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Life in Transit: Travel Narratives of the British Governess

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by

Jennifer Pearce, BA, MA

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ABSTRACT

Life in Transit: Travel Narratives of the British Governess argues that on entering the profession of governessing, women embarked on a new, more mobile existence of travel and relocation on a local and global scale. At a time when gentlewomen rarely travelled far without a chaperone, governesses left home and travelled unaccompanied across counties, countries and even continents for the purpose of work. Some relocated to wealthy households in Britain, some toured with families on the Continent, and others voyaged out to the colonies to work for expatriates or members of the Eastern aristocracy. Previously, however, scholars have tended to consider the governess in light of her unusual social status between the middle and working class. Studies of this kind do much to highlight the complexity of the governess's situation, but by developing new theoretical perspectives which focus on the governess's mobility, this thesis demonstrates how the impact of travel is fundamental to this.

Highlighting the interplay between the governess of fact and fiction, *Life in Transit* defines the 'governess travel narrative' as a literary strand present in the canonical novel, and a sub-genre of women's travel writing. Beginning with a re-reading of the governess novel, it considers Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) to explore the governess's journey in England. Moving its focus across the Channel, it then examines how the semi-autobiographical governesses of Anna Brownell Jameson's *Diary of and Ennuyée* (1826) and Brontë's *Villette* (1853) experience life on the Continent. Crossing the border of fact and fiction into the genre of travel writing, the thesis considers the work of the lesser-known Emmeline Lott and Ellen Chennells, and examines governess travel narratives produced at the height of the British Empire. Finally, it analyses the journeys of Sarah Heckford and Anna Leonowens, who travelling in the 1870s and 80s, reached as far as South Africa and Siam, extending the scope of women's travel and pushing the boundaries of the governess profession.

In this way, *Life in Transit* re-reads the governess's plight as both a physical and psychological journey in which she attempts to understand her place in the

world. Incorporating theories of travel, space, translation and ‘things’ into a framework through which to examine her experience, it builds on Marxist and feminist approaches to the governess’s position. Allowing for further analysis of the governess’s unusual status, this approach shows how, from within the liminal space of her displacement, the governess experiences her life through spatial above social relations, and provides a unique voice in nineteenth-century Britain’s conception of self and world.

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For my family

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INTRODUCTION



Fig.1. *Jane Eyre* (2011)
Film still, Focus Features

This screenshot, from Cary Fukunaga's film adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011) is highly symbolic of the governess's plight in the nineteenth century. It is a powerful visual reminder of so much we already know about the governess. Hers was often a bleak and dreary existence, for as an unmarried gentlewoman forced to work she was disconnected from society at large, stranded in a social no-man's land between the middle and working class. Yet in capturing Jane's escape from Thornfield, after she discovers Rochester's marriage to Bertha, this image points to a pivotal, recurring, but somehow overlooked part of the governess's life. What Fukunaga's dramatic panorama shows us is that wherever she worked, and whether or not her situation was as tumultuous as Jane's, when a woman became a governess, she also became a traveller.

While the governess hovered at a figurative cross-roads between various social constructs, in reality she repeatedly found herself forced to decide 'where next?' Governesses' working lives consisted of a string of temporary contracts. They rarely remained in one place for more than a few years before their pupils went to school or married, and the open road beckoned once again. Though scholars have focussed on the complexity of the governess's social position, her geographical mobility has seldom been the subject of detailed literary criticism. More emphasis has been put on her

abstract position between social classes, gender roles and the public and private sphere than on the physical locations she inhabits or the journey she undertakes for the purpose of employment. For this reason, *Life in Transit: Travel Narratives of the British Governess* will retrace the steps of this captivating archetypal figure and investigate two key questions, namely: what does travel add to our understanding of the nineteenth-century governess and how does the combination of her geographical and social mobility affect her perception of self and world? This way, I aim to define the governess travel narrative as a feature of the canonical novel and a subgenre of women's travel writing.

WHO WAS THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GOVERNESS?

It seems timely at this point to provide some historical context about the women at the centre of this thesis. Up until, and well into the nineteenth century, upper-class women were not expected to work for a living. Governesses were generally of middle-class birth, but when their families failed to provide for them, were forced to challenge traditional ideas of gender and find employment. Quite often this happened because their father's unsuccessful business venture or untimely death meant the family were left without a fortune, but equally, like Anne Brontë's Agnes Grey, a young woman might become a governess to fulfil her desire to contribute to her family's upkeep. At a time when most families had an average of five or six children, it was difficult to remain financially secure at the best of times, and an extra wage could ease a family's financial hardship. It has also been suggested, however, that some women of lower-class birth entered the governessing profession to improve their social standing (Peterson:1970:11). Like Becky Sharp of William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, some saw governessing as an opportunity to mingle with the upper class, but on the whole it was thought to be a shame if a woman turned to governessing instead of getting married. This attitude had intensified by 1861 because 'the population [of Britain] comprised 1,053 women for every 1,000 men', and there were not enough available men for young women to marry (Hughes:1993:31). This 'odd woman' problem, as it was termed by the press, resulted in thousands of women entering the profession in order to survive. For while women of respectable birth were on the whole reasonably well-educated, gender constraints forbade them from fulfilling professional roles in the public sphere. The best they could do was to teach children within other people's homes.

Though the plight of governesses was well known, the degree of concern surrounding their position was disproportionate to their number. Both Kathryn Hughes and Broughton and Symes point out that there were only 25,000 governesses in Britain in 1851, ‘one thirtieth of the number of female domestic servants’ (Hughes:1993:xi). (Broughton and Symes:1997:9). In spite of this, and regardless of their reputable birth and education, governesses were at best pitied and at worst actively disliked. Their financial instability was considered a great shame and as unmarried women their presence in the home caused much social anxiety. The idea that governesses were likely to seduce or be seduced by male members of their employer’s household frequently stole its way into the Victorian novel and the popular press, but above all a sense of guilt weighed heavily on the shoulders of the British upper class. The country had failed these young women who, in spite of their education and respectability, were struggling to pay their way from one day to the next. Much of the social anxiety surrounding the governess was addressed in typically satirical style in *Punch Magazine*. In an essay from February 1848 entitled ‘A Model Governess’ one writer exposes the negative attitudes governesses might face on a daily basis:

To be perfect she should be ugly. Woe betide her, if she be pretty! The mother suspects her, the young ladies hate her, and even the ladies’-maid “cannot abide her”... The young gentlemen of the house, also, persist in flirting with her, and this rouses the suspicion and sneers of the old gentleman. He accuses her of making love, of “laying traps” for his sons, of being “an artful, designing thing” (‘A Model Governess’:1848:51)

Contributors also highlighted the intolerable circumstances in which governesses could be expected to work. A recurring practice in *Punch* was to mock advertisements placed in newspapers or private correspondence such as the following:

TO GOVERNESSES.

WE have received the subjoined letter, addressed by a lady—a very gorgeous lady, no doubt—to a governess .—

“Mrs. H—s compliments to Miss S— begs to acknowledge the receipt of her note of this morning and should not engage with *any young person* unless she were compotent of teaching singing, my eldest daughter is sixteen years of age, the second thirteen, the youngest [*daughter*, of course] a little boy ten. The *person* who has now left has resided five years with us, as teacher to my family her salary *never exceeded sixteen pounds* paying her own *laundressy*, she was thoroughly compotent of tuition in every respect should Miss S—feel compotent of teaching singing &c Mrs. H—s would wish her to name salary and every particular.

“ — — near
“ Aylesbury.
“ January 1846.”

It is plain that Mrs. H. (from the style of her letter) is, to use her own phrase, “compotent” to judge of the scholastic powers of any young “perscn.” And she therefore offers sixteen pounds to the successor of the “person” who has “now left.” Sixteen pounds a year for stuffing her children with “tuition in every respect.” What may Mrs. H. give to the “person” in the kitchen who stuffs her geese and ducks? Scarcely less, we should think, than £16 per annum,—but then, to be sure, it is more important properly to stuff geese and ducks with sage and onion, than young ladies and “a little boy of ten” with “tuition in every respect.”

Fig. 2. ‘To Governesses,’ *Punch* (Apr 04 1846)

As shown here, the governess’s role within the household was often considered akin to that of a servant, but this made for a great deal of conflict because her upbringing was that of a gentlewoman. In many cases neither the members of the family nor the servants of the house found it easy to relate to the governess. The former felt she was a downtrodden victim of misfortune and considered her to be beneath them, while the latter disliked her for having airs and graces above her station. Another writer remarked that: ‘The social position of a governess is a peculiar one, being, as a novelty, rather uncomfortable, though, like a certain process to which eels are subjected, nothing when anybody is used to it’ (‘Governesses’ Benevolent Institution’:1846:216). In this way, the magazine at least strove towards securing sympathy above scorn for the misunderstood and often mistreated governess of Britain.

Despite the scrutiny under which the *Punch* writer picks apart the letter, there is still an element of mystery. It is this mystery that I seek to address in *Life in Transit*, because the very existence of this letter, and many others like it, rests on the fact that one governess ‘has now left’ making way for another. These snapshots of the ways of

governessing are imbued with ideas of leaving, arriving, travel and relocation, yet we are left unaware of where the previous governess has gone and where the next is coming from. We can only speculate as to how long, or how eventful a journey the ‘young person’ might face in moving to Aylesbury or who she might meet along the way. We are led to question how her time on the road might affect her attitude to work, her employer, or her life as a whole since embarking in this new direction. It seems then, that because the governess’s social position and experience of employment were so problematic, we have so far forgotten to pay attention to her mobility.

That mobility was in fact quite radical. Most single women at the time would refrain from travelling unaccompanied. Whether they decided to visit a friend, take a walk or relocate to the town or country for a period of time, for the sake of propriety they would be accompanied by a parent, guardian or female companion, and more often than not, at least one servant. It was not considered respectable for a single woman to travel by herself because this left her open to the advances of men. Governesses on the other hand, could cross counties, countries and even continents without a protector. Most governesses would respond to advertisements or take up the help of friends to secure situations in wealthier homes around Great Britain. They would travel for a matter of hours or perhaps even days by public coach, private carriage and on foot, before finally arriving at their situation and meeting their employer. Along the way they could travel through both rural and metropolitan landscapes, organising their route, the matter of their luggage and the cost of transport for what could be the first time. This, however, was not the full extent of the governess’s travels. Many found situations with employers looking to take their children on a tour of the Continent or live abroad for a while, but what is most interesting is that rather than merely responding to advertisements, some governesses placed them, seeking out work in Europe. This turns the notion of the meek and miserable governess on its head and instead we see her as an opportunist with a much greater sense of independence and agency. Still, this is by no means the limit of the governess’s journey.

Through various means governesses travelled as far as America, Asia and Australia. Some went to work for British families in Middle-Eastern colonies, and a few, through political connections and British Ambassadors, were asked to provide a sought-after ‘English’ education to children in wealthy Eastern households. Others, though not a huge number, travelled abroad as emigrants. Some were able to find work because

relatives or friends already living overseas organised it for them, but between 1832 and 1836, out of 2,703 female emigrants that moved to Australia, only 135 classed themselves as governesses, and only 49 of these found work as governesses once settled overseas. The rest either married or found other forms of employment such as domestic service or dressmaking (Hammerton:1979:Appendix 1). Though women continued to emigrate in the hope of finding work as governesses, things did not get much easier. Between 1862 and 1886, 302 governesses, out of 405,000 single adult women in Britain, left England for Australia and New Zealand with the help of the Female Middle Class Emigration Society. Founded in 1862 by Maria Rye, the FMCES sought to resolve the 'odd woman' problem at home, and serve the British Empire simultaneously. With the support of various wealthy patrons, Rye ensured that the women who applied for her help were educated to a reasonable standard, before offering them interest-free loans repayable over two years to facilitate their move overseas. The society continued to run until 1908 when it became absorbed by the British Women's Emigration Organisation (Hammerton:1979:122,124,125,130). The FMCES and women like Maria Rye responded to the cultural crisis surrounding the odd woman, and while the work they did could not resolve the problem of 'redundant women' it did support the growth of the British Empire. This points to the fact that in terms of middle-class working travellers, the governess had her counterparts. These include the male tutor, the missionary, and the female companion.

Most of our knowledge about male tutors and travel comes from studies of the Grand Tour and in some ways, the role of the male tutor is similar to that of the governess-traveller. While a young woman would tour the Continent with her governess, a young man would travel with his tutor. Like the governess, the tutor would be expected to teach his pupil about the language, culture, art and architecture of the countries through which they travelled. Yet, it seems they received more respect and experienced a greater degree of class equality with their students. While governessing was considered in terms of a domestic service, the work of the male tutor was more professionalised. Kathleen Burk tells us that a tutor 'was often an aspiring academic or schoolmaster, who also tried to encourage his charge's interest in art and antiquities, and to facilitate introductions to those who might later be useful to the young Grand Tourist. [He was also] responsible for the safety and financial control of their charges' (Burk:2005:1). The high esteem surrounding the role of the male tutor largely results, therefore, from their having a higher level of education than the governess.

Women generally received less formal education than men. They could not attend university until the second half of the nineteenth century and even then such women very few in number. The overarching purpose of women's education was to provide them with general knowledge, taste in the arts and moral virtue so as to prepare them for marriage. Although organisations such as the Governesses' Benevolent Institution and the FMCES devised training to ensure that their governesses were qualified to an acceptable standard, these women were not privy to the education male tutors might receive in their days at school or university. This becomes largely apparent when we compare adverts placed by governesses and adverts placed by male tutors:

A MEMBER of the University of Cambridge, in full Orders, acquainted with the French Language, and who has travelled for two years, offers himself as a Tutor or Companion to any Nobleman or Gentleman, who may be desirous of visiting the Continent. The Advertiser would have no objection to engage himself as a Tutor in a family. The highest and most satisfactory references, (academical and others) can be given.—Letters addressed to A. Z. at Messrs. Rivingtons, Waterloo-place, will be duly attended to.

Fig. 3. 'A Member of the University of Cambridge,' *John Bull* (1825)

While governesses refer to themselves as 'A lady accustomed to tuition' or 'A young lady...competent to teach French' (*The Times*: Jan 14th1841:1), this male tutor's advert in *John Bull* proudly boasts of his formal qualifications and access to academic references. Though his educational role was similar to that of the governess, gender constraints around women's education meant that the tutor's work was considered within the field of academia while the governess's did not extend beyond the matter of developing basic skills and accomplishments. Even when governesses were exceptionally well educated, their knowledge did not make up for the fact they were 'odd women' subject to social and financial degradation.

As Burk also points out, the male tutor often had both financial and geographical control of the grand tour. This was not the case for the governess because when a gentlewoman toured the Continent with her governess, there was generally a male family member or friend in charge of the company. What is more, as Brodsky-Porges notes, the matter of becoming a tutor in this way sometimes had more to do with choice than necessity:

Upon a young man's return to England, he was often plagued with the urge to travel once again. What better way than to serve as the trusted guide and teacher for the not yet initiated. Few

students traveled alone, especially the younger male still in his mid-teens. Fees for the services of the tutor were negotiable, some tutors were in demand as their fame spread. Some tutors served more than one generation of a family. Size of the family's purse was often the determinant of the number of persons that would be in the young traveler's party. (Brotsky-Porges:1981:180)

The 'young man' described in this passage is the gentleman who rather than being forced due to financial misfortune, chooses to become a male tutor. The matter of money might not be the tutor's sole reason for travelling, because tutoring allowed a young, unmarried man to prolong his freedom from marriage and long-term employment while reliving his own touring days. At the same time though, money was something the tutor could deal with quite openly, without any negative connotations. Free from the shame surrounding the position of the governess, the male tutor was able to proudly sell his knowledge and abilities and negotiate his worth in the public marketplace. In this way taking a wage put him in a position of power rather than a position of dependency and made him a vital cog in the business of the Grand Tour. The governess, on the other hand, remained in the background, limited by the fact that her work was deemed a private, not public act.

The female companion also experienced a greater degree of class equality compared to the governess. As Kaston Tange notes:

A companion was usually a young lady from a gentleman's family who was without fortune and required financial support. She served to entertain and accompany a wealthy woman who was without other companionship. The companion would engage in leisure activities with her mistress including playing games within the mistress's home and going on outings that require accompaniment... The position of companion was comparable to the position of governess, although socially it was a slightly higher position. Whereas the status of a governess could be questionable, a companion would always eat with the mistress and so forth. (Tange:2010:online)

An example of a female companion who received this kindly treatment and experienced this sense of equality was Louisa Jeffrey who travelled in America with Harriet Martineau.

Happily for me a lady of very superior qualifications, who was eager to travel, but not rich enough to indulge her desire, offered to go with me, as companion and helper, if I would bear her expenses... She was as conscientious as able and amiable. She toiled incessantly, to spare my time, strength and faculties. She managed the business of travel, and was for ever on the watch to supply my want of ears... I should have made hourly mistakes but for her. She seemed to make none,—so observant, vigilant and retentive were her faculties. We fulfilled the term of our compact without a shadow of failure ... and it is pleasant still to talk over our American adventures in her house or in mine.
(Martineau:2010:4)

In Martineau's description of her companion there is no sense of class difference, only the brief mention of Jeffrey's financial needs. This could be because Martineau was no stranger to the ways of governessing. Her elder sister Rachel became a governess and Martineau herself might have entered the profession had it not been for her hearing impairment (Hughes:1993:31). For her work as a travelling companion, Jeffrey could not have received higher praise. As Tange suggests, she seems to have shared every part of the voyage with Martineau, rather than being segregated during times of socialising or relaxation. Another illustration of Jeffrey's class equality with Martineau is the fact she went on to marry and have children, and Martineau made regular visits to the family home as a friend rather than an employer. This could rarely if ever be said of the governess who moved from situation to situation and worked for many employers.

Another category of working woman who travelled in less luxurious circumstances was the religious missionary. Travelling far and wide, both governesses and missionaries could experience difficulties on their journey, mostly as a result of inexperience or moving to remote areas rarely inhabited by Europeans. This is something hinted at in Jane Eyre's horror at the idea of a missionary life. Yet, there are significant differences between the missionary's and the governess's work. While governesses taught those who, being financially secure, were above their social station missionaries went overseas to teach people who were considered to be racially and spiritually inferior. St. John of *Jane Eyre* shows how the missionary's dreams 'of bettering their race—of carrying knowledge into the realms of ignorance—of substituting peace for war—freedom for bondage—religion for superstition' were glorified (Brontë:1999:331). Thus the public thought highly of the missionary for while the governess worked to earn, the missionary's toil was more philanthropic. In

Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice (1999), T. S. Beidelman reminds us that for middle-class women ‘working for money was considered degrading, but labor[sic] itself was virtuous, since idleness was ungodly’ (Beidelman:1999:126). While the governess’s ‘employment’ challenged this attitude, the missionary’s ‘labour’ remained within the scope of what was an acceptable enterprise for women. Where governesses were criticised, missionaries ‘piqued the sympathies of Western women across all the classes [because] the image of the missionary symbolized a virtue that was not only Christian but traditionally feminine... Women’s own domestic servitude was, like missionary lives, valorized[sic] as Christian *service* based on sacrificial love’ (Smith Kipp:1999:152).

Another key difference is that while most governesses were single, missionary women could be married prior to, or during, their service. ‘One reason why missions served as an acceptable work option for respectable, middling-class women was that female workers simply transferred familial obligations onto the mission. Of the wives of missionaries this was quite literally the case... Their presence in the mission endeavour was dependent on their having formed a partnership with a man’ (Semple:2003:205). There was also a rigorous ‘vetting’ process for single female missionaries: ‘When mission societies began to hire single women, the most obvious group of candidates were relatives of either missionaries or ministers’ (Semple:2003:38). These women, along with other single female applicants, were then ‘represented by the ministers, or elders of their home churches or chapels and in letters from their parents’ (Semple:2003:37). For successful applicants their minister’s and family’s blessing served as proof of their moral virtue and Christian devotion. Thus, missionaries avoided the suspicion that surrounded young single governesses who entered other people’s homes and might seduce, or be seduced by men.

As well as being perceived as a ‘Christian service’, the missionary was also seen to serve the British Empire. Religious missions received government funding for medicine and schools, and whether the missionaries themselves thought this to be appropriate, the general public and those in politics saw the Christian Mission to be bound up with nationalism and the progression of the British Empire. While governesses often left England having fallen victim to decreasing employment rates and felt let down by their country, missionaries were sought after, drafted in with the help of large propagandist schemes, and voyaged out enthused with a sense of religious and national cause. This is

not to say that their connection to the cause was straightforward. As Thorne tells us, their religious beliefs meant that ‘most missionaries were genuinely committed to advancing the welfare, at least as they understood it, of the indigenous peoples to whom they ministered’ (Thorne:1999:8). Many missionaries disapproved of the harsh practices of British colonialism and the impact this had on native communities. Then again, ‘[m]issionaries operated on the frontline of colonial encounter...[a]nd even those missionaries opposed to imperialism in principle contributed to the destabilisation of indigenous cultural and political structure in ways that facilitated European encroachments’ (Thorne:1999:9). Thus while the missionary’s connection to these larger forms of enterprise was by no means straightforward, it was a connection that the governess did not formally subscribe to.

The governess-traveller’s journey was different from that of the male tutor, female companion and missionary because it was not fully recognised as either a professional, domestic or philanthropic enterprise. While the tutor’s professionalism and the missionary’s cause tied them to a larger body of travellers, the individual nature of the governess’s work meant that she travelled alone, without a wider network of colleagues or comrades travelling elsewhere. Though the work of organisations like the FMCES was of great help to the women it educated and found employment for, such work shows us that the governess’s emigration overseas was ultimately caught up in public desire to ‘restore balance’ in Britain, removing surplus single women to the colonies. The overarching ambition of such organisations was for emigrant women to marry once abroad, and since the number of men in the British colonies exceeded that of women, this was often the case. The governess’s journey, therefore, continued to take place in the shadows.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GOVERNESS IN SCHOLARLY CRITICISM POST

1900

Critical interest in the plight of the nineteenth-century governess developed rapidly from the start of the twentieth century. This continued into the 1990s and the first few years of the twenty-first century. On the whole, these studies centre on the complexities of the governess’s social position, and have approached this issue via the theoretical models available in their day. The difficulty with this, however, is that the

analytical frameworks adopted in these studies are based on structures to which the governess could never herself conform. Studies of the governess are broadly Marxist or feminist and assess her relation to social-class and gender roles, but the governess could never be properly defined by these constructs. Analysing the governess in this way only confirms that she was indeed an ambiguous figure on the borders of categorisation. Nonetheless, these critical approaches certainly provide us with valuable insight into the complexities of her position.

Since her day, the nineteenth-century governess has been of interest to scholars of literature and history alike. The earliest studies were predominantly literary-critical whereas more recently the nineteenth-century governess has been the subject of historical research. Perhaps this is because while literature offers itself up for analysis upon publication, the construction of history takes time. Governesses were still around, though much fewer in number, in the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore the historical fascination with the nineteenth-century governess has emerged only more recently. In the following review of literature on the governess, in which I will explain which key studies contributed to my research, I will begin by looking at critiques of governesses in fiction before moving onto the key historical analyses. Then I will focus on the various ways in which these, and some other more recent studies, have considered the governess's role overseas.

There is little research devoted entirely to the figure of the fictional governess, but her social position is often a point of discussion in studies of canonical novels in which she is a character. Many of these studies are more interested in the novel as a whole rather than the character of the governess, but the key text to which many of these works refer is Katharine West's *Chapter of Governesses* (1949). In her book, West highlights the point I have just made: that until *Chapter of Governesses* the fictional governess had yet to be the chief focus of a substantial scholarly text. She therefore undertakes a 'survey', presents 'a portrait gallery of governesses' in fiction and provides a useful catalogue of literary governesses from 1800-1949 (West:1949:8). Also relevant to my study of the governess-traveller is West's key argument that '[a]lthough the downtrodden governess certainly existed...she represents only one type among many. These we shall classify roughly under six heads, namely *The Downtrodden, the Valued Friend, the Strict Instructress (or Dragon), the Self-Seeking Adventuress...the Villainess, and the Snob Exhibit*' (West:1949:13). In highlighting the

fact that there was more than one kind of governess, West paves the way for my recognition of the governess-traveller. Beyond this West's focus is the way that literature 'throws an interesting light on social history'. Guided by the issues brought up in the novel, she questions 'who were these women...who were their parents...what sort of schools turned them out and to fit what standards of attainment', pre-empting the research focus of later historical studies (West:1949:14). There is little mention, however, of governesses travelling overseas other than a brief reference to those who went abroad with English families: 'such adventurous openings for governesses cannot have been uncommon. Diplomats who in England would have sent their children to day schools, needed someone to educate them in their own language while abroad...it would be fascinating to know how often this occurred: among diplomats it must, surely, be almost impossible for the governess to live "as family"' (West:1949:177-9). In this way West draws on fiction to highlight complex issues and ask intriguing questions concerning the governess of reality but often without pursuing such lines of enquiry.

Some of these questions have been answered by Mary Poovey in *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (1988) and Cecelia Wasdö Lecaros in *The Victorian Governess Novel* (2001). More so than West, Poovey and Lecaros draw on non-fiction sources in their discussion of the novel. Though she does not consider the act of travel, Poovey demonstrates how social concerns permeate the governess novel and '[t]he issues of sexual susceptibility and social incongruity that contemporaries associated with the governess are inextricably bound up with each other in Jane's situation at Thornfield Hall' (Poovey:1988:136). In a similar approach, Lecaros compares the governess novel with shorter non-fiction writings such as articles, guide books and letters and shows that 'although the novels may convey a dramatized or even standardised view of governess life, fictional and non-fictional texts form a dialogue, dealing with the same topics, using similar kinds of rhetoric, and corresponding ideologies concerning femininity and work' (Lecaros:2001:14). This is something Lecaros proves, quite successfully, and in doing so highlights the typical characteristics of the governess novel such as the moment of leaving home and arriving at the employer's house. Like Lecaros I identify these moments in the novel, but I combine fact and fiction so as to envision these moments as part of her life's journey in a range of different landscapes. In doing so I hope to expose and understand the complexity of the governess's position in a global context.

Arguably, the issues surrounding the position of the governess are dealt with in more detail in literary criticism of Gothic and Sensation fiction, but why this is, is a matter of debate. In his 1975 book *Night's Black Angel: The Forms and Faces of Victorian Cruelty*, Ronald Pearsall reiterates the Victorian idea that the subjugation and isolation experienced by the governess 'bred loneliness and neurosis...and these could have tragic outcomes for both the instructed and instructor' (Pearsall:1975:48). Foreshadowing the title of Alice Renton's book, he links the governess's role in sensation fiction to her persona being that of either the 'tyrant or victim'. This stereotype is in part justified because letters like those of Charlotte Brontë do suggest that governesses experienced episodes of depression and the Victorians were renowned for admitting women to asylums for showing symptoms not much more severe. However, the idea that half of the 25,000 governesses in Britain became depressed victims, while the other half became tyrants or even criminals is absurd. The emotional strain that writers knew the governess suffered does not fully explain why they made her the protagonist of their sensation fiction.

More recently, in his study of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, Stuart Burrows has touched upon why the governess's mobility might be central to her role in sensation fiction. In his article 'The Place of the Servant in the Scale' he suggests that the governess is haunted not simply because she is lonely but because of

the knowledge that she is replaceable, that to occupy the office of governess is inevitably to step into someone else's place—in this case, that of the former governess, Miss Jessel. This is why James's narrator, at the beginning of the story, tortuously describes the governess's position as that of being "in her successor's place"... Governesses, it seems, are endlessly replace- able, as the governess herself recognizes when she admits to Mrs. Grose that she has "no pretension...to being the only one" (Burrows:2008:90)

Here Burrows points to something I have mentioned previously, and that is the element of mystery present in advertisements whereby it is uncertain where or why one governess leaves to make way for another. In this way it is the governess's need to travel that makes her a suitable figure to be both haunted and haunting because we do not know where she has come from or where she is going next. Burrows goes on to challenge Bruce Robbins's argument in *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below* (1986), that the governess appears in sensation fiction primarily because of her

social displacement. Many have noted that her horror at the sight the ghostly butler Quint is increased tenfold by the fact he wears his master's clothes, because this reflects her own class confusion. Burrows argues, however, that '[t]he scandal of *The Turn of the Screw* is less that governesses and Masters can exchange places than that the "place" of the governess is endlessly substitutable' (Burrows:2008:92). This, I believe, is the underlying reason that writers and readers of sensation fiction were drawn to the figure of the nineteenth-century governess. Her location could never be permanently fixed, and novels played up the fact that employers were limited as to what they could find out about their governess's past and where she had lived or worked previously. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Lady Audley, from her 1862 novel, travels across the country to hide her past, take up work as a governess, and bigamously marry the wealthy Sir Michael Audley. Lady Isabel Carlyle from Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) relocates to Germany so as to leave her husband for another man but then returns in disguise to act as governess to her own children. Because the references governesses received were hand-written, they could easily be forged. The unreliability of the census records recognised by Broughton and Symes shows that it was easy to hide the truth about one's past employment. Perhaps the most shocking example of a governess is Sheridan Le Fanu's Madame de la Rougierre from his 1864 novel *Uncle Silas*. Rougierre has a part in, and ultimately falls victim to, a twisted murder plot, but even this is partly because of her mobility and the fact she has come to Britain from abroad. Teresa Mangum argues that as '[a] foreigner, particularly the vulgar, licentious, alcoholic French [governess, Rougierre] threatens to undermine social (and by analogy colonial) power' (Mangum:1997:215). The foreign governess in Britain is not a figure I consider in *Life in Transit*, primarily because the British public's response to the foreign governess differs from that of the governess born and bred in Britain. For a time French governesses were thought to be desirable additions to the Victorian household. Their nationality alone meant they were qualified to teach British children the French language. This is not to say that foreign governesses were always so highly regarded. Le Fanu's villainess shows that where the Continental governess was concerned, the British public swapped their obsession with class status for their trepidations as to her foreignness. In spite of this, foreignness is still a central theme in my study of the British governess because I look closely at how this anxiety surrounding the mobility of the foreign governess in Britain is echoed in the narratives of British governesses in Egypt, South Africa and the Far East. The governess's ability to move on, and her

potential to appear from, and drift back into a murky and corrupt lifestyle is what makes her movement and mobility so central to sensation fiction, and indeed the cultural concerns of the nineteenth century.

More relevant to my study of the governess-traveller are works from the field of historical research. The best-known analysis of the governess's position is Jeanne Peterson's article 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society' (1970). Akin to Katharine West's *Chapter of Governesses*, Peterson's article continues to be a point of reference in more recent historical studies of the governess. This is largely because Peterson coins the term 'status incongruence' and in doing so defines the ambiguity surrounding the governess. She suggests that at the root of this incongruence is the fact that:

The employment of a gentlewoman as a governess in a middle-class family served to reinforce and perpetuate certain Victorian values. But inherent in the employment of a lady was a contradiction of the very values she was hired to fulfill.[sic]The result was a situation of conflict and incongruity for both the governess and the family, a conflict which called forth a variety of responses from governess, family, and society.
(Peterson:1970:8-9)

This incongruity is central to my understanding of the governess-traveller, who is a marginalised figure not only within the family unit but within society as a whole. In outlining her approach Peterson tells us that '[m]odern treatment of the Victorian governess, when it is not set in the framework of literary analysis, takes two forms: either it is a study of the occupation itself without reference to the larger social scene, or the role of the governess is considered within the context of the movement for women's education and women's rights...By examining the governess's situation within the middle-class Victorian family, we may approach a better understanding of how the family functioned and of the values, problems, and fears of the Victorian middle class' (Peterson:1970:8). The problem with the former two approaches is that they say more about the education of girls and women than the governess's experience. In this way Peterson's study of the governess's position in relation to family values is important in foregrounding my study of the governess-traveller. Peterson highlights the many ways in which the governess is a foreigner at home because she cannot conform to traditional ideals of womanhood. It is in building on, rather than challenging Peterson's observations that I explore how the contradictions surrounding the governess's position

are complicated once she travels overseas. Yet, what also strikes me in Peterson's article is the way she differentiates between literary and historical scholarship on the Victorian governess. In the quotation above, the governess of fiction is cast aside and remains in the shadow of real-life accounts. Perhaps this is what is to be expected of historical analysis, but because our modern understanding of the nineteenth-century governess rests so strongly on fictional portrayals, the separation of fact and fiction is something which needs to be addressed. In attempting to do just that, *Life in Transit* starts to move in a different direction from Peterson's 'The Victorian Governess'.

Twenty years later Alice Renton's *Tyrant Or Victim: A History of the British Governess* (1991) and Kathryn Hughes's *The Victorian Governess* (1993) are much larger works which extend and expand the ideas introduced in Peterson's article. Renton's work, however, while providing a very useful history of the governess spanning from the fifteenth century until the mid-twentieth, tends to fall into one of the two categories Peterson considers to be limited in that it considers the governess only 'within the context of the movement for women's education'. But like Katharine West, Renton emphasises that the governess 'can be the down-trodden and victimised figure of fun, the brutal and hated tyrant, or the loved and respected member of an appreciative household', and by recognising variation in the governess's persona, reinforces my argument that governesses were travellers with diverse and wide-ranging stories to tell (Renton:1991:7). What Renton goes on to say, however, is that each type of governess 'is a true image and, historically, one succeeded the other'. Her relating this to 'the deeply rooted prejudices that delayed in Britain until the mid-nineteenth century the flowering of female education' makes Renton's study more about the changing attitudes to women's education than the complexity of the governess's position (Renton:1991:7).

Kathryn Hughes does more to look beyond this approach in *The Victorian Governess* and develops the conclusions drawn in Peterson's article. She explains that the governess stirred up so much public interest, both in the nineteenth-century and beyond, because 'she marked the point at which the orthodoxies and 'natural' order of things broke down to reveal their man-made origins', shaking up the Victorian conception of the family but also of society as a whole (Hughes:1993:204). In *Life in Transit* I recognise this 'breakdown of orthodoxies' to be both a deconstructive and constructive phenomenon. While the governess certainly struggles to function on the edge of society, the breakdown of orthodoxies she instigates, like a microcosmic 'big-

bang', creates a liminal, undefined space between social constructs in which the governess finds new ways to function within society.

Hughes also does a great deal to knit together our understanding of the governess of fiction and reality. While at first she suggests that 'it is the power of those fictional representations which has blunted our curiosity about the practice of educating girls at home in the Victorian period,' she recognises that because 'many of the authors of these novels had direct personal experience of the schoolroom [there is] confusion about where documentary ends and fantasy begins' (Hughes:1993:xiii). In this way she credits novels as a 'valuable source...For while they may not exactly reproduce social reality [they provide] us with an insight into the imaginative impact of the governess upon her contemporaries' (Hughes:1993:xiii). Hughes's and my approach to the governess are in this way similar, but while Hughes aims to 'rectify' stereotypical ideas of the governess 'by reconstructing the life of the governess using a wide range of sources', I aim to ascertain how both fiction and non-fictional representations of the governess-traveller have a reciprocal impact on one another which has come to inform our overall perception of the woman at the centre of the archetype (Hughes:1993:xi-9).

Ruth Brandon's *Other People's Daughters* (2008) is the most recent historical study of the nineteenth-century governess. Like Peterson and Hughes, Brandon emphasises that central to the governess's complicated and often problematic position in society was 'the change that occurred the moment the governess took up her first situation...the mere fact of seeking employment instantly relegated the governess from middle-class respectability to an ambiguous limbo between upstairs and downstairs' (Brandon:2008:6). Brandon therefore confirms my interpretation of Hughes's argument and the idea that by involuntarily challenging social protocol, governesses created a new path, and new ways in which to exist. Brandon's book has similarities with Peterson, Renton and Hughes's texts because while she acknowledges the importance of fiction in our comprehension of the governess, and her study of real-life governesses rests on the idea of 'status incongruence', she also engages with the governess's role in women's education. Brandon's book aims primarily to 'form a picture of lone women's lives between the end of the eighteenth century, when Enlightenment hopes came crashing down, and the 1860s, when the first women's college held out new possibilities to those who would otherwise have been condemned to a lifetime as governesses' (Brandon:2008:24). In this way *Other People's Daughters* is a highly informative

collection of governesses' accounts but one which mainly traces the changing landscape of women's education. It tends to summarise the governesses' accounts within this context rather than analyse them in their own right, leaving room for more detailed literary and cultural criticism.

Peterson and Hughes's works have also been useful to my thesis through their brief reference to the governess abroad. Hughes quite simply states that:

Considerations of space have obliged me to confine my attention to those resident governesses who worked within England and Wales. During the Victorian period British governesses were very much in demand by wealthy overseas families who wished to provide their offspring with a smattering of what was still the world's most prestigious culture. From New York to Bangkok...[the] way in which these women were responsible for transplanting a particular type of Englishness to the four corners of the globe offers material rich enough to merit study itself.
(Hughes:1993:xv)

Considering the end of this passage, I am indebted to Hughes for encouraging my study of the governess as a traveller and emphasising the significance of her narrative. It is also interesting that Hughes's reference to governesses abroad, is bound up with 'considerations of space' for while textual space limits Hughes's study of the governess's experience, geographical space is central to mine. With travel, mobility and space being central themes in *Life in Transit*, it is therefore necessary to move away from the assumption that governesses were 'transplanting a particular type of Englishness to the four corners of the globe' and consider how this might have been problematic for a woman ingrained with a sense of her social marginalisation.

Towards the end of her 1970 article, Peterson recognises the complexity of this by pointing out that 'emigration of the English governess served to reduce conflict for her. She might choose to go to another part of England or, like the foreign governess who came to England, she might, if more adventurous or more desperate, go abroad...Such a move, however, would require that an Englishwoman admit the realities of her status as a paid employee and resign herself to the loss of her place in English society' (Peterson:1970:20). While Peterson's article comes prior to other writings about the governess abroad, it is still highly relevant to the ideas in *Life in Transit* because it complicates rather than simplifies the governess's journey overseas. What Peterson

touches upon here is that a move abroad was problematic not only on a practical level, but in terms of the governess's means to self-identify. Once again it is by building on, rather than challenging Peterson's view that I will pick up on this notion in *Life in Transit* and consider how the governess, who is already socially displaced, contemplates and modifies the expression of her nationality on leaving British soil.

Ruth Brandon says more about the governess overseas in her chapter on Anna Leonowens. Like Hughes she notes that 'by the mid-nineteenth century, English governesses were in demand worldwide' (Brandon:2008:189). She adds, however, that 'Not only could teaching provide a respectable single lady with a ticket to hidden parts of the world, but there might also be useful extra income in the form of a book once the actual posting had come to an end' (Brandon:2008:189). While she does not go on to define it, at this point Brandon goes one step further than Hughes in recognising the presence of the genre I term, and will go on to define as, the 'governess travel narrative'. She also builds on Peterson's reference to emigration and highlights how conflict could arise from the governess's move overseas. Regarding Leonowens's time in Siam she points out that Britishness 'did not necessarily count for much when dealing with the British themselves [and] middle-class Britons were not about to welcome a governess into their midst just because they happened to be living in Bangkok' (Brandon:2008:192). She also states that while governesses abroad were not just 'teachers, but talismans of Britishness, symbols that their employer was up with everything modern...they simultaneously threatened, by their very presence, everything the courts and their culture represented' (Brandon:2008:205). These are issues that need much more investigation because it remains uncertain in Brandon's book how both British and foreign societies, but particularly the governess herself, felt about these opposite notions of her identity. Likewise, parts of Brandon's chapter which consider the governess's complex class position could just as well refer to the governess at home rather than the governess abroad. *Life in Transit* addresses the fact that there is more to be done to differentiate between the experiences of governess-travellers in England, those touring the Continent and those residing in the East.

There are, in addition to Brandon's chapter, some other works with a larger focus on the governess's time overseas, but these too are limited to the study of non-fiction. The earliest of these is Bea Howe's *A Galaxy of Governesses* (1954). In the latter part of her book, Howe collects and summarises non-fiction accounts of governessing abroad in

order to show how such women ‘left England in the nineteenth-century to gain a complete stranglehold of the most exclusive schoolrooms in the country’ (Howe:1954:130). In this way Howe, like Brandon, recognises the governess’s journey as a literary as well as geographical movement. It seems, though, that Howe’s commentary on ‘our governess-penetration abroad’ over-simplifies both the governess’s experience and the social implications of her relocation. Written before the pinnacle of post-colonial criticism, Howe’s book overlooks the difficulties faced by the Eastern native and the governess when she enters the foreign land at the height of British imperialism. Howe also states that ‘[t]he character of the English governess abroad combines, most subtly, I think the pioneer spirit and the missionary’s zeal’ (Howe:1954:131). While on the surface the governess’s brave decision to relocate abroad means this might appear to be the case, Howe overlooks the governess’s individuality. I argue that it is important to recognise the difference between the financially independent pioneers, the faith-driven missionaries and the governess who was bound by the contract of her employer and travelled without being officially connected to a religious or colonial cause.

Years after *A Galaxy of Governesses* Patricia Clarke published *The Governesses: Letters from the Colonies 1862-1882* (1985). She presents an edited collection of letters from the Female Middle Class Emigration Society archives, signalling the diversity of the governesses’ experiences. By summarising the overarching themes present in the letters, she shows us both the practical and social difficulties governesses faced when on board ship, upon arriving at the foreign land and years after moving overseas. Above all it seems that ‘they faced adversity with dignity and a great deal of integrity...There were perhaps a few ‘complainers’ but most of these women brought diversity, strength of character and refined attainments to the task of educating strange lands’ (Clarke:1985:215-6). In her article ‘The Victorian Governess and Colonial Ideas of Womanhood’ Marion Amies corroborates this idea. She argues that in novels written by Australian women of the era, governesses get involved in all aspects of housekeeping and farming ‘without losing any of their feminine graces’ (Amies:1988:542). They adapt to a much more physical lifestyle, become part of the colonial family, and build a life and home in Australia.

Patricia Clarke also alludes to the dual motives of the FMCES. When quoting Maria Rye directly, she highlights how Rye ‘saw the solution in convincing the colonies

that the introduction of such a class of women would “not only be a relief to England, but an actual benefit to the colonies themselves – an elevation of morals being the inevitable result of the mere presence in the colony of a number of high-class women” (Clarke:1985:6). In a chapter entitled ‘The Governess of Empire,’ from her 1995 book *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire and Victorian Writing*, Deirdre David argues that this political agenda is also present in novels such as *Jane Eyre* whereby ‘race and gender politics evoke the proper role of women in the empire and the need for high moral standards in the governance of that empire’ (David:1995:97). Before Clarke and David, however, Jeanne Peterson says more about the complexity of this:

These agencies have been treated as part of the movement for improving the employment situation for all single women of the middle classes. But it seems likely that other motives were involved. The escape was to a place where status would be less ambiguous and less painful and where there was more chance of marriage and a permanent resolution to incongruence. The other purpose of the female emigration societies was to lure out of England the "half-educated daughters of poor professional men, and ... the children of subordinate government officers, petty shopkeepers" - those daughters from the lower ranks of the middle class whose fathers had been educating them as governesses in order to raise their station in life.
(Peterson:1970:20-21)

Together, what Peterson, Clarke and David show is that narratives of organised emigration such as that offered by the FMCES give as much insight into the governess’s experience at home as abroad. Such movement took place only because governesses were effectively driven out with little other option. What Clarke goes on to suggest is therefore somewhat contradictory in that governesses ‘were women deeply ingrained with ideas of their ‘place’ in the rigid caste system of nineteenth-century Britain... The governess who ventured abroad went complete with an inner consciousness of and acceptance of strong class divisions. They almost all objected to travelling second class – although they had to borrow money to buy even a second class ticket – not mainly because of discomfort, but because they felt superior to the people with whom they had to mix’ (Clarke:1985:13-21). More in tune with Hughes’s notion of ‘transplanting Englishness’ than Peterson’s concept of ‘status incongruence,’ Clarke indicates that governesses knew exactly who they were and where they belonged on the social ladder prior to and during their journey overseas. In this way the letters introduced by Clarke

can be misleading for while it might appear that governesses were ‘deeply ingrained with ideas of their “place”’ these pretensions are shown to break down in larger travel narratives. This is why in *Life in Transit* my focus is on larger works of governess travel narrative. While Clarke’s aim in editing the letters ‘has not been to interpret the letters, but to let the governesses speak for themselves’ I argue that textual interpretation is key to understanding the governess’s voice and the way she experienced the world (Clarke:1985:xi). The fact that governesses produced travel narratives that are still available today is in the scheme of things quite radical and the texts they produced deserve to receive the same critical attention as the travel narratives of women in different, perhaps less challenging circumstances.

Another highly useful edited collection of sources, which is more analytical of its content, is Trev Broughton and Ruth Symes’s *The Governess: An Anthology*, (1997). In a substantial chapter on the governess abroad they move beyond Howe’s research and highlight ‘the ideological and cultural implications of the decision to work overseas’ (Broughton and Symes:1997:154). This is something I hope to continue by drawing on post-colonial perspectives. It is also via Broughton and Symes that I will consider the governess-traveller alongside Peterson’s notion of status incongruence, for they suggest:

If hiring a foreign governess suggested itself to some families as a way of cutting the Gordian knot of her ‘status incongruence’, travelling abroad must have promised similar advantages for the British governess herself...[E]migration was offered to, and indeed accepted by, some Victorian governesses as a solution to their personal poverty and to the apparent superfluosity to the population at large...Throughout the century Britain’s imperial and industrial strength lent considerable international consequence to her culture, institutions and manners, as well as to the English language itself. Hence the prestige enjoyed by continental instructresses in aristocratic British homes was mirrored by the high reputation of the English ‘Miss’ among the merchant and professional classes, not to mention the noble and even royal families, in many parts of the world...such women helped to consolidate a sense of national self-confidence at home, while asserting it abroad (Broughton and Symes:1997:154)

The positives of relocating abroad through organised emigration, the help of friends or official appointment are something I certainly plan to address, yet as in Hughes’s *The Victorian Governess* there is a sense here that the matter of living and working overseas

allowed the governess to escape or evade anything like the social displacement she experienced at home. In *Life in Transit* I consider the fact that this enterprise was not always so straightforward. Could women, who were essentially foreigners in their own society and culture, suddenly regain their sense of self and place so as to become agents of imperialism who actively promoted the superiority of the British? Perhaps it is problematic to assume that while their social and gender identity hung in the balance their national identity and their Englishness remained intact.

Up until now, the largest work written about the governess's writings from abroad is Helen Hao-Han Yang's unpublished doctoral thesis: "'A Lady Wanted': Victorian Governesses Abroad 1856-1898' (2008). In many ways Yang's thesis is a useful step forward in studies of the governess. It is the first time longer accounts of the governess's experiences abroad are presented together and shown to form part of their own literary tradition. However, there are several limiting factors in Yang's approach to the governess abroad. Chiefly this comes down to Yang's central argument that:

these governesses' experiences were above all about positionality...The positioning of oneself in multifarious ways became essential to how they fared in the foreign lands—in terms of her self-esteem, her success in ascending the social ladder, her use of governessing experience as a stepping-stone to a writing career and so on. As traced throughout the chapters, these positions involve that of class, gender, race, religion, and nation. (Yang:2008:17,249)

By assessing the governess's relation to Victorian ideas of class, gender, race and religion, Yang concludes that her position was 'multifarious' and forever remained 'in flux' (Yang:2008:84,240). On the surface, this might seem justified because the governess's position on the edge of social constructs certainly allowed her the freedom to behave in ways a married woman could not. She could live in houses that she would never be able to afford, she could manage the business of her contract, and she could travel far and wide without the protection of a chaperone. The problem is, that analysing the governess's experience in relation to class, gender and race *only* tells us that she was a 'multifarious' figure, someone constantly relegated to the outskirts, a slave to the endeavour of fitting into one of two opposite spheres. This is something we already know and though Yang's focus is governesses abroad, as in Brandon's book, much of what is said could refer to governesses at home. Again, while the governess's social displacement could at times work in her favour it was more often than not detrimental to

her self-esteem and rarely enabled her to raise her social standing. Though the idea that the governess was a social chameleon is attractive, it still leaves us with the question of where she felt she belonged and who she believed she was. It seems then that what unites Yang's thesis and previous studies of the governess is the way they examine how the world saw and placed the governess, rather than the way the governess saw and placed herself in the world.

I argue that understanding this means recognising that the governess, whether at home or abroad, was a traveller. For as long as governessing remained her main profession, even if she returned to her childhood home for a time, the duration of her stay in any one place was always temporary. Packing, unpacking, movement, mobility and relocation were the actions which fuelled her existence and infused her days with the restless sense of journeying. Yang's thesis does not tell us anything new about the governess primarily because it begins with the idea of the 'governess abroad' rather than the governess-traveller on a literal and figurative road to somewhere new. Like all the criticism previously discussed, it aims to understand the governess's place in the world before examining how she got there. The fact of the matter is, analysing the governess in terms of rigid, and perhaps outdated, ideas of class, gender and race only generates more questions and ambiguity. *Life in Transit* marks a shift in the way we have previously engaged with the governess because while Yang and her predecessors assess the governess's changing position in relation to social constructs, I intend to investigate the very mobility at the centre of this phenomenon. In this way I aim to uncover what the experience of travel, in both geographical and philosophical terms, tells us about the governess at the centre of the national literary archetype.

TEXTS

Central to my methodology is the selection of texts I have chosen to make the focus of this thesis. Previous critics have tended to look at either the fictional or real-life governess. This, however, can be problematic because as Hughes and Lecaros remind us fiction was largely responsible for cementing the nineteenth century's image of the governess and our understanding of her today. Investigating the mobility at the centre of the governess archetype means engaging with the fiction that influenced its composition alongside non-fiction sources. For this reason I begin my study of the governess-

traveller with two renowned, canonical novels: William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Brontë's novel was being written during the time Thackeray's novel was serialised and since then the two have frequently been compared and contrasted. In the December 1848 *Quarterly Review*, when writing about *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair*, Lady Eastlake said of the governess: 'She must, to all intents and purposes, live alone, or she transgresses that invisible but rigid line which alone establishes the distance between herself and her employers' (Eastlake:1999:179). In this way, fiction gives us great insight into the governess-traveller's journey in England because it is the literature of the time that does most to engage with social issues and cultural anxieties around ideas of women, work and nation. Together *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* show how the archetypal governess navigates this socio-political terrain and forms an understanding of self and world while moving between various locations across Britain.

The next two texts considered in this thesis are Anna Brownell Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826) alongside Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), both of which are set on the Continent: the *Diary* between France and Italy, and *Villette* in a fictional, French-speaking town usually assumed to be Brussels. Both texts are also recognised as semi-autobiographical accounts. In this way *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette* bridge the divide between the fictional, England-based texts of the first chapter and the non-fictional Eastern travel narratives of the later chapters. The fact that Charlotte Brontë's work appears twice in *Life in Transit*, in the form of the more fictional *Jane Eyre* and the more autobiographical *Villette*, not only pays homage to the fact that she was central to the construction of the governess archetype and a governess herself, but indicates that wherever the governess rests on the spectrum between the real and the imaginary, travel and mobility are intrinsic to her identity. Together these texts also present a diverse picture of the governess's time on the Continent because while Jameson's *Diary* is an account of the governess on tour with a British family, Brontë's *Villette* draws on her experience of teaching in a foreign school. At this point, it is worth commenting on the role of the governess in comparison to that of the school teacher. There are of course, some key differences between the two. The school teacher would be likely to have more pupils than the governess in the mansion and might live in separate lodgings, giving her a little more independence. This, however, was not always the case, particularly when overseas. The fact that Lucy Snowe lives and works within the Pensionnat, and Anna Leonowens speaks of teaching in the Siamese school while labelling herself as a

governess, illustrates how the experiences of the governess and the school teacher overlap. As Marjorie Theobald notes: ‘indeed the term “governess” was interchangeable with “teacher” throughout the nineteenth century’ (Theobald:1996:16). In this way, not only does the combination of texts in this chapter allow me to differentiate between the governess’s experience in different locations, which critics like Brandon neglect to do, it enables me to investigate how mobility affects the relationship of self and world within different kinds of governing.

The third combination of texts consists of Emmeline Lott’s *The Governess in Egypt* (1865) and Ellen Chennells’s *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess by her Governess* (1892), both of which are less well-known than the previous works considered. Lott’s and Chennells’s books are non-fiction travel narratives which form part of the tradition of nineteenth-century women’s travelogues and recall the time these women spent governing in the palace of the Egyptian Viceroy Ismail one directly after the other. Within *Life in Transit* these texts mark a shift in focus from the governess-traveller herself, to the governess travel narrative. The Egyptian setting presented in these works is crucial to this. During the nineteenth century women’s travel writing surged in popularity. Preceded by writers such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu women such as Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird and Harriet Martineau became prominent authors in the field of world studies and anthropology. Though women and governesses travelled to other locations besides Africa, the Middle East was the most popular setting for travel writing and the Orientalist discourse widely associated with writers and artists of the nineteenth-century. By choosing two texts set in Egypt, emerging from the heart of this tradition, I hope to show most strikingly how the governess travel narrative is a sub-genre of women’s travel writing and how the governess, being different from the married or financially secure female traveller, affirms or challenges the kind of imperialist discourse which infuses nineteenth-century Britain’s understanding of the East.

The final texts discussed in this thesis are Anna Leonowens’s *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1871) and *Romance of the Harem* (1873), alongside Sarah Heckford’s *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* (1882). Critics generally acknowledge that for some women, governing was a means to social elevation and best case scenario: an unfortunate but necessary stop-gap between girlhood and marriage. Even for Charlotte Brontë whose experience of governing made her an

internationally successful author, marriage provided the ultimate relief from a life of spinsterhood and work. Though set in vastly different locations, Leonowens's account being based in Siam and Heckford's in the South African Transvaal, both texts are written by governesses who did not go on to remarry, or simply retire, but craft a career as published writers working in the field of social reform. Governesses are not credited with being as proudly feminist or radical as say, the New Woman, nor do they fully deserve this praise. Rarely did governesses challenge the appearance of respectable middle-class femininity any more than they really had to. If they did they might never have been employed. Yet Leonowens's and Heckford's texts show how one governess goes on to be a secretary to a King and the other an independent farmer and trader in the outback, and this is indeed something quite radical. Combining these texts enables me to trace how the governess-traveller and her narrative can evolve into something else, rather than ending at the onset of marriage or the close of the governess's journey.

The texts studied in this thesis are therefore considered roughly chronologically. With the exception of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*, which was published in 1826, the texts span from 1847-1883 and are considered in that order, for while Chennell's *Recollections of a Princess* was only published in 1892, her narrative is based on the time she spent in Egypt between 1871 and 1876. The publication of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* mystified its audience in 1826, not only because it recounts Jameson's journey on the Continent through the eyes of a fictional narrator, but also because it echoes the Grand Tour narrative of the previous century. Yet it is relevant in connection with *Villette* of 1853 because while I have yet to discover a longer work of travel writing in this vein, governesses were advertising in newspapers with the specific intention of finding work touring with a family in Europe. It was a way for them both to draw on, and broaden their own education in European culture without adding to their parents' financial strain. It is also worth noting that *Life in Transit* considers the governess's journey as it expands geographically. Not only does this celebrate the vast scope of the governess's voyage and provide for a varied and diverse analysis of her travels, but it highlights the chronological order in which the texts are presented. It shows how as time went on developments in transport technologies and the expansion of the British Empire meant the governess's journey was subject to developments and expansion of its own. This perhaps begs the question, however, as to why the last text considered is from the 1890s. My reason for this is not because governessing did not exist beyond the nineteenth century, but because at the fin de siècle attitudes to women

and work were subject to a faster rate of change than at any previous time. The New Woman was emerging, making a stand and challenging constructs of gender as never before. As Brandon points out, it is in 1869 that Girton College admits women; though at first there were only five students this had risen to 80 by 1884 and 140 in 1902 (Megson and Lindsay:1960:6,40). Though compared to the number of male graduates in Britain this number is still miniscule, change was stirring and women were being given more opportunities in the world of work than the governesses of previous years. This is not to say there were no governesses in the twentieth century. In *Tyrant or Victim* Renton states that it was not until 1961 that ‘The GBI [Governesses’ Benevolent Institution] no longer saw the need to continue acting as an employment agency for governesses...But there [was] still some call on agencies for governesses to go abroad’ (Renton:1991:191). Since Renton’s text was published there has in fact been an increase in the number of young people travelling overseas to teach. Today, though, these agencies do not generally refer to their teachers as governesses and usually require their staff to gain qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language. Yet the fact that governesses as they were known in the nineteenth-century declined in number as time went on, is not the sole reason that I limit my study to the years of 1826-1892. By the twentieth century the social challenges they faced were not as extreme or complicated as those of the previous century. It is in attempting to learn more about the nineteenth-century governess, and the women who lived their lives under the cloak of these challenges, that *Life in Transit* makes an original contribution to studies of the governess archetype in nineteenth-century culture.

There are of course some governess travel narratives that could not be accommodated in this thesis. In print there are several accounts by governesses who taught in the palaces of European royalty. These include Anna Bicknell’s record of her time in France, *Life at the Tuileries after the Second Empire* (1895), Margaret Eager’s *Six Years at the Russian Court* (1906), and Miss May’s memoirs of her time in Austria, *Recollections of a Royal Governess* (1915). Published later than most of the texts I am looking at, these accounts are almost beyond the chronological scope of this thesis. However, the main reason why my study does not incorporate them is that the governess who worked in a European court found herself in a position of greater esteem than the average nineteenth-century governess and above the struggles faced by those caught between the lower and middle class. There are also governess travel narratives based in Russia such as E. P. Hamilton’s *The English Governess in Russia* (1861) and

Rachel McCrindell's *The English Governess: A Tale of Real Life* (1844), and some set as far away as Brazil, like Maria Graham's unpublished journal (1823). However, works such as these are truly beyond the geographical scope of my analysis. I have chosen to focus on the Middle and Far East because it is by engaging with the governess's perception of the Eastern 'Other', as a figure which infused Britain's cultural consciousness in the nineteenth century, that I examine how she confronts her own social and cultural dislocation. I also look at South Africa, and specifically the Transvaal to gauge how the governess positions herself within the British colony. While Siam remained independent throughout the nineteenth-century, the Transvaal had been annexed by the British in 1877 and a site of Dutch colonisation since the 1600. After the annexation, the country continued to be unstable as indigenous tribes, Dutch-descendant Boers, and the British colonists fought for control of this diamond-rich territory prior to, and during the Boer war of 1880-1881 (Paulin:2001:15-17). Together, Leonowens's and Heckford's texts illustrate how far the governess supports and challenges the notion of the British colony from two different perspectives, whereby one resides in a country desperate to retain its independence, while the other lives in a land torn apart by colonial enterprise. Also in existence are accounts by or about governesses who left Britain for Australia, many of which are mentioned in Marion Amies's article as previously discussed. Yet, Australia, like North America, was more familiar to the British public as a 'New World' where one's nationality and identity could be rewritten. In this way the governesses at the centre of such works become Australian pioneers rather than British travellers.

METHODOLOGY AND CHAPTERS

My aim in approaching these texts has been to move away from more traditional frameworks which limit our understanding of the governess. By recognising that she was a traveller, movement and mobility become central to my analysis of how the governess perceives self and world. It is necessary at this point to clarify what kind of travel has proven relevant to this thesis. It is, in fact, diverse and wide-ranging and includes travel in its most minor and extreme forms, through the corridors of the English mansion and overseas to the Far East. In this way my study of the governess-traveller can be aligned with the work of post-colonial scholars who study British women's involvement in international relations, but also with that of feminist

geographers who, as Kimberly Rhodes notes: ‘have opted to define “travel” in a broader, more symbolic manner that implies movement from one space to another so as to centralize the concept of female agency’ (Rhodes:2009:205). Travel has always been associated with self-discovery, and whether her movements extend from one wing of a house to another, or across mountainscapes and oceans, the governess’s journey is how she discovers and defines her ‘self’. Engaging with the figure of the governess first and foremost via notions of class, gender and race says more about how the world saw her rather than how she saw the world, but placing the governess at the centre of her own life’s journey and retracing her steps can reveal another voice in the nineteenth-century’s conception of self and world, home and away.

This does not mean that class, gender and race do not come into my analysis of the governess and her narrative. Nor does it mean separating the matter of the governess’s social marginalisation from her geographical mobility. Her social instability was the sole reason for her constant relocation, so in studying her journey it is necessary to find a way to combine perspectives on class and gender with perspectives on mobility and travel. The philosophy of Edward Said is central to this. In developing the ideas previously presented in *Orientalism*, Said suggests:

All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world... rests upon judgment and interpretation [and] interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is in interpreting, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place. In this sense, all interpretations are what might be called *situational*: they always occur in a situation whose bearing on the interpretation is *affiliative*. It is related to what other interpreters have said, either by confirming them, or by disputing them, or by continuing them. No interpretation is without precedents or without some connection to other interpretations.
(Said:1997:154-5)

What Said shows us here is that the governess’s experience of travel and what she says about the cultures she ‘interprets’ while on the move, together form a window to her class, gender and national identity. In examining how far the governess moves towards and away from previous interpretations of the landscapes and cultures through which she travels, we gain a more insightful understanding of her identity. Thus rather than directly comparing the governess’s relation to the social categories she transcends, *Life in Transit* seeks to determine how the governess felt that she related to the world and

the social, gender and racial hierarchies it harbours via the human activities she undertakes and the physical, physiological and intellectual processes she is involved in when travelling. My decision to focus on how the governess interacts with the world beyond her strained communications with people, to whom she cannot relate, stems from the idea that governesses had few close relationships. Richard Redgrave's painting from 1844, which shows a governess holding a letter informing her of the death of a relative, illustrates the fact that if the governess had any family to speak of, she could be separated from them for months at a time. Often the only way a governess could communicate with friends or relatives was through correspondence, so they spent their working lives starved of companionship.



Fig. 4. *The Governess* (1844)

Oil on canvas

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The painting also reinforces my chief reasons for choosing my approach. The fact that the governess remains segregated and alone while her charges talk and play outdoors mirrors my argument that analysing the governess's relationship with others often tells us very little other than the fact she was an outsider and an anomaly in the otherwise tidy arrangement that was Victorian social hierarchy. In fact, my approach mirrors Redgrave's earlier and lesser known version of this painting entitled *The Poor Teacher*.



Fig. 5. *The Poor Teacher* (1843)
Oil on canvas
Shibley Art Gallery, Gateshead

As in my analysis the governess in this image is central, not set aside of traditional middle-class society. Also central and more brightly illuminated than in the later painting are her bonnet pegged up on the wall above her head and her shawl tucked into the basket on her desk. Both of these items point to the notion of the governess's mobility and highlight the significance of her journey. There are other changes here that are of equal relevance. Instead of a doorway, blocked by wealthy young ladies, there is a window seat offering a prospect view of the surrounding countryside. The presence of the window leads us to question how the governess perceives the world beyond her situation. Does she long to escape or does she feel protected from the changing weather of both the countryside and the economy? Perhaps her introspective posture and the fact her back is turned from the window suggests that bubbling beneath the idea of freedom is a sense of trepidation and anxiety. Also drawn out of the shadows is a basket of papers and textiles, inviting us to wonder how the governess engages with the items and artefacts that make up her employer's home. In this painting the floorboards are far less cluttered. The linear tessellation of wooden boards elongates the space and we can envision the governess pacing up and down the room. Does she do so in a state of boredom or restlessness and what does she think about in the times between lessons? What also stands out in this painting above that of the latter is the mysterious dark space to the far right. In Redgrave's later work the darkest area of the painting is on the left.

We can see where the walls meet in the corner and know this murky patch to be an enclosed alcove. In the earlier painting, however, the flow of the floorboards leads us to assume that the dark shadow on the right is a corridor leading out of the room. We can envisage the governess wrapped in her shawl, tying on her bonnet and walking into the void, inviting us to question where she goes when she is not working. Thus, where previous works have either represented or studied the governess's relation to social constructs and concluded that she is indeed uniquely displaced, in *Life in Transit I* follow in the wake of Redgrave's earlier painting and hope to find out how the governess lived and experienced the world from within the space of her displacement.

It appears to me that this displacement, which causes the governess to live in a perpetual state of travelling between both geographical and societal locations means that she sees the world from a self-defined 'heterotopia'. My framework for studying the governess's journey has its roots in Michael Foucault's invention and explanation of this term:

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites [in which the] real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.... From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there... The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (Foucault:1984:4)

Because the governess in some ways inverts the lifestyle and behaviours of the nineteenth-century gentlewoman, but lives and works within the 'reality' of Victorian society and family life, in effect she experiences the world from a heterotopia separate from, but equally 'connected with all the space that surrounds it', separate from, but connected with Victorian social constructs (Foucault:1984:4). So much of her character reflected all that was expected of a young, middle-class gentlewoman. She dressed, spoke and was educated like a lady. She remained chaste until she was married. Yet in her life there were but a few, albeit highly significant elements which pointed to the fact

that her world was not that of the gentlewoman but a world akin to what Foucault envisions as the space behind the mirror. Everything in this place resembles reality until certain movements and certain behaviours temporarily but jarringly disturb our perception of what is real. Times during which the governess is seen to work for a living, manage the business of her contract and travel unchaperoned, are moments like those when reflection symmetry takes us by surprise and what we know to be our right hand appears on our left while what we know to be our left hand appears on our right.

This brings me back to Kathryn Hughes's observation that the governess's very being pointed to a 'break-down of orthodoxies' and the fact that I see this as both a deconstructive and constructive phenomenon. Though the very idea that she breaks-down orthodoxies and must exist from within this space is the result of Victorian society's failure to adapt its attitudes to women and work, the governess herself defines this space and develops ways of interacting with the world from within her segregation. Her heterotopia, which I term the governess's 'liminal space', is the site of her endless journey between geographical and social locations and the space from which she finds new ways to move through, perceive, communicate with and succeed in the world. This way, I analyse how she envisions self and world while journeying within the heterotopic space of her social displacement; a space in which class and gender constructs and ideas of nationality and race are often momentarily distorted.

Because the governess is dislocated from society and is often literally or figuratively alone in the surrounding space, theories stemming from spatial geography, heterotopias and the notion of the liminal space, form the pool in which the other theories I draw on in this thesis combine. The truth is that initially at least, we do not experience the world via our relation to class, our conceptions of gender, nor distinctions between races. Rather we engage with the world through our relation to space and our movement through it, our means to perceive the things and places that surround us, through language and our ability to express our desires and have them understood. It is only then that we become aware of class, gender and racial difference. Recognising that the governess was a traveller immediately adds another dimension to what we already know about her, but examining her experience of journeying via theories relating to space, movement, architecture and art, language, things and work, depending on the nature of her location, moves us away from the two-dimensional idea

that she was an outsider and tells us how she functioned and engaged with the world around her from within the space of her displacement.

I begin, then, in the first chapter of this thesis and my reading of *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre* to consider the governess's experience of travel both in and out of doors. By engaging with her journey as a process of self-discovery and tracing the means by which she moves through space to locate her 'scattered self', the first chapter formally identifies the governess-traveller at the centre of this thesis (Blanton:2002:59). It highlights the patterns and behaviours demonstrated in both Thackeray's and Brontë's texts which equate the life of governessing with the life of a traveller, and considers how the governess's experience of advertising in newspapers and relocating via carriage journeys shapes the construction of her identity. By reading the process of 'becoming a governess' as both a birth and death into the profession it shows how the governess enters and adjusts to living in the liminal space between constructs and via her experience of journeying, attempts to resolve some of her feelings of displacement. Its focus being fiction, it is through detailed close readings of Thackeray's and Brontë's novels that this chapter seeks to demonstrate the usefulness and potential of adopting a theoretical framework which recognises the governess's involvement in travel.

In Chapter Two I continue to draw on theories of spatial geography and examine how the governess's journey is complicated when it moves overseas to Europe. Moving into the realm of semi-autobiography it also differentiates between the two kinds of governess that worked on the Continent: the governess touring with a family and the solitary governess who relocates alone. By expanding on the themes set up in the previous chapter I engage with theories of spatial production and art criticism to establish how the governesses experience the landscape, architecture and art that are so often frequented by wealthier travellers of the Grand Tour. Drawing on studies in anthropology and theories of walking in analysing the routes traversed by the governess in the rare times she is alone, I demonstrate how, through the movements of the travelling body, the governess constructs a reciprocal image of her 'self' and her surroundings. This way, she attempts to map her identity onto the world around her.

The third chapter will examine how both the governess's voice and voyage are presented in the form of the 'governess travel narrative', tracing how the governess works within and writes about foreign spaces amid the collision of two cultural and linguistic paradigms. Said's problematisation of the way cultures are interpreted comes

to the forefront of my analysis here because this means establishing how she manages to learn Arabic and Turkish, provide an ‘English’ education for her charge, and present an image of the East to her audience in the West, all of which is encompassed by the governess’s involvement in cultural translation. The experience and representation of space continues to be a focus whereby through analysing Lott’s and Chennells’s interaction with both native and imported artefacts and drawing on ‘thing’ theory to do so, I ascertain how the governess’s vision of the East appears within the discourse of travel writing in an age of Western colonial expansion. I will debate whether this occurs with ease, or some degree of awkwardness stemming from her social marginalisation. In turn, this chapter traces the characteristics of her writing throughout each text to identify the sub-genre’s stylistic conventions. For the most part, though, this chapter will discover how a woman who was fraught with anxiety that she did not belong, became empowered, found a voice and shared her perceptions with the world.

The final chapter considers the economic and professional ownership of geographical and textual space and establishes how the governess travel narrative presents itself in works of the late nineteenth century. This chapter illustrates the development of the sub-genre since it appears in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Vanity Fair* (1848) because Leonowens and Heckford extend their professionalism into other lines of work. Heckford works as a governess for only a year after her intentions of farming and trading are thwarted, while Leonowens balances governessing with her role as a political secretary to the King. Their experience of work has a great impact on their attitudes to authorship, and in turn the styles and structures present in the governess travel narrative evolve. A key focus of this chapter is the matter of gauging how far Leonowens’s and Heckford’s texts can still be considered as examples of the governess travel narrative. By drawing on studies of women and work, business and entrepreneurship, and factoring this into the governess’s preoccupation with space, it establishes what happens to both writer and text when the governess travel narrative is infiltrated by other narratives of professionalism.

Within *Life in Transit*, the governess’s journey travels full circle. It begins in the literary tradition of the Victorian novel, moves further into the genre of the travelogue, then mutates and evolves as its authors undertake other forms of employment before crafting careers as published authors and linking the governess’s journey, once again, with the profession of writing. Despite covering hundreds of thousands of miles, city

streets, desert outbacks and vast oceans, all of this takes place within the governess's heterotopia: the liminal space in which she attempts to understand her place in the world. In *Life in Transit* this begins in 1847 when the 'governess problem' was reaching its height, and the world was introduced to Becky Sharp and Jane Eyre.

CHAPTER ONE

IDENTIFYING THE GOVERNESS-TRAVELLER

Immediately, the term ‘governess-traveller’ invokes ideas of duality. Its binary nature suggests that the governess’s life is one of hybridity; half spent at home, half on the move, part duty-bound, but otherwise independent. Within this chapter, I frequently refer to the governess’s journey between borders, and whether those are the social borders which separate the middle and serving class and the public and private sphere, or the cultural borders created by racial and linguistic differences when the governess is abroad, she is always caught in the liminal space between two impenetrable opposites. Yet, to define her position as liminal is not enough to identify the governess-traveller, and merely signalling her ambiguity amounts to the same injustice as that committed by her contemporaries. To avoid this I propose to look beyond duality and consider that the term ‘governess-traveller’ is a ternary composition. While a hyphen can be easily overlooked as a punctuating cord, in the term ‘governess-traveller’, it is a loaded sign. It represents the heterotopic space she inhabits in memory and in text and confirms that while her identity most certainly exists, it has yet to be defined.

In a decade when three-dimensional representation is evolving, travelling from the public cinema screen to the private living room, it seems timely to consider the governess in the same multi-angled light. Until now, she has been regarded as a flat, two-dimensional being compressed between boundaries, an ‘odd woman’ sandwiched between the middle and working class. In actual fact this space between the social classes provides a channel in which she is animate and mobile.

The nineteenth-century governess novel plays a vital role in exposing this channel. While not all of these works mention distant lands, or even present travel as an obvious theme, the journey is essential to the plot, character and setting. *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* are no exception and provide a space where the governess-traveller moves outside the genre of travel writing. Within these novels we can engage with episodes of the governess’s journey untroubled by the difficulties associated with reading real-life

travel narratives. Without focussing too strongly on the likelihood of fictionalisation or the misrepresentation of other cultures, we see beyond what we might normally find within the governess novel. Gender relations and social class are present, but never more apparent than motion or mobility, landscape or architecture, and immediately the two-dimensional governess, whose static existence rarely moves beyond miserable, is an adventurous governess-traveller with a vivid story to tell.

The novel can also be recognised as the only space where the governess-traveller exists beyond a singular voyage. In fiction she is a carefully crafted being, her identity as a governess-traveller is foretold and can be traced as it develops over time. Kathryn Hughes suggests it might be problematic to assume that Jane Eyre or Becky Sharp are in any way similar to real life governesses of the era, but identifying the governess-traveller means engaging with the way her contemporary culture portrayed her (Hughes:1993:xiii). That William Makepeace Thackeray was a well-known, socio-political commentator on urban life, lived and worked in London and had a family, while Charlotte Brontë worked under a pseudonym, lived an isolated rural existence, and married only late in life, means that *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre* consider the governess-traveller from two overtly different viewpoints. Together, the picture they paint deals with multiple perspectives and is entirely three-dimensional. It is perhaps more representative than the travel writing of the era which is known to cross the border between fact and fiction (Helmets and Mazzeo:2007:7-8). The novel is the first source to be considered by this thesis because the governess-traveller's identity is coded in fiction.

While the novel is essential in identifying the governess-traveller, more relevant to this process is the journey within the novel. It would be a generalisation to suggest that in both Thackeray's and Brontë's text, the governess's voyage of self-discovery continues without reprieve. Both Jane and Becky refer to times unaccounted for, and Becky ceases to be a governess quite early on. Because it is only when an image moves that we truly appreciate its three-dimensionality, it is only when Becky and Jane are in transit that we can piece together their identities. The idea that travel can reveal or even construct and develop identities is a theme prevalent in recent criticism of travel and travel writing. By tracing modern thought on the topic and engaging with those ideas in my study of the governess novel, I can formulate a framework through which we can read the governess's journey as a map representing her identity.

Since this is a study of identity, and a type of woman's identity at that, my work has benefited from the theories presented in Judith Butler's seminal work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1991). In disproving the idea that 'the term *women* denotes a common identity' and instead showing that 'gender is performatively produced', Butler destabilises the fixity of gender and argues that '[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler:1999:6,33). Butler's philosophy of gender identity is fundamental to *Life in Transit* for various reasons. While I consider the governess-traveller's 'identity' as opposed to her 'gender identity' explicitly, by differentiating the governess from a larger body of female travellers, I hope to corroborate Butler's views that gendered experiences are in no way universal. Along a similar line of thought Butler emphasises that 'gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities' (Butler:1999:6). As someone who was brought up to be a gentlewoman in the nineteenth century, the governess certainly starts out with an ingrained acceptance of certain social constructs. Because 'it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained' her identity is by default gendered (Butler:1999:6). Yet, the idea that interests me most when thinking about the process of identifying the governess-traveller, is that gender and identity are performed via a series of 'expressions'. In various dictionary definitions the term 'expression' is foregrounded by phrases such as 'the action of' or 'the conveyance of', so with 'expression' comes the very essence of movement and motion. Without focussing on travellers specifically, Butler alludes to the idea that through movements and actions varying in scale we construct our identities. In the study of women's travel writing it is the larger-scale expressions of identity that scholars engage with when they explore the diversity of women's journeys overseas, and much has been done to establish the identity of the Western female traveller of the nineteenth century.

In 'Travel Writing and Gender' Susan Bassnett argues that women did not have a role as colonisers. While this is something I will debate in Chapters Three and Four, Bassnett continues to say that women did have a role in travel:

as wives, sisters, daughters of missionaries, diplomats or envoys,
as scientists or naturalists, as explorers seeking to prove
something to themselves, as individuals in search of the

unexpected, or of leisure and instruction, alone or accompanied, for personal or professional reasons... Travel for some women it seems, may have offered a means of redefining themselves, assuming a different persona and becoming someone who did not exist at home. (Bassnett:2002:231)

In terms of identifying the governess-traveller, Bassnett's reasoning is problematic because while she acknowledges the diversity of women's experience, she assumes that they knew who they were and who they wanted to be before they began travelling. That travel 'allowed women to redefine themselves' does not account for the governess-traveller because she had no idea who she was to begin with (Bassnett:2002:234). As an alien being, severed from the class system, clinging to the boundaries of gender constructs, the governess traveller was an exile cast out. She was involuntarily responsible for the sort of 'gender trouble', to which Butler dedicates her study, whereby gender is destabilised 'not through the strategies that figure a utopian beyond, but through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place' (Butler:1999:44). In this way the governess's perpetual dislocation from a site of origin means her journey is one of definition, not redefinition, and birth as opposed to resurrection.

For many critics, women's travel is about escape, or more closely, rebellion: 'precisely by travelling unaccompanied, women travellers in the nineteenth century challenged the seeming masculinity of the public sphere [and] challenge the assumption that women in the public sphere [were] somehow out of place' (Mills:2002:172). Sara Mills' statement better relates to the governess's situation, especially considering that in the public press she was repeatedly represented as 'other'. Still, Mills' argument can be extended because the governess was as much 'out of place' in private as in public. As I will soon indicate, the governess devised a remarkable method to establish her position and affirm her identity within the employer's home, but even that was not always successful. What Mills goes on to say, however, is that '[a]t the same time, "place" becomes a gendered site in which individual female aspiration can be played out and enterprise enacted' (Mills:2002:172). This is as true for the governess as for any other woman traveller compared to which the governess's enterprise is tenfold. Her journey is more than a space in which to 'bounce back' from a difficult marriage, overbearing father, or any deep involvement with men or the masculine sphere. Instead it is something completely new, born of her own desire to move forward. While for other

women journeys of self-discovery are linear, as if they have been pulled back their whole lives to be violently released and catapulted forward, the governess's is less direct. It is wandering, amorphous, and she gathers her identity from all around, creating her three-dimensional 'self' on a three-dimensional journey of perception, cognition and experience.

Susan Roberson agrees that '[t]ravel, movement, mobility – these are some of the essential activities of human life. Whether we travel to foreign lands or just across the room, we all journey and from our journeying define ourselves' (Roberson2001:i). For the governess this is particularly significant because every step she takes is previously uncharted. Not only are the places she visits geographically unknown to her, but they are conceptually foreign. For any nineteenth-century female traveller the open road is a daunting prospect where each step is one further into the unknown, but the governess is especially uncertain of what she is travelling towards. She repeatedly thinks she wants freedom, but when free longs for enclosure. She settles herself in seclusion, but when secluded the cycle of uninformed desire begins again. Her displacement from the world means that when she begins her journey she starts out blind, unsure how where she is going will affect her identity. This all comes back to my move away from Bassnett and Mills because while other women travellers had either a goal to move towards, or a prison to escape from, the governess had neither. Her journey is one where every single movement has meaning and the semantics of her actions impact on her identity.

This brings me to Casey Blanton's take on travel and identity and the notion that 'self-discovery' can be more accurately described as 'the search for the scattered self' (Blanton:2002:59). The governess's journey most definitely involves her picking up the pieces of her identity as she goes along, and the idea that identity is scattered echoes Butler once again, particularly in the sense that gender identity 'is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time' (Butler:1999:22). The performance of gender and the governess's expression of her identity develop and change depending on her surroundings and the discourses they constitute. Each step she takes is a meaningful imprint on the landscape which marks a place where she learnt something about herself. My identification of the governess-traveller in this chapter bridges the ideas of Butler, Mills, Roberson and Blanton while remaining aware that the governess inhabits a Foucauldian heterotopic space. In the

analysis that follows my chief aim is to investigate how the governess-traveller 'expresses' her identity and defines herself through journeying, by picking up the pieces of her scattered self from within the space of her displacement.

Principally this chapter will identify the governess-traveller by exploring her journey and the way she constructs her 'self' in four sequential stages. In preparing to enter a life of governing both Becky and Jane are subject to conflicting emotions and anxiety. This time, which defines the early stages of her journey, is a vital crescendo which we can term 'The Build-up'. It marks the protagonist's impending birth into governing but also commemorates her death from a no-where place which barely borders society. The climax or anti-climax of this stage is 'Leaving Home' when the governess both mentally and physically departs from life as she knew it. The moment of leaving, which is always an interaction of some sort, is affected by the people around her, their attitudes and sentiments, and the dialogue she shares with them. It is also the time when the governess-self finally emerges and both Becky and Jane are awakened to their individuality as women who experience the world from a heterotopic space beyond traditional society. From this point the governess sets out on 'The Journey', a period shaped by movement and momentum, time and space. In literary terms, it provides the space and solitude Brontë and Thackeray require to develop the inner-workings of their chief characters. This also relates to Casey Blanton's theory of 'the journey inward as well as outward' (Blanton:2002:62). When the governess boards the carriage, an image captured by both texts, she both physically and mentally separates herself from society and begins to generate a unique and deeply subjective view of the world around her. She grows as she moves and becomes aware that at her centre is an independent agent who can both affect and draw from the world. The place where she learns how to do this is 'The Employer's Home'. Drawing on theories of indoor travel and spatial production we see that here she finally discovers how to engage with her surroundings and move towards resolving her dislocation. On an indoor journey she seeks out new spaces and finds her place within them via a series of augmenting movements which mirror her increasing sense of agency and autonomy. In this way each segment of the governess's journey enables her to gather her 'scattered self' and serves us in identifying the governess-traveller. In the final part of this chapter I will make use of the fact that in the novel the governess-traveller's identity is consciously crafted and produced from the outset. The fact that Jane's experience of governing is both foretold and extensive makes *Jane Eyre* a fruitful case-study for locating the governess's defining

characteristics. While the journey is the lens through which we can see how the governess ‘expresses’ her identity, in the novel these expressions are foreshadowed before, and echoed after Jane’s time at Thornfield. Highlighting these expressions and analysing their meaning is the final step taken in this chapter to identify the governess-traveller.

THE BUILD-UP

As much as the governess’s journey marks a birth into a new professional identity, it is frequently portrayed through the imagery of death. So much so that Becky Sharp speaks of her new career as if it were a terminal illness: “I shan’t have time to do it here,” said Rebecca. “I’ll do it when – when I’m gone.” And she dropped her voice and looked so sad and piteous, that everybody felt how cruel her lot was, and how sorry they would be to part with her’ (Thackeray:2009:33). Although Becky’s words are explicitly intended to manipulate the feelings of those around her, they are said with some genuine regret that leaving Russell Square means leaving the life to which she has become accustomed. Despite the fact that Becky’s ‘loss’ has more to do with fortune than friendship, her departure from Russell Square means leaving one world and its inhabitants behind, and entering a much less stable realm.

The death imagery continues when prior to her departure from the Sedleys’, Becky sings a mournful ballad which through the journey of a lone-traveller, simultaneously alludes to being orphaned and dying:

Ah! bleak and barren was the moor,
Ah! loud and piercing was the storm,
The cottage roof was shelter'd sure,
The cottage hearth was bright and warm--
An orphan-boy the lattice pass'd,
And, as he mark'd its cheerful glow
Felt doubly keen the midnight blast,
And doubly cold the fallen snow.

They marked him as he onward press'd,
With fainting heart and weary limb;
Kind voices bade him turn and rest,

And gentle faces welcomed him.
 The dawn is up--the guest is gone,
 The cottage hearth is blazing still:
 Heaven pity all poor wanderers lone!
 Hark to the wind upon the hill! (Thackeray:2009:36-37)

As Becky performs surrounded by friends, Butler's theory of the performativity of gender and identity is evidenced once again, for in lamenting her birth-death into governing there is a strange sense that Becky is singing at her own funeral. Through echoing the sentiments of the orphan boy she mourns not only for home, wealth and friendship, but also for an explicitly feminine role in marriage and motherhood. By assuming the role of the protagonist in this sombre ballad, Becky foresees that becoming a governess means entering a masculine, professional world in which she will feel lost and inexperienced. Yet, Becky's anticipation of her own defeminisation is still not the predominant theme at work here, for above all else this ballad is about a journey without direction or destination. While the wanderer is intermittently met by kind hosts who welcome 'the guest', there is no indication that he travels to or from a home. When the ballad ends, presumably on a typically sombre cadence, it remains uncertain whether he lives to continue travelling or dies upon the moor.

The ballad serves as a fitting overture for the story of the governess who in preparing to enter the profession becomes a traveller of both the literal and figurative sort. Thackeray shows that while she may spend only a few hours on the road, she will spend a lifetime on the move, as much between houses as between social classes and gender constructs. When a woman becomes a governess she disembarks from her safe, sheltered life as a lady, leaves all she knows behind and effectively dies. This is problematic not only because it denotes a time of suffering, but because despite her death in one life, she never fully begins to live a new one. Her life is a journey and the governess is a traveller, because while she certainly departs, she never truly arrives at a terminus.

In *Jane Eyre*, which being written between August 1846 and July 1847 coincides with the serial publication of *Vanity Fair* in *Punch Magazine* from January 1847 to July 1848, Brontë also likens the governess to an orphan-child-traveller. She does this not only in essence, but in a way thematically and structurally similar to the author to whom she dedicated the second edition of *Jane Eyre*, and in the opening

chapters she sees that her protagonist is witness to a ‘doleful’ ballad, not dissimilar to that featured in Becky’s repertoire:

My feet they are sore, and my limbs they are weary;
Long is the way, and the mountains are wild;
Soon will the twilight close moonless and dreary
Over the path of the poor orphan child.

Why did they send me so far and so lonely,
Up where the moors spread and grey rocks are piled?
Men are hard-hearted, and kind angels only
Watch o’er the steps of a poor orphan child...

Ev’n should I fall o’er the broken bridge passing,
Or stray in the marshes, by false lights beguiled,
Still will my Father, with promise and blessing,
Take to His bosom the poor orphan child.

There is a thought that for strength should avail me,
Though both of shelter and kindred despoiled;
Heaven is a home, and a rest will not fail me;
God is a friend to the poor orphan child. (Brontë :1999:16)

Although Brontë never marks her orphan as either a boy or girl, and thus refrains from entering into the same complex gender philosophy as Thackeray, she does regard the governess’s life as a journey without an earthly ending. Through allusions to a ‘broken bridge’, ‘false lights’ and ‘kindred despoiled’ Brontë seconds the notion that the governess is a traveller because her life lacks a cosy place of origin. It is one of ‘almost belonging’ to a family, ‘almost becoming’ independent and ‘almost forging’ an identity between the domestic and the professional sphere. That said a human being cannot ‘almost exist’, so while the imagery of fierce crags and rugged moorland is in hindsight a premonition of Jane’s toil between Thornfield and Moor House, in its initial instance it can be read only as the orphan-governess’s road to social exile, starvation and death. In ‘My feet they are sore, and my limbs they are weary’ there is no doubt whether (or not) the wanderer survives. Whether it makes her more pessimistic, merciful, or simply more of a realist, Brontë sees only one end for her orphaned governess-traveller. While Thackeray’s orphan continues to wander on the edge of Victorian society, Brontë’s is expelled from that life altogether.

Becky's response to all this doom and gloom is on the surface two-faced. When with friends she is grief-stricken, when alone she is irritated, but in spite of this the truth remains that both of these emotional responses are born of the same fear and vulnerability. Whether or not Becky cares about the Sedleys, she is still the victim of social misfortune. Through yet more death imagery, Thackeray demonstrates that the governess's journey was not a voyage many women opted for by choice: 'It was the death-warrant. All was over. Amelia did not dare look at Rebecca's pale face and burning eyes, but she dropped the letter into her friend's lap; and got up, and went upstairs to her room, and cried her little heart out' (Thackeray:2009:62). In this instance the letter contains notice that the governess's hopes for a betrothal have been in vain. But regardless of its message, the 'death-warrant' is universal in the world of governess literature. The image of the paper landing like a dead-weight in the governess's lap is one repeated over and over again and it is captured in the two Richard Redgrave paintings previously discussed.



Fig. 6. *The Poor Teacher* (1843)
Oil on canvas
Shibley Art Gallery
Gateshead



Fig. 7. *The Governess* (1844)
Oil on canvas
Victoria and Albert Museum
London

In both images, the governess loosely holds an open letter upon which she can no longer bear to direct her gaze. It is said that the letter tells of the death of a relative, but that is just one version of what a letter to a governess might entail. It could be that her family is alive and well but require her to stay away to provide for them, it might be that a potential husband has married in the time she has been gone leaving little hope that she

will ever retire from her occupation. Equally, the letter could simply contain notice of the governess's next situation, sign-posting the next leg of a lifelong journey which never permits repose. Thus whether the letter gives notice of financial ruin, the death of a parent or simply a new situation, it is a ticket to a foreign place where she will cease to live as she has previously. It is no surprise that in Thackeray's socio-political commentary this letter is first written by a man and then delivered by a woman of the upper-middle class. He reveals that the governess-traveller is born when patriarchal society hands her a one-way ticket to nowhere.

While Becky is thrust out into the world as if 'condemned' to the occupation of governessing, Jane chooses this fate of her own will. When Miss Temple marries and departs for the Continent, Jane opens her eyes to new possibilities:

I went to my window, opened it, and looked out [to] the blue peaks; it was those I longed to surmount... I traced the white road winding round the base of one mountain, and vanishing in a gorge between two; how I longed to follow it farther!... I remembered descending that hill at twilight; an age seemed to have elapsed since the day which brought me first to Lowood, and I had never quitted since... I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed humbler supplication; for change, stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space: 'Then,' I cried, half desperate, 'grant me at least a new servitude!' (Brontë:1999:73)

For Jane, to travel anywhere by any means is an act of self-progression. Movement offers the prospect of liberation from the close confines of the school which though a distant sheltered place, is still a microcosmic representation of middle-class society, under the authority of highborn benefactors. To this place Jane 'descends' and within its walls she submits to custom until travel allows her to ascend from the aptly named 'Low-wood', reach above its paradoxically nurturing and stifling canopy and 'surmount [the] blue peaks' of a higher, more meaningful existence (Brontë:1999:73). Unlike Becky, Jane does not propose to emulate her friend Miss Temple by marrying and leaving England for distant shores. In her description there is only self and space, Jane's 'I' and the various sites over which she casts her eye. By seeking out employment she shows there is more to governessing than drudgery. The face of servitude so often

shrouded in shadow is the mask that allows Jane to become a solitary female adventuress.

LEAVING HOME

A significant time for both governesses is the moment of leaving home. In any experience of leaving the connection between the traveller and the people and place they are soon to depart is ironically intensified. Most travellers will have experienced a wave of nostalgia or perhaps relief when picking up their bags and heading for the door and in the governess novel, this temporarily intense connection with her surroundings is reflected in the sentiments of those around her. Whether they consider her with love or hatred, the people she resides with appear to feel more strongly immediately before she leaves them.

When Becky leaves the Sedleys' home, not everyone is sad to see her go:

“Don't take on, miss. I didn't like to tell you. But none of us in the house have liked her except at fust. I sor her with my own eyes reading your ma's letters. Pinner says she's always about your trinket box and drawers, and everybody's drawers, and she's sure she's put your white ribbing into her box”

“I gave it her, I gave it her,” Amelia said.

But this did not alter Mrs Blenkinsop's opinion of Miss Sharp. “I don't trust them governesses, Pinner... They give themselves the hairs and hupstarts of ladies, and their wages is no better than you nor me”. (Thackeray:2009:62)

While *Jane Eyre* is unusual because the governess forges meaningful friendship first with Bessie, then Mrs Fairfax and lastly Hannah at Moor House, in *Vanity Fair*, as in most governess texts, there is great animosity between the governess and the other servants. Mrs Blenkinsop's term ‘them governesses’ is loaded with otherness and marks Becky as a foreign body amongst the otherwise ‘normal’ inhabitants of Russell Square. Drawing on the notion that the governess is a traveller in both literal and figurative terms, Thackeray suggests that her physical movement results from her nomadic position within society. It is because the governess is neither servant nor lady, both superior and inferior, resented and pitied, that she is unnerving, and unwanted by

others. When the governess is forced to move on to a new situation, she will alternately forge bonds with either the servants or her employer until she habitually outstays her welcome. Thackeray sees her journey not as a straight path, but as the perpetual to-ing and fro-ing on a jagged trail which persistently crosses the border between the middle and working classes.

Unlike the servants, however, Amelia is sorry that Becky must go a'governessing. In preparation for her departure Amelia rummages through her belongings and showers her friend with unwanted possessions:

Our good child ransacked all her drawers, cupboards, reticules and gimcrack boxes – passed in review all her gowns, fichus, tags, bobbins, laces, silk stockings, and fallals – selecting this thing and that and the other, to make a little heap for Rebecca. And going to her papa, that generous British merchant, who had promised to give her as many guineas as she was years old – she begged the old gentleman to give the money to dear Rebecca, who must want it, while she lacked for nothing.
(Thackeray:2009:62)

Like Miss Jemima before her, who gave Becky a dictionary upon leaving school, for Amelia it seems customary to give the governess a selection of items to prepare her for her journey. When faced with the impending reality that the financially crippled gentlewoman is about to descend into a more modest existence, her friend is more practical than emotional. The fact that the governess will have neither the time nor money to purchase clothes and jewellery, leads Amelia to gather the articles necessary to make Becky's new life slightly more comfortable. Tapping into the sense of middle-class guilt surrounding governesses, this act of kindness barely conceals Amelia's feelings of shame. Whether that is the shame that despite her privileges, she can do little to help Rebecca, or the embarrassment that she is friends at all with a governess, her practicality can be read as an attempt to disguise her friend as a lady. While this episode is a revelation of how some members of the middle class felt about governesses, it also explains why the governess's identity is so problematic. She is pushed and pulled between the gentry and the servants because although the middle class cast her out, they overload her with souvenirs of her time spent amongst them. Indeed, as much as the servants harbour an inward hatred for the governess and all she stands for, they continue to serve her as they would any other lady of the house. Between the pull of these poles

the governess is propelled onwards through her journey, never released or permitted to settle by either source of conflicting energy.

At the culmination of all this, Becky's response is as false as can be expected:

Finally came the parting with Miss Amelia, over which picture I intend to throw a veil. But after a scene in which one person was in earnest and the other a perfect performer – after the tendered caresses, the most pathetic tears, the smelling-bottle, and some of the very best feelings of the heart had been called into requisition – Rebecca and Amelia parted, the former vowing to love her friend for ever and ever and ever. (Thackeray:2009:63)

This episode does much to define the governess-traveller because it is only at this point that Becky's true feelings are confirmed. Although right from the beginning there are hints that she is not as virtuous as the typical governess archetype, it is when she finally steps outside Russell Square and beyond middle-upper class society, that her tendency to seek social propulsion at any cost comes to light. She cares little for Amelia or Joseph and her part in the theatrical goodbye is as a 'perfect performer'. It is questionable then, whether becoming a governess-traveller allows Becky to express her identity beyond the restraints of middle-class society, or whether it initiates a process of masking where although she grows more thoughtful, confident and opinionated, she must hide behind a facade of quiet humility. Either way, it is at the instant when Becky begins her journey that her character is exposed and the governess is born.

When Jane decides to leave Lowood, the preparation for her departure is solely of her own undertaking. This does more than merely emphasise that for Jane governessing is a favourable choice where for Becky it is a dreaded sentence. The avid account of Jane's preparation provides a detailed description of the stages involved in the process of becoming a governess.

'What do I want? A new place, in a new house, amongst new faces, under new circumstances... I could not tell: nothing answered me; I then ordered my brain to find a response, and quickly... Feverish with vain labour, I got up and took a turn in the room; undrew the curtain, noted a star or two, shivered with cold, and again crept to bed... as I lay down, it came quietly and naturally to my mind: - 'Those who want situations advertise; you must advertise in the *_shire Herald*.'

'How? I know nothing about advertising.

Replies rose smooth and prompt now: -

‘You must enclose the advertisement and the money to pay for it under a cover directed to the editor of the *Herald*’...

This scheme I went over twice, thrice; it was then digested in my mind; I had it in clear practical form: I felt satisfied, and fell asleep. (Brontë:1999:74)

This passage recounts a strange episode where in the quiet refuge of her bedroom, Jane the woman, pregnant with longing for a life more stimulating, gives birth to an idea. A coherent, commonsensical plan is formed and Jane the governess is born into the world, downward gaze and grey crinoline at the ready. In fact, there are various hints throughout the novel confirming my belief that becoming a governess can be best deconstructed and analysed when considered as a process of birth and more specifically the simultaneous process of giving birth and being born.

In many governess novels, it is implied early on that prior to becoming a governess the protagonist is ‘pregnant’ with potential. Agnes Grey of Anne Brontë’s novel complains about her sheltered childhood, which made her ‘too helpless and dependent—too unfit for buffeting with the cares and turmoils of life’ (Brontë:1994:17). Thus it is obvious very early on that she will be the one to ‘escape’ the limitations of the family home and go out into the world. Though her early life is monotonous and miserable, Jane Eyre also harbours an inward disposition for travel and adventure. Despite being completely alone, the young Jane welcomes the unknown: ‘... school would be a complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, and entrance into a new life’ (Brontë:1999:19). It is when Jane’s propensity for adventure is fully developed that she shuts herself away in her bedroom for a period of physical confinement which mirrors the social and emotional confinement she has been accustomed to her whole life.

At this point Jane experiences a labour of great mental strain and her personality begins to split. During the internal struggle a series of questions and answers ensues, and through this dialogue Jane’s identity is torn in two. Within her thoughts there is a child: selfish, egocentric and only focussed on its own desires for independence. There is also a parent: a fount of all knowledge fit to provide guidance and protection. Through these spectrally opposite personas emerges the governess, an adult- carer ready to be responsible for both the learning and well-being of a charge, counterbalanced by the

traveller, a youthful, inquisitive adventurer eager to encounter life's opportunities. Such is how the governess-traveller materialises, who on starting to live outside of a womb-like prison is immediately forced into a cold, dislocated version of parenthood. But however bittersweet the liberation, the traveller must remain tied to the governess and vice versa. This is not only so she is able to care for someone else's child but so that in an era when the solitary female was little prepared for travel beyond a few miles, the governess is able to facilitate her own child-like longing for independence.

THE JOURNEY

When Becky leaves Russell Square there is no suggestion of relief after longing. There is a sense, however, that the carriage provides the space for Becky to engage with her 'self.' Because governessing engenders separation from the rest of society, it allows the traveller to ignore convention, leave behind the sway of the masses and connect with their individual desires and motivations. Such is why when Becky starts to move, Thackeray is more concerned with the governess's changing emotional landscape than the scenery through which she travels. Bearing in mind that he was a keen traveller and published two travel books, the absence of the physical journey in the novel can itself be read as indicative of the governess's hopeless, floundering existence. As long as Becky's fate remains uncertain, the path she treads remains ambiguous. What Thackeray does account for is the internal voyage, where Becky conforms to the typical role of the traveller and becomes thoughtful and reflective:

Rebecca had never seen a baronet... and as soon as she had done wiping her eyes (which operation she had concluded the very moment the carriage had turned the corner of the street), she began to depict in her own mind what a baronet must be. "I wonder, does he wear a star?" thought she, "or is it only lords that wear stars? But will he be handsomely dressed in a court suit, with ruffles and his hair a little powdered, like Mr. Wroughton at Covent Garden. I suppose he will be awfully proud, and that I shall be treated most contemptuously. Still I must bear my hard lot as well as I can – at least, I shall be amongst *gentlefolks* and not with vulgar city people".
(Thackeray:2009:65)

As the carriage begins to pick up momentum and Russell Square fades into the distance, Becky's mind opens to a world of new possibilities. As she begins to entertain a series of theories and ideas, stemming from open questions like 'I wonder...or is it...But will he...I suppose he', her intellectual capacity evolves and expands. The fact that Thackeray begins to develop the inner workings of his central character while presenting the culturally recurrent image of the governess aboard a carriage, is not merely coincidental. Rather, it emphasises the fact that the governess is born only once she embarks upon a journey.

At first Becky and Jane represent two very different types of governess-traveller. Becky is the reluctant traveller, who is an equally reluctant governess, and Jane, who sees governessing as an opportunity, longs for the open road. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, some young women, urged on by their families, saw governessing as a way to access the knowledge and experience which was typically only available to ladies of fortune, particularly where travel on the Continent was concerned. When considering this, we find that Becky experiences not one, but two shifts in her identity. When she resided at the Sedleys' she was the most reluctant of reluctant governesses, so much appalled at the prospect of working for a living that she would marry an overweight alcoholic she did not love to improve her social standing. Once on the road, however, Becky's outlook becomes much more positive and while she still harbours concerns about how the Crawleys will treat her, she is thrilled by the thought of mingling with nobility. If marriage was for Becky 'Plan A', then governessing serves as a surprisingly effective 'Plan B'.

Like Thackeray, Brontë suggests that the journey separates one life and the next. When Jane says 'I mounted the vehicle which was to bear me to new duties and a new life in the unknown environs of Millcote', the mode of transport is explicitly linked to the start of a new existence (Brontë:1999:80). As in *Vanity Fair*, in *Jane Eyre* the journey is both a predominantly positive experience and a time for reflection:

Our progress was leisurely, and gave me ample time to reflect...and as I leaned back in the comfortable though not elegant conveyance, I meditated much at my ease.

"I suppose," thought I, "judging from the plainness of the servant and carriage, Mrs Fairfax is not a very dashing person: so much the better; I never lived amongst fine people but once, and I was

very miserable with them. I wonder if she lives alone except this little girl; if so, and if she is in any degree amiable, I shall surely be able to get on with her; I will do my best; it is a pity that doing one's best does not always answer...I pray God Mrs Fairfax may not turn out a second Mrs Reed; but if she does, I am not bound to stay with her: Let the worst come to the worst, I can advertise again. How far are we on our road now, I wonder?" (Brontë:1999:81)

Jane's recognition that travel provides 'ample time to reflect' reaffirms the close connection between *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*, the latter being written as the first initially appeared in serial form. Yet, Jane's reflections differ from those of Becky Sharp. Where one governess dreams of nobility, the other prays for humility; where one longs for company the other, quite simply, cannot be bothered with the tiresome task of gratifying the upper classes. But the most striking difference between these two travelling governesses is that while strong, volatile Becky feels she must 'bear her hard lot', the much gentler, meeker Jane sees she is not bound to one employer indefinitely. In terms of identifying the governess-traveller, this all comes back to the idea of the reluctant governess who is a slave to her passivity and the adventurer who actively designs her destiny. This difference is epitomised through Jane's involvement in, and Becky's silence on the matter of advertising.

The governess's means to advertise demonstrates a degree of self-sufficiency and assertiveness. It shows that unlike women who were bound to be, or already married, she had a voice in the state of the British economy. Jane's advert is similar to those of real-life governesses in tone because as much as it proves this point, it illustrates that the governess had personality enough to desire. When Jane says 'A young lady accustomed to tuition...is desirous of meeting with a situation in a private family' (Brontë:1999:74) she echoes the sentiments of governesses who advertised in *The Times*.

TRAVELLING COMPANION or GOVERNESS.
 —A young lady, accustomed to teach in families of distinction, being about to terminate her present engagement, is desirous of travelling with or residing abroad in a nobleman's or gentleman's family, either as AMANUENSIS, Companion, &c., or Governess. Liberal salary expected. References highly satisfactory. Address Y. Z., Mr. Calder's, bookseller, 159, Oxford-street, W.

Fig. 8. 'Travelling Companion or Governess,' *The Times* (Jul 12, 1861)

FRANCE.—A Person, who speaks the English and French Languages grammatically, has a knowledge of the Theory of Music, &c. and who has been long accustomed to educate young Ladies, is desirous of going with a Family to France or Italy, either as COMPANION or GOVERNESS. Her connections are genteel, and she can have an undeniable recommendation from Families of the highest respectability. The Advertiser's principal object being to reside some time in one of those Countries, pecuniary emolument would be of small consideration, provided she were to meet with a Family upon whom she might rely for protection. Address, post paid, to A.B. at Mr. Whitley's, No. 12, Old Bond-street.

Fig. 9. 'France,' *The Times* (May 6, 1802)

The first of these advertisements could almost have been written by Becky Sharp herself as its writer pursues only the best possible situations, but will happily fulfil any role required, be it as governess, companion, or amanuensis, in order to achieve her aim of travelling overseas. The second is equally assertive and even more specific in its requirements, but its writer is a little more subtle about the matter of class status. This governess is not merely open to travel but actively demands a journey to France. She is 'a person', with genuine abilities and desires, and far from just a displaced lady attempting to cling to a respectable rung on the social ladder. In light of this she tries her luck at finding a position as a companion, which, as I mentioned previously, was often preferable to that of a governess. What these advertisements show above all, is that the governess was not always a passive woman who was shunted from one place to the next, fulfilling her duty of care to a long line of charges. Some of these women were empowered to take charge of their destiny and seek out adventure. In spite of this, there is an underlying sense of anxiety around the matter of financial security, for despite the second governess's array of skills, her desperate need for work or her discomfort with 'selling herself' means she dare not demand a good salary.

After asserting her voice through advertising, Jane directly involves the reader in her voyage. This style of narrative broadens our definition of the governess-traveller, for as Jane continues on her passage, we see her begin to identify with the role of travel narrator:

I let down the window and looked out... We were now, as far as I could see, on a sort of common; but there were houses scattered

all over the district; I felt we were in a different region to Lowood, more populous, less picturesque; more stirring, less romantic...we were passing a church; I saw its low broad tower against the sky, and its bell was tolling a quarter; I saw a narrow galaxy of lights too, on a hillside, marking a village or hamlet... We now slowly ascended a drive, and came upon the long front of a house: candlelight gleamed from one curtained bow-window; all the rest was dark. The car stopped at the front door; it was opened by a maid-servant; I alighted and went in. (Brontë:1999:82)

This episode provides an authentic example of travel narrative within the novel and is precisely what is missing in *Vanity Fair*. It is unlike the atmospheric description typically present in novels because as well as depicting a vivid image of the governess's surroundings, it echoes her movements. Brontë captures every rise and fall of the land, every twist and turn in the road and the uncomfortable, stuttering motion of the carriage. Yet, the most interesting detail in all this is that despite being surrounded by a 'galaxy of lights', open moorland and curious little hamlets, the reader's attention is always focussed on Jane. Her vision, movements and emotions are at the forefront of the passage. The surrounding imagery merely filters in and out of her perspective, prompted by subjective reflections like: 'I could see...I felt...I looked out...We now slowly ascended...I alighted'. These punctuating verbs are what make this passage one of motion rather than image, and this is reflected when Jane surmises: 'I felt we were in a different region to Lowood, more populous, less picturesque; more stirring, less romantic' (Brontë:1999:82). Arguably, Brontë is commenting on the times in which the railway and the development of transport for trade were central to the industrial revolution. Yet, having been a governess-traveller herself, Brontë brings the governess's role in the discourse of travel and travel writing to the forefront of her most famous novel. This image of the governess aboard the carriage is a common thread in *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre* and other governess novels of the era. It provides both a womb-like space which in carrying the prospective governess from one world to another nurtures her intellectually, and a moving oculus or roving eye gazing out over the landscape. In both cases it is because of the freedom and protection offered by the carriage that the governess is empowered.

While the carriage journey cements the fact that the governess was a traveller, in the novel the governess is frequently haunted by the idea of journeying. Both Becky and Jane are repeatedly situated aside from others as if they themselves were foreigners, and

this is reflected in both texts by frequent allusions to the East. To establish the extent of this we need to retrace Becky's journey, and consider her experience after the first carriage journey between Miss Pinkerton's school and Russell Square. From the moment she disembarks, Thackeray ensures that Becky is awake to the possibility of travel, the foreign, and the exotic. One occurrence of this is when she meets Joseph Sedley, an unlikely and largely unsuitable master of colonial enterprise in India. Despite his somewhat unattractive appearance and susceptibility to tropical disease, Jos represents the opportunity for marriage and travel. In suggesting that travel is a luxury reserved for married women, it is questionable why Thackeray's governess is repeatedly tantalised by the subject of travel overseas.

Initially, the governess's link with the foreign is most obviously illustrated through Becky's parentage. Her own mother being French implies that from the start, the governess is different and un-English in some way. Alongside the fact that being patently English meant being classified within a rigid social hierarchy, the governess is certainly an alien who cannot culturally conform. When residing at Miss Pinkerton's school, Becky teaches French, reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë who taught English as a foreign language in Brussels. The idea that even before adulthood, Becky is caught somewhere between the role of teacher and student and spent most of her day speaking a different language, suggests that her adult life might continue along the same line of paradox.

Later, Becky's link to the foreign is portrayed through various seemingly trivial episodes. When musing that she might one day be Mrs Sedley of Boggley Wollah, she reveals her naive and fanciful regard for the East:

She had a vivid imagination; she had besides, read *Arabian Nights* and *Guthrie's Geography*; ...she had built for herself a most magnificent castle in the air, of which she was mistress, with a husband somewhere in the background (she had not seen him as yet, and his figure would not therefore be very distinct); she had arrayed herself in an infinity of shawls, turbans and diamond necklaces, and had mounted upon an elephant to the sound of the march in *Bluebeard*, in order to pay a visit of ceremony to the Grand Mogul. Charming Alnaschar visions! It is the happy privilege of youth to construct you, and many a fanciful young creature besides Rebecca Sharp has indulged in these delightful dreams ere now! (Thackeray:2009:22)

In these opening chapters Becky's view of the Orient is like Jane Eyre's, but also similar to that of Lucy Snowe whose visions of 'the Other' will be discussed in Chapter Two. In all cases the governess's view of the Orient is seen only through the pages of books. The significant difference between Becky and the other governess protagonists is that she locates herself amid the East with ease, and imagines she will feel at home there. This presumption has considerable implications for the text. First, as Becky sees herself adorned in rich, exuberant fabric, she engages with the practice of veiling, and in turn female subjugation. This paradoxical connection between the height of feminine luxury and the depths of patriarchal suppression shows that even in the governess's most whimsical thoughts she is caught between two ends of the class system, whether in England or abroad. Also, in constructing a setting, costume and selection of props, Becky foresees her identity masked by another disguise and her life scripted within another performance. Thackeray once again hints that the identity of the governess-traveller is something that the subject herself struggles to express under the sway of Victorian gender constructs, and thus it remains hidden behind whatever facade is available to her at the time.

Becky continues to be haunted by the East during her first meal at Russell Square when thinking it was 'something cool, as its name imported', she mistakenly samples a chilli (Thackeray:2009:24-25). While this is another example where the governess and the foreign are thematically interlinked, Becky's response to the curry placed before her reveals the conflicting desires bound up in her identity as a traveller. On the one hand, her enthusiasm to try Eastern cuisine reflects her openness to travel throughout the novel, because just as she has no qualms about travelling on board a public coach, she fearlessly rushes to war-torn Belgium to support her husband. However, it is perhaps more likely that the underlying reason for Becky's willingness is to impress Joseph Sedley and fit in with the rest of the family. While for Becky 'fitting in' is merely a means to manipulate others so as to improve her future prospects, it shows that in all her endeavours and adventures, the governess-traveller continued to be motivated by a primal sense of insecurity and dislocation from the world around her.

Like Becky, Jane is also haunted by references to travel abroad and the foreign, most of which point to her own foreignness. Although neither of her parents was a foreigner, within the Reed family unit Jane feels as foreign as her half-French

counterpart: ‘an uncongenial alien permanently intruded on her family group’ (Brontë:1999:11). Through her use of the term ‘alien’ Brontë mirrors Thackeray’s suggestion that the governess, from her childhood, was never going to fit into traditional society. Her parentage, whether racially or socially inferior, means that she will always be cast out as an alien and a foreigner. Brontë continues to echo this notion when, despite having no French relations, Jane expresses herself best through the French aphorism: ‘I was a trifle beside myself; or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say’ (Brontë:1999:7). While failing to communicate in English immediately signals Jane’s struggle to locate herself within its culture, what she says here explains why.

The concept of being ‘out of oneself’ implies a sudden departure from regular behaviour, but it also illustrates Jane’s struggle to self-identify. Living with the Reed family is more than uncomfortable for Jane, because to live with a traditional upper-middle class family only emphasises her foreignness. Jane deals with this by abandoning English culture altogether and deserting the English language like a ‘rebel slave’ (Brontë:1999:7). With hindsight, we can see that becoming a governess actually facilitates Jane’s split personality. This is when as previously discussed the child-adult, carer-adventurer and middle-class-social-reject can be consolidated within one form. Arguably, identifying as a governess is what saves this young, tortured Jane we see at Gateshead.

As it is for Becky, for Jane school is a transitory place where she is neither at home nor a guest. Repeatedly haunted by the notion of journeying, Jane finds that her first lesson is geography, though prior to this she has a tendency to stumble upon books which refer to strange new places. She is struck not by the creatures, but by the landscapes in Bewick’s book:

[T]here were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of “the solitary rocks and promontories” by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape...Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with ‘the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space, - that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the

pole and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.
(Brontë:1999:4)

In this passage Jane admits that while she has little interest in birds, the main subject matter in Bewick's text, she is fascinated by the icy landscapes of the northern hemisphere. Contrary to Becky who dreams of humid Eastern climes, she is captivated by these frosty scenes. The obvious connotations of such a contrast are that Jane represents the cold, harsh reality of being a governess-traveller, while Becky represents a caricatured version. Brontë demonstrates that real voyages, regardless of distance, normally feature some period of struggle and loneliness. It would be a very difficult task to find a work of travel writing in which the narrator is completely content from start to finish. What stands out, though, is Jane's preoccupation with water versus Becky's interest in Eastern produce. Depictions of the ocean and local trade are elemental to the travel writing genre. This is something I will consider in detail later in this thesis, but why Thackeray concentrates on one aspect and Brontë focuses on the other has implications for defining the governess-traveller.

Brontë's metaphoric descriptions of water in its various forms have often been of interest to scholars. In a letter to W.S. Williams, when referring to the naming of Lucy Snowe, Brontë explains that 'a cold name she must have...for she has about her an external coldness' (Smith:1995:80). Again, in his essay '*Jane Eyre: Fire and Water* (1963) Eric Solomon observes that 'St. John Rivers (note the last name) contains the icy waters that would put out fire, destroy passion. His nature is frozen over with an "ice of reserve"' (Solomon:1963:216). Ironically, though, Brontë's water metaphors have not been read so as to examine the protagonist as a traveller. It seems obvious that frequent figurative references to the sea should allow the reader to ascertain what sort of a traveller they are dealing with: whether he or she is brave or fearful, an optimist or a pessimist, prejudiced or open-minded. As much as Brontë's water metaphors denote a drowning tantamount to social and emotional repression, on the surface they are surely a window into the governess-traveller's identity. In this sense even before her journey commences, we can determine that Jane's voyage will be a solitary trek, during which she will battle a slowly worsening landscape. From 'bleak shores', through 'frost and snow' until her journey ends at a destination of 'extreme cold', we are led to believe Jane will earnestly trudge. This forewarning is realised when Rochester's marriage to Bertha is revealed and the governess traveller sets out again.

THE EMPLOYER'S HOME

Projecting her own foreignness does little to help the governess discover her identity. She has to overcome this way of interacting with the world so as to gather her 'scattered self' (Blanton:2002:59). Yet, Eastern allusions in the form of architecture, décor, artefacts, books and everyday conversation were all part of the landscape of the nineteenth-century mansion. Thus the governess's interaction with the space which forms the employer's home itself becomes a challenge to overcome her own ambiguous otherness. These episodes are key to understanding her identity, particularly when analysed through channels which have since provided for critical readings of Gothic literature. This approach is helpful because while *Jane Eyre* is a Gothic text, I have shown in the introduction to this thesis that there is something specifically Gothic about the governess. She is solitary, vulnerable, and often in the company of intimidating father-figures and their turn-a-blind-eye wives. She is forced to travel when she would rather not and is a regular frequenter of the Gothic house. Though I argue that the governess's movements within the employer's home reveal her identity, this has not always been the case.

In 1976 Ellen Moers first devised the term 'Female Gothic'. This was a fundamental development for feminist literary criticism for before then it was uncertain whether the Gothic had an explicitly female strand. At the same time, however, Moers also coined the term 'travelling heroinism', referring to the female protagonist's ability to move freely within the Gothic landscape: 'the gothic novel was a device to send maidens on distant and exciting journeys' (Moers:1976:126). I have previously shown how for various critics mobility is central to the governess's involvement in the Gothic, and Kathryn Hughes stresses that '[f]or the reader, the governess became a daring alter-ego who could wander the world in a manner quite unthinkable for a young woman in more comfortable circumstances' (Hughes:1993:4). Immediately, the governess can be recognised as a not so distant relation of Moers' Gothic heroine, whose unusual position within society instigates her involvement in travelling heroinism. In her analysis of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* Moers goes on to say that

[t]he travel motif in women's literature seems, however, to require separating into two distinct kinds: indoor travel and outdoor travel...For outdoor travel the Radcliffe heroine becomes, in Brontë's phrase, 'the enchanted lady in the fairy tale', who flies through the air independent of the laws of

gravity, time, perspective, and, certainly, of real travel...Indoor travel, however, is a more serious affair, because more possible for women; and Mrs. Radcliffe's inventive use of the Gothic setting for indoor travel produced a richer literary tradition. For indoors, in the long, dark, twisting, haunted passageways of the Gothic castle, there is travel with danger, travel with exertion, a challenge to the heroine's enterprise, resolution, ingenuity, and physical strength...It was only indoors, in Mrs. Radcliffe's day, that the heroine could travel brave and free, and stay respectable. (Moers:1976:127-129)

In short, Moers recognised that travelling within the Gothic house gave female characters agency. Independent movement as the 'chased' rather than the 'chaser' meant that female characters were thinking for themselves, compelled by no other instinct than that which served to ensure their own survival. They were no longer pining, whimpering and trailing after men, but running from men and running solely to promote their own existence. Beyond this though, Moers' examination of 'indoor travel' is limited, for while her research is ground-breaking for feminism, and she does identify these female characters as travellers, she does little to define the uniqueness of this identity.

The same can perhaps be said for critics throughout the 1980s and 90s. In *The Contested Castle* (1989) Kate Ellis subverts the safe domesticity of the home and explores the dangers presented in the Gothic house which Moers claimed women were free to move through. However, she also implies that 'mobility', whether physical or figurative, is a predominantly masculine experience. As such her work does not greatly develop the framework through which we can define the governess-traveller's identity. Claire Kahane's 1995 publication *Passions of the Voice: Hysteria, Narrative and the Figure of the Speaking Woman* is another matter entirely. She expands on Moers' consideration of 'indoor travel' and argues that 'the heroine's active exploration of the Gothic house in which she is trapped is also an exploration of her relation to the maternal body that she shares, with all its connotations of power over and vulnerability to forces within and without' (Kahane:1995:338). Bearing in mind that becoming a governess can be readily understood as the dual process of giving birth and being born, the notion that exploring the Gothic house denotes an exploration of the female body is a useful link in identifying the governess-traveller.

Yet as with Moers and Ellis, Kahane tends to avoid investigating the female character's precise movements in and around the Gothic house. So far, critics have

researched the social and gender implications of the female character's mobility, without analysing her indoor rambles as episodes of travel narrative. Rather, these critics have attempted to evaluate their results without fully investigating the test that the Gothic heroine is set in her challenge to move freely and avoid danger within the mansion. This is a considerable oversight because just as the governess cannot be a governess without travelling, and the governess text cannot exist without travel narrative, the Gothic house cannot tell us anything about its heroine until we ascertain how she travelled through it.

An explanation of why critics have so far refrained from reading episodes of 'indoor travel' as examples of travel narrative is put forward by Robert Mighall in *A Geography of Victorian Fiction* (1999). In the introduction he outlines that:

The present study attempts to remedy this critical neglect, and provide an alternative "passport" to the geography of the Gothic...By rejecting the assumption that the Gothic finds its coherence in "psychology" it focuses instead on the historical, geographical, environmental and discursive factors which have played an important part in making Gothic representation credible at any given time...In place of psychology I consider history and geography; in place of ontology I consider epistemology and its discursive formations. (Mighall:1999:xiv-xxi)

Mighall's decision to avoid adopting a psychological or feminist approach in his analysis of the Gothic house means that the protagonist's journey inside the mansion is more closely read as a series of movements, whether conservative or radical, in light of the historical and geographical context of the novel. Though this adds another dimension to the study of the Gothic landscape, to deny that the governess's movements reflect her psychological condition would be to disregard the significance of space in revealing the her identity. To compromise I hope to ascertain precisely how narratives of 'indoor travel' expose the governess-traveller's identity by regarding movement as a communicative medium in its own right.

In recent years, progress has been made in terms of acknowledging that the Gothic heroine's interaction with space is a window to her psychological identity, largely because of developments in spatial theory within a literary context. In her study of *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) Davison remarks that '[t]he protagonist's exploration, often at night, of the apparently haunted Castle's maze-like interior involves confrontation with mysteries whose ultimate unravelling signifies a process of self-discovery' (Davison:2004:51). Again, in 'Gendered Space and Subjecthood: Ellena's Quest for

Identity in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*' (2003) Valerie Henitiuk argues that women not only travel indoors, but 'negotiate' their surroundings, manipulating and shaping space in a colonial enterprise to self-identify:

The voyage also clearly functions as access to the sublime and thus to the critical subjective experience: a character's sensibility and moral worth are revealed by how s/he reacts to the extravagantly described landscapes through which s/he passes. Similarly to Romantic subjects described elsewhere, it is by viewing and responding to nature during her enforced dislocations that Ellena begins to construct herself...[The] vocabulary of space [has an] unambiguous role in the attainment of the self. (Henitiuk:2003:11,16,17)

What Henitiuk says is entirely relevant to the governess travel narrative. Recognising that the protagonist's reaction to the house simultaneously defines the space and the identity of the person moving through it theorises why the governess's carriage journey provides more information about her character than her surroundings. For this reason, it is via a framework influenced by Henitiuk that I approach the governess-traveller's indoor journey through the Gothic house. But it is also important to recognise that the reciprocal construction of self and space is a concept which stems from spatial theory. The fact that in turn this idea works in dialogue with Butler's theory of the performance of identity requires a little more explanation.

Fundamental to developments in spatial theory are the works of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey. While Lefebvre's ideas are rooted in social philosophy and Harvey's social theory has a greater geographical focus, they agree that space is something that is socially 'produced' or 'constructed' (Lefebvre:1984:26) (Harvey:1990:418). Similarly, both argue that there are three types of space. Lefebvre defined these three types which have come to be known as 'lived or material space', 'represented space' and 'representational space' (Lefebvre:1984:39) In 'Space as a Key Word' Harvey explains:

Material space is, for us humans, quite simply the world of tactile and sensual interaction with matter, it is the space of experience...How we represent this world is...through abstract representations (words, graphs, maps, diagrams, pictures, etc.). [But] we do not live as material atoms floating around in a materialist world; we also have imaginations, fears, emotions, psychologies, fantasies and dreams. These spaces of representation are part and parcel of the way we live in the

world. We may also seek to represent the way this space is lived through emotions and the imagination. The spatiotemporality of a dream, a fantasy, a hidden longing, a lost memory or even a peculiar thrill as we walk down a street can be given representation through works of art. (Harvey:1990:8)

My analysis of the governess's journey in the remainder of this chapter and throughout this thesis as a whole is very much aligned with this tripartite framework developed and corroborated by Lefebvre and Harvey. By deconstructing the language and imagery through which the governess represents her journey I aim to decode the represented space of both her material and representational existence. Through examining the governess's experience of material space and engaging with the individual actions and movements of Jane, Becky and the other chief narrators I discuss, I hope to trace the changing ways the governess-traveller expresses her identity, in Butler's terms, within the physical world she describes. I will also pay close attention to the representational space of the governess's emotions, anxieties and desires and ascertain how this influences, and is influenced by the material space through which she travels.

The idea that space and identity reciprocally impact on one another is also noted early on in the history of spatial theory. In arguing that

[L]anguage ... allows meaning to escape the embrace of lived experience, to detach itself from the fleshly body. Words and signs facilitate...the transport, as it were, of the physical body outside of itself. This operation, inextricably magical and rational, sets up a strange interplay between (verbal) disembodiment and (empirical) re-embodiment, between uprooting and reimplantation (Lefebvre:1984:203)

Lefebvre demonstrates that forming a knowledge or recollection of our movements, through the language in which we think, speak and write, is a means to constructing the self. By contemplating her movements in memory or in text the governess's 'lived experience...detach[es] itself' from her body and occurs 'outside of itself'. Through remembering or writing about her movements the governess is alerted to the behaviours through which she, once again in the words of Butler, 'expresses' her identity. More recently this notion has filtered through geographical theory, anthropology and indeed literary studies highlighting that whether a pastoral landscape or the labyrinth corridors of the Gothic house, the governess's description of space, is a window to her 'self' because the represented spaces of the governess travel narrative

map out her identity. As anthropologist Steven Levinson emphasises ‘[j]ust as maps stand in abstract relation to real spatial terrain, so spatial arrangements can give us symbolic ‘maps’ to other domains. They can give us maps of the mind’ (Levinson:1996:397).

Initially it is worth recognising that in both *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*, the mansion to which the governess is transported, is in fact a Gothic house. Becky’s room at Queen’s Crawley is typically Gothic and littered with shadows of the past: ‘The bed and chamber were so funereal and gloomy, you might have fancied, not only that Lady Crawley died in the room, but that her ghost inhabited it’ (Thackeray:2009:69). As Jane ascends the stairs it becomes clear that Thornfield too, is a characteristically Gothic mansion: ‘The steps and banisters were of oak; the staircase window was high and latticed; both it and the long gallery into which the bedroom doors opened looked as if they belonged to a church rather than a house. A very chill and vault-like air pervaded the stairs and gallery, suggesting cheerless ideas of space and solitude’ (Brontë:1999:84). But in both texts, the Gothic is also subverted: ‘Rebecca sprang about the apartment, however, with the greatest liveliness’ (Thackeray:2009:69), and Jane admits: ‘I was glad, when finally ushered into my chamber, to find it of small dimensions, and furnished in the ordinary, modern style...I remembered that, after a day of bodily fatigue and mental anxiety, I was now at last in safe haven’ (Brontë:1999:84). In the governess novel, both Thackeray and Brontë present a reworking of the Gothic house trope. In a manner reminiscent of Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1818), they remind us that since it is fuelled by imagined, unrealised anxieties, the Gothic can never completely permeate all aspects of reality. And although the governess was a fascinating fictional character, her existence outside of the novel was very real. In these episodes Thackeray and Brontë continue Austen’s experiment and develop the ‘anti-Gothic’: haunting and hazardous but firmly grounded in realism, anchored by the weight of the bona fide English governess. This practice continues throughout the governess novels of the mid-nineteenth century before finally unravelling in the sensation writing which saw the close of that century, never more dramatically than in Henry James’ *The Turn of the Screw* (1898).

This duality is reflected in the fact that the governess’s indoor journey is represented on two levels, namely as what she sees and how she moves. Understanding the subtext of space through these two different media provides a fuller picture of the

governess-traveller's identity. In *Vanity Fair*, the governess's experience of the mansion is predominantly visual. While this largely results from Thackeray's use of the third-person narrative, it also denotes Becky's desire to relate to upper-class society. Where movement is a very individual, centred process, seeing requires the interaction of the subject and the object. Becky's experience of 'indoor travel' is vivid to the point that it is visually cluttered and this conveys her desperation both to see and be seen as a valid member of high society. However, in true satirical style Becky's desperation only serves to alienate her further. When Thackeray describes Becky drawing up to the employer's home, he signifies another shift in the governess's identity whereby she becomes a foreigner as well as a traveller. Initially this satire reaffirms the notion that the governess travel narrative does indeed exist: 'Having passed through Gaunt Square into Great Gaunt Street, the carriage at length stopped at a tall gloomy house between two other tall gloomy houses...in which the gloomy locality of death seems to reign perpetual' (Thackeray:2009:65-66). That the governess arrives at a caricatured version of the Gothic mansion proves that although it was not formally identified as a narrative style, the governess travel narrative was something firmly located within the tradition of the novel. Satire aside, this description likens the governess-traveller to a Gothic heroine – intelligent but inexperienced, critical but naïve, she is an adventuress bound to discover strange, mysterious places with even stranger, more mysterious inhabitants. Unfortunately for Becky, though, this heroinism at her core cannot be celebrated. For although Thackeray demonstrates that the governess-traveller is outgoing, he also emphasises that her journey is doomed from the start, blurred by a shroud of misfortune and calamity. That all Becky sees is grey and dark is a constant reminder that the governess's life is a life of mourning, not so much for dead relatives as for her lost fortune. The governess exists like the Gothic novel, tentatively balanced between the borders of thrill and horror and as a result her identity is one of equal paradox.

Part of this paradox is demonstrated through the governess's inability to affiliate with the upper classes, despite penetrating the walls of the mansion:

The faithful chambers seem, as it were, to mourn the absence of their masters. The Turkey carpet has rolled itself up, and retired sulkily under the side-board: the pictures have hidden their faces behind old sheets of brown paper: the ceiling-lamp is muffled up in a dismal sack of brown holland: the window-curtains have disappeared under all sorts of shabby envelopes: the marble bust of Sir Walpole Crawley is looking from its black corner at the

bare boards and the oiled fire-irons, and the empty card-racks over the mantelpiece: the cellaret has lurked away behind the carpet: the chairs are turned up heads and tails along the walls (Thackeray:2009:66-67)

The irony here is that although Becky has finally arrived at the Gothic mansion, wealth and respectability have never been more out of reach. Thackeray's death imagery is resurrected and as Queen's Crawley mourns the ancestors that once roamed its halls, there is a sense that all this chaos might have sprung into being only because the governess has come to confuse social boundaries and lead class distinction into muddle and disarray. Becky's chance to associate with the aristocracy is dashed because she cannot even see it. '[B]rown paper', 'brown holland' and 'all sorts of shabby envelopes' conceal every item of grandeur Becky might hope to lay her eyes on. When even the interaction of gaze between the governess and her betters proves utterly impossible, the portraits having 'hidden their faces behind old sheets of brown paper', it seems the governess's indoor journey will forever remain visually impaired. Subsequently, we can never hope to identify the governess-traveller by considering her indoor journey on a visual level. She cannot see the space which forms the employer's home in order to clearly define it, and as a result it cannot be read as a sub-text of her intention and her identity.

In contrast, in *Jane Eyre* the governess's journey through the Gothic House is more often than not described through movement:

I followed her across a square hall with high doors all round: she ushered me into a room whose double illumination of fire and candle at first dazzled me, contrasting as it did with the darkness to which my eyes had been for two hours inured; when I could see, however, a cosy and agreeable picture presented itself to my view...as I entered, the old lady got up and promptly and kindly came forward to meet me. (Brontë:1999:82)

Here Jane openly admits that on arrival at the employer's home, her eyes were 'dazzled' and her sight was temporarily distorted. But rather than depicting a travel narrative of things she could not see, she recalls her experience of space through a series of punctuating verbs: 'I followed', 'she ushered', 'I entered', so the indoor journey is expressed not through the surrounding architecture, but through the movements of Jane's body. In episodes such as this, it is arguable that like Henitiuk's heroines, the governess controls the geography of the Gothic house, because it is defined through

something more instinctive than even her subjective, perceived experience - it is defined through the semi-conscious movements of the travelling body. Yet while there is narrative authority here, there is also vulnerability and uncertainty. Where Jane is authoritative because movement gives her agency, she remains like Becky, visually disabled. Though her movements shape the description of the mansion, they are the guided movements of the visually impaired. In this episode Jane is wholly reliant on Mrs Fairfax, 'dazzled' and effectually blinded by the sheer grandeur of the house. Though in literal terms this is only because she does not know the way, Brontë implies that like Becky, Jane is prevented from directly gazing at such noble surroundings because she is unworthy to do so. This happens again when Jane enters the drawing room: 'I caught a glimpse of a fairy place, so bright to my novice-eyes appeared the view beyond' (Brontë:1999:90), but now at least Brontë charts some improvement. Once completely blind, Jane has now advanced to a 'novice', who through short, snatched glimpses becomes more comfortable in her surroundings and able to enjoy the space through which she moves.

The tendency to experience travel through action continues and soon Jane's vision improves:

Having opened my chamber window, and seen that I left all things straight and neat on the toilet table, I ventured forth.

Traversing the long and matted gallery, I descended the slippery steps of oak; then I gained the hall: I halted there a minute; I looked at some pictures on the walls... Everything appeared very stately and imposing to me; but then I was so little accustomed to grandeur. The hall-door, which was half of glass, stood open; I stepped over the threshold. It was a fine autumn morning; the early sun shone serenely on the embrowned groves and still green fields; advancing on to the lawn, I looked up and surveyed the front of the mansion. (Brontë:1999:85)

Jane's movements remain at the centre of the travel narrative but are far less confined than they were in the carriage. Her 'indoor journey' is experienced through a series of fluid expressions which increase in vitality. Open windows and transparent doors expand Jane's horizons, offering the prospect of moving outwards and onwards. Where she once 'followed' or was 'ushered', now Jane 'ventures', 'traverses' and 'gains'. Though her surroundings are somewhat 'imposing', her battle-like 'advance' goes on to suggest that the governess's indoor journey is not merely explorative, but an attack from

within. Brontë both echoes and subverts the media-driven anxiety that the governess was a dangerous figure, likely to unsettle the infrastructure of both the mansion and the nuclear family. Though Jane's intentions are as far from damaging as could possibly be conceived, her movements are involuntarily hostile towards the upper class establishment. By the time Jane reaches the lawn and freely 'surveys' the mansion, her inquiring gaze is completely uninhibited. In these still early stages of the governess travel narrative, Brontë shows that by submitting to base human instinct and blindly allowing her body to move around the house, the governess's sense of perception begins to evolve so that she is first able to look and later able to examine the geography of a social realm she was once banished from. It seems that the further the governess-traveller journeys, the more her intellect and therefore her identity develops. At this point in the novel Jane is less a Gothic heroine and more a Gothic villain, uprooting the institution of heritage by daring to assert herself upon the landscape of the Gothic house. It is even arguable that her gaze is colonial, for as the governess sweeps through the corridors, she absorbs their knowledge, history, and grandeur in order to realise her own identity.

In both texts this colonial element is reflected in yet more references to the East. When exploring their new surroundings, both Jane and Becky stumble across a Turkey carpet, but while the carpet at Thornfield is lying flat waiting to be walked over, the carpet at Queen's Crawley is tightly coiled and vertical. The East is represented as a purchasable product for the imperial upper classes which the governess can only deal with as she does any other aspect of the house. Thus, Becky's carpet retaliates against her desperate gaze whereas Jane's surrenders to her absent-minded footsteps. Even when confronted by the unfamiliar East, the governess's best chance of 'negotiating the space' and discovering her identity comes from moving directly through it. Becky's challenging gaze only strengthens the border between herself and the upper classes, making the process of self-discovery utterly impossible.

Later, when Jane is left alone to explore, the process of self-discovery through space is recalled in its entirety. Brontë shows that movement is the very essence of the governess-traveller's being and when experienced, it initiates a great sense of liberation:

I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third storey, backwards and forwards, safe in the

silence and solitude of the spot, and allow my mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it – and, certainly, they were many and glowing; to let my heart be heaved by the exultant movement, which, while it swelled it in trouble, expanded it with life; and, best of all, to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended – a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; quickened with all incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence.
(Brontë:1999:95)

Whether or not it is a safe place, the great house is at least a domestic space where like the Gothic heroine, the governess is able to move freely. Certainly there are limitations; she can hardly wander into her master's quarters or go in search of Bertha's wailing, but within her corridor there is no social or cultural order to influence her direction. Jane's micro-movement back and forth on the spot is an expression of her physical body which through all the marring division of her psychological identity remains whole and pure. Brontë turns Victorian anxiety on its head by showing that the human body and its baser instincts are organic and wholesome, while the intellectual mind is polluted by contradictory ideologies which prevent one from forming a sense of identity. Jane's unconscious and therefore uncorrupted movements loosen the lid of her mind's eye 'to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it'. Once Jane can see the world from one unified perspective, she begins to hear it too. Her movements back and forth through the corridor trace a path like those eroded by footsteps on rough terrain. The path Jane forges is a figurative one, signposting the route to her destiny and mapping out her desires, enabling the governess-traveller to discover her identity and locate her voice. That is not the voice of her guardians, teachers, nor the child-adult, carer-adventurer, middle-class-social-reject. Though affected by her past, it is the embodiment of her unique present - the singular voice of the governess-traveller.

For Becky Sharp this fate is never realised. She follows in the steps of Austen's Jane Fairfax, leaves the heterotopic space of her social displacement and is 'rescued' from a life of governessing by marriage. Her voice becomes that of the wife and mother, and while her adventures are continually fascinating, they are not those of the governess-traveller. In Becky's route to success people, rather than places become stepping stones on the way, while for Jane the prospect of a new location means everything. While both of these women continue to travel, they do so in very different ways. Becky's travels are about rising through the ranks, changing her identity all the time. She longs to displace

her identity where Jane longs to find hers. Both governesses go on a journey, but in opposite directions, because when Becky starts out she feels restrained by the ambiguous identity of the governess-traveller and is desperate to escape it. Jane, on the other hand, admits to being out of herself and the sole purpose of her journey encompasses her desire to get inside her identity (Brontë:1999:7).

In *Jane Eyre* we see that when the governess finds her voice inside the employer's home there begins a new, active phase in her existence where she sets out to realise her intentions. To identify this voice, these intentions and what the governess ultimately wants must be made clear because if the 'self' is ever to be conceptualised, it is as the embodiment of desire. In, *The Social Body, Habit, Identity and Desire* (2001) Nick Crossley tells us that 'Desire, emotion, cognition and perception are not, strictly speaking, separate parts of our behavioural life but rather integrated and mutually affecting aspects of a singular and coherent structure' (Crossley:2001:89). In this sense, the governess-traveller's identity is the combined body of all her desires and motives which are expressed in her movement through, and interpretation of space.

CHARACTERISING THE GOVERNESS-TRAVELLER

For Jane the Gothic house is the site where the governess-traveller's identity presents itself but its formulation begins much earlier in the novel. Although it is at Thornfield that the governess is 'born', in fiction the life of the female and the life of the governess cannot be separated because from the very first page Jane's life as a governess is predetermined. While these lives do not converge until the governess arrives at the employer's home, they exist adjacent to one another, even in childhood. Just as the governess's life is one haunted by allusions to the East, in childhood Jane appears to express certain behaviours characteristic of the governess-traveller's identity. By studying novels we can pinpoint the subtlest features of her identity because within this space the governess is that by design and her persona is exaggerated. In the early days of Jane's youth her governess-life awaits like a silent partner as Brontë develops the characterisation of her governess-traveller.

The problem with this notion is that it might suggest some women were born to be governesses, as if their constitution for work was provided by nature. It is more likely,

however, that Brontë is commenting on the state of Britain at the time, for when there were 1,053 women for every 1,000 men, some women literally were bound to be governesses (Hughes:1993:31). Chance and circumstances meant that one moment young women could be living comfortably at home with their family but a sudden death or bankruptcy, unforeseen and unexpected, would mean they fell victim to the sort of economic downturn which drove women into governessing. Without the option of marriage or living independently, the prospect of governessing loomed on the horizon for any daughter of the middle classes. With regard to the Victorian novel, I argue that on one level the governess persona is present from the start in order to highlight this sense of inevitability.

From all this the fact still remains that to identify the governess-traveller, her experience within the employer's home must be located within her life's journey. By tracing the development of her 'unborn' governess-self as expressed in her movement through the shifting spatial geographies of her lifetime, I hope to comprehend her identity. In the novel's opening Jane refers to the absence of travel: 'There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner...the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question' (Brontë:1999:3). The early life of the governess-traveller is ironically static and this young Jane, prevented from walking by the weather, is relieved: 'I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes' (Brontë:1999:3). While Jane's lack of enthusiasm is reminiscent of Becky Sharp, the reluctant governess who finds travelling from the door to the carriage a palpable inconvenience, Jane is less concerned about walking out than she is about returning home. Certainly, walking in the bitter cold through a harsh winter's landscape is for Jane less than pleasant but it is the utter 'dread' at returning to Gateshead which is significant here. On the surface Jane's anxiety stems from her dislike of Mrs Reed and her children, but in terms of identifying the governess-traveller, the image of 'home in the raw twilight' is key to understanding the way she experiences the world around her. In these early days in her childhood, the final stages of a day's walk, and those last steps towards home in which one simultaneously relaxes with the relief of arrival and speeds-up with the eager anticipation of getting inside, Jane is drawn into an encapsulated moment of the governess-traveller's experience. Even this early on, she is inertly

sensitive to the motional paradox of the governess-traveller's journey, of moving forwards in time and direction while being caught between the borders of two destinations. She has a pre-emptive experience of the governess's dislocation from the rest of the world and is unnerved by the moment in which she is no longer travelling but not quite home.

Since the unborn governess in Jane is as unhappy to travel as she is to arrive she initiates a process which she continues to practise throughout the novel. When she is a child this process can only be described as 'den-making':

A breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. (Brontë:1999:3)

Jane's construction of 'double retirement' is an attempt to recover from the motional paradox to which she has been subjected. She makes for herself a pre-natal space where cushioned by 'scarlet drapery', intellectually and emotionally nurtured by literature, she assumes a foetal position and proceeds to rest. Even the architectural location of her den has maternal connotations; the drawing room being the most feminine room in the house is directly linked to the breakfast room, a regular centre for sustenance. Yet this adjoining breakfast room suggests that from her cosy repose she will inevitably awake and the prospect view of endless landscape drives her to confront her blank, uncharted destiny. On entering this place Jane returns to a position of motional paradox between distinguishable borders, and creates a vantage point to her future which is itself an architectural representation of the governess-traveller's identity. That is someone who both sees and hides from the world, who on conquering interiors longs to desert them for the exterior landscapes she had been avoiding.

This process is something I have evidenced at both Lowood and Thornfield. Jane turns to these places to escape, arrives there uncertain and vulnerable, acclimatises

herself with their interiors, creates a womb-like, protective space, and when this space closes in around her like a catacomb, she sets out to escape once again. The governess-traveller continues on this rhythmic exchange, it seems from one bad experience to the next. The reason for this becomes clear when Jane relives the same pattern of events at Moor House.

When Jane arrives at Moor House she is weaker than she has ever been before, perhaps close to death: ‘I can recall some sensations felt in that interval; but few thoughts framed, and no actions performed. I knew I was in a small room and in a narrow bed. To that bed I seemed to have grown; I lay on it motionless as a stone; and to have torn me from it would have been almost to kill me’ (Brontë:1999:299). In this most helpless state, Jane’s den is her sickbed. Death imagery continues to play a part as the shrouding curtain of her windowsill refuge is replaced by a coffin-like bed upon which Jane, ‘motionless as a stone’, lies like a frozen sarcophagus. Yet again she is tormented by the prospect of waking and feels that to be born from this death-like monotony would kill her. Brontë’s twisting of life and death, waking and sleep, emphasises that despite being so cruelly expelled from her governess-life at Thornfield, Jane continues to identify as a governess-traveller attempting to hover between borders, even if it be those of life and death.

When Jane does decide to wake, no-one is home except Hannah. In this moment Jane finds a window in time when her identity becomes more stable. That is not to say there is no ambiguity here. Poor Hannah is desperately confused as to Jane’s social situation, but Jane herself has never been more sure of her place within the space she is confronted with:

I crept down a stone staircase with the aid of the banisters, to a narrow low passage, and found my way presently to the kitchen.

It was full of the fragrance of new bread and the warmth of a generous fire. Hannah was baking...

“What, you have got up!” she said. “You are better, then. You may sit you down in my chair on the hearthstone, if you will.”

She pointed to the rocking-chair: I took it. (Brontë:1999:301)

In spite of her illness, Jane is active in leaving her sickroom and searching for company. When St John and his sisters are away, she recovers her agency and explores this new

place with no other support than that of the banister. Where at Thornfield Jane's movement gave her the ability to see, at Moor House she is not so eager to visually engage with her surroundings. Rather, she relishes the 'fragrance of new bread' and allows her basic instinct to seek out this food to direct her movements. Brontë reaffirms that by submitting to her inert faculties, the governess-traveller finds agency in her movements, purpose in her existence and empowers herself. When Hannah exclaims 'You are better, then' she refers to Jane's health, but the subtext of this is that at this moment Jane, the independent navigator of this unknown territory, is simply 'better'. She is more assertive, more authoritative and socially superior to Hannah who points her to a place of comfort and repose. When Jane assumes her position in the rocking chair she takes to an oscillating throne which allows her to rest and move simultaneously, so as to support but not restrain herself.

Save a few moments of introductory awkwardness, Jane soon becomes at home in the fairy tale-like Moor House which, 'well worn and well saved', seems to fit her perfectly. Once established in both the school and the family Jane says of Moor House:

They loved their sequestered home. I, too, in the grey, small, antique structure, with its low roof, its latticed casements, its mouldering walls, its avenue of aged firs—all grown aslant under the stress of mountain winds; its garden, dark with yew and holly—and where no flowers but of the hardiest species would bloom—found a charm both potent and permanent. They clung to the purple moors behind and around their dwelling... with a perfect enthusiasm of attachment. (Brontë:1999:309)

Within these walls Jane has no need to build a den because Moor House is itself a den which shelters its inhabitants from the rugged, open moorland. It is both the perfect shelter and the perfect vantage-point, not a splendid prison in the natural landscape but part of nature itself. Moor House is an outdoor-den, not an indoor-den, a single, not a 'double retirement,' and this has multiple implications. Because at Moor House the house and the den are one, Jane is not subject to anxiety and trepidation when arriving and existing within it. Once inside she finds the peace which at Gateshead, Lowood and Thornfield she could find only within her hiding place. The fact that this division is removed also means that Jane is less confined. In the mansion and the school, the house and the pressures it imposes, weigh upon the den. As when sedimentary rock is formed the two places are compressed and compacted, leaving the governess

suffocating in a space which no longer exists. At Moor House there is no internal boundary to be compressed, and nature does not turn on it because the two are related, coexisting in the rural landscape. Unsurprisingly, Jane's affiliation with the place is great: 'I could comprehend the feeling, and share both its strength and truth. I saw the fascination of the locality. I felt the consecration of its loneliness: my eye feasted on the outline of swell and sweep—on the wild...by brilliant bracken, and mellow granite crag' (Brontë:1999:309). Like the den, Moor House is the architectural manifestation of the governess-traveller's identity. Jane sees this small, humble spot happily rooted in vast, open surroundings and 'share[s] both its strength and truth'. She realises that she need not shy away from her identity but rejoice that the governess-traveller is not subjected to the same restrictions as a lady. Brontë shows that the governess might to some degree 'belong,' if only in the landscape, as a traveller.

Once she attunes herself to this Jane's luck begins to change, but as much as Jane's fortune effectively 'saves' her from governessing, it does not eradicate her governess-self. The first evidence of this is when Jane transforms the house: 'Happy at Moor House I was, and hard I worked...amidst the bustle of a house turned topsy-turvy - how I could brush, and dust, and clean, and cook...to invoke order from the chaos ourselves had made' (Brontë:1999:346). Jane finds pleasure in housework in a manner not dissimilar to Brontë herself. For Jane, to improve Moor House is to improve her identity. The colonial act by which she invades, causes chaos, and reorganises the place mirrors the behaviour of Anna Leonowens in Siam, whose preoccupation with ownership is the topic of the fourth chapter. At this point, though, Jane's behaviour demonstrates that she has taken ownership not only of Moor House, but of herself. Through cleaning and decorating she expresses the authority to redefine space and her position within it. From being a beggar on the doorstep, Jane resides at the house, first as a guest, then as a sister, becoming at one with the location and finding a twin in its isolated, humble structure. While her effort to improve it is an attempt to show thanks to the place which taught her to accept herself, it also denotes her progression from beggar to sister to matriarch. This matriarchal position, however, is not typically maternal. Jane does not seek to care for the house as much as she seeks to develop it, strengthen it, and prepare it for her leaving. Her relationship with the house is that of a governess and her pupil, didactic, pragmatic, and of course, temporary.

St John, wounded by Jane's neglect of the school and lack of Christian enthusiasm cannot comprehend her actions. When he asks "What aim, what purpose, what ambition in life have you now?" (Brontë:1999:345), he expresses the world's confusion as to the governess-traveller's identity. The fact that she herself has learnt to embrace this very question, live only for 'now' and then ask it again is not reflected in his view of her way of life. His next question: 'How many minutes, for instance, had I devoted to studying the arrangement of this very room?' (Brontë:1999:347), time and space being the subject of his query, emphasises the temporary nature of the governess's experience within the home. At this point, the governess's world once again begins to turn at a rate which prevents her from clinging on. The middle-class homeowner sees the flaw in her vocation because although she can shape the family home, she can never own it. In Jane's case that is not because she does not have the funds, but because she does not have the means. That is the propensity to settle or to be anything more than an outsider who has made her way in. Despite the success of her integration and her attempt to put her mark upon the house, the door through which she entered permanently remains ajar and when her duty is done it makes for a cruel but timely exit.

Of St John Jane says:

"This parlour is not his sphere," I reflected: "the Himalayan ridge or Caffre bush, even the plague-cursed Guinea Coast swamp would suit him better. Well may he eschew the calm of domestic life; it is not his element: there his faculties stagnate—they cannot develop or appear to advantage....He is right to choose a missionary's career—I see it now." (Brontë:1999:348)

In him Jane sees an augmented version of herself. For both St John and Jane the Victorian home is a place where if they were to remain, they would surely 'stagnate'. Both would outlive their purpose, without a desire to fulfil, and such would be to diminish their senses of 'self'. Yet, what Jane cannot relate to is the permanence of a missionary life. Although she imagines distant, foreign locations, the places she envisages all depict the end of a path and the death of travel. The ridge, bush and swamp are all boundaries which prohibit movement and Jane cannot submit to this. While the missionary's journey was an extreme exchange of one life for another, which as mentioned previously was held in higher regard than that of the governess, the governess-traveller's life was built of a series of exchanges. For Jane, each place to

which she travels will be a place she shapes and a place she is shaped by, formulating and fortifying her identity. To become a missionary would be to deny that identity and adopt a new one entirely. It would be to disregard the ‘strength and truth’ that Moor House afforded her.

Subsequently, Jane completes the pattern of events and leaves Moor House to re-embark on the cycle which for the governess replaces maternity. This time, however, Brontë subverts the cycle and Jane’s journey is actually a return:

It was a journey of six-and-thirty hours. I had set out from Whitcross on a Tuesday afternoon, and early on the succeeding Thursday morning the coach stopped to water the horses at a wayside inn, situated in the midst of scenery whose green hedges and large fields and low pastoral hills (how mild of feature and verdant of hue compared with the stern North-Midland moors of Morton!) met my eye like the lineaments of a once familiar face. Yes, I knew the character of this landscape: I was sure we were near my bourne. (Brontë:1999:374)

In these episodes, Jane’s tone is far more pragmatic than it was on her outward journey. By the act of returning she converts the spaces she once cautiously and blindly explored into familiar places and landmarks. By comparing the landscapes of Morton and Thornfield she demonstrates her expertise as a traveller, a profound achievement for a single woman in nineteenth-century patriarchal society. However, the personification of her surroundings as a ‘once familiar face’ which meets her eye, re-invokes the notion that the landscape and her identity are mutually involved, both creating one another through interactions of movement and gaze. The term ‘bourne’ also has various connotations. While in the literal sense, Brontë refers to Jane’s goal or destination, the word also describes a boundary. This notion unsettles the wider reading of *Jane Eyre* and is particularly significant with regard to the governess-traveller. The house being a boundary illustrates why the governess-traveller is who she is, and is always required to move on. Its very presence is a symbol of what she will never attain: family, heritage, and home. Yet the governess traveller, already acclimatised to her surroundings, faces this boundary from a position of power. In returning Jane skips several stages of the typical pattern of events and is at once an all-seeing authority:

I had coasted along the lower wall of the orchard - turned its angle: there was a gate just there, opening into the meadow, between two stone pillars crowned by stone balls. From behind

one pillar I could peep round quietly at the full front of the mansion. I advanced my head with precaution, desirous to ascertain if any bedroom window-blinds were yet drawn up: battlements, windows, long front—all from this sheltered station were at my command. (Brontë:1999:375)

Fortified by Moor House and no longer afraid to draw up and arrive at the mansion, Jane manipulates the surrounding architecture so that it shelters her from view while allowing her to gaze out. This miniature den she creates has all her favoured characteristics; a protective seal and a vantage-point to the rest of the world. By hiding here she partially withdraws from her visual interaction with space because now she is in a position to see it without moving through it. Her familiarity with the location means that Jane no longer needs ‘indoor travel’ to know everything about the house and discover her agency. The whole place is already part of her knowledge and memory and entirely at her command. What happens next illustrates that the governess’s boundary is broken down and the novel becomes an experiment in ‘what ifs’ in which the governess must find her way to a solution:

I looked with timorous joy towards a stately house: I saw a blackened ruin.

No need to cower behind a gate-post, indeed! - to peep up at chamber lattices, fearing life was astir behind them...all had crashed in.

And there was the silence of death about it: the solitude of a lonesome wild...The grim blackness of the stones told by what fate the Hall had fallen - by conflagration: but how kindled? What story belonged to this disaster? What loss, besides mortar and marble and wood-work had followed upon it? Had life been wrecked as well as property? If so, whose? Dreadful question: there was no one here to answer it—not even dumb sign, mute token. (Brontë:1999:376)

By this stage of her journey the governess-traveller’s identity is fully-formed. Brontë shows that returning to a situation is an impossible dream and that the governess must commit to live independent of people and places, even if it be the place in which she gave birth to her identity. The site which enabled her to find her voice has lost its own to the ‘silence of death’. Now dumb and mute, it is a symbol of the stagnation and deterioration she might have succumbed to if she had stayed in one place. Arguably, Thornfield’s fall marks the death of Jane’s governess-life because like Becky she goes

on to marry and have a family of her own. I argue, however, that the house's ruin points to the enduring nature of the governess-traveller's identity. To demonstrate this endurance Brontë tears down the point of Jane's destination to permanently establish the governess-traveller's nomadicity. The house is a transient vehicle on her cyclic journey rather than a home and a place for her to move through like a breeze, bringing in the experience of her voyage and taking something of the place with her when she leaves.

When Jane arrives at Ferndean the cycle of events begins again. Marriage is no match for the persistent characteristics of the governess-traveller. As Brontë ties up all loose ends she shows Jane preparing to be a wife without compromising her identity. Her unique ability to visualise space through movement, allowing it to nurture and strengthen her is the very lesson she proposes to teach Rochester. Having found her sight and voice she sets out to 're-humanise' Rochester just as she re-formed Moor House. The ending of Brontë's novel might depict an unrealistic and idealistic end to the governess's experience because for an odd woman marriage became more unlikely with time. Nevertheless, it shows that the governess's role as teacher, and its paradoxical position between leadership and service, is more than just a profession. It is the one feature which separates her from other middle-class women of her day, permeates every possible realm of her existence, and drives her through the cycle which, despite representing an ever-changing landscape, is the native space which produces her identity.

Ultimately identifying the governess-traveller means understanding what she wants, and comprehending how travel contributes to this. In both Thackeray's and Brontë's novels, the governess-traveller is someone who simultaneously desires and longs to be free from an unnamed oppressor. Her entire existence is fuelled by the continual need to move away from the familiar and onto something new. Yet, the familiar and the new are often similar situations in which the governess will face the same difficulties. This is echoed by the fact that although the governess attempts to be assertive and demonstrate strength of character by travelling alone, working for a living and being self-sufficient, both Becky and Jane express an innate tendency to serve. In one of *Jane Eyre's* most memorable scenes, Jane literally offers herself up as an object to be leant upon: "I cannot think of leaving you, sir, at so late an hour, in this solitary lane, till I see you are fit to mount your horse"...He laid a heavy hand on my shoulder, and leaning on me with some stress, limped to his horse' (Brontë:1999:99-100). Like Anna Leonowens,

governess and confidante to King Mongkut of Siam, Jane ignores Rochester's dismissal and supposes she is the dominant character in the dialogue. It must not be overlooked, however, that in doing this she offers herself up as a vehicle to complete the last leg of someone else's journey in place of her own. The same can be said for Becky Sharp at Queen's Crawley: 'the reports were that the governess had "come round" everybody, wrote Sir Pitt's letters, did his business, managed his accounts—had the upper hand of the whole house' (Thackeray:2009:95). Just like Jane, Becky is hell-bent on becoming invaluable to her master. And while this is for the purpose of social propulsion, Becky demotes herself to the position of housekeeper. The two governesses' motives are very different; Jane feels she cannot abandon a person in need, and Becky wants to climb the social ladder, but in both cases the governess only ever attempts to achieve her goals by entering into servitude.

In terms of the Victorian novel, this skewed version of desire extends beyond *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* and nearly always involves marriage. It could be said that the governess enters into a strange semblance of Victorian wifedom, because like Cathy Earnshaw, who chooses Edgar despite her love for Heathcliff, Helen Huntingdon, who cannot bear to remain alone, and Tess, who is repeatedly drawn in by men, the governess-traveller lives in a male-dominated society to which her life is devoted. That both Jane Eyre and Becky Sharp choose to marry does more than provide our governesses with a conservative ending. It highlights the similarities between the roles of wife and governess – both serve a master, live in his house, and both devote their lives to raising children.

The idea that the governess is a pseudo-wife who, in signing her contract, temporarily 'marries' her master, vows to live in his house and care for his children, explains much of her bad press. The Victorians were obsessed with bigamy and its simultaneous destruction and extension of the family unit, so for them the governess was a symbol of their most disturbing fears. The press certainly had issues with her position in the family home, branding her a danger to the family unit. She destabilised Britain's most valued institution so that it appeared bigamous, harem-like and anything but British. When Thackeray writes Becky's marriage to Rawdon Crawley, he taps into this somewhat irrational anxiety and presents the British public with a caricatured version of their fears. Brontë, a governess herself, attempts to counteract this and depict

an honourable governess who was neither spinsterish nor seductive, but for her more conservative readers Jane's marriage to Rochester continued to be a point of contention.

The truth is that the element of marriage in both novels results from Thackeray's novel being satirical and Brontë's being optimistic. When Jane and Rochester's betrothal is announced Mrs Fairfax's concern sums up the inappropriateness of the master-governess union. Considering that governesses rarely married their masters in this way, identifying the governess as a temporary wife ignores her journey and the fact that she comes so close to becoming independent. If she were to inhabit the middle ground she creates for herself and live contentedly as 'other', moving from place to place without constant preoccupations of home, then the governess might have been remembered as a precursor for the emancipated woman. Becky and Jane's marriages to their masters are largely symbolic of the fact that while both the governess and the emancipated woman charted new territory in the geography of women's lives, the emancipated woman continued to advance when the governess sought to retrace her steps.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GOVERNESS-TRAVELLER'S EXPERIENCE ABROAD

As explained in the introduction to this thesis, many governesses sought work abroad in both Europe and the colonies. By appealing to friends and acquaintances, advertising in newspapers, or applying to organisations such as the Female Middle Class Emigration Society, governesses found the means to leave England and work for families living or travelling overseas. At present, few literary critics have examined the journeys and narratives of these women, and even fewer have engaged with their stories while paying particular attention to the fact these female travellers were governesses. As is to be expected, the main focus of literary criticism on the subject of travel writing is the depiction of the foreign land. Both new-historical and post-colonial perspectives on travel writing are largely preoccupied with the representation of cultures because examining and challenging these depictions is fundamental to deconstructing Britain's vision of self and world. Arguably, these perspectives do not go far enough in investigating the many layers of subjectivity which inform this construction of space. Critics' unrelenting interest in women's travel writing is indicative of the genre's importance. To do justice to the women travellers of the nineteenth century it is important not to generalise when talking about their many, diverse experiences. Such is the reason why this chapter examines the governess's experience abroad mindful of the fact that her conception of foreign lands, which indeed contributes to nineteenth-century Britain's image of the world, is a product of her own subjective experience. This is where post-colonial perspectives usually adopted in the study of travel writing, converge with my interest in the production of space and identity.

For two reasons, this chapter's focus is governess-travellers in Europe. Engaging with the governess's journey, first in England and then Europe, before considering her time in the East provides this study with a sense of geographical structure. It is also important, however, to highlight the unique nature of the governess-traveller's journey even when that journey takes place no great distance from home. While gentlewomen travellers certainly did journey to the East, many more travelled to the Continent.

Europe, therefore, provides both a geographical and analytical framework through which to differentiate between the gentlewoman's and governess-traveller's experience abroad.

As outlined previously, critics such as Kathryn Hughes and Broughton and Symes suggest that by leaving British soil the governess avoided much of the negativity surrounding her unusual social position (Peterson:1970:7). Yet, this does not mean to say that the governess had a wholly enjoyable time in Europe or swapped her status incongruence for a sense of national superiority. Like any artist's landscape, the governess-traveller's portrayal of Europe is crafted of multiple tones, shades of light and dark, hues both vibrant and sombre. Building on the framework proposed in the previous chapter, stemming from Lefebvre and Harvey's theories on the production of space and the notion that through experiencing space we express our identities, I aim to show that in no way is the governess's Europe a one-dimensional image, rather, it exemplifies all the range and complexity of a striking chiaroscuro.

Part of the reason for this is because the governess-traveller's Europe is not a place envisaged by one woman alone. There were various types of governess who travelled to Europe for different reasons, and just as it is imperative not to generalise about women's experience and women's travel writing, it is important to recognise the individuality of governess-travellers. As for the adventurer and the reluctant governess - Jane Eyre and Becky Sharp - the journey differs among governesses who went abroad. This is helpful rather than problematic because when we compare the journeys of two or more governesses, we can picture the governess's Europe more completely. In doing so we find it is not a fixed plane but a fluctuating, shifting landscape, comprising the interacting narratives of individuals. Arguably, a literary analysis which separates these narratives and studies one governess alone disregards the narrative interaction which produces the governess's Europe. So while governesses travelled without the company of their kindred, this chapter will unite the experience of two very different women to re-envisage the landscape and trace the construction of the governess's Europe.

Anna Brownell Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826) and Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853) are on the surface two very different texts. Jameson's *Diary* is often thought of as an autobiographical text which recalls her experience of travelling around Europe and through Italy, particularly between the years of 1821-1822. Brontë's *Villette*, on the other hand, is a canonical novel which tells the story of Lucy Snowe, a

governess who travels overseas to work in the fictional town of Vilette. What is more, the texts give insight into two different types of governessing. If like Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy) the governess was travelling with a family, then in many ways her journey around Europe was similar to that of the lady-traveller. In 1821 the daughter of a painter, Anna Brownell Murphy and Robert Jameson, a lawyer, ended their short engagement. Heart-broken and uncertain of her future, Anna accompanied the Rowles family on their tour of France and Italy as governess to their daughter Laura. Although she was deeply upset by the circumstances which led her to governessing, to some extent Anna was lucky. Many women advertised in newspapers longing to be taken to Europe as governesses to respectable families. For them, governessing on the road meant experiencing the grand-tour their own families could not afford. With the expectation that marriageable women ought to have travelled, learned languages and experienced European culture, this type of governessing gave women access to the cultural experience society valued so highly.

As much as governesses wanted to travel, families overseas required governesses to work for them. Critics including Howe, Yang, Brandon, and Broughton and Symes have noted that respectable English governesses were sought by European and Eastern families. Thus, many governesses became travellers by moving abroad to take up situations in households or schools. The voyages undertaken by these solitary travellers were unlike those of touring gentlewomen and governesses who travelled with families. While family governesses followed a tried and tested tourist route, governesses who travelled alone were forced to forge their own path. When Lucy Snowe, of Charlotte Brontë's *Vilette* (1853) plans her journey overseas, she does so without the assistance of others. After caring for the elderly Miss Marchmont up until her death, Lucy finds she must organise and navigate the way to her own future. In some ways her journey both to the Pensionnat at Vilette and into the governessing profession is clumsier and more troublesome than that of Anna Brownell Jameson. Lucy struggles to pick up the customs associated with staying in inns and boarding ships, particularly where money is concerned. For Jameson, however, these matters are dealt with by the employer who organises where and how they should travel. What is more, on reaching the school the opportunities Lucy has to go out and explore are significantly reduced while Jameson's journey continuously takes her to new locales. Yet, in many ways Lucy's journey is a more positive experience than Jameson's. As in *Jane Eyre*, in *Vilette* the profession of governessing is presented as an opportunity to see something of the world in a semi-

independent manner, and while Jameson is forced to figure out her new identity in the constant company of others, outside school hours Lucy is afforded a little more freedom.

This is not to say that the opportunities governessing afforded outweighed the associated stigma. For reasons not solely for the sake of obtaining publication, Jameson describes her journey as if she were just another lady on a European tour, and this is the reason *Diary of an Ennuyée* is not simply a straightforward autobiography. The protagonist admits to being broken-hearted and she tells of the places Jameson really did visit, but not a word is said directly to confirm her identity as Anna Brownell Jameson, governess-traveller. One reason for this is that Jameson's text forms part of a wider, and at the time somewhat old-fashioned, literary tradition:

The blurring of fact and fantasy, found in Jameson's text, is exactly of the kind found also in Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1786) and was in the eighteenth century perfectly acceptable. By the 1820s the mode was already dated, and discountenanced in favour of realistic, factual travel accounts, and in the Victorian period proper the old mode was abandoned completely. It is interesting, however, that Jameson chooses it for her first venture into publishing. The explanation probably lies in the wish to give herself a voice through Gothic fiction, as a more predominant, and very successful mode for women at the time. (Johnston:1997:102)

While this is very plausible, it is not unreasonable to suggest that perhaps Jameson employed a fictional narrator to avoid publicising both the end of her engagement and involvement in the governessing profession. Either way, this is why *Diary of an Ennuyée* is thought of as a semi-autobiographical text in which fact and fiction are combined. The striking imbalance, however, is that while the factual observations are detailed and vibrant the fictional narrator remains undeveloped and ambiguous. Johnston goes on to say that '[t]he stilted fiction of the gothic love plot and the voice of its lachrymose heroine contrasts vividly with the non-fiction where the cheerful traveller, supposedly that same heroine, records with lively interest all that she sees. In fact, two separate and distinct narratorial voices are created which clash and tear the text wide open' (Johnston:1997:101). The governess's involvement in the Gothic and the manner in which she transforms from 'lachrymose' victim to an autonomous agent is something I have discussed in the previous chapter, but it is true of Jameson's text that we know

nothing of the fictional narrator beyond the fact that she is miserable and often ill, travels with company but steals opportunities to be alone. So much so that her voice is merely the medium which conveys vivid descriptions of real places visited, and real observations noted. Because of this, it is difficult to read *Diary of an Ennuyée* as anything but a real life travel narrative. Yet, the notion that Jameson's narrative is comprised of two voices is doubly significant. For while certainly these two voices represent both fact and fiction, they also mark the governess-traveller's duality as part lady-tourist, part employee. For this reason, I will refer to the protagonist not as Anna Brownell Jameson herself, but as Jameson's governess. Thus without denying the presence of the fictional narrator, this chapter highlights the fact that the only reason Anna Jameson was ever able to paint her picture of Europe was because she was there as a governess, and the governess-traveller's identity is central to the Europe presented in *Diary of an Ennuyée*.

Villette too has been referred to as a semi-autobiographical text. The journey undertaken by Lucy Snowe and the events which occur at the Pensionnat, mirror those described in Brontë's letters from Brussels. During this time, Charlotte and her sister Emily attended the foreign school, both to study and work teaching English and music, and critics have suggested that *Villette* is in many ways based upon Charlotte's experiences. But while in *Diary of an Ennuyée* the fictional element remains undeveloped, in *Villette* Brontë's experience of Brussels is woven into a rich Bildungsroman. Lucy Snowe is a believable character in a novel full of memorable personalities, so unlike Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*, *Villette* continues to be considered first and foremost as a novel. In spite of this, as I have explained in the previous chapter, the novel plays an important part in understanding the governess-traveller's journey, and *Villette's* autobiographical strand only strengthens the novel's realistic representation of the governess-traveller.

This chapter, therefore, examines two governess texts which transcend the traditional boundaries of fact and fiction. Though one is more widely accepted as a work of non-fiction and the other is recognised as a novel, both serve to re-affirm the fact that the governess-traveller's narrative is itself a travelling discourse which moves between the spheres of fact and fiction, just as the governess moves between the spheres of home and work, independence and servitude. For this reason *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette* allow us to envisage the governess's Europe, and trace the process of its

construction in the most comprehensive sense possible. There is, however, a need to compromise when reading *Diary of an Ennuyée* and to some extent *Villette*. Because Jameson's narrator neither denies being a lady nor admits to being a governess, her journey through Europe must in one sense be read in the same way as the lady's, and explored through her account of the landscape, architecture and art. This is appropriate because, as previously explained, governessing was for some women a way to access aspects of Continental culture that were normally restricted to wealthier women. Indeed, the landscape, art and architecture, which provide the thematic structure of this chapter, are equally significant in the narrative of Lucy Snowe.

Landscape is always of importance when thinking about the governess, because it is her ability to move relatively freely between locations which makes her different from middle-to-upper class women who required chaperones. Equally, architecture is central to her experience, because as a displaced figure it is via the structures of the European cityscape, which by design denote certain social orders and practices, that the governess experiences Continental society and culture. Art also plays an important role in her existence because it was something governesses were expected to know about. Most families sought governesses who could teach their children to draw or paint, and governesses such as Charles Dickens's Mrs General from *Little Dorrit* were required to accompany their charges around galleries both in England and abroad. However, while the governess was certainly educated in art history and the interpretation of famous works, she studies and describes art from a unique perspective. She was taught to interpret art as a middle-class lady, but in reality viewed it as a marginalised working woman. Art is for the governess-traveller a vital resource because it is in reading and interpreting drawings, paintings and cultures that she constructs both self and world.

Since identifying the governess-traveller in Chapter One, I will continue to trace the governess's movements and investigate four key experiences in her journey. First I will examine the governess's experience of landscape as she arrives in Europe and is faced with the new position of governess, traveller and writer. I will then explore how she makes the transition from the rural landscape into the city metropolis and as she explores the heart of the Continental city, this chapter will engage with the governess-traveller's involvement in art. After ascertaining how art influences the governess's means of perception I will examine how the governess interacts with the world outside the gallery, and establish how architecture contributes to her perception of self and

world and her narrative construction of Europe. Lastly, I will explore the governess's experience of walking, and by envisioning the shape of the governess's walk, consider how the act of walking, in both a literary and anthropological sense, contributes to the governess-traveller's image of Europe. The combination of landscape, art, architecture and walking allows me to examine how the changing geography of both the material and psychological space through which she expresses her identity, impacts her experience abroad.

ARRIVING ON THE CONTINENT

Despite the fact that in *Diary of an Ennuyée* Jameson's narrative is not always distinguishable from that of a lady, all the while at the forefront of my analysis is the fact that the journey and the governess are bound up in an unnamed narrator because between 1821 and 1825 Jameson was to herself an alien being. No mystery can mask the suddenness of her departure from England which signifies her equally sudden and distressful birth into governessing:

When to-day, for the first time in my life, I saw the shores of England fade away in the distance – did the conviction that I should never behold them more, bring with it one additional pang of regret, or one consoling thought? Neither one nor the other. I leave behind me the objects so long associated with pain; but from pain itself I cannot fly: it has become part of myself. I know not yet whether I ought to rejoice or be thankful for this opportunity of travelling, while my mind is thus torn and upset... for what is the world to me now? (Jameson:2008:1-2)

As the governess sails away from the English coast, she is overwhelmed by feelings of confusion and while it is not unusual for a governess to question her future, here she questions the present, as if becoming a governess means a sudden departure from reality. By commenting on the role of space in formulating 'the self' she taps into the complex self-space interchange which is introduced in the previous chapter. The only difference between this governess and Jane Eyre or Becky Sharp is that her life had previously been stable and secure. Because the places which provided her with stability have become part of her 'self', then it is no wonder that she is in a state of turmoil when that gentlewoman 'self' is no longer aligned to her. She is unsure whether to resent or be

grateful for the fact that she is travelling because the journey is both the destroyer and healer which transports her to and from a liminal channel of experience in which she is no longer a gentlewoman, but not yet familiar with the life of the governess-traveller.

In Lucy's account of sailing to Europe the concepts of self and space play a fundamental part, but the imagery employed is darker than that illustrated in *Diary of an Ennuyée*:

Black was the river as a torrent of ink; lights glanced on it from the piles of building round, ships rocked on its bosom...Down the sable flood we glided, I thought of the Styx, and of Charon rowing some solitary soul to the Land of Shades. Amidst the strange scene, with a chilly wind blowing in my face and midnight clouds dropping rain above my head; with two rude rowers for companions, whose insane oaths still tortured my ear, I asked myself if I was wretched or terrified. I was neither. Often in my life have I been far more so under comparatively safe circumstances. "How is this?" said I. "Methinks I am animated and alert, instead of being depressed and apprehensive?" I could not tell how it was.

"THE VIVID" started out, white and glaring, from the black night at last (Brontë:2004:56)

That the Thames estuary is 'black,' as in Conrad's much later *Heart of Darkness* (1899), alludes to the governess's social foreignness. For her water ceases to reflect as if the elements have disregarded her presence and refused to grant her a space among them. But the fact that Brontë refers to the water as 'ink', whether or not it be a 'torrent' or treacherous mess, implies that the water is something to be both read and written, experienced and represented by the governess-traveller, so as to make sense of her relation to the world around her. It is not surprising that as one of Brontë's heroines, Lucy finds a way to do this. Her imagining the water to be that of the River Styx can be read as a premonition of her fiancé's death in the last pages of the novel, but also as a classical allusion to the site of her own social purgatory. Yet, this reading does not explain Lucy's optimism. Instead it seems that by reading the water and imagining the Styx Lucy resolves some of her instability. While at first the river is in motion, the 'ships rocked on its bosom' and gazing upon it would be likely to induce a bout of seasickness, Lucy's reading of the water takes away its capacity to unsettle and disturb. The water is no longer a live entity which presents a tormentingly illegible scrawl, but a dead

river, still and unchangeable, which serves as a preserved and readable text. From this point on, the water reflects precisely what Lucy needs to see. Though it is highly unlikely, considering the state of Victorian sanitation, that the Thames presents Lucy with a clear reflection, being on the water and reading its surface aids the governess-traveller in discovering her identity.

It is not in finding she is unafraid that Lucy discovers her identity, but by the very act of questioning her emotions. Her own status, being constantly in motion, moves with the water and that is why the governess-traveller is able to perceive the water as still. When everything around the governess moves, she is comparably stationary and this momentary stability enables her to locate her identity. In questioning 'How is this?' in response to her lack of fear, Lucy directly states 'Methinks I am animated', knowing on some level that movement for the governess is key to finding her place in the world. When Lucy finally reaches the ship, its name, 'The Vivid', illustrates the result of her being upon the water because whether it is clear or murky, a river or an ocean, when the uncertain, unsettled governess-traveller moves with the current, her image of self and world becomes vivid and distinct.

There is certainly a powerful bond between space and self and as discussed in the previous chapter, geographical, social and anthropological theorists all agree that the two are reciprocally constructed. This explains Jameson's governess's distress since being torn from both home and self, but also implies that the places, people and objects described, which form the 'factual element' in *Diary of an Ennuyée*, can tell us everything we might wish to know about the 'fictional' narrator. Levinson's argument that 'spatial arrangements give us maps of the mind' suggests that space and identity cannot be separated and so the border imposed by Jameson's fictional narrator is easily crossed (Levinson:1996:397). His idea also reinforces the importance of considering the governess as a traveller, because in fact and fiction alike, her character is shaped by her relation to space and the influence space has on her perspective. Lucy's positive and constructive behaviour when sailing towards 'The Vivid' results from the 'spatial arrangement' providing the perfect terrain upon which she can map out her intentions.

RURAL LANDSCAPE

The first way the governess experiences Europe is through the rural landscape. In Jameson's text travelling overseas leaves the governess in a state of confusion, but travelling through the French countryside compounds these feelings and sends the governess into a deep depression. As she travels through St. Germain the governess complains:

I cannot bear this place, another hour in it will kill me; this sultry evening—this sickening sunshine—this quiet, unbroken, boundless landscape—these motionless woods—the Seine stealing, creeping through the level plains—the dull grandeur of the old chateau—the languid repose of the whole scene—instead of soothing, torture me. I am left without resource, a prey to myself and to my memory—to reflection, which embitters the source of suffering, and thought, which brings distraction.
Horses on to Paris! Vite! Vite! (Jameson:2008:3)

In instances such as this, the governess rejects the picturesque discourse typical of women's travel writing. This is not one of Ann Radcliffe's awe-inspiring scenes but one which bores the protagonist to despair. In an ironic twist, the bountiful countryside does little to encourage life, thought, and motion. The vast open space is not a traversable terrain but a slippery surface which inhibits the governess from latching on, engaging with the surroundings, discovering the meaning they hold for her, and understanding her identity. So while for *Jane Eyre* and *Becky Sharp* open landscape represents opportunity and presents itself as a blank canvas to be coloured by the governess's unprecedented movements, for Jameson's governess the open landscape is a black hole, empty and all consuming.

Her response to cities and towns, however, is entirely different. One hundred miles from Calais, the governess arrives at Rouen; the land of Joan of Arc, where 'a champion, and a woman, was devoted to chains and death, without one effort to save her' (Jameson:2008:2). In the north of Italy she visits Ferrara where in a cell 'not above twelve feet square... Tasso, "Inferno più di tristezza che delirio," was confined seven years and one month' (Jameson:2008:33). Nearly 400 miles south in the heart of Rome she wanders 'through the street now called the Suburra, but formerly the Via Scelerata, where Tullia trampled over the dead body of her father' (Jameson:2008:85). Afterwards she concludes:

My excursion was altogether delightful... Every step was classic ground: illustrious names, and splendid recollections crowded upon the fancy... On the Palatine Hill were the houses of Cicero and the Gracchi; Horace, Virgil, and Ovid resided on the Aventine; and Mecænas and Pliny on the Æsquiline. If one little fragment of a wall remained, which could with any shadow of probability be pointed out as belonging to the residence of Cicero, Horace, or Virgil, how much dearer, how much more sanctified to memory would it be than all the magnificent ruins of the fabrics of the Cæsars! (Jameson:2008:85)

On the surface there is nothing unusual about the governess's fascination with these historically significant locations. Tours through Europe typically involved an element of pilgrimage so young travellers could see with their own eyes the sites of legendary events. Yet for Jameson's governess, there is the sense that all of this merely provides distraction. In these episodes the Europe she experiences is not her own, but a Europe woven from other people's stories. Landscape is different because each time it is described within a textual space the governess is forced to draw on her own perceptions, and it is created anew. The governess's problem, albeit evidence of her intellect, is that she is all too aware that if she describes the countryside she will create a landscape which mirrors her own perceptual space. In the early stages of her narrative, Jameson's governess does not dare to craft this projection of her own anxiety and regret. Instead she saves her ink for scribing other people's stories, memorialised by the architecture of towns and cities.

Arguably the same sentiments are expressed by Lucy Snowe, very early on in *Villette*. Lucy is desperate to leave Miss Marchmont's isolated home, and at night hears frightening banshee wails in the windy and exposed rural setting. Yet as with water, there is another complex twist in Brontë's depiction of the natural landscape. After Miss Marchmont's death, Lucy goes to stay with a friend, and when alone she sets out on a walk to collect her thoughts and consider her future prospects:

I should have trembled in that lonely walk, which lay through still fields, and passed neither village nor farmhouse, nor cottage: I should have quailed in the absence of moonlight [and] still more in the unwonted presence of that which to-night shone in the north, a moving mystery—the Aurora Borealis. But this solemn stranger influenced me otherwise than through my fears. Some new power it seemed to bring. I drew in energy with the

keen, low breeze that blew on its path. A bold thought was sent to my mind; my mind was made strong to receive it.

"Leave this wilderness," it was said to me, "and go out hence."

"Where?" was the query.

I had not very far to look; gazing from this country parish in that flat, rich middle of England—I mentally saw within reach what I had never yet beheld with my bodily eyes: I saw London.

(Brontë:2004:49)

In this episode preceding her sea-voyage, Lucy once again finds herself unafraid in normally frightening circumstances. Like Jane Eyre at Lowood, whose personality splits on becoming a governess so as to guide her on her journey, Lucy is soothed by a second voice entering her mind. It seems that her relative calm results from there being movement in her surroundings. The northern lights, which prevent the space from being otherwise still and stationary, make the scene one of motion. The lights ripple through the sky transforming the still and ominous expanse into a vibrant, dappled sea of colour so that the governess-traveller and her ever fluctuating status move in relative motion with the surrounding space. Lucy feeds on the kinetic energy generated, drawing in 'the breeze that blew on its path' and is encouraged to 'read' the surrounding landscape. It is intriguing then, that despite being so at one with the space, the image produced by Lucy's reading tells her to leave the countryside and head for London. It seems that like Jameson's governess Lucy is troubled by the stillness and isolation of the rural landscape which reflects only the monotony of her existence. But while Jameson's governess is 'chased off' to the city, Lucy is gently guided towards it. The reason for this comes back to the fact that the protagonists in *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette* represent two different types of governess-traveller. For Jameson's governess, the journey and the landscape en route are her place of employment, constantly pointing to the fact that she is an employee dependent on her master and the money he grants her. Yet, for Lucy the journey and the landscape through which she travels provide a temporary break from employed work and signal her independence from traditional social constructs.

Both governesses know, however, that they cannot go on this way forever. Jameson's governess cannot avoid describing the landscape and Lucy cannot continue travelling through it without finding work. Both must face up to their identity as

governess-travellers because it is impossible to remain dislocated from that identity, or ‘out of oneself’ in the manner of *Jane Eyre*. Eventually Jameson’s governess attempts to write about the landscape, but this is by no means straightforward. In drawing on her memories and putting pen to paper she enters a complex chain of events:

I am so tired to-night, I can say nothing of the Jura, nor of the superb ascent of the mountain... nor of that never-to-be-forgotten moment, when turning the corner of the road, as it wound round a cliff near the summit, we beheld the lake and city of Geneva spread at our feet, with its magnificent back-ground of the Italian Alps... No description had prepared me for this prospect; and the first impression was rapturous surprise; but by degrees the vastness and the huge gigantic features of the scene pressed like a weight upon "my amazed sprite," and the feeling of its immense extent fatigued my imagination till my spirits gave way in tears. Then came remembrances of those I ought to forget, blending with all I saw a deeper power—raising up emotions, long buried though not dead, to fright me with their resurrection. I was so glad to arrive here, and shall be *so* glad to sleep—even the dull sleep which laudanum brings me.
(Jameson:2008:9)

At first she complains that she cannot write because she is too tired, or like many women travel writers, she feels unworthy to do so. This refusal itself can be read as an attempt to avoid the crucial interaction between self and space which would help her cultivate her identity. But before very long she retracts her refusal, submits to the power of the landscape, and recalls her view of the Alps which predominantly accounts for how the scenery affected her emotionally. While there is movement and motion in her description of the landscape, which in *Jane Eyre* shows the governess to be central to the narrative, Jameson’s governess pinpoints each moment when the changing scenery enters her consciousness. ‘[T]hat never-to-be-forgotten moment, when turning the corner of the road’ and ‘the first impression’ for which ‘no description had prepared’ her, are instances when the governess is not central to the landscape but penetrated by it, so the landscape is at her centre, inspiring her to think, feel and remember (Jameson:2008:9). Unprepared by the accounts of travel guides and books, Jameson’s governess is forced to enter her own perceptual space in order to see and write about the mountain views. Confined within this space ‘the huge gigantic features of the scene press... like a weight’ and drive her towards her ‘self’ so that her repressed anxieties are brought before her. As she gazes out at the landscape, the scene,

her eyes, her thoughts, and the past experiences that have contributed to shaping the way in which she perceives, are all connected. This chain of perception, cognition and experience, which recurs again and again, is what makes Jameson's governess resent her surroundings. The power they have to remind her of her unstable position as a governess-traveller in turn contributes to the construction of the governess's Europe.

This chain of thought is not a one-off and is often preceded by the governess's questioning the need to write. This has various implications concerning the text's position between fact and fiction. At Gaëta, she is overwhelmed by a 'beautiful bay' and again, her troubling memories are conjured forth by the landscape: 'These, and the remembrances connected with all, and a mind to think, and a heart to feel, and thoughts both of pain and pleasure mingling to render the effect more deep and touching.—Why should I write this? O surely I need not fear that I shall *forget!*'

(Jameson:2008:100). While rendering the scene unforgettable emphasises the sheer power of the landscape, in this instance, questioning the need to write works as part of the fictional element of the text. It implies that the narrator is not aware of her audience and is a believable character writing for her own pleasure. Yet at other times the refusal to write highlights the text's autobiographical nature. Of her conversation with an acquaintance she says 'Several little anecdotes which she related I need not write down; I can scarcely forget them, and it would not be quite fair as they were told *en confiance*. I am no anecdote hunter, picking up articles for "my pocket book"' (Jameson:2008:30). On the one hand this adds to the characterisation of the narrator and demonstrates that she is in favour of proper behaviour, but it also hints as to her position as a governess who ought not to become too involved in social affairs. It also shows Jameson toying with her audience, very aware that the reading public would delight in learning such secrets.

When the governess does write, it is the result of an overwhelming need to do so: 'I have resolved to attempt no description of scenery; but my pen is fascinated. I *must* note a few of the objects which struck me to-day and yesterday, that I may at will combine them hereafter to my mind's eye, and recall the glorious pictures I beheld' (Jameson:2008:13). It seems that the culmination of holding back, refusing to write and suffocating her 'self' is that suddenly the governess must consider that 'self' on an acutely conscious level. Here the governess speaks of writing as if it validates the act of travel, and refers to the process of discovering her identity by moving through

space. But where in novels like *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* the governess certainly goes through the process of creating space to create her 'self', in autobiographical texts, and even those narratives which are decorated with fictional embellishments, the governess has a heightened sense of this process. These governesses are more aware that in remembering and writing, the 'mind's-eye' and 'glorious pictures beheld' are interwoven in a tapestry of perception. Journeying and writing enable the traveller simultaneously to construct self and space because in writing her movements the expression of her identity is represented on the page. One obstacle which inhibits this process though, occurs when the governess reads the work of other writers:

"Corinne" I find is a fashionable *vade mecum* for sentimental travellers in Italy...but when I began to cut the leaves, a kind of terror seized me, and I threw it down, resolved not to open it again. I know myself weak—I feel myself unhappy; and to find my own feelings reflected from the pages of a book, in language too deeply and eloquently true, is not good for me. I want no helps to admiration, nor need I kindle my enthusiasm at the torch of another's mind. I can suffer enough, feel enough, think enough, without this. (Jameson:2008:49)

The critique of other people's writings is a recurring trope in the governess travel narrative and something I will continue to focus on in the third and fourth chapters of this thesis. Jameson's governess dislikes popular fiction like Germaine de Staël's European tour novel *Corinne* (1806), to the extent that she is seized with terror. Arguably, her horror can be read as unconscious recognition of the fact that she is not what she once was. The fashionable novel is not suitable for the lowly governess-traveller, but because she clings on to the upper-class establishment, she is not so far removed that she cannot in some way relate to the words on the page. The fact is that when the governess reads the novel her 'own feelings [are] reflected from the pages,' but the mirror into which she gazes is cracked. The self that it reveals is fragmented and broken, scarred by the nightmare of social degradation, and while the governess is always aware of her miserable status, she does not need constantly reminding of it. Her response to this episode is to cast the book aside and learn, think, and write about her own perceptions of the places through which she travels. It is with this attitude that the governess starts to accept her new identity and see the world not as a gentlewoman, but as a governess-traveller. Thus despite the construction of a fictional narrator, the protagonist's rejection of other writings, coupled with her desire to form her own

perceptions, means that the Europe she describes is one seen through the eyes of a governess-traveller.

In *Villette* the landscape and the act of writing are bound up in a similar manner. When Lucy first sets eyes on the European shore she enters the same chain of events as Jameson's governess, only for the solitary governess-traveller the events occur in reverse:

In my reverie, methought I saw the continent of Europe, like a wide dream-land, far away. Sunshine lay on it, making the long coast one line of gold; tiniest tracery of clustered town and snow-gleaming tower, of woods deep massed, of heights serrated, of smooth pasturage and veiny stream, embossed the metal-bright prospect. For background, spread a sky, solemn and dark blue, and—grand with imperial promise, soft with tints of enchantment—strode from north to south a God-bent bow, an arch of hope.

Cancel the whole of that, if you please, reader—or rather let it stand, and draw thence a moral—an alliterative, text-hand copy—

Day-dreams are delusions of the demon.

Becoming excessively sick, I faltered down into the cabin.
(Brontë:2004:62-3)

For Lucy, the European landscape is not an overbearing presence which suddenly overwhelms her in a moment. Rather, it is a hazy miasma which gradually appears before her eyes. While Jameson's governess first avoids the act of describing the mountain scenery, Lucy is lulled into crafting sublime descriptions of the picturesque coastline. Arguably this difference results from the fact that Jameson's governess is surrounded by the landscape and violently penetrated by it, whereas Lucy is able to visualise the landscape from a safe distance. Though perhaps this reflects the different experiences of the two types of governess-traveller - one who was surrounded and suffocated by the company of a family that is not her own and one entirely alone whose only companionship came from her own imagining - this is not completely true. Although Lucy's panoramic view of the coast implies that it is a great distance away, the landscape she describes is in reality a product of her daydream, inspired by the paintings and descriptions of others. The recurrence of adjectives such as 'gleaming', 'gold',

‘metal-bright’ and ‘soft tints’, suggests that the whole scene could result from a trick of the light, and in stating ‘methought’ Lucy fails to verify that the Europe she envisions is real. Though compelled to recollect the scene, Lucy like Jameson’s governess, soon finds the act of writing to be too difficult a task. And while Jameson’s governess avoids writing from the outset, aware that in describing the landscape she will project her own heartache, Lucy learns this lesson the hard way.

In describing a landscape, which considering her distance from the shore must be at least partly imagined, Lucy realises that she has no idea what Europe has in store. While Jameson’s governess travels the Continent and spurns the writing style of popular novelists and anecdote hunters before writing in a way which communicates her own subjective experience, Lucy attempts to write about the Continent before setting foot on European soil. Brontë shows her heroine experiencing the same complex realisation as Jameson’s governess in a mere moment because, in attempting to write about space before moving through it, Lucy finds she cannot depend on traditional discourse. She cannot rely on picturesque descriptions and subliminal representations of the European landscape because such accounts are written by people entirely unlike the governess-traveller. Lucy’s strong urge to take back her words, and the episode of sickness that follows, are often read as a moment of weakness in which she is overcome by chronic anxiety and insecurity. Alternatively, though, Lucy’s sickness, coupled with the sudden change in dialogue, marks a physical shift, whereby on approaching the European shore and the land where she will begin a new existence, Lucy Snowe both mentally and physically becomes a governess-traveller. At this very moment she is made aware that the Europe she is bound to experience will not encompass the dream-land of her reverie, fuelled by the writing of others, but one which echoes the landscape of her mind. Thus she returns to her cabin only so that on emerging, she is prepared to begin her life anew.

ART

Like most nineteenth-century travellers, governesses who travelled with families and those who moved abroad alone had the opportunity to study the art of each region they visited. The family governess would accompany her charge to various exhibitions,

and the solitary governess might visit a gallery when allowed a break from her duties. This was one of the perks which drew women to the profession. The fact that governesses could view the work of artists like Da Vinci, Raphael and Botticelli meant they retained some gentility. Jameson's governess immerses herself in the art she sees throughout her journey. In one sense it is like the famous landmarks previously discussed because it distracts her from her troubles:

We visited the gallery for the first time yesterday morning; and I came away with my eyes and imagination so dazzled with excellence, and so distracted with variety, that I retained no distinct recollection of any particular object except the Venus; which of course was the first and great attraction. This morning was much more delightful; my powers of discrimination returned, and my power of enjoyment was not diminished. New perceptions of beauty and excellence seemed to open upon my mind; and faculties long dormant, were roused to pleasurable activity (Jameson:2008:38)



Fig. 10. *The Birth of Venus* (1486)
Oil on Canvas
Uffizi Gallery, Florence

While the governess directly refers to art as distraction, she also indicates that art is a healer. Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* is the catalyst which stirs her senses and awakens her new identity. First she admires it on an aesthetic level and appears envious of the Venus's beauty, knowing that love and sensuality are unlikely to play a part in her own

existence. Yet in other ways the *Venus* reflects the governess's situation. Aside from the painting's mythological meaning and its many philosophical interpretations, the image depicts a lone woman being born into a new world. Like the governess-traveller the *Venus* begins her life not as a new-born or a child, but as a young woman whose life begins on reaching a foreign shore. The clear water of the bay bordered by the lush, green forest is distinctly Mediterranean and the *Venus*'s nudity makes her vulnerable. In this way the *Birth of Venus* mirrors the governess's arrival in Europe where, although she is surrounded by others, she enters a new life, in a new country, vulnerable and alone.

When Jameson's governess views the *Venus* she initiates an intellectual dialogue which underpins both *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette*, and concerns the complex formulation of human perception. In the process of looking at the painting the governess goes on to adopt a more critical approach. This in itself is a notable subject because while many women in England and abroad certainly had access to art, the position of the female art-critic was typically unrecognised and nearly always unstable. In her essay 'Critically Speaking' (1995), Pamela Gerrish Nunn states that:

many women, through a personal interest in cultural matters, carried on a private discussion of art, such as is to be found in correspondence, memoirs, auto/biography and oral recollections [but this] falls outside the term 'art criticism' as patriarchally defined. Culture was a field assigned in some ways to women to mind, as part of their task of sweetening the world for men, and in other ways forbidden to women, as part of what was too difficult and worldly for them to handle without men's mediation or management. Consequently, middle-class women were encouraged to develop taste rather than knowledge; and a tentative interest in fine art, music and poetry, content to stay on the amateur side of the fence, was a sign of desirable refinement. (Gerrish Nunn:1995:109-110)

The idea that art, for women, ought to be acquired for the purposes of taste rather than knowledge is problematic where the governess is concerned. Because she was generally considered to be middle class, she would be expected to have developed taste, but because she was a professional whose duty was to educate, she was expressly required to be knowledgeable. Governesses learned about art not only so they could express an opinion when in company, but also so they could teach their pupils about a painting's history, style, and meaning. Jameson's knowledge of art and means to describe art in

such a vivid and unique style became fundamental to her whole life's work. She became renowned in the art-world after publishing *Sacred and Legendary Art* in 1848. It is important to remember, however, that despite her publishing history, between 1821 and 1825 Jameson looked upon art from a marginalised position. Caught once again between two fields of discourse, the governess of *Diary of an Ennuyée* is forced to find her own way, and develop a uniquely subjective way of seeing. Being involved in this sort of criticism the governess-traveller, not surprisingly, begins to consider the problem of imitation:

I am glad I was not disappointed in the Venus which I half expected. Neither was I surprised: but I felt while I gazed a sense of unalloyed and unmingled pleasure, and forgot the cant of criticism. It has the same effect to the eye, that perfect harmony has upon the ear: and I think I can understand why no copy, cast, or model, however accurate, however exquisite, can convey the impression of tenderness and sweetness, the divine and peculiar charm of the original. (Jameson:2008:38)

Although she writes in avid praise of the *Venus*, Jameson's governess condemns artifice and fakery. For her, cheap imitations of the original *Venus* have no purpose because the viewer's experience of the painting, and his or her interpretation of both its form and message, are shaped by the notion of gazing upon the original.

The notion of originality versus artifice suffuses the text and early on in the *Diary* when, remembering a landscape, Jameson's governess concludes: 'all and each, when I recall them, will rise up a vivid picture before my own fancy;—but never could be truly represented to the mind of another—at least through the medium of words' (Jameson:2008:13). As much as the governess is concerned with reproduction in art she is aware that the words written and images drawn by others do not compare to her own memories of the landscape. Later on in the Apennines she exclaims:

O for the pencil of Salvator, or the pen of a Radcliffe! But could either, or could both united, give to my mind the scenes of to-day, in all their splendid combinations of beauty and brightness, gloom and grandeur? A picture may present to the eye a small portion of the boundless whole—one aspect of the ever-varying face of nature; and words, how weak are they!—they are but the elements out of which the quick imagination frames and composes lovely landscapes, according to its power or its peculiar character; and in which the unimaginative man finds

only a mere chaos of verbiage, without form, and void.
(Jameson:2008:36)

Here the governess points to the weakness of words and the relativity of language. She speaks of words and language in the context of art, as frames which merely suspend the original. So while the *Venus* strengthens her view that original art supersedes imitations, she maintains the belief that art and text are limited forms compared to the imagination. While this notion has its place in a wider philosophical discourse and is by no means specific to the governess-traveller, it significantly impacts the way she comes to view herself and the world around her.

At the culmination of this intellectual dialogue the governess concludes:

I can allow that one-half, at least, of the beauty and interest we see, lies in our own souls...but, as colours do not exist in the objects themselves, but in the rays which paint them—so beauty is not less real, is not less BEAUTY, because it exists in the medium through which we view certain objects, rather than in those objects themselves. I have met persons who...give themselves airs of fashionable *nonchalance*, or flippant scorn—to whom the crumbling ruin is so much brick and mortar, no more—to whom the tomb of the Horatii and Curiatii is a *stack of chimneys*, the Pantheon an *old oven*, and the Fountain of Egeria a *pig-sty*....

“Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,

He is a slave—the meanest we can meet.” (Jameson:2008:98)

The governess is confident that the imagination and enthusiasm which stimulate human perception paint a more accurate, meaningful and beautiful picture than any great artist or writer. Yet she is aware that the human capacity to imagine has its own limitations. While ‘imagination’ is superior it is held prisoner in the mind and while art is limited, it can communicate with the rest of the world. Quoting from the second sonnet in Wordsworth’s *Personal Talk* (1806), she ridicules travellers who take art, architecture and landscape at face value alone and refuse to seek a deeper meaning. For the governess, art’s semantic value, which can never be conveyed directly and interpreted only at will, is important because it provides a connection between matter and mind, world and self. That she discards books and travel guides and detests fashionable nonchalance shows that she is acutely aware that interpreting art is not simply about

working out what a painting means, but working out what it means to her. In experiencing the art that many female travellers would seek out on their journey, the governess gains something more than knowledge and culture. She re-gains a sense of identity and locates the starting point of her journey, from which she will go on to see the world.

In *Villette* when staying with the Brettons, Lucy Snowe also considers the act of painting and viewing pictures, but while for Jameson's governess art is escapism and provides her with an opportunity to form subjective perceptions beyond the sway of the family society she is surrounded by, for Lucy looking at art is a problematic concept:

I never had a head for science, but an ignorant, blind, fond instinct inclined me to art. I liked to visit the picture-galleries, and I dearly liked to be left there alone. In company, a wretched idiosyncrasy forbade me to see much or to feel anything. In unfamiliar company, where it was necessary to maintain a flow of talk on the subjects in presence, half an hour would knock me up, with a combined pressure of physical lassitude and entire mental incapacity. I never yet saw the well-reared child, much less the educated adult, who could not put me to shame (Brontë:2004:221-222)

Lucy's recollection of the gallery is filled with self-doubt. While one would expect a solitary British governess working in a foreign country to relish the opportunity for conversation, Lucy shares the family governess's desire for peace and solitude. The similarity between the two governesses ends, though, because while Jameson's governess is empowered by the process of viewing art, Lucy is baffled and unnerved by the fact that other viewings are taking place, and other interpretations are being constructed around her. It seems the family governess, who spends her time in the constant company of her employer, is fascinated by the artist's skill, but Lucy, who is so often alone, remains preoccupied with how her views compare to those of others. From this point the governess's struggle to find her place in middle-class society influences Lucy's discussion of art criticism:

In the commencement of these visits, there was some misunderstanding and consequent struggle between Will and Power. The former faculty exacted approbation of that which it was considered orthodox to admire; the latter groaned forth its utter inability to pay the tax; it was then self-sneered at, spurred

up, goaded on to refine its taste, and whet its zest. The more it was chidden, however, the more it wouldn't praise. Discovering gradually that a wonderful sense of fatigue resulted from these conscientious efforts, I began to reflect whether I might not dispense with that great labour, and concluded eventually that I might, and so sank supine into a luxury of calm before ninety-nine out of a hundred of the exhibited frames. (Brontë:2004:222)

In juxtaposing 'Will' and 'Power' in a bitter confrontation Lucy opposes self and society. She is aware that her means to perceive art is entirely different from that of a typical, middle-upper class viewer and that this difference is likely to be 'sneered at'. Nevertheless, it is from this confrontation that Lucy realises her 'self' is not invalidated by society. For Lucy, as for Jameson's governess, viewing art exposes the tension between self and world as the vital cord which allows her to scale the periphery of social convention and simultaneously contribute to, and expand on, its discourse. Thus she strengthens the tension, indulging her 'Will,' and allows herself to perceive what might not necessarily subscribe to the standard interpretation of the paintings. So while the family governess instantly finds peace in art and is quick to forge her own subjective reflections, the solitary governess at first struggles to come to terms with yet another aspect of her life which requires her to think and work alone.

From this point on Lucy, like Jameson's governess, undergoes a realisation as she considers the notion of originality versus artifice:

It seemed to me that an original and good picture was just as scarce as an original and good book; nor did I, in the end, tremble to say to myself, standing before certain *chef-d'oeuvres* bearing great names, "These are not a whit like nature. Nature's daylight never had that colour [...] Many scores of marvellously-finished little Flemish pictures, and also of sketches, excellent for fashion-books displaying varied costumes in the handsomest materials, gave evidence of laudable industry whimsically applied. And yet there were fragments of truth here and there which satisfied the conscience, and gleams of light that cheered the vision [...] These exceptions I loved: they grew dear as friends (Brontë:2004:222)

Like Jameson's governess, Lucy condemns the act of artifice which occurs in the production of art, even if a painting is the first of its kind. Since allowing herself to indulge her will and thus being true to her 'self' and her perceptions, her critique grows

confident and self-assured. She disregards the authority of famous artists and proclaims ‘These are not a whit like nature’, signalling the fallibility of brush-strokes and shading in reproducing images from the real world. Lucy’s preference, not surprisingly, is for the ‘little Flemish pictures’ which were of less interest to the typical tourist than work by well-known artists. Confident that her perceptions and preferences are valid, Lucy scours these smaller pictures for semblances of truth, and although on the surface this can be interpreted as the simple act of indulging the senses and figuring out her artistic preferences, this exercise significantly contributes to the governess-traveller’s formation of her identity. It is in discovering ‘fragments of truth which satisfied the conscience’ that through art the governess reconnects with the world. Such is why for Lucy paintings become friends which exercise her ability to think, feel, and act as a governess-traveller. In a complex reworking of the same idea, Brontë shows that like the rural landscape, art proves itself invaluable to the governess-traveller’s construction of ‘self’, but is also a limited medium. Like landscape, art does not completely satisfy the governess-traveller’s desire to connect with the world, and so it steers her towards the next stage of her journey. The way in which this occurs, however, differs markedly from the family governess’s experience as she views the ‘Cleopatra’:

It represented a woman... from fourteen to sixteen stone. She was, indeed, extremely well fed: very much butcher's meat—to say nothing of bread, vegetables, and liquids—must she have consumed to attain that breadth and height, that wealth of muscle, that affluence of flesh. She lay half-reclined on a couch: why, it would be difficult to say; broad daylight blazed round her... she ought to have been standing, or at least sitting bolt upright. She had no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa. She ought likewise to have worn decent garments; a gown covering her properly, which was not the case... Then, for the wretched untidiness surrounding her, there could be no excuse. Pots and pans—perhaps I ought to say vases and goblets—were rolled here and there on the foreground; a perfect rubbish of flowers was mixed amongst them, and an absurd and disorderly mass of curtain upholstery smothered the couch and cumbered the floor (Brontë:2004:223-224)

What Lucy sees in the *Cleopatra* is very different from what Jameson’s governess sees in Botticelli’s *Venus*. While the *Venus* is regarded as beautiful, what Lucy sees in the *Cleopatra* is vulgar. Though the paintings are equally colourful, the tones in Botticelli’s coastline image are fresh and lively, while the harsh light which illuminates *Cleopatra*’s

residence reveals a chaotic mass of unruly pattern and garish colour. Even the different settings, one being outdoors and the other indoors, dramatically affect the governess-traveller's interpretation of the art.

While this episode shows that Lucy has overcome her initial insecurity and as Jameson's governess dares to write her diary, Lucy dares to criticise the painting, it also emphasises how there are variations in the governess's vision of Europe. Where Jameson's governess relates to the image of the *Venus*, and sees in the painting something of herself, Lucy gazes at the Cleopatra and sees precisely what she is not and, more significantly, what she has no desire to be. She scrupulously describes and scrutinises every aspect of the painting in minute detail. She considers approximate values, calculating the Cleopatra's weight and the angle at which she is sitting. She questions the painting's message, asking why the woman is resting in the daytime. When Lucy remarks on the pots and pans strewn in the foreground of the painting she moves on from describing the scene and analyses the painting's structure and proportions. With the authority of the critic, Lucy provides a controversial and opinionated commentary scattered with disapproving adjectives such as 'wretched' and 'absurd'. She even makes suggestions as to how the Cleopatra, and thus the painting itself, 'ought to' look. Lucy's art criticism becomes vastly different from Jameson's governess's because while Jameson's governess continues to focus on the idea of originality and individuality in both the creation and interpretation of art, Lucy's reading of the Cleopatra becomes less and less original and subjective. Instead, her somewhat blinkered attitude towards the woman in the painting conforms to the rhetoric of Orientalist discourse. Lucy's confidence and authority comes, not from her position as a semi-independent gentlewoman able to travel alone and earn her own living, but from the process of 'othering' the woman in the painting. As Edward Said explains, Orientalism contributed to 'how Europe gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (Said:2003:3). It is this way that Lucy, the socially marginalised governess away from home, attempts to reconnect with the British middle-society she has left behind through both leaving England and entering the profession of governessing.

For both Lucy and Jameson's governess art is the space which allows the governess to 'practise' perceiving and experiencing the world around her. Yet while Jameson's governess's experience of art is about cultivating her individual perceptions

and differentiating her view from that of others, Lucy's is about connecting her ideas to a wider form of discourse. In this way the combination of Lucy's and Jameson's governess's differing experience of art illustrates how the governess perceives the world from within the heterotopic space of her displacement, in which society is 'simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (Foucault:1984:4). While both Lucy and Jameson's governess at times invert the ideas prevalent in middle-class society, Lucy's involvement in Orientalist discourse shows that ultimately the governess's heterotopia will to some degree represent the attitudes and behaviours of the society in which it functions. In this sense, art is for the governess abroad what the curtained windowsill is for Jane Eyre. It is the 'den space' in which she is half nurtured, healed and reformed, half stifled, compressed and contained before she pulls back the curtain on reality and is either drawn towards, or thrown into the reality of the governess's Europe.

ARCHITECTURE

It is through architecture that the governess-traveller engages with Europe most intensely, because by its man-made design architecture both impacts on, and is impacted by, the social orders and practices that come together in forming an image of the Continent. Formulating a framework through which to analyse the governess's construction of Europe, is not a straightforward process. The way she does this, and the Europe she ultimately presents, is bound up in multiple modes of discourse. My analysis continues to build on the ideas of spatial production and self-discovery discussed in the previous chapter because the governess experiences Europe via a quest-like voyage in which she searches to discover her identity. The difference is that once abroad the governess's exile from middle-upper class society amounts to her exile from British soil and augments and intensifies the search for the 'scattered self' (Blanton:2002:59). The Europe she represents is one she must decode if she is ever to locate her position within it.

Prior to theorising this process it is useful to situate the governess's image of Europe within the wider context of how Britain saw Europe in the nineteenth century. This means drawing on studies of national identity. As a marginalised figure in her own country, writing about Europe puts her in a relatively unusual position because while

many Britons lived abroad, they did so as established members of British society. The governess, being on the edge of that society, depicts a different version of Europe which provides another dimension in the nineteenth-century's vision of Europe. In *Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (1995) Gerard Delanty argues that 'every age reinvented the idea of Europe in the mirror of its own identity...Europe did not derive its identity from itself but from the formation of set global contrasts [of which it] found its most enduring expression in the confrontation with the Orient in the age of imperialism' (Delanty:1995:1,84). This is an idea that in part, speaks strongly in terms of the governess-traveller. The Europe she presents is entirely of her own making and a 'mirror' to her own identity. Yet, Delanty's model of Europe does not consider the governess because it suggests that on arrival the governess felt at home on the Continent. The idea that she could 'safely' identify as European in direct opposition to the Eastern 'Other' is unconvincing because the governess is cast out of her society, whether she is at home or abroad. The symbols of the 'Other,' which recurrently materialise, do little to help her establish a European authority. Rather they point directly to her own state of foreignness.

A more recent study along this line of thought is Marjorie Morgan's *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* (2001). She maintains Delanty's view that identity, 'everyday experience and ritual were important contributors to people's sense of national belonging,' but she also stresses that Europe was 'a geographic place which...functioned very much as an 'outside influence' with respect to Britain...[M]uch of what we are now terming 'colonial' existed within Europe itself before there were any overseas colonies' (Morgan:2001:4-7). In regarding Europe as Britain's 'other', particularly where religion is concerned, Morgan avoids the assumption that the governess-traveller could instantly integrate in European society. This opens up a multitude of questions primarily preoccupied with how the governess sought to locate herself amid society and culture on the Continent. The problem with Morgan's suggestion is that it presumes that prior to finding her place in Europe, the governess was certain of her place at home, and this is far from true. The governess's Europe is not strictly 'other' because she is neither home nor away. Without a strong sense of Britishness from which to register a foreign counterpart, the governess is obliged to construct Europe from a more isolated, detached position.

Delanty and Morgan's argument that Europe mirrors the identity of the viewing subject is corroborated in studies of travel writing. In *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing* (2002) Sara Mills urges that:

The notion of space being imbricated with social relations is important when considering women in space because it moves discussion away from simple notions of women as a group having a consistent unchanging relation to spatial frameworks... One's position in space necessarily maps out a position of knowledge about the country and the landscape. Her socio-economic position, and her relation to authority and knowledge will determine the type of landscape that she will produce in writing. (Mills:2002:178)

Mills stresses that there is variation in women's experience of Europe which stems directly from their subjectivity and relation to society. Yet there is still a sense here, that in constructing Europe the traveller's relation to society must remain intact, when for the governess social relations were at best significantly strained and more often than not damaged beyond repair.

The instability of the governess's position does not prevent her from producing an image of Europe. Rather, her social marginalisation means that her portrayal of Europe often stands apart from traditional tourist discourse and challenges cultural stereotypes. In *The Beaten Track* (1993), James Buzard investigates the development of 'anti-tourism' through the nineteenth-century European tour. He suggests that in the period after the Napoleonic wars

travellers sought to distinguish themselves from the 'mere tourists' they saw or imagined around them. Correspondingly, the authentic 'culture' of *places*—the *genius loci*—was represented as lurking in secret precincts 'off the beaten track' where it could be discovered only by the sensitive 'traveller', not the vulgar tourist. (Buzard:1993:6)

In this way he shows that in the world of travel and travel writing, there was a value associated with the practice of defying tradition and not fitting in. What is more, he argues that this distinction between tourist and anti-tourist 'traveller', was not necessarily affected by social status: 'the criteria for separating authentic from touristic experience have not been those visibly based on advantages of birth (in contrast to the

overt privileges of the pre-1800 Grand Tour), but rather a loosely defined set of inner personal qualities that amounts to a superior emotional-aesthetic sensitivity' (Buzard:1993:6). This is important in understanding the governess's construction of Europe because it suggests that the image of Europe a traveller presents is not explicitly defined by their having a fixed place in society. I argue, in fact, that the governess's marginalisation, and her segregation from the masses is largely the reason that in her travel narrative she demonstrates a 'superior emotional-aesthetic sensitivity' because when away from the company of her employers she is utterly alone and in her segregation, beyond the sway of the masses, wanders away from 'the beaten track'(Buzard:1993:6). She does not have to try to find a unique 'anti-tourist' experience, because as a socially displaced employee, the Europe she envisions could never be that of the tourist's imagining. Outside of her working hours, the route she takes is not one prescribed by others or one governed by the habits of a rigid social order. Instead, the sites the governess chooses to frequent and the way she moves around, and between them, form part of a subjective experience in which 'images of self and setting reciprocally reinforce[e] one another' (Buzard:1993:5).It is this way that the governess's Europe is constructed in the absence of social-belonging and is part of, and relevant to, nineteenth-century Britain's picture of Europe. Buzard's theory ties into my use of Foucault, Lefebvre and Harvey because it allows room for the fact that the governess experiences the world from within the heterotopic space of her own displacement, and 'reciprocally' constructs 'self and setting' as she journeys through and represents the material and representational space of the Continent and her mindscape. It is important to recognise, however, that the governess is a version of the anti-tourist not solely because she visits places 'off the beaten track'. When working, the route of her travels was often controlled by her employer, and the family governess in particular would accompany her charge to many famous tourist spots. Rather, the governess is an anti-tourist because for her Europe becomes more than a centre for tourism where she learns about Continental culture. It becomes the representational space in which she continues the search for the 'scattered self' (Blanton:2002:59).

In *Diary of an Ennuyée* the governess recurrently finds herself on bridges, staircases or balconies. And while this could be down to the lie of the land and the fact that Venice, for example, is teeming with bridges, the way the governess describes these locations is of interest. It seems that in these spaces she can move beyond traditional 'tourist' discourse and explore her own perceptions. At Verona the governess is drawn

to ‘a most singular bridge of three irregular arches’ (Jameson:2008:24). This bridge itself can immediately be read as symbolic of the governess’s own liminal position between two channels of society. Its three ‘irregular’ arches point first to her abnormality, and second to her triadic identity which encompasses home, work and travel. However, it is on the Roman Catholic day to consecrate the dead that the governess recalls:

We visited to-day the Giant's Staircase and the Bridge of Sighs...I observed many persons, both men and women, who wept while they prayed, with every appearance of the most profound grief. Leaving St. Mark, I crossed the square. On the three lofty standards in front of the church formerly floated the ensigns of the three states subjects to Venice,—the Morea, Cyprus, and Candia: the bare poles remain, but the ensigns of empire are gone. One of the standards was extended on the ground, and being of immense length, I hesitated for a moment whether I should make a circuit, but at last stepped over it. I looked back with remorse, for it was like trampling over the fallen. (Jameson:2008:32-3)



Fig. 11. *The Bridge of Sighs* (1841)
Pencil and Watercolour
Private Collection



Fig. 12. *The Giant's Staircase* (1842)
Print
From *The Rhine, Italy and Greece in a Series of Drawings*

The Bridge of Sighs has a gloomy history. It became known by this name in the seventeenth century because the prisoners who passed through it were said to sigh as they looked out onto the water for the last time. The Giant’s Staircase also has a history of misfortune as the entrance to the Doge’s Palace which housed the chief magistrate

until the Venetian empire fell in 1797. It is interesting that the bridge and staircase and all the history they invoke, cause the governess to segregate herself, in narrative voice at least, from the rest of the company. The change of pronoun from 'We' to 'I' is a narrative extension of the death imagery associated with both of these locations. That and the architectural liminality of the bridge and the staircase signal the governess's 'death' from upper-middle class society and 'birth' into a no-where space between the classes. Yet, these projections of her social isolation do not disturb her in the same way as the empty, rural landscapes she experiences earlier in her journey. The governess is not reluctant to leave the rest of her company, in fact, she does so without hesitation. After navigating the bridge and staircase and confronting her own social detachment, she boldly steps out into St Mark's Square. The open space here is not so open that it disturbs her in the same way as the vast rural landscape. Rather, the square provides a habitable space between the multiple borders that the governess is forced to hover between. That St Mark's Square is only three parts bordered by buildings and looks out onto the canal is also significant. This explains the fact that the governess does not move around the square as someone who is caged in, but navigates the space with authority, enthused by her own mobility and the possibility of travel beyond these confines. In a sense, the square, just like Jane Eyre's window seat, is yet another protective den space which offers the governess a prospect view of the space she has yet to encounter. The governess's description of the empty standards is also important. As a poignant symbol of the fallen empire they are also intrinsic to the governess-traveller's propensity to disturb the 'natural order' of middle-class society. When the governess steps over the standard 'like tramping over the fallen' she is to some extent empowered by her ability to alter the shape of her surroundings and begins to appreciate that her segregation from others, affords her freedom to cultivate a sense of individuality and agency.

In Rome, the governess has another noteworthy encounter based around a staircase:

About seven o'clock, and before any one was ready for breakfast, I walked out; and directing my steps by mere chance to the left, found myself in the Piazza di Spagna and opposite to a gigantic flight of marble stairs leading to the top of a hill. I was at the summit in a moment; and breathless and agitated by a thousand feelings, I leaned against the obelisk, and looked over the whole

city. I knew not where I was: nor...could I for a while distinguish a single known object; for my eyes and my heart were both too full: but in a few minutes my powers of perception returned; and in the huge round bulk of the castle of St. Angelo, and the immense façade and soaring cupola of St. Peter's, I knew I could not be mistaken. I gazed and gazed as if I would have drunk it all in at my eyes: and then descending the superb flight of steps rather more leisurely than I had ascended, I was in a moment at the door of our hotel (Jameson:2008:61-2)



Fig.13. *Roma Piazza di Spagna* (late-nineteenth century)
Postcard

Private Collection of Monir Tayeb and Michel Austin, Scotland

In one of the precious moments in which the governess is able to explore by herself she once again finds herself at the foot of the stairs. Recalling the ‘mere chance’ of this suggests that the governess has an instinctive link to these liminal sites where she is neither up nor down, nor on one side or the other. In standing ‘opposite’ the grand marble staircase her position within the space echoes that of the governess in the hallway of the mansion. In novels like *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair* this positioning denotes the governess’s arrival in a new world. Equally similar is the notion that on reaching the top of a summit, the governess is awakened to a ‘thousand feelings’ and all the opportunities afforded to the single female traveller. Such allusions to new beginnings highlight the importance of these places in the governess’s search for the ‘scattered self’. Her very being there alone is empowering and points to her potential for crafting a subjective view of the world, beyond the limitations of traditional social and gender constructs.

On reaching the summit the governess, like Jane Eyre, uses the architecture as a means of support. The obelisk itself is subject to multiple interpretations. The governess's leaning against the phallic pillar can be read as an enactment of her sexual desires and hope for the renewal of her engagement. Like the standards at Venice, the obelisk's towering aspect is also representative of patriarchy's domination of society. In leaning against it the governess accepts her dependence on patriarchy because patriarchal constructs shaped the families who sought to employ her. But in terms of the governess-traveller's journey, the obelisk provides temporary repose in the same way as the employer's home. The remainder of the passage continues to echo my reading of *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair*, for when she looks out onto the world from her newfound position the governess is initially blinded. From being so long starved of the excitement of the world she is overwhelmed and dazzled when she sees it from a position of financial and geographical independence. Yet when leaning against the obelisk, as if 'earthing' herself to reconnect with the world and locate her identity, she is soon able to gaze out with an authority and certainty born of the fact that she is an educated woman bound to travel. This experience in its entirety is a microcosmic representation of her whole life's venture, and it seems that just as movement teaches her to see and art teaches her to think, architecture teaches her how to live within the space of her displacement. The governess directly refers to the idea that she feeds off her surroundings because she and the architecture are mutually constructed. From here on she embraces the liminality of stairs which in Venice and prior to her ascent here in Rome appeared so daunting. She discovers that hovering between boundaries, and inhabiting the middle-ground has its advantages – her voyage to Italy being one of them.

In *Villette*, there are two occasions when Lucy, like Jameson's governess, finds herself wandering around a square. The first occurs in Chapter VII shortly after her arrival in Villette and Lucy is concerned by the appearance of two 'bearded, sneering simpletons' (Brontë:2004:70):

On I went, hurrying fast through a magnificent street and square, with the grandest houses round, and amidst them the huge outline of more than one overbearing pile; which might be palace or church—I could not tell... I no longer knew where I was; the staircase I must long since have passed. Puzzled, out of breath, all my pulses throbbing in inevitable agitation, I knew not where

to turn...yet the ground must be retraced, and the steps sought out.

I came at last to an old and worn flight, and, taking it for granted that this must be the one indicated, I descended them. The street into which they led was indeed narrow, but it contained no inn. On I wandered. In a very quiet and comparatively clean and well-paved street, I saw a light burning over the door of a rather large house, loftier by a story than those round it...No inn was this...

"Pensionnat de Demoiselles" was the inscription
(Brontë:2004:70-71)

Lucy's account is charged with a sense of danger here. Her experience of the square is tempered by the drama of being alone after dark among the shady-looking inhabitants of a strangely foreign city. Yet, Brontë's representation of the governess's journey is still significant because while Lucy's 'plebeian' pursuers certainly have a role to fulfil, the architecture and Lucy's movement through it, are the central focus of the scene (Brontë:2004:70). For Lucy, however, the square is not a comfortable den-space in which she marks her territory, instead, it poses a threat. The tallest of the buildings are 'overbearing piles' which she cannot clearly visualise, and encage her in the space. At this point in the darkness, Lucy's blindness echoes that of Becky Sharp and Jane Eyre on arrival at the employer's home. Feeling that she has no place in this world, with no friends or family inhabiting the surrounding buildings, her vision of the space around her becomes distorted. To maintain her footing and continue searching for the staircase which will lead her into a new phase in her life, Lucy becomes more and more preoccupied with the ground beneath her feet.

This means of limiting her focus to herself and the ground shows that despite travelling through a modern metropolis, the governess engages with the space in a rhythmic, ritualistic manner. It is by accepting her displacement from society and communing with the earth itself that the governess-traveller finds her way and arrives at the staircase which transports her into a life of governessing. Yet, even though the area appears to be 'well worn' and sufficiently lit, the governess's preoccupation with the ground continues. Moving onwards, Lucy observes the 'clean and well-paved street' and when she arrives at the Pensionnat she recalls: 'While I waited, I would not reflect. I fixedly looked at the street-stones, where the door-lamp shone, and counted them and noted their shapes, and the glitter of wet on their angles' (Brontë:2004:71). In spite of

reaching her destination, Lucy's attention is focussed on the ground. By blocking out any other thoughts and reflections she remains in tune with the space, hoping that reading the terrain, in the same way she read the water, might help her to navigate the next stage of her journey within the Pensionnat.

Later in the novel, on an errand for Madame Beck, Lucy once again travels through a square. Describing the effect of the weather on the city she says the rain 'sweeps a great capital clean before you; it makes you a quiet path through broad, grand streets; it petrifies a living city as if by Eastern enchantment; it transforms a Villette into a Tadmor' (Brontë:2004:429). Here, the rain is a timely baptism which cleanses Villette of undesirable characters and turns the gloomy city into a sacred space. In short, once the city is empty and the governess is left alone to wander its streets, she experiences spiritual enlightenment:

An unknown clock from an unknown tower (Jean Baptiste's voice was now too distant to be audible) was tolling the third quarter past five, when I reached that street and house whereof Madame Beck had given me the address. It was no street at all; it seemed rather to be part of a square: it was quiet, grass grew between the broad grey flags... Antiquity brooded above this region... That church, whose dark, half-ruinous turrets overlooked the square, was the venerable and formerly opulent shrine of the Magi. But wealth and greatness had long since stretched their gilded pinions and fled hence, leaving these their ancient nests, perhaps to house Penury for a time, or perhaps to stand cold and empty, mouldering untenanted in the course of winters. (Brontë:2004:429-30)

In many ways this episode is an extension of the first because although when moving through the first square Lucy connects with the space on a more organic, instinctive level, this time Lucy's experience of the space is no less ritualistic. She enters the square to the ceremonial fanfare of the personified church bell, and the streets no longer appear disorderly, but belong to the square as religious servants belong to a higher order. Lucy continues to observe the terrain and notes grass between the stone flags, but this time what she sees in the terrain is evidence of the harmonious intertwining of two sects. Arguably, this notion is the pre-emptive imaging of protestant Lucy's relationship with Paul Emanuel, but it also signals the governess's instinctive connection to the

urban terrain because it is through relating to socially produced spatial arrangements, rather than society itself, that the governess engages with the world around her.

Lucy's fascination with the church which overlooks the square is also significant here. For the governess, ruined buildings are like bridges and staircases because they too are liminal spaces. In one sense they remain as they were, still monopolising the space in which they were built, ever present to the traveller. Yet, they are changed by both their aged appearance and the way that people move through them. Like anything ambiguous or unusual, ruins attract much more attention than inhabited buildings. A ruin is described as such because of the way a person moves through it, avidly noting each crumbling brick, broken window pane, and missing roof-tile. The space and traveller's route through it are mutually constructed because as the ruin draws the traveller onwards with curiosity, the traveller's fascination means that a space of the past, which no longer has purpose or use, remains very much in the present. For Lucy the ruin is an 'ancient nest' and this itself is oxymoronic. A nest is something temporary which does not last above a season and so for the governess-traveller, who lives her life in temporary nests at various locations, finding an ancient nest is an epiphany. Seeing the ruin, once 'venerable' and now 'mouldering' and yet, very much present shows the governess that although she is forever bound to move from place to place, it is possible, albeit ironic, that temporality provides her life with its one and only constant. When Lucy refers to the square as a 'deserted "place"' she signals that the site of her epiphany is both ambiguous and familiar, an 'ancient nest' and a home amid the liminal which plays a crucial role in her acceptance of her displacement and the cultivation of her identity as an individual beyond social definition.

Both governesses, therefore, construct an image of Europe by charting liminal spaces which simultaneously augment and alleviate the governess's sense of dislocation. When visiting these sites the governess's status is made more apparent because it is echoed by the architecture she chooses to frequent. At the same time, though, when moving through these spaces the governess embraces her dislocation and is liberated by the experience of wavering on the cusp of a transitional moment in time. For the governess abroad, bridges and staircases facilitate episodes of motional paradox like those apparent in *Jane Eyre*, in which the governess hovers on the border between one place and the next. However, the family governess's Europe is different from that of the solitary governess. Jameson's governess moves through space so as to travel beyond

the tourist route and effectively escape her employer. She is forever surmounting great heights and gazing out at the world, so the Europe she constructs is frequently presented as a vast and often unreachable panorama. Lucy, on the other hand, is most preoccupied with finding her way in the world. She has no-one to depend on, so when she travels her focus is the ground and the rhythm of her own footsteps. The Europe she constructs is presented as a fluctuating terrain upon which she must find her footing. It seems that while the solitary governess maps the terrain, the family governess captures a panoramic view of the horizon and together both governesses construct an image of Europe which is subsequently three-dimensional.

WALKING

The theme of walking has been the focus of much discussion in the fields of literary studies and anthropology, whether or not in relation to travel writing. In novels, walking provides characters with time to reflect and develop, in poetry the notion of walking provides narrative structure, and in factual accounts and essays being on foot allows the narrator to describe his or her surroundings in vivid detail. Walking is fascinating because it is both a mode of travel from which a narrative can be delivered, and an intrinsic theme within a narrative form. In literary criticism walking is particularly topical in work where the focus is Romanticism and the picturesque, and women in the nineteenth-century. At the intersection of these two research areas lies my study of the governess-traveller in Europe. Both Jameson's governess and Lucy Snowe of *Villette* are acutely aware of the Romantic tradition. Jameson's governess frequently refers to the poetry and prose works of Romantic poets Byron and Wordsworth, and Lucy Snowe similarly points out scenes of the picturesque. It is important, therefore, in analysing the walks of these protagonists, to engage with an idea of walking they themselves were conscious of. Another factor, highly relevant to the governess-traveller's walk, is the idea that when relieved from her duties she became a solitary woman walking in a foreign city. This is significant because particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, the lone woman on the streets was a controversial figure who fuelled social anxiety and cultural concern.

Both Robin Jarvis, author of *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (1999), and Deborah Epstein Nord in *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation,*

and the City (1995), concur that walking, and walking for women especially, can be read as a transgressive act. In considering ‘the anatomy of the walker’ Jarvis states [T]he walker’s decision to exploit his freedom to resist the imperative of destination and explore instead the lanes, by-roads and field-paths, could be interpreted as an act of denial, flight or dissent’ (Jarvis:1999:29-30). Nord, taking a feminist approach, suggests that ‘the particular urban vision of the female observer, novelist, or investigator derives from her consciousness of transgression and trespassing, from the vexed sexuality her position implies and from her struggle to escape the status of spectacle and become a spectator’ (Nord:1995:2). Jarvis and Nord’s statements form part of a critical dialogue which views walking as an act which denies and defies established social and/ or gender constructs. While Jarvis implies that this occurs on a sub-conscious level, Nord suggests that women walkers were highly aware that by walking, they might ‘escape’ both repression and objectification. This is relevant to the governess of both the travel writing genre and the novel because the episodes in which she is seen to walk are rare and welcomed opportunities in which she can escape her professional duties, relax and reflect. Yet, there is more to be said about the governess and walking. It seems that when in Europe at least, the idea of being observed or objectified is neither the governess’s main concern, nor the predominant theme in her narrative. While the family governess could quite easily blend in with her fellow travellers, it is unclear why the solitary governess is equally untroubled by walking alone.

One reason for this could be that in spite of being a woman, the governess’s role encompasses both the public and private sphere. She advertised for work and negotiated via correspondence like any other professional. Though society gazed upon the governess with anxiety and concern, this was not worsened when she walked down the street. Of her walks Lucy Snowe says ‘[I was] very well convinced that nobody minded me,’ and later, while at the fete, she recalls ‘This man, in his courtesy, seemed to find nothing strange in my being here alone’ (Brontë:2004:123,503). The governess is most ‘out of place’ and demonstrably ‘odd’ when in the company of a family group. It is the home rather than the street which points to her segregation, and so walking for the governess is more about constructing the self aside from society than being judged by it. Her journey on foot is a time in which she aims to achieve this by building spatial, not social relations.

For this reason I move away from Nord's argument and the notion that 'the female bohemian who strolled and looked with freedom could not exist in the nineteenth century city' without being 'hampered by urban realities and discourses alike' (Nord:1995:15). The governess's prior deconstruction of self means she evades urban realities and discourses, effectively moving through the undercurrent beneath the waves. With this in mind it could be tempting to align the governess's walk with that of the flâneur, who 'strolls aimlessly in the modern city, observing people and events' (Wolff:2006:18). But there is debate as to whether the female flâneuse even exists. Janet Wolff argues that even by the early twentieth century, '[f]or women in the city, negotiating the geography and architecture of public space...the role of flâneuse remained unavailable...Women, of course, were almost invariably regarded with suspicion as they traversed the streets of the modern city' (Wolff:2006:22). Though the governess does not necessarily worry about being viewed with suspicion, the problem with considering the governess-traveller as a flâneuse lies in the fact that her time in the city is, for the most part, far from leisurely. The family governess spent most of the day touring with her charge, and when Lucy Snowe leaves the Pensionnat it is often to complete an errand. Yet, even when the governess does find the opportunity to walk alone, her journey is both a necessary means of self-preservation amid her busy schedule and fuelled with a sense of mission to 'collect the scattered self' (Blanton:2002:59). For this reason I move away from the idea that the governess 'avoids suspicion' and walks through the city as a flâneuse and focus on examining how she experiences the metropolis from within the space of her displacement.

That there is a sense of purpose in the governess's walk relates to Jarvis's idea that 'in the displacement from physical experience to the order of imagined reality and literary representation the rhythms and modalities of walking remain a visibly determining force' (Jarvis:1999:33). In Lefebvrian terms Jarvis suggests that through producing a narrative representation of her walk, the act of walking becomes a 'determining force' in depicting the representational space of the governess's mindscape. In this way the governess's social displacement, which means she can walk freely and alone and construct a unique image of Europe, implies that once again the liminal space she inhabits is one of development and production, but while I will certainly examine the governess's walks as representations of her mindscape, I will do this through detailed analysis of her physical movements through the material world.

Anthropological theory and the ethnographic philosophy of walking are useful tools for engaging with the governess's movements. The ideas presented by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst in *Ways of Walking* (2008) are even more relevant to the way I intend to analyse the governess's experience of walking than those presented by literary critics because they focus on the physical act of walking and the very notion of movement and mobility, before concentrating on the themes of perception and perspective. They support my argument that we must analyse the governess's journey if we ever hope to understand how she experiences her destination. They affirm Harvey's argument that while '[i]t is tempting... to treat Lefebvre's three categories as hierarchically ordered...it seems most appropriate to keep the three categories in dialectical tension,' and suggest that the way in which someone moves affects, as much as it is affected by thought processes. While literary analysis considers the complexities of what is produced by walking narrators, anthropological theory considers how these productions are formed in the lived space of material reality.

One example of this is the way in which Ingold and Vergunst observe that 'every step faces both ways: it is both the ending, or tip, of a trail that leads back through our past life, and a new beginning that moves us forward towards future destinations unknown' (Ingold and Vergunst:2008:1). It seems then, that while both literary critics and anthropologists draw on the language of spatial production, the former conclude that reading the act of walking produces various conflicting ideas and interpretations, while the latter find the root of this conflict in the very physicality of the act. Ingold and Vergunst go on to say that 'the body itself is grounded in movement' and 'is foundational to culture'. They urge that we look for 'the rooting of the social in the actual ground of lived experience, where the earth we tread interfaces with the air we breathe. It is along this ground and not in some ethereal realm of discursively constructed significance, over and above the material world, that lives are paced out' (Ingold and Vergunst:2008:2). This explains why for the governess, particularly in the city, walking is significant to her construction of self and world. Because of this in the analysis that follows, I remain aware of the governess's position as a walker in literature, but prefer to read her journey in an anthropological sense. Yet, even this is a fittingly literary act: 'One can read pedestrian movement from footsteps, as one can read a manual gesture from a written line...narrative writing is closely bound up with walking precisely because, just as with following footsteps, it allows one to read the words of someone – the author – who has gone before' (Ingold and Vergunst:2008:8).

Thus in reading the walk of Jameson's governess in Florence, I adopt what can be described as a retrospective anthro-literary approach. Anthropological studies of walking tend to be live acts that take place in the present, and although there can never be a live observation of the walking governess, in the passage that follows I attempt, with the benefit of hindsight and the disadvantage of ages past, to consider the governess-traveller's words and steps in equal measure. By reading her words and imaging her walk on a map which closely depicts the Florence of her time, it is possible to recapture a picture of Europe constructed by the governess-traveller and examine the process by which this occurs.

When staying in Florence Jameson's governess eventually has the opportunity to walk out and see the city alone:

I walked across the first bridge, from which I had a fine view of the Ponte della Trinità, with its graceful arches and light balustrade, touched with the sparkling moonbeams and relieved by dark shadow: then I strolled along the quay in front of the Corsini palace, and beyond the colonnade of the Uffizi, to the last of the four bridges; on the middle of which I stood and looked back upon the city—(how justly styled the Fair!)—with all its buildings, its domes, its steeples, its bridges, and woody hills and glittering convents, and marble villas, peeping from embowering olives and cypresses; and far off the snowy peaks of the Apennines, shining against the dark purple sky: the whole blended together in one delicious scene of shadowy splendour. After contemplating it with a kind of melancholy delight, long enough to get it by heart, I returned homewards.
(Jameson:2008:39)

It is fitting that Jameson's governess's walk begins on a bridge. While the governess-traveller can never be at home, it is appropriate that the starting point of her walk is one of her liminal sites, and a place where she feels at one with her surroundings. Yet, it is intriguing that the governess stands in the centre of one bridge, only to gaze out at another. Focussing her gaze in this way shows the governess-traveller to be mapping out her walk. While the touring walker might scan the landscape for signposts or footpaths, or the explorer might head for higher ground, the governess-traveller plots a route which encompasses the sites that she is most drawn to and most familiar with. That the governess finds the combination of 'moonbeams' and 'shadow' somewhat of a relief again points to her predilection for transitory experiences. Jameson, in this episode,

presents the governess's Europe as a complex blend of light and dark. Emphasised by the fact that she walks at twilight, we see in this passage that for the governess, Europe marks the end of one life and the beginning of a new one.

Even more illustrative of this is the governess's appreciation of her surroundings here. It is through walking, and remaining in motion that the governess-traveller is able to unite the many worlds her identity transcends. As she lists and admires features of both the city and nature, the governess unites her experience of landscape and architecture. She is no longer disturbed by the vastness of nature because it is tamed by the construction of man-made domes, steeples, and bridges. Typical of travel-writing, this passage conveys both the physical and psychological journey, with the physical landscape mirroring the governess's psychological landscape. Though once her descriptions of the natural landscape were projections of her isolation, now she sees the vast mountain-range and empty expanse of sky to 'blend' with the architectural footprint of society. The vision before her suggests that within the city, and among its inhabitants is a place for the governess's heterotopic experience, separate, but not utterly expelled from, nineteenth-century Britain's vision of Europe.

The rest of the governess's walk describes her route in such detail that it can be traced onto a nineteenth-century map of the city:

Men were standing on the wall along the Arno, in various picturesque attitudes, fishing, after the Italian fashion, with singular nets suspended to long poles; and as I saw their dark figures between me and the moonlight, and elevated above my eye, they looked like colossal statues. I then strayed into the Piazza del Gran Duca. Here the rich moonlight, streaming through the arcade of the gallery, fell directly upon the fine Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini; and illuminating the green bronze, touched it with a spectral and supernatural beauty. Thence I walked round the equestrian statue of Cosmo, and so home over the Ponte Alla Carrajo (Jameson:2008:39)

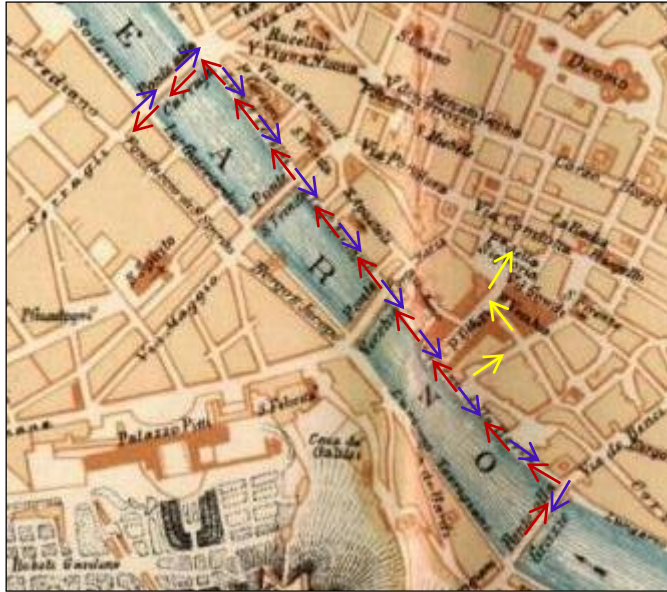


Fig.14. *Map of the Arno* (1877)
From Augustus Hare's *Florence*

Outward journey ———— Return journey ———— Detour ————

It is intriguing that while the governess's journey is anything but straightforward, the shape of her walk, the description of the city and even the portrayal of its inhabitants is linear. Arguably this is the case because in a world of uncertainty the governess hopes to regain some stability and control. In walking forwards then back along a straight line, she will most certainly get from A to B and back again without getting geographically, as she is socially, lost. In spite of this, the fact that men stand along the Arno like statues opposes Nord's theory that for women walking meant being objectified. In this episode the men are equated to the stonework the governess sees later in the square. They are observed in the same way one observes art and are effectively dehumanised and objectified by the gaze of the governess-traveller. It can be said, therefore, that walking empowers the governess. The path she treads is a platform, out of reach and out of danger, from which she can take in the city with voyeuristic authority. The shape of the walk itself depicts a long line. The governess sets out from one bridge to the other and then almost entirely retraces her steps, only drifting from the path to stroll around a nearby square. Jarvis and Nord might read this movement away from the path as an act of denial or transgression but bearing in mind the governess's affiliation with town-squares, arguably the shape of her walk incorporates a den space, connected to, but aside from the flow of other walkers and essentially the flow of society.

Walking is also a central theme in *Villette*. Often, as scholars have recognised previously, walking provides Lucy with a sense of freedom and escape:

The crétin being gone, I was free to walk out. At first I lacked courage to venture very far from the Rue Fossette, but by degrees I sought the city gates, and passed them, and then went wandering away far along chaussées, through fields, beyond cemeteries, Catholic and Protestant, beyond farmsteads, to lanes and little woods, and I know not where. A goad thrust me on, a fever forbade me to rest; a want of companionship maintained in my soul the cravings of a most deadly famine. I often walked all day, through the burning noon and the arid afternoon, and the dusk evening, and came back with moonrise (Brontë:2004:174-175)

In her walk, Lucy, like Jameson's governess, encounters scenes both urban and rural. While the walk's being equated to 'the crétin being gone' immediately associates walking with freedom, health and vitality, Lucy's trepidation to 'venture very far' in part corroborates Nord's argument that for women walking was a dangerous and transgressive act. Yet, Lucy is driven to overcome this fear by something more than the desire to cross social boundaries, and as with Lucy's previous encounters in the city, there is something very innate and instinctive in her urgency to walk. Ingold and Vergunst's idea that 'the body itself is grounded in movement' and 'is foundational to culture' is apparent in Lucy's desire to move, because despite the negative connotations surrounding the image of a woman walking alone, and while she has no idea where she is going, it is imperative that she continues to walk (Ingold and Vergunst:2008:2). It is via the act of walking, moving and travelling that the governess-traveller lives out her life and experiences both joy and sorrow. Walking is for the governess a mode of expression as much as it is a mode of travel. In this sense *Villette*, more than *Diary of an Ennuyée*, emphasises the reasons why walking is fundamental to the governess-traveller's experience both at home and abroad.

Although inspired to trek miles out into the countryside, Lucy's most significant experience of walking occurs within the city and within the walls of the Pensionnat:

The windowless backs of houses built in this garden, and in particular the whole of one side, was skirted by the rear of a long line of premises... the walk was narrow, and the neglected shrubs were grown very thick and close on each side, weaving overhead a roof of branch and leaf which the sun's rays penetrated but in rare chequers, this alley was seldom entered even during day, and after dusk was carefully shunned... the seclusion, the very gloom of the walk attracted me. For a long time the fear of seeming singular scared me away; but by degrees... I became a frequenter of this straight and narrow path. I made myself gardener of some tintless flowers that grew between its closely-ranked shrubs; I cleared away the relics of past autumns, choking up a rustic seat at the far end. (Brontë:2004:118)

This passage is reminiscent of the episodes of 'indoor travel' prevalent in *Jane Eyre*. It could even be said that Lucy's narrative is an extension of Jane's for though Jane's paces are limited to the corridors of Thornfield, Lucy's favoured walk only just surpasses the confines of the school. Like Jameson's governess, Lucy is able to walk alone only in the mornings or evenings, and the sense of peace she feels at this time is tantamount to her affiliation with anything transitional or temporary. As with Jameson's narrative, it is possible from Brontë's description to envision the shape of Lucy's walk. Once again, the governess-traveller follows a linear route, but this time this linearity is at its most extreme.

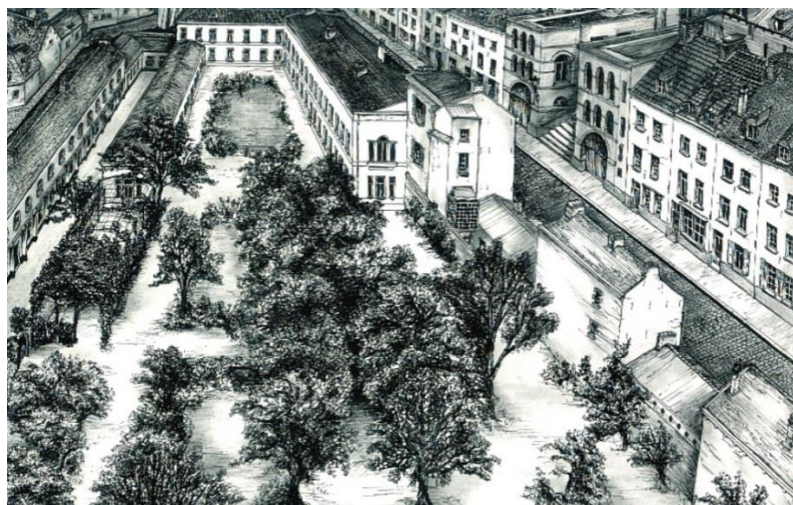


Fig. 15. Panoramic view of the Pensionnat and the garden (1995)
From Eric Ruijsenaars's *Charlotte Brontë's Promised Land*

Skirted by mostly windowless buildings and a high wall on the one side, Lucy's alley is the most secluded of all the alleys in the garden and forbidden to pupils. Once again, it seems that there are reasons for Lucy to avoid the walk and in this instance she is concerned about people's opinion of her. In spite of this her urgency to pace up and down the alley is stronger than her fear of what people might think. It is possible that Lucy's preference for the lonely alley mirrors her state of isolation, but the fact that Lucy traverses this forbidden space echoes Jarvis and Nord's argument that walking is a transgressive act. Yet, Lucy soon overcomes her fear of being observed or considered odd. She notes that the alley is mostly bordered by 'all blank stone, with the exception of certain attic loopholes high up, opening from the sleeping-rooms of the women-servants, and also one casement in a lower story said to mark the chamber or study of a master' (Brontë:2004:119). What is most significant about the shape of Lucy Snowe's and Jameson's governess's walk is it provides the perfect space for the governess-traveller to retrace her own steps.

The notion of retracing one's steps in fact relates to the way the governess views art, perceives space and in doing so constructs Europe. That both Jameson's governess's and Lucy Snowe's walks encompass linear channels in which the governess must turn back on herself and retrace her steps is in line with Ingold and Vergunst's notion that 'following footsteps...allows one to read the words of someone – the author – who has gone before' (Ingold and Vergunst:2008:8). In plotting her route the governess is the author or artist, crafting an image of Europe based on the space she chooses to inhabit. In retracing her steps she becomes the critic and is able to 'read' the image she has created for herself. In setting out, the governess-traveller forms perceptions as she learned to do from studying art but it is on returning and on retracing her steps that she 'reads' her footsteps, examines her own perceptions, and learns about herself so as to know her identity. This way, walking is key to how the governess-traveller simultaneously constructs space and self, and generates a picture of both Europe and her identity.

The governess-traveller's experience abroad is not simply about escaping social stigma, nor does it present a jaded kind of tourism. Although when away from the schoolroom the governess follows a route taken by upper-middle class tourists, namely that which encompasses the landscape, architecture, and art of each region she moves through, this in fact forms part of a complex web of experiences, some of which are shared by both the family governess and the solitary governess. What is significant,

though, is that the governess-traveller's experience of landscape, architecture, art and walking do, essentially, form a web. These are linked episodes which are influenced by one another and shape the governess's experience and her narrative. On arrival, the governess's displacement and feelings of being overwhelmed are manifest in her description of the landscape. Unsure of her own identity and uncertain as to the life that awaits her, the landscape she describes only ever mirrors the landscape of her mind. What is more, this struggle is both worsened and lessened by the governess-traveller's decision to write. Both Jameson's governess and Lucy Snowe find writing or narrating their experience problematic. Typical of governess-travellers, they shy away from the opportunity to write because severed from their former selves and exiled from genteel society, they lack the authorial voice required to present their version of Europe to the rest of the world. Eventually, though, the governess finds a means to carefully craft a unique and powerful narratorial voice, and that is through viewing and critiquing art. The governess's link to art, as an educated woman who has at least enough authority to teach, enables her to fine-tune her vision of the world. She discovers, through describing paintings, that she perceives the world from a unique and valid perspective and so accepts rather than resolves some of her 'status incongruence', happy to see in art and in Europe what the gentlewoman-traveller might not see (Peterson:1970:7). From this point she steps out of the gallery and wanders through the architecture of the city. The Europe she envisages is made three-dimensional by variations in the family governess's and solitary governess's experience. For while the family governess looks beyond the tourist route, gazing high up and far out, finally able to construct an image of Europe of her own making, the solitary governess's isolation weighs upon her so her focus is the interaction of her footsteps with the ground. The result is an image of Europe crafted of both horizontal and vertical strokes, a place both earthly and tribal, lofty and ethereal. When settled in the heart of the city the governess soon finds the opportunity to walk out alone, and it is when walking that all she has learnt so far comes into practice. Her walks are described in vivid detail and certainly contribute to her construction of Europe. More than anything, the shapes her walks assume, enable the governess to reflect on her perceptions and at the culmination of her experience abroad, eventually know her identity as a governess-traveller.

There are some differences in the family governess and solitary governess's experience, and Jameson's governess and Lucy Snowe's experience specifically. This variation, however, is not so strong as to incur large-scale conflict or contradiction in

what can be recognised as the governess's Europe or the governess-traveller's experience abroad. Often the family and solitary governess arrive at similar conclusions on matters of the self and world, but the differences occur in how the two types of governess come to form these conclusions. While Jameson's governess, suffering heart-ache, is cast out of her former life and then steered through Europe by the authority of her employer, Lucy Snowe seeks out a position abroad and travels alone at her own will. Though Jameson's governess finds solace in art and indulges in the opportunity to form her own, personal ideas, Lucy is often lost in loneliness and struggles to connect with anything beyond her own, troubled mindscape. While the family governess spends her time longing to move beyond her tour with the family, the solitary governess focuses her efforts on seeking out any traversable way forward. It seems, therefore, that while the family governess is pulled along, and forms an image of Europe only when she is able to indulge her subjectivity, the solitary governess's journey is propelled by her desire to seek out her place in the world. While these experiences do not go so far as to cause contradictions in the governess's Europe, they do form a dialogue impacted by diverse, wavering tensions, and thus the governess's Europe is presented as a fluctuating space. Yet, the family and solitary governess's experiences are united by Jameson and Brontë's depiction of the governess's walk. The protagonists share the need to make sense of their situation and so they both walk, back and forth on linear trails so as to pace out their anxieties, read, and re-read the nonsensical imprint, and eventually place their vision of Europe in the context of their subjective experience. Brontë illustrates the significance of this united experience in a relatively minor episode in *Villette*. In Chapter XXV, during Count Bassompierre's visit to Mrs Bretton's home where Lucy and the Count's daughter Paulina are staying, the Count, then a stranger to Lucy and with no knowledge of her circumstances, says something which perhaps speaks for all governess-travellers:

By nature he was a feeler and a thinker... He did not know much about Lucy Snowe; what he knew, he did not very accurately comprehend: indeed his misconceptions of my character often made me smile; but he saw my walk in life lay rather on the shady side of the hill: he gave me credit for doing my endeavour to keep the course honestly straight; he would have helped me if he could: having no opportunity of helping, he still wished me well... "Yours," said he, "is an arduous calling. I wish you health and strength to win in it—success." (Brontë:2004:316)

The Count is a mysterious character in the novel, representing both an unrealistic and idealistic version of Continental nobility. Brontë provides this character with great intuition, which in the first instance can be read as a plea to the upper-middle classes to pity the ill-fated governess. What the Count says, however, also epitomises the governess's experience abroad. His words immediately equate the governess's life to movement and travel, contemplating her very existence via the notion of walking. He regards her life as lying 'on the shady side of the hill,' and while this implies the governess's life is one of sorrow, it also highlights the fact that she sees the world from an alternative perspective. His respect for the governess's 'keeping the course straight' is a nod to her ability, through walking linear paths, to make sense of her situation and acknowledge the validity of her experience. His wishing the governess health and strength is another matter hugely relevant to the governess-traveller's life as a whole.

Travelling around Europe, and the rest of the world was no mean feat. Governesses certainly required their health and considerable physical and mental strength to manage the pressures of living and working on the move. This idea is highlighted by the overarching role of sickness prevalent in both *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette*. Sickness in Jameson's text, occurs whenever the governess is overwhelmed by feelings or realisations which remind her of the past and by proxy, signal the current state of her existence. But because of the semi-autobiographical nature of *Diary of an Ennuyée*, these recurring episodes of sickness can be read in a multitude of ways. One argument is that they represent episodes in which Jameson was retained by her professional duties as governess and was required to withdraw from the day's sightseeing. This is a fitting hypothesis considering that the end of her engagement and start of her governessing career meant that Jameson was forced to retreat from her old life. Another reading however, which is echoed in *Villette*, is that sickness and mental torment were symptomatic of governessing. Chronic loneliness, coupled with memories or dreams of a better life, send both Lucy Snowe and Jameson's governess into episodes of depression and the endings of both texts, like *Vanity Fair* and *Jane Eyre*, suggest that governessing on the move is not something that can be maintained indefinitely. The death of Jameson's governess points to her own return to England and the renewal of her engagement to Robert Jameson. Thus once again it is implied that governess-travellers must be rescued by marriage or succumb to ill health and eventually death.

In *Villette* Brontë makes this suggestion to some degree, but it is complicated by the matter of the storm. The ambiguity as to whether M. Emanuel returns and the sense of uncertainty this creates in Brontë's last lines points to the sort of life unmarried governesses were bound to expect until the day they died. There is little insight into the lives of governesses who held onto what Brontë's Count considers health and strength and continued to travel for their purpose of working abroad. One characterisation in fiction of this robust sort of woman is Charles Dickens's Mrs General in *Little Dorrit*. Despite being of middle age she longs to travel to Italy and storms through gallery after gallery as an authoritative, undeterred veteran governess-traveller, spurred on by her cause to 'form the mind[s]' of her pupils (Dickens:2002:425). Yet, the fact that Mrs General borders on being a caricature points to the unlikelihood that women could go on governessing all their lives. What is known is that more often than not 'in retirement, the governess was unlikely to be able to satisfy even the most basic requirement of middle-class respectability'; many of them were forced to live with other retired governesses, take up lodgings with strangers, or accept charity (Hughes:1993:175). Arguably this makes the governess-traveller's experience abroad even more valuable because her time in Europe and the narrative she produces are fruitful but limited sources for scholars of travel writing.

The governess-traveller's time on the Continent and the vast web of experience related to landscape, architecture, art, and walking form part of two principal concepts, namely the governess's construction of Europe and her simultaneous construction of 'self'. The governess's Europe is for both Jameson's governess and Lucy Snowe not so much a blank space to be colonised as a network of unconnected co-ordinates which the governess-traveller must somehow make sense of. She is neither the first to discover nor write about the places she sees and for this reason the idea that the governess constructs Europe has more to do with the act of mapping than with the act of colonisation or 'transplanting' Englishness. Her narrative is a textual topography of liminal sites, borders both oppressive and traversable, panoramic cityscapes and graduating terrains. While Europe was central to cultivating tourists who shared an inherently middle-upper class British identity, such spaces enable the governess to express and represent her own identity, nurture her subjectivity, and at the pinnacle of this, produce what we can term the governess travel narrative.

CHAPTER THREE

WRITING THE GOVERNESS TRAVEL NARRATIVE

Up to this point I have identified the governess-traveller as both a literary figure and travel writer, and shown how by journeying in England and overseas, she comes to recognise, and even embrace, her uniquely liminal identity. Now, however, I move my focus to real-life travel writing to examine how the governess uses her position to her advantage, and produces a text which is novel in its content and tone. In short, this chapter will establish how the governess-traveller constructs her authorial voice in the sub-genre I term the ‘governess travel narrative’.

Alongside exploring the governess’s reflections on the acts of travel and writing, I will analyse the structure of the text she produces and identify the key tropes and conventions which make the governess travel narrative its own, unique sub-genre. Turning my attention to non-fiction is timely at this point. While analysing fiction and semi-autobiographical writing allowed me to untangle the notion of the governess-traveller from the overarching governess archetype, I have yet to investigate travel narratives in which the previously overlooked voice of the governess-traveller speaks for itself.

The first text discussed in this chapter is little-known travel writer Emmeline Lott’s *The Governess in Egypt: Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople* (1865). Not much is known about Lott other than that she was born between the 1830 and 1840 and published three books about Egypt, where she taught the Viceroy’s son (Wojcik:2006:235). While Lott lived and worked in Egypt much was changing. When she arrived in 1863, the Viceroy Ismail had not long since ascended the throne and Egypt was more unstable than ever. Amid the cotton boom he borrowed money from European bankers to fund agricultural development, and in 1864 he was forced to pay off a huge debt in order to obtain the rights to land and labour. To do so Ismail raised the land tax putting huge strain upon his citizens (Hunter:1984:39). Yet amid Egypt’s economic downturn and increasing dependence on European funds, Ismail did a great deal to modernise and essentially westernise Egypt. He opened schools across Cairo,

founded a teacher training college and sent many officials to Europe to obtain a Western education. With the funds he did have, railways, factories, and sugar refineries were built (Hunter:1984:39). The Egypt Lott visited, therefore, was content to work with the West for the purpose of world trade so long as it retained national autonomy. Ismail, who was somewhat fascinated with Western culture, was keen for his son, the Grand Pacha Ibrahim, to receive what he felt was a good quality 'English' education so as to maintain international relations once he succeeded him to the throne. It is uncertain precisely how Lott came to be offered the position of governess, but when she did the young prince was just five years old, and like many governesses Lott became her charge's carer as well as his teacher. Apart from a German laundry maid Lott was the only European woman working in the palace with frequent access to the Harem where she met with her charge, spent time with his mother, and spoke to the other princesses. Such long-term access to Harem life shows how the governess's 'status incongruence' was key to her unique perspective on the world.

The second text I will discuss comes slightly later than Lott's and is even less well-known. *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess* by Ellen Chennells was published in 1893, though unlike Lott, Chennells was in no great hurry to make her account public. Born around 1814, Chennells was older than the other governesses considered in this thesis by the time she taught the Princess Zeyneb, daughter of the Viceroy Ismail, between 1871 and 1876. While the access she had to Harem life was similar to Lott's, Chennells was part of a group of English teachers responsible for educating the Viceroy's children. She worked alongside Mr Freeland, an Oxford graduate, and for a time lived with his family in a house not far from the palace. At this point the Viceroy was struggling to retain political control. 'A shift in terms of trade by which Egypt became a receiver of manufactured goods and a provider of raw materials to Europe [caused] rapid growth of European political influence and a loss of Viceregal control over Europeans living in Egypt' (Hunter:1984:33). In cities such as Cairo, buildings were being erected in the European style, the cotton business was bringing in colonial expatriates as never before, and Egypt was more westernised than ever. The extent of this is revealed when we find that Chennells's charge, the Princess Zeyneb, and many servants in the palace, speak at least a little English. More was to change, however, between the time Chennells left Egypt and later published her book. As Lanver Mak notes:

By 1872, the Khedive... had acquired such a massive debt – by trying to make Cairo look like a city in Europe through erecting European-style streets, gardens, and buildings – that he was forced to sell his shares in the Suez Canal to Britain. Thereafter, to regulate the Egyptian economy in order to appease British and French creditors, Britain and France instituted a system of Dual Control over much of Egypt's financial affairs, bringing in considerable numbers of British and French civil servants to manage Egypt economically. (Mak:2011:9-10)

In 1882 there was an Egyptian revolt, but this was soon crushed by the British military which 'quickly established a renewed stability under British authority... This form of British rule in Egypt became known as the "veiled protectorate" whereby the Egyptian Khedive and his ministers were officially in control of government departments, but in reality, the British Consul General and his advisors were in charge' (Mak:2011:10). Political unrest continued until Ismail was overthrown. By 1914, on the verge of the First World War, Egypt became a formal protectorate of Britain (Mak:2011:13). In many ways, then, Lott's text depicts a country which is anxious about, but not utterly discouraging of, westernisation, while by the time Chennells published her book, Egypt had been crippled financially and Europe had taken control of the country's finances. For this reason both Chennells herself, and the Egypt she depicts, are more anxious about the long-lasting effects of colonial enterprise. This history will impact my reading of these two connected, but sometimes very different texts, because in uncovering how far the governess presents an imperialist view of the foreign land, I must ascertain how she situates herself within a constantly changing imperialist context. At this point it is also important to recognise that while Lott's journey takes place in the 1860s, and Chennells's begins in the 1870s, the different cultural contexts in which these two governesses travel continue to be affected by Egypt's past.

Though Lott and Chennells spend most of their time in Egypt, their movements between Egypt and Constantinople highlight Egypt's role in the Ottoman Empire. Since medieval times, the Ottoman Empire had been both a source of great concern and great intrigue to Europeans. Alain Grosrichard tells us that since 1453, when Mehmet II conquered Byzantium

the Ottoman Empire set itself down at the gates of Europe, to which it would be a constant military threat for nearly two centuries. For the sixteenth-century European he would be a

fearsome – not to say hated – though respected enemy; he was feared for a power that derived from the courage and discipline of his armies and the burning faith that drove them.

(Grosrichard:1998:19)

By the seventeenth century, however, internal conflict within its borders was causing the Ottoman Empire to decline. ‘Bloody revolts multiplied... four sultans would be deposed or assassinated [and] between January 1664 and September 1656 seventeen grand viziers would succeed one another with only one of them dying a natural death... At one and the same time, without ceasing to be feared, Ottoman might became an enigma’ (GrosRichard:1998:20). A century on, less than three decades prior to Lott’s arrival in Egypt, the Egyptian Viceroy, Muhammad Ali, took steps to modernise and in many ways Westernise Egypt so as to extend his power within, and beyond the Empire. He took control of Syria in 1832 and in 1839 was victorious in a battle with the Sultan’s troops at Nezip. In 1840 Britain intervened. Fearful that the conflict might seep into Europe, Britain facilitated an agreement between Ali and the Turkish Sultan, which meant that although Egypt would remain under the umbrella of the Ottoman Empire, Ali was awarded the power to govern and the right of succession was reserved for his sons (Toledano:2003:16-20).

Ismail, who ruled for the duration of Lott and Chennells’s stay in Egypt, was Muhammad Ali’s grandson, and shared many of his grandfather’s aspirations for a modern Egypt. Yet the overarching supremacy of the Turkish Sultan, meant that the country he governed was imbued with various converging and conflicting cultural codes. At the top of the social hierarchy was the ‘Ottoman-Egyptian elite’, who despite coming from countries right across the empire, tended to speak Turkish, be Muslim and support the idea of an Ottoman-Egyptian Egypt governed by the Viceroy but ultimately under the power of the Sultan. In comparison, the non-elite, and indeed the majority of the Egyptian population, tended to speak Arabic and follow Arab-Egyptian traditions. In *State and Society in mid-nineteenth-century Egypt* (1990), Ethud Toledano explains that ‘[u]nlike Ottoman-Egyptian elite culture, which was imperial, universal but Istanbul centred, and literate, Arab-Egyptian culture was rooted in the Egyptian locale, replete with themes and images of both village and city life in the Nile Valley’ (Toledano:2003:16). However, Toledano also stresses that ‘Egyptian society at the time was not segregated but segmented, and interaction between its various groups was

common. In socio-cultural terms we can speak of a number of sub-cultures. While each subculture had a distinct core their peripheries overlapped in a noticeable measure...and where the cultural peripheries overlapped, bilingualism existed, and social mobility occurred through education and service to the state' (Toledano:2003:16-17). It is amid this multi-cultural, 'segmented,' but interactive society that both Lott and Chennells attempt to establish their voice within the discourse of travel writing. What I will go on to show in the remainder of this chapter is that doing so means trying to situate their voice within an ever shifting paradigm of power relations, where neither the governess's, the West's nor the East's perception of itself and others is static.

This area of my analysis draws largely on the theories of Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978). Questioning how far the governess conforms to imperialist attitudes means assessing how and whether she contributes to Orientalist discourse 'as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it...having authority over [it]' (Said:2003:3). While Said separates the politics of British imperialism and the cultural 'othering' of the East that appears in literature and art, he maintains that Orientalism 'was reinforced by, the certain knowledge that Europe or the West literally commanded the vastly greater part of the earth's surface' (Said:2003:40).

Where the governess abroad has been considered previously, literary critics align her narrative with Orientalist and imperialist discourse in their suggestion that once overseas she was able to attribute her social displacement to national differences and 'transplant... a particular type of Englishness to the four corners of the globe' (Broughton and Symes:1997:153) (Hughes:2001:xv). There is certainly evidence for this line of thought. Spurred on by the imperialist cause and the popular press, agencies such as the Female Middle Class Emigration Society sought simultaneously to resolve the 'odd woman' problem at home, and serve the British Empire. At the forefront of these organisations women such as Maria Rye felt that by sending governesses abroad, they could ensure the moral enlightenment of colonised nations. I argue however, that this enterprise was perhaps not so straightforward. The idea that despite being regarded as socially 'foreign' within the borders of their own nation, governesses could suddenly regain their sense of self and place so as to become agents of imperialism overseas is quite problematic. To assume that while their social and gender identity hung in the

balance their national identity remained intact is unrealistic and suggests that the governess travel narrative is a simple example of imperialist propaganda.

Yet, in Patricia Clarke's edited collection *The Governesses: Letters from the Colonies* one governess presents a more confused and agitated reflection on the state of her Englishness. Susan Penrose, who emigrated with the help of the Female Middle Class Emigration Society to Melbourne in October 1867, speaks for herself and her friend Laura Jones when she says: 'We have neither of us obtained situations – everyone appears suspicious of engaging new arrivals...Miss Jones is quite in despair, her English certificates are not of the slightest value here...They all seem to prefer colonists. Everything is dull at present' (Clarke:1985:119). From this it is clear that when a governess chose to relocate abroad, her Englishness did not necessarily mean she escaped her awkward social position enough to immediately procure an authorial voice in the discourse of travel writing and imperialism. Susan Penrose's letter shows that in Australia at least, English birth and English qualifications might mean very little.

With this in mind I argue that while in an attempt to secure her position as a respectable English gentlewoman the governess taps into the Orientalist and imperialist discourse that cemented ideas of Britain as 'the occident' and the East as 'the Other', this is not always her chief priority, nor is it the sole purpose of the governess travel narrative (Said:2003:12). Said emphasises the importance of analysing individual contributions to Orientalist discourse when he states that 'falsely unifying rubrics like "America," "The West" or "Islam" and...collective identities for large numbers of individuals who are actually quite diverse, cannot remain as potent as they are, and must be opposed' (Said:2003:xxii). The governess's social displacement means her very existence points to the falseness of such 'unifying rubrics' as 'British' and 'middle class', thus it stands to reason that when overseas she has the potential to destabilise certain Orientalist and imperialist assumptions regarding 'The West' and 'The East'. Whether or not by travelling the governess escapes her awkwardness or transplants her Englishness as suggested by Hughes and Broughton and Symes, chiefly the governess travels to locate her voice within the community of the foreign locale and the discourse of travel writing. As Said remarks:

Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds,

the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf... Additionally, each work on the Orient *affiliates* itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself. (Said:2003:20)

Said shows us that the process through which travel-writers locate their voice is of equal importance to the picture they ultimately produce. As I approached the works of Brontë, Thackeray and Jameson to show how through travelling the governess finds the ‘scattered self’ I will approach the travel narratives of Lott and Chennells through methodologies which expose how in non-fiction the governess travels to find a voice. The fact that writing about Egypt is, as Said explains, to ‘translate’ it and the writer’s relation to it into text, develops the way I have drawn on the ideas of Butler, Lefebvre, and Harvey because it points to the linguistic rather than psychological mechanics through which self and space are reciprocally constructed. Since my interest in this chapter is the very fabric of the text through which Lott and Chennells represent their involvement in the foreign land, the conceptual umbrella, beneath which these theories function as part of a unified body of analysis, is the notion of cultural translation.

Everything the governess does from the minute she sets foot on foreign soil contains an element of translation. Monsika Gomille argues that ‘Translation has thus two fundamental aspects: It is a *textual* practice, a form of (re)writing the contact between different cultures, on the one hand, and a *performative* act, on the other’ (Gomille:2008:vii). It is, in the latter sense, the process by which the governess, when living and working in the palace, situates herself in relation to the culture she goes on to describe in text. This could be said of all travel writers because everything they see, hear and do within a foreign locale is translated so as to have meaning within the cultural consciousness of the audience back at home. This is why travel writers so often make comparisons between life in the foreign land, and that in their home country. Yet, because the governess-traveller is a uniquely liminal figure, she is more aware of her own subjectivity and in turn more aware of the cultural-relativity of translation. Her narrative is as much a work of self-discovery as the discovery of new worlds and she knows first-hand that one person’s image of the world differs from the next depending on their social status and gender identity. Her translation of the world into text itself travels between two discursive worlds and it is not surprising that when residing in Egypt these worlds are those of her Western audience, driven by the upper-middle class

to which the governess clings, and the culture of the Egyptian palace, to which the governess has a unique form of access. Reading the process through which the governess translates and decodes the world is key to unravelling the complexities of both her identity and her narrative.

The governess's involvement in cultural translation can be broken down into four key strands which together make up the governess travel narrative. These strands are distinct, but interwoven narrative structures which reflect key episodes in the travel writer's experience. They can be identified quite simply as times in which the governess's chief focus is moving, reading and listening, language-learning or looking. The structure of this chapter is based on the analysis of each of these strands in turn. Initially I will develop my analysis of the topic of the governess's movements as touched upon in earlier chapters. While Chapter One shows how by moving the governess constructs her identity, and Chapter Two shows how movement overseas aids her in crafting a subjective view of the world, this chapter will investigate how, by writing her movements, the governess's subjectivity is translated into text as she goes on to 'write the self' into the discourse of travel writing. Next, I will examine moments where the governess reads and listens to other people's descriptions of Egypt so as to differentiate these narratives from her own. Like many governesses, Lott's and Chennells's prior knowledge of Egypt comes from books or other travellers. Within their recollection of these episodes both governesses become increasingly intrigued by the notion of language as they contemplate how their own perception of Egypt differs from that of other travel writers and how all of this compares to the native reality. It is in reading and listening to other people's accounts of Egypt that the governess begins to contemplate the complexity of both cultural and linguistic translation and it is at this point that my analysis draws largely on aspects of translation theory. This feeds into the third strand in the governess travel narrative, where the governess directly refers to the matter of learning a foreign language and the act of translation. In this section I consider how the governess presents the act of learning Arabic or Turkish for two reasons. In the first instance she does this so as to communicate successfully among the Ottoman-Egyptian community, but she also learns languages for the purpose of gaining insight into the subject she is to write about. This is where, yet again, the line between the traveller's experience and the act of translation is blurred, because all the time Lott and Chennells are learning Arabic and Turkish, they are writing of their experience in English. As they attempt to work through this, the fourth strand in the governess travel

narrative emerges. Caught amid a tangled web of language and semantics the governess looks upon her already unfamiliar surroundings from an even more unfamiliar position, where words and meanings are constantly being renegotiated. It is at this point that the ‘things’ the governess sees, thinks and writes about are instrumental to her attempt at cultural translation, so in the latter part of this chapter my analysis is informed by an approach I develop from thing theory. It is in describing ‘things’ that the governess resolves some of the complexities bound up with language-learning and translation, finds her own way to associate signs and objects, fine-tunes her authorial voice and finally situates her perceptions within or aside from the discourse of British travel writing, Orientalism and imperialism.

MOVEMENT

During their time in Egypt both Lott and Chennells, like all of the governesses in this thesis, tell of their movements both in and out of doors. As I have previously shown, these movements are instrumental to the way the governess expresses her identity via spatial production. As governesses who went abroad as far as the Middle East, Lott and Chennells are particularly preoccupied with the matter of their own movements. The very title of Lott’s account *Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople*, is suggestive of movement and mobility between two locales. Chennells, in her account, records her visits to numerous places including Cairo and Constantinople. As it is for the protagonist in Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée*, and Lucy Snowe in *Villette*, walking through these places is central to the process by which the governess-traveller in Egypt cultivates her subjectivity. However, in *The Governess in Egypt* and *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess*, moving through space helps the governess to craft her subjectivity into something more tangible because both Lott and Chennells travel with the intention of writing about their experience. Essentially, the governess-traveller’s subjectivity is translated into text and becomes the authorial voice of the ‘governess travel narrative’.

Lott does not appear to travel as much as Chennells, but an outdoor space where she frequently moves about is the Harem garden. In this way her narrative echoes that of Lucy Snowe, whereas Chennells’s narrative, which records various trips and excursions up and down the Nile, is more like Anna Brownell Jameson’s. For Lott, the garden provides a limited degree of freedom from the confines of the palace; limited because

not even the beautiful, exotic scenery completely distracts her from her own irritableness. Towards the end of her book she reminds her reader: 'I was constantly being sent out with the Prince into the gardens during the intense heat of the day, the thermometer often ranging from 99 to 100 degrees; it really seemed as if H.H the Princess Epouse considered that I had been thoroughly acclimatized before I entered the Harem' (Lott:2000:207). As always, the governess's journey is limited by the nature of her profession. If travelling allows her to escape her awkwardness or assert her Englishness, then it is within the bounds of the contract drawn up by her employer.

Earlier on, however, the Harem gardens play a pivotal role in the way Lott forms an authorial voice. Her description of the garden in which she recounts the size, shape and layout of the garden in detail, employs positional phrases such as 'At one end....At each of the four corners, at the sides of the corners...along the path to the left' so as to construct a precise, almost architectural blueprint-like image of the scene (Lott:2000:104-5). Within her narrative here it is as if Lott assumes the role of Head Gardener, carefully drafting the textual topography of the landscape. It is this way that the governess-traveller proves she has unique insight into palace life and begins to establish herself as a valuable informant in the genre of travel writing.

At the culmination of her description Lott concludes:

For we have all along been describing the Harem gardens, in which, however, strange to state, their highnesses the Princesses seldom if ever promenaded. Why or wherefore I am unable to say ...The grounds of Frogmore, the Crystal Palace, St.Cloud, Versailles, the Duke of Devonshire's far-famed Chatsworth, and our national pride, Kensington Gardens, and Windsor Home Park, exquisite, beautiful, and rural as they are...lack the brilliant display of exotics which thrive here in such luxuriance.
(Lott:2000:109)

There are two elements to Lott's summation of the harem gardens here. First she criticises the fact that the Princesses rarely walk in this beautiful place, and secondly, she both praises and critiques the not quite so superior splendour of famous gardens in Britain. The way she moves through the garden, then in Egypt but remembering Britain and making comparisons between the two, mirrors her position as an author. By refraining from wholly praising one way of life above the other, the governess hints that her account will neither affirm nor negate a typically imperialist view of the world. Lott

speaks of the garden as if it were her own, personal space, uninhabited by the women of the harem, and inaccessible to Western travellers. Like her narrative, the garden embodies an Egypt, unseen and untouched by the West, albeit a translated Egypt experienced by a foreign governess, not a native Egyptian. From making the garden her own in this way Lott goes on to declare:

Murray in his Handbook for Egypt, states, that “*none* of the Viceregal palaces are worth visiting.” I must beg to differ from the author of that work, and to explain that no travellers have as yet been able to inspect those on the banks of the Lower and Upper Nile... in most cases the Harems adjoin them, and for that reason they would be inaccessible. (Lott:2000:110-111)

In describing the garden Lott acknowledges and begins to celebrate the fact that as much as she is alone geographically and culturally her voice and narrative are unique in their insight into palace life. In this way Lott’s correction of Murray shows the governess-traveller’s ‘status incongruence’ translated into narrative authority (Peterson:1970:7).

Like the governess of Jameson’s *Diary* Chennells grasps at the opportunity of sightseeing alone, without the company of her charge or employer. Intriguingly, the similarity between the two governesses does not end here, for though they travel fifty-years and thousands of miles apart, Chennells’s wanderings, like Jameson’s, are based around a bridge:

On the third day, as I found my pupil was not coming, I went into Constantinople... I landed at the bridge at the entrance of the Golden Horn. It is a wooden structure, connecting Constantinople with the European suburbs of Galata and Pera [and] is now quite inadequate to the traffic occasioned by the steamers, and this causes great delay in landing and embarking ...Perhaps there is no place in the world more striking to a stranger than that which presents itself on the first arrival at the bridge at Constantinople. The great variety of costume worn by the passers-by, there congregated, as in one common centre, from every nation in Europe and Asia... all make a panorama of unequalled beauty and interest. (Chennells:2008:79-80)

Perhaps it is no surprise that Chennells is drawn to the bridge at Galata as shown in the image below, since that, like the governess-traveller, the bridge is a liminal entity, straddling two worlds and struggling to do its job when continually bombarded by the

needs of an increasingly demanding society. Equally, the bridge and the governess are in a position to offer a unique view of the world. Both are witness to a changing landscape, where rightly or wrongly, once distant cultures are ‘bridged’ by colonial enterprise and fast-approaching modernity. What Chennells sees in the bridge at Constantinople echoes what she produces in her narrative, namely a space where ‘Europe and Asia’ are merged, and Ottoman and European lives intermingle, the result of which is uniquely captivating.



Fig. 16. *Kara-Kevi Galata Bridge, Constantinople (1890-1900)*
Photograph, Private Collection

From the bridge, Chennells goes on into the city. In a way her movement here is reminiscent of Jane Eyre’s carriage journey, in that, rather than travelling on foot, Chennells takes the omnibus:

When I descended to Galata, I crossed the bridge; and remembering the tramway I had seen on a previous visit, I took one of the omnibuses...exclusively for women, and from the windows I saw splendid views over the Sea of Marmora. The streets were well laid out; but as the new houses are all to be of brick or stone, there were as yet few built. I heard the conductor say a few words in Italian, so I addressed him in that language, which he spoke very well, though I found he was a Turk. He told me the names of all the places I passed, and said he had been a long time in Italy, and also in England. His principal recollection

of the latter country was of Madame Tussaud's Exhibition.
(Chennells:2008:93)

Like Jane Eyre in the carriage and Lott in the garden, here Chennells enjoys a space that, if not solely for her, is at least specifically for women, and provides her with some time to take in her surroundings and reflect. Her recollection of the 'splendid views' over open water points directly to the fact that when between locations and temporarily freed from their duties, governess-travellers were privy to a certain amount of enjoyment and a freedom and independence perhaps unknown to married women. In this way Chennells's description of the building work becomes symbolic of the construction of her identity as a governess-traveller, and her hopes for both her new life in Egypt and the narrative she will produce. All of this is rapidly confused, though, when Chennells turns her attention to the idea of language.

While Chennells and the Italian-speaking Turk are able to communicate quite easily, she is surprised by the fact that the language he speaks and his national identity do not correlate. If anything her recollection of the conductor suggests that in a world where international movement was becoming more common and European empires were expanding, where language and identity were concerned, things were not always as they seemed. This passage echoes the governess-traveller's struggle to identify both self and world when living in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual society. At the end of this episode Chennells finds herself speaking of Madame Tussaud's, as if she were back at home in England. It is questionable at this point whether the governess travelled far enough to move beyond English culture, her own social marginalisation and the sway of imperialism so as to write about Egypt and Turkey as countries in their own right, and not just as 'others' in relation to home. Chennells's movements through the Ottoman city show that if she is to represent this world in text, the governess must make sense of what is culturally confusing and 'bridge' the known and the unknown via the act of translation. Thus translation is the literary device fundamental to the writing of the governess travel narrative.

READING AND LISTENING

The next key strand in the governess travel narrative, in which the governess attempts to make sense of some of this confusion, involves her reading and listening to other people's accounts of Egypt. As in Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* and Brontë's *Villette*, in *The Governess in Egypt* Lott's thought-provoking preface shows that the governess immediately recognises the difference between herself and other writers. Unlike Jameson, however, Lott is fairly comfortable with the perspective from which she writes:

Upwards of a century has rolled away since that graceful, unaffected, but perhaps too scrupulous epistolary writer, the accomplished and "charming Lady Mary Montagu," accompanied her *caro sposo*, Mr Edward Wortley Montagu, to Constantinople...that "Princess of Female Writers" published in her Letters an account of her visits to some of the Harems of the *elite* of the Turks of that period...yet, as she had not been allowed to penetrate beyond the reception halls, nor to pollute the floors of the chambers of those "Castles of Indolence" with her defiling footsteps, the social manners, habits, and customs of the *Crème de la Crème* of both Turkish and Egyptian noblesse, and the Star Chamber of Ottoman intrigue, were to her all unexplored regions (Lott:2000:v-vii)

Mirroring the interplay between Jane Eyre and Blanche Ingram, at first Lott claims to be writing in the shadow of Montagu and this culminates in the way she refers to her as a princess. Though this can be read as glorifying praise of the acclaimed travel writer, the word 'princess' is an intriguing choice by Lott, considering the content of her book, because it equates Lady Montagu with the princesses of the harem. Lott continues in a manner indirectly critical of her. While her satirical jibes towards the 'Castles of Indolence' suggest that Montagu was lucky to avoid entering the harem, and the view that Montagu could neither penetrate, pollute, nor defile the harem refers to the fact she was not a Muslim, Lott's language is undeniably ironic here. Arguably she hints that it is Montagu, like the Harem princesses, and not the governess-traveller who sees the world from a place of shadow. Through the combination of her backhanded compliment and satirical slur against Harem life, she discredits the writings of married female-travellers who journeyed with their husbands, and presents a more feminist outlook

which gives higher regard to women who travel independently and make up their own mind about the foreign land.

Lott continues to present conflicting attitudes concerning the position of herself and others when she states:

It was reserved to a humble individual like myself...to become the unheard of instance in the annals of the Turkish Empire...and thus an opportunity has been afforded me of, Asmodeus-like, uplifting that impenetrable veil which had hitherto baffled (like that of a European's pilgrimage to Mecca, until so bravely and successfully accomplished by the gallant Captain Burton) all the exertions of Eastern travellers (Lott:2000:viii)

This passage is widely inconsistent. In the first instance, Lott plays on her social inferiority and implies that her humility granted her entrance to the harem, but she goes on to compare herself to the mythical Asmodeus. The name Asmodeus, which comes from the Hebrew word for devil, has been linked to various personas throughout history. In Ancient Greece and Renaissance Catholicism he was thought to be the King of Demons, demon of lust, and ruler of the nine hells, but Lott's reference more closely relates to the character in Alain-René Lesage's French novel *Le Diable Boiteux* or *The Devil of Two Sticks* (1707). Amongst other things, Lesage is credited with an attempt to translate and extend Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, but *Le Diable Boiteux* is a comic novel which tells the story of Don Cleophas who accidentally frees a devil. In return, the devil (Asmodeus) makes all the rooftops of Madrid transparent and shows Don Cleophas the secrets of each household. It is to Lesage's version of Asmodeus that Lott compares herself here. In doing so she negates her previous statement regarding her humility. Instead she suggests that the governess-traveller is in a position of power, and that out of social displacement come agency and authority.

The other traveller to whom Lott refers in this passage, 'the gallant Captain Burton,' is also highly significant. Richard Francis Burton travelled to Mecca disguised as a Muslim in 1853 and published his account *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Meccah* in 1855. Later in his life and unknown to Lott when she published her book, Burton became a hugely controversial figure. After exploring the African Great Lakes with John Hanning Speke between 1856 and 1860, Burton continually quarrelled with Speke as to whether Lake Victoria truly was the source of the River Nile. While Speke was certain of this fact, which despite lack of evidence

proved to be true, Burton remained unconvinced (Lovell:1998:188-9). To add to the rift, the men struggled to settle the debts they had acquired during their travels (Lovell:1998:197). When Burton and Speke were set to meet in Bath to finally settle their debate, Speke stormed out of the room and later that day, fatally shot himself. Whether the shooting was suicide or accident is still disputed among scholars (Lovell:1998:275-8).

The point of all this is that although Burton's travels made him famous, and led people like Lott to hold him in high esteem, they also made him a controversial figure. Burton's remarkable grasp of languages meant he produced many works of travel writing and numerous translations. Though on the one hand this meant he published prolifically, it also got him into trouble. Questions were asked as to how far Burton would go to present an 'authentic' account of Eastern life, one being whether or not he killed a boy who could have blown his cover as a non-believer journeying to Mecca (Brodie:1967:3). The fact that he had the linguistic skill to translate works such as *The Arabian Nights* and *The Karma Sutra* meant that some considered him to be subversive. Bearing in mind that an educated army man from a respectable family could by travelling damage his reputation, it is questionable how a financially insecure and socially inferior governess might fare in her attempt at travel writing. In this way Lott's preface and her reference to Burton can be read as an eerie foreshadowing of the public's scorn should she go too far for the sake of her story. To ensure her respectability within both the Egyptian palace and the world of publishing it seems that the governess must find a voice somewhere between that of a humble servant and authorial didact, and present an account which is both unique in its insight and appropriate for an audience with imperial attitudes, reading in colonial Britain.

Ellen Chennells's preface to *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess by her Governess* is much more sombre than Lott's as it is influenced by her financial hardship and grief at losing three young charges. It does, however, illustrate that like Lott, Chennells is preoccupied with how her narrative compares to that of other writers:

Every book published in London or Paris was immediately procured in Cairo, and great displeasure was manifested when (as occasionally happened) some distinguished visitor to the harem gave her impression to the world at large

I had always been in the habit of keeping a journal when travelling or residing in foreign countries, and as I wrote openly it soon attracted the notice and disapprobation of my pupils. "Was I going to publish a book?" they asked. I said, "No; but as everything was new and strange to me, I wished to write down my impressions while still fresh, to assist my memory in later years." (Chennells:2009:v)

Chennells's preface epitomises the governess's struggle both to live within and write about the harem. Just like the governess in Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*, Chennells insists that she had no intention to publish her account and she wrote only to preserve her cherished memories. At first it seems that rather than being empowered by her position as a Western woman living and working in the East, Chennells feels just as oppressed as the inhabitants of the harem. By speaking out she fears she might disgrace the Egyptian Viceroy, his family and friends, and perhaps this is not surprising, since governesses at home often became scapegoats for problems within the family and society. Yet, because her chief concern is that she might be scorned by Eastern culture, it appears that by going abroad she moves beyond her loyalty to Western society. More conflict arises, though, when Chennells explains how she changes her mind and later resorts to publishing her account:

When I left Egypt in the autumn of 1876, all I possessed was invested in Egyptian bonds, bought in at prices ranging from £80 to £90. They kept falling! Falling! Falling!...Several years have passed: of the four children whom we educated, three are dead...Under these circumstances there is no-one left to feel aggrieved at my publication, and I have spoken ill of none. (Chennells:2009:v-vi)

In the first part of her preface Chennells is clearly critical of wealthy writers who travelled in the East for pleasure and produced voyeuristic, Orientalist accounts. This justification for publishing her book, in which the statistics and exclamations of 'falling' emphasise her financial distress, shows the governess to be exceedingly willing and almost desperate to dissociate herself from the larger body of nineteenth-century travel writing. Like Lott then, Chennells suggests that it is being socially inferior and financially dependent on her work that gives the governess's travel narrative integrity and credibility. Both governesses identify a niche in the market of travel writing that for all her problems, only the governess could fill.

Alongside comparing herself to other writers, the governess reads and listens to the stories of others throughout the course of her journey. Examining the governess's reaction to what she reads and listens to before and during her voyage is the first step to untangling the conflicting voices in her preface. The first instance of this occurs in *A Governess in Egypt* when Lott meets the Greek merchant Mr Xenos aboard her train to the palace. In the first two chapters of her book, Lott avoids disclosing her own thoughts and ideas, and for a grand total of twenty-eight pages recalls the warning words of Mr Xenos. Arguably, Lott does so because, like Anna Brownell Jameson, at this stage of her journey she feels she has little to say about the foreign land, particularly considering that she could not speak much of the language. It seems, though, that in his account Mr Xenos says as much about the universal complexity of the governess's position as he does about Egyptian society. Lott says of the merchant that 'his twenty years' experience of life in Egypt led him to regard my position as one fraught with considerable perplexity,' but this is not strictly because she is an English woman immersed in an Egyptian way of life (Lott:2000:6). He tells her:

“you should find it necessary to battle with H.H's reputed associates to obtain European comforts about you, and to maintain your status as an English lady...I admit your position as an English lady entitles you to receive every attention, yet at the same time you will be called upon to conform to many strange whims, fancies and customs, which may appear most singular and outlandish to your European notions...And no doubt your position will cause you to be feared by the slaves...the sad monotony of the daily life you will be called upon to lead will be of such a melancholy, convent-like nature, that in my opinion, it were better far that you had immured yourself within the cell of a nunnery.” (Lott:2000:6-16)

Mr Xenos's preoccupation with the governess-traveller's identity, and Lott's decision to record his account in detail, demonstrate how far she was aware that in order to work within and write about the Egyptian palace, she must locate an authorial voice. Twice, Xenos refers to Lott as an 'English lady', but the more he gazes at her across the railway carriage, and the more he says about her role in the palace, the less his label sticks. The fact that she travels to the royal household alone, not only to look upon but to work with the inmates of the harem, separates her from English ladies, who with their husbands, or at least with the protection of their husband's name, toured the Middle East for pleasure. In acknowledgement of her Western upbringing, but no longer able to consider her

typically 'English,' Xenos goes on to identify the governess in light of her 'European notions'. Within the few pages of his account the governess loses hold of her national identity because her inability to conform to any one level of her nation's social hierarchy discredits any claim she has to 'Englishness'.

All is not lost, however, as Mr Xenos recognises that the governess-traveller is still profoundly 'European'. That is until he considers her working in close confines with not only the royal family, but also the family's many slaves. This, for Xenos, is all too much because a woman in such a dangerous position can hardly be considered as a respectable 'European'. Perhaps it is his Greek Orthodox faith that leads him to compare the governess's existence to that of a nun. There is, however, much more to this unusual imagery. Totally at a loss as to how to classify the governess both socially and nationally, Mr Xenos finds his only option is to veil her. The idea that a single, abstinent governess might take the veil is fair enough, but the geographical displacement of this image, conjured in Egypt rather than Europe, means Xenos's remark is also suggestive of a woman wearing the hijab. Perhaps Lott records his account in such detail because Xenos emphasises that the governess's marginalisation is what enables her to enter the palace and associate with its inhabitants like no other Western woman. Her displaced Englishness and fragmented Europeanness provide her with a veil and a purpose, so she is able to move alongside the men and women of the Muslim community in Egypt. When Lott finally interrupts Xenos's account through the direct and assertive address 'But be fully assured kind reader', the governess begins to re-establish her role as author. (Lott:2000:21). Thus, it is through listening to Xenos's account that the governess-traveller gains a burning sense of mission, and realises that beyond her experience and beyond the text she produces, there is bound to be an audience waiting to listen to her tale.

From this point on, the governess begins to differentiate her view from that of other travellers, and even questions the authority of the Viceroy's associate 'Mr B' who is essentially her guide. Of the Viceroy's eunuchs, Mr B states: 'They are remarkably proud and haughty in their bearing even when only of inferior rank; tenacious of the power they possess over the women of the harems to which they are attached, and which authority they do not hesitate to abuse or modify' (Lott:2000:57-58). Yet in direct opposition to Mr B's statement, Lott recalls: 'I found that the duties of the Viceregal Grand Eunuch were almost legion. Independent of his daily attendance upon

their Highnesses, he read prayers to his staff of attendants and the whole corps of eunuchs; the younger of whom he instructed, not only in their duties, but in reading and transcribing the Koran' (Lott:2000:61-62). This is significant because not only does the governess challenge the authority of her male guide, but she challenges one of the dominant imperialist and Orientalist notions of her time. She credits the eunuchs with being hardworking and religious, not slovenly and morally corrupt. What she goes on to say, however, is that the eunuchs treated her fairly because she refused to participate in the custom of backsheesh: 'I never propitiated them with backsheesh...so that instead of finding those phantoms of men the crabbed, disagreeable apparitions I had been led to believe them, I had the pleasure of experiencing from them every politeness and civility' (Lott:2000:63). It is unclear here, whether Lott criticises the custom itself or the West's involvement in bribery. Therefore, while the governess-traveller certainly begins to assert an authorial voice, in the early stages of her journey it is still unclear where that voice is situated within the context of imperial discourse.

As Chennells says nothing about her journey to Egypt, there is no evidence that she pieced together a picture of Egypt and the harem from her fellow travellers. Not long after her arrival, however, Chennells also challenges traditional imperialist assumptions by pointing out the errors in books by English authors:

I had learned in my school-books that rain never fell in Egypt, but I found this a mistake, as owing to the millions of trees planted by Mohammed Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha, rain frequently falls on the coast, and is by no means uncommon during the winter in Cairo...there seems no limit to the productiveness of the country, as the sands have only to be irrigated and the desert becomes a garden (Chennells:2009:18)

Prior to taking up a position overseas, a governess might only have ever read of her new home in books, but as Chennells points out, these books could be inaccurate. In the same way that Lott challenges Mr B, Chennells challenges the stereotypical ideas presented in English books and this is significant because very early on the governess-traveller undermines Orientalist notions of Egypt. Arguably, Chennells goes further than Lott in her critique of imperialist assumptions because she shows how such assumptions prevent Egypt being recognised as a serious contender in world trade. Her description not only subverts the stereotypical, exotic image of the desert landscape but shows Egypt to be both a garden in bloom, pleasing to the eye, and a fertile farmland

crucial for trade. In revealing that something so easily researched as the lie of the land is misrepresented in English books, Chennells exposes the economic motivation at Orientalism's core.

LANGUAGE-LEARNING

The way the governess establishes her voice in light of other writers is mirrored throughout her time in Egypt by the process of language-learning. Like the modern traveller, in the early stages of her journey the nineteenth-century governess is intensely preoccupied with her ability to communicate with the Egyptian people. Although at the height of the British Empire, travellers in the Middle East were often able to rely on the universal nature of the English language, both Lott and Chennells transcend colonial circles and travel to places where not all are familiar with the English tongue. On entering the harem, Lott is rarely able to communicate in English. Her charge and the many princesses, eunuchs and slaves of the harem speak a combination of Arabic and Turkish languages which Lott cannot speak above a smattering. Thus, in *The Governess in Egypt* the theme of communication and the process of learning Arabic and Turkish are central to the governess's mission both to live within, and write about the harem.

For reasons which differ from Emmeline Lott's, Ellen Chennells is equally preoccupied with language-learning. By the time Chennells travelled to Egypt in 1871 she entered a country very different from that which Lott visited eight years earlier. By the time Chennells met her pupil Princess Zeyneb, then aged twelve, the young princess and many of the palace's inhabitants had been speaking English for several years. What Chennells finds, however, is that despite this advancement, much of what is said is still lost in translation. It is for this reason that in *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess*, alongside the matter of her own language-learning, Chennells considers the implications of an English-speaking Egypt.

In both Lott's and Chennells's texts the governess is preoccupied with the process of language-learning for reasons other than 'getting by' and making basic conversation. Language-learning for the governess is pivotal to the process of finding an authorial voice, because before she can accurately describe life in the harem, she must be able to understand what is being said around her. As a socially marginalised Englishwoman she was under more than the usual amount of pressure to produce an

insightful account of Egyptian life. Though Lott's book did very well and three editions were published during the first month of release, the governess travel narrative, more than well-known or well-connected women's accounts, was likely to be scrutinised by the middle-upper class readership at home. Readers might question why they should trust or respect the views of a solitary governess, being practically a member of the serving class, who decided to leave British soil and live alongside the foreign 'Other'. The governess is therefore simultaneously concerned with language-learning so as to understand Egyptian life, and the way she presents this to her reader. She is perhaps more aware than other travellers of the difference between what she experiences within an Ottoman-Egyptian language paradigm, and what she presents to the imperial reader at home in England, because the way she does this affects the negotiation of her class-status. In this way the governess is patently aware that travel writing and language-learning are bound up with the act of translation.

Before and following Said's *Orientalism* the process of translation has been theorised. For centuries it was studied largely to debate the importance of authenticity, but more recently post-colonial scholars have investigated how cultures have been represented or more often than not misrepresented. Despite this, Michael Cronin points out in *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000), that '[c]ritical writing on travel and tourism has neglected [one] fundamental aspect of travelling - the relationship of the traveller to language' (Cronin:2000:1). This is something I have found to be true because prior to Cronin's work, neither post-colonial scholars of travel writing nor experts in the field of translation studies have explored how second language-learning is transmuted via the process of translation into narratives which present themselves as authentic portraits of foreign cultures. Nonetheless, it is important to trace how work in the field of translation studies and travel writing informs Cronin's framework.

Generally, in the study of translation, scholars have examined the implications of linguistic translation. By this I mean the translation of varying forms of written or spoken language. In my analysis, however, I am more concerned with the way in which the governess experiences Egyptian culture and in writing about it acts as a translator, interpreting the practices of one culture for consumption by another. In *Translation Studies* first published in 1980, Susan Bassnett reminds us that:

Language...is the heart within the body of culture and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy. In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril.
(Bassnett:2002:22)

Here, Bassnett highlights how everything we know about the world is shaped by the fact that language and culture are mutually constructed. This idea, which arguably stems from Lacan's theory of psychosexual development and 'entering' language, emphasises that reality, as defined by the language of the subject, is relative to the subject's cultural experience. What Bassnett shows us then, is that all works of travel writing are effectively examples of cultural translation.

This is where the study of translation, travel writing, spatial production, and postcolonial perspectives intersect. In her seminal work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Mary Louise Pratt points out how in parts of the world she terms 'contact zones...where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination', certain 'signifying practices' have come to inform the way cultures perceive themselves and others. What Pratt goes on to question is how travel writers have either 'affirmed or betrayed' such practices (Pratt:1992:4-7). Essentially, the 'signifying practices' or the language Pratt refers to is the rhetoric of empire and expansion and the Orientalist 'othering' of the foreigner, but it is the writer's decision to affirm or betray these practices that I am interested in here. What Pratt suggests is that travel writers might on some level be aware of their own relation to language. They might realise, to some extent, that what they come to understand of foreign lands is relative to their own language paradigm and cultural experience, and thus it is immediately 'unauthenticated'. In 'The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation' (1996) Ovidio Carbonell confirms the idea that the travel writer might consciously or unconsciously choose to 'affirm or betray' the ideology of their own culture in his suggestion that cultural translation amounts to 'affirming, negating or destroying old stereotypes'. (Carbonell:1996:93) Travellers might come to realise that cultural translation is limited as they discover stereotypical semiotic practices to be artificial constructs.

It is this way that the governess becomes aware that her understanding of the harem is limited by more than what we think of as a straightforward language barrier.

Early on in their experience of language-learning Lott and Chennells realise that as they expand their vocabulary, so as to name and describe everything that occurs around them, they build an understanding of Egypt shaped by the limitations of the Turkish and Arabic languages. In learning about palace life within the limitations of one linguistic paradigm, namely Arabic and Turkish, and writing about that life via another, in this case English, the governess comes to realise that as much as she is a traveller, she is a translator. This is where Cronin's work on language, travel and translation comes into play in my analysis. In *Across the Lines* '[t]he relationship between travel and language is explored...in the context of a nomadic theory of translation. The translating agent, like the traveller, straddles the borderline between cultures' (Cronin:2000:2). Thus Cronin blurs the lines between language-learning and translation, for on arriving in a foreign land, 'the transaction of translation must be immediately entered into because the mother tongue is no longer the language of the surrounding community'(Cronin:2000:10).

In the following analysis of Lott's and Chennells's texts I, like Cronin, intend to consider 'the role of language in the construction of identity of both the traveller and the other,' and to do this I will explore the governess's experience of language-learning as an act of cultural translation, as well as examining episodes where the governess contemplates the broader implications of the translation process (Cronin:2000:2). All the while, however, I aim to bridge the discourses of language-learning, translation studies, and post-colonial approaches to travel writing, by pinpointing how Lott and Chennells either 'affirm or betray' the semiotic practices of imperialism and Orientalism (Pratt:1992:7). In turn, this framework will facilitate my analysis of how from within the space of her displacement, the governess 'finds her voice' by negotiating her class-status and her cultural identity within the Egyptian community and the discourse of nineteenth-century travel writing.

Emmeline Lott first demonstrates her preoccupation with language in an episode I have mentioned previously, where she summarises her conversation with the merchant Mr Xenos, who shared her train to the capital. During this episode she begins to contemplate the implications of translation and the problem of untranslatability, which she does by undertaking some linguistic analysis of her own:

The signification of the word *Harem* is a perfect misnomer in our European acceptance of the expression, unless indeed we

interpret it by its other and far more appropriate meaning, 'interdicted', since it is considered by all Moslems as implying 'The Abode of Bliss' [which] will be their *Kishmet*, 'fate', when they shall enter the seventh heaven in the world to come. (Lott:2000:8-9)

For various reasons, Lott's recollection of this conversation is significant. In contemplating the word 'harem' she is immediately confronted with the fact that while she might learn to speak the language of the palace, she may never understand its true meaning. In an instant the worlds of language and semantics are torn apart and we see that if the governess is to succeed as both an employee and a travel writer, she must build a translatory bridge which allows her to decode the concepts and ideas the merchant-traveller can only perceive as 'misnomers'. Whereas other travel writers have the luxury of leaving their focus behind, the governess has to live, work and write from within the confines of the harem. Thus, while the former can conclude that foreign languages, traditions and cultures are 'mysterious' or 'inexplicable', the governess is obliged to investigate this further. The only way the governess can make something of her 'status incongruence', benefit from her position, and find a subjective, authorial voice, is to unravel the many misnomers which frequently bemuse her (Peterson:1970:7).

In an attempt to do this, Lott examines the roots of the Turkish language. Much later, when describing her tour of the harem she notes: 'At the extremity of those rooms I was led into a smaller apartment, where, on the divan (so called from the Persian word *dive*, signifying "fairy, gem") which was covered in dirty, faded yellow satin, sat H.H. the Princess Epouse' (Lott:2000:73). Despite the governess's best efforts, this episode highlights that understanding and writing about the harem are highly problematic. Lott's attempt to find meaning in the root of the word 'divan' echoes her effort to make up her own mind about the harem. Shortly I will examine the fact that as in Anna Brownell Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée*, throughout her time in the harem Lott separates her own experience from that of other travellers. At this point, however, Lott's attempt to strip away the many Western, Orientalist connotations of the word 'divan', and understand its Egyptian meaning, signals the complexity of the governess's position. Although her status allows her to enter the harem in a way unlike other female travellers, her concept of propriety is innately westernised. Because their connection to middle-class Englishness was tenuous, governesses were often more desperate than

gentlewomen to maintain a degree of respectability. Thus Lott struggles to unite the root of the word 'divan' with the image she sees before her. Her inability to correlate 'fairies and gems' with 'dirty, faded yellow satin' is a fundamental barrier built on cultural ideals and embedded imperial prejudices which she must somehow learn to deal with if she is to locate her voice and present a more objective account of Harem life.

Early on in her narrative Ellen Chennells undertakes a form of linguistic analysis exactly like Lott's study of the word 'harem'. Chennells, however, focuses on the equally loaded term 'slave' and finds that despite living among English speaking Egyptians, some words are impossible to translate. Of a group of concubines she says:

Could those gorgeously dressed ladies who came forward to meet us be slaves, of whom we had heard so much? The word slave has a very different acceptation with us from what it bears in the East. There is no degradation implied there in the term... They are confined, it is true, within four walls, but they are allowed a degree of liberty within those walls astonishing to our habits. The menial work of the harem is mostly done by the black slaves; and they, with few exceptions, are kept quite in the background (Chennells:2009:23-24)

In the same way that Lott struggles with the idea of a 'dirty divan' Chennells is confounded by the 'gorgeous slaves' before her. However, rather than struggling with such a paradoxical notion, Chennells almost immediately accepts and reiterates to her reader the Egyptian understanding of the word 'slave' and her position seems at first, less conflicted than Lott's. Her frankness in stating without any doubt that '[t]here is no degradation implied there in the term' shows that rather than becoming an imperialist agent and criticising this concept, the governess accepts that the only knowledgeable authority on Eastern culture is Eastern culture itself. Effectively, the governess employs her didactic voice to enlighten her audience at home rather than her pupils in the East, and where translation simply cannot bridge two very different cultures, Chennells remains firmly on the Eastern side of the divide. It might be said then, that Chennells goes so far as to challenge imperialist and Orientalist ideas of the East. Yet, in the final lines of this passage Chennells, like Lott, remains caught up in her Western prejudices. Of the black slaves she says very little and fails to investigate their subordination within Egyptian society. Above all this shows that however eager the English governess is to 'jump ship', and fit into Eastern society, there are some European and apparently Egyptian prejudices which governesses like Lott and Chennells cannot move beyond.

Amid all this conflict, Lott and Chennells are eager to make themselves understood and recurrently recall their efforts to do so. On two occasions Lott remembers communicating with the Princesses of the harem without the use of language. When residing at the palace of Ghezire[sic], Cairo, first she notes: ‘After I had partaken a few mouthfuls, I made a sign that I had finished, for at that time I was unacquainted either with the Arabic or Turkish languages, both of which, however, I picked up in a very short space of time’ (Lott:2000:98). The fact that the governess successfully communicates without the use of speech, perhaps demonstrates that cultural and imperial barriers can be broken down in the absence of language. When they refrain from talking about anything more complicated than food, it appears that the women can sit together and eat together without any misunderstanding.

This is not the case when Lott uses gestures to complain about having to eat alongside a lower class laundry maid. She recalls: ‘I lost no time in remonstrating with H.H. the Princess Epouse upon the impropriety of being obliged to take my meals with the German maid, and although unacquainted with her vernacular, still I managed to make Her Highness sensible that it was a degradation to me’ (Lott:2000:155). Although at first it seems that once again, gesturing, rather than speech enables successful communication, the issue of class complicates, and proves detrimental to, the governess’s means to communicate. While the custom of mealtime unites the governess and the foreigner in a dialogue of shared experience, the matter of social protocol soon tears them apart. Thus in a later episode, Lott meets Rhoda, the Mother of the Harem, who she finds is able to converse in Italian:

She inquired of me in Arabic whether I spoke Italian, and receiving a reply in the affirmative...she asked me to have the kindness to show her my wardrobe...I then went down into the Stone Hall, where I partook of what was to me my luncheon, and was again subjected to the mortification of having the German laundry-maid as my companion, notwithstanding that I had already complained to Her Highness of such treatment.
(Lott:2000:164-5)

It is intriguing that a European language other than English is what enables the governess to share something of her history. It points to the fact that while culturally the governess can be considered Western, her sense of national identity was somewhat fragmented. Western imperial ideology is ridiculed because within the harem the European tongue serves only to orchestrate a fashion show, and despite finding a

common tongue, the governess remains unable to resolve what she sees as an insult to her social standing. While gesturing and Italian allow the governess to interact successfully with the women of the harem, and begin to form relationships, within these communicative modes the topic of social protocol remains untranslatable. As soon as it is brought up, the subject is instantly dissolved and Lott's message is lost in translation.

Despite working in a much more westernised harem in which many members speak English, Chennells is equally concerned with the limitations of translation and soon comes to realise that learning a language involves more than linguistic translation alone. When in Cairo, a member of the royal staff comes to the governess with a message he has translated into English and Chennells remarks at its 'ludicrous effect' (Chennells:2009:62).

"The nightingales of pleasure warbled in the gardens of enjoyment, and the sons of merriment shone on the forehead of time, with safety. I request of your renowned help to honour me on Sunday next, the 8th of Atour 1590, at ten o'clock, hoping that enjoyment will have a turn to you."

He was very proud of his translation, and could not see in the least what there was to excite our risibility. (Chennells:2009:62)

While Chennells admits that the messenger was renowned for his 'very good English', his attempt to translate the original message while retaining the Arabic idiom of speech results in hilarity. The content of the message is effectively overwhelmed by the act of translation and words and their meanings are reduced to nonsense. This passage highlights the effects of westernisation in Egypt and the position of the governess-traveller. The messenger's decision to retain the Arabic idiom, despite his English audience, and the gibberish this produces, shows that though British imperialism was at its height, the essence of Egyptian culture is something un-colonisable. Chennells suggests that there is no sense at all in attempts to westernise the East, and in turn highlights the complexity of her task to experience Egyptian culture through Arabic or Turkish, but write about it in English. In this way the hilarity of Ghirghis's message is a warning to the governess-traveller to find a more successful means of translating her experience.

It seems then, that the only way for both Lott and Chennells to communicate successfully, so as first to live within and eventually write about the harem, is to learn

how to speak in Arabic or Turkish. This becomes wholly apparent to Lott during a walk with her charge through the Ghezire Palace gardens. Displeased with the flowers brought to him by his servants, the young Prince orders the eunuchs to beat a group of black slaves:

This they continued doing for some time; but as the Prince made no sign to them to discontinue the chastisement, I began to remonstrate with him at such a display of his ungovernable temper, and in an authoritative tone exclaimed *Bess! Bess!* “Enough! enough!” when the eunuchs ceased. The morning was extremely sultry, and the perspiration poured down the faces of the eunuchs (Lott:2000:159)

Here it appears that the violence of the scene is a catalyst in the governess's experience of language-learning. The Arabic words '*Bess! Bess!*' burst forth in her horror of the eunuchs' cruel attack and the governess communicates successfully on two counts. Once she speaks in Arabic she is able to control her difficult pupil, but she is also able to influence social protocol in a way she could not do previously. Lott learns that class issues can only ever be addressed via the linguistic paradigm they were conceived in. She realises that whatever language she speaks, avoiding the German laundry maid is a lost cause because her Western ideas of appropriate social etiquette cannot be translated into the languages of the harem. Her acquisition of the Arabic language mirrors the acceptance of her 'status incongruence' because as a product of Western discursive frameworks, that status cannot be accessed or altered once inside the harem. Steadily Lott learns that her displacement has its benefits. It is, after all, entirely because of her social instability that the governess is able to enter the harem, and communicate with its inhabitants in a way unlike most Western travellers. In this episode with the young prince, it is out of frustration with her social mistreatment at home that the governess is able to locate her voice, and does so to challenge social behaviours within the harem.

Chennells also realises she cannot continue to communicate only in English. While for Lott language-learning seems tied up with the matter of complaining, Chennells continues to equate language-learning and humour. Despite having a different approach, in episodes such as the following which takes place in Turkey, Chennells echoes Lott's realisation that in order for the governess to communicate with any real success she must do so in either Arabic or Turkish:

A day or two after, I went in to Stamboul on an exploring expedition, and upon reaching the station found the steamer had not yet arrived. There were some Turkish ladies waiting there, escorted by a eunuch, and they would have entered into conversation with me; but when one's knowledge of the language is confined to declining the personal pronouns and counting up to a hundred, conversation becomes difficult, so our efforts failed (Chennells:2009:91)

Like Lott, Chennells admits to understanding very little of the Turkish language. Through self-mockery she shows that the governess continued to struggle to escape her social displacement, despite living and working overseas. What Chennells points out, though, is that this is not a lost cause. The humour in her tone, her direct reference to stages in the language-learning process, and the notion of patiently counting to one-hundred, further emphasises the governess's hope that the barrier between herself and Eastern society will eventually be overcome.

To move towards this Chennells attempts to learn from, as well as teach the Egyptian people. Before visiting the princesses of the harem she remembers: 'My pupil had taught me a Turkish sentence to say to her mother ...and I thought I had it by heart, but I broke down in the middle of it. The Princesses laughed and took it in very good part' (Chennells:2009:24-5). Yet she is not deterred by this slight humiliation for later in her account, when travelling up the Bosphorus she sits with the second lieutenant Shefter and the pilot Suleiman and recalls: 'I learned the names of every point of land that we passed throughout the whole voyage; and what voyage could be more replete with interest and historical associations' (Chennells:2009:74). In this way Chennells reaffirms the idea that to establish a unique insight into the discourse of travel writing, the governess must first find her voice in Arabic or Turkish. To avoid this would be equal to sailing up the Nile and seeing its many sights but never putting names to the places along the way.

Arguably, Chennells goes further than Lott to demonstrate how crucial it is for the governess-traveller to communicate in Egypt and Turkey's native languages. Even in a more modernised East, and even when visiting Westerners, the only way to communicate is first and foremost in Arabic or Turkish. Of her visit to a European acquaintance in Constantinople Chennells recalls:

One evening I went to visit Mdlle. who resided in the harem with his Highness's second daughter. As I was not going to one of the princesses, I did not enter at the principal door, but at the general entrance for everyone who has business in the harem. Although I was asking for a European (or more properly a Levantine), I found the rule of never mentioning a woman's name beyond the harem applied even here, for I could not make them understand whom I wanted, until I bethought myself of the Turkish term *lioja*, which signifies "teacher." (Chennells:2009:83-4)

This passage highlights the impact of British imperialism in the East, but above all it reveals how through language-learning Chennells comes to understand and find her place in Eastern culture. Through her description of the 'principal door' and 'general entrance,' Chennells presents an architectural metaphor which shows how while imperialism and westernisation certainly did penetrate the Ottoman harem, Eastern tradition and culture were by no means shut out. They ran their own course, and continued to shape life in the harem alongside the matter of Western 'progress'. The implication of this is something I will discuss later on, but presently I will return to the way language-learning leads the governess-traveller to find her voice. What Chennells learns in this episode is that despite being European, and seeking out a fellow European, she must speak to others and refer to herself in Turkish. Her thoughtful utterance of the term '*lioja*' shows how in order to produce the governess travel narrative the English governess must fully immerse herself in Eastern culture to the extent that she self-identifies within its linguistic paradigm. It is only then that Chennells might speak with her European companion and ensure that her voice reaches out to the audience reading at home.

Later on in her narrative, Emmeline Lott listens to, and attempts to produce direct translations of the stories she hears around the palace. In this way Lott's recollection of 'other people's stories' is entirely different from Anna Jameson's because while Jameson recounts the famous histories of Joan of Arc and Tasso so as to avoid coming to terms with her identity, Lott's translation of traditional tales shows her willingness to engage with and adopt a 'foreign' voice. When once again walking through the palace gardens at Ghezire, Lott hears the Turkish slaves singing a chant-like song titled 'The Turkish Sentinel's Refrain'. The song tells the story of a young man who falls in love, but is sent to war before he can marry his beloved. Later on in the song, the man lies in an enemy hospital close to death until his long-lost love comes to

his bedside, administers his medicine, and he eventually recovers. In the end the couple are married. The fact that Lott is able to translate this tale, which spans several pages, is itself significant and impressive, but perhaps the most interesting result of her translation occurs in the passage directly following it, where there is a sudden and striking shift in Lott's subject matter and tone. Rather than reflecting on the Sentinel's love for his bride, or the young woman's bravery, Lott goes on to describe a rather unusual discovery:

I perceived dense volumes of black smoke issuing forth from a huge, tall chimney towering in the distance up to the sky...it was His Highness the Viceroy's sugar refinery. I then learned that immense quantities of sugar were manufactured from the cane which grew on His Highness Ismael Pacha's estates near Minich, which produce yields the billionaire merchant prince a most lucrative return...The refinery that we had seen towering in the distance yields upwards of 30,000 quintals annually
(Lott:2000:124-125)

This passage is a striking discord concluding Lott's translation of the Turkish song. While in the previous few pages the thematic focus is love, war, human suffering and endurance, here Lott's discussion is scattered with the mention of yields, quantities and incomes. One reason for this is that Lott wanted to avoid being classed as a stereotypically emotional and sentimental female writer. She juxtaposes her translation of the song with cold, hard facts to stand her ground as a serious informant on life in Egypt. This suggests that the governess actively negotiates her approach to translation so as to establish her class-status and her identity in the discourse of travel writing because in the nineteenth century there was a shift in attitudes to translation. While in the past translation had been considered as an art form in its own right, by the time Lott was travelling, translation was beginning to be seen as a much more intermediary, consumable service or 'craft,' or even a mechanical, scientific process. As Susan Bassnett points out: "Craft" would imply a slightly lower status than 'art' and carry with it suggestions of amateurishness, while 'science' could hint at a mechanistic approach and detract from the notion that translation is a creative process' (Bassnett:2002:14). Lott's sudden shift in tone, between recounting the love story to detailing the workings of the sugar refinery, shows her struggling to identify as a translator. She begins to approach translation as an art form in her attempt to capture the essence of the Sentinel's Refrain. However the shift in tone suggests that Lott sees her

own translation of the story not as an artistic act but as the provision of a service to her upper-middle class readers. To move beyond this, Lott enters the realm of science and technology and becomes the informant we see describing the business of the sugar refinery. Thus translation, for Lott, is a means to explore the boundaries of her liminal status between the middle and the serving class.

Because when Ellen Chennells took up her position as governess English was being spoken more widely, she was not under the same pressure as Emmeline Lott to become totally fluent in Arabic or Turkish. Consequently larger episodes of translation are absent from her text, but what Chennells does frequently allude to, is that though her charge, the many inhabitants of the palace, and a large part of the country's population speak English, much is still in danger of being lost in translation. While Lott shows that translation is something which allows the governess to negotiate her status and cultivate a unique perspective on the world, Chennells highlights the fact that it is also something highly complex and often problematic. Through teaching the princess, whose English is near perfect, Chennells comes to realise that in spite of sharing a common tongue, she must still find a way to ensure that the essential message of her lessons makes sense within the Egyptian princess's cultural experience:

As the Princess was constantly asking me for stories, I told her all the Bible stories relating to Egypt... She shed tears, which she was rather ashamed of, until she saw that I was subject to the same weakness... I often wished for the invention of Scheherazade, as my memory would become quite exhausted; but as the Princess always earnestly asked, "Is it true?" I never drew on imagination, but kept strictly to history.
(Chennells:2009:49)

It is perhaps intriguing that despite living in a predominantly Muslim country and teaching Muslim pupils, Chennells draws on Christian bible-stories in her teaching. One could argue that Chennells preaches like a missionary in an attempt to enlighten the princess to Christian beliefs. As Matt Waggoner explains in 'Is there Justice in Translation?', 'translation is after all part of the work of imperialism, both in its colonial and capitalist operations: translating native subjects into colonial subjects' (Waggoner:2012:193). In one sense Chennells tries to avoid this in her teaching because the focus of these stories, like the focus of the lessons in which she teaches the princess French and English, is always Egypt. Chennells's teachings mirror the tone of the

governess travel narrative because they show the governess trying to cultivate a voice which combines two different cultural experiences; namely that of the Christian English governess and that of the Muslim Egyptian native. This passage takes an interesting and unexpected turn, however, when in the last few lines Chennells longs for the ‘invention of Scheherazade’. Persian legend has it that Scheherazade was introduced to the King who as a result of his first wife’s infidelity, married a different wife each day and had her executed just twenty-four hours later. Scheherazade, however, was a beautiful and intelligent woman who had in her youth read hundreds of thousands of books. She avoided execution because each night she began to tell a new and fascinating story. The king spared her life over and over again, only so that he could hear her stories drawn to their conclusion. By the time Scheherazade had told the king a thousand and one stories, he had fallen in love with her, the couple had had three children, and Scheherazade became queen (Lang:2012:1-5).

On the surface the idea that Chennells longs for Scheherazade’s imagination seems fairly straightforward. With such a knack for story-telling entertaining the children of the harem and writing her book would be made light work. Yet, if we bear in mind the governess’s ongoing struggle to establish a voice which allows her to work within and write about palace life for an imperial audience at home, Chennells’s reference to Scheherazade is significant. Chennells’s longing to be more like the Persian Queen echoes the sentiments in the preface where the governess demonstrates her loyalty to her Eastern employer rather than her Western reader. In her quest to belong, the governess almost longs to be absorbed by the Egyptian cultural-consciousness and see the world from an Eastern perspective. There is a sudden shift, however, when Chennells changes her mind and declares ‘I never drew on imagination, but kept strictly to history’.

This shift results from the tension spun by a literary thread which connects Lott’s and Chennells’s narrative. Chennells’s reference to Scheherazade is explicitly linked to Lott’s earlier mention of Captain Burton, because in the years between Chennells’s residence in Egypt and the publication of her account, none other than Burton published his version of *The Nights: The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (1885), in which Scheherazade is the voice of the frame narrative. Burton’s translation received a mixed reception. Overall it was a huge financial success, but many commented that the content was over sexualised and retained too much of the Arabic

idiom (Lovell:1998:409,410,412). Thus nearly thirty years after Lott, Chennells, in her account, indirectly makes reference to Burton and his problematic involvement in translation and travel writing. Her longing for Scheherazade's imagination equals her longing for the native's insight but with the knowledge of the British public's response to Burton who 'went too far' in presenting an 'authentic' account of Eastern life, Chennells pulls back from this.

Michael Cronin, in theorising the acts of travel and writing, says that 'travel implies return and the accounts are the fruit of that return... The coming home of composition is a *revisiting* of the mother tongue as the writer picks his/ her way through multiple traces of language difference from the journey' (Cronin:2000:35). In remarking 'I never drew on imagination, but kept strictly to history' Chennells signals a move away from Eastern culture and a narrative return to the culture conceptualised by her mother-tongue, whereby 'history' is the product of British imperial ideology and the semiotic practices which embody it. She ensures that when providing insight into Egyptian life she stays very much in the middle of her translatory bridge, and that the travel narrative or cultural translation she produces never appears so wholly 'authentic' that she is seen to be absorbed by the East in a way similar to Burton.

LOOKING

Alongside learning the language of the palace and attempting to locate her voice by practising and reflecting on the process of translation, the governess becomes more preoccupied with looking around her and describing in detail everything she sees. Examining her observations, and the way in which these observations are noted, also serves to untangle the conflicting voices in Lott's and Chennells's prefaces, and as there has been a resurgence of interest in Victorian material culture, it seems logical that in my analysis of Lott's and Chennells's experience I draw on aspects of thing theory. In many ways this extends and develops my study of the governess's involvement in spatial production, because space, and the experience and representation it invokes, is shaped by its incorporation of objects. As Lefebvre points out:

Visual space in its specificity contains an immense crowd, veritable hordes of objects, things, bodies. These differ by virtue of their place and that place's local peculiarities, as also by virtue

of their relationship with 'subjects'. Everywhere there are privileged objects which arouse a particular expectation or interest, while others are treated with indifference (Lefebvre:1984:209)

This notion has been analysed further over the last decade and thing theory has largely been developed by Bill Brown. His article entitled 'Thing Theory', published in a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* in 2001, traces the development of the theory in different modes of academic discourse. Brown's work is particularly helpful to my thesis at this point, because it breaks down the processes by which we both see and study 'things'. Quite notably, Brown differentiates between things and objects:

As they circulate through our lives, we look *through* objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture—above all, what they disclose about *us*)... A *thing*, in contrast, can hardly function as a window. We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation. (Brown:2001:4)

Brown's argument is significant in terms of the governess-traveller, because while she might not make much of broken things or things that stop working, by travelling abroad objects become things quite simply because they are foreign to her or geographically displaced. When a governess gazes upon a foreign artefact which might remain an 'object' to a native onlooker, to her it is a point of interest – a remarkable, unknown, alien 'thing'. Her description of such things is as Brown describes: 'the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation' (Brown:2001:4).

Brown goes on to consider, more specifically, how 'things' appear to different societies and cultures when he discusses the philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis's belief that 'the "perception of things" for an individual from one society... will be the perception of things "inhabited" and "animated"; for an individual from another society things will instead be "inert instruments, objects of possession"' (Brown:2001:9). For me, Castoriadis's point is interesting because in the governess travel narrative the two

sides of what he refers to take place simultaneously. Since the governess is not merely a tourist, but someone who lives and works with people native to the country of her employment, she is the representative individual from one society perceiving things as “inhabited” and “animated” while the native perceives such things as “inert instruments, objects of possession”. At the same time, however, the governess as a travel writer records both her and the native’s varying perception of things to paint a picture of Eastern life for the reader at home. In short the governess must see ‘things’ from both her own and the foreigner’s perspective.

Brown goes on to challenge Castoriadis’s theory in a way which sheds light on how the governess comes to form this fragmented perspective of things. He suggests that there is something else at work to make societies perceive things differently.

The question is less about “what things are for a given society” than about what claims on your attention and on your action are made on behalf of things. If society seems to impose itself on the “corporeal imagination,” when and how does that imagination struggle against the imposition, and what role do things, physically or conceptually, play in the struggle? How does the effort to rethink things become an effort to reinstitute society?
(Brown:2001:9-10)

The way in which Brown shifts the theoretical focus from the thing itself to the viewer’s ‘corporeal imagination’ is particularly helpful in my study of the governess travel narrative because while the governess gazes upon things, and describes them from both hers and the Egyptian perspective, the picture she paints shows her ‘corporeal imagination’ to be imposed upon by more than one society alone. Her perspective is classed and gendered in several different ways because when she gazes upon things in the Egyptian palace she sees them as a woman both wounded and liberated by her social marginalisation, and as a traveller, who while holding onto some ingrained imperial ideas, has a fundamental role in the life of the Egyptian royal family and bears witness to the country’s modernisation.

One critic who shares my interest in how things impact the onlooker’s idea of race is Joseph Jonghyun Jeon, in his book *Racial Things, Racial Forms* (2012). He outlines that “[i]n nineteenth-century racial discourse, a thing is an epithet for a racialised body, as in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s original subtitle for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin: “The Man who was a Thing”*. In transmuting an enslaved human being into crude

objecthood, this forceful pejorative denies subjectivity to the slave who becomes regarded as a mere commodity' (Jeon:2012:xviii). Jeon's point here highlights how when the governess-traveller describes things, what she says has a deeper resonance with her readers at home. In other words, bearing in mind the historical context in which she was writing, there is very little to separate the governess's description of things, whether imported or native to Egypt, from what she says about the nation as a whole. This is not to say, however, that the governess is as unabashedly racist as to describe all foreigners in light of things. It is more that her discussion of things, inevitably reflects on her and her reader's image of the foreigner. There is a sense, though, that the governess is aware of this transference of meaning. In *Racial Things, Racial Forms* Jeon states that '[l]ike Brown, I am interested in the way in which things access alternative histories and contexts of intelligibility, but I am more interested in the way in which avant-garde texts authorise rather than elide them'. (Jeon:2012:xxiv). While the governess travel narrative is not necessarily 'avant-garde,' it does expose and question the ways in which things can be interpreted differently so as to affirm or betray certain discourses.

Arguably, this comes back to the fact that when the governess gazes on things she does so knowing that she is a foreigner in both racial and social terms. On arriving at the Viceregal palace for the first time, Lott is bombarded by the presence of the West and cannot see for piles and piles of Western produce. The fact that the items around her are geographically displaced versions of the familiar, also serves to transform such objects into things. In this way the governess is made instantly aware that things can be considered outside of their traditional context. Another reason why the governess is so aware that things can be read in different ways comes back to an idea I considered in detail in Chapter Two. In my reading of Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* and Brontë's *Villette* I demonstrated that when the governess-traveller looks upon art and architecture she does so as someone who is both a gentlewoman and servant, mother-figure and professional, independent traveller and financially-dependent employee. In Egypt, as in Europe, the governess's struggle to exist between class, gender and economic spheres, makes her aware that the way she perceives things is bound to be different from that of a more traditional 'female traveller'.

The way that I shall use thing theory in a more literary mode echoes Elaine Freedgood's method in *The Ideas in Things* (2006). She suggests that

The reader who wishes to recover (or rather, imagine) the material qualities of fictional things must avoid the temptations of allegory and follow instead the protocols of the collector [who] brings together what belongs together; by keeping in mind their affinities and their succession in time, he can eventually furnish information about his objects. (Freedgood:2006:3)

While she does ‘eventually develop interpretive allegories’ around the ‘metonymic readings’ of things, this is delayed so objects come first and subjects and plots come second. (Freedgood:2006:3) Freedgood’s point here is that when using thing theory in reading novels, allegorical interpretation of the metonymic reading of things is wholly acceptable, after a thing’s social and political history has been placed in the context of the text. Thing theory need not take away from what is revealed through more traditional approaches to literary analysis, but rather, it can expose new depths. Like Jeon, Freedgood highlights the importance of using thing theory in conjunction with other approaches to literature, and this is certainly what I will do in my reading of the governess travel narrative. Yet, Freedgood’s reason for undertaking allegorical interpretation is specifically linked to the study of the novel, and this begs the question of whether her means of interpreting things is suited to the study of non-fiction travel writing.

In clarifying my methodological use of thing theory, I stand by the fact that after first producing a metonymic reading, allegorical interpretation is relevant to my analysis of Lott’s and Chennells’s texts. My reason for this echoes the introduction to this thesis where I discuss how both fictional and non-fictional portrayals of the governess-traveller are interwoven and of equal importance. However, Freedgood’s approach is also suited to the study of travel writing because as Brown says early on, the perception of things is born of the corporeal imagination. The key word here, in relation to any sort of literature, is ‘imagination’ because whether we talk about the way things are represented and responded to in novels, poetry, travel writing, or any other non-fiction narrative, when a thing is represented in text, it enters an imagined reality and one which is relative to the language, society and culture in which it is produced. For this reason, thing theory is especially suited to the study of travel writing, because the aesthetics of things are key to the way cultural and national identities are constructed. Thing theory is also useful in analysing the governess travel narrative because by focussing closely on subject-object relations, I can trace how the governess-traveller writes the self and others and contributes to the nineteenth-century’s image of self and world.

In my application of thing theory then, I will begin like Brown by highlighting key moments in the governess travel narrative when objects become things. I will then consider one of Brown's key questions and determine how far the governess struggles against the imposition of her corporeal imagination as something which is influenced by the various social spheres which she transcends. I will then, in a manner similar to the way Jeon reads avant-garde art, examine how the governess, in translating things into the textual representation of things, exposes this struggle so as to situate her narrative within or beyond of the discourse of imperialism. In the course of this analysis, so as to honour the literary nature of the governess travel narrative, and provide my observations with a practical, coherent structure, I will adopt Freedgood's step by step approach to divulging a thing's social and political history before suggesting how this history might permeate the governess's corporeal imagination and shape her perception of the thing, the 'self', and the world.

As mentioned earlier, when Lott enters the palace at Ghezire for the first time, at the forefront of her description is not the Eastern aesthetic but the presence of Western merchandise. This is significant first of all because it provides an insight into nineteenth-century Egypt. The scale of this appears to come as a surprise to Emmeline Lott, who is mesmerised by the Viceroy's vast array of Western goods and so resolves to describe them in detail:

bales of the softest Genoa velvets, the costliest Lyons silks, the richest French satins...gaudy-coloured Manchester prints, stout Irish poplins, the finest Irish linens...Nottingham hose, French silk stockings and Coventry ribbons...huge cases of fashionable Parisian boots, shoes and slippers, immense chests of *bonbons*...For, be it known to you gentle reader, that the Viceroy of Egypt may most appropriately be styled, *par excellence*, the Sinbad of the age, the merchant prince of the terrestrial world (Lott:2000:65-6)

The rhythmic nature in which the objects are listed, and the exaggerated adjectives which punctuate this list, echo the way Brown suggests objects become things, in that by presenting themselves in an extraordinary fashion, these once everyday items are made animate and alive. They no longer exist simply as functional foods or fabrics, but become precious treasures long sought after and carefully stored. Because of this the governess becomes more than a surveyor recording an inventory. In describing these treasures she becomes, an insightful and captivating story-teller who assertively

addresses her reader and speaks of her employer in terms of the legendary Sinbad. Later she describes the palace as an 'Enchanted castle' and then as a 'curiosity shop', so by alluding to fairy-tales and a famous novel of the era she marks her entry into literature (Lott:2000:72,73).

One might expect these objects to make Lott feel more at home, but their geographical displacement means they mirror her own dislocation from society and culture. Structurally, Lott's three-page long list strips the items of their familiarity and transforms them into something uncanny. They become devoid of their true purpose and exist only to illustrate developments in mass-production. When studying the surrounding furniture, Lott soon directly criticises the Western presence in the East. While she delights in the 'Long divans, covered with rich satin damask, bespangled with the eternal gold and silver crescents glittering about in all directions, like stars' (Lott:2000:89), she is utterly horrified by the sight of European furniture within the palace walls:

But, oh! Horror of horrors! the European innovation of a dozen common English cane-bottom chairs, on which I afterwards beheld some of the ladies of the Harem endeavour to establish themselves [one] looking miserably forlorn, while the other sought in vain for room to double itself up upon the chair like a hen at roost. This was not, most assuredly, in keeping with the magnificent decorations of this palatial hall. (Lott:2000:91-92)

It is certain at this point that Lott sees something problematic with the presence of a Western product in the East through her distaste at the common cane chairs and the sense of absurdity surrounding the scene. Her exclamation 'Horror of horrors', which is eerily similar to Conrad's most famous line, suggests that her displeasure comically foreshadows Marlow's in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1898). Marlow recognises that within the East, Western concepts lose all their meaning, and consequently the whole notion of colonial enterprise becomes confused and incomprehensible. In many ways the conflict prevalent in Conrad's novella is also present in Lott's much earlier *A Governess in Egypt*. Although the dangers of imperialism are not presented at the forefront of the governess's narrative, she certainly contemplates the conflicting ideologies bound up in colonialism, particularly where the object is concerned. Thing theory can be applied here to shed some light on Lott's unease concerning the cane-bottom chair.

By the mid-nineteenth century cane-bottom chairs were staple pieces in homes across England. William Thackeray even referred to one in his poem ‘The Cane Bottom’d Chair’:

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
 There is one that I love and I cherish the best:
 For the finest of couches that's padded with hair,
 I never would change thee, my cane-bottom'd chair
 (Thackeray:2005:63)



Fig. 17. *The ‘Cane-Bottom’d Chair’ of William Thackeray’s Ballad (2010)*
 Photograph, Travellers Club, London

Yet, while Lott specifically refers to the cane bottom chair as an ‘English’ item, in fact the chair has a long, transnational history. Cane itself, which comes from the outer skin of the Rattan vine, is native to Asia and has been harvested since ancient times for the purpose of making furniture (Ward:2008:759). Adding further irony to the fact Lott refers to the chairs as ‘English’, some of the oldest examples of cane furniture were discovered in the tombs of the Egyptian Pharaohs. What this illustrates, above all else, is that something Lott considers to be fundamentally English has roots much closer to her current place of employment than the small island she thinks of as her native land. The mass production of cane furniture in Europe increased during the mid-nineteenth century as a result of Dutch and British colonisation across the Middle and Far East. In *Statistics of the Colonies of the British Empire*, published in 1839, Robert Montgomery Martin shows how ‘canes and rattans form[ed] a considerable branch of the exports’ from colonised lands such as Singapore (Martin:1839:408). When placed alongside *The*

Governess in Egypt, the history of the cane-bottom chair ties in with Lott's unease and anxiety. For while it is difficult to read Lott's mockery and animalisation of the princesses as anything other than Orientalist ridicule, her laughter perhaps highlights the irony that the chairs and the imperialist ideology they represent, are an ugly embarrassment that neither ennobles Europe nor civilises Egypt. From here on Lott continues to engage with Western things, but as much as she does this to paint a picture of Harem life, she does so to contemplate her own Englishness.

All of a sudden I was electrified at hearing upwards of fifty voices exclaiming simultaneously "*Koneiis! Qui-yis! Koneiis!*" "Pretty! Pretty! ... Some of them took up the black straw hat which I had taken off and laid down upon the divan at my side. This they passed from hand to hand, gazing with pleasure and delight at that specimen of European manufacture... At the earnest request of some of the ladies of the Harem, I rose from my seat, and walked up and down that noble hall, in order that they might see how European ladies generally paced up and down their rooms. (Lott:2000:96-7)

Once again it is Western objects that are at the forefront of Lott's description, but this time the governess's perspective has shifted and it seems that she is now able to look upon the Egyptian women to envisage how they see her. On the surface this episode points to the fact that if the governess travelled to the East with any sense of imperial agency, then within the palace walls that agency is completely undermined. For as I have previously suggested, the governess's 'Englishness' does little more than encourage a fashion show. Yet, much more can be said of this passage because as with the merchandise in the palace entrance, the Egyptians' fascination with Western objects consumes Lott's attention here, and subsequently her 'black straw hat' is transformed from 'inert, possessed object' into an 'inhabited, animated thing'.

Straw hats, and black straw hats specifically, were worn widely in Britain for a large part of the nineteenth century. Made in various styles for various occasions, they were worn by women of all social classes. Queen Victoria was noted to have worn a black straw hat during the second half of her life, as part of her mourning garb after the death of her husband Albert. In an obvious sense Lott's hat is therefore a symbol of death and mourning. And though it is so far unknown whether Lott was truly in mourning, the black straw hat is symbolic of the governess's lost opportunities for marriage and motherhood. However, if we look at the history of the straw hat and

analyse its place in Lott's narrative using thing theory we can uncover much more than symbolism.

When Lott was in Egypt, the straw hat industry was changing. For the first half of the century the straw used in hat making was predominantly harvested in and around Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. It was woven into strands by women and child plaiters, who from a young age learned their craft by attending plaiters' schools. The work they did fulfilled a significant role in the regional and national economy of hat making. Yet in the mid-nineteenth century, there were conflicting attitudes towards plaiters and their work. In *A Dictionary, Practical, Historical and Theoretical, of Commerce and Commercial Navigation* (1852) John Ramsay McCulloch explains:

There is perhaps no manufacture more deserving of encouragement and sympathy than that of straw-plait, as it is quite independent of machinery, and is a domestic and healthful employment, affording subsistence to great numbers of families of agricultural labourers, who without this resource would be reduced to parish-relief. (McCulloch:1852:663)

However, in the *General View of the Agriculture of Hertfordshire* (1804) Arthur Young stated that 'The farmers complain of it, as doing mischief, for it makes the poor saucy, and no servants can be procured, where this manufacture establishes itself' (Young:1804:222). Like governesses, the public view of plaiters ranged from pity to concern for their propriety. Yet, with the invention of the sewing machine and the industrial revolution reaching its height, all this began to change. There was less call for plaiters as work moved to the factories in larger towns and cities, and by the 1890s 'the trade was virtually eliminated...in the face of competition from China and Japan', from where straw was imported cheaply and in abundance (Williams:2011:22).

The history of the straw hat and the plaiters is significant when reading *A Governess in Egypt* because it shows Lott's 'black straw hat' to be so much more than an emblem of English or European femininity. What Lott places on the divan, and what the Egyptian princesses pass from one to the other, is an item worn by women of all social classes, made by women these social classes could not easily define. When Lott describes foreigners 'gazing with pleasure and delight at that specimen of European manufacture' she realises that it is more than a 'Western' object. It is the product of women who like herself, baffled the British public, and found their economic survival

threatened by technological advances. For Lott then, seeing the princesses interact with her hat, transforms the humble, 'inert, possessed object' into an 'animated and inhabited thing'. The hat becomes representative of women at home to whom the governess can relate, but also of the fact that even the simplest artefacts have a national heritage. Whether of Eastern or Western origin, that national heritage is vulnerable to, and might need protecting from, the ever increasing advance of international trade and technology.

In an intriguing twist, Ellen Chennells, who visited a more Western version of Egypt, is more interested in Eastern objects. Arguably this reflects how British imperialism and westernisation in Egypt did more to expose Eastern traditions as exotic and 'other' than absorb them into a Western way of life. Throughout her time in Egypt, Chennells is intrigued by one object in particular, and that is the lattice screen. One place she describes in some detail is the 'so-called Tombs of the Caliphs' in Cairo. She goes on to explain: 'I say "so-called" because the real tombs are all destroyed with one exception, and the site is now covered with bazaars' (Chennells:2009:54). Chennells's observation here shows her to be acutely aware, and perhaps critical of, the way in which Egypt is changing as a result of imperial expansion and consumerism, but soon after making her point about the Bazaars, Chennells first mentions the Egyptian lattice-work which becomes a recurrent theme in her text:

They are all in ruins...and travellers recklessly break away pieces of anything that may take their fancy, to be carried home as specimens. In one of these mosques was a large lattice-screen of various patterns, which was almost perfect, and Mr P., one of our party, looked about to see if he could discover any part where it was broken or decayed, so that he might carry off a specimen. It was difficult to find, and he tried several times before he could accomplish it, but at last he succeeded in detaching a piece. I thought it such a pity that I remonstrated with him, but he replied it would all crumble away sooner or later, and he would like to have a bit of it; so he took it. Ever after, on subsequent visits, this lattice-work went by us under the name of the P. screen. (Chennells:2009:54-55)

Mr P's vandalism of the previously undamaged screen is difficult to interpret as anything other than an aggressive, colonial act, but what is most disturbing, is the fact that this kind of behaviour was actively encouraged. In *Egypt: Descriptive, Historical, and Picturesque*, published in 1878, Georg Ebers suggested that Egypt could not be held responsible for preserving its own cultural heritage. When he said: 'The antiquities

of Egypt, which for many centuries had been utterly neglected, had already begun to attract the attention of the learned men of Europe' he gave tourists free-rein to 'save' what they could of a once great, now degenerate culture (Ebers:1897:37). His rhetoric, imbued with allusions to Britain's national superiority, forms part of a process of justification which was central to British colonisation and the civilising mission, whereby acts of destruction are represented as acts of salvage. Ebers's concept of 'saving' Egypt's ancient history works alongside the British colonists' endeavour to 'civilise' conquered lands, and the Christian missionaries' desire to 'enlighten' colonised peoples, while equally engaging in the act of destroying indigenous traditions. At first it seems that Chennells refuses to be caught up in this imperialist practice, perhaps because ruins, like those described by Jameson's governess and Lucy Snowe, are liminal sites which mirror the governess's identity. By describing in some detail the difficulty with which Mr. P detached the piece of lattice-work, her account reflects something painful and torturous and Mr. P pulls at the lattice like a dentist pulling out a tooth. In this way Mr.P's yanking and tugging at the lattice becomes a physical assault on the body of the ancient tomb and the image of Egyptian culture, but in spite of her dismay, Chennells's use of the pronoun 'us' points to her place among the company of imperial travellers.

At this point in her narrative Chennells's view of the lattice-work largely Orientalist. For her the wooden screens or 'mashrabiya' as they are called in Egypt, are symbolic of subversive femininity, incarceration and oppression. Indoctrinated with this view, Chennells is at first highly critical of the mashrabiya. In describing the royal family's house on the Bosphorous in Constantinople she says: 'From the upper storey there would have been a beautiful view but for the thick foliage of the trees and those dreadful lattice-work blinds outside the windows, which impeded the view without excluding the sun' (Chennells:2009:77). Later, when she visits a friend of the family, she surveys the room and is horribly disappointed by 'the everlasting lattice-work blinds at the windows, which turn a bright day into a dull one, and a dull day into twilight' (Chennells:2009:125). At this stage in her journey Chennells's perception of the lattices is shaped by the imperialist ideology infusing her corporeal imagination. She cannot separate the association of the lattice-work with the Orientalist notion of the harem and as a result finds them highly oppressive. For Chennells the lattices are restrictive barriers between the self and the world, limiting both the journey experience and the search for a narratorial voice. Later on though, Chennells presents the mashrabiya quite

differently. In her last year in Egypt, once Princess Zeyneb has married, Chennells and her charge move to a palace at Eamleh, Alexandria. Of this coastal palace Chennells speaks very highly:

I was quite delighted with the palace when I entered it...At the northern extremity was a very large terraced balcony, with a verandah overhead, and lattice-work screen about ten feet high on the three open sides. This balcony was full of rocking-chairs, where you might sit and listen to the ceaseless murmur of the waves breaking on the shore (Chennells:2009:210)

The sense of openness and space in this episode turns Chennells's earlier view of the mashrabiya on its head, and intriguingly there is no direct explanation for why this is the case. The mashrabiya have a very long history. In the earliest of ancient times homes in Egypt were built completely without windows, from thick earthen walls which absorbed the cool night air and retained this cool through the long, hot days. Soon, however, the wealthy sought to improve their homes by letting in some light. It is uncertain exactly when the mashrabiya was invented but it quickly became a very popular feature of the Egyptian home. Throughout Egypt's history carpenters who crafted mashrabiya were regarded highly. It took expert skill to construct every aspect of the lattice-work. The exterior frames could be vast in size and had to be cut of the best quality wood which would expand and contract with the heat. The lattices required even more precision to make, as William Samuels notes:

The importance of the craftsmen cannot be [overstated] for not only did they create the artistry and aesthetics of the mashrabiya but they also controlled the exact functional properties of the screen by varying its attributes during construction. They defined precisely how the screen mediated the boundary between the extreme desert heat and the cooler interior, controlling the amount of light, heat and air allowed in. It is a testament to the ingenuity and skill of these craftsmen that they were able to temper the environment to the extent that they did. That comfort could arise amidst such intolerable conditions speaks volumes of the knowledge and experience that is ingrained within the architectural forms that they created. (Samuels:2011:online)

The mashrabiya then, was both a highly advanced, functional piece of technology and a beautiful art form; much more than simply a means to suppress Egyptian women. As Egypt developed industrially, the population increased and the

cities were built up; mashrabiya were created so as to provide shade not only for those inside the home, but also for the pedestrians walking the city streets. By the nineteenth century, projecting mashrabiya windows were a common sight all over the country, and particularly in Cairo. Yet, the art of the mashrabiya, like so much of Egypt's culture and tradition was diminishing. The first examples of mechanical air-conditioning were being developed and this soon changed the way temperature was regulated in the home. What is more, by the nineteenth-century buildings in Egypt were being erected in a more European style. The colonial hand of Britain and Europe was reshaping the Egyptian cityscape for all time.

Over time Chennells begins to appreciate the domestic functions of the mashrabiya for letting in some, if not all of the light and providing a view to her surroundings, albeit one that is partially obstructed. Her conflicting descriptions of the mashrabiya echo the contradictions prevalent in the work of the artist John Frederick Lewis who, like Chennells, spent several years living and working in Egypt. Lewis relocated to Cairo in 1841 and spent the next ten documenting his vision of Ottoman life in sketches, oil paintings, and watercolours. In *Intimate Outsiders: The Harem in Ottoman and Orientalist Art and Travel Literature* (2007), Mary Roberts argues that 'Lewis's intimacy with life in Cairo, resulting from his residence there for almost a decade, distinguishes the artist from other British Orientalist painters of his generation, and for many, the veracity of his Orientalist paintings are attributed to the life he held there' (Roberts:2007:21). She goes on to explain, however, that

When we track the shift of the artist and his work from Cairo to England, what comes into focus are the processes of translation and transformation that occur: of translation across cultures as the expatriate accrues authority as an intermediary for his British audience and a transformation of the idea of the harem into a convincing visual fiction: the realist fantasy. (Roberts:2007:21)



Fig. 18. *The Harem* (1850)
Watercolour and Body colour
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The idea that Lewis's work both translates and transforms elements of Ottoman life for the Western viewer, means that in many ways it is similar to the governess travel narrative. Both Lewis and Chennells ultimately try to find a balance between presenting what they deem to be a 'true' reflection of Eastern life, and framing this portrayal in a manner suitable for a Western audience. Like Chennells's governess travel narrative, Lewis's work is highly complex and full of contradictory ideas. His painting entitled *The Harem* (1850), and particularly his depiction of the *mashrabiya*, is a prime example of this. On the one hand, the lattice-work which covers the back wall is presented in a typically Orientalist light. In terms of the colour palette used in this painting, these *mashrabiya* are of the darkest tone, bringing the background into the foreground and creating an illusion of confinement. As a result the women of the harem appear crammed between their two chief oppressors, namely the *mashrabiya* which conceals them from the rest of the world and man who limits their freedom. On the other hand, though, the *mashrabiya* pictured on the left of the painting appear much more transparent. Streams of light filter through the lattice-work illuminating the Harem's inhabitants and rather than leaning towards the light as if starved for freedom, they bathe comfortably in its dappled glow. What is more, the direction of the light is parallel with the inhabitants' line of vision, and though we can only speculate what it is that holds their attention, whether it be a messenger, entertainer, or servant setting out a meal, this suggests that the harem is not simply a place of darkness, but a domestic space where ordinary day to day occurrences are lived out. In this way Lewis presents

the Egyptian lattice-work not as an obstruction but as an intermediary between two worlds. Not unlike the figure of the translator, Lewis's painting, and the governess travel narrative, the mashrabiya provides a limited and in many ways transformed version of one culture which would otherwise be beyond the comprehension of another. Perhaps what Chennells comes to realise as she modifies her view of the mashrabiya, is that should the Western world encroach further on the East, not only could it destroy the mashrabiya, but also the culture to which the Egyptian lattice-work owes its legacy. Should this come to pass the Western world would forever lose the opportunity to understand Eastern life.

So far, in my analysis of the governess travel narrative I have considered cultural translation as an intrinsic process, fundamental to the governess's construction of an authorial voice, but the significance of cultural translation within the governess's account suggests that there is more to this. In concluding this chapter I argue that the governess travel narrative, as a sub-genre of women's travel writing can be defined as a site of cultural translation. In the same way the governess exists within a heterotopic space, which both reflects and subverts social 'norms', her narrative is as Carbonell would define it, a 'third space':

That 'third space' is the site of temporal/historical difference, the place 'where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences'; the space of unstability where cultural translation takes place and becomes the medium of communication between two cultural realities.
(Carbonell:1996:92)

This idea of the 'third space' echoes my deconstruction of the term 'governess-traveller' whereby the hyphen is representative of a liminal channel in which the governess moves from location to location between traditional social and gender identities. Central to her identity is the idea of paradox, and this too can be said of her narrative. The instability Carbonell speaks of is the governess-traveller's movement between two 'cultural realities', which in Lott's and Chennells's case are England and Egypt. But the governess also moves between other opposite realities such as the role of servant and instructor to both her people at home and the family of her Egyptian employer, and Egypt as it is defined by imperialist and Orientalist discourse versus the Egypt she experiences from within, via the Arabic and Turkish language.

This explains why the governess experiences and represents what she does in each strand of her narrative. When the governess describes her movements her experience of liminal sites points to her position between worlds. Moving means crossing borders and marks the governess's entrance into unknown linguistic territory where words and their meanings are unstable. Through moving the governess realises that language and semantics are in motion too. Like the arrows on a compass they re-align themselves depending on the perspective from which she gazes upon the world. Rather than seeing the world from the perspective of the West or the East both Lott and Chennells plan to go on by making something of their status incongruence, embracing their liminality and in crafting their authorial voice construct a translatory bridge.

They read and listen to others' tales of Egypt to figure out how to do this. It is at this point that Lott and Chennells become aware of their unique access to palace life. On the one hand this means that the governess's social displacement is what provides her narrative with credibility and means she is able to challenge traditional imperialist assumptions about the foreign land. At the same time, however, she feels her nomadic status puts her in danger of losing grip of her national identity and being wholly absorbed by the East. In both Lott and Chennells's account the mention of Captain Burton highlights this as a possibility should they adventure too far from the centre of the bridge they build to connect these two worlds.

Nonetheless, the governess finds that in order to present an account which offers something new to the reader at home, she must engage in, and record the process of, learning Arabic and Turkish. Both her linguistic analysis of Arabic and Turkish terms, and her attempt to communicate in other common languages such as Italian, French, or even broken English, point to her position between meanings as defined by their Eastern roots and meanings as defined by her own cultural consciousness. While Lott shows that practising linguistic translation gives her the freedom to explore her liminal status, translation being something she experiences as craft, science, and art-form, both Lott and Chennells show that ultimately certain social and cultural concepts are lost in translation. By recalling the figure of Scheherazade, and inadvertently, Captain Burton, Chennells realises once again that the only way to present an Eastern view of Egypt would be to write about it as a native. Moving any closer to this is something the governess cannot do for danger of losing the small freedom offered to her as a result of her liminality should she be absorbed in Eastern life.

It is from this position that the governess writes the fourth strand in her narrative and recalls all she sees in looking upon her surroundings. In examining the many artefacts in and outside the palace walls both Lott and Chennells show a fascination for geographically displaced, near extinct or misunderstood artefacts. In renegotiating the status of these things, the governess-traveller situates her voice quite firmly as that of the translator. Like Jane Eyre on her window seat, both Lott and Chennells find they are comfortable in the 'third space' that is the governess travel narrative. Her account is the site where although the governess's authorial voice is contained, it is able to move within and beyond traditional discourses of travel writing.

What is truly unique about the governess travel narrative is its attempt to 'translate' the foreign land from a position of instability rather than re-write it from a fixed position of power. In *Routes* James Clifford states that:

One enters the translation process from a specific location, from which one partly escapes. In successful translation, the access to something alien – another language, culture or code – is substantial... At the same time...the moment of failure is inevitable. An awareness of what escapes the finished version will always trouble the moment of success [but] if confronted consciously, failure provokes critical awareness of one's position in specific relations of power and thus, potentially reopens the hermeneutic process. Such awareness of location comes less from introspection than from confrontation (Clifford:1999:182-3)

Most of what Clifford says here explains how the governess comes to interpret Egypt from a space in-between cultures. As a socially marginalised, gender-displaced, financially unstable nomad, the governess-traveller is more than familiar with what Clifford terms 'the moment of failure' where what makes sense within one set of constructs unravels to nothing within another. Because her 'failure' to conform is something the governess confronts every day of her existence, in writing her narrative she continually 'reopens the hermeneutic process' of interpreting the foreign land again and again and with relative ease. The governess's liminality means she can constantly renegotiate her position as a translator and portray the foreign land from multiple perspectives. The one idea of Clifford's that does not speak for the governess travel narrative is that the governess writes from 'one specific location'. As I have expressed previously, the governess-traveller's identity is the product of living and working in

multiple locations. The 'scattered self' is something she pieces together on her life's journey (Blanton:2002:59). I argue then, that the governess enters the process of translation from a position of dislocation and if anything, this is what opens her eyes to, and makes her so ready to accept, 'the moment of failure' and the untranslatable without falling back exclusively on traditional imperialist relations of power. Carbonell tells us that 'translation may also operate from a space in-between, avoiding the negative activities of exclusion and homogenisation...and that can only be achieved from that 'beyond' in the middle of the bridge between cultures' (Carbonell:1996:94). If anyone or anything exemplifies the 'inbetween' it is the governess and the governess travel narrative and there is a fundamental moment in Lott's *A Governess in Egypt* which sums this up completely.

Shortly after arriving at her apartment Lott notes the absence of a desk and in rectifying this she recalls:

placing two of my largest square trunks upon one another, for a table, which I covered with my travelling-rug, and for a chair laying my travelling cloak upon another box and turning a larger one upright, I placed it at the back, which gave me a support for my back; and thus did I begin to jot down these incidents of my experience of Harem life in Egypt. (Lott:2000:143-4)

Lott shows us in these moments that in every possible sense, the governess's voice and the narrative she produces come from a position of temporality and rest upon the notion of mobility. From items which continually move between locations, the governess constructs in her workspace and narrative a 'third space'. This site 'in-between' cultures can be altered without difficulty, change direction, and move as the governess moves between both geographical and discursive locales. The governess travel narrative is therefore an account which itself travels and presents a multidimensional, forever evolving picture of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOVERNESS TRAVEL NARRATIVE

In the previous chapter, I examined the structures and styles present in the governess travel narrative to establish the work of Emmeline Lott and Ellen Chennells as part of a distinct, identifiable sub-genre. In this chapter I will shift my focus both thematically and geographically to gauge the development of the governess travel narrative and analyse the ways in which the sub-genre has evolved. The texts discussed in this chapter, and the landscapes they encompass reflect the journey this thesis has taken since its exploration of *Jane Eyre* and *Vanity Fair*. While I began my analysis with governesses travelling in England, and followed their voyages through Europe and the Middle East, I now turn to governesses travelling in more distant, less well-researched locations. Here, I will examine the journeys of governesses in South Africa and the Far East.

The first governess discussed in this chapter, Anna Leonowens (1831-1915), is perhaps the most well-known real-life governess-traveller. Her writings about Siam were not only popular at the period of publication, but have continued to be adapted in the form of novels, musicals and films until as recently as 1999. Prior to her success, like many of the governesses previously discussed, Leonowens had a difficult start in life. Born in India in 1831, she never knew her father, who while working as a sergeant in the army, died before she was born. Her mother, Mary Anne Edwards, is thought to have been of Eurasian descent and grew up in British India. After her father's death Mary Anne and her children were left unprovided for until 1832 when she married Patrick Donahue, another sergeant in the army who often worked away. Like *Jane Eyre* at Lowood, Anna spent her childhood in a boarding school (Baigent and Yorke:2004:online).

In the mid-1840s Anna became engaged to Thomas Leon-Owens, a paymaster sergeant working at Deesa. Unfortunately, Anna's family did not approve of the match and in 1849 the engagement was broken off. From here on she accompanied the family of Reverend George Percy Badger on a tour of Egypt where she broadened her knowledge of Eastern languages and culture. Later that year Anna returned to India, and despite her family's objections, married Thomas and became Anna Leonowens (Baigent and Yorke:2004:online).

After her marriage Anna lost all contact with her family and moved to Perth where Thomas ran a hotel and she could work as a school mistress. By this time the couple had had four children, but only two were still living. In 1857 the Leonowenses moved to Singapore, but in another disastrous turn of events Thomas became ill and died leaving Anna and their children, Avis and Louis, with nothing. Widowed and impoverished once again, Anna returned to work as a school-mistress. In 1862 she found a situation with the help of the Borneo Company, as a governess in the Siamese Court of King Mongkut. Sending her daughter to school in England, but taking Louis with her, Anna set out for Bangkok where she arrived in March 1862 (Baigent and Yorke:2004:online). Her time in Siam inspired two books: first, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1871) and second *Romance of the Harem* (1873), both of which will be examined in this chapter.

The second governess to be considered has much in common with Anna Leonowens, despite being less well-known and largely overlooked by literary critics. Like Leonowens, Sarah Heckford, née Goff (1839-1903) had a difficult childhood. She was born in Dublin to wealthy middle-class parents, her father being the governor of the Bank of Ireland. Her life took a turn for the worse, however, when her mother died, Sarah was left with a limp and a hunch-back after suffering from tuberculosis, and in 1848 her father committed suicide. Somehow, though, Sarah Goff rallied. She was well educated, and as a young woman she took a house in London with her sister, regularly visiting impoverished parts of the city on a philanthropic mission to improve conditions for the poor. Living off their parents' fortune meant the sisters were independent, but Sarah longed to train as a doctor. Unable to do so because of restrictions in the law she became a nurse instead, where she met her husband Dr Nathaniel Heckford. He encouraged his wife to study medicine and eventually, with Sarah's money, the Heckfords founded the East London Hospital for Children and Dispensary for Women.

The hospital went from strength to strength and after a visit from Charles Dickens, the Heckfords had enough funds to open another, purpose-built hospital which recently became part of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Hackney. Sarah Heckford's travels began, however, when her husband died of tuberculosis just three years after they were married (Allen:2006:online).

When the new hospital was complete Heckford went to Italy with the seventeen-year-old orphan Marian, whom the Heckfords had adopted when she was twelve. Heckford's relationship with Marian in many ways echoes that of a governess and her pupil and foreshadows her experience in South Africa. What is more, her traditional tour of Italy invokes that of Dickens's Mrs General and the Dorrit sisters, but unlike Mrs General who saw governessing as a way of regularly frequenting the Continent, after Marian was married Heckford went to India as a missionary, offering medical help to the women there. Once she had returned to England she bought shares with the Transvaal Farming, Mining, and Trading Association and expected to receive farmland and training in South Africa (Allen:2006:online). This is the point in her life at which Heckford's first travel narrative, *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* (1882), begins.

Like the governesses themselves, Leonowens and Heckford's texts have much in common while at the same time, being vastly different. *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* is the most well-known of Leonowens's works. Along with a few choice moments from her second book, it is the inspiration for Margaret Langdon's novel *Anna and the King of Siam* (1944), Rodgers's and Hammerstein's musical *The King and I* (1956) and Andy Tennant's 1999 film *Anna and the King*. In many ways, *The English Governess* is similar to the work of Lott and Chennells. In recalling her experience of governessing in a palace, Leonowens describes the anxiety of her arrival, the slow process of making herself at home, teaching the King's many children and exploring both the urban and rural landscape. Yet, her work differs from Lott and Chennells's because unknown to her before she arrived at the palace, the King wanted her to work as a translator and scribe, aiding him with his political writings and correspondence. As a result Leonowens's book enters much more political territory, and its content and form reflect this.

The English Governess was not the only book Leonowens wrote about Siam. In 1873, once she was living in America, Leonowens published *Romance of the Harem*. Unlike *The English Governess*, this book jumps between various different stories and

episodes. In parts Leonowens plays a central role and offers a first person account. These episodes are a continuation of the governess travel narrative presented in *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*. Other stories, however, stem from Siamese folklore and were told to Leonowens second or third hand, sometimes by the characters involved but often by those who only heard the story much later. In her second book then, Leonowens continues to move away from the traditional form of the governess travel narrative.

Unlike Leonowens's *The English Governess, A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* was not Sarah Heckford's first book. She had previously written *The Life of Christ and its Bearing on the Doctrines of Communism* (1873), which encouraged social reform through Christian teachings. Heckford's first work of travel writing, *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* (1882), is a fascinating text, but like Leonowens's work, it augments the traditional form of the governess travel narrative. Written in 1880 while still in South Africa, and dating from 1878 when she first set out to Pretoria, *A Lady Trader* traces Heckford's quest for a new, self-sufficient life as a farmer and trader in the outback. Eight years after her husband's death Heckford boarded a ship with her English servant, a teenage boy named Jimmy. She intended to train as a farmer, set up her own farm and trade goods from her land in Rustenburg. At that time her fellow travellers were nearly all men, going out to the Transvaal as volunteer soldiers because of the political turbulence which led to the Boer War. Heckford defied social convention by travelling without friends or family, managing the complex business of relocating and purchasing land, and sleeping on the road in extremely difficult conditions so as to go on to employ staff and farm her own land. Unfortunately, though, her ambitions were not easily realised. Weeks after arriving in South Africa, travelling to Pretoria and on to Rustenburg, Heckford found that she had been conned. There was no-one to train her in the art of farming and no land to show for her investment. Sixty-three pages into her book she says:

The scheme about the farm was a snare and a delusion; both the men who came out to work on it, and I, who had counted upon getting instruction there, had been utterly deceived... two or three of the men, and Jimmy, went on to the farm, such as it was, the rest went as volunteers, and I had to shift for myself.
(Heckford:2000:63)

At this point, social convention catches up with Heckford, for while the men she had employed to work for her and her trusted servant Jimmy are able to find farming work elsewhere or go out as volunteers, neither of these options was suitable for a middle-class lady. Stranded in the outback Heckford was helped by the clergyman of Rustenburg Mr Richardson. He found Heckford a position as a governess in the family of a farmer, a white 'English Africander' [sic] named Mr Higgins who had been born in South Africa to English parents. There is irony in Heckford's colloquialism, 'shift for myself', because above all this moment in her life marks a shift in her circumstances and foreshadows the continual shifting and moving associated with the journey of the governess-traveller.

Before looking more closely at Leonowens's texts and Heckford's *A Lady Trader*, it is necessary to consider how far these works are examples of the governess travel narrative. Within their accounts both Leonowens and Heckford attempt to become something other than governesses. While Heckford uses her equestrian skills and knowledge of foreign cultures to become a trader, Leonowens uses her political knowledge and bilingualism to become the King's secretary. Essentially both women are more ambitious than Lott and Chennells in the previous chapter, and part of my aim in this chapter is to consider why these governesses are so intent on extending their professionalism. It could be because by the 1870s and 80s, Leonowens and Heckford had more freedom than at the time of *Jane Eyre* (1847). Equally it could be that they pushed the boundaries of governessing because for reasons of chance alone, both were fiercely independent and politically minded. I am inclined to think, however, that the reason for this stems from Heckford and Leonowens's circumstances before governessing.

Prior to marrying their British husbands, both Leonowens and Heckford would have had to deal with elements of racial prejudice. Though neither woman would have appeared to be foreign to their middle-class counterparts, and both could be classed as British, Leonowens's grandmother was of Eurasian birth making Anna part Asian, and though Heckford left Ireland when she was four years old, she was still a woman of Irish parentage living in England. Leonowens says nothing about her ethnicity in her writings and in the title to her first book claims to be English, but it is likely that she feared racial prejudice from people of entirely English descent when living and working in the colonies (Morgan:2008:195). The same can be said of Sarah Heckford because

throughout the nineteenth century, the English middle classes maintained certain 'negative stereotypes [which rendered] the Irish like other subject peoples of Empire' (De Nie:2004:173-4). For Heckford and Leonowens, marriage would have been crucial to maintaining their status as gentlewomen. As well as offering them financial security, their marriages to British men would have alleviated the degree of marginalisation they might have experienced because of their nationality. Upon being widowed, somewhat disconnected from their status as 'Englishwomen,' and reduced to the role of governess, Leonowens and Heckford were more marginalised than if they were of purely English birth. While neither chose to remarry, it is not surprising that both should be driven to become self-sufficient in order to avoid depending on others and avoid the possibility of becoming victims to their employers' discrimination. As liminal work between the public and private sphere, professionalism and domesticity, governessing does not satisfy this drive. Thus with a strong desire for security based on their previous experience of it, rather than remarry and return to a life of domesticity, Heckford and Leonowens attempt to enter the public sphere of work and commerce as independent professionals.

This desire is at the root of why Leonowens's books have continued to be of interest to critics. Adaptations and subsequent criticism of her texts have tended to centre on her problematic relationship with the King. Though in Leonowens's original texts, her feelings towards the King are less romanticised than in the adaptations, her professional closeness to the monarch is still an issue because she implies that as his secretary and governess to his children, she had the power to influence the King in political matters. This is a difficult notion, because for one thing, the idea that a governess and employee had power over a King seems highly unlikely, but equally Leonowens's depiction of this shows her to be imbued with ideas of Western superiority. For this reason 'scholars of Siam who have deigned to pay any attention to it...have labelled Leonowens's account...as at best fantasy, at worst fraud' (Morgan:1996:248). Intriguingly, the fact that critical interest in Leonowens's work focuses on her books being heavily fictionalised, ties into Leonowens's changing role as a professional and the evolution of the governess travel narrative.

What we have in Leonowens's first book about Siam is stylistically varied, but relatively straightforward. It is initially a clear-cut example of governess travel narrative, but because of the professional opportunity afforded to her when asked to

fulfil the role of secretary, thematically it moves into a much more political vein. The process by which this occurs mirrors that by which Leonowens goes from governess to secretary. *Romance of the Harem*, however, is much more complicated and its publication affects how readers perceive both of Leonowens's books as a whole. Published two years after *The English Governess*, *Romance of the Harem* is difficult to classify as a work of travel writing because so much of it is made up of other people's stories rather than Leonowens's own personal journey. The fact that many of these stories stem from Siamese folklore and are reinterpreted by Leonowens, further complicates the matter of categorising the text as either fact or fiction. Essentially, *Romance of the Harem* traces the process by which Leonowens transforms from a governess-secretary to an author of semi-fictionalised travel writing with a political message concerning the oppression of Siamese women. In this way, her book contributes to the discourse of Imperial feminism which emerged in the 1790s and continued long into the nineteenth century. In *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain 1790-1865* (2007), Clare Midgley explains that

many British liberal feminists promoted their own right to vote in imperial Parliament through claiming a role as social reformers of Empire and in particular as saviours of supposedly victimised Indian women...In the name of liberating colonised women, British women played an important part in reforming Empire through helping to bring about the end of colonial slavery; at the same time, positioned at one remove from the direct assertion of coercive imperial power, women were crucial in providing justifications for the continuance of imperial rule through its re-presentation as social mission rather than exploitation and violence (Midgley:2007:7,148).

Central to the development of imperial feminism was the campaign against sati, or the Hindu tradition of widow burning in India. Though Leonowens's focus was the mistreatment of women in the Siamese harem rather than the practice of widow burning in India, her work plays into the contradictions of Imperial feminist discourse because in championing the rights of Siamese women, she promotes equality for women on a universal scale while continuing to support Britain's mission to 'civilise' foreign nations. She suggests, therefore, that while women and men should be treated as equals,

some men and women, namely the British, should retain authority over others. Like many Western women before her, Leonowens was disturbed by the idea of the harem and the way women were enslaved as concubines. Equally she protests about the lack of women's rights in Siam and the violence to which women were subjected by judicial authorities. Through the evolution of her identity, Leonowens employs fiction in amongst a fusion of narrative strands to sell her political ideology to a wider audience.

Heckford's text is different because it contains elements of Leonowens's two books in one. Like *Romance of the Harem* it does not begin as a clear-cut example of governess travel narrative. At a glance, considering the title of the book, the work might not be recognised as a governess travel narrative at all, but as the account of a gentlewoman trader. It is only on closer inspection that, like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, *A Lady Trader* contains an episode of governess travel narrative. Yet, there are other reasons why *A Lady Trader* can be recognised as a governess travel narrative beyond the episodes in which she recalls governessing.

Writing prior to her return to London, when caught in a siege in Pretoria between 1881 and 1882, Heckford reflected upon her time in the Transvaal with the hindsight of several years. Thus, from putting pen to paper she knew her book would refer to financial ruin, social upheaval and governessing. Before and after her employment at the Higginses', Heckford's account is scattered with the preoccupations of the governess-traveller and tropes typical of the governess travel narrative. Towards the end of her book, during her last days in Pretoria, once again Heckford contemplates governessing. At this time the country was under Boer rule, war was imminent and Pretoria was in a state of economic depression. Heckford had lost most of her livestock, the rest of her oxen were dying, and she had few options left. Having been forced from her own farm Heckford explains:

I had to arrange for the loads to be brought on for me, and at first determined to try to take the oxen loose over the Drachensberg and try to get them on to a warm farm, while I, for a time, once more tried my fortune as a governess, in, if possible, the employment of the owner of the farm, so as to be able to watch over them. (Heckford:2000:410)

Though this does not turn out to be the case, owing to bad weather, Heckford's account almost enters another episode of governess travel narrative. As it turns out this is the last of many moments in which the governess travel narrative is present but not exclusively

so. Heckford's 'governess-like' hope for a new situation is combined with the strangely parental, protective instincts a farmer feels for his livestock, bound up with his concerns for their livelihood amid heightening political anxiety. Beyond the words on the page, however, these moments in Heckford's experience mark a second shift in her identity equal to that experienced by Leonowens. It is when trapped in Pretoria, knowing her farm is doomed to failure, and angered by the political turmoil in South Africa that Heckford turns to writing above trading in the hope of encouraging social reform in South Africa.

Like Leonowens, Heckford was an Imperial feminist. While working overseas in India, she wrote for *The Times* campaigning for better medical treatment for women. At home she engaged in similarly philanthropic efforts, and in one article pleaded for support for struggling needlewomen in London ('A Working Women's Co-Operative Association': Aug 18, 1885:11). After her residence in the Transvaal she campaigned for improvements in women's education in the region and set up an educational programme for Boer women, but during her time there she was more preoccupied with the Boer conflict, than women's rights specifically. At this time the British had taken control of the Transvaal region, and though Heckford did not disagree with this as a political move, she was disturbed by the way British colonists went about this, and was fervently opposed to Boers being detained in concentration camps. Though accused of being 'pro-Boer' in her writings for *The Times*, on the whole she merely campaigned for better ways of settling disputes (Allen:2006:online). Like Leonowens's *The Romance of the Harem* then, Heckford's *A Lady Trader* also wanders between popular genres in a bid to convey a political message.

For this reason in Anna Leonowens's *The English Governess* (1871) and *Romance of the Harem* (1873), and Sarah Heckford's *A Lady Trader* (1892), the governess travel narrative is diluted by the infiltration of other accounts and this occurs in two different ways. Firstly, Heckford's time at the Higginses' house and Leonowens's *The English Governess* illustrate how the governess extends her professionalism into trading and political administration respectively. In this way the governess travel narrative is altered thematically as the protagonist's journey moves beyond the path normally traversed by governesses. The second way in which the governess travel narrative evolves occurs when Heckford describes putting pen to paper, and at the close of Leonowens's first book and the start of the *Romance of the Harem*.

This time marks the governess-trader and governess-secretary's transformation into a different kind of writer who desires political reform while needing to make a living solely from her book. A word must be said to explain why becoming an author and successfully marketing and publishing their books is a greater preoccupation for Heckford and Leonowens than it is for Lott and Chennells in the previous chapter. The reason for this is politics. While Lott and Chennells are shown to both challenge and affirm imperialist attitudes, this is only to establish their location 'vis à vis the Orient' (Said:2003:20). It is more about finding their own voice than asserting that voice on the world around them. As ambitious women driven to cultivate significant careers, Leonowens and Heckford desire to have a real impact in the issues they care about. Lott and Chennells only debate political or cultural ideology via personal, inward reflections on a psychological journey typical of the travel writing genre. Because Leonowens and Heckford move beyond governessing into other lines of work, they appreciate the notion of making a real difference to the community around them, and this preoccupation continues into the authorship and marketability of their texts.

As a result, my analysis in this chapter takes place in two distinct but interrelated halves. First I will look at how the governesses extend their professionalism, and ascertain how this impacts their experience overseas. Then, in gauging what kind of texts these women ultimately produce, I will analyse the textual fabric of Heckford and Leonowens's works to pinpoint how, through the evolution of their identities and narratives, they express a political message. The matter of theorising this process is complex because my focus is both the events within, and the production of, the texts. Yet in attempting to become a secretary and a trader and then writers, both Leonowens and Heckford's attempt to extend their professionalism is bound up with the subject of ownership. Understanding this begins with recognising a striking collision of events which preceded the publication of both Leonowens and Heckford's texts.

The year before Leonowens's *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* was published, in 1871, the first version of the Married Women's Property Act was passed. This meant that any money a wife earned through her own work would not automatically become her husband's and could remain in her name. Eleven years later in 1882, the very same year that Heckford's *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* was published, the second version of the Act was passed. This time any property a woman

acquired, regardless of when or how it was obtained, could remain separate from her husband's property (Digby and Harrison:2005:403-404).

The impact the Act would have had on Leonowens and Heckford varies. For Leonowens the passing of the Act would have been considerably poignant since her husband died leaving her with nothing. Again, while Heckford's financial misfortunes were a result of a scam rather than her husband's error, for both women the loss and regaining of property are constant concerns. The fact of the matter is that governesses did not belong anywhere. They lived a liminal life between other people's houses, and because they spent their lives nurturing children who were not their own, they rarely saw the long term impact of their work. The difference between the pure governess travel narrative and Leonowens and Heckford's hybrid version, is that while other governesses attempt to make a home within the heterotopic space of their displacement, Leonowens and Heckford seek to move beyond this.

The fact that Heckford and Leonowens push the boundaries of their dislocation and extend their professionalism is bound up with two consecutive dialogues concerning ownership. The first concerns the notion of owning a physical space to inhabit and either the material or abstract product of her labour within the foreign land. The second involves authoring the texts they produce. This translates into Heckford's desire for land, Leonowens's desire for a house, Heckford's desire to run a working farm, Leonowens's desire to influence Siamese politics, and eventually both women's desire to craft and publish a book which has a long-lasting political impact. In *Mistress of the House: Women of Property in the Victorian Novel* (1997), Tim Dolin equates owning property with independence. He suggests that during the nineteenth century, '[t]he internal self-division of the subject as owner was, in this formulation of subjectivity, reserved for men in the market place' and builds on Mary Poovey's argument in *Uneven Developments* (1988) that in the nineteenth century women were thought to be tied to their true 'maternal' nature and not permitted to perform multiple identities (Dolin:1997:7). Through their respective aspirations for a farm and house, Heckford and Leonowens challenge the idea that this sort of 'self-division' is for men alone.

It seems, though, that more can be said about what this 'self-division' involves. Dolin's theory alludes to one universal experience of ownership in the moment of purchasing property, but in reality this depends on the prospective owner's

circumstances. In his statement he considers ‘men in the marketplace’: men who had through work or inheritance come into enough money to purchase real-estate. He goes on to focus on the implications of women inheriting property and becoming owners without having worked to earn capital. Yet, this overlooks the fact that during the nineteenth century some women did have access to the marketplace.

Since *Mistress of the House* and particularly in recent years, there has been much interest in the Victorian economy and women’s involvement in business enterprise, and Leonowens and Heckford are certainly relevant to this. In *Victorian Literature and Finance* (2007) Francis O’Gorman tells us that:

Recently, Victorianist scholars have been more interested, in common with wider shifts away from apparently old canons and thematics, in the ways in which literary writers, especially women and popular fiction writers, have not so much criticized but profited from capitalism and made writing pay. Those who were able to manipulate their economic environment, chiefly systems of publishing, to secure advantageous deals and to exercise degrees of control over their own, and their work’s, commodification and public circulation have been particularly privileged. (O’Gorman:2007:8)

My study of Heckford and Leonowens’s texts is certainly aligned with this critical discussion. My theoretical standpoint on capitalism travels with the governesses of this thesis who in the earlier chapters are marginalised ‘victims’ of capitalism not fully admitted to the public world of work, but by this chapter seek to extend their professionalism and enter the capitalist domain. Several other feminist scholars since Dolin have explored how women sought to achieve this.

In *Women, Business, and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres* (2006), Beatrice Craig, Robert Beachy and Alastair Owens suggest that women had a presence in the marketplace, but this came with limitations: ‘Women were permitted to enter the world of trade and commerce as long as their activities reinforced rather than undermined gender stereotypes’ (Craig, Beachy and Owens:2006:10). They, and other scholars of history and literature such as Allison Kay, Stana Nenadic and Wendy Gamber, show how women capitalised on typical ideas of ‘femininity’ by working as seamstresses and milliners and entering the retail sector. Yet while a traditional governess might enter the marketplace in a ‘feminine’ manner, by

saving her earnings and starting her own school, this being an idea referred to in George Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893) and in Anna Brownell Jameson's letter to her mother (Jameson:1915:69), Heckford and Leonowens, in their attempt to move beyond the typically 'female' role of governess, do not enter the marketplace in this way. Both Leonowens and Heckford challenge traditional gender roles, and therefore their road to ownership reflects this.

Leonowens's experience ties into the overarching theme of the previous chapter because her work in political administration centres on translation. In *Translation, Authorship and the Victorian Professional Woman* (2011), Lesa Scholl explains why women like Leonowens challenged typical ideas of gender: 'Beyond being able to read the foreign text in the original, in taking on the role of translation, the female writer engages in a subversive act...[B]y engaging with foreign cultures within the foreign land [female translators] redefine their sphere' (Scholl:2011:2-8). Thus while Lott and Chennells become involved in various levels of cultural translation, so as to produce the governess travel narrative, Leonowens's work as a linguist, translating royal documents and the King's own words, takes her into new territories of professionalism not usually frequented by women. Through this part of her work she becomes heavily involved in, or at least privy to, the political management of Siam.

Just as Leonowens's work amounts to that of the translator Heckford's challenge to gender stereotypes is aligned with that illustrated in the frontier narrative. Her experience of travelling overseas to begin a new enterprise and become self-sufficient echoes the experience of frontier men and women who travelled across America to fulfil their own individual desires for a new life and new prospects. In *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915* (1982) Sandra L. Myers stresses that 'women who survived...the adjustment to frontier conditions and changed roles for women tended to ignore, or at least not slavishly strive towards Eastern-dictated models of femininity or the ideal of true womanhood. These hardy and self-sufficient women stepped out of woman's place with few regrets' (Myers:1982:269-70). Like Heckford in South Africa, frontier women learned to ride horses, rear livestock, and handle rifles as well as manage the administration of local businesses, and whether or not they felt that they were behaving in an unfeminine manner, they forged a new path in the experience of women's work.

With regard to the governess's desire to own the product of her labour as well as a physical inhabitable space when residing in the foreign land, Scholl tells us that within the act of translation is a quest for ownership because '[t]he resulting text does not belong solely to the original author, but to both the author and the translator, for it is the product of their dialogic relationship' (Scholl:2011:2). Likewise Myers shows that while some frontier women 'first learned business skills by assisting their husbands...others learned because of necessity and gained economic and technical expertise through hard work and often bitter experience [and] often to their own amazement, found that they enjoyed earning their own livelihood and controlling their own lives, and they became enthusiastic entrepreneurs' (Myers:1982:268). The harsh conditions of the frontier gave both married and single women the opportunity to learn skills otherwise withheld from them. This way they were owners of an array of abilities which allowed them to enter the marketplace and define themselves professionally. In short, Leonowens and Heckford seek to maintain the bond between labourer and product and anchor themselves to their profession, rather than remain as governesses who are constantly bound to leave their work behind. For them the splitting of the self that Dolin equates with ownership is about putting part of themselves, whether it be their physical efforts or their ideas, into an enterprise that they might see flourish.

This matter of owning their labour continues in the latter part of this chapter where Heckford and Leonowens extend their professionalism for the second time, from trade and administration into authorship. In *Patent Inventions - Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (2004), Clare Pettitt looks at how development of other kinds of intellectual property in the nineteenth century affected how writers came to view their work as a property which simultaneously belongs to them and their audience. Her theories can be applied to Heckford and Leonowens as their experience of governing and trading or political administration shapes both their experience in the profession of writing and the text they produce. Pettitt suggests that to succeed in the professional world amid the development of patents, workers and inventors of intellectual property 'tried to hold on to the ideal of the bond between the person and the property...while also needing the flexibility, and ultimately, the freedom of contract that allowed them not merely to own, but also to sell and disperse' (Pettitt:2004:22). To strike this balance, Leonowens and Heckford attempt to write texts which evidence the development of their professional identity within the foreign land and put forth a political message, while being marketable to audiences at home.

The fact that other kinds of professionalism inform women's experience in the profession of writing is corroborated in Jennie Batchelor's *Women's Work: Labour, Gender Authorship* (2010). Batchelor says that work is 'not simply a threat to be avoided or a hurdle to be overcome...work is crucial to many female authors' self-construction, their negotiation of the gendered politics of the work of writing forming the cornerstone of their identities as women and as writers' (Batchelor:2010:11). What we find then, is that while governessing itself does not satisfy Heckford's and Leonowens's desire for independence and professionalism, writing about governessing does exactly that. Along with trading and political administration which, while being vastly different occupations, ultimately provide Heckford and Leonowens with great insight into how the countries they inhabit are run, governessing provides them with 'the vocabulary of professionalism' which 'women were denied access to' and allows them to cultivate insightful accounts of the foreign land written by someone who has not only visited, but lived and worked there. (Batchelor:2010:11,5). As much as governessing gave women access to the most obscure parts of the world, it gave them a popular topic on which to write about in order to access to the world of publishing. To capitalise on their experience of governessing, and strike the balance Pettitt speaks of by simultaneously signalling their ownership of their work and selling it, the governess travel narrative in Heckford and Leonowens texts evolves.

For Leonowens and Heckford then, 'self-division' does not come with ownership as a response to inheriting property or spending ready money but is a prerequisite on the way to ownership which they achieve through extending their professionalism. They do this not by capitalising on their femininity but by challenging it and 'defin[ing] their own sphere' (Scholl:2011:8). Within this sphere they divide the self professionally, so that rather than remaining 'whole' but isolated governesses they become 'divided' integrated professionals who establish ownership of their labour. The fact they are able to do this at all has a lot to do with the notion that the governess-traveller has already experienced something on the way to 'self-division' as she moves between the public and private spheres, teaching and travelling. Though this sort of division is never permanent, but a liminal to-ing and fro-ing between the various expressions of her identity, governessing still provides a useful stepping stone into other forms of employment. From this point, entering a new profession and creating a new professional identity is the road to ownership. This continues when Leonowens and Heckford's focus shifts from trading and administration to writing, because by writing a

book and attempting to capitalise on its publication, Leonowens and Heckford seek to craft and own a work of non-fiction that defines who they are and their place in the world so they can never again be confined to the liminal space of governessing. Yet rather than being something they are desperate to get away from, governessing once again proves key to authorship and ownership as it provides Heckford and Leonowens with the grounding in the ‘vocabulary of professionalism’ they need to assert themselves as authors. What this means for Heckford’s and Leonowens’s text is that the governess travel narrative mutates and displays the presence of genres which trace the governess’s professional development into social reform, convey a political agenda, and appeal to mass consumption.

In my analysis of Heckford’s and Leonowens’s texts I will first trace the evolution of the governess-traveller and consider how the governesses go about extending their professional identities in *A Lady Trader* and *The English Governess at The Siamese Court*. I will then expose a second shift in Heckford and Leonowens’s professional identity whereby the governess-trader and governess-secretary re-focus their efforts on the act of writing. From here I will compare *A Lady Trader* with *Romance of the Harem* and examine how the evolution of the governess travel narrative occurs within these texts. In doing so I will show how from traditional episodes of governess travel narrative, both Heckford and Leonowens’s narratives divide, extend and evolve into other marketable forms of writing which contain a political discourse. Within my discussion of these two professional transformations I will examine how through several narrative offshoots, the governesses express their desire for professional independence and ownership of a physical space in which to live, and the product of their labour. This means engaging with the ideas of spatial geography and identity previously considered in this thesis while considering how the governess’s experience of these ideas comes to form part of a politically influential, publishable product which she can both capitalise on and own.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOVERNESS-TRAVELLER: EXTENDING PROFESSIONALISM AND OBTAINING PROPERTY

Though the ways in which Heckford and Leonowens desire ownership are very different, both fight to obtain property and space. However, while Heckford looks to achieve this beyond the profession of governessing, Leonowens believes, up until her arrival at the palace, that governessing can offer her these things. When Leonowens arrives in Siam, she expects to be given a house outside the palace walls. This, she says, was promised to her in a letter from the King and an important part of her contract. Much to her distress Leonowens soon finds that she is expected to reside within the palace, and the first half of her book recalls three failed attempts in which she campaigns for the house she was promised. In her first attempt at securing a home, Leonowens meets directly with King Mongkut:

Presently, mustering courage for myself also, I ventured to express my wish for a quiet house or apartments, where I might be free from intrusion, and at perfect liberty before and after school-hours.

[H]e said abruptly, "You not married... where will you go in the evening?"

"Not anywhere, your Excellency. I simply desire to secure for myself and my child some hours of privacy and rest, when my duties do not require my presence elsewhere."

"How many years your husband has been dead?" he asked.

I replied that his Excellency had no right to pry into my domestic concerns. His business was with me as a governess only; on any other subject I declined conversing (Leonowens:1988:65)

It is intriguing that though thousands of miles from England, in the lead up to the Married Women's Property Act, Leonowens and the King have this debate regarding property, and the King, like many men and women at home, understands ownership to be the right of the husband, not the wife or even the widow. In this way, Leonowens challenges not only the King's view, but that held by anyone who opposed the Women's Property Act in Britain. Yet in the latter half of the passage, Leonowens touches upon the complexity and impossibility of her position when it comes to her

desire to own property and space. Although it is through governessing that she first sets out to establish herself as an independent professional and obtain a house, ultimately Leonowens wants to separate work and home, profession and ownership, and acquire a place of ‘privacy and rest’ for times when her ‘duties do not require [her] presence elsewhere’. When she replies that the King ‘had no right to pry into domestic concerns. His business was with me as a governess only’, she emphasises further her desire to separate public and private, but this is an impossible feat for a governess whose role demands she perpetually float between the worlds of work and home. It is not until much later, and Leonowens has found another way to establish her professional identity, that she is able to obtain her own space.

In the meantime, Leonowens turns to extending her professionalism. This begins when she and the King discuss her role in the palace and after considering her duties as a teacher, the King goes on to say:

‘And, furthermore, I have by every mail foreign letters whose writing is not easily read by me. You shall copy on round hand, for my readily perusal thereof [sic]’.

Nil desperandum; but I began by despairing of my ability to accomplish tasks so multifarious. I simply bowed, however, and so dismissed myself for that evening. (Leonowens:1988:59)

From this point, Leonowens becomes the King’s secretary as well as a governess and this is why in many ways *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* moves beyond the bounds of the traditional governess travel narrative. Immediately, though, Leonowens has some concerns about her position. This is not because she doubts her abilities as a secretary, nor because she is a young woman and it compromises her propriety to work alone with the King. The latter is resolved by the fact that being in a position of authority in the court of Siam means Leonowens is considered almost on a par with the men of the palace. Her social status is valued above her gender and many people of the palace address her as ‘sir’. Her only anxiety results from the ‘multifarious’ nature of her role. This is not a symptom of the work itself, but more to do with the evolution of her identity as a governess-traveller entering the world of political administration. This is not surprising considering the complex political landscape of Siam at the time.

King Mongkut came to the throne in 1851 after having spent over twenty years in a Buddhist monastery. He was a highly intelligent, and somewhat forward-thinking king who, while being wary of the European powers, was interested in building relationships with the West. ‘He was of the opinion that the future of Siamese sovereignty would largely depend on good (trade) relationships with the West... [and the] adoption of certain Western notions and standards of civilisation and progress’ (Stengs:2009:7). His outlook proved to be right, and Siam was the only country in the Far East to remain independent throughout the nineteenth century. In his bid to modernise Siam, and see his country flourish in the world of trade and commerce, Mongkut did a great deal to reform Siamese politics and culture. In 1855 he agreed to a treaty developed by the British politician Sir John Bowring to lower the tax on foreign trade in Siam. Previously the tax on trade had been disproportionately high and was significantly limiting economic growth. After the Bowring treaty trade increased and the Siamese economy soared. This is not to say that Mongkut was not criticised for his decision. Some critics felt that the treaty was an unfair encroachment on Siamese culture, particularly because it also extradited Britons from the Siamese legal system. In the wake of the Bowring treaty similar treaties were formed with other Western powers including America. These treaties were equally a double-edged sword which, while ‘costing Siam a degree of legal and fiscal independence, spared the country the military incursions and colonial subjugation other Southeast Asian states experienced’ (Britannica:2013:online).

Like the governess-traveller, Siam at the time of Leonowens’s visit was an entity in-between worlds. The way in which Leonowens and King Mongkut’s relationship has come to be represented has caused much controversy, but thinking about Leonowens’s position as a governess-traveller and secretary shows these two very different people sharing some common experience. For both the King and Leonowens, maintaining their profession depends on the independent modernisation of Siam. This, however, required a near impossible balancing act between achieving modernisation in line with Western standards and being altogether Westernised. As much as Siam’s success meant changing to accommodate Western trade relations, Siam needed to retain its own identity both politically and culturally so as to remain a strong and unconquerable presence in South-East Asia. Both King Mongkut and Leonowens struggle to work together within such a conflicted and unstable ideology and though there are times when they manage this, there are also times when their ingrained cultural

beliefs cause a rift in both their working relationship and the smooth running of Siamese politics. Essentially both the King and the governess are caught between the cultures of the East and the West and a new quasi-culture somewhere in-between. In my exploration of her role as secretary I will say more about the effects of Leonowens's attempt to extend her professionalism and pursue her desire for ownership between these worlds.

For a time, however, Leonowens reaps some benefits from her dual role as governess and secretary to the King:

What with translating, correcting, copying, dictating, reading, I had hardly a moment I could call my own... But it was my consolation to know that I could befriend the women and children of the palace, who, when they saw that I was not afraid to oppose the king in his more outrageous caprices of tyranny, imagined me endued with supernatural powers, and secretly came to me with their grievances, in full assurance that sooner or later I would see them redressed. And so, with no intention on my part, and almost without my own consent, I suffered myself to be set up between the oppressor and the oppressed. From that time I had no peace. Day after day I was called upon to resist the wanton cruelty of judges and magistrates... I suffered from continual contact with the sufferings of others, and came to the rescue in self-defence and in pity for myself not less than for them. (Leonowens:1988:270)

In this episode Leonowens shows that her role as a secretary affords her a much greater sense of agency and power than her role as a governess. So much so that she becomes politically influential in the day-to-day running of the Siamese Court and its judicial system. It is in this role that Leonowens presents herself as an 'imperial feminist' who, as Antoinette Burton and Clare Midgley show, felt it was their duty to 'expose the oppression of women in the West while simultaneously representing Western women as liberated in comparison to their victimised sisters in Africa or India,' and, as it turns out, Siam (Midgley:1998:176). As a self-sufficient British woman living and working in Siam, Leonowens certainly conforms to this definition. She complains about, and actively seeks to resolve, the entrapment and mistreatment of women as slaves, and does so because as a white woman she presumes to know better. At the same time, she challenges the King's, and indeed the British assumption that she should live with, and depend on, a man whether that is her husband or her employer.

What Leonowens also demonstrates here, is that while her desire for ownership means extending her professionalism beyond the role of governess, her experience of governing is intrinsic to her success as a secretary and her ability to effect change where she sees fit. Her experience of living and working between spheres and the governess-like passivity with which she carries out her actions are what qualify her 'to be set up between the oppressor and the oppressed' in the world of politics. In this way being a secretary is not so much a move away from governing as an extension of it and evidence of the 'internal self-division' Leonowens experiences when one profession blurs into another (Dolin:1997:7). Her success in achieving this, however, also brings with it serious negative effects.

Though Leonowens sees her ability to impact judicial rulings as an act of progress in terms of gender equality, and her own professional status, the imperial aspect of her 'Imperial feminism' means her involvement is equally a British intervention. Extending her professionalism and entering the world of politics to this degree takes her out of the middle ground traversed by traditional governess-travellers who, while having their own personal opinions, never ventured to voice them to their employers or in any other official capacity. It seems then, that while governing prepares Leonowens for her role as secretary, once she oversteps the boundaries of governing into the world of politics, she approaches a point of no return in terms of her relationship with the foreign land. From this moment, Leonowens strays from the liminal territory governesses were required to confine themselves to in order to work peacefully within the foreign land without being regarded as an imperial agent.

During the time in which Leonowens successfully extends her professionalism, she also finally succeeds in obtaining the space and property she so dearly covets. Eight chapters into her book she recalls her elation at being granted a house outside the palace walls. Subsequently she goes on to describe the process by which she makes the house a home:

I sat down to plan an attack... How quickly the general foulness was purified, the general raggedness repaired, the general shabbiness made "good as new"! The floors, that had been buried under immemorial dust, arose again under the excavating labors of the sweepers; and the walls, that had been gory with expectorations of betel, hid their "damnéd spots" under innocent veils of whitewash... a couple of armchairs, hospitably

embracing; a pair of silver candlesticks, quaint and homely; a goodly company of pleasant books; a piano, just escaping from its travelling-cage, with all its pent-up music in its bosom; a cosey little cot clinging to its ampler mother; a stream of generous sunlight from the window gilding and gladdening all,—behold our home in Siam... Triumphantly I... prepared to queen it in my own palace. (Leonowens:1988:74-6)

A lot of this is highly reminiscent of Jane Eyre at Moor House, who on discovering she is the owner of a fortune, decides to spend time and money on redecorating the Rivers' home. For Jane renovation and redecoration are colonial acts and the same can be said for Leonowens. The idea that she must 'plan an attack' so as to become 'queen in [her] own palace' is highly territorial and echoes the attitudes of agents of imperialism who felt that Western superiority gave them a right to 'purify' the 'foulness' and 'repair' the 'raggedness' of an otherwise uncivilised East. The 'white-wash' she applies to conceal 'damned spots' on the walls foreshadows Conrad's preoccupation with light and dark in *Heart of Darkness* (1899). At the same, however, Leonowens's mention of the 'damned spots' seems a direct recall of Lady Macbeth's dialogue in Shakespeare's 1605 play: 'Out, damned spot! out, I say! - One: two: why/ then, 'tis time to do't. - Hell is murky!' (Act5:Scene1:35-6). Lady Macbeth says these words towards the end of the play, driven mad by her involvement in King Duncan's murder. The theatricality of this reference is surely ironic, but points to the performative nature of Leonowens's split identity as a governess, secretary and now a colonial agent removing all trace of those who previously inhabited 'her' space. Though this takes place within a domestic setting, what we are seeing is Leonowens performing and engaging in a more patriarchal, colonial version of imperialism than the Imperial feminism of previous episodes.

This continues later on in the passage. In her new home Leonowens presents herself as the commanding general and her many personified artefacts are her army, but the personification of these items is intriguing. While to an extent Leonowens presents a pleasant, homely scene, some of her language denotes the opposite. On the one hand the way the piano is in the act of 'escaping', the music is 'pent up' and the cot is 'clinging to its ampler mother' suggests that the items have finally been released from imprisonment, like passengers disembarking from a ship after a long journey. On the other hand, the actions assigned to Leonowens's belongings denote trepidation and anxiety at their arrival in a new land and point to the furniture's reluctance to participate in Leonowens's possession of the space. Through this imagery Leonowens suggests that

extending her professionalism into the world of politics, means slipping from the heterotopic space of the governess's displacement into a public space where she cannot help but be seen to act on her innate imperial assumptions. There is a sense that such a move is bound to end badly and ultimately force her to pack up her belongings and leave Siam.

Sarah Heckford's desire for ownership differs from Leonowens's in that it occurs much more on a geographical, than a political level. Typical of the governess travel narrative, a significant part of Heckford's text is devoted to describing her surroundings as she walks through them. Like Anna Jameson, Lucy Snowe, Emmeline Lott and Ellen Chennells, Heckford uses the short time before or after her duties to explore her new home and recalls: 'I WOKE early the next morning, and took a survey of my new abode, and a stroll towards a wooded spur of the mountain' (Heckford:2000:73). However, while the other governesses tend to walk linear routes and retrace their steps forward and back, as epitomised by Jane Eyre's journey away from and returning to Thornfield, Heckford explores much further afield:

A little farther on the road passed over a broad stone bulwark, which served to dam up a rivulet, which, gushing out of the precipitous crown of the mountain, found its way down its side through a ravine overarched by trees, and carpeted with ferns, to a place at which it was compelled to form a big pond or dam. From this dam as much or as little water as was requisite could be let out, by means of two wooden pipes ... This process is called "letting water," and is a very important one in this dry country, also a very troublesome and tedious one... The stream of water and the dam are the first things to be looked to in buying a farm out here, also their relative position to the ground to be cultivated. The dam has frequently to be made by the purchaser, then he must be careful to see that he can make one of sufficient size above what he means to be his lands. (Heckford:2000:73)

As Heckford wanders through a changing landscape, so does her narrative. It begins picturesquely, typical of the travel narrative style as the governess gazes up at the impressive mountainscape. She goes on to describe a den-like space in the ravine, 'carpeted with ferns', illustrating the governess's ease at being both in and out, liminally at home while on the move out of doors. From this point there is a shift in Heckford's tone as the voice of the trader emerges and she knowledgeably informs her readers of how a dam functions to serve the community. This passage illustrates Heckford's state

of mind at this point in her journey. Though the pronoun 'his' is used for the grammatical purpose of declaring universality, there is a sense of bitterness that while a man stranded in the wilderness might have found work on a farm, Heckford is forced into governessing. While her information seems out of place in describing a stroll, she insists on including it in her memoir, struggling to amalgamate her roles as governess and trader in the process of extending her professionalism. At this stage in her narrative, the problem seems to lie in the fact that while governessing is a suitably feminine profession, the life of the landowner, though something she longs for greatly, is kept at arm's length because it is considered a masculine role. Despite her penchant for breaking with convention, Heckford struggles to form an identity which combines the 'lady' and the 'trader' referred to in her title, and the 'professional vocabulary' of trade jars with the rest of her narrative (Batchelor:2010:5). It seems then, that while Leonowens's imperial feminism is covert, Heckford's bubbles beneath a layer of bitterness and is less about liberating her sisters than conquering her own feminine space on the colonial map of Great Britain.

To a degree governessing helps Heckford to resolve this inward conflict. When travelling between locations, or in semi-enclosed spaces such as window seats, carriages, walled gardens, bridges and staircases, essentially in 'spaces' rather than 'places,' governesses become in tune with their own liminality and go on to define their identity as governess-travellers, inhabiting the in-between. What Heckford cannot deny, by showcasing her agricultural expertise, is that like Leonowens's secretarial work, trading is an extension of governessing. Until she has experienced governessing, and semi-independence, Sarah Heckford the widow, still living off the fortune of her marriage, cannot succeed as a female trader in a man's world. It is only once she has been made officially homeless, and lived her life under another's roof by another's rules that she is truly driven to make a fortune from the land and a home in one of the many open spaces of the Transvaal. Just as governessing is a step towards female emancipation and ownership, in this case it rekindles her Imperial feminism and desire for independence.

The first step to resolving her perception of land ownership as a masculine act is the result of her employer's thoughtfulness. Being a kind employer, Mr Higgins helps Heckford to find and purchase a suitable horse which Heckford names Eclipse:

Mr. Higgins allowed me forage for my animal, and I groomed him, fed him, and bedded him up myself. No hand but mine touched him... At first he was trouble-some to groom, but he soon got accustomed to it and fond of me...Eclipse knew as well as most horses how to distinguish between a master who treated him well and never punished him except when he deserved it, and one who neglected him and spurred him to make him show off.

I certainly felt much happier after getting my horse...and although I had no time to ride much... many a ride I had, generally with one of the children with me on Dick, and I felt now that if there were danger I could get hold of Jimmy.
(Heckford:2000:83-84)

There is something very governess-like in Heckford's treatment of her horse as this passage demonstrates that she is the epitome of 'firm but fair'. Upon purchasing Eclipse Heckford alters in two ways. Her ownership of, and sole responsibility for the horse give Heckford a greater sense of authority, and though she is still financially dependent on her employer, she too becomes someone upon whom another life depends. While Heckford admits that her duties mean her opportunities to ride out are limited, the main thing Eclipse offers her is a greater sense of independence. Where more traditional governesses, if ever permitted to visit a friend or relative, would have to rely on public transport, or that provided by their employer, Heckford knows that she can venture out on her own. By extension, the land on which she travels is made more accessible, and thus traversing the space at her own will, by her own means makes the possibility of extending her professionalism for a life of land ownership and trade seem more achievable.

Later in her account, but still within the governessing episode, Heckford describes a trip to Pretoria with the Higginses. While Mrs Higgins and the children ride ahead in the carriage, Mr Higgins and Heckford travel on horseback and her experience of the landscape continues to change:

For some distance the road was uninteresting, its chief advantage being that it was good for cantering; but as we neared Moy-plas and crossed the tributary of the Crocodile River, which I had previously crossed when riding to Fahl-plas, we came to a farm which made a great impression upon me...it looked the perfection of a Boer farm, and made one picture to oneself what it might be if it were an English one. (Heckford:2000:123-124)

Initially this passage is not about the scenery, but more concerned with movement, mobility and freedom. In this way riding her own horse at an unlimited speed empowers the governess and Heckford goes on to look upon the landscape with more confidence, regarding the Boer farm as something she, a British citizen, might own. As I have shown in previous chapters, this is not unusual because governesses are often empowered by the movement and mobility which signal their independence. Yet while the other governesses in this thesis walk or ride inside a carriage, Heckford tears through the landscape by her own means of transport and this does even more to empower her. In this way both Heckford's body and gaze are fuelled with a greater sense of agency. Though Heckford begins to look upon the landscape as one who might own part of it in the future, she achieves this by mimicking typically masculine behaviour. The way she rides alongside Mr Higgins, mirroring his movements, shows that like Leonowens she begins to 'perform' certain colonial behaviours generally associated with men. This begs the question of whether Heckford's feminist aspiration to be independent is more aligned with patriarchal imperialism and colonial enterprise. Heckford begins to envisage the landscape in a more accessible light, but there is conflict in how this occurs:

The owner of this fine property a tall, gaunt woman with a pleasant face, the widow of three husbands was standing by the gate of the little yard in front of her house, a yard trim as a room, with oleander and other trees round it, and shut in by a low whitewashed wall. (Heckford:2000:123)

Here admiring the owner of the farm: a widow who refuses to admit defeat and recalling the image of the house, shrouded by trees, Heckford describes a feminine space inhabited by a 'pleasant faced' earth-mother. In this way she realises that farming, and essentially nurturing and caring for the land, can be perceived as an overtly feminine role. However, this approach to farming and land-ownership still does not appeal to Heckford as she discovers that the widow survives only by marrying one man after another. Instead Heckford's kinship with the farm comes down to her changing perception and gendering of the landscape itself:

Stretching right across the valley and to the top of the ranges on either side, with water from two tributaries of the Crocodile irrigating it, with its broad lands, magnificent orchard, its out-buildings, and its small but trim farmhouse. (Heckford:2000:124)

Heckford's personification of the landscape, the imagery depictive of the sloping valley and lush, fertile terrain, and the feminine adjectives used to describe of the 'small but trim' farmhouse play into the tradition of describing land in terms of the female body. Though the correlation of the rural landscape and the female form is nothing new, it has various implications in light of Heckford's desire to extend her professionalism and own land. On the one hand, the way she comes to envisage the land is a manifestation of her Imperial feminism. The land itself is gendered and becomes one of the victimised 'sisters' she sees it as her duty to help and improve. On the other hand, the fact she sees the land as something passive stretching out before her puts her in a position of patriarchal authority over the fertile, feminine landscape. Like Leonowens, it seems that Heckford's Imperial feminism begins to be absorbed by the matter of colonial conquest at Empire's core. Whether she accepts it or not, her feminist aspirations contribute to British patriarchal aspirations for an ever expanding Empire.

Ultimately, for both women, maintaining their ownership of space through a profession beyond governessing is doomed to failure. For Leonowens this occurs towards the end of *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* where her work as secretary leaves her caught in a political trap. Once again Leonowens refers to the duality of her role when she explains: 'I had struggled through many exacting tasks since I came to Siam, but never any that so taxed my powers of endurance as my duties at this time, in my double office of governess and private secretary to his Majesty...At length the crash came' (Leonowens:1988:277). The 'crash' Leonowens speaks of begins when she refuses to write a letter in reply to Sir John Bowring, a British politician who had since been appointed the Governor for Hong Kong. In the days Leonowens describes, the King had promised Bowring that he could visit Paris on behalf of Siam to negotiate new treaties concerning Siamese possessions in Cambodia. Throughout the nineteenth century Cambodia was a colonised nation and while Siam possessed a relatively small, central area, the rest of the country was being encroached upon by both the French and Vietnamese. When Leonowens was living in Siam, the Cambodian King sought a French Protectorate to prevent further domination by the Vietnamese. However, Siam retained its possession of parts of inner Cambodia, and it was these parts that King Mongkut wanted to protect through negotiations with France. (Baker and Phongpaichit:2009:58)

The ‘crash’ Leonowens describes began when the King changed his mind about sending Bowring to France and asked Leonowens to write, telling him that a Siamese Embassy would now be going to Paris in his place. Leonowens recalls:

No sooner had he entertained this fancy than he sent for me, and coolly directed me to write and explain the matter to Sir John, if possible attributing his new views and purpose to the advice of her Britannic Majesty's Consul; or, if I had scruples on that head, I might say the advice was my own,—or “anything I liked,” so that I justified his conduct. (Leonowens:1988:277)

This moment exemplifies the complex nature of Leonowens’s position and the difficulties it led her to face. While governesses like Lott and Chennells float between affirming and negating imperialist attitudes, Leonowens finds herself in a stranglehold between the Siamese King and Bowring the British representative. Governesses were able to form, develop, and change their attitudes towards East and West because their liminal position between domesticity and professionalism allowed them, along with their ideas, to slide into the private sphere. Though they entered the world of work their words could equally be considered as the private musings of a woman in the home, not a public outcry in the political domain. This way, governesses could sink into shadow so as to live and work comfortably within the foreign land. As a secretary, however, Leonowens is forced into the limelight and becomes ‘bonded to’ her political ideas quite publicly. While Pettitt argues that successful professionalism required workers to maintain ownership of their labour, this puts Leonowens in a dangerous position when living and working overseas in light of her imperial feminism. In this episode Leonowens shows the King attempting to make her his scapegoat, encouraging her to take responsibility for the words she writes. This highlights Leonowens’s exit from the safe space of governessing and entry into a world where ownership of one’s labour means accepting culpability. Though she extends her professionalism and obtains a place to live so as to liberate her Siamese ‘sisters’ and maintain her independence, her feminism is overshadowed by the Imperialist aspect of her work. Because it is the British Empire that facilitates her residence in Siam, her feminism is trumped by its patriarchy. Her desire to help herself and other women does not exist beyond the context of imperialism, and for that reason she ultimately becomes an enemy to the independence of Siam.

When Sarah Heckford finally acquires her own farm, she is as empowered as when Leonowens moves into her house. Yet, extending her professionalism into the world of trade also complicates Heckford's position as a British woman living and working overseas. In the 1870s the Transvaal was bordered by the Orange Free State and the British governed Cape Colony. It was inhabited largely by the Boers or white Afrikaners who were descended from the Dutch colonists of the eighteenth century. Also living in the Transvaal were the Zulus whom Heckford refers to as Kaffirs. This term is now highly derogatory but in Heckford's day was used widely. Misapplied to the Zulu people native to the Transvaal, the term derives from the Arabic of the Middle-East and refers to a non-believer of Islam. In the 1850s, after the Zulu wars, the Boers set up several small republics across the Transvaal and Britain recognised the region's independence. However, when Heckford arrived in South Africa the Transvaal region had been annexed by the British. They did this to settle border disputes between the Boers and the Zulus and to enhance the protection of their diamond mining economy in the Cape. While the Boers did not object to the British governing the Cape they rejected this interference and tensions began to rise (Judd and Surridge:2013:17-28). This state of unrest verging on conflict was what Heckford came to experience the longer she stayed in the country.

Like Leonowens, Heckford finds that maintaining a professional identity and asserting her imperial feminism beyond governessing is ultimately impossible, and the reason for this comes down to a shift in power relations between herself and the country she inhabits. When Heckford moves onto her farm, which she names Griinfontein, she immediately plans to build upon it in a Western style. She longs for a working dam and a cottage, but finding reputable builders proves to be a difficult task, and Heckford is frequently disappointed in the staff she employs. Many set-backs take place in her development of the farm and just when she is satisfied with the work of a good tradesman Heckford runs out of money:

From the time when I arranged to buy Griinfontein, I had known that to make it pay a certain class of buildings would have to be erected on it. It was not a farm, to the best of my belief, that could be made pay by working it in the hugger-mugger fashion of the country. I had been careful in making all my calculations...now I found that I had been grossly, although I do not mean wilfully, misled. The meaning of all this to me was, that I must give up Griinfontein or be ruined. Of course I chose

the former alternative, but it was very painful. I dreaded parting from the Higginses, and going as it were out into the unknown again...However, the truth was too obvious; to me Griinfontein meant ruin... I could have cried as I turned my back on them, if crying had been of any use. (Heckford:2000:218)

Arguably, Heckford's downfall is her attitude towards the development of the farm and her insistence that it not be done 'in the hugger-mugger fashion of the country'. Though Heckford sets out to start a new life for herself as an independent, self-sufficient, working woman, she ends up co-ordinating a 'civilising' mission. Like Leonowens, it is Heckford's inert, imperial assumption that the Western way is the best way that overshadows her feminist ambitions. Once again, the country to which she moves cannot support the governess's extended professionalism, and while Leonowens cannot be supported politically, Heckford's imperial values cannot be sustained economically. It seems then that when a woman working abroad moves beyond the liminal space of governessing she cannot help but become an agent for imperialism, and though it is the networks created by the British Empire which facilitate Leonowens and Heckford's move overseas, it is the drawbacks, and specifically the overbearing patriarchal domination of Empire which ultimately sees them cast out and rejected by countries which resent their being there.

For Heckford, giving up Griinfontein marks the beginning of the end of her life as a trader. She does go on to purchase another farm, but this too fails in the midst of the Boer conflict. Their failure in professions other than governessing is why both Leonowens and Heckford turn to extending their professionalism by another means, namely through the act of writing. The ownership they seek to experience then is not of physical property, but of their own intellectual property. Essentially the governesses transfer their focus from space to text.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE GOVERNESS TRAVEL NARRATIVE: A TRANSFER OF INTEREST FROM SPACE TO TEXT

Just as governessing works as a stepping stone into Leonowens's work as a secretary and Heckford's work as a trader, it is pivotal to their profession as writers. So much so that despite being heavily involved in Siamese politics because of her role as

secretary, when she comments on her duties in *Romance of the Harem* Leonowens tends to focus on her work as a governess. This highlights how while governessing did not do enough for Leonowens in terms of extending her professionalism, writing about it does. In the opening chapter of *Romance of the Harem*, rather than echoing the opening to *The English Governess* and giving details of her journey to Siam, Leonowens begins by offering a historic introduction to the country. Yet, even this mirrors the governess travel narrative in terms of its style and approach, through Leonowens's linguistic analysis of the term 'Muang Thai':

SIAM is called by its people " Muang Thai " (the kingdom of the free). The appellation which we employ is derived from a Malay word scujdm (the brown race),and is never used by the natives themselves; nor is the country ever so named in the ancient or modern annals of the kingdom. (Leonowens:1988:1)

In this way the narrative structures present in the governess travel narrative, as illustrated in the previous chapter, continue to play a part in *Romance of the Harem*. Here, like Lott and Chennells, Leonowens investigates the native roots of certain words and providing translations in parenthesis. Yet, the process presented in Lott's and Chennells's governess travel narrative takes place sooner here. Within a few lines, rather than several chapters, Leonowens highlights the significance of linguistic roots, the matter of translation and the impact of language on constructing 'the Other'. While here in the introduction to her book, Leonowens does not dare to appear directly critical of Western attitudes to the East, she does point out that one race's opinion of another does not necessarily translate. Her role as a governess, who moves between worlds like Lott and Chennells before her, allows her to acknowledge the 'moment of failure' so essential to knowing the limitations of translation (Clifford:1999:183). What Leonowens points out here is that translations can often be misinformed, the result of which can be insulting. The 'Malay' appellation of the Siamese language is in this case the scapegoat deemed responsible for the West's mistake.

Leonowens continues to imitate the structures present in the governess travel narrative when she goes on to challenge European impressions of Siam.

In the opinion of Pickering, the Siamese are of Malay origin. A majority of intelligent Europeans, however, regard the population as mainly Mongolian. But there is much more probability that they belong to that powerful Indo-European race

to which Europe owes its civilization, and whose chief branches are the Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Latins, Kelts, and the Teutonic and Slavonic tribes...Comparative philology alone enables us to track the origin of nations of great antiquity. According to the researches of the late king, who was a very studious and learned man, of twelve thousand eight hundred Siamese words, more than five thousand are found to be Sanskrit, or to have their roots in that language, and the rest in the Indo-European tongues; to which have been superadded a great number of Chinese and Cambodian terms.
(Leonowens:1988:1)

Interestingly, Leonowens's way of pointing out the errors of European scholars is to set out their views side by side and let contradiction speak for itself. Amid the conflict between the traveller William Alexander Pickering and other 'intelligent Europeans,' Leonowens's voice emerges as the most trustworthy. Her listing of the various nations within the Indo-European race emphasises the range of her knowledge, and the linguistic analysis undertaken in the previous passage is shown to form part of a broader interest in 'comparative philology'. Leonowens's intellectualism is brought to light through her use of the pronoun 'us'. Not only does this point to her role alongside other, most probably male, scholars of Siam, but it unites the English governess and the 'late king'. This is highly ironic considering that her disagreements with the King and the pressure she was put under as his secretary ultimately caused her to leave Siam. In this way Leonowens's *The Romance of the Harem* shows how she writes to capitalise on her largely successful experience as a governess, rather than her problematic role as a secretary so as to assert her voice as part of both a collective body of research and the Siamese royal family.

Despite spanning only seventy-four pages and covering a period of just under a year, Heckford's governess travel narrative, like Leonowens's in *Romance of the Harem*, is often stylistically typical of the sub-genre. On the whole, her time with the Higginses was happy and comfortable. She received a pleasant room, was well fed and permitted to bring her dog with her. There is, however, a typical example of the governess travel narrative where Heckford considers her departure from one life and arrival in a new one at the close of Chapter 7. Here she regretfully concludes: 'my stay in little Kustemberg, and under the friendly roof of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, came to an end' (Heckford:2000:64). Heckford also struggles with the shift in her identity and becoming a governess-traveller just like governesses of fiction or semi-autobiography.

Thus while *Romance of the Harem* draws on the governess's preoccupation with language as shown in Lott's and Chennells's text, Heckford's account has more in common with those of Jane Eyre, Lucy Snowe and Anna Jameson:

That asking whether I might take my dog seemed like the first plunge into a cold bath on a frosty morning; it was part of the part I had to play now, and I wondered how I should play it. I had always pitied governesses, and had also always objected to be an object of pity my- self[sic], even to myself. I never could see the use of self-commiseration, which to some seems to be so delectable. How I wondered what Mrs. Higgins would be like, what my pupils would be like, what the whole life would be like, and what sort of a governess I should make, as we bowled along the pretty road, over Oliphants-nek, and then along the southern side of the picturesque Hagaliesberg once more, into the long valley (Heckford:2000:66-7)

The imagery at the beginning of this passage certainly echoes the notion of being woken from a peaceful sleep. As in many governesses' accounts the reality of being a servant in someone else's home is for Heckford as pleasant as being thrown into cold water, and the control of her property, specifically her dog, is at the heart of this. Though Heckford attempts to distance herself from the pity associated with governessing, towards the end of the passage, like Jane Eyre and Becky Sharp before her, the movement of the carriage leads Heckford to muse over a series of questions, uncertain of what she is to expect on arriving at her situation. What is most intriguing here, though, is Heckford's referring to her new job as if she were to act out a part in a play. While this exposes the performativity of gender and identity, this also marks a shift in the narrative style and perhaps suggests that Heckford was aware of how novelistic her life had become: not only because she was stranded like Robinson Crusoe, but also because, like many governesses before her, she had fallen in status from a gentlewoman with a fortune to a servant entirely dependent on her employer. It is here that we gain a sense of how, when trapped in Pretoria, Heckford transfers her professional focus from trading to writing, and with some clever marketing aims to make an adventure story of, and therefore capitalise on, her experience of governessing. Because of this there are many more moments in the text when *A Lady Trader* reads more like a fictional adventure story than a real life travel narrative.

The opening chapter begins in a sentimental style, and there is sense of distance between the narrator and the events taking place, as if the writer has no direct involvement in the story:

ON a fine breezy morning, early in December, 1878, a number of passengers, and volunteers for the Zulu war, crowded the deck of one of the Union Company's steam-ships, then lying off the Port of D'Urban, or Port Natal (Heckford:2000:1)

Heckford does not mention her presence until page three which is unusual because travel writing is a self-reflective genre in which the narrator records both a physical and psychological journey. Both Lott and Chennells begin their accounts by detailing their first days overseas alongside their thoughts and feelings. When Heckford does introduce herself it is only to maximise the dramatic moment of being lowered from the ship into the smaller boat which would take her to shore. Despite the kerfuffle she finds this a simple matter and describes the fuss over nothing as 'a fitting prelude to life in South Africa, where, so far as my experience goes, everything is exaggerated - dangers, difficulties, beauties, and advantages' (Heckford:2000:3). Referring to the structural device of a prelude is interesting because while reflecting on the act of writing is quite common in the work of governess-travellers, Heckford goes one step further, envisioning the events at hand as part of a more adventurous, literary tale with a planned structure. This prelude provides theatricality and excitement but more than anything continues to distract from the identity of the narrator, heightening the reader's curiosity as to who is telling this equally remarkable and comical tale. Essentially, Heckford's prelude allows her to delay the fundamental moment of self-characterisation so that when she does write 'the self' into the narrative it is to maximum dramatic effect:

Jimmy and I started on ponyback. With a vague idea that I was going into a wild country, and with a distinct one that Jimmy was not likely to afford me much protection, I had a revolver in a case strapped round my waist, and another in a holster on my saddle... I was a little in front when I heard "Hilloa! I say, look what's happening!" and looking back, I beheld the road strewed with articles which had gradually fallen from Jimmy's various parcels. Jimmy looked disconsolate as he returned, and began to pick them up and tie them on again, while I sat on my pony and laughed. (Heckford:2000:9)

In this episode Heckford cements her identity as a woman beyond the social conventions of her day and ensures that her readers never fully typify her as a humble, apprehensive governess-traveller. At this early stage in the governess travel narratives of Jameson, Lott and Chennells, there is a sense of self-doubt and uncertainty, and as the narrator attempts to write herself into her account, she creeps into the narrative struggling through a period of identity crisis. Heckford, however, bursts onto centre stage, characterised entirely by the props which surround her: the horse and the revolvers attached to her waist and saddle. Heckford completely subverts our understanding of the governess-traveller, for while governesses like Lott and Chennells are defined by their internal reflections, Heckford is defined by external, material items. As well as introducing us to Heckford's wicked sense of humour, the last part of this passage is more reminiscent of a pantomime than a work of travel writing, but arguably this comedic episode is entirely bound up with the fact that Heckford's text can be classed as a governess travel narrative. This moment, when Heckford's and Jimmy's belongings tumble from the horse is the first of many occurrences in which, quite simply, things go horribly wrong. From here on, whole waggons of luggage are lost, the pair are refused entry to hotels, and are repeatedly caught in a downpour. Bit by bit Heckford shows herself to be pushed out of her life as an independent adventurer to the extent that the first sixty-two pages of her book provide the real prelude to her arrival at the Higginses' and the chief episode of the governess travel narrative.

Later, Heckford continues along this vein, employing a narrative style more typical of the Victorian novel than the travel writing genre. Frequently, there is an interruption in the narrative where a new character enters the tale. In the middle of the governing episode, Heckford recalls the Nell family who often came to lodge on the Higginses' farm:

Before going farther, allow me to introduce the Nell family. It consisted of a hulking black-bearded father; of a stout garrulous mother, who had unlimited powers of invention, and who could speak a little English; then followed two big sons, and a whole bevy of little boys and girls, ending with an infant in arms
(Heckford:2000:70)

In a somewhat Dickensian style, Heckford provides her readers with a humorous, caricatured image of the Nell family. As one would expect if they were reading this description in a novel, the family go on to cause much trouble for Mr Higgins and his

wife. The point of all this is that while it appears that the governess travel narrative is breaking down, or being invaded by a more theatrical or novelistic style of writing, Heckford's experience of governessing, hand in hand with the power of hindsight is what sparks this adventure-story strand in the text. The episode of failing as a trader and being forced into governessing provides Heckford with the misfortune central to the success and progression of the adventure-story plot, and by writing her book two years after her journey began, Heckford was able to capitalise on this. I have argued that the real governess's experience of travel is central to the governess novel and our understanding of the archetypal governess, but what *A Lady Trader* shows is that the reality of governessing provides the theatricality and literary adventure Heckford requires to succeed in the profession of writing.

Like Heckford's story, the second chapter in *Romance of the Harem* provides an example of where Leonowens's governess travel narrative begins to move in another direction. At first Leonowens continues to build on the governess travel narrative and refers to her earlier work:

THOSE of my readers who may recur to my late work, "The English Governess at the Siamese Court," will find on the 265th page mention of "a young girl of fresh and striking beauty...as free as she was lovely...This is all that is there said of her."
(Leonowens:1988:14)

In these lines Leonowens begins to tell the story of TupTim but it is significant that Leonowens acknowledges *The English Governess* as this confirms the idea that governessing provides her with the necessary means to extend her professionalism into authorship. In turn, the governess travel narrative is not something Leonowens wants to move away from but something she wants to develop, evolve, and capitalise on. This is the first example of where the governess travel narrative genre works as a springboard into something else, and arguably this is something as political as it is literary:

A week later I saw the girl again, as I was passing through the long enclosed corridor within the palace on my way to my school-room in the temple. She was lying prostrate on the marble pavement among the offerings which were placed there for the king's acceptance, and which he would inspect in his leisurely progress towards his breakfast-hall.

I never went that way without seeing something lying there, — bales of silk on silver trays, boxes of tea, calicoes, velvets, fans, priests' robes, precious spices, silver, gold, and curiosities of all kinds, in fact, almost anything and everything that money could purchase, or the most abject sycophancy could imagine as likely to gratify the despot. (Leonowens:1988:15-16)

Here Leonowens's movements echo those of Brontë's Jane Eyre through the similarly 'long, enclosed corridor[s]' of Thornfield. Equally, this passage is highly reminiscent of Emmeline Lott's *The Governess in Egypt*, when Lott describes the many imports acquired by the Viceroy. For Lott, the many artefacts present in the hallway signal the merging of cultures and the presence of the West in the East. In contrast, Leonowens uses this element of governess travel narrative to serve her own political agenda. The story of TupTim is quite well known. It is recreated in Margaret Langdon's adaptation of Leonowens's text, Rodgers's and Hammerstein's production and, somewhat more graphically, in Andy Tennant's film. In Leonowens's day, TupTim became one of the King's most esteemed concubines, but as is revealed in *Romance of the Harem*, TupTim had a lover before she entered the palace. Desperate to see the loved one she had been forced to leave behind, TupTim escaped the Siamese court dressed as a boy and entered the monastery where her lover was confined as a monk. She did so, not to continue their romantic relationship but just to be close to him and pray by his side. What Leonowens goes on to recount is TupTim's and her lover, Khoon P'hra Bâlât's capture, trial and execution, but in these early stages of telling the tale Leonowens borrows a technique found in the governess travel narrative to express her moral and political message. Aligning the image of TupTim with that of 'bales of silk on silver trays, boxes of tea, calicoes, velvets [and] fans' emphasises Leonowens's plea that women in Siam should cease to be considered as items of property.

There are many more occasions when Leonowens uses tropes typical of the governess travel narrative to introduce a new episode and ultimately communicate a political message. One begins quite traditionally: 'ONE morning in the early part of May, 1863, I went at the usual hour to my temple school-room, and found that all my pupils had gone to the Maha P'lira Saat to attend a religious ceremony, at which I also was requested to be present' (Leonowens:1988:42). On walking to the ceremony, Leonowens stumbles across another deprived and desolate woman, this time with a child. Horrified by the dismal scene before her, Leonowens initiates a dialogue:

“Why art thou thus chained? Wilt thou not tell me?” I pleaded.

“Pye” (go), said the woman, snatching her breast impatiently from the sucking child, and at the same time turning her back upon me. (Leonowens:1988:45)

Her attempt to make the woman speak goes on for some time until a simple act on Leonowens’s behalf marks the beginning of the woman’s tale and one of the many, episodic stories which work alongside Leonowens’s own experience of Siam:

Eleven o'clock boomed like a death-knell through the solitude. The woman laid herself down beside her sleeping boy to rest, apparently worn out with a sense of her misery. I placed my small umbrella over them; and this simple act of kindness so touched the poor thing, that she started up suddenly, and, before I could prevent her, passionately kissed my soiled and dusty shoes. I was so sorry for the unhappy creature that tears filled my eyes. “My sister,” said I, “tell me your whole story, and I will lay it before the king.”...

“There is sorrow in my heart, lady, where once there was nothing but passive endurance. In my soul I now hear whisperings of things that are between heaven and earth, yea, and beyond the heaven of heavens, where once there was nothing but blind obedience”(Leonowens:1988:45-47)

Here, Leonowens uses her position as a kind and trusted governess in the palace to encourage the woman to tell her story. However, pinpointing the moment in which the woman eventually submits demonstrates how we might make sense of *Romance of the Harem*. It is only once Leonowens places ‘her small umbrella’ over the prisoner that she finally begins to speak. This episode is one in which the events on the page mirror the structure of the text. The governess travel narrative provides the umbrella beneath which the stories of others and the voices of the oppressed are amplified. Communicating her political message requires Leonowens to take a stylistic detour. For various reasons the governess travel narrative cannot provide the vehicle for her message. Many members of the upper-middle class considered governesses as servants whose voices were not to be valued too highly. Equally, governesses were still widely considered as domestic figures that had no place in public sphere politics. To ensure the successful distribution of her ideas *Romance of the Harem* borders on other genres and styles and the governess travel narrative is seen to evolve.

Leonowens's introduction to the tale along with the woman's reported speech is highly dramatic. Her elaborate interpretation of the events in the middle of a typical episode of travel narrative, presents a juxtaposition of styles as alarming as the 'booming' chimes Leonowens describes. The death imagery she incorporates here perhaps marks the death of the governess travel narrative as we know it and the beginning of something new. However, the melodramatic tone through which Leonowens conveys the scene plays into the reason why her work has come to be criticised. The idea that the half-starved prisoner had enough energy to speak in such an eloquent way about her misery perhaps takes something away from the horror of her captivity. Likewise, the fact that she claims to hear otherworldly voices almost glorifies her suffering as an act of martyrdom. To an extent, Leonowens's critics are justified. Extending her professionalism from governessing into authorship requires Leonowens to draw on more marketable styles than those present in the governess travel narrative. The melancholy and spiritual references in this episode show Leonowens leaning towards the sensation writing genre in an attempt to capitalise on her labour, and in one sense this is at the slave-woman's expense. At the same time as this, however, making her work appeal to the masses in this way, ensures that although it is muffled by the smoke and mirrors of literary sensation, at least the woman's voice is heard. What Leonowens's work illustrates is that in securing mass distribution, the only way to write about an Eastern reality is to package it as Western fiction.

The political message at the root of Leonowens's text is equally conflicted and echoes the difficulties she faced as the King's secretary. This becomes apparent in another example of a narrative shift in terms of how Leonowens refers to the woman. Within as few as eight words the woman goes from being a 'creature' to Leonowens's 'sister' illustrating the idea that *Romance of the Harem* simultaneously hinges on imperialist ideas of racial superiority typical of nineteenth-century travel writing and the strong feminist values of a universal sisterhood. It is only because of Leonowens's allusion to a sisterhood, that when the woman speaks of 'whisperings of things that are between heaven and earth, yea, and beyond the heaven of heavens, where once there was nothing but blind obedience' we are led to believe she refers to an alternative to female oppression. Yet in shrouding her interpretation of the tale in both literary ambiguity and feminist allusions, Leonowens sidesteps the idea that the woman might refer to an alternative to imperial domination and the subjugation of men and women on a global scale. This highlights the difference between *Romance of the Harem* and *The*

English Governess at the Siamese Court. Where in the earlier work Leonowens was caught up in the conflict between the sway of British Empire and Siam's desire to remain independent, in *Romance of the Harem*, when writing away from Siam, she focuses chiefly on female oppression. After this episode Leonowens retells the story of several subjugated women including Smâyâtee, a beautiful and intelligent woman who, when on a Pilgrimage with her father from their home in the mountains, was preyed upon by the Duke's guards and surrendered to life imprisonment to secure her father's freedom. Yet once again she is caught amid the tension between imperialism and feminism, for while she attempts to tackle the horror of female subjugation and emancipate her 'sisters,' she simultaneously degrades the Siamese people, showing the treatment of women to be the result of Eastern savagery. Just as giving the slave-woman a voice means fictionalising her words, campaigning for female equality leads Leonowens to draw on her ingrained belief in Western superiority. It is through writing from between the worlds of fiction and politics, and by crafting literary interpretations of the events at hand that Leonowens presents a more focussed but equally limited political agenda.

There is one moment of particular interest when Leonowens reflects on both her physical and narrative position between worlds which takes place within the governess travel narrative present in *Romance of the Harem*. In the early morning hours Leonowens gazes out from her window prior to walking to work at the school:

The earth, air, and sky seemed to bask in a glory of sunlight and beauty, and everything that had life gave signs of perfect and tranquil enjoyment. Not a sound broke the stillness, and there seemed nothing to do but to sit and watch the long shadows sleeping on the distant hills...

Reluctantly quitting my window, I turned my steps toward the palace, leaving all this beauty behind me in a kind of despair; not that my temple school-room was not in itself a delicious retreat, but that it always impressed me with a feeling I could never analyze; when there, it seemed as if I were removed to some awful distance from the world I had known, and were yet more remotely excluded from any participation in its real life.

(Leonowens:1988:122)

The window and the view it provides are highly significant parts of this scene, and a central theme in the governess travel narrative whereby the prospect view offered by

windows, and the retreat provided by window seats fulfil the governess's need for a liminal den-space between freedom and security. For Leonowens the window points to the liminality of her position between the broad expanses of Siam itself and the school in the palace. It seems she has a love for, and interest in both of these worlds. The idea that the school provides a 'delicious retreat' echoes *The English Governess in the Siamese Court* and refers back to the idea that governessing was the only way for a woman to work abroad without getting caught up in the dangerous space between Eastern and Western political ideology. Yet the fact that governessing means turning her back on 'the long shadows sleeping on the distant hills' shows that for Leonowens, governessing meant living in a bubble, segregated from the imperfect beauty of Siam itself. In short, it meant failing to have any real political impact in a country she cared about but wished to improve, and failing to voice her message to those at home. In this way the evolution of the governess travel narrative and the blurring of fiction and politics allow Leonowens to communicate her message to the West, albeit at a cost. For while the infiltration of fictional discourse secures the proliferation of her work in the West, so that her local experience of female subjugation has global resonance, this de-authenticates some aspects of the local reality and explains why since then, Leonowens work has sometimes been regarded as a false representation of Siamese culture.

In Heckford's *A Lady Trader*, the very literary, adventure story element also blurs into a narrative strand which is much more political. The way this occurs is quite striking, and it begins in the early days of Heckford's governessing episode at the Higginses'. During this time of political instability the possibility of a Boer invasion was a great concern for many inhabitants of the Transvaal. It is intriguing, therefore, that Heckford pays the threat of attack little attention. Arguably, this is because there are frequent false-alarms of an impending battle. On being warned of a Boer attack that never came she recalls:

Mrs. Higgins and I held a council of war on the verandah that afternoon... The invaders were to be allowed to take what they liked, but if they... insisted on forcing an entrance, we would use our pistols and knives; also that we would do the same if they attempted any liberties with either of us... We really felt quite dull after the Boer excitement was over... It seemed to me quite stupid to settle down to common-place life again, after talking of pistols and knives; and I know the children had the same feeling in a different way. They quite enjoyed the Boer scare, and once

Ada dressed herself in my mackintosh, and girding on my belt with knife and pistol, blackening her eyebrows, and putting on a cork moustache, she gave the Kaffirs in the kitchen a fine start. (Heckford:2000:92)

Heckford often makes light of the idea of an invasion. The fact that their plans to defend the property would most probably have proven ineffectual demeans the idea of a real invasion, and her ‘council’ with Mrs Higgins on the verandah is depicted as if it were part of a game. This is emphasised by young Ada’s dressing up in a mackintosh and carrying a knife and pistol; an image which invokes one of Peter Pan’s lost boys from the early twentieth century. Referring to the frightening possibility of an attack as ‘excitement’, feeling ‘dull’ when they find they were misinformed, and the fact they all ‘enjoyed the Boer scare’ points once again to the colonial game-playing Bradley Deane speaks of in his article on Barrie’s work:

Two years after the Boer War... Pan is born of late-Victorian conceptions of competitive child's play and of the adventure stories in which they were popularized. Peter Pan embodies these ideas so richly and convincingly that he has come to stand for a transcultural and transhistorical archetype... where the endless, circular struggle of lost boys, pirates, and redskins means nothing except for the pleasure of play. (Bradley:2011:785)

Heckford’s making light of the idea of an invasion plays into this archetype but also tells us two different things about the type of text she produces in *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal*. First, it points once again to the fact that it is out of the governess travel narrative, and out of monotony, rather than from her experience of trading, that Heckford is able to transform her story into something much more adventurous and appealing to consumers of literature at home. Rather than jumping from the governess travel narrative into a more political direction, like Leonowens, Heckford must first take a stylistic detour via the adventure story narrative. In this way both governesses extend their professionalism into the authorship of highly marketable forms of writing, to capitalise on their labour and simultaneously communicate a political message.

Heckford’s message comes much later in her narrative than Leonowens’s. While for Leonowens sensation and politics merge, in *A Lady Trader* the adventure story gives way to more serious political discourse only towards the end of the book. Heckford finally becomes concerned about the threat of a Boer attack after speaking to a

Boer neighbour when travelling between Pretoria and her second farm on the outskirts of the town:

There was beginning to be a feeling of insecurity in Pretoria. There was nothing to be seen, but people felt that the air was electric. I was pretty sure that the Boers would fight, after a certain conversation I had with De Clerc at his farm...

“I will tell you our plans. I don't count you as an enemy. This is what you will hear. Some man will refuse to pay his taxes; then your government will seize property to the amount of what is due; and then we shall rise; and we shall take that property out of the hands of the authorities, and if they interfere with us we shall fight.” (Heckford:2000:336-7)

For Heckford, it takes her own neighbour to threaten attack before she finally worries about the political unrest in the Transvaal. There is little trace of the adventure story style previously adopted here. Instead, there is anxiety in Heckford's tone. War is no longer a game in which to play a part but an all-consuming state of things in the air itself. Above all, these moments highlight Heckford's unusual position whereby although she is British she does not 'count as an enemy'. Like Leonowens, Heckford finds herself in between cultures politically, though perhaps this proves to be more advantageous for the latter, whose experience of bridging cultures means she is warned of an invasion. This is largely a result of the fact that during her time in South Africa she openly disagrees with some aspects of British colonialism while remaining in agreement with others. Of the annexing of the Transvaal she says: 'It has always been my opinion that although the English Government were perfectly justified in annexing the Transvaal, the manner in which it was annexed was not only an unjustifiable blunder but an unjust act' (Heckford:2000:359). It seems that at this point, after working as a governess and hovering between so many social and cultural borders, Heckford has become an expert, so inhabits the middle ground. Hovering between political borders in this way is crucial to her survival in a place where the rest of her countrymen are seen as the enemy. Nonetheless, Heckford struggles with her position just as much as Leonowens:

All the Boers I knew spoke before me with great frankness, and when...I said that in case of war I should, in spite of what I had

expressed, side with the English...they accepted that as simply an inevitable consequence of my not being able to change my nationality, and it would have been a useless task to attempt to explain to them that under given circumstances I should feel myself bound to side against my own nation; but that in the Transvaal case I did not feel myself so bound...I should have attempted what I yet knew was impossible, namely, to explain my opinion thoroughly to them, but for my still imperfect knowledge of Boer language. That language is unfit in itself for the expression of abstract thought, because formed by people who never think abstractly; and this deterred me from the effort whenever I felt impelled towards it (Heckford:2000:359-60)

This passage epitomises the conflict present in *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal's* political message, and Heckford's attitude towards Western colonisation is shown to be highly complex. Like Leonowens she finds that she cannot deny her imperial principles, and corroborates the overall idea of annexing the Transvaal. At the same time, however, the process by which this takes place is to Heckford deeply disturbing; so much so that she feels 'bound to side against [her] own nation'. To add to this Heckford is frustrated that the Boer natives assume her views to be symptomatic of her nationality. All this implies that for Heckford, whatever constitutes nationality is negotiable and can be challenged.

Arguably, this is because in the Transvaal Heckford was already living and working in a multi-cultural society where for at least two generations, white immigrants and Black tribes people had lived together, the Boer people themselves being the descendants of eighteenth-century Dutch immigrants. Yet Heckford's struggle to express how she identifies herself nationally, and her preoccupation with the abstract illustrates how far she realises that nationhood is an illusion. Amid all the conflict in Pretoria, among such a vibrant mix of cultural heritage, Heckford becomes aware how nationality means little if one does not share the ideas and values of their nation. In this way *A Lady Trader* is certainly a text which challenges the blind practice of supporting one's nation for nationality's sake. Instead, she encourages her readers to question their patriotism and establish their values based on morality not nationality. Saying this, Heckford does not provide an alternative to nationality in terms of self-identification. What she shows us, and what leads her into a state of depression, is the fact that there is no place between nationalities for Heckford to inhabit. Ultimately, she is forced to accept her nationality as British. Unable to communicate the complexity of her feelings to the Boers she is

bound to her nationality by the shackles of her native tongue. Exasperated by this, Heckford is absorbed ever more by the pull of imperial thought when she blames her failure to communicate on the Boers' incapability of having or sharing abstract thoughts, rather than her own limited language skills. In the end Heckford's text offers a captivating and intelligent political critique but fails to provide realistic, workable alternatives to accepting one's nationality and in times of conflict, siding with one's nation of birth.

The closing paragraph in Heckford's *A Lady Trader* sums up this sentiment:

I think what I have told will show those who read it, how ruin has come to numbers owing to the war and the subsequent Convention, without being due to any looting on the part of the Boers. The compensation offered by the Government, even if it be paid, which is doubtful, will come tardily, and only direct losses are to be admitted. As a fact, most of the people who have been ruined, have been ruined by indirect losses, and this without counting the loss entailed by the depreciation in value of landed property, which is such that properties which would have fetched a high price before the war are now unsalable... All that I have to add is, that I took Jimmy with me to Natal, where he got a fairly good situation; and that Eclipse and Dandy, and little Moustache, are well, and still belong to me. Herewith I make my bow, and end my story. (Heckford:2000:412)

In these moments Heckford's political message, albeit a limited one, is at its most poignant. She makes no suggestions of how to improve the state of things in the Transvaal and does not presume to know better than those managing the expansion of the British Empire. She only highlights, through the somewhat bitter afterword 'and yet this is what has been done in the matter of the Transvaal', the hopeless and irreversible nature of the conflict caused by British colonisation. She shows that however colonisation is justified, whether it is believed to be a patriarchal service to the empire or a dutiful civilising mission, in reality its most apparent outcome is economic collapse, social chaos and death. The fact Heckford withholds from offering any answers emphasises the fact that the more the Empire seeks by its own standards to make something of the Transvaal, the more it does to destroy it. This largely reflects Heckford's own personal situation and the governess-traveller's attempts to extend her professionalism. It is the empire which provides the governess with opportunity to travel and move beyond the profession of governessing. At the same time it is the

imperial values of the British Empire imbued in both Leonowens and Heckford, and the undeniable pull of nationality, which means these governesses find themselves caught in an impossible tension between East and West. Their only way out is to return to the West and thus the same Empire that facilitates their travels is the reason Leonowens and Heckford return home.

Through all the success and misfortune she experiences, what motivates the evolution of the governess-traveller and her narrative is the strong desire to own both a piece of physical property and the material or abstract product of her labour. In Leonowens's and Heckford's texts, she achieves this by extending her professionalism first into trading or political administration and then into authorship. Yet throughout this evolution, both Leonowens's and Heckford's experience of governessing permeates their experience of other professions and shapes the text they produce.

In *The English Governess* Leonowens's colonisation of the house she finally secures outside the palace walls is highly reminiscent of Jane Eyre's renovation of Moor House. Similarly, Heckford's experience of moving through space in *A Lady Trader* often mirrors that of the governess-traveller reflecting on the state of her identity. Perhaps the most recognisable elements of governess travel narrative, which continue to play a part in Leonowens's and Heckford's accounts, stem from the governess's liminal position between constructs. Their desire for a space to call home, in which they hope to 'define their own sphere', illustrates not only the woman's desire to own, but the governess's desire to resolve her placelessness (Scholl:2011:8). In working towards this, at first Leonowens succeeds in extending her professionalism because the liminality surrounding the governess's identity lends itself to the role of political secretary and allows her to mediate between cultures. Likewise, the liminality of governessing which infuses Heckford's life in the Transvaal enables her to renegotiate gender boundaries, alter her perceptions of a gendered landscape, and move into a life of trading. In this way governessing is at the root of both Leonowens's and Heckford's second profession, as the liminality of governessing makes way for diversity in their professional experience.

Unfortunately though, extending their professionalism comes at a cost. Leonowens's direct involvement in Siamese politics and Heckford's negotiations in the field of trading mean both women are removed from the safety and anonymity offered by the liminal profession of governessing. They no longer hover between ideologies and

cultures but are trapped in the middle of official forms of conflict that occur between the East and West. In the end, both Heckford and Leonowens are forced to quit their new professions, and after being driven from their life in between cultures decide to return home.

The second part of this chapter sought to establish how far the governess's movement beyond their new occupations into the profession of authorship affects the structures and styles present in her narrative. Like Lott and Chennells, Leonowens draws on her role as a governess to emphasise her reliability as a writer. Primarily she does this through the literary analysis and translation of Siamese terms whereby she challenges other accounts. The governess travel narrative has a strong presence in Heckford's *A Lady Trader* in other ways. The sub-genre is woven through her work and becomes largely apparent in episodes of upheaval. Like Lucy Snowe and Anna Jameson, Heckford is prone to questioning her role in the world, and her anxiety as to the social reality of being a female professional permeates the entire text. One such episode occurs when Heckford is on the road to Pretoria. Looking at a photograph of herself she says:

[T]he individual represented in it struck me, as I looked at her, to be absurdly unfitted for a "Smouse," as a trader in a waggon is called here. Looking at that picture, it struck me that I was not only doing a foolish thing, but a ridiculous thing. (Heckford:2000:233)

As well as typifying the anxious reflection expected of the governess travel narrative, this episode shows how Heckford struggles to shake off the identity of the governess-traveller. Like Jane Eyre gazing in the mirror as she removes her wedding veil after her marriage is aborted, Heckford stares at her own image as if gazing into the heterotopic space of the governess's displacement and mentally strips away her identity as a trader, regarding the whole affair as 'ridiculous'. In moments like this what is left is a solitary governess-traveller, stranded in the wilderness.

While in reality governessing does not bring Leonowens and Heckford close enough to ownership, and their work as secretary and trader fails, governessing allows them to enter the profession of writing because it makes them the owner of an adventure story. The governess's misfortune in Heckford's text and her ability to bridge cultures in Leonowens's *Romance of the Harem* are sensationalised and blur into an adventure story

narrative. Within this highly marketable strand of discourse, Leonowens extends the governess's fascination with material artefacts to express her political opposition to the objectification of women. To a similar end, Heckford merges adventure with politics via the notion of imperial game play. By making light of the Boer conflict during her governessing days she provides her readers with an exciting and often comical account. The result is that later, when an attack finally occurs, reality provides for a disturbingly resonant discord emphasising the true horror of colonisation.

The negative side of this is that there are times when, for the purpose of emphasising her political objection to female subjugation, Leonowens's narrative overlooks the matter of racial equality and enters into an imperialist discourse imbued with national superiority. Similarly, while Heckford's *A Lady Trader* critiques British colonisation, it proposes no workable alternative. Her use of the adventure story narrative highlights the political nightmare taking place in Pretoria, but in the end her personal feelings are subsumed by the conventions of the adventure story genre in which the British Empire is always the conquering champion.

With these marketable, albeit limited, texts in their possession Lott and Heckford have a vehicle through which to convey a political message so that they can extend their professionalism once again, into the field of social reform. In the years after *Romance of the Harem* and *A Lady Trader*, when living in America and then Canada, Leonowens became well known as a feminist scholar and earned a living by giving lecture tours on the topic of female oppression in Asia. Later, she became a suffragette and a founder of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Baigent and Yorke:2004:online). Heckford continued to publish on the topic close to her heart, and wrote several lectures and articles concerning social reform and women's education in South Africa. Her *Report on the Educational needs of the Transvaal Colony from the Transvaal Women's Educational Union* was published in 1901 (Allen:2006:online). What this tells us about *Romance of the Harem* and *A Lady Trader in the Transvaal* is that these texts are the spaces in which Leonowens and Heckford 'define their sphere' as professionals for years to come (Scholl:2011:8). By manipulating the liminality proffered to them by governessing they enter the literary marketplace not as anomalies on the edge of society, but as voices of diversity, transcending social, cultural, and geographical borders. For Anna Leonowens and Sarah Heckford *Romance of the Harem* and *A Lady Trader* allow for the evolution of their identities as governess-travellers so

that they can continue in their role as educators on a global scale, beyond the sub-genre that is governess travel narrative.

CONCLUSION

My chief aim in writing *Life in Transit* has been to discover what travel adds to our understanding of the nineteenth-century governess. In works of fiction and non-fiction, set across England, Europe and the East, I have examined how the governess's geographical and social mobility affects her perception of self and world, so as to define the governess travel narrative as a feature of the novel and a subgenre of women's travel writing. What foregrounds this is the critical perspective from which we view the British governess. Incorporating the notion of travel into my analysis of the governess reveals untrodden paths in nineteenth-century studies because it allows us to develop new ways of theorising the age old dilemma of the governess's plight.

Recognising the journey of the governess-traveller and engaging with her experience via frameworks relating to movement, mobility, and travel is as valuable to the study of the novel as to studies of non-fiction narratives. The governess who has existed in our cultural consciousness since the nineteenth-century has always been strongly, if not chiefly, influenced by the governess of fiction. This is because novelists, who may or may not have been governesses themselves, expose Britain's anxieties surrounding this familiar, yet worrying figure. Such anxieties are as present in fiction as in non-fictional narratives, therefore whether it appears as a series of separate episodes within the confines of the novel or is the focus of a larger work of real-life travel writing, the governess's record of her journey provides vital information about her identity.

It seems that in recent years the notion of mobility has stolen into the foreground of our ideas about the governess. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, with developments in special effects and a renewed interest in revisiting and adapting everything Victorian, the notion that the governess is a traveller has begun to emerge in film. In his 1999 film *Anna and the King*, an adaptation of Leonowens's *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, Andy Tennant focuses in detail on Leonowens's campaign for a house outside the palace walls. In Leonowens's original account her house is a short walk through the Bangkok streets; Tennant, however, portrays Anna, played by Jodie Foster, travelling on a riverboat before arriving at her home.



Fig.19. *Anna and the King* (1999)
Film Still, Fox Pictures



Fig.20. *Anna and the King* (1999)
Film Still, Fox Pictures

It is intriguing that Tennant makes much more of the governess's mobility in this way. Leonowens's journey on the river echoes the sea-voyage she undertakes in order to reach Siam in the first place. Tennant's altering Leonowens's account like this subtly reminds his audience of the great distances governesses travelled in pursuit of work.

Cary Fukunaga's 2011 adaptation of *Jane Eyre* also plays up the governess's solitary journey. In the opening sequence, Fukunaga flashes forward to Jane leaving Thornfield, but it is the individual moments he captures in putting together this scene that are particularly significant in the context of the governess-traveller's experience.



Fig. 21. *Jane Eyre* (2011)
Film Still, Focus Features

First he shows the governess on the verge of crossing a threshold, her semi-independent state allowing her the freedom to wander out into the rural landscape. Next he shows her skirting a boundary, mirroring her position on the edge of middle-class society. Jane's movements pick up pace until she races across open ground, emphasising the governess's ability to journey far and wide if it be her desire to do so. Finally, and most intriguingly for the scholar, Fukunaga captures Jane walking along a road into the mist and the unknown, heightening our curiosity as to where the governess will go next and what she will find when she gets there. All the while the figure of the governess becomes smaller, while the landscape expands and her journey stretches out before her.

Yet perhaps the most striking image which binds the notion of travel to the figure of the governess is from the 2006 BBC adaptation of *Jane Eyre*.



Fig. 22. *Jane Eyre* (2006)
Film Still, BBC

This image draws on both Jane's childhood fascination with distant lands and Rochester's threat that she might 'walk up the pyramids of Egypt' if she should leave her situation at Thornfield (Brontë:1999:198), but it also unites the experience of governesses like Jane with those of Emmeline Lott and Ellen Chennells. While highlighting the way she could be isolated as an 'uncongenial alien' on the border of both Western and Eastern communities, it illustrates the governess's potential to voyage out and capture a unique perspective on foreign lands as a direct result of her social marginalisation (Brontë:1999:11).

Films such as this highlight the importance of reading these women's experiences as those of governess-travellers as opposed to just governesses. Resolving much of the ambiguity surrounding this historically-renowned figure, this approach allows us to

combine theories relating to travel and mobility with perspectives on class, gender and race. It means that rather than assessing her relation to the social constructs to which she could not conform, we can place the governess's narrative at the centre of her own life's journey. We can move beyond the idea that she was ambiguous, her status was 'incongruent' and her social position remained 'in flux' because analysing how she moves through and experiences the space definitive of cultures, allows us to discover how she perceived her relation to the world and its inhabitants on a global scale.

All of this is encompassed by the idea that the governess experienced the world from a heterotopic space which reflects and inverts social norms: a liminal space between social constructs where the rules of society are present but can be seen to bend. While this means she is simultaneously involved in, and segregated from the rest of middle-class society, and might be put under a great deal of emotional strain, in terms of her vision of self and world this heterotopia is neither static nor limiting. Though the governing profession was often considered a misfortune which fell upon women after a series of other unfortunate events, her financial and social instability was the very reason she was able to travel unaccompanied. In this way the heterotopia or liminal space the governess inhabits is a moving vehicle from which she obtains a unique and changing vantage point on often unseen areas of the world.

One unseen, or more accurately unrecognised aspect of the novel which is made visible by adding travel to the governess equation, is the travel narrative strand present in these canonical texts. Reading the journeys of Jane Eyre and Becky Sharp, from their schools to the houses in which they begin governing, and examining their time in the employer's home as that of the traveller in the foreign land, tells us much more about the protagonists than simply reading these novels in terms of the *Bildungsroman*. This is because travel is bound up with identity. Across the disciplines of literary criticism, geography, philosophy and anthropology, the act of travel, movement, and any record of the journey are known to trace the traveller's psychological development and the construction of the self. Identifying Jane and Becky in this way means we see them less as ambiguous, 'incongruent' governesses, and more as mobile, nomadic, governess-travellers: specific types of people with specific experiences in the world around them. We learn that the governess-traveller is someone who simultaneously desires and longs to be free from servitude and that this desire propels her along her life's journey. Though both Becky and Jane leave governing, their marriages are more symbolic of

the governess's desire for 'a new servitude' than an escape from the profession. Being of middle-class birth and brought up to be gentlewomen, governesses cannot envisage a life other than that which revolves around a schoolroom or a husband. The marriage plot in these novels points to the reality that though the governess is semi-independent, ultimately she depends on patriarchy. If the governess could remain permanently in transit, content to move from place to place aside from the rest of society, then she might have been remembered as a precursor for the New Woman. What the novel shows us overall is that while the governess is certainly a traveller, no matter how far she voyages out geographically, psychologically her journey is regularly infused with a sense of return. Jane's return from Moor House to Thornfield and Becky's return from the somewhat rebellious road she previously traversed to married life as Mrs Crawley is symbolic of the governess's perpetual toing and froing between female autonomy and the values of the British middle classes. This pattern continues to be the case in semi-autobiographical and non-fiction texts.

The governess's journey in Europe highlights the combination of her geographical and social mobility. In the semi-autobiographical texts of Anna Brownell Jameson and Charlotte Brontë, we are steered further towards the realm of non-fiction and shown that the concerns present in the governess novel continue to be a driving force. On the Continent we find that there are two different types of governess: the governess who travels abroad with the family of her British employer, and the solitary governess who travelled to Europe to work in the Continental household. This combination in *Diary of an Ennuyée* and *Villette* shows us that there is variety in how governesses perceive self and world. Chiefly though, the governess's journey in Europe reveals that she experienced the world via a network of spatial, not social relations. Just like any other lady-tourist, building a mental picture of the Continent allows the traveller to construct and develop 'the self', but while the lady does this by visiting important cultural sites for the purpose of broadening her knowledge and developing good taste, the governess does so by engaging with the spaces in-between. These are liminal spaces such as bridges and staircases which mirror her location between social spheres and help the governess to recognise the value of her subjectivity despite her marginalisation. The self she constructs from looking at and remembering these spaces is one which forms new ideas and perspectives on art and architecture, shaped by her experience of social dislocation. This is something that continues in non-fiction travel narratives and is particularly significant when texts are set in the East because the governess is able to challenge

Orientalist and imperialist ideas. Yet, as with the novel, in the governess's experience of Europe there is an element of return. Physically this is encompassed by the governess's desire for walking forwards and backwards along linear routes, but figuratively these episodes are mirrored by the fictional element of Jameson and Brontë's texts in which the governess experiences sickness, death or more optimistically, the possibility of marriage. Though both Jameson and Brontë did eventually marry, the *Ennuyée*'s death at the close of *Diary of an Ennuyée* and the death of Lucy's fiancé in final pages of *Villette* point to the fact that beyond a cyclic life of governessing, single women in the nineteenth century had very limited options or opportunities.

It seems, though, that the same can be said of real-life governess travel narratives because while Emmeline Lott leaves Egypt because of her own ill health, Chennells departs soon after the death of her charge. That the governess travel narrative is framed by the notion of temporariness, in that it exists only for as long as its author is a governess, means the governess's account is something that could quite easily slip through our fingers. In Lott's *The Governess in Egypt* and Chennells's *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess*, essentially the governess travel narrative attempts to function as a work of translation. In writing and publishing her account of Eastern life the governess hopes to bridge the two very different worlds of her employer in Egypt and her audience at home, translating aspects of Egyptian culture into a text suitable for middle-upper class readers, ingrained with a sense of British imperial ideology. The governess is able to attempt this only because her marginalisation allows her to experience Eastern life from within, living and working inside the palace for several years. She can claim that her account is more reliable than that of wealthy or financially independent women travellers because she has access to the day-to-day running of the palace and harem. Her social and financial instability therefore becomes the key to the governess's success.

The governess's segregation from the middle-upper classes also means that in her account she can veer away from the attitudes presented by wealthier travel writers with political or military connections. At times the governess highlights how aspects of Eastern life have been previously misjudged or misrepresented. As a woman who was in her own country socially foreign, she has a heightened awareness of what it meant to be misunderstood, and this leads her to challenge imperialist and Orientalist ideas. Since the governess is aware of her own unique social position, she is consciously

preoccupied with the way she represents Eastern life. Yet, because she experiences the world through spatial rather than social relations her account is thematically focussed on the language and artefacts which are both created by, and become definitive of the foreign culture she perceives. Within her attempts to 'translate' language, space and things into text, the governess's perceptions and ideas can themselves be seen to travel between challenging and affirming imperial thought. On many occasions she highlights the futility of Orientalist attitudes, but ultimately, ingrained with the British middle-class ideology of her upbringing, her narrative returns to its home in the heart of imperialist and Orientalist discourse. In this way both the limitations placed upon the governess's account, and the temporary openings in which she is brave enough to challenge stereotypes make the governess travel narrative something quite precious.

Recognising the governess's experience of travel, and her production of the governess travel narrative also opens our eyes to the ways women used governessing as a stepping stone into other professional fields. Both of Leonowens's books and Heckford's *A Lady Trader* are texts that move beyond the governess travel narrative, driven by the governess's desire to own some form of space in which to limit her perpetual toing and froing between geographical, social and ideological opposites. Both geographically and textually the governess strives to create a new kind of existence exempt from the sway of Western, upper-class society. Both Leonowens and Heckford achieve their desires for a time, not because they have moved on from governessing but because they were indeed governesses. The governess's role in translating cultures serves Leonowens in her secretarial duties for King Mongkut, while the liminality of governessing which infuses Heckford's life in the Transvaal enables her to renegotiate gender boundaries and move into the typically masculine life of farming and trading. In this way governessing is at the root of both Leonowens's and Heckford's second profession, and allows them to diversify their professional experience. What we discover however, is that exiting the profession of governessing means eradicating the propensity to return to previous locations and previous ways of thinking. This is, in fact, very dangerous and both Leonowens and Heckford find themselves at the centre of political and physical conflict unable to free themselves from the locations they inhabit and the ideas they have conveyed to others. This is why in their lives they return to a form of governessing, and in their texts they frequently return to the styles and structures of the governess travel narrative.

Ultimately what Leonowens and Heckford show us is that this notion of return does not denote the governess's failure to wander into the territory of the New Woman. Rather, this element of her narrative is valuable in its own right. Despite trying other forms of employment governing continues to play a key role in both Leonowens's and Heckford's records. Like Lott and Chennells, Leonowens draws on her role as a governess to emphasise her reliability as a narrator. An expert at tutoring those above her social station, her narrative teaches readers at home about alternative attitudes towards the East without preaching at them or bombarding them with criticism. While the governess's tendency to return means she can never break down social and discursive borders, it is the only way she can bridge two cultures and open her readers' eyes to the possibility of new ideas about the East. For the governess-traveller and her narrative, returning, whether it be from the freedom of travelling to 'a new servitude', or from challenging to affirming imperialist ideas, is the nineteenth-century governess's means of self-preservation, and the reason that she and her narrative still survive in our cultural consciousness today.

While I have drawn various conclusions about what travel adds to our understanding of the nineteenth-century governess, I also want to emphasise that there is still work to be done. By recognising the governess's journey I hope to have opened a line of critical enquiry, which encourages the re-reading of the governess novel and a continued interest in the governess travel narrative in non-fiction. Looking to the future in this way has led me to question where and how the governess-traveller exists today, and why her journey should now be of scholarly interest. It appears that in the last ten years, there has been a great increase in the number of young people setting out on journeys to experience foreign cultures, many with a plan to teach English as a second language. On average, 7% of college-leavers and approximately 2.5 million young people in 2012 chose to leave the UK and travel overseas for a gap year. 30% of these travellers, like many governesses before them, voyaged out alone, and many employers credit those who have had a gap year as being better prepared for life in the world of work (Sainsbury:2013:online).

Like the governess-traveller of the nineteenth century, these young people are not really trying to get anywhere. They travel to broaden their knowledge of the world around them and to discover who they are, what they want, and the values that will shape their lives. The idea that this time in their lives is a 'gap' shows that like their

governess-sisters voyaging out before them, young people travelling today are consciously inhabiting the 'in-between,' and from the outset of their journey are ever prepared to return home. For them, as for the governess, the journey is everything, for there, suspended in time and space, the travellers are at their most perceptive and in tune with their individual ideas and their relation to the world around them. Just prior to leaving Lowood School for Thornfield, Jane Eyre says 'A phase of my life was closing to-night, a new one opening to-morrow: impossible to slumber in the interval; I must watch feverishly while the change was being accomplished' (Brontë:1999:77). Jane's words offer an invaluable piece of advice from the governess to those studying her legacy, not to dismiss the intervals between the landmarks on her journey. From Jane Eyre in England, to Sarah Heckford in the Transvaal, the governess is made more animate and alive to us now if we envision her life as one that is perpetually and momentarily in transit.

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