

**ORIENTALIST REPRESENTATIONS OF PERSIA
IN THE WORKS OF SPENSER, MARLOWE, MILTON, MOORE
AND MORIER**

By

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To the memory of my brother Ali

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the representations of Persia in a number of canonical and non-canonical texts in English literature. The theoretical framework comes from Edward Said's analysis of orientalism. It is argued that the case of Persia instances the heterogeneous and striated character of orientalism ('representations' rather than 'representation' in the title). It is shown that while a number of relatively similar set of motifs and topoi, mainly derived from classical tradition and contemporary travel writing, circulate in the works of the three Renaissance authors included (Spenser, Marlowe, Milton), they are differently inflected and serve different thematic and ideological purposes. It is also suggested that the somewhat nascent orientalism of these authors develops into a more fully-fledged one in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* where a basically Romantic notion of Persia as an exotic land is overridden by its construction as a realm fallen to foreign domination and cultural dispossession so as to displace the poet's radical political views. Finally, it is shown how the motifs and topoi teased out in the analysis of the matter of Persia in the works of the authors preceding James Morier find their characteristic form and their most effective articulation in his fiction, especially the Hajji Baba novels which arrogate the representation of the 'real' Persia. Central to the analysis is the point that though Said's theorisation of orientalism is immensely useful, and essential, to any consideration of the orientalist canon, issues such as masquerading and displacing as well as the specificities of each text, of its context, and of the object of representation, compound the notion of orientalism as merely a mode of Western domination and hegemony.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The idea of this study occurred to me when I first read James Morier's *Hajji Baba*. Before reading I had a dim notion of what I could expect in a novel written some two centuries ago by a British imperial functionary about a Muslim Eastern country. What I did not expect was for the novel to be so overwhelming in its style, so 'well-written' as a piece of orientalism. The experience, which no doubt owed much of its poignancy to my being an Iranian, led me to investigate other representations of Persia and the Persian in English literature. Tracing these figurations was a task in itself. Eventually, I selected works by three canonical and two non-canonical authors and a number of lesser texts, as regards the object of this analysis, as an exhaustive survey is beyond the scope of a single study. The theoretical framework comes from Edward Said's groundbreaking analysis of orientalism.¹

Borrowing Foucault's concept of discursive formations and articulation of knowledge with power Said has emphasised the complicity of orientalism as a form of 'knowledge' about the Orient with European imperialism and colonialism. Said's pivotal thesis in *Orientalism* is that texts of orientalism 'can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe.'² As such, orientalism is defined as 'a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient.'³ Elsewhere, Said puts this as: 'Orientalism is the Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient', an 'archival system' which helped the West achieve its hegemony by rendering invisible the 'actual *affiliations* that exist between the world of ideas and scholarship, on the one hand, and the world of brute politics, corporate and state power, and military force on the other.'⁴ 'The relationship between Occident and Orient', Said maintains, 'is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.'⁵

Following Said, the field of colonial discourse theory concerned with the analysis of the body of texts about the others of the West, oriental and non-oriental, has proved an

animated and fruitful one. As Robert J. C. Young puts it, the importance of Said's work in this regard lies in that it has shifted 'the study of colonialism among cultural critics towards the discursive operations, showing the intimate connection between the forms of language and the forms of knowledge deployed for the study of cultures and the history of colonialism and imperialism.'⁶

Said's model of orientalism has been subject to a number of charges. For example, it has been pointed out that Said poses the category of 'the human', in its basically Western conception of it, instead of that of the Orient, which he refuses to recognise; that his ethical and theoretical values are altogether too 'deeply involved in the history of the culture he criticizes'; that 'culture' for him 'always remains exclusively European high culture'; that he tries to 'combine Foucauldian and Derridean methods and Gramscian dedication to social change'; that if true representation is taken as an impossibility, 'on what ground is he criticizing the Orientalists?'⁷ The chief criticism levelled at Said's account of orientalism (and the most relevant one to this study), however, is probably one which holds that it is monolithic, that it flattens many heterogeneities and nuances. As Dennis Porter puts it:

Unlike Foucault, who posits not a continuous discourse over time but epistemological breaks between different periods, Said asserts the unified character of Western discourse on the Orient over some two millenia, a unity derived from a common and continuous experience of fascination with and threat from the East, of its irreducible otherness.⁸

It is against this backdrop that Homi K. Bhabha has argued for ambivalence and 'the splitting of colonial discourse', which produces the possibility of resistance to its hegemonic process.⁹ Bhabha 'has shown', in Young's words, 'how colonial discourse of any kind operated not only as an instrumental construction of knowledge but also according to the ambivalent protocols of fantasy and desire.'¹⁰ Said's 'inadequate attention', in the words of Ali Behdad, 'to the complexities of power relations between the orientalist and the oriental makes him reaffirm in a sense an essentialist epistemology that derives its authority from the dichotomies it puts forth.'¹¹

A number of studies of orientalist and colonial texts have tried to take into account the heterogeneities in the history of orientalism and colonialism. For instance, contending that 'Said's world picture is itself bounded by its own ideology, dividing its territory into West and East, self and other, and leaving out the complicated presence of the "third world" of Africa ... and of a fourth, the "New World", neither of which can be accommodated within a self / other binarism', Emily Bartels has tried to address the 'third' terms which compound the binarism of orientalism in her study of Marlowe.¹² Or, in her investigation of women's travel writing Sara Mills has taken on board the problem, neglected in Said, of gender, 'the way that women writers had to negotiate different textual constraints.'¹³ One more example of the concern with these heterogeneities can be found in Peter Hulme's classic *Colonial Encounters* where he shows, for instance, that in Columbus's diaries there are side by side a discourse of (African, Caribbean) savagery and a discourse of Oriental civilisation.¹⁴

Despite all the criticisms rightly or wrongly levelled at Said's theorisation of orientalism, his analysis remains immensely useful in providing a vocabulary with which to deal with the representations of the East. In the final analysis, though it is crucial to note that while his rather unified vision of orientalism does not allow for the fissures and rifts in orientalist or colonial texts, these disharmonising effects should not be overestimated. For, as Mills reminds us, 'without the notion of a dominant reading' one can hardly explain 'the power that these texts have had.' Hence, 'it is necessary to be aware of the reception of these texts and the fact that they did serve a role in the process of affirming and reaffirming' colonial or imperial domination.¹⁵ My probing of the representations of Persia in the texts I have selected, especially in my chapter dealing with James Morier's *Hajji Baba* novels, will, I hope, bear out the point at issue.

Though *Orientalism* is mostly concerned with the Middle East there has been no major study of representations of Persia in English literature in the light of Said's insights. This study aims at tracing and analysing these representations in the texts included, paying attention to the historical nuances, 'the complexity of power relations between the orientalist and the oriental' as well as other possible conditions (aesthetic,

generic, biographical, masquerading, etc.) which could contribute to the production of the figurations under discussion. Overlapping with the factors involved in their production (and of equal importance to this study) are the thematic and ideological purposes these figurations appear to serve. I think any consideration of these figurations is a worthy task in itself. My objective here is to discuss them in the light of Said's insights while heeding the heterogeneities (hence 'representations' rather than 'representation' in the title of this thesis) not adequately theorised or accounted for in his model. The assumption here is that detailed analysis will enhance our understanding of orientalist texts and their contexts.

The study begins with highlighting the lineaments of a nascent orientalist discourse in *The Faerie Queene*, examining how the mainly monarchical image of Persia is incorporated into the thematics and imagery of the poem. Focusing on *Tamburlaine the Great*, the study proceeds to probe the way Marlovian orientalism could be read in the context of his critique of power and ideology. The ambivalence of Marlowe's text is shown to be an attribute of its orientalism as well, problematising the notion of orientalism as merely a mode of Western domination. The section on Milton postulates a reading of the representations of Persia in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* in the context of the author's essentially anti-monarchical stance. A brief consideration of some of the eighteenth-century texts in which Persia features (such as Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and Collins's *Persian Eclogues*) leads to an examination of some of the Romantic orientalist texts in the next chapter, one focused on Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817). It is shown that the Romantic notion of Persia as an exotic land in this text is overridden by its construction as one fallen to foreign domination and cultural dispossession so as to displace the poet's liberal and nationalist (anti-imperialist, in a sense) stance. The discussion of all these texts will serve as a sort of prelude to that of James Morier's orientalist work, which brings the study to an end. It is argued that the orientalist motifs and topoi teased out in the analysis of the matter of Persia in the authors preceding Morier find their characteristic form in his fiction. For in Morier's work the mostly classical image of Persia in the work of the three Renaissance authors included here (that of a monarchical, pre-Islamic imperial realm) and the exotic, Romantic one in Moore

becomes that of the ‘real’ Persia. It is also suggested that Morier’s Hajji Baba novels have as their central theme both a justification of imperialism and a critique (and scrutiny) of British society of the time. The orientalism of these novels is taken to ultimately reveal some of the conflicts and contradictions of British society and culture of the time as well. The link between orientalist discourse and colonial discourse (as regards the East as an object of colonialism and imperialism), rather tangential in the other texts included, becomes crucial here. A central point prompted by the consideration of the texts included in this survey is that their orientalism is by and large involved in a process of masquerading and displacing. This rather compounds the notion of orientalism as a discourse of Western hegemony.

Discussing colonial narratives Peter Hulme notes that if the time has come ‘to write some *petit récits* ... it is not because the age of grand narratives has been left behind on epistemological grounds ... Smaller narratives are now needed, with attention paid to local topography, so that the map can become fuller.’¹⁶ This study aims at telling one of these ‘smaller narratives’ in the history of orientalism. And I think this ‘smaller’ tale offers a rather interesting case too, not just because some of the central texts in orientalist canon are concerned with Persia (Said cites Aeschylus’s *The Persians* as a founding text here, for instance, and this study argues for the importance of a number of other texts) but also because Persia (Iran) is the target of a powerful neo-orientalism (‘axis of evil’).

Orientalism is above all ‘a style of thought.’¹⁷ Any consideration of orientalism is, to use Behdad’s phrase, an ‘anamnesiac practice’, not just as ‘an exercise in remembering’ some forgotten texts and their contexts but also an exercise in remembering and *thinking* about ‘the way we live now’, a corrective to modern hegemonic views of the ‘East.’¹⁸ In its very small way this study aspires to do something like that.

Notes

1. It is worth noting here that, as Ziauddin Sardar points out, *Orientalism* builds upon earlier studies by scholars such as Tibawi, Alatas, Abdel-Malek and Djait though they do not seem to have been acknowledged by Said. See Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), 65.

2. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* [1978] (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 94.

3. Ibid., 95.

4. Ibid., 3, 4.

5. Ibid., 5.

6. Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 159.

7. Robert J. C. Young, *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990), 130; *ibid.*, 133; Ania Loomba, *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 253; *White Mythologies*, 138.

8. Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems', in eds, Francis Barker et al., *Politics of Theory. Proceedings of Essex Sociology of Literature Conference* (Colchester: University of Essex, 1982), 181.

9. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man. The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 91.

10. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 161.

11. Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers. Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Dublin: Cork University Press, 1994), 11.

12. Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 6.

13. Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference. An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 1.

14. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters, Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 32-34.

15. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 54.

16. Peter Hulme, 'The locked heart: the creole family romance of *Wide Sargasso Sea*', in eds, Francis Barker et al., *Colonial discourse / Postcolonial theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 73.

17. *Orientalism*, 2.

18. Behdad, *Belated Travelers*, 8.

CHAPTER II

THE FAERIE QUEENE

The vast empires [of Asia] ... give a further sublimity to the feeling associated with all oriental names and images.

Thomas De Quincey, *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

This study aims at contextualising and providing a kind of micropolitics for the figurations of Persia in the texts discussed. In the following pages it is suggested that though the Persian material is slight in *The Faerie Queene*, a consideration of it lays bare the lineaments of an emerging orientalist discourse.

The importance of Spenser in institutionalising English poetry and English as a national vernacular could hardly be overstated. He composed *The Faerie Queene* only two decades after the publication of *Schoolmaster* (1570) in which Roger Ascham had called upon English men to have the kingdom of their own language. Spenser sets upon himself the twin and interdependent tasks of articulating a national vernacular and the English nation.¹ To do so, he draws on a variety of sources and material including, I will argue, orientalist discourse, most notably as it pertains to Persia. I will try to contextualise the allusions to Persia and show the ways in which this discourse is modulated and appropriated to serve different purposes. I will also try to cast some light on the significance of these references within the parameters of an inchoate orientalism in the Renaissance which will develop, as I hope the discussion of the selected texts in this study will bear out, into a fully-fledged one in the nineteenth century.

The Faerie Queene incorporates a multiplicity of discourses. There is the discourse of orientalism subsuming figurations of Persia and Islam. There is also the discourse of nascent English nationalism and imperialism. The mostly monarchical image of Persia in the orientalism of the poem fits into its ideology – the celebration of national and imperial power.

First of all, the text should be considered in the wider context of the Renaissance world of Europe. As a backdrop to the text, there is the conflict of and the hostility between Christian Europe and the Islamic forces (first, the Caliphate-led forces and then the Ottomans) dating back to the Crusades, the time of Charlemagne. The poem shares this backdrop with its predecessors, works such as *The Song of Roland*, *The Poem of the Cid*, *The Divine Comedy*, *The Lusiads*, *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. All these works share a concern for forging a national as well as a European identity. They are seminal texts in which can be found 'Europe's attempt to historicize and locate itself.'² All these texts as well as an array of non-literary ones helped construct a discourse on Islam -- and the Orient -- as 'a monotheistic, culturally and militarily formidable competitor to Christianity.' In them 'Islam ... is viewed as belonging to a part of the world -- the Orient -- counterposed imaginatively, geographically and historically *against* Europe and the West.'³

In *The Faerie Queene*, however, it is the idea of nation that is foregrounded. It permeates the poem. Here is Merlin prophesying the future of Britomart's progeny:

Renowned kings, and sacred Emperours,
 Thy fruitfull ofspring, shall from thee descend;
 Brave Captaines, and most mighty warriours,
 That shall their conquests through all lands extend,
 And their decayed kingdoms shall amend:
 The feeble Britons, broken with long warre,
 They shall upreare, and mightily defend
 Against their forrein foe that comes from farre,
 Till universall peace compound all civil jarre.⁴

Hamilton notes that the stanza summarizes Merlin's chronicling of the history of England 'up to the "sacred Peace" of Elizabeth's reign, 49.1-5' (III.iii.23n.). The passage expresses the aspirations for a powerful imperial nation out of a people enfeebled 'with long warre' and 'civil jarre.' But this nation is defined against that perennial other of all nations, 'that forrein foe that comes from farre.' Elsewhere this 'forrein foe' is more precisely specified: 'To this his [Artégall's] native soyle thou backe shall bring / Strongly to ayde

his country to withstand / The powre of forreine Paynims which invade / Thy Land'
(III.iii.27).

By Paynim is meant both the Catholic powers, especially Spain, and the Turks, the enemies of true Christianity.⁵ A look at the etymology of the word Paynim is revealing. Here is how OED defines it: 'A.1. Pagan or non-Christian lands collectively; pagandom, heathendom. 2. A pagan, a heathen; a non-Christian; esp. a Muslim, a saracen. B. adj. of pagans; pagan, heathen; non-Christian, chiefly Muslim or saracen.' Here Paynim, a signifier with a multiplicity of signifieds, pinpoints a sort of undifferentiated, unnuanced other. Orientals -- the Turks representing the Islamic Orient -- and Europeans -- the Catholic -- are commonly the 'forreine foe.' This is resonated time and again: 'Then shall Britons, late dismayed and weake, / From their long vassalage gin to respire, / And on their Paynim foes avenge their ranckled ire' (III.iii.34).

In Book I, canto ii, the Knight of Redcrosse, beguiled by false Archimago is led astray and encounters Sanfoi (without faith), accompanied by Duessa, whom he kills:

At last him chaunst to meet upon the way
A faithless Sarazin all arm'd to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sanfoi: full large of limbe and every joint
He was, and cared not for God or man a point. (I.ii.12)

Sanfoi is a sarazin (Saracen). Again OED's definition of the word:

Saracen (The ultimate etymology is uncertain, The derivation from Arabic commonly given (of which the most usual is Arab. *Sharqi*. eastern, Oriental, F: *Sharq* sunrise) are not well founded.)

Among the later Greeks and Romans, a name for the nomadic people of Syro-Arabian desert which harassed the Syrian confines of the Empire; hence, an Arab; by extension, a Muslim esp. with reference to the Crusades.

non-Christian, heathen, or pagan; an unbeliever, infidel.
An ignorant and tasteless person, a 'barbarian,' Goth,'
'Vandal.'

These etymologies, taken as indicators of a discourse, are telling ones. They show, among other things, how the East and Islam, as the ultimate alter ego of a Europe busy consolidating and enhancing its boundaries, merge. The Saracen is the oriental, the Arab, the Muslim, the barbarian, the pagan. These indicators also show that the process of discoursing on Islam and the people associated with it -- the Arabs and later the Turks -- dates back to 'the later Greeks and Romans' (in case of Persia this dates back to the ancient Greeks and Romans). On the Sanfoy episode Russell Meyer notes that 'in the most simplistic terms', it could be said 'that militant – and Protestant – Christianity (the Redcrosse Knight), separated from Truth (Una), will fall prey to the duplicity and pride of the Roman Catholic Church (personified by Duessa, daughter of the Pope),' Orientalist imagery is here subsumed in the allegorical apparatus of the poem.⁶

One more example is the scene in which Prince Arthur and Artegall save Samient, servant of Mercilla, from two 'paynim' knights who pursue her; the knights are sent by Adicia (injustice), the wife of the 'souldan' (V.viii.24). Arthur and Artegall go on to kill the 'proud souldan', a 'paynim' of 'fell tyranny' (V.viii.59, 28). The word 'souldan' with strong resonation of the Islamic Orient and its echo of despotism again betokens the merging of discourses on Islam and the Orient. Critics commonly take the allegorical figure of the 'proud souldan' to represent Philip II of Spain and the Pope.⁷ The oriental figure of 'souldan' (sultan) automatically opens up a symbolic space of the alien other invoking paganism, pompous pride and despotism. Here the oriental 'despots', the Spanish monarch and the Pope occupy the same discursive space. Although the figure of sultan can be a symbolic register of all oriental rulers, it is particularly associated with the Ottoman, and occasionally the Egyptian, sovereigns rather than, say, the Persian kings. For a Europe embattled by the Ottomans, the word sultan was evocative of menace, threat and evil. As such the figure of sultan is packed up with all the associations and evocations which sit quite easily with the poem's conceptions of the Spanish monarchy and the Pope. Meyer points out that apart from Philip II of Spain the actual model for the souldan and his cruel wife in the souldan episode could well have been a 'near-contemporary figure', Süleyman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire (reigning from 1520 to 1566). As such, he continues, 'the victory of Artegall and Arthur is meant to

represent not only the English defeat of the Spanish, but also the superiority of Christian warriors over the “pagan” Süleyman as well.’⁸ Once more orientalist discourse, with the Muslim Turk as its main vector here, is incorporated in the allegory of the poem.

The discourse on Islam is nowhere more explicit than in the three episodes in which the ‘paynim’ knights swear by the prophet of Islam. In Book I, as we saw, Sanfoi (faithless) who fought the Redcrosse Knight (personifying militant Christianity) was a ‘sarazin.’ In Book II Prince Arthur (assuming the role of Christ), who ‘hath to paynim knights wrought great distresse, / And thousand sar’zins foully done to dye’, saves Sir Guyon (the Knight of Temperance) from ‘paynim brethren’, Pyrochles and Cymochles (II.viii.18). Pyrochles, Hamilton glosses, ‘represents anger; or the fiery temper’ and Cymochles with ‘his unstable nature ... moves between wrath and lust’ (II.iv.41n.). Seeing his brother killed by Arthur Cymochles: ‘fraught with great grieve / And wrath, he to him [Arthur] leaped furiously, / And foully said, By Mahoune, cursed thief, / That direfull stroke thou dearely shalt aby’(II.viii.33).

In canto 8 of Book IV Prince Arthur (representing divine grace) fights and kills another ‘pagan’, Corflambo (flaming torch). Struck by Arthur, ‘All full of rage he gan to curse and sweare, / And vow by Mahoune that he [Arthur] should be slaine’ (IV.viii.44). ‘Mahoune’, as with its previous occurrence in Book II, is ‘Mohammed, god of Sarecens or pagans generally’ (Hamilton, IV.viii.44.3n.). Corflambo conquers his victims by ‘casting secret flakes of lustfull Fire / From his false eyes, into their harts and parts entire’ (IV.viii.48). He: ‘Of an huge Geauntesse whylome was bred; / And by his strength rule to himself did gaine / Of many nations into thraldome led, / And mighty kingdomes of his force adred;’ (IV.viii.47). Allegorically, ‘nations into thraldome led’ means that ‘nations enthralled by lust are ruled by Corflambo’ (Hamilton, IV.viii.47n.). However, I suggest, also implicit in the imagery of conquest and slavery is the rapid spread of Islam after its advent. Further, the association of Islam and the East with sensuality and tyranny is characteristic. During the Renaissance ‘the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab’, Said reminds us, ‘was always a way of controlling the redoubtable [Islamic] Orient.’⁹

The last explicit reference to the figure of the Muslim and the prophet of Islam occurs in canto 7 of Book VI in a rather curious context. Mirabella is tormented by Disdaine and Scorne. Here is how Disdaine is described:

He wore no armour, ne for none did care,
As no whit dreading any living wight;
But in a Jacket quilted richly rare
Upon checklaton he was strangely dight,
And on his head a roll of linnen plight,
Like to the Mores of Malaber he wore;
With which his locks, as blacke as pitchy night,
Were bound about, and voyded from before,
And in his hand a mighty yron club he bore. (VI.vii.43)

Disdaine, fighting a Squire who tries to rescue Mirabella, ‘oftentimes by Turmagant and Mahound swore’ (VI.vii.47). Representing one aspect of discourtesy in the Book of Courtesy, Disdaine is dressed like the Irish, wears his hair like the Muslim Moor and swears by the prophet of Islam (Hamilton’s gloss, VI.vii.43.5-8n.). As critics have noted, here Spenser is trying to justify Lord Grey’s brutal treatment of the Irish rebels. In her discussion of the theme of colonialism in Book VI, Anne Fogarty argues that colonial ideology subtends the Book and suggests that ‘the text aims at educating and controlling our political responses.’¹⁰ Significantly, in order to evoke in his readers feelings of utmost dread and abhorrence about the Irish (they are to be deemed as deserving extermination!) the best Spenser can do is couch his rhetoric in orientalist motifs and imagery. As we shall see the orientalism of the poem in its Persian figurations also gets enmeshed in its colonial and imperialist ideology.

The discourse of orientalism in *The Faerie Queene* as regards the Islamic East is even more highlighted when we take account of the fact that, as Walter Lim points out, the poem’s important ideological intertext is *Orlando Furioso*, the story of Charlemagne’s defence of Europe against Islam, the apocalyptic beast emerging from the dark forest.¹¹ Englishness -- a protestant England -- is defined, ‘fashioned’ against both the European others (the Spanish, the Irish, the French, the Germans) and the non-European ones (the

Arabs, the moors, the Turks, the Indians, the Persians). The Orient with its vague contours at this juncture appears both as the abode of heathens and, as we will see, the realm of fabulous monarchs.

Before turning to the specific allusions to Persia, more needs to be said about the text's inscriptions of otherness. The poem inscribes a multiplicity of others against which Spenser fashions 'Englishness' and the idea of an imperial England. These range from the ancient empires (Greece, Rome, Persia) to the European countries (France, Germany, Spain) and the newly 'discovered' America (Peru, Guiana) and, of course, India -- some to be emulated, even if in counterpoint, some to be vied with and some to be subjugated and colonised. Here is given the genealogy of Britomart's ancestors:

Donwallo dyde (for what may live for ay?)
And left two sonnes, of pearelesse prowess, both;
That sacked Rome too dearely did assay,
The recompense of their perjured oth,
And ransackt Greece well tryde, when they were wroth;
Besides subjected Fraunce and Germany, (II.x.40)

Gurgunt wins more victories:

He Easterland subdewd and Denmarke wonne,
And of them both did foy and tribute raise,
The which was dew in his dead father's dayes:
He also gave to fugitives of Spayne,
Whom he at sea found wandring from their wayes,
A seate in Ireland safely to remayne,
Which they should hold of him, as subject to Britayne. (II.X.41)

These imperial and colonial schemes include even the 'neighbour Scots' (II.x.42). And here is a recapitulation of all these imperial, colonialist visions which from the fictional past merge into the present and the future:

And of these a mighty people shortly grew,
And puissant kings which all the world warrayd,
And to them selves all Nations did subdew:
The first and eldest, which that scepter swayd,
Was Elfin; him all India obayd,
And all that now America men call: (II.x.72)

The stanza is also significant in that in it colonial discourse -- what Walter Lim calls 'discourse of England's nascent colonial ambitions' or 'England's nascent imperialist discourse' -- and orientalist discourse coexist and are coterminous.¹² The East here, evoked in 'India obayd', is that locus to be subdued and colonised by England. All this indicates that the text cannot be extricated from the imperial ideology to which it subscribes and in which it is inscribed. And orientalist discourse in the text is subsumed in this ideology. This quite fits the Saidian model of Orientalism. After all, the text is the product of a time, towards the end of the sixteenth century, when, as Jaqueline Kaye puts it, 'the relationship between the countries of what is now designated Europe and those of what is now called the Orient or the East have been brought into consciousness.'¹³ The poem can be read in the context of the relationship between literature and the ambitions of empire-building at a time when the coming into consciousness of the idea of a nation is simultaneous with the transgressing of the boundaries of that nation.¹⁴ Nationalism and imperialism, as the ideological economy of Spenser's poem indicates, become inextricable. And it is here that orientalist discourse gets enmeshed in the thematics of the poem.

The period we are addressing here is one in which European nations were just beginning to discourse on their others, European and otherwise. This is evident in *The Faerie Queene* where, for example, the Islamic Orient (the Arab, the Turk) and the Catholic Europe or the (would-be) colonised Irish can at times occupy the same discursive positions. Later on the process of discoursing is focused more and more on the non-Europeans, especially the orientals. Hence, it could be argued that alongside this

‘discourse of England’s nascent colonial ambitious’ or ‘England’s nascent imperialist discourse’ there was emerging what we may call a ‘nascent orientalist discourse’ with whose workings in English literature this study is concerned. The two discourses were interwoven and fed into each other. As we move towards the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries the interconnections become more and more explicit and pronounced so much so that at times the two discourses become virtually the same, for instance, in Kipling or Rider Haggard (and, for our purpose, James Morier). But this entanglement with the imperial ideology is more variegated and striated than it may seem. Besides, there is more to the figurations of the Orient in the poem than this. Discussion of the allusions to Persia will further clarify this point.

In his letter to Raleigh, Spenser expresses his purpose in writing *The Faerie Queene*: ‘The general end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline’ (Hamilton, ‘A Letter of the Author’, 737). Elsewhere, further explaining his sugarcoated conception of poetry, he refers to Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* which he deems preferable to Plato’s *Republic* in ‘fashioning’ a gentleman:

For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a commune welth such as it should be, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a governement as might best be: so much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So have I laboured to doe in the person of Arthur (Hamilton, *ibid.*, 737).

The general purpose of the poem, then, is to educate the most important figures of that time, the courtier and the gentleman but also the queen herself. Significantly, *Cyropaedia* is the story of the imperial expeditions of a ruler. Xenophon’s text with its, in James Tatum’s words, ‘great potential about instruction about political power’ seems the perfect text to draw on and refer to in a poem intended to encourage Elizabeth’s imperial and colonial ambitions.¹⁵ The passage bespeaks Spenser’s familiarity with things Persian through classical writers and a tradition of works on Persia which he draws on and reinforces. The positive image of Persia in the passage, however, is not the only one.

In one of the poem's episodes Britomart and Sir Guyon enter the Castle Joyeous in the first canto of Book III, the Book of Chastity. Malecasta's chambers are described:

So was the chambers clad in goodly wize,
And round about it many beds were dight,
As whilome was the antique worles guize,
Some for untimely ease, some for delight,
As pleased them to use, that use it might:
And all was full of Damzels and of Squires,
Dauncing and reveling both day and night,
And swimming deepe in sensuall desires,
And Cupid still emongst them kindled lustfull fires. (III.i.39)

Here is the abode of lust and sensuality which chaste ladies, Britomart their paragon, must eschew: 'Faire ladies, that to love captived arre, / And chaste desires do nourish in your mind, / Let not her fault your sweet affections marre, / No blot the bounty of all womankind;' (III.i.49). Malecasta is conversely lust and corruption personified: 'For she was all given to fleshly lust, / And poured forth in sensuall delight, / That all regard of shame she had discust, / And meet respect of honour put to flight:' (III.i.48).

A lush language and imagery is used to depict the chambers of carnal delight; the passages are themselves mellifluous and sensuous. Here is Spenser mustering up his pictorial and phonetic powers in describing Malecasta's own chamber:

Thence they were brought to that great ladies vew,
Whom they found sitting on a sumptous bed,
That glistred all with gold and glorious shew,
As the proud Persian Queenes accustomed:
She seemed a woman of great bountihed,
And of rare beautie, saving that askaunce
Her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed,
Did roll too lightly, and too often glaunce,
Without regard of grace, or comely amenannce. (III.i.41)

Malecasta taking Britomart for a man sets about wooing her in an episode that acts out the theme of adultery and sexual pleasure. Britomart enters this castle but gracefully ignores and disdains all this.

Aesthetically, one could imagine that in order to provide figures, images and pictorial details for so gigantic a poem as *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser had to resort to every available source including the bits and pieces of Orientalia in classical writers and the early travel writings about the East.¹⁶ After all, to the Renaissance mind of his time, Persia was something of a 'faerie' land, the images and figures of which, even its names, well fitted a poem composed in praise of a 'faerie' queen. In a romance, the genre of the princes and heroes and exotic settings, references to the great monarchs of the past with their exotic aura are only too natural. Orientalist discourse exoticizes Spenser's romance. The scene exemplifies the poet's pictorial powers and craftsmanship as it so well evokes the sense of exoticism intended.

Oriental figures and images could come in handy both for the mise en scène of the romance and its thematics, although, it is not easy -- some would say wrong -- to separate the two. From a formalist point of view, Spenser creates an archaic diction and style to produce the aura of antiquity suitable to his epic romance, hence the whole apparatus of myths and legends, exotic names and places including the oriental ones, which apart from the thematic and allegorical aspects, help give the poem a sort of verbal sensuousness, a lush language.¹⁷

To return to the passage at hand: it reproduces a number of the most important orientalist motifs. These are pompous show, luxury, riches, sensuality and pride, which is specifically that of the discourse on Persia. The thematic and ideological implications of these usages need some unpacking. To depict the zenith of sensuous luxury, glamour and splendour in which Malecasta is 'swimming deepe', the poet uses a simile: she is likened to the 'proud Persian Queenes'. It is revealing that in a text as early as 1590s an orientalist image is used in such a context. Significantly, the image is used in association with Malecasta whose house, as A. C. Hamilton notes, reveals 'the forces opposed to chastity', and not, say, with Britomart or Belphoebe, the manifestations of Queen Elizabeth's character (Hamilton, 302). In a Book treating of chastity the allusions to Persia function to embellish a backdrop of seductive luxury, pomp and sensuality --

‘luxurious corruption’, to use C. S. Lewis’ words -- the better to make Malecasta a foil to chaste Britomart who disdains her and all that is associated with her.¹⁸

There is only one instance in which this motif of Persian luxury is not used in association with an evil character. We saw that the scene of men and women wallowing ‘deepe in sensuall desires’ in Malecasta’s chamber was likened to ‘the antique worldes guize’ and Malecasta herself to the ‘proud Persian queenes.’ The ‘antique guize’ of Persia is referred to in another episode too. In canto 3 of Book IV Cambina intervenes to reconcile the warring parties (Cambell and Trimond); her chariot is described: ‘The charet decked was in wondrous wize, / With gold and many a gorgeous ornament, / After the Persian Monarks antique guize, / Such as the maker selfe could best by art devize’ (IV.iii.38). Hamilton’s gloss on ‘Persian Monarks’ is: ‘traditionally associated with wealth’ (IV.iii.38.8n.).

Importantly, Persian figurations, excepting the above example and the references to Cyrus, are deployed in places deemed evil in the allegoriy of the poem. In discussing the discourse on Islam in the poem it was said that ‘Sarazin’ Sanfoy was accompanied by Duessa intimating the similarity between Islam and Catholicism:

He had a faire companion of his way,
A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,
Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay,
And like a Persian mitre on her hed
She wore, with crownes and owches garnished,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave;
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave. (I.ii.13)

Duessa’s gaudy luxury is imaged as that of the Persians. The word ‘mitre’ means the ‘papal tiara’ and ‘Persian’ ‘suggests pompous pride’ (Hamilton, I.ii.13.4n.). The simile, then, aptly enhances and evokes Duessa’s association with the Pope and the Catholic Church. Once more the two components of orientalist discourse, the discourses on Persia and Islam, serve to sharpen and invigorate the thematics of the poem. Here are featured

the pagan Orient and the opulent Orient. Orientalist discourse is here doubly inscribed, it is the discourse of the Orient as other which helps construct the papal other.

In another canto Duessa calling herself Fidessa beguiles the Knight of Redcrosse who has left Una (the true church) and leads him to the House of Pride. They enter the hall of Lucifera:

By them they passe, all gazing on them round,
And to the presence mount; whose glorious vew
Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In living Princes court non ever knew
Such endlesse riches, and so sumptuous shew;
Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous pride
Like ever saw. (I.iv.7)

Even Persia herself, the nourisher of ‘pompous pride’ has not seen the luxury and ‘endlesse riches’ of Lucifera’s palace.

The concept of pride is essential to the thematics of the poem. The giant Orgoglio, for instance, the embodiment of pride in one reading, is meant to evoke associations with Rome and Catholicism. S. K. Heninger notes that ‘viewed in the light of contemporary history, the victory of Prince Arthur over Orgoglio becomes the victory of pious Protestantism over corrupt Catholicism.’¹⁹ The discourse of Persian pomp and pride circulating in classical writers, enhanced and empowered in the early contemporary travelogues, makes the images, figures and tropes associated with Persia fit material for the tropological and thematic structure of the poem.

So is the theme of tyranny, ‘Orgoglio is the incarnation of Catholic pride and tyranny, which in the end will be overcome and completely destroyed by Prince Arthur the allegorical complex representing English Protestantism.’²⁰ Tyranny was a concept very much associated with the oriental monarchs, especially the Ottoman ‘sultans’ in the Europe of that time. The Pope himself, like the ‘souldan’, was the despot par excellence to Protestant England.

Another focal theme is sensuality, the sin of flesh, that which incapacitates the soul. Rome is associated with sensuality, luxury and materialism. The seductive, false Duessa incarnating the falsity of the Roman Catholicism, tempts Redcrosse. He succumbs to his sensuality beside the magic spring and becomes easy prey to Orgoglio who enslaves him: 'when Redcrosse succumbs to the power of Orgoglio, Spenser reveals the incapacity of the individual soul if it succumbs to the sensuality and materialism of popish Rome.'²¹

All these motifs and topoi of orientalist discourse -- despotism, sensuality, luxury, pomp and pride -- are central to the moral-allegorical and politico-allegorical underpinnings of the poem as they are vices attributed to the corrupt Catholic church and are the fetters of the soul on its way to salvation.

Here I would like to make a slight digression and emphasise that the above-mentioned motifs and topoi have their origins in early Greek thought about Persia. I have already made mention of two classical writers on whom Spenser draws for his Persian material, Xenophon and Plutarch. Aeschylus's *The Persians*, the first extant Attic tragedy, is the most central text in this regard. Said identifies it as the first, and paradigmatic, orientalist text in which 'Europe ... articulates the Orient.'²² It contains all the motifs of 'Eastern excesses', luxury, pride, sensuality, irrationality and tyranny.²³

To return to the point at issue, the figurations of Persia, and the Orient for that matter, are there to enhance the poem's thematic underpinnings, its religio-moral and political didacticism. Pamela Joseph Benson's point in her discussion of Spenser's praise and defence of Queen Elizabeth in Book V, especially the Radigund episode, can further clarify the point at issue. Radigund is the Amazonian queen to whom Artegall succumbs; she is killed by Britomart. Incidentally, her name, Hamilton notes, 'may derive from the valorous Persian princess, Rhodogune, in Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*' (V.iv.33.3n.). She is, Benson points out, 'politically and sexually corrupt.'²⁴ Spenser, Benson continues, 'represents the rejection of the Amazonian model of queenship as praiseworthy ... he ... advises Elizabeth on how she ought to behave'; she concludes that: 'Given the traditional

and Calvinist arguments against woman rule, Spenser must admit that there can be bad female monarchs (just as there are bad male monarchs), if his praise of female monarchy is to be taken seriously instead of being discounted as mere courtier's flattery.²⁵ It is in such a context that the figurations of Persian monarchs (and the orientalist motifs accompanying them) in association with Malecasta, Lucifera, Duessa and Radigund are to be accounted for. But, as we shall see in the following pages, the matter of Persia is also used to sharpen the imperialist imagery and ideas of the poem. The matter of Persia as an indispensable component of orientalist discourse in the poem is also echoed in more subtle and indirect ways. In the climax of his quest, Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, meets Arcasia, Intemperance herself, in the Bower of Bliss. She is described after an act of love:

Her snowy brest was bare to readie spoyle
Of hungry eies, which n'ote therewith be fild,
And yet through languour of her late sweet toyle,
Few drops, more clear then nectar, forth distild,
That like pure Orient perles adowne it trild, (II.xii.78)

In this particularly libidinal and voluptuous scene, in portraying intemperance personified, the oriental motif of exoticism is invoked. Spenser could well have read something about the pearl divers in the Persian Gulf and the pearl trade in Persia (as we will see, this is alluded to in Milton), say, in Marco Polo's *Travels* or the early travel writings about Persia. Anyway, the 'Orient perles' is meant to be evocative of the absolute exotic beauty required here.

In another passage, the warlike Britomart virtually kills Marinell whose mother is a sea nymph who: 'Her Sea-god syre she dearely did perswade, / T' endow her sonne with threasure and rich store, / Bove all the sonnes that were of earthly wombes ybore' (III.iv.21). Her wish is granted and:

Shortly upon that shore there heaped was,
Exceeding riches and all pretious things,
The spoyle of all the world, that it did pas
The wealth of th' East, and pomp of Persian kings;
Gold, amber, yuorie, perles, owches, rings,
And all that else was pertious and deare, (III.iv.23)

Marinell's treasures are the wealth of nations swallowed up by the sea. But Britomart does not stop to avail herself of these treasures after overcoming him. She despises them:

The Martiall Mayd stayd not him to lament,
But forward rode, and kept her readie way
Along the strond, which as she over-went,
She saw bestrowed all with rich array
Of pearles and pretious stones of great assay,
And all the gravel mixt with golden owre;
Whereat she wondered much, but would not stay
For gold, or perles, or pretious stones an howre
But them despised all; for all was in her powre. (III.iv.18)

These two stanzas are quoted in full as they palpably bespeak and underline the ideological orientation of the text.

A religio-allegorical reading of these would suggest that the pious Britomart is not tempted by worldly riches. A politico-allegorical reading on the other hand would pinpoint the discourse of empire-building, 'the destruction of England's enemies' in this stanzas as part of the poem's 'epic narrative.'²⁶ More specifically the reference is to the Armada and the defeat of Spain, England's daunting enemy of the time. The association of the sea and the 'spoyle of all the world' is apt here, as, observes Walter Lim, 'the sea and its treasures constitute an important metaphor in the discourse of colonialism and imperialism in early modern England.'²⁷

On the one hand there is the moral idea of resisting the mundane temptation of wealth ('But them despised all'), on the other there is the suggestion of Britomart's having the treasures in her control ('for all was in her powre'), the dream of England ruling the waves and hence having in control the wealth of all the nations. A close look at the

catalogue of goods here -- gold, amber, ivory, pearl, jewels --shows them to be all those of the East and Africa, the commercial destinations and the would-be colonies. The 'spoyle of all the world' are indeed the spoils of the would-be and the actual colonies ('Guiana', 'Peru') and the Orient captured in the symbolic register of 'pompe of Persian kings.' These spoils are enumerated and reiterated time and again. In psychological terms, there is a compulsive repetition betokening the return of the repressed, the spoils of the East, the object of desire, a desire that is denied fulfilment due to the particular workings of the politics and power relations of that time. Orientalist discourse here underlines that which is ostensibly disavowed but actually desired. The pomp and splendour of Persia and her kings and queens is also ostensibly disavowed but it is exactly that which is coveted and dreamed of for England and Elizabeth, the 'Great Lady of the greatest Isle, / Whose light / Like Phaebus Lampe throughout the world doth shine' (l.i.4). Spenser's text with its fetishistic repetitions is trying to cover a lack at that time, England's universal supremacy.

In the moral, religio-allegorical schemata of the poem, to recap, these goods are portrayed as tempting and evil, that which to be avoided but in the poem's politico-ideological economy they are the object of desire. They are the objects of rivalry between the imperial powers of that time, dominant and emerging. There is here, then, this split in the ideological deep structure of the poem when orientalist discourse with Persia as its main vector gets entangled in Spenser's 'sustained vision of English imperialism.'²⁸ As we will see in discussing other English writers' literary allusions to the Orient and Persia, such a split is typical and symptomatic in such texts and its consideration, as the work of Homi K. Bhabha elaborates, one of the major points of departure from a Saidian model of orientalism.

It is hardly overstating the case to say that in the symbolic economy of the poem the Persian is the cultural other, a metaphor for the values deemed antithetical to a truly Christian rule: pomp, pride, luxurious corruption. But if it is a metaphor, it is an overdetermined one. The glory of the Persian monarchs, their imperial rule, their fabulous riches are things desired for Gloriana, typifying the 'glory' and the rule of

England. The allusions to Persia, scanty as they are, cannot be extricated from a desire to define England as a glorious imperial power and Queen Elizabeth as a powerful empress. Persia and the Persian comprise that 'surrogate self', in Said's words, against which England and Queen Elizabeth are, in however refracted a way, set off to gain 'in strength and identity.'²⁹

More can be said about this concept of power and its workings in the Elizabethan period. To grasp fully the implications and the ideological moorings of the poem we need, to quote Stephen Greenblatt, 'a poetics of Elizabethan power' which is 'inseparably bound up with the figure of Queen Elizabeth, a ruler without a standing army, without a highly developed bureaucracy, without an extensive police force, a ruler whose power is constituted in theatrical celebration of royal glory and theatrical violence visited upon the enemies of that glory.'³⁰ Elizabethan authority still very much depended on the royal charisma associated with her. The matter of Persia in the poem can also be read in the context of this theatricalism, this display of power and glory, this augmenting of Elizabeth's charismatic figure. Generally speaking, the figures, images and tropes of orientalist discourse in the poem, especially as regards Persia, are associated with this power and glory. This discourse with its exoticized, 'theatricalized' aspects, with its invocations of the glories of the past, the Persian monarchical pomp and display well suited the literary creations of a society and culture which was 'deeply theatrical.'³¹ These figures and topoi act as foils to the Elizabethan royal power which is romanticised and idealised in the poem. The way, for instance, Britomart ignores Malecasta's Persian-like luxury or Marinell's wealth -- the moral-allegorical interpretation apart -- underpins the charismatic aura around the figure of Elizabeth who strangely transcends all this.

Yet another way of approaching the matter of Persia in the poem is to view it as part of that 'imaginative geography' which is what orientalism was about.³² Orientalism in Said's account is the maintaining of geographical divisions within scholarly and aesthetic texts in an attempt to institute Europe on 'flexible positional superiority' over its others.³³ Sure enough, there is ample evidence of this 'geographical divisions,' this sense of cartographical awareness, of spatial mapping in Spenser's work.³⁴ These concerns are

symptomatic of orientalism's endeavour to control, incorporate and domesticate 'manifestly different' and novel worlds.³⁵ The nascent discourse of imperialism mentioned before also manifests itself in this concern with geography in the poem. Britomart, fallen in love with the image of Artegall, sets out to seek him: 'though beyond the Africk Ismael / Or th' Indian Peru he were, she thought / Him forth through infinite endeavour to have sought' (III.iii.6).

One more example of the geographical allusions to Persia whose context shows the merging of ideas taken from classical writers and contemporary travel writings (Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana*) is to be found in Book IV. In his catalogue of rivers, Spenser includes 'Ooraxes,' a river in the ancient Persian Empire, which, according to Herodotus, Cyrus' decision to cross led to his death: 'Ooraxes, feared for Great Cyrus fate' (IV.xi.21). To appreciate fully the significance of this allusion we need to elaborate on the colonialist discourse of the poem that subtly subtends its orientalism here. The allusion occurs in the final cantos of Book IV where through the marriage of the rivers Thames and Medway a vision of England as an imperial and colonial power is produced: 'It fortun'd then, a solemne feast was there / To all the Sea-gods and their fruitfull seede, / In honour of the spousalls, which then were / Betwixt the Medway and the Thames agreed' (IV.xi.8). Hamilton quotes Fowler on this stanza who argues that the marriage here intimates the marriage of England to Elizabeth; as the Medway was the centre for naval operations, the event signifies 'a visionary England – and Ireland – united in friendly alliance' (Hamilton, IV.xi.8-53n.). The vision proceeds and in stanza 15 Britain is named among the 'puissant nations':

There also some most famous founders were
Of puissant nations, which the world possest;
Yet sonnes of Neptune now assembled here:
Ancient Ogyges, even th' auncientest,
And Inachus renown'd above the rest;
Phænix, and Aon, and Pelasgus old,
Great Belus, Phæax, and Agenor best;
And Mightie Albion, father of the bold
And warlike people, which the Britaine Islands hold. (IV.xi.15)

The vision continues in the catalogue of great ancient rivers:

Great Ganges, and immortal Euphrates,
Deep Indus, and Mæander intricate,
Slow Peneus, and tempestuous Phasides,
Swift Rhene, and Alpheus still immaculate:
Ooraxes, feared for great Cyrus fate;
Tybris, renowned for the Romaines fame,
Rich Oranochy, though but known late;
And the huge River, which doth beare his name
Of warlike Amazons, which do possesse the same. (IV.xi.21)

The cataloguing of the rivers mentioned in the Bible ('Euphrates: another river of the paradise, Gen.2.14') and classical writings ('Ooraxes: Cyrus's decision to cross the Ooraxes led to his death. See Herodotus, *History*; 201-14') leads to 'Oranochy' ('mentioned by Raleigh in his *Discovery of Guiana*, 1595') featuring in a contemporary exploration text (Hamilton, IV.xi.21n.).

All this leads to an overt articulation of English colonial aspirations in the next stanza:

Joy on the warlike women, which so long
Can from all men so rich a kingdome hold;
And shame on you, O men, which boast your strong
And valiant hearts, in thoughts less hard and bold,
Yet quail in conquest of that land of gold.
But this to you, O Britons, most pertaines,
To whome the right hereof it selfe hath sold;
The which for sparing litle cost or paines,
Loose so immortal glory, and so endlesse gaines. (Iv.xi.22)

'That land of gold', Hamilton notes, 'is Guiana with the empire of Amazons on its southern borders. In the *Discovery of Guiana*, Raleigh urges its conquest. Spenser's exhortation to his countrymen to plunder the land was topical' (Iv.xi.22n.).

Spenser's allusion to Persia occurs in such a context. The allusion is perfectly apt as Cyrus was known as a great empire-builder. Its significance with regard to the theme of empire can be further clarified if, I suggest, we consider it in a biblical context (apart

from the historical one, Herodotus' *History*, glossed by Hamilton) as well. 'The ancient Persian empire', Linda McJannet reminds us, 'was understood to be one of the four divinely sanctioned "monarchies" or empires (the Assyrian, the Persian, the Greco-Macedonian, the Roman) featured in the Book of Daniel.'³⁶ In the episode under discussion Spenser mentions all the four empires. Assyria is alluded to in stanza 15 ('Great Belus: the founder of Babylon'); Greece ('Peneus: a river in Greece'), Persia ('Ooraxes') and Rome ('Tybris, renowned for the Romaines fame') appear in stanza 21 (Hamilton's gloss, IV.xi.15.6-7n.). The implication is that the English, as Spenser's exhortatory rhetoric in stanza 22 indicates, should be the fifth great monarchy or empire, the inheritor of the Roman empire. Elsewhere, Spenser expresses this idea in a more direct manner. *The Ruins of Time* with its elegiac tone catalogues the great empires of the past fallen prey to the ravages of time:

What nowe is of th' Assyrian Lyonesse,
Of whome no footing now on earth appears?
What of the Persian Beares outrageousnesse,
Whose memory is quite worn out with years,
Who of the Grecian Libbard now ought heares,
That overran the East with greedie powre,
And left his whelps their kingdomes to devoure? ³⁷

Rome is then described as the crown and 'Empresse' of all nations: 'of the whole world as thou was the Empresse' (87). Of this imperial Rome, we read in Spenser's mythopoeic poem, the English are descendants and should be inheritors. The forlorn Princess of the poem comes from London: 'That citie, which the garland wore / Of Britaines pride, delivered unto me / By Roman victors, which it wonne of yore;' (37-39).

The poem is not just a lamentation on the ruins of time but, among other things, a celebration and expression of national and imperial aspiration. In Spenser's 'nascent discourse of England's imperialism,' the great imperial powers of the past are ruined by time. Now it is the time for England, the inheritor of Rome, to become the 'Empresse' (88) -- the feminine form is significant -- of the world. Here we see the intersection of orientalist and colonial discourses. Incidentally, the matter of Persia, as we will see, also

features in Milton with regard to the idea of the four divinely sanctioned monarchies; Milton's treatment of this idea, however, turns out to be radically different from Spenser's.

The enumeration of rivers and lands in *The Faerie Queene*, Helgerson proposes, 'presents an image of royal and artistic power exercised in defiance of the very geographical differences that it seems intent on celebrating.'³⁸ On the relationship between geographical figurations and the ideology of the poem Walter Lim notes: 'The Other is identified in this poem as that uncharted space beyond England's geographical and political confines that the Queen should occupy through an extension of her literal and symbolic body.'³⁹ Apart from this spatial mapping there is a temporal one too. For instance, The Castle Joyous, Malecasta's palace, or the whole of the poem for that matter, is supposed to inhabit a world in a legendary past. Yet Persia is conceived of as a place predating that legendary past: 'As the proud Persian Queenes accustomed.' This fits in with Spenser's romantic conception of poetry in which Persia is a far-away land belonging to a long-ago past.

To conclude, orientalist discourse is important to the formal and thematic logic of *The Faerie Queene*. Persia figures centrally in this discourse. Slight as the Persian material of the poem is, its analysis prompts a few observations.

First and foremost, it shows that orientalism of the poem is both inchoate and of a modulated character: the Persian figures rather differently from that of the Muslim orientals. As mentioned elsewhere, there was a long tradition in the Greek and Roman writing on Persia available to the Renaissance writers, one which hardly existed in the case of other orientals, say the Arabs or the Turks. In the case of the latter there were the Crusades and the later conflicts with Europe still relatively fresh in the memory of the Renaissance men. The images of the Arabs, the Moors, and especially the Turks (at times subsumed under the rubric 'Muslim,' 'Mohametan,' 'Saracen') were laden with dread associations as they embodied the ever-present menace of Islam -- the current notions about which were, in Said's words, that of 'some necessarily diminished version of those

great dangerous forces that is symbolized for Europe.⁴⁰ These were the Arabs, the Moors and, later, the Turks who became in a sense the objective correlatives of Islam in the European imagination of that time. As such they and the Persians, as I hope my discussion of orientalist discourse in Spenser's epic poem bears out, were not seen in the same colours. For instance, John Hale writes that: 'To those who saw the Ottoman Empire from the outside, they were, above all cruel.... Whenever a Turk featured in an English or French play of the sixteenth century, he appeared laden with dread.'⁴¹ An angry Othello could cry out to his rowing companions: 'Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that which heaven has forbid the Ottomites?'⁴² Or he could call himself a 'malignant and a turban'd Turk' (5.2.). In contrast, the Persians featuring in the works of the same period are mostly associated with sensuous luxury, wealth and opulence rather than dread. On this Anthony Parr writes:

The animus against Islam joined with the notorious cruelty of Ottoman sultans to create an immovable stereotype of the raging and expansionist Turk. Persia was a rather different case. Traditionally the land of wealth and luxury, with a glorious imperial past, it was for Western writers a genuinely exotic country, not a malign and unknowable neighbour but a fabulous resource. Like India or Japan, it was not so much Europe's Other as its opposite or foil; and while the fascination with the glamorous east [sic] was later to become a disabling orientalism, arguably it was during the early modern period a positive alternative to views of Asia either as the home of barbarian hordes or of the hellish doctrine of Islam ...⁴³

Parr's observations, though by and large correct, need to be modified. We saw that Persia was mostly associated with evil (Lucifera, Malecasta, Duessa) in the poem. (In Milton, as we shall see, this association with evil becomes more emphatic.) In other words, 'the disabling orientalism' which Parr takes to have emerged later than the early modern period is already there. Nonetheless, our discussion of the matter of Persia in Spenser bears out the fact that 'Persia was a rather different case' (in our next chapter on Marlowe we will have more to say on this 'difference'). Here Persia is 'the self-consolidating' rather than the 'absolute' other, to use Gayatri Spivak's distinction, as it has some reassuring and desirable similarities with the same.⁴⁴ All this indicates that the Saidian model of orientalism has to be modified in that orientalism appears to be of a

striated character even in its early stages. Our discussion of Marlowe, Spenser's contemporary, and Milton (writing at the end of the Renaissance period) will further bear this point out.

Another point prompted by our analysis is that orientalist discourse is related to and intersects with colonial discourse even in its early stages. In the chapter on the last writer discussed in this study, James Morier, we will see that the two discourses become virtually inseparable. Incidentally, we will also see that Morier in a way purports to deconstruct the exotic construction of Persia found in Spenser. One more important point is that the orientalism of the poem serves to displace, in however an inchoate and refracted a manner, the political, and even personal, views of the author. In our analysis of orientalism in the other writers discussed in this study we will see that this process of displacement becomes more and more central.

The Orient, says Said, is one of Europe's 'deepest and most recurring images of the other.'⁴⁵ The position of the other in Spenser's narrative economy is partly filled by the figures and images provided by orientalist discourse including those of Persia and the Persians. These inscriptions of otherness are more striated and nuanced than they may appear.

Notes

1. See Richard Helgerson, 'Barbarous tongues: the ideology of poetic form in Renaissance England', in ed., Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser* (London: Longman, 1996), 177-95.
2. Jaqueline Kaye, 'The Islamic Imperialism and the creation of some Ideas of "Europe"', in eds, Francis Barker et al., *Europe and Its Others*, vol.1 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1984), 66.
3. Edward W. Said, 'Afterword to the 1995 Printing', *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 344. See also 59-73 for a discussion of Europe's representations of Islam.
4. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed., A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977), III.iii.23. All further quotations are from this edition and are cited in the text.
5. John Hollander and Frank Kermode, eds, *The Literature of Renaissance England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 213.
6. Russell S. Meyer, *The Faerie Queene: Educating the Reader* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 43-44.
7. Walter S. H. Lim, *The Arts of Empire: The Poetics of Colonialism from Raleigh to Milton* (New York: The University of Delaware Press, 1988), 153.
8. Meyer, 104-05.
9. Said, *Orientalism*, 60.
10. Anne Fogarty, 'The colonisation of language: narrative strategy in *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI', in ed., Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser* 198.
11. Lim, *The Arts of Empire*, 158-59.
12. Ibid., 143.
13. Kaye, 'The Islamic Imperialism', 66.
14. Ibid.
15. James Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1989), xiv.
16. This would be yet more highlighted if one were to take as true Northrope Frye's view that Spenser has 'limited conceptual powers' and in his poetry 'imagery is prior to

allegory.’ Northrope Frye, ‘The Structure of Imagery in *The Faerie Queene*’, in ed., A. C. Hamilton, *Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser* (Hamden Conn.: The Shoe String Press, 1972), 155.

17. The importance of this formal aspect is enlarged if we agree that Spenser was trying to tap all the resources of an English whose viability as a literary language many still doubted. For a discussion of Spenser’s pictorial language, in which all the figures and images are not meant to be necessarily part of the allegorical schemata of the poem, through which he tries to achieve emotional and rhetorical force, see Paul J. Alpers, ‘Narrative and Rhetoric in *The Faerie Queene*’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 2 (1962), 27-46.

18. C. S. Lewis, ‘*The Faerie Queene*’, in *The Essential Articles*, 7.

19. S. K. Heninger Jr., ‘The Orgoglio Episode in *The Faerie Queene*’, *Journal of English Literary History*, XXVI (1959), 178.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 179.

22. *Orientalism*, 21, 57.

23. Ibid., 57. A keynote of the text is the fabulous riches and luxury of Persia. The Persians have ‘rich / Estates laden with gold.’ (Aeschylus, *The Persians*, trans. Anthony J. Podlecki (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1991). Further references are given with line numbers.) Persia is the land ‘that enfolds great wealth’ (250). Here is an image of Persian women in mourning incorporating the motifs of emotional excess, luxury and sensuality:

And the veils of many by tender hands
Are torn through,
Their breasts drenched with tears
As they share in pain.
With delicate sobs the women of Persia
Are longing to see their newlywed men;
The beds of their marriage with delicate covers,
The luxurious pleasure of youth they have lost,
And they grieve with long, insatiable sobs. (537-45)

The motif of ‘oriental’ tyranny suffuses the play. Xerxes is the proud despot par excellence. The play itself is about the Greek defiance of his tyranny (he even tries to yoke the sea: ‘Throwing a yoke on the neck of the sea’ (65)). The play celebrates Greek victory over ‘the army of Persians / With its proud display and mass of men’ (533-34). In *Virgils Gnat* Spenser alludes to this too: ‘how the east with tyrannos despight / Burnt th’ Attic towers, and people slew with swords’ (47-49). ‘Hellespont trampled with horses

feete', he writes, 'When flocking Persians did the Greeks affray' (54-55). Even this very brief survey highlights the extent to which Spenser's orientalism is indebted to classical writers.

24. Pamela Joseph Benson, 'Praise and defence of the Queen in *The Faerie Queene*, Book V', in ed., Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser* (London: Longman, 1996), 163.

25. Ibid., 162.

26. Lim, *The Arts of Empire*, 157.

27. Ibid., 156.

28. Ibid., 155.

29. Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

30. Stephen Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets', in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism* [1984] (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 44.

31. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 162.

32. Said, *Orientalism*, 73.

33. Ibid., 7.

34. For the importance of cartography, its reflections in the writings of the Renaissance writers including Spenser and its ideological effects, see Richard Helgerson, 'The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England', in *Representing the Renaissance*, ed., Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). In his introduction to the book Greenblatt writes: 'a heightened interest in boundaries emerged in Western Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', xiii.

35. Said, *Orientalism*, 12.

36. Linda McJannet, 'Bringing in a Persian', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 12 (1999), 244. It is worth noting that in her discussion of Renaissance plays in which Persia features McJannet points out that William Alexander, a Scottish nobleman, wrote a series of plays ('Monarchick Tragedies') on the theme of the divinely sanctioned monarchies (*The Tragedy of Darius* (1603), *The Tragedy of Croesus* (1604), *The Alexandrian Tragedy* (1607)). Ibid., 247-48.

37. *The Complete Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed., R. E. Neil Dodge (Cambridge: The Riverside Press), 'The Ruins of Time', lines 64-71. Further references are given in the text with line numbers.

38. Helgerson, 'The Land Speaks', 355.

39. Lim, *The Arts of Empire*, 168.

40. Said, *Orientalism*, 60.

41. John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 41.

42. *Othello*, in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: C.M.C., 1989), II.iii. Further references to Shakespeare are to this edition.

43. Anthony Parr, ed., 'Introduction', *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 11.

44. Gayatri C. Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', in eds, Francis Barker et al., *Europe and Its Others*, 2 vols (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), vol.1, 131.

45. Said, *Orientalism*, 1.

CHAPTER III

The Imperial Map: *Tamburlaine the Great*

There are, according to Linda McJannet, some thirty three Renaissance plays and masques with some Persian material; twenty of these contain major Persian elements.¹ The only canonical texts among these are *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2* (1587/88) discussed below. In her long essay McJannet supports Anthony Parr's assertion (see also Chapter II) that 'at least in the drama, Persia and Persians were "a ... different case" from Ottomans or North Africans.'² To account for this 'difference' in keeping with the assumption of this study – fuller appreciation of orientalist articulations requiring detailed analysis – each of these twenty texts has to be minutely analysed. This is obviously a task lying far beyond the scope of the present study. To give two examples of the kind of particularities one could encounter in these texts: in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607) by John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins the orientalist motif of 'oriental' cruelty and despotism are either not there or played down in the case of Persia but are highlighted with regard to the Ottomans because the play (based on the exploits of Thomas, Anthony, and Robert Sherley) promotes the idea of a Perso-European alliance against the Ottomans.³ Another example is the multiple discourses about Persia in Robert Baron's *Mirza* (1647), a Senecan closet tragedy based on Thomas Herbert's travel accounts.⁴ In my analysis of *Tamburlaine* I will suggest that the overall indeterminacy of the play, as critics have noted, precludes highlighting these sorts of 'difference'. Furthermore, whereas in Spenser the matter of Persia is mostly of a rhetorical character and derived from the classical heritage, Marlowe's figurations of Persia show the conflation of classical elements and contemporary expeditions to and interest in the East. Marlowe's orientalism is altogether much more pronounced and politically inflected.

A glance at the portrayal of the oriental others in Marlowe's plays can serve as a prologue to the discussion of *Tamburlaine*. Here is King Edward's coronation in *Edward II*: 'If any Christian, heathen, Turk or Jew/Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king.'⁵

Here the Turk and the Jew figure as the ‘aliens’, the others of a Christian realm. India is often associated with fabulous riches. The lovelorn Dido talks of Aeneas: ‘And thou, Aeneas, Dido’s treasury, / In whose fair bosom I would lock more wealth / Than twenty thousand Indias can afford’ (*Dido Queen of Carthage*, III.I.91-93). In describing the city he intends to build, Aeneas says: ‘From golden India Ganges will I fetch, / Whose wealthy streams were upon her towers’ (V.i.8-9). In contrast, in the same play there is a reference to Persia as an exotic, romantic land. One of Dido’s renowned suitors is a Persian (III.i.44). Finally, here is how Faustus envisages his fantasies of power in commanding the spirits at his service: ‘I’ll have them fly to India for gold, / Ransack the ocean for orient pearl, / And search all corners of the new-found world / For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;’ (*Doctor Faustus*, I.I.82-85). The passage images the Orient as a locus of desire.

Closely related to the motif of gold and fabulous riches, in which Marlowe’s plays abound, is mercantilism. *The Jew of Malta* begins with Barabas’s monologue on his Eastern trade: ‘So that of thus much that return was made; / And of the third part of the Persian ships / There was the venture summ’d and satisfied’ (I.i.1-3). Persia is imaged as a desirable locus for trade. Barabas also draws a contrast between his Eastern and his European trade to the latter’s disadvantage:

As for those Samnites, and the men of Uz,
That brought my Spanish wines of Greece,
Here have I purs’d their paltry silverings.
Fie, what a trouble ‘tis to count this trash!
Well fare the Arabians who richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold, (I.i.4-9)

The play should be read in the context of the rise of mercantilism and capitalism that was related to what has been called Orientalism. The following hymn on the riches of the East well evidences this:

Give me the merchants of the Indian mines
That trade in metal of purest mould;
The wealthy Moor that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up,

And in his house heap pearl like pebble stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight;
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price (I.i.19-28)

It is mostly the Eastern trade that has made Barabas, the 'merchant capitalist', in William Zunder's phrase, able to 'inclose/Infinite riches in a little room' (I.i.36-37).⁶ 'But now', asks Barabas, 'How stands the wind? / Into what corner peers my halcyon's bill? / Ha, to the east? Yes' (I.i.38-40). It is in this context that another reference to Persia appears. One of Barabas's merchants reports to him the return of one of his ships: 'Thine argosy from Alexandria, / Know, Barabas, doth ride in Malta Road, / Laden with riches, and exceeding store / Of Persian silks, of gold, and orient pearl' (I.i.85-88). One more such mention, again associated with lucrative trade, is to 'Ormus', part of Persia famous for its pearl trade at that time whence Barabas receives some letters (II.iii.226). (This reference to 'Ormus' also occurs in Milton and is elaborated there.)

The Jew of Malta depicts a Europe beleaguered by the Turks. It dramatises the hostility between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. There is a 'deadly enmity' (II.iii.33) between Europe and 'barbarous misbelieving Turks' (II.iii.46). As the quotations indicate this hostility is often couched in religious terms, between Christian Europeans and Muslim Ottomans. In the orientalism of the play anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish sentiments are very much the same while Persia is in a sense disassociated from Islam and portrayed as a favourable destination for lucrative trade.⁷ Apropos the politico-historical background of this, mention should be made of the feeble attempts on the European side to effect some sort of alliance with Persia (with the rise of the Safavids) against the Turks. The accession of Shah Abbas I, the great Sophy, brought dramatic changes in Persia's relationships with the West. To be able to rival and counterbalance the Turks Abbas sought European help to remedy his army's inferiority to the Turks in artillery. Hence he welcomed Christians to his court. On the other hand, Pope Clement and some European rulers saw a potential ally in Persia against the common enemy, the Turks.⁸ These

political issues are much more significantly reflected in *Tamburlaine the Great*, a play more concerned with the Orient than any other of Marlowe's dramatic works.

What did it mean to write a play in 1587-88 with oriental characters and settings? It could be said that the historical Timur Khan (Timur-i-Lenk in Persian, 1336-1405) with his ceaseless military conquests, indomitable and exotic, was the kind of figure who fitted Marlowe's creative imagination. There is of course little correspondence between historical fact and Marlowe's depiction of Tamburlaine except the range of Timur's conquests and incidents such as his battle with the Turks.⁹

Of focal importance from the perspective of this study, however, are a number of interdependent discourses underwriting the text. These are discourses of Elizabethan imperialism, expansionism and mercantilism, of the Turks, Islam, Persia and the Orient in general. The very depiction of power, conquest and expansionism reflects the era's preoccupation with these issues. Even the issue of commerce, important for an emerging mercantilism in England, is broached. Tamburlaine means to cut a canal linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, so that 'men quickly sail to India' (*Two*, V.iii.136). He wants to facilitate trade, cutting short the way to 'India', the locus of desire, commercial as well as imperial and colonial. When at the end of his career, near his death, he reviews his conquests, looking west from Africa, there are unimaginable riches and looking east from Antarctic, there are vast territories, 'never descried, / Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright / As all the lamps that beautify the sky' (*Two*, V.iii.156-58). His death puts an end to a career of territorial expansionism, discovering the unknown, amassing untold riches and facilitating trade, all prime concerns and dreams of Marlowe's times. In his deathbed, Tamburlaine sonorously strikes the note of imperialism: 'And shall I die, and this unconquered?' (*Two*, V.iii.159) The Orient depicted here is the scene on which imperial fantasies are projected and enacted.

To return to Persia: its representation ought to be viewed in the context of the representation of Islam in the play. One important aspect of the play, or any contemporary play for that matter, is that in it the menace of Islam and the Turks to

Europe is dramatically countervailed. After all the play draws on the historical fact that Timur Khan intervened in the conflict between the Christian and the Turkish powers. As Samuel Chew observes, it was the theatre that provided ‘some compensation for the dread which moved the Elizabethans when they thought of Islam.’¹⁰ From the very beginning Turco-Persian hostility is foregrounded. First of all, the Persia portrayed before the taking over of Tamburlaine is a decadent realm ruled by Mycetes (a fictitious character), an inept king and a treacherous corrupt court. The king’s brother, Cosroe (also a fictitious character), invokes the memory of the mighty Persian empire and deplores its decadent state, ruled by an impotent king and menaced by the Turks and Tartars:

Unhappy Persia, that in former age
Hast been the seat of mighty conquerors
That in their prowess and their policies
Have triumphed over Afric, and the bounds
Of Europe where the sun dares scarce appear
For freezing meteors and congealed cold-
...
Now Turks and Tartars shake their swords at thee,
Meaning to mangle all thy provinces. (*One*, I.i.6-11 and 16-17)

It should be said parenthetically that the imagery (shaking the swords, mangling) implies the real threat and the utmost brutality of the Turks.

The play contains a number of anachronisms -- *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2* are ‘within the tolerances of Elizabethan classification, “histories”’ -- that are significant from the perspective of this study.¹¹ These instances of incongruity or ‘discoherence’, in Jonathan Dollimore’s terms, point out the politico-ideological underpinnings of the play.¹² Meander, one of the Persian Lords, addressing Mycetes, describes Tamburlaine as ‘that sturdy Scythian thief, / That robs your merchants of Persepolis / Trading by land unto the Western Isles,’ (*One*, I.i.36-38). Persia is here depicted as a mercantile nation worried about its endangered commerce. And what is meant by ‘the Western Isles?’, Britain or the West Indies? ¹³ In either case the reference is anachronistic. There was no trade between Persia and England until Anthony Jenkinson’s delegation to the court of Persia in 1562 and the missions of the succeeding envoys sent by the Muscovy Company. If there is to be historical consistency, the play ought to encompass a period between the

rise of Timur Khan in about 1360 and his death in 1404. Marlowe seems to have in mind Jenkinson's account of his travel to Persia through Russia via the Caspian Sea (on which I shall say more) or other English agents' accounts who followed his suit.¹⁴

Another anachronistic allusion to commerce in the Caspian Sea further supports this conjecture. Tamburlaine tells Theridamas, the Persian commander who has sold out to him, of his future expansionist plans: 'And Christian merchants that with Russian stems / Plough up huge furrows in the Caspian Sea / Shall vail to us as lords of all the lake' (*One*, I.i.193-95). If, on the other hand, 'Western Isles' refers to the West Indies, it is yet more out of keeping with historical facts as there were never any relations, commercial or otherwise, between these islands and Persia. The reference rather underscores England's expansionist aspirations as at Marlowe's time colonial schemes for these 'newly-discovered' islands, which were soon to become actual colonies, had begun to be devised. It is significant, and characteristic, that here Elizabethan colonial fantasies are displaced; they become Persia's commercial trafficking. Put another way, there is a discrepancy or 'discoherence' between the discourse of history, the play's claim to historicity, and the discourse of colonialism.

Here is Cosroe again lamenting the decline of the Persian empire:

To see our neighbours that were wont to quake
And tremble at the Persian monarch's name
Now sits and laughs our regiment to scorn;
And that which might resolve me into tears,
Men from the farthest equinoctial line
Have swarmed in troops into the Eastern India,
Lading their ships with gold and precious stones,
And made their spoils from all our provinces. (*One*, I.i.115-22)

A few lines later the identity of these men from way off the equator becomes clearer. These intruders who are replacing the Persian domination of 'India', the new colonisers and imperialists, are none other than the Western powers. The idea of colonialism is palpably dramatised in the imagery of these lines. In response to these lamentations, Menaphon, one of the Persian Lords conspiring with Cosroe against Mycetes, tells

Cosroe how he can gain the title of a conqueror by following the example of his predecessors and amending the affairs of the Persian empire:

Afric and Europe bordering on your land,
And continent to your dominions,
How easily may you, with a mighty host,
Pass into Graecia, as did Cyrus once,
And cause them to withdraw their forces home,
Lest you subdue the pride of Christendom! (*One*, I.i.127-132)

First of all, the passage foregrounds the idea of Persia as an imperial power (this emphasis on the ancient history of Persia as a monarchical, imperial country rather than, say, a Muslim one, is an important point about which more will be said later). The rising European imperial powers are featured as encroaching on one of the domains of the Persian empire, 'Eastern India.' This projecting of the imperial themes onto Persia is also detectable in the Persian Lords' crowning of Cosroe as the new emperor of Persia:

We here do crown thee monarch of the East,
Emperor of Asia and Persia,
Great lord of Media and Armenia,
Duke of Asseria and Albania,
Mesopotamia and Parthia,
East India and the late-discovered isles,
Chief lord of all the wide vast Euxine sea
And of the ever-raging Caspian Lake.
Long live Cosroe, Mighty emperor! (*One*, I. i. 161-69)

Again 'East India' and 'the late-discovered isles' are alluded to. If the 'late-discovered isles' are those near Indonesia discovered by Drake, then there is no doubt as to the thematic identification of Persia and England, although no such detailed pinpointing is necessary for this identification.¹⁵ Here orientalist discourse and the discourse of England's nascent imperialism in a very peculiar way merge. Elsewhere, Cosroe, arranging the toppling of his brother with Tamburlaine and Theridamas, says: 'Then will we march to all those Indian mines / My witless brother to the Christians lost, / And ransom them with fame and usury' (*One*, II.v.41-43). Persia is here clearly figured as an imperial power in competition with the 'Christian', the European imperial powers, over 'Indian mines.' Also, Cosroe and his accomplices form a league with Tamburlaine to be

able to restore Persia to 'her former pomp' (*One*, II.v.19). Also the Persians' attitude towards the Sythians is evidently supremacist and imperialistic. Theridamas, for instance, is surprised that such 'barbaric' people should appear noble and brave: 'Ah, these resolved, noble Sythians! / But shall I prove a traitor to my king?' (*One*, I.ii.224-25) Or, Cosroe calls Tamburlaine 'barbarous' (*One*, II.vii.1).

Act II of part One of the play ends with Tamburlaine crowned as the king of Persia henceforward he is always referred to as such. Here is how Bajazeth, the Turkish ruler, sends his messenger to Tamburlaine: 'Hie thee, my basso, fast to Persia, / Tell him thy lord the Turkish emperor' (*One*, III.ii.21). Or, as Argier says: 'They say he is the King of Persia' (*One*, III.i.45). Tamburlaine himself, at the end of part One of the play, at the height of his power, crowns Zenocrate 'Queen of Persia' (*One*, V.i.508). The inevitable confrontation between Tamburlaine and the Turkish forces is dramatised as the one between the Persians and the Turks. Bajazeth speaks of the Persians and equally of the Christian European forces in derogatory terms betokening his hatred and hostility towards them alike. Addressing his contributory kings, he says: 'Your threefold army and my huge host / Shall swallow up these base-born Persians' (*One*, III.iii.94-95). Elsewhere, he says of the Christian forces:

Now will the Christian miscreants be glad,
Ringing with joy their superstitious bells
And making bonfires for my overthrow.
But ere I die, those foul idolaters
Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones; (*One*, III.iii.236-40)

The Turco-Persian and Turco-European hostilities are equally highlighted. The Turks figure as the common enemy of the Persians and the Europeans.

The Turkish threat to Europe, so familiar a theme to the Elizabethan audience, is articulated by Bajazeth when he tells Tamburlaine: 'Now shalt thou feel the force of Turkish arms / Which lately made all Europe quake for fear' (*One*, III.iii.135). 'Lately' could refer both to the Turkish siege of Constantinople in 1402 broken by the historical Timur Khan as well as to the decades preceding the publication of the play in 1587/88.

Sultan Selim II had taken Cyprus in 1571, which roused Christendom. An alliance of the Pope, Venice, Genoa and Spain led to the naval victory of Lepanto over the Turks in 1571. In 1572 Spain captured Tunis which was retaken by the Turks in 1574.¹⁶ At that time the Ottoman empire extended from the frontiers of Germany to the frontiers of Persia. And as the Turks were adding to their conquests in Europe, they were also engaged in conflicts with Persia, conflicts that since the rise of the Safavid dynasty had come to a head. Bajazeth calls himself, 'Dread lord of Afric, Europe and Asia' (*One*, III.i.23). It was Sultan Suleiman, known in Europe as the Magnificent, who in 1530s 'had added to his other titles "Lord of Europe"'; meanwhile, there were 'diplomatic discussions in Europe of practicality of alliance with Persia.'¹⁷ Keeping this in view, it could be better understood why Marlowe conflates the events of the years around 1400 and those of some two hundred years later, the last decades of the sixteenth century. There is little wonder, then, that the king of Persia, supposedly a Muslim, declares himself (in a humanitarian gesture!) the liberator of the suffering Christians from the Turkish stranglehold. Tamburlaine is addressing Bajazeth:

I that am termed the scourge and wrath of God,
 The only fear and terror of the world,
 Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge
 Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves,
 Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains
 And feeding them with thin and slender fare
 That naked row about the Terrene Sea;
 And when they chance to breathe and rest a space
 Are punished with bastions so grievously
 That they lie panting on the galley's side
 And strive for life at every stroke they give. (*One*, III.iii.45-54)

The passage is quoted at length as it harps on the cruelty of the Turks and the sufferings of the Christians at their hands. It is at pains to produce pathos in an attempt to accentuate the demonisation of the Turks and the image of Tamburlaine as liberator. Ironically, it is Tamburlaine with his more than bloody conquests -- who 'Without respect of sex, degree, or age, /...razeth his foes with fire and sword' (*One*, IV.i.62-63) -- who speaks in humane terms of the tribulations of the Christians and the ruthlessness of the Turks. It could be an instance (to which we shall turn later) of Marlowe's laying bare of the self-authorisations

of power, as Emily Bartels, to be discussed shortly, postulates. But it also indicates that in Marlowe's portrayal, as Robert Knoll notes, 'in every exchange the Turks are more violent, more bloody, and more vindictive than Tamburlaine.'¹⁸ The containment / subversion debate apart, this belies Marlowe's awareness of and his inflection of the power relations and popular sensibilities of his time.

In another passage, important for the perspective of this study, in a sustained vision Tamburlaine draws a picture of his imperial conquests and designs which go from Persia to the straits of Magellan, and thence to Gibraltar, covering vast territories from the East to the West:

Those walled garrisons will I subdue,
And write myself great lord of Africa:
So from the east unto the furthest west
Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.
The galleys and those pilling brigantines
That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf
And hover in the straits for Christians' wrack,
Shall lie at anchor in the Isle Asant
Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war,
Sailing along the oriental sea,
Have fetched about the Indian continent
Even from Persepolis to Mexico,
And thence unto the Straits of Jubaltar,
Where they shall meet and join their force in one,
Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale,
And all the ocean by the British shore;
And by this means I'll win the world at last. (*One*, III.iii.244-60)

In the first place, Tamburlaine's act of 'writing' himself the 'lord of Africa' instances the textual strategy of imperialism. Second, Tamburlaine again features as the saviour and protector of the Christians guaranteeing the free flow of trade between Europe and the East. He keeps 'in awe' the pirates who harass the European commercial fleet, but he also keeps 'in awe the Bay of Portingale', the Hispanic Peninsula. This dissonance can be accounted for by the fact that Portugal and Spain were the dominant commercial and imperial powers of the time and antagonistic to England. Indeed the play as a product of the hectic Armada years very much displaces the emotions generated by the current

conflict. ‘Behind Tamburlaine’, Zunder maintains, ‘lies the newly emergent England of Elizabeth. And behind Bajazeth, the emperor of Turkey, lies the overwhelming, imperial power of Spain.’¹⁹ By the same token, the chaste Zenocrate, crowned as the queen of Persia, is associated with the virgin Elizabeth.²⁰ (This process of displacement, about which more will be said, is a central feature of the orientalism of the other writers included in this study as well.) Third, the passage contains a lot of geographical names, old and newly-discovered and ‘named’ territories. At the historical Timur Khan’s time, Mexico (America) had not yet been discovered. Furthermore, Persepolis, uninhabited since its destruction by Alexander, is described as the embarking point in Tamburlaine’s imperial journey. The word ‘Persepolis’, apart from its exotic ring, implies the glory of the Persian empire at its height, hence enhancing the imperial motif of the text. The Persia invoked here is clearly a monarchical, pre-Islamic realm.

This last point brings us to another important aspect of the way Persia is portrayed in the text in contradistinction to the portrayal of the Turks. The Turks as well as their allies, the Moors and the Arabs, are always associated with Islam. Bajazeth repeatedly invokes the Prophet of Islam as if he is making all his battles in the name of Islam. ‘All this is true as holy Mahomet’, says Bajazeth (*One*, III.i.54). Or: ‘By Mahomet my kinsman’s sepulchre / And by the holy Alcoran I swear’ (*One*, III.i.75-76). Zabina, the Turkish queen couches the conflict between the Turks and Tamburlaine’s army as well as the Turco-Christian hostility in overtly religious terms; according to her, the Sythians and the Persians are on the side of the ‘pagan’ Christians (*One*, III.iii.195-200). By contrast, Zenocrate, the would-be queen of Persia also invokes extra-human forces but in her invocation Persia is clearly not a Muslim country:

Ye gods and powers that govern Persia
And made my lordly love her worthy king,
Now strengthen him against the Turkish Bajazeth
And let his foe, like flocks of fearful roes
Pursued by hunters, fly his angry looks,
That I may see him issue conqueror. (*One*, III.iii.189-95)

Tamburlaine himself professes allegiance to many faiths including his sword. While Bajazeth swears by the prophet of Islam, he declares ‘By this my sword that conquered Persia’ (*One*, III. iii. 82). Or he swears by ‘Jove’ rather than the Muslim God (*One*, V.i.453). But in his second battle with the Turks, he for once professes to be a Muslim: ‘For I have sworn by Sacred Mahomet’ (*Two*, I.iii.109). However, he apparently makes this profession to Islam only to accentuate his subsequent defiance of it. In a climactic scene, he burns the Koran:

Now, Casane, wher’s the Turkish Alcoran
And all the heaps of superstitious books
Found in the temples of that Mahomet
Whom I have thought a god? They shall be burnt. (*Two*, V.i.172-75)

And finally Tamburlaine associates the Turks with Islam and takes their defeat as a proof of the falsity of Islam: ‘In vain, I see, men worship Mohamet. / My sword has sent millions of Turks to hell, / Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends, / And yet I live untouched by Mahomet’ (*Two*, V.ii.177-81).

Is it Islam that is being discredited or all religion? It is possible that a sceptic (or atheist?) Marlowe is displacing his own conception of religion onto his depiction of the Persians and the Turks. Is Marlowe, as some critics would have it, critiquing all religion including Christianity itself? ²² If so, here Marlovian orientalism serves to refract the author’s personal views on religion. One more instance of the intersection of Marlowe’s orientalism in the play with his personal life is the figuration of Mycetes, the Persian king, who, as Bartels notes, like ‘the English king Edward [in *Edward II*] ... loves his minions.’²³

Now, a few more points need to be said about Marlovian orientalist discourse in the text. To be sure the orientalist topoi are there. The Orient is the scene on which unheard of atrocities are acted out, whether by the Turks or by Tamburlaine.²⁴ It is of course the locus of fabulous riches too, ‘I march to wealthy Persia’ (*One*, IV.ii.47). So is it a desirable locus for lucrative trade and colonising, especially as regards India. The motif

of sensuality is also there. There are quite a few references to concubines and the harem theme which are interestingly mostly associated with the Turks.²⁵ But in discussing Marlovian orientalism in the play's multiple discourse, the point should not be lost sight of that it does not appear to be as one-sided as we expect such orientalist accounts to be. For instance, Greenblatt marks the following lines in which Cosroe deploring the decline of the Persian power says of Europe: 'Europe where the sun dares scarce appear / For freezing meteors and congealed cold' (*One*, I.i.18-19). He takes these lines as a 'wry reminder of how exotic Europe would appear to a Persian.'²⁶ By the same token, it is the way Christianity would appear to a Turk: 'Now will the Christian miscreants be glad, / Ringing with joy their superstitious bells' (*One*, III.iii.236-37).

Marlowe's representations then are compounded. Here a comparison with Spenser is revealing. Greenblatt argues that whereas in Spenser identity is achieved through the rejection of and an attack upon the alien, in Marlowe it is achieved through 'a subversive identification' with it.²⁷ The question however is raised: what is meant by 'the alien?' In Spenser 'the alien' could, among others, mean the orientals. And identity is really shaped in opposition to this 'other,' alien element, although even in Spenser there are distinctions, however incomplete, between those constituting the alien. Among the orientals, the Persians and the 'Sarazins' are not portrayed exactly alike. For example, the identity of Britomart, standing for Britain and Elizabeth, to some extent is shaped in opposition to Malecasta who is like 'Persian Queenes.' In contrast, in Marlowe, Elizabeth could be identifiable with Zenocrate, the queen of Persia and with Tamburlaine, its emperor. But the 'alien' Turks are hardly meant to be identified with. This identification nonetheless is far from being a simple matter. It could be made for quite subversive purposes. Simon Shepherd sees the play as problematising:

the contemporary hero ideology in trapping its audience between the success and the cruelty of Tamburlaine, between the stable rule and the means that maintain it, between civil and military. In *Tamburlaine* the weakness of the old orders has to give way to the new man, the Turkish tyranny can only be defeated by the new man; the new man also comes with his own cruelties, and makes his own terms.²⁸

In this reading orientalist discourse is appropriated to critique, or at least problematize the dominant ideological structures.

From a different perspective Emily Bartels sees the representations of the alien in Marlowe as an instance of resistance to 'a dominant discursive trend' maintaining that:

Marlowe's plays, in bringing alien types to center stage, subversively resist that exploitation and expose the demonization of an other as strategy for self-authorization and self-empowerment, whether on the foreign or domestic front. ... For the plays provide one of the most visible, most popular, and most radical voices of resistance to a dominant discursive trend, which was shaping ideas of self and state.²⁹

To her the figure of the Persian is a third term that problematises the binaries of self / other, West / East.³⁰ This is clearly a modification of Said's formulation of orientalism. According to Bartels Tamburlaine is figured as a 'strategist' rather than a hero and the play exposes the self-empowering strategies of imperialism and colonialism.³¹ In contrast, Richard Wilson emphasising the Asian setting of the play places Marlowe in the heart of Elizabethan commercial and political activities. In what followed we saw the repeated allusions to commercial and imperial notions. Tamburlaine begins his career as a 'sythian thief', cutting the trade routes to Persia near the Caspian Sea; after crowning himself king of Persia his imperial itinerary takes him across Asia to Egypt and Africa. His imperial map was, Wilson maintains, 'actually the one surveyed for the cartographer in 1562 by the [Muscovy] Company factor Anthony Jenkinson.'³² Taking the play as showing 'the triumph of capital as an invisible power penetrating distant lands' and identifying Tamburlaine with Ivan the Terrible of Russia Wilson argues that it tried to inspire the speculators in the Muscovy Company, 'England's first joint-stock enterprise', which 'from Virginia to Persia ... straddled the shipping and caravan lanes of world trade.'³³

As such *Tamburlaine* has as one of its contexts the first phase of Anglo-Persian relationship broached by Anthony Jenkinson, the first Englishman to travel to Persia in the Elizabethan era. Since the rise of the Safavid dynasty in the early sixteenth century

there had been a constant hostility and rivalry between Persia and the Ottoman empire. Politically, Persia was a potential ally for Europe but commercial benefits could be reaped from the situation too. Advantage could be taken of the stagnation of trade between the two hostile Eastern powers and English goods introduced into Persia by the Muscovy Company; the lucrative trade opened up by Richard Chancellor with Russia could be followed by trade with Persia. In 1561 Jenkinson who had been accredited with letters from Elizabeth and Ivan the Terrible headed a delegation to the court of Shah Tahmasp with instructions to open up commercial relations with Persia across Russia and the Caspian sea.³⁴

Even the above reading – reading the play as articulating dreams of empire (of trade or otherwise) – does not easily sit with Said's theorisation of orientalism as a mode of Western dominance as Persia and Turkey are depicted as contending imperial powers. Nonetheless, it could be also said that Marlowe's 'description' of the East – dissociating Persia with Tamburlaine as her monarch from Islam as a country that 'contains' the Ottomans associated with Islam – in a broad sense fits Said's formulation.³⁵ Marlovian orientalism, like that of Spenser, intersects with the imperial and ideological structures of his era, in however different and problematised a manner.³⁶ He appropriates the matter of the Orient in ways that enable both confirmative and subversive readings. Ultimately, the matter of Persia is used not so much as a comment on and the treating of Persia or the Orient per se but as a site, a setting, for displacing and treating the interdependent issues of ideology, power and empire. This is a feature more or less shared with Miltonian orientalism to which I turn in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Linda McJannet, 'Bringing in a Persian', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 12 (1999), 240. Here is McJannet's catalogue of the Renaissance plays featuring major Persian elements: 1527 *Godly Queen Hester* (Anon.); 1561 *Cambyses, King of Persia* (Thomas Preston); 1576-1580 *The wars of Cyrus*; 1578/88 *Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2*; 1600 *Alaham* (Fulke Greville); 1600 *The Four Prentices of London* (Heywood); 1603 *The Tragedy of Darius* (William Alexander); 1604 *The Tragedy of Croesus* (William Alexander); 1605 *The Tragedy of Philotas* (Samuel Daniel); 1607 *The Alexandrian Tragedy* (William Alexander); 1607 *The Travels of Three English Brothers* (John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins); 1614/15 *Abulmanzar* (Thomas Tomkis); 1622 *The Prophetesse* (Fletcher and Masinger); 1636 *The Royal Slave* (William Cartwright); 1637 *Aglaure* (Sir John Suckling); 1639 *The Phoenix in Her Flames* (William Lower); 1641 *The Sophy* (Sir John Denham); 1647 *Mirza* (Robert Baron). Ibid., 243.

2. Ibid., 239.

3. See the editor's introduction and notes to the play in Anthony Parr, ed., *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

4. McJannet, 257-62.

5. Christopher Marlowe, *Complete Plays and Poems*, ed., E. D. Pendry (London: Everyman, 1996), V.iv.77-78. All further references, cited in the text, are to this edition. References to *Tamburlaine the Great*, are to: Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, eds, J. S. Cunningham and Eithne Henson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

6. William Zunder, *Elizabethan Marlowe, Writing and Culture in the English Renaissance* (Hull: Unity Press, 1994), 40. Marlowe's texts show the connection between orientalist discourse and the rise of mercantilism and capitalism in a Europe, which was becoming increasingly Eastward-oriented, whether he discredits or endorses this trend.

7. This was not however always the case. In 'the only surviving dramatization of the story of the Crusades', Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* (1594?), it is the fire-eating Sophy of Persia, not the moderate Soldan of Babylon (that is, Egypt) who counsels battle against the Crusaders. See Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), 97-99.

8. The idea of alliance with Persia against the Ottomans dates back to about a century before the time of Shah Abbas I, to

Uzun Hassan, the Turkoman ruler over the greater part of Persia in the troubled period between the Timurids and the Safavids. When he asked

the Venitians for military aid, they sent Caterino Zeno as an envoy to him. Although Zeno returned with pressing requests for assistance they fell on deaf ears in Venice. (L. Lockhart, 'Persia as Seen by the West', in *The Legacy of Persia*, ed., A. J. Arberry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 347.)

The European powers could also make a distinction between the Sunni and Shia versions of Islam to their own advantage. For instance, discovering that 'Islam was itself divided between the Sunni Ottomans and the Shia Persians' the Portuguese 'had hopes of aid from the "Grand Sophy" of Iran against their mutual Turkish enemy'; accordingly, they 'exempted the Shia Muslims of Iran from the blockade of the Middle Eastern routes as potential allies against the Sunni Ottomans.' (G. V. Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion c. 1400-1715* (London: Routledge, 1991), 78-79, 98.) This schism in Islam is also one of the themes in James Morier's work discussed in a separate chapter. See also *The Crescent and the Rose*, 205-38.

9. J. S. Cunningham and Eithne Henson, eds, *Tamburlaine the Great*. See the editors' introduction.

10. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 99.

11. Cunningham and Henson, eds, *Tamburlaine, the Great*, 'Introduction', 4.

12. Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy, Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, [1984] (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), xxii.

13. Cunningham and Henson, eds, *Tamburlaine, the Great*, 38n., 43n.

14. For an account of Jenkinson and other English agents who travelled to Persia in the Elizabethan and Caroline eras see Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, esp. 205-35.

15. Cunningham and Henson, eds, *Tamburlaine, the Great*, 166n., 48n.

16. John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*, 39. The play, time and again discursively counters these threats, 'Turks are full of brags', says Tamburlaine (*One*, III.iii.3).

17. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 554.

18. Robert E. Knoll, *Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Twayne, 1969), 49.

19. Zunder, *Elizabethan Marlowe*, 16. For a discussion of the association of the Turkish empire with Spain, see also Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre*, 142-56. In *The Jew of Malta*, there can also be found a process of displacement in which Malta is

...not only a site of imperial struggle between Christianity and Islam, specifically between Europe and Turkey, but also a site of displacement for England, the beleaguered island. Ferneze and the Knights start to figure as the English; in particular, as the English government, of which, however marginally, Marlowe was a part. The Turks start to figure as the Spanish; more widely, as any foreign power that might threaten England. Zunder, *Elizabethan Marlowe*, 37.

20. See Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre*, 187-88. More importantly, of course, Elizabeth is identifiable with Tamburlaine himself. In a powerful assertion of imperial ideology, Tamburlaine advises his son, Amyras, how to reign and, symbolically, bridle his imperial chariot drawn by the enslaved kings:

So, reign my son! Scourge and control these slaves,
Guiding thy chariot with thy father's hand.
As precious is the charge thou undertak'st
As that which clymen's brain-sick son did guide
When wand'ring Phoebe's ivory cheeks were scorched
And all the earth, like Etna, breathing fire.
Be warned by him, then, learn with awful eye
To sway a throne as dangerous as his.
For if thy body thrive not full of thoughts
As pure and fiery as phyteus' beams,
The nature of these proud rebelling jades
Will take occasion by the slenderest hair
And draw thee piecemeal like Hippolytus
Through rocks more steep and sharp than Caspian cliffs. (*Two*, V.iii.229-42)

Zunder maintains that Tamburlaine here is to be identified with Elizabeth:

Marlowe draws on humanist discourse here to support an expansionist policy. The imperial chariot is as dangerous as Phaethon's; and must be guided by someone as disciplined as Apollo or Tamburlaine. ... the glance at Elizabeth, both admiration and admonition, seems obvious. (Zunder, *Elizabethan Marlowe*, 30.)

21. This association of Islam with the Turks is even more dramatically emphasised in Part Two of the play where the Turkish forces are engaged in battle with the Catholic Christians. To solemnise their peace treaty, Orcanes swears by 'Sacred Mohamet, the friend of God', (*Two*, I.i.137) and Sigismond by 'Sweet Jesus Chris' (*Two*, I.i.135). Generally speaking, anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish sentiments are one and the same.

22. A discussion of Marlowe's conception of religion and its reflection in *Tamburlaine* can be found in David Riggs, 'Marlowe's Quarrel with God', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality, New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed., Paul Whitfield

White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), 15-37. After burning the Koran, Tamburlaine is taken ill and dies. His sudden death, however, should not be taken as a retribution for the sin of impiety but rather as a caprice of fortune. See Cunningham and Henson, eds, 'Introduction', 7. On Tamburlaine's death, Zunder notes that it is 'presented not as retribution, but as part of natural process; the result, like his wife's death, of "enforc'd and necessary change." Marlowe here uses the discourse of history to subvert the dominant morality.' Zunder, *Elizabethan Marlowe*, 30. David Riggs also observes that despite his defiance of Islam, Tamburlaine 'dies at peace with himself.' David Riggs, 'Marlowe's Quarrel with God', 29. In fine, the play, an example of the emergent humanist drama drawing on the discourse of humanity, is ambiguous about and sceptical of all extra-human forces and source of meaning and it certainly discredits Islam. As Greenblatt observes, Tamburlaine dies when

he burns the Koran! The one action which Elizabethan churchmen themselves might have applauded seems to bring down divine vengeance. The effect is not to celebrate the transcendent power of Mohammed but to challenge the habit of mind that looks to heaven for rewards and punishment, that imagines human evil as "the scourge of God."
(*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 202.)

23. Emily C. Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1993), 17.

24. If Tamburlaine is taken as a 'dramatization of Machiavellian Prince', (Claude J. Summers, *Christopher Marlowe and the Politics of Power* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1974), 67.), then a ruthless oriental upstart will be only too fit a character and the Orient too suitable a locus for such dramatisation.

25. Bajazeth tells of Tamburlaine: 'He shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch /And in my Sarell tend my concubines;' (*One*, III.iii.77-78). As to the representation of the oriental women in the text, they are as a whole in a subordinate position and men have a possessive attitude towards them. As Charles Brooks notes, 'to the men in *Tamburlaine* beautiful women are treasures to be won.' Charles Brooks, 'Tamburlaine and Attitudes Towards Women', *English Literary History*, 24 (1957), 1-11, p.3. Moreover, The play acts out erotic desire in the representation of oriental women. Patrick Cheney sees in this Marlowe's 'imitation of Spenser's Protestant representation of erotic desire.' Patrick Cheney, 'Marlowe, Spenser, and the Renaissance literary Career', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, 47.

26. Stephen Greenblatt, 'Marlowe and Renaissance Self-Fashioning', in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed., Alvin Kernan (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 2n., 67n.

27. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 203.

28. Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre*, 151.

29. *Spectacles of Strangeness*, xv.

30. Ibid., 6.

31. Ibid., 65.

32. Richard Wilson, 'Visible Bullets: *Tamburlaine the Great* and Ivan the Terrible', *English Literary History*, 62 (1995), 48.

33. Ibid., 47, 48.

34. See *The Crescent and the Rose*, 205-38.

35. *Orientalism*, 3, 20.

36. Patrick Cheney discusses the interchange between Marlowe and Spenser and characterises it as 'metadiscursive', adding 'much of what we say about *Tamburlaine* we see as Marlowe's competitive rewritings of Spenser.' Marlowe 'can both advertise himself as the new poet of empire and criticize Spenser as the false poet of empire.' Patrick Cheney, 'Marlowe, Spenser, and the Renaissance Literary Career', 43, 47.

CHAPTER IV

Evil Kings: *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*

In the previous chapters the portrayal of Persia in Spenser and Marlowe was discussed. We saw that in Spenser the Persian images and figures were deployed in the context of a Protestant-nationalist discourse and Spenser's anxiety about the possible abuse and degeneration of royal power. Marlowe's far more complex use of the matter of Persia and the Orient was discussed in the context of his critique of power (Tamburlaine as a hero of power), religion and ideology in ways allowing both confirmative and subversive readings. He could even expose the demonisation of the oriental others 'as strategy for self-authorization and self-empowerment.'¹ In both Spenser and Marlowe a profound process of displacement was at work.

In the chapter that follows I will focus on John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* which contain a significant number of allusions to Persia.² It will be argued that Milton's orientalist discourse, which in itself reveals some deep-seated conceptions about the East, serves to refract the author's political views, sharpening the thematics and imagery of his poems.

To begin with, why include Milton in the orientalist canon at all? What were the reasons for, and what purposes were served by, the inclusion of the matter of Persia and the Orient in these two immensely influential texts? As with this study throughout, the pages that follow will be mainly concerned with the survey of the representations of Persia in the context of orientalism not in Said's words as a 'veridic' discourse -- claiming to deal with 'verities,' with the 'truth' about the East, a contrapuntal reading of which will prove it to be an array of lies and myths -- but rather as a sign of the power-relations of that time, as indicative of the state of culture and society of that time.³ Why did these references to Persia occur at all? What functions whether intended or not, conscious or unconscious, did they serve? Foucault says of the analysis of statements that it should 'question them as to their mode of existence... What it means for them to

have appeared when and where they did -- they and no others.'⁴ Analogously, our concern is to investigate what it meant for the matter of Persia to appear when and where it did.

It is no wonder to find Orientalia in a poem which, to use Barbara Lewalski's words, has 'an edenic profusion of thematic and structural elements.'⁵ Persia figures quite noticeably in orientalist discourse of *Paradise lost* and *Paradise Regained*. This discourse is arguably deep-seated, embedded in the structure and buried within the allusive texture of these poems. Figuring, however, in the work of, as Alistair Fowler puts it, 'one of the most politically engaged of all [English] poets,' in texts which are, in Tony Davies' phrase, 'the battleground of competing ideologies,' this discourse has to be considered in negotiation with other discourses circulating at the time of the production of these texts.⁶ Here the New Historicist notion of the literary text is useful -- the idea that literary texts to some extent map the discourses circulating at the time they are written and, to some sense, are themselves part of these discourses.

In order to contextualise the allusions to Persia, we have first to have a general survey of the matter of the Orient in the poems in which they occur. This matter incorporates images of exoticism, splendour and wealth, kingship and despotism and barbarism at a deeper level (in Stevie Davies' words, images of 'formless, chaotic masses of beings on the borders of the human, barbarians who pour down upon civilization...').⁷

Here is, for instance, an image of oriental luxury and splendour used in describing the Pandaemonium:

Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury.⁸

The pagan East is depicted in its Satanic luxury. The above image is about an ancient, pre-Christian era, the following is that of a more contemporary one. Satan's regiment throng when a council is proclaimed in hell:

They anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended: all access was thronged, the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the soldan's chair
Defied the best of paynim chivalry
To mortal combat or career with lance) (*PL*, I.759-66)

'Soldan,' resonating with associations of tyranny and cruelty, and 'paynim' are markers of orientalist discourse here. The image, as was discussed at some length in the chapter on Spenser, is specifically that of the Islamic Orient and to be more exact that of the Turkish rulers. Actually, as some critics have noted, Milton has a predilection for these Spenserian words, which could be indicative of some sort of continuity in Orientalist discourse.⁹ Elsewhere the Satanic council is likened to the typical oriental state councils. Satan re-enters the Pandemonium: 'Their mighty chief returned: loud was the acclaim: / Forth rushed in haste the great consulting peers, / Raised from their dark divan, and with like joy' (*PL*, X. 455-57). 'Divan' is a Persian word that, among other things, means a state council as well as, ironically, a council of justice. The alliterative 'dark divan,' resonating with overtones of corruption continues the implications of the previous image. More will be said on the association of the oriental monarchs with Satan in the discussion of the images of kingship.

The devils can also be likened to an obscure people somewhere in the East:

So thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that pygmean race

Beyond the Indian mountain, (*PL*, I.775-81)

The oriental motif continues and the ‘numberless’ devils are likened to a barbarous Oriental people from beyond the mountains, ‘formless, chaotic beings.’ This blurred geography is invoked in a series of epic similes associating Oriental territories with the Satanic regime. For instance, the encounter between Satan and Death (his son by his daughter Sin) is described as the collision of two clouds over the Caspian in the north of Persia (*PL*, II.714-16). Or, Satan’s roaming of the earth is described as follows:

Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field,
As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from the region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yearling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams; (*PL*, III.430-36)

However, oriental realms are not always associated with Satan and hell. Images of the exotic Orient are deployed to describe heaven as well; heaven’s balmy scents are likened to:

As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, oft at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore
Of Arabie the blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles. (*PL*, IV.159-65)

Several discourses overlap here. ‘Cape of Hope’ and ‘Mozambic’ as well as the whole of this nautical image are markers of a discourse of mercantilism and discovery dominant at that time. ‘Sabeian odours’ betokens the biblical discourse (Saba being a biblical land) and ‘Arabie’ marks orientalist discourse. The oriental image of the passage helps create a sort of atmospheric effect, something related to the aesthetics of the text in general that will be discussed at some length later. Likewise is the description of the scene in which Eve picks the delicacies of the Heaven: ‘Whatever earth all-bearing mother yields / In

India east or west, or middle shore / In Pontus or the Punic coast,' (*PL*, V.338-40). The East is imaged as a locale of edenic profusion and abundance. One more image of this kind, again specifically of India, is used in the scene in which Adam and Eve cover themselves with fig leaves: 'The fig tree, not that kind for fruit renowned, / But such as this day to Indians known / In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms' (*PL*, IX.1101-103). Fowler notes that Purchas could be the possible source for this image.¹⁰ The deictic 'this day' shows the wide circulation and direct stamp of the discourses of exploration and mercantilism, the Hakluyt and Purchas collections, on the Miltonic text. Such images indicate that much of the orientalism of the texts under discussion is engaged with the aforesaid discourses rather than the discourse of colonialism.

After pointing out some of the major motifs of the orientalism, to specify the matter of the Orient more, we will focus on the geography of the texts under discussion. One of the striking aspects of *Paradise Lost* and, to a lesser extent, *Paradise Regained* is their wealth of geographical detail, their truly vast 'imaginative geography,' as Said puts it, including almost all the known world as well as the 'discovered' lands of that time. The vast geographical perspectives of *Paradise Lost* embrace Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas (from 'Cambalu...And Samarchand by Oxus...' to 'Agra...Mosco...Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melind...On Europe...Rich Mexico...El Dorado' (I.420-23)), lands imagined and real, charted and uncharted. The East of course figures prominently in this grandiose setting. Why does the Orient figure so significantly in what can be called the geographical or cartographical discourse of these poems? This figuration can be accounted for in a number of ways. First of all, these texts claim to render universal themes, the story of man's creation, his fall and his final redemption. These themes are presented on a cosmic scale. Furthermore, the poems treat biblical stories and the biblical lands are located in the East. For instance, 'With these came they, who from the bordering flood / Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts / Egypt from Syrian ground...' (*PL*, I.420-23).

Milton was also writing in the late Renaissance, a time of cartographical awareness, a time of, in Stephen Greenblatt's words, 'heightened interest in boundaries.'¹¹ It was a

time of exploration, map-making and discovery. These boundaries, however, were mostly blurred and many parts of the globe were to the West an 'as yet unavailable *terra incognita*' with 'its people and customs often the product of European fable, fourth-hand report.'¹² The Renaissance discourses of exploration, discovery and cartography, then, impinged on Milton's conception of geographical places as the, to use Stevie Davies' words, 'inconclusive' geography of *Paradise Lost* evidences.¹³

This geographical discourse, with its inclusion of diverse lands, many of them Eastern, is intertwined with the thematics of these poems. In Book XI of *Paradise Lost* there is a catalogue of the Eastern empires. Adam is shown

The seat
Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Khan
To Paquin of Sinaean kings and thence
To Agra and Lahor of great mogul
Down to the golden Chersones, or where
The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
In Hispahan, or where the Russian Czar
In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance.
Turchestan born; (XI.386-96)

Fowler observes that here there is a sort of 'topomorphic' or 'spatial' pattern. Such patterns, he adds, in *Paradise Lost* often imply 'symbolism of sovereignty -- not of course to dignify human monarchy, but rather to affirm Christ's kingship and the moral hierarchy of creation.'¹⁴ Chersones, identified with Ophir, which supplied Solomon, the only biblical ruler mentioned in the poem, with gold, is centrally placed, flanked with 'the Mogul's and the Persian's realms, each with two capitals; then the Sinaean kings' and Czar's, each with one capital.'¹⁵ The matter of Persia and the Orient is used to drive home the focal theme of the poem -- the denunciation of worldly kingship and underscoring God's sovereignty. The orientalism of the poem here is inseparable from its thematics, it helps give aesthetic form to it, a central issue to our discussion about which more will be said.

Critics have noted the abundance of proper names, geographical and otherwise, in *Paradise Lost*. Fowler discusses T. S. Eliot's and F. R. Leavis' treatment of the '“roll-call” of names as having only a vague atmospheric or auditory value' and goes on to explain how the recent study of theological and historical contexts shows that 'every naming...is sharply edged.'¹⁶ But this idea of 'atmospheric or auditory value,' is, I think, something quite relevant to the discussion of orientalism in these poems. 'Samarchand' (once a celebrated city in the Persian empire), 'Cambalu,' 'Agra,' 'Ecbatan' (an ancient capital of Persia), 'Susa' (the winter palace of the Persian kings, also with biblical overtones), 'Hispanan' (the capital of Persia in the Safavid era, at Milton's time) are names, which, apart from other associations, are sonorous, evocative, even romantic. The note of wealth, exoticism and glory associated with the earthly kingdoms is certainly there, but one is conduced to assume that these oriental, along with the non-oriental ('Quiola,' 'El Dorado,' etc.), names to some extent are there to achieve atmospheric and sound effects befitting an epic on a cosmic scale. This once more brings us to the relationship between the aesthetics of these poems and their orientalisms. The heavily politicised Saidian model of orientalism which does not take note of the aesthetic aspects seems to be inadequate here.

To focus on the specific allusions to Persia we could group them into three main frameworks: classical, biblical and contemporary. An important instance of the classical framework is the allusion to Xerxes' Greek expedition. Sin and Death build a bridge over the chaos linking hell and earth:

Over the foaming deep high arched, a bridge
 Of length prodigious joining to the wall
 Immovable of this now fenceless world
 Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive down to hell.
 So, if great things to small may be compared,
 Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
 From Susa his Memnonian palace high
 Came to the sea, and over Hellespont
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,
 And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves. (*PL*, X. 306-11)

Milton is here drawing on Aeschylus and Herodotus. Susa (the winter palace of the Persian kings known to the Greeks as Memnonia after Memnon, the son of the dawn, Aurora) is analogous to hell and Xerxes to Sin and Death, the offspring of Satan. On the aptness of this image, Fowler observes that 'Death and Xerxes both build bridges, intend to subdue nations, are proud and strike the deep.'¹⁷ The passage reproduces two of the salient *topoi* of the classical Greek writers' discourse on Persia, tyranny and pride. These two *topoi* are specifically highlighted. Xerxes builds his bridge 'the liberty of Greece to yoke' and his overweening pride makes him scourge the sea in indignation. The reproduction and recirculation of these *topoi* empower and authorise the Miltonic text. Moreover, as Xerxes' invasion of Greece, recorded in Herodotus, is regarded as a historical fact, the passage also draws on the discourse of history and hence doubly empowers the text. *Paradise Lost*, says Mary Radzinowicz, is 'a course in political education.'¹⁸ Milton tries to 'educate' his readers by underlining the inseparable link between tyranny and kingship through the discourse of history. Milton's use of the matter of Persia, then, is related to his particular conception of history as his works, holds C. A. Patrides, are 'the most successful attempt in poetry to fuse the essential aspects of the Christian view of history into a magnificent whole...Above all we have the universalistic and Christocentric view of history.'¹⁹ Milton suggests, and 'educates' his readers as to the fact, that history shows that except the one true sovereign, Christ, all kings are fraudulent and tyrannical.

This classical-orientalist discourse on Persia is also related to what can be termed Milton's display of erudition. In a seminal essay on the relationship between politics and the literary culture in the Restoration, Steven Zwicker shows how Milton tried to give authority to his voice by drawing on 'the language of cultural authority -- Scriptures, the classics, scholarship, history, literary learning.'²⁰ Milton, the staunch champion of the overthrown republic, surrounded by his Royalist enemies, was trying to assert his voice, 'out of humiliation and political displacement, out of the need to assert the authority of his voice came the epic scope of this poem.'²¹ The Orientalia of the poem (as well as those of its sequel, *Paradise Regained*), the bits and pieces of 'knowledge' about the history, geography and customs of the East, come out of these languages of 'cultural

authority.’ In the case of the references to Persia almost all of these apply. As regards the aforementioned wealth of geographical detail in these works, Milton’s attempt at an encyclopaedic scope had to incorporate cartography as well as it was an important field of knowledge and erudition at that time. To return to the image under discussion, there is a resort both to the discourse of history (Herodotean account of the Greco-Persian wars) as well as that of the classics (Aeschylean account), which here happen to be more or less overlapping. Here, as in *Paradise Regained*, the orientalism of the text gives an edge to its pivotal theme, an indictment of all kingship except the kingdom of God. This brings us to the discussion of a cluster of images of kingship and empire that comprise most of the allusions to Persia.

As critics have noted, kingship in Milton’s two major works is mostly associated with the satanic regime. For instance: ‘Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised / Above his fellows, with monarchical pride’ (*PL*, II.426-28). Or: ‘Thus saying rose / The monarch [Satan]’ (*PL*, II.466-67). Satan is also called the devils’ ‘great emperor’ (*PL*, I.379). Perhaps the best encapsulation of Milton’s view of the kings is the scene in which Adam in his vision denounces Nimrod:

O execrable son so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl
Domination absolute’; that right we hold
By his donation; but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free (*PL*, XII.64-71)

The denunciation of kingship is mediated through biblical (the above example), classical (the image of Xerxes’ expedition, for instance) as well as contemporary frameworks. In the following lines Satan and his fellowship are imaged as a sultan and his host:

As when the potent rod
Of Amram’s son in Egypt’s evil day
Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o’er the realm of the impious Pharaoh hung

Like night and darkened all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of hell
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal givn, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct (*PL*, I.338-48)

The biblical story of a tyrant leads to the contemporary realities of the sultans. The 'numberless' host of 'bad angels' is like the overwhelming army of the Turkish sultans invading Christendom. The images of kingship run through *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* driving home the central theme of the indictment of the fraudulent kings of history and the glorification of the kingdom of Heaven. Stevie Davies sums this up as follows:

It is through the reiterated image of the king of this world that Milton embodied in *Paradise Lost* this cyclical pattern of corruption in human life. Once Satan has been established as the archetype of vitiated kingship...the image is extended through a kind of family or chain of subsidiary kings invading all time and all space, from Moloch to Pharaoh to Charles I.²²

As regards the orientalism of the poem, apart from the biblical kings of Babylon, Assyria and Egypt we have the images of the Persian kings and those of the Turkish sultans. If the Persian kings had invaded the West 'the liberty of Greece to yoke,' the despotic, cruel Turkish sultans were also invading Christendom. As discussed in chapters on Spenser and Marlowe, for a Europe embattled with the Ottomans, the image of sultan resonated with menace and dread associations. The aforementioned image of Satan as a sultan at war well conveys these associations; taking into consideration the menace of the Turks as lived experience for Milton's readers, it was the most chilling image that he could have invoked. Davies notes how the Royalists and the Roundheads in their mutual recriminations called each other the 'Turk.'²³ For an embattled West these images of the sultan could also be 'a test of grace in which readers find themselves. If the West cannot stand against the Sultan, how far can the Christian soul resist Satan?'²⁴ The Persians were also in conflict with the Turks and, as was explained elsewhere, were in a sense the allies of the West, hence the image of the Persian kings could have no such dire associations as

that of the Sultan. However, there was a classical discourse on Persia which did not exist in the case of the Turks and this discourse could mark Milton's classicism. Furthermore, Milton's universalistic view of history had to include the vituperation of all kings throughout history.

We come now to another image of kingship related to Milton's politico-historical milieu. Probably the most poignant image showing the association of the excesses of kingship with Satan is the one depicting Satan's enthronement:

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, (*PL*, II.1-5)

These lines appear at a topomorphically as well as symbolically privileged point in the poem, the beginning of the Book II that focuses on Satan and his journey to discover the truth about the creation of another world and man. Fittingly, Satan who is to be foregrounded in Book II is 'orientalised' from the outset, which indicates the importance of the orientalism of the poem to its symbolic structure. It seems that Milton here is trying to throw into sharp relief the attributions of Satan and the kind of kingship associated with him (exotic, excessive, 'barbaric') and the best he can manage is to use oriental imagery. Here the workings of orientalist discourse and its intersection with other discourses needs some unpacking. A text, observes J. Pocock, is 'an actor in its own history, and a polyvalent text acts in a multiplicity of concurrent histories.'²⁵ Here the Miltonic text intersects with a number of histories: the history of East-West relationship, mercantilism, colonial and imperial enterprises as well as the history of the overthrown English republic and the England of 1660s.

As regards Persia and the Orient, the dominant motif here is unfathomable wealth and luxury. The Orient -- Persia ('Ormuz') and India -- is imaged as the ultimate locale of riches and 'barbaric' opulence. Stevie Davies observes that in the 'soaring image' of satanic majesty 'There is a dizzying sense of both poet and reader being 'outshone' by

the atmospheric scale of Satan's opulence, which transforms the mind to the very sources of this world's wealth, Ormus and India, where the raw gold pours in eternal freakish showers upon inhuman Eastern despots'²⁶ Persia and India are imaged as the 'very sources of this world's wealth' because of, apart from the classical *topoi* of Eastern riches, the lucrative trade existing between Europe and the East at that time. As with the plays of Christopher Marlowe, here is evident something of the new wealth indicating that England was increasingly becoming a mercantile world power. The stamp of mercantile and 'discovery' accounts collected by Hakluyt (1589) and later Samuel Purchas (1625) is certainly there. As Martin Green maintains, although these accounts were mercantile in character at that time, they were still a form of propaganda providing the 'energising myth' of English imperialism. 'English propaganda was mercantile in character; and hence it was England that had a Hakluyt and later a Defoe.'²⁷ The following image is another instance of the impingement of mercantilism on the Miltonic text and Milton's attitude towards it, Satan's voyage to reach the gate of Heaven is described

As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole. So seemed
Far off the flying fiend: (*PL*, II.636-43)

Is the association of mercantilism with the Satanic regime indicative of Milton's criticism and disapproval of, in Tony Davies' words, 'the revolutionary energies of expansive colonial capitalism'? ²⁸ Paul Stevens argues that, as with colonialism, Milton only disapproves of mercantile excess.²⁹ This *excess* brings us back to the allusion to 'Ormuz,' an strategic island in the Persian Gulf. A brief survey of the history of Anglo-Persian trade up to Milton's time will make such an allusion clear.

As mentioned elsewhere, the first English merchant who travelled to Persia was Anthony Jenkinson sent by the Muscovy Company of Merchants in 1562. Jenkinson's

mission, due to an agreement between Turkey and Persia which made the trade through the Caspian Sea undesirable for both sides, was not successful.³⁰ Although Jenkinson failed in his mission, he was very much impressed by the splendour and lavish display of Shah Tahmasp's court. Samuel Chew quotes Michael Drayton's mention of this in his *Poly-Olbion*: 'Adventured to view rich Persian wealth and pride / Whose true report thereof, the English have since tried.'³¹ *Poly-Olbion* (1613), writes Richard Helgerson, 'close behind *Faerie Queene* in size and ambition is another massive poem about England.'³² It is little wonder, then, if Drayton draws on Hakluyt's massive chronicle of English adventurers and travellers, *Principal Navigations of the English Nation* (1589), which along with John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563) 'contributed greatly to the sixteenth-century writing of England.'³³ This is a good example of the complex trafficking between two main components of orientalism, travel writings and literary texts.

Anyway, some six years after Jenkinson's attempt, another mission headed by Arthur Edwards and Richards was dispatched to Persia. Many members of the mission died on the way, the surviving ones, however, were warmly received by Tahmasp and were given a number of commercial privileges.³⁴ Thomas Alcock and Richard Cheney (1564), John Newbury (1580) and Ralph Fitch (1583-91) followed. Chew notes that through the narratives of the subsequent travellers to Persia a considerable change of attitude for the better towards the Christians in general and the English in particular can be detected.³⁵ The Safavids' tolerant attitude towards the Europeans was mainly politically motivated. After the death of Shah Tahmasp, the merchants were in fact faced with a dilemma. When Persia was at peace with Turkey, she was reluctant to incur the Turks' displeasure by trading with the English. When she was at war with Turkey and anxious to develop the Caspian-Volga trade the turmoil was such that the trade was unprofitable. The English, seeing the risks to be too great virtually abandoned the trade with Persia.³⁶ It was Anthony and Robert Sherley's mission to the court of Shah Abbas the great in 1598 which marked a new era in Anglo-Persian relations. Under Shah Abbas, the English markedly appear on the scene of Persian policy. Chew notes that apart from the commercial gains, the mission of the Sherley brothers could further the policy of

persuading the Shah of Persia to unite with the Christian princes against the Turks whereby reducing the pressure of the Turkish Sultan's aggressive operations in Europe.³⁷ On the other hand, Shah Abbas whose wars with the Turks for retaking the lost Persian territories were on the horizon welcomed these advances. The Sherley brothers gradually became Shah Abbas' favourites and gained considerable influence in his court. The Shah also granted them a generous pension.

Shakespeare's allusions show the interest in their activities in England. In *Twelfth Night*, there is an allusion to 'sophy,' the title of the Safavid kings of Persia, which are most probably gleaned from the Sherley brothers' accounts. Fabian says to Sir Toby: 'I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the sophy.'³⁸ Elsewhere, Sir Toby praising a knight's bravery and skill, says to Viola 'They say he has been fencer to the sophy.'³⁹ Robert Sherley who used to wear Persian clothes was sent by Abbas to the English court and other European courts for help against the Turks. He was also commissioned to negotiate the Anglo-Persian co-operation in retaking Hormuz from the Portuguese. Hormuz ('Ormus' in Milton), an important entrepôt in the spice trade, which was a major Persian trading outpost in the Persian Gulf before its occupation, had now become the strategic and commercial centre for the presence of the Portuguese in Asia. The retaking was accomplished in 1622. This brings us to where we left off, 'the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.' 'And so the Inhabiters of Hormuz doe say, that all the world is a ring, and Hormuz is the stone of it,' so goes part of the description of the island in Hakluyt's collection.⁴⁰ Gordon Campbell also quotes Marvell's reference to 'Ormus' ('"jewels more rich than Ormus shows" ("Bermudas" 20)') and explains that the reference is 'topical, and that (as one might expect) the wealth is tainted.'⁴¹ Before explicating the topicality of this allusion, it is noteworthy that before Marvell, Ben Jonson had also referred to 'Ormus' as a locale of untold riches. In *The Alchemist*, Subtle, addressing Face, says: 'There is a ship now, coming from Ormus, / That shall yield him, such a commodity.'⁴²

Campbell's reading relates these lines and the association of Persia and India with the Satanic regime to the sordid history of imperial rivalry.

On 18 February 1622 an English expedition joined forces with the governor of Fars [a province of southern Persia] and besieged Hormuz, which fell on 1 May 1622. The political implication of the attack was complex, because Portugal was then subject to Spain, which was at peace with England. Suffice it to say that some of the booty was used to “sweeten” the Duke of Buckingham, who received £10000, and that an identical sum was paid to King James. For someone of Milton’s persuasion, the association of bribes from Ormus with the throne of James (and his favourite, Buckingham) would constitute sufficient warrant for the comparison with the throne of Satan.⁴³

The matter of Persia here serves as a displacement and cuts across the contemporary history troping a corrupt system with the king at its head. The reference to India, Campbell notes, is topical too as ‘the wealth...of Ind’ was also

a focus of conflict and competition between England and Portugal, but the power of Portugal waned after the fall of Hormuz, and Portuguese possessions increasingly fell to the Dutch, who became the chief rival of England in the region. English aspirations were focused on the Spice Islands...The struggle for domination reached its climax in 1623 at Amboina...where Goerge Van Speult tortured and executed nine Englishmen for conspiracy. The “Massacre of Amboina,” which led the English to abandon the Spice Islands, remained in the minds of Englishmen of Milton’s generation...⁴⁴

These references to Persia and India are in other words like a palimpsest upon which is written a seamy history of bribery and corruption, bloody conquest, imperial and colonial rivalry. Here we come to the issue of imperialism and colonialism in the texts under discussion.

In the most extensive study of the idea of colonialism in *Paradise Lost*, Martin Evans discusses the poem’s corollary of orientalist discourse: colonial discourse. He pinpoints the ways in which the poem on a cosmic stage reenacts many of the salient themes of colonial encounters and conquests. In Evans’ words, ‘Milton’s version of the genesis myth resonates with the complex thematics of Renaissance colonialism.’⁴⁵ These texts were, then, concerned, apart from the internal politics, with politics in general including the colonial politics and the East-West encounters manifested in the matter of the Orient.

Orientalism and colonialism, in Said's account, are supposed to be consciously or unconsciously in collusion. However, in its explicit form the colonial discourse in these texts mostly focuses on America and Africa, where colonial activities were well under way. It is implicit with regard to the Orient as references to the colonial stance of England apropos the Orient, specifically India, were not manifest at Milton's time and were in large part subsumed under a mercantile discourse. Orientalist discourse of the poem, nonetheless, in depicting the East as a locus of untold riches and drawing on and interrogating the discourses of mercantilism, exploration and discovery also negotiated with the ideology of European imperialism. As Evans points out, the first and crucial phase of English empire-building, which was in the New World, was more or less coincident with Milton's life-time.⁴⁶ Did Milton approve or disapprove of this ideology?

Here we encounter a number of different critical attitudes. Walter Lim is of the opinion that owing to his disillusionment with the English nation Milton interrogates England's colonial and imperial aspirations but he does so in 'poetic narratives controlled by a dominant rhetoric of theological imperialism.'⁴⁷ David Quint sees *Paradise Lost* as an 'indictment of European expansion and colonialism that includes his own countrymen and contemporaries.'⁴⁸ For Paul Stevens, however, Milton is no anti-colonialist; he does not criticise colonialism per se but only its abuses. His is an ideal colonialism, it is Milton's 'very virtue, his desire for civility and his refusal of any thoroughgoing relativism, that makes it so difficult for him to stand outside the discourse of colonialism.'⁴⁹ The upshot of all this is that Milton's attitude towards the ideology of colonialism is split. According to Evans, there are two colonial narratives in *Paradise lost*, an anti-colonial one, based on the Spanish conquests in the New World, and a pro-colonial one based on the English attempts to settle Virginia and New England. He traces this bifurcation to the 'essentially binary character of English colonial ideology' during most of Milton's life-time, contending that it fits Stephen Greenblatt's theoretical model of Renaissance political discourse in which 'a "subversive" critique of diabolic exploration and conquest is "contained" by a larger history of divine imperialism in which England's hegemony over its transatlantic possessions is emphatically

endorsed.⁵⁰ In short, *Paradise Lost* is imprinted with the thematics of colonialism as it is with that of orientalism.

To return to the image under discussion, orientalist and colonial discourse converge. But is the Saidian model of orientalism quite satisfactory here? On the one hand, the East is troped as a locale of unimaginable wealth, barbarism and irrationality and furthermore it is associated with Satan and hell. This seems to fit Said's model. On the other hand, it is arguable that Milton is only drawing on the authority of history, alluding to contemporary events -- in Hormuz and the Spice Islands -- as a way of displacing his indictment of the English monarchy. In other words, there is a profound process of displacement involved in which the corrupt and satanic character of the English monarchy and the Royalists in Milton's persuasion is displaced on to the Orient. Moreover, if Satan is figured as an oriental king or sultan, for Milton, in Fowler's words, 'kings and sultans are all ectypes of the Satanic archetype.'⁵¹ Another important point is the idea of pomp and opulence -- which as our discussion of Aeschylus, Spenser and Marlowe indicated was a seminal motif in the representations of Persia -- epitomised in the phrase 'the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.' Stephen Buhler observes that for Satan and his followers ceremony and pomp are of paramount importance although they decry both.⁵² Needless to say, for a man of Milton's religio-political persuasion, pomp and lavish display were anathema. The demonisation of Persia and the East, in other words, could be read as a vilification of all pomp and ceremony. Once again a hint at the restored English monarchy is quite possible. As Thomas Corns notes, 'In the England of 1660s the oriental exoticism of Satan's throne may have seemed to have found a domestic equivalent.'⁵³ This idea of kingly pomp and ceremony is more dramatically rendered through Persian imagery in *Paradise Regained* discussed later. Put another way, the demonisation of the East here might not necessarily stem from an 'essentialist' outlook towards it. Orientalist discourse of the text, as instanced here, is split and more ambivalent than Said's model would allow. Although, in the final analysis, the matter of Persia and the Orient in Milton, and the other writers hitherto discussed, cannot be wrested from the 'ideological suppositions, images and fantasies' which in Said's account

are the stuff orientalism is made of, still there seems to be a distinction -- sketchy at best, nevertheless useful – between two kinds of orientalisms.⁵⁵

I would call the kind of orientalism with more overt, pronounced imperialist / colonialist assumptions, implications and tendencies *imperialist* orientalism in contrast to a sort of early or *emergent* orientalism which seems to be more ‘a body of knowledge,’ an attempt on the part of the West to imagine, map out and finally conceptualise lands and peoples other than itself, the struggle of a culture to come to terms with its oriental others. This of course seems very similar to the distinction Said makes between ‘latent’ and ‘manifest’ orientalism, the former referring to ‘an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity’ and the latter to the ‘various stated views’ about things oriental. The differences in the viewpoints about the Orient in different writers can be ‘characterized as exclusively manifest differences, differences in form and personal style, rarely in basic content.’⁵⁵ There are two important points to be noted here. For one thing, Said is writing about the nineteenth-century writers here, from Renan to Marx, in the ideological domain, Lane and Sacy, in the scholarly domain, and Flaubert and Nerval, in the imaginative one, a period beginning from about the 1870s on.⁵⁶ It was a period in which European nations were saturated with imperialist ideology. This study, however, is concerned with writers from the Renaissance, late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century (Morier’s work written in early nineteenth-century should be more in keeping with Said’s account). Another crucial point, which I hope this study of orientalism with Persia as its vector will bear out, is that differences in orientalist representations of different writers, *pace* Said, could be more than just ‘differences in form and personal style.’ As regards Milton, anyway, the relationship between orientalism, belonging to the aforementioned early or emergent brand, and colonial discourse is rather tangential.

Another allusion to Persia that is also related to contemporary history is the following which depicts the way Satan’s legions, awaiting his return, convene:

As when the Tartar from his Russian foe

By Astracan over the snowy plains
 Retires, or Bactrian Sophi from the horns
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
 The realm of Aladule, in his retreat
 To Tauris or Casbeen. So these the late
 Heaven banished host, left desert utmost hell
 Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch (*PL*, X.431-38)

Tartars were a people of nomadic tribes who constantly irritated the Russians and the Persians by their looting skirmishes, their retreat from the Russians is likened to the retreat of the Satanic legion in hell. Fowler points out that ‘snowie plains’ recalls ‘hell’s “frozen continent”’ (ii 587) where the devils are taken for punishment “at certain revolution”.⁵⁷ The geography of the Orient and that of hell once again overlap. The retreat of the devils in hell is also likened to the retreat of the sophy, the title of the Safavid kings of Persia, from his Turkish enemies all the way back through Armenia (‘the realm of Aladule’) to Tabriz (Tauris) or Kazvin (Casbeen), former capitals of Persia. To be specific, the sophy referred to here is Shah Tahmasp, who gave audience to Jenkinson and other English agents, one of the Safavid kings who followed a completely defensive policy in facing Suleyman the Magnificent (the ‘great sultan’? (I.348)) of Turkey. ‘I pray thee,’ says the Prince of Morocco to Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ‘Lead me to the caskets / To try my fortune. By this scimitar, / That slew the sophy and a Persian prince, / That won three fields for Sultan Sulyman.’⁵⁸ To return to the Miltonic image, although Bactria, modern Afghanistan, was subject to Persia at that time, one wonders why the shah of Persia is called Bactrian. This seems to some extent in keeping with what was earlier propounded about oriental names -- ‘sophy,’ ‘Bactrian,’ ‘Aladule,’ ‘Casbeen,’ uncertain names with exotic echoes picked up from far away. To go back to the issue of the association of the Eastern realms with the Satanic regime here, Fowler again observes that ‘The *grand* devils are compared to Saracens...whether barbarians (Tartars) or proud rulers (sophies).’⁵⁹ An important point to be noted here is that here in some sense a differentiation is made between different oriental peoples, Tartars and the Persians, something rare in orientalist accounts. As to the Turkish sultan (‘Turkish crescent’) and the Persian king (‘sophy’), it could be said that if the sophy is likened to one of the grand devils retreating in hell in anticipation of the arrival of Satan, then the

Turkish sultan is Satan himself. However, the Tartar, the Turk and the Persian all figure as ‘Saracenes.’ Read this way, Persia is figured as one of the Islamic realms, hence its diabolisation is understandable in the context of the Renaissance conceptions of Islam. Also, as noted elsewhere, Persian monarchs were traditionally figured as proud and opulent (see Jenkinson’s account of his audience with Shah Tahmasp quoted in footnote 30), hence the sophy here could be identifiable with the restored English monarch. Still, one wonders how come Milton starts with describing the council of the devils in Pandaemonium and ends up with events in contemporary Persian history, the Turco-Persian hostility. Davies holds that Milton deploys Stuart and oriental imagery with an accompanying ‘providential framework’ in which each prototype enacts ‘the role of the scourge of God, self-punishing political engines.’⁶⁰ Read in this light, the hostility between the Persians and the Turks instances a providential pattern in which the forces of evil cancel each other out. From the aesthetic point of view, it is arguable that epic requires grand settings, hence the incorporation of the Persian realms along with so many others. “As when” marks an epic simile structured out of the matter of the Orient and Persia.

To proceed to my classifications of allusions to Persia, there are a number of biblical ones too. Adam is told of the Babylonian captivity and the liberation of the Jews by the Persian kings (Cyrus, Artaxerxes and Darius): ‘Returned from Babylon by leave of kings / Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God / They first, re-edifie’ (*PL*, XII.348-50). Nebuchadnezzar deported the Jews to Babylon in 597 and 586 BC (*II Kings* xxiv. 14-16; xxv. 11). Cyrus allowed them to return and rebuild Jerusalem after he captured Babylon in 538 BC (*Ezra* ii). In *Paradise Regained*, the biblical allusion is more manifest. Here is Satan showing Jesus a panoramic view of the world: ‘There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues, / As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice / Judah and all thy father David’s house / Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste, / Till Cyrus led them free.’⁶¹

These are the only instances in which the Persian kings are not associated with the satanic regime, they are figured as liberators. The biblical framework through which the

figurations of Persia are mediated here seems to problematise the Miltonic representations of Persia as a whole and even that of kingship; Persian monarchs figure as tyrannical, decadent, satanic, as well as liberators. But it should be noted that it is the authority of the Bible that licenses these positive representations here. Moreover, in the first example Milton takes pains to modify his figuration by asserting that it was God who disposed ('whom God disposed') the kings to liberate the Jews and let them return to Jerusalem. It could also be argued that in the 'providential framework' of the poem they were the scourge of God against the Babylonians. As regards the mention of Cyrus as a liberator ('till Cyrus set them free'), the point to be noted is that apart from the authority of the Bible, as discussed in the section on *Faerie Queene*, he figured as an ideal king in the classical tradition.

In *Paradise Regained*, there is also a significant number of allusions to Persia in which Milton heavily draws on Persian history. In the first of these, built within the allusive texture of the poem, Satan addressing Belial speaks of the temptation of lust and carnal desire:

among the sons of men
 How many have with a smile made small account
 Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
 All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
 Remember that Pellean conqueror,
 A youth, how all the beauties of the East
 He slightly viewed and slightly overpassed; (*PR*, II.192-8)

The 'Pellean conqueror' refers to Alexander the Great who in 336 BC defeated Darius the king of Persia and captured his wife and daughter whom he reportedly treated honourably. 'All the beauties of the East' tropes the East as a locale of carnal temptation, a test to Alexander's solidity of character. Satan has much stronger temptations in store for Jesus in the wilderness. Listing a succession of conquests, he thus addresses Jesus: 'Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe: the son / Of Macedonian Philip had ere these / Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held / At his dispose' (*PR*, III.31-4). The 'throne of Cyrus' is figured as the apogee of worldly glory into which Satan tries to tempt Jesus. John

Carey compares the order of temptations here to the one used by Spenser, on whom Milton frequently draws, in *The Faerie Queene*. ‘Glory following wealth,’ Carey observes, is ‘the order of temptations in *FQ* II, where persuasions of Mammon gives way to Philotome (Vainglory).’⁶² As an earlier chapter discussed, in Spenser the allusions to Persia mostly occur in evil contexts associated with temptations of wealth, pomp and glory, Milton does the same here though in a biblical framework. Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows him the ‘seats of mightiest monarchs’ (*PR*, III.262) enumerated in a vast array of territories in the East including, prominently, Persia:

here thou behold’st
Assyria, and her empire’s ancient bounds,
Araxes and the Caspian Lake; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay, (*PR*, III.269-73)

The Persian motif (its geography, history, biblical and classical) runs through *Paradise Regained*. Satan’s panoramic view goes on:

There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David’s house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,
His city; there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbatan her structure vast there shews,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings;...
All these the Parthian, now some Ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That Empire, under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won. (*PR*, III.280-89, 294-97)

Satan gives a brief account of the Persian history up until the time of Christ and the inheritance of a magnificent empire by the Parthian dynasty. As I have indicated, in his incorporation of the Persian material, Milton draws on the biblical, classical, historical and contemporary discourses to give authority to his text. The biblical story of the liberation of the Israelites by Cyrus in 528 BC conflates with a Herodotean narrative

about Cyrus. 'Herodotus: 188 says that when Cyrus marched he carried with him water from Choaspes "whereof alone, and of none other, the king drinks"'.⁶³ This leads to the story of the foundation of the Parthian dynasty in Persia by Arsaces. Babylonian, Seleucian and Parthian empires come one after another. Once more the text chimes in with the political situation of Milton's time in a very subtle way.

The passage suggests the evanescent nature of all empires and monarchies even the greatest ones while 'Flux and change', points out Thomas Corns, 'were conditions the restored Stuarts tried hard to distance from the public perception of their reign.'⁶⁴ Milton is a writer who, maintains C. A. Patrides, 'attempts to establish what Christian writers had repeatedly maintained, that history is a teacher of highest order.'⁶⁵ And one important way of approaching the matter of Persia here, and elsewhere, is to view it in the light of Milton's drawing on the discourse of history. The Parthian dynasty ruled Persia in the time of Christ and Satan takes great pains to highlight the magnificence and sumptuous glory of their empire to Jesus. He shows the Persian king in one of his military expeditions against the 'barbarous' Sythians and their 'incursions wild',

And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon has gathered all his host
Against the Sythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; (*PR*, III.298-302)

Quite a number of lines are allotted to the elaboration of the size and might of the Persian army, their 'martial equipage' (III.304) and their 'military pride' (III.312): 'He looked and saw what numbers numberless / The city gates outpoured, light-armed troops / In coats of mail and military pride' (*PR*, III.310-12). The Persian soldiers are

the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound;
From Arachosia, from Canador east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales, ... (*PR*, III.315-18)

The geographical descriptions, of places in the Persian empire, go on. Milton's sources are classical and contemporary accounts. For instance, 'dark Iberian dales' is taken from Purchas' collection, which speaks of the 'palpable darkness of this thickly wooded region' and the description of the Persian troops, notes Carey, 'seems to recall several details from Ammianus Marcellinus who has a most vivid account of the battle with the Parthians near Margiana, in which Julian was killed, xxvi 11-19.'⁶⁶ Milton uses the Persian material, in keeping with epic conventions, to dramatise the notion of worldly pomp and glory central to the thematics of *Paradise Regained*. The detailed description of the Persian provinces can suggest Milton's encyclopaedic learning discussed elsewhere, but for the aesthetics of the poem these lines (to quote Carey quoting Lewalski) could be regarded 'as a reworking of a *topos* common in biblical epic, the detailed description of a pagan metropolis.'⁶⁷ In other words, there is a close affinity between the stylistic considerations and the orientalism. Even the geography of the scene, in which Satan shows the vast prospects of the worldly empires (mostly Persian and Roman), can be related to generic and aesthetic considerations. This geography, observes Andrew Barnaby, is actually a reworking of that of Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Though including two empires, both Parthia (III, 267-385) and Rome (IV, 25-108), the epic geography of the scene encompasses much the same area held by Virgil's Augustus (*Aeneid* VI, 791-805): the Parthian empire extends "As far as Indus east" (III, 272) and Rome reaches as westward to Mauritania ("the realm of Bocchus to the Blackmoor sea") and Cadiz ("Gades") (IV, 72, 77), regions forming the pillars of Hercules.⁶⁸

Miltonic orientalism, then, seems very much tied up with his classicism and literary learning, his claim to be the true inheritor of the great classical writers which ultimately authorises his text. This to some sense accounts for the remarkable incorporation of the matter of Persia mediated through the classical writers. The detailed depiction of the Persian army goes on, the orient in the account of the pagan Persian cities leads up to an Islamic Orient of the Medieval romances:

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrian with all his northern powers
Besieged Albraca, as romances tell;

The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica
His daughter, sought by many prowrest knights,
Both paynim, and the peers of Charlemagne. (III.337-43)

Milton here draws on Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, he also uses Spenserian words 'paynim' and 'prowest', which instances the intertextuality between orientalist texts, his classicism and his assertion of erudition and the fact that these texts provide a stockpile of ideas and images for him.⁶⁹ Satan continues his persuasion:

But say thou wert possessed of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,
Between two such enclosing enemies
Roman and Parthian? (PR, III.356-62)

Earlier, Satan had referred to the liberation of the Israelites by Cyrus from their Babylonian oppressors, he again highlighting the Romano-Persian enmity, suggests that Jesus' people could be likewise liberated from the Roman yoke by the might of the Persian empire: 'Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task / To render thee the Parthian at dispose' (PR, III.368-69).

Persia stands for the most persuasive of the Satanic temptations, worldly might and glory, which for Jesus is of course 'argument / Of human weakness' rather than of strength (III.400-401). Persia is again associated with evil, but Milton also vilifies the Roman empire, which in a sense embodies Western civilisation. After failing to tempt Jesus by offering to put at his disposal the Persian empire, Satan offers him the Roman empire:

The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations; (PR, IV.44-47)

Whereas in the case of Persia, Satan expatiates upon the military power, it is the magnificence of the Roman arts and civilisation that he emphasises. He elaborates the glories of the Roman empire:

All nations now to Rome obedience pay-
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian; these two thrones except
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed; (*PR*, IV.80-87)

Rejecting the Satanic offer of the Roman empire, Jesus says: 'Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show / Of luxury, though called magnificence, / More than of arms before, allure mine eye' (*PR*, IV.110-112). Persia clearly represents martial might ('arms') and Rome stands for 'majestic show / Of luxury,' arts and civility. Although Persia and Rome both stand for 'the kingdoms of the world, and all their glory' (*PR*, IV.89) and hence are equally denounced, Milton's preference is manifest. Jesus castigates the Romans for the decadence of their customs and 'the lapse of Roman political morals by which the citizens of the Republic have surrendered their freedom both to their own base desires and their tyrannical rulers.'⁷⁰ But, there is no suggestion of decline from an ideal to a degenerate state in the case of Persia. Persia is not deemed 'barbarous' (Persia and Rome are the only kingdoms not barbarous), but there is no doubt as to her 'inferiority' as a civilisation to Rome. In Said's words, the 'positional superiority' of the West is maintained.⁷¹ Oriental and Western empires are both rejected but 'the quietist Milton's rejection of empire' in 'Jesus' excoriation of the Roman Empire's corruption,' argues Paul Stevens,

turns out to be highly ambiguous...the rejection comprises a traditional, humanist civility argument. Jesus makes it clear that though Rome has become degenerate, it had actually started out well: the Romans "who once just, / Frugal, and mild, and temperate, [had] *conque'red well*" (IV. 133-34, my emphasis). Thus, presumably, for a state or people bound by the civil imperatives of justice, frugality, mildness and temperance, it was still possible to conquer well.⁷²

Barnaby argues that in *Paradise Regained*, Milton discredits his 1650s' republicanism. By employing the *topos* of *translatio imperii* -- the transfer of power and civilisation from one imperial centre to the next, a providentially designed movement of history that followed the movement of the sun, hence moving westward -- he tried to figure England as an inheritor of ancient Rome as the Roman imperial orientation could be accommodated to Christianity's as well as England's imperial ideologies. Furthermore, such an imperial vision with its emphasis on republican political organisation could effectively counter the resurgence of support for Stuart monarchy. But in *Paradise Regained*, Milton

undercuts the very figural design he had set forth in the 1650s for England's imperial and his own poetic inheritance by representing Rome precisely as the wrong exemplar upon which to stake the claim the national election, the claim, that is, to serve as the primary vehicle to Providence' true imperial design.⁷³

The rejections of the Persian empire and the Roman one are not of the same order. In Satan's two offers to Jesus (the Persian and the Roman empires), I suggest, Milton discredits two contrasting, if not totally, views of governmental system and political order, a militaristic, monarcho-centred one versus its degenerate republican version. To relate the matter of Persia and Rome yet more to Milton's politico-historical milieu, Laura Knoppers points out that the restored Stuart monarchy was Romanised in propaganda.⁷⁴ Charles II associated himself with Roman triumphalism, hence Jesus' rejection of the triumph on earth -- his rejection of the Satanic offer of the Persian and Roman empires -- 'not only undercuts but outgoes' the political uses of the Caroline triumphal discourse.⁷⁵

In discussing the matter of Persia in Spenser and Marlowe, it was mentioned that the Stuart monarchy heavily relied on spectacle and theatricalism. Knoppers holds that Milton's poems

not only register the power and problematics of monarchical spectacle in the Restoration, but also goes one step further to reconstitute spectacle as written before a divine audience...Milton's articulation of a "paradise within" does not withdraw from politics but both challenges and replaces the spectacles of state.⁷⁶

Milton creates a 'mode of anti-spectacle' which 'questions the very nature of human spectacle itself.'⁷⁷ In this context the 'theatrical' dramatisation of the Persian imperial power can be understood, the poem links 'theatricality with Satan.'⁷⁸ The matter of Persia functions as a displacement for Milton's rebuttal of the restored monarchy, it masquerades his articulation of the overthrown English republic. This involvement of the Miltonic text with the political discourses of its time and the fact that Miltonic orientalism frequently masquerades the subversive potential of his poetry again problematises Said's model of orientalism as articulating Western domination.

To sum up, I tried to survey the workings of orientalist figurations of Persia in the Miltonic texts discussed. To dramatise the ancient and ongoing rivalry between good and evil, one rich stockpile of ideas, images and figures available to Milton was the matter of the Orient in which Persia figures prominently. The Persian images and figures woven into the fabric of the vast epic similes help give aesthetic form to the theological concepts, the ideological economy and the thematics of these texts. Reiterated, either explicitly or implicitly, throughout these texts, along with other oriental material, specifically as regards the images of kingship, they help unify the symbolics of these texts. If the matter of Persia in Spenser could give an edge to the pro-monarchical thrust of his work, it could also give an edge to the anti-monarchical thrust of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The frequent association of the Persian material and the Orient with evil and the satanic regime indicates that, in the final analysis, it cannot be completely wrested from what Said calls 'latent Orientalism,' 'an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity' about the Orient' which Milton inherits and empowers through frequent recourse to it. But, issues such as aesthetic considerations, disregarded in Said's account; a cosmic setting and background; drawing on the authority of history and a universalist, Christocentric view of it; the complex and multi-vectored negotiation with a multiplicity of other discourses circulating at that time; classicism and an attempt at an

encyclopaedic scope; the vilification of all kingship through all time and space (the association of the most of the allusions to Persia with kingship) and above all a profound process of displacement whereby comments on contemporary issues are displaced on to the matter of Persia and the Orient all help problematise the orientalism of the texts discussed. The outcome is an ambiguous, multivalent orientalist discourse for which Said's account is essential but inadequate.

In the next chapter, I will survey the representations of Persia in the Romantic context focusing on the work of Thomas Moore and investigate differences between these and the use of the Persian material in the context of the Renaissance writers discussed.

Notes

1. Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness*, xv.
2. It should be noted that apart from the works hitherto discussed and the Renaissance plays there are passing references to Persia before Milton, which mostly draw on the classical discourse on it. What follows are a few examples of these passing allusions, which are mostly images of the monarchs of Persia, its history and customs reproducing the common *topoi* of the aforementioned discourse. In *The Advancement of Learning*, for instance, Francis Bacon alludes to the Persian history: 'and it is of Xenophon the philosopher, who went from Socrate's school into Asia, in the expedition of Cyrus the younger against king Artaxerxes. *The Advancement of Learning and New Atlantis*, ed., Arthur Johnston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), The First Book, VII, 30. To her mythic glory: 'For your majesty had truly described, not a king of Assyria or Persia in their extern glory.' Ibid., The Second Book II, 8. And to 'the Persian pride': 'When one of Antipater's friends commended him of Alexander for his moderation that he did not degenerate into the Persian pride, in use of purple, but kept the ancient habit of Macedon, of black.' Ibid., The First Book, VII, 17. There are also references pertaining to commerce: 'your best Persian carpets.' Ben Jonson, *The Magnetic Lady*, in *The Works of Ben Jonson*, ed., F. Cunningham, 9vols (London: Blackers And Son, 1875), vol. 6, IV.iii, 51. A writer like Sir Thomas Browne to give an exotic aura to his book about gardening could call it *The Garden of Cyrus* and write about the passion of Cyrus for gardening. Sir Thomas Browne, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed., William Swan Sonnenschein (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1940), 143.
3. *Orientalism*, 6.
4. Quoted in Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference. An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 10.
5. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, 'The genres of *Paradise Lost*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed., Dennis Danielson, [1989] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 113.
6. Alastair Fowler, ed., 'Introduction', *Paradise Lost*, [1968](London: Longman, 1998), 41; Tony Davies, ed., *John Milton, Selected Longer Poems and Prose* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 22.
7. Stevie Davies, *Images of Kingship in Paradise Lost, Milton's Politics and Christian Liberty* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 93.
8. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, [1968](London: Longman, 1998), I.716-21. Further references are to this edition and are cited in the text with *Paradise Lost* abbreviated as *PL*.

9. John Carey, ed., *Milton, Complete Shorter Poems*, [1968](London: Longman, 1997), 464. Even in his diabolisation of the Orient Milton might have been drawing on Spenserian orientalism. Carey and Fowler suggest that Milton's most telling oriental image in *PL*, likening Satan's throne to that of an oriental tyrant, is comparable to 'Spenser's description of the bright throne of the Phaethon-like Lucifera, embodiment of pride: "High above all a cloth of state was spread, / And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day" (*F.Q.* I iv 8).' John Carey and Alaster Fowler, eds, *The Poems of John Milton* (London: Longman, 1968), *PL*, II. 1-4n., 508. We saw that in Spenser the matter of Persia, most notably the motif of pride and opulence, was used in evil contexts, like the description of Lucifera, for instance. In the above-mentioned image in Milton, virtually the same happens.

10. Fowler, *PL*, IX.1101n., 502.

11. Greenblatt, 'Introduction', *Representing the Renaissance*, xiii.

12. Stevie Davies, *Milton* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 123.

13. Ibid.

14. Fowler, 'Introduction', *PL*, 23.

15. Ibid., 387-96n., 618.

16. Ibid., 'Introduction', 21.

17. Ibid., *PL*, X.307-11n., 557.

18. Mary Ann Radzinowicz, 'The Politics of *Paradise Lost*', in, eds, Kevin Sharp and Steven N. Zwicker, *Politics of Discourse. The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 206.

19. C. A. Patrides, 'Milton and the Christian Tradition,' in Timothy C. Miller, ed., *The Critical Response to Paradise Lost* (Westpoint, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 269.

20. Steven N. Zwicker, 'Lines of Authority: Politics and Literary Culture in the Restoration', in *Politics of Discourse*, 259.

21. Ibid., 248.

22. Davies, *Images of Kingship*, 49.

23. Ibid., 51.

24. Ibid., 55.

25. J. G. A. Pocock, 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought', in *Politics of Discourse*, 28.

26. Davies, *Images of Kingship*, 13.

27. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 41.

28. Tony Davies, *John Milton, Selected Longer Poems and Prose*, 259.

29. Paul Stevens, 'Paradise Lost and the Colonial Imperative', *Milton Studies*, XXXIV (1997), 8.

30. E. Delwar Morgan and C. H. Coote, eds, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and Other Englishmen* (London: The Haklyut Society, 1886), 26. Jenkinson was a prototype of English gentleman-adventurer in the East. His adventures instance the inevitable intermeshing of politics and commerce at that time. The English intended to take advantage of Turco-Persian hostility, intensified since the rise of the Safavids in Persia, and establish commercial and political relationships with Persia. However, Jenkinson's mission was ill-timed as Shah Tahmasp was making arrangements to conclude a perpetual peace treaty with the Turks. The Portuguese were also encroaching on the Persian territories in the Persia Gulf. It so happened that he was even taken to be a Portuguese spy and his head was about to be sent to Suleyman the Magnificent of Turkey as a present. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 210. However, he had a narrow escape and even managed to obtain an audience with Shah Tahmasp. His account of this, as one of the first instances of a European's representation of Persia, is worth quoting:

...thus coming before his majesty with such reverence as I thought meet to be used, I delivered the Queen Majestie's letters with my presents, which he accepting demanded what country of Franks I was and what affairs I had there to do: unto whom I answered that I was of the Famous citie of London within the noble realm of England, and that I was sent tither from the most excellent and gracious soveraigne Ladie Elizabeth, queen of sayd Realme, for to treat of friendship, and free passage of merchants and people, to repaire and traffique within his domain, for to bring in our commodities, and to carry away their, to the honour of both princes, the mutual commodities of both realmes, and wealth of the subjects, with other words here omitted. Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages*, ed., Ernest Rhys 8vols (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1932), II, 22.

He describes the Prince of Shirvan (then a city in the northern part of Persia) as follows:

Being a prince of mean stature, and of a fierce countenance, richly apparelled with long garments of silk, an cloth of golde, imbroidered with pearls and stones: upon his head was a tolipane (turban) with a shape and

standing upwards half a yard long... and on the left side of his tolipane stood a plume of feathers set in a trunk richly inameled. Ibid., 14.

31. Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 211.

32. Richard Helgerson, 'Writing empire and nation', in ed., Arthur F. Kinney, *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1500-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 324.

33. Ibid., 316.

34. These included the permission to freely pass and trade in Persia, exemption from taxes, protection of the merchants by the Persian forces and the permission to the merchants to build houses for themselves. Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages*, II, 50.

35. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose*, 215.

36. Ibid., 217.

37. Ibid., 250.

38. II.v. John Day's play, *The Travels of Three English Brothers*, is a semi-fabulous dramatisation of some of the Persian adventures of the Shirley brothers.

39. Ibid., III.iv.

40. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, Or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 20 vols, [1905-7] (New York, 1965), X, 'Relations of Ormuz', 324.

41. Gordon Campbell, 'The wealth of Ormus, and of Ind', *Milton Studies*, 21 (1987), 22.

42. Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*, ed., F. H. Mares (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), I.iii.59-60.

43. Campbell, 'The wealth of Ormus, and of Ind', 220.

44. Ibid.

45. Martin Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic, Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 4-5. In *PL* we have the figuration of the most famous of all colonial figures, Columbus, in probably the most poignant of all colonial encounters: 'such of late / Columbus found the American so girt / With feathered cincture, naked else and wild / Among the trees on isles and woody shores' (IX.1115-

118). Evans enumerates the reenacting of the central events ‘that took place in the conquest of the New world’ as ‘the voyage of discovery, the initial encounter with naked innocents, the delivery of *requerimiento*, the search for gold, the cultivation of the land, the conversion of the natives, the dispossession of the indigenous population, the triumphant return home.’ Ibid.

46. Ibid., 11.

47. Lim, *The Arts of Empire*, 30.

48. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 25.

49. Stevens, ‘*Paradise Lost* and the Colonial Imperative,’ 17.

50. Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic*, 141 and 142.

51. Fowler, *PL*, I.1n., 110.

52. Stephen M. Buhler, “‘Kingly States’: The Politics in *Paradise Lost*’, *Milton Studies*, XXVIII (1992), 60.

53. Thomas N. Corns, *Regaining Paradise Lost* (London: Longman, 1999), 137.

54. Said, ‘*Orientalism* Reconsidered’, in *Europe and Its Others*, I, 14.

54. *Orientalism*, 206.

56. Ibid.

57. Fowler, *PL*, X.431-38n., 563.

58. II.i.20-27. See also Chew’s note on this allusion, 251-55.

59. Fowler, *PL*, X.431-38n., 563.

60. Davies, *Images of Kingship*, 7. It should be noted that, as it was discussed in the chapter on Marlowe, the idea of ‘the scourge of God’ is also to be found in *Tamburlaine the Great*, in which Tamburlaine can be taken to be ‘the scourge of God’ who demolishes the Turks, though Marlowe might be read as interrogating this very notion.

61. John Carey, ed. *Milton, Complete Shorter Poems*, [1968] (London: Longman, 1997), *Paradise Regained*, III.280-84. Further references are to this edition and are cited in the text with *Paradise Regained* abbreviated as *PR*.

62. Ibid., 30n., 464. Also, in discussing the issue of empire and colonialism in Milton, Martin Evans observes: 'If Spenser was "our originating and preeminent poet of empire," as Stephen Greenblatt has proposed, then Milton in this as in so many other respects, was his heir and successor.' *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 5. One of the things in which Milton was the 'heir and successor' of Spenser was orientalist discourse, though as discussed in Milton it is posed for different reasons and serves different functions.

63. Ibid., 288-9n., 475.

64. Corns, *Regaining Paradise Lost*, 139.

65. Patrides, 'Milton and the Christian Tradition,' 269.

66. Carey, *Milton, Complete Shorter Poems, Paradise Regained*, III.318n., 478 and III.310-40n., 477.

67. Ibid.

68. Andrew Barnaby, "'Another Rome in the West": Milton and the Imperial Republic, 1654-1670', *Milton Studies*, XXX (1993), 79.

69. Gordon Campbell, ed., *John Milton, The Complete Poems* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1980), *Paradise Regained*, III.343n., 479; Carey, *Milton, Complete Shorter Poems, Paradise Regained*, III.343n., 479.

70. Barnaby, 'Milton and the Imperial Republic, 1654-1670', 79.

71. *Orientalism*, 7.

72. Stevens, 'Paradise Lost and the colonial Imperative', 16.

73. Barnaby, 'Milton and the Imperial Republic, 1654-1670', 69.

74. Laura Linger Knoppers, *Historicizing Milton, Spectacle, Power, and Poetry in Restoration England* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 114.

75. Ibid., 96.

76. Ibid., 10.

77. Ibid., 12.

78. Ibid., 36.

CHAPTER V

Exotic Persia: *Lalla Rookh*

The three preceding chapters treated the matter of Persia in the works of three canonical writers writing in the Renaissance and late Renaissance period. In contrast, the present chapter and the next one deal with figurations of Persia in the Romantic and early nineteenth-century period focusing on the works of two non-canonical writers. The present chapter first discusses, by way of an introduction and providing a context, the Persian / oriental material in the works of writers such as Montesquieu, Lyttelton, Goldsmith, Collins, Byron, Southey, and finally analyses Thomas Moore's 'oriental tale' in which Persia figures prominently. I hope the chapter will give the reader some idea of the similarities and the differences between the figurations of Persia in the Renaissance and the Romantic periods. The analysis of Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* with its 'exotic' picture of Persia will in turn serve as a contrast to the work of James Morier, the last writer included in this study, which presumes to portray the 'real' Persia.

'Orientalism', says Marilyn Butler, 'is a major theme of Romanticism.'¹ The few decades comprising what is generally labelled the Romantic age were ones of conflict, stress and tumult. This was an age of revolution as well as hectic imperialism. It was also the age of orientalism proper, the era of Napoleon's expeditions including the one to Egypt, which Said designates as a landmark in the history of orientalism. The heyday of orientalism roughly coincides with the Romantic era. Surprisingly, however, Said does not seem to share Butler's view as to the importance of the Romantic poets and writers to the orientalist venture. As Butler observes, he does not have much to say on the work of the English Romantic poets such as Robert Southey and Byron, which he mentions in passing without feeling any need to analyse them: 'It is enough that the works of their type, which he takes to be essentially *private fantasy*, bolster Western superiority by producing an Eastern *alter ego* -- weak, sensuous, servile, effeminate -- where the West is strong, free and manly.'² This Butler takes to be a misconception as, she holds, English Romantic poetry and prose

represents an intellectually ambitious strand of Romanticism, associated with the imitation of high-cultural forms (Renaissance romance, classical history and tragedy, the Bible, Shakespeare), with public-sphere rather than domestic or local material, and above all with the period's hunger for essentialist, universal knowledge.³

Indeed, as Butler's critique (held in different ways by other historians of Romanticism such as John Barrell, Javed Majeed and Nigel Leask) shows, Romantic literary orientalism is a major area in which Said's thesis has to be corrected and modified. His view of the English Romantics' orientalist works as 'essentially private fantasy' presupposes a kind of escapism that is ultimately related to his notion of 'latent' orientalism -- a kind of escapism that designates the East as a locale in which imagination could be given a free reign.⁴ As we will see, this notion of the Romantic orientalism as 'private fantasy' is by and large applicable to a work such as William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) though even there some public and political concerns can be found. Apropos the other Romantic orientalists, Butler is right in considering Said's notion erroneous as these were politically-'oriented' poets and writers, most of them radicals (at least, initially) and hence their orientalism could not but engage with their political 'orientation'. This of course does not mean that the Orient for these more politically-oriented poets could not also be a site on to which they could project private fantasies as well. Joseph Lew, for example, has shown how Byron's orientalist works displace his misogyny on to the treatment of oriental and 'orientalized' women.⁵ In chapters on Spenser, Marlowe and Milton -- writers writing in comparably less politically-charged eras than the Romantic era, one of revolution and high imperialism -- we discussed the profound process of displacement and the ways in which these writers' (Persian brand of) orientalism was involved with the discourses of the time. With the Romantics one expects this displacement and intersection with the discourses of the time to be even more profound and of significance to the genesis of their work. Romantic orientalism, compared with the orientalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (up to Milton), is also more subtle and complex as it roughly coincides with the rise of orientalism as a 'scientific' and academic venture (at a time of 'hunger for essentialist, universal knowledge'). Before focusing on these issues, a word about the representations of Persia from where we left off.

In discussing the figurations of Persia in writers up to Milton, I argued that two main sources were drawn upon: classical or historical writings as well as travel writings. In the eighteenth century, neo-classical age, this classical discourse on Persia, naturally, continues to reappear. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* treats the burning down of Persepolis by Alexander under the influence of the musician Timotheus. The dominant motif of luxury is also there: 'To purchase but the tenth of their store, / Would make the mighty Persian monarch poor.'⁶ Pope also makes some allusions to the Persian kings Darius and Cyrus.⁷ As we will see, the so-called 'oriental renaissance' begins with the translation of the *Zend-Avesta*, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, in 1771. Interestingly, Pope prefigures the Romantic interest in Zoroastrianism (for instance in Thomas Moore's laudatory depiction of it in *Lalla Rookh*) in *The Temple of Fame*: 'And the great founder of the Persian Name: / There in long robes the royal Magi stands, / Great Zoroaster waves the circling wand.'⁸ Herein is the imprint of a discourse of another kind, one with the arrogation of 'knowledge' coupled with an attempt, in the literary domain, at tapping new sources of themes and images.

Edward Said has mostly based his approach in *Orientalism* on modifying and complementing the work of the French literary historian Raymond Schwab in his study *La Renaissance Orientale*. Schwab dates back the emergence of a fully-fledged 'scholarly' or learned discourse about the Orient to the translation of the *Zend-Avesta* by Anquetil du Perron in 1771. He redefines Romanticism in terms of an 'Oriental Renaissance', the rediscovery of the East in late eighteenth-century culture comparable to the 'classical renaissance' two to three centuries earlier.⁹

The coexistence of these 'classical' and ('Romantic') 'orientalist' strands in the eighteenth century is probably best manifest in Pope's cherished plan for 'writing a "Persian fable" in which he "should have given a full loose to description and imagination", and which if he had executed, "would have been a very wild thing"'.¹⁰ Christopher Knipp has shown how Pope inscribes an exotic Orient in his letters to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the author of extremely popular *Turkish Embassy Letters*

(1711), onto which he projects his 'wild' romantic fantasies.¹¹ Ironically, Said's aforementioned remarks about the Romantic orientalists is more applicable to Pope, the great Augustan poet. When it came to the Orient, Pope was all too 'romantic.'

Ironically again, in a central Romantic poet like Byron, whose favourite poet was Pope, we find classically-derived figurations of Persia. These figurations are related to Byron's Romantic Hellenism, his long-held concern for Greece and her subjugation to the Ottoman empire, and his half-despairing exhortation of the Greeks to put an end to this subjugation. 'Gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died', the persona of *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, roaming in modern Greece, recalls the Persian abortive attempts at subjugating Greece: 'Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold / Defies the power which crush'd thy temples gone: / Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.'¹² He sees the same ancient Greece but with a difference:

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except the foreign lord;
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame
The battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bow'd beneath the brunt of Hellas'sword,
As on the morn to distant glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which utter'd, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career,¹³

Byron here rewrites the Aeschylean discourse in a modern context. 'The foreign lord' is of course the Ottoman empire; the Persians and the Ottomans are equated with the difference that unlike the Persians, these new 'conquerors' have not as yet 'bow'd beneath the brunt of Hellas'sword'. A revolutionary impulse underlies Byron's rhetoric here. His orientalism in rewriting a classical discourse aspires to 'plot' the overthrowing of the Ottoman rule in Greece.

In his *Hellas* (1822) Shelley also draws on this Aeschylean discourse but with a much more optimistic view he heralds the freedom of Greece. Writing across the Greek war of independence, in an introductory note he elaborates on the genesis and 'orientation' of his

poem: 'The *Persae* of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians.'¹⁴ As in Aeschylus's *The Persians* in which a messenger brings the news of Xerxes's defeat to his mother, a messenger brings Mahmud, the Turkish ruler, the news of the successive victories of the Greek freedom fighters. The Chorus of the play depicts the failed attempts of the Persians at subjugating Greece as archetypal triumph of freedom:

So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendour burst and shone:
Thermopylae and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
The springing fire.¹⁵

Far from being 'private fantasy' the versions of orientalism discussed here are clearly engaged in the politics of their time. This can be contrasted with Oliver Goldsmith's drawing on the classical discourse in his dramatic poem *The Captivity: An Oratorio* (1764), different in important ways from Shelley's. Goldsmith's appropriation, unlike Byron's and Shelley's, is apolitical and figures the Persians not as subjugators but as liberators. The poem treats the story of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great and the liberation of the Jews by him. The First Prophet sings:

Cyrus our great restorer, is at hand,
And this way leads his formidable band.
Give, give your songs of Zion to the wind,
And hail the benefactor of mankind:
He comes pursuant to divine decrees,
To chain the strong and set the Captive free.¹⁶

Goldsmith's Chinese philosopher in *The Citizen of the World* has this in mind when he says: 'Into what a state of misery are the modern Persians fallen! A nation once famous for setting the world an example of freedom, is now become a land of tyrants, and a den of slaves.'¹⁷ In the section on Thomas Moore we will see how Persian history and mythology also gets wrought into a work treating the theme of liberty in more complex

and less explicit ways. First, it is necessary to sketch in general the orientalism of the eighteenth century.

Butler says of the 'geographical signification' of the orientalist works of the Romantics, especially in the Napoleonic war period, that it 'should be taken at face value, since these are materialist poets for whom the place of a poem's setting means what it says, and the time is always in some sense the present.'¹⁸ In other words, this geography was not so much of an 'imaginative geography' as Said puts it.¹⁹ With the eighteenth century things are somehow different as the Orient figures more as an abstraction than a 'material' reality. We have more 'pseudo-orientalism' than orientalism. There is the Orient as a locale associated with 'private fantasy' (*Vathek*), exoticism (*Persian Eclogues*), philosophical / moralist contemplation (*Rasselas*), social comment (*The Citizen of the World*). In all of these figurations, mostly related to Persia, the element of a non-specific time and place, distancing and exoticism are significant. These writings are all indebted to a number of highly influential orientalist works in the early eighteenth century. Foremost amongst these were the translation of *One Thousand and One Night* or *Arabian Nights* (1708-10) and Baron de Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721). *Arabian Nights*, (a motley collection of stories originating in the oral tradition and containing a mixture of Persian, Arabic, Turkish and even Chinese and Indian elements), is, as Knipp says, in one sense 'a vast collection of wish-fulfilment fantasies', which is why it became so fascinating for a writer like William Beckford.²⁰ It contained all the motifs with which the Orient was and came to be associated: satanism, eroticism, violation of taboos, despotism, cruelty, and legendary riches. The French writers used this model to develop 'the prose "oriental tale", which with wit and style celebrated an idealised world of consumerist delights – a land of magic, ingenious contrivances, treasure, love-intrigue and powerful arbitrary caliphs.'²¹ (Beckford modelled his *Vathek* on these 'arbitrary caliphs'.) In Butler's words, the oriental tale either 'dreamed up a land of heart's desire or (in the hands of dissident intellectuals, such as Voltaire) it sniped at court despotism nearer home.'²² Before discussing *Persian Letters*, a work by one of these 'dissident intellectuals', mention should be made of another important collection of oriental stories: *Les Mille et Un Jours: Contes Persanes* (1710-12) in two volumes

translated from Persian by the Frenchman Petis de la Croix. An English translation was published in 1714.

‘How can one be a Persian?’

Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* is a seminal text in the history of orientalism, especially as regards the figurations of Persia. It incorporates a number of central themes, patterns and techniques to be rewritten and drawn upon in succeeding orientalist works. As the title suggests it is in the form of a series of letters written by two Persians, Uzbek and Rica (very ‘un-Persian’ names, to be sure), travelling in France. Montesquieu’s sources are travelogues, a salient component of orientalism, written by merchant travellers to Persia, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1676-77) and Jean Chardin (1686), as well as Jean-Paul Marna’s *The Turkish Spy*, purportedly the secret correspondence of a Turkish agent in France. As critics have noted, *Persian Letters* was one of the originating texts of the Enlightenment. As such it rewrites and re-deploys from a rationalist’s perspective the salient motifs of orientalism: despotism and eroticism. The use of the foreign observer device (imitated by many others such as Lord Lyttelton in *Letters from a Persian in England to His Friend at Ispahan* (1735), Goldsmith in *The Citizen of the World* (1776), James Morier in *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* (1828)) creates a distancing effect allowing the writer to displace his socio-political and philosophical comments and criticisms on the current issues in France and Europe. A translator is supposed to have translated the letters from Persian, a technique used in many other orientalist works such as Morier’s *Hajji Baba* novels. This purported translator also provides footnotes; for instance, in a footnote to Letter 29 we read: ‘The Persians are the most tolerant of all the Muslim nations’ (though ultimately despotic). This also was to become a common technique.²³ But the most important of all is the ‘harem’ theme with its curious combination of the exotic and the erotic, which according to Montesquieu himself was the most popular feature of the book.²⁴ There is a voyeuristic portrayal of the harem as sexually available space as well as a place of sexual frustration and deviancy (suggestion of lesbian practice in the harem, incest hinted at in the story of the brother-sister on which Byron drew in *Manfred*).²⁵ It all gives a good deal of erotic

interest to the work. This eroticism, however, goes hand in hand with the idea of despotism, in the words of Judith Shklar, 'Montesquieu's perpetual nightmare.'²⁶ Uzbek's domestic despotism in maintaining a harem in 'Ispahan', over the control of which he is always worried, is symbolic of the idea of despotism at large. (*The Citizen of the World*, influenced by Montesquieu's work, also takes up the theme of 'oriental' despotism symbolised in the harem image. The Chinese philosopher's son is sold as a slave to a Persian, 'a voluptuous and cruel master', who owns a large harem over which he has tyrannical control).²⁷

Judith N. Shklar notes that Uzbek, who 'in some ways is Montesquieu's alter ego, as both 'an enlightened philosopher and a despot' was above all meant to expose the 'fatal flaws of the then fashionable theory of "enlightened despotism", which argued that a rational and omnipotent ruler who relied on the advice of enlightened experts could soon transform France into a good society.'²⁸ She reads Uzbek's return to Persia and his harem instead of saying farewell to it as 'the victory of despotic jealousy over enlightenment.'²⁹

One's expectation of the idea of universality of human condition from a writer of Enlightenment is to some extent met in Montesquieu's work in which the Orient is more 'a nightmare territory of mind ' than a geographical area.³⁰ There is an element of self-reflexivity apropos the 'orientalising' in it. It satirises the popular 'orientalism' of the time and to some extent exposes the process of othering by intimating the universality of human nature. In Letter 72 Rica writes to his friend about his conversation with a Frenchman about Persia: 'I mentioned Persia to him, but I had hardly uttered four words when he contradicted me twice over, on the authority of books by Messers Tavernier and Chardin.'³¹ He even encounters a Frenchman who claims to know the streets of 'Ispahan' better than he does!³² Elsewhere (Letter 6) the self-righteous Uzbek writes to one of his friends in 'Ispahan' about his arrival in Turkey: 'As I penetrated further into this profane land, I had the impression that I was becoming profane myself.'³³ In Letter 30 Rica writes about his experience living among the Europeans illustrating the absurdity of 'othering' and of failure to acknowledge the uniformity of human nature: 'if someone happened to tell the company that I was Persian, I would immediately hear a buzz around me: "oh!

oh! Is he Persian? What a most extraordinary thing! How can one be a Persian?’³⁴ Nevertheless as it is evident in the inability of Uzbek to get rid of his ‘Persian’ despotism and prejudices there is also an essentialising orientalist discourse that treats the concept and practice of despotism as ‘essentially’ Oriental (a notion articulated in Montesquieu’s *De L’Esprit des Lois*). This is a crucial and equally influential aspect of Montesquieu’s novel, at least in regard to succeeding orientalist representations, so much so that, as we will see later, a writer with radical tendencies like Thomas Moore had to be apologetic about attributing the love of liberty to the Persians in his *Lalla Rookh*. It could be postulated that, and this is a pivotal point, Montesquieu’s work, a pioneering text of the Enlightenment, is a cautionary one intimating that France, and Europe, should be on their guard against and purge themselves of oriental elements.

Shortly after the publication of Montesquieu’s work George Lyttelton, a minor Augustan, wrote *The Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan* (1735), which acknowledgedly closely imitates the form and strategy of its French model. This English ‘Persian Letters’ contains 78 letters written by Selim in London to his friend Mirza (the names are certainly more Persian than those of Montesquieu’s!) in Persia. ‘The relations we received from our friend Uzbek [a character in Montesquieu’s work]’, writes Selim to his friend, ‘of those parts of Europe which he had been, raised in us an ardent desire to know the rest, and particularly this famous island.’³⁵ It is the Enlightenment impulse to ‘know’ that takes Selim to Europe and it is in the spirit of Enlightenment that the work scrutinises and satirises some of the institutions of the English society of the time, notably the Parliament and the Law. ‘I have been ... often assured’, writes Selim, ‘that the English parliament is a check to the king’s authority; and yet I am well informed, that the only way to advancement at court, is to gain a seat in parliament.’³⁶ Elsewhere, visiting an English court of law, Selim writes: ‘In Persia the *cadi* passes sentence for a round sum of money: in England the judge indeed takes nothing; but the attorney, the advocate, every officer and retainer in the court, raise treble that sum on the client.’³⁷

Later in the century, Goldsmith in *The Citizen of the World* (a collection of ‘Chinese’ letters!), with its note of social criticism, could use the matter of the Orient and Persia to satirise and warn against the ‘Persian’ elements in English society. For instance, in a letter titled ‘On the licentiousness of the English, with regard to women. A character of a woman’s man’ the Chinese philosopher says of the ‘licentious’ English, who abide by the law of matrimony in just not committing bigamy, that ‘They seem to think like the Persians, that they give evident marks of manhood by encreasing [sic] their seraglio.’³⁸ Read this way, as we will see in the next chapter, James Morier’s work is also in its discursive ‘orientation’ (purging English society of its oriental elements) very much in line with that of Montesquieu. His orientalism, with its masterly displacement of, and engagement with, the issues and discourses of the time on the one hand, and its touch of exoticism and eroticism to balance the intellectual content with palatability and ‘popularity’ on the other, set a model for and affected the work of other writers incorporating the matter of the Orient (notably that of Moore). As A. Lytton Sells observes, *Persian Letters* became the model for socio-political and religious satire.³⁹

The notion of rationalism and universalism in Samuel Johnson’s orientalism in *Rasselas* (1759) is underwritten by assumptions different from those of the politically-charged *Persian Letters*. In Johnson’s moral tale the Orient seems to be just there to add a touch of exoticism. Be it in Arabia, India or Persia it provides a mostly unobtrusive, neutral backdrop against which to depict the essential uniformity of human nature ‘through all its variations.’⁴⁰ Imlac, the man of learning, travels throughout the world to ‘trace’ human nature:

Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.⁴¹

Imlac has read ‘all the poets of Persia and Arabia’, and is ‘able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca.’⁴² The allusion to the ‘suspended’

‘volumes’ refers to the few ancient Arabic poems a translation of which, as *The Moallakat*, was published by Sir William Jones in 1782. In Johnson’s allusions to the Persian and Arabic poets along with his positive portrayal of the Persians there is mark of orientalism as a ‘scholarly’ venture. Johnson, a friend of Sir William Jones (‘the Persian Jones’) was familiar with and interested in the work of orientalists; he even urged the establishment of a chair of Persian at Oxford.⁴³

Johnson’s Orient, unlike that of the other important Augustan man of letters, Pope, is not ‘wild’ and ‘romantic’; it is there to add a touch of exoticism to his moral fable. The note of exoticism is well present in the work of a, to use a now outmoded term, pre-Romantic poet produced less than two decades before *Rasselas*.

From Arcadia to Persia

William Collins’ *Persian Eclogues* (1746) (changed to *Oriental Eclogues* in 1757) is, as the title suggests, a pastoral. The so-called pre-Romantic poets were, in the words of Marcus Walsh, in ‘quest for new poetic forms, modes, and styles.’⁴⁴ Collins’ use of the matter of the Orient exemplifies this quest, a quest that culminated, in respect of tapping new sources of creativity, in the work of Romantic poets such as Landor, Southey and Moore. Collins’ general source for his poem was Thomas Salmon’s *Modern History* published in 31 volumes between 1725 and 1738. W. C. Bronson points out that ‘although sensible and mildly interesting’, Salmon’s work ‘is not imaginative or picturesque; and Collins showed he was greatly athirst by sucking from it as much romance as he did.’⁴⁵ Collins was writing in ‘the Age of Pope’ and, as Oliver Sigworth points out, he had to be apologetic (in the ‘Preface’) even for that amount of romance and ‘wildness.’⁴⁶ In keeping with a common device the poet (of the ‘Preface’) claims to have translated the poem from a Persian manuscript given to him by a merchant ‘who had made it his business to enrich himself with the learning, as well as the silk and carpets of the Persians.’⁴⁷ At first he gives readers a piece of characterology:

The gravity of the Spaniard, and the levity of the Frenchman, are as evident in all their productions as in their persons themselves; and the stile

of my countrymen is as naturally strong and nervous, as that of an Arabian or Persian is rich and figurative.

There is an elegance and wildness of thought which recommends all their compositions; and our genius are as much too cold for the entertainment of such sentiments, as our climate is for their fruits and spices. If any of these beauties are to be found in the following Eclogues, I hope my reader will consider them as an argument of their being original.

Later we will see how this 'rich and figurative' style of Persian literature became the subject of disparaging and derisive view in poets such as Landor, Southey and Byron. Apart from these prefatory remarks, a few Persian names ('Shiraz', 'Hassan', 'Abbas') and a few hints at Persian history (the marauding Tartars and Perso-Turkish hostility in the fourth Eclogue) there are also a number of orientalist topoi. The First Eclogue, 'Selim or the Shepherd's moral', begins with: 'Ye Persian Maids, attend your Poet's lays, / And hear how shepherds pass their golden Days' (lines 1-2). Selim advises the Persian maids, who happen to be identical with 'the maids of Bagdat' (line 70), to couple beauty with virtue. In 'The Second Eclogue' Hassan, a camel-driver from 'Shciraz' braves the desert. 'The Third Eclogue', 'Abra or the Georgian Sultana', tells the story of Abra, a Georgian maid wooed away by Shah Abbas:

Great Abbas chanc'd that fated morn to stray,
By love conducted from the chace away;
Among the vocal Vales he heard her song,
And sought the vales and echoing groves among:
At length he found, and woo'd the rural maid,
She knew the Monarch, and with fear obey'd. (lines 21-26)

There is a hint of 'oriental despotism' in 'with fear obey'd'. This is smoothed over in the moral of the tale: 'Let those who rule on Persia's jewell'd Throne, / Be fam'd for love, and gentlest love alone: / Or wreath, like Abbas, full of fair renown, / The lover's myrtle, with the warrior's crown' (lines 65-68).

The fourth Eclogue is in a sense the most 'Persian' or 'Oriental' of all. It tells the story of the flight of two Circassian brothers from the marauding Tartars, who in the

Safavid era were a constant source of threat and irritation to the northern and north-eastern borders of the Persian empire (Georgia, Armenia, etc.). One of the brothers, Secandar, bewails the plight of his homeland and the failure of the Persian kings to protect it:

Unhappy land, whose blessings tempt the sword,
In Vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian Lord!
In Vain, thou court'st him, helpless to thine aid,
To shield the shepherd' and protect the maid,
Far off in thoughtless indolence resign'd,
Soft dreams of love and pleasure sooth his mind:
'Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
No wars alarm him, and no fears annoy. (lines 31-38)

Historically the king alluded to here is Shah Sultan Hussein (an inefficient ruler), referred to as 'Sha Sultan Hosseyn' in the 'Preface', in whose reign the purported original author, Abdillah of Tabriz, is supposed to have composed the poem. The passage deploys the topos of 'oriental sensuality' in depicting an oriental king 'lost in idle joy' in his harem. The topos of 'oriental' cruelty and barbarity, rather uncommon in a pastoral, is also there:

The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
Fix'd to destroy, and steadfast to undo.
Wild as his land, in native deserts bred,
By Lust incited, or by Malice led,
The villain-Arab, as he prowls for prey,
Oft marks with blood and wasting flames the way;
Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
To death inur'd, and nurst in scenes of woe (lines 45-52)

A sensual, ruthless and evil, weak, and 'romantic' Orient – this is 'orientalist' enough. Apart from the Persians the poem includes Arabs, Turks, Georgians, Circassians and Tartars; after all Collins was right to change the title from *Persian* to more general *Oriental Eclogues*.

The poem sold well but Joseph Warton reports that Collins spoke very 'contemptuously of them, calling them his Irish Eclogues, and saying they had not in them one spark of orientalism...He was greatly mortified that they found more readers

and admirers than his odes.⁴⁸ Collins wanted to give in *The Persian Eclogues*, as the ‘translator’ says in the ‘Preface’, ‘a very just view of the miseries, and inconveniences, as well as felicities that attend one of the finest countries in the East’. By ‘just view’ he means a sort of verisimilitude and local colour, what later Byron and Moore were to call ‘costume’, what Moore tried very hard to achieve in his *Lalla Rookh* and James Morier did achieve, with near perfection, in his *Hajji Baba*. Collins’ attempt to transplant Arcadia to Persia with a few Persian (and oriental) names and images was not, in his own terms, successful. By his own standards, he had not ‘orientalised’ Persia enough hence the adjectival ‘Persian’ in ‘Ye Persian maids, attend your poet’s lays’, according to Collins himself, could well be replaced by, say, ‘Irish.’ Later on in a letter encouraging Moore’s decision to write an oriental tale, Byron was to refer to Collins’ remark about the title of his poem and find it not at all infelicitous.

From Samarah to Istakhar

If Collins’ *Persian Eclogues* contain the seeds of Romanticism, William Beckford’s *Vathek: An Arabian Tale* (French edition 1782, English translation and notes by Henley in 1786) brings us to its threshold. This bizarre ‘oriental tale’ shares with Collins’ poem an apolitical ‘imaginative’ geography. *Vathek* depicts a world of wild and grotesque imaginings and fantasies, a world of ‘Dives’ and ‘Peri’s, satanism, eroticism and violation of taboos. This is a world as antithetical to Augustan restraint as one could possibly imagine.

Inspired by *Arabian Nights* (*Vathek*, the title tells us, is an ‘Arabian Tale’), Beckford’s novel, as critics have pointed out, shares that book’s world of wish-fulfilment. Its orientalism, however, has as many Persian elements as ‘Arabian’ ones. As Henley’s extensive notes indicate, one of the immediate sources, apart from De la Croix’s *Persian Tales* and Chardin’s Persian travel writings, was Alexander Dow’s translated collection of Persian tales, *Tales Translated from the Persian of Inatulla of Delhi*, published in two volumes in 1768. *Vathek* contains Persian settings (Shiraz, Persepolis or Istakhar, Rocnabad, the fairy Shadukian and Ambreabad), mythology (Dives, Peris, the mountain

of Kaf, the Simurgh, the carbuncle of Giamschid, etc.), names (Gulchenrouz, Babalouk), and imagery (the nightingale and the rose). It all adds up to a heavy dose of exotica and Orientalia betokening what Roger Lonsdale terms the author's 'escapist longings for the exotic and beautiful, especially the oriental.'⁴⁹

Critics have noted the strong autobiographical element in *Vathek*. 'Perhaps no more definite meaning should be sought for in *Vathek*', writes Roger Lonsdale, 'than is suggested by its role as a vehicle for the imaginative projection of private fantasy and emotional turmoil.'⁵⁰ Here, says Christopher Knipp, 'the oriental tale is more autobiographical than moralistic, and the exotic setting becomes a private world in which the author isolates himself and gives free reign to bizarre fantasies.'⁵¹ The Orient (here Iraq and Persia) becomes a world onto which Beckford projects private fantasies, desires and turmoil such as his homosexuality, tampering with black magic and revolt against his calvinistic mother.⁵²

In rewriting stories and motifs taken from Arabian Nights and other orientalist sources Beckford fuses the Oriental and the Gothic. There is 'oriental' despotism and sensuality as well as the promise of untold riches and bliss in the Gothic 'caves of Istakhar.' Caliph Vathek sets out on a journey from his capital Samara in Iraq to Istakhar (Persepolis, the ancient capital of Persia) where the satanic Giaour has promised him 'the diadem of Gian Ben Gian; the talismans of Soliman; the treasures of the pre-Adamite sultans.'⁵³ ('I would not wrong the slenderest hair', says Selim to Zuleika in Byron's *The Bride of Abydos*, / 'That clusters round thy forehead fair, / For all the treasures buried far / Within the caves of Istakar').⁵⁴ Elsewhere a group of old men offer the Caliph a pleasurable detour of Shiraz.⁵⁵ 'Disgusted with the mountain of the four fountains', the Caliph resolves to 'go and drink of the streams of Rocnabad.'⁵⁶ The idyllic Rocnabad is a resort near Shiraz in Persia immortalised in a few lyrics of Hafiz. (As Henley points out in one of the footnotes to his 1786 translation, Beckford here draws on Sir William Jones' translation of one of these lyrics 'A Persian Song of Hafiz' in his *Poems Constituting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages* (1772)).⁵⁷

Knipp observes that the Persian-Arabian world of *Vathek* is one of 'irresistible extremes' alternating between

the refined and crude, the opulent and the barren – between Persian gardens, arbors of roses, with jasmines and honey suckles, oranges, cedars, and citron trees, pomegranates and violet ..., on the one hand, and wild romantic chasms, horrific heights, lonely deserts, and grim caves and grottoes, on the other. The lushness is Persian; the wildness, the sublimity, the horror, the danger, the coldness...is Arabian.⁵⁸

This oriental / Persian imagery will be discussed in some detail in the section on Byron's version of it. (Byron was more than any other poet influenced by *Vathek* and praised what, as I have noted, he called its 'costume').⁵⁹

As I have already mentioned, *Vathek* fits more than any other work Said's account of Romantic orientalism as 'essentially private fantasy'. Orientalism is again involved in displacement here of private desires and traumas. The matter of the Orient allowed Beckford 'to revel in the fantasy of expressing the power of his social position to the hilt by supplying a space beyond the jurisdiction of local mores.'⁶⁰ Although, as P. H. Knox-Shaw has shown, even *Vathek* is not completely devoid of politics as it intersects with contemporary anti-slavery writings.⁶¹

The Smaller Fry

In its deployment of copious footnotes and its use of the work of orientalists such as D'Herbelot, Sale and Sir William Jones, *Vathek* anticipated works such as *Gebir* (1798), *Thalaba* (1801) and *Lalla Rookh* (1817). As mentioned earlier, Raymond Schwab dates the emergence of what he calls 'oriental renaissance' to the translation of the *Zend-Avesta* in 1771. Sir William Jones' *Persian Grammar* was published in the same year. Indeed, the writings and translations of this jurist, poet, linguist and scholar were to become the major source of inspiration and 'information' for the Romantics interested in the Orient. It was the pioneering work of 'Persian Jones' and his appropriations / translations of the Persian poets like Firdusi, Attar, Hafiz and Sadi that enjoyed a remarkable vogue in

England and brought about what J. D. Yohannan calls the 'Persian fad' between 1770-1825.⁶² This was partly related to the previously mentioned 'quest' for new literary styles, modes and images. Aware of the exhaustion of old themes and images in the Augustan age, which drew too often on the classics, Jones calls upon the English men of letters to turn to Arabic and Persian poetry as a rejuvenating source. In the preface to his translation *Poems Constituting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages* (1772) he writes:

...the public would not be displeased to see the genuine compositions of Arabia and Persia in an English dress. The heroic poem of Ferdusi might be versified as easily as the *Iliad*, and I see no reason why the delivery of Persia by Cyrus should not be a subject as interesting to us, as the anger of Achilles, or the wandering of Ulysses. The odes of Hafiz...would suit our lyric measures as well as those ascribed to Anacreon;⁶³

Apologetic about comparing Persian and Arabic poetry with the classics (though this does not save him from criticism from the likes of Landor and Southey who called him a 'barbarian scholar'), he explains the reason for tapping these new sources:

...in bestowing these praises on the writings of Asia, I may not be thought to derogate from the merit of the Greek and Latin poems, which have justly been admired in every age; yet I cannot but think that our European poetry has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images, and incessant allusions to the same fables:⁶⁴

Studying the 'principal writings of the Asiaticks...with the usual advantage of notes and illustrations', would open a 'new and ample field' for speculation whereby a 'more extensive insight into the history of human mind' would be available; furthermore, it would furnish 'a new set of images and similitudes.'⁶⁵

The tapping of new 'images and similitudes', however, was neither the only nor the most important reason for the interest in Persian literature and culture. Until its replacement by English in 1834, Persian was the official language of the Mughal Empire in India and as such indispensable to rule in India.⁶³ Furthermore, for understanding a heavily Persianised Indian culture, a knowledge of Persian literature was necessary. For

instance the attention shown to such didactic works as Attar's and Sadi's, in John Yohannan's words, 'reflects the realization, by the British, that the psychology of the people with whom they were now dealing was best explained in the books that had shaped the mind of the Mogul India. The *Gulistan* had been a universal primer on Moslem countries.'⁶⁷ E. M. Forster in his *A Passage to India* exemplifies this in the portrayal of Dr Aziz always quoting Persian poetry. In fine, a knowledge of Persian language and literature was the key to unlocking Indian treasures. 'British rule' needed, in the words of Javed Majeed, 'to legitimise itself in Indian idiom.'⁶⁸ Persian literature and culture constituted a good deal of this idiom. Majeed has shown that Jones' linguistic, literary as well as judicial efforts were all part of a larger concern to find a common idiom indispensable for British rule over its heterogeneous empire; Jones' comparison of Persian with classical literature could be read in the context of laying the foundation for comparison of cultures.⁶⁹ (We will see how Landor, Southey, Byron and Moore made such comparisons.)

This of course aptly fits Said's emphasis on the collusion of orientalism and imperialism. The fact that Jones himself was not as enthusiastic about Persian literature as his comparison with the classics may imply further attests to this. 'It is an amusement for me', he writes, 'to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who (I think) are not poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them.'⁷⁰ This disparaging view is also shared, much more strongly, by those who answered his call for new themes and images.

Walter Savage Landor, whose oriental poem *Gebir* (1798) considerably influenced the succeeding Romantic orientalist works, also published *Poems from the Arabic and Persian* (1800) which he translated from a French edition. In the 'preface' to this short collection, acknowledging his ignorance of either Persian or Arabic, he writes: 'In my opinion, it is quite sufficient, if, without the fatigue of travelling over a dry uninteresting waste of perhaps some hundred pages, the public be presented, whether from Egypt or France, with a new and rich collection of undistorted images.'⁷¹

Given Landor's radicalism, it may seem odd that on the one hand, answering the call of Jones, he could talk of a 'new and rich collection of undistorted images' and, on the other, be so complacent about oriental cultures. Elsewhere he says: 'For a taste which has once been accustomed to the delicacies of Athens and of Rome, will naturally loathe the heady spirits and high-seasoned garbage of barbarians.'⁷² This devaluing of Eastern literatures and cultures is in keeping with Landor's endorsement of a so-called 'enlightened' version of imperialism. *Gebir* is a pioneering text in a vein of orientalist works (including Southey's *Thalaba*, Byron's *The Bride of Abydos*, Shelley's *Revolt of Islam*, Moore's *Lalla Rookh*) with, in Butler's words, 'allegorical narratives enacting revolution.'⁷³ In *Gebir*, holds Alan Richardson, Landor, following Volney, envisions a 'democratic / universalist impulse arising out of the French revolution and imposing the most progressive aspects of European ideals and institutions' first 'throughout the West and then around the globe, in an enlightened version of imperialism: 'Captivity led captive, war o'erthrown, / They shall o'er Europe, shall o'er Earth extend / Empire that seas alone and skies confine, / And glory that shall strike stars.'⁷⁴

It was this 'enlightened' imperialism, this 'civilising mission', that a century later Conrad was to ironise but could not completely disavow in his *Heart of Darkness*. Likewise, *Gebir* manifests, in the words of Alan Richardson, 'a residual colonial rhetoric that undercuts its anti-imperialist agenda.'⁷⁵ Eastern countries so politically (as an Enlightenment guru such as Montesquieu depicts) and culturally (as a follower of Jones like Landor depicts) inferior to the European norm were deemed in dire need of 'enlightenment'. Here we have, to quote Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, the 'beginnings of the cultural codes that will frame British hegemony through the nineteenth century.'⁷⁶ Although 'plotting' revolutions in the East in the narratives of such orientalist works with radical orientations had targets in view nearer home, nonetheless the aesthetic and political economy of these works necessitated depicting the East as inferior and decadent. This is what Robert Southey does in his orientalist works.

In the Muslim romance *Thalaba*, Southey turns to the matter of the Orient, Islamic Orient, to write an epic as a part of his early plan to 'exhibit the most remarkable forms

of Mythology which have at any time obtained currency among mankind.’⁷⁷ Majeed has shown that Southey’s concern with tapping ‘new sources of creativity made available by the oriental renaissance’ is manifest in the preoccupation in his epics with the images of ‘plumbing and probing of depths.’⁷⁸ Southey more than follows Jones’ advice about making available the ‘writings of Asiaticks’ with ‘the usual advantage of notes and illustrations’ in *Thalaba* and elsewhere. The copious notes of *Thalaba*, even longer than the poem itself, in Butler’s words, make this ‘eclectic pastiche’ a ‘commonplace-book and near-encyclopaedia of Eastern travel literature, legends and story-types.’⁷⁹ This ‘cunning cultural palimpsest’, to use Butler’s phrase again, becomes the ground for comparison of oriental cultures against a European or an ideal norm in which the matter of Persia figures prominently.⁸⁰

The copious notes function to ‘authenticate’ the text and give Southey the status of a learned authority on all things oriental. In a note about the ‘magnificent mosque’ at ‘Tauris’ (Tabriz in Iran) given in Book I on Tavernier’s observations in his travels to Persia, Southey debunks, in a sweeping generalisation characteristic of an absolute authority, oriental / Persian art:

A waste of ornament and labour characterises all the works of the Orientalists [Orientals]. I have seen illuminated Persian manuscripts that must each have been the toil of many years, every page painted, not with representations of life and manners, but usually like the curves of a Turkey carpet, conveying no idea whatever, as absurd to the eye as nonsense verses to the ear.⁸¹

Southey’s view of Persian literature is no more flattering than Persian art. ‘The little of their literature’, he writes, ‘that has reached us is equally worthless.’⁸² Referring to Jones’ comparison of Persian poets with the classics, Southey continues: “Our barbarian scholars have called Ferdusi the Oriental Homer. ...To make this *Illiad* of the East, as they have sacrilegiously stiled it, a good poem, would be realising the dreams of Alchemy, and transmuting lead into gold.”⁸³

Persian literature does not fare much better in Byron's opinion either. Earlier I discussed the persistence of the classical discourse on Persia through the Romantic era in the works of Byron and Shelley. Mention was also made of Byron's response to the so-called oriental renaissance. Indeed, Byron, along with Beckford, Moore and Goethe, is one of the poets Said takes to have contributed to what he terms the 'restructuring' and 'orientalization' of the Orient.⁸¹ Echoing Jones' comparison of Hafiz with Anacreon, he couples them in Book II of *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*: 'Love conquers age – so Hafiz averred, / So sings the Teian and he sings in sooth.'⁸⁵ In his satirical 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers', however, of which Southey is one of the main targets, his view of Persian poetry appears to be no more flattering than Southey's: 'Last of the howling host which once was Bell's, / Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz yells.'⁸⁶ And elsewhere: 'As for the smaller fry, who swarm in shoals, / From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles.'⁸⁷

Later in the century, even Edward Fitzgerald, whose fame was based on his translation of another Persian poet, Khayyam, could depreciatingly say that he kept on reading 'foolish Persian' chiefly because it connected him with his orientalist friend Cowells in Calcutta.⁸⁸ The oriental renaissance could provide new themes and images, it could also make people such as Byron and Moore rich and famous. The poets and writers providing these new sources of literary creativity, though, were deemed producers of 'high-seasoned garbage' or at very best 'the smaller fry' with works of little merit. Before finally turning to a survey of *Lalla Rookh* in the following pages we will briefly examine some of the uses these new (Persian / oriental) themes and images were put to in the context of some versions of the East in which they occurred.

Some Versions of the East

Southey's pioneering work had an enormous impact on the succeeding literary orientalist accounts. Butler argues that many of his structures and images reappear in the 'nineteenth-century literature of colonialism, high and low, beginning with Shelley and Byron.'⁸⁹ We may include Thomas Moore and James Morier. I mentioned that Schwab dates the inauguration of the oriental renaissance to the translation of the *Zend-Avesta*.

Three decades later (1801 when *Thalaba* was published) Southey, according to Majeed, 'claimed to have 'fixed the ground-plan' for a Persian epic based on the *Zend-Avesta*. As late as 1814 he was confident that his next 'mythological poem...would be founded upon the system of Zoroaster', but Thomas Moore's 'The Fire-Worshippers' in *Lalla Rookh* (1817) pre-empted his plan.'⁹⁰ *Thalaba*, reflects the revival of interest in oriental literature, culture and history in its Islamic spectacle in which the matter of Persia, both pre-Islamic and post-Islamic, significantly figures. Some examples follow.

In Book VI *Thalaba* enters an Edenic-looking garden (Southey gives a note on Persian gardens based on travel writers' observations) in whose description the following image occurs: 'Wearied with endless beauty did his eyes / Return for rest? Beside him teems the earth / With tulips, like the ruddy evening streaked.'⁹¹ Southey's note to this image is as follows: 'Major Scott informs us that sears and wounds by Persian writers are compared to the streaky tints of the tulip. The simile here employed is equally obvious and more suited to its place.'⁹² The image of 'Dives' and 'Peris' (from Persian mythology) figures in the next quotation, which is followed by a note from D'Herbelot on a Persian work (*Caherman Nameh*): 'As Peris to their Sister bear, / When from the summit of some lofty tree / She hangs encaged, the captive of the Dives.'⁹³

The following image, the readers are told in a note, is derived from a travelogue to Persia: 'From golden goblets there / The guests sate quaffing the delicious juice / Of Shiraz' golden grape.'⁹⁴ Some of the central symbols and the figures in the poem such as 'the Simorg', the ancient 'all-knowing bird', and 'Zohak', the archetypal despot, are also derived from Persian mythology.⁹⁵ But the most significant of all is the semi-fabulous topos of paradisal garden placed centrally in the poem, which should be approached in the context of its ideological orientation.

Earlier mention was made of Jones' notion that speculating in the 'ample field' of oriental writings could provide a 'more extensive insight into the history of human mind'. The thematic economy of *Thalaba* can be thought to be based on such a premise. As critics have noted, the plot of *Thalaba* suggests the 'maturation' and 'evolution of human

race'; it expresses Southey's 'adherence to a philosophy of progress throughout his life.'⁹⁶ Thalaba is an iconoclast whose quest for overthrowing the 'Damdoniel', the habitat of the evil Magicians, allegorises, most prominently in the topos of paradisaal garden, Southey's Foucault-like Volneyan vision of history and religion. Volney's *The Ruins* (1792) expresses the case against 'state religion' or priestcraft whereby the rulers rule 'the credulous vulgar.'⁹⁷ Mokanna in 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan' in *Lalla Rookh* is such a ruler.

After Thalaba encounters Mohareb and rejects the false talisman of the ring for the 'talisman' of faith his faith, is put to test and he is conveyed to Aloadin's earthly paradise where he finds 'The glittering tents, / The odorous groves, / The gorgeous palaces' and is invited by an old man to 'go taste / The joys of Paradise!'⁹⁸ In a series of lush Persian / oriental images the delights of this paradise is described: 'streams of liquid light', flowers, nightingales and jasmines, feasting, dancing girls and 'the delicious juice / Of Shiraz' golden grape.'⁹⁹ Butler observes that Southey gives three accounts of the source for Aloadin's paradisaal garden, though he thinks they are of the same origin in order to 'hint at the universality of the myth' and to further illustrate this by 'extending his coverage to Persia, Cathay, and Abyssinia.'¹⁰⁰ Here is the account given by Purchas in a note in Book VII on 'The Paradise of Sin':

The Paradise of Sin

In the N.E. parts of Persia there was an old man called Aloadin, a Mahumetan, which had included a goodly vally, situate between hilles, and furnished it with all variety which nature and art could yield; as fruits, pictures, rilles of milk, wine, honey, water, palaces, and beautiful damosells, richly attired, and called it Paradise. To this was no passage but by an impregnable castle; and daily preaching the pleasures of this Paradise to the youth which he kept in his court, sometimes would minister a sleepey drinke to some of them, and then convey them thither, where being entertained with these pleasures four or five days, they supposed themselves rapt into Paradise, and then being again cast into a trance by the said drinke, he caused them to be carried forth, and then would examine them of what they had seene, and by this delusion would make them resolute for any enterprize which he should appoint them; as to murther any prince his enemy, for they feared no death in hope of their

Mahumetical Paradise. But Haslor or Ulan, after three years of siege,
destroyed him, and this his fool's Paradise. – Purchas¹⁰¹

This semi-fabulous account, itself a good example of 'orientalism' in its early stages, is actually based on a real figure, something of a revolutionary, Hassan Sabah, in Persian history (during the Mogul occupation of Persia). Purchas' phrase 'they feared no death in hope of their Mahumetical Paradise' implies imposture not only on the part of 'Aloadin' but also Islam. Southey's quotation, in other words, aptly fits the ideological 'orientation' of his poem because it hints at the 'universality of the myth' and also shares the same conception of Islam as the host text.

Although the hero of the book is a pious Muslim, Southey is emphatic on his view of all Muslims, whether Arabs or Persians, as extremely superstitious (which is also a dominant motif in Morier's work). Mohareb tells the pious Thalaba in the 'cave of punishment': 'What brings thee hither? Thou shouldst have a hut / By some saint's grave beside the public way, / There to less-knowing fools / Retail thy Koran scraps.'¹⁰² The impression produced here is that these words are ironised and discredited as they are spoken by one of the evil antagonists of the poem. This impression, however, is undermined by Southey's citing of Shaw in a footnote: 'No nation in the world is so much given to superstition as the Arabs, or even as the Mahometans in general.'¹⁰³ Indeed, this undermining of the assumptions of the text by the paratext, the notes, is a main strategy in *Thalaba*. Elsewhere Southey gives notes on the Islamic notion of 'Leileth-ul-Cadr' taking it for the incurable fatalism of the Muslims.¹⁰⁴ One can also find notes about Persians' 'strange' superstitions (for instance, their 'superstitiousness' about the burial of their kings).¹⁰⁵

Southey's view of the Islamic Orient as wallowing in superstition, ignorance and false ideology is spelled out in his description of Baghdad in Book V. Thalaba, having extricated himself from the snares of Lobada, views the city with 'Its thousands dwellings, o'er whose level roofs / Fair cupolas appear'd, and high-domed mosques, / And pointed minarets, and cypress groves, / Everywhere scatter'd in unwithering green.'¹⁰⁶

The thing to note here is that the dominant feature is the mosque; as Southey says in his note: 'These prominent features of an oriental city will be found in all the views of Sir John Chardin.'¹⁰⁷ This note is followed by an account of 'Ispahan' (Isfahan in Iran) by Tavernier implying that what is said about Baghdad is also applicable to any other city in the Islamic world.¹⁰⁸ A dirge on the present state of 'Bagdad' follows: 'Thou too are fallen, Bagdad! City of Peace, / And loathsome Ignorance and brute Servitude, / Pollute thy dwellings now.'¹⁰⁹ In an interventionist, imperialist tone (very much in line with Landor's in *Gebir* quoted before) the now explicitly authorial voice proceeds: 'So one day may the Crescent from thy Mosques / Be pluck'd by Wisdom, when the enlighten'd arm / Of Europe conquers to redeem the East!'¹¹⁰

Butler maintains that the topos of paradisaal garden is 'seen to stand for rich oriental civilisations as a whole; its wicked deceiving Eastern despot models represent court cultures anywhere.'¹¹¹ (Rewritings and redeployment of such motifs could also be found in Moore and Morier.) For a still radical Southey (in 1801) Butler's assertion means a displacement of radical and revolutionary ideas onto his orientalism. Apart from the universalist impulse, as the imperialistic rhetoric of the above-quoted passage indicates Southey is very much concerned with the East itself, a concern more clearly spelled out in his Hindu epic *the Curse of Kehama* (1810). 'Neither imperialism', writes Said, 'nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported or perhaps even impelled by impressive cultural formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.'¹¹² Read in the context of his progressivist vision of history and the larger discourse of nascent modernity, Southey's Perso-Islamic version of the East in *Thalaba* is a myth-ridden, despotic, unprogressive one in dire need of (European) 'enlightenment.'

Another version of the East is Byron's 'anti-modern' one. In the pages that follow I aim at giving a brief account of the role played by the Persian material in depicting such a version. Stuart Curran writes that the [orientalist] Romantic school of poetry 'in the

hands of Southey, Byron and Moore has escaped war-weary Europe only to collide with the despotism and fanaticism inseparable, from Britain's view of the Muslim East.'¹¹³ for Byron, however, this despotism and fanaticism is coupled with a much-desired exoticism. Unlike Moore Byron's hankering after, and concern with, exoticism in his orientalist work does not just stem from an attempt at pandering to the taste of the public. The exotic Orient also becomes, observes Saree Makdisi, a 'site into which one could escape from Modernity.'¹¹⁴ 'Know ye the land', writes Byron at the beginning of *The Bride of Abydos* (1813),

where the cypress and the myrtle
Are emblems of the deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden into crime!
Know ye the land of the cedar and the vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the garden of Gul in her bloom;
Where the citron and the olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale is never mute:
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye:
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'T is the clime of the East; 't is the land of the sun¹¹⁵

In this passage, quoted at length as it is paradigmatic, Byron in a 'manichean allegory', to use Abdul R. JanMohamed's term, inscribes his version of the East as a locus: soft, sensual, gorgeous and at the same time cruel (where all 'save the spirit of man is, divine'), a place with immense possibilities of romance and chivalry.¹¹⁶ This is expressive of, in Joseph Lew's words, Byron's 'nostalgia for a place not Christian, not English, and not the present.'¹¹⁴ This generalised image of the East is more precisely that of the Ottoman Levant, the setting of the so-called 'Turkish Tales', of which Byron could boast first-hand experience. Byron is concerned with what he calls the 'costume', for which he praised *Vathek*, a sort of verisimilitude and local colour affecting a detailed knowledge of Eastern customs and manners, the touch of 'realism', presenting the Orient 'as Orient.'¹¹⁸ With his first-hand experience he knew of the heavily Persianised culture

of the Ottomans, especially their courtly culture (Selim and Zuleika live in the court of a Turkish ruler), and as such he weaves images derived from Persian literature, made available in the oriental renaissance, into his picture of the 'manichean' East. Images such as 'the cypress', 'the love of the turtle' ('bulbul' in Persian), 'the light wings of Zephyr' are traditional images in classic Persian poetry, especially that of Sadi, 'the favourite Persian poet of the Enlightenment', a poet whose *Gulistan* 'offered a key to that baffling combination of Machiavellian realism and transcendental idealism which permeated the Persian culture of the Indians.'¹¹⁹ Yohannan writes that there were numerous translations of Sadi. A year after Francis Gladwin's edition in 1806 two other English translations became available.¹²⁰ Indeed 'the garden of Gul' (Persian for rose) is most probably taken from the title of Sadi's famous work *Gulistan* (Garden of Roses). When an angry Giaffer, the Turkish ruler, demands explanation for Zuleika's absence from the 'Haram', Selim, supposedly his son but actually his nephew, says that he took her for a promenade: 'We to the cypress groves had flown, / And made earth, main and heaven our own!'¹²¹ The cause of their lingering has been, Selim explains, an absorption in 'Mejnoun's tale', a Persian romance, and Sadi's poetry: 'There linger'd we, beguiled too long / With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song.'¹²²

The poem is studded with such images throughout. Zuleika's voice is like the 'hymn' of 'Houri's (Persian for a woman of heavenly beauty, and also a Koranic word), she is his 'Peri' (Persian for fairy, angel, a woman of angelic beauty).¹²³ She wears 'The Persian Atar-gul's perfume.'¹²⁴ Elsewhere she uses the stock Persian image of 'gul-o-bulbul' (the rose and the nightingale) standing for the beloved and the lover: 'This rose to calm my brother's cares / A message from the Bulbul bears.'¹²⁵ In depicting a harem scene in *The Bride of Abydos*, one of Byron's 'male fantasies', an example of, in Butler's words, his 'overuse of this emblematic case of Eastern despotism and effeminacy' showing 'a contempt for female weakness and passivity, an association of the East with this degraded view of woman, and a voyeuristic, semi-pornographic curiosity towards what amounts to sexual abuse', Byron in reality incorporates his version of a Perso-Islamic spectacle.¹²⁶ Here is how he describes Zuleika in her tower, her 'Peri cell':

And o'er her silken ottoman
 Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
 Near these, with emerald rays beset,
 (How could she thus that gem forget?)
 Her mother's sainted amulet,
 Whereon engraved the Koorsee text,
 Could smooth this life, and win the next;
 And by her comboloio lies
 A Koran of illumined dyes;
 And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
 By Persian scribes redeemed from time;
 And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
 Reclines her now neglected lute;
 And round her lamp of fretted gold
 Blooms flowers in urns of China's mould;
 The richest work of Iran's loom,
 And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
 All that can eye or sense delight
 Are gathered in that gorgeous room: ¹²⁷

Through juxtaposing Islamic images ('Koorsee text', a 'Koran of illumined dyes') with those of Persian literature ('many a bright emblazon'd rhyme') and 'luxury', the dominant motifs of Ottoman (courtly) life and culture, Byron is able to give a 'realistic' touch to his text as well as to deploy the aforementioned topoi of 'oriental' sensuality, effeminacy and despotism inseparable from his vision of the East. Byron's use of such imagery is very much comparable to and in line with that of Moore in *Lalla Rookh* in which a Persian poet entertains an Indian Princess on her way to her future husband's palace with poetry.

Iran and Erin

'Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots', writes Byron to his friend Thomas Moore in the preface to *The Corsair* dedicated to him. 'It is said', he continues

...that you are engaged in the composition of a poem whose scene will be
 laid in the East; none can do those scenes so much justice. The wrongs of
 your country, the magnificent and fiery spirit of her sons, the beauty and
 feeling of her daughters, may there be found; and Collins, when he
 denominated his Oriental his Irish Eclogues, was not aware how true, at

least, was a part of his parallel. Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality, are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.¹²⁸

Byron's letter concerning *Lalla Rookh* delineates some of the main issues involved in and themes and motifs incorporated into its composition: Moore's patriotism and his concern with 'the wrongs of his country'. The association of Ireland with the East, oriental 'wildness' and 'tenderness', overdoing the 'orientalising' touch (creating a 'warmer sun') as regards the imagery.

The full title is *Lalla Rookh, an Oriental Romance*, in a note (like Beckford or Southey, Moore provides extensive notes) to 'Lalla Rookh' Moore writes: 'a princess described by the poets of her time as more beautiful than Leila, Shirine, Dewilde, or any of those heroines whose names and loves embellish the songs of Persia and Hindustan.'¹²⁹ The eponymous Lalla Rookh (meaning 'having tulip-coloured cheeks' in Persian), a stock figure of speech for beloved or a very beautiful woman bespeaks, as indicated by Moore's own note, the literary tradition to which the work belongs or purports to belong – Persian romance – and the kind of expectations it raises. Lalla Rookh has a Persian girl attending on her who 'Sung sweetly to the Vina, and who, now and then, lulled the Princess to sleep with the ancient ditties of her country, about the loves of Wamak and Ezra, the fair-haired Zal and his mistress Rodahver, not forgetting the combat of Rustam with the terrible White Demon' (p. 9). As such the poem is decidedly meant to have an 'oriental' quality appealing to the taste of its audience. Meaning to make himself rich and famous by *Lalla Rookh*, Moore read almost all the orientalist works available (including, interestingly for our purpose, James Morier's accounts of his travels to Persia (e.g. p. 17)). The poem sold well, indicating, in Curran's words, 'a deep interest in the orientalism which it played upon', and indeed made Moore rich and famous.¹³⁰

Lalla Rookh, the youngest daughter of Aurungzebe, the emperor of India, is on her way from Delhi to Bucharia in northern Persia to be married to the son of the king there.

To keep her and her entourage entertained a Persian poet, Feramorz, who later (not unexpectedly, given the conventions of romance) turns out to be the husband himself, narrates four stories. *Lalla Rookh* has a curious amalgam of escapist orientalism and concern with socio-political change. The first and third stories, 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan' and 'The Fire-Worshippers', are in large part narratives 'enacting revolution', narratives concerned with nationhood, power and imperialism while the other two short stories which act as interludes, 'The Paradise and the Peri' and 'The Light of the Haram', have a gossamer quality depicting a dream-like world of luxury, love and sensuality.

Moore clearly, though not explicitly, displaces his personal preoccupations and political beliefs onto his orientalism in *Lalla Rookh*. Earlier it was said that Byron's letter to him spells out some of these displaced issues, on which critics have elaborated. For Majeed the Orient in the orientalist works of Southey and Moore 'was a creation which played a vital role in constituting their differing religious, political, and aesthetic positions.'¹³¹ 'Moore's orientalism, at least in *Lalla Rookh*, he holds, 'was part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy which reflected his ambiguous position as an Anglo-Irish poet in London society.'¹³² Stuart Curran takes Moore's orientalism as exemplifying the fact that despotism and fanaticism were inseparable 'from Britain's view of the Muslim world'. He also notes that Moore 'clearly intends his audience to identify Feramorz with himself as the author of eastern romances.'¹³³ Butler terming Moore's politics in *Lalla Rookh* as 'firmly nationalist' also notes the Irish-Eastern connection and identifiability of Persia with Ireland as well as the identifiability of the figure of Mokanna, the false prophet, with the Prophet of Islam and Napoleon.¹³⁴ For Leask the denunciation of Napoleon stems from Moore's upholding of 'organic nationalism' rather than 'Jacobin cosmopolitanism.'¹³⁵ In Knox-Shaw's view Moore 'relives' 'the Irish rebellion in the liveliest part of *Lalla Rookh*.'¹³⁶

The first narrative, 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan', tells the story of Mokanna (based on 'Al Mokanna' of Khorasn in Islamic history) who deceives his Iranian followers into believing that the veil he wears is there to protect them from the dazzling brilliance of his countenance:

There on that throne, to which the blind belief
Of millions rais'd him, sat the Prophet-Chief,
The Great Mokanna. O'er his features hung
The veil, the Silver Veil, which he had flung
In mercy there, to hide from mortal sight
His dazzling brow, till men could bear its light. (p. 9)

The veil of course is there to hide his hideous face. Mokanna is a satanic figure, a 'mocking Fiend' (p. 106) lusting for power and revenge for being sent 'thus maim'd and monstrous upon earth' (p. 56). Like Alaodin, 'in the N.E. of Persia', in Southey's *Thalaba*, Mokanna also has his paradisal garden / harem, this time in Khorasan in the east of Persia. His followers, like the inmates of Alaodin's garden, are bedazzled by his religious and libertarian rhetoric. Azim is one of these followers who joins Mokanna's army when he hears that: 'an Arm Divine was rais'd / To right the nations, and beheld, emblaz'd / On the white flag Mokanna's host unfurl'd, / Those words of sunshine, 'Freedom to the World' (p. 20-21). Here the rhetoric, freeing the world, echoes, to use Leask's words, 'Jacobin cosmopolitanism' distrusted by Moore.

Mokanna is also a revolutionary figure who has seemingly revolted against Muslim conquest of Persia. But Moore makes his rhetoric decidedly a cosmopolitan rather than a national one. 'But then, celestial warriors', he tells his army,

then, when all
Earth's shrines and thrones before our banner fall;
When the glad slave shall at these feet lay down
His broken chain, the tyrant Lord his crown,
The Priest his book, the conqueror his wreath,
And from the lips of Truth one mighty breath
Shall, like a whirlwind, scatter in its breeze
That whole dark pile of human mockeries; --
Then shall the reign of mind commence on earth,
Man, in the sunshine of the world's new spring,
Shall walk transparent, like some holy thing! (p. 25)

The ironised 'Jacobin' rhetoric here shows how far Moore's satirical and negative view of the French revolution and Napoleon in 1817 had moved away from Landor's laudatory

depiction in 1801. When Mokanna's sexual and political tyranny becomes revealed to Azim he joins the army of 'counter-revolutionary' Caliph, 'the occupier', against whom he used to fight in Mokanna's ranks. Incidentally, Leask reads Shelley's version of the revolution in the East in *The Revolt of Islam* (1818) as a reaction to this negative account of oriental revolution.¹³⁷

To continue the discussion of the significance of Mokanna's character, he is a Persian renegade who predicts the downfall of Islam: 'Victory's our own – 'tis written in that Book / Upon whose leaves none but the angels look, / That Islam's sceptre shall beneath the power / Of her great foe fall broken...' (p. 94). But, as critics have noted, Moore also means him to be identified with the Prophet of Islam. Mokanna who has a 'deep-felt, long-nurst loathing of man's name' (p. 43) also holds in contempt all religious creeds. In a parody of the Islamic notion of paradise he says:

That Prophet ill sustains his holy call,
Who finds not heavens to suit the tastes of all;
Houris for boys, omniscience for sages,
And wings and glories for all ranks and ages.
Vain things! – as lust or vanity inspires,
The Heaven of each is but what each desires,
And, soul or sense, whate'er the object be,
Man would be man to all eternity! (p. 45)

Apart from such parallels there is a passage in which Moore explicitly identifies Mokanna, the impostor, with the Prophet of Islam; like Mokanna, he is 'born for love and guile' (p. 82). Elsewhere, in a Volneyan view, his target seems to be 'priestcraft' rather than any specific religion:

Your preaching zealots, too inspir'd to seek
One grace of meaning for the things they speak;
Your martyrs, ready to shed out their blood,
For truths too heavenly to be understood:
And your State Priests, sole vendors of the lore,
That works salvation; (p. 43)

The designation of Islam as ‘priestcraft’ and imposture is ultimately linked with Moore’s politics and his endorsement of the religious and national independence of Ireland, to which we will shortly turn.

‘For God and Iran’

The themes of patriotism and liberty run through *Lalla Rookh*. In ‘The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan’, the Ghbres, or the Zoroastrians, ‘by oppression wrong’d’ (p. 104), join Mokanna’s host, though they do not believe in him, to fight the Caliph’s army and put an end to Muslim rule in Persia:

But none, of all who own’d the Chief’s command,
Rush’d to that battle-field with bolder hand,
Or sterner hate, than Iran’s outlaw’ed men,
Her Worshipers of Fire – all panting then
For vengeance at last for their dear country spurn’d,
Her throne usurp’d, and her bright shrines o’erturn’d. (p. 105)

In the second narrative, ‘Paradise and the Peri’, the Peri is given admittance to Paradise by presenting a drop of a patriot’s blood shed in battlefield: ‘Sweet is our welcome of the Brave / Who die thus for their native land’ (p. 163). The blood shed here, however, is that of a young Indian patriot fighting against the invading Persian army (Mahmood of Gazna’s army, which conquered India in the 11th century AD), who refusing to surrender shoots his last arrow at the invaders and falls: ‘Though foul are the drops that oft distil / On the field of warfare, blood like this, / For Liberty shed, so holy is’ (p. 162). Associating the Orient and liberty, however, is an odd thing and Moore has to be apologetic about it. In an anticipating note, also about ‘The Fire-Worshippers’ in which a group of Zoroastrians figure as freedom fighters, he writes:

Objection may be made to my use of the word liberty in this, and more especially in the story that follows it, as totally inapplicable to any state of things that has ever existed in the East; but though I cannot, of course, mean to employ it in the enlarged and noble sense which is so well understood at the present day, and, I grieve to say, so little acted upon, yet it is no disparagement to the word to apply it to the national independence,

that freedom from the interference and dictatorship of foreigners, without which, indeed no liberty of any kind can exist; and for which both Hindoos and Persians fought against their Mussulman invaders with, in many cases, a bravery that deserved much better success. (p. 162)

Moore's apologetic rhetoric is an indication of how powerful and ubiquitous orientalist notions could be at the time. He finds himself in a discursive tangle. On the one hand he wants to displace his libertarian ideas onto the East while on the other he has to subscribe to an entrenched 'essentialist' orientalist discourse depicting despotism as inseparable from the Orient. He has to negotiate with a colonising culture (British), which deems the idea of liberty as 'totally inapplicable' to the East while it takes away the 'national independence' of colonised cultures (Irish), without which, he holds, 'no liberty of any kind can exist.' One more contradiction the above passage smooths over is that it was a Muslim Persia that conquered India while the 'invaders' are merely called 'Mussulman.'

Given Moore's patriotic sentiments, his praise for patriots who fight for liberty and national independence, clearly, has also a target nearer home. This is, however, an expression of an anti-imperialist stance as relevant to Persian imperialism in India centuries ago as to the contemporary British one in Ireland. Moore goes on to give another instance of imperialism, this time that of Nader Shah's conquest of India in the mid-eighteenth century (based on the accounts given in Dow and Sir John Malcolm's histories). He gives an account of the shah of Persia's violent imperial conquest:

Lie scattered in his ruinous path –
His bloodhounds he adorns with gems,
Torn from the violated necks
Of many a young and lov'd sultana;
Maidens, within their pure zenana,
Priests in the very fane he slaughters,
And chokes up with the glittering wrecks
Of golden shrines the sacred waters! (p. 161)

The passage images imperial conquest as an act of violence and violation in every respect. This dramatisation of a murderous 'violating' pillage (an 'oriental' version of imperialism not unlike, say, Byron's account of Turkish imperialism or Morier's account

of Persian imperialism in Armenia) foregrounds the inhumanity of imperialism, ‘interference and dictatorship of foreigners’, and justifies the struggle for ‘national independence.’

Moore’s expression of his endorsement of Irish national independence and Catholic emancipation is mostly channelled in his praise for and defence of Zoroastrianism against Islam. This is in evidence in his note on the idea of liberty in the East, in ‘The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan’, the framework tale and, especially, ‘The Fire-worshippers.’ In a note on the phrase ‘Worshippers of Fire’ in ‘The Veiled Prophet of Khorasan’, already quoted, he calls it a false charge against ‘those original natives of Persia, who adhered to their ancient faith, the religion of Zoroaster, and who after the conquest of their country by the Arabs, were either persecuted at home, or forced to become wanderers abroad’ (p. 106). ‘Our Indo-European kinsmen, the Persians’, writes Arthur Comte de Gobineau in his influential essay, *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*, ‘[were] conquered by the Semitic Arabs.’¹³⁸ The antiquity and precedence of Zoroastrianism and the Islamicisation of Persia in terms of conquest, the superimposition of an alien culture on a native one, is an idea Moore is particularly anxious to emphasise throughout the poem both through direct comments in the footnotes or through fictional voices. In the framework tale when Lalla Rookh and her entourage come to a ruined building Feramorz explains that it is

the remains of an ancient fire-temple, built by those Ghebers or Persians of the old religion, who, many hundred years since, had fled hither from their Arab conquerors, preferring liberty and their altars in a foreign land to the alternative of apostasy or persecution in their own land. It was... not hard to feel interested in the many glorious but unsuccessful struggles, which had been made by those original natives of Persia to cast off the yoke of their bigoted conquerors. (p. 198)

Such unorthodox ideas enrage Feramorz’s critic, the sanctimonious Fadladeen (an anticipatory figure, in Butler’s view, whose criticisms stand for ‘conservative English criticism of Moore’s *Irish Melodies*’) who exclaims at intervals ‘Bigoted conquerors! – sympathy with Fire-Worshippers!’ (p. 199).¹³⁹ Here Moore gives another note: ‘Voltaire tells us that in his tragedy, ‘Les Guebres’, ‘he was generally supposed to have alluded to the Jansenists. I should not be surprised if this story of the Fire-Worshippers were found

capable of a similar doubleness of application' (p. 199). Moore is clearly implying that his story of the Zoroastrians struggling against the Muslim rule in Persia is meant to be applicable to the Irish struggle against British rule in Ireland.

The interest in Zoroastrianism was in large part sparked by the translation of the *Zend-Avesta*, the sacred book of this religion, which as mentioned before, is supposed to have inaugurated oriental renaissance. 'For Romantic mythographers', writes Leask,

Zoroastrianism is the portal which leads from the moral dualism and anthropomorphic basis of contemporary Christianity back to an understanding of the beginnings of myth in a poetic response to nature. As to the religion of the Persians, it also occupied the geographical as well as world-historical mid-point in the 'Passage to India' from the patriarchal monotheism of Judaeo-Christian tradition to an Indian source in the Vedantic religion of poetry, love and nature.¹⁴⁰

Moore used his Zoroastrian material in such a context; however, he is more interested in the idea of Zoroastrianism as a religion comprising a crucial part of the 'beleaguered' pre-Islamic culture of Persia. Majeed argues that the subject of 'The Fire-Worshippers' is 'imperialism and its beleaguered cultures.'¹⁴¹ (Hence the foregrounding of a panorama of Persian culture in the poem.) He also notes that this narrative makes the Islamic ascendancy in Zoroastrian Persia analogous with the Protestant ascendancy in Catholic Ireland.¹⁴²

'The Fire-Worshippers' tells the story of a group of Zoroastrian guerrilla patriots led by the idealistic Hafed who fight against the Muslim rule in Persia. It is possible to see in the doomed revolt of these patriots an echo of the 1798 Irish rebellion. Hafed is outraged at his struggle being labelled rebellion: 'Rebellion! Foul, dishonouring word, / Whose wrongful blight so oft has stain'd / The holiest cause that tongue or sword / Of mortal ever lost or gain'd' (p. 235). The action takes place in 'Harmozia' in southern Persia where Hafed and his followers struggle against the tyrannical Muslim ruler, emir Al Hassan, who is 'One of that saintly, murderous brood, / To carnage and the Koran given' (p. 203). The association of Islam with tyranny and fanaticism goes on:

Even he, that tyrant Arab sleeps,
Calm, while a nation round him weeps:
While curses load the air he breathes,
And falchions from unnumber'd sheaths
Are starting to avenge the shame
His race hath brought on Iran's name. (p. 202)

Moore uses the word 'Iran' here and throughout the poem instead of the much more common 'Persia' at the time. This, I suggest, is one more way of associating Ireland and Persia as his frequent use of 'Erin', the ancient native name for Ireland, in his *Irish Melodies*, very much concerned with patriotic sentiments, shows. Hafed elaborates on the fate of Iran:

Never was Iran doom'd to bend
Beneath a yoke of deadlier weight.
Her throne had fallen – her pride was crush'd --
Her sons were willing slaves, nor blush'd,
In their own land, -- no more their own, --
To crouch beneath a stranger's throne.
Her towers, where Mithra once had burn'd,
To Muslim shrines – oh shame! – were turn'd,
Where slaves, converted by the sword,
Their mean, apostate worship pour'd,
And curs'd the faith of their sires ador'd. (pp. 204-205)

Elsewhere the idealistic Hafed, ruining the fate of Iran, in a more nationalistic rhetoric, emphasises the heroic past of Persia by mentioning Zal and Rustam, the mythological warriors of Persia on whom Ferdosi based his epic *Shahnameh* available in part to Moore in *Champion's Ferdosi* to which he refers (p. 212):

If her proud sons, her high-born souls,
Men, in whose veins – oh last disgrace!
The blood of Zal and Rustam rolls,
If they will court this upstart race,
And turn from Mithra's ancient ray,
To kneel at shrines of yesterday;
If they will couch to Iran's foes,
Why, let them – till the land's despair
Cries out to Heaven, and bondage grows

Too vile for even the vile to bear! (pp. 245-46)

Finally, the patriots all die in a battle with the Muslim army calling ‘For God and Iran! As they fall’ (p. 261). The passage depicts the Islamicisation of Persia in terms of conquest, coercion and cultural dispossession reiterating the not uncommon view of Islam among Western historian and orientalist as the religion of the sword (‘converted by sword’). This account of the Islamicisation of Persia runs contrary to the historical fact that, ironically, it happened in large part due to Iranians’ fascination by the egalitarian and libertarian ideas in Islam in which they saw a way out of the double tyranny of Zoroastrian priestcraft and monarchy, which had imposed an unbearably rigid class system on them. Majeed observes that Moore’s stress on the tyranny of the Muslim rule in Persia was in contrast to Gibbon’s account emphasising the guarantee of the civil and religious liberties of the Ghebers by the Muslims. He points out that Moore had a special interest in foregrounding the idea of the intolerance of Islam. ‘The parallel between Muslim rule in Iran and British rule in Ireland’, he writes, ‘is driven home with the suggested similarity between the intolerance of Islam and what Moore later called the “pestilent bigotry” of Protestantism.’¹⁴³

The highlighting of Islam as the religion of an ‘upstart race’ in contrast with ‘Mithra’s ancient ray’ again reinforces the parallel between Islam and Protestantism as new arrivals on the scene. Moore, indeed, shows admirable dexterity in cloaking his political views and patriotic aspirations under the garb of his orientalism.

For Moore the idea of displacing his views regarding the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland and intolerance towards Catholicism on to the matter of Persia dates back to his minor pseudo-oriental work *The Twopenny Post Bag* or *Intercepted Letters* (1813). This is a collection of letters in the tradition of Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*. A few of these letters are supposedly written by a Persian, Abdillah, in London to his friend in Isfahan. In one of these Moore draws an analogy between the Shiite ascendancy in Persia and the ‘plight’ of the Sunnis, ‘qui étoient comme les Catholiques des Musulmanisme’ (Moore

quotes D'Herbelot), and the Protestant one in Ireland.¹⁴⁴ 'In some things', writes Abdillah to his friend of the English,

they are a thinking nation
And, on Religious Toleration,
They are so Persian and right!
You know our Sunnites, hateful dogs!
Whom every shiite flogs
Or longs to flog –
...
Such is our mild and tolerant way,
We only curse them twice a day
...
As to the rest, they're free to do
Whate'er their fancy prompt them to,
Provided they make nothing of it
Towards rank or honour, power or profit;
Which things, we naturally expect
Belongs to us, the Establish'd sect,
...
The same mild views of Toleration
Inspire, I find, this button'd nation,
Whose Papists (full as given to rogue,
And only Sunnites with a brogue)
Fare just as well, with all their fuss,
As rascal Sunnites do with us.¹⁴²

Such an explicit analogy leaves no room for doubt about the fact that in *Lalla Rookh* Moore was more concerned with Ireland than Persia. In fine, in *Lalla Rookh* Moore parades his own brand of nationalist and political agenda, one couched in orientalist escapism and exoticism in an attempt to tailor it for the popular taste.

But even this 'tailoring' had its implications. Such was the complex nature of the relationship between (his) text and its context at the time that his construction of the exotic could not but have a bearing on the imperial issues of the time, a bearing rendered the more complex by his ambiguous position. The literary construction of the exotic and the 'anxieties' attendant on it, to use Richardson's and Hofkisch's words, could be both "productive" as well as disruptive in regard to the "imperial will".¹⁴⁶ It is arguable that as regards Ireland Moore's orientalism was meant to be disruptive of this imperial will but

otherwise it was productive of it as it, in a way, empowered it. As such the complex economy of Moore's orientalism cannot be fully accounted for by Said's 'monolithic' model. The disproportionate popularity of *Lalla Rookh* in relation to its 'slightness' as a literary work, Majeed argues, was due to its playing upon (both confirming and caricaturing) the expectations and anxieties of popular 'imperial sensibility.'¹⁴⁷ (This is a crucial point that is equally applicable to James Morier's fiction to which we will turn in the next chapter.) Writing to Moore in 1813, Byron had exactly this 'popular' sensibility in mind:

Stick to the East; -- the oracle, Staël [Madame de Staël] told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South, and the West, have all been exhausted; but from the East, we have nothing but [Southey's] unsaleables – and these he has contrived to spoil, by adopting only their more outrageous fictions... The little I have done in that way is merely a 'voice in the wilderness' for you; and, if it has had any success, that also will prove that *the public are orientalizing*, and pave the path for you.¹⁴⁸

I now turn to Moore's handling of imagery and motifs in *Lalla Rookh* that reflects the author's attempt to tailor it to the 'orientalizing' of 'the public.'

For a reviewer of Southey's *Thalaba* the following lines in it 'breathe the true spirit of oriental poetry':

And oh! What odours the voluptuous vale
Scatters from jasmine bowers,
From yon rose wilderness,
From clustered henna, and from orange groves
That with such perfumes fill the breeze,
As Peris to their Sister bear,
When from the summit of some lofty tree
She hangs, encaged, the captive of the Dives.¹⁴⁹

Southey's floral and florid image of 'the voluptuous vale' is wrought out of a Persian myth. Moore by and large uses the same technique pushed to an extreme. Here is the way he describes 'the vale of Cashmere' in 'The light of the Haram', the last narrative, which is suffused with a sort of mellow sensuality: 'When the Spirit of Fragrance is up with the day, / And the wind, full of wantonness, woos like a lover / The young aspen-

trees, till they tremble all over' (p. 339). The image of 'aspen-trees', Moore tells us in a note, is taken from Bernier's *Travels* (p. 339). The description of the valley goes on:

The Valley holds its Feast of Roses;
The joyous Time, when pleasures pour
Profusely round, and, in their shower,
Hearts open, like the Season's Rose, --
The Flow'ret of a hundred leaves, (p. 340)

Moore's note indicate that 'Feast of Roses', a Persian festival, ('Gul Reezee' in Persian) and the 'Flow'ret of hundred leaves' ('gul sad berk' in Persian) are, respectively, based on Pietro del Valle and Ousley's travelogues to persia (pp. 340, 341). Elsewhere he derives his image, he tells us, from the poetry of a Persian poet (Jami): 'What is it to the nightingale, / If there his darling rose is not?' (p. 352).

Lalla Rookh is shot through with such imagery. Here we have an interesting case of the relationship between 'scholarly' orientalism (travel writings, histories, translations, etc.) and literary orientalism. Moore's more than frequent drawing on orientalist sources, apart from seeking 'authenticity' and authority, gives the impression that his pictorial powers are almost entirely dependent on it. The following images are respectively based on a description of a Persian city, 'Casbin', in a travelogue (*Description of Persia*) and a translation of a famous lyric by Hafiz:

The board was spread with fruits and wine;
With grapes of gold, like those that shine
On casbin's hills; (p. 372)

And Shiraz wine, that richly ran
As if that jewel, large and rare,
The ruby for which Kublai-Khan
Offer'd a city's wealth, was blushing
Melting within a goblet there! (p. 374)

The cornucopia of Persian imagery depicting a Persian spectacle, however, is related to the thematics of the poem. I have suggested that *Lalla Rookh* is concerned with the superimposition of an alien culture on a native one hence the predominance of Persian

imagery underlining the richness and precedence of the beleaguered native culture. An imagery which also imbues the poem with a luxurious, lush quality.

This motif of oriental luxury and the East as the locus of legendary riches is precisely what, in Byron's words, the 'orientalizing' 'public' expected. It is evoked in the poem right from the beginning: 'From the garden in the suburbs to the Imperial Palace, it was one unbroken line of splendour' (p. 3). In 'The Paradise and the Peri', the Peri knows about all the treasures of the East. She knows 'where the Genni hid / The jewell'd cup of their king Jamshid' (p. 1580). She can also see from the above the treasures of the gem of the British Empire, India:

While thus she mus'd, her pinions fann'd
The air of that sweet Indian land,
Whose air is balm; whose ocean spreads
O'er coral rocks, and amber beds:
Whose mountains, pregnant by the beam
Of the warm sun, with diamonds teem;
Whose rivulets are like rich brides
Lovely, with gold beneath their tides;
Whose sandal groves and bowers of spice
Might be a Peri Paradise! (p. 159)

This telling passage exoticises and feminises India. The rich and passive India is imaged as ready to be penetrated (by British imperialism). Here Moore panders to the taste and dreams of an already 'orientalizing' public by providing them with one of, what Martin Green calls in his *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, 'energising myths' of empire propagated throughout the nineteenth century by adventure stories and 'literary second-raters'.¹⁵⁰

Moore couples this motif of 'oriental' opulence and untold riches with another on hinted at before, 'oriental' sensuality and eroticism. The motif of the harem is deployed right from the beginning when we understand that Fadladeen is 'the Great Nazir or Chamberlain of the Haram' (p. 6). In the first narrative, Mokanna has created a 'sainted colony' of the choice beauties of the East enticed by the promise of paradise: 'Alas, poor Zelika! It needed all / The fantasy, which held thy mind in thrall, / To see in that gay

Haram's glowing maids /A sainted colony for Eden's shades' (pp. 31-32). This underlines Mokanna's sexual and political tyranny. But Moore's harem scenes are no less male fantasy than those of Byron discussed before. There is a detailed description of the beauties in the 'curtained galleries' in Mokanna's palace:

(Creatures so bright, that the same lips and eyes
They wear on earth will serve in Paradise,)
There to recline among Heav'n's native maids,
And crown th' Elect with bliss that never fades!
Well hath the Prophet –Chief his bidding done;
And every beauteous race beneath the sun,
From those who knell at Brahma's burning founts,
From Persia's eyes of full and fawn-like ray,
To the fresh nymphs bounding o'er Yemen's mounts;
To the small, half-shut glance of Kathay;
And Georgia's bloom, and Azab's darker smiles,
And the gold ringlets of the Western Isles;
All, all are there; -- each land its flower has given,
To form that fair young Nursery of Heaven! (p. 18)

Moore's description of Mokanna's harem, also parodic of the Islamic concept of heaven, implies sexual tyranny that, like Montesquieu's harem scenes, is emblematic of political tyranny as well. But this minute portrayal of oriental beauties is also manifestly voyeuristic. The following scene is also indicative of this scopophilic desire:

and from behind
Those Persian hangings, that but ill could screen
The harem's loveliness, white hands were seen
Waving embroider'd scarves, whose motion gave
A perfume forth; (p. 24)

Indeed Moore exploited the motif of eroticism to the extent that many of the contemporary reviews accused him of having a 'licentious' imagination. Majeed has noted the reaction of a review such as *The British Review* objecting to the depiction of women in *Lalla Rookh* and Moore's use of the Orient as a 'convenient locale' for a 'full riot of licentious ideas', where a 'gilded corruption and voluptuous abandonment' is possible.¹⁵¹ The review, as he notes, expressed anxiety about women reading this poem, reminding them that *Lalla Rookh*'s stories were from countries 'where women are

merchandize, and men are their proprietors'; the review linked this to anxieties about the 'British muse in her migration to the scenes of Oriental luxury', suggesting that the writing and reading of such works could threaten 'British masculinity': 'We must always raise our voices against all writings, in poetry or prose, in which we perceive a tendency to emasculate the British mind; to melt down its robust virtue, and to dissolve the chaste hardihood of its ancient character, by delusive exaggerations of vicious delights.'¹⁵² The passage exemplifies the split nature of colonial discourse, elaborated in the chapter on Spenser, as it in the same breath speaks of treating women as 'merchandize' being oriental and the British 'masculinity' being in jeopardy. As the century grew such concerns about the degeneration of the nation closely linked with empire-building aspirations were much more strongly voiced.¹⁵³ Such concerns had their origin in orientalist discourse even in its early stages. As one of the earliest references to Persian in English language OED records a statement by Harrison (*England* II.xxii) in 1587: 'Our men are...become...through Persian delicacie crept in among us altogether of straw'. About a century later, Sir John Chardin, one of Moore's important sources, wrote in his account of travels to Persia: 'Luxury, sensuality, licentiousness on the one hand, scholasticism and literature on the other, have made the Persians effeminate.'¹⁵⁴ One could imagine that Moore in giving a free reign to his 'licentious imagination' felt at home in his Persian setting. The involvement of Moore's text in such issues once again bespeaks its complex relation with its context. He could play upon and pander to the imperial sensibility of his readership but such was the nature of the oriental matter, the state of affairs in early nineteenth century and his ambiguous position that his gilded oriental pageantry could also be read as subversive. All these conflicting strands point to the fact that Said's model is inadequate.

One of Moore's sources in writing *Lalla Rookh* was James Justinian Morier's Persian travel writings. Gary Kelly takes Morier's novel *Hajji Baba* (1824) to be a novelistic analogue of orientalist narrative poems such as *Lalla Rookh*.¹⁵⁵ Morier's position in regard to the British Empire was not as complex as that of Moore; nonetheless, there are numerous other issues which make his brand of orientalism no less complex. The next chapter addresses Morier's orientalism and these issues.

Notes

1. Marilyn Butler, 'The orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*', in eds, Bernard Beatty and Vincent Newey, *Byron and the Limits of Fiction* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 78.
2. Marilyn Butler, 'Orientalism' in *The Penguin History of English Literature*, vol. 5 (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 397. Emphasis added.
3. Ibid., 397-98.
4. *Orientalism*, 206.
5. Joseph Lew, 'The Necessary Orientalist? *The Giaour* and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny', in eds, Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkish, *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780-1837* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 183.
6. John Dryden, *The Poems and Fables of Dryden*, ed., James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 'The Flower and the Leaf', lines 225-26.
7. Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems*, ed., Geoffrey Tillotson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 'The Wife of Bath', lines 247-44; 'January and May', lines 341-44.
8. Ibid., 'The Temple of Fame', lines 96-98.
9. Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking [1950] (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1-10.
10. Peter Quennell, cited in Charles Christopher Knipp, *Types of Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1974), 102.
11. Knipp, *Types of Orientalism*, 53-108.
12. Byron, *The Works of Lord Byron* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1994), *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II, stanza LXXXVIII. Further quotations from Byron are from this edition.
13. Ibid., stanza LXXXIX.
14. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley, Poetical Works*, ed., Thomas Hutchinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 446.
15. Ibid., *Hellas*, 52-56.

16. Oliver Goldsmith, *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed., Arthur Friedman, 5 vols. (Oxford University Press), *The Captivity*, Act III, lines 83-87.
17. Ibid., vol. II, *The Citizen of the World*, Letter LXXXV, 152. Further references are to this edition given with letter and page number.
18. Butler, 'The Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*', 78.
19. *Orientalism*, 49.
20. Knipp, *Types of Orientalism*, 272.
21. Butler, 'Orientalism', 396.
22. Ibid.
23. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, trans., com. and intro. C. J. Betts (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 82.
24. C. J. Betts, 'Introduction', *Persian Letters*, 21.
25. Alan Richardson, 'Astrate: Byron's *Manfred* and Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 10 (1991), 18-22.
26. Judith N. Shklar, *Montesquieu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 81.
27. *The Citizen of the World*, Letter LXXII, 152.
28. Ibid., 32-33.
29. Ibid., 39.
30. Shklar, *Montesquieu*, 46.
31. *Persian Letters*, 149.
32. Ibid., 307.
33. Ibid., 45.
34. Ibid., 83.
35. George Lyttelton, *Persian Letters* [*Letters from a Persian in England to His Friend at Ispahan*, 1735], in *Harrison's British Classics* (London: J. Walker, 1793), Letter I, p. 5.
36. Ibid., Letter XXVII, p. 11.

37. Ibid., Letter XXVI, p. 24.

38. *The Citizen of the World*, Letter LIX, 45. Another example is: 'I am to conclude the [English] nation is actually poor; and that like the Persians, they make a splendid figure everywhere but at home' (Letter II, 20).

39. A. Lytton Sells, *Oliver Goldsmith, His Life and Works* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), 241.

40. Samuel Johnson, *Samuel Johnson. A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, ed., Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 351. But even in humanist Johnson passages could be found suggestive of 'innate' oriental traits. For instance, in a strangely ambiguous passage (as to a pro- or anti-imperialist stance) Imlac reveals his 'oriental' fatalism:

'By what means, said the Prince, are the Europeans thus powerful, or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plan colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither'.

'They are more powerful, sir, than we, 'answered Imlac, 'because they are wiser; knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours? I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being' (Ibid., 358).

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. John D. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America. A 200 year History* (New York: Caravan Books, 1977), 21.

44. Marcus Walsh, 'A Very Peculiar Practice: Christopher Smart and the Poetic Language of "Early Romanticism"', in ed., Thomas Woodman *Early Romantics, Perspectives in British Poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 151.

45. Richard Wendorf and Charles Ryskamp, eds, *The Works of William Collins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 102. Further references to Collins are to this edition and are given within the text with line numbers.

46. Cited in Oliver F. Sigworth, *William Collins* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965), 89-90.

47. *The Works of William Collins, Oriental Eclogues*, 'The Preface', 2.
48. Cited in Wendorf, *The Works of William Collins*, 102.
49. William Beckford, *Vathek*, ed. and intro., Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 'Introduction', viii. Further references are to this edition.
50. Ibid., 'Introduction', xxviii.
51. Knipp, *Types of Orientalism*, 229.
52. Ibid., see 229-60.
53. *Vathek*, 36.
54. *The Bride of Abydos*, canto I, stanza xii.
55. Ibid., 102.
56. Ibid., 37.
57. Ibid., 2n., 132.
58. Knipp, *Types of Orientalism*, 265.
59. Lonsdale, 'Introduction', xxiii.
60. P. H. Knox-Shaw, 'The West Indian *Vathek*', *Essays in Criticism*, 43 (1993), 288.
61. Ibid., 296.
62. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, 'Introduction', xxi.
63. Sir William Jones, *The Works of Sir William Jones, With the life of the Author*, 13 vols. (London, 1807), X, 204-205.
64. Ibid., 359.
65. Ibid., 360.
66. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, 10-13.
67. Ibid., 12. The popularity of a poet like Sadi could have other reasons too. Yohannan notes that the libertarian sentiments of Sadi's work at the time of the American and French revolutions could have a message for Europe. He points to Jones' remarks about some lines in *Bustan* to the effect that 'they would have been suppressed in Europe

in an earlier age 'for spreading with too strong a glare the light of liberty and reason' (Ibid., 20).

68. Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings, James Mill's The History of the British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 22.

69. See *ibid.*, 11-47.

70. Cited in Haideh Ghomi, *The Fragrance of the Rose: The Transmission of Religion, Culture, and Tradition Through the Translation of Persian Poetry* (Goteborg: University of Goteborg, 1993), 2.

71. Walter Savage Landor, *The Complete Works of Walter Savage Landor*, ed., Stephen Wheeler, 16 vols. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), vol. 15, 242.

72. *Ibid.*, 429.

73. Marilyn Butler, 'Plotting the Revolution. The Political Narratives of Romantic Poetry and Criticism', in Kenneth R. Johnston et al. eds, *Romantic Revolutions, Criticism and Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 135.

74. Alan Richardson, 'Epic Ambivalence: Imperial Politics and Romantic Deflection in Williams' *Peru* and Landor's *Gebir*', in *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture*, 276.

75. *Ibid.*, 275.

76. Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkisch, 'Introduction', *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture*, 9.

77. Cited in Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 49.

78. *Ibid.*

79. Butler, 'Orientalism', 413.

80. Butler, 'Plotting the Revolution', 142.

81. Robert Southey, *Thalaba: the Destroyer*, 2vols. (London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1801), 8-10. No line numbers. Further references are to this edition and are given with book and stanza numbers. References to the notes are given with page number.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Orientalism*, 5.

85. *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto II, stanza LXIII.
86. Ibid., *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, lines 1001-1003.
87. Ibid., lines 929-31.
88. Cited in Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, 93.
89. Butler, 'Plotting the Revolution', 142.
90. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 47.
91. *Thalaba*, Book VI, stanza 25.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid., stanza 28.
94. Ibid., stanza 36.
95. Ibid., Book X, stanza 11; Book V, stanza 28.
96. Butler, 'Plotting the Revolution', 142; Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 75.
97. See Butler, 'Orientalism', 402-07 and 'Plotting the Revolution', 142-49.
98. *Thalaba*, Book VI, stanzas 18, 19.
99. Ibid., stanzas 19, 24.
100. Butler, 'Plotting the revolution', 144.
101. *Thalaba*, vol. 2, 68.
102. Ibid., Book V, stanza 15.
103. Ibid., vol. 2, 308.
104. Ibid., 184.
105. Ibid., 178.
106. Ibid., Book V, stanza 5.
107. Ibid., 261.

108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., Book V, stanza 6.
110. Ibid.
111. Butler, 'Plotting the revolution', 144-45.
112. *Culture and Imperialism*, 9.
113. Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 147.
114. Sara Makdisi, 'Versions of the East: Byron, Shelley and the Orient', in *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture*, 209.
115. *The Bride of Abydos*, canto I, stanza i.
116. Abdul R. JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics, the Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (Amherst, Mass.: the University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 4.
117. Lew, "'The necessary Orientalist?'" *The Giaour* and the Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny', 183.
118. Lonsdale, 'Introduction', *Vathek*, xxiii.
119. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, xxivi, 12.
120. Ibid., 12. Bernard Blackstone also notes that Persian poetry in translation including several translations of Hafiz before 1807 and Stephen Weston's *Specimens of Persian Poetry* (1805), widely known at the time, was available to Byron ('Byron and Islam: the triple Eros', *Journal of European Studies*, vi (1970), 330.
121. *The Bride of Abydos*, canto I, stanza iii.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid., canto I, stanza v.
124. Ibid., stanza x.
125. Ibid.
126. Butler, 'Orientalism', 433, 430.

127. *The Bride of Abydos*, canto Ii, stanza v.

128. *Ibid.*, 270.

129. Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh, An Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, 1846), 2. No line numbers. Further references are to this edition and are given with page number.

130. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 93.

131. *Ibid.*, 4.

132. *Ibid.*, 5.

133. Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*, 144.

134. Butler, 'Orientalism', 426, 420-22.

135. Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, 113.

136. Knox-Shaw, 'The West Indian *Vathek*', 284.

137. Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, 110.

138. Cited in Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, 79.

139. Butler, 'Orientalism', 426.

140. Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, 145.

141. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 94.

142. See *ibid.*, 94-100.

143. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 95. It should be noted that, as Majeed also observes (*ibid.*, 92-93), Moore tries to render his text as dialogic as possible by incorporating alternative perspectives. For instance, if Hafed calls the Arab Muslims the 'upstart race' or 'bigots', Al Hassan also calls the Persians the 'cursed race' (p. 255); or Hinda calls the Zoroastrians 'Slaves of fire' and 'impious Ghebers' (pp. 220-21). Moore also mimics and provokes the reaction of his critics in his text. We will see that there is the same tendency towards 'dialogism' in Morier too.

144. Moore, *The Twopenny Post Bag*, in *Moore's Poetical Works, With a Life of the Author* (London: Routledge, 1863), 452.

145. *Ibid.*, 451-52.

146. Richardson and Hofkisch, 'Introduction', *Romanticism, Race and Imperial Culture*, 5.
147. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 102-03.
148. Cited in Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East*, 13.
149. Lionel Madden, ed., *Robert Southey, The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 87.
150. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, 3.
151. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 105.
152. Ibid.
153. For a discussion of these concerns see also John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) and Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 'Introduction'.
154. Cited in Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America*, xxii.
155. Gary Kelly, 'Verse narratives and the Novel', in ed., Paul Schellinger, *Encyclopaedia of the Novel*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 1404.

CHAPTER VI

The 'Real' Persia: James Morier's Hajji Baba Novels

'[If all] the solid literature about Persia were to be burnt ... tomorrow, *Hajji Baba* would suffice to replace it.' Lord Curzon (1895)

In this concluding chapter I will discuss James Morier's construction of Persia focusing on his *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* and its sequel, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*. The orientalist motifs, topoi and themes as well as their formal and stylistic rendering in the texts hitherto discussed, I will argue, reach a sort of finale in Morier's work. Before turning to the subject of this chapter proper, a brief survey of what is already said about the writers hitherto discussed by way of comparing and contrasting them with Morier follows to help highlight his significance from the perspective of this study.

I have suggested that the nascent orientalist discourse of *The Faerie Queene*, a poem about 'fashioning' the courtly gentleman and the English nation, is subsumed in 'England's nascent' nationalist and imperialist discourse of the poem.¹ Viewing the poem in the context of a 'poetics of Elizabethan power' and the Protestant-nationalist discourse of the time sheds light on the figurations of Persia which help define England as a glorious imperial power and Queen Elizabeth as a powerful, virtuous empress.² The association of Persian monarchs, mostly, with evil in the symbolic structure of the poem also reflects anxieties about the abuse of royal power and degeneration in a court government and culture. Comparably, Morier's orientalist works, especially Hajji Baba novels, purport, among other things, to depict the harms of a (despotic) court government and culture.

Marlovian orientalism in *Tamburlaine the Great* is to be read in the context of his critique of power (Tamburlaine as a hero of power), religion and ideology. His is a much more sophisticated, self-conscious (and sustained, for that matter) orientalism than Spenser's – one which allows, thanks to its split nature, both confirmative and subversive

readings. It can, in Bartel's words, even expose the demonisation of the oriental others 'as strategy for self-authorization and self-empowerment.'³ The displacement underlying Marlowe's orientalism is more profound and complex than Spenser's. But if Marlowe's orientalism is relatively self-aware, Morier's is conclusively so, though in sharp contrast, in its totally 'manifest' aspect it 'naturalises' rather than exposes the 'othering' of the orientals.⁴ The contradistinction between Marlowe's and Morier's orientalisms tends to be more than just 'differences in form and personal style', as Said would have it.⁵ Marlowe's ambiguous treatment of the idea of imperialism culminates in its stark justification in Morier. Significantly, however, the works of these two writers, to one degree or another, share the theme of 'representation' itself. In the Hajji Baba novels we see that the Persians stereotype the Turks and they both stereotype Europeans as 'infidels'. The difference lies in the fact that whereas Marlowe seems to expose the stereotypical discourse as 'strategy for self-empowerment', Morier figures it as indicative of 'oriental' intellectual darkness.

In Milton the matter of Persia is likewise inextricable from the 'poetics of power.' In essentially anti-monarchical poems, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Persian monarchs figure as instances of the evil character of all kingship. More important, figurations of Persia in Milton also serve as a displacement and cut across contemporary history troping a corrupt system with the potentate at its head. Whereas in Spenser Persian potentates provide a contrast to the English queen, in Milton they are identifiable with the English king. Comparably, Morier's work also purports to treat a corrupt and corrupting courtly culture as hallmark of a pre-modern society.

An important element of Romanticism, orientalism serves different political and ideological purposes in Romantic writers and poets. However, the notion of escapism and private fantasy is also there, notably in Beckford's *Vathek* and Collins' *Persian Eclogues*. Byron foregrounds the exoticism associated with the East, in which his Persian imagery plays a significant part, as a refuge from modernity whereas Morier valorises modernity as a mark of the superiority of a 'civilised' society over its pre-modern version. With Southey, in important ways a precursor of the English Romantic

orientalism, Morier shares the depiction of ‘oriental’ ‘Loathsome Ignorance and brute Servitude.’⁶ The radical impulse of Thomas Moore’s work contrasts with Morier’s essentially anti-jacobin stance. While Moore’s orientalism in *Lalla Rookh*, on to which he displaces his liberal and nationalistic political views, can be read as a part of a larger anti-imperialist strategy, Morier’s is the converse. What these two have in common is the topicality and the sense of contemporaneity as well as an espousal of high Enlightenment ideas. More important, they both play on the imperial sensibility of their readers, which in large part accounts for their popularity. Moore parades his own brand of political agenda couched in orientalist escapism and exoticism (a touch of which is an inescapable aspect of the representations of Persia in all the texts discussed in this study) in an attempt to tailor it to popular taste. In contrast, it is the purportedly ‘realistic’ portrayal of Persia that makes the Hajji Baba novels both popular and ‘definitive.’

John Sutherland observes that Morier has brought the ‘oriental tale’ to ‘its highest level.’⁷ In what follows I will discuss issues which make Morier’s Hajji Baba novels the culmination of ‘oriental tales’ both thematically and stylistically. It will be argued that the Hajji Baba novels have a double ideological thrust: justification of imperial expansion, especially in *Hajji Baba in England*, and a critique of the residual ‘oriental’ elements of British society of the time. Morier’s work, we shall see, well documents the power and entrenched status of orientalist discourse. A creature of his times, Morier could not ultimately think outside the binary vision of East / West, ancient / modern, benighted / enlightened. But, as I will propose, there are issues that make this ‘binary vision’ more complex than it may seem. I will try to read Morier’s construction of Persia in the context of the discourses of the time, especially the emergence and gradual consolidation of the culture of modernisation in Britain and its rise as the foremost imperial power of the time. For, if the inchoate orientalism of Spenser, the first English literary figure discussed in this study, is subsumed in his nascent imperialist vision, Morier’s fully-fledged orientalism is of one piece with his sustained imperialist view. Finally, it will be argued that the split orientalist discourse of Morier’s work reveals some of the conflicts and contradictions of the British society and culture of the time.

Said quotes Disraeli as having observed in his novel *Tancred* that ‘the East was a career.’⁸ Morier’s family, after their banishment from France, had prospered in the East (Turkey) as merchants and diplomats. Persia was to prove even more of a career for James Morier himself whose success both as diplomat and writer had to do with it.

James Justinian Morier (1780-1849) was born at Izmir in Turkey. The Moriers, according to Edward G. Browne, were a Huguenot family who migrated to Switzerland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; some of them engaged in commerce at Smyrna (Izmir) where Issac Morier, James’ father, was born in 1750.⁹ James was the second of four sons; the first three became diplomats and the last a naval officer. James was sent to England to receive his education at Harrow. Sometime before 1807 he joined his father in Constantinople where he was the Consul General of the Levant Company. The first phase of James’ career as a diplomat, which lasted ten years, began in 1807. As the private secretary of Sir Harford Jones, he accompanied him in his mission to Persia whose aim was to thwart Napoleon’s attempt at seeking an ally in Persia for invading India. After staying for about three months in Tehran, where he was promoted to the secretary of the delegation, he returned to England with a Persian delegation to finalise the agreements reached in Tehran. In 1810, as secretary to Sir Gore Ousley, ambassador extraordinary to Tehran, he travelled for a second time to Persia where he took part in negotiations attempting to obtain Persian support against Franco-Russian alliance, which resulted in a treaty eventually signed in 1812. On Ousley’s return to England in 1814, Morier was left in charge of the embassy in Tehran till 1815 when he finally left the East. Two years later he was granted a retiring pension. With the exception of two years (1824-26) as a special commissioner to Mexico, he lived until his death in 1849 in London where he devoted himself to writing.¹⁰

Morier wrote two travelogues, two ‘tales’, and a number of novels, which, with the exception of two, are concerned with the Islamic Orient and Persia. Morier’s fictional works were all published after his retirement as a diplomat. In 1812, shortly after his return to England from his first Persian travel, *A Journey through Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor to Constantinople, in the Years 1808 and 1809* was published. *A Second*

Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople, in the Years 1810 and 1816 followed in 1818. Morier's first and most important fictional work, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, came out in 1824. The sequel, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* followed in 1828. Probably influenced by Sir Walter Scott's historical romances, Morier wrote *Zohrab, the Hostage* in 1832. His next work, *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars*, published in 1834, was also a romance. Morier's first of the two non-oriental works, *Abel Alnutt*, was published in 1837. The first and longest of his two 'tales', *An Oriental Tale*, was printed in a limited number of copies in 1839. *The Mirza*, actually a 'miscellany' by a single author, a collection of 'oriental tales' in the style of *The Arabian Nights* bound together by a frame narrative, was published in 1841. *Misselmah, A Persian Tale*, a short 'tale', was printed in a very small number of copies in 1847. Morier's last work, *Martin Toutrond: A Frenchman in London in 1831* was published in 1849, the year he died.

Apart from *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars*, which can be called a 'Turkish Tale', and *An Oriental Tale*, which as the title suggests is about the (Islamic) East in general, Morier's other orientalist works are all concerned with Persia (though only the frame narrative of *The Mirza* specifically deals with Persia and its 'tales' are set in the East as a general locality). *Hajji Baba* and, its sequel, *Hajji Baba in England*, especially the former, are by far the most important and recognized of Morier's works. Edward G. Browne notes that Morier's 'reputation as a writer of fiction, and an observer of men and lands' rests on these two novels.¹¹ On Morier's other works he adds that excepting *Zohrab, the Hostage* and *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars* 'it may safely be said that of the remainder scarce even the titles are known.'¹² Indeed, a look at British Library Catalogue shows that the titles of Morier's other works are followed by 'By the Author of "Hajji Baba"'; for example, *Zohrab, the Hostage. By the Author of "Hajji Baba."*

Morier, then, all in all wrote eight 'oriental' works of fiction. Two of these are 'tales' and one (*The Mirza*) is actually a collection of 'tales' rather than a novel. Of the remaining four works, which could be called novels, one (*Ayesha, the Maid of Kars*) is set in Turkey while the remaining three (*Hajji Baba* and its sequel plus *Zohrab, the*

Hostage) are set in Persia. In what follows we will focus on the Hajji Baba novels as they are thematically, structurally and aesthetically the most important and representative of Morier's works so much so that it could be said that what followed them were at best shadowy reworkings of some of the topoi and imagery found in them. The Hajji Baba novels contain by far the most sustained and coherent articulation of Morier's views regarding the East and the British society of his time.

I start my discussion of Morier's work with a look at his travelogues. Morier's travel writings are crucial to his fictional work, especially to the Hajji Baba novels which could be said to be, more or less, novelistic versions of these accounts. They also provide, as already mentioned, a repertoire of motifs, topoi and images to be drawn upon in later works. The importance of these writings can be better appreciated by noting the fact that, as we shall see, Morier's novelistic powers are very limited. For a writer who seems to have always more than needed a pattern and ready-to-be-used material what could be better than these writings, which were already a sort of 'narrative' in themselves? Moreover, these writings and their extensive incorporation into the fictional works following them, put Morier in a unique position as an 'orientalist' writer; the position, like that of Byron in the domain of narrative poetry, of someone composing works of 'fiction' about the East having, allegedly, had the chance of seeing the 'reality' of it first-hand. Indeed, this claim, explicit or implicit, on being 'realistic' is the seminal point on the basis of which Morier's orientalism could be said to be a culmination of those of the writers hitherto discussed in this study. If for their Persian material the writers preceding Morier had to draw on the classical works and later on the travel writings written in the first phase of Anglo-Persian relationship (in the Elizabethan period), Morier had himself travelled to Persia and had written two copious accounts of his travels there.

On the 27th October, 1807 James Morier, 'His Majesty's Secretary of Embassy to the Court of Persia', sailed from Portsmouth with Sir Harford Jones' mission to 'that very interesting part of the globe.'¹³ This mission marked the second phase of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relationship after its first phase in the Elizabethan and Caroline eras (discussed in the chapters on Spenser, Marlowe and Milton). Unlike the first phase, this

second round of relations had been embarked upon by the British on mostly political rather than commercial grounds. The objective of the mission was to protect India against the designs of Napoleon. So crucial was this protection that to save time the East India Company had itself sent a delegation to the court of Persia. We read the narrative of *A Journey through Persia* against the backdrop of colonialism (the last waves of anti-colonial resistance in India) and imperial rivalry:

In latter years, during the war between the East India Company and Tippoo Saib under the administration of Marquis Wellesley, the political relations of England and Persia were renewed. An embassy, which Tippoo sent to Fatteh Ali Shah, the present king of Persia, was followed soon after by a rival mission, [by] the Indian government...¹⁴

‘Sometime after’, Morier goes on, ‘French agents were traced into Persia, and the views of France began to be suspected.’¹⁵ On his return to England Morier soon published the account of his journey: ‘Finding ... that curiosity was quite alive to everything connected with Persia, I was induced to publish my memoranda which I had already made on that country.’¹⁶ The reason for this curiosity was of course ‘the views of France’, Napoleon’s schemes of finding an ally in Persia for invading India had resulted in signing the Treaty of Finkenstein in 1807 according to which, in return for French assistance against the encroaching Russians on the north of Persia, Persia would go along with Napoleon’s designs on India. As a result of being drawn into the imperialist rivalries of the three important powers of the time (Britain, France and Russia) in those hectic years, the little known country of Persia, remaining mostly a far-away, exotic Oriental land in the English imagination, suddenly had become the focus of attention. The policy of the Persian court in its relation with France and Britain was to take advantage of the Franco-British hostility in order to gain assistance, first from the French and then from the British, against the Russians. This policy, only one aspect of the mishandling of the Perso-Russian wars by the Persian government, failed leading Persia, in 1813 and 1828, to the loss of vast territories in the north. Morier’s *Journeys*, published in 1812 and 1818, cover these events, which also figure in the Hajji Baba novels.

These travelogues, the first travel writings addressing contemporary Persia in the Napoleonic Wars era, became hugely popular owing to their topicality (as mentioned in the previous chapter Moore drew on them in his *Lalla Rookh*). Their fictionalised versions were to become a sort of guidebook to Persia throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁷ These writings, however, are not just accounts of the political scene in Persia at a particular period. Indeed, their prime objective, as the writer puts it, is to give a picture of the 'real' Persia and the Islamic (Middle) East.

In his account of his first journey to Persia, Morier tells us that because of 'the comparative shortness of my stay in Persia, I cannot presume to delineate the national character.'¹⁸ The pose of impartial observer, however, cannot be maintained for long as the narrator proceeds to depict 'a despotic country.'¹⁹ The text postulates ideas like 'the national levity of the Persians', their 'mere love of change', 'the exaggeration natural to a Persian', 'superstitious Persians', the ignorance and vanity of the Persians and their 'low cunning.'²⁰ Elsewhere, discussing the recent history of Persia, Morier tells us that the memory of Kerim Khan, the founder of the dynasty immediately preceding the Qajar period (1787-1925) with which Morier is concerned, 'is much lamented in Persia; as his reign, a reign of dissipation and splendour, was congenial to the character of the people.'²¹ The Persians are 'an Asiatic people, so much charmed by show and brilliancy.'²² These motifs are all developed in the Hajji Baba novels in which the Persians are portrayed as a vain, self-interested, duplicitous and cunning people – typical enough. Morier, however, is ready to praise too, though it rarely happens. He writes, for instance, that 'as a nation, as fit stuff for soldiers, I know of no better materials. The Persian possesses the true qualities of the soldier: active, inured to labour, careless of life, admiring bravely, and indeed (as the chief object of their ambition) aspiring to the appellation of *resheed* or courageous.'²³ This is part of his attempt to maintain his assumed position of impartial observer. And, to do him justice, for a person who hardly knew Persia and had very little contact with people other than courtiers and government officials in his short stay in Persia during his first journey, at times he presents some realistic touches. His accounts of the harsh treatment of people, especially peasants, by government agents at a time of widespread poverty and abuse of power in Persia history

could hardly be unrealistic. The impression one gets from reading *A Journey through Persia* is that the writer could be a pretty fair-minded travel writer, as far as travel writers go, if it was possible for him not to carry his cultural and orientalist baggage. But this 'baggage' is there. For instance, though he could have virtually no contact with Persian women, he tells us that for Persian men, women are 'creatures... born only for their pleasure and convenience.'²⁴

One crucial aspect of Morier's work demonstrating that if it is 'orientalist', it is in spite of itself, is the attempt at differentiation. Orientalist discourse, in its Saidian account, is all in all monolithic, endeavouring to deny difference rather than highlight it. Even in this first of his works, in his 'delineation' of the 'national character' of the Persians, Morier defines 'Persian character' in terms of its difference from that of the Turk. 'In the national characters of the Persian, the most striking difference from that of the Turk is perhaps the facility with which he adopts foreign manners and customs.'²⁵ Earlier I have discussed some of the origins of orientalist topoi about Persia in Herodotus. I would suggest that the fact that Morier makes such a big claim about the 'national character' of the Persians in a matter of a few months residence in Persia has something to do with his tendency, especially in his travel writings, to draw on classical writers and the Bible in talking about things oriental. In his *Histories* Herodotus emphasises the Persian's pliability in adopting and assimilating foreign manners and customs.²⁶ In his concluding remarks in *A Journey through Persia* Morier further develops this idea. The passage merits quoting at length as it well shows the operation of a discourse to which Morier subscribes and contributes:

I am sure that if the Persians had possessed as much communication with Europeans, as the Turks have had, they would at this day not only have adopted many of our customs, but, with their natural quickness, would have rivalled us in our own arts and sciences. Unlike the Turks, they never scruple to acknowledge our superiority, always however reserving to themselves the second place after the English in the list of nations: whereas the Turk, too proud, to obstinate, and too ignorant to confess his own inferiority, spurns at the introduction of any improvement with equal disdain from every nation.²⁷

What is involved here is of course defining 'the English' against the oriental other. Instead of the binary division of us / them, however, the passage posits a tripartite structure, 'them' being further subdivided into 'the Persians' and 'the Turks', the former ready to mimic 'us' (the English / Europeans). Furthermore, also implied in the passage is the idea that 'us' too is subject to differentiation: between 'the English', who come first 'in the list of the nations', and other European nations. The Persians and the Turks, to use Spivak's terms, are respectively the 'self-consolidating other' and the absolute one.²⁸ As the mid-term in the above-mentioned tripartite structure the Persian is the 'self-consolidating' other in that he assumedly reassures the English of their 'superiority' whereas the Turk, the third term occupying the extreme pole in this representational matrix, refuses to acknowledge his own 'inferiority'. The passage also tries to naturalise the relationship between these terms in its representational scheme by couching the adoption of European customs and manners – the desire of 'them' to become as far as possible like 'us' – in terms of 'improvement'. The Persians are figured as ready to accept this 'improvement' because of 'their natural quickness', while the Turks refuse it because they are 'too proud, too obstinate, too ignorant.' In other words, and this is a crucial point, the text naturalises British dominance. And this is the kind of ideology, a version of the ideology of 'civilising mission', which suffuses Morier's work.

This representational strategy, which I think is another example of the inadequate attention paid to the complexities of the relationships between the orientalist and the oriental in the Saidian model of orientalist discourse, is again a culmination of what could be also found, in varying degrees, in other works discussed in this study. In his study of De Quincey's orientalist writings John Barrell points out that such textual strategies can be found even in the Greek writings about the non-Greek.²⁹ As far as Persia is concerned (as, incidentally, Barrell also points out), as discussed elsewhere in this study, the Greek construction of oriental otherness was not uniform. Distinctions were made between the Persians and the peoples inhabiting unknown territories to the north-east of Persia. For instance, Childs notes that the Indians featured as a 'monstrous race.'³⁰ Aeschylus could even wonder why the Greeks and the Persians should be enemies at all while celebrating the Greek triumph over Persian 'oriental despotism.'³¹ The figuration of the Persian

seems to oscillate between the familiar and the alien. This tripartite differential grid seems to be partly applicable to Spenser's figurations of Persia too, for in his exercise in 'self-fashioning', the figure of the Persian monarch appears to be more familiar and less menacing than the all too alien that of the 'sarazin' with its Islamic overtones. Though Marlovian orientalism seems to problematise the very concept of the alien and the validity of such differentiation, his figuration of (de-Islamicised) Persians tend to be nearer the 'us' pole than that of the Turks (associated with Islam) who, due to the power relations of the time, were bound to appear more menacing. Moore 'familiarises' the figure of the Zoroastrian Persians fighting against the Muslim conquest in *Lalla Rookh* as he can find a similarity between them and the Irish nationalists. The point is that these, at best, sporadic differential patterns develop into a more sustained, coherent representational strategy in Morier's work in which the figure of the Persian fluctuates between the familiar (so far as he is ready to adopt or conform to European mode of behaviour and thought) and the alien (so far as he fails to do so or is ignorant of it). This indicates that Morier's orientalist discourse is necessarily split in its endeavour to simultaneously differentiate and, as we shall see, homogenise.

Joseph Lew notes that in the writings of the first decades of the nineteenth century, Byron's generation, one sees, among other things, 'the beginnings of modern anthropology.'³² The word 'anthropology' is here used in the broad sense of looking at a people as an object of 'observation.' In Morier's travel writings one can certainly see an amateur anthropologist and Bible scholar (as well as, we may presume, a would-be novelist gathering data for his fiction). Though he hardly knew Persian, had little contact with people and his stay in Persia was short in his first trip there due to which, he tells us, he 'cannot presume to delineate the national character' (implying that given enough time he should do so!), he presumes to record contemporary customs of Persia – notably its superstitions. He is of course often wrong or inexact. For instance, he makes the gross mistake of calling the Persians, like the Indian Muslims, Sunnites.³³ So important are these 'observations' to Morier that he incorporates them, in an appendix, in his *A Second Journey* six years after the publication of his *A Journey*. He also adds them to the 1835

edition (the third) of *Hajji Baba*. For him these ‘observations’ affirm the validity of the Bible and the unceasing, monolithic nature of the East:

For the manners of the East, amidst all the changes of Government and Religion, are still the same; and at every step, some object, some idiom, some dress, some custom of common life reminds the traveller of antient times, and confirms above all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety of the language and the history of the Bible. There is perhaps no part of the East to which these observations might not apply; for whatever differences of creed, of government, or of language may exist between them, there is still no line of separation between any two Eastern nations so strong, as that which is drawn between Europeans and Asiatics.³⁴

Here is the orientalist-traveller eager to find the ‘monolith’ of the East to which to apply his (pre)conceptual baggage. The passage, as with Morier’s work in general, takes what it deems as the Persian mode of life and thought to be emblematic of the East in general. His ‘delineation’ of the ‘national character’ of Persia is a discursive act on the East as a whole, an act which has as its ideological underpinning the binary logic of orientalism – ‘us’ (Europeans) / ‘them’ (Asiatics) – discussed in Said’s work. The monolith of the East is conceived not just in space (different Oriental realms) but also in time (‘antient times’). The ‘declarative and self-evident’, in Said’s words, remarks about Persia and the East are cast in ‘the timeless eternal’ (‘the manners of the East ... are’).³⁵

A creature of his time, Morier is ultimately unable or unwilling to think beyond this binary vision. What makes his case interesting, apart from the fact that his writings are the product of a time that was a turning point in the history of British expansionism, is the reality effects he produces and the degree of self-awareness he shows in his orientalising project as well as the tendency toward ‘polyphony’ in the *Hajji Baba* novels (which I shall discuss towards the end of this chapter). As to the differentiating effects under discussion the ‘difference’ between Easterners is conceived in terms of the degree to which they are supposed to be eager to appear European. For instance, in his *A Second Journey* Morier notes with characteristic glee Crown Prince Abbas Mirza’s efforts, with the help of European officers, to introduce European discipline to his troops:

One of the most remarkable facts in the modern history of Asia, is the introduction of European discipline in the armies of Persia. When we have seen such discipline entirely destroyed in one Mahomedan state, in spite of the efforts of the government to maintain it – when the prejudices of the Mahomedan religion are considered, and particularly the doctrine of predestination which it inculcates, it must remain a matter of surprise how it has commenced, maintained and strengthened itself in Persia.³⁶

I have already noted that the ideology of ‘civilising mission’ informs Morier’s orientalist project. The above passage demonstrates that his attitude towards this ‘mission’ is evangelical. It is ‘a matter of surprise’ that the Persians, the followers of ‘the Mahomedan religion’ (not Islam), should be able to change at all; they are able to change, to appear European, despite being Muslims. We shall say more about ‘predestination’, which Morier regards as part and parcel of Islam and the probable biographical note in it later. ‘The Turks’, ‘observes’ Morier in *A Second Journey*, ‘are greater predestinarians than the Persians.’³⁷ Six years earlier he had ‘observed’ that: ‘The national levity of the Persians counteracts the original rigour of their religious principles, and disposes them from the mere love of change, to admit the encroachments of European manners, which would rouse to despair and revenge the less volatile character of Turks...’³⁸ The Persians are Muslims in spite of themselves. In the Hajji Baba novels we see that most of them breach the Islamic religious principles (the prohibition of alcohol, for example) so far as they are not exposed. When they go to England in *Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, they, especially Hajji Baba himself, have more freedom to act in accordance with their ‘national levity’ and infringement of these principles.

For the Persians to become ‘entirely civilised’, they should first be brought out of ‘their darkness in religion.’³⁹ For this, Morier proposes an evangelical programme:

if, in addition to the Scriptures, some plain treatises of the evidences of Christianity, accompanied by strictures upon the falseness of the doctrines of Mahomed, were translated into Persian and disseminated through that country, very favourable effects would be produced.⁴⁰

Evangelicalism is, as we shall further discuss later, one of the major preoccupations of Morier’s work. Morier is sure of the success of such a project, or ‘policy’ in his own

words, holding that its undertakers would be surprised with ‘the rapidity with which the Persians might be entirely civilised’: ‘if it were ever the policy of any one of European nations to give a further impulse to the eagerness with which they have already begun to acquire some of our arts, it is not to be doubted, but that the whole of Persia would soon exhibit a very different aspect from what it does at the present.’⁴¹ In the light of what has already been said about the ideological underpinnings of Morier’s work in the Hajji Baba novels could be said to be concerned with the reason why such a ‘policy’ should be undertaken and the degree to which it may be viable. *Hajji Baba* depicts the Persians as a degenerate, ‘picaresque’ nation in dire need of European ‘enlightenment’ and *Hajji Baba in England*, by contrasting the Persian and the English manners and mode of thought, puts to test the viability of such a project. On his return to Persia from England, in *Hajji Baba in England*, our eponymous hero has changed so much that we can hardly recognise him as the protagonist of the first novel. In a sense, Hajji Baba could be said to be a ‘mimic man.’ Morier’s insistence on depicting the Persian as eager to ‘mimic’, to appear European could be likened to Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of ‘colonial mimicry’ in his discussion of ‘colonial discourse’, with which ‘orientalist discourse’ at times overlaps, as ‘the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite.’⁴²

The Persian Picaresque

The connection between Hajji Baba novels and the two volumes of travel writings Morier wrote on Persia, and partly on Turkey, is so close that, as Edward G. Browne also observes, the former could be called the ‘cream’ of the latter.⁴³ The point to remember here, however, is that the Hajji Baba novels are a distillation and a caricature of all that their author wishes to find in Persia. If in his travel writings in the interest of ‘realism’, the pose of ‘impartial’ observation that travelogue as a ‘factual’ mode of writing appropriates, he is obliged to portray Persia, and the East for that matter, as a more dynamic and vital place than he would have wished to, his Persian vision in the Hajji Baba novels comes closer to the ‘orientalist’ mode which he both recreates and subscribes to. In other words, Morier’s ‘fictional’ version of Persia is more static than his

‘factual’ one as his ‘orientalising’ impulse could be given a freer reign in ‘fiction.’ Of course, all this does not mean that Morier’s account of Persia in his novels does not purport to be ‘realistic’. Indeed, as I have already mentioned, the main distinguishing feature of Morier’s orientalism in general and its fictional version in the *Hajji Baba* novels in particular is this claim on giving the ‘true’ picture of Persia and, by extension, the Orient (the Islamic Orient, at least): a claim which the reception of the novel by and large corroborated.

‘Realism’, which in this case means the avowed or unavowed claim on representing the ‘essence’ of the East is, in a sense, the mark of all orientalist works. Said calls it ‘radical realism’, that is, ‘the kind of language, thought, and vision’ used in ‘Orientalism’ (‘the habit for dealing with questions, objects, qualities, and regions deemed Oriental’) who anyone engaged in it uses to ‘designate, name, point to, fix what he is talking or thinking about with a word or phrase, which then is considered to have acquired, or more simply to be, reality.’⁴⁴ Apart from this, Morier’s fiction in *Hajji Baba*, which is by far his best, also imparts a kind of ‘formal’ realism through a variety of narrative techniques and strategies (lack of authorial intrusion, for example) which makes it sharply distinguishable from the orientalism of its predecessors (that of Southey or Thomas Moore, for instance). ‘One of the ways in which ideologies work’, notes Peter Hulme, ‘is by passing off partial accounts as the whole story.’⁴⁵ What makes the *Hajji Baba* novels masterpieces of orientalist works is above all Morier’s ability to ‘pass off’ ‘partial accounts’ of Persia, which he presumes to have noted during his stay there, (dysfunctional government, social injustice, being out of pace with ‘modernity’, etc.) as ‘the whole story.’ Thus, the Persians become, to use Bhabha’s words, ‘a population of degenerate types’ in his work.⁴⁶

The adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824) begins with a frame narrative in the form of an ‘Introductory Epistle’ to the Rev. Dr. Fundgruben, ‘Chaplain to the Swedish Embassy at the Ottoman port’ by ‘Peregrine Persic.’⁴⁷ The writer of this ‘introductory’ letter, ‘Peregrine Persic’ (traveller to Persia), a very thin guise for Morier himself, tells us how he came into possession of the Persian manuscript of Hajji Baba’s autobiography

and that he has acted only as its translator and editor. The addressee, Dr. Fungruben, is reminded that 16 years earlier they had discussed the possibility of a European describing faithfully and meticulously the life and manners of Asiatics, Peregrine Persic had suggested that:

if a European would give a correct idea of Oriental manners, which would comprehend an account of the vicissitudes attendant upon the life of an Eastern, of his feelings about his government, of his conduct in domestic life, of his hopes and plans of advancement, of his rivalities and jealousies, in short, of every thing that is connected both with the operations of the mind and those of the body, perhaps his best method would be to collect so many facts and anecdotes of actual life as would illustrate the different stations and ranks which compose a Mussulman community, and then work them into one connected narrative, upon the plan of that excellent picture of European life, *Gil Blas* of Le Sage (*HB*, 3).

The passage encapsulates Morier's fictional project of presenting as thorough a picture of an Eastern Islamic society as possible, a picture that would encompass all aspects of life, domestic and social, high and low. A 'picture' that unlike the writings of the travel writers on the East, which make 'sweeping assertions; which leave no precise image on the mind' (*HB*, 2), would be also 'concrete' and 'consistent' so that it could leave a 'precise', more thoroughly 'orientalist', 'image on the mind.' That is precisely what Morier's fictional Persian recreations are meant to be though, as we will see, this 'precise image' of Persia is riddled with ambivalence.

Peregrine Persic goes on to relate how Dr Fungruben had objected to this, saying that only 'if a native Oriental could ever be brought to understand so much of the taste of the Europeans... as to write a full and detailed history of his own life, beginning with his earliest education, and going through to its decline, we might then stand a chance of acquiring the desired knowledge' (*HB*, 3). Chance finally places such a manuscript in the hands of the author of the letter. In short, the frame narrative makes it out that the narrative is actually written by a native of Persia, Hajji Baba, who, we are told by himself, has written it in imitation of European autobiographies (*HB*, 12). Hajji Baba's very act of writing, then, is an act of mimicry.

On his way to England from Persia, the author of the 'Introductory Epistle' meets Hajji Baba in Tocat, Turkey, where he has fallen ill on his return from Constantinople on a state business (*HB*, 6-7). He remembers him to be the same 'Mirza Hajji Baba' who had accompanied the Persian ambassador to England some years before (*HB*, 8). Here is Morier returning from his second journey after the completion of his diplomatic career in Persia (1816), referring to his first journey to and back to England. As regards the biographical note in Morier's novels, Arthur J. Weitzman goes so far to suggest that he takes his model, or at least the name of, the main character from a young Persian of the same name who had gone to England, with Sir Harford Jones' arrangement, to study medicine.⁴⁸ He also notes that the Persian ambassador in both novels is to be identified with 'Abul Hassan who Morier knew during the diplomatic mission to England in 1809-1810 and subsequently in Persia when Morier returned in 1810'; moreover, Morier was appointed *mehmandar* (official escort) to the ambassador during his second trip to England in 1819.⁴⁹ The *mehmandar* of *Hajji Baba in England*, then, an important figure in the novel, as the textual evidence also attests, was actually Morier himself. George Krotkoff also notes that the Dr Fundgruben of the 'Introductory Epistle' to whom the translation of the putative manuscript is dedicated, was an actual figure, 'the "father" of Austrian orientalism and founder of one of the earliest orientalist periodicals, *Die Fundgruben des Orients*', who was a family friend of the Moriers.⁵⁰ The dedication of the novel to a prominent contemporary orientalist, though through the artifice of dissimulation, implies Morier's conception of himself as an orientalist who has written an exemplary account of Persia ('that uncontaminated source of Eastern manners') (*HB*, 5). This gesture of assuming himself to be in the mainstream of European orientalism is akin to that of planning his novel on the model of *Gil Blas*. If *Gil Blas* (1715-35), contemporaneous with Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721), the first major work of Enlightenment, is 'that excellent picture of European life' in the sixteenth century, *Hajji Baba* also presumes to give a 'precise image' of Persian life (we shall say more on the connection between these two later). Moreover, the thinly disguised transference of events in personal life to the novels by Morier, on top of the refraction of personal ideas and views, adds a new dimension to the process of displacement present in all the works hitherto discussed.

Morier may or may not have taken the title of the novels under discussion from the name of a real person. The point is it is uncannily apt for his orientalist project. *Hajji Baba* is evocative both of Islam (Hajj: the ritual pilgrimage to Mecca) as well as romance and adventure à la *Arabian Nights* (Baba: Ali Baba, etc.). Furthermore, though Ispahan (Isfahan) can be taken only as a convenient name of a celebrated city in Persia (being probably the most frequently cited Persian city in European travel writings as it was the capital of Persia during the Safavid era), it could take on further implications for the readers of Morier's travel accounts. In his *A Journey through Persia* Morier tells us that the people of Ispahan 'boast, and with much reason, of their superior cleverness and learning [over those of the rival city of Shiraz], though with these advantages indeed they are said to mix roguery and low cunning.'⁵¹ This shows the extent to and the meticulousness with which Morier transforms the material from his travel writings into his fiction. The very title, then, is evocative of adventure and romance in an exotic Islamic east. Ispahan, metonymically, stands for Persia and Hajji Baba is meant to typify the Persians. The title also builds up expectations that the novel itself in a way undermines. The anticipated adventures turn out to be just 'roguery and low cunning' and the exotic land, a harsh one with scenes of misery rather than splendour.

Explaining that he was 'fortunate enough to be appointed to fill an official situation in the suit of an ambassador' to Persia (*HB*, 5), the author (of the 'Introductory Epistle', the travel writings and the novel) talks about what he expected to find: 'Persia, that imaginary seat of Oriental splendour! that land of poets and roses! that cradle of mankind! that uncontaminated source of Eastern manners lay before me' (*HB*, 5). I take these few sentences to be the key to Morier's orientalist conception of the novel. Here are the standard image(s) of Persia up until the early nineteenth century (when Morier published his works on Persia) in the European imagination: 'seat of Oriental splendour' in Greek writings and its Renaissance and post-Renaissance recreations and rehearsals (in Spenser, Marlowe, Milton); the exotic 'land of poets and roses' in contemporary Romantic 'orientalism', most notably in Thomas Moore's '*Lalla Rookh*.' Though the exotic vision fails Morier ('for perhaps no country in the world less comes up to one's

expectation than Persia', whether in the beauties of nature, or the riches and magnificence of its inhabitants' (*HB*, 5), he finds Persia to be truly the 'uncontaminated source of Eastern manners.' 'In what regards manners and customs' (which, as we will see, include 'manner' of thought as well), he goes on, 'it appears to me that no Asiatics bear so strong the stamp of an ancient origin as they' (*HB*, 5). For he distinguishes 'even in their features... a decided originality of expression' (*HB*, 5). This is 'confirmed' by the author's archaeological observations (recorded in *A Second Journey*) when he notices 'that the numerous faces seen among the sculptures of Persepolis, so perfect as if chiselled but yesterday, were so many likenesses of modern Persians' (*HB*, 5). This emphasis on the 'pre-modern', 'ancient' nature of the Persian way of life is central to the thematics of Hajji Baba novels. For the author tells us that he has 'ever conceived' 'most of the customs and habits of the orientals', well exemplified in their 'uncontaminated source' in Persia, 'to be copies of ancient originals' (*HB*, 4). Eating with hands, e.g., reminds him of 'that part of our sacred history which records, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish"'; or, whenever he hears the Persian expression "'what ashes are fallen on my head!'" he finds it 'one of the commonest expressions of grief as recorded in ancient writ' (*HB*, 4).

The orientalist impulse to explore and decipher 'unknown', and 'little known' Eastern lands and peoples has brought Morier, he tells us, to the very source of Eastern manners. The humanist idea of the common origin of the Christian West and the Muslim (Middle) East underlies the depiction of the Persians as a 'degenerate' people, most notably, we will learn, through their conversion to Islam.

I have already mentioned that Morier's work, in a sense, makes the culmination of orientalist constructions of Persia in the works that precede it. In a way, he de-exoticises Persia, undermines inscriptions and 'de-scribes' it in his own brand of orientalism – one which is to a degree self-conscious and tends, one is conduced to assume, to include the voice of the 'orientalised' too. Noting that many events in *Hajji Baba* may appear improbable to those who have not visited the East as they 'could only occur in Eastern countries', the 'humble translator' of Hajji Baba's manuscript asserts that:

A distinct line must be drawn between ‘the nations who wear the hat and those who wear the beard’; and they must ever hold each other’s stories as improbable, until a more general intercourse of common life takes place between them. What is moral and virtuous with the one, is wickedness with the other – that which the Christian reviles as abominable, is by the Mohamedan held sacred (*HB*, 13).

One is inclined to read these lines as an acknowledgement of cultural difference and regret at the dichotomies of the (Islamic) Orient and the West and lack of rapprochement between them. As the passage proceeds, however, this proves to be something of a misreading:

Although the contrast between their respective manners [which Morier actually draws in *Hajji Baba in England*] may be very amusing, still it is most certain that the former will ever feel devoutly grateful that he is neither subject to Mohamedan rule, nor educated in Mohamedan principles; whilst the latter, looking at the rest of mankind as unclean infidels, will continue to hold fast to his bigoted persuasion, until some powerful interposition of Providence shall dispel the moral and intellectual darkness which, at present, overhangs so large a portion of the Asiatic world (*HB*, 13-14).

The passage is more an empowerment of the above-mentioned polarity than a critique of it. A ‘more general intercourse of common life’, an erasure of the ‘distinct line’ can be realised only when the Muslims are ‘dissuaded’ from adhering to their ‘bigoted persuasion’, which only ‘some powerful interposition of Providence’ can bring about. In laying out the thematic trajectory of the Hajji Baba novels (and indeed his orientalist oeuvre) Morier here both subscribes to and entrenches the then centuries-old, more or less dominant, European conception of Islam (‘the lasting trauma’ of Europe, in Said’s phrase) – a conception that has been central to orientalism throughout centuries.⁵² Morier’s casting of the binary of the Orient / Europe in religious terms betokens his religious turn of mind; indeed, religion and, as we shall discuss in greater detail, conversion is one of the salient themes of his work.

Morier does not mince matters. His, as he enunciates in the quoted 'Introductory' manifesto, is a self-conscious orientalism, which acknowledges its own dichotomising practice ('a distinct line'). The promise of 'dialogicality' is thwarted. While it initially purports to descry the absurdity of such polarising (Muslims 'looking upon the rest of mankind as unclean infidels'), it is itself committed to it in deeming as 'bigoted' 'infidels' (we may presume) whose 'moral and intellectual darkness' has to be dispelled by the light of Christianity.

Such doublethink and double-talk is characteristic in Morier. Elsewhere, he satirises and scoffs at the banality of the Orientals stereotyping each other as he himself stereotypes them:

Some idea may be formed of the national feeling of the Persians towards the Turks by the treatment of their representative; a feeling which comprehends every sentiment that contempt, prejudice and hatred can supply to a bigoted people. It is, however, fully repaid by the Turk, who indulges freely in any execration against the Persian, that his ferocious spirit can suggest.⁵³

The 'bigoted' Persians, he tells us, hold in contempt the 'ferocious' Turks who reciprocate the feeling. Morier concludes his *A Second Journey* with remarks which could only be read as indicative of his own 'bigotry' towards the Persians. In Persia, he says, 'the people...are false'; 'At a distance from civilized life', he goes on, '...the life we led was little better than exile.'⁵⁴ We shall later elaborate on Morier's ambivalent stereotypical discourse. The point to remember here is that the fact that this representational practice is riddled with contradiction did not make it any less effective. The Hajji Baba novels, Richard Jennings points out, came to be regarded, 'throughout the nineteenth century', 'as the perfect epitome of Persian manners and customs.'⁵⁵ Indeed the fact that Morier did not feel that such contradictions could undermine his assumed 'authenticity' of representation bespeaks the entrenched status of orientalism, which he subscribes to and refashions.

Now, to focus more closely on the novels themselves, in the pages which follow I shall discuss in some detail the narrative structure and techniques of the Hajji Baba novels, their two main thematic thrusts (justification of British imperial expansion and a critique of the British society of the time in the light of high Enlightenment ideas), the kinds of discourses and issues with which they engage (modernity, nationalism, evangelicalism, religious tolerance, the rise of consumerism, position of women, slavery, etc.) and their reception.

The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan tells the story of the mostly comic adventures of an eponymous Persian picaroon, the son of a barber from 'Ispahan.' The novel is written in the episodic mode of the picaresque; it acknowledges *Gil Blas*, one of the most important progenitors of the genre, as its model. We follow the adventures of Hajji Baba as he sets out from his native city to see the world and finally becomes secretary to the Persian ambassador to Turkey, Mirza Frouz, who commissions him to write 'the History of Europe.' The novel concludes with Hajji Baba returning to his native city 'a greater man than when he first left it' as now he is the Shah's deputy in charge of collecting some presents to be taken to England by the Persian embassy, which he accompanies there (*HB*, 445). The sequel, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England*, treats the adventures of Hajji Baba and the Persian embassy in England.

Hajji Baba could be read as a rags to riches story, the story of how a barber's son becomes the shah's deputy and is able to reap huge profits. It is also a sort of *bildungsroman*, a tale of how a talented but naive youth comes to achieve the 'ingenuity' of a perfect rogue. At the end of the novel Hajji Baba, solely motivated by profit, accepts his post as secretary to the Persian ambassador to England, which involves hardships of a long voyage, largely because, as the Grand Vizier who is trying to cajole him into accepting the post puts it, 'The Franks are proper materials for your ingenuity' (*HB*, 441). From a petty swindler who had practised as merchant, a water-carrier, a pipe-seller, an itinerant vendor of smoke (adulterated with dung, straw and decayed leaves), a dervish story-teller, a marriage-broker, a quack and a soldier he finally makes it to the court where he is afforded the chance to play the big charlatan. As the Grand Vizier puts it:

‘...you would... have an opportunity of enriching yourself’ (*HB*, 448). If *Hajji Baba* is a *bildungsroman*, the story of the ‘formation’ of a perfect rogue in Persia (the environment, in the novel’s depiction, fit for such a ‘formation’), *Hajji Baba in England* could be characterised an *erziehungsroman*, an education novel. In England Hajji Baba, and to some extent the other Persian members of the embassy there, are afforded an ‘opportunity’ to be educated out of their ‘oriental’ mode of life and thought: the journey from ‘ignorance’ to ‘enlightenment’, from Persia to England, is both physical and intellectual.

Thematically, as I have already noted, Morier models his novel on *Gil Blas* (1715-35) – a critique of courtly culture, contemporaneous with *Persian Letters* (1721) on which *Hajji Baba in England* is structurally modelled – which puts him in the tradition of the writers of Enlightenment. The Hajji Baba novels champion ideals of rationalism, humanism, defiance of despotism (public and domestic) against the background of ‘moral and intellectual darkness which... overhangs so large a portion of the Asiatic world’ (*HB*, 14). Structurally, *Gil Blas* is more than just a model for *Hajji Baba* in the sense of being an exemplary work of the picaresque genre. Morier, more or less, copies the outline of Le Sage’s novel. The eponymous heroes of both novels come of humble origins and after many an adventure and misadventure finally make their way to a high position in the state (though Hajji Baba’s is more precarious than *Gil Blas*). Some episodes of *Hajji Baba* are similar to Le Sage’s work even in details. For instance, like *Gil Blas*, Hajji Baba is also captured by robbers and is forced to become their accomplice; in this, he proves more of a rogue than the Spaniard as he leads the robbers to rob the market, even his father’s shop!, in his native city. Again, Hajji Baba’s practice as a quack in the company of Mirza Ahmak (‘doctor fool’) rather closely follows that of *Gil Blas* in the service of Doctor Sangrado (‘unholy’). Both the Spanish and the Persian rogue fake themselves as hermits. They are also both lovers of money and women. For Sir Walter Scott, *Hajji Baba* could ‘be termed the Oriental *Gil Blas*.’⁵⁶

Gil Blas, and other preceding picaresque novels, such as works of Smollett (the translator of *Gil Blas*) and Fielding, were not the only models on which Morier drew.

The author of the 'introductory Epistle' reminds Dr. Fundgruben that they had both agreed that 'of all the books which have ever been published' on the subject of the Orient, 'the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* give the truest picture of the Orientals...because it is the work of one of their own community' (HB, 2). Apart from the orientalist assumption of regarding *Arabian Nights* as 'the truest picture of the Orientals', a canonical attitude in the history of orientalism, Morier seems to have copied some descriptions and stories (such as Hajji Baba's encounters with Zeenab and Shekerleb or the story of the baked head) from it. It is claimed that, like *Arabian Nights*, in *Hajji Baba* we can see oriental life from the viewpoint of a person immersed in it. Indeed, the episodic, rambling narrative style of the novel is very much that of the *Arabian Nights*, the superb example of the storyteller's art, which as Dervish Sefer puts it, is 'to make his tale interminable and still to interest his audience' (HB, 59). Almost all the characters in the novel (Osman Agha, Zeenab, Mollah Nadan, etc.) play the storyteller's role and relate either their own histories or the stories they have heard. This 'storytelling' impulse can be found in Morier's other works too, the last of which, *The Mirza* (1841), is actually closely modelled on *Arabian Nights*. The frame narrator of *The Mirza* tells about his Persian friend, Mirza, the Poet Royal, who has told him a number of stories (improvised by him for the king in the manner of *Arabian Nights*) during a number of 'Visits.' He tells of his fascination by the facility with which the oriental storyteller improvises.⁵⁷ Employing this improvising mode of writing considerably contributes to the narrative energy of the Hajji Baba novels, making them enjoyable reads (one reason, no doubt, for their immense popularity). More important, however, is the fact that the centrality of orality, narrativity and a sort of linguistic extravagance to the Persian culture as depicted in Morier is to be read as an index of an 'oral', 'pre-modern' society – a seminal point as regards the thematics of these novel which I shall elaborate later in these pages.

Morier's fictional powers were limited as he always seems to have needed some rather specific models and ready material. *Arabian Nights* served both as a general model and source as well as a specific one (for *The Mirza*); material from *Journeys* was woven into Hajji Baba novels and, to a lesser degree, into *Ayesha*, *the Maid of Kars*, and *Zohrab*, *the*

Hostage (for which some events in the history of Persia were also drawn upon); a lieutenant Bume's *Travels in Bukhara* provided the material for *An Oriental Tale* and one of Sir John Chardin's historical 'anecdotes' in his travel writings was turned into *Misselmah, A Persian Tale*. The success of the Hajji Baba novels, however, despite the fact that it had to rival its immediately preceding orientalist novel, Thomas Hope's *Anastasius* (the adventures of a Greek rogue in the Levant, published in 1819), apart from its topicality and its play upon the imperialist sensibility of the time (to be elaborated later) was also due to its humour, its creation of a likeable protagonist, its subtle rehearsal of orientalist motifs and above all its claim to be a 'realistic' portrayal of Persia in contradistinction to her more or less phantasmogoric image in the preceding orientalist lore.

'Hajji Baba', wrote Sir Walter Scott, 'is not an orientalist [Oriental] merely, but one of a particular class and character – a Persian, and differing as much from a Turk as a Frenchman from a German.'⁵⁸ Scott's remarks betoken the kind of impression *Hajji Baba* was meant to leave on the minds of its contemporary readers. At a time when, as Marilyn Butler notes, 'increasingly verisimilitude becomes the test of truth' the kind of, by and large, 'concrete' image *Hajji Baba* creates of Persian life could hardly fail to impress its audience.⁵⁹ In 'the Romantic period', Butler points out, 'the significant trend is in the direction of realism.'⁶⁰ In this regard *Hajji Baba* is also in tune with dominant literary trends of its time; published only six years before Dickens' first novel came out, though incorporating 'romance' and even Gothic elements, it has realism as its dominant mode of writing.

The frame narrative, the first person point of view, the memoir-writing mode and lack of authorial intrusion (exclusive to the Hajji Baba novels in Morier's work) maximise the impression that one is seeing Persian life through the eyes of someone immersed in it. In the 'introductory Epistle' Morier defines the objective of *Hajji Baba* as presenting a faithful picture of Persia, typifying a 'Mussulman community' for him, which would 'comprehend vicissitudes attendant upon the life of an Easterner' and which would 'illustrate the different stations and ranks' of life there (*HB*, 2-3). The connecting thread

in this ‘comprehensive’, varied novel (populated by the king, courtiers, poets, judges, clergymen, soldiers, traders, thieves and rogues) is the ‘ingenious’, amusing and, above all, self-interested Hajji Baba. Above all, it is Morier’s orientalist vision of a society wallowing in ‘moral and intellectual darkness’ that unifies the novel despite its vivacity of episode and character.

To depict this ‘darkness’ Morier takes details from Persian life -- cultural ‘codes’ (‘recorded’ in his *Journeys*) – and dextrously ‘familiarises’ them for his readers through the course of the narrative. This ‘deciphering’ of the then ‘little known’ Persia informs the orientalist project of the Hajji Baba novels; as orientalism itself presumes to ‘decipher’ the Orient. Morier’s art lies in his ability to make this ‘deciphering’ seem ‘realistic’, to ‘naturalise’ the ‘Persian’ cultural codes in both senses of making them ‘known’ (‘decoding’ them) and showing that ‘strange’ though they are, they are ‘natural’ to the way of life, the mode of thought and behaviour, in the (Islamic) East. In other words, these codes become orientalist ‘coda’, the final, ‘conclusive’ remarks on Persian / Oriental life. To give an example, having read the first two pages of *Hajji Baba* (treating Hajji Baba’s birth and education), the reader ‘knows’ something about ‘kerbelai’ and ‘hajji’ (and their respective importance), religious education and ‘Saadi’ and Hafiz being the most popular Persian poets (*HB*, 1-2). Through the subtle irony that permeates the novel, from the very beginning something of the ‘moral...darkness’ of the Persian is also implied. Hajji Baba’s industrious father neglects his first wife because she is barren ‘after twenty years’ industry, he found he could afford a second wife to his harem’ (*HB*, 1). This irony, combined with the cynical attitude and witticism of the narrator, is also the main source of humour in the novel. Hajji Baba’s father undertakes a ‘pilgrimage to the tomb of Hossein, at Kerbela’ ‘to get rid, for a while, of the importunities and jealousy of his first wife, and also to acquire the good opinion of his father-in-law (who, although noted for clipping money, and passing it for lawful, affected to be a saint)...’ (*HB*, 1). Motifs such as hypocrisy, self-interestedness and oppression of women – markers of a corrupt society – are harked back to time and again in the novel to the point that they seem quite ‘natural’ to Persian life. To give another example of this, Osman Aga, one of the most amusing of the novel’s minor characters, is ‘a good Mussulman’ whose

prevailing passion was love of gain, and he never went to sleep, without having ascertained that this money was deposited in a place of safety. He was, however, devoted to his own ease: smoked constantly, ate much, and secretly drank wine, although he denounced eternal perdition to those who openly indulged in it (*HB*, 18).

The characters Hajji Baba meets each reveal and typify some aspect of 'Persian life' through their careers and their stories. Dervish Sefer, e.g., tries to persuade Hajji Baba to become a dervish and lead a life of ease; to exhort him he explains how his fraud thrives on the credulity, ignorance and superstitiousness of people:

By impudence I have been a prophet, by impudence I have wrought miracles, by impudence I have restored the dying to health – by impudence, in short, I lead a life of great ease, and am feared and respected by those who like you, do not know what dervishes are. (*HB*, 59)

Considering that the position of dervishes in Persian society was not dissimilar to that of monks, hermits or adherents of mysterious religious and spiritual orders in Europe, the above passage could be read a critique of popular superstition and ignorance in the light of the Enlightenment ideal of a rational society. As the passage proceeds, however, it becomes evident that the matter of (the Islamic) Persia is not used merely as an artifice of refraction to enunciate 'universal' ideas; it is itself the object of discourse too. Dervish Sefer goes on to compare himself with the prophet of Islam: 'If I chose to give myself the trouble, and incur the risks which ... [he] did, I might even now become as great a prophet as he' (*HB*, 59). More than implicit in this is that the oriental dervish, the typical impostor, has as his prototype the prophet of Islam himself. Dervish Sefer is only one of the rogues Hajji Baba encounters in all ranks of Persian life, high and low, who are products of and thrive on the 'moral and intellectual darkness' of Persia. Once again the depiction of one aspect of 'Persian life' translates into an orientalist 'coda', the final word on Islam and the Islamic Orient. The act of describing becomes one of inscribing. And herein lies the crucial aspect which makes Morier's work, as already mentioned, the highest point in the 'Oriental tale'. Morier's 'inscriptions' of Persia, through a number of textual strategies (frame narrative, memoir-mode of writing, absolute lack of authorial

intrusion, editorial notes, dramatic irony, reality effect), are cast as 'realistic' 'description'. He tells the readers from the outset, in the 'Introductory Epistle', that what he has done is put together 'so many facts and anecdotes of actual life' (as recorded in his *Journeys*, the gist of which he also included in 1835 edition of the novel) based on the plan of *Gil Blas*.

One of the techniques used to maintain the pose of 'realistic' description is the creation of what we could call, in Roland Barthes' phrase, 'reality effects': the providing of a great deal of details, some of them seemingly unimportant ones, to produce the 'effect' of reality.⁶¹ In a broader sense, this effect is produced by the inclusion of so many trades, professions and 'ranks and stations' of life: the merchants, petty shopkeepers (such as barbers, water carriers, pipe-sellers, etc.), the clergy, physicians, poets, soldiers, courtiers, dervishes, robbers and so on. On a smaller scale, the profuse descriptions run the whole gamut from the ritual of marriage, death, burial, the dress of war, the movement of armies, state punishments to the habit of the table and the manners of ablution. For example, when Osman Aga is described as 'a good Mussulman, very strict in his devotions', in one last particularising detail an example of his 'strict' observance of his religious duties is given: '...[he] never failed to pull off his stockings, even in the coldest morning, to wash his feet, in order that his ablution might be perfect' (*HB*, 18). A chapter on the dinner party given in honour of the Shah by his physician, Mirza Ahmak, contains a description of the table which runs more than two pages and in which Morier manages to go into details of briefly explaining some of the dishes:

A cloth, of finest Cashmerian shawl fringed with gold, was then spread on the carpet before the king, by chief of the valets, and a gold ewer and basin were presented for washing hands. The dinner was then brought in trays Here were displayed all the refinements of cookery: rice, in various shapes, smoked upon the board; a piece of boiled lamb, smothered in rice; then another *pilau*, with a baked fowl in it ... and at length, the king of Persian dishes, the *narinji pilau*, made with slices of orange-peel, spices of all sorts, almonds, and sugar, ... delicacies ... were piled up in such profusion around the king, that he seemed almost to form part of the heap. ... the sherbets ... the *sekenjebin*, or vinegar, sugar, and water, so mixed that the sour and the sweet were equally balanced, as the blessings and miseries of life ... (*HB*, 155-56).

We quote the passage as an example of the techniques used by the author to produce the impression of ‘authenticity’ and ‘realism.’ We should parenthetically note that, as we shall elaborate later, this also well exemplifies ‘the culture of conspicuous consumption’, emblematic of the aristocratic and fashionable classes, which runs contrary to the rational principle of moderation. As another example of these techniques, in *Hajji Baba in England*, where Persian and English manners are contrasted, even the manner in which a Persian bathes is explained (e.g., it is said that though the Persians frequently take a bath, they do not bother to change their underwear as frequently while the English, who do not bathe as often as the Persians, change their underwear regularly), which shows the extent to which petty details are indulged in to create a texture of ‘realistic’ description.⁶²

The text is also replete with Persian words and expressions either in their original form or in the form of literal translations. The reader can get the meaning either through the often literal translations given in the text or from the context in which they are used. Further ‘scholarly’ explanatory notes (in the manner of other dabblers in literary orientalism in the Romantic era such as Southey and Byron) are also frequently provided. ‘He ordered’, says Zeenab of the Shah, ‘that I should be educated for a *bazigar* (dancer or singer)’ (*HB*, 160). ‘A *Pahendaz*, composed of embroidered silks, had been spread for him’, Hajji Baba narrates (*HB*, 159). Someone says of Zeenab: ‘After all, she has no beauty. ... She has no salt in her complexion.’ On this Morier’s note reads: ‘This is a Persian idiom, and is intended to denote the fascination of a brunette’ (*HB*, 158). This technique both enhances the sense of realistic portrayal (‘oriental costume’) and ‘authenticity’ and produces a sort of linguistic charm. ‘What is spikenard? what *mumiai*? what *pahzer*? Compared even to the twinkle of a royal eyelash!’, says the poet laureate during the Shah’s visit to Mirza Aahmak’s house. The footnote on this sounds quite scholarly: ‘*Mumiai* and *pahzer* are antidotes in which the Persians have a great faith. Our Bezoar is evidently a corruption of *Pahzer*’ (*HB*, 154). Here one can detect the impress of the philological movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries pioneered by Sir William Jones (who held that Indo-European languages had as their origin a lost language of ancient Persia).

These literal translations can also often produce comic effects, especially in *Hajji Baba in England* (where the Persians, trying to learn English, speak a Persianised English). They provide a comic backdrop for Hajji Baba's roguish feats, for instance: "By my head, friend Hajji", I would occasionally say to myself, 'thou art born under a fortunate star! Here are the beards of the inhabitants of two of the largest cities of Persia and their provinces placed in thy hand, that thou mayst pluck them at thy pleasure' (*HB in England*, 2). Here is an angry Mirza Firouz vociferating, to a Turkish governor, about the punishment he is going to inflict upon a misbehaving servant in his bragging tone: 'By the head of the Prophet, by the salt of the Shah, by the Pasha's soul, and by your death, I would cut off his ears ... as I would drink a cup of water. We are rare madmen, we Persians; we do not stand upon trifles' (*HB in England*, 34-5). Elsewhere Hajji Baba refers to a beautiful English woman as 'moon-faced' (literal rendering of the Persian *mahru*, as bright as moon).

The sense of 'realism' is intensified by the first person point of view employed; the readers are supposed to be reading the narrative of a Persian who has written his memoirs in imitation of European diarists. Presenting the narrative through the filter of the consciousness of Hajji Baba, the Persian, the English novel-readers for Morier are made to contrast the Persians' 'mode of thought and behaviour' with their own. Although this contrast is more distinctly the organising principle of *HB in England* ('the one idea of illustrating Persian manners by contrast with those of England', as the writer puts it), it is also central to *Hajji Baba's* conception (*HB in England*, xi). The narratorial device results in a dramatic irony that suffuses the Hajji Baba novels; the reader is wooed into a sort of collusion with the author as he / she is amused by, laughs and winces at the Persian narrator and his fellow countrymen and is tangibly made aware of the 'distinct line' between 'themselves' and 'them.' If an essential ingredient of realism in fiction is the (assumed) shared cultural and conceptual background and outlook between the writer and his readership, then the Hajji Baba novels are very much 'realistic' in that they hinge on (draw on, rewrite and empower) this shared outlook, this sense of awareness of the 'distinct line' between the English and the Persian / (Muslim) Easterner.

Realism also requires that fictional characters act out of some plausible motivation. In the Hajji Baba novels all the characters, from beggars and robbers to courtiers and the Shah himself, are motivated solely by self-interest, vanity and pride of rank. A few characters, notably Hajji Baba himself, however, at times are able to show some human feelings. Osman Aga, for example, though 'his prevailing passion was love of gain', proves to be a kind and true friend to Hajji Baba. Hajji Baba himself shows human compassion more than once: he helps the distressed Yusuf the Armenian and his wife, e.g., or when he sees the cruel death of Zeenab his revulsion is so much that he leaves the service of royal guards at the risk of his life. Elsewhere, when he escapes with Osman Aga's fifty ducats recovered from the robbers, leaving him in the hands of the Turcoman bandits, he pacifies the pangs of his conscience by resorting to fatalism: '...it was his fate to lose and mine to recover them [the coins]' (*HB*, 30). The novels depict Persia engulfed in such moral and political chaos that it seems natural and 'realistic' that the 'prevailing passion', the dominant motivation, of the characters should be self-interest.

There is little inward subjectivity in the Hajji Baba novels. In comparison, in his next novel, *Zohrab, the Hostage* (1832), Morier seems to show some glimpses of a more mature characterisation. The novel, 'in which history and fiction are combined', is a historical romance partly based on the life of Agha Muhammad Khan (1787-97), the founder of the Qajar dynasty (succeeded by Fath Ali, the king in the Hajji Baba novels), 'famous for his cruelty, his wisdom, his wars.'⁶³ Richard Jennings holds that in writing *Zohrab* Morier complimented Sir Walter Scott who had admired his Hajji Baba novels.⁶⁴ If in the Hajji Baba novels the writer draws on the authority of first-hand observation arrogated to the travel writer, in *Zohrab* he draws on the authority of history to empower his orientalist construction of Persia (what he also does in *Misselmah, a Persian Tale*). His 'object' in writing the novel, as he puts it in the introduction, 'has been to place before the reader a succession of personages, whose manner of speech, whose thoughts and actions, and general deportment, are illustrative of Persia and the East' (*Zohrab*, vii). This 'object' is actually that of all of Morier's orientalist works. The point at issue is that though the king in *Zohrab* is cruelty and despotism incarnate (he orders the murder of his

brother, his supposedly orphaned niece and nephew live in constant fear of him), his cruelty is partly ascribed to his traumatic childhood: 'the cruel manner in which...[he] had been treated, had at a very early period impaired the original frame of his character' (*Zohrab*, 309). In the Hajji Baba novels, however, the duplicity and self-interestedness of the characters are deemed a corollary and an index of the 'moral and intellectual darkness' in which they live; there are textual equivocations as to whether the corruption of the characters is a by-product or a producer of the conditions in which they live. The point is that instead of inner subjectivity the Hajji Baba novels are concerned with issues and forces outside the self. This brings us to the discussion of the seminal thematic concerns of these novels.

Throughout this study, as with any examination of orientalism, our approach to the texts discussed has been a historically and socially conscious one. The Hajji Baba novels are also to be considered as products as well as articulations of the major social and cultural issues and changes of their time. Written in the early nineteenth century, a time of rethinking and remodelling of many attitudes and social institutions, a time of the emergence or gradual consolidation of new (or nascent) social and cultural formations (professionals of the middle class, commercialism, the beginning of modernity) and a time of hectic imperialism, Morier's orientalist recreations of Persia in the Hajji Baba novels partake of a split discourse in which both a justification of imperialism and a critique of the English society of the time are attempted. I have suggested that all the orientalist motifs and topoi teased out in the analysis of the texts preceding the Hajji Baba novels find their characteristic form in them. A profound ambivalence marks the two-pronged 'orient'ation of these novels. I will argue that though ambivalence in varying degrees is found in all of Morier's orientalist works (or indeed in Bhabha's theorisation, in any articulation of colonial and, by extension, orientalist discourse), the ideological equivocation of the Hajji Baba novels is more profound and thoroughgoing as they also incorporate a critique of the English society alongside their Persian figurations. Indeed, the ambivalence of orientalist discourse of these novels – fluctuation between a 'stereotypical' representation and a 'realistic' one or an 'essentialist' and a non-essentialist ('necessitarian') construction of the East – is largely owing to the fact that

they are about England too; that the reformist impulse permeating them is refracted through the matter of the Orient. This is nowhere more manifest than at the beginning of *Hajji Baba in England* where the assumed translator of the manuscript of the novels expresses their purpose as providing some means whereby the Persians ‘might reflect upon themselves as a nation. ... and with reflection, who knows what changes may not be effected?’ (*HB in England*, viii) Peregrine Persique continues:

...let me ask what further good may not be expected by placing them in strong contrast with nations of Christianity, and more particularly with our own blessed country? ... in talent and natural capacity, the Persians are equal to any nation in the world. In good feeling and honesty, and in the higher qualities of man, they would be equally so, were their education and their government favourable to their growth. What is wanted, then, but some strong incentive to reflection? (*HB in England*, viii-ix)

The addressees of the rhetoric of ‘reformism’ in novels written by an English author for an English audience could not be possibly the Persians; they are those classes in the British society, most importantly the lower classes, which lack ‘the higher qualities of man’ due to the circumstances in which they live. The note of a Godwinian social ‘necessitarianism’ is manifest. The point is that this reformist impulse makes the essentialism of the orientalist discourse of these novels less strident or problematised (it is still there as evident in the wholesale figuration of the Persians as lacking in ‘good feeling and honesty, and in higher qualities of man’). In what follows we shall address the two-pronged thematics of these novels in some detail.

In discussing of Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters* I noted that Persia was used as a mask to reflect on and refract a critique of the ‘oriental’, ‘unenlightened’ elements in European societies. Likewise, as I have already mentioned in their explicit and implicit contrasts, the Hajji Baba novels reproduce and entrench, in their own peculiar way, the dichotomies of enlightened/unenlightened, modern/pre-modern, Christian/Muslim, Persian/English and ultimately European/oriental. There are, however, overlapping areas in these dichotomies; for in the Hajji Baba novels, as Gary Kelly points out, ‘the West is shown to be both “modernised” and residually “pre-modern.”’⁶⁵ For Kelly, the purpose of Hajji Baba is

to show how superficial and denaturing an autocratic court culture can be. Absolutism is shown to be the cause of all alienations and differentiations in the society it dominates by concentrating all power and thus all meaning and value in itself... This kind of centring is to be contrasted, presumably, with the supposed pluralism yet social integration of the west and Britain. In particular, absolutism and the court system are shown to pervert human nature and ‘natural’ social relations...⁶⁶

Though this is a correct reading of the novel, it needs to be complemented by one which also pays attention to its overriding orientalist discourse, mentioned by Kelly in passing. Kelly’s reading implies that Morier’s rendition of the central theme of ‘oriental despotism’ is impelled more by a consideration of the British society than Persia or the East in general. In his review of the Hajji Baba novels Sir Walter Scott wrote of the Persians, as they are depicted in the novels, that:

The genius of the Persians is lively and volatile to a degree much exceeding other nations of the East. They are powerfully affected by that which is presented before them at the moment – forgetful of the past, careless of the future – quick in observation, and correct as well as quick, when they give themselves leisure to examine the principles of their decision – but often contented to draw their conclusions too rashly and hastily.⁶⁷

Of Hajji Baba’s vicissitudes he wrote:

The rapid and various changes of fortune, which in any other scene and country, might be thought improbable, are proper to, or rather inseparable from, the vicissitudes of a government at once barbaric and despotic, where an individual, especially if possessing talents, may rise and sink as often as a tennis-ball, and be subjected to the extraordinary variety of hazards in one life, which the other undergoes in the course of one game.⁶⁸

Kelly reads these remarks as indicating that Scott interpreted the Persians ‘in terms of the “pre-modern” or potentially revolutionary common people of Britain or Europe.’⁶⁹ For him they ‘show that Scott was reading Morier’s two novels in terms of the immediate political problems of Britain in the late 1820s, when people like Scott felt themselves

confronted by a ruling class no longer fit to govern and a common people not yet fit to do so.’⁷⁰

This reading, however, should be complemented and modified by heeding the fact that in Scott’s view of the Persians there is also something of the childishly irrational ‘oriental.’ His image of the Persians is also rather redolent of, say, Joyce Cary’s image of the African in *Mister Johnson* where the lively, puerile and irrational Johnson always lives in the present. For Scott the contrast drawn in the Hajji Baba novels could be charming and instructive for the British reader as in it ‘a civilized people have gazed ... upon one of those uninstructed productions of rude nature whom they term barbarians.’⁷¹ If the Persians are figured as identifiable with the unregenerate (but reformable) common people, they are also figured as, to use Bhabha’s words, ‘a population of degenerate types’, so as to justify interventionist policies in the (Islamic) East typified by Persia.⁷² ‘We’, says the frame narrator of *The Mirza* to his Persian friend,

are found in all parts of the world, legislating, governing, interfering, aiding the oppressed and relieving the indigent. Why should we not find our way also into your countries? To say the truth, I know of no Asiatic nation which, if properly acted upon, would sooner catch the spirit of innovation and improvement than the Persian (*The Mirza*, 34).

In my reading the explicit and implicit critique of the British society (the ‘residual’ pre-modern elements) thematised in the contrast between it and the Persian society is complemented, if not overridden, by the thematic thrust of inscribing an imperial destiny for Britain, though the two go hand in hand. The point to remember in discussing the Hajji Baba novels is their political topicality. After all these are novels which owe their very genesis to, and reflect, the urgency of the political situation in Napoleonic wars era when London deployed Sir Harford Jones’ mission during which Morier ‘collected’ material for their composition. The very plots of these novels, especially that of *Hajji Baba in England*, largely reflect the imperial concern. It is as secretary to the Persian embassy to England for concluding the Anglo-Persian treaty designed to contain Napoleon’s threat that the hero of these novels goes to England. The Hajji Baba novels, then, are also novels of Empire. Apart from this empire-building impulse, one more

important aspect of Morier's orientalism not taken into consideration in Kelly's reading is that the cause of the degeneration of Persian society in Morier's conception is not just absolutism and the corrupt court culture but, no less, the Persians' 'false religion' too. (*Zohrab*, vii) This puts Morier in the mainstream of an orientalism dating back to the Crusades (cf. the 'paynims' of *The Faerie Queene*).

Throughout this study we have discussed the process of displacement involved in the orientalist figurations of Persia and the Orient in general in the texts analysed. The Hajji Baba novels are outstanding in this respect too in that this displacement is more sustained and manifest. 'The one idea of illustrating Persian manners by contrast with those of England has been my *kebla*, my direction of Mecca', says the frame narrator in *Hajji Baba in England* (xi).

Implicit in the above-mentioned 'contrast' is the presupposition of the existence of some 'oriental' elements in the British society. 'Persian manners' are contrasted with 'those of England' in a self-defining and self-fashioning exercise. For in 'delineating' the 'national character' of Persia Morier's representational practice also 'delineates' that of England. This is the organising principle of Morier's orientalist trajectory which he bluntly outlines in the introduction to his, fittingly, last major orientalist work (*The Mirza*) published in 1841. The passage merits quoting at length as it also encapsulates the thematics of the Hajji Baba novels:

Although the Persians cannot be complimented upon their morality, as a nation, yet no one can deny that they abound in a lively wit, a social disposition, and in qualities which fit them to be agreeable companions. The Englishman, bred up in reverence of truth, in love of justice, and in admiration of everything that constitutes good government, with a strict sense of honour, and a quick impulse to uphold his rights as an independent man, remains perfectly astonished and incredulous in all he sees and hears, when first he finds himself an inhabitant of an Asiatic state. In Persia particularly, where truth and falsehood are upon equal terms, where a man to live, must practice deceit, where the meaning of the word honour is not to be defined, and where there is no government but such as emanates from caprice or despotism, there his astonishment and disgust are complete, although, at the same time, should one have any turn for humour, he cannot help being amused at the ingenuity of the wiles

exercised, at the light-hearted levity, and the apparent clown and pantaloon philosophy with which evils, such as the Englishman would call great, are supported (*The Mirza*, 1-2).

Parenthetically, these assertions are made in 1841, at the beginning of the decade which saw 'the condition of England' novels, and as such the note of social criticism is quite evident in them. To go back to the point at issue, Englishness both in individual and social domains is inscribed here as 'not Persian.' At this point we need to elaborate upon the central aspects of 'the national character' of Persia, as inscribed by Morier, and their contrast with 'those of England' as they are or should be in his conception.

In line with the dominant paradigms of a time of social change and conflict Morier depicts two contradistinctive kinds of society in the Hajji Baba novels: pre-modern and modern. The fundamental marker of the 'pre-modern' Persian society is despotism which pervades every aspect of its life. In *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), which 'marked a defining moment in Enlightenment attitudes and approaches to the law, morality, politics and human nature', Montesquieu defines three kinds of governments: republican, monarchical and despotic; the principle on which each of these governments hinges were, respectively, virtue, honour and fear.⁷³ 'In despotic government', he writes, 'one alone, without law and without rule draws everything along by his will and his caprices.'⁷⁴ 'Honor', Montesquieu elaborates, 'is not the principle of despotic states;... as men in them are all slaves...'.⁷⁵ 'There must be fear in a despotic government. Virtue is not at all necessary to it and honor would be dangerous.'⁷⁶ The examples Montesquieu provides for 'these monstrous governments' are that of 'the Grand Signior' of Turkey and 'the Sophi of Persia' who 'deposed in our own time by Myrrweis, saw his government perish before it was conquered because he had not spilled enough blood.'⁷⁷ A comparison of the extract from *The Mirza* and Montesquieu's idea shows how much a student of the Enlightenment Morier is.

The Hajji Baba novels could be said to dramatise the version of the despotic society outlined by Montesquieu, a society in which a people devoid of any sense of honour and virtue live in constant fear of their rulers. 'When the Shah approached, 'says Hajji Baba,

with all the terrors of despotism concentrated in his person, I could not help feeling an odd sort of sensation about my neck; and I made my lowest prostration to that power, which by a single nod might have ordered my head to take leave of my shoulders, even before I could make an objection (*HB*, 173).

When Hajji Baba becomes a government executioner, he ‘gives a specimen of Persian despotism’: “In short, I am somebody now”, said I to myself; “formerly I was one of the beaten, now I am one of the beaters” (*HB*, 177). Hajji Baba underlines the contrast between his country and England in his description of their meeting with the ‘prime vizier’ who ‘was a dervish in appearance, so mild, so kind, that we marvelled how the affairs of his great country could be directed by him, when we considered how much vigour and bloodshed must be necessary to keep a large populace in order’ (*HB in England*, 100). ‘You are’, says Hajji Baba to the English Mehmandar, Morier’s mouthpiece, ‘an incomprehensible people; kings and their sons are of no consequence in this country compared to what they are in ours; you would make one suppose that they are as little thought of by you as common mortals are by our kings and princes’ (*HB in England*, 150). If in Persia the despotic king is above the law, in England in contrast nobody, even the monarch, is above the law. This is highlighted by stressing the importance of laws and the parliament in England. In their visit to the parliament the Persians are amazed at its powers. The members of parliament, Hajji Baba relates, ‘even have the audacity, we were assured, to settle in what manner he [the king] ought to support his wife’ (*HB in England*, 138). The stressing of the powers of parliament in an era when campaigns for parliamentary reforms was rife is quite topical. It is of course ironic too as these ‘powers’ were in reality much more limited than what intellectuals like Morier thought they had to be (cf. Lord Lyttelton’s take on this discussed in the previous chapter).

Closely related to this is the novel’s critique of the government’s heavy-handed approach towards such campaigns and the suppression of anything smacking of ‘radicalism.’ ‘“Opposition!”’, exclaims Hajji Baba when he hears the word applied to a section of the English parliament. ‘Why, those are rebels: is it not so?’, he says to the

English host. Now it is the host's turn to be amazed: 'Rebels? What words are these? A man may differ from another in opinion, without being a rebel' (*HB in England*, 249). More than implicit in this is that measures such as the passing of Six Acts or Combination Acts, designed to suppress radicalism, smack of 'oriental despotism.'

Self-interest, whether financial or of status, and the concomitant deception required to secure it, constitute another dominant aspect of Persian life. All the characters in *Hajji Baba*, from the bottom to the top of the social hierarchy, are cheats and swindlers of some sort. The protagonist is himself solely motivated by self-interest: he refuses to return his master's money secured from the robbers, joins the robbers to invade his native city, becomes an itinerant vendor of adulterated smoke, a bribe-receiving government executioner, a bragging soldier, a quack, a saint, a 'promoter of matrimony', goes fortune-hunting by marrying the widow of a Turkish Emir under false pretences, and finally as secretary of Mirza Firouz, the Persian ambassador in Turkey, enters court service where he gets the chance to practise deception at a large scale. In court his ingenuity makes him the grand vizier's favourite:

This led to my being entrusted with messages to the English ambassador, the answer to which I always brought back, with something of my own surcharged, flattering to his abilities as a great statesman, and thus by creating goodwill between the parties, I myself became a favourite (*HB*, 438-39).

In his new capacity our hero becomes 'the means of satisfying' the 'leading passion of the vizier' which 'was the love of receiving presents. This was my kebleh in all transactions with the Elchi [English envoy], and my ingenuity was constantly exercised in endeavouring to extract something from him which would be acceptable to the vizier, and serviceable to myself' (*HB*, 439). Delighted by Hajji Baba's handling of the negotiations with the English ambassador, the grand vizier urging him on encapsulates the supposedly contrastive state of affairs of public life in Persia and Europe:

Proceed in the path which now lies before you. The Franks [Europeans, the English] are proper materials for your ingenuity. I give you my sanction to work upon them. They have plenty of gold, and are in want of

us. What more need be said? The people of Iran are like the earth; they require *rishweh* ['The word *rishweh*, bribery, is also used for *manure* in agriculture.' (Morier's note)], their interest must be highly excited, before they will bring forth fruit. The Franks talk of feelings in public life of which we are ignorant. They pretend to be actuated by no other principle than the good of their country. These are words without meaning to us; for as soon as I die, or when the shah is no more, all that we have done for the welfare of Persia will most likely be destroyed; and when his successors shall have well ruined the people in securing himself, the whole business of improvement and consolidation must be gone over again. Certain privileges and enjoyments are the lawful inheritance of the shahs of Persia: let them possess them in the name of Allah! And their viziers also have their allotted portion: why should they refuse them? Certainly not for the good of the country because not one individual throughout the whole empire even understands what that good means, much less would he work for it (*HB*, 441).

The passage fleshes forth the evils of court government and culture in its embodiment in the 'pre-modern' Persian society and its contrast with the 'modern' British society as it is or as it *should* be. The autocratic system of government based on serving the good of the autocrat and his epigones rather than the country. Even the individuals, in a struggle for survival, seek only their own interest. Everybody is on his own. There is no sense of tradition, continuity with the past and the future or common interest. Every new autocrat eradicates whatever has been before him and 'radically' starts anew so that 'the whole business of improvement and consolidation', if any, 'must be gone over again.' In its inscription of 'Persian' government and nation the passage, I suggest, antithetically posits a Burkean 'concept of an organic nation' and improvement continuous with the past (contra the radical intellectuals who were for uprooting the past). 'The Burkean positives', Marilyn Butler points out,

Are family affections and loyalties, hearth and home; hence, by extension, the greater family made by the nation, a hierarchy with the king as its head; and continuity with the past, especially with the inherited creed which it is the Church's business to preserve. Against this imaginative concept of an organic nation, Burke is able to depict as puny and unwholesome the intellectuals, French and English, who want to change the fabric or body of the state...⁷⁸

To want to change the whole fabric of the state and society is a very ‘oriental’ thing, the passage intimates. Given Morier’s evangelical mindset and the fact that it was as part of an anti-French measure that he travelled to Persia, he could hardly be more in agreement with Burke. ‘Of Bonaparte’, he writes in his *Journeys*, ‘from the likeness of his history to that of their Nadir Shah, they [the Persians] have a very high idea; and as many of his acts were quite in the Oriental style of despotism, they not only feared but admired him.’⁷⁹

The self-serving mentality of a pre-, or rather anti-, modern society is perhaps nowhere better exemplified in the chapter dealing with the English doctor, a member of the English delegation, trying to introduce vaccination against small-pox whose efforts are undermined by the Persian physicians, especially the king’s chief physician, and the opportunist courtiers. Hajji Baba who has managed to stop the practice of the despairing English doctor tells him:

‘But why should you grieve?’ said I to him. ‘You get nothing for your trouble, and the people are not obliged to you.’

‘Oh, ... you know not what you say. This blessing must be spread throughout the world; and if your government stops it here, it will be guilty of the blood of all those lives which might have been saved.’

‘What is that to us? answered I: ‘let them die – we get nothing by their being alive.’

‘If it be profit that you require’, exclaimed the doctor, ‘I will willingly pay any sum you may demand, rather than lose my vaccinating matter, which must dry up and be lost if my practice ceases’ (*HB*, 443).

After paying through his nose the doctor is allowed to resume his practice. Vaccination, introduced by the English Edward Jenner in 1798, is to be read as a symbol of modernity. Before Jenner an extensive essay in the *Encyclopédie* had been dedicated to inoculation. Vaccination which despite some initial resistance had culminated in controlling the widespread small-pox, then a major cause of mortality in Europe and elsewhere, was a potent symbol of the triumph of science and rationality over nature in early nineteenth century (in 1802 and 1806 Parliament voted Jenner sums of £ 10, 000 and £ 20, 000 for spreading it). As an emblem of E(e)nlightenment and European superiority it could also

be used to justify interventionist policies in the name of humanitarianism in the East and elsewhere. In his *Journeys* Morier claims that European 'modern' medicine can dramatically further the cause of spreading Christianity in Persia.⁸⁰ In *An Oriental Tale* an English gentleman, who 'enjoyed all the characteristic good qualities of his country: generous, brave, warm-hearted, forgiving and easily entreated by distress', on his way to India is made a prisoner of one of the rebel chiefs of Tartary.⁸¹ It is the magic of European medicine (he treats Rushenak the sick maiden, beloved of the Tartar chief) which saves him. Both in *Journeys* and the Hajji Baba novels Morier underlines the contrast between 'the ignorant and relentless Persian doctors' with their basically Hippocratic notion of medicine (*HB*, 164) and the English / European physician equipped with 'modern' medicine.⁸² Mirza Ahmak ('doctor fool'), the king's chief physician, who sees a dangerous rival in the English doctor accompanying the mission to Persia decides to get rid of him by hook or crook. 'This infidel', he says of him to Hajji Baba,

Has already acquired a considerable reputation here. He treats his patients in a manner quite new to us, and has arrived with a chest full of medicines, of which we do not even know the names. He pretends to the knowledge of a great many things of which we have never yet heard in Persia. He makes no distinction between hot and cold diseases, and hot and cold remedies, as Galenus and Aviceinna have ordained ... , what is worse than all, he pretends to do away with small-pox altogether, by infusing into our nature a certain extract of cow, a discovery which one of their philosophers has lately made. Now this will never do, Hajji. The small-pox has always been a comfortable source of revenue to me; I cannot afford to lose it, because an infidel chooses to come here and treat us like cattle (*HB*, 97-98).

Here two worlds, old and new, are juxtaposed in the image of ancient and modern medicine. Given the novelty of vaccination and the initial resistance to it the passage could also imply that rejection of the new medicine and, by extension, other material symbols of modernity, smacks of 'Persian' / 'oriental' backwardness and superstition.

'Such marvellous stories are related of Europeans', says Hajji Baba to Mirza Ahmak (*HB*, 96). 'What varied wonders', says Byron, 'tempt us as they pass! / The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism, and gas, / In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare, / Till the swoln

bubble bursts – and all is air!’⁸³ Byron’s satirical attitude is to be contrasted with the note of triumphalism in Morier’s depiction of the Persians’ wonder at these emblems of modernity. There is no end of ‘marvellous stories’ for the Persians in store when they go to the brave new world of England: huge ships, armaments, excellent coaches and roads, hotels, gas lighting and so forth. ‘Wonderful things’, says Hajji Baba time and again, ‘shall we have to say when we return to Persia’ (*HB in England*, 46). ‘But’, he says elsewhere, ‘we were in the country of miracles; not a day, not an hour, passed without our hearing or seeing something which all the grandfathers Persia ever had, or might have, had never seen even in a dream!’ (*HB in England*, 118). On their return to Persia the king can hardly believe what the travellers to England have to tell about what they have seen and lest be accused of lying they have to modify their stories (*HB in England*, 288-89). The ‘miracles’ of science, only one aspect of the ‘boundless difference’ between Persia / East and England / Europe, are highlighted as emblems of Western superiority and the shift from a pre-modern age to a modern one. This paradigm shift is illustrated by the contrast between the outlooks of the Persians and the English to the world.

‘A conjunction of the planets favourable to the operation [bleeding] would take place on the following morning’, says someone ‘who pretends to a smattering of astrology’ to Hajji Baba who is about to bleed a sick woman (*HB*, 28). This is one of the many instances throughout the Hajji Baba novels underscoring the Persians’ addiction to astrology and superstition. Upon buying a Circassian female slave Mirza Firouz says: ‘What she may prove to be in character ... will entirely depend upon my good or ill luck, and upon the position of the planets at the time of her entering my house’ (*HB in England*, 41). He would not embark on the English ship taking them to England till a favourable hour: ‘In vain, both mehmandar [the English host] and captain said that the most favourable moment surely was that when the wind was fair’ (*HB in England*, 43-44). ‘They endeavoured’, Hajji Baba goes on, ‘to show us the difference between astrology and astronomy’ (*HB in England*, 49). This clash of two worlds or two different outlooks of the world (the superstitious astrology and scientific astronomy) is fittingly imaged in the contrast between the pre- and post-Copernican worldviews. The captain

and crew of the English ship try to explain to the Persians 'that the earth upon which we stood went round the sun; whereas it is a well-known fact in Persia since the days of Jemshid, that the sun has no other business than to revolve around us' (*HB in England*, 50). This superstitious, 'pre-modern' mentality is manifest, in Morier's depiction, in every aspect, private and public, of Persian life.

A corollary of this mentality is the Persian's fatalism. They fit in everything with the decrees of fate. In a comic episode, for example, Hajji Baba in his capacity as a quack can persuade a sick woman refusing to be bled only by playing on this mentality; he tells her 'that her refusal was unavailing, for that it was her fate to be bled, and that she and everyone knew nothing could avert an event which had been decreed since the beginning of the world' (*HB*, 29). When the punishment due our hero falls on Mollah Nadan ('priest ignoramus'), it can only make him a 'staunch predestinarian': 'I still could not help looking at myself as one under the protection of a good star, whilst the Mollah, I concluded, was inevitably doomed to be unfortunate' (*HB*, 367-68). Osman Aga's 'belief in predestination had rather increased than diminished by his misfortunes', Hajji Baba relates (*HB*, 331). As Scott also noted, this lottery mentality, corollary to the 'rapid and various changes of individual fortune', is meant to be 'proper to, or rather inseparable from, the vicissitudes of a government at once barbaric and despotic.'⁸⁴ But in Morier's depiction this irrational, unenlightened mode of thought is as much the result of a courtly, despotic culture as of 'the principles of a religion so baleful as the Mohamedan' (*HB in England*, 233). Mohamed Beg, the most strictly religious member of the embassy to England, is also the most staunch predestinarian. 'Are we not Persians and Mussulmans?', he says to an angry Mirza Firouz anxious to visit the English monarch as soon as possible,

And if we are fallen into the hands of an ignorant and unclean generation, whose fault is it, if it be not that of our destiny? The chief of our nation is a despotic king, there is no doubt of that; but powerful as he is, can he prevail against that which is written in the book of fate? ... if it be ordained, that you cannot see the king of Franks before a certain day, what can you, one of God's creatures, do to the contrary? (*HB in England*, 98)

Given the Calvinistic background of Morier's immediate ancestors, French Huguenots and his preoccupation with religion and Christianity this emphasis on predestination, I suggest, could also strike an autobiographical note.

The theme of religious intolerance and bigotry also resonates with this autobiographical note. Morier repeatedly represents Muslims as intolerant and bigoted. The Muslims, writes Peregrine Persic in the Introductory Epistle, 'looking upon the rest of mankind as unclean infidels, will continue to hold fast to his bigoted persuasion' (*HB*, 13-14). The Mushtehed' (chief priest) of 'Kom', who releases Hajji Baba from his sanctuary and introduces him to Mollah Nadan ('one of the principal men of the law of Tehran'), in answer to Hajji Baba's profuse thanking says: 'Be a good Mussalman, wage war against the infidels, and stone the Sufis, - that is the only return I ask; and be assured that, by so doing, you will always find a place in my memory' (*HB*, 318). The ambitious Mollah Nadan, who takes advantage of every opportunity for 'manifesting his religious zeal', attributes the drought in Tehran and lack of precipitation even after prolonged prayer for rain to the presence of Armenians:

'Tis plain that the heavens have declared against us, and that city contains some, whose vices and crimes must bring the Almighty vengeance [sic] upon us. Who can they be but the Kafirs, the infidels, these transgressors of our law, those wretches, who defile the purity of our walls by openly drinking wine, ... and by making our streets the scene of their vices? (*HB*, 336)

'Upon this', Hajji Baba goes on to narrate, 'a general stir ensued; and fanaticism, such as I never thought could be excited in the breasts of men, broke out in the most angry expressions...' (*HB*, 337). Morier whose family were victims of religious persecution in France could hardly be unaware of the inhumanity and unenlightenedness of 'fanaticism.' As such he takes pains to portray 'fanaticism' as a very 'oriental'/'Persian' thing undeserving of the English. Given the historical background of the time (O'Connell formed the Catholic Association in 1823 and Catholic emancipation was not granted till 1829, one year after the publication of *Hajji Baba in England*) the treatment of this theme

reflects some of the ideological conflicts and contradictions of the time. With his characteristic wry humour Hajji Baba puts his view of the intolerance he finds in the English society very bluntly:

From what we heard, it was plain that Mahomedans would have but a sorry existence of it in England; for if her own subjects were not allowed to pray after their own fashion, what in the name of the Shah's beard, could we expect? If they are looked upon as dogs, we might be treated as dogs' uncles! (*HB in England*, 138)

It is Mohamed Beg, the most strictly religious of all the Persians, who embodies fanaticism. When he is forced to be in the company of some Jews at a dinner party, he spends 'all the following morning in purifying himself from the contamination which he might have received from the Jews' (*HB in England*, 253). Inscripting Englishness in the light of late Enlightenment assumptions Morier casts such 'Persian' *prejudice* as a threat to social bonds.

Corresponding to this *prejudice* is another very 'Persian' thing: *pride*. Vanity and pride of rank are cast as hallmarks of the Persian 'national character.' 'Touch but their vanity, and you attack their most vulnerable part', says Peregrine Persic (*HB in England*, viii). 'The Persians are a vain people', Morier pontificates in *A Second Journey*.⁸⁵ In the Hajji Baba novels everybody (soldiers, lawyers, clergymen and above all, courtiers) tries to achieve distinction and status by hook and crook. For example, Mollah Nadan's ambition, which causes his ruin, is to become the chief priest of the capital. Hajji Baba's own sole ambition is to become a somebody. When he leaves his native city he vows never to return there 'unless under better circumstances' (*HB*, 314). 'One day... princes and the next beggars', says a disgraced Mollah Nadan to be the lot of many Persians (*HB*, 353). What makes Hajji Baba one of the 'beggars' again after having become a 'prince' of some sort by marrying the rich widow of a Turkish Emir under false pretences is his vanity. He simply cannot resist the temptation of vaunting his good fortune: 'I had long promised to myself the enjoyment of one of the principal pleasures arising from my good fortune; I mean, the exhibition of myself in all my splendour before my countrymen' (*HB*, 403). Corollaries of this vanity are of course pretence, lies and flattery. It is important to be 'son of words' (*HB in England*, 100). 'Who is there like our Aga [master] now in Persia?', say the companions of the

Persian ambassadors to him, 'who is the master of writ, the master of thought, like him?' (*HB in England*, 31)

In England the Persians find ample opportunity to display their vanity. 'My face is black; your face is black; and your government's face will also be blackened... throughout the world when the fact is known!', vociferates a furious Mirza Firouz to the English Mehmandar (*HB in England*, 88). 'The fact', of course, is that as the Persian ambassador he is not being received 'in the pompous manner of Persia' (*HB in England*, 87). 'After all, we concluded we were Persians, and that was saying everything. Who can deny a Persian's precedence?' (*HB in England*, 95) Hajji Baba's wry, flattering outburst addressed to the Persian ambassador highlights the absurdity of the Persians' vanity:

They think... because they have looking-glasses in their houses, which we have not; because they make clocks, and penknives, and cloth, which we do not; and because they have got possession of Hind, which was once ours, that we are men to sit behind them... we are Persians... (*HB in England*, 106).

The absurd vanity of the Persian ambassador is in sharp contrast with the unassuming attitude of the English minister for foreign affairs who meets him. There is no end to the Persians' astonishment when they realise that the Persian visiting the ambassador

was no less a personage than the vanquisher of the famous Tippoo Sultan, the captor of the splendid city of Seringapatam; one whose power had been greater than that of the Mogul Chiefs together;... And here he was, with white dust on his head, seated on a chair instead of a throne, paying a first visit to one less than one of our Shah's shoe-bearers, when he himself had had Shahs and nawabs waiting to kiss the dust of his feet... (*HB in England*, 95).

Apart from a note of triumphalism with regard to British Imperialism, to which we will later turn, the English official embodies an 'enlightened', 'modern', attitude to power and status. In his review of the Hajji Baba novels Sir Walter Scott wrote of the Persian's insistence on ceremony and status: 'we have turned over to oblivion and scorn the ancient superstitions of masters of ceremonies... But, we would ask, might not the reformation be carried further? ... to simplify diplomacy?'⁸⁶ The Persians are puzzled at the attitude of the English towards status; 'for truly', says Hajji Baba, 'everybody seemed to be on an

equality in this strange country' (*HB in England*, 90). When Hajji Baba expresses his astonishment at this 'equality' to Mehmandar (Morier's mouthpiece) he is answered: 'merit, ... merit of whatsoever kind, that is our great *kebleh*; that is the point to which we all pay our adoration' (*HB in England*, 150). As Morier, like Burke, was a self-made man this enlightened meritocracy again resonates with an autobiographical note. 'Merit', however, is not everybody's *kebla* in Britain.⁸⁷

Kelly notes that *Hajji Baba in England* shows that

the 'modern' and pre-modern' elements in Britain are not equally distributed: some classes and some people, mainly professionalized middle-class people, are enlightened, while others, principally the fashionable classes and the narrowly middle-class people, are made objects of satire.⁸⁸

On seeing a 'dandy; formerly ... called a "d--d" duck' dancing a 'dance of recent importation' at a dinner party, an English friend tells a surprised Hajji Baba:

...we have a certain tyrant among us called 'Fashion', much more despotic than even your king of kings, whose decrees are more powerful than either reason or sense of propriety, and who as you see, overthrows decorum, and makes us, a nation naturally inclined to admire everything that improves the dignity of our nature, a nation of frivolous and ridiculous imitators (*HB in England*, 152).

'In our country', says Hajji Baba to his friend of the 'dandy', 'we should soon teach his mincing feet better manners, and he should limp for something' (*HB in England*, 152).

This satirising of the fashionable class is part of the critique and / or depiction of the rising and consolidating bourgeoisie of the time. For *Hajji Baba in England* is, among other things, about the embourgeoisment of the British society. The Hoggs (the name is descriptive) family with their relentless social emulation and social climbing represent this embourgeoisment at its worst. Mr Hoggs is 'an East India Company merchant'; he is, as Mrs. Hoggs puts it, 'everything that a good husband ought to be, very rich and very generous ...' (*HB in England*, 173). The episodes treating Hajji Baba's acquaintance

and further involvement with this family are among the most comic and satirical ones in the Hajji Baba novels. Mrs. Hoggs meets our hero who makes himself out to be a 'Mirza' at a dinner party. Taking him to be a Persian prince, the tenacious Mrs. Hoggs simply does not let go of him, using every opportunity to associate her family with him. They give a dinner party in honour of 'Mirza Hajji Baba' and waste no time in giving an account of it in a paper:

Mr. And Mrs. Hoggs' grand entertainment, ... These distinguished fashionables gave a superb entertainment to his highness the Persian prince, Mirza Hajji Baba. The table was ornamented with devices emblematical of the friendship that exists between England and Persia ... It would be needless to describe the magnificence of the dinner; ... His highness was observed to eat much of some of the finest asparagus that ever was seen, provided by Messrs. Peas and Beans, of Bond Street, which cost five guineas the hundred... (*HB in England*, 211).

In his discussion of the theme of luxury and social emulation, of which as a typical example in Persian society we discussed Mirza Ahmak's party given in honour of the Shah, Kelly notes that the Persian system of government and society, 'based on status and favouritism', 'leads to financial extravagance and pursuit of mere display, as individuals ... seek to impress others with their own status and wealth.' In this, he points out,

...readers could find an obvious parallel to the European courtier's, aristocrat's, or gentleman's culture and code of conspicuous consumption, which ultimately leads to mere pursuit of luxury and which runs against 'rational' principles of conservation and accumulation of capital.⁸⁹

Though the English system of government is represented as incomparable with the Persian one, the British society as a whole or at least some sections of it is figured as far from being totally 'enlightened' in some respects. 'It is the same', reflects the Persian picaroon on the English social scene, 'among the English: distinction, consideration – these they seek above all other things' (*HB in England*, 219). The Hoggs vaunt their wealth. Mary's religious zeal and charitability are motivated by pursuit of display: 'She was trying to convert the Jews; was very fond of the poor, for whom she made stockings and petticoats, and taught their children herself' (*HB in England*, 173). For 'distinction', Hajji Baba puts it wryly, she 'would become a martyr' (*HB in England*, 219). For

‘distinction’ Bessy the beautiful socialite ‘would squeeze her feet in a Chinese shoe’ and the bookish Jessy would be ‘buried in a cell full of books’ (*HB in England*, 219). Hajji Baba even meets a sham ‘orientalist’, ‘a depository of Oriental and other languages’ including Persian who scarcely knows more than a few Persian words! (*HB in England*, 201)

Corresponding to this social emulation and pursuit of display is a rampant commercialisation of the society satirised in the novel. Note, for instance, the cunning incorporation of an advertisement of a fruit and vegetable trader, ‘Messrs. Peas and Beans...of Bond Street’, in the account of the Hoggs’ party in the paper (quoted above). The Persians in England are inundated with ‘bills’ from all sorts of traders who always overcharge them. ‘Indeed we found’, says Hajji Baba, ‘that an infidel armed with a bill was quite as formidable as a true believer amongst us armed with a firman: both are absolute’ (*HB in England*, 267). Hajji Baba aptly calls the chairmen of the East India Company, Mr. Hoggs being one of them, ‘kings’ (*HB in England*, 179). They are the new rulers of the age. This is indeed an adroit use of the device of ‘naïve narrator’ for producing vitriolic satire. In the Persians’ visit to the East India Company office in London ‘the Indian chair-sitter [chairman]’ talks ‘much of India, of nawabs, of curries, of crores [crore, half a million] of rupees. Everything in his calculation, seemed to be fixed at so many rupees per month’ (*HB in England*, 201). (We shall return to this mercantile attitude to imperialism in our discussion of the theme of imperialism.) In the chapter on ‘English Lies’ (bk. II, chap. vii), the ‘naïve’ but shrewd Persian narrator reflects on a society in the process of becoming increasingly commercialised and materialistic:

We found out that a system of deceit was carried out in England that exceeded anything that we could boast of in Persia. Scarcely a day passed but the ambassador was asked to lend his name to the extension of a great lie. One man passed upon him the acceptance of a coach whip, and immediately he inscribed upon his shop, in large letters, “Coachmaker to the Shah of Persia” (*HB in England*, 171).

When Hajji Baba’s fortune-hunting scheme in marrying Bessy, thanks to the English host’s letter, fails she accepts marriage to a rich grocer for whom she has no feelings. In

her wedding she, ‘poor helpless! looked the saddest of the party,’ Hajji Baba observes (*HB in England*, 273). Her mother, however, tells Hajji Baba that ‘she will be very rich; she’s to keep her carriage, and is to be vastly happy.’ (*HB in England*, 273) On this increasingly money-oriented society Hajji Baba makes the observation: ‘These English, after all are a bad race. Their souls sleep in money. They marry, they separate, they fight, they make peace for money’ (*HB in England*). As we will soon see, they turn out to build an empire, in Morier’s conception, ‘for money.’ It is worth noting that here Morier is rendering a central theme also treated in the works of other nineteenth-century writers and thinkers (in *Past and Present* (1844) by Thomas Carlyle, his near-contemporary, for instance).

‘Remember the country and the age in which we live’, says Henry Tilney to Catharine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*, taunting her for imagining ‘Gothic’ ‘atrocities’ to have taken place in General Tilney’s house. ‘Remember’, he goes on, ‘that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult you own understanding, your own sense of the probable, ... Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetuated without being known, in a country like this....’⁹⁰ Morier’s point in the Hajji Baba novels in general, and with regard to the question of the women in particular, seems to be pretty much the same. In a ‘modern’ Christian country, at a ‘modern’ age, ‘oriental’ barbarities are totally out of place. When in Bessy’s wedding Hajji Baba sees the heartbroken bride swoon, he comments:

The truth is, that upon seeing this my heart turned upside down. Although I had been witness to many a scene of misery in my own country, yet, let me say it, in England it appeared to me *totally unnatural and misplaced*. We had no been so long absent from Persia, where acts of violence are as common as any of the daily occurrences of life, that I was not prepared for what now had taken place before my eyes; ... (*HB in England*, 276-77, emphasis added).

This brings us to the discussion of the place of women in society, Persian and English, as conceived in the Hajji Baba novels, where, as Kelly points out, the ‘evils of court culture are seen most clearly.’⁹¹ Although there are very few oriental female characters in

the Hajji Baba novels, the theme of the place and character of women in Persian society, and the implicit and explicit contrast made in this regard between the Persian and English societies, is given special treatment as it is taken as a potent index of how civilised a society is. The treatment of this theme in 1820s by Morier is particularly significant and topical as the issue of the rights or wrongs of woman was a hot one at the time.

There are only four Persian women in *Hajji Baba*. The first one is Hajji Baba's mother. She is the second wife of Hajji Baba's father ('after twenty years' industry, he found that he could add a second wife to his harem') whom he marries because of her fertility, his first wife being barren, as well as her father's wealth. (*HB*, 15-16) She is not much of a mother to Hajji Baba; when her husband dies she tries to cheat him out of the inheritance left him by his father. The second Persian woman of the novel is Mirza Ahmak's wife. Once 'the first beauty in – his [the Shah's] harem, and the terror of all my rivals', she is relegated to being the king's physician's wife after losing her prime (*HB*, 328). She is a real virago, a terror both to her hen-pecked husband and the female servants of the doctor's house, especially the beautiful Zeenab whose life she makes a misery. Finally, after her husband's death, Hajji Baba meets her in his new position as a marriage-broker when she is 'an old fat and bloated hag'; to revenge himself on her for her ill-treatment of the unfortunate Zeenab Hajji Baba marries her off to Osman Aga, the old Bagdad merchant (*HB*, 329). The two other Persian women are also in one way or another victims of the Shah's despotism whom Hajji Baba meets in his capacity as a marriage-broker ('promoter of matrimony') (*HB*, 326). One is the widow of a silversmith 'who had been blown from a mortar for purloining some gold, which he had received to make a pair of candlesticks for the king' (*HB*, 329). The other one turns to the marriage market when she is abandoned by her husband 'who had fled from the wrath of the Shah, and sought refuge among the Russians' (*HB*, 329). All these women are figured as victims of patriarchy and a despotic society with the marriage market and prostitution as the only options open to them (Mollah Nadan launches his marriage-brokering business as a remedy to the alarming rise of the 'commerce of ... courtesans' in the capital of which the Shah complains to the men of law) (*HB*, 323). Here an obvious parallel could be drawn between the position of women in the Persian society and the English society of

the early nineteenth century, where prostitution was becoming an increasingly obvious social problem.

The predicament of oriental women in Morier's conception, however, is most poignantly dramatised in the fate of Zeenab who is fittingly a slave. She is the daughter of a Kurdish chief who taking refuge from a Turkish pasha in Persia is betrayed by a Persian governor coveting his precious horse. Killing a Persian soldier gives the governor the pretext to imprison and sell into slavery the Kurdish tribe; Zeenab becomes the property of Mirza Ahmak and serves as a maid in his house. When Mirza Ahmak's wife becomes suspicious that her husband has an eye on the beautiful Zeenab, she is treated much more cruelly than before. 'My heart bled', says Hajji Baba, of the fate of Zeenab, 'when I reflected what might be the fate of that poor girl; for I had heard horrid stories of the iniquities performed in harems, and there was no length to which such a demon as the khanum [the lady, Mirza Ahmak's wife] might not go, with one so entirely in her power' (*HB*, 143).

The fate of Zeenab is meant to be symbolic of the 'slavish' existence of oriental women in the seclusion of the 'harem.' For 'harem' apart from its erotic associations, the site of sexual fantasies, in the Western imagination was also emblematic of imprisonment, oppression and despotism as Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* so well demonstrates. When Hajji Baba meets Zeenab for the first time in his new capacity as assistant to Mirza Ahmak he falls in love with her. She is in the '*anderun*', women's department, and Hajji Baba has to peep over the secluding wall. The voyeuristic description of Zeenab is redolent of the descriptions of women in *Arabian Nights* or Moore's portrayal of oriental women in Mokanna's harem (discussed in the previous chapter):

Her blue veil was negligently thrown over her head, and as she stooped the two long tresses which flowed from her forehead hung down in so tantalizing a manner as nearly to screen all her face, but still left so much of it visible, that it created an instant desire in me to see the remainder (*HB*, 114).

This love affair, however, ends in tragedy. When an anxious Hajji Baba asks a fellow slave of Zeenab (a black girl) serving in Mirza Ahmak's house about her (he has not seen her for a while), she tells him of her brutal treatment by Mirza Ahmak's wife who thinks her husband is having an affair with her: 'You Persians are a wicked nation. We who are black, and slaves, have twice the heart that you have. ... was there ever an animal, not to say a human creature, treated in the way that this poor stranger has been?' (*HB*, 144). Finally, during Mirza Ahmak's reception of the Shah, Zeenab is presented to the king, who takes a fancy to her, as a gift. Zeenab's stay in the king's harem is short; when it is discovered that she is pregnant (with Hajji Baba's child) she is put to death.

The tragic fate of Zeenab the slave apart from its metaphoric aspect – symbolising the 'slavish' existence of oriental women – is also resonant with a more literal signification: the brute reality of slavery in the British empire. 'During the time we were at the Brazils, the slave trade was in its full vigour, and a visit to the slave market impressed us more with the iniquity of this traffic, than anything that could be said or written on the subject', Morier writes in *A Second Journey*.⁹² Parenthetically, it should be noted that, characteristically, he simultaneously rails against slave trade, in Persia and a Portuguese colony, and exhibits a racist mindset. On the filthiness of St. Sebastian, a town in Brazil, he writes: 'It must be allowed that this is greatly owing to the negro community ... who, in certain emergencies, have scarcely a restriction beyond that of brute creation.'⁹³ In a broad context this double-think here is symptomatic of one of the ideological contradictions of Morier's time: the arrogation of a civilised, enlightened society and the brute reality of slave trade and colonialism itself. For though slave trade had been officially abolished in 1807 owing to the campaign of the Abolition Society (founded 1787), slavery was still an integral part of British colonial system well until 1833, and beyond (the Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1823, one year before the publication of *Hajji Baba*). The beauty and prosperity of Sir Thomas Bertram's Mansfield Park, Said reminds us in his brilliant discussion of *Mansfield Park* (1814), which he takes as a 'perfect example' of the relation of the cultural discourse of the time and imperialism, depends on his Antigua 'plantation' worked by slaves.⁹⁴ Said writes of Jane Austin's passive affirmation and '*assuming*' of 'the importance of an empire to the situation at

home' through her 'aesthetic silence or discretion'; he mentions the 'dead silence' when Fanny Price asks Sir Thomas about the slave trade.⁹⁵ Morier's rationale for imperialist expansion as we have already mentioned and will further discuss is different from his contemporary canonical writer. No 'aesthetic silence' on this topic in his case as he demonstrates in his contrast of the Persian and English societies with regard to the situation of women and slaves (treated as more or less correlatives in Persia in his depiction).

To make the contrast between oriental and English women more vivid and concrete our writer squeezes an oriental woman into the narrative of *Hajji Baba in England*. Fittingly, she is a slave given to Mirza Firouz by the Turkish Yarak Effendi as a present (43-44). When the English host hears that the Persian embassy wants to take a number of 'choice' slaves to England to be presented to the king as gifts, he exclaims:

How is this? Slaves! – This cannot be – we allow of no slaves in England.
... We are all free in our country, ... and whoever comes there is free also.
... and, what is more, we not only do not allow of slavery in our
possessions, but our king is using his best influence to put it down in other
states also (*HB in England*, 12).

The point Morier tries to put across here is that slavery is a very 'un-English' thing. The passage intimates the state of things as they are (slavery still existent in the British empire) and outlines it as they should be.

One of the most manifest instances of the 'boundless difference ... between the manners and sentiments' of the Persians and the English, repeatedly emphasised in the Hajji Baba novels, is their respective treatment of women (*HB*, 437). 'There was', says the Persian protagonist early in his stay in England, 'one difference between them and us which we remarked and wondered at. This was the respect and deference they paid to women' (*HB in England*, 68). The Persians are amazed at the respect the English pay to Delferib (the Circassian slave): "If slaves are thus treated in this country", said we, "what a happy lot must attend their wives!" (*HB in England*, 72) Of Persian wives Mohamed Beg says: 'Once within the walls of her harem, her husband becomes her sole

lord and master, and then she eats blows, and devours grief, as a matter of course' (*HB in England*, 270). To this the English host replies: 'Our law protects women, whatever yours may do' (*HB in England*, 207). Mistreatment of women, it is implied, is a thing Persian.

When Hajji Baba makes the acquaintance of the Hoggs family, he is astonished to find 'that Mary's only wish was to make me a Christian; that Bessy had already learnt much of Persian grammar; and that Jessy had done nothing but to pore over the history of Persia' (*HB in England*, 181). 'Are these women?', he goes on to contrast them with the Persian women,

they might pass for viziers and *mustofees* [religious authority, very learned]. ... What our women care about the religious feelings of other nations? Do they ever think of any language besides their own? And as for the study of history, who is there amongst them who knows the difference between Jemsheed and Shapoor? (*HB in England*, 181)

This construction of English women as well-educated is fraught with social criticism at a time when the majority of women were either uneducated or at best poorly educated. This note of social criticism with regard to the situation of women in Morier's work is nowhere more forcefully put than in his last major orientalist work, *The Mirza*, where treatment of women is regarded as an index of civilisation. 'I have come to the conclusion', says the frame narrator of the work to his Persian friend, Mirza, 'that no nation, consequently, no Mohammedan nation, can make any advance in civilization, until they emancipate their women from the thralldom, both of mind and body, in which they are held' (*The Mirza*, 37). Elsewhere, the narrator tells Mirza: 'If you wish Persia to be counted amongst civilized nations, you must treat your women as *responsible beings*' (*The Mirza*, 307, emphasis added). These ideas mediated through the matter of Persia foreshadowed the shape of many fictional debates and topics about the status and the rights of women to come in the Victorian period. Morier finds the matter of Persia ideal as a vehicle for scrutinising British society.

British women, nonetheless, are made to understand that even with the state of things as they are they fare far better than their Persian / oriental counterparts. In answer to Mr Hoggs' inquiry about Persia and Hajji Baba, who has asked for Bessy's hand, the English host writes:

I would rather tie a millstone about my sister's neck, and throw her into the sea, than marry her to a Persian. ... Once immured in the *anderun*, she would associate with creatures, 'tis true, in the shape of women, but whose habits would constantly shock her notions of decency and propriety. And it is not to be denied that she would frequently be witness of all the passions of our nature – anger, strife, jealousy, revenge, and not unfrequently of more horrid crimes (*HB in England*, 233).

As in Byron's tales of 'atrocities' done to oriental women (say, in *The Giaour* where an oriental woman is thrown into the sea by the Turks) or Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, Morier uses the orientalist motif of 'harem' as a collection of female bodies and a site of vice and oppression as a symbol of the physical and intellectual bondage of Muslim women. In Morier's lurid picture Persian women are figured as 'victims' of both despotism and Islam.

Delferib, the only oriental woman of *Hajji Baba in England*, becomes a convert to Islam when she is sold into slavery by her gambling father. To the surprise of the Persians she becomes a strict Muslim and even when she is set free by Mirza Firouz in England she refuses to unveil herself and socialise. Implicit in this is that the 'thralldom' of Islam is even more restrictive than that of slavery.

This denigration of Islam at a time when the first wave of European colonialism and imperialism in the heart of the Muslim world was under way (Morier, we shall see, gets rhapsodic about it at the end of *The Mirza*) is to be read as a justification of British involvement in the (Middle) East. The matter of Persia in Morier, then, is not merely used as a convenient vehicle for defining Englishness, criticising and satirising some aspects and classes of the British society or giving voice to progressive ideas. Even the question of women (their alleged mistreatment), Joseph Lew reminds us in his discussion of the fate of oriental women in Byron, could be 'often used ... as an excuse to meddle in

the internal affairs of other nations' (Burke rhapsodising about Marie Antoinette or Sheridan about 'Begumes', for instance).⁹⁶ On the 'British reactions to Muslim "atrocities" against women and the institutionalization of such atrocities in Western literature' in the nineteenth century Lew notes that 'as the century progressed, readers and interlocutors of Western travelers came not simply to expect but to demand tales of atrocity and amorous intrigue with secluded women.'⁹⁷

These 'tales of atrocity and amorous intrigue' usually complemented with the fantasy of conversion are central to Morier's orientalism; apart from the Zeenab episode in *Hajji Baba*, they are also rehearsed in his other works which are basically informed by, in Lew's terms, 'penetration of seraglio plots.'⁹⁸ They are all emplotted on tales of saving distressed (oriental) women from harems or seraglios (symbolising 'oriental' despotism and benightedness).

Zohrab, the hostage (1832) is a historical romance partly based on the life of Aga Mohamed Khan, the founder of the Qajar dynasty in Persia, who figures as an archetypal despot. He says of himself: 'I am the king who has burnt the fathers of the Moscovites in their very hearths; I am he who has made the dogs of Franks lick the dust of my slippers' (*Zohrab*, 56). The book contains all the elements of romance: the hero and heroine as lovers, love triangle, the evil king prohibiting the lovers' union, the old man (dervish) as guide, the evil humpback and the happy ending. Zohrab, son to a chief at war with the king, accidentally meets Amima, the king's niece, in a secluded royal retreat (a sort of harem) and falls in love with her. He is taken prisoner and is to die unless his father surrenders. After a series of overcomplicated events the evil king is killed and the lovers are united. Zohrab as his name suggests ('Sohrab' is the engaging, tragic young hero of the Persian epic *The Book of Kings*) is a paragon of nobility. Morier uses Thomas Moore's description of the heroic Hafed, hopelessly fighting the Muslim rules of Persia, to illustrate Zohrab's situation in captivity:

Ev'n he, this youth – though dimmed and gone
Each star of hope that cheer'd him on –
His glories lost – his cause betray'd –

Iran, his dear-loved country, made
A land of Carcases and slaves. (*Zohrab*, 423)

Similarly, Amima is a saintly character: ‘No pen could ever define the beauty, the bewitching air of innocence and dignity, which pervaded the whole person of the one [Amima] who prayed.’ (*Zohrab*, 33) Like Thomas Moore who, as we saw in the chapter on the Romantics, felt necessary to justify his depiction of Persians fighting for freedom, Morier is obliged to explain, in the introduction to the novel, why they are so unlike ‘the Persians’ he depicts:

Although it may be urged that such characters as my hero and heroine are not known in Persia, yet let me say that there is no reason why they should not. It has been remarked that the principles which actuate them are not likely to be produced by the doctrines of the Koran; but we often see in the votaries of a false religion an excellence, however produced, which seem to be guided by the true one. Let me ask those who have lived in the East, and particularly in Turkey, whether they have not been acquainted with Mahomedans there whose conduct in life could have done credit to Christianity? (*Zohrab*, viii)

The upshot of this very back-handed compliment is that the hero and the heroine are Christian-like characters. Moreover, instrumental in the deliverance of Amima from the confinement of her harem is Sadeq, a Georgian slave and by implication a Christian. This is, then, to some extent a tale of ‘saving the brown woman from the brown men’, in Gayatri Spivak’s poignant phrase.⁹⁹ It is worth mentioning that the other Persian woman of the novel, Zulma (the daughter of a minor court official, host of Zohrab in his captivity), is also figured as a victim of the ‘Persian way of life.’ She is an intelligent, daring woman who shows nothing of ‘the childish helplessness of Asian women’, as Byron’s Sardanapalus puts it.¹⁰⁰ The ambitious and enterprising Zulma who is in love with Zohrab saves him from certain death but she, the author tells us, acutely aware of ‘the situation of constraint in which a Persian maiden is placed, both by religion and propriety’ (*Zohrab*, 215).

Ayesha, the Maid of Kars (1834) tells the love story of such another ‘constrained’ maiden and an English youth. Lord Osmond after visiting Persia, on his return to England by Constantinople is obliged to stay at the remote Turkish town of Kars (mentioned in *Journeys*) on the border with Persia and Russia where he meets the saintly Ayesha and falls in love with her. He is one

of those spirited and enterprising youths ... who, although born to every luxury and every advantage which the highest civilization can bestow, have voluntarily submitted to severe privations, regardless of danger, amongst an ignorant, barbarous, and fanatic people, in order to unshackle their minds from those prejudices which may be acquired by only a partial view of mankind.¹⁰¹

In this characteristic piece of doublethink Morier also rehearses the cult of imperial hero. Later when Lord Osmond is made captive by Cara Bey (black lord in Turkish), an evil outlaw, he almost single-handedly captures his castle, a feat the Turks, the Persians and the Russians had failed to achieve. ‘A more finished monster’, the narrator says of Cara Bey, ‘of cruelty, lust, licentiousness, and wickedness of every kind, than this Asiatic, never had existed’ (*Ayesha*, 222). His harem is ‘stored with beauties greater than any which Circassia could afford’ (*Ayesha*, 222). Lord Osmond’s heroic capture and the consequent destruction of Cara Bey’s castle with its great harem is somehow similar to the destruction of the ‘Bower of Bliss’ in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* by Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance.

Lord Osmond also plays the saviour for another distressed maiden. It is in his flight with Ayesha that he is made captive by Cara Bey. Ayesha, whose apparent mother is a Greek convert married to a pious Turk, is too good and pure to be a Turk, according to the English hero: ‘She cannot belong to these Turkish Barbarians’ (*Ayesha*, 58). Lord Osmond ‘saves’ Ayesha not only from the confinement of harem but also from ‘the gross errors of her present belief [Islam]’ by exposing her ‘to the truth of the consolatory and overpowering faith of the Christian’ (*Ayesha*, 256). After many an adventure Lord Osmond finally manages to take Ayesha to England where it is revealed that she is actually Mary, the daughter of an English lord stolen in her infancy by her Greek nurse

(her supposed mother in Turkey) during her family's visit to Greece. The 'saving' of a 'brown' woman from 'brown men' turns out to be saving a 'white' woman from 'brown men.'

An Oriental Tale (1839) is the story of an English gentleman who on his way to India is made captive by one of 'the rebel chiefs of Tartary' (*An Oriental Tale*, 7). In his captivity he is afforded the opportunity to treat Rushenak, the sick maiden who is to enter the Tartar chief's harem. The story of the 'penetration of seraglio' concludes with the flight of the English hero and the Tartar maid and the final conversion of the maid. In a delicious act of gallantry the English hero 'saves' the Tartar maid, the helpless victim of 'the Tartars, who in fact are only grown-up children, with the passions of men', both physically and spiritually (*An Oriental Tale*, 27).

Finally, *Misselmah, A Persian Tale* (1847), the last of Morier's orientalist works, is also a tale of harem and 'oriental' 'atrocities.' Top Beg, a Persian general of Artillery in Shah Abbas the Great's army, enslaves Misselmah (as bright as moon, in Persian) and her lover, Ferhad, in an expedition to Georgia. Convinced that his neighbour spies his harem, Top Beg kills him and his family in a jealous outrage. In turn, an angry Shah Abbas orders the massacre of Top Beg and all his household: 'Let not one of that accursed race be left alive.'¹⁰² It is then that Ferhad finds an opportunity to save his beloved Misselmah from Top Beg's harem.

'Harem' becomes, to use a Bakhtinian term, a chronotope ('functioning as the primary means of materializing time in space') in Morier.¹⁰³ It becomes the space where the time of 'pre-modernity' is materialised. As one of the most important, in Bakhtin's definition, 'organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events' and the meanings inherent in them, 'as a center for concretizing representation', the chronotope of harem makes the 'oriental'ness of the (Islamic) Orient most palpable in its intimation of the themes of tyranny, oppression and unbridled sensuality.¹⁰⁴

The alleged atrocities to oriental women and the myth of harem is the motif in which the double ideological orientation of Morier's work is thematised. On the one hand it serves to construct in counterpoint Englishness (in its depiction of the way things are and / or should be with the English women as well as the way English men treat and / or should treat women) and on the other it justifies colonial and imperial expansion which supposedly puts an end to the mistreatment of women (note that in *Ayesha* and *An Oriental Tale*, e.g., the English gentlemen saving the oriental women in distress are imperial agents).

This brings us to a fuller discussion of the theme of imperialism in Morier's orientalist work. Morier is one of those writers whose works were, to use Said's phrase, 'manifestly and unconcealedly a part' of 'the imperial process.'¹⁰⁵ Even his non-orientalist work *Abel Allnutt* (1837), a domestic tale obviously prompted by the author's Mexican experience, is imprinted with the drama of imperialism in its rehearsal of the ideology of *la mission civilisatrice*. 'I must reserve my exertions', says Abel, the saintly hero of the novel, 'for Mexico and South America in general, where I hope to introduce so many improvements.'¹⁰⁶ It is 'in consequence of the failure of all his schemes' in England that Abel 'had determined to cross the Pacific to *further the interest of civilization* on the other side of the globe' (*Abel Allnutt*, 280, emphasis added). When Abel dies it is his 'Mexican funds', which 'were looking up', that provide financial security for his nephew and niece in Britain (*Abel Allnutt*, 280). Even works such as *Zohrab* and *Misselmah* in which the drama of imperialism is not manifest in their depiction of Persia and the Islamic East as a locale of unimaginable despotism, cruelty and ignorance ('loathsome Ignorance and brute Servitude' in Southey's phrase) are productive of and part of, in Said's words, the 'culture that nurtured the sentiment, rationale, and above all the imagination of empire.'¹⁰⁷

The Haji Baba novels are even more literally inflected by the drama of imperialism as they enact, among other things, the struggle for world power during the Napoleonic wars era. 'Whatever the East', Marilyn Butler point out, 'came afterwards to represent as an abstraction in English culture in the Napoleonic wars period it is also the site of a

pragmatic contest among nations for world power.’¹⁰⁸ As we said before, the very writing of the Hajji Baba novels (virtually novelistic forms of the author’s travel writings) and indeed Morier’s ‘Eastern career’, both as a diplomat and a writer, were impelled by the exigencies of empire. It was for ‘spying’ on and thwarting the French activities in Persia, as Denis Wright notes, that Morier went to Persia as a member of the English mission.¹⁰⁹ In the Hajji Baba novels Persia is figured as a side-plot to the protection of India (which more or less sums up the British policy towards Persia throughout the nineteenth century).¹¹⁰ This ‘side-plot’ constitutes the lineaments of the plot of *Hajji Baba* in its final chapters and the overall plot of *Hajji Baba in England*.

When our hero’s fortune is at its lowest ebb after his escapade with the Turkish Emir’s widow in Turkey he befriends Mirza Firouz, the Persian ambassador there, who commissions him to write a history of Europe. This is because the Persians who virtually know nothing about the French and the English are puzzled at their rivalry in Persia. ‘A few months ago’, says Mirza Firouz to Hajji Baba,

an ambassador from Europe arrived at the Gate of Empire, Tehran, and said he was sent by a certain Boonapoort, calling himself Emperor of the French nation. ... He held himself very high indeed, and talked of all other nations of Franks as dirt under his feet, and not worth even a name. He promised to make the Russians restore their conquests in Georgia to us, to put the Shah in possession of ... all which belonged to Persia in former times. He said, that he would conquer India for us, and drive the English from it; and, in short, whatever we asked he promised to be ready to grant (*HB*, 420).

When ‘the English infidels’, Mirza Firouz goes on,

heard of the arrival of this ambassador, they immediately sent off messengers, letters and an agent, to endeavour to impede the reception of this Frenchman, and made such extraordinary efforts to prevent his success, that we soon discovered much was to be got between the rival dogs (*HB*, 421).

Morier’s comic version of the drama of imperial rivalry seen through the eyes of the self-satisfied, opportunistic Persians marks a step towards the defeat of Napoleon, ‘a great

breeder of disturbance', as the English mission finally gets the better of the French (*HB*, 420). *Hajji Baba* was published in 1824, a few years after the 'triumphant victory of 1815' which, as Saree Macdisi puts it, 'would forever alter Britain's attitudes towards the rest of the world.'¹¹¹

Hajji Baba in England resonates with this note of imperial triumphalism. The Persians frequently express their astonishment at the military might of Britain. From the outset Hajji Baba cannot believe the number of cannons he sees aboard the English ship departing for England (*HB in England*, 45). But there is much more surprise in store for him when the embassy reaches England:

Our eyes were much struck at all we saw, and the power of the ship in which we now were sank in our estimation when in every creek we discovered cannons upon cannons, in such vast numbers, that if we were to give a true account of them in Persia, nobody would believe us. we now began to find, for the first time, how it happened that the English had got possession of India ... With such cannons and ships to carry them about, who would not *conquer the world*? (*HB in England*, 53, emphasis added)

This parading of the imperial might is exactly productive of, in Said's phrase, "'structures of feeling'" that support, elaborate, and consolidate the practice of empire.'¹¹²

This strident nationalistic triumphalism is also indicative of the political conservatism of the novel if we take into consideration the socio-political background against which it is written. In its celebration and inscription of the imperial might and destiny of Britain the novel is essentially anti-jacobin (after all it celebrates the defeat of Napoleon, the self-proclaimed embodiment of the French revolution) as it could be read to intimate the soldering of the social rifts and conflicts of the time in the image of a mighty imperial nation. The time was that of the post-war depression when economic and political grievances were on the increase (organised Luddism had begun in 1811). The government's response to the protests was more stringent measures such as the passing of Six Acts and the suspension of Habeas Corpus. The novel's inscription of the British as a ruling race (who 'would ... conquer the world') occurs just a few years after the victory

of Waterloo had been parodied in the aftermath of the brutal putting down of the protests in 1819 as the Peterloo massacre.

The above passage also, I suggest, is symptomatic of how much ‘the practice of empire’ depended on spectacle even in its heyday – an aspect not addressed in Said’s model of orientalism. Another example of the nurturing of imperial sentiment by parading the imperial spectacle is Hajji Baba’s painting of an exotic picture of India and his rhapsodic expression of surprise at its conquest and administration by obscure-looking East India Company officials:

India! that great, that magnificent empire! – that scene of Persian conquest and Persian glory! – the land of elephants and precious stones! The seat of shawls and kincobs! – that paradise sung by poets, celebrated by historians, more ancient than Iran itself! – at whose boundaries the sun is permitted to rise, and around its majestic mountains, some clad in eternal snows, others in eternal verdure, the stars and the moon are allowed to gambol and carouse! (*HB in England*, 118)

One more way in which Morier’s work subscribes and contributes to the ‘imagination of empire’ is his rehearsal of his own version of the cult of imperial hero. Of one of the most (probably *the* most) prominent of these heroes (Marquess Wellesley who nearly completed the subjugation of India), whom the Persians meet, the English host addressing Hajji Baba says:

For that person exemplifies what I have just remarked [about the priority of merit]. He is no prince; he is the greatest conqueror of the age – the pacifier of the world – the vanquisher of what was esteemed invincible; though of noble descent, he began a soldier’s career, like many of a youth before him, with nothing but his sword and his heart to carry him through life; and has raised himself by superior merit alone to be the shield and breastplate of his country, and the admiration of nations (*HB in England*, 150-51).

Note the way the ideology of *Pax Britannia* (‘the pacifier of the world’) is inculcated here. As regards the imperial hero, Hajji Baba (in one of the rare instances where the authorial voice is pretty palpable despite the device of first-person narrator) says of him

elsewhere: ‘It was evident from the dignified expression of his eyes ... that he was ... one who could rule kingdoms; one, in fact, who understood the difference between right and wrong, whether he governed Christians or Hindoos’ (*HB in England*, 96). Here Morier sets an ideal for the men of empire to aspire to. The emphasis on personal merit and moral rectitude is his way of engaging with the debate over defining a governing ethos for the empire. For Morier’s ideal man of empire, like the saint-like Abel, is a ‘moral’ agent dedicated to the cause of spreading ‘civilisation’ and Christianity. Kathryn Tidrick notes that evangelicalism with its identification of ‘the moral power of the Christian message with the moral power of the messenger’ contributed a lot to defining the character of the ‘governing ethos’ of the British empire.¹¹³ In his letter to Mr Hoggs the English host stresses that the Persians are the ‘rogues’ they are partly because instead of high-minded, ‘moral’ models they have corrupt, despotic ones: ‘The same varieties of character and disposition, the same mixture of good and evil, ‘t is true, are to be found in Persia as well as other countries, but few, indeed, are those who can withstand *the force of example...*’ (*HB in England*, 233, emphasis added).

This stressing of the ‘moral’ power of the imperialist in our writer’s conception stands in sharp contrast to the rapacious attitude of the ‘nabobs’ and, especially, the East India Company officials towards the empire where a strident note of satire is struck. At a dinner party Hajji Baba is introduced to someone who ‘was called a nabob, because he had been long in India, and had returned very rich’ (*HB in England*, 199). ‘The protecting shade of an eyebrow’ of the wife of an East India Company tycoon, ‘would have been of more value than the gold of the Indies’, so hears Hajji Baba at the dinner party the Persians attend (note that the riches acquired from one part of Empire is described in terms of those of another part of it) (*HB in England*, 216). The chairman of East Indian Company, Hajji Baba relates, ‘talked much of India, of nawabs, of curries, of crores of rupees. Everything in his calculation, seemed to be fixed at so many rupees per month’ (*HB in England*, 201).

‘These Ingliz’, says the Persian scribe of *An Oriental Tale* (published about a decade after *Hajji Baba in England*) to the tartar chief, ‘are men that possess bits of the world in

every portion of it ... in short they are to be found in everybody's business' (*An Oriental Tale*, 29). As I have already mentioned, this articulation and espousal of the ideology of imperialism is also to be found in *The Mirza* where the frame narrator tells his Persian friend: 'we are found in all parts of the world, legislating, governing, interfering, aiding the oppressed and relieving the indigent. Why should we not find our way also in your countries?' (*The Mirza*, 34) In 1841, at the beginning of the decade which saw 'the condition of England' novels, Morier inscribes reformism in the metropolis and its imperial dominions as inseparable:

great changes, gradually though they be, are said to be taking place in the Eastern world, ... England once being in the possession of the whole of Hindustan, the same spirit of improvement which pervades her sons in their own country, will be sure to be carried to their Eastern as well as their other vast possessions. Wherever they have dominion, they must create reforms, correct abuses, and ... produce improvement (*The Mirza*, I, 35).

Elsewhere, Morier grows rhapsodic about the first successful wave of European imperialism at the heart of the Muslim world attributing it to the will of God:

Perhaps, in the meanwhile, I may venture to assert, that the East, as we have known it in *Oriental Tales*, is now fast on the change. ... How wonderful it is – how full of serious contemplation is the fact, that the whole fabric of Mahomedanism should have been assailed, almost suddenly, as well as simultaneously, by the events that nothing human could have foreseen (*The Mirza*, III, 308).

This statement made at the end of *The Mirza*, almost at the end of Morier's career as a writer is to be regarded as his last word on the Orient. Thanks to European imperialism and colonialism the Islamic East, the passage denotes, is being brought out of its 'moral and intellectual darkness' of which the author had talked at the beginning of *Hajji Baba*.

Morier's works, from *A Journey through Persia* (1812) to *Misselmah, A Persian Tale* (1847), in a way document the rise and consolidation of British imperialism as the kind of pattern of cultural attitudes, or 'structures of feeling' (the term Said borrows from

Raymond Williams), they subscribe to and (re)produce fully corresponds to and is impelled by it. They are classic examples of the interrelationship between imperialism and the novel. 'Imperialism and the novel', Said writes, 'fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible ... to read one without in some way dealing with the other.'¹¹⁴

The theme of imperialism – its espousal, justification, elaboration and articulation – in Morier, as mentioned before, is also tied up with the idea of nationalism. For if, as Benedict Anderson's contribution has it, 'the novel and the newspaper' as 'two forms of imagining' were essential to the origination and spread of 'the kind of imagined community that is the nation', then Morier's orientalist work, especially in the Hajji Baba novels, is doubly so.¹¹⁵ As we have been arguing in this chapter, the Hajji Baba novels in their 'delineation of the national character' of Persia also 'delineate' the British national character as it is and, more importantly, as it should be. In outlining an imperial destiny and mission for Britain, in their inscription of and subscription to 'the imagination of empire' these novels are again part of the mainstream cultural attitudes of the time which were essential to the nurturing of 'the imagined community' of the British nation. The drama of nationhood is largely inflected by that of imperialism. The nascent discourse of nationalism and imperialism in Spenser, with whom we started this study, becomes a fully-fledged one in Morier. The two main thematic thrusts of the novels (a scrutiny of the British society and justification and articulation of imperialist expansion), then, are in the final analysis of a piece.

To conclude and sum up our discussion of orientalism in the Hajji Baba novels: What is it which makes these novels, in John Sutherland's words, 'the most characteristic' form, 'the highest level', of the Oriental tale? ¹¹⁶ How can one account for the immense popularity of these orientalist representations? We argued that there are two salient distinct but convergent thematic strands to be found in the novels under discussion: they become ideal vehicles for inflecting high Enlightenment ideas, a mirror in which to scrutinise the assumptions and situation of one's own society and tradition as well as a venue for articulating (justifying and critiquing) imperialist expansion. By delineating the 'national character' of Persia they aspire to inflect that of Britain. They are both

about Persia / the (Islamic) East and Britain. Impelled by imperialism they produce 'knowledge' about Persia / the (Islamic) East which in turn feeds into the 'imagination of empire.' As such these texts (both in their thematics and their popularity) are exemplar indexes of their time when 'imperialist fantasies', in John Barrell's words, became 'all-pervasive in the national imagination.'¹¹⁷ These are extremely topical novels that are steeped in the discourses of the time (modernity, the question of women, embourgeoisment, evangelicalism, slavery, colonialism, social and political reform and so forth), which largely accounts for their popularity at the time. This topicality, furthermore, is always accompanied with humour and irony, one more reason for the popularity of these novels.

The 'realistic' mode of these novels, which sets them off from many a preceding and contemporary orientalist work, is also significant. Herein, it is assumed, is represented the 'real' Persia / East. Orientalist discourse is analogous to colonial discourse which, Bhabha points out, 'employs a system of representation, a regime of truth, that is structurally similar to realism.'¹¹⁸ Morier employed this 'system of representation', this 'regime of truth' so successfully in the *Hajji Baba* novels that they became the final word on Persia in the orientalist tradition. At the turn of the century the early decades of which saw the publication of these novels Lord Curzon wrote of them: '[If all] the solid literature about Persia were to be burnt ... tomorrow, *Hajji Baba* would suffice to replace it.'¹¹⁹ For Comte de Gobineau, a vastly influential theorist of race, it was 'the best book written on the temperament of an Asiatic nation.'¹²⁰

Apart from the points hitherto discussed one more crucial feature which makes the figuration of the 'loathsome ignorance and brutal servitude' of Persia in the *Hajji Baba* novels mediated through a sophisticated brand of orientalism is that, in Bakhtinian terms, they (especially *Hajji Baba in England*) to some extent tend towards dialogism. Now a 'dialogic' 'orientalist' work sounds like a contradiction in terms. Orientalism, as theorised by Said, is informed by the impulse to 'essentialise' and 'monologise', to articulate the supremacy of one voice – that of the Western orientalist. The voice of the 'orientalised' (Persian women in the *Hajji Baba* novels, e.g.) is hardly ever

acknowledged. However, the very idea of contrasting and juxtaposing two belief systems (Persian vs. English; Islam vs. Christianity) introduces an element of ‘heteroglossia’ into these novels. Moreover, these novels are, self-acknowledgedly, in the tradition of the picaresque (*Gil Blas*) and the comic novel, employ the framing device (‘posited author’) and a distinctive language (a sort of Persianised English) used by characters – all features responsible for incorporating heteroglossia, as Bakhtin puts it.¹²¹ ‘The posited authors and tellers’, Bakhtin writes,

assume a completely different significance where they are incorporated as carriers of a particular verbal-ideological linguistic belief system, with a particular point of view on the world and its events, with particular value judgements and intonations, ‘particular’ both as regards the author and his real direct discourse, and also as regards ‘normal’ literary narrative and language.¹²²

What happens in the Hajji Baba novels is precisely this use of ‘a particular belief system belonging to someone else.’¹²³ The point to remember here of course is that this ‘particular belief system belonging to someone else’, incorporated to be unmasked, as far as ‘someone else’ refers to the oriental is already *constructed* (which is all orientalism is about). In his discussion of the incorporation of heteroglossia in the comic novel Bakhtin points out that in such novels ‘a multiplicity of “language” and verbal-ideological belief systems’ are incorporated which ‘while of course utilised to refract the author’s intentions, are unmasked and destroyed as something false, hypocritical, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, inadequate to reality.’¹²⁴

By making the frame narrator of these novels a foreigner Morier gives an edge to this ‘incorporation’ of a ‘foreign’ belief system whereby refracting both his satire of some elements in the British society and falsifying this supposedly ‘incorporated’ belief system (of course other ‘belief systems’, elements in the British society which are object of satire, such as that of the fashionable classes are also ‘unmasked’). For this ‘belief system’ (purportedly that of a pre-modern Persian Muslim) is also itself the object of the narrative. Herein, in the falsification of the entire belief system of the oriental, comes the essentialising drive of orientalism which makes authentic ‘dialogicality’ and ‘polyphony’

impossible. For, as Bakhtin stresses, ‘The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent ...’¹²⁵ They should be ‘as it were, *alongside* the author’s word.’¹²⁶ The voice of the Persian is of course far from ‘independent’; Hajji Baba’s narrative is too heavily ironised at the expense of his own ‘belief system.’ In the end he readily accepts the self-image carved out for him by the author. ‘In my secret thoughts, however, I could not but allow that he [the English host] was right’ (*HB in England*, 233). The frame remains altogether too much in the power of the orientalist framer. It could be said that the use of a Persian narrator is, in a way, an act of appropriation – the appropriation of the voice of the native to enhance the ideological impact of the texts.

Nonetheless, to quote Bakhtin again, ‘All forms involving a narrator or a posited author signify to one degree or another by their presence the author’s freedom from a unitary and singular language.’¹²⁷ ‘The speech of such narrators’, despite the appropriative impulse of the orientalist in the case of the texts at issue, ‘is always *another’s speech* ...’¹²⁸

There are also other features that make the Hajji Baba novels tend toward the dialogic pole. One is the idea of mutual incomprehension and ignorance between the English and the Persians. The English in their turn know very little about Persia. For instance, they think that the Persians are sun-worshippers (*HB in England*, 131). Hajji Baba is appalled at their ignorance of Persian culture and religion (*HB in England*, 138). Another is the element of self-reflexivity – *Hajji Baba in England*, to some extent, parodies the institution of (pseudo-) orientalism. Hajji Baba meets an English lord who, having read the works of an orientalist (‘who seemed to know a great deal more than any of our historians’) insists, despite our hero’s protestations, that the Persians are fire-worshippers (*HB in England*, 130). Morier even refers to his own travel writings. Mrs. Hoggs asks Hajji Baba: ‘But “Mirza” in your country is “prince”, ... so we read in Morier’s Travels: are we right? ‘He’, answers Hajji Baba, ‘sometimes eat dirt, ma’am, but now he right!’ (*HB in England*, 177)

Contrasting this tendency toward ‘dialogicality’ of some sort, however inauthentic, in the Hajji Baba novels with Morier’s brass direct authorial voice in his other orientalist works underscores the significance of these novels. Here is Morier’s authorial voice, e.g., in *An Oriental Tale*:

We might fill a book with account of the ignorance and absurdity exhibited on this occasion [the interrogation of the imprisoned Englishman by the Tartars]; but we have, we apprehend, said enough to explain to our readers some of the characteristics of the Tartars, who in fact are only grown-up children, with the passions of men (*An Oriental Tale*, 27).

I have said throughout this chapter that the Hajji Baba novels partake of two main thematic thrusts: a critique and scrutiny of some elements and aspects of the metropolis in the light of high Enlightenment ideas as well as a justification (and articulation) of the expansionist policies as regards the (Islamic) East. At the beginning of *Hajji Baba in England* the frame narrator writes of a letter which he purports that an angry Mirza Firouz has sent him upon reading *Hajji Baba*. This letter, he says, has prompted him to present the sequel so that the Persians ‘might reflect upon themselves as a nation. ... and with reflection, who knows what changes may not be effected?’ (*HB in England*, viii) Here is an English author writing for an English audience in an era of social change about ‘reflection’ and ‘changes.’ Elsewhere the narrator tells his readers: ‘With such cannons and such ships to carry them about, who would not conquer the world?’ Here is also a writer inscribing the power and destiny of Britain after Napoleon’s defeat and its emergence as the dominant power (esp. maritime) of the time.

The matter of Persia serves both to focus social and political satire as well as to articulate (and justify) imperialist expansion – novels about both Britain and Persia / the (Islamic) East. The topical interest of these novels (the socio-political issues of the time treated in them) wore out but they became, as Lord Curzon put it at the end of the nineteenth century, tantamount to ‘all the solid literature about Persia’, unrivalled in ‘excellence as a picture of Persian life’, as C. W. Stewart put it in the 1970 Oxford edition of *Hajji Baba*.¹²⁹ It is doubtful if one can find a more ‘characteristic’ example of

the ‘Oriental Tale.’ The reception of the book as the definitive picture of Persia (and, to some extent, the Islamic East) is proof to the durability of the discourse of orientalism. The Hajji Baba novels are classic examples of the kind of, to use Spivak’s poignant phrase, ‘epistemic violence’ which orientalism is.¹³⁰

It is with a post-Saidian perspective that we now can probe the assumptions of this discourse. But overarching theoretical models have to be complemented with and modified in the light of thick description. To better understand the assumptions and workings of the ‘grand narrative’ of orientalism smaller tales in its history should be told. I have attempted to tell one of these in this study.

Notes

1. Lim, *The Arts of Empire*, 158-59.
2. Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets', 44.
3. Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness*, xv.
4. *Orientalism*, 206.
5. Ibid.
6. Southey, *Thalaba*, V. 264.
7. John Sutherland, 'The Novel' in ed., Duncan Wu, *A Companion to Romanticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 335.
8. *Orientalism*, 5.
9. Edward G. Browne, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (London: Methuen, 1895), xiii.
10. See entry by Shirley Laird in ed., Laura Dabundo, *Encyclopaedia of Romanticism, Culture in Britain, 1780s-1830s*, (London: Routledge, 1992); *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. XIII; C. W. Stewart's introduction to *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Henry McKenzie Johnston, *Ottoman and Persian Odysseys. James Morier, Creator of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, and his Brothers* (London: British academic Press, 1998).
11. 'Introduction', *Hajji Baba* (London: Methuen, 1895), xvi.
12. Ibid.
13. James Justinian Morier, *A Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, in the Years 1808 and 1809* (London: Longman, 1812).
14. Ibid., xiv.
15. Ibid., xv.
16. Ibid., 1.
17. Richard Jennings, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (London: The Crescent Press, 1949), xiv.

18. Morier, *A Journey through Persia*, 248.
19. Ibid., 24.
20. Ibid., 32, 171, 229, 201, 114.
21. Ibid., xiii.
22. Ibid, 243.
23. Ibid., 281.
24. Ibid., 273.
25. Ibid., 365.
26. Herodotus, *Histories*, Bk I, 81-82.
27. *A Journey through Persia*, 366.
28. Gayatri C. Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', 131.
29. John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 11-12.
30. Peter Childs, 'Introduction', in ed., Peter Childs, *Post-colonial Theory and English Literature: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 6.
31. Anthony Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylus' Tragedy* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), 181-87n.
32. Joseph Lew, 'The Necessary Orientalist? *The Giaour* and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny', in *Romanticism, Race and the Imperialist Culture*, 182.
33. *A Journey through Persia*, 50.
34. Ibid., viii.
35. *Orientalism*, 72.
36. James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor to Constantinople between the Years 1810 and 1816* (London: Longman, 1818), 211.
37. Ibid., 40.

38. *A Journey through Persia*, 32.
39. *A Second Journey through Persia*, 227.
40. Ibid., 224.
41. Ibid., 227.
42. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man, The ambivalence of colonial discourse', in *The Location of Culture*, 86.
43. Edward G. Browne, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, xviii.
44. *Orientalism*, 72.
45. Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 15.
46. Bhabha, 'The Other Question, stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism', in *The Location of Culture*, 70.
47. James Justinian Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, ed. C. W. Stewart (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1. Further references are to this edition, abbreviated to *HB*, and are cited in the text.
48. Arthur J. Weitzman, 'Who was Hajji Baba?', *Notes and Queries*, ccxv (May 1970), 179.
49. Ibid., 180.
50. George Krotkoff, 'Hammer-Purgstall, Hajji Baba and the Moriers', *International Journal of the Middle East Studies*, 19 (1987), 103-04.
51. *A Journey through Persia*, 114.
52. *Orientalism*, 59.
53. *A Second Journey*, 278.
54. Ibid., 390.
55. Richard Jennings, 'Introduction', xiii.
56. Sir Walter Scott, 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', *The Quarterly Review*, 29 (Jan. 1929), 75.

57. James Justinian Morier, *The Mirza* (London: Richard Bentley, 1841), 1-4. Further references are cited in the text.

58. Scott, 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', 75.

59. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries, English Literature and Its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 155.

60. Ibid.

61. Roland Barthes, 'The reality effect', in ed., Dennis Walder, *The Realist Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 260.

62. James Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England* (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), 143. Further references, cited in the text, are to this edition, abbreviated to *HB in England*.

63. James Morier, *Zohrab, the Hostage* (London: Richard Bentley, 1936), vi. Further references are cited in the text.

64. Jennings, 'Introduction', xxiv.

65. Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period* (London: Longman, 1989), 218.

66. Ibid., 215.

67. Quoted in Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, 218.

68. Scott, 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', 77-78.

69. Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, 215.

70. Ibid.

71. Scott, 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', 73.

72. Bhabha, 'The Other Question', 70.

73. David Williams, ed., *The Enlightenment. Cambridge Readings in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 245, 251.

74. Ibid., 251.

75. Ibid., 264.
76. Ibid., 265.
77. Ibid.
78. Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*, 180.
79. *A Second Journey*, 184.
80. Ibid., 53.
81. James Justinian Morier, *An Oriental Tale* (Brighton: Printed for Sale in Aid of the Funds of the Sussex County Hospital by W. Leppard, 1839), 8. Further references are cited in the text.
82. *A Second Journey*, 53.
83. Byron, 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers', lines 168-71.
84. Scott, 'The adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', 75.
85. *A Second Journey*, 18.
86. Scott, 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in England', 89.
87. 'I was not, like his grace of Bedford, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a legislator: "Nitor in adversum" is the motto for a man like me', Edmund Burke writes in *Letter to a Noble Lord*. Quoted in James T. Boulton, 'Edmund Burke's Letter to a Noble Lord: Apologia and Manifesto', ed., G. R. Hibbard *Renaissance and Modern Essays* (London: Routledge, 1966), 73. See Boulton's essay for a discussion of his insistence on his personal merit.
88. Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, 218.
89. Ibid., 216.
90. Jane Austin, *Northanger Abbey*, ed., John Davie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 159.
91. Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, 216.
92. *A Second Journey*, 6.
93. Ibid.

94. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 68, 100-16.
95. Ibid., 106, 113, 115.
96. Lew, 'The Necessary Orientalist?', 187.
97. Ibid., 194.
98. Ibid.
99. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice', in eds, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 296.
100. Byron, *Sardanapalus*, II,i.
101. James Morier, *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars* (London: Richard Bentley, 1834), 3-4. Further references are cited in the text.
102. James Morier, *Misselmah, A Persian Tale* (Brighton; Printed by W. Saunders in Aid of the Funds of the Irish Charities, 1847), 46. Further references are cited in the text.
103. Michael Holquist, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 250.
104. Ibid.
105. *Culture and Imperialism*, xv.
106. James Morier, *Abel Allnutt, a Novel* (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1837), 72. Further references are cited in the text.
107. *Culture and Imperialism*, 12.
108. Marilyn Butler, 'The Orientalism of Byron's *Giaour*', in *Byron and the Limits of Fiction*, 78.
109. Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians During the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 6-7.
110. Ibid., 10.
111. Saree Macdisi, 'Versions of the East', 215.
112. *Culture and Imperialism*, 14.

113. Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 1-3.

114. *Culture and Imperialism*, 71.

115. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 24-25.

116. John Sutherland, 'The Novel', in *A Companion to Romanticism*, 342.

117. Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey*, 8.

118. Bhabha, 'The Other Question', 71.

119. Quoted in Richard Jennings, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1949), xiv.

120. Ibid.

121. See 'Discourse in the Novel', in *Dialogic Imagination*, 303-20.

122. Ibid., 312.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid., 311.

125. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, 'Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel', in ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 21.

126. Ibid., 7.

127. *Dialogic Imagination*, 314.

128. Ibid., 313.

129. C. W. Stewart, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, vii.

130. Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', 144.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

I have tried to trace and contextualise some of what Said terms ‘meticulously maintained references’ to ‘distant and peripheral worlds’ and their concomitant ‘attitudes ... that grow with astonishing power from the seventeenth to the end of nineteenth century’, the ‘distant’ world here being Persia. (Exemplifying the writers in whose work this ‘consistency of concern’ with ‘distant and peripheral worlds’ could be discovered he starts with the Renaissance poet Spenser and ends with a nineteenth-century novelist, Austen.¹) Beginning with Spenser and concluding with James Morier, Austen’s contemporary novelist, I tried to examine the significance of the representations of Persia in the history of orientalism. The consideration of these representations prompts the observation that though Said’s model of orientalism is immensely useful, there are a number of issues for which it seems insufficiently nuanced to deal with. There are ‘differences’ made between the representations of Persia and the Persians and other oriental domains and peoples. Also, the orientalist figurations often serve to displace or focus the note of social and political criticism or satire. There are lesser issues, too. For example, sometimes there is hardly anything more to the use of the matter of the East than the evocation of a note of exoticism (*Persian Eclogues*) or the idea of a far-away land to make a moral (*Rasselas*).

Of the five main authors included in this study three are canonical ones writing in mid- and late Renaissance and two are ‘popular’ ones writing in early nineteenth century. The differences and variations discernible in the orientalist representations of these authors (stemming from the differences in their outlooks, their historical milieus as well as the rhetorical and ideological orientation of their works) testify to the variegated character of orientalism.

I have suggested that the lineaments of a nascent orientalist discourse are discernible in Spenser’s Anglican epic, which celebrates national and imperial power. The images of

Persia as pre-Islamic imperial realm ruled by pompous monarchs fit into the ideological orientation of the poem, mostly as a foil (association of these potentates with evil figures) but also as a model (Cyrus as a model imperial ruler).

The Orient figures much more prominently in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. The orientalism of Spenser's contemporary is also more complex as it is appropriated to critique or, at least, problematise the dominant ideologies of the time. In contrast to the other orientals (Turks and Arabs) who are markedly associated with Islam, the image of Persia is again a mostly Pre-Islamic, imperial one. This bespeaks the playwright's awareness and appropriation of the political map of the time as the play highlights Turco-Persian and Turco-Christian hostility. Whereas in Spenser the matter of Persia is mainly derived from a classical heritage, Marlovian orientalism in *Tamburlaine* also betokens contemporary interest in the East (the first phase of Anglo-Persian relationship). What is remarkable about Marlowe's use of the matter of the East is that it does not fit a simple model of orientalism with the binarism of East / West. Persian figurations appear to introduce a third term here.

Milton, whose republicanism and religious cast of mind make him in a sense the opposite of, respectively, Spenser and Marlowe, uses the matter of the Orient, in which Persia features prominently, to sharpen the imagery and thematics of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Once again the image of Persia is a pre-Islamic, imperial one mostly derived from classical tradition and the Bible, though the mark of contemporary *interest* in the East is also there. The association of Persian potentates with evil (with the Satanic regime) is here given a sharper edge than what is found in *The Faerie Queene*. However, this should be viewed in the light of these poems' focal theme, which is underscoring of the God's sovereignty and the denunciation of worldly kingship. Viewing Milton's use of the matter of the East in the light of what could be called a micro-politics of representation confirms Said's theorisation of orientalism as a mode of Western domination to be inadequate. For instance, the oriental motif in Milton could be partly accounted for in the context of the author's deployment of the languages of cultural authority (the classics, the bible, history, cartography, literary erudition, etc.) as well as

the universalising thrust of the poems and their attempt at an encyclopaedic scope. Though here, in the final analysis, the representations of Persia and the East cannot be completely wrested from what Said calls 'latent Orientalism' ('an almost unconscious (and certainly untouchable) positivity'), which Milton inherits and empowers through frequent recourse to it, the above-mentioned issues problematise them.²

Thomas Moore's popular poem, *Lalla Rookh*, is the product of the Romantic era and well represents the Romantic interest in and appropriation of the matter of the Orient. Herein are to be found an exotic notion of Persia (like that of Collins's *Persian Eclogues*) as well as socio-political comment and Enlightenment ideas (as with Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and its English version, George Lyttelton's *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan*). Also, in contrast to the works of the Renaissance authors included in this study, Moore mostly draws on contemporary travel writings (including Morier's) and 'scholarly' works (Sir William Jones's writings, etc.) rather than classical tradition. Moore throws into sharp relief three central motifs of orientalism ('oriental' luxury, despotism and sensuality) in order to tailor it to popular taste. The displacing of the author's radical political views is also another central aspect of the poem. In the two most important narratives of the poem the matter of the East (Persia versus Arab Muslims) is taken to treat the theme of cultural dispossession – 'Iran' and 'Erin' become identifiable. This seems not to fit the account of orientalism as the discourse of Western domination. However, Moore's representation of Islam in the same tales does fit this notion of orientalism in which, in Said's words, Islam figures as the 'lasting trauma' of Europe.³ This differentiating representational strategy with regard to Persia and other Islamic realms and peoples, to some extent present in all the other main writers in this survey, is absent in James Morier's Hajji Baba novels (though it is certainly there in his travel writings).

Morier brings the 'oriental tale' to 'its highest level' in the Hajji Baba novels.⁴ There are a number of issues which render his brand of orientalism distinctive and in a sense the culmination of those of the writers who precede him. His position vis-à-vis the matter of the East he incorporates is unique in that, unlike the other writers discussed in this study,

he purports to have experienced the East first-hand. He assumes to represent the 'real' Persia that in his depiction is neither a glorious Eastern imperial power nor an exotic land but a 'moribund' Muslim country.⁵ These novels have as their central themes both a critique of the 'oriental' elements of British society of the author's time and a justification and articulation of colonial and imperial policies in the (Middle) East by representing it as a decadent place in dire need of European 'enlightenment.' In the last analysis, the former is overridden by the latter as the later reception of the novels also showed. They were taken to be, in Curzon's words (in his eulogistic introduction to *Hajji Baba* in 1895), 'an epitome of modern and moribund Iran.'⁶ The immense popularity of these novels is proof to the durability and astonishing power of orientalist representations. Whether this power has diminished or increased since Morier's time remains a moot question.

Notes

1. *Culture and Imperialism*, 61.
2. *Orientalism*, 206.
3. Ibid., 59.
4. John Sutherland, 'The Novel', in *A Companion to Romanticism*, 335.
5. Lord Curzon, 'Introduction', *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (London: Macmillan, 1895), xxiv.
6. Ibid.

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