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Ella Hawes

edch2@cam.ac.uk

'Toto Divisos Orbe': Placeless Community in *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda*

Ella Hawes
MPhil, University of Cambridge

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'We carry our nation everywhere with us; and are in our island, wherever we go. *Toto divisos orbe*—always separated from the people in the midst of whom we are.'

- William Makepeace Thackeray, 'The Kickleburys on the Rhine'[1]

Thackeray's satire on European travel repurposes a quote from Virgil's Eclogues: 'et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos' (and the Britons are utterly divided from the world).[2] This Classical view of the isolated British Isles was warped by Thackeray for the age of steam ships and railways as his countrymen 'all flock the one after the other' to the continent, dislocated both from their own land and the native peoples.[3] The playful criticism of his British characters' remove from the European norm, however, is overwhelmed by a fear of what might happen were these characters to assimilate into the societies they encounter. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1848) and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) both argue against the deterioration of cultural identity that the wrong kind of travel must surely engender, with foreign characters and locales alike displaying the kind of moral degeneration that was becoming bound up with the concept of cosmopolitanism. This perceived collapse of national selfhood into an amalgamation of cultural vagueness was rarely depicted without horror in nineteenth-century literature, and yet these two books make almost the opposite argument: travel not only strengthens national identity but appears to actively construct it. One facet of this is the propensity for characters in these novels to repeatedly and

[1] William Makepeace Thackeray, 'The Kickleburys on the Rhine', *The Christmas Books of Mr M. A. Titmarsh* (The Floating Press, 2010), p. 136.
[2] Virgil, *Virgil's Eclogues*, ed. by Gregson Davis, trans. by Len Krisak (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p.8, my translation. For additional classical references, see also: Josephine Waters Bennett, 'Britain among the Fortunate Isles', *Studies in Philology*, 53.2 (1956), pp. 114-40.
[3] Thackeray, 'Kickleburys', p. 136.

serendipitously cross paths when abroad, creating the feeling that everywhere is Britain.[4] In *Vanity Fair,* they not only meet unexpectedly in Pumpernickel but also continents away, in India; in *Daniel Deronda,* the characters (almost) meet in Leubronn, and then again in Genoa. Travel in these books does not broaden horizons but narrows them, implausibly always replicating the same society of home. Yet this version of home is dependent upon its patriotism, its erosion of class divides, and its longing for British soil – all factors which are absent from their domestic lives. There is a fundamental (and fundamentally unresolved) tension in both novels between the harms of cosmopolitanism and the undeniable need for the 'other' against which British patriotic identity can declare itself. While this may be a definitive element of nationalism, what is distinctive is how both novels view this 'other' as continental rather than colonial. As such, the novels seem to assert that British identity, and in turn passion for imperial expansion, would not exist without immersion in European otherness.

Despite the gap in time between the publication dates of *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda*, both writers use similar structural and formal tools to demarcate 'good' British behaviour from 'bad' European behaviour. The three decades between the publication of the two novels saw a huge expansion in the availability of international travel, shaping views on tourism, and travel in general. Published in 1848 but set from 1812 onwards, *Vanity Fair* is already reminiscing about earlier glory days, whilst now 'there is now hardly a town of France or Italy in which you shall not see some noble countryman of our own'.[5] *Daniel Deronda* is set in 1865 and published in 1876, long after crossing the channel had become the prerogative of the middle classes as well as the upper, with networks of railways and telegrams uniting people across vast distances. However, both writers rely on sweeping generalisations to depict a homogeneity among travellers that they insist *must* come to infect anyone who allows themselves to fall prey to the lures of cosmopolitanism. In 'The Kickleburys on the Rhine' (1850), Thackeray criticises what he presents as the cause of this cultural sameness: the proliferation of trope-laden travel writing, already-hackneyed guidebooks, and expanding tour companies, with his narrator confirming that 'We do as our neighbours do [...] we take our holiday in common'.[6] It seems implicit that the 'common' to

[4] This trend is evident in many other nineteenth-century novels featuring travel on the continent, for example, George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 3rd edn (Oxford University Press, 2019) or Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (Penguin, 1985).
[5] William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (Wordsworth, 2001), p. 345.
[6] Thackeray, 'Kickleburys', pp. 130, 171.

which Thackeray refers draws on all its potential meanings, signifying the widespread *and* the shared *and* the lower class. Likewise, in his earlier novel, *Notes on a Journey From Cornhill to Cairo* (1846), a fictionalised journey to the Middle East reveals what Lindsey Chappell calls the 'inauthenticity in the British perspectives abroad that orient the imperial apparatus', an essential element of the colonial project that nonetheless has a bearing on the European holidays of Thackeray's other writings, as will be seen.[7] In all the above texts, the narrator is a character himself: M. A. Titmarsh narrates both travel books ('Kickleburys' and *Cornhill to Cairo*) while an unnamed visitor at Pumpernickel is the narrative voice throughout *Vanity Fair*, creating an ironic divide between the narrator and the crowds of tourists through which he moves. Through this divide, Thackeray uses the degenerate masses to expose the cultural decline of cosmopolitanism, from which his narrator is saved by his satire and formal remove – with the implicit suggestion that his characters may not be so fortunate.

Eliot's narrator, given the personal pronoun of a human onlooker but not physical characterisation in the text, is altered by both, by the developments in foreign travel over the nineteenth century and the shift in genre. Eliot's realism is defined by Nancy Henry and George Levine as not 'simply accuracy in representing things as they are [but also] an honest representation of one's own feelings and perceptions', while Thackeray's satire obfuscates his own feelings, summarily mocking all characters.[8] The generic conventions of each encourages moral commentary, and both do so by creating a mindless, deindividuated mass of travellers to hold accountable for the deterioration of society. Thackeray writes that the fictitious 'society of Pumpernickel used to separate, according to the German plan, and [...] rushed with hundreds of their kind to gourmandise at the tables d'hotes' while Eliot's gamblers look 'as if they had all eaten of the same root that for the time compelled the brains of each to the same narrow monotony of action'.[9] These two pan-European societies have willingly eroded their national distinctions in preference of their shared activity, losing a humanity that the writers suggest is tied to ethnic heterogeneity. Their antlike following feeds into the definition of tourism that Jonathan Culler proposes of 'a systematized knowledge of the world, a shared sense of what is significant, and a set of moral imperatives' but one which

[7] Lindsey Chapell, 'The Satirist Abroad: Thackeray, Temporality, and Genre', *SEL 1500-1900*, 56.3 (2016), pp. 583-604 (p. 591).
[8] Nancy Henry and George Levine, 'Introduction: George Eliot and the Art of Realism' in *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot,* ed. by George Levine and Nancy Henry (Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1-19 (p. 6).
[9] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair,* p. 648; George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* 2nd edn (Wordsworth, 2003), pp. 5, 4.

also produces a 'cultural consensus that creates hostility rather than community among individuals'.[10] Culler's critique of the assumed superiority of the individual traveller over a mass of 'tourists' depends upon a numerical imbalance – an othering created through scale, whereby the onlooker maintains privilege via their distance from the common – but both novels situate their heroes or heroines within the melee. Whilst the narrator, largely removed from the plot, casts judgement, their characters follow the well-trodden path: so too do the Sedleys rush from Pumpernickel, so too does Gwendolen join the gambling. By submerging their characters within these morally dubious environments, the writers claim the danger for cultural infection that must be forcefully avoided.

The kind of exceptionalism that Thackeray and Eliot employ through their narrative distance was typical of non-fiction travel writing in the period, with popular writers like Chateaubriand, Alexander Kinglake, and Edward William Lane seeking to confirm known peculiarities for their readers, rather than elucidating fresh or novel perspectives of foreign life. Edward Said's seminal book terms this intentional solidifying of trope 'orientalism', through which 'the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in [...] some bit of previous imagining'.[11] While Said's view is in evidence across the Asian travel writing he examines, what he does not consider is the extension of this reductionism across *all* travel writing. *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda* are both reluctant to offer more than a cursory glance over their landscapes, while the native inhabitants fade into unnamed, often unspeaking, and caricaturised plurals, such that Becky's Paris is populated with 'French ladies' and 'Prussians and Cossacks, Spanish and English' while 'the chiefs of English society' are individuated by name.[12] The excision of native life from these characters' travels replicates the prominence of Britishness that Said highlights in his work: 'what the English mind surveyed was an imperial domain', so that travelling through the colonies was effectively 'touring the realm of political will, political management, political definition'.[13] Rather than British colonial thinking being the reserve of genuine colonial actors on governed land, in these two books it becomes an essential quality of national identity through the effacement of European culture and the narrative dominance of British characters.

[10] Jonathan Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), p. 158.
[11] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin, 2003), p. 178.
[12] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair,* pp. 327-8.
[13] ibid., p. 171.

While all characters require the blurring of the continental actors by which they are surrounded, this does not mean that the authors do so indiscriminately or without irony. The nationalistic bent of certain characters in each novel is derided with similar distaste as the cosmopolitan bent of others. This quality is aggressively portrayed by Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda,* who wishes to mentally depopulate his environment. He enjoys yachting in the Mediterranean for 'its dreamy do-nothing absolutism, unmolested by social demands', with no desire to encounter another person in the 'dreariness of the Maremma'.[14] These scenes are juxtaposed with a broader reflection on him as a man who can 'believe, and not merely maintain, the non-existence of an external world'.[15] While this egoism separates him from all, the free indirect discourse of his boat trip insists that his misanthropy is exacerbated by xenophobia, having 'a scornful satisfaction in the attention given by the nautical groups to the *milord'* and believing that his 'manner made the speakers understand that they were too officious, and that he knew better than they'.[16] The distinction Eliot creates between the likely opinions of the sailors towards Grandcourt and his arrogant self-assurance is comical, but it still does not afford space to the perspectives of the locals, who instead become refractive lenses for the better understanding of Grandcourt's character. With a similarly narrow sightline, Thackeray's Mrs O'Dowd unfailingly interprets all new experiences through comparison with Ireland: the 'kenal boats' are inferior, the beef is inferior, and the very 'idea of comparing the market at Bruges with those of Dublin [...] caused immense scorn and derision'.[17] Her failure to truly perceive the world is noted by Becky as she admires 'Mrs O'Dowd's large cairngorm brooch and superb Irish diamonds, and wouldn't believe that they were not from Golconda direct'.[18] The irony that Mrs O'Dowd would effectively steal the jewels twice over – once in their extraction from the site famous as the origin of the Koh-i-Noor, and once in her refusal to even acknowledge their provenance – is intensified by her husband's subsequent role as a Major in British India. Of all Thackeray's wandering characters, Mrs O'Dowd, along with Jos Sedley perhaps, is the least capable of assimilating to her current environs, with both characters spending decades outside the British Isles and yet remaining almost entirely unchanged. Yet while we laugh at both characters for their absurd intransigence, we see little desire for true cultural exploration from any other

[14] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* p. 555.
[15] Ibid., pp. 556-7.
[16] Ibid., p. 565.
[17] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 254.
[18] Ibid., p. 263.

character, or indeed their narrator, who glosses over the Indian colony and the European cities with equal disregard.

The failure of these travellers to connect with their surroundings naturally raises the question of the purpose of these tours. Kinglake wrote in his hugely popular *Eothen* (1844) that he and his 'comrade' barely thought about their surroundings in the Middle East and talked instead about 'old times', in other words, the boys at Eton they used to bully.[19] And yet, he uses the traditional argument for the virtue of travel, well-worn in writings of the Grand Tour, that it is 'one of those rare and plastic seasons of your life' which will contribute to 'the moulding of your character—that is, your very identity'.[20] Similarly, Eliot wrote in her journal that she travelled for 'the hope of the new elements it would bring to my culture' and that travel would be 'a continual current of disappointment if the main object is not the enlargement of one's general life'.[21] The design of travel, then, was to benefit the individual with 'culture', whatever this slippery term actually means to these writers. The superficiality and ubiquity of this goal is expressed by Thackeray in Lady Kicklebury's desire to 'go to the "Saint Antoine" of course. Everybody goes to the "Saint Antoine" [...] We propose to rest here; to do the Rubens's', notably using the verb 'do' rather than 'see' or 'experience', still a remarkably common (mis)use in twenty-first-century travel parlance.[22]

While culture is overtly reduced to a check-box exercise in unadmirable characters, both novels maintain that the purpose of travel is indeed acquisition from the countries visited. For Eliot, this is primarily emotional or moral gain. Daniel gains tangibly, finding in Genoa a heritage, a race, and a sense of purpose that had been stymied by his overwhelming and directionless 'sympathy' while in England. It is obvious that, although Eliot's narrator argues that Daniel's rootlessness had been his great flaw, it is actually his uprooting to Europe that precipitates his development of character. In *Vanity Fair,* travel is presented in terms of financial gain, inextricable from the hovering presence of the East India company. This is made clear through Jos, who dubs himself 'Waterloo Sedley' to gain favour in India, from where he is enabled 'to lay by a considerable sum of money' and return home 'with a good pension'.[23] The benefit to Jos is not only the luxurious lifestyle and adequate

[19] Alexander Kinglake, *Eothen* (Gorgias Press, 2009), p. 16. See also Said's comments on this: *Orientalism,* p. 194.
[20] Kinglake, *Eothen*, p. 16.
[21] George Eliot, *Journals,* p. 336, quoted in John Rignall, 'George Eliot and the Idea of Travel', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 36.2 (2006), pp. 139-152 (p. 145).
[22] Thackeray, 'Kickleburys', p. 130.
[23] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 545.

recompense, but also the ability to redefine himself, first in England, then in Brussels, then in India, to cloak his personal failings with stories from his adventures. Storytelling is central to his character, allowing his personality to fade into the background while he tells 'his tiger-hunt story with great effect, both at the mess-table and at the soiree, to Mrs O'Dowd in her turban'.[24] Neither he nor the Major's wife need experience any cultural engagement; he can don a tale as she does a turban to further his prospects among his fellow Britons without the requirement of any true evolution.

Despite the lack of evidence that travel might result in genuine cultural development, this is repeatedly stated as its primary goal. In his analysis of nineteenth-century tourism, James Buzard asks whether 'the "acquiring" of "culture" through travel—the chief desideratum of the Continental tour—[was] comparable to the acquiring of property?' and if so, could 'acculturation be described in the language of the "cash nexus"'?[25] Buzard's questioning can, I think, be taken a little further. If the purpose of travel was to acquire and carry back property or social/ cultural gains to Britain, could it not be seen as comparable to the kinds of extractive colonialism that were contemporaneous with the Grand Tour's huge increase in popularity? Both *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda* show their lead characters engaged in just this kind of activity. Daniel's first sight of Gwendolen is as she is 'occupied in gambling: not in the open air under a southern sky, tossing coppers on a ruined wall, with rags about her limbs' but in a tawdry gambling hall.[26] The scene evokes the moment in *Middlemarch* when Will Ladislaw sees Dorothea in Rome, with both men watching a woman's behaviour to determine her moral integrity, comparing a physical woman with the idea of one. While Ladislaw sees 'a breathing blooming girl [...] not shamed by the Ariadne', with 'the consciousness of Christian centuries in its bosom', Daniel's comparison serves to highlight beauty deadened by immorality; Gwendolen seemingly would be beautiful were it coppers she was playing with, but her rapacity makes her ugly.[27] Both men view their women in crowds, but while Dorothea becomes more extraordinary by this setting, Gwendolen becomes common, infected by the money-hungry gamblers. Her story more broadly reflects the harms that people feared cosmopolitanism was effecting on society, which Katherine Bailey Linehan describes as Eliot's anxiety about the 'fast money that derive[d] from mid

[24] Ibid., p. 250.
[25] James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800–1918* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 77.
[26] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 3.
[27] George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 3rd edn (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 177.

Victorian commercial success backed by the spoils of colonialism'.[28] The European world normalised the pawning of heirlooms as 'a practice so common in stylish society at German baths that there was no need to be ashamed of it'; only a few weeks later Gwendolen is willing to pawn herself for financial stability.[29] The dangers of a capitalism intensified by increasingly liquid assets and speculation instead of property are embedded in Leubronn, where Eliot argues the flow of money erases national belonging in what her narrator drily terms 'an admission of human equality'.[30]

This scene of capitalistic hedonism is seemingly the after-effect of the arrival of people contemporaneous with the setting of *Vanity Fair,* who were 'among the first of that brood of hardy English adventurers who have subsequently invaded the Continent and swindled in all the capitals of Europe'.[31] These people now are 'shabby in attire, dingy of linen, lovers of billiards and brandy, and cigars and greasy ordinaries' and go about 'swindling inn-landlords, passing fictitious cheques upon credulous bankers, robbing coachmakers of their carriages'.[32] The 'invasion' of which Thackeray speaks is not only an allusion to the literal invasion of the troops, but to the 'jokes and complaints about the 'British invasion of Europe [...] in the periodicals', in Buzard's words.[33] It is notable that Thackeray consistently prefers the polyptoton of 'invasion' over any other term to describe the rise in tourism. The mass of British travellers to Europe is framed in exactly the language of imperial conquest, and the dynamic of arrival, triumph, and extraction mimics colonial pursuits. Therefore, Becky's gambling in Paris, though profitable, is 'only an idle dalliance and amiable trifling' and the priority is to *return* with this money and 'push Rawdon's fortune in their own country'.[34] The gambling that both Becky and Gwendolen participate in is offered as an example of the decline of moral society into individualistic avarice, and yet both women, despite being apparent symbols of cosmopolitan capitalism, long for the community that Britain signifies, failing to meet its standards even as it fails to meet their desire for freedom.

[28] Katherine Bailey Linehan, 'Mixed Politics: The Critique of Imperialism in Daniel Deronda', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language,* 34.3 (1992), pp. 323-46 (p. 329).
[29] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 11.
[30] Ibid., p. 4.
[31] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 345.
[32] Ibid., pp. 251, 345.
[33] Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 19.
[34] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, p. 344.

Yet despite both novels intentionally warning against the dangers of cosmopolitanism, this is not the insidious force in either novel that their authors seem desperate to prove it is. Instead of cultural distinction being eroded and a kind of hedonistic international blankness replacing it, we only witness characters' cultural identity being solidified by their foreign excursions; British community is not hindered by distance from Britain but is rather fortified, and arguably created, by it. This is, perhaps, an essential part of nationalism whether in the nineteenth century or the twenty-first, with patriotism necessarily demanding an 'other' against which to assert itself. But the inconsistency generated by the thematic fear of foreignness and the subtle need for it creates a tension in both novels. What constitutes national community is not the same in *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda* – a fact introduced even before opening the books' covers. Eliot's later work centralises community yet takes as its title the name of a single man, whereas Thackeray's title uses the name of a place, a travelling fair which can be swiftly relocated to Brussels 'where all the Vanity Fair booths were laid out with the most tempting liveliness and splendour'.[35] Both novels insist on the precedence of community over the individual, in part achieved through the dual narrative structures of both, while Thackeray's subtitle claims that this is 'a novel without a hero' (while making a strong case for Becky Sharpe to fulfil that very role). For Eliot, Daniel is effectively 'an allegory about cosmopolitanism', to borrow Amanda Anderson's phrase, very nearly an emblem of enclosed community rather than an individual, while Thackeray's repetition of the fair motif positions his moveable community in the foreground.[36]

The symbolisation of community as either a person or a location in the two titles suggests variance in its definition, yet both writers mysticise its construction in a comparable manner. *Daniel Deronda* presents the Jewish community as something magically bound together across space, and likewise, by some inexplicable gravity, *Vanity Fair* draws together its British expatriates and travellers. For both, this geographic scattering harmonises the community, shown clearly in Thackeray's army scenes as the gentry 'condescended to mingle with the rest of the company whom they met there', a removal of class barriers which is seen to be impossible on home shores.[37] Similarly, this recurs both times the national anthem is played: as the ships depart for Belgium, there is 'cheering from the East India ships, in the river and the military on shore, the band, playing "God Save The King", and

[35] Ibid., p. 255.
[36] Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (Princeton University Press, 2001), p.121.
[37] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair,* p. 256.

then again in Pumpernickel, the Englishmen, narrator included, 'proclaimed themselves to be members of the dear old British nation'.[38] For Thackeray, travel abroad and especially colonial employment offers an egalitarian pause in class distinctions, strengthening the unity of national bonds, while also allowing for a Dobbin to eclipse an Osbourne, indicating the meritocratic freedoms found away from the homeland. It seems apparent that 'Britishness' is created through removal from the native country, since genuine community is lacking in Gwendolen's village, in Daniel's or Becky's London, and certainly anywhere poor Becky Sharpe sets her foot. But on the continent, bombastic British identity is formed not through memory of the homeland but through an artificially constructed familiarity produced by unwanted contact with otherness.

The intensity of national ties is most portrayed vividly in *Daniel Deronda* by Eliot's quasi-mystical Jewish consciousness. The immediate relationship between Mordecai and Daniel is described as the former's 'figure [having] bitten itself into Daniel's mind', and there are constant allusions to the sense that his belonging can be silently intuited by other members of the community.[39] Daniel's increasing nationalism is tied to the village-esque community found among the Cohens and even across the continent to Joseph Kalonymos. In her analysis of the role of the village in provincial literature, Josephine McDonagh notes the '*idée fixe* of [...] an encounter with a former neighbour in a distant place, as though the colony were in some way a displaced village, only stretched and distended across a new and strange environment'.[40] In *Daniel Deronda,* the Jewish community replicates this almost oppressively close-knit environment of limited geography but spread across Europe. There is a subtle misalignment therefore in Mordecai's speech in which he favours the establishment of a physical land so that 'our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute', since the establishment of a settler colony would definitionally be inorganic, while the genuine organic connection is evident throughout the novel and without any geographic anchor.[41] Their intense bond of nationality requires the exclusion of others, leading to the effective disowning of Sir Hugo as Daniel's father and reduction of Gwendolen to a mere correspondent, now foreign to Daniel in favour of 'my race' and 'my people'.[42] As

[38] Ibid., pp. 250, 593.
[39] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* p. 391.
[40] Josephine McDonagh, 'Towards a Genealogy of the Village in the Nineteenth-century British Colonial World' in *Commodities and Culture in the Colonial World*, ed. by Supriya Chaudhuri, Josephine McDonagh, Brian Murray, and Rajeswari Rajan (Routledge, 2017), pp. 145-59 (p. 145).
[41] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda,* p. 443.
[42] Ibid., p. 669.

John Plotz claims, 'Eliot establishes an unscrutinizable national interiority by elaborately staging a withdrawal of the novel's gaze from scenes that might shed light on the interiority' of Daniel, forcing us out of this collective identity such that 'by novel's end [...] it is almost impossible for the reader to comprehend him, let alone feel sympathy for him'.[43] In effect, the nationalism Daniel experiences enforces the reader's exclusion, in a manner comparable to the attitude of British travellers abroad: community is achieved through the opacity and impassability of its borders.

Daniel's safe, enclosed community is placed in opposition to what Anderson terms the 'thin and morally deficient forms of cosmopolitanism', recasting Jewish insularity as 'a sign of remarkable endurance predictive of the capacity for the noble condition of true nationhood'.[44] Anderson's comparison presents Jewish identity as an ideal to which the English community of the novel should aspire (to return) to. This parallel is more explicitly drawn in 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!', an essay in Eliot's final book, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879), in which her narrator muses that Britain's 'sea-wall is a specially divine arrangement' to keep us 'secure against invasion and able to invade other lands when we need them', an alienation and social withdrawal elsewhere levelled at Jews as a criticism yet fashioned here as a benefit.[45] This later text more firmly expresses Eliot's fear that cultural diversity would degrade 'the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national traditions', writing that 'it is a calamity to the English, as to any other great historic people, to undergo a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood'.[46] Community is fragile and liable to be destabilised, she implies, and despite no evidence that intermingling has harmed her fictional Jewish community, Eliot is in terror of what might happen to her own British community through too much interaction with others at home or abroad.

The potential harm that the introduction of non-natives might bring to Britain is portrayed in *Vanity Fair* through Becky Sharp, with the suggestion that her success on the continent and failure at home both stem from her not-quite-British blood. Becky is introduced as the daughter of 'a young woman of the French nation, who was by profession an opera-girl' and the narrator remarks that 'it was only from her French being so good that you could

[43] John Plotz, *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* (Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 82, 85.
[44] Anderson*, The Powers of Distance,* p. 131.
[45] George Eliot, 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (Blackwood and Sons, 1879).
[46] ibid.

know she was not a born woman of fashion'.[47] She may speak 'the genteel jargon so well that a native could not speak it better' but she is always just beyond the sphere of understanding, in large part because she is so efficient at blending into whatever society she encounters.[48] In her arrival in Paris, '[a]ll the French ladies voted her charming' as she 'adopted at once their grace, their liveliness, their manner', while in Pumpernickel she is 'at home with everybody in the place'.[49] A message emerges that British characters should firmly retain their own character; they should not adopt new behaviours or customs when abroad, they should not blend in.

Like Becky, Daniel's capacity to relate to others is seen as a weakness; in almost identical language, he longs 'to be at home in foreign countries' and has a broad sympathy for all people.[50] But, for Sir Hugo, a desire to understand other cultures could cause him 'to be melted down for the benefit of the tallow-trade', while the story confirms that Daniel's hope 'to be an Englishman, but [...] to understand other points of view' is unachievable, requiring him to gain Jewishness at the expense of his Britishness.[51] Daniel's ancestry comes to function in the same impermeable manner as British nationality is depicted in *Vanity Fair,* even in the fact that it is not tethered to geographic location. The novel ultimately refutes the narrator's suggestion that a 'human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land' and that only in this way will 'kindly acquaintance with all neighbours' occur 'as a sweet habit of the blood'.[52] Instead, community is instinctively produced through nationality, not location, and rather than encouraging integration, Eliot firmly favours 'separateness' even if it is 'with communication'.[53] The latter part of this famous phrase is all but forgotten at the close of novel as Daniel prioritises the ethnic community he has just found over the clear desperation of Gwendolen, for whom he is the only person capable of truly offering support or guidance. While this trio of words, 'separateness with communication', has been leveraged virtually since the novel's publication in argument for its soft cosmopolitanism, most recently so by Anderson and others, the conclusion to the novel does away with its seeming power. Against this reading, Aleksander Stević insists that Eliot's position in the novel is staunchly nationalist, writing that any attempt to view Daniel's

[47] Thackeray, *Vanity Fair,* pp. 11, 267.
[48] Ibid., p. 267.
[49] Ibid., pp. 327-8, 621.
[50] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 149.
[51] Ibid., p. 152.
[52] Ibid., p. 15.
[53] Ibid., p. 602.

'nationalist commitment to the community of blood over other commitments' as cosmopolitanism 'would require us not only to qualify the concept of cosmopolitanism but to qualify it out of existence.'[54] It is in the divergence of Daniel and Gwendolen at the close of the novel that we see not only the sharpest divide between what cosmopolitans or nationalists deserve according to Eliot's moral judgement, but also the stark divide between the genders when it comes to intermingling of national identity.

Travel is presented as something emboldening for the male characters, forming an 'apprenticeship to life' for Daniel or the means by which Jos or Dobbin can become financially free, but for women it is devastating.[55] Daniel's success abroad in acquiring a sense of community corresponds directly with Gwendolen's collapse in identity, not once but both times she travels abroad. Similarly, Amelia Sedley's time in Brussels brings about the collapse of her family and signals a total loss of self. As John Rignall notes, for 'Eliot's female protagonists the journey typically dramatizes a crisis of selfhood', as not only is Gwendolen damaged by her travels abroad, but so is Dorothea.[56] In 'unintelligible Rome', the 'stupendous fragmentariness heightened the dream-like strangeness of her bridal life', invading her mind so completely that 'in certain states of forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the vastness of St Peter's'.[57] Gwendolen's experiences abroad also shatter her sense of self, forcing her to return to the place that isn't quite home, condemning her, like all women, to 'stay where we grow, or where the gardeners like to transplant us'.[58] This pattern recurs throughout nineteenth-century travels, as in Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* (1865) with Alice Vavasor's two European tours, in which she first loses her resolve to marry Mr Grey by the Rhine, and then loses her resolve *not* to marry him in Lucerne, both of which produce a collapse in self-reliance.[59] The occurrence reaches a height in Henry James's fiction, in which European travels trigger or coincide with the death of Milly Theale, the fracturing of Maisie's family, and of course, the devastating marriage of Isabel Archer. In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), Madame Merle sums up the phenomenon of women's unbelonging, saying that 'a woman, it seems to me, has no natural place anywhere; wherever she finds herself she has to remain on the surface and, more or less, to crawl'.[60] One

[54] Aleksandar Stević, 'Convenient Cosmopolitanism: Daniel Deronda, Nationalism, and the Critics,' *Victorian Literature and Culture* 45.3 (2017), pp. 593–614 (606).
[55] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 145.
[56] Rignall, 'George Eliot and the Idea of Travel', p. 145.
[57] Eliot, *Middlemarch,* pp. 180-82.
[58] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 110.
[59] Anthony Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her?* (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 39-57, 584-93.
[60] Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 202-3.

of the insistent messages coming from both *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda* is that it would have been safer for the heroines to remain at home.

The traditional domestic image is fought against by the speech of these heroines, as indeed it is by Eliot herself, but it is affirmed by the structures of the texts themselves. The two narrative lines of home life and travel, of domesticity and adventure, are for Patrick Brantlinger, 'the seemingly opposite poles of a single system of discourse' such that 'the parts of the antithesis demand each other as ironically contrasting parts of a whole'.[61] The divide within *Daniel Deronda* is made even sharper by its split structure, such that F. R. Leavis famously said about the Jewish part, 'there is nothing to do but cut it away', to leave 'an actual great novel to be extricated [...] for separate publication as *Gwendolen Harleth*'.[62] Yet the opposite is truer: cutting away Gwendolen would change nothing for Daniel's development. What the double narrative does achieve is a conservative balance to the colonial ending, grounding a place of home from which the man is able to adventure out to new climes. Linehan remarks that 'Eliot regards the female capacity for tenderness as the linchpin of civilization', and refusal of this innate duty could destabilise Eliot's fragile community.[63] Yet, what is more effectively argued in *Daniel Deronda* than the prevalent critical perspective of the woman fixed as one compass point and the adventuring man as the other is the proof that Gwendolen could never have become this domesticated, shrunken woman without her foreign journeys. It has been the act of travelling that has inculcated in her a sense that she must remain at home, that she must fully accept her British identity to the exclusion of others. It is also, perhaps more equivocally, the means by which Becky Sharpe reluctantly forms a stable household with her husband and son and rises to the top of British society. Therefore, the effect on both genders, while one is clearly positive and the other negative, is to enforce the boundaries of a cultural identity that could not be located otherwise.

By encouraging a message of destruction for women in foreign adventure, the rigidity of British community is enforced, and by depicting the explorations of men as socially and financially transformative, the aims of the British Empire are legitimised. But the paralleling goes further than that. The necessity of feminine domesticity within travel fiction throughout

[61] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 12.
[62] F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (George W. Stewart, 1950), p. 122.
[63] Linehan, 'Mixed Politics', p. 340.

the Victorian era produces a dual definition of British culture, which *Vanity Fair* and *Daniel Deronda* seem to argue are inextricable from one another. What signifies in the two texts, and plausibly more broadly in nineteenth-century literature, is that British identity is meaningless without continental travel, which in turn seems to construct a national culture only through removal from the homeland. The mystical way in which characters gravitate towards each other would be generically out of place in both Thackeray's satire and Eliot's realism, were the reader not predisposed to assume the ordinariness of this kind of event. Equally, the revelations about selfhood, and especially about nationally conferred cultural identify, seem to originate solely in encountering their countrymen abroad. These epiphanies bear little relation to the claimed purpose of travel; that is, broadening one's horizon through experiencing the new. Instead, it seems that the imperial mindset locates its patriotism only in leaving Britain, thereby raising questions around what British culture even is in this globalising world. National identity thereby requires foreignness even while dreading its potential.

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