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OURANIA CHATSIOU

QUOTATION, PARATEXT AND ROMANTIC ORIENTALISM: ROBERT SOUTHEY'S "THE CURSE OF KEHAMA" (1810)

1. *"Purloined Letters": Quotation and Paratext in British Orientalism*

In his essay *The Purveyor of Truth*, a reading of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, Jacques Derrida challenges invention and authorial creativity by arguing that: "everything begins 'in' a library: in books, writings, references. Therefore nothing begins. Only a drifting or disorientation from which one does not emerge".[1] Many of Poe's works literally begin in an "obscure, little back library", a "silent, dark room", and a "study":

[1] J. Derrida, *The Purveyor of Truth*, trans. by A. Bass, in *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalytic Reading*, ed. by J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, pp. 173-212 (p. 198).

"Our first meeting was at an obscure library in the Rue Montmarte, where the accident of our both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume brought us into closer communion";[2]

"I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in company with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book-closet, au troisieme, No. 33, Rue Dunot, Faubourg St. Germain. For one hour at least we maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppresses the atmosphere of the chamber";[3]

"During a rainy afternoon not long ago, being in a mood too listless for continuous study, I sought relief from *ennui*, in dipping here and there, at random among the volumes of my library – no very large one, certainly, but sufficiently miscellaneous".[4]

Poe always liked to project and "flatter [himself as], not a little recherché".[5] He valued "a kind of writing so closely allied to reading that it explicitly relies on other texts [...]. The whole discourse is inflected with a connoisseurship: the 'miscellaneous' and 'recherché' taste that informs the library".[6] He was very much influenced by his literary milieu, seeking for literary models to quote, imitate, appropriate, surpass in style and erudition, or debate with. The powerful contemporary discourse of antiquarianism in Britain and its popular literary products – annotated poetry and prose – had a pervasive impact on the development of his poetics of intellectuality, and, specifically, his appreciation and use of marginalia, notes and "scribblings".[7] Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), Robert Southey, and most of all, Lord Byron, with their exotic orientalist works and elaborate annotations inspired Poe, exciting

[2] E. A. Poe, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, in Id., *The Portable Poe*, ed. by P. Van Doren Stern, New York, Penguin Books, 1945, pp. 332-376 (p. 337).

[3] Id., *The Purloined Letter*, ivi, pp. 439-462 (p. 439).

[4] Id., *Marginalia*, in Id., *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, New York, Cosimo Classics, 2009, vol. IX: *Criticism*, pp. 176-372 (p. 178).

[5] *Ibid*.

[6] S. Rachman, *"Es lasst sich nicht schreiben": Plagiarism and "The Man of the Crowd"*, in *The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by S. Rosenheim and S. Rachman, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 63-69 (p. 66).

[7] E. A. Poe, *Marginalia*, cit., p. 178.

his imagination and feeding his inherent admiration and systematic pursuit of scholarship.

There is a fascinating similarity between many of Poe's works and many British Romantic Orientalist works in that, more often than not, they both start "in a library". The greatest and most erudite Orientalist of the nineteenth century, and pioneer of the annotated Oriental romantic verse tale, Sir William Jones, established high scholarship and systematic research as the *raisons d'être* of Orientalism; he was nicknamed "Persian Jones" and "The Great Scholar".[8] Similarly, Robert Southey was characterised by Byron as the "only existing entire man of letters".[9] In 1821, Southey confessed: "I have a dangerous love of detail, and a desire of accuracy, which is much more expensive (both in materials and time) than I ought to afford".[10] Southey's reading was immense and he had a passion for facts. Retaining aspects of the eighteenth-century antiquarian tradition, he was an exponent of the late-enlightenment deification of education and learning. His thirst for knowledge was imperial in the Saidean sense, transcending in scope familiar European boundaries and embracing and domesticating exotic Asian and native American cultures. His precious library comprised 14,000 volumes. Thomas De Quincey compared it to that of Wordsworth's:

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[8] M. J. Franklin, *Sir William Jones*, ed. by M. Stephens and R. B. Jones, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1995, p. 3 and p. 8.

[9] "His appearance is Epic; and he is the only existing entire man of letters. All the others have some pursuit annexed to their authorship. [...] His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions: there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation; posterity will probably select. He has passages equal to any thing": *The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, ed. by T. Moore and Sir W. Scott, London, John Murray, 1920, p. 203. This appraisal, which when compared to the infamously combative relationship of the two poets sounds surprisingly judicious, rightly singles out Southey's breadth of erudition, variety of genres and immense productivity.

[10] Robert Southey to C. W. W. Wynn, Nov. 5, 1821, in *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by J. W. Warter, 4 vols, London, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1856, vol. III, p. 282.

"A circumstance which as much as anything, expounded to the very eye the characteristic distinctions between Wordsworth and Southey, and would not suffer a stranger to forget it for a moment, was the significant place and consideration allowed to the small book collection of the former, contrasted with the splendid library of the latter. The two or three hundred volumes of Wordsworth occupied a little, homely bookcase, fixed into one of two shallow recesses formed on each side of the fireplace by the projection of the chimney in the little sitting-room upstairs. […] On the other hand, Southey's collection occupied a separate room, the largest, and every way the most agreeable, in the house; and this room styled, and not ostentatiously (for it really merited that name), the Library".[11]

Lady Morgan, also an avid reader, as well as admirer and appropriator of Jones's scholarship, "had 'waded through' […] the Oriental library of her friend and former lover, the Dublin barrister Sir Charles Ormsby", before composing her orientalist romances and their antiquarian annotations.[12] Equally, on February 16, 1813, Lord Byron confessed to his friend Francis Hodgson: "I shall find employment in making a good Oriental scholar. I shall retain a mansion in one of the fairest islands, and retrace, at intervals, the most interesting portions of the East".[13] Although Byron often advertises his eye-witness originality and authenticity and constructs the appearance of writing entirely from personal experience and spontaneously, we should not disregard the number of books he consulted, just like Robert Southey. To a considerable extent, Romantic Orientalist literature is founded on scholasticism, authentication, quotation of antiquarian sources, in other words, on paratext.[14]

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[11] T. de Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets: Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey*, Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1863, pp. 236-237.

[12] M. J. Franklin, *Representing India in Drawing-Room and Classroom; or, Miss Owenson and "Those Gay Gentlemen, Brahma, Vishnu, and Co."*, in *Interrogating Orientalism: Contextual Approaches and Pedagogical Practices*, ed. by D. L. Hoeveler and J. Cass, Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 2006, pp. 159-181 (pp. 171-172).

[13] *The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, cit., p. 153.

[14] In his *Seuils*, translated in English in 1997, as *Paratexts, Thresholds of Interpretation*, – the most theoretically subtle and influential study of the paratext – Gerard Genette produced a mathematical formula on which he founded his whole analysis of paratext: "paratext = peritext + epitext". "Peritext" is the "more typical paratext", including paratextual elements which necessarily have "a *location* that can be situated in relation to the location of the text itself: around the text and either within the same volume or at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance. Within the same volume are such elements as the title

It constitutes in many respects an oxymoronic, though fascinating and dynamic, symbiosis of repetition/replication and creative imagination/invention. Does the paratext demystify those "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance" and the "magic hand" of the Romantic poet?[15] Does it make poetry less "philosophical", or less "serious"?[16] How do we define pure creation and how diverse and hybrid is the nature of Romantic poetic creation and the figure of the Romantic creative genius? To what extent are Romantic-period poetics and authorial identity defined by constant "différance" and intertextuality, by "traces of traces",[17] by "Purloined Letters", by constant response to and echoing of other texts? What are the different authors' poetics and objectives of quotation? These are some of the questions this essay will seek to address.

2. *Robert Southey's "The Curse of Kehama" (1810): Paratext and the Hindu Gothic Sublime*

Southey's extraordinarily abundant notes hold a very prominent position in his *œuvre*, especially his lengthy Orientalist narrative poems, *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). His gothic tales were

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or the preface and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text, such as chapter titles or certain notes". (G. Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1987, trans. by J. E. Lewin and R. Macksey, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 4-5). The "epitext", on the other hand, is a much broader term, relating a text or a book with "the world's discourse about [it]". It refers to "the distanced elements […], all those messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries, and others)" (*ibid.*, p. 5).

[15] J. Keats, *The Poetical Works of John Keats, With a Life*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1863, p. 348.

[16] Aristotle famously argued that "poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history" because "poetry tends to express universals, and history particulars" (Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by M. Heath, New York, Penguin Books, 1996, p. 16).

[17] J. P. Muller and W. J. Richardson, *The Challenge of Deconstruction*, in *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida and Psychoanalysis*, cit., pp. 159-172 (p. 163).

prototypical, imitated and appropriated by the younger generation of Romantics: Byron, though he never admitted it of course, Shelley, and Moore. According to Tim Fulford, "*Thalaba* became […] the first of a new, Romantic, genre, an updated Oriental tale, now in verse and with a weighty apparatus of factual footnotes to convince the reader of its historical veracity".[18]

Southey's *Common-place Book* (1849-1851), very much like his literary notes, is "testimony to the industry, the perseverance, and the extensive research of the learned author",[19] the "only existing entire man of letters".[20] It "[gives] us at once an idea of the 'immense quarries' in which the author must have laboured".[21] It includes a wealth of details and curiosities, rather than commonplaces, on a range of subjects varying from civil, religious, literary and natural history, to travel literature, topography, socio-political analysis, miscellaneous anecdotes and gleanings.

We do not know the exact time when Southey started keeping notes while reading, but it is most definite that he sustained this practice for a very long period of his life. The most obvious connection between Southey's common-place books and notebooks and his paratext is the fact that he transformed a large amount of their content into the scholarly apparatus surrounding his works, primarily in the form of footnotes, endnotes, and appendices. The notes were commonly copied *verbatim* or only slightly abridged. Research was fundamental to Southey's authorship and one of his central writing practices was to convert facts, legends and anecdotes into

[18] R. Southey, *Poetical Works, 1793-1810*, 5 vols, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2004, vol. III: *Thalaba the Destroyer*, ed. by T. Fulford, pp. VIII-IX.

[19] *"The Curse of Kehama". By Robert Southey*, unsigned review in "The Literary Panorama", IX (June, 1811), pp. 1044-1059 (p. 1058).

[20] See note 9.

[21] *"The Curse of Kehama". By Robert Southey*, unsigned review in "The Quarterly Review", V (Feb. and May, 1811), pp. 43-61 (p. 61).

fiction, which was often either set in historically, or geographically, or ideologically remote places.

In 1789, the fifteen-year-old Southey, a student at Westminster school at the time, came across Bernard Picart's 1733-seven-volume *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World*. In his *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1826), Southey recalled his deeply momentous encounter with Picart's work:

"The book impressed my imagination strongly; and before I left school, I had formed the intention of exhibiting all the more prominent and poetical forms of mythology which have at any time obtained among mankind, by making each the groundwork of an heroic poem".[22]

Similarly, on May 28, 1808, he wrote to Anna Seward, placing *Kehama* within a broader and more ambitious scheme of development:

"My old design was to build a metrical romance upon every poetic faith that has ever been established, and have gone on after the Mahommedan in *Thalaba*, and the Hindoo in this present poem, with the Persian, the Runic, the Keltic, the Greek, the Jewish, the Roman Catholick and the Japanese".[23]

In 1810, he published *Kehama*, his truly avant-garde poem, something that has never really been adequately stressed. Scott, who is a very objective and accurate critic, stressed its originality in the *Quarterly*:

"The poem [is] of a nature powerfully interesting, and at the same time the most wild and uncommon which has hitherto fallen under our observation. The story is founded upon the Hindoo mythology, the most gigantic, cumbrous, and extravagant system of idolatry to

[22] R. Southey, *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae: Letters to Charles Butler Comprising Essays on the Romish Religion and Vindicating the Book of the Church*, London, John Murrey, 1826, p. 7.

[23] *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by K. Curry, 2 vols, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1965, vol. I, p. 476.

which temples were ever erected. […] nothing in this extraordinary poem might resemble what had been written before".[24]

Southey's preface to *Kehama* famously begins with a resounding dismissal of the very mythology on which the poem is based, proclaiming Hinduism to be, of all religions, "the most monstrous in its fables and the most fatal in its effects":

> "In the religion of the Hindoos, which of all these religions is the most monstrous in its fables, and the most fatal in its effects, there is one remarkable peculiarity. Prayers, penances, and sacrifices, are supposed to possess an inherent and actual value, in no degree depending upon the disposition of motive of the person who performs them. They are drafts upon Heaven, for which the Gods cannot refuse payment. The worst men, best upon the worst designs, have in this manner obtained power which has made them formidable to the Supreme Deities themselves, and rendered an *Avatar*, or Incarnation of Veeshnoo the Preserver, necessary. This belief is the foundation of the following Poem. The story is original; but in all its parts, consistent with the superstition upon which it is built; and however startling the fictions may appear, they might almost be called credible when compared with the genuine tales of Hindoo mythology. No figures can be imagined more anti-picturesque, and less poetical, than the mythological personages of the Bramins. This deformity was easily kept out of sight: – their hundred hands are but a clumsy personification of power; their numerous heads only a gross image of divinity, 'whose countenance', as the Bhagvat-Geeta expresses it, 'is turned on every side'".[25]

Southey is writing a whole epic on a religion he apparently despises and from which he anxiously attempts to dissociate himself by foregrounding in his preface an Evangelical outlook. This preface illustrates not only his Protestant and puritan fear of the Gothic sublime and the fantastical, but also his fascination with it.

Kehama's first two Books set its context of terrifying Gothic supernaturalism. Book I: *The Funeral* is an extravagant Gothic spectacle, portraying Arvalan's funeral procession accompanied by the Hindu ritual of

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[24] "*The Curse of Kehama". By Robert Southey*, unsigned review in "The Quarterly Review", cit., pp. 43-44.

[25] R. Southey, *Poetical Works, 1793-1810*, cit., vol. IV: *The Curse of Kehama*, ed. by D. S. Roberts, p. 3. Hereafter cited parenthetically as *RSPW*, IV.

sati (also known as suttee), according to which the dead man's widows, Azla and Nealliny, willingly and forcibly, respectively, immolate themselves on Arvalan's funeral pyre. The procession's vast crowd and the medley of noises produced by the trumpets, the drums and the constant, synchronous moaning and wailing immediately create a horrible and awe-inspiring atmosphere:

"Midnight, and yet no eye
Through all the Imperial City clos'd in sleep!
Behold her streets a-blaze
With light that seems to kindle the red sky,
Her myriads swarming thro' the crowded ways! […]
For lo! ten thousand torches flame and flare
Upon the midnight air, […]
Hark! 'tis the funeral trumpet's breath!
'Tis the dirge of death!
At once ten thousand drums begin,
With one long thunder-peal the ear assailing;
Ten thousand voices then join in,
And with one deep and general din
Pour their wild wailing".[26]

The wives' immolations produce the ultimate Hindu Gothic spectacle, with Nealliny's forced immolation being especially described in all its gruesome detail, portraying her wild agony in struggling to avoid death and her misery before her sacrifice:

"Woe! Woe! Nealliny,
The young Nealliny!
They strip her ornaments away,
Bracelet and anklet, ring, and chain, and zone;
Around her neck they leave
The marriage knot alone, […]
O sight of misery!
You cannot hear her cries, … all other sound
In that wild dissonance is drowned; …
But in her face you see
The supplication and the agony, …

[26] *Ibid.*: I, 1-5, 20-21 and 28-34. The poetical quotations are centred, rather than indented, in order to reproduce the effect of Southey's typographical innovation.

See in her swelling throat the desperate strength
That with vain effort struggles yet for life;
Her arms contracted now in fruitless strife,
Now wildly at full length
Towards the crowd in vain for pity spread, …
They force her on, they bind her to the dead".[27]

In Book II, Kehama curses Ladurlad to an eternal agony. The curse is "horribly sublime", and its powerful effect is enhanced by its short, staccato rhyming lines:[28]

"I charm thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beasts of blood:
From Sickness I charm thee,
And Time shall not harm thee,
But Earth which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee;
And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee:
And thou shalt seek Death
To release thee, in vain;
Thou shalt live in thy pain,
While Kehama shall reign,
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain;
And Sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
For ever and ever".[29]

[27] *Ibid.*: I, 150-155 and 162-172.

[28] *"The Curse of Kehama". By Robert Southey*, unsigned review in "The Quarterly Review", cit., p. 47.

[29] *RSPW*, IV: II, 144-169.

Southey was aware that the Gothic eccentricity and religious monstrosity of *Kehama*'s very first Book would bewilder and, possibly, enrage his Protestant audience, and introduce himself as an advocate of Hindu polytheism and its bizarre Gothic rituals. Anticipating these unwelcome reactions, and bearing in mind the long-standing controversy over sati, he made sure he placed himself on safe ground by quoting from imperialist scholars, such as the strictly Evangelical East India Company chaplain, Claudius Buchanan (1766-1815),[30] who had outspokenly condemned the insular social system of the Indian casts and the power of their leaders, the Brahmins, to impose and propagate the practice of rituals such as sati. In his *Memoir in the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India* (1805), "Buchanan dwells on the (supposed) savagery and cruelty of Hindu customs and argues that the Hindu religion offers no 'moral instruction'":[31]

> "From a late investigation it appears, that the number of women who sacrifice themselves within thirty miles round Calcutta every year, is, on an average, upwards of two hundred. The Pundits have already been called on to produce the sanction of their Shasters for this custom. The passages exhibited are vague and general in their meaning, and differently interpreted by the same casts. Some sacred verses commend the practice, but none command it; and the Pundits refer once more to *custom*. They have, however, intimated, that if government will pass a regulation, amercing by fine every Brahmin who attends a burning, or every Zemindar who permits him to attend it, the practice cannot possibly long continue; for that the ceremony, unsanctified by the presence of the priests, will lose its dignity and consequence in the eyes of the people.

[30] "Buchanan laboured zealously for the promotion of Christianity and education among the people of India. [In 1796] he was appointed to a chaplaincy in Bengal, the first of a band of evangelical chaplains brought to India […]. Next, [Buchanan was] appointed vice-provost of [the] new college for East India Company servants at Fort William. […] He had high hopes for the college, believing that it had been founded to 'enlighten the oriental world, to give science, religion, and pure morals to Asia, and to confirm in it the British power and dominion'" (P. Carson, *Buchanan, Claudius (1766-1815): East India Company chaplain*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3831> [accessed 22 March 2007]). Hereafter cited as *ODNB*.

[31] D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, in *RSPW*, IV, pp. 395-412 (p. 398).

The civilized world may expect soon to hear of the abolition of this opprobrium of a Christian administration, the female sacrifice; which has subsisted, to our certain knowledge, since the time of Alexander the Great".[32]

Buchanan's rejection of sati as an "opprobrium of a Christian administration" controls and contains the first Book's Gothic sublime, by helping demonstrate Southey's evangelicalism. Southey furthers his exposition of sati's barbaric monstrosity by citing its straightforward rejection by the traveller and physician Francois Bernier (1625-1688) in his *Travels in the Mogul Empire* (1826):

"At Lahor, I saw a very handsome and a very young woman burnt; I believe she was not above twelve years of age. This poor unhappy creature appeared rather dead than alive when she came near the pile; she shook and wept bitterly. Meanwhile, three or four of these executioners, the Bramins, altogether with an old hag that held her under the arm, thrust her on, and made her sit down upon the wood; and, lest, she should run away, they tied her legs and hands; and so they burnt her alive. I had enough to do to contain myself for indignation".[33]

Through the vivid demonstration of Hindu heathenish barbarism, the extract implicitly advocates the urgency of India's evangelizing by the British missionaries. Southey further substantiates his notes' necessary evangelicalism by taking sides over the sati-controversy and denouncing any tolerance of it. He first juxtaposes d'Alboquerque's evangelicalism against Colonel Mark Wilks's (1760-1831) religious tolerance in his Historical Sketches of the South of India (1800-1814), and then openly rejects the latter's willingness to tolerate sati:

"When the great Alboquerque has established himself at Goa, he forbade these accursed sacrifices, the women extolled him as their benefactor and deliverer, […] and no European in India was ever so popular, or so revered by the natives. Yet, if we are to believe the anti-missionaries, none but fools, fanatics, and pretenders to humanity would wish to

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

deprive the Hindoo women of the right of burning themselves! 'It may be useful (says Colonel Mark Wilks), to examine the reasonableness of interfering with the most exceptionable of all their institutions. It has been thought an abomination not to be tolerated, that a widow should immolate herself on the funeral pile of her deceased husband. But what judgement should we form of the Hindoo, who (if any of our institutions admitted the parallel) should *forcibly* pretend to stand between a Christian and the hope of eternal salvation? And shall we not hold him to be a driveller in politics and morals, a fanatic in religion, and a pretender in humanity, who would forcibly wrest this hope from the Hindoo widow'. […]

Such opinions and such language may safely be left to the indignation and pity which they cannot fail to excite. I shall only express my astonishment, that any thing so monstrous, and so miserably futile, should have proceeded from a man of learning, great good sense, and general good feelings, as Colonel Wilks evidently appears to be".[34]

Partially, scholars such as Marilyn Butler, David Eastwood, Herman Fischer, Balachandra Rajan, Nigel Leask, and, more recently, Herbert Tucker, and Carol Bolton have promoted and sustained Southey's portrayal as an author who, though constantly struggling between Jones's radical, oriental syncretism, and James Mill's Anglican utilitarianism, suppressed the first model of Orientalism due to his imperial anxieties and later Toryism, and propagated the latter one. This long-standing, systematic emphasis on Southey's political bipolarity on the one hand, and his imperial anxieties on the other, has had a great impact on scholarly interpretation of his oriental epics' paratext, and its ideological outlook in relation to the main text. Thus, the paratext's primary objective has largely been discussed as remedial, correcting and controlling through an evident conservatism the main text's extravagant oriental sublimity, highly condemnable by the majority of Southey's contemporary audience.

[34] *Ibid*., p. 195.

3. *Southey's exoticization of India*

Southey's heavily scholarly notes represent his own historicizing project: his own attempt to historicize, and therefore control his main text's Hindu Gothic sublime. Judging by his first notes against sati, he certainly follows Mill's paradigm. However, none of Mill's works appears as an authoritative source in Southey's notes. By contrast, the majority of his notes use Jones as an authority in researching and appreciating India and Hinduism, suggesting, thus, his closer affinity to a 'romantic' rather than a utilitarian view of India.

The systematic citation of Jones's works, such as his contributions to the "Asiatick Researches", the journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the translation of Kalidasa's *Sacontala, or the Fatal Ring: An Indian Drama* (1789), or, *A Hymn to Indra* (1785), and the frequent references to works of his followers such as Edward Moor's[35] *Hindu Pantheon* (1810), provide an antipode in the paratextual illustration of Hinduism by exoticizing its religious mythology:

"*Matali*. That O king! Is the mountain of Gandarvas, named Hemacuta: The universe contains not a more excellent place for the successful devotion of the pious. These Casyapa,

[35] "Edward Moor (1771-1848): writer on Hindu mythology, was appointed a cadet on the Bombay establishment of the East India Company in May 1782, and sailed for India in the September following, being then under twelve years of age. […] In 1810 Moor published in London his most significant scholarly contribution, the *Hindu Pantheon*, a work later largely superseded but of considerable value in its time, being for more than fifty years the only authoritative book on the subject in English. A collection of pictures and engravings of Hindu deities formed the nucleus of the book. Around these the author accumulated a mass of information, partly gathered by himself, but largely derived from Charles Wilkins and other correspondents, and *supplemented from the works of Sir William Jones and other orientalists. The book, though unduly prolix and overweighed with Western classical parallels* and irrelevancies, was nevertheless of sufficient value to carry it through several editions". (T. Seccombe, *Moor, Edward (1771-1848): writer on Hindu mythology*, in *ODNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19089> [accessed 19 March 2007]; my italics). Moor, thus, was another exponent of cultural syncretism, following Jones's ideals.

father of the immortals, ruler of men, son of Marichi, who sprang from the self-existent, resides with his consort Aditi, blessed in holy retirement… – *SACONTALA*.

The Indian God of the visible Heavens is called *Indra*, or the King; and *Divespetir*, Lord of the Sky. He has the character of the Roman *Cenius*, or chief of the Good Spirits. His consort is named *Sachi*; his celestial city *Amaravati*; his palace *Vaijayanta*; his garden *Nandana*; his chief elephant *Airevat*; his charioteer *Matali*; and his weapon *Vajra*, or the thunder-bolt. He is the regent of winds and showers, and, though the East is peculiarly under his care, yet Olympus is Meru, or the North Pole, allegorically represented as a mountain of gold and gems. He is the Prince of the beneficent Genii. – *A Hymn to Indra*.

Nareda, the mythological offspring of *Saraswati*, patroness of music, is famed for his talents in that science. So great were they, that he became presumptuous; and, emulating the divine strains of *Krishna*, he was punished by having his *Vina* placed in the paws of a bear, whence it emitted sounds far sweeter than the minstrelsy of the mortified musician. I have a picture of this joke, in which *Krishna* is forcing his reluctant friend to attend to his rough-visaged rival, who is ridiculously touching the chords of poor *Nareda's Vina*, accompanied by a brother bruin on the cymbals. Krishna passed several practical jokes on his humble and affectionate friend: he metamorphosed him once into a woman, at another time into a bear – *Hindu Pantheon*".[36]

All this exotic onomatology combined with Moor's comical and light-hearted religious anecdote undermine Southey's evangelicalism in his earlier notes against sati, as well as his prefatory claims against Hindu monstrosity, and present, instead, his favourability towards, and even fascination with, Hindu religious sublimity.

Southey's notes often promote the sublimation and justification of Hinduism, not only through its exoticization, but, also, through its connection to Christianity. Southey, for instance, quotes frequently from *Bhagvat Geeta's* references to the undying human soul, suggesting, thereby, a dogmatic affinity between Christianity and Hinduism:

"The Soul is not a thing of which a man may say, it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter; for it is a thing without birth; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not to be destroyed in this its mortal frame […] for it is indivisible, inconsunable, [*sic*] incorruptible, and is not to be dried away; – it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable; – it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable".[37]

[36] *RSPW*, IV, pp. 206-207 and p. 218.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

We should not forget that Southey conceived this grand literary scheme in an era when the Protestant English audience was very uneasy with the notion of a sublime pagan religious mythology, let alone its serious portrayal in an epic poem, which, as a genre, carried of course the indispensable heavy weight of the Christian tradition of the British established church. The British middle class wanted to preserve a strict division between 'superstition' – related to paganism, Roman Catholicism, and the working class – and an Anglican, rational form of Christianity, purged of many of the supernatural elements which had been the mainstay of Christian art. Modern Anglicanism was so rational a religion that Southey had to go to the religions of the world to seek the mythology which would inspire his poetry.

Religion was at the centre of his vocation as an epic poet. He wanted to succeed Milton, but his imagination was simultaneously fired by Enlightenment comparativism and Evangelical fervour. The struggle against France not merely in the Napoleonic wars but more importantly in imperial rivalry produced the dream of a Britain civilising the world through religion.

This historical contextualization of Southey's literary design reveals two very important aspects of his authorial identity. First of all, it shows how risky Southey's attempt was. He was far more courageous and adventurous than his critics, or Byron, actually gave him credit for. It also reveals his fascination with Hinduism, and his determination to explore and write about it, regardless of his contemporaries' religious tendencies. We should note here the extract from George Wither's 1622-poem *Fair-Virtue, the Mistresse of Phil'Arete* that Southey prefixes as an epigram to Kehama:[38]

[38] M. O'Callaghan, *George Wither (1588-1667), poet*, in *ODNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29804?docPos=1> [accessed 10 December, 2008]. See his *Fair-Virtue, the Mistresse of Phil'Arete* (1622).

"For I will for no man's pleasure
Change a syllable or measure;
Pedants shall not tie my strains
To our antique poets' veins;
Being born as free as these,
I will sing as I shall please".[39]

4. *Southey's Editorial Techniques*

Kehama portrays and justifies an interesting paradox about Southey's authorial nature: he often writes with enthusiasm about something that he supposedly despises. He simultaneously asserts both his disapprobation of and fascination with the monstrous oriental sublime. His attempts to conceal, and contain, Hindu religious and cultural sublimity are constantly counteracted by his instinctive willingness to celebrate it. The sublime, and/or the Orient in *Kehama* struggle between an imposed containment, and a natural, instinctive proliferation. This ideological ambiguity is further intensified through Southey's elusive paratextual authorial voice. In his notes, Southey employs various citational or editorial techniques in order to be either associated with, or dissociated, from both evangelicals and Jones's school.

Southey's own editorial voice appears in the notes very briefly, primarily in order to serve certain typical editorial purposes, such as introducing a text and/or source, or praising certain authors:

"Henry More, the Platonist, has two applicable stanzas in his Song of the Soul; A distinct idea of Indra, the King of Immortals, may be collected from a passage in the ninth section of the Geta; Dellon[40] […] whom I consider as one of the best travellers in the East; This excellent traveller [i.e. Francois Bernier][41] relates an extraordinary circumstance which

[39] *RSPW*, IV, p. 6.

[40] "Charles Dellon (b. 1649), French traveller who published his *Relation d'un Voyage des Indes Orientales*, 2 vols, in 1885" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 397).

[41] "Francois Bernier (1620-88), French travel writer, published his *Travels in the Mogul Empire* in 1670 in Paris. An English translation was published in London in 1671" (*ibid.*, p. 397).

occurred at one of these sacrifices; There are, says this excellent author [i.e. George Glas][42] only three fountains of water in the whole island".[43]

It also has more significant roles, such as debating and/or establishing the authenticity and credibility of his or other's works. For instance, in the note that elaborates on the myth of the "Raining Tree",[44] Southey evokes his unbiased research principles by presenting sources which both assert and doubt the credibility of the myth:

"Feyoo[45] denies the existence of any such tree, upon the authority of Tallandier, a French Jesuit […] who visited the island. […] What authority is due to the testimony of this French Jesuit I do not know, never having seen his book; but it appears, from the undoubted evidence of Glas, that its existence is believed in the Canaries, and positively affirmed by the inhabitants of Fiero itself".[46]

In a note he added in *Kehama*'s 1838 edition, anticipating any charges of plagiarism, he testifies to the originality of the incident of Ladurlad's desertion of Kailyal by formally denying its duplication from Henry Hart Milman's poem *Nala and Damayanti* (1835):[47]

"This part of the poem has been censured, upon the ground that Ladurlad's conduct in thus forsaking his daughter is inconsistent with his affection for her. There is a passage in Mr. Millman's version of Nala [the father] and Damayanti [the daughter] so curiously resembling it in the situation of the two persons, that any one might suppose I had imitated the Sanscrit, if Kehama had not been published five and twenty years before Mr. Milman's

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[42] "Glas was a cultivated man. His translation from a manuscript of J. Abreu de Galinda, a Franciscan of Andalusia, then recently found at Palma, *An Account of the Discovery and History of the Canary Islands*, was published in 1764" (E. Baigent, *Glas, George, (1725-1765), mariner*, in *ODNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10797> [accessed 30 November 2007]).

[43] *RSPW*, IV, pp. 198, 207, 194, 196, 212.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[45] "Benito Jeronimo Feijoo (1676-1764), *Theatro Critico Universal*, Vol. 2, Discurso Segundo, section 65" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 401).

[46] *RSPW*, IV, p. 212.

[47] "From H. H. Milman, *Nala and Damayanti and Other Poems*, Book X (London, 1835), pp. 27-9. Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868); was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1821-31; he became the dean of St Paul's in 1849" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 400).

most characteristic specimen of Indian poetry. Indeed, it is to him that I am obliged for pointing out this very singular coincidence".[48]

In another note discussing "The Chariot of God" which carried Kailyal to the temple of "Jaga-Naut", Southey certifies its exaggerated size, and, by extension, justifies Hindu sublimity:

"The size of the chariot is not exaggerated. Speaking of other such, Niecamp[49] says, […] They have built a great chariot, that goeth on sixteen wheels of a side, and every wheel is five feet in height, and the chariot itself is about thirty feet high".[50]

Southey's more straightforward justification of *Kehama*'s extravagant Gothic sublimity is detected in *Kehama*'s lengthiest note, covering ten and a half pages, where he anticipates the audience's disbelief of the legend of "the descent of the Ganges" and the ritual of the horse-sacrifice known as "The Aswamedha" by providing a "genuine specimen of Hindoo fable" that outweighs his own poetical versions of these two legends in Gothic spectacle and extravagant sublimity:[51]

"The descent of the Ganges is related in the Ramayuna, one of the most celebrated of the sacred books of the Bramins. This work the excellent and learned Baptist missionaries at Serampore are at this time employed in printing and translating; one volume has arrived in Europe, and from it I am tempted here to insert an extract of considerable length.[52] The reader will be less disposed to condemn the fictions of Kehama as extravagant, when he compares them with this genuine specimen of Hindoo fable. He will perceive too, that no undue importance has been attributed to the Horse of the sacrifice in the Poem".[53]

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[48] *RSPW*, IV, p. 202.

[49] "Southey's probable source is Johann Lucas Niekamp, *Histoire de la Mission Danoise dans les Indes Orientales*, 3 vols (1745). […] Niecamp was a Danish missionary based in Tamil Nadu, South India" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 398).

[50] *RSPW*, IV, p. 250.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 220. The ritual of 'The Aswamedha' refers to the sacrifice of one hundred horses which would grant Kehama the seat of Indra. According to the Enlightenment motto "Incredulus odi", to disbelieve is to dislike. This is the reason why Southey cautiously justifies the credibility of these two legends.

[52] At the same time, Southey advertises his informed, up-to-date research.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

Southey complements this undercutting of *Kehama*'s Hindu extravagance with his brief, though explicit, criticisms of the supposed ludicrous exaggerations of Hindu culture. Similarly to his aforementioned explicit condemnation of sati and Charles Wilks's religious tolerance towards it, he patronizingly denounces the Hindu tradition for royal appellation – "No person has given so complete a sample of the absurdity of oriental titles as the Dutch traveller Struys,[54] in his enumeration of the proud and blasphemous titles of the King of Siam" – and exposes the "sublimity" of Hindu religious mythology in reference to the legends surrounding Seeva's creation – "Throughout the Hindoo fables there is the constant mistake of bulk for sublimity".[55]

Although Southey's critique of Hinduism's sublimity is very explicit in the cases where he uses his own voice, his attitude towards Hinduism becomes rather ambiguous when he chooses to give precedence to his numerous antiquarian sources, which, as we mentioned earlier, fall under two ideologically divergent groups sanctioning two opposing views of the Orient: the 'romantic' and the Anglican or utilitarian. Southey uses his sources in a very elusive manner. He cautiously avoids being pinpointed as either exclusively evangelical, or anti-evangelical, by suppressing any straightforward and explicit commentary on sources belonging to either of the two groups. Moreover, there is an absence of quotation marks in numerous quotations which causes the impression of Southey appropriating, and therefore sanctioning, both groups. Many authorial "I"s, may be very easily misconstrued as Southey's own authorial or editorial "I". For instance, in the aforementioned quotation where Claudius Buchanan condemns the practice of

[54] "Jan Struys, *The Voyages and Travels of John Struys*, trans. John Morrison (London, 1683) […]. Jan Struys (d. 1694) was a Dutch travel-writer who travelled across the Mediterranean and the East to Italy, Greece, Persia, India and Japan among other places" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 404).

[55] *RSPW*, IV, p. 218 and p. 266.

sati – "the civilized world may expect soon to hear of the abolition of this opprobrium of a Christian administration, the female sacrifice; which has subsisted, to our certain knowledge, since the time of Alexander the Great" – although, Southey cites Buchanan's name at the end of the quotation, the fact that he does not use quotation marks, or any other separating marks suggests his intention, conscious or unconscious, to present Buchanan's criticism as his own.[56] In a similar fashion, Southey also appropriates quotations by anti-evangelicals, such as Jones or Moor. By lifting the quotation marks, Southey undermines and suppresses the quotations' distinct authorship. This allows him the freedom to attach his editorial voice to any quotation, either of utilitarian or syncretistic dispositions.

The notes' emphasized factuality and historicity seemingly diminish the Hinduism's monstrous sublime, and protect *Kehama* from being associated with a provokingly extravagant and absurd eastern superstition. However, Southey's paratextual historicizing project and his initial objective to contain the Hindu sublime are counteracted by the introduction of myth and its aesthetic of the marvellous. Fiction clashes with fact, re-invoking the sublime eastern exoticism which the notes' facts and evidence are trying to contain. The term "account" is occasionally replaced by the term "story", which has loose semantic associations, verging simultaneously on the opposing notions of "history", on the one hand, and "fable", or "myth", on the other.

Therefore, Southey elaborates on the religious myth of the Glendoveers – "the celestial children of Casyapa" –[57] by providing "the neglected *story* of Peter Wilkins".[58] Accordingly, he elaborates on the myth of the Ship of

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 197.
[57] Casyapa is "the Father of the Immortals" (*ibid.*, p. 7).
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 204 (my italics).

Heaven[59] by providing its "history" by reference to a "story" from Francis Wilford's[60] article in "Asiatick Researches" (III, 1794):

> "'On Egypt and other countries adjacent to the Cali River, or Nile of Ethiopia, from the Ancient Books of the Hindus': I have converted the *Vimana*, or self-moving Car of the Gods, into a Ship. Capt. Wilford has given the *history* of its invention, – and, what is more curious, has attempted to settle the geography of the *story*".[61]

This short extract exemplifies the subtle way in which *Kehama* blends the terms "history" and "story" or, otherwise, the notions of factuality and fictionality. The term "story" could be interchangeable with the term "fable". Southey, thus, provides a "fable" from Moor's *Hindu Pantheon* in relation to the God Seeva, the Destroyer: "It will be seen from the following *fable*, that Seeva had once been reduced to a very humiliating employment by one of Kehama's predecessors".[62] Southey undoubtedly blends facts and fictions, "histories" and "stories", challenging, thereby, the conventional perception of the notes as factual referential devices, and also, most importantly, portraying the Orient both as an object to be historicized and contained, and, also, as a sublime and exotic Other which transcends the imperial western objectives of factual representation, and fascinates himself as a poet and a scholar of the sublime.

Southey's subtle aesthetic combination of the elements of fact and fiction can be associated with, if not attributed to, his own literary career which displays a pervasive and systematic merging of the factual genres of history, biography, and periodical review, with the fictional genres of fiction and poetry. Southey always experimented with many different kinds of literature,

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[59] The Ship of Heaven transported Kailyal, and Ereenia to the Swerga, or Paradise.

[60] "Francis Wilford (1750/51-1822), *On Egypt and other countries adjacent to the Cali River, or Nile of Ethiopia, from the Ancient Books of the Hindus, Asiatick Researches*, III (1794), pp. 295-468" (D. S. Roberts, *Editor's Notes*, cit., p. 401).

[61] *RSPW*, IV, p. 210 (my italics).

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 208 (my italics).

and, most importantly, at the same time. For instance, between the years 1800 and 1810, he commenced the *History of Portugal* (1800) – which he never finished –, he published *Thalaba* (1801), he started reviewing for the "Annual Review" (1803), he published *Madoc* and *Metrical Tales* (1805), he began his *History of Brazil* (1807) which he published in 1810 – in the same year he published *Kehama*, and he also began reviewing for the "Quarterly Review" (1808).

It is obvious that Southey constantly moved between factuality and fictionality. He always combined the role of the factual scholar and historian and the imaginative role of the poet. In relation to this see the following extract from his letter to his friend John Rickman on January 23, 1805:

> "Should my Uncle be driven from Portugal, and my design of going over in consequence frustrated, I should put the first volume to press in the course of next winter. Of materials arranged and unarranged for the several divisions, I have more than as much as would make seven such volumes as the Sharonical – a great capital of labour lying dead. With the needful works of reference at hand, nothing more is required than to transcribe them for the printer, for I have all the arrangement methodized in my own mind, and could fit in the new matter to its place as I wrote on. I am confident that the work is what it ought to be, having followed this for my rule – to relate every thing – and to write first as intelli [*sic*] – nay – you shall have it in a Triad – the three excellencies of historical composition – language as intelligible as possible. Nothing provokes me like a waste of words. Me judice [*sic*] I am a good poet – but a better historian, and the better for having been accustomed to feel and think as a poet. A new but happily a last cargo interrupted me just as I was setting to. They are almost killed off, and meantime I had collected matter for a chapter on the Hindoos".[63]

The composition of the *History of Portugal* coincides with the composition of and research on *Kehama*, or 'the Hindoos'. Southey's factual disposition coincides and blends with the creative one. He asserts this stylistic hybridity by claiming that he is a good poet because he is a good historian and vice-versa. A comparison between the *History of Portugal* and *Kehama*'s notes proves that he applies his methodical nature, and his referential system,

[63] *New Letters of Robert Southey*, cit., vol. I, p. 376.

or, to use his own words, his ‘rule – to relate every thing –’ not only in the context of history, but also in that of poetry. For Southey, factuality and fictionality transcend the conventional theoretical genre-distinctions and categorizations and go always hand in hand.

In conclusion, Southey’s intricate art of quotation is central to the development and projection of his authorial identity and public persona, enabling him to reveal as well as conceal aspects of his complex socio-political and religious ideology, controlling the readers’ perceptions and manoeuvring their assumptions. Paratext and quotation are integral, formative aspects of Romantic Orientalism and Romantic-period poetics, illustrating the hybridity and diversity of the Romantic genius and Romantic poetic creation, and challenging common assumptions about a sublime, universal Romantic-period poetry. Romanticism’s “Purloined Letters” resonate its strong connection to history and factuality, reverberating their antiquarian rationalism and factuality onto the main poetic text, upsetting, or deconstructing its romantic sensibility and oriental exoticism. *Historia* or factuality is ironically coupled with *fabula* or myth and artful reproduction with imaginative invention. Paratext provides an essential means towards a more nuanced understanding of Romantic-period literature and, on a broader level, demands a new method and perspective towards a more comprehensive analysis of fictional literature.