of Travel Writing: Across Theories, Genres, Centuries and Literary Traditions*, ed. Grzegorz Moroz and Jolanta Sztachelska (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 21-29.

<sup>248</sup> Jonathan Raban, *For Love & Money: Writing-Reading-Travelling 1968-1987* (London: Picador, 1988), 253-54.

‘travel genre.’<sup>249</sup> Conversely, Carl Thompson, in his comprehensive introduction to the history and theoretical background of travel writing, chooses to view travel writing as a genre, albeit one with “fuzzy” boundaries. He writes, “The genre is perhaps better understood as a constellation of many different types of writing and/or text, these differing forms being connected not by conformity to a single, prescriptive pattern, but rather by a set of what the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein would call ‘family resemblances.’”<sup>250</sup>

These “family resemblances” are perhaps best summarized by Borm, who does not agree that this “constellation” constitutes a genre, but is still able to arrive at a definition for the travel book: “Any narrative characterized by a non-fiction dominant that relates (almost always) in the first person a journey or journeys that the reader supposes to have taken place in reality while assuming or presupposing that author, narrator, and principal character are but one or identical.”<sup>251</sup> This definition, which is also the standard by which I determined what travel writing to include in this study, excludes non-narrative travel guides, ethnographic studies, and any fictional travel narratives. It assumes that a narrative thread must be present, although narrative can be defined in the most elemental way. Additionally, although I have used Borm’s definition to create boundaries for which of the dozens if not hundreds of texts from this time period I discuss and analyze, I adopt Thompson’s view—the more traditionally accepted one—that the texts that fall within this definition do comprise a genre, one with its own rules, expectations, and guidelines.

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<sup>249</sup> Jan Borm, “Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology,” in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 13.

<sup>250</sup> Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 26.

<sup>251</sup> Borm, “Defining Travel,” 17.

In this chapter, my interest is in the multiplicity of forms that comprise this genre and in how these forms unite travel writing as well as complicate arriving at a universally accepted definition for the genre. I will focus on two distinct groups of forms popular with Anglo-Indian women travelers: immediate writing, or diaries, journals, and letters; and retrospective writing, including chapter narratives and composite forms primarily written, structured, and/or edited after the traveler returned home. Additionally, I will explore narrative structures or patterns that arise and unite these forms into an identifiable genre, one which we might not be able to call simply travel writing (for that genre includes shorter works, such as essays and articles as well), but could be called—to borrow Borm’s terminology—the travel book.

In modern Anglophone scholarship, comprehensive studies that examine all of the dominant forms of the travel book and the narrative patterns and structures that arise within it are largely absent. While form is sometimes discussed in analyses of individual texts, and some individual forms, especially the journal and letter, have received critical attention, no scholar has attempted a collective exploration of all the forms available, especially in Anglo-Indian travel writing. Decades of critical oversight cannot be corrected in a single chapter, but by examining the narrative choices Anglo-Indian women made and the forms to which they were drawn, as well as how they experimented with form to meet their stylistic needs or to make the reading experience more pleasurable, we can begin to uncover a little more about what it meant to be a woman travel writer in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as how these women overcame opposition, reader apathy, and a saturated market to tell their stories and make their voices heard.

## Writing in the Moment: Journals, Diaries, and Letters Home

In a 2007 article for *The New Yorker*, Harvard literature professor Louis Menand supplies three possible reasons for why people keep diaries, each based on an aspect of the psyche. The id theory—the one that might bring to mind childhood diaries bound with locks and stowed beneath mattresses—argues that people maintain diaries to hide their secret hopes, desires, disappointments, and humiliations, all the aspects of ourselves we wish to keep private. The second possibility, the ego theory, supposes that people journal about the events of their daily lives out of a belief that those events matter because they happened *to them*; however, Menand argues that most people cannot maintain the “level of vanity and self-importance” that continuously writing about oneself for one’s own edification or amusement requires. Although we tend to think of diaries as private forms of writing, Menand suggests that many who choose to record their daily lives are actually subscribing to the third and final reason, the superego theory, and are not writing primarily for their own diversion, but because they intend their words to be read by others. “[Diaries] are exercises in self-justification,” Menand writes. “When we describe the day’s events and our management of them, we have in mind a wise and benevolent reader who will someday see that we played... a creditable game with the hand we were dealt. If we speak frankly about our own missteps and shortcomings, it is only to gain this reader’s trust.”<sup>252</sup> According to the superego theory, diary-keeping can often be a private act with a more public aspiration: to make the writer’s voice heard, believed, and remembered.

The reasons for keeping a diary are more complex and nuanced than Menand’s theories propose, and there are other motivations for diary keeping (such as to chronicle one’s sleep

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<sup>252</sup> Louis Menand, “Woke Up This Morning,” *The New Yorker*, 10 Dec. 2007, accessed 8 Aug. 2013, [http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2007/12/10/071210crat\\_atlarge\\_menand?currentPage=1](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2007/12/10/071210crat_atlarge_menand?currentPage=1).

patterns, work progress, or health deterioration) that can have more practical value than these reasons suggest, but Menand's theories—and especially the superego theory—can be useful for beginning a conversation about Anglo-Indian women's diary keeping and the diary's relationship to other forms of immediate writing, such as letters. Although diary keeping and letter writing may seem to be dissimilar activities, with conflicting agendas and audiences, in practice they fulfilled much the same purpose for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers and resembled one another in scope, content, and tone. As forms of immediate writing, both diaries and letters tend to recount daily or recent activities, written “on-the-spot” while experiences are still fresh in the writer's memory. Both fulfill promises made before going abroad to keep friends and family well-informed about their loved one's journey and experiences. Sometimes a diary was nothing more than an unsent letter, intended to be read by others once the writer had returned home, and sometimes a letter was nothing more than a collection of journal entries bundled and mailed home every month or so.<sup>253</sup> Maria Graham's *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812) begins with a salutation to “My Dear Friend,” suggesting that the journal was written to be read by one of Graham's close friends, and the preface of Sarah Lushington's *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe* (1829) relates that the text originated as a detailed journal the author kept for

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<sup>253</sup> More private forms of the diary existed, of course, but these usually did not find their way into print, at least not with the author's permission. In *The Timely Retreat; or, A Year in Bengal before the Mutinies* (London: Richard Bentley, 1858), sisters Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop describe (somewhat mockingly) the fear induced by losing one of their diaries: “words cannot describe the mental horror I endured on first becoming aware of the absence of my Diary. Nora and I had often been laughed at for carrying about with us two bulky, ledger-like books, with massive locks, the inside of which no mortal was permitted to behold; but, spite of all ridicule, we persisted in retaining our precious diaries; and now this repository of all my choicest secrets was in possession of some unbeliever, whose profane hands might break open the lock, and expose it to the eyes of some Englishman, who perhaps might, for the fun of the thing, publish it! What a horrible idea!” (49). While the Wallace-Dunlops may have kept such private, locked diaries, they did not choose to publish them or even excerpt from them in their retrospective narrative, whereas the writers of published journals often emphasize that their diaries were always intended to be read by an audience beyond the self.



her friends at home. Some journals that were published posthumously from manuscript, such as *Tigers, Durbars and Kings: Fanny Eden's Indian Journals 1837-1838* (1988), even contain direct addressees. Eden's journals, edited by Janet Dunbar, are addressed to her friend Eleanor Grosvenor, who was the original recipient of Eden's illustrated entries. Another posthumous publication, *Miss Fane in India* (1985), collects Isabella Fane's letters to a friend, Mrs. Chaplin, each of which contains dated diary-style entries. Fane's third letter even begins, "This morning I dispatched a large bundle of journal to you."<sup>254</sup>

Eighteenth-century epistolary novels also speak to the practice of sending journals to friends and family to be read. Throughout Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), references are made to the journal Pamela keeps, "which was intended for nobody's Perusal but her Parents." Early in the novel, the narrator introduces one of Pamela's letters as "the Account she herself gives of all this; having written it Journal-wise, to amuse and employ her Time, in hopes some Opportunity might offer to send it to her Friends."<sup>255</sup> Towards the end of the century, the eponymous heroine of Charlotte Lennox's *Euphemia* (1790) thanks her friend Maria Harley for sending a "large packet" in which Maria supplied copies of letters exchanged with a suitor. "How greatly am I obliged to you for giving me, in your charming journal, so large a share of your conversation,"<sup>256</sup> Euphemia writes. During this period, the line between letter and journal is clearly difficult to distinguish, especially when writing is directed to friends and family who are far away. Pamela is, of course, separated from her parents first by her service to Lady and Mr. B and then because she is being held captive at the Lincolnshire estate, and Euphemia is an ocean

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<sup>254</sup> Isabella Fane, *Miss Fane in India*, ed. John Pemble (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985), 69.

<sup>255</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (1740; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 316, 98.

<sup>256</sup> Charlotte Lennox, *Euphemia*, ed. Susan Kubica Howard (1790; London: Broadview, 2008), 149.

away from her friend, traveling in New York with her husband, a Lieutenant to one of the independent companies. The letters she and Maria exchange are by necessity long, substantive, and frequently cover days or even weeks of time. Euphemia's letters also occasionally resemble non-fiction travel writing as she describes the people and landscapes she encounters in Colonial America.<sup>257</sup> Both *Euphemia* and *Pamela* demonstrate the part travel played in making the journal and letter forms nearly synonymous to eighteenth-century readers and writers.

As narrative forms, non-fiction travel journals, diaries, and letters have drawn far more critical attention than chapter memoirs and composite texts, especially in studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women's travel writing. Because these forms of immediate writing have been described as feminine or associated with women's writing, they often appeal to feminist scholars and other critics seeking to reconstruct women's lives or discuss gendered dialectics. Joanne E. Cooper contends that in diaries, journals, and letters, "we have a rich tradition, a predominantly female tradition, with much to teach us," and Felicity Nussbaum has gone as far as to argue that women were the possible innovators of the introspective published diary.<sup>258</sup> Countless critics have discussed why the diary/journal/letter was an appealing form for early women travel writers, and Sara Mills provides an excellent overview of some of these arguments in her trailblazing *Discourses of Difference*, including citing Linda Anderson, who argues that

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<sup>257</sup> For more on the epistolary form and its relationship to travel in this novel, see Susan Kubica Howard, "Seeing Colonial America and Writing Home about It: Charlotte Lennox's *Euphemia*, Epistolarity, and the Feminine Picturesque," *Studies in the Novel* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 273-291.

<sup>258</sup> Joanne E. Cooper, "Shaping Meaning: Women's Diaries, Journals, and Letters—the Old and the New," *Women's Studies International Forum* 10, no. 1 (1987): 95; and Felicity Nussbaum, "Toward Conceptualizing Diary," in *Studies in Autobiography*, ed. James Olney (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 134.

the diary form is attractive to women travelers because it gives “a provisional voice to women who were denied confident access to public expression.”<sup>259</sup>

Anderson’s statement touches on just one of four primary reasons I argue the letter and diary/journal forms of travel writing appealed to women writers. Although some women may have chosen to publish in these forms simply because they required the least amount of revision or rewriting before publication, or because they truly were publishing only at the behest of friends and family, the majority of Anglo-Indian women travel writers published in these forms for more strategic purposes. First, as Mills, Anderson, and others have related, women travel writers faced particular challenges because “by writing about travelling, the women authors were bringing upon themselves criticism for both the writing and for the travels which they represented; they were laying themselves open to attack on charges of exaggeration and of sexual impropriety.”<sup>260</sup> Concern about how others perceived their choices and femininity prompted many writers to emphasize that they were only traveling as companions to male relatives (even though those relatives are often absent from the narratives) or to improve the lives of others through missionary or educational work. These women claim to have written only for the benefit of friends and family, and by publishing letters and diaries, these claims seem more sincere and believable.<sup>261</sup> At a time when being a woman writer could inspire hostility and character denigration from strangers and supposed friends alike, these writers drew less attention to themselves by publishing in what many perceived to be appropriate forms for women.

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<sup>259</sup> Quoted in Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 41. See also Mills, 41-42, 103-104.

<sup>260</sup> Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 41.

<sup>261</sup> Carl Thompson relates, “Even in the nineteenth century, when female authorship generally had become more acceptable, it remained common for women travel writers to adopt an epistolary or diary format, and by this means to suggest that their observations were never originally intended for publication.” See Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 180.

Although this explanation offers a convincing *gendered* reason for why women published letters and journals, it does not explain why men would also adopt these forms. The majority of male Anglo-Indian travel writers structured their texts as chapter narratives (as did the majority of women travel writers), but some men also employed the epistolary or journal structure in their narratives, including Donald Campbell, whose *Journey Overland to India, Partly by a Route Never Gone Before by any European* (1795) is a collection of letters to his son Frederick. Although Campbell does not highlight the epistolary nature of his narrative in the book's title, he emphasizes his form in the preface. Specifying to whom these letters were written makes his letters appear genuine, which corresponds with the second reason travel writers were drawn to this form: because it made their writing seem more authentic and honest—important qualities to underscore at a time when fraudulent travel writing abounded. The specific dates, locations, and other emblems of correspondence attached to journal entries and letters suggested authenticity, and diaries and letters were more likely to relate detailed personal experiences and reactions, which, in moderation, were useful for proving accounts were genuine lived experience.

Additionally, by the nineteenth century, “letters-as-literature” were an established and reputable form, so diaries and letters used in women's (and men's) travel writing still had literary value. As Andrés Rodríguez relates, the published letters of the eighteenth century were “highly sophisticated and cultivated, retaining a seventeenth-century aristocratic bias. ‘Wit’ distinguishes letter-writing of this period, just as it marks the literature, a literature addressed to readers who admired intellectual prose.”<sup>262</sup> Both well-known men and women had contributed to the letter-writing tradition of the eighteenth-century, including Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Thomas Gray, Samuel Johnson, Horace Walpole, and John Wilmot, the

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<sup>262</sup> Andrés Rodríguez, *Book of the Heart: The Poetics, Letters, and Life of John Keats* (New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 15.

Earl of Rochester. Choosing to publish letters and journals placed these women in distinguished company.

Although these are all plausible reasons for the continued adoption of the epistolary and diary forms in women's travel writing, equally plausible is the argument that women continued to publish forms of immediate writing because they believed these forms offered something that past-tense chapter narratives did not: immersion in the experience. Because letters and journal entries were written as events unfolded, without the increased objectivity created by time and distance, these forms tend to present a more visceral, immersive experience than narratives written after the writer had returned to the comfort and safety of home. The immediacy and tension of unexpected situations could prompt travelers to write with the sort of emotion and candor rarely found in retrospective writing. As Cooper relates, "Because they are written daily or under the pressure of the moment, diaries and journals tend to reflect more directly the author's views and circumstances than events recalled, reshaped and recorded years after they have taken place."<sup>263</sup> Similarly, Suzanne Bunkers has stated that one of the great benefits of immediate writing is the way in which it conveys "life as *process*, not *product*," reflecting "life as lived experience rather than as carefully shaped, edited text."<sup>264</sup> Although the past-tense chapter narrative would eventually become *de rigueur* for travel writers—and is still the preferred form in travel books—nineteenth-century writers who continued to publish travel journals and letter collections clearly recognized that these forms have value that is difficult to replicate in retrospective writing.

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<sup>263</sup> Cooper, "Shaping Meaning," 95.

<sup>264</sup> Suzanne Bunkers, "Reading and Interpreting Unpublished Diaries by Nineteenth-Century Women," *A/B: Autobiography Studies* 2, no. 2 (1986): 15.

By the late nineteenth century, travel journals and letters had slipped so far down the literary hierarchy that Victorian travelers frequently commented on how outdated or problematic the forms were, yet many still insisted on their value to travel writing. In *Travels in West Africa* (1897), Mary Kingsley apologizes for using journal excerpts, acknowledging that she had been “informed on excellent authority that publishing a diary is a form of literary crime.”<sup>265</sup> In *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (1880), prolific traveler Isabella Bird espoused that the epistolary form “involves the sacrifice of artistic arrangement and literary treatment, and necessitates a certain amount of egotism.”<sup>266</sup> Even Anglo-Indian traveler Matilda Ouvry echoed these thoughts by apologizing in her preface for publishing her diary entries, stating “a Diary cannot fail to be somewhat egotistical.”<sup>267</sup> Despite these claims, however, all of these writers found it necessary to use diaries or letters to create an immersive experience for their readers. The majority of Kingsley’s narrative is written as retrospective chapters, but occasionally she includes direct excerpts from her personal journal, creating a composite narrative that combines present-tense immersion and past-tense reflection. At the beginning of chapter seven, she pauses her narrative to defend her decision to include these entries, stating, “there are things to be said in favour of the diary form, particularly when it is kept in a little known and wild region, for the reader gets therein notice of things that, although unimportant in themselves, yet go to make up the conditions of life under which men and things exist.”<sup>268</sup> Bird justifies her decision to narrate

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<sup>265</sup> Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa: Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons* (London: Macmillan, 1897), 100. This passage is taken from the unabridged version of *Travels*; it does not appear in the (more common) abridged version.

<sup>266</sup> Isabella Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan: An Account of Travels in the Interior, Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkô and Isé* (London: John Murray, 1880), 1:viii.

<sup>267</sup> Matilda Ouvry, *A Lady’s Diary: Before and During the Indian Mutiny* (Lymington: Chas T. King, 1892), iii.

<sup>268</sup> Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 100.

*Unbeaten Tracks through Japan* (1880) through letters by arguing that the form “places the reader in the position of the traveler, and makes him [sic] share the vicissitudes of travel, discomfort, difficulty, and tedium, as well as novelty and enjoyment.”<sup>269</sup> Although Kingsley and Bird both acknowledge the arguments against using diaries and letters in travel writing, in these passages they underscore that immediate writing connects readers with travel experiences in a way retrospective writing cannot.

Despite the obvious utility of these forms, writers and critics have frequently questioned the artistic value of immediate writing. Just as scholars in the last century have had to reintroduce early women writers to the critical conversation and reestablish their importance to the canon, many have also had to make a persuasive case for why the diary/journal form is worthy of examination as an artistic literary form. The letter form has always enjoyed prestige with critics—due in part to the status of the epistolary novel and the prestigious authors whose letters were published—but it has only been within the last forty years that the common diary has been taken seriously as a literary form. Earlier critics, such as Donald Stauffer, claimed that “the diary has scant claim to consideration, for it makes no pretense to artistic structure,”<sup>270</sup> echoing the statements Bird made against the letter-narrative in the previous century. The majority of dismissive critics have considered diaries beneath literary consideration because immediate writing is concerned with the minutia of the everyday, the mundane details of an individual life, fragmented experiences instead of a unified existence.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Bird, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, 1:viii.

<sup>270</sup> Donald Stauffer, *The Art of English Biography Before 1700* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930), 55.

<sup>271</sup> For examples, see Donald Stauffer; Arthur Ponsonby, *English Diaries: A Review of English Diaries from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century with an Introduction on Diary Writing* (London: Methuen, 1923); and William Matthews and Robert Latham, introduction to

According to this once commonly held view, to infuse one's writing with "a profusion of details," or to describe one's daily existence, "leads to a loss of perspective."<sup>272</sup> As William Matthews relates, "the diarist can see only the pattern of a day, not the pattern of a lifetime."<sup>273</sup> This argument presupposes that perspective can only be gained through temporal distance, something the diary or journal inherently lacks. For many critics, especially those of the neo-classical variety, perspective equals distance, and any texts that lack distance (and therefore perspective) are considered to be of lower literary status or are ignored altogether.<sup>274</sup> Out of the various forms of life writing, the autobiography and memoir are considered more literary than the diary or journal because the former require time and reflection and embrace what some might consider a more artistic structure. What these critics and arguments fail to recognize is that the diary form does not lack perspective; it just contains *a different kind* of perspective, one that offers something vastly different from temporal or even, for the travel writer, physical distance from the events being described. As Suzanne Juhasz relates, "the perspective of the diarist is immersion, not distance."<sup>275</sup> The immediacy of the diary form offers readers the opportunity to experience a life as it is lived, to live in the moment, to discover life's challenges, fears, joys, triumphs, and heartbreaks in real time, which in turn allows them to reflect on their own experiences and reactions. The diary's use of concrete, sensory details, its ability to create a

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*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 1:xvii-lxvii.

<sup>272</sup> Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987), 21.

<sup>273</sup> William Matthews, *British Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of British Diaries Written between 1442 and 1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), x.

<sup>274</sup> Rebecca Hogan, "Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form," *Prose Studies* 14, no. 2 (September 1991): 99.

<sup>275</sup> Suzanne Juhasz, "Towards a Theory of Form in Feminist Autobiography: Kate Millet's *Flying* and *Sita*; Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*," in *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Estelle C. Jelinek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 224.



vicarious experience, is precisely why readers are able to immerse themselves in the form and connect with the writer's story. As Rebecca Hogan argues, "the diary crosses or blurs the boundaries between author and reader....diary-writing blurs or crosses the boundaries between text and experience, art and life."<sup>276</sup>

For Hogan and many critics like her, the diary, with its profusion of details, is an art form to be celebrated and critiqued, one with its own structure, rules, and expectations, many of which could be viewed "as potentially subversive of the structures, logic, and syntax of masculine language."<sup>277</sup> The most skillful diarists recreate experience and bring it to life rather than just supply a basic sketch of it, and they reflect on their travel experiences, frequently comparing and contrasting expectation with reality. During the period in question, publishing a journal, especially of the travel variety, also meant an opportunity for revision: to elaborate on hastily written descriptions or observations, to insert background research, and, most importantly, to expand self-reflection. Few journals were published without substantial editing. Producing a readable, entertaining travel journal could require as much knowledge, skill, and creative vision as writing a post-journey chapter narrative.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, travelers were often encouraged to make their journals as detailed as possible. In 1672, an epistle "To all Mariners" by James Janeway outlined twelve "directions" for future seaman, including to "Keep an exact Journal."<sup>278</sup> Nearly a hundred years later, Samuel Johnson offered similar advice to a friend bound for Italy: "I hope

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<sup>276</sup> Hogan, "Engendered Autobiographies," 100.

<sup>277</sup> Hogan, "Engendered Autobiographies," 99-100.

<sup>278</sup> James Janeway, "To all Mariners, and others that use the Seas," in *A Plat for Mariners; or, the Seaman's Preacher*, by John Ryther (London, 1672), A3.

you take care to keep an exact journal, and to register all occurrences and observations.”<sup>279</sup>

Johnson’s own journal of his trip to the Hebrides with James Boswell later became the basis for his only published first-hand travel narrative, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775). Although Johnson did not publish his narrative in diary form, he still admired those who did, including Thomas Pennant, of whom Johnson said, “he is the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than anyone else does.”<sup>280</sup> Johnson greatly admired Pennant’s journal-style *Tour in Scotland 1769* (1771) specifically because of the profusion of details it contained. “Pennant,” Johnson claimed, “has told us more than perhaps one in ten thousand could have done, in the time that he took.”<sup>281</sup> The present-tense immediacy of Pennant’s journal entries immerses the reader in his scenes, which are described vividly and meticulously. However, even during Johnson’s time, the diary writer’s predilection for recording *all* occurrences and details prompted some to reject the present-tense journal as a legitimate literary form.

Boswell, Johnson’s friend and biographer, believed Johnson had overvalued Pennant’s accomplishments and that “at best [Pennant] treats merely of superficial objects, and shews no philosophical investigation of character and manners.”<sup>282</sup> Today Boswell is recognized as one of the foremost diarists of the eighteenth century, yet, as his opinion of Pennant makes clear, even he believed that published journals should provide reflection and meditation instead of merely description and narration. Boswell’s own account of his and Johnson’s journey, *The Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides* (1785), contains the word “journal” in its title, yet it is written as a past-tense narrative, not a collection of immediate journal entries. Privileging the word journal in the

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<sup>279</sup> Letter to Giuseppe Baretti, 10 June 1761, in *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, 5 vols., ed. Bruce Redford (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992-94), 1:200.

<sup>280</sup> James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (London, 1791), 2:216.

<sup>281</sup> James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, with Samuel Johnson* (London, 1785), 268.

<sup>282</sup> Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2:216.

title suggests that the text closely mirrors Boswell’s own diary—and also underscores that the form remained popular and relevant—but Boswell’s choice to switch to a past-tense point of view and heavily edit and elaborate on his travels supports the commonly held belief that diaries require revision and reflection in order to be considered literary achievements. The chief complaint against these kinds of journals was that it was impossible for readers to find important or interesting information because indiscriminate diarists overloaded their entries with details, failing to exercise the restraint necessary for the creation of true art. As early as the 1720s, Daniel Defoe had articulated a similar opinion when he complained that keeping an exact journal of one’s travels led to the creation of “a Journal of Trifles.”<sup>283</sup> In his *Tour Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-27), Defoe offered another form of “immediate” writing as an alternative: “long, markedly non-epistolary ‘Letters,’” each of which was addressed vaguely to “Sir” and focused on a particular county or region of Britain.<sup>284</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century, the letter form dominated the travel writing field. Although not every letter-writer adopted Defoe’s “non-epistolary” style, many travel writers recognized that attaching dates, locations, and even addressees to their letters granted readers instant access to the narrative’s timeline and allowed them to locate themselves within the itinerary, which was especially important in long narratives that covered multiple cities,

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<sup>283</sup> This argument is made in the form of an anecdote comparing a judicious traveler who only records “critical” minutes with a gentleman who maintains an “exact Journal” in the preface to the third and final volume, Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 3 vols. (London, 1724-1727), 3:3-4.

<sup>284</sup> Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and the English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 161. Although Defoe chose to label the sections of his travel narrative as “Letter I,” “Letter II,” etc., he makes no claim that his letters are genuine correspondence. His full title makes clear that the text is “Divided into Circuits or Journeys,” which suggests substantial editing and careful arrangement, and later editions highlighted the “great Additions, Improvements, and Corrections” Defoe made to bring the text up to date and make it relevant as a travel guide for potential travelers. See title page of Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 4 vols. (London, 1742).

countries, or even continents. Perhaps even more importantly, including these markers of time and place, in both letters and journal entries, added an authenticity to travel writing that was imperative during a century “plagued” with “spurious” accounts.<sup>285</sup> The first travel book by an Anglo-Indian woman, Jemima Kindersley’s *Letters from...the East Indies* (1777), makes clear from its very title that the author has adopted the epistolary form for her narrative, and although Kindersley uses the same Roman numeral headings Defoe preferred, she also gives the specific location and date of each of her letters. These small details, which may seem minor or insignificant, endow Kindersley’s narrative with a temporality that encourages readers to believe in the veracity of her travels while also placing her in an esteemed literary tradition. Additionally, the epistolary form allows Kindersley to write with more honesty. As Floriane Reviron relates, “the genre gives the narrator greater freedom to criticise: because her harsh comments belong to the realm of the private they may be seen as less subversive.”<sup>286</sup>

Because letters and diary entries were supposedly written in the heat of the moment, without the detachment created by time and distance, it was somewhat safer for writers to make “unfeminine” claims or present unpopular opinions in these forms. Additionally, because these kinds of writing are typically associated with the private, and therefore transparency, they accommodate opinion and digression particularly well, which allows writers to describe the landscape in one breath and opine on political matters in the next. As Montesquieu explains in *Lettres persanes*:

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<sup>285</sup> Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 60.

<sup>286</sup> Floriane Reviron, “Isabella Bird’s in Japan: Unbeaten Tracks in Travel Writing,” in *In-Between Two Worlds: Narratives by Female Explorers and Travellers 1850-1945*, ed. Bèatrice Bijon and Gérard Gâcon (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 70.

In ordinary stories, digressions are permitted only when they form in themselves a separate and new story;...But in the epistolary form, where accident selects the characters and where subjects treated are not dependent upon an preconceived design or plan, the author permits himself to join philosophy, politics, and ethics to the story, and to bind the whole with a secret and in some sense obscure chain.<sup>287</sup>

The epistolary form's ability to empower writers to be more forthright and honest about "philosophy, politics, and ethics" benefitted both men and women writers, which is why the form was popular in the eighteenth century no matter who the writer was.

In the nineteenth century, the popularity of publishing immediate writing declined with writers in general, but Anglo-Indian women gravitated towards the letter form for longer than men did, perhaps in part because of a peculiar affinity for the form. In book reviews and journal articles, women had developed a reputation for being superior letter writers. In a review of Anne Katherine Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland...to India* (1830), a reviewer for the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* declared that "women have a knack of communicating an interest to the occurrences of every-day life, by the delicate grace and truth of their narrative, which men never can attain. When in a foreign land, the letter of a male relation is rather acceptable than otherwise; but one from the ladies is happiness."<sup>288</sup> Nearly twenty years later, a critic for the *Calcutta Review* expressed a similar opinion, acknowledging that letter-writing is its own art form, requiring a skill and talent not everyone possesses: "Familiar letters, when written with elegance and feeling, possess a charm which no other style of literature can share—a peculiar

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<sup>287</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 66.

<sup>288</sup> *Edinburgh Literary Journal* 96 (11 Sept. 1830): 168.

charm of their own, partaking of a delightful ease and frankness, yet with the appearance of having been written carelessly, and without study.”<sup>289</sup> Begrudgingly, this critic allows that women are the more sophisticated letter writers, stating, “Letter-writing is the only branch of literature in which the fair may be allowed to bear away the palm. Woman appears to have been ordained to excel at the epistolary style....Letter-writing would seem to be peculiarly her province.”<sup>290</sup> Regardless of whether such claims are accurate, the supposition that letter-writing could be an art form in the hands of a woman writer perhaps prompted some women, including Anne Katherine Elwood and Emily Eden, to continue publishing letters even after the traditional travel writing journal/letter form had been mostly abandoned or absorbed into composite chapter narratives.<sup>291</sup>

Four of the five earliest publications of Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing are in the letter form, including the very first, Jane Smart’s *A Letter from a Lady at Madrass to her Friends in London* (1743), which contains Smart’s account of a visit from a nabob and an elaborate, colorful description of his “Lady.” Appearing in 1743, the publication of this eight-page letter, originally addressed to Smart’s son,<sup>292</sup> coincided with the rise of the modern epistolary novel,

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<sup>289</sup> *Calcutta Review* 7 (Jan.-June 1847): xxxii.

<sup>290</sup> *Calcutta Review* 7 (Jan.-June 1847): xxix.

<sup>291</sup> Although the title of Elwood’s *Narrative of a Journey Overland...to India* (1830) does not call attention to its epistolary form, the volumes are composed of letters addressed to her sister, just as Eden’s *Up the Country* (1866) is letters to her sister. Non-Anglo-Indian women travelers who continued to use the letter form include Fanny Kemble, whose *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation 1838-1839* (1863) is actually composed of signed and dated letters addressed to the unnamed “E—,” proving yet again the commutability of these forms of immediate writing. The diary/letter forms were not abandoned altogether but were mostly absorbed into composite narratives, as will be discussed in the next section. With the exception of Matilda Ouvry’s *Lady’s Diary Before and During the Indian Mutiny* (1892), the few Anglo-Indian diaries published after this point were published posthumously, when the authors obviously could not revise them into another form.

<sup>292</sup> The published version does not include an explicit salutation, although at one point Smart mentions that “myself and your Sisters” were invited to visit the Nabob’s Lady. Henry

including Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), and the continued popularity of *Lettres persanes* and Montesquieu-style fictional foreign letters. More than thirty years later, Kindersley's *Letters from the...East Indies* would appear, followed in the early nineteenth century by Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India* (1817) and Maria Graham's *Letters on India* (1814), the follow-up to her successful and critically acclaimed *Journal of a Residence in India*. Although Anglo-Indian women published more retrospective writing than immediate writing after this point, some still continued to publish traditional epistolary narratives, including Elwood and Eden, the latter of whom published her letters first in newspapers and journals and later collected these into *Up the Country: Letters Written to Her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India* (1866).

All of these writers chose to publish epistolary travel narratives over any of the other available forms, but they each adapted the letter to accommodate personal aspirations. Elwood's *Narrative of a Journey Overland...to India* is arranged as a series of undated letters to her sister, but these letters have clearly benefitted from substantial revision and elaboration, and the first letter begins with a summary of the entire work, which could only have been written and inserted after the journey concluded. In this introduction to her text, Elwood argues that her letters offer something missing from existing travel literature:

Instead of the Popes and Cardinals who grace the Diaries of other migratory damsels, you will meet with Agas and Cacheffs, and hear of Pashas and Rajahs; and for the ceremonies of the Holy Week, you will have the initiatory rites of the Mahometan Hadje, the Mohurrum, and the Hindoo Hoolie. You must ascend the Pyramids, and descend into Joseph's well, penetrate into the tomb of King

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Davison Love reports that the manuscript version of the letter was addressed to her son. See Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras: 1640-1800*, 4 vols. (1913; Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988), 1:281.

Sesostris, and explore the caves of Elephanta. You will be exposed to Camseens and Siroecos; to Monsoons and Tropical heats; you will sail in Egyptian Cangias, Arab Dows, and Indian Pattermars; travel in a Tacktrouan and Palanquin; take up your abode in Tents, Caravanseras, and Durrumsallahs; hear of places seldom or perhaps never before visited by any of our countrywomen; and I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to a Turkish Divan at Djidda, an Arab Haram at Hodeida, a Jahrejah's Zenana at Bhooj, and a Bramin's Pinjrapole at Broach. Have you the courage to accompany me? *Allons donc*.<sup>293</sup>

Even readers unfamiliar with Elwood's foreign terms must have had their interest piqued by this bizarre list of exotic activities and locations, and despite the fact that Elwood deviated from the authentic, immediate letter form by heralding future events, her daring final question must have compelled many readers to continue reading and embark on this journey with her. Those who continued reading were gifted with a detailed, knowledgeable, insightful narrative bestrewn with references to and quotes from renowned literature (Byron's *Manfred*, the works of Washington Irving, Rousseau, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are cited within the span of five pages) and well-organized letters, many of which focus on a single subject or place, including Turin (Letter III), Pisa (IV), Florence (V), Sienna (VI), and Rome (VII). Because Elwood believed herself to be the first woman to ever make the overland journey, she offers one of the most detailed descriptions of the outbound journey found in Anglo-Indian accounts, including more than 150 pages on Egypt alone. From the beginning, Elwood's emphasis is on the details her narrative offers that other, earlier accounts had missed or ignored.

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<sup>293</sup> Anne Katherine Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England by the Continent of Europe, Egypt, and the Red Sea, to India; Including a Residence There, and Voyage Home, in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28* (London, 1830), 1:2.



Elwood was far from the first woman to make the overland trip, but she was obviously unfamiliar with Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India*, which also contains a comprehensive description of the journey across Egypt. Fay's letters, which she was preparing for publication at the time of her death in 1816, are remarkable not only because they relate adventures and encounters experienced nearly fifty years before Elwood made her trek, but because they are divided into two markedly different parts. Part one, which comprises more than three-fourths of the text, contains letters narrating Fay's first trip to India (1779-1783), and the letters contain all of the markers of genuine correspondence, including specific dates, locations, recipients, and sometimes even time of day or weather conditions. Most of the letters were originally intended for Fay's family members, and they are addressed to her father, sister, or the more generic "Friends." These letters are the epitome of immediate writing. Fay often begins a letter in the morning and returns to it in the afternoon, describing the events that have happened in the hours between. She describes her feelings and reactions to these events in real time, as she is experiencing them. For example, shortly after boarding the ship *Julius*, bound for Egypt, Fay reports that because of strong winds "several vessels have been driving in, in distress," but relates, "I feel perfectly easy. I am luckily sheltered now, and no one shall persuade me to leave this ship 'till all is over, and the weather settled again." By describing her emotions in present tense, Fay makes her situation feel extant, and the immediacy of her writing becomes even more explicit in the letter's closing lines: "Tea is waiting, and they are tormenting me to death. Adieu."<sup>294</sup> Readers are immersed in Fay's ship life immediately; one can almost picture her husband and friends in the next cabin, persistently calling for Fay to put down her pen and join them for tea.

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<sup>294</sup> Eliza Fay, *Original Letters from India* (1817; New York: New York Review Books, 2010), 65-66.

The immediacy of Fay's voice and experiences in part one makes reading part two of *Original Letters* all the more jarring. Described as an "abstract of the author's three subsequent voyages,"<sup>295</sup> the eight letters in this section are all addressed to an unidentified "Mrs. L----" and dated February or March 1815, although they describe two of Fay's three subsequent trips to India (1784-1794, 1795-1796) and a voyage to the United States in 1796. Because these letters were written long after Fay's travels were over, her language is the opposite of immediate: it is formal, stilted, and literary. In the first letter, she begins where part one leaves off, describing for Mrs. L---- her feelings upon leaving India in 1783 after her first trip there:

I was still young, and with buoyant spirits relieved in some degree from their late severe pressure, hailed my native land; yet a sigh of regret would mingle with my joyful anticipations, at quitting the society wherein, though assailed by tempestuous winds and mountainous seas, I had so frequently enjoyed, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" amidst congenial minds.<sup>296</sup>

While part one of Fay's letters is full of concrete description and immediate detail, part two is all abstraction and distance, her memories muddled by time and nostalgia. Gone is the voice of the young woman eager to embark on her first major voyage, and instead we find a wiser but more sentimental older woman, who can supply a basic sketch of her decades-old journeys but none of their heart, none of their emotion.

The significant differences between the two parts of *Original Letters* underscore what was at stake as travel writers shifted from immediate to retrospective writing. Although Fay continues to use the epistolary form throughout her book, in part two the lack of immediacy strips the letters of Fay's trademark wit and humor and leaves the reader unaffected. The letters

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<sup>295</sup> Fay, *Original Letters from India*, 225.

<sup>296</sup> Fay, *Original Letters from India*, 228.

in part two are obviously less successful at creating an engaging, immersive travel experience. However, these letters demonstrate that forms traditionally associated with immediate writing could be corrupted, or, perhaps less negatively, could evolve, to accommodate post-journey writing. Many early women travel writers believed the epistolary form to be, in the words of Nira Gupta-Casale, more “unassuming” than chapter memoirs. Gupta-Casale argues that although Fay’s reasons for publishing were “probably purely commercial,” she adopts the persona of a “modest, unassuming woman writer who shrinks from thrusting herself into the public eye” and chose to publish in letter form because epistolary writing “was associated with feminine writing and style.”<sup>297</sup> By adapting the letter form to accommodate her retrospective narrative, Fay loses the immediacy one expects to find in epistolary writing but gains the ability to tell stories she had failed to record on-the-spot and to shift her writing from what Bakhtin calls “primary utterances” to something he “might recognise as ‘a complex speech genre.’”<sup>298</sup>

Similarly, Maria Graham used the epistolary form to give *Letters on India* the appearance of unassuming, feminine writing even though the letters in the collection were written after Graham returned to England and were probably always intended for public consumption. According to the book’s preface, after the publication of *Journal of a Residence*, Graham received many letters from readers asking questions about Indian religions, customs, geography, and culture, among other topics, and her responses to these letters became the basis for *Letters on India*. Graham claims that the letters she received were primarily from India-bound servicemen, and most of her letters are addressed to the same (unnamed) male correspondent. Framing her

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<sup>297</sup> Nira Gupta-Casale, “Intrepid Traveller, ‘She-Merchant,’ or Colonialist Historiographer: Reading Eliza Fay’s *Original Letters*,” in *New Readings in the Literature of British India, c. 1780-1947*, ed. Shafquat Towheed (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007), 77-78.

<sup>298</sup> Gupta-Casale, “Intrepid Traveller, ‘She-Merchant,’ or Colonialist Historiographer,” 83-84.

book as a series of letters written in service to her countrymen allows Graham to assume a modest, feminine narrative persona and suggests that she only published the book because she felt her responses would be helpful to those with similar questions. At the same time, by stating that these men chose to contact her when they needed information and advice, she cleverly positions herself as a trustworthy, well-informed expert on Anglo-India who possesses knowledge and experience found nowhere else.

Throughout *Letters on India*, Graham's epistolary responses are thoughtful and well-researched, and they often include personal observations and elaborations on descriptions found in her *Journal of a Residence*. Each of the seventeen letters focuses on a central theme or subject, such as Indian languages or the Hindu caste system, and most letters bear the expected signets of genuine correspondence, including salutations, closing remarks, and conversational references to previous questions and earlier letters. However, the deeper we read into the collection, the less authentic Graham's epistolary apparatus appears. Although we might expect a collection of responses to reader mail to be fairly unorganized, with each of Graham's "answers" dictated by the questions she received, the disparate topics on which Graham reports appear to be pre-selected and strategically organized. In the opening of Letter VIII, Graham writes, "A thousand thanks for the patience you have had with my last letter, which has really encouraged me to begin this, and to go on with the plan I had proposed. Since, then, we have done with the heavens, it will not be amiss to inquire what the ancient Hindus thought of the earth."<sup>299</sup> It is clear from this passage and others that Graham is not merely responding to a question posed by a reader, but that she has a fixed, logical "plan" for these letters.

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<sup>299</sup> Maria Graham, *Letters on India* (London, 1814), 125.

Most India-bound servicemen would likely have appreciated receiving the kind of practical information found in existing guidebooks about Europe and Scotland, such as those by Mariana Starke and Sarah Murray, or in guides like Emma Roberts' *The East India Voyager* (1839) that were praised by servicemen later in the century.<sup>300</sup> Graham's letters, however, ignore practical topics like what to bring on the journey or what kind of conditions to expect in India and instead focus on obscure Indian literature, ancient writing systems, the role of women in Indian religions, and Hindu mythology, among other complex and ambitious topics. Perhaps Graham did encounter an earnest correspondent who initiated a dialogue and then readily agreed to an epistolary education, happily accepting each of Graham's letters, many of which are several dozen pages long. Perhaps the book initially began as responses to reader questions and then evolved into something more. Equally plausible, however, is the possibility that Graham's letters were always intended for publication and that she used an artificial epistolary frame in order to write the kind of volume on Indian history and culture she wished to write, knowing that by adopting a more feminine form her ideas and knowledge would be more widely accepted and respected. Using this frame also places her in the esteemed company of other renowned writers/editors, including Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, and Henry Fielding, who fabricated letters to themselves so that they could answer them in their papers and journals.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> The reception of Roberts' *East India Voyager*, which was praised by the *Naval and Military Gazette*, is discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>301</sup> The convention of fabricating letters for this purpose was so well known in the eighteenth century that Henry Fielding's periodical the *Champion* provided this headnote to a letter to the editor in its July 26, 1740 issue: "Our Readers may be assur'd the following Letter was not cook'd up by any Person concern'd in writing the *Champion*; but was *really* sent, in the very *Dress* it now appears in, to be submitted to the Consideration of the Public." See Bertrand A. Goldgar, "Fact, Fiction, and Letters to the Editor in Fielding's Essay-Journals," *Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History* 1, no. 1-2 (1993): 19-26. Quotation taken from p. 19.

No matter how *Letters on India* originated (and we will likely never know), Graham's letters reveal the pliancy of the epistolary form, that even narrative forms typically associated with immediate writing could be appropriated by retrospective writers to create a pleasurable, insightful, useful reading experience. Perhaps even more significantly, Graham's *Letters on India* and Fay's *Original Letters from India* marked a shift in Anglo-Indian letters. Although some women travelers would continue to publish diaries and epistolary narratives, the majority began embracing retrospective forms, choosing to write their stories after their journeys had ended and the significance of those journeys—to their own lives and identities, to Britain and to Anglo-India—was only just beginning to be revealed.

### **Post-Journey Writing: Chapter Memoirs and Composite Forms**

At the beginning of his *Travels...in France* (1793), Arthur Young argues that there are “two methods of writing travel: to register the journey itself, or the result of it.” Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Young was aware of a growing divide between the registered journeys, or immediate forms like journals and letters, and retrospective travel writing, including “essays on distinct subjects” that were bound into book form. In Young's time, the second method of writing was far rarer than the first, of which he said “almost every book of modern travels is an example.” Each form had its advantages and shortcomings. According to Young, the journal had the benefit of “a greater degree of credibility” but also a greater risk of being accused of duplicity if descriptions and remarks were underdeveloped or passed rapidly over. The very nature of travel journals also meant that they were often too repetitive and prolix, and Young argues that their penchant for mundanity and lack of structure “lessens the effect of writing, and destroys much of its utility.” On the other hand, retrospective travel writing, especially when in

essay form, lacked the inherent credibility and immediacy of the journal form, but it benefitted from travelers being able to craft and polish their writing and refine and focus their topics.

Young concludes that for his own narrative, it might be best to borrow from both forms,<sup>302</sup> so the first volume of his *Travels* is composed of his journal entries from his three years in France, and the second is comprised of chapters on individual topics, such as “Of the Climate of France” and “Of the Sheep of France.” This unusual format marked a turning point in the travel narrative form, and Young’s *Travels* presaged great changes for the future of travel writing.

By the nineteenth century, more and more travelers were abandoning journals and letters in favor of post-journey forms such as the chapter memoir and essay collection. Among Anglo-Indian women travel writers, the majority of whom were writing in the nineteenth century, the post-journey chapter memoir proved to be the most popular form of travel book. The key difference between these narratives and the diary/journal/letter forms was that they were written after the journey was complete, in past tense, which allowed writers to streamline their narratives, delete repetitive or digressive details, add background or exposition when necessary, reflect on or analyze their experiences, and make their writing more plot-driven and novelistic by foreshadowing later events and building suspense, or, conversely, more fragmentary, using sketch storytelling to relay entertaining anecdotes, local fable, and diverting gossip. Despite claims that they only published their narratives because of the encouragement of friends and family, these writers were consciously writing for a public audience, one for whom the dangers and peculiarities of British India had become somewhat banal, so writers had to create exciting new premises for their narratives and draw readers into their stories from page one. Additionally,

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<sup>302</sup> Arthur Young, *Travels during the Years 1787, 1788 and 1789, Undertaken More Particularly with a View of Ascertaining the Cultivation, Wealth, Resources, and National Prosperity, of the Kingdom of France*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1793), 1:1-3.

retrospective travel writers, especially women, had to be even more mindful of how they presented their own characters or what personal viewpoints they shared, since any seemingly radical beliefs would not appear as momentary lapses in femininity, confined to a single journal entry, but as representations of their true selves.

Although retrospective writing became the norm in Anglo-Indian travel books, the letter and journal forms did not die out altogether. In reality, many chapter narratives were composites in which writers braided together journal entries, letters, and post-journey memories and reflections into a single narrative. Travel writers understood that there were some events—especially traumatic ones—that could only be understood or felt by readers through immersion in the experience, by erasing the distance past-tense narratives created. The title of Katherine Bartrum's *A Widow's Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow* (1858) makes immediately clear what the outcome of her narrative will be (widowhood), yet, due in large part to interpolated letters and journal entries, she is able to create a suspenseful, emotional account of life during the Indian Mutiny and the deaths of her husband and son. A deluge of newspaper and magazine articles kept the British populace well-informed throughout the massacres and attacks that plagued Anglo-Indians in 1857, but few of these accounts make the situation feel real in the way Bartrum's hybrid narrative does. After reporting on the massacres at Meerut and Delhi, Bartrum includes this letter to her father:

the fortnight has been one of such intense anxiety and trouble to every one, that we have been unable to think of anything but our own fears and terror. I think we have all become fearfully nervous; every unusual sound makes one start; for who can trust these natives now, when they seem to be thirsting for European blood?...I cannot describe to you what our feelings have been lately—only ten



Europeans in the place completely at the mercy of the natives: what could we do if they chose to rise?<sup>303</sup>

The next day, she again writes to him:

I cannot tell you how I felt; I could neither sleep, eat, talk, or do anything but look to my husband for protection against foes which I fancied near at hand. I used to sit and cry over baby, thinking it might soon be snatched from my arms and murdered before my very eyes....alas! for the widows and orphans who are mourning the loss of many a loved one. That Mrs. G you spoke of was at Delhi; her husband was murdered, and no one knows what has become of her children.<sup>304</sup>

Although Bartrum claims that she “cannot describe” her feelings or “tell you how I felt,” these letters make her fear and anxiety palpable in a way no retrospective account could. They immerse the reader in this terrifying situation, in which Bartrum must fear every moment for her safety as well as that of her husband and child. Her plight as a British woman during the Indian Mutiny is made clear not by the relation of events, but by sharing her immediate reactions and emotions. Retrospective memoirs have the tendency to present events as if they are history—important to remember, but no longer affecting—and Bartrum clearly understood this flaw in traditional chapter narratives.

If Bartrum understood the problems retrospective writing creates, she was equally knowledgeable of the conventions and possibilities of the chapter form, which would explain why she chose to construct her narrative as a composite instead of just publishing her letters or

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<sup>303</sup> Katherine Bartrum, *A Widow's Reminiscences of the Siege of Lucknow* (London: J. Nisbet, 1858), 3-4.

<sup>304</sup> Bartrum, *A Widow's Reminiscences*, 8.

journal. The chapter form allows her to control the structure, mood, and tone of her story in a way immediate writing alone does not. Her chapters toggle between forms, but most begin and end with retrospective writing, which she uses to set the scene, foreshadow future events, and generate suspense. Chapters tend to end at moments of revelation, peril, or foreboding. The first chapter, in which she relays her reasons for going to Lucknow, as well as her fears about what she will find there, concludes, “When we entered the Residency, it presented a scene of the utmost confusion, so that I could scarcely recognise it to be the same place I had seen a year before.”<sup>305</sup> Ending the chapter at this point leaves the reader wondering, *How is Lucknow different? What has changed? Why is it in a state of confusion?* Using this novelistic technique, Bartrum ensures that her readers are invested in her story and likely to begin the next chapter in order to find answers to their questions.

Amelia Falkland was equally adept at using the chapter form to create suspense. In *Chow-Chow; Being Selections from a Journal Kept in India, Egypt, and Syria* (1857), she closes the opening chapter by describing a violent thunderstorm that strikes while her family is having dinner on the verandah, and she concludes, “Such was the commencement of the monsoon.”<sup>306</sup> This rather ominous statement builds anticipation for the chapter ahead. Because monsoons had been described frequently in other accounts, Falkland knows her audience is aware of the difficulties and dangers the British faced because of them, and ending on the word “monsoon” is a deliberate choice to build a mood that she continues into the next chapter. “The first storm did not cool the air,” Chapter Two begins, and readers are immediately transported back into the scene, imagining the warm, humid Indian air against their own skin, while also noting the

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<sup>305</sup> Bartrum, *A Widow's Reminiscences*, 15.

<sup>306</sup> Amelia Falkland, *Chow-Chow; Being Selections from a Journal Kept in India, Egypt, and Syria*, 2 vols. (London, 1857), 1:27.

suggestion of more rain and cooler days ahead.<sup>307</sup> Although the majority of Falkland's chapters still recount day-to-day life in India and contain much of the same information found in journals, moments like these show she was aware of novelistic conventions that could be used to give her book a more narrative arc and keep her readers engaged.

Although the title of Falkland's *Chow-Chow* claims that the work contains "selections from a journal," the book is written entirely as a well-organized, highly structured, past-tense memoir, with no direct excerpts from her journal. The title probably means that the details of Falkland's narrative are adapted from journal entries, not merely constructed from memory, but highlighting the word "journal" may prepare readers for a different experience from what they will encounter on the page. However, using this word in her title is a strategic reference to authenticity. Moving from immediate forms of writing to more distant, retrospective forms did not alleviate the burden travel writers felt to prove the veracity of their accounts; in some ways, it may have even increased it. Most authors of chapter narratives continued to make some claim to authenticity, stressing that their narratives were written from personal notes or journals, even when they failed to include direct quotes from these. In one of the earliest chapter narratives by an Anglo-Indian woman, Sarah Lushington's *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by Way of Egypt* (1729), the author claims that "little alteration has been made in the original journal, beyond adapting its contents to a narrative form, and omitting details that might prove tedious."<sup>308</sup> While one might read this representation of Lushington's narrative and assume it will resemble the travel journals of earlier writers, in fact Lushington's narrative exhibits none of the hallmarks of journal writing; like Falkland's *Chow-Chow*, it is carefully structured, written

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<sup>307</sup> Falkland, *Chow-Chow*, 1:28.

<sup>308</sup> Sarah Lushington, *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by Way of Egypt* (London, 1829), x.

entirely in past tense, and contains no exact dates or any of the immediacy of the diary/journal form.

Similarly, Harriette Ashmore's *Narrative of a Three Months' March in India* (1841) begins with a claim that the "following pages were written during the Author's absence from England." "Most of the notes," Ashmore writes, "were hastily made during the bustle and confusion upon marching, but they are faithful representations."<sup>309</sup> This claim allows Ashmore to defend herself against any faults others may find in her narrative or with her writing style, as well as to insist on the authenticity of her representations and the immediacy of her writing. However, despite Ashmore's insistence that the book is no more than a collection of hastily written notes, composed while she was still away, in reality her narrative more closely resembles Young's "essays on distinct subjects" than a random assortment of notes. Although the text follows Ashmore's journey chronologically, individual chapters are highly structured and focus more on particular subjects, places, or legs of the journey than on daily life. One chapter even takes an opportune moment to abandon the narrative completely and instead offer advice to outbound travelers, counseling them on how to prepare for the journey and whom to seek as associates, and even admonishing parents to improve the "paltry educations" young women receive before being sent off to India to become wives and mothers.<sup>310</sup>

If Ashmore's narrative strays into essay territory, Emma Roberts' books fully embrace the essay form. More than any other Anglo-Indian woman traveler, Roberts adopts the detached, objective tone of the ethnographer and travel guide writer, minimalizing her presence in the text and avoiding a linear narrative structure. The chapters in Roberts' *Scenes and Characteristics of*

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<sup>309</sup> Harriette Ashmore, *Narrative of a Three Months' March in India; and a Residence in the Dooab* (London, 1841), v-vi.

<sup>310</sup> Ashmore, *Narrative of a Three Months' March in India*, 342.

*Hindustan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1835) originally appeared as a series of articles in the *Asiatic Journal*, and Roberts' makes no effort to insert a narrative thread connecting them. Some of the chapters in *Scenes and Characteristics* highlight specific places ("Arrah," "Delhi," "Government House: Calcutta") or regions ("Environs of Calcutta," "Gour, Mandoo, and Benjapore"), while others focus on amenities and popular pastimes ("Shops and Shopping") or people ("Sketches of Remarkable Living Characters in India"). Each chapter is its own self-contained essay, and the text lacks the traditional travel narrative structure of a beginning, middle, and end. Readers could begin reading in any chapter, on any topic, without feeling lost.

Two years before her death, Roberts decided to return to India by way of the overland route, and the *Asiatic Journal* again commissioned a series of articles that would later become Roberts' final book, *Notes on an Overland Journey*. Each of the twelve chapters in this text are named after a location or leg of her journey ("London to Paris," "Marseilles to Alexandria," "The Desert," "Suez to Aden," "Bombay"), and the chapters are all written in the "clear, concise," retrospective style Roberts preferred. Occasionally, she slips into an immediate narrative voice—"The festival of the Duwallee has taken place since my arrival in Bombay"<sup>311</sup>—which suggests that at least parts of her chapters probably resemble the notes from which they were adapted, but most of the narrative is written with the critical eye of the impartial observer, recording details, events, and experiences as if they happened to someone else, or at the very least, to another, younger self. However, because *Notes on an Overland Journey* traces Roberts' precise route, it has a clear narrative arc, and despite its objective tone, it more closely resembles the retrospective chapter narratives of other mid-century Anglo-Indian travel writers.

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<sup>311</sup> Roberts, *Notes on an Overland Journey*, 326.

H. Porter Abbott, Gérard Genette, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and others have argued that at minimum a narrative must represent an event or series of events, which can be unconnected.<sup>312</sup> An event might be something as simple as “girl enrolls in a new school” or “man is bitten by a spider” or, for our purposes, “woman travels to a foreign country,” so Roberts’ book meets the basic requirement for consideration as a travel narrative. Although it does not possess the same continuity as some more author-focused travel writing, in which a narrator provides transitions and reflections that connect events, the events in her text do “belong to the same chronology from beginning to end and share the involvement of at least one character”:<sup>313</sup> Roberts herself, although her presence in the text is minimal. While active narrators or narrative personas were not always prominent or even encouraged in travel writing—which will be discussed in the next chapter—most Anglo-Indian travel narratives were structured around some form of the narrative cycle, which requires additional context and reflection often missing from Roberts’ *Notes on an Overland Journey*.

In *Narratology*, Mieke Bal argues that every narrative cycle contains three phases: “the possibility (or virtuality), the event (or realization), and the result (or conclusion) of the process.”<sup>314</sup> While an event alone might be enough to constitute narrative in its most basic form, the event requires some kind of anticipation and conclusion of the event in order to be a narrative cycle. While “woman travels to a foreign country” is an event and qualifies as narrative, “woman wants to travel abroad for the first time, woman travels to a foreign country, woman has a great time” would be a narrative cycle in its most basic form. To a greater or lesser degree, we see

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<sup>312</sup> See H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 13.

<sup>313</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 14.

<sup>314</sup> Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 19.

these three stages reenacted countless times in Anglo-Indian women's travel writing as writers anticipate what life in India will be like, live it, and then reflect on it. Although the event itself—life in India—dominates the account, most narratives also allow writers to anticipate what life there will be like and then, after leaving India, to reflect on the experiences collected and how those experiences have shaped their perceptions of the land, people, and cultures encountered, as well as how those perceptions shape their understanding of their own culture, heritage, and position within society. Within this larger narrative cycle, there can be dozens or even hundreds of smaller narrative cycles, but in essence, the predominant cycle, or the narrative arc, is the same.

Because the majority of travel narratives by Anglo-Indian women mirror this narrative cycle, the stories can seem overly similar and even repetitive at times. Their summaries are nearly identical: woman prepares for and journeys to India, either by sea or by the overland route through Egypt; woman spends a number of months or years in India, typically visiting Calcutta, Madras, and/or Bombay; woman returns to England, either by sea or by the overland route, and reflects on how she has grown or what the experience has taught her. Even the details can seem the same. Accounts of sea voyages describe cabin conditions; bouts of seasickness; shipboard activities, including moonlit quadrilles, shark hunts, and Sunday services; weather conditions and geographic coordinates; and the general monotony of life at sea. Overland accounts describe visits to the pyramids and sphinx and caravans across the desert to Suez.

The closer these accounts were written to one another, the more identical they can seem. Both Rosalind and Madeline Wallace-Dunlop and Matilda Ouvry describe remarkably similar experiences at the desert stations and pyramids in Egypt. Of their ascension to the peak of the Grand Pyramid in 1856, the Wallace-Dunlops report,

we resigned ourselves to the tender mercies of four Arabs, that being the number allotted to each aspirate for surmounting the rugged sides of old Cheops' monument....Poor Nora! clambering up stones of from four to five feet with her short legs was a difficulty, to say the least of it, while the merciless Arabs would suspend my whole weight from my unfortunate wrists, which I momentarily expected to give way.<sup>315</sup>

Two years later, Ouvry writes:

I resolved if possible to get to the top. I therefore told four or five Arabs to pull me up, without any effort of my own. These Pyramids are composed of huge blocks of stone piled one on the top of the other, forming gigantic steps from one to three feet high,...my arms were nearly pulled out of their sockets, but I got up at last.<sup>316</sup>

Although the Wallace-Dunlops perhaps exaggerate the distance between pyramid steps (or Ouvry underestimates it), the accounts are similar enough to sound repetitive.

Similarities between travel descriptions were actually encouraged in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because the more alike two descriptions were, the more likely they were to be authentic; however, the repetitive structure of these narratives combined with the similarity of these women's experiences prompted many retrospective writers to flout traditional narrative conventions and structure their stories around unusual events or situations. Because the outbound voyage had been described in detail by so many authors, by mid-century many travelers relegated this first part of the narrative cycle to a single paragraph or even sentence. Instead, they chose to begin their narratives with a more interesting or curious event. The

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<sup>315</sup> Wallace-Dunlop and Wallace-Dunlop, *The Timely Retreat*, 30-31.

<sup>316</sup> Ouvry, *A Lady's Diary*, 162.



opening paragraph of Falkland's *Chow-Chow* plunges her readers into this unusual situation: "In the spring of 1848, Lord Falkland was appointed governor of Bombay; and soon after our arrival in India, it became my duty to hold a kind of drawing-room, to receive the ladies...and it was decided that this grand event should take place as early as circumstances would allow."<sup>317</sup>

Readers immediately know that this will not be an ordinary travel account. Falkland is not the wife of a military officer or EIC official; she is the wife of Bombay's governor, and her account will offer a vastly different perspective from the depictions of military cantonments and marches most women published. The first narrative cycle to which she introduces the reader does not begin with the possibility, or virtuality, of going to India but the anticipation of hosting a grand "drawing-room" for the Anglo-Indian women of Bombay.

Although most travel writers continued to use the traditional narrative travel arc to structure their accounts, more and more often they were mining the flexibility of the chapter narrative form to present their experiences in more innovative and entertaining ways. The sketch form of storytelling became particularly popular because it allowed writers to make the kind of interesting digressions accommodated by journals and diaries with the added structure and reader friendliness of the chapter form. In the preface to *The Manners and Customs of Society in India* (1841), Eliza Clemons refers to her work as "sketches," but she quickly proves that her account is more than just a random collection of stories and descriptions. Instead, she uses sketches to expand her traditional narrative journey with interpolated stories. Interpolated stories were common in early eighteenth-century novels, when characters would often encounter people along their journeys and share those people's individual stories and histories. Sketch narratives like Clemons' work in a similar way; travelers chronicle their own journeys but often interrupt the

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<sup>317</sup> Falkland, *Chow-Chow*, 1-2.

narrative to recount an anecdote heard along the way. Clemons uses all of the related storytelling conventions that appear in eighteenth-century novels: she often writes her anecdotes in first person from the point of view of the original storyteller, provides a separate setting and background for the interpolated story, and uses dialogue. The traditional narrative cycle is established in such chapters as “Chapter I: Voyage from England to Madras” and “Chapter XXVIII: The Homeward Voyage,” but interpolated stories appear in separate chapters throughout the book. Chapter eight ends “A friend of mine related to me the following story...,” and the next chapter, “The Suttee,” begins in the friend’s voice: “It was during one of those lovely sunsets...I arrived at a small village.”<sup>318</sup> Some stories stray into fable or fiction, including chapter nineteen, “Love and Revenge: A tale of Native passion”; the three-chapter long story “The Soldier”; and “The South Polar.—A Yarn.” She devotes an additional three chapters to “Burmese War—Journal of an Officer,” which she claims contains direct excerpts from an officer’s journal of “particular and interesting circumstances.”<sup>319</sup> An additional chapter uses a letter to share a “love story.” By taking the chapter form and combining it with sketch storytelling and forms of immediate writing, Clemons creates an entertaining narrative that is original and surprising. At the time, *The Metropolitan* even called it, “A very amusing work, and as untarnished by a fault as almost any with which we ever met.”<sup>320</sup>

Clemons adopted the traditional narrative arc of voyage to India, residence, and return to England to give her collection of sketches structure and familiarity, but her contemporary Marianne Postans used a more limited frame for her two sketch narratives. The first, *Cutch; or*

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<sup>318</sup> Eliza Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India; Including Scenes in the Mofussil Stations; Interspersed with Characteristic Tales and Anecdotes: and Reminiscences of the late Burmese War* (London, 1841), 77, 78.

<sup>319</sup> Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India*, 131.

<sup>320</sup> *The Metropolitan* 31 (August 1841): 107.

*Random Sketches of Western India* (1838), begins not with her leaving England, but with her leaving Bombay for Cutch.<sup>321</sup> Her narrative is about a journey within a journey, and by beginning and ending her narrative with her travels to and from Cutch, she is firmly establishing herself as an Anglo-Indian and allowing a region to take center stage as opposed to the entire subcontinent. Each of her twenty-two chapters has a specific focus that sheds light on some aspect of this little-known region. While some chapters are structured around travel itself (“The Voyage”) and give her narrative a plot of sorts, others serve as mini-dissertations on various subjects: “The Harem,” “Suttee,” “Castles in Cutch,” “Juggling, Snake-Charming, and Magic.”

The following year, Postans’ published a second book, *Western India in 1838* (1839), that uses essay-style chapters to create a yearbook of life in British India, including such topics as “The Burrah Bazaars,” “Native and European Soldiery,” and “Native Education and Society’s Schools.” Throughout both of these texts, Postans balances an objective, journalistic tone with a more personal, anecdotal form of sketch storytelling, peppering her chapters with eye-witness accounts that enliven the narrative and demonstrate authority and authenticity. After describing the typical first reaction of isolated Indian villagers to white Europeans, with whom they shared no common language and whom they believed to be “some Rakush or Demon,” Postans provides this personal anecdote:

The first time I remember to have occasioned this terrible passion of fear, was in the neighborhood of Purtabghur, a magnificent strong hold in the Deckan<sup>322</sup>...our attention was attracted to a group of peasants....The men, each with a water

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<sup>321</sup> The princely state of Cutch, located more than 550 miles northwest of Bombay, sits on the Gulf of Kutch and was ruled by the Jadeja dynasty until Indian independence. Today the region, called Kutch, is the largest district in the northwestern state of Gujarat.

<sup>322</sup> The Deckan, or Deccan plateau, comprises most of the southern, triangular part of India. It lies between the Western and Eastern Ghats, coastal mountain ranges that run the length of the lower half of the subcontinent.

gourd, slung carelessly over his shoulder, were coming merrily on, trolling some simple ditty, while ever and again a gay laugh rang out its silvery tones, and convinced us that a village lass was of the party. As we approached, a pretty bright-eyed damsel of some fourteen summers, skipped lightly from her companion's side to catch a glimpse of us; but no sooner had a single glance awakened her natural terrors, than gathering her saree tightly round her form, she uttered shriek after shriek, bounding like a hunted doe, from side to side of the road, vainly attempting to escape. Remonstrance was useless; the mere sound of the strange voices increased her agony."<sup>323</sup>

This anecdote demonstrates Postans' first-hand knowledge of this behavior, that she is not merely reporting on a situation that exists in India, but that she has been an eye-witness to the reactions of villagers who encountered Europeans for the first time.

The chapter form proved useful not only to travelers wishing to create hybrid texts or provide narrative structure to collected sketches but also with diarists and letter-writers who wanted to make immediate writing more reader friendly and accessible. Although it is composed entirely of journal entries, Georgiana Paget's *Camp and Cantonment: A Journal of Life in India in 1857-1859* (1865) uses chapters to divide the narrative into more digestible, organized segments (typically 20-30 pages each). In the table of contents, the content of each chapter is summarized, and that same summary is repeated at the beginning of the corresponding chapter (see fig. 3.1). The near-daily journal entries, most comprising a single long paragraph, do not appear to be substantially abridged or expanded, but the chapter format makes important

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<sup>323</sup> Marianne Postans, *Western India in 1838*, 2 vols. (London, 1839), 1:206, 208.

# JOURNAL.

## CHAPTER I.

EMBARCATION—TOWING DOWN CHANNEL—PUT INTO  
PORTSMOUTH—START AGAIN—SEA SICKNESS—PASS  
MADEIRA—A SHARK CAUGHT—GALE OF WIND—  
COLD AND WET.

Tuesday, August 4, 1857.

AFTER an early breakfast I drove down at 8 o'clock to the Arsenal Quay at Woolwich, accompanied by the kind friends with whom my husband and myself had been staying ever since the breaking up of our own establishment, and who wished to see the last of us. Here I found the men and officers drawn up, belonging to my husband's field battery, and to another company of the Royal Artillery which was to go in the same ship with us. Then were enacted the scenes of painful partings inseparable from the departure of troops on service, where the wives are of necessity left behind, and greatly was the sergeant's wife envied who was allowed to accompany me as my maid.

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**FIGURE 3.1.** The first page of Paget's opening chapter in *Camp and Cantonment* shows the hybridity of her structure, which groups journal entries into chapters.

information easier to find and gives the diary a book-shaped structure that sometimes feels missing in journal-style travel writing.

Fanny Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (1850) adopts a similar system of chapter breaks and summaries to make her journal more approachable. Unlike Paget's chapters, which appear to be broken according to length, Parks' chapters are based on topic, location, or even time span, and each is given not only a summary but a title that highlights the main idea of the chapter. Four early chapters (Chapter IV: Residence in Calcutta, 1823; Chapter V: Residence in Calcutta, 1824; Chapter VI: Residence in Calcutta, 1825 (see fig. 3.2); and Chapter VII: Departure from the Presidency, 1826) each cover an entire year's worth of carefully selected diary entries, whereas some later chapters, including Chapter XXI: Life in the Zenana and Chapter XXV: The Cholera, combine a handful of entries, most from a single month, that focus on a particular topic of interest. No matter how much time they cover, the chapters do not vary widely in length because Parks is not interested in publishing (and truly could not publish) every entry in the journal she kept during her residence in India from 1822-1845. Instead, she chooses only those entries that are most pertinent to her topics, and although she may linger over sunsets and landscapes in early entries, these kinds of entries become rarer as Parks tries to avoid too much repetition in her lengthy two-volume narrative. This unconventional approach allows Parks to create chapter essays out of mostly unaltered journal entries.

In discussions on travel writing form, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* has received more critical interest than any other text discussed here, and with good reason. Encompassing more than a thousand pages, the text is by far the longest of the Anglo-Indian travel narratives and contains a cornucopia of information on British India, delivered in what appears to be a recognizable

## CHAPTER VI.

### RESIDENCE IN CALCUTTA.

1825.—A Day in March—The Furlough and Pension Funds—Bandidote Rats—The Strand—The Cutting System—Harrow-on-the-Hill—Sickness in Arracan—The Golden Feet—Arrival of Lord Combermere—Bhurtpore—La Pucelle—Marsh Fever—Change of Residence to Middleton Row, Chowringhee—Fogs up to the Second Story—Burrā Bazār—Seed Pearl.

January, 1825.—The cold weather is delightful, and a Persian carpet pleasant over the Indian matting, but a fire is not required—indeed, few houses in Calcutta have a fire-place. Ice is sent from Hoogly, and is procurable in the bazaar during the cold weather ; it is preserved in pits for the hot season.

March 23rd.—I will describe a day at this time of the year. At 6 A.M. it is so cold that a good gallop in a cloth habit will just keep you warm. At 9 A.M.—a fine breeze—very pleasant—windows open—no pankhā.

3 P.M.—Blue linen blinds lowered to keep off the glare of the sunshine, which is distressing to the eyes ; every Venetian shut, the pankhā in full swing, the very mosquitoes asleep on the walls, yourself asleep on a sofa, not a breath of air—a dead silence around you.

4 P.M.—A heavy thunder-storm, with the rain descending in torrents ; you stop the pankhā, rejoice in the *fraicheur*, and are only prevented from taking a walk in the grounds by the falling rain.

5 P.M.—You mount your Arab, and enjoy the coolness for the remainder of the day ;—such is to-day.

April 11th.—The hot winds are blowing for the first time this year.

**FIGURE 3.2.** The first page of chapter VI, in Parks' *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, vol. 1, shows how closely her narrative often adheres to the journal form.

structure but more closely resembles a cauldron of observations, experiences, ideas, and opinions melded together. As Gérard Gâcon has stated, because *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* is a “hotchpotch of information,” reading it can be a “bewildering experience” for those unfamiliar with Parks’ style.<sup>324</sup> Parks’ account frequently abandons the narrative cycle found in other travel narratives. It often appears that she is more interested in relaying facts and sharing anecdotes than telling a unified story. She moves swiftly from topic to topic, sometimes covering two or three subjects within a single paragraph. For example, in one paragraph of her July 4, 1822, entry, while still onboard the *Ely* in route to India, Parks reports:

On Sundays Divine service is performed; the psalms are sung in very good style, accompanied by the Lancer band. The weather is hot; the thermometer 79° in our cabin, 81° in the cuddy, which at dinner-time contains six-and-thirty people. To-day a shark was caught; it was attended by three pilot fish, which they say, guide the shark to its prey. These small fish are very pretty, and striped like zebras. The shark was hooked and dragged up by the stern windows; he struggled manfully, but was soon despatched.<sup>325</sup>

In these few short sentences, Parks relays a wealth of information, but she makes no attempt to prettify this or any of her other entries, instead relaying information in the same sort of matter-of-fact style we might expect to find in journal notes written only for one’s own future edification or memory recall. Astute readers are able to connect the narrative threads between entries and tie them into something loosely resembling a plot, but Parks makes little attempt to

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<sup>324</sup> Gérard Gâcon, “An Emancipated View of the Other: Fanny Parks in India,” in *In-Between Two Worlds: Narratives by Female Explorers and Travellers (1850-1945)*, ed. Béatrice Bijon and Gérard Gâcon (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 82.

<sup>325</sup> Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim, in Search of the Picturesque, during Four-and-Twenty Years in the East; With Revelations of Life in the Zenana*, 2 vols. (London: Pelham Richardson, 1850), 1:4.



make these connections for her readers. Instead, her focus appears to be on creating the single largest storehouse of information on Anglo-India ever published.

Before travel guides became popular in the early nineteenth century, many travelers published encyclopedic travel accounts, of which *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* appears to be a descendent. In *Pleasurable Instruction*, Charles Batten highlights some of the common characteristics found in encyclopedic travel books:

In an attempt to describe virtually everything of interest in particular countries, they omit or abbreviate reflections, and they minimize their narratives, using them almost exclusively for the sake of ordering descriptions....they provide detailed indexes and print itineraries, lists of posts, and the like....For the most part they remain dry repositories of vast stores of information, often collected by the traveler both from his own experiences and from the books he has read.<sup>326</sup>

Although many Anglo-Indian travelers appended guides for outbound travelers, brief glossaries, or personal sketches to their narratives, Parks includes all of these resources and more.

*Wanderings of a Pilgrim* contains a detailed, comprehensive glossary; illustrations; a list of oriental proverbs and sayings; an appendix of annotations; and the most extensive index found in Anglo-Indian travel writing.

Parks' appendix is particularly fascinating because it shows her awareness of the problems created by her narrative style. Instead of rewriting her journal entries to add context or background information for readers the way many travelers did, she includes an appendix of lengthy annotations and explanations. Most of these explanations relate to Indian processes with which the British were probably unfamiliar, such as "Indian method of washing the hair," "to

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<sup>326</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 85.

prepare skeleton peepul leaves,” and the ever useful “to arrange a turban.”<sup>327</sup> She also offers directions on how to create antiseptic paste, arsenical soap, and moustache dye, among other homemade items. These annotations allow her audience to read her diary entries in their original, raw form but with the background knowledge necessary to understand the experiences she shares. Perhaps even more importantly, Parks’ appendix—along with the text’s other extraneous features—ensures that *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* contains novel information unavailable in other travel accounts.

In the eighteenth century, the encyclopedic travel book gradually lost favor with readers in part because “the demand for novelty was so strong” and encyclopedic travels were perceived as being too disorganized and dry, too focused on aspects of travel that were of limited interest, such as economics or agriculture.<sup>328</sup> By the nineteenth century, the form had been abandoned in favor of entertaining, anthropological accounts that were less comprehensive but more novel and pleasurable to read. Parks’ *Wanderings of a Pilgrim* combines these two writing styles into something original and in many ways groundbreaking. Parks’ text may appear to be as “disjointed” and “fragmentary” as earlier encyclopedic writing,<sup>329</sup> and sometimes her journal entries can be too dry and factual, but her account is loaded with entertaining information, experiences, and adventures found nowhere else in Anglo-Indian letters. “Her entertaining pages call up before one the scenes or the people she describes, with all the truth and fidelity of the Daguerreotype,” a reviewer for the *Calcutta Review* said. “Much of her book too, even to Indian readers, is as novel as it is life-like.”<sup>330</sup> Because Parks positioned herself as an “amateur

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<sup>327</sup> Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 2:501, 502, 503.

<sup>328</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 91, 99.

<sup>329</sup> Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 185.

<sup>330</sup> *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 475.

ethnographer,” dedicated to recording every aspect of life in India,<sup>331</sup> and because she included her original journal entries, written “on-the-spot,” she offered something encyclopedic travelers and earlier Anglo-Indian writers had failed to deliver: “a perfect panorama of India...pourtrayed with the hand of a master.”<sup>332</sup>

“The narration of pleasure is better than the pleasure itself,” Parks writes in the conclusion to her narrative, quoting an oriental proverb.<sup>333</sup> The best travel writing allows us to feel as if we have surfed the North Shore of O’ahu, climbed to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro, or kayaked the rivers of Kerala without leaving the safety and comfort of our favorite armchair. Parks and the other Anglo-Indian women travelers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries understood that in order to gain an audience, they had to create powerful, emotive, immersive experiences for their readers. They had to make the common appear extraordinary, the everyday seem memorable, and well-documented experiences feel fresh and novel, no matter how many countrymen and women had traveled the same paths previously. Most importantly, these writers recognized the evolving importance of language and structure at a transitional moment in the genre, when experimenting with new storytelling forms and methods of narration could be as rewarding as it was risky. By deconstructing and recombining the various forms at their disposal, these writers were able to produce travel books that are original, entertaining, and insightful—true narrative pleasures that are as enjoyable to read now as they were then.

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<sup>331</sup> Nandini Sengupta, “The British Woman Traveller in India: Cultural Intimacy and Interracial Kinship in Fanny Parks’s *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*,” in *New Readings in the Literature of British India, c.1780-1947*, ed. Shafquat Towheed (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007), 95.

<sup>332</sup> *Calcutta Review* 15 (1851): 500.

<sup>333</sup> Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, 2:496.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTER: THE SELF AND THE OTHER IN ANGLO- INDIAN WOMEN'S TRAVEL WRITING

*“The races at Bombay take place in the afternoon....It is a pretty gay sight. All the natives go; and there is such a strange mixture of people. You may see in the crowd a Bombay European exquisite by the side of a dirty fakir. Here is a group of parsees—there is a Jew; and there are Hindoos of all castes—Mussulmans, people from Scinde, with square caps (very much like those of the English Lancers), Portuguese, English sailors, Chinese with long tails, native soldiers, and Armenians.” ~Lady Amelia Falkland<sup>334</sup>*

For residents of British India, the winter horse races were an opportunity to gather for some lively entertainment, socializing, and—perhaps most importantly—people watching. While extreme heat and monsoon rains kept Europeans indoors much of the year, the advent of winter, or the “cold season,” brought a host of activities and events, from balls to bazaars, that inspired people of all backgrounds and nationalities to gather publicly. From the early days of EIC rule, the races especially were an entertainment staple, and many travel writers and diarists record attending the “gay” and festive races, particularly those held at Barrackpore, the governor-general’s country seat.<sup>335</sup> Perhaps the most interesting commonality that exists in these records is

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<sup>334</sup> Lady Amelia Falkland, *Chow-Chow: Being Selections from a Journal Kept in India, Egypt, and Syria*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1857), 1:53.

<sup>335</sup> Falkland was far from the only writer to describe the festive race atmosphere and attendants as gay. On December 5, 1810, Maria Graham wrote, “In three weeks all the gay world will be assembled at Barrackpore, on account of the races... This year there will be little sport, as the horses are indifferent, but I am told the scene will be very gay, ‘with store of ladies, whose bright eyes rain influence.’” Three decades later, Eliza Clemons wrote, “At Secunderabad, the young and gay will always find some amusement going forward, cheetah-hunting, pic-nic excursions, balls, races, and parties, fill up each successive day.” Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop also described the races as “a gay and busy scene.” See Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh, 1813), 147; Eliza Clemons, *The Manners and*

that, even in the shortest accounts, writers highlight the diversity of the crowds present. In a rare moment of community, normally disparate ethnicities, nationalities, castes, religious groups, and economic and social classes assembled to enjoy sport, food, and festivities. Although in some accounts British writers employed imperialist language in their representations of non-European spectators or propagated negative stereotypes (such as Falkland's "dirty fakir"), the descriptions of the race scene provide a more nuanced look at European/Eastern interactions than one might assemble from the pervasive depictions of Indian servants waiting on Anglo-Indian settlers, impoverished women and religious mendicants begging in the marketplaces, and rajahs hosting lavish parties. Rosalind and Madeline Wallace-Dunlop recorded that they had never seen "a more novel sight" than the race scene in Meerut and that they spotted "many of [their] own servants in the crowd."<sup>336</sup> Winter race depictions are just one indicator that the subcontinent's population—and class system—was more complex and in some ways less stratified than many accounts might at first suggest. Their prevalence in these accounts also underscores a primary focus of Anglo-Indian women's travel narratives: encounters with different kinds of people.

While early eighteenth-century and Romantic travel writers emphasized place and setting more than individual people, in the decades leading up to the Mutiny of 1857, Anglo-Indian women writers became increasingly interested in describing people and relationships and in developing "characters" using the same tools employed by fiction writers. Although these writers continued to provide descriptions of the landscape and scenery they encountered during their travels, more and more often such descriptions were deprioritized in favor of depictions of people. A saturated travel book market required writers to scramble for new ways to make their

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*Customs of Society in India* (London, 1841), 20; and Madeline Wallace-Dunlop and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, *The Timely Retreat; or, A Year in Bengal before the Mutinies* (London: Richard Bentley, 1858), 2:61.

<sup>336</sup> Wallace-Dunlop and Wallace-Dunlop, *The Timely Retreat*, 61-62.

accounts seem fresh and original, even when writing about lands as distant and exotic as India. While there were only so many ways one could describe the monuments and temples already immortalized by previous travelers, every encounter with an individual person could be made unique through the use of dialogue, characterization, and narration. Such encounters not only made accounts seem original, but they also suggested authenticity. The fear remained that writers could plagiarize their descriptions of other countries from previous accounts without ever stepping foot out of Britain, but when writers described personal, original interactions with people met during their travels, and especially with prominent individuals known to reside in India, they were providing information and entertainment that could be found nowhere else.

In addition to developing the characters of individual people they met, writers also began dedicating more space to the construction of their own narrative personas. Today a travel book in which the narrator is not essential to the narrative, participating in the action, sharing her thoughts and reflections on all she encounters, would seem unnatural and inauthentic, but emphasis on the narrative self is a fairly recent development in travel writing history. In its nascency, travel writing was intended to introduce readers to areas of the world few of their countrymen or women had ever seen or explored, and its primary purpose was spiritual, political, or economic rather than personal. Johannes Fabian, Mary Louise Pratt, and Barbara Korte have all noted the important role imperialism played in determining the subject and tone of early British travel writing—namely, that travel writers were expected to collect data on the places, peoples, and cultures they encountered rather than personal experiences and adventures.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Judith Adler has also discussed the ways in which all manner of travel “performances” were normalized or proscribed in handbooks and by formal institutions, including Britain’s national scientific organization, the Royal Society. See Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 6 (May 1989): 1366-1391, especially 1378-79. See also Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York:

Although some autobiographical details were required to prove the author was honest and trustworthy, “too much would make him [sic] seem either an egotist or a writer of fiction.”<sup>338</sup> Charles Batten notes that, in order to avoid these kinds of accusations, Thomas Pennant often skipped first-person nominative pronouns in *Tour in Scotland* (1771) (leading to awkward sentence constructions with absent subjects, such as “After leaving Buxton, passed thro’ Middleton dale...”<sup>339</sup>); Joseph Addison, William Gilpin, and Ann Radcliffe resorted to using “we” instead of “I” in some of their travel books; and Samuel Derrick and Samuel Ireland substituted “you” for “I.”<sup>340</sup> However, by the 1770s, a major shift in the role of the narrator was underway, and writers began exploring new ways to build and shape their narrative personas. As travel became less about “political exploration or mercantile errands” and more about education, improvement, and “travel for its own sake,” the traveler’s presence in the text grew by necessity.<sup>341</sup> This single “new ingredient”—the incorporation of an active, vocal, individualistic narrative persona—“irrevocably changed the genre.”<sup>342</sup> The voice and personality of the author’s narrative persona became another tool for differentiating and selling one’s text, and the

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Columbia University Press, 1983), 2-6; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 15; and Barbara Korte, “Chrono-Types: Notes on Forms of Time in the Travelogue,” in *Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of the Modern Journey*, ed. John Zilcosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 28.

<sup>338</sup> Charles L. Batten, Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 76. Batten relates that eighteenth-century travelers had to walk a delicate line between providing too many personal details and not providing enough to seem authentic: “The autobiographical information in eighteenth-century travel accounts...serves four main functions: it provides a principle of order, conveys entertainment, proves the author is accurate and truthful, and shows him [sic] to be the sort of man whose descriptions can be trusted” (76).

<sup>339</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland* (Chester, 1771), 5.

<sup>340</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 40.

<sup>341</sup> Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York: Twayne, 1997), 3.

<sup>342</sup> Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*, 4. Blanton also attributes this shift to the influence of attributes the development of the self-conscious travel narrator to the eighteenth century’s concern with “sensibility” and to the profound influence of John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) throughout the century (11).

construction—or characterization—of the narrative self became just as important as the characterizations of people encountered during the writer’s travels.

Although a growing interest in ethnography prompted many travel writers to focus on individual people and cultures more than previous travelers had, from the beginning, women writers were “more likely to describe their interactions with people” than men were.<sup>343</sup> While men could infuse tired geographic descriptions with heroic, adventurous tales of battles and tiger hunts, the socially prescribed boundaries of female propriety restricted how women could adapt their content to meet the evolving needs and desires of readers. As Sara Mills relates, the movement toward describing individuals was in part a result of “women writers’ problematic status, caught between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism. The discourses of colonialism demand action and intrepid, fearless behavior from the narrator, and yet the discourses of femininity demand passivity from the narrator and concern with relationships.”<sup>344</sup> However, by focusing on “intrepid” encounters with the colonial Other and their own personal relationships with the people they met, Anglo-Indian women writers were not only seeking a balance between imperial and feminine discourses and striving to avoid controversy, but they were also anticipating the movement towards character-driven travel writing that modern readers have come to expect.

This growing emphasis on character in travel writing coincided with the rise of the individual in fiction, another character-driven genre in which women writers excelled. From the beginnings of the English novel in the seventeenth century and on through its growth and proliferation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fiction was overwhelmingly titled after

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<sup>343</sup> Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 106.

<sup>344</sup> Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 21.



its heroes or central characters, as seen in such well-known novels as *Oroonoko*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, *Betsy Thoughtless*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Evelina*, *Emma*, *Jane Eyre*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Adam Bede*. During this period, the “modern conception of character”<sup>345</sup> crystallized as writers discovered just how multi-dimensional and realistic characters could be when treated and described as more than just a function of plot. The more carefully crafted and unconventional a character was, the more memorable he or she would be. As the novel became increasingly popular, this interest in novelizing the traditional “hero’s journey” eventually bled over into travel writing, a genre which has often been described as bridging the nebulous divide between nonfiction and fiction.<sup>346</sup>

Perhaps not by coincidence, this shift towards more novelistic travel writing occurred just as the definition of *belles-lettres* was constricting to focus less on non-fiction texts and more on “‘imaginative’ literature—the poetic, dramatic, and narrative kinds that in the [nineteenth] century were to form its main divisions.”<sup>347</sup> Discerning travel writers understood that in order to maintain their status as literary writers, the travel genre had to become more imaginative. More than information, readers wanted an experience, to feel as if they had visited other worlds. While many early non-fiction travel writers had worked hard to distance themselves from the devices of fiction, by the nineteenth century, some travelers, and especially women writers, were embracing

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<sup>345</sup> Baruch Hochman, *Character in Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 57.

<sup>346</sup> For examples, see Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), especially 27-67; Christopher M. Keirstead, “Convoluting Paths: Mapping Genre in Contemporary Footsteps Travel Writing,” *Genre* 46, no. 3 (2013): 285-315; Kristi Siegel, “Introduction: Intersections: Women’s Travel and Theory,” in *Gender, Genre, & Identity in Women’s Travel Writing*, ed. Kristi Siegel (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 1-11; and Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>347</sup> H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson, “Introduction: Criticism and Tradition,” *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume IV: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (1997; New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46.

more creative modes of storytelling. Embellishment and exaggeration had always existed in travel writing to some degree, but nineteenth-century travel writers found themselves in a rather unexpected situation; while they had more freedom to fictionalize certain aspects of their narratives than their predecessors ever had, they were also required to use and master fiction writing techniques in order to establish the literary merit of their texts. In the words of Debbie Lisle, their writing had to “authorise itself through both fact *and* fiction.”<sup>348</sup>

This chapter is about what happened when Anglo-Indian women writers realized the potential of characterization to the travel narrative form and began incorporating people into their non-fiction travel books in original, novelistic ways. It examines the three primary kinds of characterization found in these texts: characterizations of the self, or the construction of a narrative persona; characterizations of the familiar, including friends, family, and other Anglo-Indians; and characterizations of native Indians and the colonial Other. To the newly arrived, or griffins, as those within their first year in India were called, the Anglo-Indian community’s culture and customs often appeared both familiar and bewilderingly foreign, so writers were often preoccupied with describing their new friends and acquaintances, as well as the peculiar habits, routines, and social etiquette of the community. Many writers relegated native Indians to the background of their narratives and relied on stock descriptions or stereotypes that ignored individuality. However, the longer a woman lived in India, or the later in the period she was writing, the more likely she was to develop the characters of both Anglo-Indians/Europeans and native Indians and to imbue the people in her account with personality and ipseity. Through the integration of characters, including the self, these travel books elevate themselves from travel

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<sup>348</sup> Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 28.

guides to travel stories that share similar elements with novels, plays, and other forms of literature in which fictional characters reside.

### **Constructing the Narrative Persona**

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even travel narrators could often be reduced to a type. The scientific traveler, educated man on the Grand Tour, pious pilgrim, missionary, and economic explorer were as recognizable to readers of travel writing as rakes and naïve young virgins were to readers of amatory fiction. Introducing their type to the reader early on allowed travel writers to focus their narratives on what they saw and experienced rather than on their individual selves or personal motives for travel. Anglo-Indian women travel writers subscribed to a variety of popular types appropriate for women travelers—the dutiful wife/sister/daughter, the curious ethnographer, the proud patriot, the pious Christian—yet they also constantly undermined and strained against them, especially if they were writing later in the period. As the role of the narrator grew in travel writing, these women took advantage of evolving conventions and expressed and described their personal opinions, insights, and experiences more freely, which allowed readers to gain a better understanding of their individual interests, backgrounds, and personalities. By the mid-nineteenth century, women travelers were using a variety of fiction writing techniques to make their own characters (and voices) come alive on the page.

The earliest Anglo-Indian women travel writers cautiously avoided revealing too much about themselves in their texts, but they also realized that increased narrator presence allowed travelers to write with more originality and personality. The text of Jemima Kindersley's *Letters from...the East Indies* (1777), which was published just as the role of the narrator was shifting, often reads more like an objective travel guide than a subjective travel memoir, but Kindersley

also does not shy from using “I” to express her personal opinions, thoughts, and beliefs. Her book’s epistolary form allows her greater freedom to share personal experiences and adopt a familiar, conversational tone, and she uses this advantage to sometimes devote entire letters to her own unusual circumstances, such as the confinement she faces in St. Salvador, where she finds she “cannot walk out of one room into another, without being followed by [an officer and a soldier].”<sup>349</sup> Sharing her opinions and personal experiences gives Kindersley personality and subjectivity, but her text still reveals little about her private life and allows place, rather than person, to remain at the center of the text.

Both Kindersley and Maria Graham, whose *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812) was published more than thirty years after *Letters from...the East Indies*, had the benefit of writing about India when there was still an abundance of new information to share or rumors to dispute, so they were able to incorporate some of the self while simultaneously adhering to the traditional travel writing formula. Graham frequently uses “I” in ways similar to Kindersley, but she too is able to maintain a singular focus on place over person. By keeping their narratives more factual than personal, Kindersley and Graham demonstrate that they wish to be viewed as a particular kind of travel writer—specifically, the knowledgeable, research-driven traveler who wrote primarily to educate others. These two writers frequently adopt the academic tone and occupy the detached-observer role popular among early travel writers, which allows them to focus on their primary agenda: sharing their knowledge of distant lands. Paul Fussell has described the “ideal travel writer” as someone who “is consumed not just with a will to know” but also “a

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<sup>349</sup> Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, 1777), 25.

powerful will to teach,”<sup>350</sup> and these writers exhibit this pedagogic desire to share the knowledge and insights they have gained.

Because Kindersley’s and Graham’s narrative personas are primarily motivated by the desire to teach and share knowledge, these writers also avoid being categorized strictly based on sex. Many of the women who went to India later in the period chose to adopt the persona of “dutiful British woman,” emphasizing—or contending—that they were traveling merely to support male relatives or for the good of the British Empire, but neither Kindersley nor Graham make such claims, and Graham especially does her best to deemphasize her sex so that she might avoid associated stereotypes. Her narrative is so stripped of personal details that it is unclear from the text why and with whom she goes to India, and even her marriage to Lieutenant Thomas Graham, whom she met in route to India and married a year after leaving England, is reduced to a footnote.<sup>351</sup> Her companions, including her husband, father, and siblings, are almost

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<sup>350</sup> Paul Fussell, introduction to *The Norton Book of Travel*, ed. Paul Fussell (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 15.

<sup>351</sup> This fascinating footnote was added to the second edition of *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh, 1813) apparently because readers—and especially critics—had mistaken Graham for being an unmarried husband-hunter due to an early, pre-marriage passage in which she refers to herself as “an unmarried woman.” The accompanying footnote reads, “This passage having led to some ludicrous mistakes with respect to the writer, she begs leave to inform her readers in general, and the Quarterly Reviewers in particular, that, although she did not go to India in search of a husband, she was married there on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1809,—a fact which, however interesting to herself, she did not think of telling all the world, but which she now publishes, that she may claim the honour of being Mrs, not Miss Graham” (fn. 27-28). Although the note suggests that Graham merely wishes to claim the appropriate honorific due a married woman, she could have corrected the situation by giving herself the byline “Mrs. Maria Graham,” as many women travel writers did. Instead, Graham continued to label herself “Maria Graham” in all of her writing, which suggests that there is more to this footnote than simply correcting understanding of her marital status. No doubt she wished to defend herself from the assumptions of the *Quarterly Review*, which called her “a young lady who, probably, went thither, like most young ladies, to procure a husband instead of information,” in *Quarterly Review* 8 (Sept.-Dec. 1812): 406. But most important to this footnote is Graham’s claim that her marriage “however interesting to herself, she did not think of telling all the world.” She is suggesting that such personal, private details have no place in travel writing, which should be

completely absent from the text, so it is often unclear whether Graham is traveling alone or in a group, and she provides no real sense of why she goes certain places other than her own curiosity. Curiosity, as Mary B. Campbell has noted, was a defining characteristic of even the earliest travel writers,<sup>352</sup> so it would have been an appropriate personal trait for Graham to share even if she wanted to depersonalize her narrative as much as possible.

As two of the earliest Anglo-Indian women travel writers, Kindersley and Graham do not develop or emphasize their personas in the way later writers do, but the astute reader can still come to understand their personalities and those of other Anglo-Indian women writers by tracking their reactions, opinions, and, perhaps most importantly, preoccupations. Writers typically express—and temper—their reactions and opinions with the knowledge that they are opening themselves up for public scrutiny, so often the indirect presentation of their preoccupations is more likely to reveal their true interests and personalities. An epicurean traveler might focus on finding and eating exotic foods, while a traveler taken with the arts or culture might linger in obscure art galleries. Other travelers show a preference for unusual experiences or spend their days getting lost in back streets and unfamiliar neighborhoods. In India, Graham's preoccupation was with cave temples and ruins, all of which she meticulously describes and illustrates in *Journal of a Residence*.

Graham does not methodically develop her persona in the way later travel writers did, but because she focuses so much of her text on exploring cave temples, readers can easily deduce that she was an adventurous, resourceful, driven explorer with an archaeologist's passion for

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concentrated on place rather than individual, and that, contrary to the *Quarterly Review's* claims, she did travel in order to procure information, not a husband, so information on India should be the reader's focus and not the author's personal life.

<sup>352</sup> Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 25.

ancient cultural history. In order to see rarely visited cave temples, Graham was willing to brave the hottest parts of the day, ascend dangerous ladders, scramble up rocky hillsides, and bribe temple guards. Many Anglo-Indians visited the well-known caverns and carvings at Elephanta and Karle, but Graham records visiting those caverns and dozens more, including the caves at Kanheri, those on Salsette, and the excavations near Sungum. In Trincomale (in Sri Lanka), she is disappointed to learn that there are caves “in the neighborhood” but that she cannot “procure a guide to them,” and when visiting the “Teer of Arjoon”—most likely one of the seventh-century monuments of Mahabalipuram—she is excited to find “a number of these small caves in the rocks, all of which I propose to visit, if not prevented by the jungle, which grows over the mouths of many of them.”<sup>353</sup> She laments that the Madras government’s mining will probably destroy “some of the best executed caves,” and regrets even more that she has to leave the region, for “there are many curious things I have not yet seen, and figures lying in every field” (168). Graham’s continued emphasis on cave exploration allows the reader to see her as an individual person and not just a stock traveler. Subsequent travelers have built similar personas by emphasizing their personal reactions to and experiences with ruins and excavations, but Graham creates this public identity while maintaining her tunneled focus on place over person. She is able to avoid accusations of egotism by ensuring that her textbook-quality descriptions of cave architecture and history remain the focal point of her narrative.

Just as Graham dedicates a substantial portion of her narrative to cave exploration, subsequent writers emphasize their individual pastimes, interests, and pursuits to an astonishing degree, which allows the reader greater insight into who these women were. During her outbound voyage to India, Lady Alicia Scott spends her evenings in a chair on the poop deck,

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<sup>353</sup> Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 121, 161. All subsequent references to this text are cited parenthetically.

stargazing with her constellation maps spread around her, and she sings and plays the guitar for her fellow passengers, sometimes even joining a flute-playing ship officer for impromptu concerts.<sup>354</sup> During a three-week stay in Papamhow, Fanny Parks acknowledges her enjoyment of a long list of activities—“Painting in oil and water colours, sketching from nature, turning, making curious articles in silver and brass, constructing Æolian harps, amusing ourselves with archery, trying the rockets on the sands of an evening, chemical experiments, botany, gardening”—and declares that “the day was never half long enough for our enjoyment in the workshop and the grounds.”<sup>355</sup> Anne Katherine Elwood exhibits a similar penchant for botany and horticulture while living in Bombay. Although she laments that the other “European” inhabitants are uninterested in horticulture beyond growing “[a] few cabbages and English vegetables,”<sup>356</sup> she herself includes detailed, colorful, scientifically accurate descriptions of locally grown flowers, trees, fruits, and vegetables, including giving their scientific names. The depth of knowledge Elwood displays in these passages reveals how educated she is and how much she enjoys the topic of native vegetation, just as Parks’ lengthy list of interests makes her appear active and insatiable, as someone always hungry for more experiences and more knowledge.

Self-education and the search for knowledge is a common theme in many of these texts. Eliza Fay spends much of her outbound voyage reading French and Italian and studying Portuguese, Parks and Scott learn Hindustani, and Matilda Ouvry reads German. Reading is a popular pastime for all of the women, but perhaps for none more so than Harriette Ashmore,

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<sup>354</sup> Lady Alicia Scott, *A Lady’s Narrative of a Residence in India in 1834* (London: Webster and Larkin, 1874), 39-40, 14-15.

<sup>355</sup> Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1850), 1:71.

<sup>356</sup> Anne Katherine Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England...to India* (London, 1830), 1:384.



whose great love of books is apparent from the frequency with which she mentions reading, book clubs, and libraries of all kinds, from the regimental libraries of the outposts to the archives of the Asiatic Society to the private collection of a wealthy Patna man. Other writers constantly quote, reference, or recommend literary and historical texts and previous travel writing, which has the effect of making these writers appear well-read, knowledgeable, and educated while also demonstrating their knowledge of traditional travel writing conventions. Charles Batten argues that the eighteenth-century travel writer “was first of all a researcher,”<sup>357</sup> and Addison and other early eighteenth-century travel writers often quoted from classical literature in order to appear educated and insightful. Sometimes they even substituted excerpts from other travel narratives in place of their own personal descriptions and experiences,<sup>358</sup> and some Anglo-Indian women travelers used similar techniques not only to give their narrative personas more authority and credibility, but also to develop their personalities and individuality.

By citing and quoting other texts, travel writers give themselves more authority and credibility but also tell us something about themselves—about their educations, about the kinds of readers they are, about the depth of their knowledge. The kinds of texts women writers chose to reference can also speak to the types of narrative personas they were trying to build. Anne Katherine Elwood establishes the depth and breadth of her literary education within the first few pages of *Narrative of an Overland Journey* (1830) by referencing or alluding to Voltaire, Rousseau, Edward Gibbon, Germaine de Staël, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Byron’s *Manfred*. Later in the first volume, she likens a situation in which a stranger accosts her and her

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<sup>357</sup> Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 7.

<sup>358</sup> Batten reports that Addison’s *Remarks on Italy* contains a “staggering” 141 classical quotations and that Addison was mocked for his overuse of quotations by everyone from Horace Walpole to Laurence Sterne, who, in *Tristram Shady*, imagined Addison traveling with a donkey weighed down by books. See Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, 14.

husband to the one that Alderman Popkins faces in Washington Irving's *Tales of a Traveler*. She contradicts a platitude by Samuel Johnson and a description by John Howison, and she quotes travelers Thomas Pennant and Reginald Heber, among others.<sup>359</sup> While most of Elwood's literary references are not specific to India, they are still well-chosen because their authors are recognizable, at least superficially, to a large portion of her contemporaries, and even today anyone familiar with major eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers or travel writing history could easily identify most of her references. Her choices, then, make her appear intelligent and educated but also make her readers feel cultured and knowledgeable when they can identify her allusions.

While Elwood's popular literary selections make her narrative more accessible and familiar to her audience, Ashmore's and Falkland's textual references emphasize their specialized educations in the history and exploration of India. Ashmore inserts passages from earlier Anglo-Indian travel memoirists, including Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali and Major Bevan, in order to corroborate her own depictions of controversial events, such as the Muharram fast and the sheep-eater performances at Hindu festivals. Falkland also frequently enriches and supports her descriptions of personal experiences with references to other travel accounts and histories, including James Forbes' *Oriental Memoirs* (1813-15), Edward Ives' *A Voyage from England to India* (1773), John Fryer's *A New Account of East India and Persia* (1698), and J. Stevenson's essay "The Theory of the Great Elephanta Cave" (1852).<sup>360</sup> Most of the travelers and historians Falkland cites are only referred to by their last names, and some references are nearly impossible to decode accurately because the texts are so obscure. Even in their own day these texts were

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<sup>359</sup> Elwood, *Narrative of a Journey Overland from England...to India*, 1:7-8, 58, 361, 379, 392, 397, and 407.

<sup>360</sup> Falkland, *Chow-Chow*, 112.

probably not well-known,<sup>361</sup> so Falkland's quotations serve a different purpose from Elwood's literary allusions or even Ashmore's passages from preeminent Anglo-Indian travelers. Instead of simply making her appear educated and insightful, citing such specialized research suggests Falkland is an expert on the topic of India; she is not only someone who has spent years living there, but she is also someone with an authoritative knowledge of the body of literature and historical research that has previously appeared on the subject.

Along with emphasizing their interests, education, and knowledge, in the century following Graham's *Journal of a Residence*, Anglo-Indian women travelers also began increasing their narrative presence in their writing, and the narrator gradually shifted from the margins to the center of the text. In *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (1823), Ann Deane frequently places herself within scenes instead of distancing herself from them, such as when she describes a favorite breakfast spot: "Sitting at my writing-desk, I counted above sixty sail of vessels laden with merchandize, sailing down, or tracking up, this beautiful river."<sup>362</sup> While previous travelers might have described the same spot and similar boats traveling up and down the Ganges, Deane begins her description by situating herself within the landscape so that, instead of just picturing the boats and river, the reader first imagines Deane sitting there, observing and appreciating the scene in front of her. Nearly twenty years later, Harriette Ashmore describes all of the ways in which she finds personal amusement in India, including rowing and sailing on the river near her house, sketching her neighbors' houses, and sitting

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<sup>361</sup> Stevenson's paper, for example, was published in the Bombay-published *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 4 (1853): 261-275, not a highly in-demand publication to be sure, and one to which most people in Britain would have little or no access.

<sup>362</sup> Ann Deane, *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan* (London, 1823), 58.

outside to enjoy the “quietude” of nature.<sup>363</sup> Her book is full of private moments like this one: “One lovely morning, before sunrise, I detached the little boat from its moorings, and rowed myself across the placid water to the opposite bank, where I jumped on shore and found myself in a perfect parterre.”<sup>364</sup> Such narrations reinforce the idea that Ashmore’s travel narrative is more about chronicling one woman’s experiences in India than about recording impersonal information about the subcontinent. By the time Elizabeth Campbell Fenton’s *The Journal of Mrs. Fenton* was published in 1901, it would not have seemed so unusual that Fenton often emphasizes herself over the places she traveled in India, such as when she concludes a brief meditation on Felicia Hemans’ poem “Graves of a Household”—prompted by seeing an exquisite tropical sunset—by stressing whose story this really is: “But to return from the rainbow forms of imagination to myself, Bessie Campbell.”<sup>365</sup> In little more than a century, travel writers had gone from viewing any personal detail as egotistical to recognizing that travel narratives were as much or more about their narrators as they were about unfamiliar regions of the world.

Of course, this movement towards a more personable, prominent narrative persona did not necessarily mean that travel writing became more authentic or truthful. The narrative persona is a character like any other, contrived by the author, who has every reason to fictionalize her character and make herself appear in the best—or most interesting—light. As Elizabeth A. Bohls relates, “Readers naturally equate the narrator of a travel account with its author, but analysis reveals a distinctive persona—a character the writer creates according to the demands of the

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<sup>363</sup> Harriette Ashmore, *Narrative of a Three Months’ March in India; and a Residence in the Dooab* (London, 1841), 52-54.

<sup>364</sup> Ashmore, *Narrative of a Three Months’ March in India*, 52.

<sup>365</sup> Elizabeth Campbell Fenton, *The Journal of Mrs. Fenton: A Narrative of Her Life in India, the Isle of France (Mauritius), and Tasmania during the Years 1826-1830* (London: Edward Arnold, 1901), 22.

literary work.”<sup>366</sup> No matter how well-intentioned an author may be, the very process of presenting oneself in words requires, as Kristi Siegel relates, “a considerable amount of construction and performance” because the nonfiction writer “often delves through layers of self, and, in a performative way, constructs and reconstructs his/her identity.”<sup>367</sup> The emphasis on subjective, individual experience and interiority might leave readers with the false impression that they know the author of the text or that what they are reading is somehow truer or more honest than earlier accounts that sidelined narrators. When Fenton directs the readers’ attention away from the sunset and poem and towards “myself, Bessie Campbell,” she is suggesting that such a person exists and can be known through her words and self-described actions. The inclusion of “Bessie Campbell” the narrative persona may present readers with a more vibrant and entertaining armchair traveling experience as they immerse themselves in her first-person adventures, but it does not make the text more authentic or credible than the pre-nineteenth-century accounts that minimized narrator presence did.

Eliza Fay’s *Original Letters from India* (1817), which has arguably had a more lasting influence than any other work of Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing, serves as an excellent case study for understanding the importance of increasing narrator presence in travel writing as well as the reasons why readers and scholars should approach discussions of narrative personas fastidiously. While most Anglo-Indian travel writing remains unfamiliar to all but the most specialized scholars, *Original Letters* has been reprinted by both scholarly and popular presses, including Routledge in 2007 and New York Review Books in 2010, and the text has been championed by E. M. Forster, novelist and editor M. M. Kaye, and travel writer Simon

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<sup>366</sup> Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Romantic Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 19.

<sup>367</sup> Siegel, “Introduction: Intersections: Women’s Travel and Theory,” 6-7.

Winchester, among others. While part of the appeal of Fay's book may be its compact size—*Original Letters* is around 250 pages, while some popular Anglo-Indian texts, such as Fanny Parks', are closer to 1000—Fay's readers tend to pin their enjoyment of the text on her persona itself. In the introduction to the 1925 edition of *Original Letters*, E. M. Forster states, "Eliza Fay is a work of art. But she was also a historical character, who wielded and resumed a pen."<sup>368</sup> Forster's shift from present to past tense between his first and second sentences underscores that there are two different Eliza Fays—the one who was created and crafted by a talented writer and who will live for as long as the text is available, and the writer herself who had been dead for more than a hundred years. Subsequent reviewers have reiterated Forster's assessment that Fay is "a work of art." Writing for *History Today* in 1987, Francis Robinson said, "In [Fay's] exuberant presence we quickly come to see why Forster rated her 'a work of art'"; in a 2010 *New York Times* book review, Richard B. Woodward said, "Eliza Fay (1756-1816) was an actual Englishwoman, even if she was also, in the words of E. M. Forster, quite 'a work of art'"; and in *Slate*, Margaret Wheeler Johnson opened her 2010 review by stating, "'Eliza Fay is a work of art,' E. M. Forster wrote.... It's hard to disagree."<sup>369</sup> By insisting that Eliza Fay the narrative persona is "a work of art," Forster and these other critics are contending that the most important, influential, and enduring aspect of Fay's travel writing is not her representation of late

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<sup>368</sup> E. M. Forster, introduction to *Original Letters from India*, by Eliza Fay (New York: New York Review Books, 2010), 7.

<sup>369</sup> Francis Robinson, "Paperback History—July," *History Today* 37, no. 7 (July 1987), 57; Richard B. Woodward, "Book Review: Original Letters from India by Eliza Fay," *The New York Times*, last modified 31 January 2010, accessed 30 March 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/31/travel/31armchair.html>; and Margaret Wheeler Johnson, "Book of the Week: 'Original Letters from India'," XX Factor, *Slate*, last modified 30 January 2010, accessed 22 April 2010, <http://www.doublex.com/blog/xxfactor/book-week-original-letters-india>.

eighteenth-century India or Anglo-Indian and native Indian cultures but her representation of herself.

Because she is a traveler and daughter of Britain, Fay shares her abundant knowledge of the overland route to India, the pyramids and monuments of Egypt, British-Indian relations, and Anglo-Indian culture in Madras and Calcutta, among other subjects of national interest, but she also balances her mandate to record information and teach with a candid awareness of what her experiences reveal about her own character. It is clear early in the narrative that Fay understands the essential ingredients of a compelling story and what it takes to create a reliable narrator. Unlike most epistolary travel writers, who include only their own letters in their narratives, Fay inserts a single letter from her husband to her father that was allegedly composed while the couple was still in transit to India. The three-paragraph epistle, written after the couple left Egypt, provides brief descriptions of the difficulties the couple confronted when crossing the desert, including living with the constant threat of being attacked or robbed, subsisting on bread and water, and fighting off the desert illnesses that plagued the rest of their party. Inserted immediately before Fay's own letter on the subject, Anthony Fay's letter confirms that Fay is not exaggerating about the obstacles they faced, but more importantly, it serves to emphasize her character by providing a second opinion on what these experiences require of those who survive them. Anthony insists, "Your daughter behaved most courageously and is extremely well, considering the extraordinary fatigue she has undergone." By presenting her husband's letter first, Fay is perhaps able to prevent reader skepticism of her own bold claim: "I never could have thought my constitution was so strong. I bore the fatigues of the desert, like a Lion."<sup>370</sup> Including

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<sup>370</sup> Fay, *Original Letters from India*, 83-84. Subsequent quotations from this edition will be cited in text.

her husband's corroborating letter allows Fay to establish herself as a brave and hardy traveler without seeming arrogant or making her claims seem hyperbolic.

While some travel writers avoid complaining or doing anything that could be construed negatively, and others were careful to craft personas that reflect the ideal image of British nationalism or piousness, Fay's narrator, like any real person, is riddled with contradictions. She can appear blunt, hotheaded, and willful, but she also is not afraid to show her weaknesses and vulnerability when circumstances or transparency calls for it. At the beginning of her journey, she claims, "we travel without fatigue, and the way of living just suits me," but after enduring months of emotionally draining, obstacle-ridden travel, she confesses, "this life is horrible" (45, 133). Perhaps because Fay began compiling and editing *Original Letters from India* at the end of her life, when public response to her character mattered less, she allows her letters to retain passages in which she openly discusses her emotional state and reactions to her difficult travels, even when those responses are inconsistent or unflattering. She appears uninterested in conforming to what readers and critics might expect of her, for she says, "this story must be told in my own way, or not at all" (129), thereby taking ownership of her narrative in a way that was still somewhat unorthodox at the time. She claims in her preface that fear of criticism prevented her from publishing in the eighteenth century when the majority of her letters were first written (28-29), so perhaps Fay saw the recent allowances for increased narrator presence in travel writing as permission to publish her story on her own terms.

In *Original Letters*, Fay includes the requisite descriptions of travel methods, local customs, and well-known landmarks readers would expect from a travel narrative, but throughout the text she places her emphasis on narration and personal experience. She even refers to her collection of letters as "my narrative" (77), which suggests that she sees a narrative



arc in her words, that she does not see her letters as loosely connected vignettes but as parts of a cohesive story—her story. By emphasizing subjective narration over objective exposition, Fay allows the reader to share in her adventures and experience the world through her eyes. During her captivity in Calicut, she describes her horrifying living conditions in sensuous detail, including nights in which she is besieged by rats, scorpions, centipedes, and bats while trying to sleep and the nerve-shattering ticking she is forced to endure when she hides her and her husband's watches, their only valuables, in her hair. When in Egypt, instead of simply describing the cumbersome dress required of Muslim women, Fay dons the layers of muslin and silk herself and narrates her difficulties walking and riding in such attire. She concludes, "as it was in the full heat of the day and the veil prevented me from breathing freely, I thought I must have died by the way" (78), and she confesses that she finds the veil "a terrible fashion for one like me, to whom free air seems the great requisite for existence" (80). While nearly every woman who journeyed to the Middle East and India had an opinion on what the local women wore, most clung to British dress styles—a symbol of their national identity and their separation from local cultures—no matter how impractical or uncomfortable such fashions were. Fay is one of the few who can speak with any real authority on the subject of local women's clothing because she is not afraid to step outside the bounds of British propriety and present subjective experiences rather than just observations. Because Fay creates an engaging, candid narrative persona with a strong presence in her narrative, she is able to present original content that sets her text apart.

Increasingly, as the century progressed, women writers began looking for new ways to make their travel narratives—and travel narrators—seem original, and their narrative choices exhibit a material awareness of the tradition in which they were writing as well as new ways that the narrative persona might be interpreted. In particular, Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop

use novel references and fiction techniques to create a sort of anti-traveler persona in their *Timely Retreat* (1858). While other Anglo-Indian women highlight their knowledge, intelligence, and sensitivity to complex subjects and cultures in their narratives, the Wallace-Dunlops strive to appear frivolous, irreverent, and self-absorbed. The sisters are as well read as earlier writers, but instead of referencing classical poetry and Indian history in their narrative, they insist that they lack “expansive minds”<sup>371</sup> and instead mostly choose to read novels and popular contemporary writers. Upon arriving at their brother’s house in Meerut, where the sisters are to stay a year, they are at first disappointed to find his bookcases full of law books; however, “the Waverley Novels, when discovered, were hailed with rapture, and carried off in triumph” (1:129). In preparation for a hunting expedition, they visit the Landour Library to stock up on reading material, and Frank Smedley’s novel *Lewis Arundel, or the Railroad of Life* (1852) becomes their “pleasantest companion,” despite being without “its cover and some fifty leaves at the beginning and ending” (1:267). Twice they compare dark, foreboding houses (their brother’s and their friend Mr. Maxwell’s) to the Castle of Otranto (1:131, 2:138). In a conversation with a Shakespeare enthusiast, they confess that that they “preferred Tennyson and Longfellow” (1:296, 302). While other women travelers used literary allusions to make their personas appear authoritative and insightful, it seems the Wallace-Dunlops were actively attempting to appear otherwise.

The Wallace-Dunlops’ insistence that they lacked “expansive minds” and preferred novels to all other texts is worth noting because of all the non-fiction Anglo-Indian travel narratives, theirs is the most novelistic and, ironically, one of the most informative accounts. When constructing their narrative persona, they take a most unusual approach—they use pseudonyms and also change their brother’s name and the name of the place where he lives.

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<sup>371</sup> Wallace-Dunlop and Wallace-Dunlop, *The Timely Retreat*, 1:302. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

Even though authenticity was still important to travel writers at the time, the Wallace-Dunlops make no attempt to explain their decision to adopt aliases, nor do they explain the degree to which names have been changed or include any sort of “the names have been changed to protect the innocent”-type clause. In fact, while many memoirists no doubt make similar changes when they wish to protect their reputations or avoid accusations of defamation, the Wallace-Dunlops do not appear to change names out of some sense of moral or legal obligation to conceal their own or anyone else’s identities. They reveal their true names in their opening dedication, and they openly acknowledge that they have changed the name of a major setting, stating, “In the narrative we adopted the fictitious name of Dhoorghur (the far-off city), but the reader is requested to bear in mind that the actual place designated is—Meerut” (1:iv). Perhaps because of this forthrightness, no contemporary reviews of the book questioned the sisters’ decision to change these names, and despite these fictionalized elements, the book has been accepted as a true travel narrative by both contemporary reviewers and modern scholars.<sup>372</sup>

Not only do Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, who claim to be joint authors of *The Timely Retreat*, adopt pseudonyms in the text, but they also write the narrative in first-person singular instead of first-person plural. Because even many single-authored travel narratives used the collective “we” so as not to call attention to the author, it is fascinating that this writing team chose instead to adopt the more narrative friendly, novelistic first-person singular point of view.

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<sup>372</sup> Among the modern scholars who have discussed the text (albeit briefly) as a non-fiction travel narrative are Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765-1856* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978); Margaret MacMillan, *Women of the Raj* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988); Marni Stanley, “Skirting the Issues: Addressing and Dressing in Victorian Women’s Travel Narratives,” *Victorian Review* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 147-167; Sujit Bose, *Essays on Anglo-Indian Literature* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2004); and Rosemary Raza, *In Their Own Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

The sisters use the aliases Maud and Nora Leslie in the account, but it is Maud alone who narrates their story, and she quickly proves to be one of the most active, opinionated personas found in Anglo-Indian women's travel writing. With a comedienne's awareness of ridiculous social hierarchies and customs, Maud describes in vivid detail everyone she meets and every new experience she endures. Her tone is acerbic and irreverent, and her descriptions and representations can seem impolitic and even callous, but they are also often—uncomfortably—laugh-out-loud funny. Nora, on the other hand, is characterized as more traditionally feminine—small and delicate, prone to illness, predisposed towards helping others, and typically far less active and vocal than her bold, imperious sister. Although Nora is capable of impassioned speech—such as when she enters into a debate with two men about why women should not have to obey men (2:198-200)—more often than not she tends to fade into the background, her voice unheard or forgotten. Because the Wallace-Dunlops chose to have a single, pseudonymous narrator tell their story and never specify which sister is Maud and which is Nora—or whether Maud is, instead, an amalgam of both Madeline and Rosalind—the sisters are able to distance themselves from their narrator and speak candidly.

Adopting an honest, droll narrative voice also allows the sisters to question the purpose and veracity of travel writing and parody its conventions. Maud confesses that one of her greatest childhood dreams was to see the Sphinx, so while she and Nora are passing through Cairo, they make the desert journey to see it. She says,

I approached the desert, with my head filled alternately with floating dreams of that face Alex. Smith describes as 'still looking on with calm, eternal eyes;' and Eothen's enchanting description of 'those sweet pouting lips which gave the law of loveliness to the world before the Greeks arose, and decreed that henceforth the

short upper lip was to be everywhere the type of beauty.’ (I quote from memory.)  
(1:34).

Here Maud not only parodies the somewhat ridiculous travel writing convention of quoting from other travel texts as if the narrator could recite them in the moment, but in the next few lines, she also highlights the danger of believing what other travelers have written. She arrives at the Sphinx expecting the grand, refined monument described by poet Alexander Smith and traveler Alexander Kinglake, but instead, “what was the reality? A huge square face, whose massive and protruding jaw could only be compared for strength and form to a lion’s—a large chasm, where once may have stood a nose, and small, half-shut, peering eyes” (1:34). She concludes, “No devotee ever approached the shrine of his patron saint with more awe and veneration than I did—no startled day-dreamer ever woke to find his delusions more ruthlessly swept away, his visions more completely banished” (1:35). Such confessions reveal the well-read mid-nineteenth-century traveler’s plight—because so many travel accounts already existed, and because so many destinations were becoming increasingly commercialized, the reality of travel increasingly failed to live up to the expectation.

Maud is consistently torn between what she *thinks* she should be feeling, based on other travelers’ experiences, and what she actually feels. Too often, the journey is devoid of the glamour and adventure other travelers have promised. After climbing the pyramids (or, in reality, being dragged up the steps by a group of Egyptian men who crowd around the Grand Pyramid’s base waiting to sell their services to tourists), Maud complains, “Altogether we looked upon the ascent of the Pyramids as a melancholy failure, having frequently undertaken far more perilous expeditions amongst the rocks and chasms of our native land entirely by ourselves” (1:35). Her Orientalist dream that visiting the pyramids will be a romantic adventure has been shattered by

the commercial reality of the enterprise. While her predecessors, including Kinglake, often described their experiences at the pyramids in philosophic, Gothic-tinged language,<sup>373</sup> Maud's description reveals how untrustworthy such accounts can be, even when they come from well-respected, popular sources. However, by having such a claim issue from such a capricious, acerbic narrator, the Wallace-Dunlops risk their point being dismissed or, worse, misinterpreted.

Although *The Timely Retreat* was a bestseller and a popular topic of conversation in 1857 and early 1858,<sup>374</sup> its authors were also harshly criticized for the narrative voice in which they wrote. The most scathing review came from *The Saturday Review*, which condemns Madeline and Rosaline Wallace-Dunlop for being part of the "school of 'Plucky Girls' ... whose sentiments are on a level with their language." The reviewer finds the Wallace-Dunlops to be among "the least enlightened and the least humane of the other sex." Without ever mentioning that the narrative is told from the Maud persona or acknowledging that there could be some radical differences between this persona's views and those of the actual Wallace-Dunlops, the review concludes,

We feel a disgust more than usually strong at a self-drawn portrait of bold and hard Englishwomen, because it forms the dark shade of that luminous, and to all time glorious, picture of resignation and fortitude, gentleness and courage, forgetfulness of self and devotedness to others, which Englishwomen in all the

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<sup>373</sup> As Kinglake climbs the Great Pyramid alone, he describes "a cold sense and understanding of the pyramid's enormity" and that there was "something akin to that old nightmare agony in the terrible completeness with which a mere mass of masonry could fill and load my mind." Kinglake mentions "Arabs hanging about in [the pyramid's] neighborhood," but these men too he describes in foreboding terms so that their presence increases the passage's sense of adventure and the risk involved in his ascent. See Alexander Kinglake, *Eothen* (1844; Evanston, IL: Marlboro Press/Northwestern, 1992), 181-183.

<sup>374</sup> H. G. Keene, "India in English Literature," *Calcutta Review* 33 (1859): 45. In this article, Keene reports that "before the second edition was out, the trade-subscriptions for a third were completed; and all in about the third month from the appearance of the book."

fiercest and deadliest extremities of horror, fear, privation, and suffering, have lately exhibited. For the honour of the sex and the nation these noble women have so illustrated, let us hope that such exhibitions as that made in the *Timely Retreat* may be forgotten.<sup>375</sup>

The Wallace-Dunlops have apparently committed an unforgivable literary crime: they have created an idea of Englishwoman that fails to uphold the Victorian ideals of womanhood—gentleness, courage, selflessness, fortitude in difficult circumstances—promoted through the standard “type” of narrative persona found in most British women’s travel writing. By speaking honestly, they have failed to conform to expectation—an apparent contradiction in a genre that claimed to value, above all, authenticity. Whether or not they hoped using a pseudonymous narrator would protect them from such accusations, the sisters could not prevent contemporary reviewers from conflating their personal views and attitudes with Maud’s.

While such negative criticism seemingly did not deter the sisters from their future writing endeavors—in 1860, they resumed their literary personas (Maud and Nora) in *How We Spent the Autumn; or, Wanderings in Brittany*—it does highlight the difficulties women travelers increasingly faced if they dared to write outside the prescribed lines or depict themselves and their journeys in nontraditional ways. By making their experiences subjective and their narratives novelistic through the amplification of the narrator’s voice and characterization, writers were opening themselves up to harsh personal criticism. But they were also propelling the genre forward, revealing the power of narrator presence and voice. *The Timely Retreat* upset the *Saturday Review* critic primarily because the account showcased a strong, dissenting female voice, “a self-drawn portrait of bold and hard Englishwomen,” whose very existence frightened

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<sup>375</sup> “English Girls,” *Saturday Review* (6 March 1858): 239.

and disgusted the reviewer. That reviewer's reaction alone proves how powerful a tool narrator presence can be and why its increased use in nineteenth-century travel writing changed the genre forever. For those travel writers bold and skillful enough to employ this new literary ingredient, the novelistic, developed narrative persona could allow for more perceptive insights than ever before.

### **Characterizing the Familiar: Compatriots and Anglo-Indians**

While the British critic for the *Saturday Review* was disgusted primarily by Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop's bold and frivolous tone and narrative persona, Anglo-Indian critic H. G. Keene, writing for the *Calcutta Review*, was offended by the sisters' portrayal of Anglo-Indians they met in Meerut. In an article entitled "India in English Literature," Keene acknowledges that *The Timely Retreat* has "merit" and that "no utterly stupid book could have had such a 'run'" but also strongly censures the sisters for making the "men and women who had kindly received them in India...[into] actors in a 'low comedy,' just at the very time that they were struggling [sic] for life or honor amidst horrors such as are rare even in the blood-stained page of religious history."<sup>376</sup> When the Wallace-Dunlops published their 1858 account, Anglo-Indians were still badly shaken from the events of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, which began with a sepoy<sup>377</sup> rebellion in Meerut, where the Wallace-Dunlops had stayed with their brother. The sisters were certainly capitalizing on the renewed interest in India spawned by the Mutiny and the horrific massacres in Cawnpore and Lucknow, as the full title of their work, *The Timely*

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<sup>376</sup> Keene, "India in English Literature," 45.

<sup>377</sup> An Indian soldier trained by—and typically serving under—the British or other Europeans. The Indian Mutiny of 1857, which was initiated by sepoys working for the East India Company, is often referred to as the Sepoy Mutiny or Sepoy Rebellion. See OED.



*Retreat: or, a Year in Bengal Before the Mutinies*, suggests, but unlike the Mutiny memoirs published by other women at that time, the Wallace-Dunlops do not pander to an Anglo-Indian audience or attempt to gloss over the misdeeds of that community. Instead, throughout the text, they maintain their status as British tourists, visiting and observing the Anglo-Indian community but never fully becoming part of it. Because of this approach, they are able to offer a complex critique of Anglo-Indian culture and perhaps unintentionally provide some insight into why the Mutiny happened in the first place.

The Wallace-Dunlops were far from the first women travel writers to view the Anglo-Indian community negatively, but most of their disapproving predecessors took a more serious approach when complaining about the burgeoning culture. Early in the nineteenth century, Maria Graham criticized Anglo-Indian women for allegedly eschewing their responsibilities and failing to help those in need. She writes, “I have seen women in India pretend that, on account of the climate, they were too sickly to nurse their own children, too weak to walk in their own gardens, too delicate to approach a native hut, lest they should be shocked by the sight of poverty or sickness.”<sup>378</sup> As a counter-example, she offers the description of a woman she calls “Mrs. A.,” a paragon of English womanhood whom Graham wishes more women would strive to emulate. In order for her readers to envision what a woman like Mrs. A. is like, Graham provides a glowing characterization of the woman:

I have followed her in admiration through a village where her appearance made every face to smile. She is blessed alike by the old and the young; she knows all their wants, and listens to all their complaints. There is no medical man within many miles, and I have seen her lovely hands binding up wounds which would

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<sup>378</sup> Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 114-115.

have sickened an ordinary beholder. The work of charity over, she enjoys a walk amidst these beautiful scenes with all the gaiety natural to her age. She says, “*Qui fait aimer les champs, fait ‘aimer la vertu;*” and one of her chief pleasures lies in the contemplation of beauties of nature. Her family consists of the daughter of a friend, whom she instructs with the diligence of a mother, a little black boy whom she rescued from famine, and whom she is bringing up as a mechanic, and her own two infants. Mrs. A.’s accomplishments are above those of most women. Her drawing is that of an artist, and her delineations of the costume of the natives are beautiful; her judgment in music is exquisite, and her taste correct in both ancient and modern literature. Her language is pure and elegant; her voice in speaking is charming, and her manner is gentle and unembarrassed. She puts me in mind of those gems which bear the highest relief and the deepest intaglio, and that yet take the brightest polish. Would that there were a few more such European women in the East, to redeem the character of our country-women, and to shew the Hindoos what English Christian women are. (115)

On the surface, this lengthy, detailed description of Mrs. A. includes many of the hallmarks of novelistic characterization. Graham attempts to show us Mrs. A. in action, caring for the sick and taking walks for pleasure. She describes Mrs. A.’s hobbies and pastimes, as well as her family life. She uses figurative language, comparing Mrs. A. to a gem, and she even uses brief dialogue to give Mrs. A. a voice. But because she focuses exclusively on Mrs. A.’s saint-like qualities—and even calls her “an angel” earlier in the narrative (115)—while describing none of her flaws, her character appears superhuman.

Because Graham spends more time delineating Mrs. A.'s character than describing the individual women with whom she finds fault, Mrs. A. leaves a more lasting impression on the reader than Graham's criticism and in some ways even overrides it. We are not introduced to the individual women who fail to live up to Mrs. A.'s example but merely told of their collective faults, so their weaknesses are less memorable than Mrs. A.'s perfection. It is also difficult to determine whether or not Graham's criticism is valid because she does not show us individual women in action or record their exact complaints through dialogue. Instead, we are given only a summary and an interpretation of what these women are like, which is less effective than allowing readers to see and judge them for themselves. While visiting Madras, Graham describes the local Anglo-Indian women's daily activities—which mostly include eating, napping, reading novels, and dancing—as “frivolous” and “idle” (131), but because we are shown neither the circumstances that prompt the women to spend their days in this manner nor individual women engaged in these activities, it is difficult to judge them as Graham does. Because Graham's tone is so condescending, and because a few pages later she approves of Calcutta society because it “affords a greater variety of character, and a greater portion of intellectual refinement, than that of any of the other presidencies” (133), her condemnation of the Madras women appears uncomfortably snobbish. Graham's characterizations resemble those of earlier travel writers who used descriptions of people to instruct rather than to entertain or color the places they were describing, but it could be argued that her censure of Anglo-Indian women begins to have the opposite of the intended effect because she appears to be holding these women to an impossible standard of British womanhood.

Although many early characterizations resemble Graham's in tone and purpose, gradually, as the purpose of travel writing shifted, so too did the reason for incorporating and

developing characterizations of people. Women travel writers in particular began to recognize the importance of including not only their own individual experiences but also those of the people they met during their travels. Incorporating these experiences adds depth and originality to their narratives, and because individual characterizations are more concrete than descriptions of groups or types of people, including these characterizations gives their narratives definition and makes them appear more vivid and realistic. Perhaps due to the influence of novels, women travelers began to realize they could create more believable, affecting characters with a few lines of dialogue or by showing people in action than with paragraphs of description or detached observation. By letting readers experience individual people through their own words and deeds as opposed to merely seeing them through the eyes of a narrator, writers were trusting readers to interpret others as they had without explicitly stating what those interpretations were.

Like many travelers who published accounts of life in India, Eliza Clemons waited years after returning home to publish her narrative, but, perhaps paradoxically, that time and distance allowed her to write some of the most vivid, novelistic characterizations found in early women's travel writing. Clemons spent fourteen years on the subcontinent, including much of the 1820s, but her book, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India* (1841), is far more novelistic than those of the other Anglo-Indian women who published during her residence in India, including Ann Deane, Sarah Lushington, and Anne Katherine Elwood, whose characterizations frequently resemble Graham's. Even as the complexity and function of the narrative persona was growing in travel writing, Clemons' account shows the importance of understanding when the narrator should be forefront in the text and when she should be allowed to fade into the background to let other individuals take center stage. In Graham's narrative, characterizations are clearly being filtered through a highly opinionated narrator, but Clemons' narrator often recedes to the point

that she is seemingly absent from the text; her narration is so cinematic that it is easy to forget that all stories are told by *someone*, from some distinct point of view, and readers may accept what they are being shown as if they were there watching for themselves.

Although most travel writers focus on their own experiences and observations in their accounts, Clemons spends a significant portion of her narrative bringing India and its people to life through second-hand anecdotes. Clemons was far from the only Anglo-Indian woman to include character-centered anecdotes, or sketches, in her narrative, but she is perhaps the most egalitarian in her selection. Among the anecdotes to which she devotes considerable narrative space and development are the stories of a Hindu woman rescued from sati; an Anglo-Indian family concerned about arranging good marriages for their three daughters; and an ill-fated love triangle involving an Anglo-Indian officer, an Indian “dancing girl,” and an English woman. Occasionally, these stories even involve important historical figures. While staying at the cantonment in Secunderabad in the early 1820s, Clemons has the opportunity to meet and observe Sir Charles Metcalfe, the local British Resident, and Mr. Jenkins, long-time Resident of Nagpur, who at the time was visiting Metcalfe.<sup>379</sup> Because Metcalfe lived in India for more than thirty years, he appears in multiple travel accounts from the early nineteenth century,<sup>380</sup> but rarely does he appear as knowable and personable as he does in Clemons’ brief account:

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<sup>379</sup> Both men were well known in Anglo-India and England for their service. Jenkins spent more than twenty years as Resident, and after he retired and returned to England, he was elected as a director of the EIC, eventually becoming deputy chairman (1838) and then chairman (1839). From 1835-36, Metcalfe served as Governor-General of India, and later he was appointed the governor of Jamaica and Governor-General of Canada.

<sup>380</sup> For example, he is mentioned in Lady Maria Nugent’s *A Journal from the Year 1811 till the Year 1815, Including a Voyage to and Residence in India* (London, 1839), 2:52, but despite his position (or perhaps because of it), he is not individually described and appears as just one more British officer among hundreds of others.

Sir Charles Metcalf and his friend Mr. Jenkins descended from their carriage and entered, calling loudly for a ‘boy;’ but no answer was returned. “Is Ensign B--- or F--- at home?” Still no answer. At length one of the suddenly-awakened and not a little testy occupants of the dormitory, the venetians of which were nearly closed, exclaimed:

“What the deuce do you want? Who are you bawling out that way? Can’t a fellow get a minute’s sleep after this morning’s hard fag to please those British residents?”

“The British residents want you. I am Sir Charles Metcalf,” said the good-humoured Baronet.

“Aye, aye, Smart, I know it is you,” replied the sleepy ensign; “take a glass of grog and be off; you will find the brandy-bottle in the straw.”

Ensign F---, who had been thoroughly awakened by the noise, now thought it best to turn out, knowing that if it were Lieutenant Smart, there would be no more rest. Bouncing into the hall, to his amazement, he saw the gentlemen, in propriis personis, one sitting on the only chair in the room, the other on the table. They both held out their hands to him with the greatest cordiality, and begged him to convince his friend B--- that they were really the persons they represented themselves, and not Lieutenant Smart of the 9<sup>th</sup> regiment of whom they had often heard. B---, however, could not be convinced except by his own eyes. So out he came, “sans everything” but shirt and long drawers, and in that costume was laughingly welcomed by his distinguished visitors...<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India*, 17-18.

Although it is unlikely that Clemons was physically present for this conversation, she relays it as if she—or the reader—is really there, seeing and hearing every interaction between these men. Her narration is humorous and engaging, and each word of dialogue attributed to the ensigns and Residents tells us something of their characters and life in the cantonment. Unlike many travel writers who only use a line or two of dialogue to show individual voices, Clemons frames an entire conversation between these men, allowing us to not only see but also hear them. Dialogue gives the scene added tension as we wait to find out how the Residents will react to the ensign's insubordination, and the descriptive dialogue tags allow the various players in the scene to be introduced and described naturally ("said the good-natured Baronet," "replied the sleepy ensign"). These techniques of characterization, all rooted in narrative fiction, bring Clemons' narrative to life.

Clemons' anecdote about the Residents' visit to the ensigns reveals the importance of narration and dialogue to developing characters in travel writing, and it also shows the power of humor. The light-hearted tone she adopts encourages the reader not to judge any of the players too harshly and instead presents the men as they are, flaws and all. Such a tone was difficult for Anglo-Indian writers to maintain consistently, especially in the face of difficult or heartbreaking circumstances, but Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop were able to bring together the best of Clemons' characterization techniques and combine them with their consistently irreverent tone and impudent sense of humor.

From the opening pages of *The Timely Retreat*, the sisters prove to be expert people-watchers and masters of the character-driven social critique, and they establish early on that Maud will spend far more time developing the characters of individual people than did the Anglo-Indian travelers who came before her. The sisters' India-bound steamer is full of the usual

suspects: ship officers, soldiers, and EIC officials and their wives—all “types” that had been described in impersonal terms by countless other travelers. But while almost all Anglo-Indian travelers comment on their fellow passengers, few do more than label them. Eliza Fay provided some of the most specific passenger descriptions in her *Original Letters from India*, but even her characterizations seem rather flat when compared to Maud’s. Six weeks into her voyage from Mocha to Calicut, Fay provides this description of her shipmates:

Mr. Taylor is an amiable, tho’ melancholy companion, and Mr. Manesty an agreeable young man, under twenty, going out as a writer on the Bombay Establishment, from whom I always receive the most respectful attention. Mr. Fuller, is a middle aged man; it is easy to see, that he has been accustomed to genteel society. How different his manners from those of Hare! Poor man he has, it seems, fallen into the hands of sharpers, and been completely pillaged. He has the finest dark eyes, and one of the most intelligent countenances I ever met with. His trip to Bengal is, I doubt, a last resource....I had almost forgotten to mention Pierot, the purser of the ship—a lively, well informed little Frenchman,—full of anecdotes and always prepared with a repartee; in short, the soul of the party. He sings an excellent song, and has as many tricks as a monkey. I cannot help smiling at his sallies, though they are frequently leveled at me; for he is one of my most virulent persecutors. (107)

Fay does many things right in this description—she assigns people names (not always the case in travel accounts), she gives some of the men’s ages and physical descriptions, and she tells us how they make her feel or how they treat her, which tells us something about their characters as well as about her expectations. But because we are being told about these people instead of being



allowed to see them for ourselves through action and dialogue, they make no lasting impression on the reader.

Maud's characterizations, on the other hand, are primarily based on action and dialogue. Through the use of these elements, she is able to show some of the humanity and individuality of her fellow passengers, although she does so with her typical irreverence. Maud describes many of the young men and officers she meets, but she reserves one of her most colorful characterizations for a pair of gentlemen dubbed "the elephantine brothers, on account of their immense size and imperturbable silence" (9). On the first night of the voyage, the captain assigns Maud and Nora to sit between these young men:

The captain chose them, he said, because they made the best watch-dogs on board. My unaccustomed eyes were much astonished at the immense quantities of nourishment that seemed necessary to recruit the exhausted frame of my elephant. No wonder he was so stout; everything edible that came in his way was pounced on by his broad, fat fins, and dispatched with marvelous celerity. The only words he found leisure to address to me during dinner were, "Tapioca good," with a significant point at the dish. Nora drove her elephant away, by wickedly insisting on asking him questions, till the poor creature, finding his feeding-time getting curtailed, refused to sit longer in her vicinity, and changed his seat.

We found these two ungainly cubs had been sent out on their travels to get polished up. They spent their time in playing chess with each other on deck, or in writing their journals down stairs. (9-10)

Maud dehumanizes these men by describing them in animalistic terms—they are watch-dogs, elephants, cubs, creatures; they have fins. But while the portrait of these men is far from

flattering, and even though Maud never tells us their names, the reader is able to imagine the two more vividly than any of Fay's fellow passengers. We can picture the brothers clearly from this description; we can hear their voices. Although Maud could obviously be cruel and unsympathetic in her descriptions, she also has a gift for bringing people to life through humorous detail, dialogue, and action. While we may suspect the portrait of being hyperbolic, accuracy and objectivity are of far less importance here than creating a captivating narrative peopled with entertaining characters. Perhaps even more interesting, despite their cruelty and irreverence, the Wallace-Dunlops often give us rounded portraits of even characters they humiliate, making us feel more sympathy for these unfortunate ones and helping us see them all the more clearly. For example, by telling us what the "cubs" do on deck and downstairs, and by showing their antipathy for conversation, Maud shows their isolation and builds reader sympathy for them. Because she also includes a drawing of the brothers, the reader is able to see these characters as real men and to understand that Maud's description of them is subjective.

After the sisters arrive in Calcutta, Maud's attention turns briefly to the kinds of setting description expected of travel narratives. She describes her initial impressions of the buildings and parks in Calcutta; the Nortons' house, where she and Nora are invited to stay even though they have never met the couple (as is the custom in Anglo-India); and her struggles with trying to obtain a *dâk garrie*—a two-person carriage drawn by a single horse—to carry her and Nora up to Dhoorghur (Meerut). Despite this expected emphasis on place over people, Maud continues to use dialogue in her descriptions, which has the effect of not only characterizing individual people but also the Anglo-Indian community itself. Her relayed conversations with the director of the *dâk garrie* company demonstrate what a frustrating process scheduling transportation could be, and her recording of a typical Anglo-Indian conversation reveals how baffling the jargon could

be to the uninitiated. After dictating a particularly impenetrable conversation, Maud proclaims, “What between ‘Civil shop’ and ‘Military’ ditto, one might sooner learn a new language altogether than make yourself conversant with Anglo-Indian technicalities” (1:82). Because she has just demonstrated this point by transcribing two pages of dialogue, in which four men toss around terms such as “Deputy-Assistant Advocate-General,” “Salt Chokees,” “Omrahs,” “Sudder,” and “Superintendent of the Abkaree Revenue,” her point rings truer than if she had simply stated that it was difficult for the newly arrived to understand Anglo-Indian conversations (1:81-82).

Once Maud and Nora reach the Meerut cantonment—where the Indian Mutiny began in May 1857, a little more than a year after their arrival—their attention turns to navigating Anglo-Indian social customs and culture, most of which they find absurd and bewildering. Local etiquette dictates that social calls be made between twelve and two, during the hottest part of the day, and men always arrive in pairs and present their cards together, so the sisters never know who is who and can never learn the names of individuals without directly, awkwardly asking. They find evening rides to be painfully formal and somber occasions and have difficulty taking the situation seriously. “[D]oubtless many of the good folks were scandalised at us,” Maud says, “for actually laughing and talking above a whisper” (1:175). The sisters enjoy watching young Anglo-Indian children playing and riding their ponies, but every child is attended by his or her own ayah and bearer, as well as a *syce*, or horse groom, and often a *chuprassee*, or wagon master, and Maud finds the parade of servants “utterly absurd” (1:172).

Perhaps unwittingly, the sisters begin to reveal the tension that exists between Anglo-Indians and native Indians, especially Indian servants. Because Maud loves to share dialogue, she incorporates conversations other travelers fail to include. Within a two-page span, the

Wallace-Dunlops' brother Robert, called "Keith" in the narrative, objects to an Indian band playing inside the house because he does not approve of "dancing in the presence of 'niggers,'"<sup>382</sup> and their friend Mrs. Douglas calls Keith's *khansamah*, or head servant, a "guddah," or donkey (1:142-143). Maud appears unsurprised by either term, and she even refers to *guddah* as "the natural reply of the Anglo-Indian" (1:143). This dialogue further informs our understanding of Keith's and Mrs. Douglas's characters, but it also reveals an aspect of Anglo-Indian society missing in other narratives: the direct, stated racism many Anglo-Indians displayed toward native Indians. While prejudice and xenophobia are present in nearly all Anglo-Indian travel writing, rarely do we find such pejoratives addressed directly to Indians; writers often share their opinions on presumed Indian inferiority with the reader, but they usually avoid using such derogatory slurs, and actual conversations with servants, personal or observed, go unrecorded. Because the Wallace-Dunlops show us such language in action, we can imagine what life must have been like for Indian servants, many of whom were habitually subjected to abusive language.

Because people are always more interesting to Maud than her surroundings or her own daily activities, readers are also shown the physical and economic abuse some Indian servants faced. During the night, servants are responsible for keeping their Anglo-Indian masters cool by pulling a cord that keeps the *punkah*, or fan, rotating. Inevitably, however, the servants fall asleep and the masters wake to air "so dense it seems to choke you" (1:151). Because this happens so frequently, the men "keep a large store of boots and other miscellaneous articles beside their beds solely for the purpose of pitching at [the servant's] head whenever he forgets

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<sup>382</sup> While the word "nigger" is typically viewed as a pejorative term for people of African descent, by the mid-nineteenth century, it was frequently used when referring to dark-skinned people of any origin as well as when referring to people of low social standing. In both of these other cases, the word was still considered derogatory or offensive. See OED.

his duty” (1:152). Another young ensign the sisters know claims to keep his punkah rotating by fining the servants every time the fan stops. Maud says, “When I afterwards wondered how they contrived to pay fines out of their pittance, Keith declared that as that young man had never paid his men anything since they had entered his service, of course the fines and payment were equally imaginary” (1:153). We rarely find such honesty about the unethical and even inhumane treatment of servants in other Anglo-Indian accounts, but because Maud presents herself as an outsider looking into the community and incorporates these realities as if they are merely amusing details about the people she knows, she can be honest about cantonment life in a way other writers cannot.

Throughout the Wallace-Dunlops’ narrative, Keith in particular comes across as a racist, hotheaded, intolerant Anglo-Indian, a perfect illustration of why imperialism is problematic and why native Indians mutinied against their British overlords. From the moment Keith first appears in the text, his portrait is unflattering yet realistic. When he goes to meet his sisters at the end of their *dâk garrie* journey, Maud says,

it was difficult at first to believe, especially by the dim rays of the lantern, that the tall, gaunt, thin, long-faced individual before us, dressed entirely in white, with hardly any hair (that ornament having been cut off during a recent fever), and his head surmounted by a huge pith helmet, was really the same long-absent brother whom a carefully cherished photograph at home had represented to our sisterly eyes as a stalwart and handsome-looking Highlander. (1:126)

It is clear that India has changed Keith; he no longer resembles the beloved brother Maud and Nora remember, either physically or temperamentally. He has grown too serious and severe, and when he does joke around, his humor is coarse. Maud enjoys a trip to the “picturesque” sati

tombs, but when she notices a peculiar smell and asks Keith what it is, he replies, ““Roast Hindoo, no doubt”” (1:202). In the summer, when the goat milk quickly turns ripe, Keith berates and fines his goatman, even though Maud attempts to defend the servant: “Occasionally I would venture to remonstrate it could not be the man’s fault, as I had seen the goats milked in the verandah: ‘It did not signify—it was entirely his fault’” (1:162). Such snippets of dialogue demonstrate Keith’s hardness towards his servants and how little tolerance and patience he has. However, despite Keith’s obvious and substantial flaws, his sisters’ affection for him is clear, and for the most part they do not censure his behavior but allow readers to judge it for themselves.

Through the increased use of dialogue, narrative action, and humor, nineteenth-century women travel writers allowed the individuals they encountered to speak for themselves and simultaneously infused their accounts with more perceived authenticity and originality. These techniques allowed these writers to show both the good and the bad in the Anglo-Indian community and provide a seemingly more accurate and useful account of history than earlier narratives, with their stereotypical portrayals of generic groups or types of people, had. However, characterizations in these accounts were not limited to friends, family, and other Anglo-Indians and Europeans; the “proto-ethnographic quality”<sup>383</sup> of travel writing also demanded writers

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<sup>383</sup> Corinne Fowler, *Chasing Tales: Travel Writing, Journalism and the History of British Ideas about Afghanistan* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 82. Although ethnography as we know it might be thought of as a twentieth-century invention, Joan Pau Rubiés, Mary Louise Pratt, Corinne Fowler, and others have noted that the “proto-ethnographic quality” of travel writing dates back to as early as the early modern period. According to Rubiés, the difference between ethnographic observations in early travel books and modern ethnographic studies is that the travel writer is “given to subjective musings rather than to...systematic observation,” in Joan Pau Rubiés, “Travel Writing and Ethnography,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 242-260. Fowler contends that while ethnography and travel writing share many similar narrative conventions, their major difference is that travel writing “tends to

describe native Indians and other foreign cultures and ethnicities. Although characterizations of Indians tended to rely heavily on stereotypes and generalized descriptions, gradually, as dialogue and narrative action became more frequently used, characterizations of individual Indian men and women began to emerge in women's travel narratives.

### **Characterizing the Indian Other**

Characterizations in travel writing are perhaps never more problematic than when they represent races and cultures other than the writer's own. In particular, characterizations that are underdeveloped or based on stereotype can have lasting, harmful effects on how foreign peoples are perceived. In one recent psychology study, scholars found that readers who were presented passages randomly labeled either "invented" or "real" retained information differently depending on whether or not they believed what they were reading was fictional. In both cases, the imagination was activated, but when the test subjects read passages labeled "real," they exhibited a more accurate memory of the content. Presumably, the brain recognized the need to integrate the "factual" information "into the reader's world knowledge."<sup>384</sup> What this study means for literary scholars is that characterizations of people in non-fiction texts, or those that are labeled or understood to be non-fiction, could have more lasting effects on the reader than fictional characterizations. Reinforcement or negation of harmful stereotypes or representations of other

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subordinate description to narrative while classical ethnographies tend to embrace description and suppress narrative, especially personal narrative" (83). See also Mary Louise Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 27-50.

<sup>384</sup> Ulrike Altmann, et al, "Fact vs Fiction—How Paratextual Information Shapes Our Reading Processes," *Social Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience* 9, no. 1 (2014): 25.

cultures in travel writing could have more profound or lasting consequences than similar depictions in novels.

Stock characters are as endemic to travel narratives as they are to fairy tales, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some types were even particular to India: the fawning nawab, the duplicitous or lazy Indian servant, the oppressed Indian wife, and even Falkland's "dirty fakir," mentioned in this chapter's opening quotation. Whether or not these stereotypes possessed any element of truth, their proliferation in early travel writing helped solidify British views on Indian peoples and cultures and reinforce belief in British superiority. Because such types were inveterate to a genre founded on the promotion of truth, the depictions were accepted as factual—in essence, they became part of the British populace's "world knowledge." In some ways, the reduction and acceptance of these types was inevitable. Baruch Hochman argues that "our perception of people is typological, in life as well as literature, just as all of our perceptions are essentially typological and categorical. We tend to perceive anyone (as we perceive anything) in terms of some system or classification and only then come to conceive of him or her, if the signs point that way, in terms of his or her uniqueness or individuality."<sup>385</sup> In this case, most travelers were so caught up in their own experiences or in making connections with the Anglo-Indian and European communities that they never achieved the ability to see the Indians they encountered as individuals. And because they failed to do so, their readers back home failed to question the typological representations they had absorbed for decades.

To some degree, India was everywhere in Britain—it was on the stage, in novels and newspapers, in the muslin women wore and the tea that was drunk; yet, most of the British populace knew little about imperial politics and governance, and even less about the

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<sup>385</sup> Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 46.



complexities of Indian cultures, religions, and peoples. Much of what was known related to the most exotic, superstitious, or macabre elements of the various Indian cultures. Depictions of sword swallowing, fire eating, and snake charming abound in newspaper articles and travel accounts from the time, as do descriptions of zenanas, nautches, sati, and Hindu rituals for disposing of the dead. Because certain kinds of Indian people had been represented ubiquitously, even a mention of these ones brought an image instantly to the minds of British readers, and once that image appeared, it became increasingly difficult to override it, to see beyond labels and preconceived notions and grasp an individual's subjectivity and personhood. As Hochman asserts, "images form before we are fully aware that they have formed, and we often respond to those images well before we distinguish the elements of which they are composed."<sup>386</sup> In other words, once these images of Indian people were awakened in the imagination, the British failed to question or amend them; instead, their minds defaulted to these depictions whenever they thought of India and its native inhabitants.

Indira Ghose has argued that, due in part to the work of Foucault, "the 'other' produced by travel writing is increasingly being seen as a textual construction, an interpretation and not a reflection of reality,"<sup>387</sup> yet such a distinction was not made by British readers and consumers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Travel writing had emphasized truth and accuracy for so long that when its writers were credible and authoritative, their words had a lasting influence on British perceptions of India. In *The Location of Culture* and elsewhere, Homi K. Bhabha has asserted that nations are narrative constructions borne from cultural interaction and "the social

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<sup>386</sup> Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 41.

<sup>387</sup> Indira Ghose, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 2.

articulation of difference,<sup>388</sup> and we can certainly apply the same concept to the construction of foreign regions, such as the Indian subcontinent. The India of the British imagination was a narrative construction created in large part by travel books—books that largely focused on difference and what the writer found to be most extreme or alien in other cultures. Showcasing difference is the hallmark of all travel writing. As Debbie Lisle relates, “[travel writing] requires the author to discriminate between what is familiar and what is exotic so that readers are satisfied that they are encountering people and places that are sufficiently *foreign*.”<sup>389</sup> Because early travel writers focused primarily on groups or types of people and what made them different from the British or other Europeans, the early British view of Indians was fairly one dimensional and dependent on stereotype. However, after women travelers began to shift their emphasis from the Anglo-Indian community to individual Indians, British readers were given a glimpse into the humanity and individuality of Indian people.

In the earliest travel narratives by Anglo-Indian women, individual Indians are almost never named but are equated with whatever function they serve in the community; they are not Amit or Riya or Palash, but the bearer or ayah or mali.<sup>390</sup> Because these ones are not provided with any individual identity, readers have no way of distinguishing them from the hundreds of bearers, ayahs, and malis mentioned in other accounts, and it becomes nearly impossible to see these people as individuals. Although characterization was not a priority of early travel writers, who usually did not describe either themselves or their loved ones in great detail, most of those

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<sup>388</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

<sup>389</sup> Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 71. Italics are Lisle’s.

<sup>390</sup> Bearers typically helped carry palanquins (individual carriages carried on poles by usually four to six men), although the term was also used sometimes in reference to domestic servants who acted similarly to valets or who were charged with the care of (usually male) children. Similarly, ayahs were ladies’ maids or nurses for young children. Mali (also spelled mollee/mallee by Anglo-Indians) is Hindi for gardener. See OED.

writers do at least attach names to the majority of the Anglo-Indians and Europeans they meet. Hochman writes that “names are saturated with meaning,”<sup>391</sup> and while it would be pointless to try to analyze the names of real Anglo-Indians, just the fact that they have names at all is meaningful. Names give them individuality and allow the reader to think of them as people with lives, families, histories, needs, and desires, something that is surprisingly more difficult to imagine when a person is only referred to by a title, profession, or as part of a group.

One of the earliest travel narratives by an Anglo-Indian woman, Maria Graham’s *Journal of a Residence in India*, contains dozens of depictions of Indian men and women, but, somewhat paradoxically, the more detailed Graham’s descriptions are, the more distant and “Other” the Indians appear. *Journal of a Residence* opens with a study of the local people in Bombay, the first Graham saw upon her arrival in India, including palanquin bearers, hired laborers, and washer women. Of the palanquin bearers, she writes, “they for the most part wear nothing but a turban, and a cloth wrapped round the loins, a degree of nakedness which does not shock one, owing to the dark colour of the skin, which as it is unusual to European eyes, has the effect of dress....they are a hardy race” (2). In the next paragraph, she moves from the *bunder*, or pier, to the esplanade,

which presented a gay and interesting scene, being crowded with people in carriages, on horseback, and on foot....the *koolies* employed in washing at their appropriate *tanks* or wells...where groups of men and women are continually employed in beating the linen, while the better sort of native women, in their graceful costume, reminding one of antique sculptures, are employed in drawing, filling, or carrying water from the neighbouring wells. (2)

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<sup>391</sup> Hochman, *Character in Literature*, 37.

From these passages, it is easy to see that Graham was interested in the people she observed, and her depictions are not overtly negative or prejudiced the way some accounts are; however, her descriptions consistently exoticize and Other native Indians. By referring to the bearers as a “hardy race” and stating the color of their skin is “unusual to European eyes,” she has highlighted not the similarities she shares with these men, but the differences that lie between them. Likening the women’s “graceful costume” to those found in antique sculptures presents the reader with a clear and immediate mental image, but it also makes the culture seem ancient, otherworldly, and distinctly different from Graham’s own, which in many ways is just as problematic as accounts that depicted Indians negatively. While a reader might question whether or not a negative depiction was fair and accurate or instead a product of prejudice, a positive depiction would most likely raise fewer questions or objections. And because Graham does not share a conversation with any of these people or attempt to describe them as individuals, her reader fails to see them as anything other than background, a colorful part of the local scenery. Her adoption of the traditional detached-observer role places these men and women firmly in the role of Other.

In the early decades of Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing, positive descriptions of native Indians, and especially Indian women, proliferated in women’s travel accounts, but often even accounts that were intended to be positive shore up belief in British racial and cultural superiority. In what is probably the earliest first-hand account of an Indian zenana, Jemima Kindersley describes her rare visit to a certain “great Mussulman’s Zanannah” (220). Kindersley describes the man’s wives in exhaustive detail, devoting two pages alone to their dress, jewels, and embellishments, such as dyed hair and eyebrows and painted nails, palms, and feet. She feels obvious sympathy for these “poor women” for their confinement and their lack of autonomy

from an early age (“The Indian women have often children at twelve years of age; and by the time they are turned of twenty are thought old women” [227]). She admires their “small persons...delicately made.” But even in her compliments her racial prejudice shows. After a lengthy description of the women’s facial features, she writes, “many of the Eastern women have so much beauty in their fine long black eyes, eye-brows, and long black eye-lashes, that if they were set off by a fine red and white complexion they would be incomparable.” In other words, no matter how beautiful the women are, they would be more beautiful if they were white, a supposition she affirms when she says, “they are admired in proportion as they are distant from black” (221). Because the rest of Kindersley’s account of the zenana appears balanced and mostly objective, her contemporary readers might accept this racial hierarchy as fact rather than as a culturally biased opinion.

Even Kindersley’s sympathy and concern for these women and their situation is problematic and highlights a common theme in British travel writing. Anglo-Indian women often wrote such depictions of the zenana for the same reason that they described the practice of sati—to affirm the inferiority of cultures that oppressed women. Gayatri Spivak has noted that by underscoring what was problematic in native Indian customs, these writers were setting up a dichotomy between British “civilization” and Indian “barbarism.” Although the British might have seen themselves as champions of Indian women, attempting to free Indian women from the oppression of such rituals and conventions that seemingly denied them choice and independence, in actuality, by creating such laws as the one that abolished sati in 1829, the British were setting themselves up as saviors when instead they were colluders in women’s oppression who again

denied women a choice by silencing the cultural traditions of native Indian populations. By creating such laws, Spivak argues, “ritual is not being redefined as superstition but as *crime*.”<sup>392</sup>

More than thirty years after Kindersley visited the “great Mussulman’s Zanannah,” Maria Graham recorded her own visit to the “Shahab o’dien’s harem” in Bombay, which led to a similarly problematic depiction of Indian women’s oppression. On the surface, Graham’s account is a far more positive and individualistic account. The women all crowd around her and ask her questions about her own jewelry and garments, and Graham describes many of the women individually. She is particularly drawn in Fatima, the Shahab o’dien’s wife, of whom she writes, “Her large black eyes, the *cheshme aho*, stag eyes, of the eastern poets, were rendered more striking by the black streaks with which they were adorned and lengthened out at the corners” (17-18). Again we find Graham attempting to exoticize Fatima by comparing her eyes to those described by “the eastern poets,” but Graham makes a greater attempt to understand and depict these women and their roles as individuals than Kindersley did. Graham’s open-minded tone and individual descriptions bring the women and their situation to life in a way Kindersley fails to do,<sup>393</sup> but Graham too spends considerable time highlighting the negative aspects of zenana life and in particular the women’s lack of education and the monotony of their secluded days. What is more, because Graham makes her reader see these women as individuals—women who are just as curious and opinionated about her as she is of them—we feel their oppression and confinement more severely.

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<sup>392</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London and New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 97.

<sup>393</sup> Perhaps because of the specificity of Graham’s zenana account, it was frequently referenced in reviews and was even reprinted in *The New Annual Register*. See “Customs and Manners of Nations: Description of Bombay [From Mrs. Graham’s Journal.],” in *The New Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1813* (London, 1814), 145-164.

These zenana scenes reveal some of the difficulties scholars face when evaluating colonial travel writing. From Spivak's point of view, the disparaging comments these white women make about zenana life are problematic because they suggest that there is something fundamentally wrong with this traditional Indian—and, in particular, Muslim—custom. Because difference is always at the heart of these descriptions, by calling attention to what an outdated and discriminatory practice secluding upper-class women in zenanas is, these writers suggest that British culture is superior, at least in its treatment of women. Additionally, both Kindersley and Graham speak *for* the women; Fatima and the other women do not themselves complain about their lack of education or the responsibility to marry and bear children at such a young age. However, from a feminist point of view, it would be far more problematic if these Anglo-Indian writers did *not* comment on the oppression of women in zenanas. Failing to comment on the status of their Eastern sisters would be the equivalent of seeing these women as so different, so Other, that they could not relate to or see them as individuals. Although Fatima and the other women in these accounts are clearly depicted as Other, Graham and Kindersley still identify with them as women and call attention to their plight because they themselves understand what it means to be oppressed. Such encounters also suggest that Anglo-Indian women and native Indian women could find common ground simply based on their shared sex.

In India, friendships with women confined to zenanas were nearly impossible due to lack of consistent access, but some Anglo-Indian women were able to establish friendships with more autonomous Indian women. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, female companionship could be especially difficult for Anglo-Indian women in the outstations to find, which led many to seek out less traditional female friendships. Lady Maria Nugent comments frequently on the scarcity of Anglo-Indian women in the hill stations, recording at one station

that there were only two women and at another that there were “[n]o ladies at this place.”<sup>394</sup> In Hansi, she notes, “The only ladies of this place are Mrs. Logie and Mrs. Doveton, two half-caste daughters of Colonel Arnold, and a Miss Skinner, sister to a Captain and a Lieutenant Skinner, who are singular characters... Their father was a Yorkshireman, and the mother a Mahratta woman, and the sons have been brought up like Mahrattas. The eldest, in particular, is said to be a fine character” (2:23). While associations with half-caste, or biracial, women were nearly unheard of by mid-century, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Nugent enjoys getting to know these women, and in Meerut, she even develops a more particular friendship with Begum Samru, the famous ruler of Sardhana.

Begum Samru is one of the most intriguing rulers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, in part because of her sex and primarily because of her unusual journey to power. Born in Kashmir around 1750 to the mistress of a nobleman, the Begum, originally named Farzana, was orphaned and then trained as a nautch dancing girl. In 1765, a forty-five-year-old European mercenary, Walter Reindhardt Sombre, the so-called “Butcher of Patna,” became infatuated with Farzana and took her to live with him, where she remained until his death in 1778. During the thirteen years in which she cohabitated with Sombre, Farzana accompanied him on military campaigns, learned how to lead his army, and earned the respect of those in power around her. Sombre’s army-for-hire was so successful that he accrued an enormous fortune and was given Sardhana, all of which Farzana, now called Begum Samru, inherited after his death, despite the two never having been officially married. The Begum earned a reputation for being a just but firm ruler and became a living legend, known for her military prowess and her care for the peasantry. Although Sombre had been an enemy of the British, the Begum recognized Britain’s

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<sup>394</sup> Lady Maria Nugent, *A Journal...Including a Voyage to and Residence in India*, 2:69, 97. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically.



growing influence and power over the subcontinent, and in the early nineteenth century, after fighting against the British for decades, she realigned her allegiances and sided with the new Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis.<sup>395</sup>

The Begum took her new alliance seriously, and she frequently visited with the Anglo-Indians stationed in and around Meerut. On Lady Nugent's second day in Meerut, January 25, 1813, the Begum visited her for the first time, and Nugent recorded her initial impressions of the infamous ruler:

The begum is a little, lady-like looking old woman, with an intelligent countenance. Her dress was more like a man's than a woman's—she wore trousers of cloth of gold, with shawl stockings, and Hindoostanee slippers... Her face is fine, though something of the Jewish cast; she is fair for a native, and has very good manners. In short, altogether, she is rather prepossessing than otherwise. (2:51)

Although at this point in the narrative Nugent is merely observing the Begum from a distance—and invoking many of the same problematic racial descriptions found in other colonial travel accounts—after dinner that evening, once the other women have retired to the drawing room, Nugent and Ann Deane, who is also staying at the station, stay behind to talk with the Begum. Despite having lived with Sombre for more than a decade and having had affairs with other European men, the Begum has many questions about the dancing she witnessed before dinner and other customs she observed, and Deane and Nugent have a friendly discussion with her. Two

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<sup>395</sup> For more on Begum Samru, see Mahendra Narain Sharma, *The Life and Times of Begam [sic] Samru of Sardhana, A.D. 1750-1836* (Sahibabad, India: Vibhu Prakashan, 1985); John Lall, *Begum Samru: Fading Portrait in a Gilded Frame* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2005); and Preeti Sharma, *Begum Samru: Her Life and Legacy* (Sardhana, India: Academic Excellence, 2009).

days later, the Begum and Nugent meet again, and Nugent reports, “The begum and I had a great deal of conversation; we exchanged rings, in token of friendship, and are now sisters” (2:54).

Since the Begum was known for having few friends,<sup>396</sup> this small gesture perhaps meant as much to her as it did to the friendship-deprived Lady Nugent, who had complained so frequently about her lack of female companions.

A rare second characterization of the Begum comes from Deane, who was even more fascinated with the Begum than Nugent was. Even today Begum Samru’s life is shrouded in mystery and supposition, so characterizations like Nugent’s and Deane’s add greatly to our understanding of who the Begum was. Deane’s account of the Begum begins in December 1808, more than four years before Nugent’s first meeting with the Begum, and it begins with a brief recounting of the Begum’s captivating history, much of which appears to be derived from rumor as much as fact. Unlike Nugent, Deane barely mentions Begum Samru’s rise to power and instead focuses on the Begum’s short, disastrous marriage to a Frenchman, Le Vassoult, whom Deane calls “Monsieur L’Oiseaux.” This union was controversial and divisive from its inception, and it ended with Le Vassoult dying of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. While modern scholars often attribute Le Vassoult’s death to a possible suicide pact made in response to the mutiny of the Begum’s army, Deane presents another interpretation, claiming that the Begum “soon took an inveterate dislike [to Le Vassoult], and formed a project to get rid of him. Having won over the troops to her views, she caused a pretended revolt among them,” during which time her emissaries hid her away while they told Le Vassoult that the Begum killed herself (149). Deane says, “[The Begum] foresaw the effect this intelligence would produce on the timid mind of the

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<sup>396</sup> Ann Deane wrote that the “natives say that [Begum Samru] was *born* a politician, has *allies* every where, and *friends* no where,” in *A Tour through the Upper Provinces of Hindostan*, 149. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically.

Frenchman, who immediately became so alarmed, that with a pistol he put an end to his existence. No sooner was the Begum informed of the event, than she quitted her prison, resumed the reins of government, and everything again wore the face of peace” (149). Deane’s retelling of this story suggests that Le Vassoult’s death was entirely by design, that the Begum was in full control of the situation and her troops the entire time. Yet Deane does not appear to be horrified by the suggestion that the Begum orchestrated her husband’s death in order to remain in power. Instead, she declares, “This woman has an uncommon share of natural abilities, with a strength of mind rarely met with, particularly in a female” (149).

It is clear that Deane admires Begum Samru and respects what she has been able to accomplish. The Begum represents a kind of womanhood Deane never knew was possible. Although the Begum is traditionally feminine in appearance—Deane describes her as “a small woman, delicately formed, with beautiful hazel eyes...with the finest turn of hand and arm I ever beheld” (150)—she also behaves more like a Mahratta man than a woman, staying behind after dinner to smoke her hookah, dressing in trousers and a turban, and commanding her army directly on the battlefield. While some British women may have found it difficult to form a relationship with a foreign woman who lived so far outside the bounds of traditional female propriety, Deane is drawn to the Begum partly because she is so unconventional.

Through her friendship with the Begum, Deane is able to have many cultural experiences that otherwise would have been denied her. The Begum introduces her to the local royal family and invites her to attend a three-day wedding celebration in Delhi. The Begum even has an appropriate costume made for Deane, but Deane is unable to attend because her husband receives orders that take them away from the area. Both women are disappointed, and the Begum gives Deane a beautiful shawl as a parting gift. On other occasions, Deane visits two of the Begum’s

opulent palaces, the first of which includes a menagerie containing tigers, leopards, and monkeys, and the second of which is protected by a cantonment of soldiers whom the Begum orders to fire a salute for her English guests. Although Deane may still find some of the local customs that the Begum follows to be “ludicrous” by English standards (159), she also admires her hostess’s ability to navigate social and political situations and tries to replicate her manners and behavior in unfamiliar situations. She understands that she is the outsider here, and so she determines “to follow [the Begum’s] example on all points of etiquette” (151). Because Deane observes the Begum so carefully, noting her every gesture, and because she admires the woman more than judges her, the famous ruler’s presence on the page is simultaneously distancing and commanding. She is a woman of immeasurable wealth and power, an expert politician and a refined hostess, who seems ultimately unknowable but also remarkably understandable. Deane’s meticulous characterization of the Begum brings the legendary woman to life in a way few travel accounts do.

Occasionally, friendships with Indian women could lead to more than rare opportunities to see the other side of life in India; they could lead to personal introspection and reexaminations of British life as well. Fanny Parks was privileged to form friendships with several high-ranking Indian women, including Maharai Baiza Ba’i, the Queen of Gwalior and widow of Daulat Rao, of the famous ruling Scindia family. When Parks first makes her acquaintance, Baiza Ba’i is camped in Fathighar because of a rebellion that threatens to replace her with a young male relative. Parks is immediately taken with Baiza Ba’i, recording “there is a freedom and independence in her air that I greatly admire” (2:3). Parks and Baiza Ba’i first bond over their mutual love of horses, with Baiza Ba’i asking Parks to ride for her sometime because she has heard that English women ride sidesaddle. When Parks arrives with her favorite Arab at the

appointed day and time, Baiza Ba'i admires her horse and enjoys her display of horsemanship, but afterwards she has her granddaughter, Gaja Raja, demonstrate the Mahratta way of riding.

Afterwards, Parks writes,

On dismounting, the young Gaja Raja threw her horse's bridle over my arm, and said, laughingly, "Are you afraid? Or will you try my horse?" Who could resist such a challenge? "I shall be delighted," was my reply. "You cannot ride like a Mahratta in that dress," said the Princess; "put on proper attire." I retired to obey her commands, returning in Mahratta costume, mounted her horse, put my feet into the great iron stirrups, and started away for a gallop round the enclosure. I thought of Queen Elizabeth, and her stupidity in changing the style of riding for women. *En cavalier*, it appeared so safe, as if I could have jumped over the moon.

(2:6)

Moments like this one, where Parks is completely willing to go with the moment and immerse herself in the local way of doing things, endear her to the Indian women. Baiza Ba'i even gives Parks the title "Gaja Raja Sahib ki par Khala," or "The Great-aunt of my Grand-daughter," which Parks says "was very complimentary, since it entitled me to rank as the adopted sister of her Highness" (2:7).

Over the coming days and nights, Parks and Baiza Ba'i have many conversations comparing their ways of life and their positions in their respective societies, which they find to be more similar than at first imagined. Although Baiza Ba'i is a queen, she is first and foremost a widow, and as such is expected to endure certain privations, including sleeping on the ground and eating bland food. She notes that, in general, the situation of widows "was rendered as painful as possible" (2:8). When she asks Parks what life is like for English widows, Parks gives

an answer that may have surprised her British readers, not because of its content so much as because of its brutal honesty: “I told her, ‘An English lady enjoyed all the luxury of her husband’s house during his life; but, on his death, she was turned out of the family mansion, to make room for the heir, and pensioned off; whilst the old horse was allowed the run of the park, and permitted to finish his days amidst the pastures he loved in his prime’” (2:8). Here and elsewhere, Parks uses metaphors, such as that of the old horse, that both her Indian and British audiences can fully grasp. Afterward, Parks acknowledges that unlike Hindu widows, English widows have the option to marry again, but she summarizes the choices available to both Hindu and English women with an Indian proverb in this way: “The fate of women and of melons is alike. ‘Whether the melon falls on the knife or the knife on the melon, the melon is the sufferer’” (2:8). Parks’s next point is made even more clearly, again with the use of Indian proverbs. She writes,

We spoke of the severity of the laws in England with respect to married women, how completely by law they are the slaves of their husbands, and how little hope there is of redress.

You might as well “Twist a rope of sand,” or “Beg a husband of a widow,” as urge the men to emancipate the white slaves of England.

“Who made the laws?” said her Highness. I looked at her with surprise, knowing she could not be ignorant of the subject. “The men,” said I; “why did the Maharaj ask the question?” “I doubted it,” said the Ba’i, with an arch smile, “since they only allow themselves one wife.” (2:8)

Although Parks swiftly moves from this topic to ornaments and jewelry and then to describing some of the other young women in attendance, her point is still made: the situation of Hindu and

British women is more alike than different—they both have little independence from men and their laws, even when they are in positions of authority as Baiza Ba'i is. While many other Anglo-Indian accounts attempt to portray British women as being far better off than their Indian counterparts—especially since the British were not confined to zenanas or forced into sati as many Indian women were—Parks shows that no matter how much independence a woman may appear to have, she is still under the authority of men, so she has no real freedom at all.

By using dialogue along with description and narrative action, Parks allows the reader to not only see but also hear Baiza Ba'i and the other women of her encampment, including the Gaja Raja. Their smiles, laughter, and teasing banter show the women's camaraderie and how comfortable Parks felt with the women and they with her. Subsequent interactions with Baiza Ba'i, such as the letters she and Parks exchange and the favors Parks grants her (such as finding tiger claws for Gaja Raja to turn into a necklace to "avert the evil eye and keep off maladies" [2:12]) reveal that their friendship was not merely made in passing but that the women deeply admired, respected, and cared about one another. Perhaps because Parks lived in India for more than twenty years, and because she spoke some of the local languages, she is able to assimilate in a way few other Anglo-Indian women travel writers did.

Ann Deane, Lady Maria Nugent, and Fanny Parks all developed friendships with strong, high-ranking, independent Indian women, which proves that ethnicity or race did not always have to be a factor when determining acceptable social circles, at least not in the early decades of EIC rule. Class, however, is almost always a factor, and the individuality of Indian servants is less apparent in these texts. Although most Anglo-Indian women had at least one ayah to wait on them and who accompanied them on their travels, these Indian women rarely make substantive appearances in travel writing. Parks, however, is one of the few women to record glimpses into

her unnamed ayah's past and into what kind of woman she was. Her ayah proves on more than one occasion to be stubborn but also honest and "good" (1:31). She has also had her share of heartbreak. When Parks prepares to visit the menagerie at Barrackpore, her ayah asks to go with her because she wishes to see the hyena. Of their visit to the hyena enclosure, Parks writes,

While she was looking at the beast, I said, "Why did you wish to see an hyena?"  
Laughing and crying hysterically, she answered, "My husband and I were asleep, our child was between us, an hyena stole the child, and ran off with it to the jungle; we roused the villagers, who pursued the beast; when they returned, they brought me half the mangled body of my infant daughter,—that is why I wished to see an hyena." (1:39)

Although Parks is clearly summarizing what the woman said rather than recording it verbatim, the ayah's heartbreaking story is more affecting because Parks has it come from her own mouth. By hearing the story from her directly, we can sympathize with this woman and see her as more than just a servant—she is a mother, a wife, a neighbor, and a person who has known great suffering. Clearly, however, she has not allowed this suffering to define her since her own mistress did not know of it until this moment. Even the kindest Anglo-Indians often did not take time to get to know their servants on a personal level, so the retelling of this woman's story is a rare moment of openness where both Parks and the reader recognize the ayah's individuality and personhood.

For the most novelistic travel writers, even brief encounters with Indian servants could result in colorful, distinct characterizations that defy stereotype. Servants play a more substantial part in the Wallace-Dunlops' narrative than in most Anglo-Indian travelogues, perhaps in part because Maud and Nora have limited interactions with native Indians outside the cantonment. By



mid-century, it was far less common for Anglo-Indian women to visit zenanas or to interact with royal families, and those living in the outstations associated primarily with the other (now more plentiful) Anglo-Indian women of the cantonments, so their engagement with Indian people was mostly confined to servants and those they met or observed while traveling between cantonments or for hunting expeditions. Although the Wallace-Dunlops almost always speak of their servants collectively, instead of individualizing them, they present a different side of the master/servant relationship.

When Nora grows violently ill and must be taken into the Himalayas for her health, Maud emphasizes the kindness of the male servants who accompany her. She writes, “Nothing could have been more gentle and thoughtful than the way in which these rough, untutored men always treated Nora during her illness” (1:230). While taking Nora out in her “jhampaun” one day, the bearers pick and arrange bouquets of flowers for her, competing to find the best and most beautiful ones for her. Maud reports that the Tyndal, who oversees the bearers, was particularly invested in creating the perfect floral arrangement:

The Tyndal once made up a most magnificent bouquet of this description, with a bunch of bright red berries in the middle. All the time he was making it, however, he was warning us that they were poison; when it was finished, he seemed still very uneasy in his mind about it; at length, fearing, I suppose, that it would be impossible for Nora to help eating one, he pulled them out and flung them over the cliff, substituting a large dahlia in their place. (1:234)

Although Maud is teasing the Tyndal for his fastidiousness, to the reader his care and concern for his mistress is clear. On all occasions, the Tyndal and other bearers do their utmost to ensure their mistresses are safe and comfortable. They appear nothing like the lazy, thieving, deceitful

male servants so often portrayed in other accounts, and, in another passage, Maud even shows that the Tyndal may have been right to worry about Nora eating the berries.

During a jaunt one day, Maud reports,

Whenever we saw, as we were being carried past, any pretty flower or leaf, pointing toward it, we called out “Do, do” (give), until after two or three snatches at ugly or common flowers, the desired object was attained; very often, however, they refused to pick some especially gorgeous flower or berry, but following the usual plan of treating us like children, would shake their heads, saying “Krab” (bad), and push hastily on out of the way of temptation. (1:284)

Maud thinks that these men are just trying “to prevent our stopping too often,” so when she finds some of the pods she asked for earlier, she breaks them open with her hands. Her fingers almost instantly become inflamed and swollen. The men laugh at her when they see what “the Missy Babas had got into,” and Maud cannot help but laugh at herself too because she knows she should have listened to the men in the first place. After the men have had their laugh, they go and fetch an antidote and get rid of the remaining pods, but they tease Maud for the rest of the day (1:285-286). Although we are still hearing and seeing these men as a group rather than as individuals, their collective personalities begin to show because Maud is able to laugh at herself and write openly and honestly about her experiences.

In the second volume of *The Timely Retreat*, there is an obvious but subtle shift in tone as Maud’s griffin status comes to an end and she becomes more invested in describing her Indian servants and her relationships with them. She says that she and Nora “got on wonderfully well with the Ayahs” and were able to hold conversations with them despite the language barrier, although often the ayahs would cover their faces with their veils to hide their laughter, seemingly

at the sisters' misuse of certain words (2:88). The sisters are also taken with their dhobi, or washerman, and his family. In particular, they enjoy the presence of the dhobi's young son, of whom Maud reports, "During Nora's convalescence, this little fellow would appear constantly in the verandah, his red shawl gracefully draped over one shoulder, to present his offering of flowers" (2:30). This young man even offers the sisters his own sweets, considered by many Indians to be a luxury item. Despite some initial racist reservations about having so many Indian servants constantly attending them, these more mature, more knowledgeable Wallace-Dunlops consistently underscore the kindness, good humor, and trustworthiness of their servants through small interactions and snippets of dialogue. Together, these seemingly insignificant moments add up to a portrait of the Indian servant class unlike any other in Anglo-Indian travel writing.

Although there is much that is problematic in the characterization of native Indians in these accounts, these examples show just how far the representation of the Other had come in just a few decades. The same characterization techniques employed by narrative fiction writers, especially dialogue and narrative action, could be used to show the personalities and individuality of people who had previously only been stereotyped or who had been depicted strictly through distant observation. The increased presence of the narrator allowed writers to relinquish their roles as detached observers and to write more complex characterizations of everyone they met, including other Anglo-Indians and native Indians. While there were many shifts in narrative form, plot structure, and the transmission of content during this period, the most significant changes occurred in the way people of all cultures were presented on the page and how the narrator was allowed to interact with them. These changes not only allowed travelers to write with more honesty and insight, but they also revolutionized voice and tone in a genre that might otherwise have languished as travelogues began to sound too much alike.

Through the use of individual characterizations, authors were able to make their accounts seem innovative and original and to make the places they visited seem real in a way detached observation could not. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel writing's evolutionary shift from focusing primarily on place to focusing primarily on individual people is the reason that the travel genre thrives even today.

## CONCLUSION

### WHEN THE WANDERING TRAVELER SPEAKS

*“Whatever the wandering traveller says, he does so from having seen that of which he speaks.”*  
~Indian Proverb<sup>397</sup>

When I first began researching Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing, I was struck by the above quotation, the Indian proverb with which Fanny Parks opens *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (1850). Parks’ narrative is peppered with these kinds of proverbs—there are nearly 150 of them listed in an appendix at the end of volume 1—but this is the one from which she takes her book’s title. It seemed right that I, who embarked on the journey of writing this dissertation in part because of Parks, should also use a corruption of the proverb for the title of this study.

In the introduction to her one and only publication, her massive two-volume account of twenty-four years lived in India, Parks uses the proverb almost as an apology; she wants her readers to understand that no matter what fault they find with her writing, she writes from a place of experience and merely wants to add one more voice, one more perspective, to their knowledge of the subcontinent. My own use of the proverb has more to do with the research questions I posed to myself when I began exploring the history and body of Anglo-Indian women’s travel writing. Over months of reading dozens of primary texts, my initial question—When the wandering traveler speaks, what does she say?—took on an additional component: When the

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<sup>397</sup> Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque* (London, 1850), 1:vii.

wandering traveler speaks, what does she say, *and how does she say it?* It was the how that drove me to investigate the poetics of travel writing and the evolution of the form.

The question of *how*, too, was sparked by Parks as well as by a theme I noticed in the introductions and prefaces of women's travel writing. These women articulated, over and over again, that they wished to be taken seriously as writers, that they hoped their writing would leave a lasting impression. Parks' narrative opens with an invocation to Ganesh, the Hindu god of beginnings, the remover of obstacles, the "Patron of Literature," the deity who is "invoked on the commencement of a journey, the writing of a book." Parks asks Ganesh to encourage her and make her brave so that at the end of the day, "May it be said, 'Ah! she writes like Ganesh!'"<sup>398</sup> Parks, like so many other Anglo-Indian women, wanted her writing to be respected and admired; she wanted others to appreciate not only her narrative's informative content but also its literary value. Maria Graham confessed to having a similar desire in a private note she penned in one of her mid-career travel books, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil* (1824). "The truth is," Graham writes, "I can expect happiness from posterity either way: if I write ill, happy in being forgotten; if well, happy in being remembered with respect."<sup>399</sup> Parks and Graham both wanted critical respect. They wanted what they had written to matter. So what strides did these women take to ensure their writing was respected and remembered?

In chapters 2-4 of this study, I highlighted three key components women writers used to make their writing appear both literary and original: paratexts, form and structure, and characterization of the self and others. Paratexts, including titles, bylines, and tables of contents,

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<sup>398</sup> Fanny Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, 1:n.p.

<sup>399</sup> Quoted in Regina Akel, *Maria Graham: A Literary Biography* (Amherst, NH: Cambria Press, 2009), xi. This quotation comes from a handwritten note on the back of the title page of Graham's personal copy of *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There During Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* (London, 1824), a typescript of which was provided to Akel by the Oliveira Lima Library at the Catholic University of America.

were used by these writers to build their authority and credibility with readers as well as to highlight the originality of their content. These women wanted the potential reader to recognize that they understood the literary requirements of the genre in which they were writing as well as that they knew their subject and the history of Anglo-Indian travel writing. In “What Is Poetics?,” Stein Haugom Olsen writes, “To understand a literary work is to understand a goal-directed effort made by a creating intellect....Poetics must deal with the role of intention and assign to it a proper place in literary understanding.”<sup>400</sup> Through an examination of paratexts, we glean a better understanding of these writers’ goals and intentions for their narrative projects. Their titles stress the areas of India they explored and what new information they provide, their bylines use social and military titles and previous publication history to highlight their authority and credibility, and their prefaces comment on the purpose of publication and what they hope readers will gain from their accounts—most notably, a pleasurable armchair traveling experience and new knowledge of the subcontinent, its people, its customs, and its landscape. Tables of contents frequently highlight these topics and the extensive knowledge these women possessed. For early Anglo-Indian women writers, authority within the colonial framework was derived largely from their knowledge of India. As Rosemary Raza relates, “Knowledge was power—and power was enhanced by their ability to command wide audiences for their published accounts of India.” For much of the twentieth century, scholars and historians assumed that Anglo-Indian women primarily derived their power and influence through “the creation...of the domestic and social life of the home,”<sup>401</sup> but the paratexts of women’s travel writing reveal that these women

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<sup>400</sup> Stein Haugom Olsen, “What Is Poetics?,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 26, no. 105 (Oct. 1976): 351.

<sup>401</sup> Rosemary Raza, *In Their Own Words: British Women Writers and India, 1740-1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 207.

understood how to combine their domestic roles with their first-hand knowledge to claim authority and achieve public influence through publication.

The earliest travel writers also used paratexts, and especially titles, to highlight the narrative forms in which they wrote. By emphasizing their use of immediate forms, such as letters and journals, these women were making their writing appear credible while also placing it in an esteemed literary tradition. The use of immediate forms also allowed women to write more freely on controversial subjects because they could claim that their opinions were written in the heat of the moment or were intended for friends or family at home and not meant for a larger audience. Insisting that they published only at the behest of these friends and relatives allowed women to achieve power without seeming to desire it. They continued to make similar claims even as the letter and journal forms grew less popular with travel writers and women began adopting and adapting retrospective writing structures. The chapter narrative was particularly popular, as were composite forms that used a chapter structure interpolated with occasional letters or journal entries. These retrospective and composite forms often adopt a more novelistic, plot-driven structure than letters and journals, and the novel influenced not only how travel stories were narrated and structured but also what they emphasized. Travel writers increasingly chose to focus on the people they encountered over the places they went, and many Anglo-Indian women writers used the techniques of fiction writing, including dialogue, character description, and narration, to create individual, original narrative voices and personas that privileged subjective experience and personal interactions with diverse peoples.

It is in the shift towards character-driven travel writing that we see the makings of modern travel writing. Although place is always at the heart of travel writing, today's travel-book readers are rarely interested in reading the kinds of dry geographic description and matter-



of-fact narration found in most popular eighteenth-century travel texts, such as Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705) or William Gilpin's *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England* (1782). Information and description comparable to that offered by Addison and Gilpin can still be found in encyclopedias and guidebooks, but modern non-fiction travel narratives are expected to offer a more character-driven experience. J. Maarten Troost's travel books are popular because he has created a humorous, self-deprecating narrative persona whom readers trust will keep them entertained and laughing. He is, in that way, similar to Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop, who were viewed as crude and irreverent even in their own day, but who produced a best-selling page-turner by creating a colorful, character-driven experience narrated by a witty, amusing persona. Over the course of Troost's three books about the South Pacific, the islands all begin to resemble one another geographically and in some cases even culturally, but the narratives are compelling because, like the Wallace-Dunlops, Troost meets so many different kinds of people and makes them seem real to the reader. Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* sold millions of copies in part because so many could identify with her post-divorce struggles with love and identity and her quest for spiritual fulfillment. In her emphasis on the personal, Gilbert resembles Eliza Fay, who embarked on her second, third, and fourth voyages to India, as well as a voyage to America, after the end of her own marriage and out of a need to establish herself in a new context. Cheryl Strayed's *Wild* was a runaway bestseller in 2012 and 2013, not because millions of people shared any particular interest in the Pacific Crest Trail, but because Strayed's account of her personal struggles and triumphs makes her a dynamic character worth accompanying. As an independent, adventurous risk-taker, she resembles earlier women who wandered from the trodden path, including Fanny Parks. These modern travelers and the thousands of others who

publish travel memoirs each year are part of the tradition of character-driven travel writing that began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—a movement that was sparked in part by women writers' emphasis on their own narrative personas and their adoption of character-related fiction writing techniques, such as using narrative action and dialogue to inform character.

Although it would be difficult to argue that any individual Anglo-Indian travel narrative radically influenced the evolution of travel writing, when examined cumulatively, these texts demonstrate an enormous shift in the form, structure, tone, voice, and agenda of travel writing between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the purpose of travel writing was still primarily to inform readers at home about unfamiliar places and peoples, writers wanted readers to find as much pleasure in reading about their experiences as they found information. They wanted their narratives to immerse readers in another world in the way novels do. Additionally, while the individual accounts may not have had a major, identifiable influence on better-known travels of the time, such as those by Charles Dickens and Robert Lewis Stevenson, they certainly influenced one another. When women referenced the Anglo-Indian writers who came before them, they were not only bolstering their own authority or demonstrating their research of complicated topics, but they were also leaving a trail for scholars, who can now look back to see what other travel writers and styles might have influenced these women. When Anne Katherine Elwood mentions reading Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's account of the Turkish harem just before visiting one in Yemen, or when Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop reference Alexander Kinglake's *Eothen* before visiting the pyramids of Giza, these women not only underscore their knowledge of the British travel writing tradition, but they also provide scholars with a path to the literary influences that guided their travel choices and informed their writing.

While I have touched on this attribute of Anglo-Indian women's travel writing in chapter 4, the influence of these texts on one another and on other travel writing of the period is ripe for additional critical inquiry.

The writing we have from Anglo-India is a treasure trove for scholars interested in empire, colonial history, the Indian subcontinent, the treatment of women, or travel writing in general because there is such a large body of it, published and unpublished. The India Office Records and Private Papers, now housed in the British Library, contain thousands of government and East India Company documents on the management of India, as well as letters and journals from countless men and women who lived in India. These include unpublished letters by well-known Anglo-Indian writers mentioned here, such as Emily Eden and Reginald Heber. This body of supporting material—millions of pages of corroborating evidence—is like nothing else available to travel writing scholars. By the middle of the nineteenth century, most regions of the world had been described by at least a handful of British travelers, but from India we have hundreds of published accounts and many more unpublished diaries and letter collections. The majority of British subjects in India were there with a shared purpose; whether they were in India as missionaries, military officers, or EIC agents, they were all there as part of the imperial mission, so the India Office archives can provide additional context and historical background for these accounts. Additionally, because the writers who published their accounts of India were there for similar purposes, there is a commonality in their narratives that makes the evolution of Anglo-Indian travel writing easier to chart and substantiate.

The commonalities found in women's narratives have inspired scholars to examine the role these women played in the imperial mission and how their writings helped shape British

perceptions of the East.<sup>402</sup> Some historians vilify the memsahibs for their seemingly superficial and disdainful attitudes as well as their collusion with colonial projects. Others blame them for the fall of the empire. As late as 1985, Sir David Lean said, “It’s a well-known saying that the women lost us the Empire. It’s true,” repeating a claim made by countless India specialists, who have insisted that women were too prejudiced and “too insular in most cases to interest themselves in alien culture and life for its own sake.”<sup>403</sup> These critics have argued that the growing presence of British women in India and throughout the empire effectively ended sexual relationships between British men and indigenous women (from whom, they argue, the British learned much about local culture and society). Additionally, the (unfounded) fear that British women might be vulnerable to the sexual appetites of indigenous men is said to have increased tensions between the British and native Indians. According to this theory, in the early decades of EIC rule, Anglo-Indian men had befriended rajahs and local rulers and had fraternized more freely and equitably with native peoples, but the growing presence of Anglo-Indian women in the second half of the nineteenth century allowed colonizers to form “an exclusive group” that solidified the segregation of the British from indigenous peoples. As the so-called “protectors of Anglo-Indian domestic life,” these women stand accused of enforcing racial boundaries and maintaining “internal hierarchy.”<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> For examples, see Pat Barr’s *The Mem Sahibs: The Women of Victorian India* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976); Margaret MacMillan’s *Women of the Raj* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), Indira Ghose’s *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998) and *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Denise Kendall Comer’s “Fictions of Empire: British Women’s Travel Narratives in India, 1799-1854” (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2000), and Rosemary Raza’s *In Their Own Words*.

<sup>403</sup> Quoted in Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1.

<sup>404</sup> Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, 1-2. Here Strobel is summarizing previous critical arguments, which she calls a “myth” (2). See also Jane Haggis,

More recently, women scholars doing important recovery work have rejected such essentialism and insisted that “women travellers refuse to be labelled and stowed away into compartments. One cannot set up a definition for the nineteenth-century women traveller in India.”<sup>405</sup> All Anglo-Indian women, of course, were burdened by their own individual prejudices, preferences, and experiences when traveling to and on the subcontinent, but part of the difficulty of defining the nineteenth-century woman traveler comes not from the individuality of these women but from the enormous differences in British attitudes towards imperialism and native populations at the beginning, middle, and end of the nineteenth century. In late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century travel books, such as those by Jemima Kindersley, Maria Graham, and Ann Deane, British women frequently dine with rajahs, visit with upper-class Indian women, and attend nautches and local festivals. Lady Maria Nugent, who lived in India in the 1810s, frequently comments on interracial families she meets, and Fanny Parks, who arrived in Calcutta in 1822, became close friends with Colonel James Gardner, who famously married an Indian princess and maintained his own zenana. By the 1840s, however, the influence of Christian missionaries and the movement towards Victorian ideals forever changed British attitudes towards native Indians. It was during this time, Indira Ghose reports, that “the term ‘nigger’ gained currency.... Gone were the days when the British in India would slip into native clothes, smoke a hookah and take a native mistress,”<sup>406</sup> as Eliza Fay’s husband had done. As the century progressed, encounters with native Indians became more unusual and more superficial.

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“Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender?” Recent Women’s Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 13, no. 1-2 (1990): 105-115; Claudia Knapman, *White Women in Fiji, 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire?* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986); and Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1987), especially 244.

<sup>405</sup> Ghose, *Memsahibs Abroad*, 2.

<sup>406</sup> Ghose, *Memsahibs Abroad*, 5.

In *The Timely Retreat*, such a shift can be seen in the kinds of interactions Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop have with Indians, most of which are restricted to their servants and their families. Unlike women earlier in the century, the Wallace-Dunlops have no opportunities to visit zenanas or strike up friendships with high-ranking Indian women, and after the Mutiny of 1857, it was nearly impossible for such relationships to develop as racial segregation became more pronounced. Miscegenation, which frequently occurred in the late eighteenth century, was unheard of by the end of the nineteenth.

When historians blame British women for the fall of empire or for being too racist and supercilious, they are usually referring to the women writing post-Mutiny, as if the Victorian memsahibs of the 1860s-1890s are representative of the century as a whole. After the Mutiny, a “mass hysteria” spread across Britain that was fueled in part by the massacre at Cawnpore, during which rebel leader Nana Sahib slaughtered Anglo-Indian women and children, as well as by false reports of white women being raped and mutilated by brown men.<sup>407</sup> It was within this milieu that late nineteenth-century British women, many of whom knew little about pre-Mutiny India, traveled to the subcontinent, lived the traditional domestic lives of memsahibs, and wrote memoirs and novels for which they have been judged harshly. The ideology they invoke in these texts is far from merely their own, however. Invoking Althusser, Stuart Hall argues, “We experience ideology as if it emanates freely and spontaneously from within us, as if we were its free subjects, ‘working by ourselves.’ Actually, we are spoken by and spoken for, in the ideological discourses which await us even at our birth, into which we are born and find our place.”<sup>408</sup> It was impossible for Anglo-Indian women to escape the influence of imperial

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<sup>407</sup> Ghose, *Memsahibs Abroad*, 6-9.

<sup>408</sup> Stuart Hall, “Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2, no. 2 (June 1985): 109.

discourses since they were enmeshed in them—and had been enmeshed in them—their entire lives, especially if they grew up in post-Mutiny Britain. Such an argument, of course, does not excuse the blatant racism some women displayed or their mistreatment of Indians, but it does perhaps explain why representations of native Indians shifted so dramatically from the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century.

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 was the catalyst for an enormous shift in British-Indian relations, but it was also somewhat inevitable. The characterizations found in mid-century travel narratives, such as *The Timely Retreat*, reveal how strained the master-servant relationship had become. Although native Indians were viewed as Other even in the earliest travel narratives, to be Other took on more negative connotations and consequences as the idea of British identity solidified. The concept of British identity is, of course, tenuous and artificial, forged as it was from the creation of what Peter Scott has described as “an invented nation, not so much older than the United States,”<sup>409</sup> but the proliferation of this concept also had a huge bearing on how the British interacted with the rest of the world. Linda Colley has demonstrated that it “was a series of massive wars between 1689 and 1815 that allowed [Britain’s] diverse inhabitants to focus on what they had in common, rather than on what divided them,” which in turn allowed for the development of a national identity.<sup>410</sup> War and the formation of empire gradually united Britons so that they no longer saw themselves primarily as Londoners or Highlanders or Scots. Although these distinctions still remained, individuals maintained multiple loyalties while increasingly seeing themselves as British first, and they defined what it meant to be British

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<sup>409</sup> Peter Scott, *Knowledge and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 168.

<sup>410</sup> Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 4 (Oct. 1992): 316.

largely in terms of what was *not* British, or, in other words, “They defined themselves...in conscious opposition to the Other beyond their shores.”<sup>411</sup>

Interestingly, in the earliest Anglo-Indian women’s travel accounts, the writers’ identities are rarely tied specifically to Britain but instead to Europe, making identity more about race than nation or culture. In light of the extreme “Otherness” of native Indians, the English found common ground not only with their Scottish, Welsh, and Irish countrymen, but also with their oldest enemy, the French. Often the word European is used in these accounts to denote not only someone from the continent, but from the British Isles as well. In *Manners and Customs of Society in India* (1841), Eliza Clemons writes regarding Hindus, “Their knowledge on many subjects surprises the European, knowing as *we* do, that they are uneducated.”<sup>412</sup> Fanny Parks reports, “The children of Europeans in India have a pale sickly hue, even when they are in the best of health; very different from the chubby brats of England.”<sup>413</sup> Sometimes using European in place of British even allowed the British to suggest their own misdeeds were more universal. In a passage in which she comments on how “cruelly treated” Indian servants are by their British masters, Florence Marryat writes that it is “a popular superstition amongst the Europeans that to enable a native to understand English, he must be addressed as if he were deaf, and in the most infantile language.”<sup>414</sup>

Increasingly, as the century progressed, the British in India considered themselves just that—British. The more nationalistic the British became, the less likely they were to associate with native populations or cultural outsiders. But earlier in the century, before the term “British”

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<sup>411</sup> Colley, “Britishness and Otherness,” 316.

<sup>412</sup> Eliza Clemons, *The Manners and Customs of Society in India* (London, 1841), 66. Italics mine.

<sup>413</sup> Parks, *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, 1:30.

<sup>414</sup> Florence Marryat, “Gup”: *Sketches of Anglo-Indian Life and Character* (London: Richard Bentley, 1868), 15.



held such weight and currency, it seems that the further one got from home, the broader one's definition of the self became. For travelers like Ann Deane and Anne Katherine Elwood, that meant not only defining themselves as British or European but also as women, which allowed them to expand their networks beyond those who looked or spoke as they did. For these women, class and gender were more important determinants for developing a friendship than race or nationality, so when companionship with other white women was difficult to establish—such as when visiting the hill stations, where Anglo-Indian women rarely traveled in the early decades of EIC rule—they sought friendships with middle- or upper-class Indian women. Even when such relationships were logistically impossible, such as in the case of friendships with women in zenanas, Anglo-Indian women still made an effort to visit these sites in order to understand and report on how the women of India lived.

In the early nineteenth century, these visits were often made out of curiosity as well as out of a desire to share knowledge. If, as was stated earlier, women's power was derived primarily from their knowledge, when it came to Indian women, they held more power than anyone else. In 1856, Richard Burton reported that the first question travelers to the East were asked upon returning to Britain was “What are the women like?”<sup>415</sup> In the case of India, Anglo-Indian women were the only people who could credibly answer this question for their countrypersons. They had access to Indian women that Anglo-Indian men could never hope to achieve, and what is more, they were able to move throughout all levels of society in a way that would have been unheard of in Britain. Their unique position within the imperial structure imbued them with a kind of authority unknown to their male compatriots and a freedom unknown to their countrywomen back home. As Chloe Chard relates, “Female traveller-

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<sup>415</sup> Richard Francis Bacon, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*, 2 vols. (London, 1856), 2:85.

narrators, when commenting on the behaviour and desires of foreign women, are able to claim an additional authority by reference to their gender: the authority of someone who, having firmly established that foreign women are not easily understood, can nevertheless claim to enjoy privileged opportunities to enquire into female manners.”<sup>416</sup> Such opportunities provided Anglo-Indian women with the authority to write travel books and to enact change. Rosemary Raza reports that “[o]ne of the considerable gifts which British women gave to India in the early nineteenth century was the introduction of education for women, and the elimination of perverse customs which blighted their lives.”<sup>417</sup> Spearheaded by missionary women, these movements often placed Anglo-Indian women in the role of social reformer. While the majority of the women travel writers discussed in this dissertation were not actively involved in these movements, their questioning of how women in zenanas lived and why they needed education, as well as their portrayal of the horrors of sati, raised public awareness of these issues.

Not every Anglo-Indian woman involved herself in the issues facing native Indian women, of course. Travel writers were often the exception rather than the rule, at least in their own eyes. They often defined themselves not only in opposition to the foreign Other but also in opposition to other Anglo-Indians. Emma Roberts complained that “so few persons are induced to visit scenes and countries in the East,” and that even when those employed by the East India Company visited the interior of the subcontinent, “the sole remark frequently made by persons who have sojourned amid the temples and citron groves of Agra, consists of a simple statement, that ‘it is exceedingly hot.’”<sup>418</sup> Later in the century, Constance Gordon Cumming lamented,

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<sup>416</sup> Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 129.

<sup>417</sup> Raza, *In Their Own Words*, 226.

<sup>418</sup> Emma Roberts, *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*, 3 vols. (London, 1835), 2:289-90.

“One of the perpetually recurring aggravations of travelling in India, is the impossibility of getting definite information as to what things and places are really best worth seeing. It is so very exceptional to find any one, who takes the smallest interest in anything native, unless it has reference to coining rupees.”<sup>419</sup> Such statements allow Roberts and Cumming to define themselves against other travelers and to feel superior for choosing the road less traveled, or, as Cumming’s refers to it, the path “wholly untrodden by white feet.”<sup>420</sup> Aware as they were of the stereotypes against Anglo-Indian women even in their own day, these women wanted readers to recognize that they were not afraid to travel beyond the Anglo-Indian settlements and cantonments to see the “real” India.

Paul Fussell states, “Successful travel writing mediates between two poles: the individual physical things it describes, on the one hand, and the larger theme that it is ‘about,’ on the other.”<sup>421</sup> The travel writing discussed in this dissertation is about India. It is about the landscape and local religions and food and styles of dress and the disparate cultural groups occupying the subcontinent. It is about the habits of the Anglo-Indian community and the daily lives of Indian women and the tasks of different kinds of Indian servants. But it also “about” the enterprise of travel, the discovery of the Self and the Other, and the negotiations required when trying to be both a citizen of the world and a citizen of an imperial nation. Salman Rushdie has said in regard to postcolonial writers, “Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools.”<sup>422</sup> Such a description

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<sup>419</sup> Constance Gordon Cumming, *In the Himalayas and On the Indian Plains* (1884; London: Chatto & Windus, 1901), 54.

<sup>420</sup> Cumming, *In the Himalayas and On the Indian Plains*, 131.

<sup>421</sup> Paul Fussell, Introduction to *The Norton Book of Travel*, ed. Paul Fussell (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 16.

<sup>422</sup> Salman Rushdie, “Imaginary Homelands,” in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), 15.

could also be applied to many of the Anglo-Indian women travel writers of the early nineteenth century, many of whom spent several years or even decades living on the subcontinent. Their efforts to integrate into Anglo-Indian life, to travel and experience as much as they could, to befriend Indian women, and to learn about Indian cultures left them on the fringe of multiple communities, but it also allowed them to write about an India that few others saw and to leave behind important historical, cultural, and literary texts, many of which—including those by Maria Graham, Eliza Fay, and Eliza Clemons—are commensurate with the more famous travel narratives of Harriet Martineau, Isabella Bird, and Mary Kingsley, and others, such as Madeline and Rosalind Wallace-Dunlop's *Timely Retreat*, arguably have no creative equal.

Throughout this study, I have attempted to highlight not only the literary qualities of Anglo-Indian women's travel writing, but also that their writing is lively, creative, humorous, and engaging—a true pleasure to read. Early travel writing has developed a reputation for being dry, matter-of-fact, and uninteresting, and perhaps in part because of that stereotype, travel writing tends to exist on the margins of literary studies, devalued in favor of the novel, poetry, and drama. However, a comprehensive understanding of British literature, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is impossible without an understanding of the ways in which travel writing adapted techniques from and influenced these other genres. John Pier argues that the “object of poetics is not the singular text but...textual transcendence of the text”: “all that sets a text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.”<sup>423</sup> Through a closer examination of Anglo-Indian women's travel writing, we can learn more about the genre of English travel writing as a whole and eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature in general. In this dissertation, I have examined travel writing's hybridity, but there is still far more work to be

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<sup>423</sup> John Pier, “Gérard Genette's Evolving Narrative Poetics,” *Narrative* 18, no. 1 (Jan. 2010): 12.

done on how the melding of forms shapes the reading experience, as well as how the introduction of other intertextual and paratextual components, including frontispieces, interpolated illustrations, and appendices, enhanced the travel writing genre.

Additional work is also needed on how travel writing influenced the development and proliferation of the novel, especially in terms of how settings are described and created. Early travel writers were presented with the unenviable task of representing foreign places, people, flora, and fauna accurately and in familiar terms. Many women recorded their impressions of the wild, untamed jungles; dry, barren deserts; and beautiful ocean vistas, and they brought to life the Indian climate, which was oppressively hot in the summer and deliciously cool and sweet in the winter. England was always a source of comparison for travel writers, but it must have been difficult to describe such wild, foreign, larger-than-life landscapes when most of their readership was only personally familiar with England's cool, rainy cities and countryside. However, even today these descriptions have the ability to transport readers to another time and place, and the use of travel writing's descriptive techniques and sensory details in fiction deserves further exploration.

As Mary B. Campbell states, "Travel writing...hovers at the brink of the fictional abyss,"<sup>424</sup> and it is travel writing's status as a border genre that allowed these women writers to thrive. The proliferation of the novel, the popularity of travel writing, and the abundance of opportunities to travel and publish in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries converged to create an environment that welcomed and even desired Anglo-Indian women's travel writing. This cultural milieu gave women the opportunity to publish their adventures, but more importantly, it allowed them to build literary careers and give voice to their own opinions and

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<sup>424</sup> Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 147.

desires. We are only just beginning to uncover who many of these women were and how influential their writing was, but because of continued scholarly discussion and more widespread examination of their texts, these wandering travelers continue to be heard.

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