Victorian Women Travellers and the Political Economy of Art: An Analysis of Commerce, Craftsmanship, and Nationhood in Travel Writing on the Middle East and Asia, 1844-1899

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the School of English Language, Literature, and Linguistics

April 2024

Abstract

Although recent travel criticism has acknowledged the intellectual authority and popularity of female travel writers in the Victorian period, few studies have considered that female travellers both informed and expanded upon Victorian debates surrounding the role of art, and art production, as a symbol of political-economic progress and cultural identity. My analysis shows that female travellers consistently situate their observations of art production and trade in the Middle East and Asia as a central concern of political-economic discourse throughout the mid- and late-Victorian period. Crucially, these accounts reveal the development of an ideological impasse between the collectible value placed on traditional arts and crafts, and the value placed on industrialisation as an indicator of political-economic progress in the late-nineteenth century.

In Victorian Britain, museums and global exhibitions served a dual purpose as educational spectacles and sites of nationalistic competition which centred Britain as an exemplar of technological and cultural advancement. In this thesis, I approach travelogues as another form of 'exhibitionary space' where female travellers textually recreate displays of art objects and antiquities found in museums, private collections, markets, and manufactories in Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan. I apply this conception to travelogues by twelve women, including professional authors such as Isabella Bird, Harriet Martineau, and Amelia Edwards alongside more obscure travellers such as Anna d'Almeida, Isabella Romer, and Mary Bickersteth. These women perpetuated stadial ideals of industrialisation and global commerce as a signifier of national 'progress' in both implicit and explicit fashion across the century; however, as mass production replaced traditional artistry and craftsmanship across the world, their accounts reflect a growing concern that the resultant decline of quality and cultural authenticity will destabilise not only the value of eastern collectibles, but of Britain's own artistic productions.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Dr. James Ivan Miklovich.

Dear Professor Higgins,

It breaks my heart that I will never get the chance to present you with a copy of this thesis, or to thank you, one more time, for taking me under your wing when I was just an insecure undergrad 'from that other department'. I'll never forget that you were the first person to tell me I should get a PhD, or that I told you 'no, that's not for me'. You always knew what I could handle, and never let me get away with less. You helped me to achieve my dream of studying at Oxford and never stopped patiently supporting me as I grew into my dream career, one step at a time. You fought for me when you thought I hadn't been treated fairly, and championed me for every opportunity. You amazed me with your stories and inspired me with your example. I will always strive to pay forward your legacy as a teacher, mentor, and sometimes tormentor (mostly during exam season).

I cherish your advice to work hard and 'always look for angels'. I hope you know you were one.

Thank you.

Love,
Miss Doolittle

Acknowledgments

I have many people to thank for their unwavering love and support that has kept me going through the most difficult moments of the last four years – of which there were plenty. This thesis has been a labour of love, and represents the culmination of ten years of study, work, and waiting; there are more people than I can name who have contributed, in some way, to each stage as I progressed towards this end, but I will reserve this space for those closest to me, and those with the most direct influence over my time in Newcastle.

First, I want to thank my supervisors, Dr. Ella Dzelzainis and Dr. Jake Jewusiak. From the start, you have both gone out of your way to help me find my confidence as a researcher and young professional, and never hesitated to fight for me when it was necessary. Your kindness and encouragement have been a bright spot during some very hard times; no one could have imagined that a pandemic would strike in the middle of my first year, and I am so grateful that I had you both in my corner to help me through and ensure that I had opportunities to make up for lost time when the world opened up again. I know the work I've seen you both do is the tip of the iceberg, and it means more than you know that you have always taken time to talk to me, read a draft, or write a letter on my behalf when you have so much else going on. Even though much of my time in Newcastle was overshadowed by unexpected hardship, I can say with confidence that I made the right choice in coming here for my degree, and that I am blessed to have had you as my supervisors. I have so much respect and admiration for you both, and I hope to learn from your examples of patient leadership, rigorous academics, and thoughtful collaboration.

Next, I want to thank Professor Cliff Jones. I had no idea when I answered the JobSoc advert to help with your bibliography that I would end up meeting such a warm and caring mentor. You have opened so many doors for me to learn skills and have experiences that have prepared me for whatever my future career may bring (and then some!). I never have and never will take your trust in me for granted, or forget all the times that you have gone above and beyond to support and encourage me as though I were your own student. You and Joanne have been so kind to me, and I owe you both so much for your continued support and friendship.

I could fill pages with my love and gratitude to my family. Mom, Dad, Steven, and McKenna (and Frasier and Niles), thank you for the hours upon hours of phone calls and video chats, the pantomimed hugs, care packages, and plane tickets home for the holidays. The hardest part of this degree was the forced separation from you all during COVID, and the fact that I only get to come home every once in a while; it is always a painful choice between following your dreams and leaving the people who know and love you best, but I am so thankful for the time that we've spent talking as though the miles don't matter. Y'all have sustained me in every way possible when the work and the stress felt like too much. I look forward to a brighter future and to sharing this country that I love with the people I love every chance we get. I can never repay what y'all have done for me, but that won't stop me from trying!

I have always been the kind of person to prefer a few, very close friends over dozens of acquaintances, and I feel blessed to call some of the most wonderful people in the world my best friends. Jennifer, Upasana, Rachel, and Sam – each of you hold a special place in my heart, and each of you make my life more special than I feel I deserve. I wish I lived closer to you all, but I always look forward to seeing each of you wherever in the world we end up next. Dane and Luke, my other brothers; thank you, as well as Steven, for being the wolves that raised me. In Newcastle, I have been lucky to share this experience with Stephanie, Juliana, and Pauline; thank y'all for the laughs, the commiserating, the walks, the shared

私の愛するの男性人へ：私たちの時代が来ることを祈ります。やがて。

Table of Contents

Introduction

The public exhibition was one of the most influential and emblematic cultural developments of nineteenth-century Britain. Institutions such as the British Museum were celebrated as sites of public education and entertainment that provided unprecedented access to 'high art' and antiquities to the working and middle classes. It is well-established that Victorian 'society sought to define its own culture via multiple engagements with classical antiquity' (Moser 1271); although cloaked in the benevolent language of public education and cultural 'preservation', the drive to obtain and display antiquities from around the world in national, regional, and private collections cannot be separated from the cultivation of a narrative which placed British civilization as the paragon of political-economic development. Literary critic Frank Palmeri links the Victorians' narrative of civilisation and political economy as a continuation of eighteenth- century conjectural histories, which were speculative accounts of how, and under what conditions, civilisations formed and progressed into a more refined state of social and economic organisation. It is commonly assumed that there was a cultural and philosophical disjuncture between 'the genre of conjectural history', and 'the emerging fields of political economy, sociology, and anthropology in the course of the nineteenth century'; however, Palmeri argues that conjectural history 'made a crucial contribution to the framework of modern knowledge, by replacing biblically authorised narratives of early society with the knowledge produced by the social sciences' (1-2). My own research reveals a direct and continuous philosophical lineage between the visual comparison of nations' artistic and technological productions in the nineteenth century and the 'stadial' conjectural histories that emerged in the 1750s that associated commercial – later known as capitalist – economies with the highest level of civilisation.

Building on the eighteenth-century model of stadial development, the nineteenth-century narrative that the British Empire had reached the apex of civilisation was brought into concentrated focus in the Great Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, where global delegations gathered together in London to display cultural and technological wares in a public spectacle which sociologist Tony Bennet termed "the exhibitionary complex" (1988). This complex 'formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting … messages of power' by '[transferring] objects … into progressively more open and public arenas …' (74). Although Bennet's article deals with physical spaces of display, his theorisation of the exhibitionary complex is not only applicable, but essential, to nineteenth-century travel literature. Theorists of literature, politics, and museum studies have long acknowledged the influence of Victorian museums

and exhibitions on public perceptions of imperial power, knowledge, and nationhood.[1] However, these studies exclude the consideration that literature should be considered as a form of exhibition. Furthermore, there is little acknowledgement of the role that Victorian women played in the formation and dissemination of cultural knowledge and political-economic discourse – a role that I argue was often accomplished through the medium of travel writing. The popularity of travelogues, along with the increase of middle-class tourism to Eastern territories throughout the nineteenth century, opened new possibilities for women to exert social and political influence over the British public. One of the key ways that women accomplished this was by using their impressions of foreign cultures and aesthetics as prompts to reflect – whether consciously or unconsciously – on the relationship between art, cultural knowledge, and capitalist development. This becomes especially evident in discussions of museums and private collections, as women use the medium of travel writing to represent and commentate on the displays of artefacts and *objets d'art* they encounter abroad. Across women's travelogues, there is a clear theme that the authors believe that the well-travelled have an obligation to curate – through textual representation – what cannot be physically viewed by the reader at home. Thus, the travelogue acts as an alternative form of display informed by the lived experience and research of the traveller-author.

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the male figures most frequently credited with the popularisation or formalisation of Victorian aesthetic and political-economic discourses were part of a greater ideological lineage that included the public contributions of female travellers reporting on the state of art and art production in the Middle East and Asia. I argue that women's accounts of consuming Eastern art, antiquities, and textiles act as a form of productive, educational labour that both expands upon and critiques the stadial messaging of the exhibitionary complex.

0.1 Reframing Nationalism, Art, and Nineteenth-Century Exhibitions in Stadial Terms
Before examining the importance of stadial political economy as an organising principle of the Victorian exhibitionary complex, this section will provide a brief history of how conjectural histories of human civilisation were first developed in the eighteenth century and then evolved into early-nineteenth century 'classical' political economy. My thesis does not seek to provide

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[1] C.f. McDonald, Sharon, editor. *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*. Routledge, 1998; Young, Paul. *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Auerbach, Jerry A. and Hoffenberg, Peter H., editors. *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. Routledge, 2016.

a comprehensive history of aesthetic and political-economic criticism in the nineteenth century; rather, my aim is to perform a revision of the historical, literary, and economic criticisms which have neglected the contributions of women in developing a more integrated view of nineteenth-century art and political economy. Consequently, this portion of the history does not include women; this is primarily because there are few women who have been acknowledged as active participants in the developmental history of classical political economy. One of the important exceptions is sociologist, novelist, and travel-writer Harriet Martineau, who will feature prominently in the primary analysis of this thesis; however, many historians limit her role 'to disseminat[ing] laws of political economy to workers through her middle-class readers' rather than making original contributions to theory (Palmeri 88). I will directly address the critical importance of gender in nineteenth-century political economy, travel writing, and the exhibitionary complex in the following section, including a more thorough consideration of how Martineau's perceived role as 'the only woman among these [male] thinkers' has been so diminished (Palmeri 88).

The stadial political economic theory established by eighteenth century Scottish and French philosophers has its own history dating back to the seventeenth century; however, economist Ronald Meek designates the publication of French philosopher Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748, Eng. translation 1750) as the first significant attempt to provide an 'elaboration of the rudimentary notions concerning socio-economic development which the seventeenth century had thrown up … all roads were in fact leading in the direction of the new social science which was to emerge in the 1750s' (28-29). Although it may not have been the core aim of Montesquieu's work to codify 'socio-economic development' into stages per se, his work was the first to foreground the relationship between a nation's laws and 'the principal occupation of the natives, whether husbandmen, huntsmen, or shepherds', among other considerations' (Montesquieu 6). This aspect of Montesquieu's work, which was not originally presented as a linear trajectory of socio-economic progress, was expanded upon by the 'pioneers of the four stages theory', in both France and Scotland; although I have chosen to focus more narrowly on the contributions of key figures in the Scottish coterie, it is important to acknowledge that many theoretical developments in stadial theory occurred simultaneously in both countries during the late-eighteenth century (Meek 32).

The most famous names associated with the Scottish coterie – sometimes referred to as the 'Edinburgh School' – of political economy include David Hume, Dugald Stewart, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and later on, John Millar. These writers differed significantly in their applications and precise approach to classifying conjectural histories of stadial development,

including the exact number and denomination of stages; for example, Ferguson famously adopted a 'three-stages' model based on Montesquieu's terminology of the 'savage, barbarian, and civilised periods', which Frank Palmeri argues 'exerted an even wider influence than Smith's, constituting a nearly ubiquitous part of the implicit knowledge of the nineteenth century' (41). However, I will demonstrate throughout this thesis that even though the taxonomy of Ferguson's stages was more commonly known and used in the Victorian era, the relationship between ethics, art, and political-economic advancement established by Smith played a more essential role in defining the underlying structures of stadial political-economic thought in relation to the production and display of art.

Ronald Meek offers a condensed definition of stadial theory 'in its most specific form' as the belief that:

> society 'naturally' or 'normally' progressed over time through four more or less distinct and consecutive stages, each corresponding to a different mode of subsistence, these stages being defined as hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce. To each of these modes of subsistence … there corresponded … different sets of ideas and institutions relating to law, property and government, and also different sets of customs, manners, and morals. (2)

The earliest, most precise distillation of these four stages has been traced back, with some difficulty, to several series of lectures given by Adam Smith during his successive tenures at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow between the early-1750s to the mid-1760s (Meek 107- 112). Although other philosophers, who are known to have been either students or colleagues of Smith's during this period, were the first to publish about the four-stages theory, lecture notes and testimonials of Smith's students, notably his protégé and later close friend, John Millar, have identified that Smith was already teaching these ideas with varying degrees of sophistication in his courses on Jurisprudence and Moral Philosophy; the key points of these lectures were later expanded and published as *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), respectively.

While Smith is most famous for the latter treatise, which explores a version of the commercial doctrine now known as 'laissez-faire' capitalism, economist Jonathan Wight notes that 'Adam Smith, following [David] Hume, was firmly in the virtue ethics camp. Developing moral character was … necessary for the fulfilment of a decentralised economic system lacking the heavy hand of government' (157). In order to achieve Smith's ideal of a minimally-regulated, yet morally sound commercial society, his body of work 'argue[d] persuasively that the arts play a central role – perhaps an indispensable role – in human development' (Wight 177). As Wight points out, the prioritising of art in the development of

the moral, and consequently political economic, fabric of society was not unique to Smith; although there were significant differences in their views on the role of religion in achieving social progress, Smith's work 'builds on Hume's earlier conjectural narrative of the shift from feudal to commercial society in 'Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences (1742)' (Palmeri 59). Hume's work was largely driven by a desire to replace traditional biblical history, and its related social mores, with an alternative, secular narrative of development. Although he never codified his view of social development in specific 'stages', Hume wrote extensively on the characteristics of an advanced society, including the essential role of the arts (Meek 30). Rather than focusing on the moral implications of art, Hume argued that art was a necessary contributor to the intellectual development of a nation, and perhaps more importantly, to the development of a productive sense of competition between developing states, wherein:

> *nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy.* The emulation [of the refined arts], which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement. (120, original emphasis)

For Hume, one of the chief benefits of this 'emulation' of the arts that have been successfully refined in other nation-states, and carried across through 'commerce and policy', is the 'stop … to both *power* and to *authority*' of individual governments (120, original emphasis). Fundamentally, Hume argues that the arts simultaneously thrive under the rule of 'free governments' and act as a check against the encroachment of government 'tyranny'; however, he also cautions against nations becoming 'dependent on their neighbours for those elegant entertainments' and failing to '[cultivate] their own language' (120, 137-138). Thus, art facilitates multiple vital functions related to the formulation of national identity, maintaining a limited government, and inspiring the people of a given nation to cultivate their own intellectual and social development.

Similarly, in *The Wealth of Nations*, the role of art is briefly mentioned as one of two 'remedies' to the 'unsocial or disagreeably rigorous … morals of all the little [religious] sects into which the country was divided' (280). According to Smith:

> The state… by giving liberty to all those who for their own interest would attempt without scandal or indecency, to amuse and divert the people by painting, poetry, music, dancing; by all sorts of dramatic representations and exhibitions, would easily dissipate, in the greater part of them, that melancholy and gloomy humour which is almost always the nurse of popular superstition and enthusiasm. (281)

Like Hume, Smith argues that the government should have minimal involvement in the arts in order to achieve the maximum social benefit. In this context, art is not simply reducible to an

economic product; rather, art and exhibitions act as a unifying cultural force which contributes to the well-being, creativity, and harmonious relations between citizens of the same nation-state. Although there were significant disagreements between Smith, Hume, and other formative voices of political-economic philosophy, it can be collectively inferred that art and exhibitions were considered as essential as free commerce with other nations in the development of national identity and a thriving economy. This same conception is evident in the Victorians' obsession with assigning distinctive cultural identities – 'national characters' – to each nation with whom they came in contact that were reproduced through art, drama, literature, and the microcosmic representation of industrial and artistic productions in private collections, museums, exhibitions, and marketplaces.

The legacies of eighteenth-century political economy into the nineteenth century can be traced directly through the work of Smith's successors such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, Thomas Malthus, and David Ricardo, although they are often best remembered for the aspects of their work which deviated from Smith's more resolute stance on government 'non-interventionism' (Paul). John Stuart Mill, son of James Mill and one of the most prominent political economists of the early Victorian period, drew from the work of his father, Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, and others to develop his own influential, and sometimes contentious, work on the division and categories of productive or unproductive labour which were first introduced in the *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith's conception of the division of labour assumed that dividing the process of manufacturing into small, repetitive tasks performed by a team of workers would increase productivity and grow the economy. Smith acknowledged that strict adherence to such division would necessarily come at the cost of the worker's creativity and critical thinking 'unless [the] government takes some pains to prevent it' (Smith 268). Mill's approach to this topic incorporated early socialist ideas, such as the importance of labour unions, and he also wrote numerous essays addressing the 'sexual division of labour' that attempted to codify appropriate roles for single and married women's labour within an industrial economy. Nonetheless, Mill praised Smith's work despite their ideological differences and expanded upon several of Smith's ideas, including 'an extensive, conventional four-stage history as the prologue to his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848)'; *Principles*, as a whole, was written as an attempt to mediate between capitalism and the emergence of socialist ideals in order to 'investigate with increasing interest the possibilities for modifying capitalism through workers' shared ownership and management of industrial concerns' (Palmeri 60).

In terms of Mill's view of the arts as a concern of political economy, his 'Preliminary

Remarks' do not explore this concept specifically, but rather he offers a valuable account of the role of art within the broader field at the time of the *Principles'* first publication:

> Writers on Political Economy profess to teach, or to investigate, the nature of Wealth, and the laws of its production and distribution … The enquiries which relate to it are in no danger of being confounded with those relating to any other of the great human interests. All know that it is one thing to be rich, another thing to be enlightened, brave, or humane; that the questions how a nation is made wealthy, and how it is made free, or virtuous, or eminent in literature, in the fine arts, in arms, or in polity, are totally distinct enquiries. Those things, indeed, are all indirectly connected, and react upon one another. … But though the subjects are in very close contact, they are essentially different, and have never been supposed to be otherwise. (3)

Here, Mill establishes that the popular view was that the 'fine arts' were a separate, but nonetheless relevant consideration of political economy; however, he goes on to clarify the distinction between 'wealth' in terms of the discipline of political economy, which refers to money and fungible articles, versus 'the possessions of an individual … a nation, or of mankind [in which] nothing is included which does not of itself answer some purpose of utility or pleasure' (3). Similar to the way that Smith divided his analysis between *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations*, Mill takes care to distinguish between the philosophical and economical disciplinary approaches to understanding wealth and wealth production but does not deny that both are essential. This careful distinction between disciplinary boundaries was misunderstood, and subsequently misrepresented, by art critics and designers who took it upon themselves to fuse existing discourses on aesthetic labour, production, and trade into a bespoke discourse dedicated to the political economy of art, prompted in large part by the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Both the venue and wares on display at the Great Exhibition were designed to 'combine commerce and culture, arts and manufactures, taste and profits' in a show of British innovation and excellence, but for many art critics it represented the precise opposite (Auerbach 113). Few voices were more prominent than John Ruskin and his protégé, William Morris, both of whom attended and publicly criticised the Exhibition; Ruskin, in particular, spoke out against 'the paltry arts of our fashionable luxury' displayed in an architectural style which he belittled as a 'magnified … conservatory' (*Crystal Palace* 420; 419). The harsh criticisms of the design of the Palace and its contents from Ruskin and his contemporaries – which also included architect Augustus Pugin and Secretary of the National Gallery Ralph Wornum – 'were essentially [criticisms] of the division of labour, and … at heart a lament for craftsmanship' (Auerbach 115). Ruskin conceived of craftsmanship as a separate, and lesser, form of artistic production, and believed painting and sculpture to be superior mediums more deserving of national attention than glasswork, ironwork, furniture, and pottery. In contrast,

Pugin organised a unique exhibit within the Great Exhibition called the Medieval Court that served as a 'utopian view of the future and as a lament for a largely imaginary past', comprised of 'hand-crafted furniture in the Gothic style', 'ecclesiastical ornaments', and 'a motley collection of stoves, pots, sofas, and tables' (Auerbach 115-116). This display effectively 'preview[ed] the team-oriented craftsmanship that would characterise William Morris' Arts and Crafts productions' later in the century (Auerbach 116). Morris' famous 'golden rule' of design '*have nothing in your houses which you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful*' makes a clear reference to Mill's definition of non-monetary wealth in *Principles* as objects that 'answer some purpose of utility or pleasure' (Morris 110, original emphasis; Mill 3). The Arts and Crafts Movement formalised in the 1880s as a response to the increases of mechanisation and division of labour in industrial production, and as an extension of the utopian socialist ideals seeded throughout Ruskin's attempts to formulate his own 'political economy of art' in the years following the Great Exhibition.

Fundamental to Ruskin's work was his prioritising of 'the necessity of an intrinsic value attributable to aesthetically pleasing objects, a value that was independent of price' which Ruskin claimed was at odds with the celebration of modern manufacturing that was the Great Exhibition; even though Ruskin 'understood Adam Smith's distinction between value in use and value in exchange', he 'accused Mill and the other political economists of concentrating too much on the latter', paving the way for his own alternative vision of a political economy of art (Throsby 280- 281). Ruskin famously claimed in the introduction to his collected essays *The Political Economy of Art* (1868) that 'I have never read any author on political economy, except Adam Smith, some twenty years ago', but instead based his arguments on the more nebulous 'statements of economical principle … most [of which], if not all, of them are accepted by existing authorities on the science' (vii).[2] It is unclear whether this statement was made 'tongue in cheek' or was intentionally meant to mislead his readers, but it is nevertheless evident that 'his understanding of the workings of the economic system showed little of the insight and intellectual rigour that were characteristic of the political economists of his day or before' (Throsby 290).[3] Since Ruskin's work drew heavily on his

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[2] For the remainder of this thesis, I will abbreviate this collection of essays as *PEA* in parenthetical citations.

[3] Throsby cites economic historian John Fain as an important detractor of Ruskin's arguments about Adam Smith; Fain makes the argument that Ruskin's work was based on a fundamental mischaracterisation of Smith's work rather than ignorance of it, based on the apparent compatibility of many of Ruskin's views with Smith's. C.f. John Tyree Fain, 'Ruskin and the Orthodox Political Economists'. Southern Economic Journal vol. 10, no. 1, 1943, pp.1-13.

evangelical Christian beliefs and background in aesthetic criticism to inform his body of work, it is arguable that his work shares more characteristics with moral philosophy than political-economic theory.

Ruskin made efforts throughout his career to deflect criticism of his writings by 'represent[ing] as forcefully as possible a society blind to its faults, and to underline the urgency and difficulty of his own efforts to redeem it', and thus remain blind, himself, to the limitations of his own contributions (O'Gorman 246). Despite Ruskin's questionable grasp of either eighteenth- or nineteenth-century political economy, he remains an important figure for 'areas where his work does indeed have strong resonances with the evolution of the economics of the arts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries' and 'for his contribution to art and architectural theory and practice' (Throsby 290). For this reason, I have chosen to focus on the critiques of art and production championed by Ruskin, and subsequently Morris, as emblems of mid- and late- Victorian attempts to reject capitalism as the apex of stadial progress, and to position art as a central rather than contiguous concern of political economy.

My analysis will show that discussions of the relationship between aesthetic labour, nationalism, and related anxieties over the demoralising effects of industrialisation in art production which are most famously associated with Ruskin were already present in the writings of female travellers in the early and mid-Victorian periods. Women writing in the later part of the century also made consistent returns to Ruskinian ideas; their specific choice of language suggests that, despite not citing Ruskin or his disciples directly, middle-class Victorian women were both aware of and engaged with his writings on the decline of British artisanship amidst the rise of industrialised production. Examined collectively, these accounts offer a more sophisticated attempt to grapple with Smithian stadial capitalism and the moral philosophy of aesthetics than Ruskin's own work, including accounts which predate the Great Exhibition and related criticisms of mechanised production. Similarly, discourses on folk craft and the navigation of the industrial age most famously associated with William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement are also evident in women's writings across the latter half of the nineteenth century, both before and after the publication of his seminal lectures. Although the degree of education, political awareness, and intentionality of the authors varies widely, it is nonetheless evident that travel writing enabled middle- and upper-class Victorian women to establish themselves as cultural authorities and use accounts of their experiences as visual and commercial consumers of Eastern art and textiles to influence the evolving discourses of British political-economic thought.

0.2 Positioning the Female-Capitalist Gaze in Feminist Economic History, Travel Studies, and Exhibitionary Culture

As noted at the start of the previous section, Harriet Martineau is one of the few women commonly acknowledged for her work to promote political economic principles to the nineteenth century popular audience.[4] As a young woman, Martineau published a series of short stories called *Illustrations of Political Economy*, published in nine volumes between 1832–1834 that 'made use of Malthus's principle of population … [and] drew on the work of other thinkers in political economy, including Adam Smith, James Mill, and J. R. McCulloch' (Palmeri 70). These volumes, which were designed to make existing political economic principles accessible to a lay, middle-class readership with the hope that they would, in turn, pass on this knowledge to the working class, were extremely popular. Martineau also published a translation of Augustus Comte's *Course of Positive Philosophy* – a work heavily reliant on conjectural history – which is credited as 'the means through which most English-speaking readers came to know Comte's thought, which first defined and established the field of sociology' (Palmeri 70). Despite these accomplishments, Martineau has been criticised by political-economic historians for 'not [having] been concerned with (or even aware of) the inconsistencies and controversies among [political-economic] thinkers, regarding them as the discoverers and proponents of a unified set of doctrines called political economy' and is typically given more credit for her role in the development of the sociological discipline through the publication of *How to Observe: Morals and Manners* (1838) (Palmeri 70).

Claudia Klaver offers a substantial rebuttal of this perspective in her analysis of *Illustrations* as a complicated and internally contradicted piece of literature that '[drew] upon two different generic structures … universal history and realist narrative – [which] are rarely articulated with one another' (23). For Klaver, Martineau's choice to bring together the mode of universal history '[that] aspired to the factual, the social scientific, the abstract, and the objective' with 'the fiction, the literary the concrete, and the subjective' mode of the novel represented 'the convergence of [the] typically distinct domains [of gendered public and private discourses] in [a] didactic literary project' (23). This project not only established the 'collective stakes' of political economy for domestic and public interests justified the British imperial project in the name of furthering the trajectory of human civilisation on a collective, global scale (23). This is most evident in her choice to set several of her stories in colonial territories, essentially:

> using [them] as laboratories … in which she can conduct her narrative experiments [to

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[4] Other notable examples include Jane Marcet, Barbara Bodichon, and Harriet Taylor.

assert] at once the universal relevance of her economic principles and the temporal divide between colonial space and the national space of Britain. … Ironically, the very diachronic narrative of progress that promised development, prosperity, and well-being for all was articulated with another chronotopic structure that froze this narrative into a naturalized history of insurmountable difference. (Klaver 24)

Klaver's recognition of the unique and often incongruent blending of political economy, natural history,[5] and sociology with literary fiction found in Martineau's *Illustrations*, and of the colonial imperatives it propagated, situates Martineau's literary labour as an innovative contribution to political economy rather than a simple reiteration. I will build on Klaver's insightful analysis by considering how Martineau's subsequent travelogue *Eastern Life, Present and Past* not only acted as an extension of her 'didactic literary project' but added additional layers of complication to her attempts at reconciling the discourse of 'universal progress' with the 'insurmountable' social and ethnic differences in colonial, or pre-colonial, contexts. Faced with the responsibility of depicting the observed realities of life in a non-European society according to her own sociological and journalistic standards, the logical and moral gaps in Martineau's stadial imperialism become increasingly apparent in her travel writing. Likewise, her solutions to the real or perceived economic and social failures of foreign governments are increasingly fraught with contradictions that, while not fully examined, represent a necessary process of theoretical application and experimentation in real-world rather than fictional 'laboratories'; this is especially significant given that the majority of early stadial theorists that influenced her work did not actually travel outside of Europe.

The overarching tendency to frame Martineau and other female intellectuals as little more than uncritical mouthpieces for men's political-economic philosophy, rather than as political economists in their own right, is symptomatic of a larger problem with the recognition of women's intellectual work on nineteenth-century political economy. It is my contention that the dominant, multidisciplinary assumption that Martineau – and other Victorian women – were ancillary participants in a male-dominated field is rooted in widespread misconceptions surrounding women's literary labour and the role of the travelogue in the formation of 'scientific' knowledge, broadly defined in the Victorian era as any specialised field of study. In order to thoroughly address these complex misconceptions surrounding women, travel, and political economic criticism in the Victorian era, the remainder of this section will provide an overview of relevant critical literature which will

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[5] A more detailed treatment of the relationship between stadial theory, natural history, and racism is provided on pp. 26-29.

establish my own argument that travel writing meets the nineteenth-century criteria for productive, educational labour. I will further demonstrate how my methodology both complements and challenges the existing field of postcolonial-feminist travel criticism by recognising travel writing as a site of political-economic discourse, regardless of the gender of the author. This will be followed by an examination of how reconstruing travel writing as part of the Victorian 'exhibitionary complex' reorients female travellers' activities as consumers of Eastern art into a unique form of political-economic discourse that applies the principles of stadial capitalism alongside the philosophy of aesthetics in order to gauge individual nations' degree of 'civilisation'.

In a 1998 study on *Feminism and Anti-Feminism in Early Economic Thought* (1998), Michèle Pujol summarised the state of the field of economic history, noting that:

> women do not figure prominently in the writings of economists. They are often not mentioned at all, or only in the odd example or footnote. … A scrutiny of economics texts shows, however, that women are not the object of complete neglect, rather they are construed, explicitly or implicitly, as exceptions to the rules developed, as belonging 'elsewhere' than in the economic sphere, and as participating only marginally if at all in the nation's economic activity. (1)

Pujol's ground-breaking work brought the economic writings of nineteenth-century women such as Barbara Bodichon and Harriet Taylor into focus alongside the writings of John Stuart Mill, who changed his position on the rights of women after marrying Taylor,[6] and of course the 'father' of classical economics, Adam Smith. Although Pujol's primary goal was to address the erasure of women's contributions within her disciplinary field, her study was fundamentally limited by its narrow focus on overtly economic nineteenth-century texts rather than a broader consideration of women's activities in literary, archaeological, and anthropological fields, the latter of which were most often recorded in travelogues rather than 'economic' treatises.

A similar erasure of Victorian women's intellectual contributions proliferated in literary criticism of the 1980s and 1990s. Literary critic Deirdre David famously argued against the intellectual autonomy of prominent, female Victorian political commentators, specifically characterising Harriet Martineau's work in *Illustrations* as a 'performance as intellectual … succeeding in popularisation but not in discovery, and as fulfilling an ancillary role' (28). David further diminishes Martineau's work by asserting that Martineau 'cast

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[6] See J.S. Mill's famous essay, 'On the Subjection of Women' (1869), which argued for legal and social equality for women, was directly influenced by Harriet Taylor Mill's essay 'The Enfranchisement of Women' (1851).

herself in a supporting part, one that served to highlight the star turns executed by her more luminous … male, contemporaries' (28). Similarly, although David's book acknowledged travel writing as one of Martineau's many vehicles of public expression, her work does not consider that the experimental application of theory – whether in a fictional or non-fictional context – is equally important to the scientific process as 'discovery'. By framing Martineau – and by extension, other female writers– as applied political-economic scientists rather than theorists, the distinction between 'star turns' and 'supporting roles' in the development of intellectual thought becomes far less apparent, and certainly less important. In a rebuttal to David, Mike Sanders argued 'that women writers on economics were not confined to the role of 'dutiful intellectual daughter' ... but were capable of articulating a thoroughgoing critique of existing theoretical models' (193). Similar to Klaver's analysis, Sanders uses examples from Martineau's fiction to demonstrate her ability to explore the complexities of her economic ideologies through 'a significant disjuncture between the claims made at the level of the narration and the evidence furnished by the narrative itself' (194). He also praised the intellectual work of Frances Wright, a Scottish ex-pat who founded a commune in America and published a vigorous critique of the socio-political ramifications of imperial expansion in the name of civilisation in her book *England, The Civiliser* (1848). For Sanders, the nuances of these women's differing views on political economy and their open critiques of British society and government provide evidence of Victorian women's uniqueness of thought and willingness to speak publicly on topics critics believe to have been 'off limits' to their sex; however, he does not explicitly address whether Martineau's travelogues – or travelogues in general – should also be counted as an essential site of political-economic critique.[7]

In the aftermath of Michèle Pujol's seminal study, there was a multidisciplinary shift in the study of women and political-economic history in the 1990s and early 2000s that called for more holistic reconsiderations of long-standing assumptions about the economic and intellectual lives of Victorian women. Economic historian Amartya Sen critiqued Pujol's early work for failing to consider 'deprivations other than gender-based ones (related to class, race, and other variables), which would have to be considered along with problems of

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[7] Ella Dzelzainis has explored the political potential of Victorian women's travel writing in her essay 'Travel Writing', published in Hartley, Lucy. (editor*). The History of British Women's Writing, 1830–1880.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp.163-177. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58465-6_10. She has also refuted Deirdre David's reductive assertion that Martineau was complicit in '"ratifying" the patriarchal discourse of political economy' in 'Reason vs Revelation: Feminism, Malthus, and the New Poor Law in Narratives by Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', published in *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2006, pg. 2.

inequities related to gender' (57). The recognition that gender alone did not determine the degree of influence women held in the development of political-economic thought is key to redressing the exclusion of women from the classical economic canon. Building on Sen's comments – which, it should be noted, are specific to his own discipline and are partially based on allegations that Pujol's methodology was negatively influenced by her own experience of sexism in academia – it is equally important to acknowledge that the absence of women in the political-economic canon does not mean that they were absent from the development of political-economic discourse in reality. This can only be made clear by first broadening the parameters of the kinds of writing that count as political-economic texts, and then by recognising that Victorian women – especially travellers, who were predominantly middle- and upper-class – circumvented the gendered limitations of their societal roles through literary labour.

There have been several studies across political, historical, and literary criticism that have attempted to redress the question surrounding the recognition of Victorian women as economic agents; each of these studies contributes an important facet to the re-conception of women's economic labour that undergirds my own argument that women's travel literature should be included in histories of political economy. In a 2008 analysis of John Stuart Mill's work on the position of married women in the Victorian labour market, political scientist Nancy Hirschmann argued that although Mill 'failed to realise fully the radical potential in his own argument', that 'does not negate the fact that he has shown [contemporary political economists] a way to declare the economic value of women's household labour' (212). She examines his three concepts of 'productive labour', and how his various definitions of productivity and 'usefulness' ultimately lay a framework for the inclusion of (unpaid) household work as a market factor; however, Hirschmann's study does not consider the application of Mills' second concept of productive labour to the work of literary women: '"to endow human or other animated beings with faculties or qualities useful or agreeable to mankind, and possessing exchangeable value"' (Mill *Essays* 84, in Hirschmann 205). While married women were rarely employed by public or academic institutions during this period, these restrictions did not preclude women from engaging in literary labour that could 'endow human … beings with faculties or qualities useful or agreeable'; considered in association with Mills' 'second utility' of labour, which 'includes the labour of education, both technical and general', the omission of women's literary labour, especially literature designed to educate and inform the public of the conditions, cultures, and political-economic state of Eastern nations, is a glaring one (Secord 136; Mill 46, qtd. in Hirschmann 205). This is

primarily because Hirschmann's study intentionally maintains a distinction between the labour of married and single women in order to perform a feminist analysis of Mill's approach to the 'sexual division of labour'; however, this approach effectively endorses the popular assumptions that Victorian wives' only economic contributions were restricted to household and familial labour, largely derived from the pervasive influence of the 'separate spheres' theory.

The conception of a Victorian middle-class' division between the male 'public' and female 'domestic' spheres continues to perpetuate critical tropes of the Victorian woman as a timid figure too insecure, too socially constrained, or too uninformed to engage meaningfully or autonomously with topics of any political or economic importance. Amanda Vickery's landmark 1993 article 'From Golden Age to Separate Spheres' demonstrated that this image of Victorian life was derived from a problematic critical reliance on didactic writings, sermons, and fictional depictions of female modesty and subjugation as historical evidence for the suppression of women into the 'domestic sphere'. She argues that many, if not most, of such texts were prescriptive or performative rather than descriptive and factual (385). She also demonstrates that the mindset of the British middle-class 'sexual division of labour', which dates back to the enclosure movement of the seventeenth century when Britain's economy was still mostly agricultural, continues to have undue influence over perceptions of women's public influence in not only cultural and literary histories, but in studies of political economy (403-05). Although Vickery's article did not specifically engage with political economy or forms of women's literary labour, it acts as a powerful rebuttal to long-standing assumptions that the domestic and public – sometimes referred to as 'commercial' – spheres were decidedly and fundamentally separated on the basis of gender, rather than multivariate factors of class, education, and individual choices or opportunities.

Since Vickery's article, there have been a number of cross-disciplinary articles that have attempted to reorient Victorian studies away from the reductive conception of 'separate spheres' in order to reframe women – especially married women – as vital economic agents. In 2016, literary critic E.J. Clery summarised how approaches to historical studies of women and the domestic sphere have changed since the era of Thatcherism and the neo-liberal free market:

> in place of the sequestered 'angel in the house', there has been an altered emphasis on women as consumers. … Shopping can be re-conceived as itself a form of work as well as an indulgent pleasure, requiring skill and judgement and driving economic prosperity. This affirmative perspective abolishes the boundaries that had been assumed to separate home and workplace, domesticity and the empire of trade. It enables us to resituate women with money to spend as key players in the revised socio-

economic order. (48)

This 'emphasis on women as consumers' has had a significant, positive influence on removing the more sexist implications associated with female consumption as merely household labour or 'indulgent pleasure'. There remains, however, a consistent and limiting belief that shopping – and its ongoing associations with the domestic, both in the sense of the household and of a limited national market – is an inherently feminine and spatially-confined activity. In a similar approach to Clery, economist Michael Allen discussed female consumption throughout history as a process of 'bargaining' that gave them a subtle, but significant power over domestic economic development, and in turn, international political economy. He based his argument on the:

> reality that economic, technological and ecological factors have become at least as important as arms and territory used to be, in determining who has power in the world, and how it is used. An immediate concern here is to show that the conceptualisation of women's roles and power in the world economy is also necessary.... (453)

Within the determining factors listed, Allen argues that women had – and have – the ability to 'bargain' with the structures of political and economic powers-that-be via their nurturing roles at home, which profoundly impact the market through the immediate feedback of consumption choices and their influence on the future workforce. He also argues that a similar bargaining power could be achieved through the subsistent labour of single or impoverished mothers in low- or no- pay roles (e.g., caretaking, cleaning, and entry-level jobs) (462-463). Allen uses cross- disciplinary references to support his alternative conception of the fluidity of the public and private spheres based on the economic interdependence of consumption and caretaking, but again there is no consideration that women's educational labour as writers had a direct influence on domestic or global political-economic movements. Both Allen and Clery rely on the restriction of women's roles to distinctly 'feminine' modes of economic influence which result in important, but still limited, steps towards acknowledging the full extent of women's involvement in political-economic discourse in the nineteenth century.

Joanna Rostek's *Women's Economic Thought in the Romantic* Age (2021) makes a more substantial argument for the inclusion of 'novels, pamphlets, or memoirs' alongside the more traditional forms of economic treatise favoured by 'androcentric' histories of political economic thought around 1800 (11), but Brian Cooper's *Travel, Travel Writing, and British Political Economy* (2022) offers a specific bridge between the traditional conceptions of women's political-economic labour in the context of the household economy and the wider public influence afforded to female travel writers. Citing political economist Jane Marcet's argument that no individual should read an account of travel without first grounding

themselves in political-economic theory (Marcet 10, qtd. in Cooper 1), Cooper demonstrates how the rising accessibility of travel – and travel writing – across the general British population represented a challenge to traditional boundaries of political and popular literature, as well as boundaries of gendered social or intellectual spheres (2,4). For both male and female travellers, travel writing represented a new frontier in combining the literary with the scientific and the artistic with the political, resulting in a highly complex network of interests, associations, and ideological formations across the century. Cooper's analysis allows for a more nebulous, or at least amorphous, conception of 'separate spheres' than many earlier studies of feminist political economy or travel writing, but I argue that further steps can and should be taken to fully acknowledge the extent and value of women's contribution to political economy. Specifically, it is important to consider women's activity as viewers, shoppers, and collectors of art in travelogues as an essential practice of applied political-economic theory, rather than simply focusing on the 'popular' appeal of women's writing that is often construed – as seen previously in discussion of Martineau's *Illustrations* – as evidence of women's restriction to writing for non-intellectual, domestic audiences. I argue that this change in critical perception is best achieved by reframing nineteenth-century travel writing as an extension of the exhibitionary complex wherein the women act as both spectator and curator.

Before its more recent inclusion in political-economic studies, women's travel writing emerged as an academic sub-genre of travel literature and postcolonial criticism in the late 1980s in concurrence with, and in consequence of, the rise of inter- and cross-disciplinary women's studies and feminist critical theory. Victorian women's travel writing, in particular, has come to occupy a place of unique historical, as well as literary, significance; although there were several famous British women – such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Baroness Elizabeth Craven – who published travelogues in the eighteenth century, the rapid acceleration of the tourist industry in the mid-nineteenth century made Eastern travel safe and accessible for women, resulting in a corresponding boom in female-authored travelogues published in Britain after 1850. Of the few women who published travelogues on Egypt or the Middle East, the earliest decades of the nineteenth century, such as Sarah Belzoni (1820) or Anna Katharine Elwood (1830), most were the wives of archaeologists, soldiers, or diplomats, and their presence in Egypt was considered both novel and dangerous, which initially heightened the public's interest in female travel experiences. By the 1840s, however, Egypt became normalised as a destination for middle-class Victorian women, both married and single. As the century wore on, more and more female tourists travelled to the Middle East

and, as laws permitted, East Asia. Wives, sisters, and daughters of civil servants or merchants in India and West Africa also published significant numbers of popular travelogues across the nineteenth century, ranging from the more frivolous or personal accounts of British life in the colonies to detailed accounts of the customs, landscapes, and history of India.[8] Missionary writings by single women also proliferated across the nineteenth century, serving the dual purposes of informing readers – and donors – of the challenges and successes of mission life, and providing insight into the local cultures and customs.[9] As Maria Frawley observed in the preface to her 1994 study *A Wider Range,* 'the material [found in Victorian women's non-fiction] was simply too vast' to categorise into 'simple' topical categories, and argued in her own ground-breaking survey that 'much of what seemed to be art criticism, or history, or sociology – *also* looked curiously like travel writing' (8, original emphasis). When examined in totality, this non-exhaustive range and variety of topics found in women's travel writing also – to paraphrase Frawley – looks curiously like political economy, thus fulfilling Mill's conception of education as a form of labour as well as broader conceptions of productive labour resulting in monetary profit.

Within the last twenty years, there has been a significant shift in the valuation of women's contributions to the travel genre concurrent with emerging historical evidence that women's voices were not as marginalised in the Victorian era as previously assumed. Multidisciplinary essays examining the historiography of travel writing and knowledge formation in the nineteenth century offer an additional, profound challenge to not only gendered, but generic divisions used to dismiss the credibility of travel narratives as escapist or unreliable popular literature. Carl Thompson has argued that 'what readers principally demanded of [accounts of] voyages and travels was reasonably well-informed, factual reportage across a variety of topics' (135). Drawing from the work of Katherine Turner, Thompson further notes that 'Much travel writing was … amateur and generalist in nature … yet … for many readers this only heightened its value as an honest empirical record, seemingly unspun by any sort of vested interest or polemical intent' (135).[10] Hearkening back to Frawley, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that 'many Victorian women used their travel experience to establish authority to write in areas traditionally outside of [the] women's sphere' (Frawley 8).[11]

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[8] C.f. Maitland, Julia. *Letters from Madras: During the Years 1836-1839*. London, 1843.

[9] C.f. Johnston, Anna. *Missionary writing and empire, 1800–1860*. Cambridge UP, 2008.

[10] C.f. Turner, Katherine. 'Women's Travel Writing, 1750–1830.' *The History of British Women's Writing, 1750–1830*. Edited by Jacqueline Labbe, Palgrave, 2010, pg. 47-60.

[11] As already noted, the concept of a literal separate 'sphere' for Victorian women has been

It is common in travel criticism to assume that nineteenth-century women, who typically wrote from an amateur perspective, hid behind appeals to (usually) male experts and travel companions as a form of feminine 'modesty'. This is further assumed to represent women's struggle to be taken seriously by the reading public, in accordance with a stricter conception of separate, socially acceptable male and female spheres of influence. It is key, however, to understand the social importance of the travel genre and the high expectations for the accuracy of the facts that travellers of either sex represented to the British reader before assuming that women's deference to relevant experts was a sign of 'modesty', or even femininity. While there were some additional pressures on women to affirm the merit of their contributions to the genre in this period, Susan Bassnett notes that it was equally common to see deferential language or factual corroborations from experts in male-authored travelogues; consequently, this thesis will not engage with this aspect of women's writing (225).

Given the significant historical evidence that the travel genre was both popular and respected across a wide range of readers in the nineteenth century, it is reasonable to argue that accounts by both women and men were valued for their insights into the political and economic state of foreign nations as well as observations and anecdotes about the landscapes, cultures, and customs encountered by the author (Youngs). Consequently, this thesis will demonstrate that female travellers' descriptions of museums, markets, monuments, and manufactories in travelogues effectively act as a form of literary 'exhibition' where the traveller-author acts as both spectator and curator of previously inaccessible artistic and technological wonders. Although subject to the social and gendered politics associated with nineteenth-century publishing, the travelogue offered women unprecedented access to and influence over the exhibitionary complex and the conjectural histories it represented. Within their travelogues, women frequently recorded their processes of viewing, comparing, and purchasing art objects, textiles, and antiquities, unifying the exhibitionary function of their descriptions with the discursive function of applied political economic theory.

Although there are few places where the kind of interdependent representations of art objects, industry, and nationalistic narratives of stadial competition are made more explicit than in the travelogue, the majority of studies on Victorian object theory to date are focused on the novel. Object or 'thing' theory became a fixture in Victorian studies after the

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called into substantial question by Vickery and other scholars, but as will be explored in a later section there were a few rigid divisions imposed between male and female scholars, authors, etc. after the rise of institutionalised 'professional' science toward the end of the century; these divisions, however, were neither consistent nor universally applied across the century.

publication of Andrew Miller's *Novels Behind Glass* (1995), which is considered the 'first major critical work on object theory and the Victorians' (Sattaur 348); dozens of new critical studies followed between the early 2000s and 2010s that examined objects ranging from furniture to clothing to uniquely Victorian items such as hair jewellery.[12] The symbolic relationship between household objects and empire was a frequent feature of these studies; as Elaine Freedgood argued in *The Ideas in Things* (2009), fiction was 'a particularly rich site for tracing the fugitive meaning of apparently nonsymbolic objects' (4). Freedgood's study made the important case that objects mentioned in the 'increasingly detailed description' of narrative settings should not be dismissed as mere *mise en scene* in the realistic novels of the mid- and late-nineteenth century; her conclusion that objects do not require a meaning assigned within the narrative to be discursively salient is vital to my own approach to the meticulous descriptions of museums and marketplace displays in travelogues (4). Although still predominantly focused on fiction, John Plotz's *Portable Property: Victorians on the Move* (2008) established a more conceptual precedent for reading literary texts, including travelogues, as a form of meta-display. Plotz's analysis takes a similar approach to Freedgood in terms of acknowledging the more subtle relationships between objects and empire that might be overlooked in other studies of the time, but the most unique aspect of his work focuses on exploring representations of the market and philosophical valuations of objects. He gives the example of 'a few of [fictional characters'] favourite things' that range from copies of 'Shakespeare's complete plays' to 'some unlabelled beetles bound for the British Museum' to Indian jewellery and shawls, arguing:

> that Victorian novels made much of such objects ... [the novels themselves were] sentimentalised items, endowed with a fiscal and a transcendent value at once, English novels from the 1830s onwards took on the project of making sense of resonant but potentially marketable objects. (1)

Plotz intentionally chooses a mix of exotic and sentimental objects for his comparison in order to blur the lines between objects which have personal meaning to the individual and those that represent cultural or commercial values. The characterisation of the novel as a 'sentimentalised' and a 'fiscal' object through which writers attempted to '[make] sense of resonant but potentially marketable objects' applies equally, if not better, to non-fiction. Plotz

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[12] C.f. Miller, Andrew H. *Novels Behind Glass: Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative,* Cambridge UP, 1995. Additional, recent studies include Lindner, Christoph. *Fictions of Commodity Culture: From the Victorian to the Postmodern*. Ashgate, 2003; Johnson, Barbara. *Persons and Things.* Harvard UP, 2008; Goldhill, Simon. *The Buried Life of Things: How Objects Made History in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge UP, 2015.

addresses this, in part, by analysing a selection of travelogues by British expatriates living in India in the 1830s, arguing that the Victorians invented a conception of 'dematerialised portability (that is, the notion that abstract concepts like Englishness, race, or familial heritage can become metaphorically portable by being incarnated in crucial objects)' (46). Applying this conception to travelogues, Plotz demonstrates how these accounts served as a means for the writer to construct his or her own sense of selfhood, although he does not address the broader political potential of travel writing, or the traveller as a formative contributor to public knowledge. Nonetheless, the idea that objects, including fictional and non-fictional books, could be used to create or convey constructions of national or racial identity is essential to the role that I argue travelogues played within the exhibitionary complex.

Plotz specifically argues that any travel writing that 'deploy[s] ready-made Orientalist tropes to caricature and classify' (46) Eastern cultures is itself a portable cultural property designed to constitute and protect an image of the author's own cultural heritage. In his analysis of Julia Maitland's 1843 travelogue *Letters from Madras*, Plotz argues that by propagating stereotypes about colonial India whilst maintaining an ambiguous relationship with her own Anglo-Indian expat community, Maitland is demonstrating a 'simultaneous connection to and alienation from a cohesive national identity in exile' (53). The 'aloof' tone used throughout Maitland's account is also present in the literature of female explorers in later decades of the nineteenth century; a key alteration that I make in applying Plotz's arguments about expatriate writing to the travellers included in this thesis is that the drive to codify a 'cohesive national identity' is not solely focused on protecting the authors' own cultural heritage, but rather, at indexing their cultural heritage within the emerging hierarchy of global market competition (53). By imbuing objects with a cultural significance that is tied – but not limited – to market value and aesthetic desirability, female travel writers' perceptions of their own national identity and value systems are challenged by the same objects that they often use to construct imperialist or Orientalist narratives. In this manner, the 'simultaneous connection to and alienation from a cohesive national identity' is less literally applied to the authors' own identities as British subjects, but rather their simultaneous experience as spectators and curators within the British exhibitionary complex, thus lending both the travelogues and the culture they represent through objects a 'fiscal and a transcendent value at once' (Plotz 1). It is widely agreed that art and antiquities, whether acquired privately or institutionally, played a central role in the organisation of the exhibitionary complex; thus, reorienting the discussion of objects, and object theory, in Victorian culture to recognise that women were not just indiscriminate or sentimental consumers, but intentional and strategic collectors of art and

cultural objects, adds additional weight to the conceptualisation of female-authored travelogues as an exhibitionary space.

As with most institutional systems in the Victorian age, the exhibitionary complex is characterised as a male institution. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was famously championed by Prince Albert and Henry Cole, the latter of whom became the founding director of the Kensington Museum (affectionately known in the present day as the V&A). The British Museum, which will be prominently featured in two chapters of this thesis, was founded through the Parliamentary purchase of physician and Royal Society president Sir Hans Sloane's extensive collection of global literature, artefacts, and natural specimens in 1753. Although the British Museum was fully opened to the general public in the 1830s, historian Kate Hill has concluded from the testimonies of female visitors, donors, and administrators from museums around the country that the museum complex 'tended to segregate women in specifically gendered enclaves which institutionalised feminine expertise as real and separate, but less important than masculine expertise' (2). The exact nature and degree of women's involvement in the exhibitionary sector shifted throughout the nineteenth century; however, with few exceptions, it is generally agreed that female participants in museums or public historical, archaeological, or antiquarian societies 'warrant little mention' due to their 'minority status' (Levine 9, footnote 9). Even women's involvement in private collecting – which, as in the case of Dr. Sloane mentioned above, was an important mechanism in the formation and expansion of public exhibitions – is believed to have been widely 'hidden from view' due to both social and legal obstacles (Stammers 11).[13] While historians have acknowledged that female travellers were in a unique position to acquire or sell artefacts obtained while abroad and may have even achieved a degree of recognition for their collections, they also do not consider that travel writing acted as a form of exhibitionary space that allowed women to contribute to, and even criticise, the exhibitionary complex and the nationalistic narratives which it propagated (Hill 160; Secord 136-137). By reading the exhibitionary complex – including museums, local exhibitions, private collections, and travelogues – through the lens of stadial theory, any competitive display of technological 'progress' is equally indicative of the anxieties of market competition as well as any presuppositions of superior development.

Although discussions of industrial technology and craftsmanship also feature

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[13] Stammers refers to the legal prohibition for married women to own property as a key reason that female collectors and donors are difficult to identify prior to the passing of the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 (7).

prominently in women's travel writing, the conceptualisation that exhibitions of 'finished products and *objets d'art'* (Bennett 8) are equal signifiers of Britain's national progress is integral to interpreting female travellers' accounts of shopping for collectible objects as both a nationalistic and political-economic endeavour. Toshio Kusamitsu's influential article 'Great Exhibitions Before 1851' (1980) credits localised exhibitions held by the Mechanics' Institutions of the Lancashire and Tyneside regions of northern England in the 1830s for the launch of '"the exhibition movement"' that would eventually grip not only Britain, but the world (70). This places a notable, and often ignored, emphasis on the significance of local markets' ability to not only reflect, but impact commercial practices on national and global scales. Bill Lancaster addresses the 'revolution in the popular perception of manufactured goods created by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and afterwards', as well as the '[heightened] popular awareness of the achievements of British power and the industrial revolution' (16) which preceded the increased demand not only for commodities, but novel ways to view and interact with them. Lancaster's framing of the Exhibition as a key point in establishing public awareness of Britain's significance as a global industrial competitor indicates that interest in commerce and technology shifted away from a particular class or gender as it became intertwined with nationalist and imperial sentiments across the century. Hearkening back to Tony Bennett's 'The Exhibitionary Complex', there is a clear basis to establish the ubiquity and influence of exhibitionary spaces on cultural and political thinking in the nineteenth century prior to the Great Exhibition of 1851 which essentially 'translated [existing "techniques of display"] into exhibitionary forms which … were to have a profound and lasting influence on the subsequent development of museums, art galleries, expositions, and department stores. … often with a transfer of meanings and effects between them' (74). As Bennett points out, subsequent developments in the layout of museums and department stores were heavily inspired by the design of the Crystal Palace; however, when placed in context with late-Georgian and early-Victorian developments in commercial design – starting with the construction of Regent Street in London's West End in 1819 – it is more accurate to consider the Crystal Palace as a watershed moment that accelerated the reorientation of the relationship between the Victorian consumer and the commercial and cultural objects they encountered through shops and museums.

Bennett further highlights the way that competing market cultures in the nineteenth century used display to not only interpret but define one another. He performs a reading of the Great Exhibition that engages with Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) to interpret the design of the Crystal Palace as a combination of 'spectacle' and 'surveillance'

(76). The concept of 'surveillance' is used, in particular, to attribute a colonial mindset to both the layout and intent of the Exhibition organisers, giving Britain the power to observe its subaltern visitors in a performance of imperial and market dominance. Bennett relates this closely to Foucault's discussion of the 'carceral archipelago', which attributes power to ideologically 'discipline' society to structures such as 'factories, schools, barracks, hospitals' (Foucault 298-299). Essentially, Bennett argues that museums and exhibitions functioned as an extension of this 'carceral archipelago', using the rhetoric of visual design and display to:

> [Not only mark] out the distinction between the subjects and the objects of power not within the national body but, as organised by the many rhetorics of imperialism, between that body and other, 'non-civilised' peoples … This was, in other words, a power which aimed at a rhetorical effect through its representation of otherness rather than at any disciplinary effects. (80)

Bennett's conceptualisation that the Crystal Palace's visual rhetoric was a means of communicating relations of power through a material 'representation of otherness' suggests a presupposition of the superiority of British civilisation. In service of this ideology, the Exhibition 'transform[ed] displays of machinery and industrial processes, of finished products and *objets d'art*, into material signifiers of… progress as a collective national achievement with capital as the great co-ordinator' (8). The emphasis on material and visual representations of Britain's nationalistic self-perception through technological and artistic productions is key to considering the relationship between the same mechanisms of display and representations of 'otherness' in travelogues, although my own approach does not adopt the hyper-literal interpretation of spatial relationships espoused by Bennett and Foucault. This becomes especially relevant when considered in tandem with additional changes to the design and layout of British department stores inspired by 'Oriental bazaars', such as Liberty's in London, which further complicates the relationship between the exhibitionary complex, commerce, and gender.

Drawing on the same Foucauldian model of 'surveillance' as Bennett, Krysta Lysack considers how the construction of Liberty's Oriental Bazaar facilitated a shift:

> Within the imperial marketplace and its technologies of display, women shoppers could aspire to become spectating subjects, producing knowledge by gazing. That is to say, the imperial marketplace does not resemble Foucault's regulatory panopticon, in which surveillance ensures civility consistent with institutional aims. Instead, an entire apparatus of exhibitionary forms produced spectators—women shoppers—as subjects, rather than objects of knowledge. (150)

Although Lysack's analysis is centred on London, her argument that spectacle in the marketplace empowered the female consumer's gaze as a site of knowledge formation may be extended to the role of spectacle in travelogues that reproduce the spectacle of the Eastern

24

bazaar. By placing theories of female consumption in dialogue with the adoption of 'bazaars' as a site of female commerce in late-Georgian London, I will expand on Lysack's concept of the female consumer's imperial gaze into a politically and socially engaged capitalist gaze that evaluates the state of authentic Eastern bazaars according to a stadial measure. Although gender remains a factor in the travellers' relationships to the various spaces they encounter abroad, I aim to subvert the simplistic framing of domesticity and femininity as oppositional forces to 'masculine' commerce. To do this, I will frame my analysis through a 'female capitalist gaze'; this term will incorporate the productive labour of political-economic analysis alongside the act of consumption in order to explore how textual representations of browsing and purchasing art and textiles in the Eastern bazaar form a unique kind of literary exhibition.

Rather than depicting Eastern market spaces as a 'spectacle, or tableau vivant' as proposed by Edward Said in his seminal 1978 book *Orientalism* (158), I argue that the women render them as an 'anti-spectacle' where the fantastical presuppositions of Oriental fantasy are grounded, for better or for worse, in their physical, cultural, and political realities in order to evaluate the stadial progress achieved by each nation. As Sadiah Qureshi argued in her ground-breaking study of *Peoples on Parade* (2011), 'explorations of nineteenth-century mass culture suggest that diverse spaces of … entertainment, from menageries to department stores, were all sites in which social and political orders, often amenable to imperialism, were created or endorsed' (8). Furthermore, it was common practice throughout the nineteenth century for 'commercial exhibitions of living foreign peoples [to be] embedded within a thriving entertainment market', although, as Qureshi emphasises, the critical conflation of such exhibitions with '"freak shows"' has led to a misconception that although such entertainments did overlap in this era, this 'did not entail that both were marketed or interpreted in the same terms' in all cases (8). Rather than '[consolidating] that foreign peoples were routinely interpreted as evidently strange, deformed, bizarre, anomalous, or even pathological', it is vital to '[trace] how differences … were created, marketed, and interpreted' (8). Thus, for the purposes of this study, I will consider how the literary depictions of market transactions in the Eastern bazaar as a kind of human exhibition function as a 'contact zone' for the female traveller-consumer to engage with, as well as observe, the Oriental male 'Other' in a hybrid domestic and commercial space.

The term 'contact zone', as originally coined by Mary Pratt in her seminal 1992 monograph *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* denoted 'the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations', emphasising that the nature of such zones 'usually [involve]

conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable of conflict' (8). This term has been adopted as a staple of the travel-criticism lexicon and is widely used to describe a variety of literal and figurative spaces of colonial or intercultural encounters; however, a number of critics have raised concerns that the applications of this term within Pratt's own analysis have set a precedent for reading *all* cross-cultural encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans as inherently and immediately sinister. As observed by Lawrence Williams, '[Pratt] typically reads European travel accounts as antagonistic and highly ideological texts', a viewpoint that is largely informed by her geographical focus on regions subjected to violent colonial regimes (298). Williams essay references previous attempts by postcolonial theorists Debbie Lisle and Ania Loomba to 'propose more pluralistic readings of imperial discourse' that avoid the kind of universalised or prescriptive tropes that permeate Pratt's work (298).[14] Williams' own approach to applying the 'contact zone' to intercultural encounters in Meiji Japan builds on previous criticism by Steve Clark which called for a revised understanding of the contact zone that does not presuppose Western supremacy or a 'confident assertion of colonial power' (Clark 5). Both Williams and Clark make a persuasive case that the nature of relations within the contact zone should be based on the specific geo-political and material conditions of the countries or individuals involved, although this does not negate that the outcome of a given encounter may be unequal or detrimental to the receiving culture. In my own study, I wish to continue in the latter tradition of revising or adapting Pratt's conception of the contact zone in my reading of female travellers' encounters with Eastern market cultures. Fundamentally, I propose reading these zones of encounter as a microcosm of the women's attempts to grapple with the political-economic implications of the romanticised appropriations of Oriental commerce and commodities on the rise in their own 'progressive' industrial-capitalist culture. While this does result, in some cases, in an endorsement of colonial regimes or racist stereotypes, my goal is to avoid prescriptive applications of the term in order to more accurately articulate the authors' individual worldviews as understood in their original historical and geo-political contexts.

Although I propose eighteenth-century models of stadial development as the organising principle behind the representation of Eastern countries as either 'progressive' or 'regressive', it is nonetheless important to acknowledge that the complexities of cultural representation in both human and economic terms cannot be reduced to a single, conscious motive or mechanism; stadial theory itself underwent numerous revisions and iterations across

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[14] C.f. Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism.* Routledge, 1998, pg.70, and Lisle, Debbie. *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* Cambridge UP, 2006, pg.188.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with various organising principles substituted for economy as the basis of civilisational advancement. For example, French philosophers such as Henri Saint-Simon, Nicolas de Condorcet, and Augustus Comte argued that intellectual thought developed in stages roughly correlating to religion, philosophy, and ultimately, science; these French thinkers are credited with 'bridging the gap' between the conjectural histories of the eighteenth century and emergence of the discipline of sociology in the nineteenth century (Palmeri 90-95). There was a substantial cross-pollination of ideas between French, Scottish, and German philosophical schools across this period, but the Scottish coterie had evident advantages in the transmission of their ideas to succeeding generations of British thinkers; nonetheless, the influence of Continental thinking or alternative conjectural histories cannot be dismissed in the bigger picture of how conjectural histories shaped nineteenth century thought. This is especially true in the context of racial representation, and the role that conjectural theory played in the development of 'scientific racism' that formalised in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Amidst the plenitude of conjectural histories that gained traction in the eighteenth century, the majority of 'the Enlightenment interest in the natural history of man as a species was imbued with a particular strand of humanism' centred on the assumption that all human races were fundamentally capable of civilisational advancement (Anderson 43). Differences between cultures or ethnic groups were most often attributed to various social, cultural, or even environmental circumstances (Buchan 4; Qureshi 6); an example of this is Adam Smith's comments on the Chinese empire in *The Wealth of Nations*. Although he praised the Chinese for their longevity and 'considerable stock of politeness and science', he blamed their cultural emphasis on uniformity and a general unwillingness to 'resist the torrent of popular opinion' or '[dispute beliefs] universally received by their ancestors' as the most obvious 'reason why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire' (123). This comparatively liberal view was nonetheless rooted in the same staunch, Eurocentric prejudice as the rest of the Scottish coterie, and he remained convinced of the universal superiority of European capitalism under a limited government. By the end of the eighteenth century 'both race and stadial theory enabled European colonial travellers and natural historians to conceptualise a global humanity as classifiable into historical gradations and physical variations that began to suggest not merely correlation, but causation' (Buchan 6). Fundamentally, the two strands of economic and natural conjectural thought remained closely intertwined throughout the nineteenth century; although not explicitly concerned with the scientific taxonomy of races introduced by 'influential, albeit hotly debated' European

27

naturalists Carl Linnaeus and Georges Buffon (Brantlinger 13), the stadial theories of Smith, Ferguson, Stewart, and others were often used as evidence of the rights of European powers to take control over the resources of 'regressive', savage, or barbarous societies, often combined with more specifically racialised frameworks of human development (Klaver 28-30).

A growing number of treatises published throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century by heterodox religious figures, natural historians, and political-economic theorists espoused the view that 'savage' and 'barbarian' races were on a trajectory to self-extinction, often due to the perceived 'natural consequences' of their own 'regressive' social and economic practices. Thomas Malthus' *Essay on Population* (1798) is credited as an early and significant influence in the mainstream adoption of this theory in the context of political economy (Brantlinger 13), although the most 'decisive point in the history of the theories of culture' more broadly came in the 1850s and 1860s following the publication of works like Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind* (1854) and Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) (Ratnapalan 134). Darwin's work, while certainly not the first to propose evolutionary theory as a conjectural alternative to Biblical creation, was released in the midst of a climactic cultural moment of religious and intellectual turmoil, and for many Victorians this work represented a definitive refutation of the Bible's credibility. This decisive move away from the 'Christian orthodoxy [which] dictated that humans were considered a single species' and the rise of '[challenges to] environmental explanations [for human difference] forced moral and natural philosophers to reassess how human variation was conceptualised' (Qureshi 6). This led to 'numerous redefinitions of the term *race* and the formulation of new methods for its scholarly study' such as the field of ethnology, which was subsequently renamed 'anthropology' (Qureshi 6).

Post-Darwin, a series of writers including Charles Lyell, Matthew Arnold, John Lubbock, and E.B. Tylor debated variations on classical stadial or conjectural histories – rebranded as 'development theory'— against the emergence of 'degeneration theory', which argued that modern human civilisation was on, or at risk of, a social or biological decline (Ratnapalan 132). While not all adoptees of evolutionary theory abandoned humanist or Biblical concepts of universal, sacred humanity, as I will address in Chapter 1, there was a heightened paranoia in the mainstream Victorian consciousness that social or genetic mixing with 'regressive' or 'primitive' races would result in the degeneration of 'superior' (white) European civilisations. Concurrently, scientists and religious figures alike touted the notion that some non-European races had reached their maximum potential 'despite the best efforts of colonial civilising measures', and thus were relegated to a lower status of humanity

(Anderson 117). This dramatic shift in conceptions of human development and categorisation ushered in a period of overt racist stereotyping and colonial aggression that had previously been veiled – albeit thinly, in many cases – under categorisations of political-economic 'progress'.

For the purposes of my analysis, I will consider the persistent influence of the Smithian conjectural framework across the Victorian era, and how that framework complicates or enhances a postcolonial reading of the representation of Eastern cultures and objects in Victorian women's travel writing. To do this, I will reframe current critical discourses through a historically accurate lens of stadial economic development rather than the modern, dualistic structures of 'coloniser and colonised', 'hegemonic and subaltern', or 'metropole and periphery'. My approach illuminates the way that Victorian women represented cross-cultural hierarchies according to a spectrum of political-economic, technological, and aesthetic achievements. In the spirit of Neil Lazarus and other revisionist postcolonial critics, my thesis does not aim to disregard or refute the growing influence of racialised science, or the overtly colonial aspirations espoused by many British travellers, but will 'propose alternative readings and conceptualisations, to be set alongside and compared with those currently prevailing' (Lazarus 1). Lazarus raised concerns about the overall trajectory of postcolonial theory in his 2011 monograph *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, in particular that 'the struggle over representations [has given] way to the struggle against representation itself, on the ground that the desire to speak for, of, or even about others was always shadowed by a secretly authoritarian aspiration' (19). While I will demonstrate that there were instances – especially in travelogues on Egypt – where female authors chose to represent Eastern cultures or races as 'regressive' to further imperialist agendas, I will also show that contextualising cross-cultural representations through a stadial economic worldview complicates the pervasive critical assumption that all negative, ambivalent, or exotified representations were consistently and consciously written with sinister intentions. [15] As noted in Julia Kuehn's essay on 'Colonial Cosmopolitanisms' (2015), the Victorian era simultaneously marked 'the rise of nationalism and the heyday of imperialism, concepts that might seem irreconcilable with cosmopolitanism … In other words, diverse and even

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[15] Some important works that specifically address female travel writers' representations of imperial and racialised violence in colonised regions include Franey, Laura. *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British Writing on Africa, 1855-1902*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; Agnew, Éadaoin. *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India: Representing Colonial Life, 1850-1910*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2017.

conflicting ideas would have surrounded Victorian cosmopolitanism' (265). Consequently, it is essential to accept that the majority of travelogues in the Victorian period paradoxically celebrated the mixing of cultures through commercial trade and travel while also propagating prejudicial and nationalistic sentiments towards those same cultures. It is precisely these 'irreconcilable' aspects of Eastern representation in travel writing that I find most compelling. In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate how women's representations of Eastern craftsmanship and cultural traditions, with all of their contradictions, serve as a process of intellectual and ideological negotiation between their established, stadial view of the world, and the rapidly changing political-economic landscape that threatened to displace British heritage and identity from its presumed place at the apex of the global, capitalist hierarchy.

My choice to build my analysis around Victorian women's engagements with Smithian stadial theory is also a decisive departure from the sub-category of postcolonial-feminist theory that has collectively marginalised women's writing on science, colonialism, and global commerce based on exaggerated or prescriptive dualisms between male and female subjectivities and social spheres. As already noted, Mary Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* is one of the most frequently cited works in travel literature studies; in addition to introducing critical terms such as the 'contact zone' and 'transculturation'– the inevitable erosion or evolution of the subaltern culture within the contact zone – that are now considered essential in the lexicon of travel literature criticism, Pratt's study explores the genre of European travel writing as both a product of and a contributor to the colonisation of South America, Africa, and the 'Orient'. She offers an insightful history of the genre ranging from the early-eighteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first,[16] especially in terms of understanding the influence of 'natural history' and racialised taxonomies on European colonisation; however, it is important to note that her use of the term 'science' refers to the history of the natural world, ethnology, or anthropology, rather than in the broader sense of 'any specialised field of knowledge' which more accurately characterises the intellectual landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since Continental travellers and natural historians are the primary focus of her analysis, there is little differentiation made between the conjectural histories of the Continental philosophical schools, where natural history was the more prominent ideology, and the economic conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment that are known to have had a significant influence on British imperial ideology (Klaver). While Pratt's study is nonetheless valuable in highlighting the racialised imperialism that undergirds both British and European travel writing, my main contention, for the purposes of this thesis, is the

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[16] I am referring to the expanded second edition of *Imperial Eyes*, published in 2008.

minimal inclusion of female travel writers in the study's corpus. Pratt's choice to gender 'the discourse of discovery' as fundamentally masculine is understandable on the basis that only men had unfettered access to non-European travel prior to the nineteenth century; however, although she does include some interesting readings of Maria Falconbridge and Mary Kingsley's travelogues on Africa, there are not enough female writers represented in this study to accurately reflect the active role that Victorian women played in the processes of imperial or commercial expansion post-1800, or in the formation of scientific knowledge more broadly (Pratt 209).

Several of Pratt's contemporaries took a specifically female-centric approach to the genre, including the aforementioned Maria Frawley, offering varied perspectives on how female travellers should be situated within the travel canon of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Billie Melman's 1992 study *Women's Orients* offers a provocative and in-depth look at the history of women's travel writing from the highly influential publications of Lady Wortley Montagu to women travellers in the early- and mid-nineteenth century. Melman decries the view that Orientalism should be thought of 'as a man's place, and the empire as a male space, the *locus* of male character-building and career', arguing instead that European views on the Orient 'were neither unified nor monolithic' and were also not built strictly on the binary oppositions perpetuated by mainstream postcolonial critics (5,7). Melman further argues that 'even outside of the harem':

> The women's experience of the Middle East was quite novel and challenged middle-class gender-ideology. Travel was a culturally meaningful gesture. It was, [Paul] Fussell notes, a [sic] emancipating experience.[17] And travel writing constituted a break away from the precepts and aesthetics of the very notion of separate, masculine and feminine spaces. (8)

Melman's view that travel writing reduced, rather than reproduced, the presumed geographical or conceptual divides between male and female spaces was an important contrast to the views popularised by many of her fellow postcolonial critics, including Pratt and Sara Mills. My own argument on the re-framing of Oriental – and Orientalised – commerce draws on Melman's argument that European women travellers made unique attempts to identify with the Middle Eastern societies they visited, and even engaged in self-reflexive critique despite maintaining a fundamental belief in the 'superiority' of their own culture (17).

Sara Mills' *Discourses of Difference* (1991) continues to be cited – often alongside *Imperial Eyes* – as a foundational text in the majority of studies published on Victorian

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[17] Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Travelling between the Wars*. Oxford UP, 1980.

women travellers and their contributions to scientific and imperial knowledge.[18] Similar to Melman, Mills' study poses a direct challenge to Paul Fussell and other twentieth-century critics who 'explicitly refuse[d] to consider women travel writers' on the grounds that women were 'not sufficiently concerned with either travel or with writing itself'; however, rather than positioning women's travel writing as an overlap between 'masculine and feminine spaces' (Melman 8), Mills asserts that 'women's writing and their involvement with colonialism was markedly different from men's', and thus occupy a separate, albeit important, place in the travel canon (3). Although Mills' close readings of Victorian travellers in West Africa and India (namely Mary Kingsley and Nina Mazuchelli) effectively subvert several of the more reductive critical tropes used by earlier critics to minimise female traveller's contributions to imperial and scientific knowledge, Mills herself acknowledges that, in places, the colonial and feminist discourses that frame her study '[seem] to be caught up in … contradictory clashes … with one another', suggesting a need for further critical developments to fully articulate the complexity of women's roles within, and contributions to, the travel genre (174).

After the initial boom in criticism on Victorian women's travel writing in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, there was a brief lapse in new monographs or theoretical approaches until a new wave of interest arose around the 2010s and has continued to build momentum into the present day. A few notable examples are Michelle Medeiros's *Gender, Science, and Authority in Women's Travel Writing* (2019), Judith Johnston's *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel* (2013), and Brian Cooper's aforementioned *Travel, Travel Writing and British Political Economy* (2022). Medeiro builds on Pratt's work on travel and the 'discourse' of 'natural history', but with an alternative, exclusive focus on the contributions of female travellers; there is, nonetheless, a persistent caveat that women were 'not permitted to contribute to the production of scientific knowledge' because they 'were largely prevented from doing so due to the exclusively male world that was constructed among scientists' (8). There is evidence to support that within the specific field of natural history, there was a concerted effort to restrict women's participation in or ownership of scientific discoveries, but as Medeiro herself acknowledges the most significant barriers came towards the end of the nineteenth century when scientific production across most disciplines became formally institutionalised (5). In the body of my thesis, I will address the ongoing debates surrounding this critical tendency to retrospectively 'gender' specific fields of

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[18] C.f. Bohls, Elizabeth A. *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818.* Cambridge UP, 1995; Blunt, Alison. *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa.* Guilford Publications, 1994; Bird, Dunalith. *Travelling in Different Skins: Gender Identity in European Women's Oriental Travelogues, 1850-1950.* Oxford UP, 2012.

knowledge or activities in the nineteenth century, and the persistent, retroactive applications of patriarchal language and social strictures onto women's scientific productions which a minority of feminist critics have persuasively argued is, itself, a form of intellectual sexism. As articulated by Sally Minogue, by 'attacking patriarchal language' – and, by extension, patriarchal structures – 'feminists open themselves to the same charge. Their language is a barrier to a large group of the women in whose service they are supposedly arguing' (12). Without denying the reality of the historical constraints placed on women seeking to establish themselves as institutionalised 'professionals', it is equally important to note that Medeiro's analysis presumes a strict and specific social hierarchy of knowledge access and production that does not necessarily align with the Victorian's own conception of what science was, or how scientific knowledge was produced prior to – and to a lesser degree, after – the 1860s (Phillips 235).

As acknowledged in Alison Martin's introduction to the 2015 special issue of the *Journal of Literature and Science,* 'Ingenious Minds: British Women as Facilitators of Scientific Knowledge Exchange, 1810-1900', recent scholarship has started:

> seeing women less as singular prodigies and more as figures embedded in different networks of scientific exchange [which] has been more helpful … in understanding how they developed their talents in settings which were not necessarily as controversial or spectacular as one might imagine'. (3)

Despite the many social and institutional barriers that existed for women in the nineteenth century, travel literature is increasingly recognised among 'the variety of roles that women took on' as an essential avenue for amateur female 'scientists' to '[find] outlets for their intellectual curiosity and ambition' (Martin 6). Although additional barriers, particularly for married women, arose in the latter half of the nineteenth century, foreign travel remained one of the most 'liberated' experiences for British women, especially when contrasted to the legal and social restrictions placed on Continental European women in the same era not just physically, but intellectually (Morgan 177).

Scholarship on women's travel in Continental Europe offers additional, interesting perspectives on travel writing as a political-economic exercise outside of traditional associations with colonial relations, natural history, or Orientalism. Judith Johnston's *Victorian Women and the Economies of Travel* asserts that translations of works by British women allowed for the formation of a distinctly British, imperial identity wherein '[one version of] knowledge is received through reading… [and in the other version] knowledges are created, through writing… which includes translating' (2). Art historian Caroline Palmer has further emphasised the importance of Continental travel as an opportunity for Victorian

women to both cultivate and disseminate an authoritative perspective on art from the eighteenth century onwards, noting that:

> the increasingly scientific approach to art criticism that emerged in the early 19th [sic] century offered women an advantage, as it valued individual knowledge acquired through empirical experience above innate taste. … women began to make substantial contributions to the body of knowledge on art, participating in contemporary debates on taste and acting as cultural mediators between Britain and the Continent. (249)

Although Palmer and Johnston are both geographically focused on European travel, I argue that the same conceptions of self-authorised authority and identity may be applied to Victorian women's writing on art and nationalism in the Middle East and Asia in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, when arguments about taste and the collectible value became increasingly intertwined with political-economic concerns regarding production, commercial trade, and cultural authenticity.

A key point that is ignored in many analyses of female 'science' is that the division between 'professional' and 'amateur' was a far more nebulous concept in Victorian culture, particularly in the earlier decades; as previously noted, the term 'science' was used to describe academic work in any number of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and political economy. There was also no formal set of criteria to be considered a 'professional' travel writer in this era; nonetheless, as explained by Carl Thompson:

> travel writing was by no means a peripheral or ancillary medium for many disciplines in this period… This was … an age of what has been dubbed "gentlemanly science", when most leading figures were not paid professionals, but rather men of private means who undertook their intellectual enquiries for pleasure or from a sense of social responsibility. (137)

Thompson takes part of his argument from the work of historian James Secord, who further clarifies that the modern 'division between "specialist" and "popular" science' is 'inappropriate to understanding a period when people differing in gender, rank and depth of expertise not only talked about science but in so doing contributed directly to its making' (Secord 132). In a more recent article, 'Women Travellers, Romantic-era science and the Banksian empire', Thompson expounds on the current wave of scholarship rediscovering female contributors to Romantic-era science as 'not just an important project of feminist recovery research' but a means of uncovering:

> insights into the period's scientific networks and institutions … the collaborative and collective dimensions of Romantic-era science and the processes of dissemination, translation and popularization by which scientific knowledge passed between and beyond expert communities. (432)

These same 'insights' also apply to women's involvement in science in the Victorian era, and

to tracing the complexities of women's roles in the scientific community as various disciplines became more formalised and restrictive across the latter-parts of the century. Consequently, my own approach embraces the ambiguities of the historic divides between professional and popular science in the knowledge formation of the nineteenth century, and between the various discursive strands of conjectural history, political economy, and anthropology that female travellers weaved together in their comparative analyses of commerce, craftsmanship, and nationhood across the Middle East and Asia.

0.3 Selection Criteria for Authors and Notes on the Corpus
I have chosen to focus my thesis on Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan, none of which colonised by Britain at the time that my primary sources were published. This choice of corpus necessitates a departure from the predominant, monolithic approaches to power and intercultural contact that have been extrapolated from studies of West Africa, India, Latin America, and other regions subjected to more straightforward colonial regimes. I will provide more detailed histories of each region as they are introduced in the body of the thesis, but fundamentally each of my four regions were chosen for their unique geo-political status within the British Empire and their popularity within Victorian collector-culture. Turkish-ruled Egypt was a highly coveted and contested territory among European powers, and across the century Britain actively sought to infiltrate the Egyptian government through trade, rail developments, and the preservation of antiquities and monuments. Although ultimately successful in occupying Egypt by the 1880s, the slow encroachment of the British government and the conditions that enabled their coup at the end of the century is traceable through the discussions of art, antiquities, and industrial developments in women's travelogues. Persia was never brought under British rule, but concessional territories were granted to both Britain and Russia after a series of battles seeking access to the country's burgeoning commercial markets; Britain also sought access to Persian territory to improve overland access to India and various Asian colonies and trade posts. The Persian economy was destabilised by the interference of foreign governments as well as the failure of their own government to fully commit to developing their own capitalist infrastructures, resulting in a decline in the production of the traditional crafts, in particular textiles and carpets, that were prized by European collectors. Consequently, British travellers' representations of Persia reflect an ambivalent attitude towards Persia's government and citizens, vacillating between ridicule and respect.

China, like Persia, prompted a mixed response from visiting travellers. It is a unique

example of a country that was both colonised and autonomous from British rule, although I will primarily focus on treaty ports rather than the fully conceded region of Hong Kong for the purposes of this thesis. Although most writers viewed China in a negative light, in exceptional accounts it was recognised as a civilisation worthy of recognition for its artistic consistency and longevity; this is especially apparent when autonomous cities were compared to treaty ports, and when hand-produced Chinese crafts were seen to outperform the products of British industry in both quality and sales. Japan is the only nation included in this study that was never colonised by any Western power, although it was reluctant to open its borders prior to the intervention of the American military. The rapid modernisation – often characterised as Westernisation – that followed Japan's opening to global tourism and trade in the mid-nineteenth century prompted nearly universal admiration from travellers. The traditional arts and crafts of Japan were tremendously popular in Victorian collector-culture and challenged the notion that traditional crafts were incompatible with modernisation. What unites each of these four nations is a shared internal conflict over the encroachment of industrial-capitalist modernity – a conflict that they also share with Britain itself.

Taking the intricacies of each country's economic and geopolitical relationship to Britain into account, it is clear that a straightforward postcolonial approach would not be sufficient to effectively analyse how they were represented back to the British public through the eyes of female travellers, either individually or collectively. Consequently, my thesis offers an alternative approach to postcolonial travel criticism which does not assume a predetermined hierarchy of political hegemony in the representations of subaltern cultures by an imperial subject, but rather engages with the stadial, capitalist ideology that underpinned imperial perceptions (or projections) of Eastern cultures as either 'regressive' or 'progressive'. Furthermore, by positioning women's travel writing as a form of educational labour that expands upon and critiques the exhibitionary complex, I will demonstrate how the representations of art and art production that feature prominently in accounts of Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan serve the same nationalistic and political economic functions attributed to museums and the Great Exhibition.

For this thesis, I have chosen twelve female travellers who visited the Middle East and Asia between 1842 and 1897. The travelogues which resulted from these visits were published between 1844-1899, totalling fifteen travelogues. I have taken both the marital and social status of the authors into consideration as part of the selection process; although Eastern travel was not financially accessible to members of the Victorian working class, I have endeavoured to include middle-class women and women who earned their own income from

36

writing, such as Harriet Martineau, Isabella Romer, and Isabella Bird, alongside women who were born or married into affluence and diplomatic access such as Sophia Lane Poole, Lady Anne Blunt, Lady Lucie Duff- Gordon, Amelia Edwards, Anna d'Almeida, Alice Frere, Mary Bickersteth, and Constance Gordon-Cummings.[19] My aim was to provide a representative sample of women's travelogues across the Victorian period in order to trace the development of political economic thought in relation to Eastern travel that accounted for variables of class, marital status, professional experience, or personal circumstances without positioning those variables as central to the argument.

I have necessarily had to exclude several notable female travel writers from this study based on pragmatic factors, such as publication date, to ensure a manageable corpus, but one of the primary motivations behind my selection criteria was to represent a fair mixture of amateur and professional writers from each region covered in this thesis. Many critical studies give priority to writers like Harriet Martineau or Isabella Bird who achieved extraordinary critical praise or institutional recognition in the Victorian era to the exclusion of women who wrote and published accounts of their travels for personal gratification.[20] One example of the latter is Anna d'Almeida's travelogue, *A Lady's Visit to Manilla and Japan* [sic] (1863), which is frequently dismissed by critics as a vanity publication 'not intended for scientific reading' (Sarmento 5); this is based on the fact that this travelogue was her only published work, and the publishing house that produced it was known to take paid publishing 'commissions', essentially the Victorian equivalent to self-publishing. Although it is fair to consider d'Almeida's book a 'vanity' publication, I do not agree that this negates the value of the book as a competent, if otherwise unremarkable, record of China and Japan in the mid-nineteenth century; it is especially valuable as one of the first accounts of travel in Japan published by a Victorian woman. I would further argue that it is worth including precisely on the basis that it represents a 'lay' opinion that has no apparent political motivation, but nonetheless engages in many of the same politicised tropes used to compare Chinese and

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[19] Many of these authors overlap in categories: for example, authors listed here as self-funding may have funded their first travels using money from family or an inheritance. Several authors also changed marital status between publications. Relevant details of each author's life and career will be mentioned in the body of the thesis.

[20] In recent years, there has been a positive expansion of the women's travel writing canon to include women such as Amelia Edwards and Gertrude Bell that have previously been excluded because of modern-day divisions between the disciplinary fields of literature and social sciences, in this case Egyptology and Archaeology. There is also a growing acceptance of 'amateur' and 'vanity' writers, but they are seldom included on equal terms with their more eminent contemporaries.

Japanese art and market cities that are seen in the more 'professional' travelogues. Thus, although there were women who made their living from writing, and attained a high degree of validation and recognition for the excellence and accuracy of their work that are best characterised as 'professional' writers, both in Victorian and modern standards, this does not belittle the contributions of 'amateur' authors – which, for the purposes of this thesis, will refer to authors who did not earn their living from writing and publishing travelogues. Similar to criticism that attempts to exclude Victorian women's writing from being counted alongside men's contributions to scientific codification and inquiry, there are several challenges to the authorial integrity and autonomy of Lady Anne Blunt that claim her husband, political activist W.S. Blunt, was too heavy-handed an editor to count the political segments of her travelogue *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (1879) as her own. The exact degree of his editorial influence is unknown, but it was publicly acknowledged on the cover page of the travelogue that he edited the book and contributed additional political commentary. This has occasionally been construed by critics as a suggestion that he essentially ghost-wrote the book. Based on my own research in Lady Blunt's archives, although it is evident that she had a significant insecurity about her skill as a writer in her early life she frequently edited her husband's manuscripts, including his poetry and political columns, prior to publication; this suggests that there was at least some degree of mutual respect for one another's literary and editorial voices in the years surrounding the publication of her travelogue.[21] For the purposes of this thesis, although it is likely that her husband did use her travelogue to push his own political views, there is no definitive evidence that his editorial changes were made in opposition to Lady Blunt's own views, or without her approval; thus, I do not believe that this disqualifies her inclusion in this study.

Collectively, these chapters demonstrate that there is clear historical precedent to consider contributions by women, regardless of their academic background or literary style, as active contributors to scientific as well as popular knowledge through the publication of their travelogues. By extension, there is no reason to discount women from the development of a unique political economy of art through travel writing; given the evident ignorance of the nuances of Smithian stadial theory exhibited by several lauded male figures of the era, such as John Ruskin, there is little scholarly basis from which to discredit the writings of female travellers, whether professional or amateur, on the same topics.

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[21] Letters from Anne Blunt to W.S. Blunt. 13 July 1867 and 17 April 1880. MS54100, MS54101. Wentworth Bequest, Box F. Western Archives and Manuscripts Collection, British Library, London, UK.

0.4 Chapter summaries

This thesis is divided into two parts, made up of four chapters in total. The first two chapters will examine how travelogues represent exhibitionary spaces, including museums, private collections, and marketplaces; these chapters are focused on establishing the central conceit of the travelogue as a curated space which both expands and comments on the exhibitionary complex, as well as the relevant historical contexts on commercial developments in Egypt, Persia, China, Japan, and Britain. The final two chapters will take an object-centred focus on women's interactions with art objects, antiquities, and textiles; this portion of the thesis will consider the objects not only as cultural collectibles, but as tangible representations of the changing conditions of art production and commercial trade networks across the nineteenth century.

The first chapter is focused on travellers' representations of museum spaces and collections. While it is evident both foreign people and objects were frequently put on a politicised, and often racialised, display by the travel writers in this corpus, there is a clash of values between several of the authors' complicity in the framing of museums – in particular, the British Museum and other nationalised institutions – as reliquaries of world history and antiquity, and their own observations of the cultures in question. These internal conflicts lie at the core of my analysis. From a postcolonial perspective, the fragmentation and deportation of cultural objects acts as a form of conquest, wherein the literal deconstruction and deportation of the cultural heritage of foreign nations demonstrates the power of the British Empire to divide and subsume less powerful states for the sake of imperial profit. Beyond the obvious colonialist implications of institutional collecting and display, which this thesis acknowledges, I will examine how this fragmentation, removal, and display – including textual descriptions – of cultural objects functions within the more complex political-economic frameworks pertaining to stadial development.

Chapter 2 will consider how women travellers represent descriptions of Eastern shops, merchant encounters, and market cities framed through a female capitalist gaze. Starting with developments in London's West End shopping district that drew on 'Oriental' commercial practices, I will examine how female travellers' engaged with the moral and economic attributes commonly associated with the East in Victorian commercial culture through their descriptions of the visual spectacle and contents of authentic Eastern bazaars. I will also consider how accounts of transactions with Eastern merchants reframe both romanticised and pejorative Orientalist stereotypes through the women's experience of 'hospitality', and 'domesticity' in the contact zone of Eastern shops and bazaars. In context with the heightened

drive to index global cultures according to their cultural and economic achievements resulting from the Great Exhibition, which was itself influenced by the visual spectacle of the British bazaar, the women attempt to infer – or project – the 'national character' of each region they visit through their representations of commercial transactions. Fundamentally, the women's attempts to represent Eastern commerce as primitive and uncivilised – or in more generous cases, quaint and developing – betray the underlying cognitive dissonance behind the 'progressive' developments of Victorian commercial culture, and the limitations of assessing progress according to a linear trajectory.

Chapter 3 will consider how representations of the acquisition, migration, and production of art objects and antiquities in Eastern countries contributed to geo-political propaganda and the development of a bespoke strand of political economic discourse pertaining to the production and trade of art. I will consider women's discussion of the cultural objects commonly traded, sold, or scavenged by Western collectors in context with Parliamentary reports that propagandised the 'preservation' of Egyptian monuments, setting a precedent that tied together the concepts of preservation with imperial political economy. I will also examine the changing conceptions of 'value' applied to eastern art and antiquities by private collectors, incorporating twentieth-century theories of the 'value' of art and aesthetics by Walter Benjamin and Pierre Bourdieu alongside aesthetic discourses of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, and William Morris. Across the century, the emergence of forged antiques – or copies – in Egypt, China, and Japan prompted women to compare the economic benefits of industrialisation with the cultural importance of traditional craftsmanship, and to reconsider cultural authenticity as a key component of sustainable progress.

Continuing with the object-oriented approach of the last chapter, this final chapter considers the women's engagement with the industrialisation of the global textile industry. The women's narrations of inferior British textiles found for sale in eastern markets demonstrate a growing cognitive dissonance between their explicit support of the growth of the British empire, and their implicit disdain for the means by which the empire facilitated that growth. The comparisons between the unattractive and less-durable materials produced in Britain and the industrial or hand-produced fabrics made in Egypt, Persia, Japan, and China prompt the women to contemplate the relationship between the decline of traditional craftsmanship, class identity, and cultural heritage in Great Britain in keeping with the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris. Similar to the women's reactions to traditionally produced handicrafts in the previous chapter, the women exhibit a conflict of values arising from a view of traditionally woven materials as signifiers of cultural authenticity and artisanal

excellence, in direct contrast to the stadial notion that industrial societies represent the peak of civilisation.

Together, these chapters will show that although Victorian women's travellers do not offer a definitive answer to questions of value, authenticity, or whether industrial capitalism could be successfully adapted to encompass the value of traditional crafting, their narratives illustrate that Victorian discourses of social, political, and economic progress were intrinsically linked to discourses of art, aesthetics, and nationalism. Furthermore, their work demonstrates that Victorian women writers were not simply disseminators of existing political-economic thought, but were instead active contributors to the development of the nineteenth-century political economy of art.

Chapter 1: The Travelogue as an Exhibitionary Space

The British Museum, credited as 'the first great national museum' (Stocking 7), opened a new department dedicated to 'Antiquities' in 1807, marking the first expansion from the original collections purchased from Dr. Hans Sloane in 1753 and subsequent objects donated by Captain James Cook. Although other, smaller museums and institutions with a more dedicated focus on ethnography already existed, the British Museum's expansion of their collection marked the beginning of a long and controversial project to acquire, research, and display foreign cultural objects. Among the most ubiquitous social and scholarly criticisms of museums is the history of forced or illicit removal of cultural objects from foreign countries and the ethical responsibility that museums have to represent foreign cultures with accuracy and respect. In both the public museums and private collections of the Victorian period, cultural artefacts were displayed in a fractured setting where their meaning, value, and aesthetics were determined by curators who may or may not have had personal experience with the objects' cultures of origin. By textually recreating public and private collections for their readers, the travel-writer was able, both consciously and unconsciously, to expose the limitations of visual display by filling in gaps of cultural knowledge and aesthetics through their commentary. The notion that travellers act as mediators of cultural authenticity and value is especially significant when examining the work of female travellers, who use their observations of foreign cultures to establish a form of intellectual and cultural authority that is not based on or directly linked to their gender. Although women's accounts are coloured by their individual biases and interests, their encounters with both public and private collections set a precedent for reading travelogues as a means for Victorian women to produce their own nationalistic and scientific curation of other nations' cultural histories.

In this chapter, I will explore how female travel writers textually recreate Eastern museums and private collections and establish themselves simultaneously as a proxy spectator and curator.[1] Although the exact discursive approach differs from author to author and region to region, there is a consistent attempt to frame the design and contents of museums and

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[1] China has been omitted from this chapter because although there were smaller, private collections and exhibitions located in colonised territories in the early and mid-nineteenth century, there are no substantial accounts of these collections in the travelogues selected for this study C.f. Puga, Rogério Miguel. 'The First Museum in China: The British Museum of Macao (1829–1834) and its Contribution to Nineteenth-Century British Natural Science.' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 22, no. 3-4, 2012, pp. 575–586. doi:10.1017/S1356186312000430.

private collections as signifiers of political-economic and social 'progress'. Part one of this chapter will analyse passages from Harriet Martineau and Isabella Romer that criticise the limitations of physical museum spaces in a manner that effectively elevates their own status as mediators of cultural knowledge. Part two will examine how Alice Frere and Mary Bickersteth discuss collections of Japanese art and religious relics as a representation of its development into a modern, 'civilised' nation-state. The final section will focus on a case study of Gertrude Bell's visit to the Treasure House of the Persian Shah, and her reaction to seeing European objects displayed as 'curios'. Collectively, I argue that the women employ the language of stadial development to shape their readers' perceptions of Eastern cultures, positioning Egypt and Persia in relatively lower phases of development than the rapidly modernising Japan. This stadial approach allowed female travellers to justify British control over global narratives of political economic development whilst also criticising the inherent limitations of museum displays.

1.1 The Problem with Cultural Fragmentation in the Curation of National Collections

While some critics are reticent to acknowledge Victorian women's roles in the museum complex because of the ever-changing social and institutional mores that barred women from most public- facing roles, female travellers' commentaries on the curation of national collections suggest that inclusion within the complex was not a necessary prerequisite to influence over it. Political commentator, novelist, and abolitionist Harriet Martineau published a brief, but notable critique of the British Museum's Egyptian collection in the first volume of her travelogue *Eastern Life, Present and Past* (published in three volumes in 1848), which argues that travel writing was a necessary and very public extension of the museum:

> Everybody at home talks of the ugly and grotesque character of the Egyptian works of art: and no wonder, if they judge, with English mind and English eyes, from broken specimens in the British Museum. One can only ask them to trust something to the word of travellers who have seen such works in their plenitude, in their own locality and proper connexion [sic]. (1:183)

While Martineau is specifically addressing the selection of 'broken specimens' for display at the British Museum, the passage has further bearing on the role of the traveller – regardless of gender – in providing essential educational contexts for museum displays. Martineau implicitly criticises the British Museum for failing to communicate the aesthetic value of Egyptian art to the 'English mind and English eyes' of the museum goers. It is clear that she is not criticising the museum for possessing foreign objects; rather, her contention is that once

works of art have been fragmented and removed from 'their plenitude, in their own locality and proper connexion' their beauty and value cannot be fully appreciated. Martineau asserts that it is 'the word of travellers who have seen such works' in their original contexts who must fill in the gap for 'everybody at home', essentially authorising herself and other travellers to mediate the cultural misrepresentations that inevitably result from the fragmentation of artefacts in visual displays. Effectively, travel literature serves as an alternative form of display which allows the untraveled reader to 'see' the work of art in its 'own locality and proper connexion' through textual descriptions and illustrations and contextualised by commentary. This claim implicitly diminishes the reliability of museums as a space of cultural education because of their reliance on visual display; to a lay audience, the full meaning and aesthetic quality of an object cannot be appreciated without the mediation of those privileged enough to see such items in their place of origin. As critic Billie Melman noted, 'many other Victorians' as well as 'Martineau saw travel as part of middle-class education and the *Bildung* of *bourgeois* men and women' (237). Thus, Martineau's statement that it was the right, if not the duty, of travellers to cultivate the 'English mind and English eyes' of those unable to travel themselves affirms my contention that travel-literature was a legitimate form of educational labour that was not restricted on the basis of gender, but on the restrictions of wealth and class. Furthermore, by highlighting the limitations of the British Museum's visual displays in shaping or informing the taste of untravelled patrons, Martineau's passage elevates the educational function of travelogues from a supplementary, to an essential part of the exhibitionary complex. By establishing a criterion that is based on the authority of experience rather than gendered or institutional credentials, Martineau's passage engenders the need for a new feminist criticism which acknowledges that travel writing allowed Victorian women to circumvent institutional and social barriers to directly influence formations of public knowledge on aesthetics and related issues of political economy.

Social anthropologist Nelia Dias discusses the 'focused concern with the visual' in the nineteenth century and cites 'exhibition organisers' concern to supply visitors with "'sights"' as evidence of 'their awareness of both the epistemological and aesthetic stakes underlying the act of seeing' (49). This sense of 'awareness' is keenly communicated throughout women's travel writing on art acquisitions and displays, suggesting that travelogues can act as a frame of reference that reveals the 'epistemological and aesthetic stakes' of viewing Eastern art outside of its native context. As Dias observes, the 'focused concern with the visual' was not limited to a single type of research or exhibition but was a universal fascination of the arts

and sciences in both academic and popular circles (49). Thus, Martineau positions herself –
and by extension, other travel writers – as an authoritative voice who corrects the
misapprehensions caused by the 'mournful' behaviour of 'scientific antiquarians … [who
saw] through the middle of a tablet of inscriptions; and another knocks down one pillar of a
series; and another carries away a group, — symbolical and necessary in its own place' (2:39).
Martineau's critique of the failure of cultural institutions to preserve the integrity of cultural
contexts in the formation and display of foreign collections is not concerned with the ethics of
acquisition and removal, but rather the integrity of the mechanisms by which those objects are
presented for public viewing.

      It is important to recognise that Martineau's concerns over the fragmentation of
Egyptian art objects have little to do with Egypt in its nineteenth-century present,[2] but rather
the ancient Egyptian civilisation that was in the process of being excavated by British and
European archaeologists. After the failure of a French coup in the late-eighteenth century,
Egypt was placed under the rule of Muhammad Ali Pasha, an Ottoman Viceroy, in 1805. The
resulting social and economic instability created an intense competition between European
powers to gain political influence with the Pasha in order to develop transcontinental rail
infrastructures through Egyptian territory for the purposes of trade and travel. During this
same period, European scholars and archaeologists entered Egypt en masse to dig up and
remove the contents of temples, tombs, and ancient cities in the name of 'science'. The British
public was particularly enraptured by the discovery of Egypt's ancient, advanced, and nearly
forgotten civilisation; for many, the desire to experience Egyptian monuments and antiquities
was satisfied through museums. However, by the 1840s, Egypt had established a flourishing
tourism industry which catered to upper- and middle- class European travellers eager to not
only see and touch, but to take home a piece of Egyptian history for their own collections.
This continued across the century despite the imposition of a ban on the unlicensed export of
antiquities in 1835; antiquities were still permitted to be excavated by Europeans, but the ban
was designed to keep any objects of historical – and monetary – value stored or displayed
within Egypt without special permission from the Pasha's own administration. This led to the
rise of illicit trade networks, forgeries, and additional attempts at political interference from
European governments; women's direct engagement with the latter aspects of Victorian
antiquarianism will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In the present context, it is key to

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[2] For the sake of brevity, I will refer to nineteenth-century Egypt as 'modern Egypt', unless
otherwise specified.

acknowledge that there were complex political and legal implications to the commentary on ancient Egyptian artefacts and national museums published by Martineau and her contemporaries. Furthermore, these commentaries betray the sharp distinction between the Victorian prejudices against the Pasha's Egypt, which was suffering under harsh taxation and the loss of civil rights for the lower classes, and their obsession with the curious, yet advanced civilisation of ancient Egypt.

In stadial terms, modern Egypt was viewed as a regressive, mostly agricultural nation that could only benefit from the construction of trade and rail infrastructures proposed by British contractors. The emerging discoveries of Egypt's past kingdoms slowly brought awareness to the technological and scientific advancements associated with a great civilisation, but at the time Martineau published *Eastern Life* in 1848 the general public could not fully appreciate this distinction based on fragmented pieces of statuary and artefacts displayed in institutions such as the British Museum. Mummies and the treasures buried with them were among the most popular artefacts to be exported from Egypt in the early-nineteenth century, leading many members of the British and European public to believe that the religious practices of ancient Egypt signified a quaint and superstitious society. For Martineau, this was not only insulting to a culture which she held in high esteem, but a failure on the part of the British Museum to complete its mission of educating the British public through exposure to classical antiquity. Thus, it cannot be argued that her intentions were purely in the interest of accurate and respectful representation; rather, fragmented representations undermined the academic rigour of Britain's national collections and inhibited the production of an accurate global narrative.

A later example from the second volume of *Eastern Life* further demonstrates the limitations of her critique of the British Museum, as she reorients the discussion of representation around the imperial imperative which is central to her philosophy of exhibitions. While on the return leg of her journey across Egypt and Northern Africa, Martineau records her impressions of the collection of Dr. Henry Abbott, an Orientalist residing in Cairo:

> It was [around the Pyramids] that that precious ring was found which ought to be in the British Museum, but which remains in the hand of Dr. Abbott, at Cairo, — the gold ring of Cheops,[3] with his cartouche cut upon it. In Dr. Abbott's possession, too are some gold ornaments with "Menes" marked upon them.[4] Treasures of such singular value as these should surely be national property. (2:81)

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[3] 'Cheops' is the Greek name for Khufu, the Pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid.
[4] Menes was the Egyptian king who reunited Upper and Lower Egypt under the First Dynasty and built the city of Memphis.

On a surface reading, this passage appears to contradict Martineau's previous commentary on the removal of objects from their original contexts. Here, she finds fault with Dr. Abbott's choice to keep a 'precious ring … which ought to be in the British Museum' in his private collection in Cairo. However, her contention that the treasures of the Menes dynasty 'should surely be [a British] national property' on display in London rather than a local museum in Cairo shows that the locus of her prior complaint was not the geographical 'locality' in which the artefacts are displayed; rather, her primary concern was that items of significant historical – and consequently, educational – value should be made accessible to the British public. The fact that Martineau's account ignores the existence of the Egyptian Museum, which was established by the Pasha government as part of the 1835 ban on unlicensed excavation and export of antiquities, suggests that she viewed the British Museum as a universal archive of world heritage as well as a central source of education for the British public; thus, Dr. Abbott's decision to withhold items of historical importance from the British public is framed as an impediment to the British Museum's dual role as custodian and vanguard of civilisation.

A similar commentary on Dr. Abbott's collection appeared in Isabella Romer's *A Pilgrimage to the Temples and Tombs of Egypt,* published in two volumes in 1847. Romer, like Martineau, was a professional columnist and novelist, although she was not as well known or celebrated. Her travelogue openly supported British political and economic interests in Egypt, including the prerogative to own and display antiquities, potentially in a bid to establish herself as a political pundit rather than a mere writer of women's entertainment.[5] She speaks of her visit to 'Doctor Abbott's valuable Egyptian Museum',[6] describing it as:

> perhaps the most perfect private collection existing, and, as such, I cannot help regretting that Doctor A. has not been induced to dispose of it either to the English government or to some high-minded and wealthy individual of our country, who would convert it into a source of national instruction and amusement…. although nothing can exceed the polite and liberal manner in which Doctor A. allows free access to it, it is necessarily restricted to the knowledge of those travellers who pass through Cairo…. (1:103-104)

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[5] C.f. Reviews of *A Pilgrimage…* in Madden, Richard Robert. *Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington,* vol, 2. London, 1855, p.329; *The Athenaeum*. London: British Periodicals Ltd. 29 August 1846, pp. 879-881 and 5 September 1846, pp. 904-905. Accessed online.
https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c3470610&view=1up&seq =633&q1=romer.

[6] This is not to be confused with the Egyptian government's national museum of the same name. Abbott's collection was sold to the Brooklyn Museum in the United States in 1937 and is now held in the New-York Historical Society repository in New York City.

Romer's lament that Dr. Abbot's 'perfect' collection of Egyptian artefacts was not made accessible to the wider British public, whether as a national or private project, is indicative of the same nationalist mentality evident in Martineau's argument that such items should be the 'national property' of Great Britain, as opposed to remaining in the care of an Orientalist living near the items' 'own locality and proper connexion' (Martineau 1:183).

Similar to Martineau's account, there is an ostensible internal contradiction in Romer's closing remarks on Abbott's collection, which details several items with Biblical significance, including the ring of Cheops also highlighted by Martineau. Romer boasts that Dr. Abbot promised her 'an impression in wax' of the ring, which she reveals:

> has excited the covetousness of more than one amateur, and large sums … have been offered to the Doctor for it, but in vain – he does not like to break his collection by parting with its greatest gem, and he is in the right; for thousands instead of hundreds could not repay him for such an infraction of its completeness! (1:105)

Here, Romer matches Martineau's early sentiment that appears to prioritise 'completeness' over accessibility, thus elevating the importance of the brief and incomplete peek into Abbott's exclusive foreign collection she offers the public through her writing. The conflicting values at play in both Martineau and Romer's accounts of Dr. Abbott's collection are, in part, representative of the limitations of their medium; as Romer explicitly states after describing several smaller objects from Dr. Abbott's collection, 'were I to specify all the wonders his collection contains, my letter would be endless' (1:106). Thus, the travelogue is necessarily subject to a reverse form of fragmentation than that which Martineau identified in the British Museum: within the travelogue, the visual element is incomplete, but the historical and geographical contexts of the exhibits remain intact. Thus, in theory, it is only by combining the literary and visual forms of exhibition that the exhibitionary complex can be rendered whole.

Contrary to her predecessors, novelist and critic Amelia Blanford Edwards, who later rose to fame as a pioneering female Egyptologist and co-founder of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, wrote about the 'youngest of great museums, the Boulak [sic] collection' in her 1877 travelogue *A Thousand Miles up the Nile,* which recounted her travels across Egypt in 1873-74 (709). The Boulaq collection was the second iteration of the Pasha's Egyptian Museum, which housed the collection from 1863-1891 before the construction of its permanent site in Cairo in 1895. Edwards notes that this collection was 'necessarily less rich in such colossal statues as fill the great galleries of the British Museum, the Turin Museum, and the Louvre' due to the small supply that remained of such monuments in Egypt after the rest had been 'seized upon long since and transported to Europe' (709). Edwards appears to show a greater

sympathy for Muhammad Ali's decision to limit the removal of such artefacts than the other accounts; however, as will be discussed in chapter three, the extent of her sympathy was limited.

Edwards gives detailed descriptions of the architecture and 'portrait-statues' in the first chambers of the museum, with copious citations and explanations of the symbolic design attributes and historical contexts (709-714). Nonetheless, Edwards acknowledges that she also is subject to the limitations of her written medium and resolves a remarkably thorough list of the types of objects included in the collection of Queen Ahhotep's burial trousseau with the simple comment 'I have no space to tell' (713). She offers only summaries of the remainder of the collection before shifting her focus to the museum building: 'the present building gives temporary shelter to the collection. In the meanwhile, if there was nothing else to tempt the traveller to Cairo, the Boulak [sic] Museum would alone be worth the journey' (714). As seen in the previous accounts, Edwards's account frames access to this museum as the privilege of the traveller; however, in a departure from Martineau and Romer, Edwards supports the Egyptian government's project to construct their own permanent collection of antiquities. She credits to the reigning Viceroy, Ismail Pasha, as the first Viceroy to 'ever [interest] himself in the archaeology of the country', even though the Boulaq location was initially commissioned by Ismail's father Said Pasha in 1858 (Edwards 709; The Egyptian Museum). The full implications of Edwards' relationship to the preservation of Egyptian antiquities will be discussed in chapter three, but in this immediate context she appears to frame the rise of a nationalised institution for archaeological preservation and public education in Egypt as a praiseworthy development towards a more modern Egyptian civilisation. Implicitly, there is a sense that a nation's ability to self-reflect on its own history – or in a more advanced state, the history of the world – is itself a marker of civilisation. If the establishment of this semi-permanent collection marked a step forward in Egypt's progress towards a more culturally progressive state, then it can be inferred that earlier accounts were implicitly signalling Egypt's regressive state by substituting discussions of a British-owned collection for the first Egyptian collection curated by their own government.

Although Edwards' does not lament the obvious inaccessibility of the Egyptian Museum to the average British citizen, it is consistent across all three travelogues that the inherent limitation placed on visual representations of museum collections in literary form necessarily confirm the authors' position as mediators of cultural knowledge. The exclusivity of both the visual and cultural aspects of experiencing art and exhibitions in their unbroken contexts guarantees the importance of travel literature as a platform for travellers – including

women – to assert themselves into the formation of cultural and institutional knowledge through their own curated forms of literary display. In the case of the rings in Dr. Abbott's collection, Martineau and Romer's disapproving comments indicate that Dr. Abbott has failed to fulfil a duty to British society by keeping historical relics in a private museum that bears no profit – whether economic or educational – for the Empire. In Martineau's case in particular, the desire for the items to be displayed in a museum that she previously deemed insufficient to communicate cultural nuances suggests that her priority is not simply to educate the British public, but to establish her own right, and the right of other privileged travellers, to act as arbiters of knowledge. Similarly, Romer expresses a desire for the items to be shared with a wider British audience, yet she places a higher priority on recounting her own exclusive acquisition of the wax impression rather than attempting to describe the treasures of the collection. Thus, although Martineau, Romer, and Edwards attempt to use their travelogues to address the cultural gaps that result from the physical and geographical limitations of both private and public museums, the drive to legitimise their own intellectual authority manifests in an equally fragmented curation of the cultures they seek to represent to their readers.

1.2 Reversing the Cultural Gaze in the Shah's Treasure House

While most Victorian travel writers focused on displays of Eastern antiquities, there are exceptional cases where the flow of the cultural artefacts – and consequently, the cultural gaze – is reversed. Although somewhat rare, accounts of Western objects held in Eastern collections complicate the inherent Eurocentricity of theorisations of the exhibitionary complex, such as Tony Bennet's, because of the displacement of the European subject's gaze onto their own cultural properties which have been indexed according to a non-European visual order. The 'discursive formations' which resulted from the development of various 'exhibitionary spaces' across nineteenth-century Europe are considered, in the context of Bennett's essay, as part of an imperial, Eurocentric agenda that used display as a means of establishing a cultural, commercial, and even evolutionary hierarchy.[7] Bennett's argument suggests that museum displays are most 'productively analysed as particular articulations of power and knowledge', but questions why:

> they should be construed as institutions of confinement …It seems to imply that works of art had previously wandered through the streets of Europe … rather than being withheld from public gaze, secreted in the studiolo of princes, or made accessible only to the limited gaze of high society in the cabinets des curieux of the aristocracy. (73)

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[7] The introduction of a separate, stadial theory based in evolutionary and anthropological science will be addressed in the following section.

Bennet's argument rightfully suggests that the physical structure of museums should not be interpreted as a means of confining the 'articulations of power and knowledge' implicit in the display of artistic or scientific collections. The rise of museums and exhibitions in the nineteenth century were an important means of making objects and information formerly 'withheld from the public gaze' accessible to anyone with the capacity to travel to a museum's location. As already demonstrated in Martineau, Romer, and Edwards' accounts, travel writers had the power to reveal and contextualise public and private collections in Egypt which were 'accessible only to the limited gaze of [British] high society' – in this case, those with the resources to travel abroad. Likewise, this section will examine how Gertrude Bell opened the private Treasure House of the Persian Shah to the British public in her debut travelogue *Safar Nameh, Persian Pictures: A Book of Travel* (1894). In this account, the most extraordinary revelation is a small and ostensibly worthless curation of Western trinkets subversively placed among the priceless hoard of Eastern treasures.

As one of the first women to complete a First Degree in Modern History at the University of Oxford and the niece of British Ambassador to Persia Frank Lascelles, Bell was aware that British relations with Persia were turbulent in the nineteenth century. Persia reluctantly opened to Western visitors after being invaded by Russia in the early-nineteenth century, and then by the British in the 1850s. Historian Yann Richard records that '[Persia] felt caught in a stranglehold between two imperialist powers, barely succeeding in balancing out their rival hegemonies … Reforms were sought less for social advancement and political effectiveness than as means of countering interference'. The British took control of the city of Herat with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1857, and years later 'took [over] the lion's share' of the Persian economy through 'excessive' concessions sold off to foreign powers by the late-nineteenth-century ruler Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (Richard). Another historian, Ali Ansari, notes that

> British visitors to [Persia] came away unimpressed with the political system they encountered … [which they considered] singularly ill-suited to the needs of a modern and progressive political economy. This disdain was compensated for by an affection for the Iranians themselves, who were generally portrayed as engaging, inquisitive and cosmopolitan. … Iranians absorbed political ideas and a philosophy of progress, while coming to terms reluctantly with the realities of politics and the gap between ideals and practice of which British colleagues were well aware.

This complex and fraught relationship between not only the governments of Britain and Persia, but between the two nations' people and stadial ideals, is evident in the representations of Persia in women's travelogues.

The privilege of accessing Naser al-Din Shah's private collection was a singular one afforded to Bell on account of her uncle; access to the Treasure House was granted at the discretion of the Shah and his Prime Minister, the latter of whom guided Bell's party inside. By representing the Shah's collection in print, Bell opens the 'cabinets des curieux of the aristocracy' to the gaze of the British public, acting as a de facto curator of the treasures 'secreted in the studiolo of princes' by imposing a narrative structure to the visual layout of the collection. This narrative is ultimately more revealing about the author than the collection she represents, as Bell uncharacteristically mocks the Shah – and by extension, the Persian nation – for both the presentation and contents of his collection. In other passages, Bell exemplifies a remarkable degree of self-awareness regarding differences between Western and Eastern cultural norms; however, she fails to recognise or redress her personal and cultural biases when confronted with a foreign royal's eccentric private collection of Eastern and Western objects. The apparent discrepancy in Bell's attitude will be discussed in more detail later in this section, but I argue that her juvenile and condescending narration arises from an assumption that the arrangement of the Shah's objects – or lack thereof – should be read as a form of visual narrative.

It is important to note that, unlike Martineau, Romer, and Edwards, Bell was not a published author prior to the publication of *Safar Nameh*, which, like many travelogues, was based on her private travel journals. According to her personal letters, it does not appear that Bell had any intention of releasing her diaries for public consumption; on the contrary, she 'refused' the offer to publish until pressure from her parents persuaded her to release her manuscripts. Bell's assessment of her own work reveals a significant discomfort with having her private work revealed to the public, as she believed that 'modesty apart [the manuscripts] are extraordinarily feeble' and she 'loath[ed] people who rush into print and fill the world with their cheap and nasty work – and now I am going to be one of them' (Bell, qtd. in Ross, 5).[8] The perception of her own work as 'cheap and nasty' may be due, in part, to the fact that she was compelled to add six extra chapters to the book after agreeing to publish it; it is not clear

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[8] 'After much hesitation I have decided to let [a friend publish *Persian Pictures*] and I am writing six more chapters. It's rather a bore and what's more I would vastly prefer them to remain unpublished. I wrote them you see to amuse myself and I have got all the fun out of them I ever expect to have, for modesty apart they are extraordinarily feeble. Moreover I do so loathe people who rush into print and fill the world with their cheap and nasty work - and now I am going to be one of them. At first I refused, then my mother thought me mistaken and my father was disappointed and as they are generally right I have given way. But in my heart I hold very firmly to my first opinion'. Letter from Gertrude Bell to unknown recipient, 1892, quoted in E. Dennison Ross, 'Preface'. *Persian Pictures*. Benn Limited, 1928.

which chapters were added in the two years that passed between the initial penning of the account and its publication, and consequently it is not known if the passages on the Shah's treasure house were written with public perception in mind. But, regardless of Bell's intent when she wrote the passage, the effect of it leaves the reader with a conflicting sense of awe, amusement, and disdain for the Shah and his 'treasures' that may, as Bennett argued, 'be productively analysed as particular articulations of power and knowledge' (73). To this end, Bell creates a powerful series of contrasts between the notions of beauty, monetary value, and scientific awareness raised by both the contents and mechanisms of the Shah's grandiose collection of curios that simultaneously subverts the exotified opulence associated with romantic accounts of Eastern life and inadvertently reveals the naïveté of the author.

Once inside the first room of the Treasure House, Bell's first impressions draws her reader into a wondrous scene:

Prepared? Ah, no, indeed! For what sober mortal could be prepared for the sight that burst upon us? A great vaulted room with polished floor and painted walls, with deep alcoves through whose long narrow windows splashes of sunlight fell — and everywhere jewels! Jewels on all the shelves of the alcoves, thick-sewn jewels on the carpets which hung against the walls, jewels coruscating from the throne at the top of the room, jewels in glass cases down the middle, flashing and sparkling in the sunlight, gleaming through dark corners, irradiating the whole hall with their scintillant brightness. (117)

In this passage, Bell describes a scene that is simultaneously chaotic and calculated. The visual impact of the jewels that are hung, arranged, and sewn across various surfaces and niches of the first room impresses both the author and her reader with a sense of awe at the sheer excess of wealth. There is an implicit sense that since the jewels that 'irradiat[ed] the whole hall with their scintillant brightness' were not set in jewellery and were displayed in ostensibly undifferentiated groupings, they did not carry any individual significance. Thus, they were placed about the room simply to emphasise that something of high monetary value was considered common or unremarkable within the Shah's personal economy.

Next, Bell examines the shelves more closely, noting the many shelves of jewellery and cups filled with 'unset stones' (118). Nearby, she notices a somewhat more organised set of glass cases, containing:

the diadems of former kings, high, closed helmets ablaze with precious stones; masses of unstrung pearls; costly and hideous toys, remarkable only for their extraordinary value — a globe, for instance, supported by an unbroken column of diamonds, whose seas were made of great flat emeralds, and whose continents of rubies and sapphires; and scattered with lavish profusion among the cases, festoons of turquoise rings and broad gold pieces which have long passed out of use, but in which regal currency, it is related, an immense subsidy was once paid to the Czar. (118-119)

These items, already set apart by their placement in cases, are further distinguished by a mixture of cultural significance and garishness. The items with the most cultural meaning, such as the 'diadems of former kings' and the 'broad gold pieces…' used to pay 'an immense subsidy … to the Czar' are overshadowed by the opulent globe covered in gems and the piles of jewellery and pearls. Bell's descriptions leave the reader overwhelmed by the 'hideous' nature of the prized 'toys', and the gaudiness of the piles which looked 'as though the ingenuity of the goldsmiths had been exhausted before they reached the end of their task' (118). The choice to repeatedly emphasise the items with lower cultural and aesthetic value appears to serve an intentional purpose beyond invoking the vastness of the Shah's wealth when placed in context in the following paragraph:

> On the other side of the room the treasures were scarcely less valuable and even more beautiful, for cupboard after cupboard was filled with delicate enamel, bowls and flagons, and the stems of *kalyans* all decorated with exquisite patterns … These lay far beyond the criticism of captious connoisseurs, who would not have failed to point out to us that the jewels were tinsel-backed, after all, and that most of the enormous rose diamonds were flawed and discoloured. (119)

After the tremendous build-up of the jewels, coins, and 'toys', Bell dramatically shifts the focus to items relatively more mundane than the ones previously described; however, Bell emphasises that 'captious connoisseurs' would find these objects 'scarcely less valuable' than the piles of gems which 'were tinsel-backed' and 'flawed and discoloured'. The structure of Bell's passage is necessarily, and I argue intentionally, complicated by this disclaimer: after pages of lavish descriptions that dazzle the reader with the brightness and expense of the Shah's jewel collection, Bell undercuts the actual value of the jewels by dramatically revealing that they are 'tinsel- backed'. This technique, better known as 'foil-backing', involved attaching thin strips of metal (tinsel) to the back of gems to alter or improve their colour and general appearance; the practice fell out of favour in nineteenth-century Europe, as improvements in cutting and setting techniques rendered this technique old-fashioned and cost-ineffective (Gere; Sandberg). Thus, the revelation that the Shah's gems have had their flaws disguised with an outdated technique implies that the glittering mounds and displays of jewels are designed to deceive the viewer, or else signal that the Shah himself is unaware of what items have 'actual' value in a modern – Western – market. Compare this to the 'scarcely less valuable' collection of ceramics and 'delicate enamels' that were highly prized within the Victorian collector's market: there is a clear implication that the total monetary value of the thousands of tinsel-backed jewels laid out in the open or in glassed-in cases was nearly the same as the ceramics sequestered inside of cupboards on the other side of the long, narrow room. Assuming that Bell is speaking from a reasonably well-informed position, her narration

creates a visual story which casts the Shah as a pompous collector with more money than taste, giving preferential placement to tawdry piles of shiny tokens rather than attempting to tell a story organised around items of historical or aesthetic value.

The next passage continues in this mode of critique, further undermining the 'articulations of knowledge' Bell presumes on behalf of the Shah:

> Taking an honoured place among the jewels and the enamel there were some objects which raised a ripple of laughter in the midst of our admiration. The royal owner of the treasure- house, doubtless anxious to show that he considered no less the well-being of the inward than the adornment of the outward man, had filled some of his upper shelves with little bottles of— what could those silvery globules be? … they looked suspiciously like— yes, they were! —they were pills! … quack remedies which the Shah had collected on his Western travels, had brought home and placed among his treasures. (119-120)

The tone becomes unapologetically mocking in this passage, as Bell reveals the Shah's eccentric collection of Western 'quack remedies' and toiletries displayed above and within his collection of dazzling – if flawed – jewels and impeccable enamel dishes. The suddenness of the discovery is replicated for her readers through the structure of the passage, carrying them through the stages of awe, overwhelm, disillusionment, and finally amusement at the expense of the Shah's perceived ignorance, all judged according to Western models of display, knowledge, and aesthetic judgement. Bell reveals that, after finding the pill-jars, she and her party discover that there are 'bottles of cheap scents and toothpowder among the diamonds' and 'some of the priceless cloisonné bowls were filled with toothbrushes' (120-121). This literal unpacking of the Shah's collection again reinforces the notion that the Shah is both ignorant and vulgar, with no ability to parse through what is valuable and what is not. Beyond the more subjective notions of aesthetic value, there is a more significant implication in this passage that the Shah's collection represents his lack of scientific and cultural literacy, as he has not failed to distinguish quack remedies from legitimate European medicine during his travels in the West. This, in turn, implies that Persia, as a nation, is scientifically regressive; however, historical records of the medicinal practices of Persian royalty at the time of Bell's visit reveal that this assumption was incorrect.

Historian Shireen Mahdavi records that the Persian Shahs 'had availed themselves of visiting or travelling foreign physicians' long before Western medicine was widely known or implemented among the 'general population' (170). It was a mixture of military and missionary interventions in Persian affairs that eventually led to a broader interest in Western medicine, but Mahdavi credits a French doctor and priest named Salvatori who 'cure[d] the grand vizier from an ailment by administering a white pill', winning the favour of the reigning

Shah in 1807 (170-171). Madhavi records that European doctors were employed by the succeeding Shahs from that point forward, including a French doctor who served at the time of Bell's account (176).[9] The description of a 'white pill' credited with saving the life of a Shah's adviser at the beginning of the century seems to correspond with the pills that were 'white enough for pearls' on display in the current Shah's collection eighty years later. While the items on display, if taken at face value, suggest an ignorance of scientific achievements in medicine, the historical context suggests that Western medical practice and education in Persia was on the rise at this time, especially in the court of the Shah. This reframes the Shah's collection from an ignorant representation of what he believed to be the most advanced offerings of Western medicine, to a curiosity of Western modernity displayed with a corresponding sense of irony, or even nostalgia for the pills that saved a prominent courtier of the Shah's predecessor.

Bell's narrative implicitly projects a belief that the visual semiotics of Western display apply universally – that visual placement (upper/lower shelf, exposed/encased) or the grouping of items together must signify either a hierarchical or corresponding relationship of value. Thus, to the critical reader, there is a clear possibility that Bell's interpretation of the Shah's collection – and by extension, her representation of the Shah himself – is obscured by her adherence to Western modes of reading display. Although Bell clearly had some notion of the historical significance of a couple of the items in the cases there is no suggestion that the mechanisms of display were interrogated during the tour, or that Bell conducted any substantial research to try to understand the thought process behind the items selected for display.

At the end of her tour of the Treasure House, which she exited through the equally lavish and eccentric throne room, Bell declares that it was not 'even a disillusion when we were solemnly told that the wooden cases placed at intervals down the room … were only musical boxes, which it is the delight of the Protector of the Universe to set a-playing all at once when he comes to inspect his treasures' (121). The fact that this display of the Shah's whimsical pomposity was 'not even a disillusion' clearly suggests that Bell has already been disillusioned by her previous observations of the Shah's 'treasures'; what is not explicitly clear is what sentiment or belief suffered as a consequence of this disillusionment. She concludes 'with a feeling of hopeless bewilderment' after being 'dazzled by inconceivable

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[9] Mahdavi paraphrases this account from diplomat and author James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan,* London, 1895, p.91.

wealth and moved to ridicule by childish folly. Wealth and childishness seemed to us equally absurd as we rode home in silence along the dusty roads' (123). This assessment, and the overall mocking tone of Bell's account, leads to a sincere question regarding Bell's motives in incorporating such a passage into her published account, given the unusual level of self-awareness and cultural respect that characterises the majority of her book. Farah Ghaderi and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya summarise Bell's approach to cultural representation by acknowledging that although there are some cases in *Persian Pictures* where Bell falls back on the dominant Orientalist tropes, her work unravels many Western myths regarding the Orient by providing an alternative response to her experience of the contact zone' (133). As noted in the introduction, Mary Pratt's conception of the 'contact zone' assumes that Western travellers necessarily wrote from an assumed position of cultural and racial superiority when describing their intracultural encounters; consequently, Ghaderi and Wan Yahya's assertion that Bell did not typically follow this pattern is a significant statement. They go on to claim that:

> Bell's recognition and appreciation of cultural difference in *Persian Pictures* was a daring approach, for her time … This suggests that as a Victorian traveller she was very much ahead of her time in recognising and respecting the ontological and autonomous worth of cultural difference, rather than relegating it like static travellers to the status of inferiority when found to be at variance with Western norms. (133)

It is difficult to reconcile the notion that Bell espoused 'a daring approach' in her representations of cultures 'found to be at variance with Western norms' with the apparent '[falling] back on the dominant orientalist tropes' of her time evident in this chapter. However, by approaching Bell's response to the Shah's Treasure House as a narrow-minded visual analysis, it is possible to argue that this passage features both the characteristics of Ghaderi and Wan Yahya's comments on Bell's work. By assuming that the Shah's collection utilises the same visual techniques as a Western museum or private collection, Bell asserts her own, distinctly Western judgement over the Shah – who represents the most privileged and well-travelled of the Persian people – effectively empowering her own voice via the articulation of her 'superior' knowledge. It is undeniable that this passage invokes regressive, orientalist stereotypes by suggesting that the Shah is at best uneducated and at worst deceitful in his aesthetic sensibilities, manifested in his decision to visually prioritise foil-backed opulence over tasteful ceramics. The supposed apotheosis of the lowest forms of Western medicine further implies to Bell's reader that the Persian nation has a regressive grasp of 'modern' science. In contrast, although the picture that Bell paints of the Shah is not a flattering one, it does function as a means of dispelling a mythical vision of oriental wealth by

stripping back the veneer of Eastern opulence. Bell's travelogue makes dozens of allusions to *Arabian Nights* and Elizabethan verse that, if taken as the benign fancies of a young scholar seeing the beloved object of her studies for the first time, act as a useful contrast to her harsh and relatively unfiltered assessment of the Shah's home display.[29] Read from this angle, Bell's mockery of the Shah's ostensibly undiscerning collection of jewels and curios serves a pragmatic purpose by deconstructing the romanticised oriental stereotypes constructed in European popular culture through not only orientalist literature, but music hall, pantomime, and satirical magazines.[10] Read from this angle, Bell's mockery of the Shah's ostensibly undiscerning collection of jewels and curios serves a pragmatic purpose by deconstructing the romanticised oriental stereotypes constructed in European popular culture through not only orientalist literature, but music hall, pantomime, and satirical magazines.[11] What the passage cannot escape, however one chooses to read it, is the naïve condescension of a highly educated but inexperienced woman recording the moment that her treasured perceptions of Eastern life are revealed to be as valuable as the foil- backed gems of the Shah.

As the future founder of the Iraq Museum in the early-twentieth century, it is well worth considering Bell's travelogue as one of her earliest contributions to the exhibitionary complex, although clearly not her most sophisticated. From this point of view, the Shah's choice of collectibles illuminates that the fascination with foreign curios was not a strictly Western or European phenomenon. The collection of European 'quack medicine' and household items suggests that the Shah may have had a general curiosity, or even amusement, about Western medicine and hygienic practices; his choice to store these items somewhat haphazardly within his private collection rather than use or publicly display them suggests that he did not take them as serious scientific developments. Regardless of his intention in reality, it is clear that Bell attempted to define the character and intellect of the Shah for her readers by projecting the expectations of a curated Western museum onto his un-curated private collection, which in turn reflected on the 'national character' of the country he ruled. Thus, for Bell, the collection itself acted as a cultural text from which she extrapolated a fragmented picture of Persia's intellectual and scientific development.

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[10] Bell was 25 at the time of her first journey to Persia.

[11] There were also many negative stereotypes of Eastern cultures propagated through these mediums; the legacies of orientalist representation and travel writing will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.3 Narrating 'Progress' in the Representations of Japanese Collections

While Bell's motivation for representing the Shah's private collection to the British public is not explicitly stated in the text, other travellers took a more direct approach to their assessments of Eastern cultures, especially cultures that were perceived as socially and economically 'progressive'. The majority of mid- and late-Victorian accounts of Japan unambiguously celebrated the Japanese' rapid development into a modernised political and economic force after two-hundred and sixty-five years of mostly closed borders and an isolationist foreign policy (*sakoku*). Japan reopened its borders to western dignitaries in 1853, and eventually allowed public tourism and trade in limited regions by 1859.[12] This marked the official end of Japan's feudal *shogunate* government, and the subsequent democratisation under the rule of Emperor Meiji, known as the 'Meiji Restoration' (1868-1889), which prompted a wave of mass urbanisation and industrialisation. These changes did not entirely erase the traditional Japanese way of life, especially in rural communities, but Western fashions, technology, and philosophy were widely integrated into Japan's cities and universities. Western tourists were reciprocally fascinated and impressed by Japan's manners and customs, but the Victorians developed a particular love for Japanese arts, crafts, and textiles.

The Victorian obsession with Japan began with the International Exhibition of 1862 in London; British Ambassador to Japan Rutherford Alcock supplied over 600 Japanese objects from his personal collection to form the first Japanese exhibit in Europe; these objects impressed the Victorian public with their beauty, quality, and ingenuity, and lead to the start of a new trend known as *japonisme*.[13] *Japonisme* soon replaced *chinoiserie* as the most fashionable aesthetic for 'decorative objects' and was subsequently embraced by many members of the late-Victorian Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts movements. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 3 and 4, but it is important to recognise that art and aesthetics were one of the primary ways that Victorians interacted with Japanese culture, both at home and abroad.

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[12] The push to open Japan's borders came from American Commodore Matthew Perry. Non-diplomatic tourists were restricted to travelling within a limited radius of port cities, such as Nagasaki and Yokohama, until the 1890s; c.f. Fukunaga, Ai. 'Tourism and Collecting in Kyoto: The Miyako Hotel as an Agent in the Creation of the Hon. Henry Marsham Collection of Japanese Art, Maidstone Museum, Kent.' *Journal for Art Market Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2018, pg. 9.

[13] Unknown to Alcock, many of the items included in his exhibit were 'embarrassing' to the Japanese delegation who considered the collection a poor representation of authentic Japanese craft. C.f. The National Diet Library of Japan, https://www.ndl.go.jp/exposition/e/s1/1862-1.html.

The role of objects in communicating the state of a nation's development is evident in the writing of Alice Frere, the daughter of a civil servant in British India, who became an avid collector of East Asian art and ceramics during her extensive travels in 1865-1866. Her travelogue, *The Antipodes and Round the World* (1870),[14] features a brief, but notable, account of her visiting the 'rooms taken for the purpose' of packing 'all the things going to the Paris Exhibition' during her visit to Tokyo, then known as Yedo (448). She visited Tokyo, which was restricted to non-diplomatic visitors at the time, under the sponsorship of Sir Harry Parkes, the British Minister to Japan, shortly after being instated to the role in 1865. Frere recounts how her party rushed to see the objects selected for display in Paris, arriving 'not a minute too soon; for already the pictures were being taken down from the walls, and the cases brought out to pack them. We had, however, time to see them all, and thought that a much better collection might have been made, particularly of lacquer' (448). The comment on lacquerware reinforces the importance of art as a signifier of national excellence, and was frequently used as a point of comparison between Japanese and Chinese art by Frere and other collectors. While the novelty of access to Japan certainly added to the Victorians' enthusiasm for its artistic products, Frere's disappointment at either the lack of quantity or quality of lacquerware chosen for display at the Paris exhibition is directly tied to the representation of Japan's advanced techniques and skilled artisanship. As will be discussed in detail in chapter 3, Japan had already begun to shift from hand-production of lacquer and ceramics to the mass production, presumably using a mixture of traditional and industrial methods, making a fully traditional production or antique even more valuable. These '"base imitations"' (414), as Frere termed them, were still high-quality pieces, so even a display of these modern productions would make a strong statement about Japan's ability to adapt to the demands of a global, industrial market if sent to Paris in sufficient quantity.

> Frere continues to describe 'the most curious things in the collection':
> a couple of Prussian needle-guns, most perfectly copied by these clever, ingenious people, and with all the fittings of their cases as complete and finished as could possibly have been, had they been the work of one of the first gun-makers in England. Even to the maker's name, engraved on a little silver plate on the stock, they were perfect. (448-449)

Assuming that Frere was not misinformed about the origin of the gun, the choice to send 'perfectly copied' European weapons to the Paris Exhibition would indeed be curious if it were merely a cultural exhibition. When considered as an industrial fair, and more

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[14] It is believed that the first edition of this book was published prior to 1870 and is currently out of print; current reprints are based on the 1870 edition, which is cited in this paper.

importantly, as a site of global competition, the imitation guns send a powerful signal of Japan's capacity as both an industrial and a military power. At this stage in Japanese history, the *shogunate* government was still in control, but the threat of approaching reforms prompted the *daimyo,* or feudal lords, to import modern weaponry, including breech-loading rifles (needle-guns) manufactured in France (Totman 344). Although it is assumed that the rifles were brought in after 1866, Frere's account suggests that the Japanese not only purchased, but learned to produce these weapons for themselves by 1865. Chapter 4 will address the development of Japanese manufacturing in greater detail, but in the context of the Paris Exhibition the decision to display manufactured, imitation weaponry would send an impressive and intimidating message to Europe and the Western world that Japan was not a primitive nation, but a rapidly-advancing modern nation with a modern, or nearly modern, military complex. Japanese military historian Conrad Totman noted that the Japanese had imported materials from Europe to build a gunpowder foundry in Yokohama in 1864 that was shortly closed down, but this record suggests that the Japanese were highly successful in other forms of industrial copying (345). Whether or not the guns were functional for combat, the symbolic meaning would be difficult to ignore.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the political landscape in Japan had been fully changed over to the democratised empire of the Meiji regime. After the formal reopening of the country in the 1860s, Christian missionaries slowly began to enter the country and plant missions across the country. These missions began quietly due to the extreme persecution of Christianity in Japan prior to the closing of the border (this will be addressed in more detail below), but over time they began to practise and proselytise in the open. The Anglican church appointed Edward Bickersteth, son of the Bishop of Exeter (also Edward Bickersteth), as the first Bishop of South Tokyo in 1866. His family, including his younger sister Mary, travelled with him on a tour of Anglican church plants across Japan in 1892, and Mary published an account of this trip as *Japan as We Saw it* in 1893. Missionary accounts were a popular sub-genre of travel writing in the nineteenth century, often looked to for cultural information as well as updates on the teams and churches living abroad.[15] As such, Bickersteth's account of her visit to the Ueno Museum[16] is remarkable for its insightful and informed perspective on religious and political-economic philosophies of the period, evidenced through her engagement with the museum displays. She consistently returns to the theme of craftsmanship

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[15] C.f. Johnston, *Missionary writing and empire, 1800–1860.*
[16] Now the Tokyo National Museum, adjacent to Ueno Park.

and artistry as a marker of Japan's national and commercial progress that is integral to the central arguments of this study, but her approach also grapples with broader debates on religion, evolution, and civilisation raised by the emergence of anthropological science.

Similar to other accounts of Western travellers, Bickersteth illustrates how objects in museums — and exhibitions more broadly — are co-opted as a measure of appraising 'civilisation' and 'national character' in travelogues, although unlike Bell, Bickersteth seeks to establish a sense of familiarity rather than difference. In doing so, she achieves a similar, but much more deliberate, end of dispelling common misconceptions about Eastern cultures and promoting the role of Christianity in the future of Japan's political economic development. From the 1870s, the Japanese experienced 'a time of spiritual crisis' as the newly established Meiji government attempted to eradicate Buddhism and make Shinto the state religion, and many former *samurai* who were not granted roles in the new government converted to Christianity in an effort to involve themselves in the intellectual modernising (Westernising) of Japan (Takeda 417; 418). Thus, Bickersteth's association between Christianity and the political-economic advancement of Japan is not simply dismissible as church propaganda, although she fails to acknowledge the paternalism and class division which characterised many, if not all, of the Japanese conversions.

Bickersteth opens her account of the Ueno Museum with a brief list of the 'fine specimens of modern art in lacquer, china, and cloisonné' which 'crowded' the ground floor of the museum (79). Like many travellers, Bickersteth and her family were keen collectors of Japanese 'modern' art, but nonetheless she dedicated most of her account to recreating the Historical Department:

> All the specimens [in the first room] are carefully arranged in glass cases, and, with the aid of Murray's Guide, we could follow the contents of each very accurately. In the first were relics of the stone age; arrow and spear heads, and rough stone implements. Then, as we went a little further, we could notice the development of the characteristic arts of Japan: pottery, bronze work, and carving in ivory; very rough at first, but improving with marvellous rapidity, probably when the arts of civilisation entered the country from Korea. (79)

This passage presents a condensed timeline of Japan's development from the 'stone age' to the 'modern' periods framed through the lens of artistic achievement and craftsmanship. The reader's attention is drawn to the way that the 'specimens are carefully arranged in glass cases', suggesting a sense of order and, based on the layout of the rooms, chronology. Bickersteth narrates the reader through the exhibit, taking on the role of proxy spectator and relying heavily on the authority of *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Japan* (1891) for

contextual information.[17] The exhibit starts with tools universally indicative of early human evolution, the 'relics of the stone age; arrow and spear heads, and rough stone implements', followed by the milestone 'development of the characteristic arts of Japan: pottery, bronze work, and carving in ivory' (79). These two displays illustrate the differentiation of humans from hunter/gatherers, the first of the four stages in Smithian stadial theory, into distinct cultures represented explicitly through the development of 'characteristic arts'. This establishes a clear link to the idea that art and craftsmanship were accepted as essential markers of a cohesive national identity. Although cloaked in the language of evolution, Bickersteth subtly distinguishes 'arts' from 'civilisation' as she continues to narrate along the display, suggesting that art alone was not indicative of progress.

The display, as already noted, began with the lower evolutionary stage (survival tools) and then proceeded to the development of a recognisable culture (art objects) that was then acted upon by encounters with an external, more-developed culture (Korea) to acquire 'the arts of civilisation'. At this point in the passage, the progression of evolutionary and socio-economic developments — as illustrated through objects — bear an obvious relationship to the Enlightenment notions of human civilisation and progress; as noted in the introduction, Adam Smith and David Hume both viewed art – whether developed domestically or through profitable exchange with other nation-states – as a unifying force against religious sectarianism in a developed or developing state;[18] however, there is a further resonance with the work of nineteenth-century anthropologists, such as Herbert Spencer and apostate Quaker E.B. Tylor, that complicates a narrow political-economic reading of this passage.

After the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859), which fundamentally refuted the Biblical narrative of creation as a scientific paradigm in Victorian society, Tylor developed an alternative stadial theory of anthropological development through three 'stages' of 'savagery', barbarism', and 'civilisation', making use of the terminology first developed by Montesquieu and later appropriated by Ferguson's popular three-stages theory. Tylor's theory was abandoned by anthropological researchers in the mid-twentieth century due to its inherently racist hierarchy of human development, but it was highly influential in the

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[17] *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Japan,* 1893, 81-82. The *Handbook* was published as part of a series designed to provide European travellers with a comprehensive guide to tourism in various parts of the world, including survival vocabulary, hotel and shopping suggestions, basic cultural history, and social rules. Handbooks were updated every couple of years, but the first edition of the Japan *Handbook* was published in 1891 (likely the edition used by Mary Bickersteth, but unavailable to read online).

[18] C.f. Introduction, pp. 5-6 (Smith 281; Hume 120).

scientific and political-economic views of the late-nineteenth century.[19]

Like many of the conjectural historians of the eighteenth century, Tylor framed 'theological systems' as fictions 'devised by human reason, without supernatural aid or revelation' (1:417). Herbert Spencer, a rival and contemporary of Tylor's in the post-Darwin era, believed that religion represented a more primitive and 'homogenous' era of thought and production, which ran counter to 'the advance from the simple to the complex … seen in the evolution of Humanity, whether contemplated in the civilised individual, or in the aggregations of races … [and] in the evolution of Society, in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organisation' (XV). This argument considers religion as a unifying ('homogenising') force in social development, as opposed to the Enlightenment view that religion is a divisive force. Where both lines of thinking agree is that religion is a key factor in social organisation, whether society is unified by religion or against it, and that intellectual and industrial progress is most likely to happen concurrently with either the peaceful diversification or eradication of religious belief. Bickersteth's analysis of the art objects in the first room of the Department of History seems to agree with the general proposition that art and craftsmanship perform an essential role in the development of the early Japanese identity, going so far as to present art and craftsmanship itself as a defining 'characteristic' of a national culture.[20] But, as Bickersteth's narration moves the reader into the second room containing 'Buddhist relics' and 'specimens of the earliest Japanese writing, all in Chinese characters', there is a clear implication she interprets Japan's joint adoption of Chinese religious and linguistic systems as a facilitator of social and intellectual progress.[21] This interpretation becomes even more pointed in her minute descriptions of the Christian relics held in the same room, which she firmly links to the advancement of social progress.

She details the contents of 'two [cases] devoted to Christian relics of the 16th and 17th centuries — the days of S. Francis Xavier, and therefore, of particular interest in the eyes of the foreign visitor' (79). These cases represent the religious interactions between Europe and Japan that led to the closing of Japanese borders to the majority of Western countries in 1639,

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[19] C.f. Lesser, Alexander. 'Evolution in Social Anthropology. '*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1952, pp. 134–46. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable /3628611. Accessed 17 May 2023.

[20] This also relates to the formal emergence of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1880s; this will be explored in detail in Chapter 3.
[21] Japanese Buddhism is derived from Chinese *Mahayana* Buddhism, which was introduced into Japan culture via Korea in the sixth century. C.f. Elizabeth Hammer, 'Buddhism in Japan'. *Asia Society*. https://asiasociety.org/education/buddhism-japan. Accessed 17 May 2023.

followed by a horrific persecution of Japanese Christians that drove the surviving practitioners underground until the reopening of the country in 1853 (Hagemann 151). The literal and metaphorical closing of the Japanese borders was not merely born out of a fear that Christianity would dilute the cultural integrity of Japan, but out of concern that the increased presence of Spanish and Portuguese traders that accompanied the missionaries into the country would result in 'aggression against the state' (Hagemann 153). From this perspective, Western religion may have increased the flow of trade, but at the potential cost of weakening the coherency of the nation-state as argued by Smith and Hume. The Japanese government utilised religious persecution as a means of maintaining national coherence by eradicating Western influences, at a calculated cost of human life and centuries of socio-economic development (Hagemann 160). Bickersteth demonstrates a clear awareness of this history in her preamble to discussing the museum objects, which opens with a lengthy summary of the persecution of Christians in Japan. She notes that a small number of provinces were spared from the violence, and that it was from one of these provinces that 'an embassy was despatched by the *daimyo* of Sendai to the Pope, and the King of Spain, and many of the relics we saw in the Ueno Museum were presents given to its members when in Europe' (80). These presents 'included crucifixes, holy pictures, and rosaries' in addition to paintings of the ambassador in religious poses, which she surmises were 'most jealously guarded during the persecution' (80). Compared to previous rooms, Bickersteth offers significantly more context to the items in the collection, most of which is paraphrased from *Murray's Handbook*; however, in this room, she directly quotes a section from the *Handbook*:

> In some cases, and of even greater interest, were "the '"*fumisita*', or trampling boards, oblong blocks of metal, with figures, in high relief, of Christ before Pilate, the Descent from the Cross, the Madonna and Child, etc., on which persons suspected of Christianity were obliged to trample in times of persecution, in order to testify their abjuration of the despised sect" (Murray's Handbook). These cases were indeed a powerful witness to the faith and devotion of the Japanese under severe trial, a witness all the more important, because the attention of many is now caught by the bright attractiveness of the national character, and they rashly decide that there cannot be depth where there is so much of outward show. (80-81)[22]

Reproducing sections of other travelogues, guidebooks, or historical works for context was a common practice in travel writing, but a brief comparison of Bickersteth's supplemental

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[22] Victorian travellers frequently commented on the performative rituals of Japanese politeness, as well as the playful whimsy of their carvings and artwork or the lusciousness of their formal, national dress. Many travellers wrote of these attributes with admiration, but as will be discussed in chapter two, there are cases – including in Bickersteth's own account – where the 'outward show' of Japanese society was subject to ridicule.

comments with the full passage of the original *Handbook* reveals the influence of her personal ideological framework in representing the museum and its contents to her reader.

In the original *Handbook*, the backstory of the Christian relics gifted to the envoy from the *daimyo* of Sendai is framed with a disclaimer:

> The official Japanese account of this curious episode is that the embassy went at the *Shogun*'s desire, in order to investigate the political strength and resources of Europe. The version usually accepted by European writers is that the expedition really was what it avowed itself to be — an act of submission to the religious supremacy of the Pope. (81)

Bickersteth does not repeat this 'official Japanese account', which effectively secularises the display as a representative of a secular political exchange; rather, Bickersteth centres her narrative on 'the faith and devotion of the Japanese under severe trial', which she offers as evidence of the 'depth' of the Japanese national character. The exclusion of an alternative, secular point of view — which is not confirmed as either true or false by the *Handbook* — is not surprising given her intimate connections to Christian missions in Japan, but it reframes Bickersteth's role in recreating and re-contextualising the museum for her readers as more 'curatorial' than 'spectator-by-proxy'. While she may have had access to historical insights from actual Japanese Christians involved with the Tokyo Mission, it is unclear whether Bickersteth consulted with them before publishing her vindication of the Japanese national character. Regardless, by textually recreating the museum display for her reader and linking the Western religious objects with a grander narrative of devotion, suffering, and faithfulness to God, Bickersteth effectually reorients European perceptions of the Japanese national character into one worthy of respect and, through shared belief, a sort of kinship. This kinship, in turn, serves as a basis for Bickersteth to argue that religion is the key to Japan's future development into a socially and politically advanced nation.

Bickersteth resumes her contemplation of Japanese advancement during her visit to the Keio Gijuku School and College[23] two days after her visit to the Ueno Museum. Keio was 'founded by Mr. Fukuzawa, one of the men who made modern Japan' (99).[24] During the visit, she paraphrases a claim made by Professor Basil Hall Chamberlain in his book *Things Japanese* (1890) that Fukuzawa-san was 'in favour of Christianity today, because its adoption

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[23] Now Keio University, one of the most prestigious universities in Japan. It was founded in 1858 as a school of Dutch studies, switching its focus to English in 1868. The College was formed in 1890. C.f. History of Keio University, https://www.keio.ac.jp/en/about/history/.

[24] Fukuzawa Yukichi was a member of the Japanese delegation to Europe in 1862 and a strong proponent of education and modernisation in Meiji Japan. This delegation famously visited the Great Exhibition in London, contributing to the Victorian fascination with Japanese culture.

might gain for Japan the good-will of Western nations".[25] During a tour of the student rooms, she observes 'a pile of books' on the floor which 'probably [include] a copy of John Stuart Mill or Herbert Spencer, which are the present ideals of young Japan' (99). This scene builds on the religious kinship Bickersteth has already attempted to draw between the British and the Japanese by implying that British philosophy is incorporated alongside Christianity as a means of political as well as social reform, despite the fact that Spencer's work was highly critical of religion in general.

Hearkening back to the museum displays in the Department of History, where Bickersteth presents a harmonised vision of the evolutionary and religious narratives of human history and civilisation, Bickersteth uses this connection to deliver a more comprehensive claim on the similarities between the Japanese and the British:

> If certain national characteristics more than others stand out clearly in the past and present history of Japan, they are these: —First, the national reverence for historical truth; second, the national appreciation of order, whether in things secular or spiritual; third, the national patriotism, sufficiently humble to learn from outsiders, but infinitely too proud to permanently resign itself to foreign guidance. Will a nation with characteristics like these embrace Roman Catholicism, with its inevitable acceptance of a foreign Papacy? … Will it in any case be able to successfully imitate the political and social reforms of modern Europe without the religious foundation on which each one had been based? These questions cannot be avoided. Rather, the next fifty years will undoubtedly have to answer them. (109)

Here, Bickersteth links the concepts of national character, religion, and progressive reform in a manner that ultimately serves her own religious agenda. The 'reverence for historical truth' and 'national appreciation of order' both resonate with the Victorian obsession with codification and organisation manifested in their obsession with objects, collections, and displays. The 'sufficiently humble' sense of 'national patriotism' which, as demonstrated through the display of pottery which evidenced the influence of Korea and other neighbours, was willing 'to learn from outsiders', is here presented as an obstacle to Catholicism, but not to Christianity at large. The 'pride' of Japanese nationalism is, for Bickersteth, presented as a sort of ironic virtue that will open the Japanese sensibility to accepting the Anglican denomination, despite the fact that Anglicanism itself was a nationalised institution, because Catholicism necessitates submission to the liturgical authority of the 'foreign Papacy'. By drawing such close comparisons between the 'national characteristics' of Britain and Japan,

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[25] C.f. Chamberlain, Basil Hall. *Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan for the Use of Travellers and Others.* John Murray, 1905, p. 344. Chamberlain was an Emeritus Professor of Japanese and Philology at the Imperial University of Tokyo, 1886-1911. He also co-authored the *Handbook for Travellers in Japan* previously cited by Bickersteth.

Bickersteth posits that Anglicanism may offer a religious solution for Japan that is not tied directly to foreign political control; rather, a Japanese form of Anglicanism under the cooperative influence of British missionaries would enable Japan to imitate Britain's social progress through a shared 'religious foundation'. From this, it is reasonable to conclude that Bickersteth's attempts to inspire a greater reverence for Japanese culture were directly tied to her hopes for an increase in missionary outreaches to Japan, which she believed, in turn, would lead to a progressive social revolution. Ultimately, for Bickersteth and for Alice Frere, Japan represented a nation that was not only capable of reaching an advanced stage of stadial development, but one that already posed a threat to the European hierarchy when exhibited on the world stage of the International Exhibition.

1.4 Conclusion

As seen in the writing of Martineau, Romer, Edwards, Bell, Frere, and Bickersteth, museum displays were an important means by which the Victorians codified the stadial development of world cultures and their associated 'national characteristics'. Consequently, the reproduction and contextualisation of visual displays in literary form demonstrate that travel writing served as an important extension of the Victorian exhibitionary complex. Martineau and Romer's accounts both express a concern that incomplete, 'fragmented' collections had the potential to lead to cultural illiteracy; although Martineau argues that this may be remedied by the intervention of travellers, her eagerness for Egyptian cultural properties to be owned and displayed by the British Museum reveals an equal concern that Britain should maintain a level of control over global cultural narratives. Edwards frames Egypt's attempt to maintain control over its own narrative by banning the exportation of antiquities and building its own national museum as a step forward in modern Egypt's development towards a modernised nation-state. Nonetheless, like Martineau and Romer before her, Edwards implies that Egypt was a far more advanced civilisation in its ancient past; her subsequent facilitation of the removal of antiquities and monuments from Egypt through the activities of the Egypt Exploration Fund, and during her own travels,[26] further undermines the magnanimity of her praises for the Boulaq Museum project.

Bell's inability to divorce herself from Western methods of display in order to evaluate the meaning behind the Persian Shah's fondness for worthless Western imports shows the limitations of visual display as a means of communicating broader cultural contexts, ultimately serving as a meta-critique on the Western preoccupation with visual display. In

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[26] Discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Bell's case, her feeling of 'disillusion' after viewing the eccentricity and excess of the Shah's Treasure House was the product of her own unrealistic expectations of Oriental life based on literature and popular culture, which she then projected onto a set of displays interpreted through a Western lens of visual semiotics. Her inability, or unwillingness, to consider alternative forms of visual organisation, or to appreciate the potential similarities between Eastern and Western collectors of foreign 'curiosities', inhibited her representation of Persian culture as a nation invested in scientific development.

Frere and Bickersteth both represent Japan as an already advanced nation with significant potential to become either a rival or an ally to Britain, and to the Western world more generally. Frere highlights the technological ingenuity of the Japanese through their reproduction of European weapons, while Bickersteth focuses on the Japanese' intellectual and cultural development by tracing the evolutionary trajectory of their nation-state through the contents of the Ueno Museum. By linking the adoption of religion – more specifically, Christianity – with other forms of progress, Bickersteth not only presents a strong, if evidently biased, argument to encourage the British to invest in the Anglican Mission, but she also confronts both existing and emergent intellectual discourses that attempted to discredit religion as a positive contributor to social advancement.

From these examples, it is evident that the power of the travelogue as a mediator between Western and Eastern cultures should not be underestimated in contemporary criticism, especially in travelogues authored by Victorian women. In addition to providing a space to critique the limitations of the physical museum space, travel writing enabled women to shape British perceptions of the values – both cultural and monetary – of the foreign cultures with whom the Empire sought to establish trade. Perhaps more importantly, these women's accounts reveal an inherent fallibility in the stadial ideologies that drove the Victorians to collect, view, and interpret fractured representations of foreign cultures.

Chapter 2: Representing National Character and Stadial Progress in the Eastern Marketplace

In *Safar Nameh*, Gertrude Bell describes the experience of Eastern shopping as a process that:

> is not without a charm which is absent from Western counters. … Shopping with [Eastern] merchants is not merely the going through of certain forms for the acquisition of necessary commodities — it is an end in itself, an art which combines many social arts, an amusement which will not pall, though many hours be devoted to it, a study in character and national characteristics. (249-250)

Bell's characterisation is applicable to many accounts of browsing and buying recorded in women's travelogues across the mid- and late-nineteenth century. In addition to descriptions of merchandise, the authors emphasise the aesthetic, ethnographic, and material conditions of Eastern trade cities, effectively shifting the focus from a simple account of their own consumer interests[1] to a scientific record of the social and economic conditions of Eastern bazaars.

As argued in the previous chapter, the nineteenth-century travelogue acted as a form of exhibitionary space where 'the focused concern with the *visual*' and 'awareness of both the epistemological and aesthetic stakes underlying the act of seeing' (Dias 49, original emphasis) could be achieved through the literary representation of display spaces. By reproducing these spaces through textual description, the authors could represent fragmented works of art or artefacts held in Eastern museums and private collections in context with 'their own locality and proper connexion' (Martineau 1:183). The same approach used to read the displays and contents of museum exhibits and private collections is also present in representations of the Eastern marketplace. As noted in the Introduction, criticism of Victorian women's engagements with commerce and commercial spaces are typically approached in terms of household or luxury 'consumption';[2] at worst, women's activities are dismissed as an exercise in indulgence, and at best, as hidden drivers of the industrial economy. While both conceptions have a place in studies of consumption in fictional and non-fictional Victorian literature, neither accounts for the depth of female travellers' commentary on the conditions of the Eastern marketplace in accordance with a stadial capitalist worldview.

My argument is, in part, an expansion of Bill Lancaster's of 'window shopping' in his history of *The Department Store: A Social History* (1995). Lancaster defends the activity of window shopping as more than just 'a popular pastime for women … a form of escape into a

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[1] I will discuss accounts of their purchases in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.
[2] C.f. Introduction, pp. 24-25.

phantasmagorical dream world', contending that this activity 'almost certainly encompasse[d] the highly rational activity of comparing prices and quality' (175). This approach combines the rational and irrational elements of shopping – the 'dream world' of what the window display has to offer and the reality of 'comparing prices and quality' – into a single process. In this process, the woman retains her agency and pragmatism even as she indulges in consumerist fantasies. This marriage of fantasy and reality is an essential component of marketplace descriptions in Victorian women's travelogues, which combine literal observations of the visual arrangement and contents of Eastern shops or bazaars with imaginative elements borrowed from popular Orientalist tropes. In the context of travel writing, I argue that women's representations of the visual elements of the Eastern marketplace integrates the intellectual labour of political-economic and ethnographic analysis with both the romantic and economic aspects of consumption, which I have collectively termed the 'female-capitalist gaze'. By reframing women's descriptions of the Eastern marketplace through this perspective, narratives of consumption reveal the women's underlying, and often unconscious, attempts to measure the stadial development of Eastern countries by framing the state of bazaars and market cities across the Middle East and Asia as signifiers of national character and political-economic status. This becomes particularly clear when the women's accounts are placed in context with the introduction of the English 'bazaar' in the early-nineteenth century, first as a female commercial space and later as a novel spectacle of romanticised consumption. Integral to the adoption of the bazaar in British culture was the rising anxiety about the effects that importing Eastern commercial practices would have on Britain's economic and social values; consequently, women's representations of authentic bazaars serve to not only interrogate the commercial and social values of Eastern nations, but to attempt to reconcile the use of Eastern commercial models within their own 'progressive' economy.

This chapter will examine how female travellers frame the visual space and modes of transaction in bazaars and market cities across Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan. The first section will provide a brief history of construction of the upper-class shopping district of Regent Street and the founding of the Soho Bazaar in London in the late-Georgian period, followed by the opening of Liberty's 'East India House' on Regent Street in the mid-Victorian period. Each of these commercial sites played formative roles in the development of Victorians' associations between gender, spectacle, and commerce in the market space, and are referenced – either directly or indirectly – in accounts by travellers' shopping in Egypt, Persia, and Japan. The second section will examine the personal interactions between the

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women and Eastern merchants in order to perform a comparison of 'national characters' in Egypt, Persia, Turkey,[3] and Japan.In the spirit of nationalistic competition raised to the fore of Victorian consciousness by the Great Exhibition, the women frame encounters with Eastern merchants as hospitable encounters that act as a 'contact zone' with the male, Oriental 'Other'; these encounters serve as opportunities for the women to evaluate the romanticised or racialised traits associated with Oriental traders in Victorian popular culture in an attempt to quantify their 'national character'. The third, and final, section of this chapter will consider the destabilising of the binary divide between 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', or between 'progressive' and 'regressive', in the market cities of Egypt, China, and Japan. When considered in context with the evolution of the visual and spatial design of Victorian department stores inspired by Eastern bazaars, the women's assessments of market cities based on Western social and economic markers of 'progress' expose the limitations of the linear conception of stadial development that continued to overshadow their view of the world. All together, these sections illustrate that Victorian women travellers' relationship to shopping cannot be reduced to simple consumption; rather, accounts of transactions in the Eastern marketplace act as extensions of the exhibitionary complex wherein shopping serves as a form of applied political-economic discourse when framed through a female-capitalist gaze.

2.1 Re-Orienting Women, Spaces of Commerce, and the Politics of Exhibition

Critical analyses of Victorian commercial and urban development frequently credit the Great Exhibition of 1851 as the catalyst for the adoption of 'spectacle' in the design of department stores. Tony Bennett's seminal paper on 'The Exhibitionary Complex' specifically credits the Great Exhibition as an exemplary model used to '[simultaneously [order] objects for public inspection' as well as '[order] the public that inspected it … [in the] subsequent development of museums, art galleries, expositions, and department stores' (74). Kylie Message and Ewan Johnston explore a similar conception of the Great Exhibition as a space that 'contribute[d] to global solidarity through the expansion of an increasingly shared marketplace' while 'also … benefit[ting] the national good' through competition; Message and Johnston argue that the

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[3] For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to include representations of Turkey and the Turkish people because both Persia and Egypt had significant multi-ethnic populations, and many members of the merchant class were of Turkish descent. Given that Egypt's government was occupied by an Ottoman dynasty, representations of the Turkish people and tensions with the government of Ottoman Turkey are necessarily relevant to Victorian perceptions of Turkish people living and working in other Middle Eastern countries in the nineteenth century.

resultant 'interconnected modern economies of exoticism and commodification' were inextricably linked to a new – and growing – 'preference for visuality' (29). Although it is fair to argue that the Great Exhibition prompted an unprecedented demand for novel and more extravagant modes and spaces of consumption, the Exhibition itself was the product of an ongoing reorientation of Britain's relationship to commerce that began with the founding of the Soho Bazaar as a women's commercial space in 1816 and the construction of Regent Street between 1810 and 1820. Placed in context with these formative developments, which continued to influence Victorian commercial culture across the nineteenth century, female travellers' accounts of visiting an actual Eastern bazaar were not merely records of exotic consumption, but engagements with counterparts to a familiar mode of commerce which they, as women, felt entitled to critique.

The Soho Bazaar was 'the first true bazaar' built in Britain, founded by arms dealer John Trotter as a space for women – especially widows of the Napoleonic Wars – to earn a living (Morrison 93; Dyer 196). The financial success of Trotter's Bazaar, which rented spaces to 200 women, led to the opening of dozens more bazaars in London and other major English cities by the 1830s; informal, temporary bazaars known as 'charity fairs', usually run by women, also grew in popularity during this era (Ash 182). The women working at the Soho Bazaar were subjected to strict rules, including the opening hours, a dress code, and 'fixed, marked prices which reduced their dialogues with customers to a minimum', out of fear that the women themselves would be gazed upon as merchandise, transforming the bazaar into a site of prostitution (Morrison 93; Rendell 114-115). Gary Dyer draws on Edward Said's *Orientalism* to argue that this anxiety was not simply a question of the visual and spatial layout of the bazaar, where the saleswomen were positioned amongst the merchandise, but because the connection with the 'East' resulted in 'women too [being] construed as essentially "Other" (both the Orient and woman being foci of masculine desire)' (203). This argument is supported by a satirical cartoon, published by Thomas Tegg on 29 May 1816, featuring a 'turbaned [Turkish] demon' transforming iconic London buildings into bazaars that simultaneously illustrated 'the concrete economic threat of the bazaars to British shopkeepers and the symbolic threat of the East to British values' (Dyer 201). Dyer posits that 'Trotter intended to draw on the public's preconceptions of the Turkish and Arab world', attributed to the popularity of 'travel narratives and Byron's stories', in an effort to subvert these stereotypes and '*domesticate* that foreign presence ... making it chaste, respectable, English' (201). This reading raises a key point that women were positioned at the centre of the social, political, and economic tensions associated with the bazaar; Dyer frames these roles as

inherently passive and subject to predominantly male anxieties over feminine virtue, and by extension, the virtues of English commercial traditions. This analysis gives little substantial consideration to contemporary accounts of women who were actively involved in the bazaars, whom Dyer recognises may have interpreted the 'symbolism of charity fairs' differently from conservative male or female observers (222);[4] consequently, the absence of the female capitalist voice in Dyer's analysis perpetuates a narrative of Victorian women's roles in commerce as objects to be gazed upon, critiqued and exotified. Similarly, Jane Rendell's influential study on gender and public spaces in Regency London, *Pursuit of Pleasure,* emphasised that bazaars were 'places for men to look for women' (114), again undermining the agency of women as commercial organisers, and the women's gaze as both sellers and consumers.

In a broader analysis of the bazaar's role in Victorian evangelical culture, Susan Ash complicates the analytical approaches of Dyer and Rendell that frame the bazaar as a site for gazing at, Othering, or commodifying women, noting that 'for the most part, bazaars were associated with women … managed by women for women' (180). The London bazaars included both 'charity and commercial systems' across the Georgian and Victorian era, although these purposes necessarily overlapped in most cases; regardless of their stated purpose, what all of the most successful events had in common was the employment of spectacle to attract customers (180). Ash notes the rise of the '"Grand" bazaars' in the early Victorian period that served as fundraisers for a variety of religious, social, and political causes, featuring both male and female vendors and organisers; although they operated on the same fundamental principles, what separated Grand bazaars from the smaller 'charity fairs' was their scale and extravagance. The 1845 Anti-Corn-Law fundraising bazaar is a key example of a Grand bazaar that illustrates the increased importance and acceptance of Orientalised 'spectacle' in the reformation of the Victorian relationship to commerce; passages from Harriet Martineau's *The History of England* (1850) and the *Art Union* periodical both emphasise how the bazaar's '"curious and wonderful display of goods"' were laid out in an Orientalised hall with '"all the effect of enchantment… as if Aladdin's palace had been called into existence by the spell of the magician"' (Martineau 548 and *Art Union*

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[4] Dyer's article includes a few comments from female contributors to the *The Christian Lady's Magazine* that amplified concerns of the moral degeneracy associated with the bazaars, but there are no counterexamples from women actively involved with the events, or from observers who took a more favourable view of them. C.f. p. 209-10.

211 qtd. in Ash 182).[5] Although far less opulent, the original Soho Bazaar used 'red cloth draping [on] the walls and mirrors to reflect and augment the space' in an effort to visually transform Trotter's warehouse into a larger, more impressive space (Ash 181). Fundamentally, the nineteenth-century British 'bazaar environment was ornamental and spectacular', even in its humblest form (181), and given the ubiquity of female-led bazaars in the early-Victorian period it is likely that many female travellers had attended, if not participated in, a bazaar prior to travelling East for the first time. Consequently, their expectations of an authentic Eastern bazaar would be based on an essential presumption that bazaars are sites of commercial spectacle. This sets up an important dichotomy between the European and Eastern approaches to the shopping experience in the mid- and late-nineteenth century: for the Europeans, shopping was an extension of the exhibitionary complex which emphasised the aesthetic presentation of goods as artefacts of economic or social importance, whereas the traditional, open-air Eastern market emphasised the tactile and social interaction between the buyer, the seller, and the objects.

In Edward Said's seminal critique of Orientalism, 'the vision of Orient as spectacle, or tableau vivant' is listed as one of the most common modes of representation employed by nineteenth-century Orientalists, such as Edward Lane Poole (158). Said argued that this mode of representation served as a mechanism of cultural 'interpretation', designed to perform a 'romantic restructuring of the Orient, a re-vision of it, which restores it redemptively to the present. Every interpretation, every structure created for the Orient, then, is a reinterpretation, a rebuilding of it' (158). This argument effectively captures the Victorian fascination with Orientalised spectacle, but it is limited by the parameters of the study that excludes accounts by women or a consideration of the relationship between spectacle and the marketplace within the Victorian's own cultural climate. It is fair to say that Victorian women's accounts of the Eastern bazaar perform a 'rebuilding' or 'restructuring' of the British vision of Oriental commerce, but it is less persuasive to suggest that the purpose was to '[restore] it redemptively to the [Victorian] present'; rather, the most common 'tableau vivant' of the Eastern bazaar portrayed in women's travelogues is a kind of anti-spectacle, used to convey the authors' perceptions of the forces that have either promoted or disrupted local economic development. One such example is an account of the Cairo bazaar by Sophia Lane Poole, the sister of Edward Lane. Poole moved to Cairo with her two sons after separating from her

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[5] C.f. Martineau, Harriet. *The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace, 1816-1846,* vol.2. London, 1850, pg. 548; 674-5; *The Art Union*, 1 July 1845.

husband under ambiguous circumstances in 1842, and at her brother's suggestion Poole undertook the project of writing an account of her experience in Egypt as a woman. This was mostly intended to fill in the gaps of Lane's own research by supplying information on gender-segregated spaces, most notably the harems. A large percentage of Poole's book, *An Englishwoman in Egypt* (initially published in two volumes in 1844, with an additional volume published in 1846), was copied from her brother's unpublished manuscripts,[6] but Poole's work is nonetheless considered a culturally important account.

In the first volume of her book, Poole made several pointed comments on the Egyptian shops, which she characterised as 'merely small recesses, and most of which are poorly stocked, [and] generally occupy the front part of ground-floor of each house in a great street' (1:144). Her description of the shop entrances as 'merely small recesses' which are 'poorly stocked' with apparently unremarkable merchandise suggests that the authentic bazaar did little to capture the imagination of a woman accustomed to the colourful and theatrical halls of the British bazaars. There is nothing 'romantic' or 'redemptive' about Poole's vision of the Egyptian market; rather, she impresses upon her reader that it is primitive and impoverished, with few touches of humanity or charm to make up for the lack of novelty or appealing inventory. She goes into greater detail about the layout and contents of various other market spaces found across the city, explaining the design of 'the sooks … [which] are short streets, or short portions of streets, having shops on either side' where 'all the shops are [typically] occupied by persons of the same trade', as well as the 'khans … [which consist] of shops or magazines surrounding a square or oblong court' (1:147). She also details the variety of clothing and small commodities sold at auction in the Khan El-Khaleelee, which she notes is 'one of the chief marts of Cairo' (1:147- 148), but there is little commentary on the quality of the items save that 'old as well as new' clothes were sold (1:148). Her bland lists of objects and unembellished descriptions of the sooks and khans reinforce the anti-spectacle of the Egyptian market even though there appears to be little difference between the types of items sold at bazaars in England and Cairo.[7] She takes a similarly pragmatic approach to her descriptions of the 'extensive' quarters reserved for Jewish, Greek, and Coptic merchants,[8]

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[6] He also wrote an appendix that constitutes nearly half of her second volume.

[7] C.f. Ash pg. 183 for a satirical description by Robert Louis Stevenson of the 'sham' goods – poor quality handicrafts and recycled objects – associated with the woman's charity bazaar.

[8] The Coptic ethnic group are considered the indigenous people of Egypt and are believed to be the direct descendants of the Pharaonic race. The influence of European and Arabic conquests is evident in the language and customs of the nineteenth century Copts, but they were, and are, a distinct group who remain proud of their Egyptian heritage and identity to the present day. C.f. Hatina, Meir. 'In Search of Authenticity: A Coptic Perception.' *Middle*

offering relatively few atmospheric details beyond a mention that the Jewish quarter was 'dirty'(1:151); this passage is the most apparent use of the term in an anti- Semitic context, although this term was widely used as an insult for foreigners or any homogeneous grouping of 'Oriental' races – which typically included Jewish people – during the Victorian period.[9] Placed in the context of the high expectations for visual spectacle set by the bazaars of late-Georgian London, and the ensuing controversy over the long-term impacts of introducing Eastern commercial practices into the British economy, Poole's analysis does little to '[restore] it redemptively to the present' (Said 158) for her Victorian reader.

At the time of the Soho Bazaar's founding, the traditional markets of London's West End were already undergoing a form of class purification with the construction of Regent Street between 1810 and 1820. In an analysis of the 'Social and Spatial Politics in the Construction of Regent Street', Laurel Flinn records that the street was designed as part of a 'metropolitan "improvement"' project (364), led by architect John Nash. In order to make way for this new, elite shopping district, Nash and the government agencies overseeing the project forcibly evicted the working-class traders, craftsmen, and residents who populated the surrounding neighbourhood and market squares. Public resistance won small concessions for a small group of these tradesmen that refused to move from their traditional venues, and a small compensation was offered to homeowners and other businesses who were forced to leave. Regardless, their homes and businesses were either destroyed or obstructed by the new street.

Flinn argues that the fundamental purpose of the Regent Street project was to separate the working and elite classes in London's West End, which resulted in a conflict between 'philosophies of urban space: the rational, ordered, geometric space imagined by Crown improvers on the one hand, and the customary, practised spaces of residents on the other' (364). Furthermore, Flinn summarises that:

> The disagreements over the value of neighbourhoods shows how the built environment of the metropolis, and the way Londoners used and imagined it, reflected and helped constitute discourses of custom, equity, and political economy and challenged the very notion of metropolitan "improvement."' (364)

Eastern Studies, vol. 42, no. 1, 2006, pp. 49-65, *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/ stable/4284430.
[9] The history of Jewish representation, antisemitism, and Orientalism is complex and beyond the scope of this thesis to address in full. A useful source detailing the recent debates on Jewish inclusion in Saidian notions of 'Orientalism' in context with the history of eighteenth and nineteenth-century European conceptions of Jewish identity can be found here: Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon. 'Orientalism, Jewish Studies and Israeli Society: A Few Comments.' *Philological Encounters,* vol. 2, no. 3-4, 2017, pp. 237-69. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/24519197-12340034.

The same process of social reordering via the reformation of market spaces in the Western metropolis was not limited to London; historian Timothy Mitchell notes that the same transformation occurred in both 'London and Paris, as small, individually owned shops, often based on local crafts, gave way to the larger apparatus of shopping arcades and department stores, each, as the *Illustrated Guide to Paris* could claim, forming "a city, indeed a world in miniature"'(224). In this context, the European movement away from artisanal shops in favour of museum- like department stores was representative of a larger reorientation of commerce and trade into a global, rather than local or regional, enterprise, although within British culture it was also linked to the early adoption of the bazaar.

While most women did not make an explicit comparison between Eastern markets and Regent Street, Amelia Edwards' account of the main Cairo bazaar – the Musky – and its neighbouring carpet bazaar is a telling exception:

> The carpet bazaar is of considerable extent, and consists of a network of alleys and counter- alleys opening off to the right of the Muski [sic], which is the Regent Street of Cairo. … One little square is tapestried all round with Persian and Syrian rugs, Damascus saddle- bags, and Turkish prayer-carpets. … It is one of the most picturesque "bits" in Cairo. (11)

An obvious implication of Edwards' comparison is that like Regent Street, the Musky was redesigned as a simulacrum of Western modernity that would stand in contrast to the smaller, segregated markets that opened off on either side of it. Similar to the few working-class shops that survived the construction of Regent Street, the traditional sooks — represented here by the Carpet Bazaar — offer a more authentic picture of the cultural aesthetic and artisanal value of the Arabic nations which, in this context, detracts from the 'progressive' ideals associated by the modernised (Westernised) Musky. For Edwards, there is an element of spectacle in the 'little square tapestried all around' with Middle Eastern textiles, suggesting that Edwards was either more willing to appreciate Egyptian culture on its own terms, or else that the outer sooks of the Musky had developed into a more thriving commercial space in the ensuing decades between the women's travels. The long-term effects of the Musky's Western redesign are brought into clearer focus when compared to accounts by Sophia Lane Poole and Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon that detail the process by which the Musky had been appropriated as the 'the chief thoroughfare street' of the Hárat el-Ifreng, which was known as the French quarter of Cairo (Poole 1:151).

In keeping with the overall tone of her description of the Cairo market, Poole's view of the Musky was much less favourable than Edwards, but she offers the most specific visual descriptions of the design and layout of the Musky, starting with the key detail that by 1842 'a

few shops [were] fitted up in the European style, with glass fronts, and occupied by Franks, who deal in various European commodities' (1:157). Poole's reference to the installation of glass- fronted European shops in this 'chief thoroughfare' is presented without further context; however, the published letters of Lady Lucie Duff Gordon, Harriet Martineau's cousin and a long-term resident in Egypt, provide a scathing account of the deleterious effects of Westernisation of Cairo's market streets as communicated to her by a member of the local community in 1867:

> My grocer is half ruined by the 'improvements' making '*à l'instar de Paris*' – long military straight streets cut through the heart of Cairo. The owners are expropriated, and there is an end of it. Only those who have half a house left are to be pitied, because they are forced to build a new front to the street on a Frankish model, which renders it uninhabitable to them and unsaleable.' (*Last Letters* 147)[10]

Here, although Duff-Gordon directly links the redesign of Cairo's market streets to the influence of Paris' urban design, the similarities between the modernising of Cairo's bazaars and Regent Street are unmistakable. As already noted, many changes to shopping spaces in London and Paris happened concurrently and had significant influence on one another's development across the century (Mitchell 224; Morrison 99); thus, regardless of which nation influenced Egypt's changes directly, it is clear how the effects of the changes to the central markets of Cairo would inevitably bring Regent Street to the minds of an early- or mid-Victorian traveller. The displacement of Egypt's traditional commercial practices from their hereditary location in order to make room for new, glassed-in stores would have necessarily caused an additional layer of disruption to the local economy; although glassworks had been established throughout Arab and Islamic cultures since the thirteenth century, the introduction of glass windows into shop fronts were a distinctly European feature. This is supported by Timothy Mitchell's analysis of accounts by the 'non- European visitors' to European department stores in the late-nineteenth century, who described their experience by:

> especially [remarking] on the panes of glass, inside the stores and along the gaslit arcades… the glass panels inserted themselves between the visitors and the goods on display, setting up the former as mere onlookers and endowing the goods with the distance that is the source … of their objectness. (225)

Mitchell's focus on the exhibitionary nature of European commercial design sets an important precedent for Eastern visitors engaging with European glass-front shops as a form of exhibitionary attraction. Fundamentally, the installation of the glass windows into Egyptian shops disrupted not only the community and character of the local market neighbourhood, but

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[10] Future references to *Last Letters* will be abbreviated 'LL'.

disrupted the entire fabric of the Cairo economy by inserting a European mode of commerce into a culture that did not share the European preoccupation with spectacle. Thus, both the local traders and the local customers were driven to the margins of their own market districts, just as Regent Street drove out the working-class traders and patrons of the late-Georgian West-End community.

When placed in direct contrast with Poole's earlier accounts of the reorientation of Cairo's central bazaar around a central street of glass-fronted European shops, the combination of Duff-Gordon's description of the displacement of Egyptian traders with Edwards' direct reference to Regent Street suggests that there was a heightened consciousness of the social as well as visual reorienting of commercial spaces in Victorian culture by 1873. Given that these accounts were written after the London Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, it is fair to say that they support Bennett's theorising of the Great Exhibition as the start of a new epoch of visually oriented commerce; however, it is evident that this process of visually redefining the market space as a combination of exhibition and spectacle actually began with Regent Street and the Soho Bazaar. Although the glass-fronted shops and the Bazaar both took inspiration from Eastern models of trade, incorporating visual spectacle and a variety of merchandise to attract customers and transform commerce into a form of social amusement, the Bazaar emphasised the more social and political elements of commerce through fundraising activities and the necessity of interpersonal interaction with the vendors. Tracing the development of these modes of commerce across the century, the Great Exhibition itself may be resituated as a watershed moment in Victorian culture that accelerated the process of evolving the market space into an extension of the exhibitionary complex through the increasingly 'focused concern with the *visual*' that raised shoppers' 'awareness of both the epistemological and aesthetic stakes underlying the act of seeing' (Dias 49, original emphasis).

The integration of human and object interaction was a key element that created the characteristic 'visual display' associated with the British bazaar that ultimately 'produced both pleasure and anxiety' (Ash 185). As discussed at the start of this section, part of this tension was due to concerns that giving women commercial agency would result in the women themselves becoming commodities, and fears that this novel form of commerce would eradicate traditional British shops; the latter fear was evidently well-founded, as demonstrated by the devastation that the construction of Regent Street brought to the local trading community. However, Regent Street itself came to be simultaneously 'characterised by [journalist] George Sala as "the most fashionable street in the world" and as an Eastern-

themed destination' by 1858 (Sala 155, qtd. in Lysack 146).[11] Regent Street's reputation as a 'destination' for Oriental goods sold in a hybrid simulacrum of the Eastern bazaar was taken to new heights with the opening of Arthur Lasenby Liberty's East India House in 1875.

Krysta Lysack records that the 'East India House was among the proto-department stores that emerged mid-century', and was famous for its imported shawls, silks, and other Eastern merchandise, as well as a novelty '"Arab" tea-room' offering an assortment of Far-East themed tea menus (146, 148). Despite the apparent focus on India, one of the early inspirations for Liberty's personal obsession with the luxuries of the Far East was Rutherford Alcock's collection of Japanese objects at the Great Exhibition of 1862 (Adburgham 13). As noted in the previous chapter, Alcock's extensive collection of Japanese objects was the first representation of Japan at an international exhibition.[12] The Victorian public was enamoured with the collection, resulting in a high demand for Japanese, or Japanese inspired, decorative objects. Liberty attended the Exhibition while working as a junior employee of Farmer & Rogers, a Regent Street shop famous for its luxurious selection of European and Eastern shawls (Adburgham 12). At the exhibition, Liberty was enraptured by the Japanese exhibit; after the exhibition, his employers purchased some of the collections on display and opened a new Oriental Warehouse that Liberty later managed for them (Adburgham 12). It is little surprise that Liberty himself came to own and operate one of the most famous Oriental-themed shops in London – later expanded into one of the largest and most famous department stores in Britain – or that his shop came to be emblematic of Eastern luxury as a central feature of Victorian consumer-culture. Although not the first to open a luxury shop dedicated to Oriental merchandise, 'Liberty's arguably took a taste for imported goods that was already in place and marketed it in new ways to Victorian shoppers', inspired – at least in part – by 'the Great Exhibitions [that] helped commodify an Eastern aesthetic, creating in the British public a consciousness of their status as potential consumers in relation to the exotic goods they surveyed there' (Lysack 1, 145-146). As argued by Susan Ash, in dialogue with earlier work by Annette Shiell, the association of '"visual merchandising"' was already established in Victorian culture through the early nineteenth-century bazaars (Shiell 44 qtd. in Ash 183)[13] however, there is no doubt that the Great Exhibition prompted a rapid acceleration of the

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[11] Sala, George Augustus. *Twice Round the Clock, or the Hours of the Day and Night in London.* 1858. Leicester UP, 1971

[12] C.f Chapter 1, pp. 60-61.

[13] C.f. Shiell, Annette. *Fundraising, Flirtation and Fancywork: Charity Bazaars in Nineteenth Century Australia.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

public demand for new and novel ways to interact with objects in commercial settings. As detailed by Louise Purbrick, the impact of the Great Exhibition on the shopping experience extended beyond the literal relationship of object and viewer to a full, ontological redefinition of commodity and display:

> The resemblance between Crystal Palace and mid-nineteenth-century department stores is striking, although it is not what allocates the Great Exhibition a place in the world of consumption. For that, two theoretical propositions have to be in place: the exhibits must be defined as commodities, objects with representational rather than useful properties; and the consumption of commodities must be understood as a process of looking at representations rather than buying actual objects. (15)

This conception that it was not the individual objects put on exhibit, but the exhibits themselves that were the chief commodities of the Great Exhibition, reframes the importance of the curated spectacle of the Eastern marketplaces represented in women's travelogues away from a simple record of their own consumption. Rather, the visual spectacle of the Eastern marketplace itself was a commodity that travel writers sold to their readers. This is especially clear in accounts of Western models of commerce and display adopted in nations perceived as relatively more 'progressive' in their approaches to commerce, such as the rapidly modernising nation of Japan.

During her family's stay in Tokyo, Mary Bickersteth describes a successful attempt at blending Western and Eastern commerce through the visual display and contents of the capital city's *kwankoba* [bazaar]. Bickersteth details how 'the daily life of the Japanese was well represented in [the *kwankoba's*] long rows of stalls, though in order to attract the foreigner they were arranged in European fashion' (64-65). To illustrate her point, she lists the counters that held 'the gentleman's pipe and tobacco, his fan and quaint clasp for his *obi* (sash), and close at hand a pile of … cotton kimonos', followed by 'his wife's hairpins and combs, her pipe … her chop-sticks, and rolls of silk crape [sic] and gaily-printed cotton for her gowns' (65-66). These displays of men's and women's clothing are closely followed by 'endless toys … for their children', school essentials, and a housewares section where 'the housewife could invest in a *hibachi* (stove) and kettle, and *futons* (the wadded quilts used for beds)' (66). Bickersteth's description subverts the typical presentation of authentic Eastern bazaars as a staged 'tableau vivant' of Oriental life and customs by exhibiting the Japanese bazaar as a modern department store, containing a familiar, albeit aesthetically different, selection of homewares, clothes, and toys. Historical scholarship confirms that the emergence of Western-style department stores into a 'modern nation state' (Tamari 5, 4). Based on Bickersteth's account, it is evident that the Japanese adoption of Western display techniques was effective in marketing their goods to the eager middle or upper-class Europeans who ventured to the

Far East, although other encounters that I will discuss later in this chapter demonstrate that not all Japanese shops had gone to such lengths to adapt themselves to the expectations of European customers. Bickersteth closes her account of the *kwankoba* by informing her readers that 'We soon packed a jinrikisha with odds and ends that would have thrown a morning at 'Liberty's into dim shade indeed' (66). This direct reference to Liberty's, which had expanded from its original specialty in Eastern shawls and fabrics into a department store with a full range of housewares and 'curios' by 1880 (Adburgham 42), would have been a clear indication to the late-Victorian reader of the extensive scope and volume of the *kwankoba*'s inventory, rendered all the more exciting by the veneer of increased authenticity for having been acquired in the actual East.[14]

There is a notable contrast between Bickersteth's delight at the blending of Eastern and Western visual sensibilities in Tokyo and other writers' disappointment at the eroding of the more traditional Eastern ways of life by the end of the nineteenth century. In her account of shopping in the merchant quarter of Tehran, Gertrude Bell observes 'here and there a European shop-window, behind which the goods are more miscellaneous than tempting' (7). The glassed- in, European miscellany adds little to a scene where — in Bell's own words — there is 'little really beautiful or precious … to be found' but 'the thronging Oriental life is in itself a source of delight' (13). Similar to Edwards' account of the Cairo Musky, Bell shows no interest in the glass-fronted shops, openly favouring the 'thronging Oriental life' typified by the traditional modes of buying and selling associated with Eastern commerce. Edwards gave a far less direct description of her feelings towards the cold, glass-fronted shops, but it is clear that she took far greater pleasure in the vibrant merchandise of the multi-ethnic sook:

> The striped carpets of Tunis; the dim grey and blue, or grey and red fabrics of Algiers; the shaggy rugs of Laodicea and Smyrna; the rich blues and greens and subdued reds of Turkey; and the wonderfully varied, harmonious patterns of Persia, have each their local habitation in the neighbouring alleys. One is never tired of traversing these half-lighted avenues all aglow with gorgeous colour…. (11-12)

The unfortunate, forced marginalisation of the Musky's Eastern vendors to the peripheries of their own market appears to have heightened Edwards' pleasure in wandering the 'half-lighted avenues', as though the outer, authentic sooks had been rendered into living exhibitions of Egypt's exotic past. Nonetheless, although Bell and Edwards' passages have somewhat different contexts, both are compatible with Purbrick's reading of the Great Exhibition's

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[14] The topic of 'authenticity' in collecting Eastern curios and textiles will be discussed extensively in Chapters 3 and 4.

influence on visual consumption: in both accounts the marketplace districts, stalls, and displays become a visual product for the consumption of the authors, who in turn commodify their visual descriptions of the markets for the consumption of their readers. Although this narrative phenomenon clearly predates the Great Exhibition and was not exclusive to Western writers, the trope of representing marketplaces as miniature representations of Eastern civilisations played an essential role in shaping public perceptions of political and economic hierarchies which left nations such as Egypt open for colonial exploitation in the later part of the nineteenth century (Mitchell 224). This is clear from the tone in both Bell and Edwards' writing about the Eastern markets that complicate an entirely literal reading of their preferences for traditional bazaars as a condemnation of the Europeanising of the markets in Cairo and Tehran. This becomes especially clear in the representations of the merchants who run the stalls which, as Edwards describes at the end of her account of the Musky, were seen as 'figures that come and go like the actors in some Christmas piece of Oriental pageantry' (13). The overt association with 'pageantry' points to another important facet of the Victorians' ambivalent relationship to expressly 'Oriental' modes of commerce, which is the view of commerce as a kind of theatrical exhibition of 'national character'.

2.2 Reading 'National Character' in Eastern Commercial Spaces

The concept of 'national character', as discussed in the previous chapter, refers to an essentialist belief that a given nation or culture had a set of shared, defining characteristics and beliefs. Religion, art, state government, and commercial practices all contributed to the Victorians' determination of national character in a developed society; within the context of travelogues, one of the primary means that women used to evaluate the national character of Eastern people was through commercial encounters. Applying the concept that both objects and displays were visually commodified in Victorian culture to travel narratives on the Eastern marketplace, this section will examine how Eastern shops and their merchants were represented as a 'tableau vivant' wherein the clothing, posture, and physical placement of merchants within the shops are commodified as fantastical Oriental stereotypes from Victorian popular culture. Edward Said argued that the trope of the 'tableau vivant' in travel writing was designed to 'interpret' and '[restore the Orient] redemptively to the present' (158); this argument is effective in the sense that some women did use their encounters with Eastern merchants as an attempt reconcile their own 'progressive' culture with the adoption of Eastern commercial practices; however, in terms of how women interpreted the Orient, these encounters do not collectively present a monolithic or redemptive image of the East.

Conversely, the women use the tableau vivant of their commercial encounters to represent each region's 'national character' in service of a broader evaluation of stadial development.

As established in the previous section, Victorian women travellers' relationship to the Eastern bazaar was influenced by their own experience of the British bazaar as a female capitalist space, as well as a space of female consumerism. This section will necessarily focus more on the women's consumer activities, but this does not negate the importance of their perception of the bazaar as a commercial modality that fell within the milieu of their gender to critique. Consequently, I will examine how records of individual transactions in Eastern bazaars, which the women frequently describe in domestic terms, act as a form of 'contact zone' wherein the traveller-consumer is able to engage with, as well as observe, the Oriental male 'Other'. As noted in the previous section, Gary Dyer's analysis of public responses to Englishwomen running Georgian-Victorian bazaars closely linked the introduction of Oriental commerce to fears of female indecency; centrally, Dyer reads the use of female respectability – controlled by male- governed strictures of virtuous public behaviour – as a 'principal inconsistency' because 'the East [was] traditionally associated with female sensuality [and] women too were construed as essentially 'Other' (both the Orient and woman being foci of masculine desire)' (203). Susan Ash's analysis complicates this assessment with the more nuanced argument that the 'cultural anxiety' and 'ambivalence' surrounding women in the Victorian bazaar was not solely predicated on a moral panic over sexualised 'exposure of women in a public place' or 'a commercial sphere' more generally; rather, Ash argues that evangelical Christian circles were often more concerned with fears that charity bazaars would become associated with deceptive trade practices designed to sell low-quality merchandise at inflated prices – another common trope associated with Oriental merchants (182-183). The implication that the Englishwoman's honesty and chastity would be tarnished by association with Oriental modes of trade presumed that Oriental cultures were fundamentally dishonest; consequently, the women would either fall passive victim to a moral contagion, or else be revealed as inherently duplicitous. Ash and Dyer's studies both offer important surveys of primary and secondary literature that clearly demonstrate how these issues of race and gender developed concomitantly over the course of the nineteenth century, but neither explore how the women viewed themselves in association with the Oriental 'Other'. Billie Melman's feminist study of *Women's Orients* argued that Victorian 'women travellers, missionaries and writers did not perceive the Oriental *woman* as the absolutely alien, the ultimate "Other"', but 'rather … the feminine West's recognisable image in the mirror' (316), suggesting that women did not take such a literal 'us versus them' approach to the concept of 'Otherness'.

Rather, their approach to differences between West and East were based on a presumption of fundamental similarities. Building on Melman's theory, I argue that the setting of the bazaar acted as a mediating space – or contact zone – for women to engage with the male 'Other' in order to explore both the moral and economic conditions of Eastern commerce. Although negative Orientalist tropes continue to pervade these accounts, examining the application of these tropes through the gaze of Victorian capitalist women reveals their attempts to interrogate the validity of these tropes based on the presumption of a shared stadial trajectory of human progress.

The drive to represent Eastern cultures as primitive and uncivilised, or, more generously, as quaint and developing, was partially a product of the existing types and tropes of 'the Oriental' in Victorian popular culture. *Arabian Nights*, also known as *The Thousand and One Nights*, was translated into English (via French) in the eighteenth century, becoming 'intimately connected with childhood and an influential early element of children's literature' for many of the most famous writers and critics of the nineteenth century (Styles 161).[15] This formative childhood influence was combined with other perceptions of 'the Orient' perpetuated by the Romantic poets and various forms of theatre, art, and print culture, many of which were, themselves, inspired by the *Arabian Nights*.[16] Quotations from novels or poems, and references to Orientalist paintings and sculpture are common features in travelogues of this era, so it should not be discounted that many writers had preconceived notions of Eastern cultures that influenced their perceptions and responses to actual Eastern people. It is clear that most of the women had a genuine fondness for the Eastern merchants and customs encountered in their travels, but in many cases that fondness is tainted by paternalistic or prejudicial sentiments based on a presupposition that the East was morally and socially regressive. When read through a political economic framework, it becomes clear that even the most romanticised tropes were appropriated, either consciously or unconsciously, into representations of national character which could then be indexed within a global

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[15] The history of influential translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* by French Orientalist Antoine Galland and Victorian Orientalist Richard Burton (among others) is, in itself, a complex study in the ethics of ethnographical representation, c.f. Knipp, C. 'The "Arabian Nights" in England: Galland's Translation and Its Successors.' *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 5, 1974, pp. 44–54. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4182920. Accessed 24 Jun. 2023.

[16] C.f. A comprehensive history of Orientalism in Victorian popular culture, with illustrations, can be found in Kennedy, Valerie. 'Orientalism in the Victorian Era.' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, vol. 22. Oxford UP. Accessed 23 May. 2023. *Oxford Research,* https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/978019020 1098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-226.

hierarchy of industrial-capitalist development.

A key example occurs in one of the last chapters of *Safar Nameh* in which Gertrude Bell and her party travel to Brusa, capital of the Ottoman Empire and one of the main producers of silk in the nineteenth-century Middle East (UNESCO).[17] Upon entering the Brusa bazaar, Bell sets the scene with a reference to a story in *The Thousand and One Nights* that describes the 'reckless … disposition' of 'exaggerated' hospitality that was 'no longer to be found among Eastern merchants' (248). It is at this point in her narrative that she describes how Eastern shopping remains 'an art which combines many social arts … a study in character and national characteristics' which she illustrates with examples: 'the turbaned Turk … the keen-featured Persian, from whom you need hope to make no large profit … the specious Armenian in his red fez, cunning and voluble' (249). Here, there is a clear distinction between the 'national character' of different ethnic groups, rather than a single caricature of 'Oriental commerce'. Her observations on this particular market betray the clear and reductive prejudices which were still projected onto the Oriental merchant classes at the end of the nineteenth century. Although it is beyond the scope of this project to interrogate the mode of representation used for each individual nation-state referenced in these travelogues, Bell's subsequent narrative of a close encounter with a Turkish silk merchant suggests that the choice to represent his sales tactics – which, in Victorian terms, could easily have been framed as 'specious' and 'voluble' – as a modern iteration of the exotic hospitality portrayed in Orientalist literature is an attempt to separate the Turkish population from the longstanding antagonism between Britain and various Ottoman governments.[18]

European relations with the Ottoman-Turkish government were especially tense in the 1890s, adding significant political stakes to her commentary on her visit to 'the shop of an old Turk who was sitting cross-legged within [his silk shop]' in Bursa (173).[19] This interaction takes the narrative beyond the fanciful consumerism of window shopping, allowing the reader to engage with a somewhat more rounded, yet still whimsical, conception of the character of a Turkish merchant in a booming industrial city:

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[17] Now known as Bursa, Turkey.

[18] This includes the Ottoman governments of Greece, Egypt, and Turkey. There was also a strong antagonism stirred up between Britain and the Ottoman-Armenian people in the 1890s due to their alleged persecution of the Christian-Armenian minority. C.f. Salt, Jeremy. 'The Narrative Gap in Ottoman Armenian History.' *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2003, pp. 19–36. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4284276. Accessed 29 May 2023.

[19] This episode especially stands out when compared to her later description of merchants in Constantinople who 'throw aside their Oriental dignity to run after you … to show you Manchester cottons' (253). The significance of Manchester cottons as a symbol of political-economic regression is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

> He rose, and with many polite salaams begged us to enter, and set chairs for us round the low enamelled table. We might have been paying a morning call … Presently the subject of silks was broached and set aside again as unworthy of discussion; after a few more minutes our — host, shall I say? — laid before us a bundle of embroideries, which we examined politely, complimenting him upon his possessions. (251-252)

Bell's narrative frames the shop as a domesticated space where the merchant welcomes customers as guests 'paying a morning call' rather than conducting business. Bell describes how the merchant 'set chairs for us round the low enamelled table', and 'set aside [the subject of silks] as unworthy of discussion'. The specific reference to the table as enamelled adds a sense of refinement and luxury to the setting, as Persian enamelled tables were highly valued by European collectors in the nineteenth century;[20] the scene is reminiscent of the "Arab" Tea Room at Liberty's, designed to associate the luxury shopping experience with the multi-sensory pleasures of the traditional bazaar. This tearoom even featured low, 'moorish' inlaid tables based on Islamic designs similar to the ones described by Bell; these tables were well-known to be among the most popular, domestically-produced furniture pieces sold at Liberty's, making the 'low enamelled table' in Bell's description all the more evocative to the Victorian reader (Levy 68). The tea room at Liberty's served a dual purpose of mimicking the Eastern practice of conducting business seated – and, in many countries, over tea and tobacco – and of 'mediating between the domestic and public spheres' of British culture (Lysack 144). Even though, as argued by Amanda Vickery,[21] the actual division between the 'domestic and public spheres' in Victorian culture is significantly overstated in criticism, Krista Lysack makes a salient argument that 'if the domestic sphere previously marked the proper limit of women's place, the new shopping emporia and early department stores mapped the continuity between home and marketplace in shops specifically designed to recall domestic comfort' (144). Consequently, the casting of the Turkish merchant as a domestic host would not be an entirely novel concept to the Victorian reader. Rather than an entirely new or unfamiliar form of commerce, it was a conflation of two very familiar elements of the luxury shopping experience in London, both of which were sourced from pan-Eastern traditions of slow and highly social forms of trade.

    Next, Bell describes how their merchant 'host … laid before us a bundle of

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[20] Enamelling (mīnā) was a well-established craft in Persia at this time, although the technique is believed to have been introduced to their culture by European and Russian traders in the seventeenth century; c.f. EIr and Diba, Layla S. 'Enamel.' *Encyclopædia Iranica,* vol. 8. no. 4, pp. 424-28. *Iranica Online,* http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ enamel. Accessed 24 Jun. 2023.

[21] C.f. Introduction pp. 15.

embroideries' that they had not asked to see; rather than make an explicit comment on the merchant's attempt to increase his sales, she describes the embroideries as 'possessions' which they 'politely' admired, framing the embroideries as domestic objects rather than merchandise. At this juncture, the merchant abruptly segues from the social portion of the commercial ritual to the actual transaction:

> as if the idea had just struck him, though he knew perfectly well the object of our visit, he pulled a roll of silk from a corner of the shop and laid it before us. We asked tentatively whether he would not permit us to see more, and the business of the afternoon began… No doubt we paid more for our purchases than they were worth, but not more than the pleasure of a delightful afternoon spent in the old Turk's company was worth to us. (252-253)

Bell presents the merchant's performance that 'the idea had just struck him' to show his customers what they had originally asked to see as a means of placing the onus of instigating 'the business of the afternoon' on the buyer. Once the transactions are concluded, Bell expresses no disdain for the manner in which the interaction was conducted or the apparently high profit margin set by their 'host'; on the contrary, she declares that the elevated price of the wares were 'not worth more than the pleasure of a delightful afternoon in the old Turk's company was worth to us'. Taken as a whole, the feminising element of the domestic atmosphere softens the popular characterisation of the Oriental merchant as 'deceitful' or manipulative, despite the fact that these same characteristics were sometimes alleged against the women who sold their crafts and recycled inventory at charity bazaars (Dyer 197).

In a case study of the celebrated Victorian philanthropist Doctor Thomas John Barnardo, who was famous for using 'Grand' bazaars to fundraise for his charitable work with orphans, Susan Ash explains the Victorians' lingering fears that the importation of the bazaar would result in degenerate behaviour, especially among the women who typically ran them. To combat these fears, Barnardo wrote articles that 'took care … to explain to readers his use of the term [bazaar] and account for its association with the East' (Ash 188). In separate pieces published in *The Children's Treasury*, Barnardo detailed his view of the differences between the 'inherently flimsy [commercial] structures in the East' that 'do not display goods honestly, but hide the "valuable" items, a practice that converts buying and selling into a long process of haggling' in which 'trickery, cheating, and deception are commonplace' (Barnardo 1875 and 1876, qtd. in Ash 188). Reframing these stereotypes through Bell's narrative, where the domestic environment is used to both humanise and soften perceptions of the Turkish merchant's 'Oriental' behaviour, the transaction is presented as a form of commercial theatre where seller and consumer each partake in the role-play of a domestic scene designed to

mutually entertain and entice. This not only suggests that, like John Trotter, Bell wished to '*domesticate* that foreign presence ... making it chaste, respectable' (Dyer 201), but that there was a legitimate aspect of socialising involved in her time with the merchant, whom she now refers to as 'the old Turk'. Rather than a cunning 'Oriental', he is an eccentric old man whose company and hospitality, whether performed or sincere, were worth the elevated price of his desirable goods.[22] In turn, this reveals that, from the female perspective, both the social and visual spectacles of buying and selling in the bazaar – whether located in Britain or in the East – were as much for sale as the objects themselves.

Fundamentally, Bell represents the merchant as both an artefact and a curator in a microcosmic exhibition of Turkish commerce, as he showcases his embroideries and his silks to Bell who, in turn, showcases the merchant and his personality – as Martineau once said of Eastern art — in his 'proper connexion and locality' (1:183). The domestic conceit crafted in Bell's narrative complicates the figure of the merchant as a simplistic caricature of Orientalist fantasies or racialised prejudices, although it does not erase the underlying Orientalist elements of this representation: his geniality is as theatrical as it is disarming because hospitality is the cost of doing business in the traditional bazaar. Nonetheless, Bell's conclusion that any manipulative tactics were overshadowed by the merchant's delightful personality and the fascination of experiencing an afternoon in his company softens some of the negative attributes commonly associated with the Ottoman regime during a time of heightened political tensions and acts a form of moral validation for recognising the political-economic achievements of the Turkish nation as a global centre for the production and trade of fine silks.

The importance of capitalist achievement to the Victorian perceptions of national character is most clearly signalled through analysing the Great Exhibition itself. Paul Young's study on *Globalisation and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (2009) explores how the mid-Victorians attempted – unsuccessfully – to frame themselves as the leaders of a global capitalist movement through the Great Exhibition, which was marketed through a conception of the free market 'using the model of a family'. He argues that:

> mid-nineteenth-century representations of globalisation cast market forces [in the light of] goodwill and fellow-feeling, allowing the self-interest of man the economic animal to be transfigured as a form of brotherly love that guaranteed human recognition. What is equally significant … is the fact that the Exhibition's new world order was

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[22] Amelia Edwards captures a similar interaction with Arab gold and silver merchants in the Khan-Khaleel market in Cairo which emphasises a similar emphasis on hospitality in the Egyptian market setting – c.f. *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, pp. 13-14.

understood very much as the result of Britain's peculiarly advanced ideological evolution. (21)

This 'guaranteed human recognition' is most apparent in marketplace encounters, where the seller is characterised based not only on his manners, but on his position within the curated display of cultural wares. Young's arguments are constructed in dialogue with Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), specifically building on Fukyama's conception of 'human recognition' which assumes that 'as standards of living increase [because of industrialisation] populations become more cosmopolitan and better educated, and as society as a whole achieves a greater equality of condition, people begin to demand not simply more wealth but recognition of their status'. As previously discussed in chapter one, political economists and philosophers across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries associated the progress of civilisation with the shift from 'undifferentiated' or 'homogenised' to a more 'complex' civilisation (Spencer XV). Fukuyama argues that there is fundamental paradox in the idea that free-market liberalism produces a stronger sense of unified nationalism, as represented by stadial theorists, because:

> religion, nationalism, and a people's complex of ethical habits and customs (more broadly "culture") have traditionally been interpreted as obstacles to the establishment of successful democratic political institutions and free-market economies. But the truth is considerably more complicated, for the success of liberal politics and liberal economics frequently rests on irrational forms of recognition that liberalism was supposed to overcome. (xix)

Fukuyama uses nationalism and culture as key examples of 'arbitrary' distinctions between people groups that must be preserved in some form in order to make the concept of 'liberal' politics and economics function: were a group to go unrecognised, their unique needs and contributions would be equally unrecognised. This does not, however, guarantee that recognition will result in equitable or just treatment of one group by another.

In his critical response to Fukuyama, Paul Young claims that 'at the heart of [nineteenth-century political economists'] arguments lay the idea of an international community that could collectively rationalise labour via exchange, and that was thus bound together by ties that cut across national differences' (23). This implies that the perpetuation of 'irrational forms of recognition' was a key means of achieving the Victorian ideal of an 'international community' that 'rationalise[d] labour via exchange' – essentially, a globalised vision of Adam Smith's 'division of labour' (Smith 268). This ideal is consistent with the obsessive codification and comparison of national characteristics evident throughout Victorian women's travel writing in the nineteenth century, especially when those comparisons are made in the context of a literal marketplace. Young's claim that globalisation — in terms of

the 'market forces' of capitalist exchange — was represented 'with relation to goodwill and fellow feeling' is reflected to varying extents in women's travel writing, but that ostensible 'goodwill' is nonetheless influenced by a form of paternalistic cultural stereotyping that casts the shop owners and the objects they sell as mutually-defining cultural tokens. By combining the elements of commercial design and human interaction woven into Victorian women's accounts of foreign marketplaces, the shopkeepers' attributes — whether real or imagined — become the human embodiment of what Bell termed 'a study in character and national characteristics' (250). Although the terminology and tropes used to represent Eastern markets are not used without variation or nuance, there is a strong correlation between the women's perception of a given region's degree of stadial 'progress' – which necessarily includes both moral and economic advancements – and the means by which that region's 'national character' is represented back to the British public.

Amelia Edward's whimsical account of the Cairo bazaar in *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* offers a more literal mingling of 'human recognition' with marketplace 'exhibits' than Bell's domesticated encounter with the Turkish merchant. Edwards introduces the bazaar with a description of 'the unpaved thoroughfare … [which] is lined with little wooden shop-fronts, like open cabinets full of shelves, where the merchants sit cross-legged in the midst of their goods, looking out at the passers-by and smoking in silence' (6). This brief description transforms the architecture of the marketplace into a display mechanism - 'wooden shop-fronts' become 'open cabinets', and counters become 'shelves'. Edwards paints a charming picture of the 'picturesque personages' that man these shops, mingling together descriptions of merchandise, costume, and owner to recast them as Orientalist caricatures:

> But the Egyptian, Arab, and Turkish merchants, whether mingling in the general tide or sitting on their counters, are the most picturesque personages in all this busy scene. … That these stately beings should vulgarly buy and sell, instead of reposing all their lives on luxurious divans and being waited upon by beautiful Circassians, seems altogether contrary to the eternal fitness of things. (9)

There are several possible ways to read the tone of Edwards' description of these 'stately beings … who condescend to retail', but her choice to present the market-stalls as a form of display-case literally frames the 'Egyptian, Arab, and Turkish merchants' who 'vulgarly buy and sell instead of reposing all their lives' as a hyperbolically fantastical diorama of the fallen state of Egyptian commerce. She goes on to describe her cast of characters in detail, along with the products they have been forced to sell:

> Here, for instance, is a Grand Vizier in a gorgeous white and amber satin vest, who condescends to retail pipe-bowls, – dull red clay pipe-bowls of all sizes and prices. He sells nothing else, and has not only a pile of them on the counter, but a binful at the

back of his shop. They are made at Siout in Upper Egypt, and may be bought at the Algerine shops in London almost as cheaply as in Cairo. Another majestic Pasha deals in brass and copper vessels, drinking-cups, basins, ewers, trays, incense-burners, chafing-dishes, and the like; some of which are exquisitely engraved with Arabesque patterns or sentences from the poets. A third sells silk from the looms of Lebanon, and gold and silver tissues from Damascus. Others, again, sell old arms, old porcelain, old embroideries, second-hand prayer-carpets, and quaint little stools and cabinets of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Here, too, the tobacco-merchant sits behind a huge cake of Latakia as big as his own body; and the sponge-merchant smokes his long chibouk in a bower of sponges. (9-10)

Rather than simple disillusionment with her opulent vision of the East, as seen in Bell's account of the Shah in the previous chapter,[23] there is an overt satire in Edwards depiction of the 'Grand Vizier' and 'majestic Pasha' discovered amongst the 'dull red clay pipe-bowls' and 'brass and copper vessels' of the market. The direct reference to the reigning Pasha dynasty in these descriptions reframes this passage as a critique of the state to which their governance has reduced the once great nation of Egypt. The humiliating image of the Viceroy forced to sell mass- produced pipes by the 'binful' is less suggestive of a romantic poem than a *Punch* cartoon; her pointed statement that the pipes could be purchased 'almost as cheaply' in London further negates the novel appeal of the Cairo market. She is more complimentary of the few 'exquisitely engraved' kitchen wares sold by the second 'majestic Pasha', but the majority of the royal- looking merchants and their wares are described in far-less flattering, collective terms as 'old', 'second-hand', and 'quaint'. The final two figures, the tobacco and sponge merchants, are both dwarfed by the stacks – or 'bower' – of their merchandise that surround them, evoking an image that is almost grotesque in its juxtaposition of the regal and the mundane. Read as a microcosmic representation of Egyptian commerce, Edwards' scene no longer reads as a naïve Orientalist fantasy, but an incisive depiction of the regressive state of the Egyptian market under the Pasha dynasty that uses Orientalist caricatures to make a political-economic statement.

A similar, but less dramatic version of these descriptive tropes is present in Harriet Martineau's account of the Cairo bazaar, written a quarter-century before Edwards'. Martineau's passage does not focus as much on her interactions with the merchants, but rather the phenomenology of 'the modes of buying and selling' she observed in the market. She subtly crafts her readers' perception of the marketplace as an odd combination of the pragmatic and fantastical, surreal to a degree that can only exist 'in [her] mind, but cannot be set down' (2:119). She further prefaces this passage by informing her reader that the

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[23] C.f. Chapter 1, pg. 57.

description is excerpted from her private journal, which effectively frames her impressions as innately subjective and sentimentalised, but paradoxically more authentic:

> Went with my party to shop: a most amusing affair. I bought a Tuscan straw hat for 4s. 6d. while a common and not large saucepan, copper tinned, was priced 12s. The tranquil slowness with which the tradespeople (who all looked, to my eyes, like kings and princes in fairy tales) served any one of us gave all the rest many such opportunities of observation. (2:119-120)

Although years before the 'spectacle' and 'surveillance' critically ascribed to redefinition of shopping in Britain brought about by the Great Exhibition or Liberty's (Bennett, Lysack), Martineau draws attention to the way that she and her party used the 'tranquil slowness' customary in Eastern transactions as 'opportunities of observation', reinforcing the conscious relationship between visual spectacle, exoticism, and commercial viability that Martineau applied to the 1845 Anti-Corn-Law Bazaar (Martineau 548 qtd. in Ash 182). Hearkening back to Bill Lancaster's argument that 'window shopping' acted as 'a form of escape into a phantasmagorical dream world' that 'encompasses the highly rational activity of comparing prices and quality' (175), Martineau's account opens by noting the apparent disparity between Egyptian and British market values for simple items such as 'a Tuscan straw hat for 4s. 6d' and 'a common and not large saucepan … priced 12s'[24] before returning to the realm of the fantastical by likening the tradespeople to 'kings and princes in fairy tales'. Her description of the 'tranquil slowness' of their service plays on the common critique of the Oriental merchant as 'anti-commercial' to perform a similar, if subtler, satire of the merchants as fallen royalty as Edwards. Thus, the implicit association between the modern Egyptians and the past grandeur of their fallen civilisation remains a central theme, effectively re-appropriating the unproductive image of the 'merchants who sit working' in a 'flimsy [commercial] structure' popularised in the Victorian's capitalist culture as part of a wider political-economic critique (Barnardo 1875 qtd. in Ash 188).[25]

Many representations of Persian merchants are notably similar to those applied to Egyptian traders; in Gertrude Bell's early accounts of shopping in Tehran at the end of the century, she notes that 'the shopkeepers alone are unmoved by the universal haste [of the

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[24] Noting the price of goods was a recurring trope throughout nineteenth-century women's travelogues, whether the numbers were given explicitly as in Martineau's example, or more generally as in Edward's comparison of the price of pipes between Cairo and London.
[25] The next chapter will give more consideration to the ethnic diversity of nineteenth-century Egyptians, which included Coptic, Arab, African, and Turkish heritage; Persia also had significant Turkish and Arab populations during this period. C.f. 'Iranian Ethnic Groups'. *Iran Chamber Society,* https://www.iranchamber.com/people/articles/iranian_ ethnic_groups.php.

bazaar], but sit cross-legged among their wares, smoking the morning kalyan' (14). While Bell's description lacks the direct and fantastical associations with 'luxury' or royalty seen in the Egyptian passages, it is still consistent with the representation of merchants as tranquil figures set apart from and 'unmoved' by the surrounding noise and bustle of the bazaar, like actors behind the invisible 'fourth wall'. While these figures are presented with minimal commentary, another, more intimate portrait of 'a small merchant' standing 'in the shadow of' the entrance to the Tehran bazaar offers a more grounded interpretation of the stereotypes associated with the Oriental merchant:

> Posted on the doorstep like an emblem of Oriental commerce — a solemn, long-robed child, so little that his mother's heart must have ached when she trusted the dear turbaned head out of her sight. This morsel of humanity has brought some bunches of flowers to sell, and has spread them out on a large stone in front of him. In his improvised shop he stands, motionless and imperturbable, watching the comers and goers, and waiting in dignified patience till one of them will buy. Wish him good luck under your breath … and pass on beneath the dark arches of the bazaar. (13-14)

The choice to designate a small, evidently poor child selling flowers at the entrance to the bazaar as an 'emblem of Oriental commerce' immediately sets this description apart from the Egyptian shopkeepers. Bell's 'morsel of humanity' standing resolutely with his 'improvised shop' at the entrance of the main bazaar draws attention to the reality that commerce is a means of subsistence, not a casual pastime. The 'motionless and imperturbable' boy is not presented as a fallen king or fairy-tale prince condescending to sell, but someone carrying the premature burden of providing for himself and his family. The narrative element of the 'mother's heart [that] must have ached' for her son as he leaves to fulfil his role with an adult degree of 'dignified patience' projects a Dickensian sensitivity to the plight of the working-class child onto this young boy; he is a figure to be fondly pitied as a victim of an apathetic commercial structure that does not permit him to experience an unencumbered childhood. Bell's identification-by-proxy with the boy and his imaginary family again unites the concerns of the domestic and commercial, reframing the quiet resilience of the boy, and by extension, the quiet indifference of the smoking merchants in the bazaar as both a cause and a coping mechanism for a generational cycle of economic stagnation.

While Egypt and Persia were widely perceived as nations in arrested states of economic development, narratives of shopping in the rapidly modernising Japan recorded by Isabella Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* (published in two volumes in 1880 and 1881)[26] and

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[26] I have cited the American first edition throughout this project because the original, two-volume version published by John Murray went out of print and was replaced by an abridged edition produced in 1885.

Mary Bickersteth's *Japan as We Saw It* serve as the most obvious examples of women struggling to represent a 'progressive' nation that still adhered to many of the traditions associated with shopping in the less-developed Eastern bazaars. Although the women's perspectives on Japanese manners are generally favourable, their accounts of Japanese commercial transactions emphasise the performative and highly socialised nature of Japanese transactions in a manner that, contrary to prior accounts, demonstrate a pronounced discomfort with the domestic aspects of the Oriental marketplace. Fundamentally, Bird and Bickersteth's equally performative resistance to the hospitality of the Japanese marketplace suggests an underlying cognitive dissonance in their perceptions of Japan as a rapidly-progressing capitalist culture while obstinately maintaining its own, distinct 'Oriental' identity.

Isabella Bird was the daughter of an Anglican clergyman; she was plagued by a spinal condition throughout her life, and it was on a doctor's recommendation that Bird embarked on her first major journey to North America in 1854; she published her first book, *The Englishwoman in America*, in 1856. She continued to travel and write, quickly becoming one of the most popular and respected travel writers of the mid- and late-Victorian era. *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* was the product of the first of many journeys into Eastern lands; she was granted an unprecedented diplomatic passport into Japan's interior and northernmost regions and was the first European to make contact with the Ainu people of Hokkaido, lending additional weight to the public influence that her work had on her Victorian readership (Banerjee).

Bird opens her reflection on her shopping experiences in Niigata with the pronouncement that 'Japanese shopping is an art to be acquired, apparently, and I have no patience for it' (*Unbeaten* 1:229). Her main objection is to the practice of haggling, which she declares she would be happy to avoid by offering 'something approaching the price first asked by the vendor', although she regretfully notes that 'foreigners [in Japan], who are expert, never do anything so extravagant, and, in the estimation of the shopkeeper, so absurd' (*Unbeaten* 1:229). This frames the entire process as a formality that is unnecessary for business, but absolutely necessary if a foreigner is to appear respectable and culturally literate. Where Gertrude Bell's account suggests that her party engaged in a mutual social performance with the 'old Turk' after he initiated the transactional portion of the encounter, Bird's narrative is explicit that in Japan, it is the customer's responsibility to initiate the performance:

> If you like and wish to buy an article you don't ask its price, but that of several other things, working indifferently round to it. Perhaps the vendor says ten *yen*; you laugh as if you were very much amused, and say two *yen*. He laughs derisively, but quite good naturedly, and you put it down, on which he says eight *yen*; you laugh again and walk about, on which he looks amused, and says seven *yen*; you say carelessly three *yen*, he looks sad and appears to calculate on his *soroban* [abacus]; you move as if to go out, when most likely he claps his hands, looks jubilant, and says *yuroshi*,[27] which means that you are to have it for three *yen*, which is possibly far more than it is worth to him. (*Unbeaten* 1:229)

The scene here – which is presumably an aggregate narrative based on several different encounters – makes repeated references to both the buyer and seller laughing at one another's unsatisfactory offers, reframes the transaction as an overt social game. Since the buyer makes the first move and is an equal participant in the process, the sellers do not come across as dishonest or disingenuous; rather, the whole transaction is a social ritual of mutual politeness and negotiation. Bird concludes that 'if the sellers were sour and glum, this process would be unbearable, but if you are courteous and smiling, they are as pleasant as people can be', again placing the onus of responsibility on the customer to set the tone for the interaction (*Unbeaten* 1:234). While this approach to commerce is still evidently rooted in Eastern traditions of haggling and performed politeness, the subtle, yet important differences in the structure of Bird's narrative minimise the implication that Japanese shopkeepers are a source of amusement or fantasy. Rather, it is the foreigner who is at risk of looking 'absurd' or uneducated if they should fail to partake of the appropriate ritual; consequently, Bird is framed within her own narrative as an emblem of Victorian capitalism forced to submit to a regressive mode of transaction in order to appear socially and economically literate in the eyes of the Japanese merchant. The resulting cognitive dissonance is brought to the foreground in a later account of shopping in Kyoto.

Kyoto, the former capital of Japan before the Meiji Restoration, was not open to the majority of Western tourists prior to the 1890s and remained one of the most traditional cities in terms of architecture, customs, and art production. Here, unlike Edwards' romanticised view of merchants 'reposing' in their cupboard-like shops, Bird describes the entire city of Kyoto as a place of 'elegant repose' that 'degenerates into wearisome dawdling' during business transactions:

> [Kyoto transactions] are slower than anywhere else. One can hardly buy the merest trifle in less than an hour. … They offer you the tabako-bon and produce tea after every little purchase; and if I go with a Japanese, they waste more time in asking my age, income, where my husband is, if I am "learned," and where I have been

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[27] Misspelling of *yoroshii*, which is a polite term for 'very well' or 'that will do' in Japanese (translation by Dr. Samuel Mortimer, University of Oxford).

(*Unbeaten* 2:254).

There is a subtle anthropomorphism in her description of the ancient capital city that imbues the place with a sort of remarkable dignity, as if the entire place is characterised by a sense of whimsically aristocratic luxuriousness. Although she does not describe any individual merchants, her experience of the 'wearisome' social interactions which make her purchases 'slower than anywhere else' clearly lacks the value-for-money that Bell would later place upon her long, drawn-out purchases in Brusa. Bird explains that 'one can hardly buy the merest trifle in less than an hour' because every individual purchase was negotiated separately and punctuated with drinks, smoking, and conversation. She draws particular attention to the consequences of travelling with an interpreter because the shopkeepers 'waste more time' asking probing questions about her personal and professional life. It is not clear if Bird understood that such questions were – and still are – signifiers of politeness and friendly intentions in Japanese culture, designed to suggest the host's – or merchant's – interest in the life of their new acquaintance. It is also not expressly stated here that Bird finds the questions themselves offensive, but it is evident that she found them nonetheless irritating and unworthy of her time. The slowness of the encounter – combined with her established resentment of the process of haggling – again points to the locus of her frustration as a resistance to an over-domesticated version of commerce that forces her to compromise her own capitalist identity.

Even though the social features of the transaction are very similar, Mary Bickersteth's account of her family's experience with a Tokyo silk merchant takes a more light-hearted approach to expressing the dissonances between Western and Eastern standards of commercial behaviour:

> We stopped that afternoon at the principal silk and crape [sic] shop to buy a few presents for our people at home. We sat on the edge of the floor, about a foot above the street, but did not go inside, as we did not want to take off our shoes. After about half-an-hour's vigorous explanation from my brother, all we could wish for was produced; but it must be confessed that Japanese shopping is a decidedly lengthy business. … The crape merchant was well accustomed to foreigners, and begged leave to draw up an English bill for my father. It was a delightful production, made out for so much "yellow crêpe" (though we had chosen pale blue and mauve), and directed to "Pickastes, Esp.". (67-68)

There is a comical tone to Bickersteth's account that makes a stark contrast with her deeper musings on the 'depth' of the Japanese national character observed in the Ueno Museum.[28] The ceremonial formality of the transaction is initially undercut by the awkwardness of the family's decision not to enter the shop because they chose to remain sitting on the edge of the

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[28] C.f. Chapter 1, pg. 68.

shop's *genkan*, an interior porch used to remove and store shoes before stepping onto the raised floor of a home or business in Japan. It remains an essential part of Japanese culture to remove shoes before stepping into a home or traditional business, and it is not clear if there was any reason beyond the sheer inconvenience of unfastening their shoes that caused Bickersteth and her mother to choose not to enter the shop. There is little advantage to this refusal to comply, given that it required many 'vigorous' attempts at 'explanation' from her brother to acquire the correct items through the traditionally lengthy process of haggling and socialising between purchases.[29] Although there is no apparent ill-will in Bickersteth's narration, the scene subtly mocks the excessive politeness and formality of the 'bowing back and forth', suggesting a superfluity of tradition that, like the removal of shoes, serves only to delay the immediate progression of the transaction. Symbolically, there is an implication that these Eastern traditions are holding Japan back from meeting the speed and efficiency expected of a modernised country, even though these traditions are not in themselves 'uncivilised'.

The subsequent description of the merchant's attempts at English again undermines the seriousness with which she has previously characterised the Japanese people. The 'delightful production' which lists the wrong colour fabric and misspells her father's surname and honorific is partially used to illustrate the efforts of the Japanese merchant to accommodate English- speaking clientele, but in the context of the entire transaction it is difficult to ignore the juvenile sense of amusement at this awkward, if amicable, meeting of East and West. This scene points to several notable similarities between Bickersteth and Gertrude Bell's approaches to cultural commentary: both women were in their early twenties and had little travel experience at the time of writing their debut travelogues, and both also had at least some prior degree of education about the Middle East and Japan, respectively. Like Bell, Bickersteth may have lacked a certain degree of self-awareness in the way that she chose to present the scene, letting her juvenile amusement at the merchant's ignorance get the better of her desire to represent the Japanese more favourably to the readers at home. Compared with Bird's take on Japanese shopping, Bickersteth's condescending depiction of the Japanese merchant as a tedious and genial figure, rather than tedious and invasive, and the additional element of his attempts to use English places more emphasis on the emergence of Western influence in the Japanese metropolis. This is further reflected in the arrangement and

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[29] She also describes, in detail, the same form of theatrical haggling over individual items followed by tea, tobacco, and small talk described in Bird's encounter, which must be repeated between each individual purchase.

presentation of the shops; as suggested by Bickersteth's account of the Tokyo *kwankoba* addressed in the previous section, the bazaar and shops in other popular tourist sites were already taking on aspects of Western-style product exhibition.

Although Bickersteth provides other descriptions of shopping in other parts of Tokyo and in Yokohama's famous 'Curio Street', she does not include the shopkeepers in most other accounts, suggesting that some Japanese shopkeepers took a more European approach to service by maintaining a subtler presence unless or until they are called upon to initiate a purchase or answer a query. Nonetheless, the merchant exchange in the Tokyo silk shop represents a microcosm of essential Japan-ness that could be commodified for the readers at home: courteous, yet blunt; sombre, yet ridiculous; increasingly cosmopolitan, yet rigidly traditional. This commodified image, much like the romanticised images of the Middle Eastern travelogues, not only contribute to the market appeal of the travelogues themselves as literary commodities, but the wider Victorian vision of a world where each nation has a distinctive character that either contributes to or hinders the global capitalist 'brotherhood' propagated by the Great Exhibition. While the impression of the Japanese national character is generally favourable when compared to other Eastern nations, there is still a degree of backwards 'Otherness' in both Bird and Bickersteth's accounts that identify the Japanese as a developing, but not fully realised capitalist civilisation.

From the visual framing of the 'majestic' shopkeepers surrounded by towering merchandise in Edwards' account, the domesticated interior of Bell's Turkish silk shop, and Bickersteth's awkward spectacle from the edge of the Japanese silk shop, it is evident that women's approaches to representing national character were not motivated by a desire to reproduce a monolithic interpretation of the Orient. Rather, their encounters with merchants, mediated through the familiar commercial modalities of visual spectacle and hospitality associated with Oriental-themed shops in Victorian Britain, act as a contact zone through which the women evaluate the stadial development of Eastern nations. Although the commercial practices of nations such as Japan – and to a lesser extent, Turkey – are presented in a relatively more positive light due to their rising commercial importance, the evident discomfort in accounts of Japanese commerce, especially, evince a lingering dissonance in the latter decades of the nineteenth century over the recognition that Eastern nations could achieve a sophisticated state of economic development apart from the accepted social and commercial mores associated with 'progress' in Victorian culture. By contrast, the representations of nations such as Egypt and Persia as regressive or staid served to perpetuate romanticised images of the East that contributed to existing associations of luxuriousness in

Orientalised commercial spaces within Britain, and to a paternalistic view of Egyptian and Persian merchants as victims of despotic governments in need of outside intervention. The practical implications of these economic and social readings of Eastern commerce become even more clear when applied directly to visual readings of shopfronts and merchandise in Eastern market cities, considered in their full geo-political contexts.

2.3 'Highest Art' and 'Unspeakable Lows': The Visual Rhetoric of Civilisation
Moving beyond the more immediate relationships between Victorian women's observations on commercial hospitality, national character, and the adoption of Orientalised commerce in Britain, this section will focus on the way that women read the visual, cultural, and commercial developments in cities as essential representations of the political-economic status of Egypt, China, and Japan.[30] Rather than simply justifying the Orientalising of Britain's own commercial sector, the women's comprehensive assessments of the state of foreign market cities contributed to the formation of public opinions on the social, moral, and economic attributes.

By the nineteenth century, Cairo — and many other cities in Egypt — had developed into a cosmopolitan metropolis that successfully capitalised on European tourism and participated in the trade of goods both to and from Europe and Asia; nonetheless, European writers insisted on representing the country as an uncivilised nation with poor sanitation and unsophisticated manners. By contrast, although most authors continued to propagate some degree of derogatory cultural stereotypes throughout their narratives, the shops and displays in China and Japan act as a representation of each individual nation's progress towards becoming competitive, industrial- capitalist societies, best characterised in the words of Isabella Bird as 'the highest art and some unspeakable low things' (*Unbeaten* 1:255). Placed in contrast with early- and mid-Victorian women's accounts of market cities in Egypt as essentially 'dirty' and undeveloped, it is clear that there was a greater effort to consider Asian cities' proximity to tourism and trade ports as a factor when assessing their general state of civilisation, as well as a greater awareness that progress could occur at an uneven pace across a single nation or region. This section will combine the 'tableaux vivants' approach to

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[30] I will keep references to Persia at a minimum in this section in order to perform a more comprehensive analysis of the representations of Chinese markets; although there are few records that detail interactions with shopkeepers in China, there are significant discussions of the visuals of Chinese markets and market cities that bear a remarkable similarity to the overwhelmingly unfavourable representation of Egyptian bazaars seen throughout the nineteenth century.

representing Eastern marketplaces and merchant encounters discussed in the previous sections in order to demonstrate how women's analyses of Eastern commercial and urban developments attempted to maintain a Eurocentric, stadial worldview in the midst of a destabilising global capitalist hierarchy.

This preoccupation with representations of 'dirty'[31] Cairo in the early-mid-nineteenth century can be situated directly within the politics of European exhibition culture. In Timothy Mitchell's analysis of the 1889 Paris Exhibition, he engages with accounts written by Egyptian travellers en-route to the International Congress of Orientalists in Stockholm. The Paris Exhibition (also known as the World's Fair) is perhaps best remembered for the construction of the Eiffel Tower; like the original Great Exhibitions in London, the main purpose of the Paris Exhibition was to competitively showcase global productions of technology and art. According to Mitchell's research, the Egyptian travellers enjoyed their tour of the fair until they happened upon the 'Egyptian' exhibit, which 'had been built by the Frenchmen to represent a street of mediaeval Cairo' (217). A travel journal kept by one of the travellers recorded that '"even the paint on the buildings was made dirty"' (217), and Mitchell details how the exhibit as a whole:

> had also been made carefully chaotic. In contrast to the orderliness of the rest of the exhibition, the imitation street was arranged in the haphazard manner of the bazaar. The way was crowded with shops and stalls, where Frenchmen, dressed as Orientals, sold perfumes, pastries, and tarbooshes. To complete the effect of the Orient, the French organisers had imported from Cairo fifty Egyptian donkeys, together with their drivers and the requisite number of grooms, farriers, and saddlemakers… resulting in a clamour and confusion so lifelike, the director of the exhibition was obliged to issue an order restricting the donkeys to a certain number at each hour of the day. The Egyptian visitors were disgusted by all this and stayed away. (217)

In contrast to Edward Said's claim that the main function of the Orientalist 'tableau vivant' was to redeem the East to a modernised sensibility (158), this record demonstrates that nineteenth-century Europe actively maintained an image of Egypt that associated its attributes in their present day (crowds, donkeys, merchandise) with an outdated era of civilisation. The exploitation of what the Europeans considered the city's worst attributes, taken out of context and out of time at the Paris Exhibition, was already occurring in travelogues from decades

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[31] As previously noted, the term 'dirty' was commonly used in both xenophobic and anti-Semitic contexts throughout the nineteenth century; although it does not negate that the term was loaded with additional, often racialised connotations, for the purposes of this analysis I will consider the contrasting regional applications of the term 'dirty' in order to demonstrate that the term was part of a stadial rhetoric used to denote nations stuck in the lower phases of progress or – as in the case of Japan – a nation on the cusp of advancement.

prior, emphasising poverty, dirt, and decaying antiquity over other evidence of Egypt's modernisation. The consistent preference for Egyptian ruins is especially revealing, as the contrast between the grandeur and beauty of the ancient civilisation and the modern cities is used to overtly represent the loss of the sophistication, intelligence, and power that made the ancient marvels of Egypt's pyramids, temples, and sphinxes possible.

A clear example of framing the Egyptian metropolis as a signifier of a regressive society is found in Isabella Romer's description of shopping Cairo in *A Pilgrimage to the Temples and Tombs…*. Romer offers a somewhat more complicated analysis of Cairo's bazaars than Sophia Lane Poole's account of two years prior, although it does little to refute Poole's generally negative impression. Upon entering the city, Romer gushes over Cairo's 'striking and original' architecture, 'picturesque' houses and 'numerous and beautiful' fountains and mosques before complaining that 'the Bezesteens of Cairo … are immeasurably inferior to those of Constantinople; even the Turkish bazaar there is a poor affair' (1:47,49).[32] Although she initially seems to favour the 'purely… Arab' environment and the inhabitants who appear 'free from those innovations which in the Turkish dominions have introduced the prose of European civilisation into the wild and picturesque poetry of Eastern barbarism' (1:47-48), her repetitive comparisons to the Ottoman capital compound the sense that Egypt, in its native state, is unable to compete with other global markets. This becomes especially clear after Romer walks further into the bazaars, where 'the noise, the bustle, the jostling of the streets of Cairo' overturned her 'recollection of the taciturn Turks, so full of decent dignity' (1: 49). Writing with a characteristic lack of self-awareness, Romer laments the disillusionment of her belief that:

> all Oriental populations must be grave and quiet … I was not prepared for the scene of confusion presented by the interior of Cairo, where everybody screams, and gesticulates, and pushes left and right to make good their own way among the dromedaries, camels, horses, and asses ... Then, the itinerant vendors of all sorts of eatables are innumerable, and their cries add to the Babel-like clamour that almost deafens and bewilders one. (1:49- 50)

Despite her earlier fondness for the 'picturesque poetry of Eastern barbarism' that survived the Turkish coup, Romer concludes from the Cairo bazaar that the Egyptian people are a lower class of 'Oriental population' without manners, elegance, or self-control. The 'scream[ing], and gesticulat[ing]' crowd that 'pushes left and right to make good their own way' bears all the hallmarks of a rude and uncivilised society that not only mixes human and

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[32] *Bezesteens* are textile markets.

animal spaces, but forces humans to resort to aggressive and territorial behaviour. She closes her account of the market with a brief anecdote about 'one of our donkey-men' who had 'evidently been indulging in *Hash-hish*' and drew 'a crowd after us, whose enjoyment of his wild jokes was to the full as noisy as himself' (1:50). Drug use was not villainised in Victorian society until the 1860s, but the indecorous and obnoxious antics of the 'donkey-[man]' evidently did little to endear Romer to the local people of Cairo; this reference to drug use and public indiscretion also foreshadows the negative representation of opium users in Chinese cities, which will be discussed later in this section. Although Romer does not provide as comprehensive a geography of the Cairo market as Poole, the sensationalist language of her narrative is equally as effective at communicating the perceived failures of the Egyptian people to meet a basic standard of social or commercial development; even Turkish commerce, which Romer appears to hold in high regard, is reduced to 'a poor affair' within the confines of Egypt's regressive society.

As already seen in previous sections, Harriet Martineau and Amelia Edwards showed a stronger affinity for the Cairo bazaars than Romer, but their accounts of markets outside of Cairo are far from complimentary of the general state of Egyptian commerce and continue the pattern of highlighting the political-economic failings of the early Pasha rulers. An important example is Martineau's visit to Aswan, an ancient trading post and quarry-city (Mode 305), which her party visited on Christmas Day, 1846. Martineau recounts that:

> As soon as our plank was down, a sort of mob-market was formed on shore. There was a display of a stuffed crocodile, spears, boy clubs, straw-baskets, coins, walking sticks, an ostrich's egg, a conjuror, &c. It was at this place that a girl offered me for sale an English halfpenny; and another the glass stopper of a little bottle. (1:96)

The immediate impression made upon the reader is an exotified poverty; the term 'mob-market' immediately connotes an environment that is both disorganised and aggressive – terms that seem equally fitting for the items on 'display'. The mixture of taxidermy and weapons alongside stereotypical tourist items like walking sticks or straw baskets, and exotic novelties like the ostrich egg and the conjuror (likely a performer rather than an object), suggests a poor population selling found objects in the absence of any unique industry or craft; in this sense, the 'mob- market' is represented as a regressive form of the English 'charity bazaar'.

The passage continues to emphasise the poverty of the city's inhabitants with a vignette of 'parents teaching a little one to speak: and the word they tried them with was "backsheesh"' (1:97). At this point Martineau does offer some contextual information about the city, acknowledging that although the region had a history of poor agricultural output –

due in part to environmental constraints – their 'principal article of exchange' was 'their renowned dates', with additional commercial 'traffic … in henneh [sic], baskets, senna, charcoal, and slaves…' enabling them to 'import enough for their wants' (1:97). This clarifies that the city, as a whole, is not as destitute as the initial 'mob-market' encounter might suggest; nonetheless, there is an evident disparity in the distribution of wealth and sanitation efforts among the different market districts. Martineau explains that severe social and economic turmoil created by the Pasha's policies of 'increased taxation and conscription' had caused 'the *fellahs* (peasants) … [to] abscond on the mention of a census' (1:97). The abuse of the *fellaheen* class,[33] whom Martineau identifies as the curators of the 'mob-market' display, was a persistent problem under the Pasha dynasty's rule; as noted by John Chalcraft, 'from 1805 onward, with the dynasty-building projects of … [Mohammed] Ali (1805-48), and his successors … peasants encountered more directly an increasingly centralised government and new and altered demands in taxation, conscription, and forced labour' (304). Although taxation and centralisation of property ownership by the Ottoman government affected multiple classes and groups, Chalcraft points out that there was a unique effect on the fellahin because 'social and economic change did not create a united peasant class'; he attributes this division to the fact that 'social stratification by wealth in the countryside had deep roots', and 'the extension of market relations' such as 'the dismantling of Mehmet Ali's monopolies in the 1840s, Said Pasha's Land Law of 1858, and the cotton boom of the early 1860s' caused 'increased inequality at the village level' (304-05). The effects of the successive Pasha rulers' legislation and market changes on the rural village structure created a crisis which displaced the fellahin geographically, as well as socially and economically. The plight of the *fellaheen* was well-known to many Victorian travellers, but the most sympathetic was Lady Duff-Gordon, who explicitly noted in an 1867 letter that although 'all classes are suffering terribly under the fearful taxation' the Pasha's policies had brought about 'the total ruin of the *fellaheen*, and the destruction of trade' (*LL* 147). Given this broader context, it is important that Martineau's account of Aswan clarifies that even within a prosperous city, the needs of the most vulnerable could not be adequately addressed due to their justifiable fear of government exploitation, which in turn led to a wilful abstention from providing the census data which might have identified their needs.

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[33] '*Fellah*' (p. *fellahin* or *fellaheen*) is the Arabic word for 'ploughman', used in this context to designate the rural, Arab peasant class who worked primarily in the Egyptian agricultural sector, especially in the northern regions. For continuity, I will use the plural spelling '*fellaheen'* throughout this paper.

After passing through the mob-market and beggars that greeted her at the shore, Martineau notes that the central bazaars – presumably the ones containing typical merchandise such as fabrics, household articles, etc. – are 'poor'; despite Martineau's well-documented abolitionist activism, the slave bazaars are given comparatively favourable attention due to the presentation of young slaves calmly going about household tasks in 'the likeness [of] the old Egyptian countenance and costume' (1:98). It was not uncommon for authors to make exceptions in their representations of bazaars, regardless of the commodity, based on any vestiges of an 'old Egyptian' aesthetic, although it should be noted that Martineau closes her description of the market with the qualifying remark that 'the first aspect of Slavery is infinitely less repulsive in Egypt than in America … [however] the institution is no more defensible here than elsewhere' (1:98). After this, Martineau narrates her party's tour of the ruins of the ancient city before they depart to attend a Christmas dinner, leaving the politics of the marketplace behind them.

The disproportionate focus on the mob-market and beggars living in the shadow of an ancient archaeological site follows a familiar literary pattern used to reproduce popular European notions of Egypt as an underdeveloped modern nation living in the shadow of its ancient glory. Although Martineau's account of the poverty and desperation of the *fellaheen* demonstrated a real and urgent need for political and economic reform, her negative impressions of the poorer districts overshadow the fact that Aswan was a lively trade port that funnelled valuable commodities not only to its own residents, but to other parts of Egypt and the world. This mode of selective comparison is a recurring pattern throughout early- and mid-Victorian accounts of Egyptian travel, including Amelia Edwards' account of shopping in the city of Minya that uses a direct contrast between European and Egyptian shops to emphasise Egypt's inability to raise itself out of poverty.

Minya was the central city of an agricultural region south of Cairo that profited significantly from the demand for Egyptian cotton exports after the loss of Southern American cotton during the American Civil War (1860-1865). Although Edwards visited this region more than ten years after the start of the American conflict, there is little evidence in her narration of the Minya bazaar that the city had at any time been the beneficiary of an economic boom, despite qualifying for her readers that 'it chanced to be market-day; so we saw Minieh [sic] under its best aspect … nothing could well be more squalid, dreary, and depressing' (126). She continues to describe the bazaar itself:

> which consists of two or three lanes a little wider than the rest, is roofed over here and
> there with rotting palm-rafters and bits of tattered matting … with its little cupboard-
> like shops in which the merchants sit cross-legged like shabby old idols in shabby old

shrines – the ill-furnished shelves – the familiar Manchester goods – the gaudy native stuffs – the old red saddles and faded rugs hanging up for sale – the smart Greek stores where Bass's ale, claret, curacao, Cyprus, Vermouth, cheese, pickles, sardines, Worcester sauce, blacking, biscuits, preserved meats, candles, cigars, matches, sugar, salt, stationery, fireworks, jams, and patent medicines can all be bought at one fell swoop… the surging, elbowing, clamorous crowd – the donkeys, the camels, the street-cries, the chatter, the dust, the flies, the fleas, and the dogs, all put us in mind of the poorer quarters of Cairo. (126-127)

Edwards' description combines the human and material aspects of the market environment to drive home the contrast between the 'smart Greek stores' well-stocked with European goods and the 'cupboard-like', 'shabby' Egyptian shops with 'ill-furnished shelves' of second-rate merchandise. Even the imported 'Manchester goods' are used as evidence of the poor selection available at this particular market, alongside the 'old red saddles' and 'faded rugs'.[34] This description hearkens back to Poole and Romer's descriptions of the Cairo bazaars almost thirty years prior, but with the added inclusion of the 'shabby old idols' who own and run the shops. By casting the merchants as old and unkempt relics, Edwards implies that the merchants, like Egypt's antiquities, have been devalued by neglect and abuse, in direct contrast to the Greek shops which demonstrate the benefits of foreign intervention to bring Egypt into modernity. By contrast, the Greek shop is a downsized version of a European department store offering brand- name products and 'patent medicines' alongside other requisite supplies of modern life. Although there is no specific information about the Greek shop's appearance, it comes across as a welcome change from the 'street-cries, the chatter, the dust, the flies, the fleas, and the dogs' that reminds Edwards and her party of the 'poorer quarters of Cairo'. The critical tone of the passage in regard to the poor and unprepossessing shops of Minya avoids a larger conversation about why the district had, apparently, not reaped the benefits of the increased export of cotton to Europe, choosing instead to recycle familiar tropes that reinforced the British public's view of the Egyptians as economically incompetent.

It is not entirely clear from the travelogues alone whether all of the women's implications that Egypt occupied a comparatively low state of stadial development were intentional or incidental. Nevertheless, the repetitive focus on shops and markets as indicators of Egypt's social and economic inferiority – especially in the writings of highly educated and politically active authors such as Martineau and Edwards – is impossible to ignore. The competition between Britain and France for control of overland passage through Egypt, which features in both Martineau's and Romer's work, and the increasing value of Egyptian cotton

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[34] Cf. Chapter 4 for detailed analysis of the tropes surrounding Manchester textiles.

in the luxury textile markets across the latter half of the nineteenth century suggest that representations of Egypt's markets as dirty, chaotic, and economically regressive were not entirely for the purpose of entertainment, but also served as a form of political propaganda (Mitchell 224).[35] This becomes clearer when compared to the contexts in which the terms 'dirty' and 'chaotic' are applied to shops, bazaars, or markets found in China and Japan. Chinese cities are typically portrayed in a negative light, with authors using the same or similar language as accounts of Egyptian cities. Japanese cities and shops, however, are presented in a more positive light in terms of their cleanliness, order, and degree of aesthetic sophistication. Nonetheless, there are still many negative values attributed to the layout of Japan's urban spaces, particularly in working-class or rural regions, but more effort is made to contextualise the negative attributes, or to find commonality between Japanese and British cultures.

Despite significant technological growth and an increasing foreign presence – including women – in its urban centres, China is consistently represented as a 'retrogressive' country with dirty streets and slovenly residents (Frere 390). Certain cities and districts are noted as exceptions, and even within the walls of a single city individual shops or districts could be presented as oases of civilisation and prosperity. Anna d'Almeida's account of a shopping trip in Shanghai in *A Lady's Visit to Manilla and Japan* (1863) is an important, early example of a Victorian woman writer contrasting spaces of high and low civilisation in Chinese urban spaces. d'Almeida was the married to a middle-class Portuguese gentleman, and together with their young daughter they journeyed across the Philippines, China, and Japan in 1862. Little is known about d'Almeida or her family, although they appear to have been reasonably wealthy and well- connected in diplomatic circles across Asia, including acquaintances in Hong Kong and Shanghai – the only cities they visited before leaving China for Japan.

Shanghai was one of five treaty ports opened to foreign trade by the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing and had a lively foreign trade and a large British and American expat community known as the Bund. The main city remained distinct from the foreign communities, including in its level of upkeep and sanitation.[36] d'Almeida sets the tone for her tour of the city with a description of the 'interior of the city, which … presents a most lively scene, but is so disgustingly filthy that I cannot possibly describe it' (143). Their journey 'through the

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[35] The propagandistic functions of travelogues will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 3.
[36] The segregation of foreign residents was legislated in the 1845 Land Regulation (*Shanghai tudi zhangcheng*).

labyrinth of narrow streets' is summarised as 'walking in and out of the principal curiosity shops, and peeping into every place where we thought there might be something worth seeing' (143). She offers little clue as to what the party found 'worth seeing' besides a sordid, voyeuristic account of a 'ghastly, emaciated- looking' addict visiting an opium shop; the account graphically describes the process of purchasing and imbibing of opium, overwhelming the reader with the simultaneously pathetic and disturbing plight of the shop's numerous patrons seeking the 'temporary bliss' of the drug (143-145). In the 'surrounding decades' of the Opium Wars in China (1839-42 and 1856-60), opium and eventually other recreational drugs fell under 'a rising tide of concern' in Britain (Milligan 21). This was in part due to political and moral concerns over the use of opium, and opium addiction, as a fulcrum to prise open China's conservative market to global trade, but it also became associated with 'alarmist representations' of opium dens and social degradation within Britain, which in turn were associated with 'anxieties' about increased numbers of Chinese immigrants around the 1860s (Milligan 27). d'Almeida's pointed inclusion of the opium shop reflects the Victorians' fascination and fear surrounding this issue; framed by her description of the Shanghai streets, the association between drug use, filth, and regressive social progress is self-evident.

d'Almeida abruptly transitions from the cautionary image of the opium den to a discussion of 'The Chinese silk shop [which] is a remarkable place for neatness and regularity' (145). The direct contrast between these two specific shops in Shanghai serves as an important statement about the status of silk shops in Chinese cities more generally; in her segue, 'the Chinese silk shop' is referenced using a collective noun, implicitly designating all silk shops as a respite from the dirt and disorderliness of urban China. The emphasis on silk shops' 'remarkable' degree of 'neatness and regularity' suggests that the silk shops – and, as will be discussed in chapter four, the silk industry – represents China's potential to achieve a more advanced state of sophistication and civilisation. This is made especially clear through her description of the interior of the shop:

> the shelves [are] arranged, with the utmost regard to order … filled with silks of various hues, though of the colours we can see but little, each piece being neatly folded in thin paper, which is carefully pasted, leaving only the ends exposed. Should you desire to become a purchaser of some of these rich and costly materials … at least a dozen or two of these nicely folded parcels have to be torn open, in order that … you may be able to judge of its quality by comparison with that of others. The bargain being concluded, the whole must be wrapped up and gummed as before, a rather tedious process, I should fancy. (145-146)

The words used to describe the contents and arrangement of the shelves act as a kind of

shorthand: laid out with the 'utmost regard to order', the 'rich and costly' merchandise is 'neatly folded'. There is a subtle drama in d'Almeida's description of the shop's neat packages being 'torn open' for examination, then 'wrapped and gummed as before' that emphasises the pristine condition of both the shop environment and the materials themselves. There is no further elaboration as to why the materials are kept in this manner, but the close mixing of commercial establishments designed to attract, respectively, both higher and lower classes suggest that the wrapping of parcels is as much an effort to protect the fabrics from the dirt of the city as it is to shield them from the view of those who do not meet the social criteria to own such luxuries.[37] The discussion of the silk shop ends here, as abruptly as it began, but the episode reinforces perceptions of China as a nation capable of great beauty and commercial development, but unwilling to free itself from the confines of its own regressive social tendencies. There is no recognition in d'Almeida's account of the role played by Britain in instigating China's opium crisis, nor does she offer any comparisons to other Chinese cities that may contextualise or qualify the conditions observed in Shanghai.

Within the stadial framework, 'the treatment of women' was an 'axiomatic' principle for determining the degree of civilisation achieved by a given society (Dzelzainis 3); consequently, the treatment of women in China was a recurring theme in several travelogues, including d'Almeida's, used to further condemn Chinese society as regressive. After leaving the silk shop, she describes her experience as one of 'few ladies [to] walk in this dirty part of town', resulting in her 'evidently [being] regarded in the light of a "curio"' (d'Almeida 146). She describes being followed and heckled by a group of young boys calling her a 'cow', a local colloquialism 'used to designate everything that is feminine' (146). The absence of women, local and foreign, from Chinese markets and urban spaces has a complex history; Maria Kar-wing Mok quotes an 1849 travelogue by American merchant Osmond Tiffany Jr., who observed that:

> "a stranger in China may go from one store to another every day in the year … Men, none but men, he sees at every turn" … the author was in fact noting the awkwardness of never meeting any women in the shops where they would normally be found in the West (foreign women were not allowed in the city). (Tiffany 59, qtd. in Mok 65)

The remarkable absence of women in urban China, while shocking to many Western visitors, was attributable in part to the conventions of Chinese culture at the time that considered it an impropriety for women to be seen in public spaces. There was 'also … a practical fear of danger' in many parts of China that made both Chinese and foreign women avoid entering the

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[37] For further analysis of the exclusive nature of Chinese silk shops, see Chapter 4.

cities, even when it was socially acceptable to do so (Rogaski 59). Although the outright

prohibition of women in public was somewhat less common in southern cities like Shanghai,

the rarity of female shoppers in Chinese cities and the further seclusion of foreign women

until sometime in the 1850s or 1860s, adds to the importance of d'Almeida's early account of

her experience as a foreign woman engaging in Chinese commerce.[38] Despite the mild degree

of harassment she experienced in the city, her presence in the city and shops suggests that

small moves towards gender inclusion had been accomplished by 1862, although not to a

degree that would meet the stadial ideals of a progressive society.

Isabella Bird's record of her own visit to Shanghai, published in her 1899 travelogue

The Yangtze Valley and Beyond, clarifies that by 1896 wealthy Chinese women frequently

travelled into the foreign Bunds for social or business purposes (*Yangtze* 18); however,

foreign men and women chose to avoid entering the main city, even though they were legally

free to do so, for fear of dirt, disease, or injury from the crowds and carts. Bird chose to

venture into the city with a single, male escort to test the validity of these claims, and

concludes that:

> I did not take back small-pox or any other malady, I was not rudely jostled by dirty
> coolies, nor was I hurt or knocked down by wheelbarrows. The slush and the smells
> were there, but the slush was not fouler nor the smells more abominable than in other
> big Chinese cities that I have walked through; and as a foreign woman is an every-day
> sight in the near neighbourhood, the people minded their own business and not mine.
> (25)

This passage points to an issue of ignorance and avoidance as the reason for the lack of

foreign female shoppers, but she does clarify later on the same page that 'few [Chinese]

women, and those of the poorer class, are to be seen' in the 'mean-looking and busy' city of

Shanghai. Bird's open-minded approach to appraising the state of Shanghai was also extended

to China more generally. In the introduction to *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond*, Bird writes

with disdain of European powers' 'undignified scramble for concessions' that did not

'[hesitate], for the sake of commercial advantages, to break up … the most ancient of earth's

existing civilisations without giving any equivalent' (11). She defends the reputation of the

Chinese people, albeit with some caveats, arguing that:

> in estimating the position occupied by the inhabitants … of China, it is essential for us
> to see quite clearly that our Western ideas find themselves confronted, not with
> barbarism or debased theories of morals, but with an elaborate and antique civilisation

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[38] Rogaski's article cites accounts of French nuns entering the walled city of Tainjin in the early
1860s, suggesting that the law had either changed by this point, or was simply not enforced, pg.
59.

which yet is not decayed, and which, though imperfect, has many claims to our respect and even admiration. (11)

While the language and ideals of Western progress are still prevalent throughout Bird's descriptions, it is evident from the beginning of her narrative that she did not agree with the typical assessment of China as a fundamentally 'regressive' nation; rather, Bird frames the nation as a remnant of an older 'civilisation' in the process of negotiating its place in a modern and newly globalised society.

In terms of a commercial record, Bird confirms that 'all the articles usually exposed for sale in Chinese cities are met with' in Shanghai, with 'old porcelain, bronzes, brocades, and embroideries [on display] to attract strangers' (25-26). This gives a fuller picture of the variety of goods available in the city than d'Almeida's account, but given Bird's wider experience it is clear that Shanghai was not unique enough for either its markets or its filth to merit a more detailed description. One city that Bird did consider exceptional was Chengdu (misspelt 'Chengtu', throughout the book), the capital of China's Sichuan province and a major commercial hub by the end of the century. Unlike the majority of other cities in China, Bird describes Chengdu as 'a very prepossessing city', with its outer wall 'in admirable repair' (349). Once she enters the main city, Bird describes a busy, but attractive shopping district with:

> wide, well-paved streets, crossing each other at right angles, and the handsome shops make far more display than is usual in China, the jewellers' shops specially, with their fine work in filigree silver, and even rich silk brocades are seen gleaming in the shadow in the rich handsome silk shops, as well as *pongees*, both of local manufacture, and costly furs, and the snowy Tibetan lambskin can be seen from the streets exposed for sale. … Farther back, in the obscurity, is the representation on a large scale, frequently taking up the whole end of the shop, of *Dzai-zen-pusa*, the God of Wealth … with an altar and incense before him. … Chengtu has many scent shops, and most articles of Chinese manufacture are exposed at the shop fronts, but there was a very small display of foreign goods. (*Yangtze* 349-350)

Bird's description leaves the reader with an impression of a vibrant and thriving marketplace with a wide variety of regional merchandise. The adjectives 'wide, well-paved', 'handsome', 'rich' etc. set Chengdu apart from the 'slush and smells' of Shanghai (and by extension, other Chinese cities). The merchandise, which is mostly or completely of Chinese manufacture, is displayed far more openly than in Shanghai, with the exception of the silks which are 'gleaming in the shadow in the rich handsome silk shops', possibly because the fabrics are packaged in protective paper, as described in d'Almeida's account. The specific mention that there was only 'a very small display of foreign goods' points towards the self-sustaining Chinese manufacture of the region, and even more importantly, the minimal foreign influence,

acting as a counterpoint to the assumption that China required Western interference to achieve a progressive and industrious society.

Historian Di Wang drew heavily on Bird's account in his case analysis of Chengdu's 'Street Culture' in the late-Qing dynasty, contextualising her description within the 'culture of commerce' brought about by the 'development of trade in the late nineteenth century', wherein the 'shop signs, store decorations, the display of merchandise, the relationship between shop owners and customers, the worship of the God of wealth, street performances of various artisans' skills … constituted an important part of [Chengdu's] street culture' (39). The centrality of commerce in Chengdu 'street culture', combined with the persistence of a more traditional way of Chinese life explains both the prosperity of the city and the unusual prominence of shop displays. The mixture of lower and middle classes in a dense urban landscape created a competition for space that resulted in a uniquely colourful, bustling commercial environment that, unfortunately, earned the disdain of the ruling classes and led to the regulation of Chengdu's streets after 1900. However, at the time of Bird's visit, it was exactly this mix of higher and lower-class cultures that created the attractive and folksy shop fronts, kiosks, street vendors, and displays that caught Bird's eye during her visit. While Wang's research offers more extensive and specific details of the kinds of shops around the city, Bird's description does go beyond the typical Chinese shops within the city to note 'the strange, wild figures of the trading Tibetans' who coexist with the 'splendour of the trains of officials and *literati*', collectively contributing to 'the air of prosperous business which pervades the streets' (*Yangtze* 350).

After touring the 'truly charming intra-mural' suburbs' that surround the city centre, Bird remarks on the 'refreshing' sight of 'tall, healthy-looking women with "big feet" … standing at their doorways talking to their friends, both male and female, with something of the ease and freedom of Englishwomen' (*Yangtze* 346). It is known that Chengdu had a relatively liberal attitude towards women in public spaces, but the reference to the women's '"big"' (i.e. unbound) feet and 'freedom' to converse even somewhat openly with men are direct contradictions of the two most common symbols of female oppression in China.[39] Ultimately, Bird concludes that Chengdu's citizens '[enjoy] affluent ease' and 'security' (*Yangtze* 350-351). When considered in context with Wang's history of the street merchants

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[39] Foot-binding was also tied to concerns about female literacy, as many Victorians believed that Chinese girls were not permitted to attend the foreign schools that offered them an education over fears that foreigners would break with the binding tradition, leaving the girls unmarriageable. C.f. Gates, Hill. *Footbinding and Women's Labor in Sichuan*. Routledge, 2014, 35-36.

and folk culture – which are gestured to in Bird's itemisation of the Chinese and Tibetan products on sale – this account suggests that a lack of foreign interference and relatively liberal attitude towards social mixing enabled Chengdu to flourish.[40] The notable lack of references to opium or filth that, in combination with the mixing of classes and genders, sets Chengdu apart as a refreshing counterpoint to the dirt of other cities like Shanghai or Peking, although it is still presented as a unique and surprising exception.[41]

Accounts comparing different Chinese cities, or travellers' experiences in the same cities over different periods, demonstrate the complexity and variety of dynamics which contributed to Western perceptions of Chinese urban development, social customs, and commercial practices; however, after the opening of Japan it became increasingly common for female travellers to compare Chinese and Japanese cities, resulting in an exaggeration of perceived failings of taste or custom in China. Mary Bickersteth's account of Canton sets the scene with the same motif of narrating the reader through 'the narrow streets' from which the author 'thus obtained a capital idea of the various trades carried on in a Chinese city' (319). Where many of the other cities are described without reference to colour – save that the colours of the silk fabrics in Shanghai were obscured by their protective wrappings – Bickersteth notes that 'the colours [of Canton] seemed gaudy, and the houses exceedingly dirty after Japan' (319). Despite the negative comparison, there is a vibrancy and exoticism to Bickersteth's experience of Cantonese shops that suggests a more nuanced perspective on the Chinese urban environment than in some previous accounts, suggesting that her overall perception may have been more favourable had she visited China first, rather than on her return journey from Japan:

> We began with a gilt-thread factory and embroidery warehouse, and went on to a button maker's, in whose shop we bought little bunches of five buttons … We stood outside the shops of the mandarins, gay with gilt umbrellas and bridal crowns, and looked into the highly-decorated eating-houses, and butchers' shops … we passed a number of drapers' shops, where every article of a Chinese costume could be procured, from the tiny embroidered shoes of the foot-bound women to the gay-

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[40] Bird also mentions that custom duties on foreign imports were aggressively enforced in Chengdu, and all waterways into the city were 'rigorously guarded' further contradicting the idea that Western interference was the key to a socially and economically progressive China (*Yangtze* 349).

[41] Bird uses Peking as a direct comparison when describing the uniqueness of Chengdu's atmosphere, summarising the differences with the statement that 'Chengtu [sic] is neat and clean, and a comparison of its odours with those of Peking is impossible, for those of [Tibetan] musk overpower all else [in Peking]' (*Yangtze* 346). The reduced odour and overall cleanliness of the city is here summarised in the subtraction of the musk trade, but when considered alongside the rest of the chapter it is clearly judged by a far more complex metric.

coloured coats and black satin pyjamas of their husbands and brothers. Last, but not least, we saw numbers of jade shops, in which earrings and bracelets of the brilliant green stone lay in tempting but terribly expensive profusion. (319-320)[42]

There are few geographical details in this passage that illustrate the scope and geography of the Cantonese marketplace, but it is likely that this passage is referring to the shops on or around the Old and New China Streets. This street was known to tourists as 'a bustling artisan and merchant neighbourhood where shops line the streets, selling both raw materials and highly finished art and craft objects' (Farris 160). The streets were conveniently positioned as 'gated passages that provided access to the factories from the city,' and were part of the typical tourist itinerary of the late 1870s and beyond.[43] These itineraries were typically led by local guides who had accepted that tourism was an integral – if not altogether defining – part of Canton's identity as a city. The lack of clear geographical markers and apparent absence of a Cantonese guide in Bickersteth's experience adds some complication to the assumption that her party was merely following a tourist route through the city, but it is equally clear that she did not feel it necessary to offer any more detailed information about the atmosphere and layout of the famous city.

Bickersteth's repetitive use of 'gay' and 'gilt' to describe the threads, fabrics, and accessories designed for the Chinese upper-class, and the 'brilliant' and 'expensive profusion' of the jewellery displays present an exceptionally affluent image of Chinese life that befits a 'gaudy' first impression. The colour and sparkle of the artisan merchandise, jewellery, and even the 'curiously flattened' meats in the butcher shops seem to overshadow the 'exceedingly dirty' appearance of the homes that greeted her view of the city on arrival. This description, which is applied in relative scale to Japan, points towards the subjective bias by which these two developing nations were judged. Despite the range, beauty, and quality of Chinese goods for sale across urban centres such as Chengdu and Canton, there is a consistent implication that the goods – and the shops in which they are displayed – represent exceptions to a generally dirty and regressive social order. Without the comparison to Japan in Bickersteth's account, the shops and factories of Canton appear to be attractive, bright, and rich; when discussed in comparison with Japan's developing civilisation, the shops are perceived as 'gaudy'. The ubiquitous preference for Japanese cities and markets does not come without variation, but the overall impression is that the Japanese people had a more intrinsic relationship with neatness, order, and tastefulness in art – to the degree that it was

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[42] Chinese textiles and sewing notions were often manufactured and sold in the same building.
[43] C.f. Taylor, Fitch W. *A Voyage Around the World*, vol. 1. New Haven. 1846, pp.140-41.

part of their 'national character'.

There is no more explicit comparison of progress between the Japanese and Chinese than Alice Frere's account of her arrival into Nagasaki. At first, she elegantly describes the 'picturesque and ornamental' and 'altogether beautiful' scenes of village life along the harbour, where 'the pure, dry air made one feel a different being' (388). Frere and her party had departed from Shanghai, where she emphasised the heat and misery of the climate, and after three days at sea her delight at the beauty of Japan where 'the cleanliness of everything is exquisite … The contrast to China was as great as it was agreeable' (388). She explicitly states that she found the Chinese to be 'an essentially unprogressive, and hence necessarily a retrogressive race' on account of their adherence to 'the traditions of the forefathers' and 'lack of ambition' (390). She immediately contrasts this to the Japanese, claiming that 'there is nothing they see of good or expedient [sic], belonging to the nations who have effected a footing in the country, that they do not adopt' (390). As seen in Frere's account of the Prussian-style rifles selected for the Paris Exhibition in Chapter 1, there is a clear association between copying Western technology, industrial ambition, and the assessment of Japan as a progressive nation. The interior of Nagasaki further cements Frere's belief that the Japanese had reached a superior stage of development, because 'there were no unpleasant sights and smells, the streets were much wider, with a paved causeway in the middle, picturesque houses, clean mats, and great neatness of arrangement in their wares' (395). The detail that there was 'a great neatness of arrangements in their wares' seems to be, for Frere, the most noteworthy feature of the Nagasaki market.

Travelogues on Japan consistently return to neatness, cleanliness, and order, including those that do not make direct comparisons to China; however, not all authors came to the same conclusions about the overall appeal of the aesthetics of Japanese cities. One early example is Anna d'Almeida's impressions of Kanagawa. Kanagawa is a coastal prefecture in Eastern Japan, slightly south of Tokyo, which was one of the main treaty ports secured for western access in the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854) between the United States and Japan. Yokohama is the main port city of Kanagawa prefecture, but at the time of d'Almeida's visit Kanagawa was also the name of a small town which housed the British consulate. This city was absorbed into Yokohama towards the end of the nineteenth century. It was common for British travellers to pass through Kanagawa en route to larger cities via one of Japan's 'high roads', although access for foreigners was a contentious issue in the Japanese government, and contemporary accounts by British ministers reported that there were a number of violent

incidents against British travellers using this road in 1863.[44] Nonetheless, d'Almeida and her party arrived at Kanagawa without incident, and spent a brief visit touring the city and its shops. d'Almeida concluded that:

> The shops [in Kanagawa] are very poor, and the whole place is far from presenting the neat appearance of Yokohama. Whether this is owing to its being on the high road, and the constant traffic consequent on this, or not, is doubtful; but, from its being much more crowded and bustling, it is not unlikely. (256)

The comparison to Yokohama and discussion of traffic makes an important distinction between the notion of a larger urban centre and a small town situated on a busy highway. The 'poor' appearance of Kanagawa is partially attributed to the degree of traffic, but there is some hesitation that suggests there may be other socio-economic factors that put the community at a disadvantage. There is no record that d'Almeida went inside the shops of Yokohama, but she records that her party passed through it more than once upon their arrival in Japan, and that they stayed very briefly in the city before moving on to other regions. Although her judgement in this passage is somewhat superficial, there are other records which support that Yokohama was an ideal spot for 'curio hunters', with fine shops and galleries that appealed to the foreign collector.[45] The most substantive takeaway in d'Almeida's analysis of Kanagawa is the fact that the smaller city's unkempt and crowded shopping district is implied to be the result of unfortunate geographical placement rather than a typical example of the Japanese urban environment.

Isabella Bird also presented a starkly different picture of urban Japan, based on her shopping excursion in Niigata. She summarises her impressions with the declaration that:

> The 'gorgeous east' is not a phrase which applies to anything in Japan except to a few of the temples. The cities … are singularly mean, and the shops, as far as outward appearance goes, are as mean as all else; for the best textile goods cannot be exposed for fear of injury from the damp, dust, and rain, and though there are a number of 'curio', or, as we should call them, second-hand shops, they only expose common things in the street. (*Unbeaten* 1: 225)[46]

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[44] C.f. Alcock, Sir Rutherford. *The Capital of the Typhoon: A Narrative of Three Years' Residence in Japan*, vol. 2. London, 1863, pp.142, 150, 435. See also the reference to defensive structures outside European houses in Yokohama in d'Almeida, pg. 234.
[45] C.f. Chamberlain, Basil H. and Mason, W.B. *Handbook for Travellers in Japan*. 3rd Ed. London, 1891, p. 55. For further discussion of women visiting Yokohama shops as collectors, see Chapter 3.

[46] These sentiments are a close echo of her initial impressions recorded on her entrance to the country: '[Japan is] beyond the limits of "Oriental Magnificence." Colour and gilding are only found in the temples; palaces and cottages are alike of grey wood; architecture scarcely exists; wealth, if there be any, makes no display … everything is poor and pale, and a monotony of meanness characterises the towns' (*Unbeaten* 1:7).

This passage gives a clear indication that most Japanese shops were enclosed, with even the second-hand shops keeping only the most 'common things in the street' due to Japan's harsh and varied climate. Although Bird's description indicates that most Japanese shops are very plain and unprepossessing from the street view, there is a clear statement that this does not apply to the interior of the shops or reflect the quality of the goods themselves. This is addressed more explicitly in her later description of the shops in Kyoto, which she declared were 'truly the home of art' despite being 'small' and 'dingy' from the outside (*Unbeaten* 2:254).

Kyoto, the former capital city of Japan, was – and remains to this day – a centre of art and craftsmanship. The centrality of art and aesthetics to Kyoto's identity is evident in Bird's account of shopping for art and collectibles:

> There are few shops which have not on their floors just now some thoroughly enjoyed spray of bamboo, or reddening maple, or two or three chrysanthemums in some exquisite creation of bronze or china. The highest art and some unspeakable low things go together, but every Japanese seems born with a singular perception of, and love of beauty or prettiness. The hundreds of shops in Kiyôto [sic], in which numbers of beautiful objects are carefully arranged, are bewildering. (*Unbeaten* 2:255)

This passage draws an intimate connection between the contents and arrangement of shops and the Japanese 'love of beauty or prettiness'. The 'hundreds of shops … in which numbers of beautiful objects are carefully arranged', populated with a 'spray of bamboo, or reddening maple, or two or three chrysanthemums in some exquisite creation of bronze or china' exemplify a sort of paradox between the simplicity and the volume of the merchandise, but it is the number, not the content, of these orderly shops that Bird finds 'bewildering'. There is an implicit degree of surprise that so many shops would be able to execute such a delicate balance of neatness, abundance, and variety of merchandise unless it were an essential Japanese quality to be able to combine 'the highest art and some unspeakable low things' into such a pleasing environment. This, again, reinforces an essentialist view of the Japanese national character that, as pointed out by Mary Bickersteth in the Ueno Museum, recommends them to the British public as an extraordinary nation worthy of admiration and, in terms of aesthetics and orderliness, emulation.[47]

The contrast between accounts of China and Japan, and between the Middle and Far East more broadly, show a consistent return to the ideals of order, visual spectacle, and urban development as markers of 'civilisation'. The similarity between negative assessments of

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[47] Bird's view of Japanese aesthetics will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Egyptian and Chinese markets or market-cities betrays the travellers' unwillingness to consider the political contexts that contributed to these nations' slower economic and social progress, particularly in places where British or European interference played a role in these unfortunate outcomes. This is especially true in China, where British interference created the very crises – such as opium addiction – which travellers and foreign residents blamed most for China's social problems. Although the Chinese are given credit for the attractiveness and order of marketplaces in Chengdu and Canton, or the silk shops which represent a respite from the dirt and disorder of the streets, comparisons with Japan consistently portray China as a regressive, or at best, stagnant nation. Accounts of Japan, while not always in agreement on the overall aesthetics, provide a more nuanced evaluation of the state of the markets and cities. Where smaller market towns are found to be wanting in visual appeal or cleanliness, they are presented as exceptions to the expectation set by the larger, better-planned cities, and contextualised with social and geographical information which explain their failure to impress. Regardless of specific regional differences, Bird's descriptive combination of the 'highest art' with 'unspeakable low things' effectively summarises not only the contents of Japanese shops, but the overall treatment of the Eastern marketplace across women's travelogues in the nineteenth century.

2.4 Conclusion

The British' selective adoption of Eastern modes of commerce across the nineteenth century, ranging from the early female-led commercial space of the Soho Bazaar to the luxurious exoticism of Liberty's, highlights the Victorians' fondness for Eastern commerce and commodities provided that they were mediated by the strictures of Western social values or contributed to the growth of the British domestic economy. The early concerns related to the erosion of British social values through the introduction of what was perceived as essentially Oriental modes of commerce continued to be debated throughout the Victorian era, including in women's accounts of transactions in the Eastern bazaars. These accounts bring to the foreground that the Victorians' were not only grappling with the moral and social implications of changing their market practices to mimic those of a pagan 'Other', but the stadial implications of importing commercial systems based on cultural traits perceived as 'regressive'.

Similar to the way that London's Regent Street was built to separate classes, market spaces in Egypt, Persia, and Japan were visually or spatially reordered to accommodate the influx of Western clientele. Traditional shops and sooks were pushed to the margins, while European- style shops and English-language signage moved into the central lanes and main

streets. Inside and outside the shops, cleanliness and order were used as the key metrics of a progressive society. Egypt is repeatedly condemned as a regressive nation for its chaotic crowds, dirty streets, and poorly stocked shelves; the representation of Egypt's sellers as either fallen princes or desperate beggars served to further cement the Egyptian people as neglected, mediaeval, and tragic, cementing the image of Egypt in the Victorian imagination as a fallen civilisation in need of intervention. Persia and Turkey are represented with more complexity; the external visuals of the bazaars and shops are not subjected to the same degree of scrutiny as in Egypt, but there is nonetheless a significant degree of stereotyping applied to the shopkeepers that implies the socio- economic impotence resulting from poor governance and ongoing conflicts over territory with European and Eurasian powers. It is historically evident that the Victorians favoured the Persian people more than their government; the resentment towards the Turkish people is less pronounced in the travelogues than in general historical records, but like Persia there is an underlying mistrust of their government that translates into a more general prejudice against the Turkish people, even where individual encounters leave a positive impression.

China is given credit for the exceptional neatness of its silk shops, but ultimately fails to impress the travellers due to its filthy streets, the widespread addiction to opium, and oppressive attitudes towards women. While some cities, like Chengdu and Canton, demonstrated that China was capable of achieving a more progressive ideal of urban order and social freedom despite an apparent lack of 'ambition', the women represent these cities as exceptional cases, and are unable or unwilling to acknowledge that Western interference was a significant contributor to the decline in cities like Shanghai. By contrast, Japan is almost universally praised for the neatness of its streets and shops; even the more critical authors, like Bird, praise the beauty and neatness of the shop interiors. The Japanese merchants are represented with fondness for their politeness but are nonetheless viewed as tedious for their adherence to Eastern niceties that are inconvenient to British customers and cause them to question the stadial order that allows them to view themselves, and their nation, as the superior civilisation.

Collectively, these accounts demonstrate an underlying anxiety that the very mechanisms of visual display – both in commercial and exhibitionary contexts – believed to represent 'progress' within the British economy posed an existential risk to both the political and economic ambitions of their expanding capitalist empire. Building on the conceptual relationship between women's travelogues and the visual representation of stadial competition in museums and marketplaces established in my first two chapters, the following chapters will

focus specifically on the women's activities as collectors of Eastern art, antiquities, and textiles. By re-centring my analysis on art objects purchased or discussed by Victorian travellers, I will show how the changing relationship between political-economic discourses of art, nationalism, and production cause a more conscious reassessment of the women's strict adherence to stadial definitions of progress across the century. Although they do not abandon the stadial model altogether, travelogues from the late-nineteenth century reflect a more nuanced perspective on the costs and limitations of mass-industrialisation and forced globalisation as a primary marker of 'civilisation'.

Chapter 3: Private, Public, Political: The Political Economy of Collecting Art and Antiquities

This chapter will consider the kinds of art and antiquities most valued as collectibles by female Victorian travellers, and how the women represent the means by which these objects were made, moved, and commodified across the nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapter One, Victorian material culture is a well-established field in literature and art criticism, with wide-ranging applications from the 'decorative arts' of the middle classes to museum acquisition and curation. Within these studies, empire and nationalism play a central role, as an influx of new products, foods, and raw materials from colonial territories transformed consumption habits across classes in Britain, effectively redefining boundaries of class as items once considered luxuries became commonplace and affordable (de Groot 171). The movements of goods between colonial territories and Britain allow for the 'tracking' of the 'intimate and extended links' formed across the globe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (de Groot 171); the resulting relationship is popularly characterised in terms of the 'metropolitan "home" [which] was … an island nation mostly untroubled by its imperial project' (Hall and Rose 26) as the material fruits of empire became interwoven with British identity.[1] It is also well-established that Victorian 'British society sought to define its own culture via multiple engagements with classical antiquity' (Moser 1271); similar to the contradictory adoption of commercial practices and commodities associated with 'regressive' Oriental cultures by Britain's luxury department stores, British collectors, both private and institutional, sought to collect antiquities, traditional crafts, and modern art pieces from Eastern nations as symbols of their wealth and status as *connoisseurs*. Although narratives of *connoisseurs* are most often focused on public institutions or male collectors, female travellers' accounts show that women were not only savvy collectors in their own right but were also engaged with the broader political-economic discourses which informed, or were informed by, the acquisition, provenance, and production of foreign objects.

Scholarship on female Victorian collectors have disproportionately focused on the 'domestic sphere', where collectibles are considered as representatives of passing fashions and feminine delicacy (Stammers 2020). There is strong evidence to support that by the end of the century, the appeal of Oriental collectibles to the majority of the Victorian middle class had little relationship to the objects' culture of origin beyond self-evident implications of

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[1] Classic examples include the widespread consumption of tea and the adoption of the dressing- gown inspired by Japanese kimono.

novelty, fashion, and imperial reach; however, there is also evidence that many middle-class women took serious interest in both the anthropological significance of art and antiquities, and the personal prestige associated with discovering or owning a piece of cultural history. In the latter sense, private collections can be read as an extension of national museum projects; however, rather than attempting to curate a visual narrative of world history for the benefit of the public, private collections communicated the owners' personal achievements in education and investment. Given that many Victorian collections were purchased through dealers or specialty shops, there was a particular degree of pride associated with collections purchased on personal travels that went beyond the simple notion of a souvenir for both male and female travellers. As noted in John Plotz's analysis of the representations of objects in Victorian fiction, 'they generally serve … as moving messengers. Aquaria or collector's cabinets might be the Victorian repositories of choice, but the objects that fill them … acquire meaning primarily from their earlier peregrinations' (1). This theorisation of the value of collectibles as a mutually defined relationship between the objects as commodities and the objects as symbols of the places the traveller has been is essential to discussions of real-world travel and collecting. In this context, the experience of finding and obtaining — whether by purchasing or simply taking — the object from abroad contributes to its value as a display piece upon the traveller's return to Britain, regardless of the object's worth according to any other system of value. This is particularly evident when comparing the mid- and late-Victorian's relationship to forged antiquities and mass-produced art.

In his seminal 1935 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin reflected on the Victorian obsession with art collecting, and more importantly, on the changes that occurred after art production passed into industrial reproduction. He argues that 'the "one-of-a-kind" value of the "genuine" work of art has its underpinnings in the ritual in which it had its original, initial utility value' (8). Prior to technological reproduction, art was valued for the uniqueness that can only come from the tangible processes of creation and use, but once it became possible for art to be produced or copied by machine, Benjamin argues that:

> for the first time in history, [the work of art is freed] from its existence as a parasite upon ritual. … From a photographic plate, for instance, many prints can be made; the question of the genuine print has no meaning. *However, the instant the criterion of genuineness in art production failed, the entire social function of art underwent an upheaval. Rather than being underpinned by ritual, it came to be underpinned by a different practice: politics.* (9, original emphasis)

Benjamin's argument effectively communicates the repercussions of technological reproduction for mass-market distribution on the social attitudes towards 'genuine' art;

however, Benjamin fundamentally misrepresents this as a shift between the 'ritual' and the 'political' following the rise of mass-industrialisation. Rather, I argue that the 'ritual' of art – and more specifically, antiquity – was itself made political in the early-nineteenth century by the 1816 parliamentary purchase of the Elgin Marbles for the British Museum; this purchase, and the rhetoric of the committee who approved it, created a precedential narrative that framed the acquisition and retention of antiquities from politically and economically unstable or under-developed countries as both the duty and the prerogative of a more advanced civilisation.

Building on this narrative, Victorian discussions of art and production took a more overt shift into the political realm in the mid-nineteenth century. As noted in the Introduction, art and art production were recognised as essential, yet indirect considerations of political economy in works by Adam Smith, David Hume, and J.S. Mill; however, philosopher and critic John Ruskin argued that art production should be considered as a unique and vital strand of political-economic discourse. Ruskin's own body of work – which was ultimately more philosophical than economical – was focused on restoring the beauty and integrity of British artistry through a return to skilled hand-labour, a project which he inextricably linked to nationalistic sentiments throughout his famous treatise *The Stones of Venice* (1851),[2] and later in a public lecture series delivered in Manchester in 1857 that was later published as *The Political Economy of Art* in 1868. In these lectures, Ruskin expressed his fear that the mass-production of art in accordance with the Smithian model of the division of labour would cause 'degradation and deathfulness to the art-intellect of the country' by separating what he considered the creativity and 'genius' of the true 'artist' from the repetitious and mechanised copying of the 'craftsman' (*PEA* 44, 29). Despite fundamentally misunderstanding – or misrepresenting – Smith's own concerns that the division of labour posed a threat to the creative and intellectual growth of the populace (Smith 268), Ruskin played an important role in the formalising of art as its own political-economic discourse; however, it is evident from my research that many of the arguments made famous through his writings were already present in women's travelogues as early as the 1840s; this is especially clear in travelogues on Egypt, which associate stewardship over the ancient art of Egypt as a national achievement for Britain.

The subsequent developments of the political economy of art, in particular the Arts and Crafts movement which arose from Ruskin's protégé William Morris and other members

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[2] I will abbreviate this work as *SV* for parenthetical citations.

of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, can also be traced through the writings of female travellers in the latter half of the century. The ideals associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement (c.1884-1905) can be effectively summarised as 'the Unity of Art (artists and craftsman working together), Joy in Labour (the creative satisfaction of ordinary work)', and 'Design Reform (making manufactured objects better)' (Crawford 20); many of these ideals were publicly discussed in lectures and publications prior to the formalising of the movement in 1884, including in women's writing on the 'traditional' arts of Japan and China, which were extended in the later century to include modern productions – or 'copies' – of antique designs.

Placed in context with the rising influence of anthropological science in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and the concurrent shifts in the political relationships between Britain and various parts of the East, women's narratives of art collecting in Egypt, China, and Japan offer poignant insight into the interconnectedness between political economic and aesthetic discourses across the century. Both the nationalistic and aesthetic drives to collect authentic Eastern art reveal an inherent tension between the conflicting valuations of art as cultural symbol, and of the industrialisation and commodification of art as a key to solving the economic crises faced by Eastern nations in a rapidly globalising market. The first section of this chapter will demonstrate how early- and mid-Victorian accounts of collecting Egyptian antiquities reproduced and reflected on parliamentary propaganda designed to frame geo-political interference in Egyptian political economy as an extension of the Victorian public interest in the 'preservation' of ancient Egyptian artefacts. Building on this, the second section will examine women's analyses of the effects of illicit or predatory collecting practices on troubled local economies in Egypt and China; placed in context with the parliamentary narratives on art and antiquities, it is evident that early- and mid-Victorian women understood 'curio hunting' as an inherently political-economic activity, as well as a social hobby. The final section will take a close look at the contrast in the reception of forgeries and copies between Egypt and Japan, which I argue represents a reckoning in mid- and late-Victorian notions of 'cultural authenticity' that ultimately led the women to reassess the effectiveness of stadial views on industrialisation as a marker of advanced civilisation.[3]

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[3] I will not address Persia in this chapter, but the Victorian fondness for traditional Persian textiles will be discussed at length in Chapter 4.

3.1 Parliamentary Propaganda and 'Cultural Preservation' in Early Victorian Travelogues

Before examining the travelogues themselves, it is essential to examine the early-nineteenth century Parliamentary reports that established public perceptions of preservation as a political- economic concern, particularly in the case of Egypt. As previously noted, the purchase of the Elgin Marbles – now known as the Parthenon Marbles – for the British Museum was a definitive incident. They were acquired over the first decade of the nineteenth century from the ruins of the Athenian Acropolis by Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin, who oversaw the removal of the marbles from the exterior of the Parthenon with the alleged permission of a *firman*, a kind of Islamic decree, from the Ottoman government which occupied Greece at the time. In 1816, a Select Committee from the House of Commons was appointed to verify the document in order to ratify the purchase of the Marbles, which they concluded was legitimate, according to their published *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons*. Contemporary scholars have contested not only the legitimacy, but the very existence of this document which has never been physically shown to the public. Even if the document was real, the scholarly consensus is that the extent of Bruce's collection far exceeded the stipulations of both the type and number of artefacts covered in the agreement (Bjornberg 464; Gurstein 88). Regardless of the status of the document, the most salient passages of the 1816 *Report* focused on framing the acquisition as simultaneously 'beneficial to the progress of the Fine Arts in Great Britain' (2) and economically beneficial to the Grecian people. The latter claim was based on the claim that the project of cutting down and removing the sculptures 'frequently employed' large numbers of 'native labourers' and was a 'means of bringing foreigners into their country, and of having money spent among them' (4-5). The explicit language of 'progress' – in this case, referring to the value of art as a means of educating the public – and the economic benefits of paid labour and tourism establishes a clear relationship between the preservation of foreign cultural relics and a propagandistic use of the language of 'progress'.

While the obvious purpose of the *Report* was to justify British national ownership of the Marbles, the narrative surrounding the state of the Marbles in Ottoman-Greece positions the rescue of historical ruins as part of a larger negotiation of power between the British and Ottoman empires. Outside of the more general arguments favouring the purchase of the Marbles, the 1816 *Report* credited the 'the success of the British arms in Egypt' against the French occupation for causing 'a wonderful and instantaneous change in the disposition of all ranks and descriptions of people', that transformed 'suspicion and aversion' of the Empire to 'universal benevolence and goodwill' (3); this goodwill was manifested – allegedly – through

the *ferman* granted to Lord Elgin for the removal of the Marbles. This passage marks the first and only stated connection between the Marbles and British foreign policy in Egypt, although the general allegation that 'the Turks' showed 'total indifference and apathy as to the preservation of [the Parthenon's] remains, except when in a fit of wanton destruction' established a public association between the Turkish government and the failure to recognise the value of the remains of ancient civilisations that would later be extended to the Viceroys in Egypt. The *Report* also drew attention to the 'greater waste' of having monuments torn apart for souvenirs by 'the numerous travellers and admirers of the Arts' (5). Thus, the Select Committee successfully framed Britain's removal and retention of the Marbles as a necessary and paternalistic act of preservation which, in turn, would be used to educate and inspire the British public. Crucially, this narrative would serve as the basis for both political economists and travellers in the Victorian era to justify geopolitical interventions in Egypt; furthermore, travellers used this rhetoric of 'preservation' to justify their own participation in the illegal antiquities trade, despite the availability of quality forgeries as legal alternatives.

The influence of the 1816 *Report* is evident in the rhetoric of political economist Dr. John Bowring's 1838 *Report on Egypt and Candia*, initially prepared for the Secretary of Foreign Affairs before its publication in 1840. Bowring's report described the state of Egypt under Mohammed Ali Pasha in meticulous detail, ranging from census data to descriptions of manufactories across the country; this includes the contexts for the *fellaheen*'s avoidance of inclusion in census data referenced in Chapter 2,[4] indicating that Bowring's *Report* was one of Martineau's sources for her own account of the state of Egypt. The most salient portion of Bowring's report in relation to this chapter is his concern for the 'sublime remains of the most remote antiquity of which [Egypt] is still the depository' (3). Bowring decried the 'most deplorable' state of Egypt's 'wonderful and most interesting memorials, both by the native authorities and by European visitors', and insisted that the Pasha should recognise the monuments as 'the most precious possessions of his country' (61). He also recommended that the establishment of an Egyptian museum and the licensing of archaeological excavations and the exportation of antiquities should be handed over to the special commission of mostly European 'individuals' chosen on the basis of 'their position in society, their zeal and enlightened views' (61-2).[5] The insistence that a multi-national committee should cooperatively protect the heritage of a politically unstable nation could be read, at face value,

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[4] C.f. pg.109.

[5] Given that the Pasha had already imposed a ban on the unlicensed removal of antiquities in 1835, two years before Bowring's first journey to Egypt, it is unclear why Bowring appears to claim that he was the first to advise the Pasha to impose such a ban.

as a useful if condescending intervention, had it not been for the repetitious characterisation of the Egyptians as 'subdued … without resistance' (7), 'so universal[ly in] the habit of obedience … [to] "the few" of the foreign race [Turks]' (9). The consistent implication that the once great Egyptian civilisation had been reduced to unquestioning subservience to a despotic foreign influence that could only be remedied by another, benevolent foreign influence, automatically undermines any pretence to altruism in Bowring's account. As noted by historian Eliot Colla, by 'constantly [tying] the preservation of ancient monuments to a consideration of the political and economic health of modern Egypt', Bowring's report 'couched' the British commercial interests driving his attempts to court influence with the Pasha (Colla 108).

One of the key ways that Bowring's report mimics the 1816 Report on the acquisition of the Parthenon Marbles to 'couch' British commercial – and ultimately, colonial – interests was by counter-intuitively pointing out the transgressions of European tourists:

> Whatever may be said of the religious fanaticism of the Persian hordes, the recklessness of the Arabs, or the indifference of the Turks, one generation of Europeans spreading themselves over Egypt as lovers of art and hunters of antiquities, has done more to overturn, deface, and destroy the ancient monuments of Egypt than whole centuries of Mahomedan sway. (125)

The 'indifference' of the Ottoman government and the over-eager 'generation of Europeans' absconding with pieces of antiquity for their own collections remain consistent with the language of the 1816 report; in Bowring's report, however, the latter group is more prominently blamed in contrast to 'centuries of Mahomedan sway' in order to justify the need for Europeans with 'zeal and enlightened views' to regulate access to antiquities (61). This passage functions on two levels: first, to reinforce negative ethnic stereotypes that pre-emptively disqualify Middle Eastern groups from controlling access to their own monuments, and second, to justify European control on the basis that it is their people who are, currently, causing the most damage to the monuments. Placed in context with the much more extensive passages detailing Egypt's plentiful resources, Bowring's attempt to present Europe as both the cause and the solution to the preservation of monuments functions as a trojan horse to gain legal traction within the Egyptian government. Placing the regulatory approval for the export of antiquities under the control of select individuals would also, inevitably, serve the interests of international societies collaborating – or sometimes competing – to acquire the most important pieces of Egyptian history for research and display.

Bowring's proposal was ultimately unsuccessful – the Pasha had already passed a law to ban the export of antiquities without special licence in 1835 (although it was, evidently, not

well defined or enforced), and the Pasha refused to relinquish the right to grant licences for archaeological finds or special purchases from the control of the Egyptian government. Nonetheless, the lasting influence of Bowring's report on the British public after its publication in 1840 is evident throughout women's travelogues, particularly in the way that monuments were read as signifiers of not only the Pasha's, but the Egyptian people's, inability to raise themselves to a higher state of civilisation.

In an account of her visit to the ruins of the temple of Denderah, Isabella Romer addresses the outcomes of the proposals outlined in the 1838 *Report* in *A Pilgrimage to Nubia and Palestine*:

> When Doctor Bowring was in Egypt, he, in conjunction with some other gifted individuals, endeavoured to interest the Viceroy in the preservation of those noble remains of antiquity, so many of which had been completely destroyed, in order to utilise their materials. Among these was the Temple of Denderah [sic], …Mohammed Ali … promised very fairly that he would become the guardian instead of the destroyer of the antique monuments … but when it was proposed that a Commission should be formed for that purpose, and that Dr. Bowring [and his colleague] should be named members of it, the Viceroy peremptorily negatived the request. (1:319-320)

Dendareh features briefly in Bowring's report in a discussion on the saltpetre industry; the stones of Denderah's ruins were said to be rich sources of nitre, which was essential to the production of saltpetre, and Bowring lobbied to have the Pasha put a ban on the processing of stones taken from temple sites (Bowring 98-99). One of the primary uses of saltpetre was the production of gunpowder; Bowring details the output of several saltpetre refineries and a gunpowder factory run by a Frenchman trained in Europe, suggesting that concerns over a well-armed Egypt allied with France was the ulterior motive behind the ban on nitre extraction from temple sites. Given that Romer was a vocal, and often uncritical, supporter of British commercial endeavours in Egypt, it is unclear if she intentionally concealed the ulterior commercial and political motives that pervade Bowring's analysis of Egyptian industry, or simply did not recognise that there was an underlying economic incentive to take control of Egypt's cultural monuments.[6]

In the conclusion of her commentary on Denderah, she invokes the same language of 'civilisation' – originally made famous by Adam Ferguson – that featured so prominently in Dr. Bowring's report as she condemns Mohammed Ali Pasha's decision to:

> [cause] a hideous double wall to be built up from the dilapidated propylon to the beautiful facade of the temple … [and converting the interior] into an occasional stable

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[6] C.f. Romer's advocacy for the Suez Railway project in *A Pilgrimage…* vol. 1, 99-103, also discussed in Chapter 4.

for the cattle. Such are Mohammed Ali's ideas of preserving the gems of Egyptian art! and this being the case, it is scarcely to be wondered at that his subjects evince such barbarian carelessness on the subject. Even when these people do not destroy … they allow every vestige of art to perish around them for want of a little of that energetic spirit of conservatism which has rendered Italy the museum of the whole world. (1:321)

Romer's projection of the Pasha's 'barbarian carelessness' onto the Egyptian people is evidently meant as an endorsement of the interventionist policies proposed by Dr. Bowring. Her accusation that the Egyptians lack an 'energetic spirit of conservatism' goes a step farther than Bowring in downplaying the centuries of occupation and exploitation that weakened the economy and demoralised the people; the direct relationship between neglect and barbarousness suggests that the problem of the monuments was symptomatic of a regressive national character, rather than the long-term consequence of colonialism. Consequently, the subsequent comparison with Italy, which Romer dubs 'the museum of the whole world', reads as broad propaganda for both the superiority of European civilisation and the right of Europeans to serve as the guardians of civilisation across the world. In this manner, Romer's account serves the same function as Dr. Bowring's report by framing 'the values of preservation and acquisition … as unambiguous, desirable indices of modernity and civilisation' (Colla 14).

In contrast to Romer, Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon invoked the language of 'barbarity' against Said Pasha, the third successor of Muhammed Ali Pasha who reigned between 1854-January 1863, placing the responsibility of the monuments' destruction on the Egyptian government. Duff-Gordon recorded in a letter to her husband in 1863 that Said Pasha had brought about 'the destruction of some of the most exquisite buildings; the tombs and mosques of the Memlook sultans' as a means to 'divert himself with bombarding for practice for his artillery …. [Which] added the piquancy of sacrilege to barbarity' (*Letters* 83). Her account clearly places the blame and lack of civilisation on the Pasha, rather than his people, noting that the Pasha made no distinction between Arab and Islamic heritage sites and ancient Egyptian; given that the Pashas were themselves Muslim, Duff-Gordon's comment shows the extreme disconnect between the Pashas and the nation that they ruled. Rather than accusing the Egyptian people of failing to live up to a Western standard of cultural preservation, she places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the ruler who sacrifices the cultural integrity of the nation under his rule for his own amusement.

While the apologetics for cultural preservation remained entangled with political economic interventions, women's accounts of collecting antiquities show that many travellers, including Romer and Amelia Edwards, only lamented that the 'desecrators of all nations' had

beaten them to the discovery of Egypt's 'buried treasures' (Romer 1:291); however, a few authors, such as Harriet Martineau and Duff-Gordon, made attempts to draw attention to the plight of Egypt's citizens, and offer a more nuanced argument on the potential benefits of British intervention. In her assessment of the general state of Egypt under Mohammed Ali Pasha, Martineau asserts that 'one thing is certain' about 'his endeavours to improve the civilisation of his people':

> [he] has omitted the first step, which is essential to all substantial advance. He has given them no security of property or other rights. … He appears never to have learned that national welfare can arise from no other basis than national industry; and that there can be no reliable national industry where no man is sure of receiving the rewards of his labour. (1: 271)

Martineau's defence of private property as an essential pre-condition to 'national welfare' of Egypt appears to be a strong example of her position in political-economic history as an 'heir' to the principles of Smith, Malthus, and J.S. Mill (Palmeri 60). Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was not principally concerned with the question of private property, which he deemed an 'acquired' rather than a 'natural', or intrinsic, right; however, his work acknowledged the importance of private property as a means of ensuring that the labourer would have exclusive ownership over the products of their work, thus contributing to the growth of their own personal wealth and, by extension, the wealth of the nation (Gronow 235). Malthus agreed with Smith's assessment on the benefits of private property to the wealth of the individual, again emphasising it as a means to the greater end of producing wealth for the populace at large (Heitger 383). Mill held similar views to Smith and Malthus at the time that Martineau wrote *Eastern Life*, although he later 'reconsidered and discarded [their] justification' of private property in a more 'radical' move towards socialism (Medearis 135). While it may seem that Martineau was simply parroting the arguments already made by her predecessors – in the case of Mill, her contemporary – it is important to note the definitive nature of Martineau's statement that there can be 'no other basis' for 'national industry' – and consequently, national wealth and welfare – than every man being 'sure of receiving the rewards of his labour'. There is no sense of the ambivalence towards capitalist systems as the essential basis of national wealth and welfare that characterised Mills' body of work, even before his more radical turn towards socialist ideals, suggesting that in terms of nineteenth-century economic thought, Martineau's body of work cannot be so easily dismissed as a simple regurgitation of her male peers' work. Although her argument does uphold Smith and Malthus' principle of private property, the novelty of *Eastern Life* is in her explicit use of the travelogue to practically apply these principles to a geo-political context, narrating the effects

of the Pasha's failure to uphold principles of private property and profitable labour in real time.

It is evident that, for Martineau, the Pasha's ignorance of basic capitalist principles will fundamentally undermine any attempt at developing a modern, thriving Egyptian civilisation. Her disdain for the withholding of rights and profits from the working man is in keeping with her professional interests in political-economic education and advocacy; however, when read in context with the overarching paternalism of her approach to representing the plight of the Egyptians already examined in Chapter 2, it appears that her views on the rights of the Egyptian labourer did not necessarily amount to a desire to see Egypt rise to become a fully independent, capitalist nation. This is made especially clear when compared to Dr. Bowring's summary of Egyptian industry, which, as already noted, was likely a key source that Martineau used to inform her own analysis of the state of Egypt's economy:

> It is difficult to speak harshly of the attempts which have been made by the pacha [sic] to introduce manufactures, with a view of creating, what is called, independence of other countries. The end may be doubted to be wise or politic, and the means are wholly inadequate to accomplish the end, even were it desirable. (99)

Bowring undermines the Pasha's industrial efforts on the basis that Egypt's political-economic independence was not a 'desirable' goal; in the full context of the report, which extensively details Egypt's raw, natural resources and potential for infrastructural developments for international trade and transit, it is evident that a self-sufficient Egypt would disrupt European plans to develop global trade and supply chains. While Martineau offers a stronger, critical position to support the profits of industry being passed on to Egyptian labourers, her arguments still fundamentally agree that globalised trade, tourism, and exports are key to Egypt's development. Her approach to advocating for Egyptian industry, while perhaps more balanced in terms of seeking a mutually beneficial arrangement for Egyptian and European economic development, consistently returns to paternalistic patterns of representation in the context of the antiquities trade, which was closely linked to the highly lucrative tourism industry that was on the rise in Egypt at the time of her travels. As will be discussed at length in the next section, even though she recognises the negative impacts of European interference in the handling of antiquities, it is obvious that she prioritises preserving the relics of ancient Egyptian civilisation over the protection of modern Egypt's most vulnerable classes.

Lady Duff-Gordon's published letters take an exceptionally biased stance against the mutual encroachment of the Pasha's illiberal policies and the exploitative paternalism of

Great Britain. As a long-term resident in Cairo rather than a short-term traveller, Duff-Gordon formed close bonds with her Arab neighbours, and became intimately acquainted with their language, customs, and history. She often wrote in defence of her Arab and Coptic acquaintances, dispelling common misconceptions and stereotypes by sharing anecdotes of their generosity, wit, and struggles under the increasing burdens of Ismail Pasha's economic policies.

In a letter to a friend in 1863, Duff-Gordon passionately argued against the increased conscription of *fellaheen* labour:

> "Don't they deserve to be decently governed, to be allowed a little happiness and prosperity? They are so docile, so contented; are they not a good people?" Those were [my neighbour's] words … Of course half these acts [of oppression] are done under pretext of improving and civilising, and the Europeans applaud and say, 'Oh, but nothing could be done without forced labour,' and the poor *Fellaheen* are marched off in gangs like convicts, and their families starve, and (who'd have thought it) the population keeps diminishing. No wonder the cry is, 'Let the English Queen come and take us.' I care less about opening up trade in the Soodán [sic], or about all the new railways, and I should like to see person and property safe, which no one's is here — Europeans, of course, excepted. (*Letters* 103-104)

The economic and social devastation of the Pashas' conscripted labour practices are laid explicitly bare in Duff-Gordon's letter; the recognition of Egypt's vulnerability to British occupation as a consequence of the cruelty experienced by the *fellaheen* is especially important in context with the impending occupation of Egypt by Britain in the latter nineteenth century. Although Duff-Gordon does not explicitly prescribe an alternative economic structure, there is an implicit agreement that the Egyptian people should have the right to private property and the profits of their labour in order to facilitate widespread economic growth, and the survival of marginalised social minorities.

Aside from Martineau, industry was not a prevalent theme among most women's accounts in this period, with the exception of Romer's discussion of the Suez Railway project which she believed would mutually benefit trade between Egypt, Britain, and India;[7] however, there are at least cursory mentions of the burgeoning sugar and cotton industries across all four accounts, mostly through references to the many manufactories encountered across Egypt.[8] The tourism industry is, by nature of the genre, a ubiquitous presence across each of the travelogues, which – along with the antiquities trade – is presented as an essential

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[7] See Chapter 4, pp. 219-221 for detailed discussion.
[8] C.f. *Eastern Life* vol. 1, 39; *A Thousand Miles* 117, 140, 166, 230, 595; *Letters from Egypt* 41, *A Pilgrimage…* vol.1, 151.

mechanism for the economic survival of the Egyptian people. The link between tourism and the trade of antiquities, real, forged, or scavenged, is a key aspect to understanding how, and why, the propagandising of preservation was essential to the advancement of Britain's vision for global political economy in the nineteenth century. Whether consciously or unconsciously, women's accounts of curio- hunting played a significant role in perpetuating the parliamentary propaganda that paved the way for the British occupation of Egypt at the end of the century.

3.2 Foraging, Forgery, and Foreign Political Economy in the Egyptian Antiquities Trade
This section will examine how women's participation in the antiquities trade, and more importantly, their resistance to the forgery trade, undermined attempts to advocate for industrial growth in Egypt. As discussed in the previous section, the majority of early Victorian women's accounts of the state of Egypt's economy perpetuated arguments from parliamentary reports that portrayed the Egyptian people as subdued, desperate, and consequently unmotivated to protect their public monuments without intervention from the British government. These arguments, which also condemned the European fervour for collecting Egyptian antiquities, or classical antiquities more generally, were consistently reproduced in women's travelogues despite the fact that the women themselves partook in the breaking, spoiling, and illegal trading of antiquities and monuments. The hypocrisy of the women's position is brought into sharper focus by the increased availability of high-quality forgeries manufactured by skilled Egyptian artisans, which they rejected as sustainable alternatives to legitimate antiquities. Later in the nineteenth century, forgeries and industrially-produced crafts also played a significant role in local economies in China and Japan, although these objects received a remarkably different response, both in women's travelogues and in the Victorian collectors' market more broadly; I will discuss the women's responses to forgeries and crafting in Asia in detail in the following section, but in Egypt, female travellers' rejection of forgeries as an alternative to grave-spoiling and illicit trading reveals their complicity in the exploitation of 'regressive' countries' economic and cultural poverty for the sake of their own collections, dubiously justified as a mechanism of cultural preservation. Consequently, the means by which Victorian women represent their experience as collectors of antiquities in Egypt reveals that cultural preservation and artistic production were essential facets of both domestic and global political economy in the early-and mid-Victorian period.

As seen in the previous section, it is evident that Harriet Martineau was aware of the widespread poverty and abuse of the Egyptian working classes that, combined with the

eagerness of European tourists to purchase antiquities, were known contributors to the practice of looting graves. In a chapter devoted to her visit to the tombs of Thebes, Martineau discusses the disturbing history of grave-robbing as both a European and Egyptian phenomenon, emphasising that there is 'no notion of reverence' for the deceased's 'remains' in either culture (2:189). She traces the history of the practice to the twelfth century, citing the historian Abd a-Latif al- Baghdadi's account of Egyptian peasants 'stripp[ing] the mummies of whatever was of substance sufficient to make garments; and [selling] the rags of the mummy cloth to the papermakers, to make paper for the use of the grocers' (Martineau 2:189); although this historical example suggests that the practice was a direct result of economic necessity, Martineau makes little distinction between desperation and irreverence, or between local Egyptians and tourists, in her account of the practice in the nineteenth-century. Later in the passage, Martineau takes an indirect approach to appraising the political-economic implications of grave-robbing in the nineteenth-century present by reframing the practice in ethnographical and religious terms:

> The three thousand years of purgatory of many of these Theban sleepers is now about expiring. If their faith was a true one, and they are now returning to resume their bodies … in what a state will they find their sumptuous death-chambers … Their skulls … are carried away; one to Russia, another to America; one is in a royal palace — another in a Mechanic's Museum: their coffins are burnt to make an English lady's tea, their cere-cloths are made into paper to wrap up an Arab's tobacco … mummies are little more respected in Europe than by the ignorant Arabs who pull them up and into pieces, for sale and use. (2:189)

The association of the dispersal of the body parts and wrappings of mummies with the disruption of Egyptian eschatology suggests that the ethnic and religious distinctions between the present- day and ancient Egyptians were an essential factor in the decision to monetise the contents of the tombs. Although there is evidence from other travelogues that Coptic groups directly descended from the ancient Egyptians also participated in grave-spoiling, Martineau singles out the Arab demographic as the primary offenders.[9] As seen in the previous chapter, there is an evident racial prejudice that underwrites the disparaging comments made by Martineau and other writers about the different ethnic groups residing in Egypt in the nineteenth century, but for the purposes of this chapter it is important to consider the historical and sociological implications of identifying Arabs as the primary group responsible for the ransacking of Egyptian heritage. After the first colonisation of Egypt by Arab groups in the seventh century, Islam had become the dominant religion; the subsequent Turkish

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[9] Coptic Egyptians in this period did not have a single, hereditary religious tradition and the majority had converted to either Christianity or Islam.

invasions, including the most recent conquest of the Ottoman Pashas, further solidified the theological disconnect between modern and ancient Egypt. Martineau frequently expressed her admiration for the ancient Egyptian religion, resulting in a significant controversy over the publication of *Eastern Life* after arguing that the Egyptian faith was older and more sophisticated than the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.[10] Her personal admiration for Egyptian religious history may account, in part, for why she takes this particular approach to arguing that mummies and their burial trousseaus should be left intact, but it becomes clear as the narrative progresses that Martineau's objection to the desecration of the tombs is equally motivated by a desire for the tombs to serve as a form of ethnographic museum.

While on a guided tour of open gravesites in Thebes, Martineau muses on the state of the tombs which had not yet been fully emptied and were kept open as tourist attractions. As she observes the state of the few unspoiled mummies, she reiterates her case that much of the disrespect shown towards the graves and their sleeping inhabitants was due to the loss of the religious context of Egyptian burial practices when other religious traditions became dominant in Egypt. However, this passage subtly emphasises the placement of the mummy 'in its proper place' as a key feature of her argument that:

> there is great dignity about a mummy. Reposing in its recess or painted chamber, and bearing the marks of allegiance to Osiris, and of acceptance by him, there is something as solemn in its aspect as in that of any coffin in an English vault: and this solemnity is not lessened by the thought that in that still breast and sleeping head beat the heart, and wrought the ideas of three thousand years ago. (2:189)

Although this passage makes an eloquent attempt to humanise mummies in protest of their popularity as museum pieces, Martineau relies on the visual positioning of the mummy 'reposing in its recess' to evoke the 'great dignity' and 'solemn aspect' accorded to 'any coffin in an English vault'. The emphasis on visual and cultural context in this passage is

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[10] Publisher John Murray reneged on his advance contract to publish *Eastern Life* due to her passionate defence of ancient Egyptian religion as older and more sophisticated than Christianity and other Abrahamic religions. It is believed that her brother, James Martineau, a 'fundamentalist theologian', may have influenced Murray's decision out of concern that his sister's book would negatively impact the church. C.f. Logan, Deborah A. '"I Am, My Dear Slanderer, Your Faithful Malignant Demon:" Harriet Martineau and the Westminster Review's Comtist Coterie.' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2009, pp. 171-91; Murray, John, and Martineau, Harriet. Three letters concerning the termination of Murray's contract to publish *Eastern Life*. 25-29 February 1848. Harriet Martineau Collection. HM.1187, HM.1189, HM.1190. Cadbury Research Library Archive and Manuscript Collections, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

reminiscent of her previous argument for the importance of seeing objects in their 'proper locality and connexion' (1:183). As seen in Chapter 1, Martineau blatantly argued that the most valuable Egyptian artefacts should be removed to the care of the British Museum; however, since she believed that the mummies could only be appreciated in their 'proper place', the tombs themselves take on the role of a museum. Consequently, her ire at the 'ignorant Arabs' and Europeans who would dig up, disperse, or recycle objects from these ancient tombs may be attributed to the same paternalistic belief expressed by Dr. Bowring and Isabella Romer that modern Egypt required the intervention of a more civilised nation to preserve its ancient monuments, whether by removal or political control.

Despite her passionate stance on the preservation of the tombs, Martineau herself covertly removed pieces of hair and burial cloth from a Theban mummy. This acquisition was not admitted in publication but was exposed by a letter – currently held in the archives of the University of Birmingham – addressed to ten-year-old Ernest Martineau, the son of Harriet's eldest brother Thomas, dated Christmas 1871. In this letter, she claims that she 'saw [the hair] cut from the head of a mummy, dug out of a tomb at Thebes, on the Nile, 1847'. The date and location correlate with the visit to Thebes narrated in *Eastern Life*; in her public account, she admits that:

> while we were fingering the curly brown hair of one of these [Theban] mummies, our dragoman cooly [sic] wrenched off the head, the throat giving way like a fold of rotten leather. I never remember so strange a sensation as in seeing this; but the thing was done before we could stop it. (2:188-189)

There is a clear attempt to distance herself from responsibility by blaming the dragoman for assuming that she, like other European tourists, would find this entertaining; however, the omission that she accepted cuttings of hair and cere-cloth for her personal collection communicates the limitations of her convictions about respecting and preserving Egyptian artefacts. Given her frequent criticisms of other writers, including Isabella Romer, who removed ancient objects from their 'proper locality', it follows that she would want to conceal her complicity, however reluctant, in the dragoman's act of desecration.[11]

In the letter accompanying the gift of the cuttings, Martineau again attempts to reframe her own act of desecration with a long explanation of the religious rites and Biblical history associated with embalming before committing the artefacts to her nephew's care:

> Neither [the woman], nor those who embalmed her body ever dreamed that it should be groped for, & taken out of its tomb, to satisfy the curiosity of European travellers

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[11] C.f. Isabella Romer's admission to stealing fragments of a wall painting in the El-Assasif necropolis in Luxor, *A Pilgrimage…,* 1:292.

several thousands of years later, when Egypt would have long ceased to be one of the greatest kingdoms of the earth, - or a kingdom at all. … Aunt Harriet thinks that Ernest may like to have this real curiosity for his Museum. (HMM/H/4)

Much like her account in *Eastern Life*, this passage seems to frame the act of 'groping' and unearthing mummies as a tragic sacrilege, yet she still offers the cuttings to her young nephew as a 'real curiosity' for his own private 'museum'. There is a clear implication that by telling Ernest the story of the woman's burial rituals she wishes him to treat the cuttings with respect; however, by offering him the objects as a 'real curiosity for his Museum', the value of the artefacts is diminished, yet again, to metonymic fragments of Egypt's 'greatest kingdom' to be protected by a representative of the nineteenth century's greatest empire.

Despite taking a private exception to her own rule, Martineau was one of a few authors to frame the desecration of graves and monuments as a fundamentally regressive practice. Amelia Edwards recorded a graphic and disturbing account of her own experience hunting for antiquities in the village of Saqqara:

the whole plateau is thickly strewn with scraps of broken pottery, limestone, marble, and alabaster; flakes of green and blue glaze; bleached bones; shreds of yellow linen; and lumps of some odd-looking dark brown substance, like dried-up sponge. Presently someone picks up a little noseless head of one of the common blue-water funereal statuettes, and immediately we all fall to work, grubbing for treasure – a pure waste of precious time; for though the sand is full of débris, it has been sifted so often and so carefully by the Arabs that it no longer contains anything worth looking for. (75)[12]

Like Martineau, Edwards blames the Arab population for the mass desecration of ancient Egyptian graves, although the primary locus of her criticism is the lack of collectibles left for herself and other tourists to find for themselves. The objects are described as fragments — 'scraps', 'flakes', 'shreds' — devoid of any value except as an enticement to start 'grubbing for treasure'. It is not until a much later passage, which will be discussed later in this section, that Edwards realised that fragments could have substantial archaeological value, suggesting that she was, at this phase of her life, not especially qualified as an antiquarian. Nonetheless, Edwards and her party continued to rifle among the tombs until they found:

with a shock which the present writer, at all events, will not soon forget … that these scattered bones are human – that those linen shreds are shreds of cerement cloths – that yonder odd-looking brown lumps are rent fragments of what once was living flesh! And now for the first time we realise that every inch of this ground on which we

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[12] C.f. Compare this description with Isabella Romer's account of Arab families selling the spoils of the tombs, including the limbs of mummies alongside jewellery and other more desirable souvenirs; Romer concludes her account of the tragic lives of these Arab grave-diggers and their 'ghastly merchandise' by speculating whether the mummies might 'have preferred … the more distinguished position of the best glass case in a Royal Museum?' (*A Pilgrimage…* 1:293-294).

are standing, and all these hillocks and hollows and pits in the sand, are violated graves. (75-76)

Edwards' claim that she and her party were ignorant of the fact that they were in a burial ground is hard to accept given that Saqqara is most famous for its royal necropolis. Even if this was the case, it is a testament to the extent of the destruction wrought by locals and tourists scavenging for antiquities that the gravesite was no longer distinguishable from the rest of the desert surrounding the ruins of the ancient city.

Despite the horror of this discovery, Edwards confesses that 'we soon became quite hardened to such sights, and learned to rummage among dusty sepulchres with no more compunction than would have befitted a gang of professional body-snatchers' (76). She admits that although she did feel 'something like remorse' when reflecting back on the incident, the 'callousness' required to desecrate a grave was 'so infectious … and so overmastering is the passion for relic-hunting, that I do not doubt we should again do the same things under the same circumstances'; furthermore, she claims that 'most Egyptian travellers, if questioned, would have to make a similar confession' to engaging in this 'predatory' act (76). Edwards' account seems to offer a de facto justification by virtue of the fact that once 'acquiring … a taste for scarabs and funerary statuettes … [tourists] forget all their former scruples, and ask no better fortune than to discover and confiscate a tomb for themselves' (76). The implication that grave-digging sent tourists into a form of hysteria played into – or perhaps informed – the worst Victorian stereotypes of collectors, which – as literary critic Kristin Mahoney observes – 'came to epitomise the deleterious effects of market society on the [late-Victorian] subject's ethical capacity, historical awareness, and aesthetic sensibility' (175).

The relationship between unethical collecting behaviours and 'market society' is reinforced by Michael Hancock's argument that 'collecting, especially by the newly wealthy, began to acquire a popular reputation as a degenerate obsession in mid-Victorian England' (14). Edwards' depiction of the 'infectious' and 'overmastering … passion for relic-hunting' which causes her and her party to abandon 'all their former scruples' makes a clear case for the concerns of moral and ethical degeneration noted by Hancock and Mahoney. Given the consistent reinforcement through parliamentary reports and travelogues that Egypt's economy was fundamentally corrupt and dysfunctional, and required the aid of 'enlightened' European intervention to regulate both its past relics and future growth, it is not surprising that mid-century Victorian travellers would grant themselves an exception from the legal and moral considerations of grave-robbing on account of their own 'zeal' for preserving antiquities (Bowring 61). Edwards' accounts is one of the more extreme examples of collecting as a

degenerate, or in Victorian terms, 'barbaric', activity; the notion that a well-read and educated woman who later came to be known as the 'Godmother of Egyptology' did not recognise that she was digging in a famous gravesite is not entirely persuasive, suggesting that she was aware, at least by the time of writing her book, that this behaviour was not defensible except under the guise of ignorance.

There is a telling contrast between her zeal for digging among the graves with her later discovery of dozens of terra-cotta pottery fragments on a hillside on the island of Elephantine; although she and her party 'could see that the characters were Greek', they disregarded the shards 'believing them to be mere disconnected scraps … taking it for granted, also, that they were of comparatively modern date' (268). Although they 'brought away some three or four as souvenirs of the place, and thought no more about them', Edwards discovered after returning to Britain that her friend and long-time correspondent Samuel Birch, a senior Egyptologist at the British Museum, 'was at this very time occupied in deciphering a collection of similar fragments, nearly all of which had been brought from this same spot' (269). This prompts Edwards and her party to 'lament [their] ignorance and lost opportunities' to be part of a genuine anthropological discovery.[13] This is especially unfortunate as this discovery did not require the desecration of a grave, or infringe on the livelihood of desperate people.[14] Some of Edwards' ignorance about Saqqara and the Elephantine potsherds can be attributed to the fact that this was her first time visiting Egypt, but her long-standing correspondence with Samuel Birch and her credentials as a professional writer and critic suggest an underlying hubris to her activities as a collector; this may be, in part, because she believed herself to be a more refined *connoisseur* than she actually was at the time, but it is nonetheless clear that she wished to establish herself within the world of institutional, as well as private collecting.

In addition to the evident moral concerns associated with her collecting behaviour, Edwards' account of digging at Saqqara reinforces that the mass despoiling of graves and transportation of historical artefacts was already recognised as an unsustainable practice in the world of private collecting long before the end of the century. Even at the time of Isabella Romer's journey to Egypt nearly thirty years prior, it was noted that 'the most beautiful

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[13] She records in a footnote that 'The results of Dr. Birch's labours were given to the public in his "Guide to the First and Second Egyptian Rooms," published by order of the Trustees of the British Museum in May 1874", marking the anthropological discovery that potsherds were used in the first and second century as a means of recording tax or business receipts, and eventually poetry and personal letters during the Roman occupation (pg. 182, footnote 5).
[14] Elephantine was populated by the Nubian people, whose economy was predominantly agricultural.

objects in Doctor Abbott's museum at Cairo were brought from the tombs at Sakkara [sic]; but so thoroughly has the locality been ransacked by amateurs and antiquarians, that very little worth having is now to be purchased of the Arabs' (Romer 1:368). While Saqqara is clearly one of the most egregious examples, it is also evident that by the 1860s the majority of gravesites across Egypt had already been stripped of any objects of value, making it difficult for tourists and collectors to find or purchase antiques without scouring the most remote areas such as the island of Elephantine. Lucie Duff Gordon described one of the few remaining troves in an 1866 letter to her husband:

> I went a few days ago out to Medamoot [Thebes]… [my guide, Sheriff] has a grand romance about a city two days' journey from here, in the desert, which no one finds but by chance, after losing his way; here the ground is strewed with valuable *anteekehs* (antiquities). I laughed, and said, 'Your father would have seen gold and jewels.' 'True,' said he, 'when I was young, men spit on a statue or the like, when they turned it up in digging, and now it is a fortune to find one.' (*LL* 27-8)

Although Duff Gordon does not discuss whether she partook of the 'anteekahs', her conversation with Sheriff offers a look at the valuation of antiquities from the perspective of the Arabs. In one generation, the perception of what was worth finding had changed dramatically, although economic value remained the ruling principle: where a previous generation sought only 'gold and jewels' and would 'spit on a statue or the like', in the course of Sheriff's life it became 'a fortune' to uncover any such antique for sale to tourists. Duff-Gordon's description implies that this remote area had already been spoiled for gold and jewels, possibly by Sheriff's own family, but had not yet been de-spoiled by or for tourists; Duff-Gordon explains that Sheriff had at one time been a thief, but had recovered his reputation as 'an honest man' (27), which may explain why he chose not to participate in an illicit trade, but did choose to share this location with a woman who would both understand – and respect – the integrity of the site. Duff-Gordon's love of the Egyptian people, and her decision to become a resident in Egypt until her death, suggests that she was an exception from the typical tourist who might indulge herself with a small trinket from a hidden trove.

The Victorians' conflicted attitudes towards collecting were not simply tied to concerns of the moral and ethical effects of a 'market society', but to the economic effects of viewing culture as a commodity. Kristin Mahoney's research summarises how the British public became increasingly critical of collectors from the mid-nineteenth century, 'view[ing them as narcissists] who disregarded the alterity of objects and transformed artefacts into markers of taste rather than historical relics' (175). This suggests that the prestige of owning a foreign artefact was not to do with the object's actual role in historical ritual, which Walter

Benjamin termed the 'cultic value', but rather the object as a commodified symbol of history (9). Benjamin posited that this separation of historical function and aesthetic appeal - the 'display value' of the object – was the result of industrial technology stripping the concept of a 'genuine', original piece of art of all 'meaning' once it was possible to mass-produce identical, affordable copies; consequently, art itself was forced to evolve from a 'social' function, to a 'political' one (8-9). Benjamin's reflection, although useful in terms of discussing the long-term effects of industrial copying, oversimplifies the argument that the introduction of industrial copying was the defining line between the 'social' and the 'political' functions of art and art collecting. At the national level, the association between art, social development, and politics is evident in the rise of the exhibitionary complex in the long-nineteenth century, as well as public Parliamentary reports on the acquisition and preservation of foreign relics and monuments. Travelogues by middle-class women show that the relationship between art, politics, and the social prestige of discovering or purchasing a valuable relic was widespread throughout the general British public, whether or not they understood the full implications. Thus, rather than arguing that the political – or political-economic – role of art was a result of the devaluing of historical antiquities, I would argue that it was changes in political-economic thought that redefined the meaning of 'authenticity', and consequently, the locus of value, in art.

Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) argued that the emergence 'of a veritable cultural industry', which started in the eighteenth century, was 'accompanied by a process of differentiation generated by the diversity of the publics to which the different categories of producers aim their products' (113). The resulting products, which Bourdieu designates 'symbolic goods', came to represent 'a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object' whose 'cultural value and … commercial value remain relatively independent' (113). Although the characterisation of artefacts' value as a 'two-faced reality' effectively captures a similar idea to the 'cultic' and 'display' values coined by Benjamin, the notion that cultural and commercial values were 'relatively independent' in the nineteenth century is complicated when considered in light of the introduction of forgeries into Eastern antiquities trades. Independent of political context, forgeries are the ultimate embodiment of a 'symbolic object' that simultaneously copies the aesthetic qualities of a historic object that make it appealing to a collector and removes the necessity that the object be moved from its place of origin. In theory, the acceptance of Egyptian forgeries in the Victorian collector's market would protect the integrity of the historical sites and contribute to the development of an industry that would enable both skilled and menial Egyptian labourers to survive the

turmoil of the Pashas' economic policies. Furthermore, from a capitalist perspective, an open forgery trade had the potential to drive the costs of collectible objects down, enabling lower-middle class collectors to enjoy the aesthetic and symbolic qualities of the objects in their own personal 'museums'. Despite the apparent benefits of the forgery trade for the casual Victorian collector who, as posited by Bourdieu, may have considered the 'cultural' and 'commercial value … relatively independent', accounts of these collectors suggest that the experience of acquiring an authentic piece of Egyptian history was, in itself, as valuable as the object.

The extent of the forgery trade in Egypt prior to the twentieth century has been underestimated in many histories of Victorian collecting; in a particularly revealing example, Dr. Henry Abbott's Cairo Museum – which featured prominently in Chapter 1 – was found to contain numerous forged antiquities amongst its prestigious collection of genuine artefacts. John Cooney, Curator of Egyptian Art at the Brooklyn Museum – where the majority of Abbott's collection now resides – published a detailed analysis of several artefacts which he uncovered as forgeries when they were first loaned to the Museum in 1949. Cooney notes that Egyptian forgeries could be divided into several categories, with the highest quality pieces coming from Paris and Egypt between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The French productions were typically 'honest' forgeries, used for 'decorative objects', while the 'tourist trade forgeries' were 'made with no effort at skilful deception' by Egyptians (11). A separate category is provided for 'partial forgeries … produced since the beginning of the nineteenth century' used to complete or improve broken, legitimate artefacts (11); several statues from Henry Abbott's collection fell into this latter category. One statue, according to Cooney, had a false head likely produced in Egypt between 1832-42; various records suggest that the statue, with and without the head, was on display in Abbott's Cairo Museum as early as 1842, but there is no conclusive evidence that Abbott or his guests – including other high-profile antiquarians – were aware that the head did not belong to the body (13). Cooney notes that the head, once discovered as a forgery, was removed from the statue and discarded by Brooklyn Museum staff since it had 'not a shred of quality to stand separately as a work of art' (16). Despite the apparent mismatch between the head and body noted by the experts at the Brooklyn Museum a century later, it is a testament to the ubiquity of forgeries in Egyptian collecting that premier Egyptologists may have mistaken the head for an original. It is also worthwhile to note that the curatorial staff would have considered keeping the forgery as an artefact in its own right, had it been of a higher – or at least more unique – quality.

Where Cooney's final rejection of the forgery was decided on the basis that it had

neither cultic nor display value, a guidebook for aspiring collectors called *Forged Egyptian Antiquities,* published by novelist T.G. Wakeling in 1912, reveals that cultic value was still a significant factor in the valuation of collectibles decades after forgeries became commonplace in the Egyptian market, thus complicating Benjamin's assertion that industrial reproduction was a direct, causal factor in the devaluing of the 'genuine' piece of art. The guidebook, designed to help with the identification of forgeries surreptitiously sold as genuine pieces, opens with several humorous anecdotes stereotyping collectors who sought expert validation for their inadvertently worthless purchases:

> As a rule, [the forgery] is packed up and taken home, to be presented in due course to some friend with the cautious remark that "perhaps it is genuine." Then some day an unfortunate Egyptologist is brought face to face with it, and he has to make his escape as best he may, with a certain loss of reputation. I have heard a hostess remark sarcastically that she did not know what post was held by her victim in the Antiquities Department in Egypt, but it certainly did not require a clever man to see that hers was an important antiquity. (3)[15]

Assuming that this example is an accurate, if somewhat caricatured, representation, the pretentiousness of the misguided tourist suggests that the value placed on their collectibles was largely contingent on the belief, or at least the hope, that their acquired item was a genuine artefact. Wakeling argues that:

> It does not seem to occur to the general public that so great has been the demand for antiquities on the part of foreign museums, private collectors, and learned societies all over the world that the supply may threaten to give out; that the districts in which the relics lie are carefully watched; and that the Cairo Museum is a jealous guardian. (6)[16]

Wakeling's concern corroborates Kristin Mahoney's observation that by the turn of the twentieth century, 'concerns about the depletion of England's store of cultural objects resulted in increased sensitivity on the part of English collectors to the harm done by collecting' (190). This topic was discussed in multiple 'articles in [the *Connoisseur* magazine which] reflect a dawning awareness that nations have a finite number of cultural resources, a finite amount of history that can be spirited away' (Mahoney 190). While the evident consensus is that there

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[15] Another anecdote parodies male collectors who '[want] an expert opinion upon his purchase' and 'lays a deep plan' to find out the value of his indiscriminate acquisition: 'Perhaps he knows a man connected with the museum, whose opinion is worth having; or, if not, he gets someone to introduce him. Then, one day, in a casual off-hand kind of way, he produces his specimen, and explains that he did not buy it as a " real thing, you know," but it seemed very clever, and he did not pay much for it. Inquiries as to how much has been paid are met by "regrets that he has forgotten —it was so unimportant." Most probably it was pounds, but the buyer will seldom or never tell you.' (Wakeling 4)

[16] In this passage, it is assumed that 'Cairo Museum' is a reference to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, not Dr. Abbott's Cairo Museum.

was not a widespread awareness of forgeries until the Edwardian and Modern periods, it is evident in women's travelogues from the early- and mid-Victorian periods that the travellers who took interest in political economy – and by extension, their readers – were aware of rising forgery trade as early as the 1840s.

While the precise extent of forgeries was not as well understood in the 1840s, it was well- known that the exportation of genuine antiquities was illegal in Egypt from 1835 and that there was a significant legal, as well as financial, risk associated with the purchase of popular souvenirs such as funeral statuettes or scarabei.[17] These restrictions contributed to the popularity of grave- robbing as a tourist activity, and also to the rise of illicit — and often aggressive — trading tactics, including improvised markets like the Aswan 'mob-market' described by Martineau. Local denizens, including children and even government officials, would approach tourists at their boats or on the street to offer them *'anteekahs'*, many of which were either forgeries or, as Edwards noted with amusement, British coins, buttons, and other small items dropped by tourists (243-245, 602). In Edwards' own words, 'every man, woman, and child about the place is bent on selling you a bargain … [which] in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, is valuable in so far as it represents the industry of Luxor, but no further' (602). Luxor – the modern city built near the ruins of Thebes – was known to be a hotspot for the illegal trade of antiquities in the 1840s, and as will be discussed in more detail below, was revealed by Edwards as a major production site for forgeries. While experienced or well-informed travellers may have been instinctively sceptical of objects sold in mob-markets or aggressive local sellers, many fell prey to European dealers, whose illicit networks created additional complications for already-troubled local economies.

Both Romer and Martineau detail encounters with a 'wily Italian' dealer, Signor Castellare, who lived and traded '*objêts de curiosité*' and guided tours of the Luxor ruins (Romer 1:148). Although Romer and her party were 'forewarned' of Castellare's high prices and shady dealings, she welcomed his services as a 'friend in need' because of the language barrier with their Arab guide (148-149). Like Romer, Martineau recalls that her party had already heard of the dealer, who had 'settled himself at Thebes, to discover antiquities, and explain them to those who have faith in his interpretation; and to sell specimens to such as have money enough to pay his very high prices for them' (*Eastern Life* 1:286). Martineau and her party were not approached directly by the Signore, although but rather, an Egyptian employee 'accosted' her party as they were walking back to their accommodation after a brief

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[17] Carved pendants shaped like a scarab beetle.

stroll in the city; mistaking him as a guide for a nearby castle, they agreed to follow him and were ushered into the presence of 'an elderly gentleman on his deewán [sic], enjoying his chibouque' who offered them coffee and dubious and, apparently, unsolicited information about the history of the local ruins (1:286). Both Romer and Martineau's accounts lay bare Castellare's sophisticated *modus operandi* of drawing tourists in with performances of cultural knowledge and hospitality before attempting to sell them over-priced 'antiquities' – this mode of selling was evidently based off of the common Eastern model of prefacing sales with a ritual of hospitality discussed in Chapter 2. Romer describes in particular detail how after an extended conversation over cups of coffee, the Signore:

> exhibit[ed] his antiquities without speaking of them as objects of commerce, and as he is displaying a mummy-chest, or some scarabæus of the time of the Pharaohs, he begs your acceptance of some trifling article with such grace that a refusal would be impossible. Then he has you fast-you feel compelled to ask the price of some more important object, and to beat him down is no longer possible, for he has you in the cleft-stick of an obligation. (1:149-150)

Romer does not appear to question the man's expertise at any point in her account; rather, she expresses a sense of amusement at the man's cleverness in enticing her and her party into making a purchase from his inventory, even though they already knew that this was always the Signore's aim in soliciting their company. The framing of his display as a kind of 'exhibit' correlates with Bell's description of the Turkish Silk merchant who 'laid before us a bundle of embroideries, which we examined politely, complimenting him upon his possessions' (252), although in this instance the seller, as a European, appears to co-opt this strategy in a more direct exploitation of the European fascination with private collections. For Castellare, this tactic allowed him to impress his guest with the age and alleged provenance of the objects before manipulating them into making an expensive purchase. There is no reference to this 'exhibitionary' tactic in Martineau's account, suggesting that the Signore had either dropped this method of sale in the two years that passed between the women's visits, or else he used his conversations over coffee to determine which clients were vulnerable to such sales.[18] Romer concludes her account of the transaction with a sentimentalised defence of her purchases:

> However, in our case, I do not think that the plunder was very outrageous; I believe

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[18] There are several differences in Signore's approach in Martineau's account which suggests that he either refined his methods over time or else varied his approach to keep the grift from becoming entirely predictable. Furthermore, Romer references that on a separate stop in Thebes over Christmas she received a present of butter from the Signore, suggesting that he tailored his methods to the individual buyer, and courted favour with those that proved themselves susceptible to his charm offensive, c.f. Romer 1:280.

that he did not ask above six or seven times the amount of what he would have taken for the articles; and for a few pounds I certainly have procured souvenirs of the place which I would not relinquish for ten times what they have cost me. (1:150)

Assuming that Romer believed in the legitimacy of the objects, it is evident that she was willing to pay well above the market-value of a piece of antiquity on the basis of sentimentality – a form of value that literary critic John Plotz highlights in his examination of *Portable Property*. Most of Plotz's argument on 'the centrality of portable properties to the logic of the [Victorian] novel', which applies equally well to the travelogue, is 'centred … on the question of reconciling economic and sentimental value' (18). As seen in Romer's case, her sentimental attachment to her 'souvenirs' appears to serve as the means of reconciling her decision to spend far more than they were worth under the influence of the Signore, suggesting that she anticipated a certain amount of scrutiny from her readers for her ill-advised purchase.

Contrary to Romer, Martineau gibes at Castellare's self-ascribed expertise, remarking that 'whenever [Castellare] does anything to prove to the world his sound knowledge on the subject of Egyptian antiquities, everyone will be glad of his offered guidance, and of his help, at any price, in securing specimens' (1:286). From this, it is evident that Martineau and her party were keenly aware that Castellare was running a dishonest trade which relied on the naïvete of his clientele; furthermore, Martineau makes it clear that she doubts the validity of his merchandise, implicitly accusing the man of selling forged – or in the best case, unprovenanced – artefacts.

Aside from acting as a warning to other travellers, Martineau's exposure of the Signore's trade, and the 'connivance' behind his inventory, reveals the extent to which illicit dealers damaged the local economy by exploiting impoverished *fellahs* who illegally scavenged objects from the ruins of Thebes. She elaborates that 'the connivance is not likely to last long; for the people of the place naturally dislike that a stranger should take out of their hands the traffic with visitors, which they find much more profitable than their inevitable sales to the Signor' (*Eastern Life* 1:286). This resentment on the part of the *fellahs* was evidently justified, as the intrusion of a foreign dealer who was better equipped to win the trust of wealthy European tourists added an additional obstacle for the Egyptian working class to obtain control over a profitable industry under the Pasha's brutal taxation and property laws. The tragedy of their situation is not fully explored in this passage since the main focus is on Castellare, but at this point in the chapter Martineau's position on the necessity for Egyptian workers to receive the 'rewards of [their] labour' has already been established

(1:271). When viewed through political-economic terms rather than the sentimentality of collecting, a case such as this, where cultural objects are scavenged and sold off to traders for significantly less than they are worth, should clearly signal why the Egyptians appeared to place such a low value on the artefacts of their own history while foreigners considered them priceless treasures. Nonetheless, despite Martineau's stated concerns over the lack of profitable industry, her narrative continuously returns to the damage inflicted on ancient ruins by scavenging *fellahs*, rather than exploring the possibilities of the forged souvenir industry as an economically viable, and archaeologically sustainable, alternative. Her consistent argument that the most valuable Egyptian objects should 'surely be [British] national property' demonstrates that for Martineau, the interests of British civilisation took precedence over enabling progress towards an economically independent Egypt (*Eastern Life* 2:81; Bowring 99).

Amelia Edwards' offers a more in-depth analysis of the Luxor forgery industry, essentially providing a blueprint of the commercial infrastructure of the antiquities trade in the early 1870s. Edwards' description of her arrival at Luxor reveals the degree to which forgeries had already infiltrated the market:

> The [dealers] waylaid and followed us wherever we went … Some of these gentlemen were Arabs, some Copts – all polite, plausible, and mendacious.… Both sell more forgeries than genuine antiquities. … Their carvings in old sycamore wood, their porcelain statuettes, their hieroglyphed [sic] limestone tablets, are executed with a skill that almost defies detection. As for genuine scarabs of the highest antiquity, they are turned out by the gross every season. Engraved, glazed, and administered to the turkeys in the form of boluses, they acquire by the simple process of digestion a degree of venerableness that is really charming. (600-601)

The passage immediately calls attention to the fact that forgeries were a multi-ethnic enterprise, involving both Arab and Coptic dealers. The full significance of ethnicity within the forgery industry will be discussed in a later passage, but as previously noted Arab Egyptians were frequently scapegoated as the main offenders in the scavenging and selling of dubious, if not altogether fake, antiquities, suggesting that this passage was designed to dispel assumptions that a non-Arab was more trustworthy.

There is no mention in Edwards' book of Signore Castellare or any other, specific, European dealers active in Luxor at the time of her visit, however, where Martineau only alludes to the localised social and economic disruption caused by antique dealers, Edwards provides an explicit analysis of how forgery, dealing, and tomb-scavenging overlapped or competed for the business of tourists:

> Side by side with the work of production goes the work of excavation. The professed diggers colonise the western bank. They live rent-free among the tombs; drive donkeys

or work shâdûfs by day, and spend their nights searching for treasure.[19] Some hundreds of families live in this grim way, spoiling the dead-and-gone Egyptians for a livelihood. Forgers, diggers, and dealers play, meanwhile, into one another's hands, and drive a roaring trade. … A good thing, of course, is to be had occasionally; but the good thing never comes to the surface as long as a market can be found for the bad one. It is only when the dealer finds he has to do with an experienced customer, that he produces the best he has. (602)

The characterisation of forgery 'production' and grave 'excavation' as 'side by side' industries gives a much greater sense of how embedded both practices were within the Luxor economy. The phrasing of Edward's description that the 'professed diggers colonise the western bank' suggests a territorial sentiment between local factions, with the lowest, working classes claiming the tombs as both their workplace and their home. The tragic image of 'hundreds of families' who perform menial or agricultural labour during the day scavenging and sleeping among the tombs at night speaks to the dire straits which enabled both tourists and dealers to take advantage of their finds. Their situation is then made more precarious by the presence of dealers – whether Arab, Coptic, or European – who aggressively courted the trust, and subsequently the custom, of tourists upon their arrival into the city. While there is some suggestion from Edwards that the three industries 'play into each other's hands' in a symbiotic fashion, Martineau's discussion of Castellare's business had already shown that diggers were ripe for exploitation by dealers. From this, it is evident that the added competition from mass-produced forgeries in the Luxor market had the potential to create further disadvantages to diggers attempting to excavate already despoiled tombs by night, unless there were to be a radical change in the collector's market that relinquished the cultic value of an authentic object for the pure display value of a quality forgery.

Edwards closes her initial description of Luxor with a summary of the legal implications of both iterations of the local antiquities trade:

Private excavation being prohibited, the digger lives in dread of being found out by the Governor. The forger, who has nothing to fear from the Governor, lives in dread of being found out by the tourist. As for the dealer, whether he sells an antique or an imitation, he is equally liable to punishment. In the one case he commits an offence against the state; and in the other, he obtains money under false pretences. (602-603)

This brief commentary suggests that, although the diggers were clearly placed at the highest risk from both legal and financial penalties, the entire antiquities trade in its mid-century form was a dangerous and unsustainable business. The inherent dishonesty of the trade, whether

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[19] A *shâdûf* was a hand-operated mechanism used to control the flow of irrigation systems; they were commonly used in the Middle East and India at this time.

lying to the government, the tourists, or both, placed all participants at risk of severe penalties should their activities be exposed. As previously discussed, the mass despoiling of graves by and for tourists had led to a dramatic reduction of actual, intact antiques worthy of selling; and, as demonstrated by Edwards' behaviour at Saqqara and the testimony of Wakefield's guide, the thrill of the search for legitimate antiques was itself an attraction for tourists that continuing beyond the nineteenth century into the early twentieth. Although facsimile antiquities were openly sold in places like Paris, London, and even Cairo throughout the nineteenth century (Cooney 11), the humiliation of accidentally buying a forgery was, as noted in Wakefield, a source of intense concern for travellers who spent indiscriminate amounts of money on what they believed to be a valuable – and rare – piece of Egyptian history. When divorced from the political economic reality of life in Egypt in the nineteenth century, such deception would understandably be deemed unacceptable; however, in context with the legal restrictions on selling legitimate antiquities, and coupled with the decreasing availability of such artefacts, it is clear that European tourists' emphasis on collecting items with an authentic cultic value was at odds with the needs of the Egyptian people to create a legal and sustainable industry. The existence of a facsimile antiquities trade – in this case, referring to pieces which were openly sold as reproductions – suggests that there was at least a small market willing to purchase pieces based on their symbolic display value, although likely at a lower cost than a presumed-real antique.

As noted at the start of Edwards' account of the Luxor trade, her account goes out of its way to note the ethnic identities of the 'polite, plausible, and mendacious' dealers (600). The implications of this recognition are not addressed directly in this passage, although she does make some attempt to distinguish that although 'Copt and Arab [people] drive the same doubtful trade' there were some 'shades of difference in their dealings' (601). Edwards further labels 'the Copts [as] the most artistic' in terms of the creation of forgeries, while 'Arabs are perhaps the less dishonest' in terms of selling them (601); this points back to the obsession with 'national character' that underwrote Victorian narratives of industry and progress discussed in Chapter 2. The singling out of the Coptic people as the more 'skilled' labourers suggests that they are the most capable of achieving a more advanced stage of industrial development, although this is somewhat undermined by the characterisation of Arab merchants as the more honest traders. This assessment of national – or in this case, ethnic – character is in direct contrast to an assessment of Coptic business dealings by Lucie Duff Gordon, recorded in a letter from Luxor in 1864, that described the Coptic people as 'not at all green where [their] pocket is concerned, but they will take anything from the English' (*Letters*

221). In Duff-Gordon's assessment, it is the Coptic traders who are at the risk of exploitation by the English, rather than the other way around; however, the contrasting impressions given of the Coptic – and by extension the Arabs – demonstrate the futility of attributing particular activities or traits to a single ethnic group in this period, given that both groups suffered under the same economic and legal restrictions under Turkish rule. What remains important is that these groups did have a different national and religious ancestry, and consequently may have suffered different degrees of deprivation and disenfranchisement over the centuries. While it is outside the scope of this chapter to fully explore these implications, it is useful to maintain a critical awareness of these different relationships to Egypt's cultural and religious heritage which, as mentioned earlier regarding accounts of Arab grave-spoiling, were likely to have affected the motivations and methods by which various groups worked to survive the economic turmoil. Keeping this in mind, and given that there are discrepancies in the assessments of the Arab and Coptic peoples' 'national character' cited in this chapter, it is interesting to note whatever mistrust may have been attributed to both groups in the context of selling forgeries, the quality of the workmanship – termed as 'artistry' by Edwards – was praised.

Edwards describes how she and one of her travelling companions 'penetrated into a forger's workshop' (603) which had been set up in the former house of the English Consul. Unaware that the house had changed owners, Edwards and her companion were greeted by 'an old deaf Fellâha [sic] [who] … after some hesitation showed us into a large unfurnished room with three windows. In each window there stood a workman's bench strewn with scarabs, amulets, and funerary statuettes in every stage of progress' (603-604). She describes the various materials and tools which they observed around the workshop, including 'a massive fragment of mummy-case in a corner behind the door [which] showed whence came the old sycamore wood for the wooden specimens' (604). She concludes 'that three skilled workmen furnished with European tools had been busy in this room shortly before we were shown into it'; at this point in the narrative, Edwards and her friend were hastily removed by:

> a well-dressed Arab … Distracted between his Oriental politeness and his desire to get rid of us, he bowed us out precipitately … We heard him rating the old woman savagely, as soon as the door had closed behind us. I met that well-dressed Arab a day or two after, near the Governor's house; and he immediately vanished round the nearest corner. (604-05)

The first major point raised in this passage is that Egypt was as much or more stratified by class than ethnicity, demonstrated by the abuse of the *fellaheen* woman. It is implied that she was employed in a domestic capacity under the authority of the 'well-dressed Arab', who was

of the same ethnic heritage.[20] Edwards notes that the 'skilled workmen' of the forgery shop used scavenged, antique materials to produce convincing forgeries, which supports her earlier observation that the 'forgers, diggers, and dealers play, meanwhile, into one another's hands' (602). The absence of the 'skilled workmen' at the time of Edwards' visit obscures their ethnic identities, but Edwards' earlier comments that the Copts were the more 'artistic' suggests that this workshop may have employed Coptic workers to produce high-quality 'specimens' from the recycled wood of an authentic sarcophagus. This again points to the idea that while the Victorian authors clearly took interest in noting the ethnic difference between groups, and attempted to ascribe particular 'characters' to them, it is ultimately a question of class, not ethnicity, which defines the characteristics of the observed groups. Without acknowledging the impact of either class or economic struggle on the rise of illicit workshops and dishonest sales, Edwards advises her readers that she:

> should not … like to buy anything at Luxor without first taking the opinion of the English Consul. His experience is great, and his courtesy inexhaustible. The Prussian Consul has also a fine judgement in antiquities … Meanwhile, the Governor, who is a man of strict probity, deals out such even-handed justice as he can, and does his best to enforce the law on both sides of the river. (603)

Her own resistance to purchasing forgeries and reliance on the expertise of European Consuls reinforces a mistrust of Egyptian sellers and tacitly contributes to the perpetuation of illegal trades which put the most vulnerable classes at the highest risk for the least reward. Although not explicitly stated in Edwards' account, it is evident that the forgery industry served a pivotal role in the economic structure of nineteenth-century Egypt, even though it likely never reached its full potential due to the early exposure of the industry by travellers and collectors.

Although the severity of Egypt's political-economic decline, exacerbated by the ethnic and class divisions resulting from centuries of foreign occupations and economic mismanagement, is clearly illustrated throughout Martineau, Duff-Gordon, Romer, and Edwards' accounts, the majority of these representations do not acknowledge the degree to which European 'preservation' acted as a hindrance to the successful industrialisation of Egypt. From the viewpoint of the European collector, the value of owning a legitimate antique and the thrill of the find outweighed considerations of how despoiling Egyptian antiquities

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[20] C.f. Additional contexts on the stratification of class within Egyptian ethnic groups in the nineteenth century can be found in Kholoussi, Samia, '*Fallahin*: The "Mud Bearers" of Egypt's 'Liberal Age.' *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*. Edited by Arthur Goldschmidt, and Amy J. Johnson, Cairo, 2005. *Cairo Scholarship Online,* https://doi.org/10.5743/cairo/978977424900 6.003.0011. Accessed 1 Nov. 2022.

directly contributed to the exploitation of the working classes who relied on the antiquities trade — whether by digging, forging, or dealing — to survive. While the women decry the excessive taxation and centralisation of production under the Pasha dynasty and, in the case of Martineau, advocate for industrialisation and property to be privatised for the benefit of the middle and working classes, concern for the Egyptian populace is undermined by their exposure of the forgery industry to other European tourists. The framing of forgery workshops and dishonest dealers as the main threat to amateur collectors, rather than the legal or ethical implications of acquiring authentic antiquities, suggests that the industrialisation and commodification of cultural objects did not necessitate a shift of the locus of value to an objects' 'symbolic' or 'display' value, as suggested by Benjamin and Bourdieu, but rather that it temporarily reinforced the 'cultic' value. Were the collectible value of the objects to be fully divorced from their value as historical artefacts which served a specific cultural or religious purpose, then it follows that forgeries would have been acceptable alternatives, assuming that this was known at the time of purchase; however, as already noted, there is no single axiom of value which can fully account for all collecting activities which took place in Egypt throughout the nineteenth century.

Put in context with the rhetoric of 'preservation' as a political-economic endeavour, the travellers' arguments in favour of the industrialisation of Egypt's economy and protection of Egyptian antiquities are clearly at odds with their exposure of the grassroots forgery industry which had the potential to accomplish both goals simultaneously. This reveals a fundamental flaw in the authors' pretence of advocating for a linear conceptualisation of economic 'progress' whilst also advocating for British control of Egypt's cultural relics: although the industrial reproduction of ancient crafts would raise the Egyptians from economic and cultural poverty towards a more advanced state of economic development, an independent Egypt would be a direct obstacle to Britain's own national progress. From this, it is evident that the link between art production, industrialisation, and nationalism in the public consciousness was not a novel result of mid-century theorists, like John Ruskin, or watershed cultural events like the Great Exhibition, but was a common feature of political-economic discourse dating back to the early-Victorians. In his published lectures, *The Political Economy of Art* (1868), Ruskin acknowledges that 'the statements of economical principle given in [his] text … are accepted by existing authorities on the science', although 'not supported by references' because they were taken from generalised discourse, not from specific authors (vii). Thus, although many of these ideas were developed and formalised into political economic discourse by Ruskin and other male critics of the mid- and

late-Victorian period, there is no legitimate basis to exclude the influence of women travellers from histories of this critical field.

3.3 Reframing Industry, Tradition, and Craftsmanship through East Asian Art Collecting

As new treaties made travel to China and Japan accessible to Western diplomats and tourists, new opportunities opened for both male and female collectors to acquire authentic Asian art and antiques. Chinese and Asian-inspired art - collectively referred to as 'chinoiserie' - had been fashionable in Britain since the eighteenth century, but by the mid-nineteenth century many elite collectors had lost interest in the aesthetic beyond certain niche objects that had not become associated with middle-class 'decorative' commodities. The introduction of Japanese art into European markets in the late 1850s, and then the British market at the Great Exhibition of 1862, started a new craze known as *japonisme*; while most studies divide collecting activities between *connoisseurs,* who are typically assumed to be upper- or middle-class men, and female or working-class amateurs, it is evident from the accounts of female travellers that the gendered division between amateur and *connoisseur* was not as definitive as it has been commonly represented, and that female travellers played an active role in shaping both public and academic perceptions of Japanese art and art production in the latter nineteenth century (Gray 3). As the nineteenth century progressed, the emergent science of anthropology, in particular the sub-field of ethnography, became an increasingly important influence in the political economy of art; simultaneously, the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain escalated Ruskin's association between art and nationalism into William Morris' campaign for the revival of traditional craftsmanship as a means to achieve a utopian socialist society.

This section will assess how female travellers in China and Japan engaged with the rapidly developing mid- and late- Victorian discourses on craftsmanship, economics, and nationalism through their activities as collectors. Unlike Egyptian collectibles, which – in the majority of cases, were only deemed valuable if they were legitimate antiquities – collectibles from China and Japan were not solely valued based on their age or historic functions. This is especially true in Japanese collecting circles, where 'modern' art, which was produced by a combination of traditional and industrialised methods, and 'antique' art, which was necessarily traditional in both production method and design, were viewed as separate categories. From this, the cultic value of art objects was a less important factor in discerning its overall value to the collector because most collectible pieces were already produced for decorative or practical purposes. Rather, it was the means and quality of production, the

materials used, and the aesthetic (display) value of the objects that were the most important factors considered in collectors' accounts, including those by women travellers. In countries like China that were actively resistant to industrialisation, many modern productions bore little difference to antiques in the eyes of the average buyer; however, there was still a social currency to be obtained in the purchase or discovery of a rare antique, suggesting that there was still a significant emphasis placed on the cultic value of objects. I argue that the contrast between the women's resistance to industrialisation in Egypt, discussed in the previous section, and their eventual acceptance of factory-produced or 'copied' art in Japan, reveals a discursive shift away from how the conditions of production impacted the accessibility and market value of authentic objects, to how the conditions of production challenged the very concept of authenticity. Consequently, the women's narratives reflect the changing priorities of political economy in the late-nineteenth century from championing economic growth and industrialisation as a means of social advancement, to prioritising cultural and social identity as drivers of economic growth.

Even though the majority of collecting activity took place in markets and curio shops, there were a few notable parallels between the predatory practices used in the Chinese and Egyptian antiquities market that expose similar links between narratives of collecting and the representation of localised political economy in East Asian travelogues. There are several important examples of this in Alice Frere's travelogue, starting with her acquisition of fragmented 'remains of the far-famed "Porcelain Tower of Nanking,"'[21] also called the Porcelain Pagoda, which was 'now nothing more than a ruined heap of broken bricks and pieces of mouldings, and ornamental tiles of bright colours' (278). The Nanking Tower was constructed in the fifteenth century as part of a Buddhist temple complex, but during military exercises in the 1840s, British soldiers are known to have removed pieces of the Tower and brought them home as souvenirs, which were 'not surprisingly … later sold or auctioned'; although the porcelain fragments were inferior to most Chinese ceramics in every aspect, their historical significance … aroused nostalgic sentiment among lovers of Chinese civilisation and made them into valuable collectibles' (Savoy et al.). The quality of the porcelain itself appears to have been valued by at least some collectors; in the first comprehensive guide to ceramic collecting, aptly named *Collections: Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain in the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries…*(1850), collector Joseph Marryat praised the Nanking tower as 'sufficient proof of the durable nature of porcelain', which had 'hitherto withstood all the alterations of the seasons … without exhibiting the slightest symptom of deterioration'

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[21] In the present day, this city is more commonly known as Nanjing.

(96). Tragically, the Tower, along with much of the city of Nanking, was occupied by Taiping fighters in 1851 and the Tower was reduced to rubble around 1856. The Treaty of Tientsin, signed in 1858, ensured free passage to British tourists upon the 'recapture' of Nanking, which did not come to pass until the end of the Taiping Rebellion in 1864, approximately a year before Frere commenced her East Asian travels.

After approaching the Tower ruins, Frere notes that the only original 'tiling' still intact was 'an enormous bronze bowl, which formerly stood at the very summit' that was now lying at or close to ground level (278). She attributes the state of the Tower ruins to the 'large village here, apparently inhabited by very poor people'; in a narrative closely resembling the treatment of ruins in Egypt, Frere explains that:

> all the porcelain bricks (which only formed the surface of the tower) have been collected by these people, and it was not long before a large quantity of small, broken pieces was brought for us to buy; but it was difficult to find any bricks that were not imperfect. The porcelain is very fine, white, and with a most beautiful glaze upon it. The tower as it stood here in its pristine glory, just outside the southern capital of the empire, must have been a truly splendid object. (278)

As already observed in travelogues on Egypt, there is a direct correlation between struggling, post-war economies and the rise of localised, often illicit trades in fragments of historic ruins. The residents of the city of Nanking, which had not as yet recovered from the eleven-year occupation of the Taiping armies, were presumably aware that British soldiers had a fondness for the porcelain tiles; after the admission of British tourists into the region, it follows that a trade in scavenged porcelain would follow. In contrast to narratives on Egypt, Frere does not appear to construct a propagandised narrative around the Chinese' ostensible lack of care for ancient monuments; although there is some apparent regret at the loss of the 'truly splendid' sight of the tower, the emphasis of her complaint is the difficulty in finding a perfect brick to purchase from the local villagers. Given that the British had already achieved their political-economic aims of infiltrating the Chinese market and obtaining access – if not complete control – of China's main port cities, there was little need to integrate the discourse of cultural preservation into narratives of collecting in China post-1860. Placed in the larger context of Frere's narrative, her aggressive approach to collecting suggests that even though she was aware of the political-economic stakes surrounding many of her acquisitions, her priority was building her public image as a collector, including in Nanking.

She continues her anecdote with the declaration that:
> I believe we were the first ladies who ever visited Nanking. The treaty opening the port is declared, but there is as yet no commerce. The news of our arrival, therefore, caused great excitement, and a large crowd of curious, but civil and good-tempered, natives soon flocked round to behold us, and the owners of bricks to press upon us

their wares. (278)

Given that the previous chapter has already discussed how British women were still hesitant to travel to certain parts of China at the end of the century, it is reasonable to accept Frere's belief that hers was either first, or one of the first, travel-parties to bring female tourists into Nanking in 1865. This gives credence to the idea that there was a unique excitement among the brick-sellers at the potential new market for their wares, although the degree to which this reflected a particular association between femininity and porcelain or a broader association between foreign tourism and novelty purchases is less certain. As some of the earliest civilian travellers to visit the newly established treaty port, it is only logical that the local community would take advantage of the opportunity to develop a new market for their bricks in the absence of other forms of commerce. It is evident that any British woman travelling in China at this time would have had at least some expendable income, which is a more probable explanation for the eagerness of the Nanking villagers to 'press … their wares' upon Frere and her party.

It is important to address that porcelain, in current scholarship, is given special significance as a feminine collectible in nineteenth-century Britain, although there are several points in Frere's account that challenge a simplistic, gendered reading of her interest in the Nanking porcelain. Porcelain had been one of the most desirable Chinese commodities in Britain since the seventeenth century, 'only to expand dramatically in the eighteenth century, the latter being marked by a strong enthusiasm for chinoiserie' more broadly. The popularity of porcelain among female consumers has come to be understood, in academic terms, as a 'trope [that] was part of a global chinoiserie imagery that served as a network of topoï to define female frailty', further 'linked to female extravagance, unreasonableness and irrationality' (Alayrac-Fielding 660). Similarly, Tom Stammers argues that female collectors dominated 'the field of Chinese ceramics' until the 'late-nineteenth century', when it was 'subject to reclamation by elite men whose scholarly approach to the topic was explicitly constructed against the long-standing decorative appeal such objects held for women' (19). This opposition between female and male collectors is constructed on the basis that women favoured porcelain for its 'decorative' qualities, whereas men favoured items based on historical, aesthetic, and monetary values. Although the term dates further back in the nineteenth century, decorative objects were defined in John Ruskin's *The Political Economy of Art* as 'lower arts of ironwork, pottery, decorative sculpture, and such like', only useful as a positive benefit for young artisans to train (*PEA* 42,64); in the context of *japonisme* and Victorian material culture more broadly, the distinction between 'fine' and 'decorative' art

was imbued with significant gendered associations between objects that were mass-produced as household decorations and objects deemed by *connoisseurs* as valuable on the basis of antiquity or craftsmanship.

Stacey Pierson offers a more nuanced argument that although the 'primary consumers' of Chinese porcelain in Britain after the seventeenth century were women, the association between porcelain collecting and femininity was largely based on 'popular imagination if not exclusively in practice' (35). This suggests that there were at least niche groups of male collectors who continued to collect pottery regardless of its feminine associations before the 'reclamation' of Chinese ceramics in the early twentieth century, despite the potential association with effeminacy. This understanding is consistent with an extensive footnote in Joseph Marryat's *Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain* which records that 'collecting china appears to have reached its acme of absurdity' in the seventeenth century (106 footnote continued from 105) Marryat cites travel writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu alongside several male writers who mocked the excesses of female collectors of chinoiseries in the mid-seventeenth century; he refers to 'China vessels' as 'playthings for women of all ages' before ridiculing 'the prince of collectors, Horace Walpole', who was publicly satirised as 'one who loved rarity for rarity's sake', which was considered an 'inferior order of collecting virtù' (106, footnote continued from 105) Although referencing an earlier century, there is an important distinction made between ridiculing the type and extent of collecting and denouncing the lack of 'virtù' associated with indiscriminate collecting of items 'for rarity's sake'. Virtù is a feminine noun in Italian, which can be translated directly to mean 'moral virtue' or 'quality', although the framing of Walpole as a 'prince of collectors' appears to be a play on the Machiavellian concept of princely virtù as 'a practical skill that may be an end in itself, and thus structurally … similar to the classical notion of prudence', especially that associated with masculine valour and political efficacy (Kahn 75). Immediately after the comment on Walpole, Marrayat's footnotes includes one more 'anecdote' about a male collector named Turner, 'a great chinaman', who attempted to sell a broken jar for twice its original value because 'it was the only jar in Europe that had been cracked by an earthquake' (106). This anecdote contextualises the critique of 'rarity for rarity's sake' as a commentary on Walpole's lack of discrimination as a collector, unable to distinguish 'rare' from valuable. In this sense, the ridicule of Walpole's masculinity as a collector of chinoiseries is de- centred from the objects of his collecting and focused instead on his ignorance and gullibility as an avid collector of decorative objects without legitimate market value.

Although there is a substantial historical evidence, including other passages in

Marryat's book, to support that middle- and upper-class Victorian women disproportionately valued porcelain, china, and other chinoiseries as decorative objects, there is evidence in later chapters of Frere's travelogue that male travellers, including diplomats, had a serious interest in collecting these same types of items. Frere's own interest in the war-torn Nanking porcelain is evidently not an expression of frailty or domesticity, but rather a desire to possess an object with significant cultic value to the history of China, and a broader collectible value established by military men and *connoisseurs* with an academic interest in Chinese history. Thus, although there were certainly gendered trends and social politics involved in East Asian collecting, women's motivations for collecting cannot, and should not, be universally reduced to simplistic stereotypes or associations between types of objects and femininity. This is further supported by Frere's account of her visit to 'the best curiosity shop' in Peking, accompanied by 'one of the Secretaries of the Legation', who:

> had a rare collection of china, enamel, and jade-stone. Being a connoisseur to a certain extent before he came to the country, he soon learnt what was really worth having though to the eyes of the uninitiated perhaps possessing no value. He consequently avoided the misfortune of many, who buy their knowledge very dear by the purchase of a vast amount of rubbish, for which they probably pay as much as they would afterwards, when more experienced, give for more valuable and beautiful things. Time is another great requisite for making a good collection. (328)

This passage parses out several important factors to acquiring what Frere deems 'a good collection', immediately signalling to the reader that her own aims in collecting extend beyond mere decorative consumption. There is no implication in this context that the Secretary's interest in collecting 'china, enamel, and jade-stone' is considered unusual or un-masculine; rather, she highlights his savvy in 'avoid[ing] the misfortune of many' amateur collectors 'who buy their knowledge very dear' after ignorantly accumulating 'vast amount[s] of rubbish'. By designating that the Secretary was 'a connoisseur to a certain extent' prior to his assignment to China, it is clear that he had dedicated a fair amount of time to this activity — 'another great requisite for making a good collection' — which gave him an advantage over the 'uninitiated' in identifying what had a value beyond decorative fashion. In terms of Frere herself, her association with such an experienced and discriminating buyer acts as a signal that her own shopping activities should be viewed as more than simple decorative consumption. This does not mutually exclude, however, that Frere does not consider her purchases on the basis of attractiveness or personal enjoyment:

> I confess that I am not an enthusiastic admirer of jade-stone; it certainly is very pretty, but I can hardly understand its enormous money value nor appreciate the raptures into which its admirers go on seeing a particularly good piece. But the enamels, old china, bronzes, and carved work, delighted me. (328-329)

159

Frere's analysis of the valuation of jade-stone demonstrates an important degree of self-awareness with regards to how items are valued in the market, versus how they are valued by the purchaser for their decorative or aesthetic qualities. In this case, she identifies that she has little interest in collecting jade, despite the fact that she considers it attractive, and in doing so she distances herself from those who experience emotional 'raptures' over a piece of jewellery. Instead, she associates herself with 'enamels, old china, bronzes, and carved work'. 'Old' china did not come into 'vogue' as a collector's item until the nineteenth century; although some of these porcelain pieces were not actually Chinese in origin, they were believed to represent a less commercialised version of Chinese ceramics than were commonly found 'in a large country house', such as the items sold from Walpole's estate in 1842 (Pierson 54-55). Thus, Frere again separates her interest in ceramics and Chinese collectibles from the average consumer taste, and associates her personal 'delight' with the collectibles – in this case, antiques – that have the highest market value.

Having established herself as a discriminating collector, Frere again reveals her ruthless and predatory approach to acquiring the collectibles that caught her eye in the curiosity shop. After explaining the best way to haggle with a Chinese shopkeeper on any given day — which, similar to Bird's account of haggling in Japan in Chapter 2, was to leave the shop and return at a later time with a low offer — Frere explains that 'The best time for making purchases is just before the Chinese New Year, by which day it is a point of honour for every Chinaman to have paid his debts. So much so, that he will sell almost anything far below its value to enable him to do so' (328). She does not give specific examples of prices, nor does she indicate which items she decided to purchase, but it may be assumed that she chose from the selection of 'enamels, old china, bronzes, and carved work' referenced earlier.

The passage takes a more sinister turn when she reveals the full ramifications of haggling during the Chinese New Year:

> With those who cannot free themselves from debt at this season suicide is a common alternative! But to return to our shop and its owner – a quaint little old man, very knowing about his goods, and keeping the best things hidden away until he began to see signs of departure, and then slyly producing something which he knew would keep us. (328-329)

The callousness with which Frere discusses the suicide of Chinese debtors is reminiscent of Edwards' attitude towards tomb-raiding in Saqqara; in both cases, the emphasis of the passage is on how the misfortune of the local people either benefits or disadvantages the collector. In Frere's case, the ritual suicides are framed as a convenient source of leverage for the buyer

160

who, if fortunate enough to be in China at the correct time of year, may be assured of a cheap acquisition if they are willing to haggle. Her accusation that the shop owner 'slyly' manipulates her and her party back into his shop with his best items only highlights the slyness of her own advice to her readers on the best way to reduce the man's profit margins during his greatest time of need.

Although she does not record purchasing many collectibles herself, Isabella Bird wrote a similar account of the New Year's debt rituals in Kuei-Chow Fu (Kuizhou) in *The Yangtze River and Beyond*; her version offers a somewhat more sympathetic view of this annual custom on the Chinese locals. She begins with a general description of pop-up markets towards the end of the Chinese calendar, when:

> tables appeared in the streets a month beforehand, and all sorts of tempting articles were displayed upon them in a tempting manner. This is the time when things can be had cheap, and many articles of bric-a-brac and embroidered dresses are for sale which are not obtainable at any other time. For in order to pay debts, a sacred obligation worthily honoured in the observance, many families are obliged to part with possessions long cherished. (160)

The popularity of Chinese embroideries will be discussed in the following chapter, but the use of the descriptor 'possessions long cherished' implies that heirloom and antique objects were part of the 'bric-a-brac' even though this term usually denoted a less valuable collection of decorative objects. Bird's narration continues for several pages, describing the various specialty goods and gifts which were commonly exchanged as part of the festivities before returning to discuss the custom of debt-repayment in more detail:

> The paying of debts and settling of accounts is a highly praiseworthy custom, and one which we might introduce among ourselves with advantage. Although only a custom, it has all the force of law. If it can be avoided by any sacrifice, no debt is carried over New Year's Day without either an actual settlement or an arrangement regarded as satisfactory by the creditor. To do otherwise would be to secure a blasted reputation. If men owe more than they can pay, custom compels them at this season to put all they have into the hands of their creditors and close their business concerns; and one among the causes of suicide is when men have not enough to pay their debts with. Interest on loans rises, the pawnbrokers' warehouses are choke-full, and most kinds of commodities fall in value, while second-hand clothing and many other personal possessions are to be bought cheap. (*Yangtze*, 163)

The language Bird uses to describe the New Year debt collection foregrounds the social and economic consequences that the otherwise 'praiseworthy custom' of debt repayment had on the reputations and businesses of the indebted rather than highlighting the benefits for tourists or collectors, although the latter is certainly implied. Given Bird's reputation as a respected ethnographer, it follows that she would approach the topic from this angle, but it highlights

the omission of social and economic context in Frere's account; for example, Frere neglects to contextualise that the sale of personal goods was only required where 'an arrangement regarded as satisfactory by the creditor' was not agreed upon, and thus was a final – and desperate – resort. Furthermore, Bird makes a point to note that there were wider economic consequences, such as rising interest on existing loans and 'choke-full' warehouses that resulted in a general drop in the value of 'most kinds of commodities'. The characterisation of the desirable curios and dresses sold off by families 'obliged to part with possessions long cherished' to fulfil a 'sacred obligation' further reminds the traveller that these items are not merely collectibles, but sentimental objects which were commodified and sold below market value by necessity rather than choice. Given the importance of sentimentality in Victorian material culture, it is unlikely that Bird's choice to frame the objects as having sentimental value to the Chinese was incidental.

Although Bird's passage paints a more holistic and sympathetic picture of the devastating financial and social consequences of the New Year season than Frere's, Bird does not explicitly discourage travellers from making purchases under these circumstances. From both accounts, there is an evident counter-argument that the purchase of reduced-price objects from the indebted Chinese sellers might prevent the need for some individuals to commit ritual suicide; much like travellers in Egypt perpetuated the exploitative scavenger-dealer trade networks to obtain antiquities, a cycle of economic precariousness made local Chinese communities vulnerable to exploitation by Western tourists, who — whether in ignorance or greed — further contributed to the structural instability of local and regional economies in their search for desirable collectibles.

There were other, less exploitative means by which travellers in China obtained valuable objects that offer useful insights into the way that traditional crafting factored into the nineteenth- century Chinese economy. Constance Frederika Gordon-Cummings was a Scottish landscape artist, travel writer and advocate for the education of the blind in China; she was also good friends with Isabella Bird and traveller-painter Marianne North (Laracy 69).[22] In her travelogue *Wanderings in China* (1886), Gordon-Cummings recounts a shopping day in an unnamed city in the Chekiang province, guided by her ship-captain, Captain Steel, who:

> as a sympathetic curio-hunter, invited me to a very early breakfast on board, to be
> followed by a prowl in the city, so I started at 6.30 in the cool of the morning, and

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[22] Bird was partially responsible for ensuring the publication of Gordon-Cumming's first book, c.f. Laracy, pg. 75.

after breakfast we explored china-shops and wood-carvers — pawnshops, where old theatrical dresses of rich silk or satin beautifully embroidered, lay piled on the floors, in tempting display. I invested in some dainty enamel cups, and a set of silver shields, which are worn by Chinese ladies to protect their horribly long nails. (2:71)

Despite the darker implications of the term 'curio-hunter', Cummings' actual 'prowl' around the city does not, as recorded, appear to involve any unethical or problematic tactics. After she and the Captain 'explored' the shops — which were customarily located in the same building as the manufactories, thus affording foreign shoppers an entertaining spectacle regardless of whether or not they chose to buy — Cummings ultimately chooses to 'invest' in enamel and silver finger-nail shields. The latter object appears to fascinate Cummings as a cultural novelty as much as an article made from a valuable material; subsequent descriptions of Chinese nail fashion as 'horribly long' and 'like a dangerous bird of prey' (2:71) suggest that Cummings was either not aware of the cultural significance of these valuable and intricate shields, or else did not care. The shields, which ranged from two to six inches in length, were worn by upper-class women as a status symbol, implying that they had no need to labour with their hands (Michael Backman). The choice to purchase this luxury item, along with a set of 'dainty enamel cups', rather than one of the 'tempting' 'old theatrical dresses' suggests that Cummings was at least somewhat calculated about her purchases, which she describes as 'invest[ments]'. Unlike Frere, Gordon-Cummings' choice to purchase modern luxury items rather than sentimental antiques sold by desperate members of the lower or middle classes shows that not all nineteenth century collecting activity was inherently unethical or predatory.

Although Gordon-Cummings was less concerned with political-economic or ethnographical analysis, her account of the Canton jade market raises a significant point about the role of class in the production and marketing of authentic or imitation jewellery. This passage marks an important distinction between the rejection of imitation objects as 'forgeries', or the acceptance of a deceptive facsimile as an alternative to a prohibitively rare or expensive object. Gordon-Cummings first remarks on the 'enormous quantity' of the authentic 'precious mineral' for sale in Canton, indicative of the 'extraordinary value which [is attached to it]' (1:67). She marvels first at the size of the market, which included 'a very large square building' as well as numerous 'open booths and shops' in 'many of the surrounding streets', and second at the fact that:

though every Chinese woman who can possibly obtain a jade ornament delights in it, as a European or an American glories in her diamonds, the prices are so prohibitive that it is difficult to imagine how a sale can be obtained for such a mass of bracelets and brooches, ear-rings and finger-rings, and especially of very ornamental pins for

the hair. (1:67)

There is an obvious implication from this passage that the majority of Chinese jade was purchased by a minority of Cantonese society. The 'prohibitive' pricing of the authentic stone is thrown into sharp relief by the revelation that 'poor women and middle-class tradesmen … solace themselves with imitation gems of green glass, or some such composition … and effectually deceive the untrained eye' (1:67). The lower-class purchaser is an intentional participant in the deception of 'the untrained eye', which places the axiom of the object's value on the prestige associated with appearance of authenticity. In this case, there is no indication of disapproval at the availability of imitation jewellery; rather, she appears to accept the pragmatic and inexpensive alternative as an inevitable result of a trade that has priced itself into a niche market. As previously noted in John Cooney's account of forgeries in the nineteenth century, there was a known trade in high-quality forgeries of antiquities in Paris and Egypt which was unproblematic on account that they were openly sold as fake. Cooney makes the case that the controversy surrounding the 'tourist trade forgeries' resulted in the seller's intentional deception of uneducated tourists in order to sell them low-quality reproductions (11). While there is an obvious distinction between an intentional choice to purchase a forgery, and being sold a forgery under false pretences, in the case of the Canton jade market the lack of cultic value – which was a significant factor in the rejection of Egyptian forgeries – was not applicable to a modern production. This included modern productions of traditional crafts.

At the end of her excursion through the market, Gordon-Cummings laments that:

We saw no specimens of very artistic work … but the prices of even simple thumb-rings or earrings are so great, that I had to console myself by the thought that I could get much more show for my money by investing in some very pretty vases of a cheap green tone mounted in well-carved stands of polished blackwood. (1:69-70)

Her admission that she must 'console herself' by purchasing lower quality items which give her 'more show for [her] money' again shows the calculated nature of her approach to collecting. Cummings' choice to 'invest' in vases that, although 'cheap', would give the appearance of a more valuable purchase. While this is not the same kind of deception associated with 'forgeries' in Egypt, there is a suggestion that purchasing a lower-quality item that might give the appearance of something more valuable to 'the untrained eye' was acceptable in cases where there was no cultic value attached. The introduction of imitations or lower quality – and hence more affordable – productions does not erase the existence of 'social function of art', which Benjamin argued was thrown into 'upheaval' once the question

164

of 'genuineness' was made obsolete (9). Although China did not introduce mechanised production methods into the jade industry until the twentieth century, jade was produced in both local and regional 'centres' during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912); the craftsman of this era also introduced superior 'tools and technologies' that reduced production times and enabled them to produce 'reproduction jades [that] looked exactly the colours of the original ancient pieces' (Boda 167). As indicated in Gordon-Cummings' discussion of the imitation jade sold to the lower classes in Canton, both the quality and authenticity of a piece of art was directly tied to class politics; while Gordon- Cummings does not appear to have extensive knowledge of the jade industry in China, her invocation of class associations in both Chinese and Western contexts suggests that imitations and reproductions, whether mechanised or produced by hand, did not inherently erase the social status of owning a genuine piece. Thus, a genuine piece of low-quality stone that '[gave] much more show for … money' was a socially acceptable compromise that offered the financial benefits of a fake without the stigma of a forgery.

Although China was viewed as a staid or regressive economy in stadial terms, there is a key similarity between the representation of reproductions or imitations in China and the introduction of industrialisation into the Japanese art market. While collectors of Egyptian artefacts were predominantly interested in the age and historicity of antiquities, the perception that traditional crafting methods in both China and Japan survived into the nineteenth century obscured the lines between antique and modern art. The lingering influence of eighteenth and early-nineteenth chinoiserie on Victorian taste was revived by the introduction of *japonisme* to the wider Victorian public in the 1862 Exhibition. Consequently, the primary consumers of Chinese, and later Japanese, art were not specialist collectors, but middle-class men and women attracted to a broadly defined pan-Asian aesthetic, meaning that both antiquities and 'modern' art productions were highly desirable to the majority of self-styled collectors. The minority of *connoisseur* collectors were far more invested in historical authenticity, but the limited access to Japanese art and antiquities prior to the 1850s meant that very few collectors had the expertise to recognise, let alone access, legitimate Japanese antiquities. Modern and antique Japanese, Chinese, and Korean ceramics were frequently misidentified by experts in this era, because unbeknownst to even the most respected *connoisseurs,* all three countries had not only borrowed techniques and designs from each other over the centuries, but all modified their designs for the Western market and frequently pooled their exports together to meet Western collectors' demands.[23]

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[23] C.f. Fukunaga, Ai. *British Collecting of Ceramics for Tea Gatherings from Meiji Japan:*

Contrary to many scholarly assumptions, women's travelogues were some of the earliest accounts on Japan that addressed the impact of the rapid political-economic changes that took place during the Meiji Restoration, and in doing so revealed the changing production methods and Westernised designs that had overtaken the international collectors' market (Gray 3; Rousmaniere 267). Although the women identified that industrialisation had negative effects on the quality and aesthetic authenticity of 'modern' Japanese art, the language used to describe the emergence of 'imitations' and 'copies' in the Japanese art market, placed in context with the emergence of the Arts and Crafts movement in the late-nineteenth century, suggests that Victorian conceptions of 'cultural preservation' and 'authenticity' were forced to evolve when applied to a nation perceived as politically and economically 'progressive'.

Alice Frere visited Japan directly after her travels in China, where she continued her quest to obtain valuable curios and antiquities for her collection. She records her visit to Yokohama's famous 'Curio Street', where 'the principal curiosity vendors [have] established shops' catering to the growing presence of Western tourists:[24]

> Even the commonest articles are beautifully made by these ingenious people. … I tried to get as many things as possible put separately into the little wooden boxes, in which they pack one's purchases, simply for the sake of the boxes; they are so strong, and so perfectly finished. (414-415)

Frere's effulgent praise of the wooden packing boxes immediately establishes the supremacy of Japanese craftsmanship, highlighting the attention to detail and skilful execution afforded to even the most pedestrian and pragmatic of objects. In the midst of her raptures over the various delights of both the content and layout of these 'admirably arranged' shops, Frere laments:

> that curiosities, like many other things, seem to have deteriorated since the admission of foreigners into the island. There are now many 'base imitations' of pretty things made wholesale for exportation to England and America. It is with great difficulty that really valuable things can be procured, so good are the imitations, and so few are the curiosity hunters who can discern between them and an original. (415)

The 'base imitations', in this context, appear to serve the same purpose as the cut-glass

[24] As mentioned in previous chapters, prior to the 1890s only visitors with diplomatic privileges or sponsorship were permitted beyond a limited radius of the port cities Nagasaki and Yokohama.

jewellery in the Canton market, in the sense that they are meant to look like an expensive piece of modern craftsmanship but are made with less rare, and thus less expensive or durable, materials; however, it is not expressly confirmed if this is the case, or if the 'imitations' were forgeries of antique designs. Regardless, Frere's comments mark one of the earliest public records of the infiltration of inauthentic products into the Japanese curio-market. Although she does not provide specific details of the types of objects that she identified as imitations, she describes a variety of curios that caught her eye in Curio Street, in particular some 'exquisite' ivory carvings which she immediately compares to the Chinese:

> [The Japanese are] in my opinion, infinitely superior. The Chinese are very clever, patient, and grotesque in their designs; but the Japanese possess an amount of real fun, and a sense of the ludicrous, which exhibits itself strongly in their works of art. There are certain little pieces of ivory, called 'nidjkis' [sic; *netsuke*] … or 'buttons' … Some of these 'buttons' are very beautiful, not only as carvings, but for the expression and taste displayed in the attitudes, groping, and executing. (415-416)

As seen in Chapter 2, comparisons between the Japanese and the Chinese were a common trope after the opening of the Japanese border, and in this case the direct comparison of their aesthetic sensibilities and craftsmanship act as yet another metonymic representation of their national characters. The specific reference to *netsuke* – small, intricately carved fobs made of various valuable materials – as an example of the 'real fun' and 'sense of the ludicrous' in Japanese art also lends credence to Frere's self-proclaimed expertise; *netsuke*, which had mostly fallen out of fashion in Japan by the nineteenth century, became one of the most common collector's items of European *japonistes*[25] along with the *inro*[26] they were designed to hold in place. Her recognition of their appeal as a collectors' item, and as a representative of the difference between Japanese and Chinese aesthetics more broadly, reinforces the mid-Victorian image of Japanese art as the ideal blend of Orientalist fantasy and Western industriousness.

      The political-economic conditions of modern Japan are brought to the foreground of Frere's narrative of shopping for antique lacquer in Tokyo (Yedo). After advertising to her reader that she was fortunate enough to purchase 'the only four pieces' of lacquered China 'we could find or hear of in Yedo' (418), she explains:

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[25]*Japoniste* was the self-appointed moniker of upper-class French bachelor coteries who became obsessed with Japanese art in the 1850s. c.f. Reed, Christopher. *Bachelor Japanists: Japanese Aesthetics and Western Masculinities*. Columbia UP, 2017.

[26] *Inro* were carved boxes used to hold tobacco, money, calligraphy pens, etc. The *inro* would be suspended on a cord passed below the *obi*, or belt, of a man's *kimono*; the *netsuke* were attached to the other end of the cord as a counterweight.

> Some of [the lacquer] now made is very fine, but not to be compared with the real old lacquer, which is very rare. This is hardly ever brought into the market, except when some old family is in such distress for want of money that they bring pieces of antique lacquer (which is highly esteemed by them as family plate with us) to be sold at Yedo or Yokohama. (419)

This comment, although contextualised as advice to antique curio-hunters, directly relates the state of the Japanese antiquities market to the impending fall of the feudal *shogunate* government that caused widespread social and economic displacement. The dissolution of local, feudal governments in favour of a centralised democratic system – which took full control of the country in 1868 – destabilised centuries of established social order, including the feudal patronage system which traditionally funded artisans and kilns (Karlin 180). At the time of Frere's visit, three years before the Meiji coup, she notes that there were still:

> on some of the noblemen's estates manufactories of lacquer, from which their owners derive great wealth. Some are celebrated for the excellence of the lacquer. Articles made there are always marked with the crest or crests of the owner of the estate, so that which is much sought after, such as Prince Satsuma's lacquer, may at once be recognised by seeing his crest upon each piece. (419)

Frere correctly identifies that a few of these traditional manufactories survived in the post-feudal era, including the renowned Satsuma ware kilns of southern Kyushu. These kilns, originally built by Korean artisans, continued to produce after the Meiji Restoration period began, but reached 'the height of [Western] popularity … from around 1885' before 'the market became saturated with cheaper, mass-produced work lacking the quality of the earlier pieces', resulting in a loss of favour in *connoisseur* circles (Page). The Satsuma ware brand was one of the long-term casualties of the 'abolition of domains' which 'forced local daimyo [feudal lords] to renounce their traditional rights and privileges' and complicated relations between 'the central and local governments' (Karlin 180). Japanese ethnographer Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) argued that as cities moved to adopt Western capitalism, the consumerist trends instigated in the urban environments led to the 'overproduction of cheap imitations' designed for domestic consumption, which arose in addition to the 'wholesale' productions Frere identified for the western market (Karlin 231).[27]

Despite the rapid changes to Japan's political and economic superstructures, the minutiae of everyday life remained somewhat consistent during this period, in the sense that most families retained a preference for the traditional Japanese way of life. The overall 'increases in the standard of living' led to 'a greater demand for traditional goods' within the

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[27] English translations of works by Yanagita Kunio discussed in Karlin are not currently available, so this reference is necessarily a paraphrase.

Japanese market, which enabled traditional modes of production and consumption to continue alongside the introduction of mass-manufacturing (Hanley 467). This divided market is evident in Isabella Bird's account of her stay in Kyoto in 1878, where she identified the drastic differences in aesthetic design between the gaudy and 'grotesque' decorative pieces produced for export to the Western markets, and the more traditional, minimalist designs in homewares produced for the domestic market (*Unbeaten* 2:256).

Although Bird was initially impressed by Kyoto, which she declared was 'truly the home of art', she later insisted that she 'cannot join in the uncritical admiration of modern Japanese art which is fashionable in some quarters' (*Unbeaten* 2:254, 256). In anticipation of her readers' curiosity, she further qualifies that:

> I see numbers of objects everywhere, and especially here in Kiyoto [sic], which gives me great pleasure, and often more than pleasure. It is not alone the costly things which *connoisseurs* buy, but household furnishings made for peasant use, which are often faultless in form, colour, and general effect. (*Unbeaten* 2:255, original emphasis)

The contrast between the 'costly things' favoured by elite Western collectors and the 'household furnishings made for peasant use' is the first key identification of divided markets within Japan. In this instance, she does not specify that the expensive art is inauthentic, but rather that it is unaffordable to the average Japanese citizen; nonetheless, even the everyday homewares are no less 'faultless' in their aesthetics than in their utility. The relationship between the beautiful and useful in art was a key argument of art critic and designer William Morris, and one of many parallels between Japanese design philosophy and the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In his first public lecture to the Trade Guild of Learning on 'The Lesser Arts', Morris argued that household implements should '[give] people pleasure in the things they must perforce *use*' (4, original emphasis). This lecture was delivered the same year that Bird travelled to Japan and was later published in the 1883 collection *Hopes and Fears for Art,* three years after the first publication of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*. Thus, in the same way that art production was already being discussed as a political-economic concern in women's travelogues before Ruskin's seminal publications, Bird's travelogue suggests that the discourse of utility and beauty in arts and crafts was already in the public consciousness years before Morris began to formalise his influential arguments in public discourse and in print; this will be discussed again, in more detail, later in this section and in the following chapter.

Bird's argument is also important as a rebuttal to Aestheticism, an influential movement that reached its peak between 1860 and 1900 that apotheosised beauty as the sole concern of aesthetics, and rejected any political, social, or economic meaning in art. In 1873,

critic Walter Pater, one of the leading voices in the movement, defined art from the perspective of 'the aesthetic critic … as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations' (xi). The Aesthetes famously adopted grotesque prints and Japanese fans into their opulent design aesthetic and designed 'Japanese tea rooms' later described by Japanese critic Kakuzo Okakura as a 'mere vulgar display of riches' (81). Many of the most prominent British *japonistes*, including Dante and Gabriel Rossetti, Christopher Dresser, and Oscar Wilde, were associated with this movement, although some also went on to become supporters of the Arts and Crafts Movement that reunited discourses of design with the political-economic concerns of production. Placed in context with the shifting discourses of art and aesthetics between the 1860s and the 1880s, Bird's praise of the 'household furnishings' used by the Japanese lower classes over the 'costly things which *connoisseurs* buy' is an implicit response to the extravagance of the Aesthetes, and the misapprehension that the objects favoured by this movement were not representative samples of Japanese art and design. This becomes even more apparent as the passage continues, and she details how:

> … on cups, vases, or lacquer made for Japanese use the effect of solitary decoration is understood, and repetition is avoided. Instead of the big birds and trees and great blotchy clouds in gold paint, which disfigure lacquer made for the English market, true Kiyôto [sic] lacquer, made for those who love it, is adored mainly with suggested sprays of the most feathery species of bamboo, or an indication of the foliage of a pine, or a moon and light clouds all on a ground of golden mist. (*Unbeaten* 2:255)

Bird's disdainful comparison of the 'big' and 'blotchy' designs 'which disfigure' the products made for the Western market and the 'true', delicate and minimalist designs 'made for those who love' the authentic Kyoto productions fundamentally accuses *connoisseurs* of not only poor taste, but a fundamental ignorance of the conditions of Japanese production. Without an awareness that there were separate industries – and aesthetics – for local and international products, neither amateurs nor *connoisseurs* could know that 'the items [they] coveted… were little more than simulacra of Japanese art and culture' because they were 'not the result of authentic artistic production, but of commercial reproduction' (Gray 8).

It is evident that for Bird, an understanding of the means of production were key to understanding aesthetics in the Japanese market. Her ideological affiliation with Ruskin's views is especially apparent in her use of terminology to describe the means of production for modern Japanese art: 'Generally in their best modern productions, they do but imitate themselves, and an attempt to please the Western buyer results in lacquer overburdened with expensive ornament… all the work of the craftsman, and not of the artist' (*Unbeaten* 2:256-257). The distinction between 'craftsman' and 'artist', as mentioned in the previous section, was a key element of Ruskin's argument for art production as a central concern of political

economy. While Ruskin associated skilled copying as the remit of the 'craftsman', the marker of the artist was the marriage of the 'Imaginative part of the intellect and the Sensitive part of the soul' (*SV* 382-383). Invoking this language in the context of Japanese production firmly situates her frustration with 'the uncritical admiration of modern Japanese art which is fashionable in some quarters' as part of a broader political-economic discourse grappling with both the industrialisation and globalisation of art and crafted goods.

Despite Bird's concerns over the impact of Westernisation in the Japanese modern art market, her response to industrially produced forgeries demonstrates a more complex relationship between the systems of value that motivated art collecting and modes of production. While visiting 'one of the workshops fostered by the Government' in Kyoto, Bird describes:

> a pair of vases a foot high to-day … which were simply perfect, copied from one in the imperial treasury at Nara. An English workman who "scamps" his work, and turns out a piece of original vulgarity, or a badly executed imitation of a real work of art, should see what honest, careful, loving labour does here in perfection of finish for one shilling a day. It is true that work at which a Japanese would hardly look passes muster with foreigners. (*Unbeaten* 2:256)

Although blatant forgeries – or 'copies' – Bird celebrates the vases as an example of what 'honest, careful, loving labour' can produce, in contrast to the 'English workman who "scamps" his work, and turns out a piece of original vulgarity, or a badly executed imitation of a real work of art' (*Unbeaten* 2:256). In this context, Bird argues that a 'perfect' Japanese copy is preferable to an 'original vulgarity' on the basis of its workmanship; this suggests that for Bird, the historical authenticity of the vases is less important than the authenticity of the craftsmanship which produced them. Bird continues to praise the investment of the Kyoto government in establishing a 'Board for the Promotion of Industries' which:

> In order to correct the tendencies to imperfect copying, and degradation of true Japanese art, the Government of Kiyôto [sic] has established a "Board for the Promotion of Industries," which is doing most praiseworthy work in raising the standard of excellence in silk weaving, and in the making of bronze, porcelain, and embroidery. It has also established schools in which apprentices are taught different trades under teachers paid by the Government, and in every way is trying to elevate the productions of the native manufacturers … the bronze workshops, which turn out such beautiful and finished works of art as were sent to the Paris Exhibition, are no better than ordinary blacksmith's shops, and the appliances are of the rudest description. (*Unbeaten* 2:257-258)

Bird's use of the word 'degradation' to describe the risk posed to 'true Japanese art' hearkens back to Ruskin's first lecture in the *Political Economy of Art*, which argued that mass production and copying would lead to the 'degradation and deathfulness to the art-intellect of

the country' (*PEA* 44). However, in Bird's estimation, the Kyoto Board's investment into the education and training in the arts most commonly associated with Japanese national identity[28] – silk, bronze, porcelain, and embroidery – struck a balance between preserving traditional craftsmanship for future generations and advancing industrial production to trade on a global market scale. The comparison of the Kyoto bronze works to the 'works of art … sent to the Paris Exhibition', made with 'appliances … of the rudest description' further draws attention to the nationalistic implications of art production that were central to Ruskin's writings, but applied in the context of an industrialising society; although, like Ruskin, Bird criticises the division of artisanship from craftsmanship in the Meiji Restoration era, Bird's praise of the Kyoto Board of Industries is suggestive of many of the ideals which came to characterise the Arts and Crafts Movement which would not be formalised until four years after the publication of her travelogue. In particular, her account suggests that the Kyoto Board placed a significant emphasis on 'the Unity of Art (artists and craftsman working together)' as the key means of integrating tradition with industry (Crawford 20). Compared to Ruskin, William Morris was less opposed to the use of machinery or factory labour in unskilled working-class professions,[29] but he maintained that the decorative arts should be produced with traditional hand-crafting methods in order to produce a revolution in Victorian attitudes towards mass-consumption; in turn, he believed that reducing the demand for mass-produced commodities would reorient the Victorian economy towards a utopian socialist model. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the development of the Japanese own political economy of art, it is worth noting that the writings of Morris and other members of the Arts and Crafts Movement were widely read and emulated in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Japan, contributing to the rise of a Japanese folk craft movement (*Mingei*) and socialist revolution. Thus, Bird's discussions of artistic nationalism and the viability of a return to traditional crafting within a globalised industrial infrastructure shows that she was not merely a keen observer, but a prescient one.

Fourteen years after Bird's travels in Japan, Mary Bickersteth recorded some of the long- term outcomes of Japan's move towards industrialisation. After visiting various factories producing *cloisonné*, china, *setomono* (Japanese pottery), and Chinese lanterns, Bickersteth concludes that:

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[28] C.f. Mary Bickersteth's discussion of 'the characteristics arts of Japan' in Chapter 1.

[29] I will discuss the classist implications of Morris' views on working-class labour and craftsmanship in the following Chapter 4.

There is evidently no falling off in the artistic power of the people. The only danger is that now, when they take orders from the owner of a factory, who is bound to supply the foreign market, they should execute these orders with modern rapidity and carelessness. In the old days each workman was in the employ of his feudal lord, and recognised as an artist. His daily wants were provided for, so that he was free to work out each design in full perfection, very seldom repeating it, and generally content to be entirely unknown to the world. (137)

Bickersteth also draws on the Ruskinian concept that artists and craftsmen serve different purposes in art production, but like Bird – and by this period, the published works of William Morris – she does not accept that these roles are mutually exclusive. For Bickersteth, the primary risk lies in the pressures of meeting a global demand for their artistic productions, '[suggesting] a nuanced idea that the industrial craftsman may still be considered an artist if they are able to (re)produce items with the requisite skill and care' (Gray 9). It is recorded that her brother, the Rev. Bickersteth, read *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* as part of his cultural education after he was appointed to the South Tokyo Diocese, so it is likely that Mary Bickersteth was familiar with Bird's work either directly or indirectly before embarking on her own travels (S. Bickersteth 147). Thus, there is reason to infer that Bickersteth's analysis was building on the hopes for Japanese industry expressed in *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* as well as the general discourse of the Arts and Crafts Movement that had reached its peak near the end of the century.

3.4 Conclusion

Although most of these travelogues predate the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late-nineteenth century which arose from the work of Ruskin, William Morris, and others, it is evident that the discursive preconditions that gave rise to these movements were already widely known and discussed in the works of Victorian women. The description of the skilled craftsmanship involved in the forgery of antiquities, and the situating of the grassroots forgery industry within the broader class conflicts in Egypt under the Turkish rulers' oppressive taxation gestures towards the more explicit discussions of art, nationalism, and industrialisation which run throughout travelogues on Japan and China between the 1860s and 1890s. In isolation, discussions on Egypt's antiquities trade can be read as cautionary tales for British tourists and amateur collectors, but in comparison with later accounts of art collecting and production in China and Japan a number of similarities emerge that reframe the Egyptian travelogues as early, yet formative contributions to the development of a political economy of aesthetics. Accounts by Harriet Martineau, Lucie Duff-Gordon, Isabella Romer and Amelia Edwards illuminate the proliferation of tomb-raiding, illicit networks, and forgeries in the

Egyptian antiquities trade resulting from the economic mismanagement of the Turkish Pasha dynasty. Similarly, Alice Frere, Constance Cummings, Isabella Bird, and Mary Bickersteth reveal the growing complexities of identifying valuable and authentic Chinese and Japanese curios as changing political and trade relationships led to the industrialisation of traditional crafts. Although industry is generally represented as a vital and commendable pathway to political-economic progress in Egypt, China, and Japan, when considered in context with nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticisms on art and industrial reproduction the women's accounts of collecting eastern art and antiques reveal a growing Victorian consciousness that the stadial notion of progress through industrialisation must evolve in order to accommodate the growing concern over the loss of traditional crafts associated with national identity in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In particular, Bird's endorsement of the Kyoto government's initiative to blend traditional aesthetic design and crafting methods with mass-production offers an alternative to early- Victorian characterisations of cultural preservation as understood in the context of Dr. Bowring's political-economic interventionism. Rather than presenting preservation as a mutually exclusive enterprise to the production or collecting of forged antiquities, Bird presents Japan's approach to industrialising traditional crafts as a new kind of preservation where a modern 'copy' has similar degrees of value as a legitimate antique when produced to a high standard of quality and aesthetic authenticity.

Chapter 4: The Looming Empire: Industry, Aesthetics, and Political Economy in the Textile Trade

As demonstrated in the previous sections, female travel writers' observations on the methods and design aesthetics used in the production of art and antique forgeries across Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan correlate with the development of a political economy of art production in Victorian Britain. As the century progressed, perspectives on the value of traditional craftsmanship and aesthetic authenticity – however broadly defined – within the wider economic and philosophical framework of stadial progress slowly evolved in an effort to reconcile the preservation of artistic traditions with industrialised modernity. Few crafting industries demonstrate this ideological paradox better than the textile industry.

Eastern silks, carpets, and embroideries were some of the most coveted objects in Victorian culture; as the output of domestically-produced British fabrics made materials previously viewed as luxuries – such as cottons – available to the lower classes, both the novelty and status of owning garments and household decorations made from authentic Oriental textiles increased. As seen previously with critical discussions of the 'decorative arts', Victorian women's interest in textiles and dress are often discussed in terms of fashion, and read as constructions of gendered and social identity.[1] Recent studies on the female-authored Victorian novel, especially industrial fiction, have acknowledged that women frequently used narratives of textile consumption and production to critique the effects of industrialisation on labour practices and class inequality within the British domestic market.[2] I argue that this is equally true in travelogues, where women use narratives of purchasing

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[1] C.f. Stanley, Marni. 'Skirting the Issues: Addressing and Dressing in Victorian Women's Travel Narratives.' *Victorian Review*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1997, pp. 147–67. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27794866. Accessed 15 Jun. 2023; Bassnett, Susan. 'Travel writing and gender.' *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. Edited by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, Cambridge UP, 2002, pp. 225-41; '"I write the truth as I see it": Unsettling the Boundaries of Gender, Travel Writing and Ethnography in Isabella Bird's Unbeaten Tracks in Japan'. *Women in Transit through Literary Liminal Space*s. Edited by T.G. Reus and T. Gifford, Palgrave Macmillan. *DOI:* https://doi.org/10.1057/978113 7330475_6. It is important to note that all three papers overwhelmingly cite studies published between the 1970s and 2005, with Mills, Blunt, Fussell, etc. noted as primary critical influences.

[2] Daly, Suzanne. 'Spinning Cotton: Domestic and Industrial Novels.' *Victorian Studies*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2008, pp. 272–78; Neuville, Elodie. 'Women, Cloth, Fluff and Dust in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South.' *Textile*, vol. 8 no. 3, 2010, 274-84. DOI: 10.2752/175183510X128689383 41402; Menke, Richard. 'Industry and Technology.' *George Eliot in Context.* Edited by Margaret Harris, Cambridge UP, 2013, pp. 153–59; Coleman, Dermot. 'George Eliot and Money.' *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot*, edited by George Levine and Nancy Henry, 2nd ed., Cambridge UP, 2019, pp. 115–35; Ford, Amanda. *The Significance of Fabrics in the Writings of Elizabeth Gaskell: Material Evidence.* Routledge, 2023.

textiles and touring manufactories to illustrate both the quality and working conditions of textile production in Eastern nations, and compare them to the conditions and output of British industry. In keeping with the conceit of the travelogue as an exhibitionary space established in Chapters 1 and 2, descriptions of fabric shops and manufacturing methods are represented as a form of cultural tableau that evaluates the Eastern textile market in accordance with a stadial view of political-economic development. However, the stadial narrative is found to be lacking when the authors are confronted with the reality that industrially-produced British textiles exported to Eastern markets are inferior in both taste and quality to their foreign competitors; this includes countries or regions that still used traditional hand sewing or hand-operated apparatuses to produce their fabrics, thread, and embroideries. The conditions of textile manufacturing, both manual and mechanised, prompt the women to reflect on the decline of traditional craftsmanship and class identity in Great Britain, and on the looming threat of foreign industrial empires outperforming Britain's place in the global hierarchy. Fundamentally, descriptions of British textiles found in Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan are emblematic of the cognitive dissonance between the authors' explicit support of the growth of the British empire, and their implicit disdain for the means by which the empire facilitated that growth. When read in context with the development of mid-and late-nineteenth century political economy of art, female travellers' observations on the quality, aesthetics, and production of textiles found in Eastern countries betray deeper anxieties about the widespread cultural decline and social ennui that resulted from the rise of global, industrial capitalism.

The question of working-class rights is also brought to the foreground in discussions of textile production, raising an important internal contradiction in the early discourse of the political economy of art formalised by John Ruskin, which became increasingly associated with socialist ideals and class politics in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Ruskin's essay 'On the Nature of Gothic Architecture'[3] (1854) – an expanded form of a chapter from his first book, *The Stones of Venice* (1852) – framed the 'perfectness' of industrialised Victorian craftsmanship as a form of 'slavery … a thousand times more bitter and degrading than that of the scourged African, or helot Greek' (*NG* 8). He condemns the introduction of machine production for the working class 'multitudes … sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke', and the 'degradation of the operative into a machine which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves' (9). This

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[3] I will abbreviate this work as *NG* in parenthetical citations.

connection between the plight of the British working class and the global rise in industrialisation suggests that Ruskin was fundamentally opposed to stadial theory; however, Patrick Brantlinger's postcolonial examination of 'John Ruskin, William Morris, and Ghandism' exposes the innate hypocrisies in Ruskin's ideology, in which '[Ruskin] rhetorically entraps himself … by simultaneously valorising civilisation (or England) and nostalgically identifying art or beauty with mediaeval barbarism' (471). Although, ostensibly, Ruskin's work appeared to champion the working class, his lectures and other published works were more focused on restoring the beauty and integrity of British artisanship as a nationalistic endeavour, and openly privileged identifying and cultivating 'genius' artists over the conditions of the unexceptional craftsman. He identified the 'fourfold' concerns unique to art as, 'first, how to get your man of genius; then, how to employ your man of genius; then, how to accumulate and preserve his work in the greatest quantity and lastly, how to distribute his work to the best national advantage' (*PEA* 29). This final point elevates the cause of the artist as individual to a national concern, wherein the intellectual and emotional fulfilment of the artist (genius) must be fostered to ensure that their output is high in *both* quantity and quality. The national advantage, in this context, refers to the contributions which artists and artisans make to society in the forms of architectural, functional, and decorative pieces. Ruskin's argument suggests that the state of art and artistry is a reflection of the state of the nation, thus, it is to the 'best national advantage' to create an infrastructure to find, train, and support artists who will produce beautiful artworks that will signify Britain's beauty, excellence, and prosperity to the world. The working-class craftsmen, in the best case, retain their status as subservient economic actors; in the worst case, they are obstacles to the elevation of British civilisation.

By contrast, female travellers' commentaries on the increased distribution or development of industrial machinery in Eastern countries results in a relatively more self-aware tension between the language of civilisation and the interests of the working-class citizen. Although imperial sentiments and a general belief that art – including textiles – function as markers of an advanced society persist, the women grapple with the possibility that global market dominance may not be compatible with the preservation of British cultural traditions, and by extension, British national identity. Similar to discussions of art forgery in the previous chapter, the recognition of superior quality and taste in Eastern countries that maintained elements of traditional manufacture leads the women to an unpleasant reckoning with the Victorian conception of the political economy of art production as an irreconcilable juxtaposition of tradition versus progress.

4.1 The Dissociation of Culture and Commodity in the 'Manchester Aesthetic'

Few industries represented the economic power of the British empire like the textile trade, with cotton emerging as one of the most desirable – and profitable – domestic and global commodities. Britain's cotton industry was firmly established alongside the existing manufactories of wools, linens, and silks in the early-nineteenth century; a hallmark achievement in establishing the cotton trade was the development of dyeing and printing technologies that allowed British manufacturers to produce inexpensive prints that imitated Oriental designs at a fraction of the cost of importing them from abroad. Domesticating production also allowed textiles that were considered exotic luxuries in previous centuries to become common household goods. Drawing from the research of Beverly Lemire, Joanna de Groot observes that 'ownership of these [cotton] fabrics was not confined to an affluent minority' (172), which in turn increased the demand for more raw cotton materials to be woven and dyed. Since Britain's climate was not conducive to the growing of cotton, it became increasingly necessary to import vast quantities of raw cotton or plain cotton cloth to feed the industrial mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Many critical studies on textiles and trade in the nineteenth century focus on the development of industrialisation and the globalisation of trade in Britain's colonial territories, with a particularly narrow focus on India.[4] Until the nineteenth century, India was the largest global producer of both raw and woven cotton products, but it is often ignored that the:

> import of Indian cottons spurred British industrial innovations for purposes of import, imitation, and substitution, leading in time to an entire reversal of comparative advantage that made Britain rather than India the great exporter of cotton goods. British cotton export accelerated from the turn to the middle of the century and ballooned as a percentage of overall export. … By the outbreak of the First World War 80 per cent of Lancashire cotton output was for export. (Blake 182)

As India began its slow decline as a major producer in the global textile market and the American Civil War shut down cotton exports from the Southern states in the 1860s, other

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[4] C.f. Washbrook, David. 'From Comparative Sociology to Global History: Britain and India in the Pre-History of Modernity.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1997, pp. 410–43. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3632402. Accessed 27 Jun. 2023; Berg, Maxine. 'Skill, Craft and Histories of Industrialisation in Europe and Asia'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 24, 2014, pp. 127–48. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26 360503. Accessed 27 Jun. 2023; Sahoo, Rajib Lochan. 'Indian Cotton Mills and the British Economic Policy, 1854-1894'. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 76, 2015, pp. 356–67. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable /44156602. Accessed 27 Jun. 2023.

countries in Asia and the Middle East took their place in British public consciousness as major sites of potential commercial – and colonial – development. The volume of raw or un-dyed cotton imported from China, Egypt, Japan, and Persia increased exponentially as trade regulations around the globe loosened, and as Japan allowed the Europeans to cross their borders for the first time. But it was not merely a one-way trade, as British companies shipped machine-woven and dyed fabrics back to the same countries that had supplied the raw materials (Blake 182).

Manchester was the central hub of the cotton trade in Britain, to the degree that the city was given the nickname 'Cottonopolis'. Manchester was also the most innovative in its approach to the weaving and dyeing not only of not only cottons, but also woollens and silks. As a result, it is not surprising that Manchester would function as a universal point of reference for women travellers commenting on the progression of the textile trade as they venture abroad. Metonymic references to Manchester are a recurring trope in travelogues across the mid- and late-nineteenth century, used as both a general term for British textile production and commerce that is easily recognisable by the Victorian reader and a literal reference to products exported from Manchester to various locations in the Far East. Despite the loyalty demonstrated towards the Empire by the travellers, the unfavourable comparisons of the exports of 'Manchester' to the textiles of Eastern manufacture reveal the women's view of the British textile industry as a paradoxical source of imperial pride and national shame.

In the account of her tour of industrial centres along the Yangtze River in 1897, Isabella Bird wrote an extensive account of Sha-Shih, which was known as 'the Manchester of China' (*Yangtze* 88*)*. Bird details the extent of Sha-Shih's production and trade, highlighting not only the city's importance within China's textile market, but the threat the city posed to Britain's own capital of cotton:

> Cotton cloth, raw cotton, silk fabrics, and hides are the staple export of Sha-shih. There are few local industries besides the weaving of cotton ... into a strong, durable, white cloth, fifteen and twelve inches wide, which I saw all over Sze Chuan, and of which at least 20,000,000 pounds are annually exported. Samples of [Sha-Shih cottons] and of English cottons were frequently shown to me by the women in Sze Chuan villages, with a scornful laugh at the expense of the latter. (*Yangtze* 87)

This passage marks an important reversal of the Victorian vision of China as an unambitious country with little or no substantial industry. Bird compliments the strength and quality of the Chinese cotton, conceding its superiority with the acknowledgement that English cottons were an object of 'scornful laugh[ter]' by comparison. As noted in Chapter 2, Bird took a more favourable view of the Chinese than most Victorian travellers, arguing that they were still an 'admirable' and 'ancient' civilisation, even if their values were not entirely consistent with

'Western ideas' (*Yangtze* 11). Thus, the comparison between Sha-Shih and English cottons signifies that Chinese industry is not 'regressive' so much as reclusive.

> Bird continues her analysis of Sha-Shih and its regional industry, detailing how:

> this comparatively indestructible cloth is graded, packed, and shipped away, the adjacent country being the greatest centre of weaving in the empire. There are 110 dealers in raw cotton in the city, and 114 shops deal in native cotton cloth, and there is a daily market for its sale in the early mornings. Silks, both plain and figured, are also produced in great quantities, and satin bed-covers, which are used all over China. Rich satins are also woven for altar cloths, bed and door hangings, and cushions. (*Yangtze* 88)

It is clear enough from this description why the domestic Chinese textile market, with its 'indestructible' and 'rich' materials produced in 'great quantities' by local weavers, showed little or no interest in increasing their trade with Britain; to add to this, economic historian Albert Feuerwerker records that only 'wealthier merchants' in 'cities and towns' could afford the extravagance of impractical, imported British fabrics while lower-income families relied on native cottons that were both cheaper and more durable (347). What makes Bird's description of Sha-Shih as 'the Manchester of China' both compelling and important is the fact that most Chinese cloth in this period was still produced by hand, and the regional demand was high enough that 'only a very small part of the handicraft cloth was exported' (Feuerwerker 357).

The 'scorn at the expense' of English textiles was not unique to merchants in the Chinese market, nor was the 'scorn' exclusive to the non-European traders. In one of Bird's earlier travelogues, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1891), British textiles are not simply shown as inferior in quality to native Eastern productions, but are cast as symbolic representations of a general decline in Persian commerce. As noted in Chapter 1, Persia had been invaded by both Russia and Britain in the nineteenth century; although territorial concessions were made to both countries, neither had achieved a monopoly on access to Persian trade routes, resulting in ongoing political and economic tensions between local and internationally-owned industries. Bird records that at the time of her visit in 1890, 'trade in Baghdad is regarded by Europeans and large capitalists as growing annually more depressed and unsatisfactory', representing a general downturn in the Persian market; in a later chapter, she describes the local market of Isfahan as a 'paradise of Manchester and Glasgow cottons' (*Journeys* 1:30, 267). The Isfahan market was a 'fairly thriving commercial emporium for British trade', to the degree that she was 'almost tired of hearing of it' (1:267). Although symbolic of Britain's 'commercial supremacy' in this market, the Northern British cottons are listed, among other international imports, as a separate trade from the 'cotton… for native

consumption' that represented one of the 'chief exports' of the industry of Isfahan (1:267). The passage is somewhat ambiguously worded, but it may be inferred from the separate list of the 'native' products, followed by a description of the 'cotton in the bazaars … [which] is of the best quality', that she considers the local products to be the superior article (267). She attributes the quality of the cottons to 'successful measures taken by the calico printers to defeat the roguery of the cheating manufacturers', which further identifies these cottons as *qalamkari*, or traditional Persian block-printed cottons (267). Thus, even though the Manchester and Glasgow cottons serve as a representatives of Britain's commercial triumph, the traditionally crafted Persian calicos still outperformed them in quality despite being produced under hostile market conditions.

Travelogues by Lady Anne Blunt and Gertrude Bell exemplify a similar ambivalence towards industrially produced British textiles in the late-nineteenth century Persian and Turkish marketplaces. Lady Anne Blunt, fifteenth Baroness of Wentworth, was the wife of poet and activist William Blunt – a known colleague of William Morris. The Blunts divided their time between estates in England and in Cairo, where they bred horses; like Lady Duff-Gordon, Lady Blunt permanently settled in Egypt in the later years of her life. Her travelogue *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* (1879)*, which is believed to have been edited and expanded by her husband, makes several brief, yet telling observations on the decline of commerce passing in and through the city of Baghdad in 1877.

After a miserable stay with the Pasha's family in Deyr prompted an unexpected change in the Blunts' travel itinerary, they hesitantly accepted an offer to travel alongside a merchant caravan bound for Baghdad. Blunt recorded that the caravan 'consists of some thirty mules and horses laden with square bales of cotton goods, probably from Manchester' (107). The casual tone with which Blunt ascribes the origin of the cottons suggests that there is nothing remarkable about seeing these items transported in bulk for resale by Eastern traders, but there is also a notable ease with which she recognises that the cottons are 'probably from Manchester'. Whether this is because the cotton trade between Manchester and Baghdad was common knowledge, or because the goods themselves were immediately recognisable based on aesthetics alone, the Blunts' decision to identify the fabrics appears to have been a deliberate choice used to set up a political narrative continued after their arrival in Turkey. After a brief summary of Baghdad's tumultuous political history – the kind of 'factual' commentary commonly attributed to her husband's edits – Blunt describes the city's troubled economic situation:

> another siege [by the Turks] ... seems to have ended its political importance, and about
> the same time its commerce began to decline .... of late the establishment of a line

of steamers from Bombay to the Persian Gulf has deprived it of nearly all that remained. The great Asiatic caravans have finally disappeared from the gates and caravanserais of Baghdad, and are poorly represented by a home traffic of corn to Syria and of cotton goods from Manchester taken in exchange. (145)

The exchange of 'cotton goods from Manchester' for Baghdad's produce is here linked to the lost commerce of the Far East, 'poorly represent[ing]' the former prosperity of overland trade with Asia. This results in an ironic association of Manchester — a symbol of Britain's commercial power — with the depreciation of a once 'great' centre of global commerce in Baghdad. Given the Blunts' close relationship with their Arab neighbours in Egypt and William's public support of Arab independence, it is unlikely that they wrote of the Ottoman city's decline with any sadness; furthermore, given William's radical socialist views, it is equally likely that the choice to identify a declining Eastern market with the product of cheap factory labour was designed as a mutual insult to Britain.

Gertrude Bell's account of the bazaar in Kasvin in *Safar Nameh* similarly unites the oxymoronic concepts of depreciation and expansion in the Persian textile market; in Bell's account, she shifts the discursive focus from commercial success to aesthetic sensibility, broadening the stakes of her comparison to include the social consequences of mass-industrialisation. She starts with a description of the bazaar where 'the sellers of cotton goods have established themselves, their counters laden with piles of cheap printed stuffs, bearing the Manchester stamp in one corner…' (25). It is key that although she explicitly states the origin of the fabric, the only adjective used to describe the 'printed stuffs' is 'cheap'. While this is likely a literal reference to the low cost of the items, no other descriptors are provided relating to the cloth's aesthetic value or quality. The omission suggests that 'cheap', in this context, does not just refer to the price, but to the make of the material as well. Regardless of possible inferences, this ostensibly one-dimensional reference sets up Bell's later descriptions of the marketplace after it was converted to a temporary theatrical space during a religious festival, 'roofed over with canvas and draped with cheap carpets and gaudy cotton hangings ... [the shops] were hung with bright-coloured stuffs' and 'cheap European lamps' (58,60). Bell spends several pages expounding on the cultural dissonance created by the brash emotional displays of the worshippers, culminating in a vivid sensory description:

> The hangings of the tent looked suspiciously as though they had come from a Manchester loom, and if they had, they did not redound to the credit of Manchester taste; the lamps smelt abominably of oil, the stifling air was loaded with dust, and the grating chant of the mollahs was as tedious as the noise of machinery. (65)

This description is filled with industrial imagery that evokes a deeper sense of disgust that

goes beyond her discomfort with the display of religious theatre. The smell of oil from the 'cheap European lamps', the 'stifling air [that] was loaded with dust', and the chanting 'tedious as the noise of machinery' all invoke the classic conditions of a nineteenth-century textile mill. The invocation of the mill-setting imposes a classist overtone to Bell's writing; her own grandfather ran an iron and steel works in Newcastle upon Tyne, as well as an aluminium plant in Middlesborough (Yale) which contributed to the mass industrialisation of the North East of England. Despite the fact that Bell's childhood and Oxford education were funded by the profits of industry, her association between these miserable industrial conditions and the tacky industrial commodities disseminated into the global market projects her disdain for the most recognisable social and ecological by-products of industry onto her foreign surroundings. Her reproof of the 'stifling' atmospheric environments of a Muslim festival in Persia and the factory floors of Great Britain are mutually signified by the presence of aesthetically unappealing industrial textiles; whether consciously or unconsciously, this tableau associates the Muslim worshippers with the lowest classes of British society, indicating a market made by and for the unsophisticated and unprogressive masses.

Associations between class and taste were pervasive in Victorian society, making the frequent association between the 'cheap' and implicitly gaudy Manchester fabrics across Victorian travellers' descriptions of British textiles found in Eastern countries a social, and not just aesthetic, indictment. When examined collectively, it is clear from the accounts of Bird, Blunt, Bell, and – later in this section, Amelia Edwards – that there was a distinct 'Manchester aesthetic' which was immediately recognisable to a member of the British public with or without the confirmation of 'the Manchester stamp in one corner' (Bell 15). While most authors do not give an exact description of the patterns produced by Manchester, Bell provides an overview of the kinds of European textile patterns on display in the house of the Persian Shah: 'Here and there a wonderful carpet lent its soft glow to the rooms, but for the most part the floors were covered with coarse productions of European looms - those flaming roses, and vulgar, staring patterns, which exercise an unfortunate attraction over the debased Oriental taste of today' (123). 'Vulgarity' was a multifaceted concept in Victorian society that referred to a variety of aesthetic and social sins ranging from 'commonplace' or 'obscene' designs, to 'ostentatious display or seeking of wealth'; it was also applied to 'the tensions between culture and commerce' and 'hybridity of different national artistic conventions', including the imitation Oriental patterns in British cotton production (Codell 223). Bell makes a telling use of the demonstrative pronoun 'those' to indicate the 'flaming roses, and vulgar, staring patterns' that typify European exports to the East; 'those' is a term used to refer to a

specific, known set or subset of objects — in this case, a specific group of vulgar textiles with obnoxious florals and miscellaneous 'staring patterns' that need not be described in further detail to be known to the nineteenth-century British reader. Just as her visual analysis of the Shah's 'gaudy' Treasure House that placed Western toiletries and quack remedies amongst priceless ceramics and jewels depicted the leader of the Persian state as an ignorant fool,[5] her accusation that his choice of European carpets reflects the debasement of Oriental taste suggests an even broader cultural decline.

Amelia Edward's *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* offers a much more specific and detailed example of Manchester prints discovered in the Cairo bazaar:

> There are many other special bazaars in Cairo … and some extensive bazaars for the sale of English and French muslins, and Manchester cotton goods; but these last are, for the most part, of inferior interest. Among certain fabrics manufactured in England expressly for the Eastern market, we observed a most hideous printed muslin representing small black devils capering over a yellow ground, and we learned that it was much in favour for children's dresses. (14)

The 'hideous' fabric with 'small black devils capering over a yellow ground' is here identified as a product made 'expressly for the Eastern market'. This is the most direct reference to Bourdieu's conception of the separation of 'cultural value' and 'commercial value' in the industrial art market (113); this suggests that, similar to the development of a divided industrial complex in Japan, Britain had developed a separate commercial industry that was not designed to reflect the taste of the British public, but the perceived taste of Eastern consumers. In the context provided by Edwards, it does not appear that the latter designs were held in particularly high regard by the consumers in Cairo, given that they were only popular 'for children's dresses'. There is no clear indication of the market competition, or what classes purchased this fabric for their children's use, but it is clear that the textile stands out to Edwards as worthy of mention by sheer fact of its ugliness, which implies that despite there being 'extensive bazaars for the sale of English and French muslins', this material was likely either the cheapest or least desirable for other uses. When viewed in relation to Bell's comments on the 'flaming roses' and 'vulgar' prints of the carpets in the Shah's home that speak to the 'debased' foreign tastes of Eastern consumers, there is significant room for doubt that foreign consumers purchased these materials for reasons of taste. Just as Bell failed to consider curiosity or novelty as a factor in the Shah's collection of Western quack medicine, the concept that Eastern consumers may purchase an imported textile with a vulgar pattern –

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[5] C.f. Chapter 1, pg. 56.

whether defined as 'hybrid', 'common', or simply ugly – on the basis of cultural novelty or amusement is entirely disregarded.

Bird offers a reversed perspective on the relationship between Eastern consumption and taste when passing through Niigata, Japan in 1878. Niigata was a flourishing market city that traded in a wide variety of locally made, traditional Japanese crafts; Bird's description of the shops and craftsmen dominates an entire chapter of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan,* with additional chapters detailing the topographical obstacles faced by European powers who wished to gain access to this relatively isolated, yet growing marketplace. While detailing the variety and quality of native craftsmanship in the Niigata market, Bird encounters a group of clothing and fabric shops selling a variety of 'striped silks' and cottons; the silks, which were commonly produced in both Japan and China for use in *kimono* and *haori* (loose-fitting jackets), are described without an attribution of aesthetic value, but Bird pointedly observes that 'some of the cottons show the vicious influence of the glaring patterns of Manchester...' (*Unbeaten* 1:233). Here, again, is a connection between Manchester textiles and ugliness. Although the materials found in Niigata are not of Manchester make, Bird's direct comparison reinforces that Manchester products were easily recognisable by virtue of their 'glaring', 'gaudy', and 'cheap' appearance. Unlike Bell and Edwards, however, Bird's account directly suggests that Manchester's 'glaring' tastes are a cause of the East's allegedly 'debased' taste rather than a response to it. Bird describes the perceived 'influence' of Manchester as 'vicious' – suggesting that aesthetic influence constitutes a form of violence when applied to a nation, such as Japan, whose national character was so closely associated with their 'superior' artistic sensibilities.

While 'Manchester' and other English cottons are the most consistent points of reference for the British textile industry across the corpus used for this study, Bird introduces another unique staple of British manufacture in her account of Niigata that draws mutual attention to the social and political-economic costs of commercial expansion at home in Britain, as well as the poor optics of expanding into the foreign market with cheap commodities. Bird relates, with surprise, that such an isolated market as Niigata sold 'blankets and British woollen goods of the most shameless "shoddy"' amidst their other merchandise (*Unbeaten* 1:228). She expresses shock, yet again, when she finds "red and green blankets... which are unmistakable British "shoddy"' in two isolated villages in the sparsely populated northern region of Hakodate, where foreign ports were almost non-existent (*Unbeaten* 2:30). Shoddy was a textile made from the waste of woollen mills combined with shreds of castoff clothing. This textile was produced in small-town mills in Yorkshire, made from the waste of

larger factories in Manchester and Leeds; by the 1840s, shoddy had become its own established industry, and sparked a number of debates within England regarding the ethical and practical implications of the trade. While the shoddy mill owners touted the new industry for its efforts to recycle industrial waste into affordable material, West Yorkshire MP William Ferrand leveraged the dangerous factory conditions in his argument against the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1842 (Shell 383). A young Friedrich Engels also visited the shoddy mills of North East England the year before publishing *The Condition of the Working Class* (1844), which cemented both the manufacturing conditions and the 'inadequacy of the working class's insulation against the Northern England climate' as representative of the gross social inequalities produced by laissez-faire industrial capitalism in the Victorian public consciousness (Shell 384). The significance of the shoddy industry to both socialist[6] and capitalist political economy lends an extra measure of gravity to Bird's disdain at finding the product in an isolated town in Japan; it is not simply a poor reflection of her country's industrial capability, but a symbol of mass production's direct, negative impact on British society. By extension, the infiltration of this cheap material into the furthermost villages of Japan signifies that mass-industrialisation and commerce had already become an unstoppable and unpredictable force, threatening to destabilise the tastes and economies of even the most progressive nations.

The rise of the shoddy industry and the abandonment of taste and tradition in the design of British fabrics are emblematic of larger issues that plagued socially conscious middle- and upper-class Victorians. Whether these individuals focused more on the welfare of the working class, their personal financial interests, or the empire at large, the encroachment of the industrial revolution on the fabric of British life was inescapable. Given that the higher classes were the primary groups with access to international travel, it is evident that discussions of the production and dissemination of cultural properties aim at more than just a superficial frustration with something that is ugly or poorly made. Rather, like the anxieties surrounding the substitution of forged antiquities or industrially-produced art discussed in the

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[6] The socialist views of Engels and Karl Marx should not be confused with the utopian socialist ideology associated with William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement; where Marx and Engels' work focused on revolution and advancement of the proletariat, utopian socialists – whose views on class and proposed solutions to labour and wealth inequalities were far from unified – focused on a more gradual process of reform and cooperation between the working and middle-classes to achieve an idealised society. More detail on Marx and Engels' criticism of the utopians can be found in Paden, Roger. 'Marx's Critique of the Utopian Socialists.' *Utopian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2002, pp. 67–91. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20718467. Accessed 26 Jul. 2023.

previous chapter, concerns over the debasement of tastes at home and abroad were indicative of a deeper anxiety that mass-industrialisation would result in a complete dissociation of culture from commodity – a dissociation made all the clearer by observing the same phenomenon as it progressed in other cultures.

4.2 The Paradox of Value, Aesthetics, and Class in Analyses of Hand-Crafted Textiles

In the context of the textile and crafting industries, the central tension that emerges in the women's travelogues is the irreconcilable paradox of criticising an industrial empire that destroys its own identity by disseminating cheap, mass-produced, culturally inauthentic commodities while also promoting the traditional stadial ideals of 'progress'. This same paradox plagued the work of John Ruskin, William Morris, and other opponents of industrial capitalism, who sought to grapple with varying conceptions of the role of crafts in political-economic and aesthetic movements; although Ruskin and Morris both rejected that industrialisation was the most ethical and effective means of achieving an ideal, advanced civilisation, neither fundamentally rejects a stadial conception of civilisation altogether, especially in relation to social and intellectual progress. This section will examine how women's accounts of hand-crafted textiles in China, Egypt, Persia, and Japan, placed in dialogue with the unresolved class politics raised in the writings of Ruskin and Morris, demonstrate that the Victorians' stadial worldview was destabilised by the introduction of a new political economy of art.

As previously noted, Ruskin's view of art as a nationalistic enterprise prioritises cultivating the beauty and ingenuity ('genius') of artists as a key concern in an advanced society. In 'On the Nature of the Gothic', Ruskin argued that savagery or rudeness in the mode of artistic production is essential in understanding the spiritual implications of craftsmanship – which he framed through his own evangelical Christian beliefs – and to the aesthetic quality, ergo, the value, of the work of art itself. He argued that 'perfection' – a word he often used to connote the product of industrialised production or copying – was a worthy 'desire' of the artist, but:

> we are nevertheless not to set the meaner thing, in its narrow accomplishment, above the nobler thing, in its mighty progress; not to esteem smooth minuteness above shattered majesty ... But, above all, in our dealings with the souls of other men, we are to take care how we check … efforts which might otherwise lead to a noble issue … Now, in the make and nature of every man, however rude or simple, whom we employ in manual labour, there are some powers for better things ... But they cannot be strengthened, unless we are content to take them in the feebleness, and unless we prize and honour them in their imperfection above the best and most perfect manual skill. (16)

There is a fundamental paternalism in Ruskin's admonishment to embrace the 'feebleness' of

the manual labourer, from whom little should be expected on account of their lack of genius. The call for the 'nature' of the labourer – whether understood in spiritual or secular terms – to be 'strengthened' and improved does not address his stance on the stark separation between reproduced and true art, and the hierarchical positioning of the genius over the manual labourer. By referring to the capacity of the manual labour in terms of 'rude or simple … powers', Ruskin establishes yet another stadial economy wherein the manual craftsman and their reproductive labours are denied the opportunity to progress because they do not have the inborn capacity – or genius – to progress to the status of the artist.

Morris, although outspoken in his desire to see 'pleasure' returned to daily labours of those fated to manual occupations, was also self-contradictory in his approach to redressing the social and political ills of the British industrial empire. In his lecture, the 'Art of the People', published alongside 'The Lesser Arts' in the 1883 collection *Hopes and Fears for Art*,[7] Morris addresses the decline of the arts of the 'conquered races', specifically in British-ruled India, declaring that 'in short, their art is dead, and the commerce of modern civilisation has slain it' (51, 52). He laments that 'their famous wares … are no longer to be bought at reasonable prices in the common market, but must be sought for as precious relics for the museums we have founded for our art education. … What is going on in India is also going on, more or less, all over the East' (51). This apparent concern for the decline of the arts in the East at the hand of 'modern civilisation' – by which he means industrial civilisation – is somewhat undermined by his frustration at the 'short-sighted, reckless, brutality of squalor that so disgraces our intricate civilisation' expressed in 'The Lesser Arts' (21). His emphasis on 'pleasure' and 'beauty', although framed as a kind of aspirational goal for the conditions of manual labour, is still predicated on a stratified relationship between the craftsman and the artist; where he differs from Ruskin is the belief that the divide between craft and art could be overcome by education and training, although there would still remain a separation between the educated craftsman and the higher, artistic labour of the designer (26). One of the primary means of educating both craftsman and the public – whom he blamed for perpetuating the demand for 'cheap and nasty' industrial products – is the museum complex, which he wishes 'were to be got at seven days of the week' (29,21). He cites the same disappointment at the 'piecemeal' displays of art in the museum, which carry with them a 'tale of violence, destruction, and carelessness', recommending the benefits of 'studying ancient art in … a more kindly form [in] the monuments of our own land' that exemplify 'a full sympathy

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[7] Both lectures were given in a series at the Birmingham Guild in 1877.

between the works of man, and the land they were made for' (21-22). In this context, art and nationalism are inextricably linked, along with art education and progress in education. The consistent return to beauty, pleasure, and the greatness of ancient British art is not so much a rejection of social and political hierarchies, but a substitute hierarchy where progress is appraised according to classical notions of beauty rather than enlightenment notions of commerce.

Although Ruskin and Morris are not directly cited, traces of their attempts to reconcile narratives of aesthetic and social progress are evident in women's travelogues across the nineteenth century that describe the traditional crafting modes still in use in Eastern countries. The stadial beliefs that underpinned the female writers' perceptions of the world were consistently at odds with the relationships between tradition, ethnography, and marketability that they so closely linked with aesthetic appeal, quality, and accessibility. An example of this can be found in Bird's account of silk shopping in Shanghai, and the class politics surrounding the availability of China's finest textiles.

As noted in d'Almeida's account of Shanghai in Chapter 2, the silk shops stood out from the rest of the city on account of their neatness, order, and hidden luxury; the description of the beautiful silks kept in brown paper until the arrival of a prospective buyer metaphorically represented the hidden value of Chinese industry, revealed to the world by the arrival of European merchants.[8] While d'Almeida's account is mainly concerned with the contrast between the dirty street and the polished interior, she does not go into much detail about the fabrics themselves. By contrast, Bird pays little attention to the external surroundings of the city, and instead focuses her attention on the social politics of accessing and buying the contents of the finest shops:

> In them are rich self-coloured silks in deep rich colourings and the most delicate shades ... and what I admire most of all, heavy figured silks in colourings and shades unknown to us sold for Chinese masculine dress, and brocaded with symbolical bats, bees, spiders, stags' heads, dragons for mandarins' robes, and the highly decorative characters representing happiness and longevity. These quaint and beautiful fabrics are not exported to Europe, and are not shown to Europeans unless they ask for them. (*Yangtze* 37)

The products which Bird 'admire[s] most of all' are the ones that are 'unknown' to Europeans because they are domestically marketed to the elite mandarin class. The mandarins were an invention of the nine-order class system in China in the 1840s; this new system ostensibly allowed men who were not born into an elite family to raise their status through education,

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[8] C.f. pp.113-115

and after passing a series of government exams they would hold bureaucratic or civil service positions. Although this offered the possibility of social advancement to the lower classes, discrepancies in education and social literacy remained significant factors in the exam, and inevitably the sons of upper-class gentlemen were in a more advantageous position to pass (Jiang and Kung). Their status, Bird records, is represented in their clothing through 'symbolical bats, bees, spiders, stags' heads, dragons for mandarins' robes'. In this instance, fabric and embroidery are a means of communicating class and identity, and as such must remain exclusive to their culture of origin to retain that meaning. In this instance, the value of the fabric to the European author is derived from mutually-defining elements of quality and cultural meaning – essentially, cultic value.

The paradoxical importance of exclusivity – in both cultural and market terms – as a basis of value was a lingering effect of the repeal of the British sumptuary laws. Sumptuary laws, which have 'traditionally [been] considered within the history of dress', were commonplace in global 'mediaeval and early modern societies … [used to mediate] between individuals and states to regulate consumer behaviour and values' (Rublack and Riello 4). In Britain, sumptuary laws were frequently introduced and abandoned between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries; these laws ranged from attempts to control access to fashions based on class and gender or the amounts and kinds of fabrics used to make certain articles of clothing (Hayward). These laws proved impossible to enforce in the long-term, and the last of the sumptuary laws, which was an embargo on the importation and sale of cotton, was abolished after the conquering of India in the eighteenth century (Blake 172). Kathleen Blake discusses the importance of textiles in Adam Smith, and later, the utilitarian economics of Carlyle, Mill, and Bentham as 'a market in pleasures supplying demand "with no limit or certain boundary,"' that 'was expansive and dynamic, a market following fashion, where no fashion will continue' (Smith, qtd. in Blake 167); consequently, attempts to curb the free development of the textile market, or the free pursuit of the fashions that drove the textile market, were viewed as regressive within the underlying stadial frameworks of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political economy.

Although Bird's example was written over a hundred years after the repeal of the final sumptuary laws in Britain, there is an implicit critique of the sumptuary rules applied to Chinese textiles that were reserved 'for Chinese masculine dress' and 'unknown to [Europeans]' because they were 'not exported to Europe, or shown to Europeans unless they ask for them'. Placing aside the evident hierarchy of class identity signified by these fabrics, these protectionist market practices were clearly in opposition to the laissez-faire economic

values embraced by the Victorians and other European nations that forcibly opened China's market to international trade. In a similar fashion, Bird positions herself as a discoverer of goods previously inaccessible to both her gender and her race; in doing so, she exposes the staid, if not fully regressive, market ideology holding China back from achieving a more advanced state of economic and social growth. What cannot be fully reconciled, from this perspective, is the fact that if these products were produced in a higher volume to export or sell to tourists, it follows that the quality, cultural meaning, and novel appeal that constitute the cultic value still prized by many Victorian buyers would be lost. This results in an impasse for the British consumer because the means of accessing these desirable cultural commodities would negate the very qualities that made it valuable.

In addition to the questions of access and consumption, the means of textile production also factored into the conundrum of values that arose from the conflicting drives of collecting authentic, high-quality Chinese silks, and the condemnation of China's 'regressive' adherence to traditional methods and strict class hierarchies. Alice Frere described the hand-weaving of silks similar to the ones described by Bird, noting that the:

> Chinese loom for weaving silk is exactly like that used in olden days by English weavers, and found even now in cottages in the north of Ireland. The Chinaman weaver whom we visited was making a rich silk, damasked with gold like 'kinkob' for mandarins' dresses; and at the same place they were making very heavy, thick, corded silk ribbons, exactly like markers for church books. These are ladies' stockings, or what answer to stockings among Chinese ladies … Everything of silk is sold by weight: the scales are beautifully delicate and exact. (225)

Frere's description draws an immediate connection between the exotic and the familiar that at once enhances the readers' perception of the value of the textiles and undermines the industry that produces them. The similarity drawn between the modern Chinese silk loom, here used to make 'rich' and gilded textiles for the upper classes, and looms 'used in olden days by English weavers' and 'found even now in cottages in the north of Ireland' frames the Chinese as technologically regressive. The products of the Chinese handloom are at once exotic and mundane, sophisticated and quaint. Even the description of the 'beautifully delicate and exact' scales emphasises their aesthetic, almost decorative qualities, rather than acknowledging the exceptional engineering required to produce a tool that is both delicate in appearance and functional for long-term commercial use. Frere's condescending acknowledgement of the skill required to make such elegant and rich textiles with such regressive means draws further attention to the paradoxical relationship between her disdain of hand-weaving techniques still prevalent in rural parts of Great Britain and Ireland – another nation widely viewed as 'regressive' in this era – and the desirability of Chinese hand-woven silks.

As noted in the previous chapter, Frere included antique embroideries and textiles in the list of collectible items that could be acquired cheaply if purchased during the Chinese New Year,[9] thus it is clear that traditional Chinese fabrics – presumably made with the same or similar methods as the silks in this passage – were considered highly valuable as collectibles. The willingness to ascribe value, cultic or otherwise, to antique items while rejecting products of the same or similar quality, made with the same or similar methods, because it is made in the present-day points to the absurdity of labelling the Chinese, or any other group, as 'regressive' on account of their production methodologies. It may be inferred that there is an implicit critique of, or even a repressed nostalgia for, the decline of traditional production in Britain; as the reliance on industrial technology increased, by necessity the skill of hand-weavers would decline, and become the remit, by default, of underdeveloped and rural communities. In confrontation with the beautiful and, by nature of their limited quantities, more valuable productions of the Chinese handlooms, there is room for doubt that progress, in a broader sense, necessitates a globalised commercial culture based on industrial production, rather than a domesticated market built on hand- or minimally-mechanised labour executed to a high standard.

In the passage directly following her description of the silk merchant's home shop, Frere describes that 'we saw gold thread being made, which is a simple enough process, only consisting in spinning together very thin strips of gold tinsel and gold-coloured silk cord, with a machine like a distaff' (226). Frere's straightforward, bland observation implies that this 'simple enough process' used a tool close enough to those used in England that a basic simile was ample to communicate the visual to her readers. While hand-weaving still occurred in parts of Britain throughout the nineteenth century, the invention of the Spinning Jenny in the late eighteenth century and the subsequent development of the Spinning Mule revolutionised both home and factory spinning by decreasing labour and increasing output, thus maximising profits for home spinners working as contract labourers who were paid according to the volume of cotton spun (Allen 915). This technology was usually applied to cotton yarn, which had the highest demand in English manufacturing, drawing an interesting parallel between the image of women in China producing gold thread for use in trimming and embroidering the fine silk robes of the mandarin class with the same technology used for the production of common fabrics in Britain. Although contextual references to class are not absent from Frere's account of the silk workers (and intended consumers), Frere does not fully explore the

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[9] C.f. Chapter 3, pp. 168-170.

relationship between class and the means or products of labour, leaving unanswered questions regarding the complexities of the Chinese labour market. This again confirms that Frere's motivation in capturing these scenes was not to encourage reforms or development in the Chinese economy, but to signal her expertise as a collector of fine Chinese commodities. Her belief that China was not just a regressive, but a 'retrogressive' country that nonetheless produced beautiful objects is a stark contrast, in tone if not in content, to more overt political reformers like Harriet Martineau (390).

Martineau's response to handicraft in 'regressive' Egypt is directly connected to the contested state of the Egyptian textile and cotton trade prior to the British occupation in 1882. As discussed in the previous chapter, Dr. Bowring's report detailed that Egypt had few large-scale manufactories capable of sustaining the level of output expected of a global trade power in the mid-nineteenth century and framed the Pasha's attempts to develop 'an independent Egypt' as neither 'wise [nor] politic, and the means are wholly inadequate to accomplish the end, even were it desirable' (99). While sugar, fruit, corn, cotton fabric, and pottery were already exported in large quantities, one area highlighted for its growth potential – and potential benefits for other countries – was Egypt's raw, long-staple cotton. Decades after the publication of Bowring's report, the cotton industry grew as a result of the supply deficit left by the American Civil War and the slow decline of India's cotton industry; few female authors travelling in Egypt took notice of Egyptian manufacturing, but Martineau made a characteristic exception to explore the issues of class and labour inequality in the early development of Egypt's home cotton industry.

While travelling in the region of Aswan, Martineau observes a 'little girl', presumed to be a slave, who stood:

> on the shore [of the Nile] making cord for tying around the waists of men; and [I] was extremely surprised to observe that the process is the same as that of bobbinmaking [sic] with the lyre by English ladies. Instead of an ivory lyre, this child had two crossed sticks; and her cotton thread was very coarse. It was striking to see this little art existing in places so widely apart. (1:99)

There are several elements at play in this brief passage that, when layered together, communicate a very powerful message about both production and class perception prior to the publication of Ruskin's influential arguments on the value of embracing the 'rude and simple' powers of the working-class craftsman (*NG* 16). The first element is Martineau's surprise at the similarities between the Egyptian and English method for cord-making, which is largely predicated on class. The 'ivory lyre' - also known as a 'lucet' or 'chain fork' - was a small tool with two prongs used to wind and knot thread into a sturdy, and usually square, cord.

According to the research of historian and curator Kathryn Kane, the device dates as far back as the Middle Ages (exact date and country of origin unknown); although its use in Britain fell in and out of popularity over the centuries, it was still a reasonably common tool in the nineteenth century for middle- and lower-class women to construct, mend, or trim garments. It was also used by sailors to produce cords for practical uses while at sea (Kane). The devices themselves could be made of smooth wood, bone, ivory, or mother-of-pearl. Given Martineau's specificity that the lyre is made of ivory - an expensive luxury material - and her use of the term 'ladies', we can infer that Martineau's hypothetical scene is referencing the middle class, which stands in stark contrast to the 'two crossed sticks' and 'very coarse' threads in use by a little girl who, very likely, is a slave. The juxtaposition of a makeshift lucet of 'sticks' by a girl making cord for pragmatic use with the 'ivory lyre' used by 'ladies' in England emphasises the fact that Martineau was 'surprised... that the process is the same' in both countries. Martineau's comment that she found it 'striking to see this little art existing in places so widely apart' encapsulates both the geographical and social distance between her subjects, further emphasising the condescension embedded in her recognition of the little girl's skill.

The comparison to England also demonstrates Martineau's paternalistic view of Egypt's potential to develop out of their current, regressive state into a formidable economic power. Lesa Scholl examines how the passage serves as 'an example of domestication in both senses of the word, bringing the Egyptian culture into the English private sphere... The scene perhaps provides a kind of hope for the Egyptians, that although they are in a crude state at present, they are working toward a higher level of civilisation' (151). Scholl's analysis calls attention to the dual function of 'domesticity' as a reference to both a social and national sphere of productivity, invoking a stadial trajectory that leads from slave labour with 'rude and simple' (*NG* 16), make-shift tools to 'a higher level of civilisation' where cord and 'bobbinmaking with the lyre' is a lady's pastime. Additionally, as Scholl continues,

> Martineau saw her time in Egypt not so much as East meets West, but as her present meeting her cultural past: in looking at Egypt, she sees herself as looking at the foundations of her own culture, as though she has gone back in time. The crude version of bobbin-making is an example of this, showing ... how far English craftsmanship and industry have come in an age where imperialism was justified by the 'valori[sation] of work and industry'; but she also explores on a broader ideological scale the roots of western civilisation.... (151)

From this perspective, the little girl becomes a simultaneously hopeful and startling reflection of Martineau's nation as it once was. If Britain could rise from the 'crude state' of making lace with sticks, then so could Egypt. This returns to the cognitive dissonance inherent in

Martineau's discussions of Egyptian manufacture: while Egypt's finer fabrics and raw cotton were highly desirable for British consumption, any significant technological or economic progress could only pose a threat to British manufacture in the long game of global market dominance, as suggested in Bowring's report. This sense of competition underlies numerous references to handicraft in Martineau's work. Another example of this is her description of Nubian rope making, which she describes as 'a pretty sight; — prettier even than an English ropewalk; though that is a treat to the eye' (1:130-131). Her compliment of the rope-making process in Egypt – which utilised palm trees as a sort of anchor while the fibres were manually twisted – seems reluctant to acknowledge that their process is 'prettier even than an English ropewalk; though that is a treat to the eye'. The second clause which emphasises the attractiveness of the English process, which was already emphasised through the amplifying term 'even than…', seems unnecessary to make Martineau's point unless there is a hesitation in acknowledging that the raw Nubian process is the more attractive to watch.

Mary Bickersteth made another, more favourable comparison between Eastern hand-production and the class politics of English sewing where she observes a group of young Japanese women at the 'Home for training Mission Women' in Tokyo in 1891. This mission house, run under the auspices of the recently established Anglican Diocese led by her brother, was part of a large initiative to provide general education and employment for Japanese women, in addition to teaching them Christian doctrine. Bickersteth describes how 'The Christian girls of the needlework school gain a livelihood by taking orders from English ladies … the needlework girls showing [us] their work, which would have done credit to a high English standard' (21-22). Here the tone is much more clinical, contextualised as a report on the function of the school to provide vocational skills for vulnerable women. The ability to '[do] credit to a high English standard of work' is, in this case, as much a reflection on the success of the school in passing on the 'high' standards expected by 'English ladies' as on the young women who are able to meet those standards. In other parts of her book (to be discussed in the next section) Bickersteth comments on the decline in the quality of traditional Japanese embroidery resulting from the sudden move towards industrial production since the beginning of the Meiji restoration, rendering the ability to cater to European tastes a matter of economic survival for women without other means of financial support. Another passage reveals that Western domestic arts were not taught to the exclusion of more traditional Japanese methods, according to 'an interesting glimpse into the ordinary education of a girl of good position in Japan' (87) at St. Hilda's Mission School:

> [In the Chu Gakko, or Middle School] Japanese needlework is taught once a week, as all ladies learn to make their own clothes. The stitches are put in by exact

measurement, and an inch-rule of wood or ivory is a necessary part of every work-box. In many cases this rule is affixed to the side of the box, and the scissors are curled at the points, instead of being crossed, as in England. English needlework, singing, and drawing closed the list of subjects…. (89-90)

In an interesting reversal, 'girl[s] of good position in Japan' who attend the Middle School are taught both Japanese and English needlework, as opposed to the converted women and girls who, presumably, live at the Mission Training School; the latter appear to be taught English needlework exclusively. Assuming that the students of the Mission School are of a lower-class status (whether by nature of their birth or religious vocation), English needlework is a means of income, whereas for girls who come from more privileged backgrounds (as suggested by their 'wood and ivory' tools), traditional Japanese methods are a key part of their education. In the latter group, English needlework is included amongst the leisure 'accomplishments' akin to those of an upper- or middle- class girl in Victorian Britain. In contrast to Martineau, Bickersteth's writing associates the precise craftsmanship taught to Japanese school girls with the decorative arts of Victorian ladies in a manner suggestive of a more fluid relationship between art, craft, and class identity. For the lower-class Japanese students, learning English craft represents an opportunity to become economically independent, while the more privileged students are taught the same craft – alongside their own cultural crafts – as part of a set of accomplishments commonly associated with middle-class eligibility. Learning foreign as well as domestic arts, in this context, represent the potential for social advancement through marriage. The representation of hand-sewing as both a practical, profitable skill and as a decorative art, reframes crafting as an essential component of social progress for women and girls, rather than a signal of social and economic regression.

The tonal differences between writers in the mid- and late-nineteenth century bring both the positive and negative aspects of the evolving ideologies of political economy of art into sharper focus; this is particularly noticeable when comparing the techniques of weavers from the same or similar social 'classes'. For example, Martineau, Frere, and Bird each examine production techniques in marginalised or tributary communities in Egypt (Nubia), China (Mongolia), and Japan (Hokkaido); the social and geographical marginalisation of these communities heightened the interest paid to their lives and industry by travel writers, both for the sake of novelty and political potential. Each of these descriptions mimics the kind of exhibitionary tableaus discussed in the context of shop displays and street cultures in Chapter 2, bringing together the ethnographical and technological aspects of the primitive mechanisms used to create local crafts.

Starting with a comparison of Martineau and Frere, the same patterns of

condescension and wonder applied to the already 'regressive' or 'staid' countries of Egypt and China are seen in their representations of crafts produced by the Nubian and Mongol communities. Martineau recounted her discovery of the Nubian weavers, whose 'arts' she describes as 'simple enough, indeed', when:

> early one morning … I came upon a loom which would excite the astonishment of my former fellow-townsmen, the Norwich weavers. A little pit was dug in the earth… just big enough to hold the treadles and the feet of the weaver, who sits on the end of the pit. The beam was made of a slender palm stem, fixed into two blocks. The treadles were made of spines of the palm fixed into bits of stick. The shuttle was, I think, a forked twig. (1:130)

The description of the makeshift 'loom', presented here as a novelty to entertain the working-class weavers of Norwich, emphasises the use of organic materials as machinery. Similar to her discussion of the slave girl in Aswan, who used sticks in place of a carved lyre, there is an implicit correlation between the makeshift tools of the Nubian weavers and a long-term trajectory towards the industrial tools of Britain's finest manufactories. She continues to describe the products of the in-ground looms:

> The cotton yarn was even, and the fabric good; that is, evenly woven. It was, though coarse, so thin that one might see the light through: but that was intended… I might have wondered at such a fabric proceeding from such an apparatus, if I had not remembered the muslins of India, produced in looms as rude as this. It appears too, from the paintings in the tombs, that the old Egyptian looms were of nearly as simple a construction, though the people were celebrated for their exports of fine linen and woollen stuffs. (1:130)

Again, Martineau makes a comparison between the 'regressed' Egyptian communities of the present and the ancient civilisation so admired by the Victorians; in doing so, she must admit that the mythologised vision of ancient Egypt was not that different from Egypt in the present in either technology or 'celebrated' industrial output. The main difference is the disruption to Egypt's political-economic infrastructure through successive centuries of invasion and oppression, from which modern Egypt had yet to recover. Martineau fails to contextualise that the Nubian people were descended from a separate ancient African empire; part of their territory was captured by the Ottomans after war divided their historic kingdom in the sixteenth century, but they were united again under the second Ottoman regime of the nineteenth century.[10] Despite this conflation of the Nubian and Egyptian empires, Martineau's

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[10] C.f. Peacock, A. C. S. "The Ottomans in Northeast Africa." *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of African History,* 25. Oxford University Press. Date of access 18 Jun. 2023, https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734. 001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-190.

reluctant admission that industry can exist without sophisticated machines remains salient.

Similar to the Nubians, the Mongols were first overtaken by the Qing Dynasty in the late-seventeenth century; historian Elizabeth Green clarifies that 'although [Mongolia] was not a direct colony' their 'fate under the Manchus is remembered bitterly', and their 'dislike and distrust of the Chinese' was 'intensified by the history of usury and the threat of Chinese settlers tasking over Mongolian pastures' (1340). Alice Frere and her party ventured past the borders of the Great Wall into Mongolian territory while on the way to Peking; the facts of Mongolia's relationship to China in this period casts a shadow over Frere's description of the 'rude, and thoroughly Chinese' felt-making process she observes in a village which she identifies as 'Ta-tān':[11]

> The wool is carded by means of an instrument like an enormous violoncello bow, which is slung from the roof. Three men and a boy take bundles of it, and with something between a fork and a comb, toss it into a layer on a reed mat, previously laid on the rough mud floor. Then it is sprinkled with leather thongs, and is then kicked backwards and forwards on the ground for five minutes, two men standing on each side, at such a distance that the roll turns just once between them. It is then unrolled, and another layer of wool is added in the same way. The same process is repeated, and the mat is made. When new, these thick white mats or blankets look very nice; and shoes, in the same material, of which many were hanging up to dry, must be comfortable to wear in the winter. (365)

The first element that stands out is the comparison of the carding tool to a 'violoncello bow', which implies a subtle sophistication to an otherwise 'rude' process of 'kick[ing] backwards and forwards on the ground'. Frere does not use any other metaphorical language or adjectives to describe the process, but she concludes by complimenting the 'thick white mats or blankets' and shoes which 'look very nice' and 'must be comfortable to wear in the winter'. The overall effect of this passage is neither romanticised nor derogatory, but by positioning the Mongols' process as 'rude and thoroughly Chinese', there is an implied reinforcement of both the technological and political inferiority of the Mongol people.

In terms of the output, Frere is willing to comment on the quality in a matter-of-fact tone, whereas Martineau's passage openly declared that she 'wondered at such a fabric proceeding from such an apparatus'. There is a slight echo of Ruskin's endorsement of the

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[11] Although Frere uses this as a place name, "Ta-tān" was a Chinese term that '"implies inferiority or subjection"; the derivative terms "tatar" and "tartar" (possibly a European mispronunciation) was broadly applied to the Mongol people by the Chinese as early as the thirteenth century. There is some disagreement about whether the term was later re-appropriated by the Mongol people in defiance of Chinese stereotypes, but there is no evidence for why Frere uses this term to identify a specific village. C.f. Dennys, N.B., editor. *Notes and Queries on China and Japan: Volumes 1-2*. Hong Kong, 1867, p.58.

inherent potential of manual labourers no matter how 'rude or simple' (*NG* 16) in Frere's recognition of the usefulness and comfort of the Mongolian wool. In recognising the capability of these 'rude' people to produce valuable products, there is an implicit acknowledgement of both their humanity and potential for advancement – whether or not that advancement is social, economic, or technological in nature. However condescending her approach to all hand-crafting observed in Chinese territories, a comparison of Frere's descriptions of the Mongol wool-weavers with the Chinese silk merchants suggests that social and political factors contribute to the degree of 'honour' attributed to handicraft, suggesting a middle-ground between the political economies of art production conceived by Ruskin and Morris. For the Mongols, whose products were made for function and survival, there is a sense of congratulation that their primitive craft is successful in meeting their present need. For the Chinese merchant, who produces 'rich' fabrics for the pleasure and show of the upper classes, there is praise for the artistry of the silks, and of the 'delicate' tools used in their production and sale. In this comparison, class and commerce mark the line between the labourer – or craftsman – and the skilled artist: to produce for personal use or the use of the working class is manual labour, but to produce fine things, made with fine tools, for the use and pleasure of the middle- and upper-class is artistry. Both Martineau and Frere appear willing to recognise the pragmatic value of the product *despite* its mode of production, but that does not elevate the worker from labourer to artisan.

Hearkening back to Martineau, the attractiveness of the process also plays an integral role in 'classing' the worker as either craftsman or artist. When passing through the village of Masgoon near the ruins of Memphis, Martineau describes how 'the people were spinning and reeling … The first white wool I remember to have seen. The distaffs were clumsy; but both men and women were as heartily busy as they could have been about better work' (2:44). Because of the 'clumsy' distaff, Martineau does not attribute value to the labourers who were 'as heartily busy as they could have been about better work'. It is important to note that, although she comments on the colour, she does not emphasise the quality of the product, but the tool that made it. This contrasts sharply with a later description of walking through the Ezbeekeyeh district of Cairo (the European tourist district), 'past a row of artisan dwellings, where the joiner, the weaver, and the maker of slippers were at work, with their Oriental tools, and in their graceful Oriental postures' (2:118). These 'artisans' are here identified through their 'Oriental tools' and their 'graceful Oriental postures', suggesting again that it is the attractiveness of their process that interests her at this stage, more so than the quality of output. These individuals also practise their trades in close proximity to bazaars frequented by

European tourists, which immediately suggests that their wares are marketed to the middle- and upper-class buyer, implicitly validating their status, in Ruskinian terms, as mere 'craftsmen'.

It is in their attempts to define the roles of the artist and the craftsman that Ruskin's, and subsequently, Morris's, rhetoric falls short of offering a meaningful solution to the plight of labourers, whether skilled or unskilled. Ruskin's apotheosis of the 'shattered majesty' (*NG* 16) of imperfect workmanship, which is supposed to represent the humanity of the workman, is contradicted by the reality that productive labour in marginalised classes must prioritise repetition over creativity, and consistency over freedom in order to maintain the custom that sustains their domestic economies; likewise, the truly desperate must favour use over beauty and survival over 'pleasure'.

While implied distinctions between the 'primitive' labourer and a skilled craftsman or artist remain a consistent theme throughout most travelogues of the nineteenth century, there is a shift in the degree to which the emphasis is placed on the beauty and marketability of the production process. Isabella Bird's description of hand-weaving by the Ainu (referred to by Bird as the 'Aino', which is now used as the singular form only). The Ainu are indigenous to Hokkaido, the northernmost island of the Japanese archipelago. Hokkaido – then called '[Y]ezo' – was colonised by the Japanese between 1868-1869; since the annexation, the Ainu were subjected to harsh oppression, losing much of their land and cultural freedom to the overreach of the Japanese government who openly sought to erase the Ainu culture from the region's history. Consequently, Bird's account is still revered in Japanese culture as a rare and important documentation of Ainu life and culture before the majority of it was lost to time.

Bird was allowed to stay as a guest in an Ainu community, and to closely observe their customs. She took a great interest in the domestic industry of weaving 'bark-cloth', a fabric made from the stripped bark of an indigenous plant:

> The women seem never to have an idle moment. They rise early to sew, weave, and split bark, for they not only clothe themselves and their husbands in this nearly indestructible cloth, but weave it for barter, and the lower class of Japanese are constantly to be seen wearing the product of Aino industry. (*Unbeaten* 2:66-67)

Gender roles in Ainu industry are a consistent theme in Bird's many references to the process of preparing and weaving the 'nearly indestructible' bark-cloth, which was predominantly produced by the labour of women; it is apparent, from Bird's account that women took the lead in both commercial and domestic production in the Ainu community. It is also important to recognise the political importance of Bird's observation that, in addition to bartering cloth with their own people, the Ainu's fabrics are worn by 'the lower class of Japanese'; despite

the hostility of the Japanese government towards the Ainu, there was potential for the Ainu to profit from trade with Japan, albeit only the lower classes. The 'nearly indestructible', hand-woven bark-cloth sold to the 'lower classes of Japanese' is reminiscent of Bird's later comments on 'comparatively indestructible' Chinese hand-woven cottons, which outperformed English cottons in the Shah-Shi market (*Yangtze* 87, 88). The emphasis on the durability of the Ainu material is essential to highlighting its marketability to the nation that conquered their people, while simultaneously illustrating the limitations of their position in the Japanese social strata.

Once the men have gathered the bark necessary for making the cloth, the women prepare and weave it together using a 'loom [that] is so simple that I almost fear to represent it as a complicated description' (*Unbeaten* 2:94). This introduction sets a vastly different tone than the surprise and condescension of the previous examples, while still maintaining a tight focus on the primitive attributes of both the mechanism and the people that operate it. The simplicity of the machine is, for Bird, a source of awe as she continues to describe the loom, which:

> consists of a stout hook fixed in the floor, to which the threads of the far end of the web are secured, a cord fastening the near end to the waist of the worker, who supplies, by dexterous rigidity, the necessary tension; a frame like a comb resting on the ankles, through which the threads pass, a hollow roll for keeping the upper and under threads separate, a spatula-shaped shuttle of engraved wood, and a roller on which the cloth is rolled as it is made. The length of the web is fifteen feet, and the width of the cloth fifteen inches. It is woven with great regularity, and the knots in the thread are carefully kept on the under side. It is a very slow and fatiguing process, and a woman cannot do much more than a foot a day. (*Unbeaten* 2: 94-95)

In this process, the Ainu women's bodies form part of the mechanism, compounding the admiration which Bird expresses towards both the process and product. The female worker 'supplies, by dexterous rigidity, the necessary tension' to make the loom work, meaning that she must master her own body to maintain the quality of her art which is 'woven with great regularity'. It is also noted that 'the knots in the thread are carefully kept on the under side', adding to both the appeal of the material and the difficulty of the task which is 'very slow and fatiguing'. Bird's comment that 'a woman cannot do much more than a foot a day' subtly implies that a man might do more, although there is no available comparison to confirm this; however, the level of physical strain required to compensate for the lack of mechanisation serves as a testament to the tenacity of the women who perform this industrial office with excellence, and manage, despite a low output, to make a product that is marketable outside of the domestic sphere. There is no direct comparison made to British or European aesthetics, class, or workmanship, which furthers the impression that Bird held the Ainu in a singular

regard, although other passages address Bird's impressions on the Ainu as a people group more generally:

> Eastern savagery and Western civilisation met in [the] Aino hut, savagery giving, and civilisation receiving, the yellow-skinned Ito [the Japanese interpreter] the connecting-link between the two, and the representative of a civilisation to which our own is but an "infant of days". (*Unbeaten* 2:60)

Although she perceived the Ainu as 'savages', Bird's analysis of their marginalised civilisation follows a political-economic continuum of 'civilisation' rather than an anthropological one.[12] Based on the broader context of Bird's recorded stay with the Ainu, there is an evident respect for their lifestyle and culture despite the condescending comparison to both Japanese and European cultures. In the context of Ruskin's view that 'savagery' was a mark of spiritual and humanistic integrity, there is again an inescapable stadial paradox that to be savage is to have ownership over one's own soul, yet to achieve great 'civilisation' society must be willingly enslaved to the collective dehumanisation of mechanical and commercial progress. This further explains the underlying sense of awe at the substitution of the – specifically – female body for tools; the human person *is* the tool, at one with their art.

Bird's amazement at the use of the human body in the art of bark-cloth weaving is only rivalled by her marvelling at the skeleton mechanism itself: 'The web and loom can be bundled up in two minutes, and carried away quite as easily as a knitted sofa blanket. It is the simplest and perhaps the most primitive form of hand-loom, and comb, shuttle, and roll, are all easily fashioned with an ordinary knife' (*Unbeaten* 2:95). The impermanence of these tools which can be 'bundled up in two minutes and carried away as easily as a knitted sofa blanket' add to their charm and is perhaps all the more significant in context of the marginalisation of the Ainu people themselves. As Japan took a firmer hold on Hokkaido, the Ainu people were forced to either abandon their lands or assimilate, where possible, into the dominant culture. Within the short period of time that elapsed between the colonisation of Hokkaido and the arrival of Bird, the erasure of Ainu culture by their Japanese conquerors became inevitable. The feeling that she is witnessing something transient is beautifully symbolised in the metaphor of the 'sofa blanket' - something that can be brought out, used, and then put away when it is no longer needed or desired, just as the Ainu were in the process of being put away. The lower classes of the Japanese could still benefit from Ainu production, but as the country sought to become a globalised industrial power, the slow and meticulous traditions of Ainu weaving would have no place in the Japanese economy.

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[12] C.f. Introduction pp. 26-30 and Chapter 1, pg. 64-66.

Not all of the late-Victorians framed hand-produced textiles in terms of the pragmatic or the progressive; in a case study of Oriental carpet, one of the most desirable Eastern textile crafts of the nineteenth century, Brian Spooner observes that for the late-Victorian carpet-collector the 'real thing is not simply an artefact; it is made by particular individuals, from special handcrafted materials, in particular social, cultural, and environmental conditions, with motifs and designs learned from earlier generations' (199). This is evident in Gertrude Bell's account of buying fabrics from a travelling merchant in Persia at the end of the century:

> presently your garden-paths are covered with crisp Persian silks and pieces of minute stitching, with Turkoman tent-hangings, embroideries from Bokhara, and carpets from Yezd and Kerman ... There is a personal note about these charming materials which lends them an interest other than that which could be claimed by bright colours and soft textures alone. They speak of individual labour and individual taste. (256)

The 'individual labour and individual taste' of these fabrics charmed Bell far beyond the 'Manchester cottons and coarse embroidered muslins' (253-254) of the bazaars frequented by tourists in major international cities. Similar to her romanticised narrative of the merchant-child discussed in Chapter 2,[13] Bell weaves a moving narrative of the 'years of a woman's life … spent stitching the close intricate pattern in blended colours from corner to corner', and of the 'incomplete' carpet designs that 'come from the fingers of a girl of Bokhara, who, when she married, threw aside her embroidery-needle, and left her fancy work thus unfinished' (256-257). These romantic pictures are a fully realised elevation of the imperfect and incomplete, favouring the soul and identity of the artist over the flawless, soulless products of industry. The framing of these products as the one-of-a-kind, unfinished products of a young woman who relinquishes her industrial pursuits for marriage merges the idea of the industrial and decorative arts, similar to the education of the Japanese girls in Bickersteth's account. In this context, decorative art may function as an industrial craft, uniting the role of the craftsman and the artist, enabling her to sustain herself until she no longer has need.

The ambivalent response to Eastern handicraft in women's travelogues demonstrates the complexities of tracing the development of the political economy of art and art production in the context of textiles. Discourses of quality, taste, and manufacturing developed at an uneven pace with other discourses of accessibility, authenticity, and class politics; while many women continued to prize culturally authentic, hand-produced crafts until the end of the century, their fundamental ideal of civilisation was still shaped by the language of stadial progress. This tension reached its climax when the women were confronted with the consequences of introducing industrial technology into Eastern textile production, prompting

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[13] C.f. pp. 98-99.

a recognition that the implementation of progress on a global scale would upset the imperial hierarchy that they tried to exhibit to the public, whether consciously or unconsciously, through their travelogues.

4.3 Industrial Technology: A Mutual Threat to Global Culture and British Commerce
This section examines how accounts of industrial technology in the textile factories of foreign competitors betray the ultimate dissonance between Victorian women writers' advocacy for a global commercial empire and the conceptions of artistic value that persisted in Victorian culture across the century. The first major revelation was that the implementation of industrial infrastructure into Eastern manufacturing was already showing a similar impact on the quality and aesthetic of the market commodities prized by Victorian collector-culture, which has already been explored in previous chapters; the second is that the same industrial machines that made Britain's mass-produced empire possible also allowed competitors to pose a direct challenge to Britain's perceived supremacy in the global economy. As the women attempt to index the global market according to an increasingly convoluted conception of stadial progress, it becomes clear that the British Empire was at risk of losing its global standing unless it could find a way to reconcile the growing conflict between cultural authenticity and technological progress.

Early evidence of Victorian women's anxieties that the adoption of industrial technology in Eastern countries posed a risk to British commerce appears in two complementary accounts of an Egyptian cotton manufactory in Esna by Isabella Romer and Harriet Martineau. Romer makes the first, innocuous reference to the manufactory in 1844:

> Although I have applied the term wretched to Esneh [sic], it nevertheless enjoys the reputation of being a place of some consideration, for the Viceroy has a palace here which he occasionally visits… and there is a considerable cotton-manufactory … which gives employment to a great number of people, and imparts something like an air of prosperity to the town. The bazaar also looks as if something was doing in it, and the market is very well stocked…. (1:151)

Here, the manufactory is credited with bringing an 'air of prosperity' to the otherwise 'wretched' town. There is no other significant detail provided about the manufactory, and Romer quickly moves on to describe other aspects of the town's community life — which itself is a mere segue to discuss the temples which made the region a favourite destination for European tourists. What stands out from Romer's description is that the manufactory was 'considerable' and '[gave] employment to a great number of people'. As seen in the previous chapter on the preservation of monuments, even a brief or oversimplified analysis of a local economy had the potential to make a substantial contribution to the British public's

perception of the state of a foreign economy; the suggestion that the manufactory at Esna gave 'an air of prosperity' to the city implicitly associates the presence of industry with progress, but as seen in Martineau's description, which was published two years later, the reality did not match the outward appearance. Martineau approached the Esna manufactory as a foil for another, more efficient factory in Keneh:

> The cotton manufactory at Kenneh [sic]appeared … better than that at Isna [sic], which certainly struck me as the poorest attempt at a manufacture I had ever seen. The machinery there was English, but kept in bad order. It was worked by horse power; and the horses were in poor plight. The thread produced was uneven, and the woven fabric therefore of indifferent quality, from so much of the machinery being worked by hand. (2: 22)

The first notable detail of the 'poorest attempt at a manufacture' is that the equipment was imported from Britain. Martineau blames the ineffectiveness of the machinery on the fact that it was 'kept in bad order' and worked by 'horses [that] were in poor plight' or 'by hand'. In this case it is not the machinery, but the lack of appropriate maintenance and use of the machinery that has resulted in 'uneven' thread and 'woven fabric … of indifferent quality'. This assessment is followed by a contradictory, yet telling, set of generalisations:

> one might say that this [poor production] was as much as could be expected from a factory on the other side of Thebes, but then, what beautiful fabrics the old Thebans wore! And of their own manufacture. And what luxuries they brought into their homes, by exporting their woollen and cotton goods! (2:22)

In keeping with the overarching theme that Egypt had regressed from the power and sophistication of its ancient inhabitants, Martineau exposes her low expectations for 'a factory on the other side of Thebes', despite her admission that the 'old Thebans' were celebrated for the 'beautiful fabrics … of their own manufacture'. As previously noted in Lesa Scholl's assessment of Martineau's representations of the Aswan slave girl, even Egypt's most 'crude' attempt at industry was a sign that 'they are working toward a higher level of civilisation' (151). Martineau's critical view of the Egyptian manufactory at Esna appears to be redeemed by the success of the Keneh factory, where 'five hundred people were employed, at wages varying, according to their qualifications, from 100 piastres (1*l.*) per month, with food, to 50 and 30 piastres. The machinery here was superior to that at Isna [sic]; the thread more even; and the woven fabric therefore better' (2:22-23). Martineau's framing suggests that by embracing more modern industrial models, Egypt can be accepted as a potential player in the burgeoning global textile market and pave a way forward for modern Egypt to return to a state of relative prosperity.

As seen in the previous chapter, Martineau's evident interest in the humanitarian side

of political economy, including concerns about poverty, government overreach, and slavery, did not always supersede her nationalistic views on the rights of the British government to interfere in matters of cultural preservation. In the context of industrial development, however, Martineau was more willing to compromise British interests. In addition to Dr. Bowring's efforts to gain control of the regulation of antiquities and the care of monuments – among numerous other social and economic programmes – other representatives of British interests were working to gain political favour with the Pasha in hopes of winning the right to build an overland transit system across the Suez River to reach India. Martineau and Romer were both approached by British tycoon John Galloway in a bid for support for his rail project that was rejected by the Pasha after the supplies had already been ordered; Romer acquiesced and dedicated almost an entire chapter of her book to praising the mutual profitability of the Suez Railroad for England and Egypt, while Martineau refused to even name Galloway or his plans in her book, although she did make a vague allusion to being approached by an 'Alexandrian gentleman' on a political matter that she preferred not to discuss in her 1877 *Autobiography* (2:276). The only direct reference to Galloway's project was a vague criticism that argued in favour of an opposing proposal to build a canal across the isthmus of the Suez; she argued that the proposed railroad would have a devastating impact on the indigenous Bedouins who relied on British foot traffic for their sustenance, and because a canal would enable more convenient export procedures for smaller Egyptian villages built along the river as well as enable British transit to the Far East (*Eastern Life* 2:275). Romer, by contrast, reprinted the arguments penned by Galloway and his friend, Naval Captain William Nugent Glasscock, in an 1864 pamphlet that favoured the Railway; this pamphlet insisted that it was French interference and misinformation that prevented the scheme from being adopted by the Pasha, rather than the potential negative impact of the scheme on the Egyptian economy (1:100-101). While there is little direct evidence of the degree to which their work directly influenced this particular issue, there is evidence that Martineau's work was taken with greater seriousness due to her pre-existing notoriety as a political and social commentator; her *Autobiography* later revealed that Galloway was livid when he found out that she had not only snubbed his request to be included in her book, but eloquently defended the benefits of the rival scheme (2:276).

Whether or not because of Martineau's influence, the Suez Canal was eventually constructed by the French government between 1859-1869, and a different contract for a British-owned railroad that ran to the Suez was accepted. The construction of the Canal overlapped with the American Civil War (1860-1865), which caused the demand for Egyptian

cotton to soar. The development of British interests in Egyptian cotton and textiles continued on an incline as India began to reduce its trade output with Britain, and Japan began to open its borders to Western traffic and trade. In 1882, Britain succeeded in occupying Egypt under the guise of a 'protectorate' under the Ottoman Government; consequently, Egyptian cotton goods (*ifrangi*) became an icon of Egypt's anti-colonial resistance in the early twentieth century, similar to the *swadeshi* movement in India which occurred in the same period (Reynolds 116). As seen throughout this thesis, Egypt's own manufacturing was never a consistent topic of interest for female travel writers, despite the fact that — as noted in the beginning of this chapter — the degree of attention paid to the different territories which produced, or were likely to produce, a significant source of raw materials or revenue for the British market appeared to increase as the century wore on. The reason for this lack of attention by female travellers is not straightforward, but aside from the evident preoccupation with Egypt's religious and cultural history, it is likely that as Britain gained control over cotton production and transport in Egypt other countries appeared to pose a greater threat of destabilising Britain's dominance of the global market. Regardless of the precise motivation, it is clear that in female-authored travelogues published after 1860, industrial competition in foreign markets was a pervasive theme that frequently emerged from the discussions of aesthetics and craftsmanship already discussed in the previous chapters.

As previously noted, China was not viewed as a threatening presence in the industrial textile market due to their reluctance to industrialise their fabric production on a broad scale. Although Alice Frere's allegation that 'the Chinese were an unprogressive race' (390) reflected the dominant view of the time, Bird argued that China did not have to pursue an aggressive campaign of mass-industrialisation to compete with Britain for local market dominance. A few chapters after Bird's account of Sha-Shih, where – as noted earlier in this chapter – hand-woven Chinese fabrics were revealed to exceed British textiles in both quality and marketability, Bird travels to the factory town of Wan where:

> Foreign goods go up the river to Chungking, the westernmost treaty port … and come down again to Wan. … [which] does not produce much cotton; and cotton yarn from Japan and India comes in large quantities into Wan to be woven there. In 1898 there were about 1000 handlooms. The cotton is woven into the pieces about thirty feet long and sixteen inches broad, which takes a man two days' labour, from daylight till 9 p.m. to weave. A weavers' wages with food come to about 600 *cash*, 1*s. 6d.* per week of six days. Can Lancashire compete with this in anything but the output? (*Yangtze* 176)

In this passage, Bird provides explicit details about China's non-mechanised approach to industry. Rather than machines, '1000 handlooms' operate simultaneously, producing cotton fabric that Bird has already identified as exceptionally durable and affordable, and better

suited to the needs of the local markets than imported British materials. Like Martineau, Bird makes a point of listing the working hours and wages offered to the labourers as a mark of relative success. For Martineau, the purpose was to compare manufactories within the same country, but Bird's choice to question 'can Lancashire compete with this in anything but the output?' demonstrates that China's textile industry had, without resorting to mechanisation, developed far enough by the end of the century to be compared to one of the capital regions of British textile development. Economic historian Julian Hunt noted that:

> the best-known contest between factory and hand worker, that between the Lancashire mills and the cotton hand loom weavers, occurred within a high-wage region [in the north of England], ... But the more pernicious and widespread effect of factory competition with hand labour was the loss of employment in the making of woollens, silk, and lace, of buttons, pins, gloves, footwear, and numerous other articles in the south of England. (956)

The 'contest between factory and hand worker' is avoided in China by marrying the notion of mass-production with hand-production; however, the wages and hours were not necessarily better in China. Bird notes that the Wan factory paid shilling sixpence (1s 6d) for 'daylight until 9 p.m.', but Lancashire was compelled to restrict working hours to under sixty hours per week by the Factory Acts passed between 1833 and 1878, and wages had reached approximately two shillings (2s) per week by the end of the century (W. Turner). Nonetheless, Bird's question impresses upon her reader that the Chinese have accomplished, with hand-looms, a higher-quality of production than the highly-mechanised Lancashire with nearly comparable hours and wages.

As previously noted, there are few meaningful examinations of Persian textile manufacturing with the characteristic exception of Isabella Bird. In an early comment on the state of trade in Persia, Bird argues that British and Persia were in a strong position to form a symbiotic relationship to address their mutual concerns over trade competition with Europe and Russia:

> I am strongly of [the] opinion that if the Empire is to have a solid and permanent resurrection, it must be through the enterprise of Persians, aided it may be by foreign skill and capital, though the less of the latter that is employed the more hopefully I should regard the Persian future. The Nasiri Company and the Messrs. Lynch may possibly unite, and the New Road Company may join with them in making a regular transport service by river and road to Tihran [sic], by which England may pour her manufactured goods even into Northern Persia, as this route would compete successfully both with the Baghdad and Trebizond routes. (*Journeys* 12)

As noted in Anne Blunt's comments on the Baghdad trade route, Manchester cottons were frequently trafficked through Turkey and Syria in the mid-century, but Bird saw potential for a

new market in Northern Persia if transit through other, competitive nations could be avoided. The concerns over 'foreign skill and capital' expressed in this passage are most likely referring to Russia, the largest foreign power to obtain significant holdings in the Persian market at this time; but when placed in context with her later description of Isfahan, discussed in a previous section, the degree of Russian and European encroachment on the local printing of calicos lends limited credibility to Bird's proposal that closer ties with Britain may ward off further damages to their local crafts.

Despite Bird's proud statement that '[British] commercial supremacy in Isfahan cannot be disputed' (*Journeys* 1:267), by the end of the nineteenth century Russian textiles had taken over the Isfahan market, outperforming both British and Persian fabrics that were 'not comparable in quality and price' (Jamali). Within this context, Bird's declaration that 'the cotton in the bazaars… is of the best quality, owing to the successful measures taken by the calico [*qalamkari*] printers to defeat the roguery of the cheating manufacturers' suggests that the fabrics being printed by the local manufacturers were not of local make, but were likely British or Russian (*Journeys* 267). Iranian artist and art historian Samira Jamali records how:

> in the 1870s the guild of the qalamkar makers had four connecting bazaars and between the bazaars there were five caravanserais and timche with 284 shops and offices, but not even half of their number have remained, because trade had declined sharply due to foreign competition and lack of demand at home. … Production could initially only survive by importing unbleached fabrics from Great Britain and India that were then printed in Iran. This delayed the inevitable decline of the craft for some time, but lack of innovation, continued inferior quality, and the use of chemical dyes meant that by the beginning of the twentieth century the craft had all but disappeared.

Jamali's account paints a sad portrait of a national art that would have 'all but disappeared' within a decade of Bird's account because the 'lack of innovation' and quality could not compete with the European products that flooded the market and drove down the price of printed textile commodities. Although it is accepted that the mutual encroachment of Britain and Russia was responsible, in the long-term, for the decline of Persian industry, scholars of Iranian history emphasise that poor economic management by the Shah dynasty and the weak agricultural sector were also significant factors (Seyf 55). However, as Bird pointed out in her earlier analysis, increasing trade with Britain was one way of delaying the inevitable.

Because of Egypt, China, and Persia's inability – whether by choice or by mismanagement – to achieve independent industrial infrastructures with global distribution by the end of the century, their territories served as an economic battleground in an aggressive competition for market dominance between not only Britain, Russia, and various European countries, but Japan. While Bird, writing in 1891, ignorantly dismissed Russia's economic

advances in Persia, she and her contemporaries had not failed to acknowledge Japan as an ever-growing presence in the textile market.

After criticising the Chinese for their 'retrogressive' preference for tradition over innovation, Alice Frere assessed Japan's rapid shift towards industrialisation:

> The Japanese are exactly the reverse [of the Chinese]; there is nothing they see of good or expedient, belonging to those nations who have effected [sic] a footing in the country, that they do not adopt. We went one afternoon across the harbour to see their foundry … They send for iron or machinery, which comes out in pieces from England, and they put it together themselves. (390)

This is one of the few instances, besides Martineau's observation of the Esna manufactory in Egypt, where the writer identifies British machinery put to use in a developing Eastern country. Although it is not being used for textile production, it effectively demonstrates that the exportation of European technology was a key factor in the rise of their Eastern market rivals. A few pages later, Frere records, 'one instance of the readiness of the Japanese to adopt European improvements is shown by the use they were making of a machine for husking rice, which had been lately sent to them from England' (395). The characterisation of the Japanese' 'readiness' to 'adopt' any 'good or expedient' technology from England sets an important precedent followed by other travelogues written in the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

Isabella Bird publishes an account of her visit to 'a filature where the managers and engine tenders all wore European clothes', which depicts the mechanisation of Japanese silk-spinning as a highly-organised and deliberate operation:

> [The filature] is a light, lofty, well-ventilated building, running 50 spindles (shortly to be increased to 100), worked by as many clean, well-dressed girls. Those who are learning get little besides their food, the skilled hands earn 5s. a week and food. The machinery is run by a steam-engine of twenty horse-power, made and worked by Japanese. In front of the spindles is a row of tables at which the girls are seated … The working day is eleven hours. The spun silk is all sent to England. The white bears the highest price, but the yellow is the strongest. In whatever form silk is sold, it must be put up in given quantities, in wrappers, bearing impressed stamps of different values. The manager complained very much of the adulterations of silk in Europe, and specially of that mixture of silk and cotton known as Japanese silk. (*Unbeaten* 1:277)

The filature described in this passage defies all of the sensory expectations of a modernised textile factory: it is 'light, lofty, [and] well-ventilated', worked by 'clean, well-dressed girls'. There is a set limit to the hours worked, comparable to the long-awaited protections of the Factory Acts of 1847 and 1874, which capped working hours in factories at ten-and-a-half hours per day for male and female workers (including children). Aside from the trainees, the wages of 5s per week far exceeded the 2s earned by Lancashire workers by the end of the

century. There is a clear work-flow and a high standard of precision in both the weighing and packaging of the silk, which is 'all sent to England'. Coupled with the information that the machinery itself, 'a steam-engine of twenty horse-power, made and worked by Japanese', Bird's passage suggests that the parts of Japan that have embraced an industrial infrastructure have, within the course of a decade, already met or exceeded the standards of industrial manufacture in Britain.

Bird's passage suggests that Japanese manufacturers also took a greater sense of pride in their product, as 'the manager complained very much of the adulterations of silk in Europe, and specially of that mixture of silk and cotton known as Japanese silk'. The manufacturer's annoyance that a silk blend that is not produced or used in Japan would be called 'Japanese' suggests a similar kind of nationalistic association with traditional standards of production. This suggestion is complicated by a later account of Japanese silk production recorded by Mary Bickersteth that demonstrated the long-term effect of industrial production, with or without the use of machinery, on the quality and appearance of Japanese textiles. Writing about a silk *crepe* factory, Bickersteth notes that the:

> *employes* were all seated on the floor before low frames containing their work, which looked more like delicate painting than silk embroidery. Yet we were told that this modern embroidery falls far below the standard of old days, and we could see it for ourselves from some fragments of old festival dresses that we picked up at another shop. The owner begged us to buy them, saying it would be impossible to reproduce them now, and would cost five times as much in the old days even to make the attempt. (147)

In this instance, the mode of production is hand embroidery, albeit housed in a factory setting. Bickersteth opens with a clear compliment that the work 'looked more like delicate painting than silk embroidery'; this briefly elevates the factory workers to the level of not only skilled artisans, in the Ruskinian sense, but proper artists, again defying the expectations of factory production. Nonetheless, when compared to hand-embroidered 'fragments' purchased second-hand, the factory products pale in comparison to the older, more traditional embroideries that were 'impossible to reproduce now'. This is the first clear hint that, however much pride was taken in producing quality goods in Japanese factories, there was still a visible decline from goods produced by obsolete methods in previous periods. It bears notice that even in their decline, factory-produced Japanese textiles still exceeded British products in quality and aesthetic appeal, exposing them as a formidable rival in the industrial market.

The final stage in identifying Japan as an economic threat comes through Bird's account of Japanese goods in the Sha-Shih market in 1898, along with a striking change in the language used to describe their national attributes:

> Foreign articles, few of which find any place in the customs returns, are to be bought in the shops. Very many of them are Japanese, owing to the energy or, as our merchants call it, the peddling and huckstering instincts of the Japanese traders, who through their trained Chinese-speaking agents find out what the people want and supply it to them. The cotton gins largely used in the neighbourhood are of Japanese make, and cheap clocks, kerosene lamps, towels, handkerchiefs, cotton umbrellas, cheap hardware, soaps, fancy articles of all descriptions, and cotton goods are poured into Sha-shih by that alert empire. Among English goods are rugs, blankets, and preserves and tinned milk and fruits. Most of the dealers in "assorted notions" are Cantonese. (*Yangtze* 87)

Although Bird is writing about China, the emphasis is on Japan's pervasive presence in China's commerce and industry, with a further emphasis on the intentionality and savvy behind Japan's rapid growth into a global economic power. The description of Japanese merchants as 'trained...agents' of an 'alert empire' unequivocally denotes that the Japanese government had a long-term plan to achieve market dominance and was well on their way to achieving their goal through careful market research, smart investments, and the development of efficient technology with a skilled and efficient labour force.

Bird repeats the unsubtle and unsavoury language of the British merchants, to communicate an even clearer picture of Japan's aggressive 'huckstering' tactics which have given them an advantage over the British by 'find[ing] out what people want and supply[ing] it to them'. Similar to the use of 'dirty' in Chapter 2, terms like 'huckstering' and 'peddling' were strongly associated with the importation of Oriental commercial practices in the late-Georgian and early-Victorian period, as well as a more specific connotation with anti-Semitism in the late-Victorian period; it may be inferred that British merchants employed this language to play on the same anxieties of encroachment and social disruption associated with the mixing of Eastern and Western cultures to discourage the favourable views of Japan and *japonisme* that contributed to the growth of the Japanese foothold in the British domestic market. The multiplicity of 'cheap' Japanese products infiltrating China suggests a growing concern that Japan was better positioned to both find and fulfil the gaps in the Sha-Shih market, thus making it harder for Britain to infiltrate the Chinese market. There is a quiet recognition that the Japanese are also fully reliant on their own technology to produce these imitation goods; in the earliest examples, the Japanese were importing British machinery for use in their foundries, but here, like in the silk filature, their own machines and factories had already reached a high level of production capacity. Thus, the Japanese represented not only a localised threat in terms of the Chinese market, but a threat to Britain's desired place at the apex of the global capitalist hierarchy.

4.4 Conclusion

In the years surrounding the publication of Ruskin's widely-read treatises on the political economy of aesthetics, there was an evident, but uneven increase of the value placed on traditional methodology and manual production methods as the nineteenth century progressed. The shift in the tone and framing used by travel writers to describe handicraft by foreign weavers demonstrates a subtle, but distinct shift away from using industrial or commercial power as the only consistent marker of civilisation. The paradox of crediting the growth of 'civilisation' to the expansion of an industrial global economy which necessitated the loss of the cultural heritage and artistry that gave value to textile commodities became an increasingly conscious aspect of travel commentary in the later decades of the nineteenth century; as typified by the contrast between Manchester and Lancashire textiles found in Eastern and the praise for hand-woven textiles from Egypt, Persia, China, and Japan, the value of a culturally-authentic textile was not simply lost by the introduction of mass-production.

Around the time that William Morris' began to disseminate his influential arguments on the importance of arts and crafts in redressing the inequalities resulting from Britain's unregulated industrial complex, women writing on Japan, China, and Persia took note of efforts to find a balance between mass- and hand-production that protected traditional crafts or aesthetics while also taking part in large-scale trade. Although not every nation was successful in this endeavour, or maintained safe or profitable conditions for their workers in the long-term, the women's analyses suggest that it is not essential to reject trade or manufacturing in order to maintain a sense of cultural identity or social mobility. Crucially, factors of class, tradition, and ethnography remained important factors in the way that hand-weaving techniques were represented to the British reader as the century progressed, signifying the anxieties surrounding the cultural, as well as economic, losses that occurred in Britain when mass industrialisation replaced local artisanship, and global capitalism replaced domestic market distribution.

Conclusion: Women, Travel Writing, and the Art of Political Economy

Sentimental. Domesticated. Decorative. For decades, scholarship on Victorian women travellers has been bound by these words. While twentieth and twenty-first century feminist discourses have succeeded in raising the lives and narratives of many extraordinary women out of the obscurity of archives and historiographical neglect, the persistent associations of Victorian womanhood with the limitations, real or perceived, of Victorian society have unintentionally imposed the same patriarchal structures that their work is designed to decry. In writing this thesis, I have shown that although Victorian women were indeed subjected to social restrictions within the physical and institutional boundaries of the exhibitionary complex, travel – and more importantly, travel writing – provided a means of not only expanding upon but critiquing that complex and the stadial, political-economic worldview that shaped it. Before the publications of Ruskin and Morris' influential lectures, female travellers had already begun parsing through questions of the role of art and art production in determining the economic future of Britain in their accounts of Eastern nations; drawing from the established visual and ideological conceits of the British museum and exhibitionary complexes, the women feature art and textiles as representative tokens of national character and stadial hierarchies of political-economic advancement. By 'seeing' Eastern art and textiles, and the means of their production, in 'their proper locality and connexion' through the eyes of female travellers, it becomes clear that stadial progress, by any definition, does not occur in linear stages; rather, it is a negotiation between protecting the traditions and values that unite a nation, and the necessary exchanges that will sustain its economy into the future.

Chapters 1 and 2 interrogated the way that the visual and spatial arrangements of art objects were perceived as narrative representations of national character and stadial progress. Starting with the museum space, I have shown that visual display was the key organising principle of the Victorian view of the world. Public museums, most notably the British Museum, were celebrated as the pride of the nation and for their educational contributions to British society; nonetheless, these spaces were criticised for their fragmented visual representations of foreign art and artefacts, prompting women, in particular Harriet Martineau, to attempt to restore missing contexts by capturing foreign works of art in their 'proper locality and connexion'. Narratives of visual displays found in museums and private collections across Egypt, Persia, and Japan sought to order the world according to a Western stadial hierarchy; this hierarchy reached its cultural zenith in the Great Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, firmly integrating the language of industrial competition into the existing conception of art and aesthetics as symbols of cultural development and national character.

Additionally, Mary Bickersteth's adherence to a Biblical conception of fundamental human equality, consistent with the humanist beliefs of the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, in her visit to the Ueno Museum in 1892 affirms that conjectural histories of stadial economic or philosophical development were not lost amidst the mainstream adoption of racialised natural histories in Victorian culture in the 1860s.

The same preoccupation with creating a visual, stadial narrative through textual description is extended to narratives of Eastern marketplaces and trade cities. Framed through the female- capitalist gaze of the travellers, Eastern shops, street cultures, and merchants are represented through literary 'tableaux vivants' onto which the women project a conception of national character and socio-economic order. Contextualised with the adoption of 'Oriental' bazaars and shopping spectacles in the late-Georgian and Victorian eras, women's representations of the dispersal of Eastern shops to the outer margins of their own markets and the narrative foregrounding of 'poor', 'dirty', and 'shabby' local shops perpetuated 'regressive' images of countries like Egypt and China despite the positive economic and social developments of larger cities like Cairo and Chengdu. In contrast, Japanese cities and markets were consistently celebrated for attempts to adopt Western market attributes, and for their characteristic cleanliness and order. The representation of merchant hospitality and Eastern transactions as a form of domesticated commercial 'contact zone' served a more positive purpose in Gertrude Bell's account of the Turkish silk merchant, suggesting the market space, when reimagined by the female capitalist as a hybrid domestic and commercial space, could act a site of cultural as well as economic negotiation. These spaces held the potential to reframe relationships with Eastern demographics that were frequently mistrusted or misrepresented in the Victorian imagination; however, as depicted in the Isabella Bird and Mary Bickersteth's encounters with the 'Oriental politeness' of the Japanese, the domesticated shop was used to affirm Japan's liminal existence between Eastern tradition and a modern, Westernised future, thus reinforcing the Victorians' persistent, derogatory associations between the Orient and a regressive social and economic state. Collectively, the visual representation of museums and market spaces by Victorian women reveal their pervasive associations of 'civilisation' with the development of material and commercial cultures, and their preoccupation with the construction of progress narratives organised by country, ethnicity, and – particularly in the case of China – class. The Victorian obsession with codifying and indexing cultures was not simply contained within the remit of academic or institutional knowledge formation, nor was it a response to the novelty and grandeur of the world on display at the Great Exhibition. Rather, it was a ubiquitous social phenomenon that

215

was as or more important to female travellers as the exotic merchandise they joyed in viewing, browsing, or purchasing.

Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated that women's narratives of 'curio-hunting' for Eastern art, antiquities, and textiles were discursive texts that engaged with the Victorians' existing relationship between visual, material, and commercial cultures to develop a bespoke political-economic discourse of art and art production. Collectively, the women demonstrate a complex, and at times ambivalent, attitude towards traditional modes of art and textile production; however, when read against the backdrop of mid- and late-Victorian aesthetic movements, particularly those by John Ruskin and William Morris, women's examinations of the nations they associate with the more extreme ends of the stadial spectrum betray a fundamental anxiety that the successful implementation of the capitalist, industrial models of production and trade to which they hold will cost the British Empire both its identity, and its place in the global hierarchy of industrial civilisation. In writings on Egypt, the women lament the fall of the ancient civilisation's artistic and commercial powers, yet they continued to reproduce government propaganda favouring political and industrial developments that benefited their own empire rather than enabling the economic independence of the modern Egyptian tribes. Even the more socially conscious, such as Harriet Martineau, maintain the perception of a primitive modern Egypt while also promoting interventions by the British government, although Lucie Duff-Gordon's published letters made an exceptional attempt to frame the Egyptian people as an intelligent and benevolent people whose economy had been irreparably damaged by foreign intervention, and who were equally unlikely to flourish should Britain's economic infiltration of the Egyptian market succeed. Conceptions of China and Persia's attempts to maintain the integrity of traditional crafts posed an even more complex challenge to women's political-economic philosophy, as nations believed to be regressive or staid succeeded, at least for a time, in protecting their own crafting traditions from the encroachment of industrial competition while also outperforming Britain's own industrial output in both quality and regional sales. In travelogues published later in the century, representations of Japan's unique approach to adapting traditional design aesthetics and craftsmanship with mass-manufacture, whether through mechanised or hand-copying, suggests that the cultural authenticity prized by Victorian collectors could survive industrialisation if conceptions of value were allowed to evolve past simple distinctions between the 'cultic value' of antique objects and the 'display value' of quality imitations.

While not all travelogues may be accorded the same degree of importance or profundity in terms of their political-economic engagement, I have demonstrated that even

authors whose works were dismissed by Victorian as well as modern critics as 'vanity' or second-rate publications – such as travelogues by Anna d'Almeida and Isabella Romer – still made significant contributions to historical records of the conditions of Eastern life and insights into the political-economic and aesthetic education of the Victorian middle-class woman. It is a further testament to the degree of influence that travel writers, regardless of gender, held over the British public that Romer, and later Harriet Martineau, were approached by John Galloway during their travels in Egypt to publicly endorse the Suez Railway project in their travelogues. Martineau and fellow professional authors, ethnographers, and archaeologists Isabella Bird, Amelia Edwards, and Gertrude Bell have received exceptional scholarly accolades for their bold and ground-breaking contributions to Victorian intellectual discourse, proving that travelogues by female authors were not merely written for the entertainment of housewives and 'armchair travellers' but had the power to influence investors, voters, policy makers, and connoisseurs. Sophia Lane Poole, Lady Lucie Duff-Gordon, Lady Anne Blunt, Alice Frere, Constance Gordon-Cummings, and Mary Bickersteth were also writers of significant accomplishment and influence, albeit in more niche circles, and often by nature of their connections to other public figures. Whether by nature of their gender or their affiliations with artistic, evangelical, or aristocratic societies, these women offered unique perspectives on the minutiae of life, religion, and art in the Middle and Far East; whether framed by concern for the development of Eastern social and economic life or the advancement of their personal or ideological projects, there is a consistent theme that art and political economy were inextricably linked in the Victorian consciousness regardless of gender or occupation.

Beyond the fields of women's travel writing and political-economic history, my research on antiquity and forgery has significant implications for studies of art history, Victorian collecting and antiquarianism, and contemporary debates surrounding the ownership of cultural heritage with contested, illegal, or unethical provenance. While many Egyptologists, such as the Lane and Lane-Poole family, Henry Abbott, and of course Amelia Edwards, collected or transported antiquities because of their passion for Egyptian culture and history, there remains the important question whether it was justifiable that they take and preserve these artefacts. Although there is an argument to be made for their successes in protecting Egypt's monuments from destruction by the Ottoman government or scavenging by impoverished locals and reckless tourists for sale or use, there is an equal argument that these cultural treasures would not have been without value to the Egyptian people were it not for the political and economic suffering wrought by centuries of colonisation. European

217

intervention in the antiquities trade — especially those who transported artefacts outside of the country — is commonly interpreted as a more insidious form of colonisation, wherein contests for ownership over Egypt's past prevented the Egyptian people from controlling either their past or their future. The European drive to preserve what remained of ancient Egypt from the abuse of the Pasha or the pillaging of the working class may have benefitted Egypt's heritage sector in the long term, but to engage in pillaging behaviours or to exploit locals who had no recourse to other profitable industries inflicted further harm on an already flailing society. This becomes especially clear in further accounts which, although intended to serve as warnings to potential collectors, exposed the rising forgery industry which might have meaningfully served the purposes of both the local people and tourists.

An obvious, practical application of this research is the current debate surrounding the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles, which continues to be a source of political and ethical debate; it is now known that Lord Elgin was a 'pioneer' in the production of plaster casting, and that casts of deteriorated or divided sculptures were also acquired by the British Museum for study and reproduction. A cast of the entire West frieze was left behind in Greece, and is now housed in the Acropolis Museum; this frieze is currently in better condition than the original pieces which are currently kept by the British Museum (Payne 1627). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to make a definitive case for or against the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece in the present day, it is evident that the political-economic rhetoric used to justify the acquisition of the Marbles in 1816 set a precedent for justifying the institutional and private acquisition of antiquities from dozens of other countries despite the availability of quality forgeries. As seen in the writings of female travellers across the nineteenth century, the basis of value necessarily changed as technological and philosophical developments challenged mid-century fears that industrial production, and reproduction, of art would lead to, in Ruskin's words, the 'degradation and deathfulness' of what makes a work of art valuable to both nations and individuals. Studying the values and motivations used to justify the original acquisition of antiquities from previously subjugated nations, and the value placed upon 'authentic' articles versus 'forgeries' will help to better illuminate the values and motivations of the present as we negotiate the future of objects which represent our global past.

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