Southern Horrors

Southern Horrors:
Northern Visions of the Mediterranean World

Edited by

Gilbert Bonifas and Martine Monacelli

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INTRODUCTION

Dr Johnson chose to peregrinate to the wilderness of the Hebrides, but he knew that it was not the right direction: "The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean," he informed Boswell. He also knew where savagery and civilization lay: "All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above the savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean."[1] From the Grand Tour onwards, such views were shared by a considerable number of northern visitors to the South − until it was left to E. M. Forster's Fielding, in *A Passage to India*, to sum up: "The Mediterranean is the human norm. When men leave that exquisite lake . . . they approach the monstrous and the extraordinary."[2]

These northern perceptions of the beauty, vitality, spirituality and sensuality of Mediterranean societies − this "passion for the Mediterranean"[3] − have become the subject of numerous scholarly studies, drawing attention away from the indisputable fact – much more prevalent than is usually imagined – that the fascination of northern Europeans (and, a little later Americans as well) for this "exquisite lake" was rarely so strong that, coming from a very different political, social, cultural and religious context, they did not also discover features of the "monstrous" and "extraordinary" on its shores.

It was to throw more light on the much less studied, more obscure and repellent sides of Mediterranean history and civilization that a conference was held at the University of Nice-Sophia Antipolis in April 2012. It brought together participants from around the Mediterranean from Portugal to Lebanon, but also from the north of Europe and Australia, all of them desirous to decipher the ethos and unravel the nexus of *mentalités* that determined the northern perception (or imagination) of a dark Mediterranean world and inspired its representation. Covering a large time span from the late sixteenth century to the years between the two world wars and several facets of a topic that is not easily circumscribed, the

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[1] James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 742.
[2] E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), 275.
[3] See John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion. Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

essays collected in this book (all but two of them substantially revised versions of the papers read at the conference) draw on a variety of sources – the visual arts, literature, monographs, travel narratives, diaries, journalism, even trial proceedings – to explore the reverse side of the coin, where cruelty, decrepitude, ignorance and obscurantism dominate.

When anatomising the vision of a "horrendous South" in the eyes of Northern Europeans and (Anglo-Saxon) Americans, what is immediately striking is the permanence of religious antipathies, inveterate and pervasive. If, as one of the contributors to the conference pointed out,[4] the South became the locus of horror and cruelty after there developed a North-South divide between Protestant and Catholic Europe, there is no surprise in the recurrent association, since the days of the Reformation, between Catholicism, inhumanity, perversion, corruption, and backwardness in northern visions of the Mediterranean world. No wonder, therefore, that this is an ever-present and often a dominant theme in nearly all the contributions on the Christian South. In a variety of forms they all probe into the anti-Catholic discourse of the last three centuries which again and again echoes Macaulay's view that "among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, [Catholicism] occupies the highest place."[5]

In the eighteenth century the Gothic Novel, as **Céline Rodenas** shows in ***"The Horrors of Catholicism in Matthew Gregory Lewis's* The Monk, *William Henry Ireland's* The Abbess, *and Edward Montague's* The Demon of Sicily,"** was still replete with the wrongdoings of priests and nuns and, indeed, often built around them. The three novels use stereotypes and prejudices borrowed from earlier centuries not merely for *Grand Guignolesque* effect but more politically, in a period of revolutionary wars, to contribute to the struggle of the (Protestant) nation against the enemy without by fuelling a deep-seated anti-Catholicism. In the Victorian age, although the question of Catholicism in England was for a while at the centre of a low-key *Kulturkampf*,[6] the Irish became practically the sole target of anti-Catholic rhetoric (and sometimes blows) in the British Isles before it began to peter out. However hostility to Catholicism could still be frenziedly militant, at least among certain

[4] Luc Racaut in "The Perceptions of the Catholic South in Reformation England and during the Wars of Religion." This paper is not part of the present collection.

[5] Cited in Raymond Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion and Literature, 1660-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17.

[6] See for instance Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 26-29.

intellectuals and artists, in other parts of Northern Europe, including Paris where the German-born Max Ernst, the central figure in **Malcolm Gee's *"Rome as the Enemy – Anti-Clerical Themes in the Work of the Surrealists,"*** spent most of his creative life. The times and the context had changed, of course, but in the end the anti-clericalism of the Surrealists appears as no more than another version of anti-popery in its crudest form, a rehash not only of the scurrilous writings of certain late-nineteenth century scandal-mongering free thinkers, but of the more sensationalist and lurid passages of the English Gothic novel which they knew well and regarded as an "important precedent."[7] There was, though, a fundamental difference in that the Surrealists' Satan was a heroic figure, a liberator, whereas the whole tradition of British anti-Catholicism is encapsulated in the title of a 1642 anti-papist story: *Trust a Papist, and Trust the Devil*. Still, Gee's Macaulayesque conclusion seems apt in all cases: Southern horrors, from a northern perspective, are first and foremost to be understood "as the debilitating, criminal enslavement of humanity by the forces and ideas embodied in and sustained by the Vatican."

In Britain, relentless anti-Catholic propaganda, which scarcely abated until the late eighteenth century, was the pivot on which early British nationalism was constructed, bringing forth an image of the national self according to which the good Briton was not only a true Christian, but also a good Protestant. Protestantism could only remain at the centre of English identity by building up the antagonistic image, indeed the stereotype, of the other as "bloody Papist"[8] through a flow of books, pamphlets, sermons, drawings dwelling on Catholic atrocities, past and present, in Europe.[9] No doubt, hatred of the Pope, the denunciation of Catholic priests as the corrupt, implacable ministers of Antichrist, could easily translate into the belief that the whole culture of the countries lying south of the religious divide in Europe was tainted by the evil spirit of Roman Catholicism, that the national character was a reflection of a wicked

[7] *Ibid.,* xi-xii.

[8] Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c.1714-1780. A Political and Social Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 6.

[9] See Carol Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism," *Past and Present*, n°51 (May 1971): 27-62. To some extent this went on until the mid-Victorian age when Cardinal Newman complained, in the words of Sage (*Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition,* 28), that "horror is endemic to English Protestantism": "We must have a cornucopia of mummery, blasphemy, and licentiousness – of knives and ropes, and faggots and fetters, and pulleys, and racks – if the Protestant Tradition is to be kept alive in the hearts of the population."

Church, and that all those who dwelt in the South were therefore potential villains. The Elizabethans' taste for sensationalism and exoticism as well as the intellectual impact of Machiavelli only made things worse as **Christophe Camard** points out in ***"From the Italian Novella to Shakespeare and Jonson: the Representation of Italian Horrors on the Elizabethan Stage"*** which explores the English image of Italy as "a country of hot-blooded murderers and avengers." Camard shows that Shakespeare sometimes outdid his sources in the depiction of "classic Italian villains" such as Iago, but adds that more often, even when he kept close to traditional stories of revenge and hate (as in *Romeo and Juliet*), he succeeded in giving the emotions he portrayed an almost timeless quality, thus transcending the Italian context in which his contemporaries and immediate successors readily located their own southern horrors. Even in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, therefore, animosity towards Roman Catholicism was not an all-pervading sentiment, but it was undoubtedly an ever-present current of thought and prejudice and it may well be that Camard's rather un-Elizabethan Shakespeare was at times the real odd man out, and the Jacobean Webster, who only plays a supporting role in Camard's chapter, a better illustration of the mood of the period,[10] thus bearing out Alison Shell's view that the horrors one witnesses in Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedies "are conceived in specifically anti-Catholic terms."[11]

In the main, the stiletto-wielding Catholic vanished with the Gothic novel, but the general suspicion that Mediterranean types were stabbing blackguards, especially if they happened to roam the streets of England, continued well into the mid-Victorian Age and was never totally relinquished as **Neil Davie** shows in ***"'Inconsistent with the Ordinary English Phlegmatic Nature'? Violent Crime and Attitudes to Mediterranean Defendants in the English Courts, c. 1830-1900."*** It may be, as Roderick Cavaliero writes, that "the Gothic novelists had left a dark image of Italy that was never to be completely dispelled," and that the belief in "the general delinquency of Italian Roman Catholics"[12] died hard. However it seems that in the Victorian age British public opinion distrusted foreigners more by reason of their geographical origins than

[10] One of his scoundrels in *The Duchess of Malfi* is of course a cardinal.

[11] Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See her first chapter: "The livid flash: decadence, anti-Catholic revenge tragedy and the dehistoricised critic."

[12] Roderick Cavaliero, *Italia Romantica. English Romantics and Italian Freedom* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2007), 9 & 53.

because of their religion – rightly so as the court cases examined by Davie concerned Orthodox Greeks and Muslim Turks as well as Spaniards or Italians. More than religion, the growing civilization gap between an increasingly prosperous North and a backward South was becoming the determining judgmental factor. This fracture had been widely publicised by many British travellers' tales[13] since the eighteenth century. These clearly located Mediterranean countries in a pre-modern, somewhat barbarous age in which primitive reactions were the norm, and lawlessness always likely to break loose.[14] In the South, it was believed, one could be knifed for a peccadillo, and no wonder since modern Italians and Greeks in particular were often regarded as thoroughly devoid of the stern fibre of the Ancients, of whom they were no more than the degenerate descendants, devious, excitable, highly-strung.[15] In short they were a European version of those "sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child" that Kipling, a few years later, entrusted to the care of the (preferably Northern) white man. That may be the reason why, as Davie suggests, English judges, after a period of greater severity that may have been the consequence of the rising number of immigrants evoking an image of barbarians at the gates, tended to be more lenient, when handing out sentences for violent crime, with foreign offenders (most of them Mediterranean) than with the local ruffians. For after all they could not help it; if not in their nature, it was at least in their culture.

Whatever the attitude of the judges, it reflected a hierarchical vision of European peoples that placed Northerners (especially Anglo-Saxons) at the top, and Mediterraneans at the bottom – a fairly common view at the time, particularly in the last decades of the century − but whether Davie's judges and journalists thought the criminal culture of the Mediterranean defendants at the Old Bailey was determined by their race rather than their national history, is impossible to say. Even a civilizational appraisal is never entirely free from racial assumptions, but what racial theorization there was then in England was much more preoccupied with distinguishing between Saxons and Celts, white and dark races, than with the finer

[13] As Kathleen Turner puts it in *British Travel Writers in Europe, 1750-1800* (London: Ashgate, 2001), 10: "Travel writing – the most consistently popular genre of the eighteenth century − . . . played a central role in developing formulations of national identity."

[14] See, for example, Cavaliero's chapter 9 in *Italia Romantica.*

[15] See John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, 228-240. Pemble, of course, is aware that this is only one side of the coin, and that many northern travellers looked on Mediterranean people with admiring eyes, as if they were the Noble Savages of the nineteenth century (133-149).

nuances separating northern and southern Europeans. In ***"'The Most Degraded of Them All': The Horrors of the Mediterranean Race,"*** **Paul Barlow** does not fail to analyse Thomas Huxley's lucubrations about the pale Xanthochroi and the darker Melanochroi, but it seems that Huxley never found in his own ideas any serious reason to discriminate between the races of Europe,[16] and "full-blown Nordicists" in Barlow's essay are German, French, American, rarely English. Even they, in fact, when confining their racial assessments to Europe, were never quite certain, at least till the Nazis came, as Barlow points out, whether Mediterraneans were "degraded" because they were Catholic and sensuous, or whether they had become Catholic and sensuous because they were racially corrupted. As Robert Young underlines, "race in the nineteenth century was always about more than just biology." Mostly, it was "a *bricolage* of cultural, religious and historical values" whose main conclusion was that civilization was "the peculiar achievement of certain races."[17]

Consciously or not, this seems to have been the ideological baggage (as early as the Grand Tour) of the northern travellers whose writings are examined in this book. It no doubt accounts for their frequent irritation, indignation, repulsion, their many phobias, their hardly hidden sense of superiority. True, these reports from the South seldom result in the clear inference that Southerners have no capacity for civilization, but nor do they claim that the dead weight of superstition, ignorance, intolerance once removed they will build progressive societies. Between the lines, the suspicion that the Mediterranean people are irredeemably degraded and that this will always determine their culture remains ever perceptible.[18]

In the eighteenth century Grand Tourists, despite their eagerness to reach Rome, carefully planned their crossing of the Roman *Campagna* so as to avoid the worst effects of *l'aria cattiva*. Well-versed in classical lore, they were shocked to see what the *Campagna* had become[19] – a deserted

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[16] See the conclusion of his "The Forefathers and Forerunners of the English People" published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 10, 1870, and reprinted in Michael Biddiss, ed., *Images of Race* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), 157-169.

[17] Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 48-49.

[18] On this point see the perceptive remarks of Kate Flint in her introduction to Dickens's *Pictures from Italy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), xxvii-xxviii.

[19] As Jeremy Black remarks in *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 153: By then "the habit of judging Italy by past descriptions was well established."

malarial wasteland, bare of trees and fatal to men. As **Lisa Beaven** shows in **"'*Grave of Graves': The Responses of Grand Tourists to the Roman Campagna*"** there were many ecological as well as economic reasons for this landscape of death, but as good Protestants it did not take English Grand Tourists long to find a sufficient explanation in papal misgovernment, unlike some of their Catholic counterparts.[20] But it was the towns that appalled northern visitors most, and eventually their squalid streets, decrepit buildings and bad smells, their swarms of beggars and droves of parasitical priests and monks outweighed the beauties of the landscape, the picturesqueness of ancient ruins, the Mediterranean light, and made even enlightened observers like the German scientist Wilhelm Gottlieb Tilesius von Tilenau in **Fernando Clara's "*The Streets of Lisbon. Late Eighteenth-Century German Science between the Scylla of People and the Charybdis of Nature,*"** or Charles Dickens in **Nathalie Vanfasse's "*The Powers of Southern Horrors in Dickens's* Pictures from Italy"** revert to "common British clichés about France and Italy" (Vanfasse), and more generally to Northern, Protestant stereotypes about "a decayed and decadent Southern Europe" (Clara), the victim both of an obscurantist Church and government, and of an all too often ne'er-do-well populace.

If we are to believe Smollett and other late-eighteenth century travellers, Nice did not differ much from the Lisbon of Tilesius except by its size. It was just another southern town of "stinking streets"[21] whose boorish inhabitants were none too clean and spent their days either doing their utmost to fleece foreign residents or going to church to perform their devotions.[22] In **"*Unbelievable Horrors on the Riviera. Perceptions of***

[20] Beaven mentions Charles-Marie de la Condamine. A counterexample would be Jean-Baptiste Mercier du Patty, but he was a Freemason [see Jean-Christian Tautil, "L'Etat romain en 1785 vu par du Patty dans ses *Lettres sur l'Italie*," in *L'Italie vue par les étrangers*, *Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Mulhouse*, n°19 (1995): 48-51].

[21] To use Southey's description of those of Lisbon in his *Journals of a Residence in Portugal*, *1800-1801* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 5. But of those of Nice itself the Swiss mathematician and philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer had similarly written a few years earlier: "L'intérieur de la ville est assez dépourvu d'agrémens. Les rues sont étroites . . . elles sont fort sales en temps de pluie ; on y sent une très mauvaise odeur" [*Journal d'un voyage fait en 1775 et 1776 dans les pays méridionaux de l'Europe*, trans. from the German (Rotterdam: L. Bennet, 1789), 161].

[22] See Daniel Feliciangeli, "Le développement de Nice au cours de la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle: les Anglais à Nice," in *Aspects de Nice du XVIIIe au XXe*

Nice in the Writings of Nineteenth-Century British Visitors and Winter Residents," **Judit Kiraly** shows that until Nice became French, and often until much later, things did not improve much, at least in the eyes of the British. They carried on grumbling about its dirt, its offensive smells, its "professional" beggars, its health hazards, its overcharging cabmen, and from the days of Smollett to those of Kiraly's petitioners of 1898 some of them at least seem to have been convinced that should they appropriate Nice, they could turn it into a much better place – an aspiration probably not uncommon then among Northern tourists in the Mediterranean,[23] and the sign that this "new race of pilgrims from the remote, and once savage, countries of the North," to whom Gibbon refers in the concluding lines of his book,[24] now felt that it was their turn to decide who was civilized and where.

Despite all the "horrors" they expected to encounter there, Northern travellers had little hesitation in moving south because doing so, as Black notes, they also moved back in time.[25] Of the South they were ready to embrace its scenery, its arts and antiquities, much less its present and its inhabitants[26] observed and judged through the prism of what Marjorie Morgan calls "the secular dimension of Protestantism."[27] Roman-Catholic areas, that is to say, were perceived as less prosperous, less clean, less dynamic, less well-ordered, less educated, less free than Protestant countries. As Morgan rightly points out, studying the Northern discourse on the South one is tempted to define it as colonial,[28] in other words to regard anti-Catholicism as the western counterpart of Edward Said's orientalism.

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siècles, *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice,* n°19 (1973): 45-67.

[23] Black cites a similar case about Sicily (*Italy and the Grand Tour*, 159-160).

[24] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, abridged and edited by Dero A. Saunders (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), 690.

[25] Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, 157.

[26] See C. P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 25.

[27] Marjorie Morgan, *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 91. In the nineteenth century the religious detestation of Catholicism, born of the menace it was believed to be, had gone and in Victorian travel narratives Catholicism "had come to be regarded simply as strange and repulsive. Its unattractive aspects were still viewed as detrimental, but only to Catholics themselves (*ibid.,* 94).

[28] *Ibid.,* 93: "Depictions of Catholics include such words as 'dark,' 'dirty,' 'ignorant' and 'strange' which cast Catholic 'others' in a subordinate position relative to Protestant gazers." Morgan, however, resists the temptation.

Orientalism, in fact, is not absent from this book and the next three chapters deal with issues which are at the heart of Said's work. Geographically we seem to be passing from a North/South to a West/East divide, but it must not be forgotten that until the early twentieth century south-east Europe was part of the Orient as a consequence of Ottoman presence in the Balkans, and that in the modern period political changes in this extended Near East were largely conditioned by the views, ambitions and fears of northern and central European powers. In *Orientalism*, Said briefly mentions Henri Pirenne's famous thesis according to which Arab penetration into the Mediterranean created a civilizational fracture between Christianity and Islam and put an end to what was left of Mediterranean unity, forcing the centre of gravity of European politics and culture northwards.[29] Said argues that this shift resulted in the Orient and Islam being "always represented as outsiders having a special role to play *inside* Europe,"[30] that, we gather, of the dangerous alien and general bogeyman.[31] A part that the Ottomans in particular played to horrendous perfection on many occasions, but never as much, at least in the eyes of public opinion, as when independence movements broke out in the Balkans. The climax came with the outburst of moral outrage which shook England in 1876 after the press had eagerly revealed the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks in Bulgaria. What erupted then were those feelings of revulsion at "the willingness of zealous Turks to persecute and murder Christians"[32] that had already got hold of British people in the days of the Greek War of Independence, if not before.[33]

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[29] Henri Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris: Le Club du meilleur livre, 1961), 115-116.

[30] Edward Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995), 71.

[31] *Ibid.*, 59-60.

[32] G. D. Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question. Missolonghi to Gallipoli* (London: University of London Press, 1971), 93.

[33] Many Victorian travellers, on the other hand, were often favourably impressed by the Turks they encountered. Very dignified, they "appeared to belong to an earlier, nobler civilization" [Rheinhold Schiffer, *Oriental Panorama. British Travellers in Nineteenth Century Turkey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 243]. But as Roderick Cavaliero shows in his *Ottomania. The Romantics and the Myth of the Islamic Orient* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010) writers and travellers could then be both fascinated by a mythical Orient of the one-thousand-and-one-night type and be repelled by Oriental despotism. Northerners of the Enlightenment Age were usually more severe. In Germany one could see "recurrent recourse to stereotypical scenes of Oriental decadence, violence, despotism, and sexuality in eighteenth-century representation of the Turks" [Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism*

The Bulgarian atrocities are today, for the layman, indissolubly linked with Gladstone's pamphlet, *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, and his speeches against what Carlyle then called "the unspeakable Turk."[34] What **Jean-Claude Sergeant's *"When Gladstone and W. T. Stead Campaigned against the 'Bulgarian Horrors'"*** establishes, however, is that in reality Gladstone, initially dragging his feet, was more follower than leader and that it was not his "pamphlets (*sic*) and oratory on the issue [that] gradually built up moral indignation in a previously indifferent electorate."[35] The protests in Britain had started before Gladstone, realizing that the masses were morally aroused, decided that the best he could do was to place himself at their head. This chronology enables Sergeant to do justice to Stead as one of the true fomenters of the anti-Turk agitation in the country, and to shed more light on an episode of his life as journalist and reformer that is too often put in the shade by his later campaign against child prostitution.

From the ferocity of Turkish repression to the conclusion that all aspects of Ottoman culture were equally barbarous, it was just a short step that some did not hesitate to take in the intellectual climate of late-Victorian England which took for proven the existence of a descending order of races, the degradation increasing the further south one went. This was the kind of "positional superiority" that a century later allowed Edward Said to postulate that "every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric."[36] In his quest for damning evidence, Said cites Alexander Kinglake who believed that "the *Arabian Nights* is too lively and inventive a work to have been created by a 'mere Oriental, who, for creative purposes, is a thing dead and dry'."[37] It is a similar story that **Francesca Vanke** tells in ***"'So Apathetic and Semi-Barbarous a Nation.' The Ottoman Empire and Questions of Art and Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain."*** Although her conclusions are more cautious than those often

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in the Age of Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 15]. Ann Thompson makes the same point about English Orientalists. See "L'Empire ottoman, symbole du despotism oriental?" in *Rêver d'Orient, connaître l'Orient: visions de l'Orient dans l'art et la littérature britanniqu*es, ed. Isabelle Gadoin et Marie-Elise Palmier-Chatelain (Lyon: ENS éditions, 2008), 177.

[34] In a public letter on the Balkan crisis published in *The Time*s on November 28, 1876.

[35] The quotation is by a no-ordinary layman, Bamber Gascoigne, in his *Encyclopedia of Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 258.

[36] Said, *Orientalism*, 7, 204.

[37] *Ibid.,* 193.

found in critiques of Orientalism, she suspects that if Iznik ceramics, one of the most popular and admired types of pottery known in western Europe in the late Victorian age, remained wrongly attributed to other peoples than the Turks, it probably was because throughout the second half of the nineteenth century the Turks were consistently ranked the lowest of all Eastern races. As contemporary Northern opinion connected race and artistic ability, it followed that Turks could by no means be artists.

This was not the opinion of Marmaduke Pickthall, the subject of **Alice Salvatore's** chapter: ***"'Southern Horrors' in a Turcophile's Writings: The Case of Marmaduke Pickthall."*** In an article cited by Salvatore he emphasized that the Turks "are mentally capable of attaining to the highest civilisation." Pickthall was certainly one of those "colourful eccentrics, those adventurous souls who are prepared to abandon insularity and throw themselves into a love of Turks, or of Balkan or Arab peoples."[38] Now critics prefer to classify him more grandly as a "counter-Orientalist," one of a small band of people who, in the Victorian age and early twentieth century, developed "pro-Islamic, partly anti-imperialist positions."[39] One wonders what Said would have made of Marmaduke Pickthall who gets only a passing mention as a "minor writer" of "exotic fiction"[40] in his book. Undeniably he was one of those "western voices" which tried "to challenge the negative and chauvinistic pronouncements of those who denigrated Islam,"[41] and which proclaimed that all the ills of the Balkans and the Near East were to be put down to the Powers' malign interference and to the fractiousness of the Eastern Christians. For Pickthall "the House of War,"[42] the *Dar al-Harb*, was not the non-Islamic world, those countries which Muslims have war with, but on the contrary the Muslim world itself, the target of rapacious Western nations. However, as Salvatore's study of Pickthall's literary and political discourse shows, he could not thoroughly rid himself of his culture of origin and the assumptions that went with it. Instances of common orientalist stereotypes can easily be garnered in his early novels. His articles are solidly pro-Turk and form a long carefully articulated case for the preservation of the Ottoman Empire, but the arguments are those a British imperialist might have used: the country is a savage land, its peoples mostly benighted or barbaric. Only the Turks, as a "white" race, can control, organize,

[38] Clayton, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 125.
[39] Geoffrey Nash, *From Empire to Orient. Travellers to the Middle East, 1830-1926* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 4. Nash has a chapter on Pickthall.
[40] Said, *Orientalism*, 252.
[41] Nash, *From Empire to Orient*, 7.
[42] The title of one of his novels published in 1916.

improve. Pickthall may have felt that he must use arguments his English readers could understand. However the fact that he could denounce Southern horrors having their true origin in the North and defend the Turkish and Islamic cause only by first devalorizing the Orient and speaking the language of cultural and racial essentialism is symptomatic of a mindset still "more than half-wedded to an imperial world view" as Geoffrey Nash puts it.[43]

During the First World War, while Pickthall was doing his iconoclastic best to exculpate the Turks from the Armenian atrocities, other horrors were unfolding in another corner of the Ottoman Empire. **Tylor Brand**'s ***"Years of Horror: The American Experience of the Famine of World War I in Lebanon and Western Syria,"*** is a meticulous and perceptive exploration of the deeds, thoughts and feelings of a little group of men and women almost cut off from the outside world, looked upon with distrust by the Turkish authorities, dismayed by the harrowing scenes they had to witness day in day out, tormented by their inability to have the slightest impact on the catastrophe, finally sinking into fatalism, but all the time never ceasing to do their utmost to relieve the sufferings of a starving population. Reading about them, one is tempted to copy Curzon and conclude that in Lebanon those Americans had found "the call to duty, and the means of service to mankind."

Although cultural echoes of the preceding chapters are clearly audible in the last two essays in this collection, these approach Southern horrors principally with some of the tools of literary criticism. In ***"Configuring Italian Horrors. From Context to Intertext in Two Novels by Ann Radcliffe*: A Sicilian Romance *and* The Italian," Françoise Lapraz-Severino** analyses the characteristic features of Radcliffe's narrative approach to a land she had never visited and to a culture not her own which she believed conditioned by a mostly repellent religion. Focusing first on her handling of the largely imagined foreign context, Lapraz assesses the evolution in Radcliffe's treatment of the Mediterranean "horrendous" dimension between *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1797). The latter closely followed the publication of Lewis's *The Monk*, and was the last of Radcliffe's published works. Lapraz sifts through *The Italian* to detect the more or less disguised impact of *The Monk* on it and adds her voice to the long-running debate on whether Lewis's novel was instrumental in Radcliffe's decision to (almost) stop writing.

[43] Nash, *From Empire to Orient*, 203.

In ***"Horror and Melancholia in Romantic Greece: British Reviews of John Keats's* Lamia *and John Polidori's* The Vampyre," Susan Oliver** brings us back to the Balkans, but neither in Keats nor in Polidori have horrors anything to do with Ottoman occupation. Oliver explores early-nineteenth century counter-Hellenistic perspectives of Greece as a site of fearfulness, a land infected with decay. However, as Oliver points out, Keats and Polidori did not only draw on ancient Greek mythology; they also retrieved horror and monstrosity from the farther eastern locations that they inhabited in much of romantic literature and brought tales of demonic transformation that had become popular through the *Arabian Nights* back onto southern European soil. In the second half of her paper Oliver dissects the reception of *Lamia* and *The Vampyre* by the review press, somewhat startled but also sufficiently impressed to immediately use this Mediterranean vampire, not over-sympathetically though, as a metaphor to define the condition of the romantic poet, the workings of his imagination and the treatment of his subjects. It emerges that British reviewers, even at the height of romanticism, preferred their Greece classical and radiant rather than Gothicized and sombre, and were more than a little tinged with almost Victorian prudishness. Some of them, however, had enough sensibility (and commercial sense) to respond to (and titillate their readers with) the sensationalism, sensuality, not to say eroticism, in which the two texts were bathed.

The last words of the inordinately long subtitle[44] of Francis Sacheverell Darwin's travelogue, *Travels in Spain and the East, 1808-1810*, guarantee that the reader will find "murder and adventure on every page." They could pass for an apt summary of what will be read in the following chapters. This book, no doubt, is far from exhausting the subject of Southern horrors in the modern age. However it compiles enough of them to take the reader on an eventful and virtual Grand Tour *à la* Sacheverell Darwin both of the Mediterranean world and of the Northern mind. So that, while journeying through this "litany of horrors" which **Roderick Cavaliero** relentlessly covers in his ***prologue*** , he will also wonder about the values, assurances, phobias of the men and women who, in the societies of the North, thought, wrote or fantasized about them.

Gilbert Bonifas
Martine Monacelli

[44] "An intrepid and eventful Grand Tour of the Mediterranean. Constant danger due to war, piracy, plague make this a thrilling read, with murder and adventure on every page."

PROLOGUE

TRAVELS THROUGH DARKNESS

RODERICK CAVALIERO

This conference has taken as its starting date the capture of Constantinople by the Osmanli Turks; it ends with the Spanish Civil War, thus embracing what one might call the centuries of Graeco-Roman spiritual, if not physical, domination of the Mediterranean world. Other countries, other histories, other cultures that barely know Greece or Rome, have now taken over, leaving to tourists the former world empire, which according to Gibbon took over a thousand years to decline and fall from apogee to zonk. To many, it is divine retribution for hubris in thinking the lessons of Greece and Rome had a perennial validity, to others it is the beginning of a new era free from both. If we are to ponder on the horrors of the south, as opposed to the equal horrors of north, west and east, we may ask how much this is a protest at the undue respect medieval, Renaissance and early modern man paid to Greece and Rome, or whether it is owing to some deeper resentment.

The intellectual thraldom of the Graeco-Roman past did not, as we know, vanish with the fall of Constantinople. Even as Constantinople was falling, Flavio Biondo began his massive *Roma Triumphans*, a collection of documents to show that Rome had been the high point of civilisation for the contemporary Christian world.[1] But with the conquest of half the Mediterranean littoral by invasive Islam, and the emergence of nation states sustained by ocean trade, the former Graeco-Roman Empire became contested land between nations that might have a Mediterranean coast line, but whose strength and wealth came from the north and across the Atlantic. The Mediterranean no longer represented the centre of European interest; for all that it had a claim to be the heartland of our civilisation. Indeed there was resentment that the modern Grecians and Romans were,

[1] F. Muecke, "'Ante oculos ponere': Vision and Imagination in Flavio Biondo's *Roma Triumphans*," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 79 (2011): 276.

in the eyes of enlightened Europe, scarcely worthy of their classical past and scarcely likely to become worthy of it. Though their subjection to foreign domination was regretted, they had, by not being ancient Greeks or Romans, brought it on themselves.

Even after Constantinople had fallen it was impossible to shrug off a cultural legacy that had dominated Europe for a millennium, but it became easier to look upon it with more dubious eyes. Even though the newly discovered Arcadias − and the respected authorities, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Ptolemy and Pliny, had promised that they must exist somewhere in the world − turned out to be anything but Earthly Paradises (their more civilised inhabitants practising human sacrifice, and their more primitive anthropophagy), they prompted students of that ancient world to ask whether it had been such a cradle of civilisation after all. Had its heirs much to boast of? In what way, one of the most enlightened students of that ancient world, Michel de Montaigne, asked, could the native American cannibals be called barbaric? They only roasted and ate dead men; unlike civilised men, who "mangle by tortures and torments a body full of lively sense, to roast him in peeces, to make dogges and swine to gnawe and teare him in mammockes." This, Montaigne observed, was the practice in his life-time in France under pretence of piety and religion.[2]

Were piety and religion, then, the civilisation that Greece and Rome had given the world? Or were they only a pretence of it? As new texts and translations of hitherto hidden texts from the ancient world rolled off the presses, people began to wonder just how civilised that world had been. The sins of the great Empire in particular, and the sheer awfulness of Roman political, social and dynastic life, were frankly too appalling to deserve any seal of divine approval, which it was deemed to have received when the son of God consented to be born into it. When Marlowe's Machiavel asked "what right had Caesar to the empery" in the world, it was a rhetorical question implying, to his Elizabethan audience, not much.[3] No region of the world had a monopoly of horrors, but those that took place in the former lands of the Empire seemed worse than elsewhere, as things should, with all its privileges of climate, wealth, intelligence, and even divine sanction, have been better.

Partly it was a form of *schadenfreude*, satisfaction that the proud empire should be humbled by the disasters now revealed as existing in its empery, but it was also a realisation that, as Yeats was to say, if the

[2] Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes*, trans. John Florio (Menston, England: The Scolar Press, 1969), 1: 104.

[3] Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (1633 [written 1589?]), prologue to act 1, line 19. Modern editions usually have empire instead of empery.

"centre cannot hold, / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." [4] First the centre had not held against the entry into the inner sea of a power almost as fearsome as had been the Mongols of earlier centuries. The Ottoman Empire may have become the Byzantine Roman Empire islamised, run, financed and built by foreigners, but these foreigners were converted and brainwashed for a Holy War that pressed relentlessly on into Europe and the central Mediterranean. Ruthless military success created the legend, still held as late as 1817, that the Turks were a "saintly murderous brood / To carnage and the Koran given / Who think through unbelievers' blood / Lies their directest path to heaven."[5] In the spirit of the Crusades, which had held Islam off for several centuries, the Christian maritime powers adopted their own form of *jehad,* a perpetual war that gave no quarter. The atrocities of this war, on both sides, were horrendous, waged as it was by followers of religions whose founders had both preached peace. When the Ottomans in 1565 finally reduced the fortress that controlled the two harbours in Malta, they floated the bodies of crucified knights across to the besieged on the other side of the bay, who immediately decapitated their prisoners of war and catapulted their heads back to the besieging army in return. No doubt the victims of both sides were immediately admitted to their respective heavens.

From the last Ottoman push into the central Mediterranean, until the end of the Napoleonic Wars, this conflict was waged with only occasional truces negotiated by maritime states on both sides of the Mediterranean. Prisoners in both camps slaved for their captors until death, unless they were ransomed or apostatized. An unofficial Geneva Convention was gradually evolved by threats of reciprocal treatment, but most of those captives, too poor to raise ransoms, died in bondage and in misery. The effects of this perpetual war on trade and development were disastrous, principally for the Barbary Regencies. There the easy gains from religious piracy and the flow of ransom money rendered their rulers too idle to improve their fiefdoms, while the northern Mediterranean littoral lived in daily fear of Ottoman attack. Though France early established trading relations with the Ottomans and by extension the Regencies, Spain, the Italian states and many of the maritime Christian ports never put an end to this war of attrition. France could easily have done so, but she tolerated its continuation, largely because the frigates and galleys, particularly of Malta, provided an excellent naval college for French naval officers, three

[4] W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming," lines 3-4, in *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 211.
[5] Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance*, in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* (London: John Dicks, 1870), 29.

Knights of Malta rising to the rank of admiral in the French navy.[6] It took two northern powers, the United States and Britain, to put an end to it by clobbering Tripoli (1805) and Algiers (1817) into submission.

The centre did not hold elsewhere, too, for the horrors of the religious and territorial war in the eastern Mediterranean as Ottoman expansion was resisted were compounded by an equally ferocious war between Christians in the west. For the Catholic South, heresy was and had always been an error to be expunged for the safety of souls. For the Protestant North, the greater errors of Rome and of the papacy had to be shown as not only false, but also wicked, and the reliance on the popular cult of saints, shrines, relics, pardons and pilgrimages as all part of a religion of trickery. Good Protestants were regaled with woodcuts that showed, at the triumphant feet of Truth, a dragon of lies, wearing the triple tiara of the Pope, surrounded by demons masquerading as angels. The behaviour of the late fifteenth-century Popes did little to modify this picture. The falseness of the papacy, for centuries hiding under a fraudulent *Donatio* from the Emperor Constantine, the damaging schism that divided Europe into warring parties and the eventual recovery of wealth and power for "the popedom," as Elizabeth Barrett Browning called it,[7] by engaging in the geo-politics of power in Renaissance Italy, all constituted an abdication from divinely appointed authority. When a Pope's son showed the face of a ruthless and unprincipled tyrant, it endorsed the belief that southern Catholicism was to be confronted as malevolent.

Cesare Borgia is recognised by common legend as about the wickedest man of his time, a legend largely promoted by Niccolò Machiavelli who dedicated *The Prince* to him. *The Prince* may now be recognised as a pragmatic, morally neutral blue-print for the absolute ruler, whom Machiavelli sought to represent as the only logically effective one for the general good of the state, but it endowed its author with the attributes of that quintessence of evil, Old Nick himself. Marlowe's Machiavel counted "religion but a childish toy."[8] Protestants may have elevated conscience above precept, but the clash of precept and conscience, the battleground of the Counter-Reformation, suggested that neither would always triumph. What was conscience? "If 'twere a kibe / 'Twould put me to my slipper," says Antonio in *The Tempest:* "I feel not / This deity in my bosom.

[6] The three admirals were François l'Ollivier de Tronjoly, François Joseph Paul, comte de Grasse and Pierre André de Suffren.

[7] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Casa Guidi Windows*, part 1, st. 15, line 900, in *The Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Marjorie Stone and Beverly Taylor, vol. 2 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010).

[8] Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, prologue to act 1, line 14.