Introduction

The experience of exile and the flight to Italy

> It is a strange thing, this transference of emotion. We sicken with the same maladies as the poets, and the singer lends us his pain. Dead lips have their message for us, and hearts that have fallen to dust can communicate their joy. We run to kiss the bleeding mouth of Fantine, and we follow Manon Lescaut over the whole world. Ours is the love-madness of the Tyrian, and the terror of Orestes is ours also. There is no passion that we cannot feel, no pleasure that we may not gratify, and we can choose the time of our initiation and the time of our freedom also.[1]

Oscar Wilde's meditation in 'The Critic as Artist' uses exile to explore the kinship between artist and reader. His point is that art transmits a wide variety of remote experiences, but all the characters he mentions happen to be outcasts of one kind or another whose fates foreshadow Wilde's own disgrace and expulsion from society. Wilde's list of exiles from all genres across time enforces his earlier point about art closing temporal distance:

> Through the burning rubies of Mars, Cacciaguida approaches. He tells us of the arrow that is shot from the bow of exile, and how salt tastes the bread of another, and how steep are the stairs in the house of a stranger. . . . Yes, we can put the earth back six hundred courses and make ourselves one with the great Florentine, kneel at the same altar with him, and share his rapture and his scorn.[2]

Wilde's continuous present tense is an affective strategy in which the deep unsettlement of Dante's banishment from Florence in 1302 can be imaginatively inhabited 600 years later. We cannot know the taste of 14th-century bread from Florence or Ravenna any more than we can now

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[1] Richard Ellmann (ed.), *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968; repr. 1982), p. 379.

[2] Ellmann (ed.), *The Artist as Critic*, p. 378.

believe in the pre-Copernican universe, but Dante's art moves us towards an understanding of his world from the edge of ours. The idea of 'transference' is apposite because Dante's exile is both an historical event and a state of mind. While we read, we find ourselves conveyed to another place and the shock of an unfamiliar country is a powerful metaphor for the experience of literature itself. In one respect, though, Wilde underestimates the power of art: the exiles in this book suggest that once we have read something, it becomes a link in an associative chain, part of a helix of perception, as well as a remnant that can be salvaged from the fluid realms of memory. We can choose when we pick up a book, but we are not always free to choose when we stop thinking about it or through it.

It seems to have taken about five centuries for the concept of exile in English to grow from an externally imposed sentence into a form of identity. The figurative meaning of the noun 'exile' to describe a banished person only emerged in the Romantic period, according to the *OED*, which dates this to Goldsmith's vision of displaced peasants in 'The Deserted Village' (1770): 'When the poor exile, every pleasure past,/Hung round the bowers and fondly look'd their last'.[3] By 1818, Thomas Love Peacock could write to a friend about Percy and Mary Shelley, 'From the exiles I have had two letters', but he clearly regards their exiled status as a misguided attempt to turn reading into a lived experience: 'I think there can be little in the "*bel paese*" to compensate the trouble of visiting it: still less the expence: least of all the loss of Greek incurred in travelling from inn to inn and hearing bad Italian spoken by ugly and filthy people.'[4] In Peacock's eyes, the 'beautiful land' of Dante cannot be recaptured by going there and classical composure is more likely to be located in England.

Literal and figurative dimensions of exile are inextricably related for the writers under discussion in this study and form part of a distinctly exilic self-consciousness, informed by literature. The metaphorical dimension of exile is firmly rooted in Latin theology. When Lady Philosophy visits Boethius in his prison, she recognizes the doubled nature of the outcast before her:

> The moment I saw your sad and tear-stained looks, they told me that you had been reduced to the misery of banishment; but unless you had told me, I would still not have known how far you had been banished. However, it is not simply a case of your having been banished far from your home; you have wandered away from yourself, or if you prefer to be

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[3] *The Poetical Works of Oliver Goldsmith, with a sketch of the author's life including original anecdotes* (London: Thomas Hurst, 1804), p. 34 (ll. 365–6).

[4] Nicholas A. Joukovsky (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Love Peacock*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), I, 150.

thought of as having been banished, it is you yourself that have been the instrument of it. No one else could have done it.[5]

Reminding Boethius that earthly life falls under the chaotic rule of Fortuna, Lady Philosophy instructs him that 'any man who has chosen to make his dwelling [in the life of Christian contemplation] has the sacred right never to be banished…there can be no fear of exile for any man within its walls and moat'. Secure in this definition of home, Boethius was imaginatively beyond the reach of those who eventually put him to death in Pavia in AD 524. His dialogue with Lady Philosophy was an influential coming to terms with reversals of fortune for subsequent writers—Dante depicts Boethius in *Paradiso* as one who '*essa da martiro/e da essilio venne a questa pace*', one who came from exile and martyrdom to peace. The alternating prose and verse Menippean form which Boethius adopts is used by later writers to convey the bipolar switches between discursive engagement and lyrical absorption in exiled consciousness.[6]

For the writers in this book, exile was a double experience of perdition: loss of the national home was bound up with a Protestant form of excommunication. Lord Byron's drama, *Cain*, was threatened with prosecution for blasphemy and Percy Shelley's *Queen Mab* had been indicted as a work that 'blasphemously derided the truth of the Xtian Revelation & denied the existence of a God as Creator of the Universe'.[7] The existence of the Christian haven described by Dante and Milton was questioned by 19th-century writers, of whom many turned to pre-Christian classical authors to articulate a bleaker universe, in which philosophy offered the only consolation for the radical dislocations of personal or political history. Among the most famous of exiles in European history, Ovid was almost unable to bear the distance of Rome from Tomis on the Black Sea at the edge of empire, a pain which he voiced in the *Tristia*: 'Rome steals into my thought, my home, and the places that I long for, and all that part of me that is left in the city I have lost'.[8] In letters from his exile in Thessalonica, Cicero defined the peculiar misery of exile: 'Other hurts grow less acute as they grow older, this cannot but increase from day to day from the sense of present misery and the recollection of the life that is past. I mourn

[5] Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy,* trans. E. V. Watts (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969; repr. 1987), p. 48.

[6] *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, III, *Paradiso*, trans. John D. Sinclair (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), X.128–9, pp. 152–3.

[7] Public Record Office Chancery Equity Suit, quoted in Timothy Morton, 'Joseph Ritson, Percy Shelley and the Making of Romantic Vegetarianism', *Romanticism* 12.1 (2006), pp. 52–61 (p. 54).

[8] Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto,* ed. and trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (London: Heinemann, 1924), pp. 108–9.

the loss not only of things and persons that were mine, but of my very self. What am I now?'[9] Cicero claimed to be contemplating suicide, although this private desperation was tempered into a more detached and stoical perspective in *De temporibus suis* once he was back in Rome.[10] Classical and biblical expressions of desolation feed an artistry in the Romantic period that is fascinated by depictions of abandonment, persecution, rupture, and loss. The metaphorical ruins of paradise have been at the heart of many former studies of Romantic-period literature; this book sets out to reconnect the literal and figurative dynamics of exile.

The philosophy that fuelled the revolutionary upheaval of 1789 was often written by men and women who became *persona non grata* in their homelands—and further afield. Despite David Hume's wish that Jean-Jacques Rousseau should live in England unmolested, conservatives were keen to see him kept out: 'Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man', Dr Johnson told Boswell, 'I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation, than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations.'[11] Romantic-period writers sought to identify themselves with historical and literary outcasts and aliens to forward political protest, but also to understand their own states of mind and to people their isolation. Robert Southey's *Botany Bay Eclogues*, William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*, and Charlotte Smith's *The Emigrants* work on the cusp between political critique and psychological transference. In Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron claims Rousseau's loneliness as entirely his own, driven into exile to Clarens, a place where 'The permanent crags' tell of one 'who sought/In them a refuge from the worldly shocks' (stanzas 99–103). For Byron, being a political and social misfit meets an engulfing, cosmic loneliness that exceeds its originating cause.

If political exile involves pressure or coercion to leave, for the intellectual, all the compulsion may come from within. 'Where, though', asks Angelica Goodden, 'does one draw the line between exile and emigration?'[12] Wherever we place it, the boundary is one that the present book will cross and recross. As will become clear, a systematic desynonymization of the

   [9] *The Letters to Atticus*, vol. I, ed. and trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 250–1.
   [10] For a detailed exploration of Cicero's generic range of writing on exile, see Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London: Duckworth, 1999), pp. 77–85, 183–4.
   [11] See Maurice Cranston, *The Solitary Self: Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Exile and Adversity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 153. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 359.
   [12] Angelica Goodden, *Madame De Staël: The Dangerous Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 25.

categories of exile, refugee, expatriate, and émigré is impossible to sustain except in the most general terms, as their imaginative conditions overlap and run into each other. Sharon Ouditt points out that the immigrant leaves voluntarily, with a desire to become an accepted member of the new society, but this need not preclude a sense of unhappy rupture with the former culture.[13] It might seem easier to separate out the traveller and the tourist who find themselves abroad, and not expelled, but Ouditt argues that 'exile is, above all, seen to be the condition of the traveller…at once nostalgic for the place of departure…yet attracted by the ambivalence of unbelonging'.[14] Strictly speaking, we should insist that the exile must feel shut out—banished—but for the Romantic and Victorian writers in this study, exile was a repudiation of English society as much as an ostracizing pressure from without and, at times, they all share Coriolanus's disdain towards the crowds of his countrymen: 'You common cry of curs…I banish you' (III.3.120–3).

Meditating on her imminent departure from England in 1822 (for the extended tour that led to her *Conversations with Lord Byron* in Genoa), Lady Blessington wrote that 'the quitting home for an indefinite period makes one thoughtful'.[15] Tourists and expatriates do not leave home under any constraint, but they may share the self-reflective capacity of the émigré. For the writers I am discussing, the condition of being in exile often intersects with the business of being on tour, and it is not always possible to separate the pleasures and pains of the two situations. Trying to disentangle the exile from the refugee, both of whom have their exodus imposed on them, Edward Said argues that refugees conjure up the image of 'large herds of innocent and bewildered people…whereas "exile" carries with it…a touch of solitude and spirituality'.[16] This re-romanticizes a condition that elsewhere Said is keen to demystify, but he points to the important truth that exile may be both an acutely personal experience and one shared by a group.

In *The Emigrants*, Charlotte Smith projects herself into the predicaments of the French refugees she portrays:

> I mourn your sorrows; for I too have known
> Involuntary exile; and while yet
> England had charms for me, have felt how sad
> It is to look across the dim cold sea,

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[13] Sharon Ouditt (ed.), *Displaced Persons: Conditions of Exile in European Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. xiii–xiv.

[14] Ouditt (ed.), *Dispaced Persons*, p. xix.

[15] The Countess of Blessington, *The Idler in Italy* (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1839), p. 1.

[16] Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2001), p. 181.

> That melancholy rolls its refluent tides
> Between us and the dear regretted land
> We call our own. (I, 155–61)[17]

Smith was in 'involuntary exile' in Normandy between 1784 and 1785 to escape imprisonment with her husband for debt. The word 'yet' lingering at the end of the line hints heavily that a time would come when Smith's detachment from the land she calls her own would increase, and that the end of her fiscal sentence of banishment would usher in a more radical sort of alienation.[18] Smith's sense of belonging to the 'dear regretted land' is, therefore, more problematic than that of Thomas Moore and Scrope Davies, who also left England to escape imprisonment for bankruptcy. Moore bounded off to France and Italy in 1818–21, where he was diverted by the manuscript of Byron's memoirs, which Byron had entrusted to him. Having placed the manuscript of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto III in the vaults of Barclays Bank with his betting books and bills, Davies left England in 1820, but held on to his Cambridge fellowship from an offshore haven in Ostende for several decades.

Stuart Curran sees Smith's fascination with statelessness as consistent with her psychological condition as a woman writer: émigrés, he suggests, resemble women in being another piece of 'flotsam'.[19] Curran's interest in gender sharpens his discussion of psychic displacement, but his thought-provoking essay typifies the merger of metaphoric and actual exile whereby, paradoxically, the exiled experience of Smith on Beachy Head becomes indistinguishable from that of Percy Shelley among the Euganean Hills, or that of the vagrants of William Wordsworth's verse. I want to reinstate the difference between these situations, and capture the peculiar flavour of home thoughts from abroad. Nearly all writers, especially women writers in the 19th century, are misfits by profession. This book tests the way in which a terminal crossing of the English channel alters the perception of 'refluent tides' and the sound of longing.

Any attempt to differentiate the traveller from the exile is complicated in an age when war and imperial expansion necessitated long periods of

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[17] Stuart Curran (ed.), *The Poems of Charlotte Smith* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 141.

[18] For a discussion of Charlotte Smith's identification with Shakespearean figures of exile in the context of the 1790s, see Susan J. Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions: Social Being & the Turns of Literary Action* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), pp. 36–59.

[19] Stuart Curran, 'Romanticism Displaced and Placeless', *European Romantic Review* 20.5 (2009): 637–50 (p. 644). For shared fears about banishment and exile caused by disruption to the childhood home, see Beth Lau, 'Home, Exile and Wanderlust in Austen and the Romantic Poets', *Pacific Coast Philology* 41 (2006): 91–107.

absence from the homeland for men who served in the army, navy, or colonial administration, and for their families and servants. In *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*, Jane Robinson dedicates a chapter to 'reluctant' women travellers: she calls them 'little tragic heroines', but notes that a strong prose style often compensates for the lack of control these women had over their geographical location.[20] Robinson includes Marianne Baillie, Anna Jameson, and Ann Radcliffe among her involuntary European travellers, but even among these three writers, homesickness finds a wide variety of forms.

After four years of residence in Italy, Mary Shelley felt that England was no longer home. Political sympathies in Mary's case, rather than duration of absence from the homeland, shaped her self-designation as an exile. Shelley's contemporary, the travel writer and art historian, Maria Graham (later Lady Callcott), spent far longer abroad, but her travel writing never breathes of the sense of not belonging in England that troubles Shelley's prose. Between the ages of 23 and 43, Maria Graham spent over 11 years away from her native shores. In her *Journal of a Residence in India* (1812), she records a hunger for English books that also emerges in the writings of the Shelleys and Byron. Graham's desire for English reading material is, however, drenched with an unconditional patriotism that is not shared by the Pisan circle:

> Our conversation most frequently turns on England. Every new book that reaches us, every poem, especially if it recal the legends of our native land, is an object of discussion and interest beyond what I could have thought possible, till I felt in a foreign country how dear every thing becomes that awakens those powerful associations,
>
> > "Entwined with every tender tie,
> > Memorials dear of youth and infancy."[21]

Graham alludes to Walter Scott's prologue to Joanna Baillie's *The Family Legend* (1810). The verses were well chosen (if slightly misquoted), as Scott specifically mentions the effect of native music on the ear of the Scot who might be toiling 'on India's burning coasts':

> 'Tis sweet to hear expiring summer's sigh,
> Through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;
> 'Tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear
> Of distant music, dying on the ear;
> But far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,

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[20] Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; repr. 2000), p. 274.

[21] Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1812), pp. 139–40.

> We list the legends of our native land,
> Link'd as they come with every tender tie,
> Memorials dear of youth and infancy.[22]

The hoarding of books and the bitter-sweet sensation that is generated by remembered sound are shared by members of the Byron-Shelley circle, as we shall see; unlike their contingent sense of belonging, however, Graham's selfhood remains firmly located in 'our native land'. Graham identifies India as a 'foreign country'; her 'tender ties' accord with Hume's suggestion that associations and memory shape our sense of personal identity. For an even narrower construction of home through locale, we need only turn to the sense of displacement John Clare records after he moved 3 miles from Helpston to Northborough in 1832; 'exile' is how Fanny Price thinks of her time in Portsmouth after her uncle sends her away from Mansfield Park.[23]

If we examine the travel writing of other early 19th-century travel writers, it appears that a disconnection between national allegiance and the English cultural core tilts the frame of mind of the traveller into the frame of mind of the exile. In such circumstances, identity becomes more porous and conditional and the associative process triggered by signifiers of home also becomes more complex. A wide cultural range of reference and an absence of jingoism are positive traits that distinguish works of literature by the exiles in this study. They often make conscious efforts to cultivate a cosmopolitan outlook—as in Claire Clairmont's Pisan studies: 'A lesson from Zanetti…Read and finish Paine's Letter to the Abbè Raynal the feeling of this letter I admire exceedingly—it is truly cosmopolitan'.[24] Their writing, however, is also marked by the loneliness outlined by Martha C. Nussbaum, whereby 'the removal of the props of habit and local boundaries have left life bereft of any warmth or security'; cosmopolitanism, she argues, is not a comfortable refuge: 'it offers only reason and the love of humanity, which may seem at times less colourful than other sources of belonging'.[25] The link between cosmopolitanism and exile, Nussbaum points out, dates back to Diogenes, and we shall see how 19th-century writers seek out earlier thinkers and authors to people an existence shorn of local ties.

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[22] Prologue, ll. 1–8. Joanna Baillie, *A Selection of Plays and Poems*, ed. Amanda Gilroy and Keith Hanley (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002), p. 132.

[23] Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 309 (vol. III, ch. 9).

[24] Marion Kingston Stocking (ed.), *The Journals of Claire Clairmont, 1814–1827* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 122.

[25] Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in Garrett Wallace Brown and David Held (eds), *The Cosmopolitan Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), pp. 155–62 (p. 161).

Late-20th-century thinkers have invoked the concept of exile to convey the dispersal of modern or postmodern identity. Redeploying a Foucauldian view of the 18th century, Charles Taylor coined the phrase a 'Great Disembedding' to describe the detachment of the individual from a communal experience of religion in post-Reformation society. The systemic removal of an 'embedded' sense of identity is, for him, one of the defining characteristics of modernity in which individuals have lost the former inability to imagine themselves outside a particular social matrix. Taylor sees this rootlessness as a loss, rather than a liberation, but for the authors we shall be examining, the weighing up of the intellectual gains of exile, as opposed to its emotional damage, remains unsettled, in flux, and part of the texture of their writing.[26]

In his seminal study of Modernism, Terry Eagleton draws attention to the 'odd' paradox that 'the heights of modern English literature have been dominated by foreigners and émigrés'.[27] He opposes their worldview to that of the Romantic poet who 'writes out of a relationship of intricately detailed intimacy with his society'.[28] Eagleton's sample Romantics are Wordsworth and Blake; inclusion of Byron or the Shelleys or Landor would admit a level of tension between self and society that is much closer to what Eagleton associates with the 'intrinsically complex and ambiguous position' of his chosen modernists.[29] But it is also evident that the mention of Byron and the Shelleys would undermine Eagleton's explanation of the 'dreadful politics' of his modern writers.[30] Their right-wing values, he argues, can be accounted for because they were 'migrant figures, caught between different cultures and fully at home in none of them. Displaced, uprooted and insecure, they clung to the values of order, authority, hierarchy and tradition more tenaciously than some of their less unsettled colleagues'.[31] Very little of this compensatory psychology would seem to apply to the 19th-century writers who had witnessed an earlier period of profound social turbulence in Europe, but remained intractably opposed to the authoritarian regimes that replaced Napoleon.

Eagleton's assumptions about the ideology of exile and the birth of Modernism are brought into question by the work of Romantic-period writers who negotiated exile in Italy while remaining fiercely critical of

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[26] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 49–67 (p. 55).

[27] Terry Eagleton, *Exiles and Émigrés: Studies in Modern English Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), p. 9.

[28] Eagleton, *Exiles and Émigrés*, p. 10.

[29] Eagleton, *Exiles and Émigrés*, p. 16.

[30] Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2005), p. 259.

[31] Eagleton, *The English Novel*, p. 259.

the order, authority, and hierarchy enforced by Castlereagh and Metter-nich's spies and military suppressions. Outspoken criticism in Romantic-period satire of the despotic forces that impinged on daily life, and the often thwarted attempts to get this protest into print, connect 19th-century writers with 20th-century and contemporary dissidents, who share a wariness and an urgency of address towards readers. The other point of contact is the genesis of a 'more searching, ambitious art' that Eagleton finds in writers who were forced to be 'more cosmopolitan' with a 'richer span of cultural traditions at their disposal'; one question, though, is how this increased range of cultural and linguistic reference affects command of the mother tongue.[32]

Particularly disturbing for poets and writers in exile is the effect of estrangement from their native language. In Tomis, Ovid was appalled by his own inarticulacy: 'I must make myself understood by gestures. Here it is that I am a barbarian, understood by nobody'.[33] His lack of elo-quence in a new language was compounded when he discovered that he was losing his old one as well: 'Lo! I am ashamed to confess it; now from long disuse, Latin words with difficulty occur even to me'.[34] Metropoli-tan, urbane, used to being at the centre of society and also mixing politi-cal opposition and literary indiscretion, Lord Byron, like Ovid, found himself at a remove from his former powers of utterance: 'I twine/My hopes of being remembered in my line/With my land's language' (IV. 9), Byron writes in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, just after telling the reader that he has had to learn 'other tongues' (IV. 8). I will argue that exile accentuates the linguistic peculiarities of a writer like Byron who, after only a few years of residence abroad, was condemned by his contempo-raries and by subsequent critics for being 'un-English'. In 1823, *Black-wood's* decided that Byron had 'positively lost his ear, not only for the harmony of English verse, but for the very jingle of English rhymes.'[35] Landor and the Brownings were also condemned for abrasive misuse of the English language; this book will propose that geographical estrange-ment from the country of birth fosters a new style and alerts readers to a disconcerting blend of hybrid elements, which in some cases suggests a predisposition to exile.

Edward Said writes of Joseph Conrad's fiction, 'the moment one enters his writing the aura of dislocation, instability, and strangeness is unmis-takable'.[36] Though most of them could speak Italian fluently, all the

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[32] Eagleton, *The English Novel*, p. 259.
[33] Ovid, *Tristia* V. x. 36.
[34] Ovid, *Tristia* V. vii. 57.
[35] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (December 1823), p. 90.
[36] Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p. 554.

authors in this book continued to write and publish in English. I argue, however, that something else happens to their mother tongue whilst living abroad. Hazlitt picked out the Shakespearean apprehension of exile as the experience of losing one's voice, or losing one's touch:

> A more affecting image of the loneliness of a state of exile can hardly be given than by what Bolingbroke afterwards observes of his having 'sighed his breath in foreign clouds'; or that conveyed in Mowbray's complaint at being banished for life.
>
> > The language I have learned these forty years,
> > My native English, now I must forgo;
> > And now my tongue's use is to me no more
> > Than an unstringed viol or harp,
> > Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,
> > Or being open, put into his hands
> > That knows no touch to tune the harmony.
>
> …How very beautiful is all this, and at the same time how very *English* too![37]

Bolingbroke's words in *Richard II* convey the double identity of the exile: his breath, or inner being, is visible (especially on frosty mornings) as something foreign to the environment in which he finds himself; even the act of respiration reminds him that he is 'here, and not there'; simple acts of speech are suddenly misted with awkwardness and self-consciousness. With many of the writers I am discussing, their period of residence abroad allows them to 'hear' English in a different way.[38] Mary Shelley writes of Italian 'Englishly pronounced'.[39] She remarks that her little boy, William, 'speaks more Italian than English—when he sees any thing he likes he cries O Dio che bella –', and she uses Wollstonecraft's *Lessons* to teach her last surviving child, Percy, to speak her mother's tongue when Italian was his first language.[40]

Eager for English books while abroad, Mary Shelley writes of the distinctive music of English poetry, which she seems able to detect thanks to her distance from home:

> perhaps it is not in pathos but in the simple description of beauty that Spencer excels – His description of the island of bliss is an exact translation of Tasso's garden of Armida yet how is it that I find a greater simplicity & spirit in the translation than in the original.[41]

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[37] P. P. Howe (ed.), *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1930–4), IV, 273.

[38] This links with the experience of hearing poetry as music, as described in Mary Shelley's responses to Tommaso Sgricci: 'The madness of Cassandra was exquisitely delineated—and her prophesies wondrous & torrent like—they burst on the ear like the Cry Trojans cry—of Shakespear and music eloquence & poetry were combined in this wonderful effort of the imagination'. See *MWSL* I, 182.

[39] *MWSL* I, 95.   [40] *MWSL* I, 89, 306.   [41] *MWSL* I, 122.

And when she returns to England in 1823, she describes herself as now a 'poor Exile' from Italy, unable to adjust to the noise of non-literary English. 'Why am I not there? This is quite a foreign country to me; the names of the places sound strangely—the voices of the people are new & grating'.[42] In barely four years, Mary Shelley had come to see Rome as her imaginative home:

> that City is my Country, & I do not wish to own any other untill England
> is *free* & *true*…But do not think that I am unenglishifying myself – but that
> nook of ci devant free land, so sweetly surrounded by the sea is no longer
> England but Castlereagh land or New Land Castlereagh.[43]

Her echo of Shakespeare's *Richard II* is telling: Richard's 'breath' has the power to make outlaws and strangers of his subjects. Exile was a feudal punishment, dependent on the principle of arbitrary power that held sway in Europe until it came under unprecedented scrutiny and question in the Romantic period. The 19th-century exiles we shall be following saw themselves as victims of various forms of despotic authority wielded by God, and King, and Law. A brief consideration of the English historical context of exile will show why it was such a potent means of self-identification for the poets who sought out the ghosts of republican Italy.[44]

   In England, banishment was a centuries-old source of contention between the King, the Privy Council, and Parliament about who had the power to inflict such a punishment: the legal status of 'the kynges owne demeanance and rule' on this matter is disputed by constitutional historians to this day. The severity of exile as a punishment varied from case to case and decade to decade. Under Charles I, for example, banishment was for political, and occasionally sexual, misdemeanours or for the crime of conversion to Catholicism. It was usually for no more than two years and Charles would often commission his exiles to purchase paintings and sculptures while they were in Europe, thus palliating disgrace with the cultural gains of a sort of grand tour.[45] In the 1640s and 1650s, royalists who were banished by parliament found the experience of exile much more traumatic and many others fled (rather than being sent) into exile

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   [42] *MWSL* I, 379.   [43] *MWSL* I, 137.   [44] *PBSL* II, 121.
   [45] Geoffrey Smith notes, 'The traditional "Grand Tour" itinerary was emerging during the 1630s…Many future royalists had travelled to Italy before the Civil War so it is not surprising that a number of exiled Cavaliers, by no means exclusively Catholics, were able to alleviate the hardships of exile with the pleasures of something approaching the Grand Tour'. *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640–1660* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 83. For the history of the Grand Tour with particular reference to Italy, see Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

because they could not bear life under a republican government or because they were in fear for their lives.[46] The hardship of immediate circumstances and insecurity about their future generated a substantial body of royalist literature of exile in the form of letters, plays, poetry, and pamphlets.[47] Charles II continued to use exile as a punishment after the Restoration and we shall see how the Protestant Milton became an exemplary figure of English internal exile, his austere integrity often twinned with that of the Catholic Dante.

After the reversals of the Civil Wars, the next significant group of English exiles were the Jacobites. For Alexander Pope, Byron's ' "little Nightingale" ', the prospect of falling foul of Walpole and being banished along with his friend Francis Atterbury was a real possibility.[48] Atterbury was eventually found guilty under a Bill of Pains and Penalties in 1723, stripped of his bishopric, and sent into exile. The epic motif of the 'exile from his dear paternal coast' may have been part of what fuelled Pope's interest in translating Homer in the turbulent years between 1715 and 1725.[49] After the failure of the 1745 uprising, Bonnie Prince Charlie fled to France and then Italy, where he began to use the title 'Count of Albany'. 'Among the Objects of mingled Curiosity and Compassion, which Florence presented in 1779, to the view of an Englishman, was the Chevalier de St George; or, as we commonly denominate him, the *Pretender*', William Wraxall recalled, noting the inevitability of 'that infatuated Family' ending its days 'in Exile, maintained by foreign Contribution'. We can detect a shudder at the prospect of dependency on 'foreign Contribution'.

The 'changing places' aspect of exile between England and the continent continued in the Napoleonic period, when the question of 'who's in and who's out' under Bonaparte created high-profile international outcasts. Madame De Staël had made two trips to England in 1776 and 1793 before her period of celebrity exile in Regency London. In 1793, she wrote to Fanny Burney from Coppet that Surrey was 'le paradis terrestre pour moi'.[50] Napoleon's own brief period of exile on Elba in 1814,

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[46] I am grateful to Lawrence E. James, Dr Sarah Poynting, and Professor Blair Worden for invaluable advice on the English practice of exile in the medieval and Civil War periods.

[47] For the generic effect of exile, see Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994) and more recently, Anthony Welch, 'Epic Romance, Royalist Retreat, and the English Civil War', *Modern Philology* 105.3 (2008): 570–602.

[48] *BLJ* VII, 63.

[49] Alexander Pope, *The Odyssey of Homer Books I–XII*, ed. Maynard Mack, vol. IX of the Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 30 (l. 19).

[50] Frances Burney, *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay …, edited by her niece*, 7 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1842–46), V, 432.

his return from it, and his terminal banishment were events of far-reaching significance that determined the road the rest of the Western world could or could not travel. During Napoleon's confinement at Elba, there was a surge of English continental tourism to places that had been out of bounds since the Peace of Amiens in 1802. Samuel Rogers's letters from Rome and Naples in the autumn and winter of 1814 describe a social scene crowded with travelling English Whig aristocrats, including the Princess of Wales, Lord and Lady Holland, Lady Oxford, Lord Clare, and Lord John Russell. But there continued to be traffic in the other direction too: England had been a refuge for émigrés from revolutionary France, then fugitives from Napoleon. After Napoleon's exile to St Helena in 1815, England became a shelter from the storms raised by the Congress system.

The paradoxical nature of English liberty was never more marked than at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, when England provided sanctuary for foreign liberals such as Henry Fuseli, Pasquale Paoli, and Jean Charles Léonard de Sismondi's family at the same time that it deported home-grown intellectuals such as Joseph Priestley. Following Napoleon's suppression of free speech in France, Austrian control of the fragmentary Italian states was responsible for a further exodus of writers after the failed revolutions of 1799 and 1820. Ugo Foscolo fled from northern Italy via Switzerland to live in London between September 1816 and 1827; in 1824 Gabriele Rossetti, father of Dante Gabriel and Christina, also became a Londoner.[51] The two Italians threw themselves into metropolitan life with great energy, but Foscolo gives us a glimpse of the insecurity of life in exile when he corresponds in French with Samuel Rogers about the difficulty of writing normally:

> It is *dangerous* for an exiled man, and one who must speak so much good and so much ill of the nation where he has taken refuge; and to provoke criticism with unequal arms: most travellers before publishing their opinions on foreign nations, go back to their own country.[52]

Poignantly, he adds: 'Mr Murray has told me that in England people love *quotations*, even in non-literary subjects. I think I could oblige him, but I have no other books than my memory'.[53] As we shall see, the challenge

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[51] For Rossetti's friendship en route to England with the 'voluntary exile' John Hookham Frere, see Peter Vassallo, *British Writers and the Experience of Italy (1800–1940)* (Valletta: Malta University Publishing, 2012), Chapter 6.

[52] P. W. Clayden, *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, 3 vols (London: Smith and Elder, 1889), I, 258.

[53] Clayden, *Rogers and his Contemporaries*, p. 259.

of restricted access to vernacular libraries leads the English writers in this study to use their own literary tradition in peculiar ways.

To those intimately involved in a civilized life of conversation and the reciprocity of social custom and manners, the prospect of national or civic eviction was profoundly disorientating: 'One of my friends warned me that a gendarme would come within a few days to notify me that I must leave', Madame De Staël wrote, 'One has no idea, at least in countries where individuals are routinely protected against injustice, of the state one is thrown into by sudden news of arbitrary acts'.[54] In Swiss and Italian towns that were full of other English visitors too, Byron and the Shelleys remained aware of British political life and felt the full force of pronouncements by the English public. Shelley and Byron's sense of alienation informed a sustained campaign against the abuses of retributive justice and arbitrary power—a critical effort on the behalf of intellectual, political, or religious dissenters that still speaks powerfully today.

With its focus on Italy, this book explores somewhat less punitive conditions of exile than the 20th-century gulag; nevertheless, it is important to recognize that although Percy Shelley famously calls Italy 'Thou Paradise of exiles', it was only a paradise for people with the right passport. Byron experienced the less idyllic side of Italy when his friends in the Carbonari were exiled from Ravenna in 1821.[55] At this point, he thought about moving from Italy back to Switzerland: 'You have no idea what a state of oppression this country is in', he wrote to Richard Hoppner, 'they arrested above a thousand of high & low—throughout Romagna—banished some—& confined others—without *trial—process* – or even *accusation!!…every one* of my acquaintance to the amount of hundreds almost have been exiled'.[56]

Botany Bay and America were the destinations of those English exiles who were not at liberty to decide their embarkation point, but who were also not the avant-garde poets of the day; their stories are told in other books.[57] All the English writers in this study felt pushed out of England, but they were able to choose their place of rest, and they chose the land which had long been a cultural and climatic magnet for northern Europeans: 'Who would live in the region of Mists, Game Laws indemnity Bills &c when there is such a place as Italy?' Keats grumbled from rain-soaked

[54] Germaine De Staël, *Ten Years of Exile*, trans. Avriel H. Goldberger (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), p. 69.

[55] 'Julian and Maddalo', l. 57; *PBSMW*, p. 214.

[56] *BLJ* VIII, 157. See also VIII, 154, 156, 165.

[57] For the difference between English and Scottish exiles in the 1790s, see Kenneth R. Johnston, *Unusual Suspects: Pitt's Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2013).

Devon in April 1818.[58] Reflections on exile by the 19th-century 'posh boys', Byron and Shelley, are not rendered less relevant by the arrival of Said's 'uncountable masses'. We know Byron, Shelley, and Browning were all 'relieved from poverty', as Wilde put it in 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism'; we know they possessed 'an immense advantage', but this does not mean that their writing cannot speak to people who are less fortunate or less articulate. Nineteenth-century efforts to deal with a crisis of identity and purpose in an unfamiliar place shape an artistry as urgent, troubling, and inspiring today as the voices of contemporary dissidents in exile.[59]

For some thinkers and writers, even an involuntary exile could be converted into intellectual gain. Finding inner resilience and stimulus in solitude after his flight to Holland in 1683, Locke described himself 'at home by my fires side, where I confesse I writ a good deale, I thinke I may say, more then ever I did in soe much time in my life':[60] the fruit of this was the completed *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690). Locke settled into his new location enough to use the phrase 'at home', though at the start of the work, he referred to it as the diversion of 'heavy hours'.[61] Indefatigable in exile as in everything else, Voltaire snatched time from the management of his expanding property portfolio in Switzerland to write *Candide* (1759), a work published simultaneously in Amsterdam, Geneva, and Paris to affront as many authorities as possible and to secure a European-wide readership. Madame De Staël turned Napoleon's banishment back into a sentence on the emperor himself, refusing to include any reference to his conquest of Italy in *Corinne; or Italy* (1807), a literary snub that she then exacerbated by detailing the pettiness of his persecution in her memoirs, *Dix Années d'Exil*:

> He knew that I was attached to my friends, to France, to my works, to my tastes, to society; in taking from me everything that made up my happiness, he meant to unsettle me enough to write some platitude in the hope of winning my return...I refused him that truly refined pleasure; there lies the only merit I have shown in the long struggle that he contrived between his omnipotence and my weakness.[62]

The flow of ambitious, cultured Italians into English literary life had a discernible impact on the reception of Italian literature and interest in the

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[58] Hyder Edward Rollins (ed.), *The Letters of John Keats, 1814–21*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), I, 269.

[59] Ellmann (ed.), *The Artist as Critic*, p. 260.

[60] To the Earl of Pembroke, 28 November 1684. E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Locke*, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), II, 665.

[61] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: J. M. Dent, 1995), p. 3.

[62] De Staël, *Ten Years of Exile*, p. 113.

state of Italy. As the 19th century progressed, the public image of Italy began to overtake revolutionary France in being associated with the idea of exile.[63] Writers like Foscolo, the Neapolitan exile Francesco Lomonaco, and Giuseppe Mazzini (in exile in London from 1837 until the revolutions of 1848) filled a niche market for books about Italian history and culture for educated 19th-century English readers. Foscolo provided introductions to new editions of Dante and Boccaccio and an influential collection of essays on Petrarch. A popular literature of Italian exile sprang up, represented by Gaetano Borso di Carminati's *Letter of an Italian Refugee on his Exile* (1827) and Giuseppe Pecchio's *Semi-Serious Observations of an Italian Exile, During his Residence in England* (1829). The publication that marked the start of Mazzini's exile was *Dell'amore patrio di Dante* (1837). The Frenchman, Pierre-Louis Ginguené, was not himself an exile, but having been removed from his office in the tribunate by Napoleon in 1802, his course of lectures on Italian literature given in Paris in 1802–7, and the subsequent *Histoire Litteraire de I'Italie* (1811–19), were pointedly sympathetic to the role of outcasts such as Dante.[64] Byron acquired Ginguené's work whilst living in Italy and it was available in the Gabinetto Vieusseux used by the Brownings in Florence. The writers in this study, therefore, informed themselves about Italy through a literature of exile. Their writing, in turn, added to the echo chamber of exiled voices that resounded in literary works from Italy.

Italian literary history became entwined with ideas of exile and modernity, especially as 19th-century English readers were more willing to cede cultural authority to Italy than to France.[65] Even the stoutly Anglocentric Murray's *Hand-book for Travellers in Northern Italy* (1843) referred to Dante as 'the greatest Poet of the modern world'.[66] One of the prime 18th-century sources for English literary Italophilism was Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774–81), which traced much of the original genius of the major English poets to Italian nurture. Other currents were historical: for Edward Gibbon (an admirer of Boethius), the Roman empire provided a perfect forum for analysis of the relationship between

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[63] For discussion of Italy's liberal appeal, see Maura O'Connor, *The Romance of Italy and the English Political Imagination* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998).

[64] Ginguené's *Histoire Litteraire de I'Italie* was reviewed in the *Quarterly* with Sismondi's in 1814.

[65] For a recent investigation of the links between ideas of modernity and the reception of Italian literary history in England, particularly shifting views of Dante, see Joseph Luzzi, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 97–100.

[66] [anon], *Hand-book for Travellers in Northern Italy* (London: John Murray, 1843), p. xi. In 'On Poetry in General', Hazlitt sees Dante as 'the father of modern poetry', placing him 'on that dark shore which separates the ancient and the modern world' (Howe [ed.], *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, V, 17).

accident and inevitability in the course of human history. In violent times, Gibbon argues, the actions of singular men could have far-reaching effects; an interest in Italy, therefore, becomes one of the main ways in which the 'fatefulness' of history can be studied. Gibbon's preoccupation with tipping points ('The slightest force, when it is applied to assist and guide the natural descent of its object, operates with irresistible weight'), feeds into the tragic, historical plots shaped by Byron, Shelley, Landor, and Browning as they ponder the way that great events might hinge on an apparently slight cause: 'Helen lost Troy', Byron remarks bleakly in the Preface to *Marino Faliero*, and 'an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both king and commonwealth'.[67] Byron's choice of culminating example from republican annals is a reflex shared by all the exiles in Italy and a measure of the way in which Italy's republics, historical and utopian, fired English imaginations.

Before he reached Italy, Byron wrote: 'I have always thought the Italians the *only* poetical *moderns*:—our Milton and Spenser & Shakespeare (the last through translations of their tales) are very Tuscan, and surely it is far superior to the French School'.[68] He would subsequently disentangle his favourite, Pope, from Hunt's prejudice against the French School, but Byron maintained his belief that Italy was the answer to all ills, literary and political. In his fair copy of the Dedication to *Don Juan*, the rhetorical question about Castlereagh's tyranny: 'Where shall I turn me not to *view* its wrongs?' is met with the single word 'Italy', which picks up the emphatically larger letters of 'IT' (all the wrongs of Castlereagh) in the stanza shown in Figure 1. As a land that has been left with nothing except memory, '*tranne la memoria*', and whose people are exiles and foreigners, '*fuoruscitti e stranieri*', in the words of Ugo Foscolo, Italy was the perfect backdrop for the backward-looking poetry of exile.[69] It was, as Michael O'Neill points out, a place of 'doubleness as reality and emblem, as place and screen for idealized or troubled projection', which reflects the experience of Romantic exiles.[70]

What develops from the peculiarly embattled perspective associated with exile finds expression in conditional moods, doubts, ironies, and

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[67] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. Oliphant Smeaton, 6 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1946), II, 458; *CPW* IV, 302.

[68] *BLJ* IV, 50.

[69] Ugo Foscolo, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis. I Sepulchi* (Firenze: Adriano Salani, 1914), pp. 89, 155.

[70] Michael O'Neill, 'Realms Without a Name: Shelley and Italy's Intenser Day', in Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass (eds), *Dante and Italy in British Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 77–91 (p. 79).
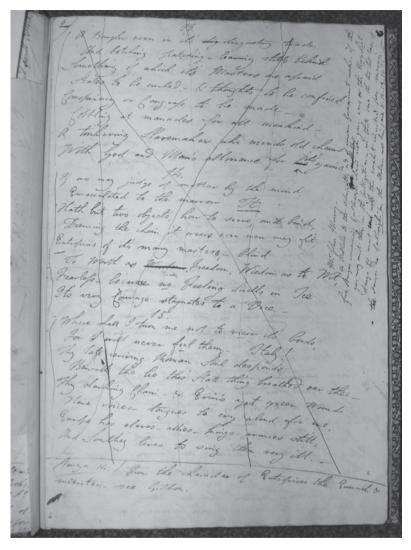
Figure 1. Byron's fair copy of the Dedication to *Don Juan*
By kind permission of John Murray.

oppositions. In England, Foscolo observed that the surrounding presence of a different culture subtly altered a writer's audience expectations, and changed the dynamics of reception. His experience was mirrored by English exiles in Italy, who developed a variety of oblique and ironic modes to articulate the sensation of being at odds with two cultures, and temporally, as well as geographically, dislocated. One of De Staël's *bon mots* when she was in London in 1813–14 was that 'Les étrangers sont la postérité contemporain'—an idea that haunted Elizabeth Barrett: 'Who is it who says that "foreigners are the posterity of contemporaries?" '[71] Troubled assessments of where they stand in relation to contemporary and future crowds—of readers or political activists—shadow the letters and poems of both Romantic and Victorian writers.

Exile falls under a number of discursive domains—legal, historical, and literary. The literary treatment of exile deploys a number of key forms and motifs that will be explored across the subsequent chapters: metaphors of distance, attention to things, and epistolary and conversational modes that are mixed with lyric, drama, and narrative. Throughout the book, my concern is to keep the artistry of exile in dialogue with distinct historical experiences of 19th-century exile in Italy, as recorded in the journals and letters of those who lived through it. The next chapter looks at the ways in which, in the early days of exodus from England, Lord Byron and Elizabeth Barrett Browning draw on the fellowship of exiled literary precursors from the Judaeo-Christian and classical traditions.

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[71] *BC* IX, 187.