UNIVERSITEIT GENT

Faculteit Letteren & Wijsbegeerte

‘Why Go Abroad? See England First.’ Colonialism and Modernity in the Travel Writing of the Webbs and Evelyn Waugh (1911-1931)

Florian Deroo

Promotor: Prof. dr. Christophe Verbruggen

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INTRODUCTION

"My own travelling days are over, and I do not expect to see many travel books in the near future."[1] Evelyn Waugh's gloomy preface of a 1945 bundle of his travel writing looked back nostalgically at a golden age of travel. In the interwar years travel books used to "appear in batches of four or five a week," full of "charm and wit and enlarged Leica snapshots."[2] This was when "the going was good."[3] An increasingly pessimistic and reactionary Waugh lamented that there was no room for true travel in a world of "displaced persons."[4] He wrote a gloomy forecast for the future, touching on the striking contradiction of voluntary and forced mobility in the post-war world:

> "...the very young, perhaps, may set out like the *Wandervogels* of the Weimar period; lean lawless aimless couples with rucksacks, joining the great army of men and women without papers, without official existence, the refugees and deserters, who drift everywhere today between the barbed wire."[5]

His words have an eerie resonance in 2016.

Yet Waugh was certainly wrong about travel books. From V.S. Naipaul's explorations of his ancestral land to Jean Baudrillard's abstract travel through an unreal America, the genre has continued to flourish. Since the 1980s, the travel book has also become the subject of academic scholarship. Both historians and literary scholars had mostly neglected the ambiguous genre of travel writing until then. Once discovered however, these texts proved to be a valuable source for cultural and intellectual history, while at the same time deserving of close literary analysis. My thesis continues in the vein of travel writing studies, a research field that has frequently blurred the boundaries between historiography and literary studies. I analyze the 1911-1912 Indian travel diary co-written by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, two prominent Fabians, and the 1931 African travel book *Remote People* by the Catholic and conservative author Evelyn Waugh. My study focusses on how the experience, assessment and representation of British colonies abroad connected with the traveler's understanding of modernity at home.

While the question of how travel writers thought about and depicted the colonial world is not a new one, its many dimensions and complexities have not been fully explored. Where most previous scholarship has focused on how imperialism[6] regulated the construction and representation

[1] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good*, [1946] (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951), 9.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] I use both the terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' in this study, but with a slightly different meaning. Following Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses, I use 'imperialism' to refer to "both the policy and practice whereby a nation establishes rule over another country or group of countries through the application of military force or conquest." 'Colonialism', then refers to "the institution and administration of an imperial power's foreign holdings and dependencies," implies the use of a more 'soft power', and is more easily

of colonial spaces and peoples, I delve into the influence of the social and cultural condition of modernity. My focus on the first decades of the 20th century in British colonial history is motivated by a relative gap in the study of (modernist) ideological and political responses to colonialism. The British empire was still a solid part of British life and politics in the first half of the twentieth century: even in the interwar years, colonial rule seemed like a stable reality.[7] I approach this period of colonialism not as a prelude to decolonization, but as an integral part of the British empire's 'working' history. To grasp the wide variety of responses to both colonialism and the contradictions of modern life in Britain, I look at two widely different travel texts, twenty years apart, written by politically opposed authors. In this way, I also aim to introduce a diachronic perspective and trace the evolution of British thinking about the colonial realm and how this was influenced by changing social and intellectual currents in Britain. First, however, I give a brief overview of travel writing studies and position my own approach within the field. The rest of the thesis is divided in two parts. Part one covers the Webbs' *Indian Diary* and the connection between the couple's politics at home and abroad. Part two explores Waugh's experiences in *Remote People*, a book that simultaneously reinforces and blurs the standard imperial categories.

The genre of travel writing was first given sustained attention by Paul Fussell. In his 1980 study of interwar travel writing, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, Fussell argued for a reevaluation of travel books as "literary phenomena."[8] This pioneering study worked firmly within the bounds of traditional literary biography and criticism. It specified the themes, artistic effects, and individual expressions of literary traveling within the context of British interwar culture. Yet the renewed interest in travel writing also coincided with the rise of postcolonial theory and a discourse-critical approach to cultural products. Pioneering studies like Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Marie Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, and David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* deconstructed the imperial constructions of knowledge that suffused and continues to suffuse so much of Western travel writing.[9] Essentially, the focus of this postcolonial approach was a study and critique of ideology and its discourses. It studied how Western travelers perceived and constructed foreign spaces; the process of 'meaning-making' abroad. Critical colonial discourse analysis aimed to situate travel writing within an imperial "global system of representation" about the non-Western

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delimited temporally. See: Richard Begam and Michael Moses, "Introduction," in *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939*, ed. Richard Begam and Michael Moses (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 3–5.

[7] See: Ronald Hyam, "The British Empire in the Edwardian Era," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith M. Brown and WM. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47–63; John Darwin, "Imperialism in Decline? Tendencies in British Imperial Policy between the Wars," *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 3 (1980): 657–79.

[8] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 202–15.

[9] These classics have played a large role in the general way that I have approached travel writing. See: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New Preface ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2003); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

world.[10] It sought to identify the genre's tropes, stereotypes, rhetorical moves, and genealogies, and to historically connect these discourses with global political constellations of power. Most postcolonial critiques thus expanded on Michel Foucault's ideas about power and knowledge, and the complex and shifting relationship between both. European travel texts were approached as deeply embedded in ideologically and racially charged discourses. They were the handmaidens of empire; the texts of a dominant group that produced knowledge about the 'other' within the context of asymmetrical power-relationships. The knowledge produced in travel writing was seen as a part of a "discursive formation of empire", an "imperial form", that rested on crude binaries and the establishment of a regime of 'truth' about other places and people.[11] Unlike the older formalist work, these analyses approached travel writing not as mere cultural artifacts, but as products and producers of political and cultural domination.

More recently, Patrick Hollander and Graham Huggan have applied this approach to contemporary travel writing in *Tourists with Typewriters*. They argue that "travel writing frequently provides an effective alibi for the perpetuation or reinstallment of ethnocentrically superior attitudes to 'other' cultures, peoples, and places." [12] At the same time, they are sensitive to travel writing as "a more or less elaborate textual performance" by very different individuals.[13] In *Haunted Journeys*, Dennis Porter, too, explores travel texts as vehicles of the "knowledge of things" but balances this Foucauldian approach with a historical psychoanalytic sensitivity to how travel books "have managed to combine explorations in the world with self-exploration."[14] He considers the ambiguous representation in travel writing as a political and an aesthetic-cognitive activity, where the traveler simultaneously represents the other and himself.[15]

Most often, the studies on discourses and representations of the colonial 'other', have focused on travel writing up to the 19th century, when imperial ideology was at its height. The main historical context considered in the postcolonial approach is thus the expansion and consolidation of empire. Imperial practice and culture, then, form the fundamental social and intellectual 'determinants' of the representations within travel texts. More recent examples of imperial visions in cultural products are subsequently seen as continuations of Eurocentric biases, myths, and discourses that have older roots. In the analysis of British travel texts specifically, the history of British colonial expansion (and its ancillary imperial culture and binary-based knowledge) forms the main axis around which travel texts are measured and evaluated. This perspective is then

[10] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 10–11.
This genealogical reconstruction of colonial discourse has been applied to India by Ronald Inden and Sara Suleri. See: Suleri Sara, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1992); Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
[11] Paul Smethurst, "Introduction," in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire. The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1,5.
[12] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), viii.
[13] Ibid., ix.
[14] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 5.
[15] Ibid., 15.

mirrored by analyses that look at how subalterns resisted, disrupted or entered imperial ideology (through Pratt's "contact zone" or Greenblatt's "go-between"), resulting in cracks, contradictions, repressions, and tensions within the text.[16] The critical approach to travel writing has also looked at how more self-conscious types of contemporary and postcolonial travel writing attempt or fail to break free from the cultural legacies of imperialism. Some postcolonial studies have in this way constructed a rigid binary of their own: there is imperial and non-imperial travel writing, conforming or contesting a hegemonic imperial constellation.

From a historiographical perspective, the dominant 'discourse analysis' approach to travel writing has also resulted in a relative gap in the research of the period between the end of the 19th century and the decades after decolonization. The scarce attention for colonial thinking and travel in the beginning of the 20th century is quite surprising, considering that the extent of the British imperial system only its reached its height after World War I.[17] The result has been a relative lack of ideology-critical study of early 20th century travel texts and especially of modernist travel books; those ambiguous texts between the Victorian colonial and the postcolonial moment. It was then that more skeptical interrogations of empire and the superiority of the modern west were coming to the forefront. Such emerging modernist thought could clash with the traditional imperial notion of civilizational superiority, while simultaneously being still deeply embedded in it.[18] The turn of the century not only coincided with a rise in popular tourism but also with a new critical self-consciousness about the modern, industrialized societies which travelers now often wanted to 'escape'. Stimulated by the rise of sociology, the questioning of Enlightenment thought, and the dizzying personal experience of urban life, travelers were especially sensitive to the putative negative effects of modernization – a process that was now increasingly grasped as a global one. In this study, I trace what this meant for the British interpretation of the colonial world.

While Foucauldian discourse analysis has highlighted imperial power relations and worldviews, the focus on imperial 'meaning-making' has thus sometimes presupposed a rather static and monolithic view of how travelers conceived of their own domestic societies. Especially in the context of the perceived rapid changes in European society and culture from the fin-de-siècle onwards, the metropole did not always so straightforwardly intellectually fit in the category of a superior, crucially 'different' place on a higher level of progress, civilization, and morality. Little attention has been paid to the different and changing ways in which travelers conceptualized the 'home' they left in relation to the 'abroad' they encountered. In this way, the effects of social changes in Europe and the intellectual responses to these changes have rarely been seriously considered in connection to the representation of foreign spaces in travel writing. Modern capitalism has been connected to the causes of imperial conquest and the rise of modern categories of knowledge; that Western 'order of things'. But the implicit and explicit presence in travel writing of the affective effects of, ideological responses to, and political attitudes towards metropolitan

[16] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6–7; Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 150–51.
[17] Begam and Moses, "Introduction," 2.
[18] Ibid., 13.

modernity has often been overlooked. Where 'imperialism' has been the guiding category of most ideological analyses of travel writing, I focus on the social context of modernity in the representation of colonial spaces and people. I believe this doesn't undermine or contradict postcolonial theory, but exactly intersects with it and enriches, nuances, and sophisticates the sometimes sweeping imperial discourses it has laid bare.

For recent scholarship on travel writing has increasingly moved away from the postcolonial approach and its focus on empire, discourse, and ideology. Postcolonial analysis of travel texts has been criticized for its reconstruction of sometimes monolithic and all-encompassing discourses and its exaggeration of the influence of the imperial project and its subservient culture. Indeed, while postcolonial theory has been incredibly fruitful in deconstructing larger trends and identifying common imperial rhetoric, the inevitable consequence is that the full complexity and heterogeneity of individual texts has often receded to the background. In the worst cases, the analysis of colonial discourse has led to sweeping generalizations and a lack of nuanced, historical analysis that situates the travel text in its own historical conditions of possibility. The wholesale denunciation of travel writing as inherently and essentially complicit with an imperial discourse of 'othering', racism and Western superiority has been criticized as being reductionist and deterministic. In his introduction for the collection *Writing Travel* John Zilcosky, for example, stresses that the authors of the essays do not primarily characterize travel writing as an ideological tool of empire.[19] Indeed, by reducing travel texts to simple ideological extensions and 'reflections' of a political and economic project of empire, postcolonial discourse analysis risks to neglect not only the complexities of literary texts but also the transgressive potential of cultural products – no matter how limited that may be. As Porter puts it: "Prolonged contact with the literature of travel has convinced me of the relative coarseness of discourse theory […] because the human subject's relation to language is such that he or she is never merely a passive reflector of collective speech."[20] When the analysis focusses exclusively on broader ideological patterns, the specificity of texts and the individual responses of authors frequently get swallowed up in grand overviews and simple models that reduce texts to mere elements of larger discursive formations and ingrained ways of thinking. While this type and scale of analysis has its political and interpretive function, it can also efface the diversity and heterogeneity of travel texts and the complex ways travelers have imagined a wide range of 'other' spaces. The recent nuanced approaches of Porter, Holland and Huggan suggest that the critical analysis of imperial discourse is best when balanced by a close attention to the travel text as a complex literary product of an individual, historical author – and indeed, the best postcolonial studies have already done this.

In reaction to the ideological critiques and grand overviews of postcolonial theory, recent scholarship on travel writing has shifted its focus to theories that emphasize the destabilizing and

[19] John Zilcosky, "Introduction: Writing Travel," in *Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of the Modern Journey*, ed. John Zilcosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 10.
[20] Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 4.

transformative nature of travel. As a balancing act to discourse analysis' 'negative' approach (both in method and evaluation), the scholarship on travel writing has increasingly taken a 'positive' interpretive turn by focusing on the heterogeneity of both travelers (by introducing the category of gender[21] and intra-European travel[22]) and of individual texts. This attention to ideological destabilization was sometimes already evident in postcolonial theory, but there has been a general move away from the focus on collective discourses and especially from the study of imperialism and colonialism. Where postcolonial theory stressed the 'writing' side of travel writing, a newer tradition stresses the 'travel' side inherent in the genre. The overarching concept of this approach is 'mobility'. In the introduction for the collection *Travel Writing, Form and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, Paul Smethurst emphasizes that "proper mobility" is fundamentally "in conflict with imperialism's paradigms of order and control, and yet disorderly mobility is inherent in the idea of travel."[23] While this collection still examines imperial frameworks, Smethurst's introduction for a more recent collection argues for a completely travel-centered approach to travel texts. With Julia Kuehn, he writes that the aim of *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies* is to "establish a critical milieu for travel writing studies in which travel-related theories are prominent."[24] All the essays fall under five categories that are intended to organize the field: Topology, Mobility, Mapping, Alterity and Globality. Kuehn and Smethurst stress that travel writing "constitutes (and is constituted by) prevailing concepts of space, place and mobility, and cross-cultural literary/linguistic strategies" and that it "registers significant shifts in the experience of space, inter-lingual dynamics, symbols and other forms of cultural encryption."[25] This reevaluation of travel writing through various types of mobility has also coincided with a renewed interest in what Ulrike Brisson has called the "naked politics" of travel writing: the immediate political statements, evaluations and engagements of literary travelers.[26] We find a similar dual focus on the 'displacement' and 'politics' of travel writing in *Radicals on The Road* by Bernard Schweizer; *Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of the Modern Journey*, edited by John Zilcosky; and

[21] See for example: Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2003), 2–5; Hsu-Ming Teo, "Constructions of Gender and Racial Identities in Inter-War Women's Travel Writing," Limina, no. 5 (1999): 134–35; Kristi Siegel, *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Wendy Mercer, "Gender and Genre in Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing: Leonie d'Aunet and Xavier Marmier," in *Travel Writing and Empire: Post-Colonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (London: Zed Books, 1999), 147–63.
[22] See for example: Pieter François, *"A Little Britain on the Continent". British Perceptions of Belgium, 1830-1870*, Cliohres.net, Vol. X (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2010); Hagen Schulz-Forberg, *London - Berlin: Authenticity, Modernity, and the Metropolis in Urban Travel Writing from 1851 to 1939* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006).
[23] Smethurst, "Introduction," 2.
[24] Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst, "Introduction," in *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.
[25] Ibid., 3–4.
[26] Ulrike Brisson, "Introduction: 'Naked' Politics in Travel Writing," in *Not So Innocent Abroad: The Politics of Travel and Travel Writing*, ed. Ulrike Brisson and Bernard Schweizer (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 1, 5–7.

Politics, Identity and Mobility in Travel Writing, edited by Miguel Cabañas et al.[27] The new 'mobility' approach has also seen the return of a more formalist analysis of travel texts. As Smethurst rightly notes, while "formalism as an end in itself may not be very productive" it can "provide the means for connecting individual travel texts with the signifying practices of imperialist discourse."[28] Many of these new studies have likewise integrated the more conventional historical and literary-biographical approach, looking at the literary strategies, personal trajectories, and political attitudes of travel writers.

Yet the new 'mobility' approach has its own perils and shortcomings. Kuehn and Smethurst themselves warn of the dangers of travel-related theory. In critical practice the theory's lexicon, which includes terms like 'displacement', 'topology', 'mobility' and 'mapping', is almost always used figuratively.[29] When this travel theory is again turned back on travel writing "it potentially confuses the source with the target of the metaphor" and may result in the tendency to "aestheticize and universalize the emancipatory potential of travel-related metaphors."[30] Hollander and Huggan are critical of the recent "hypertheorization of travel-as-displacement" writing that this liberating utopian impulse is "arguably the product, not of the world itself but of a 'worldly' intellectual elite."[31] Their book wants to find a middle ground between travel writing as a complex textual performance and a circumscribed material practice.[32] My own approach likewise seeks the complex tension between travel writing's utopian possibilities and its ideological limits. Indeed, I will argue that a lot of the recent scholarship on travel writing too straightforwardly sees the effects of mobility as the diametrical opposite of ideological discourses or imperialist thinking. Instead, I would like to stress the tangled relationship between the displacement of travel and domestic and colonial ideologies. In this, I follow the more elaborate view of mobility as traced out by Stephen Greenblatt and others in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*. In particular, I am concerned with what Greenblatt calls "the sensation of rootedness" against which mobility should always be positioned and understood.[33] The renewed focus on the formal characteristics of travel writing has sometimes also tended to become too 'internalistic': it risks isolating the travel text from larger socio-political processes, prevailing ideologemes within society, and even the text's author. The complex, theory-laden analyses of travel-as-displacement can themselves lead to an approach that effaces historical

[27] Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001); Zilcosky, "Introduction: Writing Travel"; Miguel A. Cabañas et al., eds., *Politics, Identity, and Mobility in Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2016). An early example of this approach is Hollander's critical study of Western intellectuals that traveled to the Soviet Union: Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society*, 4th ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998).
[28] Smethurst, "Introduction," 4.
[29] Kuehn and Smethurst, "Introduction," 2.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, ix.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Stephen Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 253.

differences and particularities by subsuming travel texts under abstract, seemingly universal forces like 'mobility', 'space/place' or 'globality'.

I would like, in a way then, to return to the more properly ideological analysis (of embedded beliefs, assumptions, fantasies…) that characterized postcolonial criticism. This study is concerned with the ways that travelers gave meaning to colonial spaces and how this 'meaning making' related to larger social realities and cultural formations, both metropolitan and colonial. I connect travel writing to ideological responses to the socio-historical context of an emerging modern society in Britain. But my work also builds on and integrates the recent 'travel theory' and the biographical approach. The focus on mobility and the author particularly comes to the fore in my outline of the immediate, express politics and ideas of the individuals I study. I aim to integrate these different approaches through a method of interpretation that covers the various aspects of travel writing. This method works both as a 'negative hermeneutic' that 'unmasks' ideology, and an interrelated 'positive hermeneutic' that deciphers a simultaneous utopian, constructive impulse in the ideological text.[34] I believe the simple instrumental view of culture, as often applied by postcolonial scholarship, doesn't fully capture the complexity of the cultural artifact. A cultural text is more than a mere reflection of a dominant ideology; it is also the product of a utopian (potentially 'destabilizing') impulse. In this way I grasp the ideological "somehow at one with the Utopian, and the Utopian at one with the ideological."[35] My theoretical approach here loosely follows and adapts the interpretative method worked out by Frederic Jameson in *The Political Unconscious*, which I now briefly and too summarily discuss.[36]

Central in Jameson's interpretative theory is his belief in the profound but complex relationship between the cultural text and the socio-historical context within which it is formed.[37] He argues that every text is "social and historical – indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political."[38] However, engaging with the epistemological critiques of poststructuralism, Jameson does not consider the text as an unmediated 'reflection' of its historical context. Still, unlike the deconstructionism of Derrida or de Man, Jameson does not simply discard the referent.[39] He writes that "history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise" but he does contend that it is "an

[34] See: Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2002), 271–90. Jameson calls this the 'Dialectic of Utopia and Ideology'. This approach sees the instrumental functioning of 'mystifying' ideology (that what forms the focus of much postcolonial theory and a simplified approach to Foucauldian discourse) as closely interrelated with a simultaneous utopian impulse within the same ideological texts.
[35] Ibid., 276.
[36] I was brought to the attention of Jameson's literary theory through professor Bart Keunen. I owe a lot of my theoretical and thematic approach (of interpreting cultural texts in relation to modernity) to his classes and his recently published book. See: Bart Keunen, *Ik en de stad: fantasmagorie-, ideologie- en utopiekritiek in literatuur en cultuur 1800-2010* (Gent: Academia Press, 2015).
[37] Most succinctly formulated in Jameson's tongue-in-cheek and exceptionally brief slogan "Always historicize!" Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, ix.
[38] Ibid., 5.
[39] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 121.

absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form."[40] Texts can never simply 'grasp' reality and its contradictions; the traveler does not straightforwardly represent the actual colonial realm or the state of modern life in the metropole. How then, does the text relate to its 'ungraspable' socio-historical context? Jameson argues that cultural texts are "socially symbolic acts"; the products of authors reacting to very real experiences of untextualizable history.[41] He asserts that "all cultural artifacts are to be read as symbolic resolutions of real political and social contradictions."[42] On the level of the individual text, ideology is not simply 'invested' in the symbolic production. The cultural artifact is itself an ideological act, with the utopian function of constructing "imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictions."[43] Here we find the very interconnectedness of ideology and the utopian impulse.

In this study, then, I mainly read the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People* as such socially symbolic acts that search for utopian 'resolutions' to the determinate historical contradictions of modernity. I consider these responses on three interconnected levels. First, as clearly expressed 'express resolutions' or 'naked' politics. In contrast to the fictional literature that forms Jameson's primary focus, the genre of travel writing often contains straightforward, individual expressions and ideas of the author. I especially look at specific political stances formed in the domestic context and how these were transposed to the colonial world. Further, I examine the travel writer's express political stance on the nature and legitimacy of the British empire. Yet if we want to actually understand and situate these 'naked' politics, we must connect them with the deeper-lying politics and with the socio-political problems against which they were formed.

As a necessary complement, then, the second level of response is that of the 'political unconscious' of the author. This is the domain of 'symbolic resolutions', as described above on the basis of Jameson's theory. Here I search 'between the lines' of the travel text, tracing the author's unconscious imaginary 'resolutions' to the contradictions of modernity, which are subtly channeled through the various representations, (political) evaluations, and descriptions of the colonial world. As we have seen, however, the real social contradictions cannot be immediately conceptualized in the text; it appears only in a 'reconstructed', already 'resolved' form. Jameson writes that we must thus distinguish "this ultimate subtext which is the place of contradiction" from a secondary subtext "which is more properly the place of ideology, and which takes the form of the *aporia* or the *antinomy*."[44] In the cultural artifact, a system of 'antinomies' is formed as "the symptomatic expression and conceptual reflex" of a social contradiction.[45] These 'antinomies' are binary oppositions that present a 'logical scandal' or 'double bind', which I see as finding closure in the travel text not through narrative movement (as Jameson asserts when looking at fiction) but through imagined temporal movement (in the case of the Webbs) and the material spatial movement of

[40] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 20.
[41] Ibid., 5.
[42] Ibid., 65.
[43] Ibid., 64.
[44] Ibid., 68.
[45] Ibid.

travel (in the case of Waugh).[46] In analyzing the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People* I will thus reconstruct and explore the working of such binary antinomies.[47] Once I have in this manner traced the political unconscious (which I have also termed 'the ideology') of the traveler, I can then also thoroughly understand his or her experience of the colonial world and express politics. The level of the utopian-ideological 'symbolic resolution' of the travel writer is the main focus of my analysis. Hence, I predominantly approach the travel text as a singular, complex cultural product by an individual author, who I situate within a distinct personal and political context.

However, I sometimes also connect the individual text to a final level of 'collective resolutions'. Here the individual travel text is "refocused as a *parole*, or individual utterance, of that vaster system, or *langue* of class discourse."[48] Whereas Jameson sees this as a move to the analytical category of Marxist classes, I approach these collective discourses in a looser way. But I also maintain that these discourses are fundamentally 'relational' or 'dialogical': they always acquire their meaning within the dynamic relations between social groups. Thus, as will become clear, I distinguish between various social classes and class fractions within Britain (the landed aristocracy, the intellectual elites, the bourgeoisie, the middle and lower classes). But I also distinguish between metropolitan and colonial British society, and crucially, between the British colonizers and the non-British colonized 'others'. At this last distinction we then find and can integrate the hegemonic imperial discourses that are the main focus of postcolonial theory. These are, of course, especially relevant for this study of colonial travel writing. Jameson sees the broader ideological discursive formations as organized around smaller units which he terms 'ideologemes'. I borrow this useful analytical tool. Every 'ideologeme' of a collective discourse can manifest itself both "as a pseudoidea – a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice – or as a protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy," a shared historical vision. [49] While I have not differentiated the rather broad 'pseudoidea', I have looked at how collective (political) ideas are essentially linked to certain historical master narratives or 'protonarratives'.

These three levels of responses have here been rather artificially distinguished from one another. Their separation in interpretation should be understood as different 'reconstructions' of the text that open different interpretative horizons. In the cultural texts they appear simultaneously and they merge into each other. The straightforward political opinion is thus informed by a political unconscious that in its turn is embedded in broader collective discourses. Though I predominantly work towards the reconstruction of the author's political unconscious, I do not systematically or stringently separate these different levels in my analysis. Instead, I explore and grasp the different levels of responses in their mutual connectedness.

Now, I may summarily characterize the ultimate 'subtext' against which these various responses are formulated. As already mentioned, in the scope of this study I focus on the socio-

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 70.
[49] Ibid., 73; Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 129.

political subtext of an accelerating modernity in Britain in the first decades of the 20th century. I look at the way the authors reacted and conceptualized processes of social and cultural change; changes that the authors themselves perceived and experienced as the emergence of a 'modern' world. As we have seen, however, this subtext and its social contradictions are never "immediately present as such."[50] Rather, these changes and contradictions emerge from cultural artifacts but always in already 'resolved', textualized forms. Jameson calls this the paradox of the subtext: "the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction."[51] Thus the thematic focus of modernity, those socio-cultural changes and contradictions within British society, is carried within the texture of the travel writing I study. It emerges through the symbolic 'resolutions' in the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People*, and we can thus hazily trace the subtext after interpreting its resonances in these texts. However, it is worthwhile to already briefly map out the socio-historical subtext of modernity 'in hindsight', guided of course by the long tradition of historical and sociological literature on this subject. I believe the same extensive destabilizing social changes and contradictions of modern society confronted both the Webbs and Waugh, as evidenced by the (nonetheless very different) 'resolutions' in their travel writing, diaries, and other texts. I must here rather reductively leave out the many nuances, counter-trends, and complexities of the modernization process, which I hope will become apparent in the closer analyses. Suffice it to say here that I broadly consider these well-known forces of high modernity as including the accelerating and increasingly visual industrialization, marketization, urbanization, secularization, democratization, rationalization, bureaucratization, and commercialization of British society in the first decades of the 20th century. Both the Webbs and Waugh were confronted by the contradictions emerging from these changes, against which they sought to construct their utopian 'solutions'. But as will become clear, they were sensitive to different social contradictions of modernity. The Webbs mainly responded to the contradiction of the co-existence of the massive increase in material wealth and the widespread inequality, both within Britain and on a global scale. Waugh, on the other hand, formulated his ideological resolution mainly against the contradiction of the increasing individual freedom of the modern subject (and the consequent forms of moral rootlessness and social disorder) and new forms of social restraint (the emergence of a society with a more subtle horizontal exercise of power, disciplinary institutions, and a standardized, 'suburbanized' social order). In the context of colonialism, both Waugh and the Webbs struggled with the contradiction of the experiential detachment between the subject of the imperial metropole and the larger colonial (economic) system with which that metropole was bound. Indeed, even the personal experience of travel to the colonial world could not resolve the contradiction of "this radical otherness of colonial suffering,

[50] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 66.
[51] Ibid., 67.

and exploitation, let alone the structural connections between that and this, between absent [colonial] space and daily life in the metropolis."[52]

This study, then, traces the express and unconscious political responses to the social changes and contradictions of modernity, as these emerge from the traveler's experiences in the British colonial empire. It aims to determine how travelers understood and represented colonial spaces in relation to the way they gave meaning to the development of a modern society primarily at home but also abroad. For while modernity was mainly grasped as a social change in Britain, the travelers I study also registered it as the global process that it was; spreading among other things through colonialism. As will become clear, the representation of colonial societies and places was, consciously and unconsciously, often a by-way to express concerns about the domestic sphere. I aim to trace how early 20th century British travel texts contain explicit commentary and implicit responses to socio-political challenges in Britain. I give special attention to the 'naked politics' of travelers abroad and how their views on the British empire were tied to their ideas about the modernization of British society. My focus on the modern, its transnational flows, and its representation in text also ties into the emergent scholarship on the relationship between modernist fiction, colonialism, and (tropes of) travel.[53] By looking at travelers' ideological responses to modernity, I aim to bring together the analytical categories of 'home' and 'abroad', of 'Britain' and 'the British empire'. In this way, I also investigate how these categories, like the theories of mobility suggest, could become destabilized or blurred through travel. The process of relating home to abroad should be seen as a two-way dynamic. The recent 'travel theory' has shown how one must consider the effects of mobility on politics formed in the domestic realm. Accordingly, I also explore the ways in which travelers' encounters with colonial spaces, the 'other', and global modernities affected their conceptualizations of and politics in response to the British society they left behind.

I consider this study's method to be an interpretative one and its results, I hope, informed interpretations. Just like the authors tried to grasp foreign and familiar spaces, I have tried to map their ideologies, politics, hopes and fears. My own experiences and beliefs have necessarily contributed to the interpretive acts contained within the following pages. They both limit and enrich the ways I have read, understood, and enjoyed these two works of travel literature. A nomadic youth as the son of expats has largely stimulated my interest in the experiential and political effects of travel. Slowly, I have become aware of the tension between the seemingly emancipatory character of travel and the profound limits within which it is performed. The potentially edifying but also problematic nature of modern travel has marked my own experiences and doubts. This thesis is

[52] Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, by Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward W. Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 51.
[53] See for example: Richard Begam and Michael Moses, eds., *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899–1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Alexandra Peat, *Travel and Modernist Literature: Sacred and Ethical Journeys* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Robert Burden, *Travel, Modernism and Modernity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

partly, then, an attempt to retrace the ways in which European travelers continue to understand and construct abroad in relation to their lives at home. I am especially sensitive to the tension between the images, beliefs, desires, and familiarity of the domestic sphere, and the realities, confusions, disappointments, and alterity encountered abroad. A similar tension between freedom and constraint seems to appear in the familiar surroundings of our daily lives. It materializes in the socio-economic constraints and ideological formations of late modernity on the one hand, and the struggles and utopian impulses of the individual subjectivities that modernity has constituted on the other hand.

This thesis is further motivated by a concern for the legacies and complexities of British colonialism. It hardly needs to be said, I hope, that I squarely condemn the colonial system, the imperial and racist discourses that supported it, and the economic exploitation that underpinned it. Perhaps some readers might find it strange that I mostly refrain from systematically criticizing the many racist beliefs and imperial politics that fill the two travel books I study. In interpreting these texts, I often trail their colonial categories, undiscriminating grouping of colonized people or racist deductions to reconstruct colonial discourse. If I do not repeatedly condemn colonialism, it is because I take its moral condemnation as a starting point. My aim here is not to highlight the exploitative and unjustified nature of the colonial system, to correct the many faults in colonial thinking, or to explore the agency and resistance of those colonized – though all these certainly deserve study and attention. Instead, I aim to explore the nature and complexities of colonial visions and politics of travelers from the metropole. While I believe both travel texts are of interest and relevance for readers today, I don't endorse either ones of its contents. Even in the context of their times, the Webbs and Evelyn Waugh had their own particular strengths and faults. Both travel writings were deeply embedded in the colonial project and racist notions of Western superiority. The Webbs simultaneously show a genuine concern for the other and an electrifying belief that society should change. With Waugh one finds a keen individual eye for social anomalies and a powerful aestheticization of daily life. The way these authors both responded to the challenges and opportunities of modernity is what makes these texts resonate even today. This is why Waugh's witty observations can still make us laugh and why the Webbs' idealism can still inspire us. It is also why we can painfully identify what is harmful in these texts and others like them. The uncannily familiar contradictions that emerge from the texts allow the cultural past to speak again and to deliver "its long-forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it."[54]

[54] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 3.

PART 1

THE WEBBS IN BRITISH INDIA

The general consumption of umbrellas and shoes, cigarettes and tea, gramophones and made clothes is demonstrably greatly increasing.

- Sidney Webb, *Indian Diary*

Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to be tilled, and men and women to be talked to.

- Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*

1

INTRODUCTION: THE INDIAN DIARY

What I study as the *Indian Diary* is in fact only a small portion of Beatrice Webb's enormous diary. From 13 September, 1873 to 19 April, 1943, Beatrice routinely chronicled her eventful life in fifty-seven exercise books.[55] This diary covers everything from her Victorian teenage life as daughter of a wealthy businessman to her eventual conversion to the communist cause in the 1930s. It details her destructive love for the politician Joseph Chamberlain, her social work and turn to socialism, Sidney Webb's failed attempts at courtship, her eventual marriage with the same man, and the couple's blossoming intellectual and emotional partnership. The diary is often considered to be one of the most accomplished ones of its time.[56] Beatrice found in her diary a conversational partner to whom she could confess her profound self-doubts, anxieties, and dilemmas.[57] The diary entries show an emotional candor, spiritual longing, and complexity of character that didn't always find expression in her collected public character. It presents the human side of a figure who is often caricatured as a cold and calculating automaton. The diary also contains insightful comments on the political world, the changing nature of British society and the people and places that Beatrice got to know. Finally, it offers a look at the incredibly productive collaborative work and thinking of what Beatrice herself referred to as the 'firm of Webb'. The unlikely marriage between the rich and beautiful Beatrice and the distinctly middle-class and unattractive Sidney produced a wealth of achievements and an unsurpassed working partnership. Their “solid but unreadable books,” political influence and institution-building (from founding the London School of Economics to giving the Labour Party its socialist character) have played a major role in shaping the face of the modern British society and state.[58]

The diary was also packed along when the Webbs went on vacation. What I approach as the Webbs' 'travel writing' are the diary entries that chronicled their travels and in which they recorded their impressions abroad. The entries on the Webbs’ tour through India were first published by the Oxford University Press in 1987 as the *Indian Diaries*; it is this publication that I use as a source.[59] The specific nature of this source as a type of travel writing calls for a few preliminary remarks. First, my approach of the *Indian Diary* as an example of travel writing is motivated by my inclusive

[55] George Feaver, “Introduction: A Pilgrim’s Progress in the Far East,” in *The Webbs in Asia: The 1911-1912 Travel Diary*, by Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, ed. George Feaver (London: Macmillan, 1992), 3.
[56] Niraja Gopal Jayal, “Introduction,” in *Indian Diary*, by Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), viii; Feaver, “Introduction: A Pilgrim’s Progress in the Far East,” 3.
[57] Jayal, “Introduction,” viii.
[58] Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership* (London: Longmans, Green, 1948), 15.
[59] Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, *Indian Diary*, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

approach to the genre. The genre of travel writing is notoriously hard to define: its boundaries are "fuzzy rather than fixed" and continue to be the subject of debate.[60] Travel writing frequently overlaps with other genres (ranging from the autobiography to geographic scholarship), blurs the line between fact and fiction, and is the subject of a heated debate regarding its literary and moral value. Unlike Paul Fussell, I don't limit travel writing to what he calls the 'travel book': a retrospective, autobiographical, first-person account of travel in the form of a prose narrative.[61] Following Carl Thompson, I approach it as a heterogeneous, hybrid and more expansive genre that encompasses the modern travel book, but also texts such as the travelogue, the early modern exploratory text or, indeed, the travel diary. In this inclusive approach, travel writing is any text produced by and relating to the experience of "a movement through space" and the negotiation of "similarity and difference" that this movement entails.[62] Nevertheless, unlike Michel de Certeau, who writes that "every story is a travel story", I do not expand the genre to include all forms of narrative.[63] I will discuss the complex and ambiguous relationship between fact and fiction in travel writing elsewhere. For now, it will suffice to say that I follow Thompson's assertion that the genre is characterized by a specific generic 'contract' between the author and the reader (in the Webbs' case this is an imagined reader or a self as reader).[64] In travel writing, there is a claim that the text refers to an actual journey: it is assumed that the events described actually took place, it is an *ostensibly* non-fictional account of human mobility.[65] I also delineate travel writing from the broader category of 'travel texts', which may also include visual representations such as maps, film, photography and even travel-themed fiction. With the genre thus loosely mapped out in this broad, non-stringent and generally accepted way, I can proceed to treat the Webbs' *Indian Diary* as a work of travel writing.

Secondly, one should bear in mind that Beatrice's *Diary*, unlike Evelyn Waugh's travel books, was not written with the original intention to be published. It was only after the First World War that Beatrice began to slowly work on her autobiography, which was based on her diary.[66] Beatrice intended to write a separate autobiographical volume on her 1911-1912 trip to Asia but she was never able to realize this. The entries that I analyze thus remain in their raw, unrevised forms and I approach the text from the critical perspective of a diary. I take the beliefs and impressions it contains more at face value, for example, than the travel book intended for the esthetic pleasure of a broad public. What must be remembered, however, is that I am not primarily concerned with whether what the Webbs write about India is true or false. The same applies to Waugh's descriptions

[60] Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.
[61] For Fussell on the travel book see: Fussell, *Abroad*, 202–15.; for Thompson's comments on Fussell see: Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 13–16.
[62] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 9–10.
[63] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 115.
[64] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 16.
[65] Ibid., 15–16.
[66] She was only able to finish *My Apprenticeship*, covering the years up to 1892. The posthumously released *Our Partnership* contains the draft materials for the period from 1892 to 1911, stopping right before her Asian trip.

of British Africa in part two. Indeed, my focus in this thesis is not the history of the 'reality' of the colonial world and its inhabitants but British impressions, political visions and representations. I use the *Indian Diary* as a source to study the Webbs, not the British Raj. In both sections, I frequently describe colonial spaces and people in the way that the authors *imagined* they were. To understand their thinking one must, for interpretative purposes, approach their, often wrong or even racist, descriptions as a personal reality. To build my argument I thus often write of the Webbs' and Waugh's beliefs *as if* they were true but this must not be confused with the actual conditions in the colonies. This is a cultural history of metropolitan British beliefs about colonial spaces, not of those places themselves. Of course, I frequently asses, confront and judge their writings against secondary literature on colonial India or Africa to enrich interpretation. How should one, then, judge the ideas contained within the *Indian Diary*? The detailed comments, frank thoughts, emotional confessions, serious tone and diligent frequency with which the diary was held, have lead me to approach the text as a fairly straightforward source for the beliefs, impressions and ideas of the Webbs in and on India. The *Indian Diary*, however, only reveals its fuller meaning when read against surrounding texts by and on the Webbs. Furthermore, as a prominent intellectual by this age, Beatrice probably considered or wished that her diaries might be preserved and published for posterity.[67] One should thus consider the possibility of some self-consciousness towards a future public and even a measure of self-censure.

Thirdly, when the Webbs went abroad, the diary became a joint effort. Both Beatrice and Sidney wrote significant portions of the *Indian Diary.* This means that one can't approach its authorship in the traditional way. While the manuscript version show which hand wrote which part and one can sometimes identify the author through his or her references and writing style, the *Indian Diary* is best understood and analyzed as co-written. Throughout the journal one finds them taking over the pen in the middle of a page, paragraph or even sentence. The two sometimes wrote over the other's passages, filled in blanks or added comments to the other's entry.[68] George Feaver even suggests that Sidney on occasion served as an amanuensis, writing down as Beatrice dictated. The joint-authorship need not to devalue the interest of the diary as the Webbs' work and thinking was in general characterized by an incredibly close working partnership. Beatrice and Sidney researched, read and wrote together, co-authoring many books. Intellectually the two complemented each other well: Beatrice excelled in abstract thinking and creativity while Sidney had an excellent memory and profound research skills.[69] Eventually even their 'thinking' became in a way intertwined. Beatrice herself described this: "It is a curious process, this joint thinking: we throw the ball of thought one to the other, each one of us resting, judging, inventing in turn. And we are not satisfied until the conclusion satisfies completely and finally both minds."[70] The *Indian Diary*, then, is an excellent illustration of the Webbs' intellectual union. In her Introduction to the *Indian Diary*,

[67] At least near the end of her life, Beatrice was concerned that her diaries would be typed out. Feaver, "Introduction: A Pilgrim's Progress in the Far East," 10.
[68] Ibid., 8.
[69] Carole Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb: Woman of Conflict* (London: Pandora, 1993), 231.
[70] Quoted in: Jayal, "Introduction," xxi.

Niraja Gopal Jayal writes that the passages by Beatrice and Sidney "together constitute an integrated whole."[71] It represents what 'they' thought of India, and I treat it as such. However, the Webbs were also two individuals: each had their own unique interests, concerns and beliefs. Moreover, each was often devoted to his or her own reform or political work in Britain. Therefore, I have often consulted the digitalized diary manuscripts (consultable via the London School of Economics' Digital Library[72]) for the passages where I have found it relevant to determine if Beatrice or Sidney was the actual writer. Because the travel diary was a joint effort, one should also consider that Beatrice and Sidney knew the other would read their entries. Indeed, not long after an 1898 trip, Beatrice explained that she had "lost the habit of intimate confidences impossible in a joint diary such as we have kept together during our journey around the world. One cannot run on into self-analysis, family gossip or indiscreet and hasty descriptions of current happenings, if someone else, however dear, is solemnly to read one's chatter then and there."[73] This explains why the *Indian Diary* is characterized most by joint impressions and recommendations, political thoughts, ideas and evaluations rather than emotional disclosures, descriptive passages or trivial commentary.

Finally, the formal features of the diary have also guided my reading of this travel text. The diary consists of separate entries by day, sometimes covering several days, rather than a narrative account of the whole trip written retroactively, as is the case with Evelyn Waugh's travel book. Consequently, the recorded impressions are 'fresher in memory' but they have not acquired their meanings within the context of the entire journey. Nor have they been organized in an overarching narrative. It also means that the Webbs often shift positions and adjust their beliefs, resulting in many contradictions throughout the diary. However, at the end of the Indian leg of their trip, the Webbs do write a valuable, concluding summary of their impressions of India. The diary's more 'chronicle'-like recording of the trip has influenced my interpretative approach. In part one I focus more (but certainly not exclusively) on what Ulrike Brisson calls the "naked politics" of travel writing: I consider the Webbs as political agents entering local conditions and competing political networks within India, and explicitly engaging in political discussions on the current state and future of the Raj.[74] While I also approach Waugh's *Remote People* in this way, part two mainly reconstructs the political unconscious of the travel book as a socially symbolic act. In contrast to *Remote People*, I interpret the *Indian Diary* less as a coherent narrative or a more 'literary' work of representation (with certain motifs, story arcs, allusions, ironies, styles...). Instead of 'following' the

[71] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, xxii.
[72] The integral manuscript and typescript versions of the diary of Beatrice Webb have been fully digitalized and are consultable via the London School of Economics' digital library.
For the digitalized manuscript diary covering 14 September, 1911 to 3 March, 1912 see:
http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:kic965lan
For the volume covering 4 March, 1912 to 5 May, 1912 see:
http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:nun808zok
Both volumes were consulted from April to July 2016.
[73] Quoted in: Feaver, "Introduction: A Pilgrim's Progress in the Far East," 7.
[74] Brisson, "Introduction: 'Naked' Politics in Travel Writing," 1, 5, 14.

Webbs chronologically throughout a reconstructed journey (as I do with Waugh), I analyze the *Indian Diary* thematically, building and nuancing my argument cumulatively throughout the various chapters. I look at these themes as they are represented within the diary as a whole while of course also tracing the changes that occur during the journey. After an introductory chapter on Fabianism, modernization and colonialism, I first turn to the Webbs' opinions on education in India. Next, I describe their discourse of socio-economic development and their recommendations for government action in India. In chapter five, I look at the way the Webbs represented 'primitive' India and its inhabitants. Before some concluding remarks, I evaluate the Webbs' stance on the British colonial society and discuss their relations with Indian nationalists in chapter six.

Having left England in June 1911, the Webbs first visited Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Burma. By the end of December 1911, the couple reached Calcutta. They spent almost four months in India and toured extensively throughout the country. The two visitors, both in their fifties, visited all the big cities and places of interest (Calcutta, Bodh Gaya, Benares, Lucknow, Allahabad, the Taj Mahal, Lahore, Delhi, Bombay). They spent days camping out with a district officer, saw the foothills of the Himalaya near the Nepalese border and even travelled to the rough North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan. On August 16, 1912 Beatrice and Sidney left the British colony on a crowded ship, "disturbed by three crying babies and two dogs," that would take them first to Egypt and then home.[75] Beatrice later wrote that she was never again the same person after the trip. This "sojourn in strange worlds," she wrote, "acted as a powerful ferment, altering and enlarging our conception of the human race, its past, its present and its present."[76] The diary she meticulously held with Sidney offers an exceptional insight into what she meant by this.

[75] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 209.
[76] Feaver, "Introduction: A Pilgrim's Progress in the Far East," 2.

2

FABIANISM, MODERNIZATION, AND EMPIRE

The Webbs' dominant interpretative frame in India judged the present state and future possibilities of the British colony's progress. Molded by years of close and detailed work on Britain's social and economic condition, their travel diary reads more like a colonial extension of their social investigation than a real travel account. There are rare traces of genuine relaxation or the practicalities of travel, but the travel diary mainly presents a Fabian investigative account of India's current state. In the *Indian Diary*, we rarely find the typical elements and descriptions that fill most travel texts on British India: picturesque descriptions, touristic anecdotes, atmospheric details, a stress on difference and a fascination with anything that looks, feels or sounds exotic. The Webbs' rational attitude, political engagement and sociological interest allow refreshingly little room for exoticism. The 'social investigation' of India was conducted as if the Webbs were in England. The Indian tour was mostly made up of visits to the institutions that the Webbs believed represent the 'condition of India': schools, factories, formal organizations of all kinds, elite households, local courts, the Indian Civil Service and any locus of political activity. Jayal writes that "the Webbs responded to institutions more than to people or places, and to people more than to places."[77] Indeed, instead of most travel writing's attention to space, and to cultural and geographical distinctions, the Webbs seem to have travelled between different institutions and people in colonial India.

The Webbs intended to get a comprehensive overview of the various challenges that the British and the Indian people faced in the rule, administration and 'development' of the colony. While travelling around the county, they constantly investigated, analyzed and recommended. Mostly, their findings were merely recorded in the diary, but the Webbs also actively attempted to steer India's future while they were there. They frequently advised and shared their beliefs with civil servants, regional rulers and educationalists. In this way, as will become clear, they actively engaged with various influential individuals and groups, both Indian and British. Even abroad, Beatrice continued her trademark strategy of 'permeation': influencing key persons to reach collectivist or socialist ends.[78] The guiding principle in the Webbs diagnosis of India was their belief in modern progress. For the Webbs, progress implied changing society into a more efficient and moral state, along the fair and just lines of their particular brand of bureaucratic and collectivist socialism.[79] Though England had not yet been gradually transformed into a socialist state, the Webbs believed it was already on a higher scale of material civilization and progress. The way to

[77] Jayal, "Introduction," xlvi.
[78] On 'permeation', see chapter 9 'Beatrice Webb and Permeation' in Margaret Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 78–88.
[79] Lisanne Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb: Fabian Socialists* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 145–47.

Webbian progress, as we will shortly see, was to follow the path of economic, political and administrative modernization. As Lisanne Radice writes: "For the most part they judged the countries they visited from the standpoint of efficiency and democratic accountability, imposing an alien framework which took little account of the historical background of these societies."[80] In the following chapters, I will argue that the Webbs' evaluation of and vision for India were fundamentally defined by the Webbs' overt political standpoints and the implicit ideological assumptions that they had formed in response to England's modernity. The many recommendations that fill the diary were guided by the Webbs' 'utopian' resolutions of the contradictions of modern society; those concrete goals and ideological societal visions that they hoped to realize in England.

Unlike Evelyn Waugh, the Webbs did not yet disapprove of the various effects and aspects of modernization in 1912. In fact, the Webbs had a strong belief in the promise of rationality, science, industrialization, technological improvement, and bureaucratization - when guided by socialist principles. Along with the damaging effects of unchecked *laissez fair* private capitalism, they wanted to fight inefficiency, irrationality and class privilege, those residues of a more traditional society. The ultimate goal of this social change was the gradual transformation of Britain into a fairer, more virtuous, and prosperous society. As core members of the Fabian Society, the Webbs formulated these ideas through and in association with the Society's other members. The Fabian Society had been founded in 1884 as a society for social and moral betterment. Sidney joined in 1885 and launched the program of Fabian Socialism: its aim was now to slowly and non-violently reform British society along the lines of democratic socialism. The organization quickly became one of the most influential political societies and think-tanks of the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, attracting such prominent left-wing intellectuals as Annie Besant, Ramsay MacDonald, Sydney Oliver, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Leonard Woolf. But throughout its early existence the Webbs formed the intellectual and managerial backbone of the organization, despite various attempts (like H.G. Wells') to take over the Society's leadership. The early Fabians strove to reconstitute society "in such a manner as to secure the general welfare and happiness" of as many people as possible.[81] Combining collectivism's stress on state regulation and positivism's belief in individual moral progress, the Fabians believed this 'general welfare' could be achieved through the piecemeal democratization and socialization of the economy. The Fabians held an organic view of society, stressing the need for collectivist policies and state intervention, but also saw their aims as an economic extension of the democratic ideal of liberalism.[82] It was a pragmatic and modernizing project: for Sidney socialism meant "no contempt for machinery, no dislike of education or culture, no enmity to brainwork, or invention."[83] Their focus was not primarily a Marxian critique of the capitalist mode of production, but on the various 'residual' ills and inefficiencies of an unsocial capitalism which they wished to gradually reform into socialism. They kept their aims within what they saw as the realm of immediate possibility and stressed behind

[80] Ibid., 184.
[81] Edward Reynolds Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1916), 32.
[82] Jayal, "Introduction," x.
[83] Quoted in: Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 57–58.

the scenes planning and influencing instead of political action.[84] The improvement of society, the Webbs believed at this time, was a step by step process. Sidney famously called this the 'inevitability of gradualness'.[85]

As a reaction to the urban chaos and social ills of modernity, the Webbs thus envisioned a peaceful change to a socialist society, based on collectivist ideals and perfectly managed by an expert league of administrators. Social betterment could be achieved not through wholesale revolution or a return to the past, but through the piecemeal engineering of society by influencing party politics. The objective methods and laws of social science and statistics were to guide the various reforms. To reach this type of societal efficiency, *further modernization* was needed to clear out the muddle of the present. Their ideological answer to the contradictions of modern life, contrasting sharply with that of Evelyn Waugh, was mainly formulated in response to the economic effects of the capitalist mode of production. Their critique of modernity can be understood as a 'positivistic' critique of what they saw as the major socio-economic ill-effects of *laissez faire* capitalism: poverty and inequality. Moreover, rationalization and organization could structure the disorder of a complex modern society. This brought them to develop a very different kind of politics than those arising from Waugh's pessimistic culturalist critique of the subjective effects of the modern condition. Modern 'civilization', the Webbs believed at this point, was not doomed or bad in and of itself. The selfish order of private capitalism could be transformed into the more modern, more democratic, more scientific socialist society that offered equal opportunities to all.[86] The central conviction of the Webbian project was that society needed to change.[87] Waugh was convinced society had already changed far too much. Essentially, changing society for the Webbs meant making it more modern: their ideological assumptions mainly conceived of the new and the modern as positive, the old and traditional as negative. In some way or another they advocated what many scholars have later identified as the economic, technological and political changes of the modernization process: the development of a society of consumers and producers, the general rise in material welfare, the industrialization of the economy, the uniformization of education, the extension of state control and supervision, the advance of technical innovations, the predominance of scientific thinking and rationalization, the democratization of politics, and the bureaucratization of administration.[88] This was, however, coupled with a strong ethical belief that the moral order of society had to change from the pursuit of private profit to an altruistic, collectivist morality focused on the 'general good'. The ultimate goal of all these changes was the welfare of the largest amount of people. The current state of modern society in England did not yet optimally satisfy this goal. In response to it the Webbs formulated a utopian societal vision of a fair, efficient and collectivist socio-economic system in which the government played a large role. Both at home and abroad,

[84] Fred D. Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," *The Review of Politics* 35, no. 4 (1973): 504.
[85] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 238.
[86] Ibid., 8.
[87] Ibid.
[88] For an overview of the theories of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, Ernest Mandel, Manuel Castells, Johan Förnas, see: Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 33–42.

then, the Webbs generally strove for what I will call (for the sake of brevity) and what they believed was the 'modernization' of society.

In their concrete political policies and ideas, The Webbs are frequently considered to be the forerunners of the welfare state. Especially in the years before their Eastern trip, they made the case for increased government intervention and assistance to solve social problems. As Lisanne Radice writes: "They believed it was the duty of the state to provide a safety net of basic welfare services, from education through to housing and health for all services."[89] From 1905 to 1909 Beatrice worked furiously on a government commission (the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress) appointed to reform the hugely outdated Poor Law of 1834.[90] Her dissenting Minority Report was a comprehensive and visionary document that aimed to eradicate destitution through specialized government institutions.[91] Their long trip was intended as a rest from Beatrice's exhausting yet unsuccessful campaign in support of her program. In July 1911, as the Webbs were in the Far East, the Fabian society published a tract by Sidney called *The Necessary Basis of Society*. In it Sidney posited the thesis that "the Necessary Basis of Society, in the complications of modern industrial civilization, is the formulation and rigid enforcement in all spheres of social activity, of a National Minimum below which the individual […] cannot, in the interest of the well-being of the whole, ever be allowed to fall."[92] The Webbs thus believed the existing inequalities of modern capitalism were morally scandalous and could not be abated by the current economic policies. Their idea of societal progress was concerned by the overall socio-economic state of the population. But this state reflected the moral state of the whole of society and also spilled over into the population's morality, especially that of the lower classes of society.

The main problem of the colonial world for the Webbs, then, was that it was still 'underdeveloped'. The living conditions and moral character of the colonized were 'behind' that of modern civilization. The Webbs believed that the 'general good' in the colonial world suffered from a lack of rational efficiency and scientific thought. Likewise, the education, management and economics of the colonial world severely lagged behind in efficiency and organization. The absence of modern democratic state structures and the social improvements of modernization meant that the welfare of the 'primitive natives' was not being secured. The pre-capitalist, traditional society was the primary object of progress in the colonial sphere for the Webbs, rather than the deleterious effects of private capitalism. While crude, profit-driven and non-interventionist imperialism was condemned, the legitimacy of the idea of colonialism itself (as a means for human 'progress') remained intact. As I will argue, the Webbs believed that if the English acted as good and fair 'teachers', they could rightfully guide less civilized people into that ideal of modern progress. The moral legitimacy of British rule was not questioned altogether, and full Indian independence did not yet seem beneficial or desirable. The Raj had to be reformed and humanized.[93]

[89] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 7.
[90] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 262.
[91] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 172–73; Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 275.
[92] Sidney Webb, "The Necessary Basis of Society" (The Fabian Society, 1911), 8.
[93] Jayal, "Introduction," xlii.

The Webbs' attitude towards colonial India should be situated in the context of socialist and progressive thinking about empire in the Edwardian era. In "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire" Fred Schneider has traced two strands of Fabian imperial thinking as they emerged from controversy surrounding the Second Boer War of 1899-1902.[94] While both strands have their origin in Benthamite utilitarianism, the faction led by Ramsay MacDonald stressed the principle of liberty and self-government. The other faction emphasized the ideal of good governance and efficiency. Sidney Webb, though hesitant, belonged to this last victorious faction, led by George Bernard Shaw. For them, the autocratic control of dependent colonies was justified when it led to better social conditions for the largest amount of people. The focus was not on reconstructing political forms of empire but on making them work more effectively. This vision showed a "zeal for order and centralization, and its dominant theme was greater efficiency."[95] As such, this Fabian imperialism fit into the broader Edwardian critical vision of empire that envisioned a reformed, progressive and efficient imperial system. Influential critics like J.A. Hobson argued for a 'benign' state-controlled imperialism that applied the criteria of rationality, efficiency and the common good. Only the advanced Europeans could realize such a vision, however, acting as disinterested 'higher races'.[96] This led Shaw to claim that "a Fabian was necessarily an imperialist" and to write in *Fabianism and the Empire* that a 'higher' civilization had the right to take over and improve a 'backward' one.[97] One should also consider a Fabian stance towards empire that was more purely opportunistic. Much like the Edwardian imperial suffragists described by Antoinette Burton, many Fabian socialists perhaps hoped to advance their domestic reforms by tactically aligning themselves to seemingly anchored fact of empire.[98] For still other Fabians, the heavy top-down rule of empire could look like an attractive testing-ground for scientific planning and government intervention.[99] In the Edwardian era, most critics of empire, then, were concerned by the archaic nature of the British empire rather than its fundamental assumptions and relations of power. For progressives, the old imperialism was seen to foster reactionary forces at home: "the feudal anachronism of unearned wealth, the irrational snobberies of London and the stockbroker belt, and the indoctrination of British public schoolboys with military values."[100] It supported the interests of conservatives and private interest, and blocked the advance of democratic and socialist reforms.[101]

In the *Indian Diary*, we find traces of all these critical and socialist views on empire: the empire as a testing-ground, as a place for tactical permeation, as a bastion of archaic England, as something to be reformed and modernized through state intervention. Schneider claims that Sidney,

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[94] Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," 501.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Nicholas Owen, "Critics of Empire in Britain," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith Brown and Wm Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 190.
[97] Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," 511; Bernard Shaw, *Fabianism and the Empire: A Manifesto by the Fabian Society.* (London: The Fabian Society, 1900), 46.
[98] Antoinette Burton, "The Feminist Quest for Identity: British Imperial Suffragism and 'Global Sisterhood', 1900-1915," *Journal of Women's History* 3, no. 2 (1991): 68; Owen, "Critics of Empire in Britain," 191.
[99] Owen, "Critics of Empire in Britain," 191.
[100] Ibid., 189–90.
[101] Ibid., 190.

at the time of the Boer War, stood for the "authoritarian" Fabian imperialism that played down the importance of self-government and believed paternal British governance would yield the best results.[102] While such a utilitarian stress on planning, gradualism and efficiency pervades the *Indian Diary*, I will also argue in the chapter six that Sidney's experience in India led him to change his belief that British rule was indeed best suited to achieve these ends. What remained, however, was the overarching imperial vision of progress-through-modernization that I have briefly mapped out above. The Webbs believed that through the development of a bureaucratic, industrialized modern society in India, the colonial economy would thrive, the living conditions of the Indians would improve and the subcontinent would enjoy the material comforts of consumption. As I will argue, their strong belief that modern progress was superior generated a Euro- and ethnocentric socialist imperialist vision (this combination leading to various contradictions), steered nonetheless by a concern for the social wellbeing of the Indian population. In the following chapters, I will examine the different aspects of and tensions within the Webbs' colonial vision more closely. For it is necessary to both bolster and nuance the broad colonial and domestic schemes that I have briefly mapped out above. In doing so, I will also trace the direct and indirect ways in which the Webbs perception of colonial India connected to their reformist activities in Britain.

[102] Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," 505, 509.

3

THE EDUCATION OF INDIA

A first area that reveals the Webbs' response to British India is their views on Indian education. While travelling through India, the Webbs show particular interest in the various types of educational institutions. Virtually everywhere they go, they tour the local schools and colleges, writing down their detailed observations in the diary. Given Sidney's heavy involvement in educational reform in England, particularly from 1899 to 1904, this is unsurprising. As a member of the London County Council, Sidney was behind far reaching reforms in educational administration. He became known as an expert on public education and wrote several Fabian tracts on the subject.[103] In the field of elementary education Sidney argued for a widespread centralization of the school system and the financial support and supervision of both denominational and non-denominational schools by the public authorities. His most important achievement in this regard was his work on the planning and passing of the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903. Sidney was also active in the field of higher education. He worked on the reorganization of the London University, effectively establishing a modern Imperial College of Science and Technology. The training of teachers was also a concern and he succeeded in installing a teacher-training college as part of the Senate of London University in 1902.[104] In 1895 the Webbs had founded the London School of Economics, which by their Indian trip had become a successful and self-sustaining venture. Their foundation of this innovative institution dedicated to the serious, 'scientific' study of society alone would have made them important educational innovators.[105] In content, the Webbs' view on education stressed the social sciences, technology and industry. Education should be given at the highest academic standards by the best experts, with the most modern methods and materials of teaching. In form, it envisioned a centralized and efficiently organized school system supported by government funding. Sidney believed the hold of traditional, privileged and humanities-oriented institutions like Cambridge and Oxford (an atmosphere cherished by Evelyn Waugh) were detrimental to national progress and drew intellectuals into non-productive fields of society. Through the establishment of technical colleges he hoped to counter the 'leisurely curriculum' of Oxbridge and train experts and administrators.[106] All of this was based on a rigid belief in the desirability and possibilities of a scientific method, applicable both to natural world and human society.

These domestic views on education, stressing centralization and Western science, were exported abroad, but the Webbs sometimes find that their educational policies are not always

[103] Jayal, "Introduction," xiv–xv.
[104] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 150.
[105] Ibid., 148.
[106] Ibid., 150–51.

suitable to reform Indian education. Throughout their journey, the Webbs visit a wide array of educational institutions, underlining their belief that education formed a crucial part in pushing India 'forward'. Their touring confirms their belief that a lot of progress is still necessary in the educational field. The Webbs are especially critical of Muslim educational institutions, a critique which is tied up with the Webbs' general racially-informed antipathy towards Muslims (see chapter five). After visiting *maktabs* (primary schools attached to mosques) in Allahabad, they conclude that this education "was obviously that of an uncivilised race."[107] In Peshawar, they are even more unimpressed, noting that the schools receive no government aid and that boys merely learn the Koran by heart. The religious scholars who teach the students are "obviously of the most narrow minded and feeble type."[108] The Webbs believe that this type of religious education centered on the Koran, while "extraordinarily picturesque," does not teach the boys anything that could be useful to them "as independent members of a self governing State."[109] For the Webbs, education in India should prepare the student to be a responsible member of the democratic state. As long as the majority of the population has not reached the degree of modern education necessary for the working of a parliamentary democracy, a self-governing India (which does not yet imply an independent India) seems absurd to them.

With some regret the Webbs write that there are thousands of these *maktabs* and that "they cannot be abolished (seeing that the religion of Islam makes them obligatory)."[110] Within this foreign context, the Webbs realize that their typical recommendation of centralization seems unworkable: "It is impossible to force them into a Government system."[111] Yet no reform is, of course, undesirable: "it does not seem either creditable or administratively expedient to leave hundreds of thousands of Indian boys without any real education, even elementary."[112] In typical Webbian fashion, they "have been exercised in our minds as to what could be done."[113] They believe a combination of government supplies and visiting teachers to be the best solution; in this way the pupils might learn to read and write in their mother tongue and learn subjects like arithmetic and geography. To the young Muslim lawyer who guides them around in Allahabad, the Webbs thus suggest: "(i) the free grant of suitable books, maps, etc., (ii) the free service […] of a trained visiting teacher, a Moslem, whom the Government might appoint and pay to go round from school to school, teaching English, arithmetic, geography, etc."[114] At the famous Aligarh College, the English and Westernized Muslim college founded by Syed Khan, the Webbs merely note the lack of discipline due to the scattered lay-out of the buildings.[115] The Webbs are more impressed by the Nadwah-ul-'Ulama, a Muslim school established at Lucknow intended to reform and modernize

[107] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 28.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., 123–24.
[111] Ibid., 124.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid., 28.
[115] Ibid., 103.

Muslim education. This school teaches Muslim law, philosophy, literature, mathematics and, crucially, English. The Webbs find that "real teaching" is going on here, which they judge "from the faces and gestures and tones of the teachers."[116]

This last comment, of course, betrays a problematic aspect of the Webbs' evaluations of institutions in India, which we may now briefly discuss. While the Webbs showed a great concern for reform in the future, their forward-looking diagnoses were based on a quite limited knowledge of the present realities. Previous to their trip, the Webbs had no great interest or knowledge of India (nor did they, after their trip, show any sustained interest in it). What they knew of the various institutions is what they saw, heard and read while they are in India. But the guided visits to schools, factories, meetings and courts necessarily presented only an incomplete picture, an incompleteness of which the Webbs seemed largely unaware. The language barrier made the couple reliant on the information provided by the British government, English-speaking Indians, translators or mere impressions. This prevented them from doing the thorough and investigative research that they practiced in England.[117] The *maktabs*, for example, were more than just places where "Mussulman boys learn to Koran by heart."[118] Even as the Webbs noted "some pretence at teaching arithmetic and Urdu reading" at Allahbad, their overall view of and recommendations for the *maktab* were quite narrow.[119] The nature of these institutions varied and the education that the boys received often depended on the local instructor. Yet the curriculum of many *maktabs* could be a lot broader than mere religious instruction. The instruction of reading and writing in Arabic at these schools had already been stimulated in the 16th century by the educational reforms of Akbar I. The pupil could often be taught primary arithmetic, Persian grammar and literature, letter writing, accountancy and general practical education.[120] While there was no generalized 'scientific method', examination system or generalized curriculum, the *maktab* as an educational institution was more varied than the Webbs thought. In fact, older Muslim reform plans had already proposed most of their own recommendations.

The Webbs are more impressed by Hindu educational facilities. Yet here too the guiding principle of 'good education' is how much the education resembles their ideal of organized, scientific and disciplined education along Western lines. While a boys school in Allahabad is taught by "a wild looking Brahmin with disheveled hair, not speaking a word of English", the Webbs find a girls school far better.[121] This school shows "elements of real efficiency": it has "maps, physiological diagrams of the internal organs of a man, a globe, a sewing machine, a shifting frame

[116] Ibid., 31.
[117] Carole Seymour-Jones argues that a similar naïve reliance on translators, guided tours and government information in part explains why the Webbs painted such a rosy picture of the Soviet Union during their 1932 visit. Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 312.
[118] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 123.
[119] Ibid., 28.
[120] Ram Nath Sharma and Rajendra Kumar Sharma, *History of Education in India* (London: Atlantic, 2000), 61, 66, 68–69.
[121] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 29.

like a giant abacus for teaching the letters and numerals, etc."[122]As visible (yet superficial) traces of modern Western teaching, the Webbs are particularly sensitive to the presence or absence of modern teaching materials, laboratories and libraries. At the Allahabad University, for example, they note with satisfaction the "scientific laboratory equipment", at Gurukala College they are delighted to find Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and chemical laboratories or at Edwardes College they note the lack of laboratories and only "the nucleus of a library."[123]

The Webbs visit various elite boarding schools for Indians, modelled on the English school system. The boys of the Taluqdar school at Lucknow "are treated as plutocrats", each bringing their own servants, food and horses. Interestingly, the Webbs are also skeptical of this attempt to recreate an English boarding school while being sensitive to caste and religious customs. On the one hand they note that "the atmosphere was necessarily disintegrating to Hindu or Muhammedan religion."[124] On the other hand, they see the modernization of Indian boys as not going far enough: the boys' room "were lacking in all amenity and charm, and were even squalid."[125] They note with discontent how the boys eat with their fingers in "native style" and that they aren't taught table manners so they might associate with English later in their lives.[126] They are similarly unimpressed by the Aitchison Chiefs College at Lahore, a government college meant for the education of the sons of "Native Chiefs."[127] Again they note that each brings his own servants ("from 3 to 25!"), horses and food.[128] They are highly suspicious of the lack of supervision at night "though they slept in two's and three's in adjoining small rooms."[129] At Mayo College, another one of these "Chiefs Colleges", the Webbs record that "the schooling is not very thorough or advanced."[130] These elite colleges were the educational ideal for the extremely class-sensitive Anglo-Indian.[131] It combined the old-school Englishness of the public school inhabited by the upper class, whilst 'preserving' the traditional Indian customs. But to the Webbs the old model of the English boarding school reeked of the past and privilege. This type education was unsuited to the needs of both modern and Indian society. Its lack of rigid supervision, its inegalitarianism, its stress on the individual (the schoolboy even bringing his own food), its cultivation of degenerate customs and its defiance of efficiency mirrored the Oxbridge-type traditional education that Sidney battled against at home.

So both the mere imitation of the old English school system (the traditionalist fantasy) and the complete abandonment of religion (the secularist dream) seem undesirable to the Webbs.

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 31, 100, 125.
[124] Ibid., 32.
[125] Ibid., 33.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 139.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 160.
[131] The term 'Anglo-Indian' has two meanings: a person of mixed Indian and British ancestry or a British person living in India. The last meaning is mainly used in a historical sense, referring to the period of the Raj. I use it in this historical way to refer to the expatriate community of British people living and working in British India.

Instead, they are most impressed by a disciplined, reformed and 'brotherhood' type of Hindu college. This endorsement of religious institutions would, at first sight, seem to clash with the Webbs' stress on scientific education along modern lines. Yet, when considered against the Webbs' complicated relationship with religion, these two aspects do not necessarily clash in their ideology, especially Beatrice's. As I will further explore in chapter five, Beatrice found that socialism alone was not enough. Though she never found a religion that satisfied her belief that man should be of service to mankind and not God, her Victorian upbringing had left her latently religious.[132] Beatrice herself noted "a conflict in my mind between a conscientious desire to be strictly rationalistic, and an instinctive longing for some sanction other than scientific reasoning, for believing in the eternal worthwhileness of human life."[133] According to Radice, this unresolved dilemma made her extremely unhappy and contributed to her various physical afflictions. In any case, Beatrice saw the self-effacement and the spiritual side of 'religion' as a necessary complement to science in finding one's way in the modern world. Moreover, in the Webbs' reform plan for English education, they had not argued for a complete secularization of the English school system. In the controversy surrounding the London Education Bill of 1903 their critics had opposed the Webbs' proposed government subsidization of denominational schools. In response, Beatrice Webb had firmly declared: "We are not in favour of ousting religion from the collective life of the State."[134]

In India, they likewise favored an educational type where the highest forms of modern organization and teaching were combined with a disciplined 'spiritual' calling. The Webbs are highly impressed by the monk-like seclusion of an Arya Samaj (a Hindu reform movement) college at Hardwar. The boys attending Gurukul Kangri college enter at age 7 and leave at age 25, never once visiting the 'polluting influences' of the outside world or women. The rigid rules, strict morals and supervision of "personal character" appealed to the ordered, puritan sensitivities of the Webbs.[135] The curriculum combined religion with the teaching of English, philosophy and basic science. Sidney compares this favorably to the government colleges in India: not only because of the strict supervision but also because this institution adds a spiritual element. In fact, Sidney opposes the government colleges' "complete secularity" and their "curiously superstitious reliance on the games and prefectorial system copied from 'the English Public School'!"[136] At Fergusson College, a reformed Hindu college in Poona co-founded by the nationalist Gokhale, they find a brotherhood of expert teachers that pledge to serve the College for twenty years on a subsistence salary. These teachers form a "republic of Equals" and the principal is only styled so for "practical purposes."[137] The Webbs are evidently impressed by the altruism, devotion and egalitarianism they recognize in this organization: "So much disinterested zeal, and such a life of combined devotion

[132] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 139.
[133] Webb, *Our Partnership*, 256.
[134] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 156.
[135] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 100.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid., 187.

and practical work reminds us, of course of the best of the Catholic Orders."[138] But the Webbs remark that the inspiration of these Hindu teachers is nationalism: "they have found a religion in their cause."[139] This idea of 'a cause as a religion' is exactly how Beatrice considered her own work at home, and how she frequently resolved her nagging doubts about the place of religion in her life. As I will further explore in chapter five, this vision of a selfless, ordered and ascetic elite order of expert individuals striving for the public good formed a central part of the Webbs' 'solution' to the chaos and confusion of the modern world. Their acquaintance with institutions like Gurukul Kangri and Fergusson College would lead to take an increasingly favorable stance towards certain Hindu reformist groups.

In their survey of the educational system of India, the main line of the Webbs' criticism is the general lack of planned, government initiative and organization. Early on the journey, Sidney had noted that the state of India's education "gives rise to disquieting reflections."[140] They remark that after more than fifty years of direct rule in India, only a tiny proportion of boys (and even less girls) get decent education. The government's efforts have been "absurdly 'amateur' and spasmodic in character."[141] The Webbs complain that there has been no deliberate policy or intellectual planning by the British Indian government. At the end of their trip, they only confirm this. With some *schadenfreude* they note that the result of this "parsimony and 'Early Victorian' Administrative Nihilism" has inevitably resulted to the flourishing of influential colleges in the hands of Indian Nationalists.[142] Modern progress in education seems an inevitable trend, and if the government does not initiate it, others will. This process is stimulated by the government's fear of educating the Indian people, afraid that this would lead to calls for self-government. The "curious half-hearted indecision of the civil Service as to whether they want to educate the Indians or not, and how they want to educate them" is harmful to both the Indian people *and* the British empire.[143] The traditional colonials of British India, by refusing to act for improvement or social change, are only undermining themselves.

According to the Webbian program of progressive colonialism, then, the only desirable option can be the further modernization and organization of the educational system. The Webbs find that a certain 'spiritual element' is not necessarily in opposition to an efficient and modernized education. Instead, it could offer a moral touch, a kind of self-discipline among both teacher and student, that is necessary for the creation of a properly collectivist modern society. Sidney sketches a program of state-led educational reform in India that mirrors the plans he had developed in a domestic context. He calls for the training of teachers; a system of government aid for both English and vernacular, denominational and non-denominational schools; and the establishment at universities of schools for economics, public administration, law, medicine, engineering and

[138] Ibid., 188.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 33.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 188.
[143] Ibid., 33.

technology.[144] This all reflects the Webbs' strong belief that the problems of education can be solved by rational planning and organization along universal and standardized lines (for the proposed Indian policies do not radically differ either within India or from the British context). It also presupposes the desirability of 'native upliftment' into modern society, an idea opposed by various strands of thinking. Conservative imperialism, primitivism and the critical modernism of someone like Waugh were all, for various reasons, skeptical of educating colonial subjects into modern individuals. Among the Anglo-Indian officials of British India, the Webbs discover a fear and hesitance to take any sustained or planned initiative in Indian education. Yet the Webbs believed that the British Indian government was the authority best suited to lead the way in developing and supporting a modern educational program. Moreover, in the larger scheme of Indian 'progress', they thought government action would have to go a lot further than just education.

[144] See Webbs various recommendations in: Ibid., 34–35.

4

THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH INDIA, DEVELOPMENTAL COLONIALISM AND (THE LIMITS OF) SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Throughout the Webbs' diary, the implicit idea is that the 'underdevelopment' of India can and should be vanquished through deliberate and planned government action. For them, the social and economic condition of the Indian people is the responsibility of the British colonials. On the one hand this was the progressive version of the 'white man's burden' as formulated by the Fabian's imperialism. On the other hand, the idea that the state was responsible for the welfare of its population was exactly one of the main revolutionary points that Beatrice had developed in her Minority Report. Through her work on the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress, Beatrice had come to the conclusion that the state should be responsible for a minimum standard of living.[145] The Webbs advanced this view as a reaction against the outwashes of *laissez faire* capitalism; the 'social problem' that plagued British society and thinking in Victorian society. Modern society presented problems that the Webbs believed could best be relieved by state intervention, acting for the common good. Indeed, through government planning and initiative, Western civilization could progress into a socialist society, where not the profit motive but 'the common good' was the guiding principle. In the case of India, a primitive, inferior society could progress into a superior, modern society along social lines. Where 'national efficiency' through reform was the way forward in the domestic sphere, 'colonial efficiency' was what was needed in India – and found lacking. The main actor to guide reforms and progress, the Webbs supposed, was the colonial government of British India and its Indian Civil Service. Yet, the Webbs were disappointed to find a minimalist government opposed to widespread modernization and reform.

The Webbs' stress on government initiative, reform, investment and responsibility stood in stark contrast to the minimalist, loose and low-cost rule that characterized British direct rule of the Raj. The Indian Civil Service was precisely known, and even proud, of its small size. Even at the eve of the Second World War, a maximum of 1,250 covenanted members administered a population of 353 million.[146] Of course, there were many more government workers than these official civil servants (about 1 million according to a 1931 consensus), connected in a vast imperial web.[147] British rule in India was structured through a multi-layered, authoritarian bureaucracy; a

[145] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 164.
[146] John Cell, "Colonial Rule," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith Brown and Wm Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 232.
[147] Ibid., 235.

hierarchical network that connected local village headmen, district officers, provincial services and the central government. The constraints of low finances and a lack of Anglo-Indian manpower meant that this imperial governance relied heavily on Indians.[148] According to Judith Brown, the British colonials in the early 20th century generally held a view of Indian people that stressed their essential difference from the British. Unlike some of the active administrators and Governor-Generals of the British East India Company in the early nineteenth-century, the British in India felt they held only limited obligations to the Indian people they ruled over, a vision strengthened and guided by a general feeling of British superiority.[149]

Instead of 'native upliftment', the focus was on peace-keeping, border protection, famine prevention and the conservation of the supposedly 'real' India: its traditional rural society based on the Indian village. Judith Brown writes: "It was supposed that the Raj's duty was not to manage the economy or engage in social engineering but to protect society from radical upheaval and to permit the workings of British and Indian private investment and philanthropy."[150] After the Indian Mutiny of 1857 it became a principle of the British government not to meddle with traditional Indian society or culture.[151] The guiding administrative unit of British rule in India was based on a theory of the ideal village community. These primordial self-regulating communities represented the rural, 'authentic' India. Following the village community doctrine, attempts at Westernization and urbanization were resisted and mistrusted up until independence. This particular but long dominant attitude revealed the "paternal, pro-agrarian, even anti-capitalist face of British colonialism."[152] For the Indian civil servants the village-unit not only facilitated control, but also conformed to the conservative fantasy of India that was cultivated by many Anglo-Indians.[153] This image of a traditional India mirrored the British colonials' nostalgic view of an unchanging rural England that was increasingly at odds with the reality of England as an industrialized and urbanized giant. Their view was "an essentially Tory vision of a traditional, hierarchical society, ruled by landed aristocrats in a spirit of benign paternalism."[154] As David Cannadine has argued, this preferred societal vision of a rural-based ranked social hierarchy was projected back onto and constructed in colonial India; a process he calls "the domestication of the exotic."[155] This was imperialism as what he calls 'ornamentalism', focused on the categories of class and social status. It was based on conservative constructions of society, and it was the dominant imperial model for colonial India: "Throughout its existence, the Raj preferred tradition to modernity, hierarchy to democracy."[156] The Anglo-Indians did this through the protection of the rural village, the importation of British class

[148] Judith M. Brown, "India," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith M. Brown and WM. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 423.
[149] Ibid., 425–26.
[150] Ibid., 426.
[151] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 178.
[152] Cell, "Colonial Rule," 246.
[153] Ibid., 244–46.
[154] Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, 206.
[155] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xix.
[156] Ibid., 139.

snobberies, the paternalism of the District Officers, the cultivation of aristocratic Native Rulers, and the paraphernalia of durbars, orders, and regal visits. This ideological fantasy, I believe, was in essence a reaction against the processes of modernization in Britain. Indeed, for a social class of colonials seeking to escape industry, democracy, and the city, India presented "an authentic world of ordered harmonious, time-hallowed social relations of the kind that the Industrial Revolution was threatening (or destroying) in Britain, and that therefore had to be cherished, preserved and nurtured overseas as a more wholesome version of society that could now be found in the metropolis."[157] As I will argue in part two, Evelyn Waugh constructed a highly individual version of this anti-modern colonial vision, injected with modernist and Catholic sensibilities.

Like Waugh, the Webbs were elitists, but they held no admiration for "Britain's better (but vanishing) past."[158] Their anti-capitalism looked to the future instead of the past. Thus, unlike most Edwardian colonials, the Webbs held no romantic pastoral view of the traditional Indian village. As we have seen, they belonged to that other, more metropolitan strand of colonial thinking that believed "the native regimes and hierarchies were backward, inefficient […] and had to be overthrown and reconstructed according to the more advanced model of Western society and politics."[159] A breakdown of traditional society and a policy of 'social engineering' were exactly what the Webbs wanted - both at home and abroad. They strove for gradual but far-reaching social change (so feared and opposed by colonials) that would lift the Indians out of their primitive villages and into a blossoming urban, modern life. Everywhere they went in India, the Webbs pointed out the possibilities for the type of intensive government action that could modernize India – but which they found severely lacking. For the Webbs this was all the more frustrating given the enormous possibilities of government action in the bureaucratic and authoritarian structure of colonial rule. The Webbs remained dedicated to democratic ideal and showed more attention to local government than they have often been credited for.[160] But there was an intriguing absence of the political party struggles, government changes, electoral accountability, public opinion and the need for 'permeation' that characterized English parliamentary democracy. The Webbs visited India just at a time when they were becoming increasingly frustrated with these 'deterrents' to progressive government action.[161] In a 'primitive' country like India, ruled along authoritarian lines, the possibilities for immediate progress were even larger than they were in Britain. For the Webbs, 'progress' was the ultimate justification of empire and they became seriously disillusioned with the British Indian Government, when they found even the will for progress lacking.

Early on their journey, while they are at camp with a Forest Officer near the Tibetan border, the Webbs come to the idea that the government of India "is committing the sin of 'faintheartedness' in

[157] Ibid., 13.
[158] Ibid., 57.
[159] Ibid., 13.
[160] On the Webbs' aim for "a complex and varied democratic pluralistic society" and their belief that the Soviet Union was the birth of the democratic state, see: Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 10–14.
[161] The failure of their Minority Report campaign had had a radicalizing effect on Beatrice. See: Ibid., 181.

more departments than one."[162] They note that the government lacks sufficient funds to meet the growing demand for education and other civil services, yet refuses or can't raise taxes. The obvious solution to them is profitable government enterprise but "unfortunately the Government of India is averse from 'competing with private enterprise'."[163] The civil servants who are responsible for much of the practicalities of governance are "intellectually 'individuals', vaguely remembering the political economy textbooks that they crammed up twenty years before!"[164] Due to a general lack of initiative and collectivist thinking, there are barely any profitable government monopolies or ventures except for the irrigation canals and forestry. The Webbs believe that the government should radically change its overall philosophy: it should develop monopolies, take over the railways, "put capital" in the development of forests and start Government factories "for matches, for paper, for rope and string and what not, if only for its own enormous consumption in the first instance."[165] The Webbs find a country whose natural resources have not yet been exploited by capitalist ventures and they argue that the government should fill this void. Except for a few initiatives "the field has […] remained as yet almost unworked."[166] This is mainly due to "the absence of desire on the part of European and American capitalists to embark in the difficult and unhealthy circumstances of India" but also because the Indians themselves show an "absolute indisposition" to make industrial ventures.[167] This under-exploitation of India's resources is pitiable in the Webbs' modernizing ideology. But it offers the government a wealth of opportunities to capitalize on the relative 'underdevelopment' of India. Here the Webbs first develop their discourse of development and government exploitation in the colonial context. Through enterprise the government could simultaneously develop the Indian economy and raise funds needed for the welfare and civilization of the Indian population.

The day after this entry, Sidney passes through a Himalayan village on elephant. At first, the description of the Tharus people living there resembles the trope of the idealized rural Indian and his noble lifestyle Sidney writes of the villagers: "They are reported as being entirely chaste, honest, truthful, industrious and almost completely free from crime of any sort."[168] He describes their undisturbed, simple and 'pure' lifestyle: they are monogamous, they have no elaborate religion, they are decently clothed, they cultivate their own fields and crush their own mustard seed for oil. The villagers scarcely come into contact with the outside world. Their only contact with the government is through limited tax collection, vaccinations and the declaration of births and deaths. According to the romanticized vision of rural India, this should be celebrated: the Tharus should be protected from corrupting influences or the devastating effects of modernization. Yet at the end of this entry, Sidney completely and curiously reverses the expected conclusion of his buildup. The 'limited contact' depiction is immediately followed by the remark that: "There is no thought of a

[162] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 60.
[163] Ibid., 61.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 63.
[166] Ibid., 62.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid., 67.

school for them, or of sanitation, or of medical attendance. They make no use of the police or post or civil courts and they are practically never in the criminal court."[169] Here it seems that the pre-modern primitiveness of the Tharus, while agreeable, is not desirable as an 'endpoint' of humanity. Instead, the Tharus should be pulled closer into the care and supervision of the state. For the Webbs, modern welfare trumps primitive bliss. For their own good, the villagers should enter the state apparatuses and 'progress' into more modern subjects. The responsibility for this development, a scientific take on the civilizing mission, lay with the government.

The Webbs are then understandably excited to visit the Chenab Canal colony in early March 1912. This agricultural colony near Lyallpur (present day Faisalabad) was the product of the largest government canal project in colonial India. The government had claimed a large section of barren land (not recognizing the grazing areas of the pastoral Janglis as proprietary rights), opening the possibility for large scale agricultural colonization and administration. Over two million acres had been irrigated, mainly from 1892-1905, and the government held control of the colony land and its hydraulic management. The colony was settled through a planned colonization scheme and a system of government grants; the land was intended to be predominantly settled by peasant smallholders.[170] This project was a rare example of extensive government development of the type supported by the Webbs. The Webbs had read up on the official reports and spent a morning "tramping from canal to canal" under the guidance of an English Canal engineer and an Indian Canal official who spoke no English.[171] The general impression of the Webbs is that "the Chenab Colony is clearly a success in the main essentials": it has succeeded in the irrigation and allotment of agricultural land.[172] But for the Webbs, this is not enough: "we were not much impressed with the Colony, as a social and economic experiment, as its reputation had led us to expect."[173] As they tour the villages they note that the people "look very wild and barbarous" and they are disturbed by the fact that "the cattle and children were very promiscuously mixed up in the dirty compounds."[174] They regret the lack of education, sanitation, roads or medical aid. The project, they come to realize, was simply concerned with water engineering and land allotment: "No provision whatever was made – hardly any is yet made – for the conditions of civilised life."[175] The social engineering has not gone far enough: there remains disorder, dirt and the underdevelopment of the Indian villagers. They are impressed by the Lyallpur Agricultural College and its science laboratories and excellent lodgings. But they find it inexcusable that the government spends so much money on this scientific college while so many Indian boys, even on the government colony, aren't provided with elementary education due to a supposed lack of funds.

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[169] Ibid., 68.
[170] See: Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 18–21.
[171] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 133.
[172] Ibid., 134.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid., 135.
[175] Ibid.

Their critique of the project reflects the Webbs' belief that modern progress did not just mean economic exploitation or bureaucratic administration. This only acquired its worth when it brought about the material improvement of human beings. Progress was reached when it contributed to the common good. The humanistic concern of the Webbs comes to the fore here; a side of the couple that is often eclipsed in caricatures of them as cold-hearted expert machines only concerned with top-down planning, plotting and science. After all, Beatrice had started her career as a social worker in the London East End, where she recorded how she came "face to face with individual misery."[176] Even after years of distanced study, high-society dinners and the pursuit of social prestige and power, a genuine concern for or guilt about the condition of what they conceived as the weak and powerless is unmistakable. The Webbs' diagnoses of underdevelopment were filled with Eurocentric assumptions, racist views and (as we will shortly see) bourgeois ideologemes, their proposed solutions often seem characteristically bureaucratic and inhumanely planned. But the couple's life and politics are nonetheless marked by a strong will to improve the social and economic position of the other. As we will see, this contrasts sharply with the pessimistic anti-humanism and estheticism of someone like Evelyn Waugh.[177]

About a month after their visit of the Chenab Canal colony, the Webbs travel to Godhra to inspect another example of government intervention: famine relief work. They are mostly interested in this relief work because they hope to learn something from it to apply to the problem of poverty in England. Before their Eastern trip, Beatrice had been completely absorbed in her work on the reform of England's relief system as a member of the Royal Commission to reform the Poor Law. In her investigation, she had widened the field of inquiry to encompass not only pauperism but also destitution and unemployment.[178] As we will see, her perception and evaluation of the ostensibly primitive, weak or poor Indian (in this case those suffering from famine at Godhra) was fundamentally guided by her view on the urban paupers of London (which she had encountered as a social worker) and her conclusions about national poverty. For seven years, Beatrice had been

[176] Ibid., 78.
[177] Still, it is sometimes remarkable how cool the Webbs remain when confronted with tragedy abroad. In China, they were unshaken by the violent revolution unfolding around them. As China was plunging into the dramatic civil war that would eventually end the Manchu dynasty and bring a communist state, the Webbs simply continued their journey as if nothing was wrong. Perhaps due to Beatrice's immense disgust for the Chinese ("an essentially unclean race," its officials "a self-indulging, indolent –looking lot who seem to be perpetually smoking and drinking tea") she refused to take the revolution seriously and insisted on doing the usual rounds of public institutions and government departments. In Tientsin they boarded a refugee train among terrified Chinese mobs, but they were mostly interested in the organizational efficiency shown by an English guard who turned out to be a member of the Independent Labour Party. In India, too, the Webbs' analytical interest in administration and government sometimes make them curiously oblivious or uncaring of what surrounds them. At Jhansi, for example, the Webbs encounter the devastating effects of a plague: the population of 36,000 had been reduced in half and many survivors were living in shelters in an adjacent plane. Yet their reaction is oddly clinical: "Nothing practical could be done, except watch the sanitation, remove the dead bodies of rats and men and inoculate the living." Sometimes, their obsession with efficiency, rational solutions and large-scale projects could make them less perceptive of individual suffering – as would later be the case in their endorsement of Stalin's Soviet Union.
[178] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 166.

primarily engaged in research and campaigning related to the eradication of poverty. Her thoughts and politics on this issue were still fresh in her mind as she traveled through British India. To better grasp, Beatrice's attitude towards the Indian population, it is valuable to quickly trace and situate Beatrice's views on poverty, which for her formed the main problem of modern society.

The presence of the pauper had emerged as a major social problem of the Victorians, whose England was becoming an increasingly urbanized and industrialized country. In spite of many continuities, Carl Chinn argues that the "the face and feel of the country" had become decidedly urban by the end of the 19th century.[179] Amidst the increasing affluence and consumption of the middle and upper classes, the presence of the urban poor betrayed a stark contradiction. The fact England was the wealthiest nation in the world (and that the national income increased eightfold during the nineteenth century) jarred with the appearance of deprivation and distress in the slums.[180] Economic modernization had led to material welfare, it seemed, but it had also shaped an impoverished proletariat. For many, the paradox of glaring inequalities amongst expanding wealth formed "the great enigma of the times."[181] It became known as the "Condition of England question", sparking intense debate and producing a socio-political literature on the subject.[182] The appearance of Chartism and worker's protest brought the middle classes to regard the pauper as member of an industrial proletariat with a (deficient) culture of his own. There emerged a middle class discourse that grasped poverty primarily as an ethical-religious problem.[183] The popular belief arose that there were in fact 'two nations' within England (the rich and the poor), triggering both fascination and fear. This ideology is reflected in the industrial novels of Benjamin Disraeli, Elisabeth Gaskell and Walter Besant or the social explorations of Henry Mayhew. Its protonarrative was one of *moral* progress: through moral betterment the pauper could become integrated within the healthy community of bourgeois society.[184]

As the urban working class continued to grow and the economic depressions at the end of the 19th century increased poverty, a new ideological evaluation of the pauper emerged. Poverty came to be seen as a structural problem, determined by material conditions.[185] A more scientific and clinical discourse now made a 'diagnosis' of the 'symptoms' of poverty and looked for possible 'cures'. Scientific knowledge of society could accurately determine the nature and cause of poverty. In this vision pauperism was not the result of moral deficiency but of socio-economic forces of capitalism. The turn-side of this was that if poverty was a societal problem, social reform (and not a change in the individual character of the pauper) could eradicate it. This positivistic construction of poverty was reflected in the naturalism of authors like Emile Zola and George Gissing but also in the empirical and statistical social surveys like Charles Booth's famous *Life and Labour of the*

[179] Carl Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 9.
[180] Ibid., 10–11.
[181] Ibid., 14.
[182] Michael Levin, *The Condition of England Question: Carlyle, Mill, Engels* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 1.
[183] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 138.
[184] Ibid., 140–41.
[185] Ibid., 145.

People in London.[186] This work, published in seventeen volumes, was meant to give a detailed picture of poverty in the East End on the basis of close investigation and statistics. It was through Booth that Beatrice immersed herself into social investigation and the methodology of social sciences. Beatrice had joined Booth's Board of Statistical Research and in December 1886 she helped with his research by collecting data on dock labor. This was the start of her successful career as a social investigator.[187]

Beatrice's attitude towards poverty, then, followed the ideologemes of this positivistic position as pioneered by her mentor Booth. While she often struggled to free herself from the individualistic and moral assumptions of her upper-middle class upbringings (cf. infra), she reluctantly came to a collectivist and eventually socialist view of society. While working on the commission to reform the Poor Law years later, Beatrice was determined to assert the idea that poverty was a *social* and not a moral or natural problem. The first assumption of the Webbs' Minority Report was that poverty was not the individual's fault but "a disease of society itself."[188] Where Beatrice wanted to end the stigma of pauperism, her enemies on the commission (embedded in the older ethical ideological approach to poverty) saw pauperism as an individual evil that should be punished.[189] Secondly, the Webbs had discerned through close investigation that poverty had several societal causes; accordingly the functions of poor relief should be allocated to specialized committees. Thirdly, the various committees should not just relieve poverty but prevent it as well.[190] Her scheme of a specialization in the treatment of the poor should, of course, be carried out by trained and specialized experts. Beatrice view on poverty fits perfectly in the emerging scientific, socio-economic evaluation of poverty and the new positivistic ideologemes described above. Poverty could be eradicated within the current economic system (a view which she would eventually abandon in the 1930s) through pinpointed policies of government assistance.

Beatrice, however, remained sensitive to individual morals and held on to some of the ideas of the more Victorian ethical-religious discourse (in fact, the contradictions of Beatrice's ideology could be interestingly analyzed by confronting these two worldviews). In her ideas about poverty, Beatrice was preoccupied by the danger of moral degeneracy among the poor and those in assistance. She held a firm belief that government aid should always be accompanied by some kind of commitment by the recipient in the fear that aid-giving would otherwise discourage work and result in listlessness. In May 1910 she stressed in her diary that the diversion of money from the rich the poorest classes is wholesome "*so long as it is accompanied by the increase in personal responsibility on the part of the benefited classes*."[191] This is why Beatrice was so opposed to Lloyd George's idea of social insurance. According to her, this scheme "had the fatal defect that the state got nothing for its money – that the persons felt they had a right to allowance, whatever their

[186] Ibid., 145–50.
[187] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 147, 154.
[188] Quoted in: Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 172–73.
[189] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 272.
[190] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 173.
[191] Beatrice Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. III: 1905-1924: The Power to Alter Things*, ed. Norman MacKenzie and Jeanne MacKenzie (London: Virago, 1984), 141.

conduct."[192] Crucial in Webbs' view on poverty and its reduction was that "any grant from the community to the individual, beyond what it does for all, ought to be conditional on better conduct."[193] The individual, however bound by society, was in Beatrice's view not a complete social construct. It had agency, was guided by self-interest and held its own (possibly corrupt) morals.

Now, it is possible to explore how the Webbs' (and particularly Beatrice's) concrete politics and ideological mappings of urban poverty and destitution, for them the primary social problem of modernity, related and compares to their experience and evaluation of famine and poverty in the colonial realm. The famine that the Webbs witness was a relatively small one occurring in the Panchmahals district. While a broader cattle fodder famine was more widely spread, the human famine was limited to this district. A first point of interest is that where the Webbs find hunger and poverty in Britain to be social issues, they see the famine as the result of purely natural causes. The Webb comment that the famine was "due to an almost complete absence of rain in the last rainy season."[194] While this may have been the immediate trigger, most scholars now reject the view that drought or food shortages were the real or only cause of Indian famines. Amartya Sen famously explained the Bengal Famine of 1943 as a failure of exchange entitlements due to British administrative and economic policies.[195] Bimal Paul writes that most Indian famines were not simply natural phenomena but "rather a result of the breakdown of social economic networks in the regions suffering local crops failures."[196] The breakdown of these networks was connected to British rule and the imperial economy. British taxes led many farmers in India to cultivate cash crops instead of food crops, threatening local food security. Moreover, under British rule India became a major exporter of grain. This both reduced the overall availability of grain but also drove up domestic prices. The tragic result was that regions affected by famine were in fact sometimes still exporting grain abroad.[197] However, this socio-economic approach of famine is not new: from the 1860s both British administrators and Indian nationalists recognized that famines were not simply food shortages "but complex economic crises induced by the market impacts of draught and crop failures."[198] During many of the famines, there was in fact no aggregate food shortage but a reduction in the purchasing power of the poorest classes. Famine was thus fundamentally linked to the problem of poverty. Hari Srivastava writes that "the increasing poverty of the people was a very

[192] 16 October, 1910 Ibid., 100.
[193] 16 October, 1910 Ibid.
[194] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 168.
[195] Amartya Sen, "Starvation and Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach and Its Application to the Great Bengal Famine," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 1, no. 1 (1977): 33–59.
[196] Bimal Kanti Paul, "Indian Famines: 1707-1943," in *Food and Famine in the 21st Century, Vol. II: Classic Famines*, ed. William A. Dando (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 52.
[197] Ibid., 53. Evidence suggests that a major famine took place about every fifty years before British rule and once every nine years during British rule, see: Ibid., 39.
[198] Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso Books, 2001), 19.

important cause of the growing intensity and widening incidence of Indian famines" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[199]

Yet despite their normal positivistic search for social and economic causes, the Webbs consider Indian famines as the result of the natural occurrence of draught. They explain the famine as a "local scarcity" due to rain-shortage, without connecting it to societal poverty or market dynamics.[200] However, at Godhra it seems there was also no absolute shortage of food in the region, something the Webbs' must have realized. Indeed, they note how the government compensates the famine-struck Indians with monetary wages to buy food, not food itself. This suggests that there was enough food available: the problem was not one of absolute scarcity but of food distribution and a loss of income. Still the Webbs don't approach the socio-economic phenomenon of Indian hunger as they approach the poverty of modern England. Beatrice had been at pains to stress the fact that poverty was a structural issue, but she doesn't extrapolate this structural approach to the Indian context. The Webbs don't consider the dynamics of local and imperial economies in the explanation of famine: the social-scientific discourse is noticeably absent. This suggests that the Webbs' approach to poverty that they researched, pioneered and fiercely defended in England, breaks down in the colonial world. Their guiding ideological binary of Western development and non-Western underdevelopment leads to a methodological change in their analysis of social problems. They cognitively map an essential difference between the complex, modern society of England (where socio-economic forces are at work) and the primitive, simple society of India (where they only consider natural and moral forces).

However, when we move back from the level of ideology to that of immediate politics the Webbs do project some of the evaluations formed for modern English society to the Indian context. Their position on how the famine should be practically dealt with largely conforms to their schemes to fight poverty in England. Of course, and this is crucial, their broader ideological views limit the range of immediate politics. Because the Webbs regard colonial famines as a natural and not a socio-economic process, they do not consider or give any commentary on measures that might *prevent* famine. This contrasts sharply with Beatrice's progressive assertion that poverty could be actively prevented through careful and planned management (cf. supra).[201] Instead, the Webbs only contemplate measures of government relief, and those measures reflect their domestic plans.

A first major underlying assumption is that the government is responsible for aiding those in need. The Webbs had come to Godhra specifically to investigate the famine relief work organized by the government. The Webbs obviously think that the British Indian government should provide relief, and they seem satisfied that the government is indeed doing something. This type of government intervention during famines was actually quite new. During the 19th century colonial governments had mostly held onto a strict policy of *laissez faire*. In response to a major 1877-79 famine, the viceroy Lord Lytton echoed the orthodox policies of Adam Smith as he

[199] Hari Shanker Srivastava, *The History of Indian Famines and Development of Famine Policy, 1858-1918* (Agra: Sri Ram Mehra, 1968), 332.
[200] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 168.
[201] This standpoint had led to her alienation from the other commission members.

ordered "there is to be no interference of any kind on the part of Government with the object of reducing the price of food."[202] Yet by the time the Webbs visited India, the government had implemented certain guidelines and codes to handle famines. In the terrain of famine, where the immediate, catastrophic results of non-intervention were so blatant, the government had decided to step in.

The Webbs note that in response to this local famine, the Public Works Department had organized the making of a road and the deepening of a dried up tank. In exchange for their manual labor on these projects, the Indians struck by the famine received wages at piece work rates "calculated so as to be just sufficient for bare subsistence at current prices."[203] But the Webbs note: "the Government object not being economy but relief, the regulations were evidently not very precisely adhered to."[204] The gangs of workers were paid enough money for its members to "live on for twenty four hours."[205] Those who were too old or weak to work and the women in *purdah* [in seclusion] received doles of food distributed in the villages. The Webbs record the hospital tents, the casks of water, the shelters "all of the simplest and flimsiest kind" and the inspector visiting frequently on the watch for cholera. Again, we find efficiency to be the guiding principle for the Webbs: they note and check if everything is well regulated, organized and planned. And so they remark that these operations had been planned in advance in the case of a famine and that the works are being carefully supervised by officials. They inspect the Indian Famine Code, that first modern reaction to famine developed after years of experimentation, and find that it is more a guide to relief than a precise calculation of "the 'labour cost' of each work."[206] The fact that there is no "precise checking" of the costs is legitimized, the Webbs seem to imply, because the primary goal is to prevent starvation and not to realize government works.[207]

Overall, the Webbs seem to approve of this system of manual work in exchange for government relief. They note that "the men and women on these relief works looked well nourished. We saw no signs of semi-starvation and no dreadful living skeletons."[208] They seem to concur with the Collector's policy to "relieve *before* the people had been brought low in health, in order that they might not succumb to disease."[209] While they hear several complaints, they essentially dismiss these with the comment: "all [the complaints] to the effect that the pay was not enough, because it left nothing over for the little luxuries to which they were accustomed."[210] The wording of 'little luxuries' is essential: for the ascetically-minded Webbs any form of luxury is quite inessential. Later historians have criticized the Indian Government's famine policy of 'work in return for relief' as excessively harsh. Bimal Paul writes that "starving people often had to work for

[202] Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 39.
[203] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 169.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid., 170.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

nine hours or more, each day."[211] This system was essentially punitive, and some writers claim that it was meant to discourage people from using government relief, thereby cutting costs.[212] Indeed, it seems remarkable that the Webbs don't criticize the 'bare subsistence' wages, enough to survive only for a day. Yet their positive reaction to the relief work becomes more intelligible when one considers it in the context of the Webbs' recent campaign against modern poverty in England. For, as mentioned above, a second major assumption of the Webbs' vision of welfare was that every exceptional benefit to an individual should be balanced by an effort on the behalf of the recipient. The Webbs transfer this principle to the colonial context of famine. Therefore it only seems fitting (to the Webbs at least) that those 'enjoying' from government relief during a famine should do something in return, like public work. The Webbs see the 'wage'-based approach as "a means of getting the work done": without it, the Indians wouldn't work as hard for their compensation.[213] This idea that one should work for any grant from the community was formed in the context of modern pauperism and it relied on the ideological belief that any benefit without an increase in responsibility would lead to decline in moral character. It reflects the bourgeois ethical discourse on poverty that come to prominence in the second half of the 19th century.

While the Webbs apply their unconscious and conscious politics formed in the domestic realm on the colonial realm, they also seek to 'import' colonial policies to England. In their relentless and meticulous touring and inspection of the British Indian government and colonial institutions, the Webbs have two interests. On the one hand, they look at ways in which they can transplant strategies and reforms implemented or formulated for England to the Indian subcontinent. Their belief in the uniform nature of modern science and reforms leads them to envision countless possibilities for progress along Western lines. On the other hand, the Webbs are always on the lookout for concrete practices and policies that they might bring back to England. The mobility of ideas about social reform works in two directions for the Webbs. Their 1898 trip to America and Australia had been largely motivated by the hope that they would find ideas for their work on local government. Lisanne Radice writes that the Webbs set out on their Eastern travels not as academic investigators but as "intelligent visitors."[214] As they were mostly visiting Asiatic countries "they believed that there was little in the experience of these societies which was of relevance to British administration and government."[215] The *Indian Diary* shows, however, that the case is different for India, which was after all a part of British administration and government. But the Webbs' belief in the superior development of England and the underdevelopment of colonial India does mean that the context of modern England dominates the exchange: they frequently extrapolate from the English context but rarely find useful administrative ideas in the colonial realm.[216]

[211] Paul, "Indian Famines: 1707-1943," 53.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 169.
[214] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 183.
[215] Ibid.
[216] With regards to religion and the picture is different, see infra.

Still, the desire to learn something is probably the main reason that the Webbs come to inspect the works in the first place. They hope to find something that is applicable to the problem of unemployment or poverty in England. There is a marked disappointment, however, when the Webbs find that this isn't the case. The Webbs remark that they find no useful ideas in the Indian Famine Code: "We did not see in it anything applicable to English conditions; nor did we pick up from it any hint or suggestion for dealing with our own 'unemployed'."[217] They list four reasons why this is the case: the workers are all peasants, the famine is a problem of "purely temporary stress", there is no fear that the government wages will attract "numbers of 'underemployed' or loafers", and there is no pressure from the trade union to increase wages.[218] Essentially, India has a less 'developed' working class than Britain. The only type of relief relevant for the British context, the Webbs write, is the government's support for the more advanced labor of the artisans. Here, the government bought the artisan's unsellable product or gave him subsistence wages while he continued working for stock. This policy interests the Webbs, but they find that it is not included in the Famine Code. Due to Britain's more 'developed' economy, "the part of the problem which most nearly resembles that of England was […] outside the Famine Code!"[219]

In their concluding remarks on the journey, the Webbs sum up their assessment of government policies and action in India. Here we find the clash of two different colonial visions in its most elucidated form. The Webbs pose the question: "Does this bureaucracy succeed in supplying a good Government?"[220] The question alone is already charged with their ideological assumptions on the bureaucratic nature and the 'supplying' responsibility of colonial government. Their answer: "Our impression is that the I.C.S. [the Indian Civil Service] has succeeded fairly well in carrying out its ideals of government, but its ideals are still those of 1840!"[221] They make a fairly accurate summary of the current government principles to prevent war, maintain order, fight crime "and for the rest to leave people alone."[222] Leaving people alone is clearly not a good thing for the Webbs. The Webbs do concede that the realization of these minimal goals is "a great achievement," especially considering the limited English staff, self-supporting funds and the "so imperfect a subordinate staff of Indians."[223] Yet this relative success has led to an attitude of "self-complacency and, indeed conceit"; both serious obstacles to improve the existing shortcomings even in this minimal realm of activity.[224] The Webbs note that there is still a lot of theft, extortion and "even burglaries seem such much more common than in Europe."[225]

[217] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 169–70.
[218] Ibid., 170.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid., 209.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., 210.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.

Sidney is especially critical of the admittedly "honest and unbribable" British law courts. They are racially prejudiced, the magistrates often oppress "poor and humble folk" and its procedure has "increased the evil power of the money-lender." [226] Here Sidney (the Webbs often show a surprising openness in changing their preconceptions when confronted by contrary 'empirical' evidence) concludes that government intervention has not been beneficial. He wonders if the Indian villagers might not actually prefer their older village system of jurisdiction and writes that it might not be such a bad idea to return to it.[227] Experience through mobility brought the Webbs to adjust their centralizing approach and reconsider the traditional Indian 'village-community'. In fact, in a 1915 preface for John Matthai's *Village Government in British India*, Sidney expressed his surprise to find a pre-British tradition of self-government in Indian villages.[228] He writes of the efficient and harmonious nature of this system, arguing that it "emphasizes obligations [of the individual to the public] rather than rights."[229] He even considers it a "higher alternative" to the "Majority Vote" common in Western democracies. [230] Sidney was obviously attracted by the collectivist nature and direct participation of the village system; he even found in it an inspiration for the reform and development of local government in England. He notes how newer social thinking in Europe increasingly stresses the importance of local government. Government organized "merely 'from above'", he writes, "however mechanically perfect […] will fail to take root in the minds of the mass of the people […] unless it is in some way grafted on the spontaneous groupings of the people themselves."[231] Surprisingly, Sidney formulated an idealized appreciation of the Indian village community, just like the conservative colonials he was so opposed to - but for completely different reasons. The Anglo-Indians found in it a reflection of traditional social hierarchy, mirroring an idealized rural England. Sidney didn't necessarily romanticize its 'traditionalism' (cf. infra), but valued it as form of efficient local government and a more direct form of democracy that might complement the bureaucratic perfection of his modern state. The character of the Indian village fit the political needs of its observer.

While the Webbs thus show a certain sensitivity to the limits of centralized government action and social engineering from above, this thinking still forms the main thread of their colonial vision. Their idea of progress through state intervention clashes, of course, with the dominant political vision of the British Indian government. This clash is especially apparent in the realm of economics. Sidney writes that he has "grave misgivings" about the government's economic policy in India, not only regarding "past stupidity and plunder" but "misgiving questions even about our present Economic policy."[232] As he evaluates the economic condition of the more than 300 million Indians, he admits that "it is an uncomfortable fact that it should not be beyond controversy whether

[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Jayal, "Introduction," 100.
[229] Sidney Webb, "Preface," in *Village Government in British India*, by John Matthai (London: T.F. Unwin, 1915), xii.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 211.

they are better or worse off than a generation ago."[233] The Webbs, however, never consider this to be a fault in British colonialism itself, but focus on the inefficient and iniquitous way in which colonial rule has been applied. They don't abandon the idea of colonialism but are firmly convinced that it, just like society at home, needs to change. Unlike Britain, the problem of colonial India is not social inequality resulting from selfish and individualistic capitalism. Instead, they see the poor living condition of the Indian as the result of the underdevelopment of modern industry and trade. Sidney tentatively writes that the Indian now "enjoys a greater variety of commodities than before": "he" earns more and spends more, and while he may not get rich he "at any rate gets a somewhat wider life."[234] But for the Webbs the modernization of the economy and the onset of consumption have obviously not gone far enough. The transformation of Indian society into one of modern producers and consumers has barely begun. In their state-centered approach to economics, the Webbs argue that the British government is doing too little to modernize the economy (and by extension the country). Moreover, as the supposedly most 'advanced' section of India, as the representatives of the industrialized west, it is only logical that the British should lead to push to economic progress. Sidney writes that "the Government of India […] pursues an extremely fainthearted economic policy – partly out of ancient prejudice but chiefly because the Government is horribly *poor*."[235] Echoing the previous passage about government initiative, he concludes: "Under these circumstances we suggest a bold policy of Government exploitation – taking into Government hands all the railways, developing the 240,000 squares miles of forest by Government paper mills […] and perhaps starting Government tobacco works and spirit distilleries."[236]

Thus in the unique case of colonial India, the Webbs find an excellent opportunity for the development of a more collectivist modern economy, with the industrial development in the hands of the government. The socialist schemes that the Webbs constructed in reaction to the ills of modern England are here exported to the colonial context. They found the Indian economy in a state that was still largely pre-capitalist. India, it seems, can ideally even skip *laissez faire* capitalism and its ills. The path to progress, however, lies in the British giving up their attitude of *laissez faire* government. This means not only engaging in government enterprise but also developing, as we have seen, a more modern and efficient administration, education, infrastructure, sanitation, healthcare, regulation, settlement projects and poverty relief. Indeed, the government's lack of any initiative, vision or planning is the Webbs' main criticism of the current colonial regime: "there was no definite purpose or plan about the Government of India."[237] The Webbs find their vision of a dynamic, planning and interventionist state to be at odds with that of most colonial administrators. Here, one encounters two opposing colonial visions, which I have shown are connected to two different ideological responses to modern society in England. The Webbs represent the colonial

[233] Ibid., 218.
[234] "The general consumption of umbrellas and shoes, cigarettes and tea, gramophones and made clothes is demonstrably greatly increasing." Ibid., 218–19.
[235] Ibid., 221.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 54.

vision of development through modernization, informed by a socialist diagnosis of modern capitalism and its effects on society. In contrast, most Anglo-Indians argue for the preservation of the traditional and rural India, guided by a belief in the corrupting influences of modernization and an idealization of the rural English past.

During their journey, the Webbs present their plan of government exploitation to two important individuals. They pursue their politics of permeation abroad first with the governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke. Sidney had known him twenty years ago as a progressive administrator but the Webbs find he has grown "old and bitterly reactionary."[238] Surprisingly, Clarke agrees with the Webbs' standpoint that the government was faint-hearted, unenterprising and that it did not sufficiently develop the forests, railways and irrigation. Yet the Webbs note with some annoyance that "on the whole he said very little always diverging off into irrelevancies, which frequently include deprecations and aspersions on the Nationalists."[239] It is as if the governor, intimidated by the minds and words of the Webbs (Beatrice was known for her incessant exhortations), superficially acquiesced to avoid substantial discussion. With Gopal Krishna Gokhale the Webbs find a more engaging partner for debate. Gokhale was an important early leader of the Nationalist movement: he had founded the Servants of India Society in 1905 (an organization for the self-government and progress of India) and was the leader of the moderate faction in the Indian National Congress. Gokhale, however, is skeptical about the Webbs' vision of increased government expansion and exploitation. The Webbs write: "He demurs to our suggestion for developing the forests, railways, canals and Government workshops, on the ground that without further popular control, any such increase in Government action would only be used against the Hindoos."[240] Here the subtle but crucial divide between the nationalists' project and the Webbs' comes to the forefront, a divide that I explore further in chapter six. While both essentially strive for social change, for the modernization and general progress of India, the Webbs see social and economic development as paramount. They are less concerned about self-government as an ideal in itself (though it may be a means for progress), while for the Nationalists the control of India by Indians is essential. "To the Indians the Government is a hostile force," write the Webbs. But, failing to see the larger picture of colonialism's inequalities of power and drain of wealth, they show little sympathy for this view. According to them this attitude merely "cripples them in political programme, because they are always urging retrenchment."[241]

The Webbs' colonial program in many ways predate to the later 'developmental' approach of the British Colonial Office right before, during, and after the Second World War. John Flint writes that, after 1938, there was a wholesale reversal in the attitudes towards social change and

[238] Ibid., 181.
[239] Ibid., 184.
[240] Ibid., 191.
[241] Ibid., 221.

'development' of British dependencies in Africa.[242] After the 1937 riots in the British West Indies, Lord Hailey's shocking African Survey of 1938 and the appointment of Malcolm Macdonald as Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Colonial Office would quickly reverse their interwar policies of minimalist government and the preservation of precolonial society through indirect rule.[243] The war only accelerated this development, as officials strove to anticipate reform through careful planning instead of having to respond to demands of reforms by the colonized.[244] The 'traditional', rural 'native' society was abandoned in favor of support for the educated and urban elites, social change in the colonies was assumed to be inevitable and desirable instead of feared, an Advisory Committee on Education pushed for African universities, and eventual self-government became the goal of government planning (but struggled to find a practical application).[245]

In the economic sphere the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 decidedly turned away from the deep-rooted *laissez faire* policy of colonial economics that the Webbs were so disapproving of. The main theorist behind this was Lord Hailey, whose belief in gradualism and planned development strongly echoed that of the Webbs. In a 1941 report he argued that economic and social development, undertaken in co-operation with Africans, should form the base of and precede political self-rule.[246] As I will argue in chapter six, the Webbs believed this too. In effect, of course, this socio-economic decolonization also meant the strengthening of imperial control: this forms the ambiguity of the Indian Diary and accounts for the difference between the Webbs and Gokhale.[247] Until its abandonment in 1948, this movement of planned colonial reform strove to transform and develop the African colonial world in a way that the Webbs would likely have approved of. Their colonial vision was becoming a reality at about the same time that Britain was developing itself into the welfare state that the Webbs had underpinned theoretically. The colonial reform movement failed for several reasons (among others due to its over-ambition, its underestimation of local resistance by British colonials and the international political climate) and resulted in such notorious experiments as the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme. James Scott would later criticize this kind of well-intentioned 'high modernism' or 'state-initiated social engineering' in his book *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* .[248] Yet for the Webbs, it seemed that more modernization and more government initiative and planning were the solution to India's problems. In the face of an apathetic colonial elite with un-interventionist ideas out of Victorian age and a colony that was seemed terribly 'underdeveloped', the Webbs formulated a colonial vision of social engineering and government intervention that anticipated the colonial reform movement of the 1940s. However, their critical

[242] John Flint, "Planned Decolonization and Its Failure in British Africa," *African Affairs* 82, no. 328 (1983): 394.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid., 406.
[245] Ibid., 394, 398–405.
[246] Ibid., 407.
[247] Ibid.
[248] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 4–8.

account of the Chenab Colony and interest in the local government of Indian villages suggests that, in their 'top down' planning, they might have been more sensitive to specific local conditions and practices.

As they travelled through British India, then, the Webbs were less captivated with the exotic pleasures of elephant rides and silk *sarees* than with the disturbing realization that the British were doing little to develop a still largely 'backward', pre-capitalist society. As the case of the Godhra famine demonstrates, the supposedly 'primitive' state of India lead the Webbs to understand certain social problems differently than they would in Britain. However, despite the perceived difference between Britain and colonial India, the Webbs envision a similar Fabian plan of government activity resulting in gradual social advancement and economic development. The political positions formed in the domestic context were exported abroad. Thus while the Indian famine was analyzed differently than urban poverty, the recommended government relief policies followed similar organized, planned lines and ideological assumptions on the moral character of those in assistance. The mobility of ideas could work in two ways however: the pre-capitalist community of the Indian village was thus both a supreme example of 'backwardness' in need of modern development and a possible inspiration for bottom-up local government that could optimize the modern state. But in the face of India's underdevelopment, the Webbs most of all argued for government intervention in both the economic, administrative and social realm. Their comments on the Chenab Canal colony indicate that the Webbs envisioned large-scale, comprehensive social-engineering that would push the primitive Indians into the progress of modern life. This all fits in an overarching protonarrative of universal human development into a modernized, efficient and morally superior society. Here we have explored how the Webbs believed this development was necessary and that it needed to be guided by the collectivist hand of the state. While the Webbs were convinced European society hadn't reached the 'endpoint' of this process yet (indeed, they were gradually working towards it as socialists), they believed it was much 'further' on the timeline of progress than India. This discourse of development, which will have to be elaborated and nuanced, forms a major thread in the chapter that follows.

5

DEGENERACY, DOMESTICITY, ARISTOCRACY, AND RELIGION

Essentially, the Webbs believed in the superiority of Western modernity with its democratic institutions and scientific advancements. The flipside of this belief is their conviction that traditional, primitive India is still stuck in an inferior, 'backward' state. While the Webbs are aware that their perception is distinctly Western, they frequently express their repulsion for 'primitive' Indian society and culture. The ideologemes found in the *Indian Diary* reflect the well-known imperial binaries that mark most travel writing of the colonial age. Paul Smethurst argues that imperial travel writing imposes order on the disorderly experience of mobility through such binaries of "superior culture/inferior culture, modernity/primitiveness, enlightenment/darkness, and scientific worldview/superstition."[249] Post-colonial scholars have stressed how those imperial world-constructions of travel writing both reflected and underpinned imperial politics and power structures. Throughout the *Indian Diary*, we find the Webbs assuming that India needs to be modernized, educated and reformed along Western lines. They fit their experiences and impressions abroad into existing frameworks, expressed through an imperial discourse of backwardness and degeneracy. Their India reflects many of the well-known stereotypes, preconceptions and distortions that characterized Western, imperial thinking about the other.

As we have seen, the Webbs mostly subscribed to a type of imperial vision that stressed 'difference' on a timeline of progress. I believe that kind of imperial knowledge and discourse is best worked out by Annie McClintock. The Webbs continuously channel what she calls the two centralizing tropes of the 'imperial science': "panoptical time" and "anachronistic space".[250] Panoptical time put the whole of historical time into a visual paradigm of linear, evolutionary progress. The trope of the 'Tree of Man' emerges, with the white, modern west at the zenith of progress. So does its parallel of the 'Family of Man' trope, presenting the white, male father at the apex of a familial order and the 'lesser races' as his children.[251] McClintock thus argues that this social evolutionism also *domesticated* time: it envisioned human development in the form of the family (a familial development from which women were erased).[252] This vision of progress, as I have tried to argue above as well, was fundamentally tied to the experience of modernity: "In the mapping of progress", McClintock writes, "images of 'archaic' time – that is, non-European time – were systematically evoked to identify what was historically new about industrial modernity."[253] The contradictions within industrial modernity ("between private and public, domesticity and

[249] Smethurst, "Introduction," 6.
[250] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 36.
[251] Ibid., 37.
[252] Ibid., 39.
[253] Ibid., 40.

industry, labor and leisure, paid work and unpaid work, metropolis and empire") were mediated, among others, by the tropes of 'degeneration' and its reverse of 'progress'.[254] These tropes were both applied to the colonial sphere (in terms of race) and to the domestic sphere (in terms of class). We have already seen this intersectionality in the Webbs' discourse on poverty; I will explore it further here, sometimes adding the third category of gender. When we translate McClintock's argument in Frederic Jameson's terms we can identify a political unconscious (formed as a reaction against the contradiction of the inequalities of high capitalism) based on the antimony between modern progress and un-modern degeneracy. This then connects to a collective protonarrative of the universal advancement of mankind to a higher moral and material state.

I explore this protonarrative of civilizational and human progress by looking at a few of the Webbs' evaluations about primitive India: its racial degeneracy, its unclean living conditions, its unnatural sexuality, and its superstitious religion. In the scope of this thesis, I would like to focus mainly on the way the Webbs' perception of the colonial world related to the way they understood and responded to modernity in England. Implicitly and inversely, their discourse of a 'degenerate' unmodern India also reflects and intersects with how they thought about the process of modernization and the metropolitan center. I argue that the Webbs' representation of the Indian is deeply embedded in the binary of progressive, middle-class, male West/degenerate, lower class, female Rest. But I also argue that the Webbs' conscious and unconscious politics are far more complex than this. As will become clear, the Webbs' discourse of difference and English superiority is undercut by elitist notions of class, a self-consciousness of perception, religious concerns, a better understanding of modern India and a critical perspective on England and the English colonials. The imperial discourses and racialized views that I explore here should thus be considered as the dominant imperial ideology which the Webbs both reproduce and sometimes contest. Moreover, as they learn more about India, there is a noticeable shift in their evaluation of the country and its people. Through mobility the rigid binaries and some of the imperial vision and tropes start to crumble. The Webbs themselves realize this. In this chapter, I primarily focus on this ideological 'background': the imperial discourse of progress and degeneracy that the Webbs channel and sustain until the end. But it will become clear that one of its central accompanying presumptions, that of the inherent progressiveness of the English and the inherent barbarism of the Indian, becomes severely questioned by the Webbs. This chapter should, then, be considered as a necessary and relevant backdrop to the Webbs' more nuanced and overtly politicized views on India that I touch on here but, for the sake of a clear argumentation, only fully explore in chapter six.

The Webbs understood Indian society as essentially structured by race. As Jay winter writes, their racialism was commonplace at the time: "they adhered to the common belief that ethnic groups had distinct moral and intellectual characteristics which were biologically and culturally transmitted

[254] Ibid., 43.

from generation to generation."[255] But the Webbs were, like many other Fabians, especially interested in the 'scientific' theories of eugenics. The Fabian's concern with efficiency and their confidence in planned society made them highly receptive to the idea of genetic planning. Biological 'racial' characteristics became intertwined with notions of economic productivity and 'social health'. Especially in the years before the First World War, the Webbs expressed fears that the miscegenation of the higher white races with lower Caucasian or non-white races would diminish the possibilities for social improvement.[256] In the 1907 tract *The Decline of the Birth Rate*, Sidney expressed his concern that the England's racial stock was degenerating due to fall in the birth rate of the abler classes and the proliferation of the more 'unfit' Catholics, Jews, and immigrants.[257] He feared that "race deterioration, if not race suicide" jeopardized the socialist future.[258] The Webbs 'socialist racialism', as J.M. Winter has termed it, was thoroughly enmeshed with their elitist class views. To 'save' the race and the socialist project, they believed that the birth rate of the high-level, educated whites had to increase in order to counter the proliferation of the "less thrifty, the less intellectual".[259] Winter claims that this racialism was the outcome of their paternalistic attitude to both the working class and the 'lower races', and illustrates the un-egalitarian strand in the Webbs' socialism.[260]

In Asia, the Webbs organized their impressions of the countries they visited by the supposed racial characteristics of its inhabitants. They write that there is no typical "Oriental" (a vaguer 'unscientific' category of an earlier age) but that there is a "deep –down unlikeness between the men and women of Japan, of China and of India."[261] Thus the Japanese are "a race of Idealists […] perhaps the most Executive race in the world," while the Chinese are revolting, "inscrutable" and show a "lack of capacity for the scientific method."[262] The Webbs' racial views blended social Darwinism with ideals of efficiency: racial superiority or inferiority depended on the ability of the race to organize and administer themselves effectively. As Winter writes: "social maturity was synonymous with administrative ability."[263] Hence, the Webbs admired the hyper-efficiency of the Japanese while they detested the Chinese whose country was in a state of chaotic civil war. Immature races could acquire the skills of modern political life and overcome their racial backwardness by following the example of the modern white races.[264] This made benevolent imperialism justified and even necessary. In a 1913 article called 'The Guardianship of the Non-

[255] J. M. Winter, "The Webbs and the Non-White World : A Case of Socialist Racialism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no. 1 (1974): 181.
[256] Ibid., 182.
[257] Alberto Spektorowski and Liza Ireni-Saban, *Politics of Eugenics: Productionism, Population, and National Welfare* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 41; Jayal, "Introduction," xxix.
[258] Quoted in: Winter, "The Webbs and the Non-White World," 190.
[259] Quoted in: Ibid., 190–91.
[260] Ibid., 192.
[261] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 211.
[262] Beatrice showed such an irrational revulsion to the Chinese that she wrote: "I do not feel competent to speak [of them] as I dislike them so heartily." Ibid., 211–12.
[263] Winter, "The Webbs and the Non-White World," 185.
[264] Ibid., 182.

adult Races', the Webbs argued that "all the indigenous inhabitants of the Asiatic mainland" were "in their capacity for corporate self-defence and self-government, *Non-adult races*."[265] Thus, they believed, in the interest of both of the weaker races and "humanity as a whole", progressive Europeans had a moral obligation to guide the 'children' of the world into adulthood. This paternalistic imperial vision obviously relied heavily on the naturalized trope of the 'Family of Man'.

In India, the Webbs made the primary distinction between the Hindu and Muslim races, but also distinguished between castes, which they tended to describe in racial terms as well. As Niraya Jopal writes: "the Webbs speak of Hindus and Muslims, of Brahmins, Kayasthas and Untouchables, implicitly recognizing distinctions which they believed were reflected in physical and intellectual qualities."[266] The Webbs showed a marked dislike for the Muslim 'race' in India. They represented them as servile and assumed them to be "horribly conscious […] of inability to organise or initiate or maintain anything without Government aid."[267] I have already described how they looked down on their unmodern education. In Lucknow, the Webbs visit a renowned 'Hakim', a Muslim medical practitioner. The Webbs note that there is no use of stethoscope or clinical thermometer; it is all "indescribably picturesque and primitive, with no attempt at cleanliness or accuracy […] an unaltered survival from the Middle Ages." [268] From the perspective of the panoptical time of universal human history, India here clearly becomes an anachronistic space, "out of place in the historical time of modernity."[269] The midwives at a Muslim court are described as "to the last degree ignorant and superstitious."[270] When Beatrice meets some Muslim women in Allahabad, they are considered "extraordinarily backward and unintelligent" because only a few of them speak English.[271] One exception to this negative representation of Indian Muslims is the Begum of Bhopal. This female Muslim ruler of a princely state, with whom Beatrice spends an afternoon, is judged favorably as "an able business woman."[272] Unlike the other Muslims, the Begum is in favor of modernizing the Muslim population. In (women's) education and in public health "she has been more advanced than the Government of British India."[273] Beatrice notes that the two talk about the position and the education of women, on which she finds the Begum's views rather conflicting. Beatrice herself had only recently become a supporter of the suffragist cause and had even signed a manifesto opposing women's suffrage in 1889.[274] She notes that the Begum is "dead against the Suffrage Movement" but believes that "*all Rulers should be women*."[275] The Begum explains that a female ruler is the mother of the people and that she spends her whole life thinking what is best for

[265] Quoted in: Ibid., 189.
[266] Jayal, "Introduction," xxix.
[267] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 136.
[268] Ibid., 38.
[269] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 40.
[270] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 81.
[271] Ibid., 40.
[272] Ibid., 82.
[273] Ibid., 85.
[274] Ibid., 84., footnote 2.
[275] Ibid., 84–85.

them. This fits well with Beatrice's adoration of public-spirited altruism and strong belief in the maternal instinct.[276] But Beatrice also favors the Begum because she is educated, aristocratic and seems like a partisan for the Webbian view of progress through modernization and initiative. But the Begum of Bhopal is an exception that proves the rule. Overall, the Webbs are determine that the Muslims don't like Western education "or anything else not emanating from Islam itself."[277] They complain that the high-class Muslims are generally disdainful of 'practical' occupations like law, civil service or business. Nor do they take up agriculture as a serious enterprise, instead "they like to be mere rent receivers."[278] The elite Muslims here resemble the stagnant, leisured aristocracy of England, against which a bourgeois ideal of energetic activity and work is established. Beatrice expressed her general impression in a letter home: "The Moslems are a slower and duller race, they hate democracy and dislike Education and all that is modern."[279] As we will see in part two, Waugh will also perceive the Muslims at Zanzibar to be leisured gentlemen who are anti-democratic and anti-modern. But for him, this makes them vastly superior to the educated and modernized Hindus and even the British colonials with their naïve civilizational mission.

Overall, the Webbs also place the Hindus in a domesticated and archaic time.[280] They write that the largest part of the Indian population seems "strangely childish in intellect and undisciplined in conduct."[281] This finds its strongest expression in their concluding remarks on India: "The perpetually repeated commonplace of the Anglo-Indian official 'they are like children – you must treat them as such' is ludicrous in its class insolence when you are thinking of the educated Hindu of higher caste but probably true at present about a great mass of the population."[282] This view already reveals the Webbs' different evaluation of high-class Hindus and their critical attitude to some of the dominant racist discourses of the Anglo-Indians, which I explore later. What is important to note here is that the guiding Indian degeneracy/English progress binary is ultimately sustained. Even in the doctrine of the Arya Samaj, a movement they highly respect, they note "the same combination of intellectual subtlety, wide culture, with an almost childish lack of sense of perspective or of scientific critical faculty, that is so common among the Hindu gentlemen whom we have met."[283] Thus with some provisions, the Hindus under the British are also placed in the family metaphor that McClintock describes as "paternal fathers ruling benignly over immature

[276] Beatrice saw her sexual desires as an expression of motherly longing, see: Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 169.
[277] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 141.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Quoted in: Jayal, "Introduction," xxxiv.
[280] The category of the 'Hindu' as a 'race' or 'people' within India was chiefly a modern construct of Europeans. The British colonials used this term to designate any inhabitant of India who was not a Muslim or Christian. Consequently, this colonial era identity could also be ascribed to Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or even Jews. See: Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 78.
As elsewhere in describing colonized people, I here retain the sweeping, undiscriminating British colonial category only to reconstruct the prevailing British discourses during the Raj.
[281] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 212.
[282] Ibid., 213.
[283] Ibid., 115.

children."[284] Through this metaphor of the organic family, forms of hierarchy (like that of the supposed English superiority and imperial rule over India) were portrayed as something natural, rather than historical constructs. Imperialism became a naturalized aspect of universal progress rather than a specific form of domination, obtained and enforced through violence. The image of the 'native as a child' is further reinforced when the Webbs' profess their hope that the English might become "the finest race of school masters, as well as the most perfect builders of an Empire."[285] The Webbs are critical that the English are not fulfilling this ideal, but the ideal itself underpins the discourse of progress and degeneration. Here we can thus clearly identify the 'Family of Man' trope that "offered a genesis narrative for global history."[286] The backwardness of the Hindu, seen through panoptical time, also finds its expression in the placement of the Indian in a chronological history of humankind. So the Webbs write of a caravan heading to the Khyber Pass: "the wild, unkempt, curiously garbed figures of all ages strode along, gossiping or silent, sometimes quarreling and wrangling, often looking like our idea of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."[287]

Like the servile Muslim, the Hindu has its unique degenerate moral characteristic. The essential 'laziness' or 'listlessness' of the Hindu is frequently repeated in the *Indian Diary*. The elite Hindus are idealists, but "alas! for his political efficiency, his ideals are 'all over the place' and frequently he lacks to the capacity to put them into practice – he can neither discover the means nor work at them with unswerving persistency."[288] Beatrice nuances this position, as I will explain below, but this idea forms a general background against which her self-corrections occur. Throughout the diary, the Webbs remark that the subordinate Indian officials are 'slack' or working primarily for show. After visiting the cotton mills of Agra, the Webbs describe the Indian as "an extraordinarily difficult worker to sweat. He does not care enough for his earnings. He prefers to waste away in semi-starvation rather than overwork himself."[289] Here we find indeed how a discourse of degeneracy intersects through racial and class, domestic and imperial lines: the bourgeois discourse of working-class laziness finds its way into a racial characteristic of listlessness. The triangulation of race, class and gender is complete when we consider the Webbs' vision of industrial labor as a male activity and the spaces of labor as nefarious to the morality of women. When the Webbs find women working at Hindu-owned cotton mills in Bombay, they carefully note that almost all of these women are married (their men also working at the mill) and that most widows had remarried. Then they add the comment: "No definite or reliable information as to morality," implying the danger of sexual degeneracy among working-class Hindu women in these male spaces.[290]

But despite all these negative representations and the many examples of the imperial antimony of progress and degeneracy, the Webbs do show a genuine liking for the Hindus. In their

[284] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 45.
[285] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 219.
[286] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 44.
[287] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 129.
[288] Ibid., 212.
[289] Ibid., 95.
[290] Ibid., 205.

overall summary of India they write that the Hindus "strike us an essentially lovable race."[291] This goes further than paternalistic fondness. Their physical racial features are not at all 'degenerate': "unlike the Japanese and Chinese, they have the element of physical beauty – of fineness of feature, large shapeliness of stature."[292] Throughout the trip, Beatrice frequently comments on the physical beauty of the Hindus she encounters. Moreover, she is swayed by the "extreme spirituality and intellectuality of expression" which she recognizes "even in the hordes of humble Indian folk."[293] At Benares, Beatrice even uncharacteristically admires the Hindus "indifference to this world, and their emotional and lively care for the next."[294] There is an "essential modesty of Man against the Universe" that is far more desirable than the "coarse-grained self-satisfaction" of even the most capable Englishmen.[295] Beatrice even writes, in an ambiguous invocation of the 'Family of Man' trope, that if the British treated the Hindus "persistently as Men they would probably 'grow up' to manhood."[296] The 'native child' trope is upheld, but the treatment of the native as a child is questioned. Indeed, as we will further see in chapter six, the Webbs continuously criticizes the arrogant the "invidious race exclusion" and race prejudices of the Anglo-Indians.[297] After visiting the Taj Mahal they conclude that its unsurpassed beauty and perfectly executed work is "clearly a case for the recognition of 'reciprocal superiority' as the proper mental attitude between races."[298] The Webbs, condemning the arrogance of the Church Missionary Society, contend that "that the Indians may be, in certain race qualities, actually equal to the English, let alone their superiors – in spirituality, in subtlety of thought and in intellectual humility or national modesty, for instance."[299] Here, it seems, Beatrice's views disprove many of her own assertions and rejects the traditional imperial binaries that characterize so much of the *Indian Diary*. Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie are right in asserting that Beatrice does not attempt to resolve these paradoxes and seemingly illogical, contradictory impressions and judgements.

These contradictions are baffling, indeed, when we rely only on McClintock's (and much of post-colonial studies') informative, but sweeping theories. The Webbs' ideology and politics, I have already noted, are far more complex than this. While their ideology is deeply embedded in racial thinking, other interpretive categories, also formed in relation to industrial modernity, structure their representation of India. Indeed, to understand the Webbs' admiration and respect for the Hindu we also need to consider their elitist class notions, socialist politics and Beatrice's views on religion and domesticity. These different strands of thinking all intersect, sometimes differing, sometimes converging with the Webbs' racial views. The guiding (imperial) protonarrative of progress versus backwardness remains firmly in place, but the Webbs' complex ideology, socialist views, and

[291] Ibid., 212.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid., 213.
[294] Ibid., 19.
[295] Ibid., 213.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid., 72, 91.
[298] Ibid., 91.
[299] Ibid., 126.

experience in India lead them to dismantle some of the imperial presumptions that traditionally accompany this divide. Religion, politics, class, gender and race converge, leading to contradictory and complex constructions of the Indian people. To explain these contradictions, we must try and 'dissect' some of the different aspects of the Webbs' thinking. For the sake of clarity, I will first focus on the Webbs' view of class and how it related to their vision of race. At the end of this chapter I consider Beatrice's stance on religion and in chapter six I focus more closely on their political views on Indian self-rule. Inevitably however, these different elements cannot be completely isolated from each other. In my analysis they frequently come together again, just as they did in the Webbs' thinking.

The Webbs not only structure Indian society through the category of race, but also through notions of class. Here, the picture starts to become more complex and contradictions arise. The Webbs both project the classes of industrial England onto India and embrace the various class and caste distinctions of India. Thus, when they meet Maheshwarry, a Hindu Fabian at Amritsar, they note with interest that he is the first "of the 'Bunya' or trader class" with whom they have talked to. His character, they believe, is distinguishable from the Brahmin and Kayastha castes: "keen and alert intelligence, without aristocratic distinction, as if sharpened by generations of money-lending and trading."[300] When Maheshwarry tells them that a Muslim member of the Punjab Legislative Council is poor, they remark that this is "merely the *nouveau riche* Bunya's way of suspecting everyone of destitution who is not plainly wealthy."[301] At Lahore, the Webbs befriend Lajpat Rai, an Arya Samaj member and nationalist who is also a Bunya. Though they find him to be open-minded they do note that "he has, at times, an unpleasant expression of successful intrigue. He looks a *Bunya*!"[302] From a Hindu dinner party and garden party (in their honor), the Webbs get the impression that the Hindus of Lahore are "a little 'provincial' in manners and ideas, much as Manchester or Newcastle would compare with London."[303] The provincials at Lahore stand in sharp contrast with the Hindus they meet in Bombay. These are "attractive, cultivated persons – enlightened and discreetly patriotic – the women attractive, good-looking, charmingly dressed and highly educated, and the men able and refined."[304] Thus the Webbs channel both the internal Indian caste distinctions and the metropolitan/provincial divide of social status. They clearly identify internal differences of social rank the Hindu 'race'. Consequently, these elite elements can be seen as quite the opposite of 'degenerate'. Indeed the Webbs write that the Bombay elites "are aristocratic, in appearance, manners and cultivation; and far superior to Government House or the English Indian official world – not to mention the Anglo-Indian commercial mind – who is a very distinct commoner in body and mind."[305] This last passage already offers a glimpse at how the

[300] Ibid., 105.
[301] Ibid., 106.
[302] Ibid., 110.
[303] Ibid., 137.
[304] Ibid., 198.
[305] Ibid., 199.

Webbs' notions of social hierarchy lead them to admire the educated Hindu more than the common, uncivilized English official, a theme I will explore in chapter six.

What is important to note, for now, is that the Webbs also construct a hierarchy *within* India. This ranked social hierarchy runs parallel with, and often contradicts, the racial 'developmental' hierarchy between the British and the Indian 'races'. The Webbs were ultimately elitists. In England they preferred the sophisticated company of high level politicians to that of trade union leaders. They pursued their politics by influencing educated, elites rather than through collaboration with the working class. Detailed, scientific research and high level permeation were their tactics of choice; they mostly stayed away from direct political action. At first, such a sensitivity to social standing in the imperial sphere might seem to resemble what Cannadine calls "imperialism as ornamentalism"; an imperial ideology where other societies were evaluated and favored as ranked social hierarchies.[306] As we have already seen, this ornamentalist imperial vision of the Anglo-Indians valued the supposedly age-old Indian hierarchies that mirrored the traditional, snobbish English class system. This conformed to their anti-modernism and prompted a politics of non-intervention.

The royal rulers of the semi-autonomous states within India represented the peak of this Anglo-Indian vision. For the British officials, these privileged, leisured, royal elites, like their own monarchy, rightfully deserved the support of the British people. These rulers held autocratic control over the 'native' or 'princely' states within India, nominally independent but ultimately under British paramountcy. [307] The Webbs, we have also seen, are unsurprisingly against such a backwards-looking vision of social hierarchy. While they show a profound interest in these regional rulers, visiting many of them during their travels, they are ultimately dismissive of them. Thus, the Maharaja of Chhatarpur is a "rather pathetic figure […] superstitiously religious in Hindoo fashion, and without education," while the Maharajah of Jaipur is "selfish, sensual and intensely superstitious."[308] The Maharana of Udiapur, then, is "intensely Conservative and priest ridden […] doing nothing for progress."[309] Instead of the 'traditional' view of social status admired by the Anglo-Indians, the Webbs' self-constructed social hierarchy is fundamentally guided by who is in favor and capable to pursue the ultimate goal of societal progress. Thus the only Indian rulers they favor are the relatively progressive Begum of Bhopal (mentioned above) and the Maharaja of Baroda who strikes the Webbs as "a real enthusiast for social reform." He is "*not* what one would call a gentleman [that ideal of the ornamentalist]," they write, "he is a clever and ambitious man."[310] Unsurprisingly this progressive Maharaja was in trouble with the British Indian government, who disliked and distrusted him. The Webbs' social vision does not at all overlap with the gentlemanly and nostalgic ideals of the Anglo-English.

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[306] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 122.
[307] These autocratic 'native' or 'princely' states were nominally autonomous but stood under British paramountcy. British Residents were assigned as 'advisors', mostly only loosely and cautiously interfering. See: Cell, "Colonial Rule," 237.
[308] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 152.
[309] Ibid., 156.
[310] Ibid., 176.

Instead, the Webbs construct an individual social hierarchy based on merit, education, modernism and Westernization. The elitist Webbs highly favor the 'aristocracy', but for them this means something entirely else than for the Anglo-Indian. With 'aristocratic' the Webbs primarily mean a high social status acquired through intelligence, educated cultivation and meritocratic worth rather than birth (by itself), income or class snobberies. Their aristocracy is best understood as pertaining to cultivated, educated and modernized intellectual elites rather than the traditional, backwards-looking 'gentlemen' they despised both at home (the reactionary aristocracy) and abroad (the Muslims and archaic rulers of the princely states). Of course, this kind of sophistication also means good manners, proper conduct and morals (as distinguished, as well, from the decadent old aristocracy) .The Webbs especially believed in the superiority of modernly educated individuals. This social vision was formed in response to the challenges posited by capitalism in England. Indeed, the Webbs dreamed of an intellectual, public-spirited elite that would guide England into socialism. The London School of Economics had been partly founded with the idea of creating a 'Samurai' class of "public spirited guardians of a democratic society."[311] Sidney cultivated the idea of a new meritocratic aristocracy: their worth would be their talent and self-discipline, their code would be altruistic public service and their guidelines would be modern science. For a democratic society to work, it would have to have a "basis not of interest but of community of service […] and of that willingness to subordinate oneself to the welfare of the whole."[312] Their determination to see all sides of India results in the Webbs' realization that India has such a cultivated, intellectual, English-speaking and modernized elite. In the last decades of the Raj, the development of industry, modern professions, rising literacy and Western education had indeed created an English-speaking educated elite with growing social ambitions.[313] This wasn't the class the Anglo-Indians supported - they feared and mocked it. For them these were the hybrid Hindus, ridiculously mimicking the West or the pathetic *babus* working as office clerks. But these were also the Indians filling the ranks of nationalist organizations. The Webbs don't even consider the 'strangeness' or 'danger' of their hybridity: they saw the modernization of Indians as a universal and normal form of 'progress'. To them, this new, modernized class formed the real English-speaking elite of India.

The main reason, then, why the Hindu race is "essentially lovable," respectable and perhaps even the Englishman's equal is because the Webbs have identified this progressive, educated and cultivated Hindu elite. There is a section of society that stands far on the panoptical timeline; it is at a high level of development. As Beatrice writes in her concluding remarks the Hindu "produce more aristocrats of body, mind and manners and bearing than either the Chinese or the Japanese."[314] She continues: "the fact that the cultivated Hindu has more completely assimilated English thought and English literature whilst possessing a real knowledge of his own classics gives him a broader

[311] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 9.
[312] Quoted in: Jay M. Winter, *Socialism and the Challenge of War: Ideas and Politics in Britain, 1912-18* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 40.
[313] Brown, "India," 428.
[314] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 212.

base for intellectual intercourse with the cultivated Englishman."[315] Thus even as the superior standard of English and the modern is upheld, the Hindu can be called "a delightful and refined intellectual companion" and even considered to be someone "whom one instinctively feels to be one's superior."[316] This last point specifically relates to Beatrice's esteem for Hindus sense of spirituality. She sees this as an intellectual perspective that realizes one's own insignificance: a form of modesty and anti-egotism that harmonizes with her socialist vision. I will further discuss this religious side at the end of this chapter. Here, I would like to stress that this social vision, prizing education and modern progressiveness among Indians, was inherently bound to the Webbs' utopian reaction to the problems of modern capitalism. For it was in this domestic context that the Webbs had become convinced of the desirability for societal progress through modernization. And it was in the context of their socialist politics that they had formulated their ideal of an educated, aristocratic class as a vanguard for that change.

Now that I have discussed the Webbs' conceptualization of an Indian social hierarchy, it becomes clear how their contradictory evaluations of the Hindu are possible. The ultimate antimony of progress versus degeneracy is upheld, even reinforced by this class vision. Modernity is still superior, but the Webbs find that its intellectual representatives are also found on the other side of the imperial divide. Some of the colonized Indians are also modernized and 'developed'. Indeed for the Webbs, they represent *the* progressive section of Indian society. As such, a deeper knowledge of India through open-minded travel disrupts a subsidiary binary within the broader imperial vision of progress/degeneracy. This binary placed a dynamic, modern Englishman against an inherently static and traditional Indian. The Webbs find this to be untrue, but they don't abandon their belief in progress along Western lines. As I will argue in chapter six, they merely change their allegiances. The Webbs, however, consider this educated elite to be only a small section of the Hindu race. Beatrice accordingly writes "the aristocracy of India is dragged down by the lower castes and lower races" that, we have seen, "strangely childish in intellect."[317] These are the masses of degenerated and childish Indians still living in an archaic time. For the Webbs, then, the unified Hindu race can be simultaneously "degenerate" and "lovable". While this seems illogical, it makes perfect sense when one reconstructs the different facts of the Webbs' complex ideology. This dual-faced discourse is clarified when one considers both social and racial hierarchy as categories that map the Webbs' Indian society. With this in mind, it is now possible to further explore the various expressions of primitive degeneracy in the *Indian Diary*. While race plays an important role here, I will also examine how it is crisscrossed by notions of class, gender and religion. And just like their views on social hierarchy in India, I will show how the Webbs' depiction of Indian degeneracy reflects their experience of and politics in modern English society.

[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid., 213.
[317] Ibid., 212.

A recurring theme in the *Indian Diary*, is the description of the 'backward' and squalid living conditions of the Indians. Early on their journey, Beatrice gives a devastating representation of the squalor and poverty of the Indian village, which contrasts sharply with the Anglo-Indian's romantic view and Sidney's later endorsement of local village government discussed in chapter four. In her diary she writes: "There is no amenity and no comfort in the little group of mud huts used indiscriminately for man and beast – all the appliances are of the most primitive and inefficient types; and there seems to be an indefinite number of human beings only half-occupied, and all in a state of semi-starvation."[318] Her conclusion is that "from the Western standpoint, the Indian Village […] is a most depressing aspect of Humanity – listlessness and discord being its two outstanding features."[319] Curiously enough, Beatrice shows a self-conscious awareness of her position as Western observer whilst continuing to judge and condemn the underdevelopment of India. We also find that this socio-economic underdevelopment is fundamentally tied to a moral backwardness in the conduct and mental life of the Indians (listlessness and discord). Like in her evaluation of famine relief work, the middle class ideologemes that Beatrice formed in relation to industrial poverty are also transposed abroad. The ethical-religious discourse on the urban poor, we will shortly see, was projected onto the moral character of the Indian race.

Beatrice is especially sensitive to domestic uncleanliness. In particular, she is very much disturbed by the co-habitation of people and animals. In this vision of domestic degeneracy, the Indians blend into the life of animals. At the Chenab Colony she had also expressed her disgust that "the cattle and children were very promiscuously mixed up in the dirty compounds."[320] Domestic life is not much better (or rather, cleaner) in the city either: "In all the cities of British India the "native city" is always "slummy" in character – narrow alleys, dirty and ill-paved, such fine houses as there are tumbling into decay or degraded by being used as warehouses or tenement houses."[321] For her a lack of clean, modern domestic life and housing is the ultimate sign of a lack in civilization. Cleanliness is also the criterion of 'civilized industry': at the Agra mills the Webbs are concerned that "every room was dirty."[322] Of course, this discourse of dirtiness acquires its full meaning when considered against the Victorian reactions against the effects of industrialization and urbanization. Beatrice's fixation on dirt, considered in the context of her upper middle-class Victorian upbringing, fits well into what McClintock calls the Victorian 'dirt fetish'. She writes that in Victorian culture, dirt expressed a relation to labor: "Dirt was a Victorian scandal because it was the surplus evidence of manual work, the visible residue that stubbornly remained after the process

[318] Ibid., 18–19.
[319] Ibid., 19.
[320] Ibid., 135.
[321] Ibid., 87. The Webbs do write, however, that the condition is different in the cities of the Princely States. They that "Baroda […] has the charm and good order of the capital of a native state, as distinguished from the squalor and disorder of the native cities in British India." At Bhopal and Gwalior: "one finds broad streets, beautifully carved balconies, doors and latticed window […] making for a civilised India 'without the English'." But "of course the officials have often been educated in England." In the next chapter I will explore the Webbs' support of the self-government of India by modernized, Anglicized Indians. Ibid., 177, 87.
[322] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 93.

of industrial rationality had done its work."[323] In the gender roles that emerged, female members of the middle-class could not bear traces of such labor, resulting in a fascination and repulsion surrounding dirt. Sanitation and personal hygiene came to the fore, finding their way in the colonial sphere under slogans like "Soap is Civilization". Indeed, the very commodity of mass produced soap surfaced as a symbol of emerging middle class values and "took shape as a technology of social purification, inextricably entwined with the semiotics of imperial racism and class denigration."[324]

I would like to expand this theory by looking at its possible spatial expressions. As dirt was associated with the sphere of labor, it had to be expulsed from the private, domestic context of the home. The growing modern distinction between the public and the private, thus also helps to explain why Beatrice is especially repulsed by living spaces that are considered 'dirty'. Furthermore, the appearance of dirty 'slums' where the lower classes (associated with such manual labor) lived in squalid conditions stimulated and were pulled into this emerging discourse of cleanliness and order. In reaction to these modern socio-economic conditions, social reformers like the Webbs hoped to 'clean up' the slums and lift the poor out of their condition through social reforms. The chaos of the lower-class districts had to make way for utopian visions of rationalized, organized, geometric spaces that were easily supervised. Beatrice finds a parallel of the industrial slums in the 'slummy' Indian cities, and her comment hides a wish to 'improve' these degraded quarters. As is the case in Britain, the solution to these unsupervised spaces and deviant domestic contexts, is the further rationalization, organization and supervision of social life. Thus the discourse of 'uncleanliness' also legitimated the increasing state intervention and supervision which Beatrice supported both at home and in the colonial realm.

When it comes to the issues of domesticity and sexuality, the Victorian strain in Beatrice's character and thinking emerges strongly. This can be briefly explored by looking at Beatrice's description of a Hindu household. In Calcutta, the Webbs spend a week in the "patriarchal establishment" of Bhupendra Nath Bose, a prominent lawyer and INC member.[325] The ladies of his household are in *purdah*[326]: they live in seclusion, veil themselves in front of men and only leave the household on rare occasions. Beatrice is dismayed to find only "one decently furnished" room; all the others are "dark and dingy bedrooms."[327] She notes that "there was a singular absence of any little belongings and the place might have been inhabited by quite poor people […] I have rarely seen such depressing surroundings outside grinding poverty."[328] In sharp contrast to this, the 'cult of domesticity' of the Victorian age stressed home making, interior decoration and the increased

[323] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 153.
[324] Ibid., 212.
[325] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 1.
[326] *Purdah* is the umbrella term for different forms of female seclusion in the public and private sphere in South Asia. *Purdah* generally refers to Muslim practices, while in Hinduism it is known as 'ghoonghat'. Beatrice here uses the term to describe the (less common) Hindu practice of restricted female activity outside the home.
[327] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 2.
[328] Ibid.

presence of commodities in the home. Yet Beatrice does find the gendered discipline and boundaries of the Victorian household in the women's practice of *purdah*.[329] She writes admiringly of this institution: the life of *purdah* has "a charm of its own – the charm of love of parent, mate, and child, and the capacity of subordinating all personal desires for the good of the family. The discipline is absolute."[330] This disciplined subordination, or "unmeasured devotion" as Beatrice calls it, of the wife to the husband and the child is considered to be a virtue. The Victorian rationalization of domesticity, reflecting the middle-class values and mechanization of modern society, also resulted in an increased rationalization of time in the domestic realm. Thus the servants followed strict time routines and timetables, listening for the chiming clocks and ringing of bells.[331] We also find this stress on domestic efficiency in Beatrice's approving comment that "the servants were far more efficient than the Eastern servants of European households."[332] This only adds to her general impression that "this household was one of great happiness and considerable dignity."[333] To Beatrice, this clean, decent household of high social rank with its "pious domestic life," differs greatly from the dirty animal-filled mud huts of the primitive 'low-class' Indian village.[334]

Besides the widespread dirty living conditions, the Webbs deem the Hindus filthy in another way. This race, the Webbs believe, is sexually degenerate. After visiting a hospital in Bhopal, they note that "syphilis is said to be almost universal, and unnatural vice as well."[335] According to the Webs "there is, in fact, no idea of sexual morality, among either Hindoos or Musselmans."[336] The Maharaja of Chhatarpur, for example, "had (we were told and he almost confessed it to S.W.) taken to sexual malpractices" and the sons and daughters of the Maharaja of Baroda "seem to be somewhat addicted to 'irregular conduct'."[337] In their inspection of educational facilities, they are always concerned about the nightly supervision of schoolboys. Sexual vice also marks their representation of the Chinese: a lamasery is described as a "mass of putrefying humanity – indolence, superstition and sodomy."[338] Beatrice's diary entries in England exhibit a strong concern for the norms, meaning and importance of sex. While unmarried, Beatrice struggled with her sexual feelings, often feeling guilty and ashamed of her sexual desires: "those relations with men stimulate and excite one's lower nature, for where one can give no real sympathy strong feelings in another seem to debase and drag one down to a lower level of animal self-consciousness."[339] Beatrice linked the baseness of sexuality to animalism, which gives even more force to her concern about the

[329] On the rationalizing of domesticity, see: McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 167–69.
[330] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 4.
[331] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 168.
[332] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 5.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid., 215.
[335] Ibid., 81.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid., 176.
[338] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 167.
[339] Quoted in: Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 169.

Indians living together with the 'dirty' animals. Living with/like animals also debased the Indian people's morality. Around the time of her Asian trip, Beatrice feared that the sexual norms of English society were changing, as evidenced by the affairs of her friends H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw. In August 1909, Beatrice noted "the tangle into which we have got on the sex question," and that "none of us know what exactly is the sexual code we believe in."[340] However, Beatrice firmly disapproved of the promiscuity and the excess of sexuality that she believed was emerging as the morality of modern society. She noted her frustration at the modern author's obsession with "the rabbit-warren aspect of human society."[341] These writers tirelessly stress the physical attraction between the sexes, "coupled with the insignificance of the female for any other purpose but sex attraction."[342] "That world is not the world I live in," she wrote.[343] Her distaste for sexual debauchery crossed geographical borders, but in modern society this fault was limited to an individual deviance or a social trend. In the case of the Hindus or Muslims it was a characteristic of race.

In her diary, Beatrice wrote that the problem of the sexualized modern authors (and individuals), was that they disregarded the religious aspect of life. For Beatrice, religion did not mean a particular denomination or even a clear vision of a God. It was the general idea of "the communion of the soul with some righteousness *felt to be outside and above itself*."[344] It was a calling to devote oneself to "the *eventual* meaning of human life" and it made the "mere rabbit-warren an inconceivable horror."[345] In 1890, still unmarried and rejecting Sidney's courtship in a letter, she had expressed a similar belief: "Personal happiness to me is an utterly remote thing; and I am to that extent 'heartless' that I regard everything from the point of view of making my own or another's life serve the community more effectively."[346] Beatrice's religion or spiritual calling, which she believed she and Sidney (he unwittingly) practiced, resembles a form of utopianism. Her religion meant the altruism of devoting oneself to something larger than individual impulses or concerns of the immediate moment. This, of course, fit well with her socialism, but she couldn't recognize it in the popular Hinduism that Beatrice was disgusted by.

Indeed, the sexual degeneracy of the Indians spilled over in their religion. After visiting the famous Temples Khajuraho, she writes that they may appeal to art-dealers but "to the Philistine and Puritan mind they are spoilt by their incessant repetition of lascivious figures – some being most grossly indecent in their representation of 'unnatural' lust."[347] Again, we find a self-consciousness about her

[340] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 121.
[341] Ibid., 137.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid., 137–38.
[346] Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, *The Letters of Sydney and Beatrice Webb, Vol. I: Apprenticeships 1873-1892*, ed. Norman MacKenzie, The Letters of Sydney and Beatrice Webb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 139.
[347] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 73–74.

perceptions: Beatrice identifies herself as a 'Puritan' and even a 'Philistine' (a word with the negative connotation of anti-aestheticism). Some weeks later, the Webbs study the Arya Samaj's 1882 doctrine called the 'Light of Truth'. Beatrice notes the detailed instructions on sexual acts (which fortunately prescribe "restraint of animal passions"), family life, government and war. The fact that such codes of conduct are necessary reveals to her "the evils of the lascivious and idolatrous practices of Modern Hinduism."[348] Beatrice approval of the Arya Samaj's purification of Hinduism underlines her belief that the religion is at the moment in a debased state. The sexuality of Hindu religion forms only the extreme of what Beatrice considers to be its debauched and unspiritual character.

The degeneracy and egotism of popular Hinduism deeply disturbs Beatrice, as she constructs a binary between an inferior eastern superstition and the modern, rational mental life and spirituality of the West. At the end of the journey, she writes that the problem of religion has troubled her the most in India. More so than government or economics, the religious life of Hinduism has struck her "as an almost morbid obsession."[349] She writes that she has been revolted by "the *incontinence* of the popular religion – the strange combination of almost *hysterical* and certainly *promiscuous* idolatry – with crude superstitions as to the *physical* results of "God-propitiation" – and behind it all the sinister background of revolting *lasciviousness* and gross crudity."[350] This passage underlines Beatrice's complete revulsion for the degenerate nature of popular Hinduism, notably worded in strongly sexualized terms. She finds it in the "hypocrisy and vice" of the "grossly fat" *sadhus*[351], the "hysteria of the worshippers of Evil Gods", the nauseating fortune telling of Brahmin family priests, the "barbarous rite" of the veneration of the dead and the superstitious practices and rituals of Hindu pilgrims.[352] When she writes that in the lowest strata of Hinduism, "the lowest animal impulses" are allowed to determine all forms of conduct, she once again situates the primitive Indian at the level of the animal.[353]

With regards to the ascetic Hindu ideal of worldly detachment, Beatrice is less disturbed than puzzled. She had hoped that her journey to the east would enlighten her on this question, but she comes back "as mystified as ever."[354] She doesn't understand Annie Besant's interest in Yoga (here considered to be a mental meditative practice) as it aims for the suppression of human desire and mental activity, whereas "our Western ideal is, in fact, the fullest possible of human faculty among the whole people."[355] In their book *Industrial Democracy* the Webbs had defined 'liberty' as

[348] Ibid., 115.
[349] Ibid., 241.
[350] Ibid., 214., my emphasis.
[351] Hindu ascetics dedicated to achieving 'moksha'; the final stage of the life which brings the spiritual liberation from worldly concerns.
[352] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 19, 90, 102, 214–15.
[353] Ibid., 217.
[354] Ibid., 222.
[355] Ibid. The Webbs had visited Annie Besant, one of the earliest Fabians, at Benares. In 1889 Besant had left the Fabian Society, pursuing theosophy instead of socialism. This interest brought her to India, where she would eventually settle permanently. In 1898, she founded the Central Hindu College, the center of "New

a state of maximum intellectual development and activity of every individual. Their socialist 'religion', addressed at the material problems of modern capitalism, strove exactly for the full participation of every individual within society, in "service of humanity."[356] As I will argue in part two, Evelyn Waugh found in Catholic religion an *escape* from the unbearable chaos of modern society that actually more closely resembles the Hindu ideal of detachment. For him salvation came in the essential mystery of and service to God, while order was found in the rigid system and rituals of the Catholicism. The Webbs' socialist calling, however, was completely antithetical to the eastern ideal of the restriction of activity and the detachment from worldly matters, and Beatrice was obviously painfully rattled by this. The "intensely egotistic Purpose" of Hinduism, contrasted with everything socialism stood for; it even had an uncanny resemblance to the capitalist ideal of the pursuit of private profit.[357] But again, Beatrice is conscious of her position as a Western outsider, writing that this religion is a horrible sight "to the Western observer."[358] Earlier in her journey, she had written that "to the philistine mind of the Westerns" yoga seemed like a "pathological process rather than a spiritual exercise." "But that is only another way of saying that one does not understand it," she added, showing an admittance of ignorance that is rare in travel writing.[359] The final passage of the *Indian Diary* confesses that her cold skepticism about eastern religion testifies to her "continued ignorance of what may be behind this old wisdom."[360] Still, her experience of popular Hindu religion makes her less hopeful about Indian progress along Western lines, an ideal which she still ambiguously holds on to until the end.[361] She even wonders if "the most complete Hedonistic materialistic atheism would not be preferable to the religious experience of the Hindu people."[362]

At the same time, however, Beatrice argues that this degeneracy forms only one, backward side of Hinduism. The Webbs curiosity in organization and reform had brought them to go beyond the standard static vision of Hinduism. They came to realize that the religion is complex, varied and changing. Their in-depth travelling, open-minded attitude and intense contact with elite Hindus connected them to the emerging Hindu reform movement. In particular, the Webbs became admirers of the Arya Samaj organization: they met its members all over the country, read its pamphlets and literature, and attended its meetings and conferences. Essentially, the Webbs became embedded in the organization and moved throughout a nationwide network of Arya Samajist groups. By the time they reached Ajmer in March 1912, the Webbs had become so popular with the organization that they were welcomed at the train station by a crowd of bowing Arya Samajists.[363]

Hinduism" which combined Hindu mysticism with 'the Power of Conduct' and 'the Power of Knowledge of Western civilization'. See: footnote 5, Ibid., 20.

[356] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 222.

[357] Ibid., 19.

[358] Ibid.

[359] Ibid., 115–16.

[360] Ibid., 222.

[361] Ibid., 215.

[362] Ibid.

[363] Ibid., 157.

In the same concluding remarks on Indian religion (on which I have frequently drawn above) Beatrice writes that it is essential to balance the superstitious Hinduism with the realization of "the new development – of the healthy, virile, and free service of religious orders, self-dedicated to the progress of the race."[364] This one passage perfectly illustrates Beatrice's clinical, gendered and racialized discourse, all leading up to that ideal of progress. Beatrice is highly enthusiastic about the "Informal Religious Orders of social service arising in modern India" like the Arya Samaj movement or the members of Fergusson College. These orders *did* conform to their socialist vision of self-abnegation for the service of society. They are even preferable to the Western religious orders because they show two remarkable features: complete freedom of thought (the absence of religious dogma) and "normal domestic life" (again, we encounter that Victorian ideal of modest domesticity and ideal parenthood).[365] Beatrice notes that this religion is not applied, as demoralized Hinduism or any unscientific religion is, to determine the *processes* of life. Instead, it concerns itself with "the purity and nobility of your purpose in life."[366] She writes "in the finest form of Hinduism, we watch an almost perfect relation between religious emotion and intellectual life."[367] This confirms Beatrice's previous ideas about the legitimate relation between science and religion: the first should be concerned with the processes of life, the second with one's 'higher' purpose (namely a self-disciplined dedication to something larger than oneself). The legitimacy, and absolute truth of science and rational thought is maintained while religion consists of the calling to use them for the betterment of all humans.

Beatrice probably projected much of her theory on the Hindu reformers, who were more concerned with the particularities of the Vedas than she might have liked. Whatever the case, the Webbs were predisposed to favor any kind of organized movements that were pushing any kind of reform. Moreover, the Arya Samajists were also actively working for social change (fighting against child marriage, for example) and educational reform (often incorporating modern science) in India. Just like the Webbs, they believed that society had to change: they pursued the progress of the country and had special attention for helping the poor and distressed.[368] The "sincere and powerful self-discipline" of these elite Hindus, impresses Beatrice immensely and breaks down her racial speculations. [369] She writes, shortly after her characterization of the Hindu as 'ineffectual', that when one meets the men of the Arya Samaj or the "Servants of India," "all your prepossessions as to the lack of self-discipline and persistent self-devotion and even executive force among Hindus dissolves into a mere prejudice of which you become ashamed."[370] This passage indicates the potential disruptive power of individual mobility through travel on imperial ideologies. Beatrice's close contact with the Arya Samajists makes her consider their religious devotion. In Beatrice's mind, this devotion then merges with their status as educated and progressive elites, which leads her

[364] Ibid., 216.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid., 218.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Jayal, "Introduction," xxx.
[369] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 215.
[370] Ibid., 213.

to rethink her previous sweeping racial characterizations. These disciplined orders fit well with the Webbs' dream of an intellectual, public-spirited elite. To Beatrice, the educated and reform-minded Hindus of these movements clearly belong to the Webbs' Hindu 'aristocracy' that I have described above. Beatrice characterizes their activity as "service by an aristocracy of birth and intellect, for mere subsistence, and within a democratically managed community of social equals."[371] Beatrice adds that "this [type of service] is an entirely new idea to the Western mind."[372] But it was not new to her mind: this description is a perfect sketch of the Samurai class which she wished to implement in England and which she recognized in India. Both India and England needed such a disciplined commitment to progress into a more modern and just society.

To the Webbs, then, India was still an 'anachronistic space': its masses were behind on the timeline of development along modern, Western lines. As I have argued, this overarching vision of racial backwardness of the Hindus and Muslims was crisscrossed by the Webbs' social vision of an educated elite, Beatrice's Victorian ideas about domesticity and sexuality, and the Webbs' socialist religious calling. Sometimes these different categories reinforced one another in experiences of revolting degeneracy: this is evidenced by the Webbs' representations of a 'dirty' Indian race and debauched popular religion. But sometimes these categories contradicted each other, subverting imperial assumptions and binaries. The Webbs' admiration for the 'Hindu aristocracy', the decent elite Hindu family and the self-disciplined 'Samurai' religious reform orders explain how the Webbs eventually describe the Hindus as a lovable race. All the concerned ideologemes (the dirt fetish, ideal domesticity, 'scientific' racial thinking, the need for religion …) and overt political beliefs (the ideals of a 'Samurai' class, socialist self-discipline, modern education…) that converge in the Webbs' interpretation of India were, I have argued, fundamentally tied to the condition of industrialized modernity. The representation of India by the Webbs cannot be isolated from their responses to the modern condition and their political program against private capitalism. Indeed, many of the themes, tropes, and judgements in the *Indian Diary* were formed as ideological responses to the conditions in modern English society, or in any case intersected with them.

The Webbs believed that by following the lead of a public-spirited modernizing elite of the Fabian type, the Indians could elevate themselves out of their racial listlessness, dirty homes, sexual degeneracy and superstitious religion. To their surprise, Beatrice and Sidney found such an elite aristocracy in the reforming Hindu religious orders and the many cultivated Hindus around the country. By the end of their journey the Webbs had also realized that the British officials in India shaped themselves in imitation of a wholly different type of aristocracy: the leisured life of the English landed gentry. They were disillusioned to find that the English were not fulfilling their public-spirited civilizing mission and neglecting the aristocratic section of Hindu society. Thus after the passage glorifying the existence within Hindu society of a service by a democratically-minded aristocracy, Beatrice writes: "If only the British official with his insistence on high salaries, prestige

[371] Ibid., 217.
[372] Ibid.

and elaborate arrangements for the pleasures of life, would recognize the existence, *within the Indian community*, of a moral and intellectual standard superior to his own."[373] The desperately needed progressive element in India was to be found not with the British but with the educated, aristocratic elite and the self-disciplined religious movements. Not coincidentally, this section of Hindu society was often determinedly nationalist.

[373] Ibid., my emphasis.

6

BRITISH COLONIALS AND INDIAN NATIONALISTS

In the nearly four months that the Webbs traveled through India, they slowly adjusted their idea of British colonialism. They had expected to find the British educating the Indians, developing its industry, establishing an efficient administration and pushing the country into modernity. Ultimately, this was the Fabian justification of empire: the condition of the Indian people would improve as they became modern consumers and producers, their intellectual life would become richer as they learned Western science and arts. But the Webbs slowly but decidedly realized that their socio-economic vision of a developed, modernized India was not being pursued by the Anglo-Indian officials but by educated and reform-minded Hindus. "Their preconceptions began to be undermined," writes Radice, the trip "made them examine their own preconceptions – and finally disregard them."[374] Instead of only primitive 'natives', the Webbs were unexpectedly confronted by a movement of nationalist and reformist sentiment among educated Hindus. The democratic and reformist politics of these Hindus strongly resembled those of the Webbs. Confronted by these 'facts', the Webbs eventually made the necessary deduction. In the political arena of India, they aligned themselves with the reform-minded and often nationalist Hindus.

It has been difficult to evade this fact up until now. Throughout the several chapters I have already touched upon the Webbs' disillusionment with British administration and their growing appreciation of educated Hindu 'aristocracy'. Now, we can pull together several strands of the Webbs' politics and ideology and fully explore this theme. In chapter three and four, I argued how the Webbs formulated a political vision of Indian progress along the lines of modern education and intensive government intervention. In chapter five, I focused on the ideologically determined representation and understanding of the Indian population. This chapter mostly returns to the Webbs' immediate politics, but this of course relates to their deeper lying ideological beliefs. Again, I will focus on the various links between the modern domestic context and the colonial realm. Not only was their distaste for the Anglo-Indians and support for the educated Hindu guided by their evaluations of modern English society, their experience in India in turn influenced their own domestic politics. The Webbs' growing contempt for the traditional, conservative Englishmen and their acquaintance with the Indian nationalists stimulated their radicalization. After their Indian trip, the Webbs wholeheartedly threw themselves into active socialist politics: the Webbs decided to take the Fabian Society more seriously and they finally joined the ranks of the Labour Party.

First, however, let us look at the Webbs' growing disillusionment with British colonial society. In the scope of this thesis, this is especially interesting because it opens a window to compare the conscious and unconscious politics of the Webbs and Evelyn Waugh. As I will argue

[374] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 190.

in part two, Waugh loved the company of the 'gin-swigging', 'polo-loving' British colonials in Kenya, their leisured life, and their attempt to recreate traditional England overseas. Of course, one cannot equate the specific national contexts of Kenya settlers to the Anglo-Indian officials. But as Simon Potter writes in his review of *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Over the Seas*, it is interesting to approach the different British colonial communities not as 'national units' but from a "global, and simultaneously very local" perspective. [375] He outlines "a string of empire-dependent towns and cities" in which overseas Britons, organized in communities, tried to dominate other white and non-white inhabitants.[376] In the scope of this study, of course, I am in any case not primarily interested in the actual characteristics of British colonial society but in the way it was imagined by travelers from the metropolis. British colonial societies were in reality far more complex and heterogeneous than both Waugh and the Webbs believed them to be. However, in their imaginative and even mythical constructions, we do find the same characterization of colonial society, the same returning elements. At least in the metropolitan representation of the different British overseas communities, there seems to be a global uniformity. Despite the similarities in the representation of British colonials, however, Waugh and the Webbs judge them very differently due to their conflicting attitudes towards English society.

The *Indian Diary* is full of disparaging comments on the Anglo-Indians. The Webbs frequently criticize the shallowness of Anglo-Indian social life, their unfair racial exclusions, their use of the word 'nigger', their mocking remarks about reform movements like the Arya Samaj, and their criticisms of modernized Hindu society. Perhaps only a few concrete examples are necessary to paint the progressively worsening opinion of the Webbs towards Anglo-Indian society. In January, there are barely any negative remarks. Instead, the Webbs still show faith in the colonials and in British rule. At their city of arrival, Calcutta, Beatrice notes that the Emperor King, who had travelled to India for the 1911 Delhi Durbar, was "really popular and the people appreciated his coming to India and his free and easy way of going about."[377] She scoffs that the "cultivated Hindu," whom she would later so admire, "professed to be bored with the whole thing […] but I think he was a little bit 'put out' by the obvious enthusiasm of the crowd."[378] Beatrice is disappointed that the Government of India, absorbed by the Royal visit, "have showed no sign of wishing to see us."[379] Mirroring the social concerns of the Anglo-Indians, she is even insulted that she hasn't been invited to the Government House Garden Party. Soon, however, the negative remarks subtly begin and the allegiances start to shift. At Lucknow, the Webbs write that their host Professor Ward of Canning College is "an example of how men of capacity but without professional zeal go to seed in India – especially if they happen to be of the sensual type."[380] At Jhansi they note that the officials know nothing about the Indians and aren't interested in any of

[375] Simon J. Potter, "Settlers and Expatriates. By Robert Bickers.," *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 1 (2011): 123.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 10.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid., 70.

their problems. The Anglican chaplain at Bhopal reflects the "usual 'army' prejudice against the 'niggers'."[381] The more the Webbs meet Hindus, Muslims and both critical and uncritical British officials, the more they find how the officials are at odds with their own attitudes and politics.

By the end of February, the Webbs' negative opinion has already been fully formed. At a dinner party in Agra they meet a young Assistant Magistrate who "was a mere 'Society rattle', a handsome, well-dressed youth, interested in nothing but dancing and sport, snobbish in opinion, and anti-Indian in prejudice, who served to remind us that even among the youngest and newest civilians there are some who have all the class and racial prejudices of the worst of the old generation."[382] The problem of the colonial society is thus not only a generational problem and this realization only deepens the Webbs' doubts about the Raj. In March at Delhi, the Webbs are outraged to find that the Deputy Commissioner is throwing two garden parties, one for the English and one for the Indian 'natives'. This whole arrangement is a "monument of invidious race distinction and snobbishness" which reveals this bad side of the English administration.[383] The Webbs are indeed completely opposed to the racial segregation between the elite Englishmen and the Hindus that characterized much of Indian society during the Raj. They fiercely criticize the "most objectionable" exclusion of Indians from public spaces like the Cawnpore Memorial Gardens and the Taj Mahal.[384] This is because they conceive of a social hierarchy that crosses racial lines but also because they believe that an attitude of 'reciprocal superiority' is crucial to guide India into 'manhood'. To their credit, the Webbs act out this position. During their travels they continuously seek out contact with elite Hindus: they talk to them, join their social life, attend their political meetings, stay at their houses and go to their religious events. Indeed, all in all, the Webbs probably spend at least as much time with Indian people as they do with the English, certainly towards the end of their journey. The Webbs are disturbed that the Anglo-Indians are ignorant of or refuse to associate with Hindus who the Webbs consider to be the Englishman's equal or even superior.

This segregation between the 'races' within India only reinforces the uniformity and close-mindedness of the colonials. One of the problems of Anglo-Indian society, it seems to the Webbs, is that most of Anglo-Indian society is pulled from the same 'backward' social circles in England or becomes the same once they arrive in India. The Webbs are unhappy that most English teachers are drawn from "leavings of the university world". These upper-middle class individuals who couldn't get positions in England, are "rotten elements in the Indian education."[385] Instead, the Government should bring "first-rate middle class men – the best type of elementary or science teachers."[386] Of the sixty or seventy men who yearly come to fill the ranks of the Indian Civil Service the Webbs write that they are "nearly all of identical school and university training, all cast in the same mould

[381] Ibid., 80.
[382] Ibid., 98.
[383] Ibid., 149.
[384] Ibid., 72, 87.
[385] Ibid., 195.
[386] Ibid.

as to dress, manners, language and habits and (to a great extent) also opinions and prejudices."[387] This is an exaggeration, but not by much. The members of the British imperial service were a fairly homogenous block: almost all came from the upper middle and professional classes and went to same public schools. John Cell writes of their gentlemanly education: "curricula dominated by classics and mathematics, games, teamwork, exaggerated masculinity, cold showers, and stiff upper lips."[388] The fagging system (an institutionalized custom where younger boys acted as servants to senior boys) was supposed to teach boys to obey, punish, encourage, and rule."[389] The whole elite educational system was focused on the teaching of general knowledge, not of technical or specialist skills. It was this kind of education and the type of men it created, that the Webbs were fighting against in England through their educational initiatives. Ten years later, Evelyn Waugh feared that this 'public school' England of youthful transgressions and old boy networks was in decline. The competitive examination system to join the Indian Civil Service did broaden the educational background of its members, made for more Irish and Scottish, and meant that its members were academically stronger.[390] But still, most Anglo-Indians came from a similar background or became alike during their years of service in India.

It was of course easier for the Webbs to distance themselves from British colonial society and its rules of conduct. They were only intelligent, passing visitors who held no lasting ties or responsibilities. For the young men posted out in remote places for years to come, Anglo-Indian society was often a familiar comfort from the "lonely responsibility" that characterized administration.[391] Moreover, they were more dependent on the rest of British colonial society, both in their professional and private lives. Unlike the Webbs, it was a lot harder for them to dissociate with English society in India, if only because their superiors belonged to it. The Webbs themselves discover this when even the "refined and sensible" political officer Sir Elliot Colvin shows "the usual nervous dread of criticism of the British Government as a kind of sedition."[392]

According to Cell, the immense responsibility over a large area (a consequence of the chronic under-funding of empire) in combination with the pre-existing Indian client networks, helped to mold authoritarian colonial personalities. The 'dominance-dependency' complex of colonial rule was hard to avoid, even to those who were less inclined to cultivate.[393] Indeed, the very system and culture of British rule in India seems to have fostered a homogenizing force, shaping the Anglo-Indians into similar, conservative individuals, often with authoritarian tendencies. The practicalities of administration and the dominant culture of an isolated minority of Anglo-Indians tended to blunt the more reform-minded. In the beginning of April, nearing the end of their journey, the Webbs write that they find such an official in Bombay. By now, the Webbs had become severely critical of the British Indian government and its satellite colonial society. At Bombay, they

[387] Ibid., 15.
[388] Cell, "Colonial Rule," 233.
[389] Ibid.
[390] Ibid., 232–33.
[391] Ibid., 233.
[392] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 161.
[393] Ibid., 234.

stay at the house of the Governor, Sir G. Clarke. Sidney had known him twenty years ago, when he had the reputation of "a liberal minded and progressive administrator."[394] But they write that he has now become an "old and bitterly reactionary, both as regards Home politics and, what is more important, as regards Indian affairs."[395] "Poor man," Beatrice writes, "his eyes had that lifeless, sullen, and suspicious expression which betokens disillusionment."[396] His first wife had died, a women committed to "bridging the gulf" and beloved by the Indians. His new wife, Beatrice writes, is "stupid and snobbish […] disliking 'lower races' and 'lower classes, and resenting their desire for self-government."[397] Clarke dismisses the Arya Samaj as 'political' ("as if that necessarily damned it morally," Beatrice writes) and opposes Beatrice's use of the word 'Indians' because he believes there is "no *race* of Indians!"[398] Beatrice and Sidney come to heartily dislike Clarke and all his policies: "The sooner this worn-out, tired, saddened and embittered man goes home into retirement the better."[399] All this only confirms their doubts about the prospects of British rule under men like Clarke.

However, rather than the average British colonial's conservative worldview as such, it was above all his or her perceived lack of interest in *any kind* of politics or intellectual thought that really drove the Webbs away. A point that the Webbs repeatedly stress is that the 'conversation' of the Anglo-Indians is incredibly superficial and always inferior to that of the Hindu aristocracy. The general picture that the Webbs paint is that the Anglo-Indians are overwhelmingly dumb and especially shallow. While an anti-intellectual intellectual like Waugh loved colonial conversation, one can in any case determine that the interests of the Webbs strongly differed from those that the Anglo-Indians discussed with them. Thus when Beatrice hears from the Governor of Lahore's wife that one couldn't become friends with Indians because they have nothing to talk about, she is dumbfounded. "We have never quite understood this complaint," she writes "seeing how much we have found to talk about with both Hindoos and Muhammedans."[400] But the subsequent conversation at the luncheon table "makes us realise what was meant. It turned exclusively on lawn tennis, polo and the various race meetings and tournaments."[401] Beatrice argues that because the Indian, unlike the English, doesn't incessantly talk about these 'amusements', the Englishmen thinks he has nothing to talk about. "Whereas it is he who is conversationally destitute," she snaps.[402] The interests of the politicized Hindus overlap a lot more with those of the Webbs: they "seem to us as ready as we are to talk about public affairs, about social and economic problems, about music and art, about philosophy, and even about religion."[403] These topics, they find, are banned from "a large

[394] Ibid., 181.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid., 182.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Ibid., 208.
[400] Ibid., 146.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid.

section of English society."[404] The same complaint arises a couple of days later after a "rather 'terrible' party" in the Udaipur state: "the hostess and her lady friends in extremely décolleté and ultra-smart gowns," the ascetic Beatrice writes with contempt, "the conversation more than usually 'Anglo-Indian' in its contempt for the 'natives', its concentration on petty grievances, and its snobbishness."[405] She dismisses them with a vicious one-liner: as the English in the princely states have nothing to do "it is just as well that those who are fit for nothing better should be sent there."[406] Here, we find how the Webbs' snobbery followed the criteria of education, work, intellectual interest and public service. At the end of the journey they conclude that have found more capacity for intellectual conversation among cultivated Indians than among any English people in India. This is not what they had expected.

The Webbs believed that – this was, after all the reason for colonialism – the British officials were to be the educated, progressive new guard within the colony. They were there to change the status quo, to civilize India, to administer in efficiently, not to maintain its primitive state. Obviously, the men and women of Anglo-Indian society were not suitable members of the 'imperial race' that the Webbs had in mind. There are, of course, some exceptions. The Webbs are incredibly impressed by the District Collector Hope Simpson, with whom they spend a few days traveling around his district. They admire how his close relationship with the village headmen of his district, addressing them in fluent Urdu during meetings which they find incredibly valuable. Simpson seems to them the "ideal administrator over an alien race": his profile as an efficient and energetic "General Manager" is perfectly suited for the broad work of the District Officer.[407] He is the opposite of the bureaucrat, they write, but this might also be his main fault: he is perhaps too indifferent to "the common rules of law and administration."[408] Yet, despite his reputation as a great administrator, this one civil servant approved by the Webbs is not liked by his superiors and doesn't get any recognition or a promotion from the Government of India. The Webbs suspects that this is due to his 'pro-native' stance and his disinterest in trifle matters of Anglo-Indian society. Just like the Webbs, he disapproves of the "inanities of Simla, and the intrigues, reputable and disreputable" that go in in colonial society.[409] Hope Simpson, the abandoned and secluded administrator, only confirms the Webbs' distrust of the British Indian government. And even Simpson, they write, is hardly a man that has the same refined intellectual capacities of the Hindu elite.

The Webbs come to believe that the overwhelming majority of the British officials are, unlike Simpson, apparently not at all concerned with effective administration or friendly relations with the Indians of someone like Simpson. Nor are these officials interested in progress, Indian or otherwise. Rather, most of them believe progress has gone too far in England. The Webbs think that the colonial is at heart a reactionary and not even an intelligent one. The British official in the

[404] Ibid.
[405] Ibid., 156.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid., 49.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid., 52.

Indian Diary prefers the primitive, the exotic, the inefficient, and the old instead of the new, the democratic, the industrial, and the rational. The Webbs' and the Anglo-Indian's conflicting reactions against modern society are intertwined with conflicting imperial ideologies. As I have already argued in chapter four, the Webbs' vision for the future of India and the role of the British therein was completely at odds with the anti-modern and conservative imperial ideology that was dominant among the British colonial society. Thus the Webbs' more 'personal' dislike of the colonials (their social life, their conversation, their character...) is intrinsically bound up with the colonial's different imperial and domestic ideologies and their different political vision for the colony. This also means that the Webbs and the colonials differed substantially in their judgements about the Indians. I have already described how the Webbs were very fond of modernized Hindu society and were generally less racist in their opinions of and relations with the Indian people. But the colonials also had their preferred Indian.

The conflict between the colonial vision of the Webbs and that of the Anglo-Indians is best illustrated in two passages. At Peshawar, near the Afghan border, the Webbs are "amused" by the universal praise by the British of the "wild" Pathan people.[410] They write that the British believe that these people are "fine fellows, far superior to the Hindoos!"[411] But after cross-examination they find that the Pathans are "cruel and treacherous, shockingly addicted to unnatural vice and habitually given to stealing each other's wives."[412] The men don't work, instead devoting their time to "promiscuous shooting at each other, taken unawares, which they call war."[413] There is no sign at all that these Pathans could within a few centuries develop into "anything like a civilised people, or into anything else of use in the world."[414] When the Webbs ask around why these 'barbarous' people is so admired, the colonials answer that they are "fine manly fellows, "good sportsmen", with a sense of humor!"[415] "Verily," Sidney writes, "our English standards are peculiar."[416] The masculine, militarized and ornamentalist imperial vision of course appreciates these 'wild tribes' at the edge of civilization. This gendered exoticism fit in well with the older imperial culture of war and adventure. Where leisure, humor and manliness are important to the British officers, the Webbs value the type of modernization that the Anglo-Indians experienced as threatening or possibly treacherous. The elitist Webbs found their social allies in the educated Hindu 'aristocracy', the elitist Anglo-Indians recognized 'good sportsmen' in the manly, militaristic sportsmen like the Pathans.

British colonial society also cultivated a paternalistic care over the 'primitive' Indian villagers, as I have already briefly explored in chapter four's treatment of the Indian 'village-community'. In the beginning of February, the Webbs meet Mr. Silberrad, the district collector of Jhansi. While they find him sympathetic, he "did not really believe in raising the Indians to a higher

[410] Ibid., 129.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid., 129–30.
[414] Ibid., 130.
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.

level."[417] The wording alone underlines the Webbs' familial discourse of 'raising' the Indian up into a 'higher level' of humankind, namely that level of the modern west. Silberrad, reflecting a lot of Anglo-Indian opinion, does not agree that this is the desirable goal of colonialism. "His excuse for the negative policy," Beatrice writes, "was that English civilisation was doubtfully good – why then 'impose it' on the Indians – why not keep them in a state of primitive bliss!"[418] As we will see, Evelyn Waugh channels a similar discourse that doubts the desirability of modern civilization when weighing the legitimacy colonialism in Zanzibar and Uganda. The Webbs, of course, wholeheartedly disagree. Beatrice writes that Silberrad looks so efficient, happy, healthy and agreeably self-complacent that "one could hardly believe that he was honestly doubtful of the civilisation that had produced him."[419] This attitude reminds her of Alfred Cripps, her brother-in-law and a devout Anglican conservative, when "he assures you that the labourers on his estate are, on the whole, more happily contented than his own class."[420] She believes that in both cases this is mere wishful thinking: "the wish is father to the thought, and is a mere excuse for a sort of passive resistance to upheaving forces."[421] This passage is interesting in two respects. It shows, again, that the Webbs heartily believe in the superiority not of the English per se, but of their modern civilization. They have a far greater faith in the desirability of exporting Western society than the colonials do. Where the Anglo-Indian is skeptical about the quality of modern life, the Webbs believe it is a universal good. This excellently illustrates the conflicting views between the traditionalists and the modernists in colonial affairs. Moreover, it also shows how these two views were inherently bound to domestic politics and the differing responses to the problems of modernity. The parallel that Beatrice makes between attitudes towards the English working class and attitudes towards 'primitive' Indians, is no coincidence. She is convinced that both the Indian 'primitives' and the working class are at a similar 'lower level' and need to 'raised up' along similar lines. Both the Webbs' reformist and Silberrad's conservative imperial ideologies were determined by and in turn sustained domestic interpretations of industrial capitalist society. The responses to the 'problem' of the working class ('raise them' versus 'leave them alone') and the responses to the 'problem' of the 'underdeveloped' colonial subject mirrored and legitimated each other.

Due to these profound ideological differences between the Webbs and their compatriots in India, the Webbs became increasingly alienated from and disillusioned by the British colonial society and government. On the ship that takes them from Bombay to Cairo, they sum up their journey: "the more we saw of India, the more we learned about the Government and the officials, and the longer we lived among the people the graver became our tone, and the more subdued our optimism."[422] They had arrived, they write, full of confidence for the future. But that confidence has shrunk as they have come to know how much the Indian bureaucracy is allied "in the main with

[417] Ibid., 71.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid.
[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid., 209.

reactionary Imperialism and commercial selfishness in England."[423] Their three months in India have "greatly increased our estimate of the Indians, and greatly lessened our admiration for, and our trust in this Government of officials."[424] Here, one finds the political effects of the Webbs' mobility in their own words. As I have argued, travel to and through India has not 'destabilized' the Webbs' ideologemes or their belief in the superiority of modern progress. But it has drastically changed their opinion of Indians and the Raj. Their acquaintance with the different circles of Indian society has brought them to realize that the educated Indians do and the British colonials don't stand behind their own beliefs. The people who share a vision of 'raising up' the Indian and modernizing the country are to be found in Indian society itself.

In the previous chapter, I have already explored the social vision, religious ideas and socialist politics that led the Webbs to respect and align themselves with what they called the Hindu 'aristocracy'. These reform-minded, self-disciplined and forward-looking Hindus harmonized with the Webbs' socialist and developmental ideals. Criticizing the brute racial exclusions of the reactionary Anglo-Indians, the Webbs formed an ideal of the recognition of 'reciprocal superiority' between the races. It is unnecessary to repeat the intricacies and paradoxes of these ideas here. Instead, I would briefly like to discuss the way the Webbs associated with the Indian nationalist movement and how they judged the nationalist political project.

Instead of evaluating the legitimacy of imperial conquest or the system of colonialism, the Webbs almost exclusively focus on the practicalities of administration and immediate political possibilities. Their democratic impulses bring them to latently accept that the government of the Indians would, ideally, be in the hands of the Indians. But what overrides this concern is the efficiency and progressiveness of government. The main issue for the Webbs was whether the 'Indian race' was capable of efficiently governing their country without the English. After their closer acquaintance with the Indian elites, they are quite confident that is possible – eventually. In the Native State of Gwalior they remark that "so far as one gets a glimpse of the actual administration one can hardly say that Indians show themselves incapable of the art of government […] there is certainly no sign of these officials being inherently weak, or corrupt, or partial between creed and creed, or caste or caste."[425] While the Webbs sometimes criticize the slackness of Indian officials, they call others "upright and intelligent - zealous."[426] We have already seen how the Webbs considered 'infectivity' to be a racial characteristic of the Hindus. But the Webbs believe that the Indians can overcome this; it is feasible that they *become* productive. They believe there is no inherent 'racial' unfitness for government among the Indians, they just need to be educated and cultivate a self-discipline that wins from their racial listlessness. The next step, then, is to investigate how many and which educated, productive individuals and organizations already exist among the Indians.

[423] Ibid.
[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid., 87.
[426] Ibid., 104.

The Webbs thus show particular attention to organized movements in India. Evidently, they believe these organizations are fostering the elites and political associations necessary for effective and responsible self-rule. At the start of their journey, they attend a meeting of the Indian National Congress (INC), the political organization founded in 1885 which would go on to play an immense role in Indian independence. The Webbs, at this point still supportive of the British government and largely unaware of Indian society, are not impressed: it "proved rather a frost," they write.[427] They note "an element of listlessness and unreality about the eloquent speeches" and are disquieted about the lack of tight organization ("a curious vagueness as to the arrangements for lunch etc.").[428] Of its members, the Webbs write: "You can perceive in them almost a contempt for organisation and a dislike for administration – no real interest in the problems of government […] They are, I imagine, all individualists at heart, and think our craving after governmental efficiency wholly disproportionate to its value."[429] While they support their aim to organize Indian co-operation on a national level, they seriously miscalculate the Congress' capacities and write that it will likely "peter out."[430] If the Webbs had attended a Congress meeting at the end of their journey, their judgement would likely have been different.

As I have already described at the end of chapter five, the Webbs increasingly extoll the virtues of many other politicized and reformist Hindu organizations and initiatives. They are especially supportive of the socio-religious reform movement Arya Samaj which was a major influence on the nationalist movement and counted many nationalist members. The Webbs believe their "educated and progressive" members have "shown great organising and managing ability."[431] Through their interest in such reform-minded organizations and individuals, the Webbs meet some prominent figures within the nationalist movement. In Lahore, they befriend Lajpat Rai, a prominent Arya Samaj member and an influential leader of the national movement's extremist wing. The more they see him, the more they like him. Beatrice eventually writes that he is "not 'loyal' to the British connection – but why should he be!"[432] They appreciate the Arya Samaj ideal that the Hindus should first "advance in personal character" before engaging in politics.[433] The Webbs further note with interest that the nationalists of Lahore put their hope for outside support in the Labour and Liberal parties in Britain.

Months later, the Webbs leave the snobbish Tory atmosphere at the Government House at Bombay ("with its ungenerous belittling of the whole Indian people, mingled with innuendoes and aspersions even of the most distinguished of them") to go to visit Gopal Krishna Gokhale.[434] The contrast between the two circles jarred upon the Webbs and makes them "ashamed of our official

[427] Ibid., 5.
[428] Ibid., 7.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid., 158.
[432] Ibid., 117.
[433] Ibid., 115.
[434] Ibid., 186.

representatives in India."[435] Gokhale is involved in the brotherhood of the Ferguson College, mentioned above, and the Servants of India Society. The Webbs meet the members of the Ferguson College and are very impressed with "their personalities, their great culture, their gentle and attractive natures, their obvious intellectual ability."[436] They value how the brotherhood shows so much disinterested zeal and are amazed that they do this under the inspiration "only of 'Nationalism'."[437] The Webbs express their astonishment that the Anglo-Indians don't acknowledge the devotion or self-sacrifice shown by these Hindus. The Servants of India Society, then, trains men carefully selected by Gokhale for public service. Its goal to create a body of trained and devoted men for the progress of India obviously resonates with the Webbs.

The Webbs are also impressed by Gokhale himself, whom they come to appreciate more and more. They are struck by his "political sagacity and calm statesmanship" and favor him to his more extremist rival within the INC, Bal Gangadhar Tilak.[438] Tilak's strike and sabotage-based tactics reminded the Webbs of the syndicalists inciting class warfare in Britain.[439] The Webbs' position on Indian self-rule seems to align most with Gokhale's moderate and incremental approach that stressed the self-education and self-discipline of the Indian people. The 'political' problem of India, the Webbs conclude is that "a stupid people find themselves governing an intellectual aristocracy."[440] They agree with Gokhale that this is because the "*Average man of the British race,* is far superior to the *Average man* of the Indian peoples."[441] This political vision is, of course, informed by the Webbs' ideological racial views that suppose the inferior backwardness of the large mass of Indian population and their social vision that identified a small Hindu aristocracy. The inevitable result, the Webbs believe, is that "Until the average has been raised the aristocracy of India will be subject to the mediocrity of Great Britain."[442] This is only logical within the Webbs' thinking: as the British 'race' is still higher in the scale of development, it is only logical that they remain the 'schoolteachers' of the Indians. They are glad to note that most of the nationalists, "recognise that a certain measure of alien rule is necessary at present."[443] They maintain this position even as they believe that most Indians knowingly *want* self-rule. Midway their journey, they come to the conclusion that "*all Hindus are Nationalists* – and except for their jealousy of the Hindus – nearly all Mohammedans believe in the government of India by the Indians as the ultimate ideal."[444] Strikingly, however, they don't explore this general Indian will for self-rule any further or give it much weight. This confirms Schneider's description of the major strand of imperialism as

[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid., 188.
[437] Ibid.
[438] Ibid., 191.
[439] The Webbs disapprove of the "irritating strike" strategy of syndicalism, which they considered as an interest-based movement and a distasteful return to Marxism and anarchism. See footnote three: Ibid., 192.
[440] Ibid., 193.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid., 197.
[444] Ibid., 117.

preferring "leadership to liberty."[445] But the Webbs are not confident that "paternal British rule" is yielding the best results; the British colonials are not the leaders they have in mind.[446]

By the end of their journey, it is fair to say that the Webbs had been swayed to side with the moderate nationalists. The Webbs had effectively laid out a network of friendly contacts with many progressive and nationalist forces around the country.[447] Besides similar socio-political visions, the mutual affinity between the Webbs and the nationalists was probably also facilitated because the reformist Indians saw the Webbs as important individuals and possible allies in their cause. They treated them as such, confided in them and tried to convince them of the nationalist cause. On the other hand, many British officials were probably quite suspicious of two well-known socialist reformers who were inspecting their administration. In any case, the Webbs came to conclude that the British should gradually work towards more self-rule. The Webbs believed that the Indians could eventually govern themselves and that they were effectively and rapidly creating an elite fit to do so. But this elite (and the nationalist project) was hampered by masses of Indians still desperately in need of 'guidance'. The Hindus and the British should continue to educate, discipline and modernize these more 'primitive' Indians until the average Indian was as developed as the average Briton. At the moment, they believed only certain Hindu organizations were doing this. The main focus of the Webbian vision for India's political future was thus the kind of socio-economic development and education that I have discussed in chapters three and four. Just like the Webbs' gradualism at home, then, the change in India should be incremental. The time was certainly not yet ripe for anything radical or immediate. The Webbs believed that the Indians were still far too underdeveloped for any kind of democratic self-government. But at the same time, the English should certainly give more governmental responsibilities to Indians and introduce more Indians in the various government institutions. Most of all, they should simply acknowledge the existence of an emerging "governing class" among the Indians and "gradually take them into" their confidence.[448] This would lead the British to cooperate with the deserving Hindu aristocracy and perhaps even push them to pursue more progressive policies.

Despite their positive response to the nationalist movement, the Webbs' did not completely accept (or perhaps even full comprehend) some nationalist points. They differed from the beliefs of some more radical reformers and especially from the nationalist movement's stress on *popular* self-rule. Moreover, self-government did not necessarily mean independence to the Webbs. They envisioned it as a form of loose, symbolic dependency that would resemble the 'Dominion' status of the settler colonies like Australia or Canada. The Webbs never explicitly express their belief that formal British rule over India should end. Indeed, the Webbs recommend a British policy that could 'save' empire. The main problem, they believe, is that the British officials are completely ignorant of "their essential inferiority in culture, charm, and depth of intellectual and spiritual experience, to the

[445] Schneider, "Fabians and the Utilitarian Idea of Empire," 509.
[446] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 509.
[447] The Webbs, for example, invited Lajpat Rai to a Fabian summer school when he visited England in 1914. Jayal, "Introduction," xxxii.
[448] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 214.

Indian aristocracy of intellect."[449] The cleavage between the two groups will only grow and co-operation will become less and less likely if this ignorance continues. Nationalist sentiment is "bound to spread" and if the Indian aristocratic is suppressed they believe an underground movement will emerge with the aim to overthrow British rule. To *prevent* this, the British should collaborate with these new elites and draw them into the government of the country. This way, the Webbs write, "the British race might pride themselves on having been the finest race of school masters as well as the most perfect builders of an Empire."[450] The Webbs' belief in empire and the potential of the British is still strong. The nature of empire is never really condemned and the Webbs certainly believe that it *could* be something good. By collaborating with the elite, "The British Empire might endure until International Law makes all empire a practical anachronism though perhaps it would still remain as a much loved sentimental tie."[451] This strange passage reveals how the Webbs saw empire as a natural 'fact': empire might not be ideal but within the current competitive international context it was simply something necessary for the British to have. Even when 'backward countries' have developed into self-rule and international relations have stamped out national competition abroad, they hope empire might at least remain as a sentimental tie.

Thus while the Webbs became favorable to the moderate cause of Indian self-rule, there remained some significant gaps between their vision and those of many nationalists. Most significantly, the Webbs favored gradual self-rule mostly because they believed it was practical, efficient and beneficial for the British empire in the long run. They also hoped that shared control with the educated and modernizing Hindus would result in more national reform and progress. If these educated elites also had a hand in government, they thought the reactionary imperialism of the current Anglo-Indians might crumble. In this way, their domestic politics of government intervention and collectivism strongly contributed to their endorsement of the Indian nationalists. In contrast to them, the Webbs were far less sensitive to moral side of the principle of 'self-rule', they were not critical of 'alien rule' in and of itself, and they barely considered the economic exploitation of the imperial economy. While the nationalist Indians were increasingly contemplating the end of the empire, the Webbs were still thinking of ways to reform the empire.

To conclude, I will try to trace what the effect of the Indian journey was on the Webbs' own political activity at home. Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie write that the journey "seems to have had a radicalizing effect – on Beatrice at least – and she came back to a country which was also in a more radical frame of mind."[452] According to Seymour-Jones Beatrice "returned from India more

[449] Ibid., 213.
[450] Ibid., 214.
[451] Ibid.
[452] Jeanne MacKenzie and Norman MacKenzie, "Introduction: A Change in the Partnership," in *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. III: 1905-1924,The Power to Alter Things*, by Beatrice Webb, ed. Jeanne MacKenzie and Norman MacKenzie (London: Virago, 1984), xiii.

radical than when she left, and she was determined to take the Fabian Society more seriously."[453] Radice writes that "India had proved a fascinating and extraordinary venture, full of magical moments, picturesque confusion, something of a turning point in their lives."[454] George Feaver argues that the Webbs' contact with cultural alternatives to the 'Anglo-Saxon' way (especially their admiration of Japan) guided them into a new intellectual phase that doubted the civilizational standard of the West. He even contends that in Asia the seeds had been sown for the final stage of their intellectual pilgrimage: their support of Soviet communism.[455]

Of course such qualitative effects of mobility are hard to judge. One should in any case keep in mind that the Webbs interest in Indian nationalism or even the Asian world was quite fleeting: their concerns at home soon occupied them and they rarely looked back on the trip.[456] Moreover, the seeds of Beatrice's radicalization had already been sown before the Asian trip. The campaigning and failure of her campaign for the Minority Report had increased her frustration with the tactics of permeation and non-party political campaigning.[457] Beatrice was dismayed to see how her monolithic and well-researched Minority Report (of whose 'truth' she was convinced) was so easily dismissed in the capricious turns of political maneuvering. Their own string-pulling and tactics during the commission work and the campaign had also alienated the Webbs from their old friends and allies. The 'slump in Webbs' after their lobbying on the Education Bills had never fully recovered.[458] After the campaign for the Minority Report, the Webbs had lost almost all their valuable connections in the Conservative and Liberal parties.[459] Furthermore, as the MacKenzies rightly point out, the change in domestic politics itself stimulated more radical responses. While the Webbs were abroad, the country had witnessed the start of a constitutional crisis, violent strikes, a militant turn in the women's suffrage movement, growing tensions in Ireland and the rise of syndicalism and industrial unionism.[460] Within the Fabian Society, a new faction of Guild Socialists had emerged, led by G.DH. Cole. Building on the ideas of syndicalism, they challenged what they believed was the outmoded bureaucratic socialism of the Webbs.[461] The Webbs themselves began to feel that their ideas were becoming anachronous and thought that changes in England and elsewhere demanded new answers. After the Asian trip the Webbs would increasingly become disillusioned with any form of capitalism, the opportunities offered by political democracy, and the civilizational standard of the West. The Asian trip lies at the turning point between the Webbs' optimistic phase and their pessimistic phase. What, then, was the effect of mobility on the Webbs' politics and thinking?

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[453] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 284.
[454] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 191.
[455] Feaver, "Introduction: A Pilgrim's Progress in the Far East," 21.
[456] Jayal, "Introduction," xlviii.
[457] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 181.
[458] Ibid., 157.
[459] MacKenzie and MacKenzie, "Introduction: A Change in the Partnership," xiv.
[460] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 174–75.
[461] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 285.

On an immediate level the trip, which was supposed to revitalize Beatrice, had a physically and mentally draining effect on Beatrice. Her first diary entry back in England is dated over three months after her return. “It took me at least two months to get over the effect of the tropical climate and perpetual journeyings,” she writes on September 5, 1912. One immediately notices how her diary has become once again a more personal, individual effort: “My nerves were all to pieces, and waves of depression and panic followed each other. Now I am all right again and in good working form.”[462] And Beatrice threw herself into work. She rallied the rather demotivated Fabian society and for the first time actively engaged in the society's affairs. In fact, Beatrice only became a member of the executive after the trip to Asia.[463] It is evident that Beatrice took the Society and its members more seriously on her return to England. The Webbs, having lost their high-level connections, believed the future of their politics now lay with a revived Fabian Society. Beatrice founded a thriving Fabian research department that was however soon dominated by the young Guild Socialists. Her encounter with the self-devotion of the Arya Samaj and the energetic activism of the nationalist movement might have inspired her to revitalize and take up a more leading role in the organization she herself belonged to. Perhaps by spending so much time with the nationalists, the Webbs became convinced of the power of public politics and renewed their belief in possibility of altruistic devotion to an organization or ideal. After their trip, the Webbs abandoned their politics of permeation and decided to wholeheartedly participate in the political socialist movement. The militancy of the nationalists seems to have rubbed off a bit.

The move to the left was compounded when Beatrice joined the Independent Labour Party in the fall of 1912.[464] Before her departure, however, Beatrice had already decided that the next step for the Webbs was probably their involvement in the construction of a socialist party. On 7 March, 1911 she had written: “I am not sure that the time may not have arrived for a genuine socialist party with a completely worked-out philosophy, and a very detailed programme. When we come back from the East we will see how the land lies.”[465] In 1913, the Webbs founded the successful weekly journal *New Statesmen,* with the aim to spread serious left-wing opinion and to map out the meaning of socialism.[466] Initially, however, they remained isolated from the Labour Party and its parliamentary activity. But after the start of World War One, Sidney was brought into the center of the party's organization and thinking, even drafting its foundational 1918 constitution.[467] It wasn't long before the Webbs were the mentors of the Labour Party.

The immediate years after the Asian trip thus certainly marked the Webbs' further shift to the left and their strengthened belief in organizations and politics that actively contested the status quo. Rather than positing a simple causal link between the trip and the Webbs' changing ideas and politics, I see their journey as contributing element within a whole web of events and intellectual

[462] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 178.
[463] Ibid., 176.
[464] Seymour-Jones, *Beatrice Webb*, 284.
[465] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 154.
[466] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 199.
[467] Ibid., 204.

currents that lead to their changing outlook. Like Feaver, I believe the trip was "one of several mutually reinforcing considerations that led the two by stages to abandon the trademark political moderation."[468] Beatrice, in any case, later experienced the trip to Asia as having a profound influence on her life. In the draft preface to the never completed volume of her autobiography about the trip, she wrote: "This year's sojourn in strange worlds acted as a powerful ferment, altering and enlarging our conception of the human race, its past, its present and its future […] I was never again quite the same person after this exciting journey."[469] Beatrice felt that the trip had meant the close of one phase of her life and the opening of a new one.[470] From the specifically Indian context, it seems like the Webbs took home their disillusionment with Anglo-Indian society and its old-school Tory attitude: in England they further distanced themselves from Conservative politicians and the political and social establishment in general. Their admiration for the incredibly motivated radical Hindus undermining the status-quo might have also reinforced their growing militant and activist temperament. Their friendly relationships with these men who were essentially attempting to overthrow British rule must have had a radicalizing effect on them, making them more critical of the current British political system, its 'race', and its civilizational worth. The persistent refusal of the British officials to work with these elites exemplified the Webbs' new belief that permeation or the aim of gradual co-operation might not be the most effective political tactic. The British establishment was more reactionary than they thought. The Anglo-Indians snubbing of men like Gokhale mirrored the way they felt socialist ideas like their own were being kept out of the British official world. Their surprise at finding other but still 'civilized' societies and individuals abroad may even have opened their eyes to the possibility of different paths in the timeline of human development. Their belief in the progress along modern lines might not have been broken yet, but as their interest in reformed Hinduism and anti-colonial agitation indicate, they began looking at alternatives. In colonial India, they found both distant echoes of what they were experiencing in England and inspiration to reinvigorate their politics at home.

[468] Feaver, "Introduction: A Pilgrim's Progress in the Far East," 2.
[469] Quoted in: Ibid.
[470] Ibid., 12.

7

CONCLUSION: A BELIEF IN PROGRESS

No matter how much the Webbs took home from their Indian experience, their politics in England structured their interpretation of India even more. Throughout the previous chapters I have traced how the Webbs' ideas about colonial India were fundamentally and in very direct ways connected to their conceptualization of modern English society and the socio-political visions they formulated in response to it. Both the overt political views and unconscious interpretative mappings registered in the *Indian Diary* predominantly find their roots in their reactions to the contradictions modernity. Beatrice and Sidney's travel writing lays bare the various ideological and political connections that they made between home and abroad. This connection is immediately apparent in the Webbs' detailed notes on Indian education. The recommendations for government-led educational reform pushing modern, scientific knowledge and teaching materials reflect Sidney's educational reforms in England and its ideological assumptions. The appreciation of a 'spiritual' element in education was guided by Beatrice's belief that the pure materialism of scientific knowledge was not enough to build a just society on, even in a modern age. As Beatrice envisaged the growing individualism and the egotistical pursuit of private goals in the secularized capitalist society, she hoped that a spiritually inspired self-discipline and altruism might help to build a new collectivist moral order. In the reform-minded Hindu movements and their educational institutions, she recognized the combination of rationalistic reason and spiritual experience that she herself struggled to find in her own life.

While the Webbs saw Britain as suffering from the negative side-effects of private capitalism, they considered the 'problem' of India to be one of civilizational and socio-economic underdevelopment. Both the more 'advanced' capitalist society and the more 'backward'' traditional society needed to progress, albeit on different levels. Thus while the type of forces creating societal problems were sometimes seen as different (famine having natural, poverty having economic causes), the interpretation and 'solution' of British and Indian problems were related. The program that the Webbs envisioned to transform Britain to socialism and India to modernity followed similar lines. In particular I explored how the Webbs' vision of elevating the 'primitive' Indian was fundamentally guided by their ideological evaluations of the pauper in industrial society. Furthermore, in response to the glaring inequalities of industrial society, the Webbs had formed a collectivist vision that considered the state as the central actor of reformist activity. This state-centered approach was also brought to the colonial realm, where the Webbs contended that the British Indian government (and not *laissez faire* market forces) should ideally guide the economic modernization and social development of the colony. In fact the Webbs believed that the British, as representatives of a superior, modern society, *had to* guide India into modern civilizational adulthood. That was, after all, the Fabian justification of empire that the Webbs never questioned.

The Webbs also transposed their ideal of state responsibility over the population, the fundamental of the British welfare state, to the colonial realm.

The Webbs thus loosely formulated a gradualist 'developmental' colonial policy for India. They believed that the state should develop India's still largely pre-capitalist economy and exploit the colony's natural resources. In this way, the British Indian government could acquire funds for the widespread social engineering needed to lift the colony out of its underdeveloped social condition. Accordingly, the Webbs can be seen as precursors of the British developmental colonialism of the 1940s. But at the time, this plan of change was fundamentally at odds with the dominant attitude within the British Indian government. In the Webbs' increasing disillusionment with the character of early 20th century British rule in India, we find an excellent illustration of the clash of two imperial visions grounded in two different reactions to Britain's changing society. The 'ornamentalist' imperial vision that wished England and India to be rural, static, traditional, and structured by a ranked social hierarchy clashed with the progressive imperial vision that was convinced that both metropole and colony needed to change into industrialized, dynamic, modernized, and meritocratic societies. The Webbs consequently distanced themselves from the British colonials whom they politically and personally disliked and associated with the forward-looking Hindu nationalists. They realized that the educated elite of Indian society shared a lot more of their own socio-economic interests and political activism. Above all, they also strove for social change.

The Webbian politics of progress-through-modernization were embedded in a larger ideological protonarrative of universal human progress. In this domesticated panoptical time, the whole of mankind could be put on a linear timeline that ranged from primitive degeneracy to the superiority of modern man. This historical fantasy formed only the narrative side of a collective discourse of progress that came to its height in the 19th century and expressed itself in a whole host of beliefs and values. It connected to the theories of unilineal sociocultural evolutionism, which formed the immediate intellectual heritage of both Sidney and Beatrice. This ideal of progress was one way for bourgeois society to mediate the contradictions of industrial modernity; it was applied both in the domestic and the colonial realm, and it crossed the categories of race, class, and gender. Accordingly, I have argued that interpretations of the 'primitive' abroad were crisscrossed with ideologemes (such as the dirt fetish or the ideals of domesticity) that found their origin in responses to British society. The Webbs considered India as a whole to be essentially 'backward' and some aspects of it even degenerate: its socio-economic underdevelopment blended into a moral inferiority. The racial ideas that were connected to the protonarrative of progress were highly influential in structuring the Webbs' experience in India. The Hindu and especially the Muslim 'races' were frequently situated in a familial lineage (as children) and an anachronistic historical time (as remnants of an older age). This tied into a larger 'web' of degeneracy that also connected the materialism of popular Hinduism, domestic and spatial uncleanliness, animalistic living, and sexual vice.

Yet besides this racial category, and intersecting with it, the Webbs also structured Indian society through an internal social hierarchy, an ideal of domesticity, religious views, and socialist politics. Thus the Victorian ideal of domestic life made Beatrice admire the anachronistic practice of *purdah* while her anti-materialism made her receptive to certain forms of organized and reformed Hinduism. Most importantly, the Webbs not only mapped a global and racial difference in progress, but also levels of advancement *within* Indian society. Their own social hierarchy, also following their belief in modern progress, was based on the ideals of modern education, Western-style cultivation, public mindedness and meritocratic worth. This corresponded with their rather elitist socialism that had brought them to work towards the creation of a new class of highly educated and altruistic experts within England. In India, the Webbs identified and aligned themselves with what they considered to be a 'Hindu aristocracy': the class of modernized, educated and mostly urban elites in the colony. This Indian social hierarchy was further bolstered by Beatrice's strong concern for a form of collectivist ethics necessary for socialist society. She found such moral virtues in the public-spiritedness and self-discipline of the Hindu-reform and nationalist movements. The Webbs thus came to formulate an ideal attitude of 'reciprocal superiority' between the British and Indian 'races', though they didn't always follow this themselves. Overall, they conceived of Indian society as consisting of an internal, advanced aristocracy that was being pulled down by the backward masses. Because of this, the Indian people could be considered by the Webbs to be both, exceptionally, superior and, at average, inferior.

Tying into this admiration for Hindu elites, the Webbs came into contact with the emerging nationalist and Hindu reform movements in India. In particular, they became enmeshed in the nationwide network of the Arya Samaj, whose members they met all over the country. While they never abandoned their support for benevolent, paternalistic empire, they came to lean towards the moderate nationalist position in favor of gradual self-rule. Increasingly, the Webbs regarded the Anglo-Indian colonials as shallow, racist, un-intelligent vestiges of traditional England and reactionary imperialism. On the timeline of progress, the Anglo-Indians lay behind the modernized and intellectual Hindu elites who were pushing for social change and reform. Through their intensive traveling and discussions with Indians, they came to consider that the most 'advanced' and progressive element in Indian society was to be found within Hindu and not within Anglo-Indian society. Accordingly, they argued for the gradual inclusion of the educated Hindu elite in the government of India, seeing this as befitting their superior status. They hoped this would also lead to a productive collaboration that would stimulate the socio-economic development of the colony and the personal advancement of all Indians. With the already 'advanced' Indians at their side, the British 'schoolmasters' should then more fully pursue the ultimate but still faraway goal of the Raj: the advancement of the Indians until they themselves were fit for self-government.

Cutting through all these different representations, political stances and evaluative nuances there is an underlying ideological antimony that forms the structuring backbone of the Webbs' thinking. Again and again, the ultimate touchstone of 'progress' versus 'backwardness' has returned as an explanatory force. Sometimes it appeared in the guise of socio-economic 'development'

versus ‘underdevelopment’. At other times it took the form of racial ‘civilization’ versus ‘degeneracy’. It informed the social hierarchy that placed the well-educated, modernized section of society at the top and guided their admiration for the efficiently organized and ‘rational’ religion of Hindu reformism. It connected the Webbs’ socialist politics in Britain with their ideas of developmental socialist colonialism abroad. The Webbs were, at the time of the *Indian Diary*, convinced that the problems of society, be it the ills of private capitalism or the primitive state of pre-capitalist society, could and eventually would fall away in the upward movement of human progress. All they had to do was to continue pushing for this advance, guided by the positivistic methods of their evolutionary sociology and their ideals of collectivist socialism. All they had to do was to continue changing society. This belief in progress backed Beatrice and Sidney’s confidence in rational thought, in the social scientific method, and in the positivistic critiques of and remedies for the problems of modern capitalist society. Their belief in the superiority and desirability of modernization guided their educational reforms, their stress on socio-economic development, and their position that government intervention should guide this in a moral way, both at home and abroad. The antimony of progress and backwardness structured both their representations of racial inferiority and the internal social hierarchy that undermined their own racism. It also explains their disillusionment with Anglo-Indian society, their fraternization with the nationalist cause, and their ultimate conviction that colonialism had a moral purpose.

Diachronically, as already mentioned, the Webbs’ guiding belief in progress in India reflects a protonarrative of universal human development. The Webbs’ attachment to this protonarrative fills the *Indian Diary* with the well-known imperial binaries that characterize most imperial travel writing. In the scope of this thesis, the binary of a superior modernized, industrial society against a fundamentally different and inferior traditional, rural society has been foregrounded. On a global scale, the Webbs mapped the world along the antimony of modern advancement and primitive backwardness, convinced that societies could be placed and morally judged on an evolutionary timeline. This ideological rudder invested imperialism with moral legitimacy. But the Webbs’ belief in progress was so strong that it could also override the ancillary imperial binaries that were connected to the larger antimony. When the Webbs cognitively mapped colonial Indian society in a more ‘synchronic’ way, they found, that the preconceptions that had been built around the antimony of progress versus backwardness did not always conform to the ‘facts’. Here we find the main effect of personal mobility on the Webbs. Through the quite radical ‘empiricism’ of their travel-research, they came to find that ‘advancement’ and ‘backwardness’ did not necessarily fall into the respective categories of Western and non-Western (anymore). When measured against the guiding antimony, they found that in the current state of colonial India, the average British colonial was more ‘backward’ than the modernized, English speaking elite Hindu. They had also realized this while visiting and admiring Japan: modern advances and thought were spreading globally. To save the logic of their broader ideological mapping and retain the antimony of progress and backwardness, the Webbs had to ‘unlink’ the West from progress and the non-west from backwardness. These connections, they believed, were not inherently or naturally true

anymore. In this new ‘set of characters’ the ideal ‘progressed Westerner’ was then represented by the Webbs themselves, the learning ‘progressed non-Westerner’ by the Hindu aristocracy, the ‘backward non-Westerner’ by the mass of degenerate Indians, and the ‘backwards Westerner’ by the anti-modern Anglo-Indians.

In the Webbs’ travel to India, then, we find the ‘minimal’ disruptive force of mobility in this intellectual adjustment. The guiding antimony of progress and backwardness (and all the accompanying imperial ideologemes and developmental politics that I have explored throughout the previous chapters) is never abandoned by the Webbs in the *Indian Diary*. But their acquaintance with Hindus who conform to their interpretation of the ideal of progress, did lead the Webbs to adjust one of the antimony’s accompanying presumptions. The protonarrative of progress and the Webbs’ belief that domestic and colonial society could and should progress remained in place. But with the clouds of war approaching and the Webbs’ growing frustration with the lack of advances at home, this optimism would not last much longer. Perhaps the minor adjustment in the Webbs’ ideological structure contributed to its growing shakiness. Their Asian trip seems to have brought further cracks into the pedestal of Fabian gradualism. After the realization that progress was no longer to be found only in the West, the Webbs’ confidence in the worth and future of Western civilization began to slacken. Their confrontation with impressive alternatives abroad, found in Japan or in the Arya Samaj, lead them to wonder if humankind was indeed following a universal protonarrative along the Western path. And the glaring inefficiency and passivity of British colonial rule in India perhaps made them question if the British were still advancing, still fit as paternalistic imperial mentors. Eventually, the Webbs’ belief in gradual progress crumbled into a belief in gradual decline.

INTERLUDE
DEATH AND DECLINE

Why does one fear death? One does not fear sleep; one is always glad to sink into sleep.

- Beatrice Webb, 24 June 1916

Fog was so dense, bird that had been disturbed went flat into a balustrade and slowly fell, dead, at her feet.

- Henry Green, *Party Going*

The Asian trip stood at the crossroads between an optimistic Fabian stage and a pessimistic middle stage in the life of the Webbs.[471] The belief in worldwide progress that still characterized a lot of the *Indian Diary* could not be sustained. After the First World War, the Webbs increasingly came to believe Western civilization was in decline. The system they hoped to reform began to look unreformable. Like many others on the left, they saw the crisis of the West as the imminent demise of a rotten and bankrupt capitalist system.[472]In 1923 the Webbs published a book called *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation* in which they described the decaying and terminal state of capitalism and the subsequent crisis faced by modern man. Instead of the stress on gradual modernization, reform, and civilizational improvement that characterizes their *Indian Diary*, this book was exceedingly pessimistic and a lot more skeptical about the possibility of universal betterment. Beatrice and Sidney now wholly condemned the modern economic organization of capitalism as an irrational system, driven by reckless profit-seeking and driving many into poverty or 'wage slavery'. The crisis of capitalism was seen as an organic process. In their clinical discourse the Webbs describe its causes as the combination of "morbid growths and insidious diseases."[473] In the introduction, co-written with the playwright and Fabian George Bernard Shaw, one reads that capitalism "began to decay before it reached maturity, and that history will regard capitalism, not as an epoch but as an episode, and in the main a tragic episode, or Dark Age, between two epochs."[474] Recalling their earlier fascination with rationality and order, the Webbs claim that the capitalist system is "scientifically unsound" as an efficient and optimal organization of economic production and distribution."[475] Yet the central thesis of this work was that capitalism was morally bankrupt and their primary concern was that civilization itself was in danger.[476] The book's chapters chronicle four 'evils' of capitalism: the poverty of the poor, the inequality of incomes, the disparity in personal freedom and its role in creating war. These criticisms weren't wholly new for the Webbs, but their pessimistic tone and wholesale condemnation of capitalism was. The Webbs conclude that capitalism is "inimical to national morality and international peace; in fact, to civilisation itself."[477] With the progressive decay of capitalism, modern civilization was itself in a state of decay – and the dark undercurrent in the book indicates the Webbs' uncertainty that it could overcome this crisis.

There is a crucial and pessimistic ambiguity in the Webbs' thesis. On the one hand, they consider the 'civilized west' to be at odds with the decaying economic system, writing that "the failure of capitalism is a good thing for humanity."[478] But they also underline that the wholesale destruction of capitalism would *also* mean the end of civilization. The violent revolutionary might destroy capitalism but he would destroy civilization with it. Capitalism might die, but if no new

[471] Ibid., 21.
[472] Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 50.
[473] Ibid., 52.
[474] Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, 3rd ed. (Westminster: Fabian Society, 1923), 4.
[475] Ibid., 6.
[476] Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 52.
[477] Webb and Webb, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, 6.
[478] Ibid., 171.

model is prepared or 'scientifically' planned to take its place, something worse might follow. Instead, the socially-democratic Webbs still hoped for a slow transformation of capitalism (through regulation, organization and communal co-operation) into a rational and morally healthy community of production.[479] This also meant a moral change: no longer should "the desire for riches" be preached to the young as a guide for conduct. "The motive of self-enrichment" should be substituted by "the motive of public service."[480] Here we still find profound echoes of their thinking at the time of the *Indian Diary*. Yet in their thirty years of work for the socialist movement, the Webbs had up to that point never indicted the capitalist system as a whole.[481] At the start of the interwar years the finally felt compelled to do so. In a new pessimistic mood, they diagnosed the capitalist system as a social disease and argued that it was dragging civilization down with it. Moreover, the Webbs were also uncharacteristically doubtful that anything could save this modern era. Without perhaps realizing it themselves, the Webbs had moved close to the opinions of Mr. Silberrad, the District Officer at Jhansi. If "English civilisation was doubtfully good," he had told the Webbs "why then 'impose it' on the Indians?"[482] At the time, the Webbs had questioned the genuineness of this civilizational doubt and considered it a mere excuse for negative policies and "passive resistance to upheaving forces."[483] The Webbs never shared Mr. Silberrad's penchant for negative policies. But, like him, they did come to doubt the value of Western civilization and the fear of upheaving forces, not of progress but of decline.

The change in the Webbs' sentiment, from an optimistic belief in improvement to a pessimistic conviction of civilizational and capitalist decay, could be seen as a response to the post-war economic chaos and the mass unemployment, inflation and trade crisis in its wake.[484] Already in the Edwardian era, the growth of the British economy was slowing down and becoming outdated in its focus on traditional industries. The war economy further distorted the country's economic activity and disrupted its export trade.[485] The post-war economic climate in Britain was characterized by the contraction of the old industries of textiles, iron and steel, coal and shipbuilding. This caused the persistent and highly visual interwar problem of mass-unemployment, especially in the northern parts of the United Kingdom. By June 1921 unemployment had already risen to two million.[486] Then came the Great Depression, bringing with it the slump in world trade and the government's severe deflationary measures. In 1931, Britain was put off the Gold Standard, ushering in a period of the 'floating' pound. A year later, the British empire and its dominions instituted a trading bloc

[479] Ibid., 53.
[480] Ibid., 172–73.
[481] See: Ibid., 174. They write that they never pursued "demolitions that provide for no constructions" and never felt free to "preach an ideal until we have found the way to its realisation." Ibid.
[482] Webb and Webb, *Indian Diary*, 71.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 52.
[485] John Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain: British Society 1914-45* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 104–6.
[486] Ibid., 106–7.

of 'imperial preference' (limited tariffs within the empire) which marked the Britain's departure from its long held principles of free trade.[487] With the demise of traditional Victorian morals, the fading away of older notions of Englishness, the soon growing instability in international relations, and the rise of fascism, the "upheaving forces" could indeed seem to be heading towards comprehensive decline. Yet one shouldn't overstress the war and its negative economic effects on Britain. While the older major industries declined, newer sectors emerged: by 1924 Britain had in fact regained the pre-war level of production.[488] Even after the Great Depression the British empire remained a great economic power. Internally, the country didn't witness any major upheavals, political radicalization was limited to a tiny minority, and the English public remained supportive of the empire.[489] The problem of poverty, the emergence of new forms of living, and the disappearance of pastoral 'Merrie Olde England' had all already characterized the pre-war years. For those who had work, the interwar years marked a substantial increase in the material standard of living and the development of a popular consumer culture.[490] As John Stevenson writes: "Whether measured in terms of real incomes, mass consumption or standards of health and welfare […] the period witnessed a rise in material standards of living, shaping patterns of expenditure and lifestyle ," that anticipated the welfare state after 1945. Indeed, for Evelyn Waugh the 'crisis' of modern civilization during the interwar years was, as we will see, fundamentally connected to the suburbanization of England and the rising welfare of the middle-class. It was the very real growing democratization, egalitarianism, mass consumerism and social mobility of interwar England that disturbed him profoundly.[491]

Rather than seeing the changing cultural sentiment as a direct reflection of Britain's condition during the interwar years, I consider it a new intellectual and cultural way of interpreting and responding to the same destabilizing changes of modernity that already characterized Britain before the war. While the challenges of modernity were still considered to be containable and controllable before the First World War, the interwar years were characterized by a gloomy cultural sentiment among intellectual elites that the contradictions posed by modern capitalism could no longer be so easily reined. Philipp Blom has argued that, before the Great War, the vertiginous effects of economic growth, industrialization, urbanization, and a rapidly changing culture could still be stabilized by the belief in progress, hierarchical societies, and the ideals of the Enlightenment.[492] Indeed, as I have argued, the guiding belief in progress formed the stable, structuring backbone of the *Indian Diary*. But in the interwar years, after the 'unhinged modernity' of the First World War, those old ideals and that rigid belief in progress fell away. With no immediate alternatives to take their place, "the postwar years were painfully experienced as a moral

[487] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 434–38.
[488] See: Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 108–15.
[489] Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 439–40.
[490] Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 116–26.
[491] Ibid., 348–49.
[492] Philipp Blom, *Fracture: Life and Culture in the West, 1918-1938* (London: Atlantic Books, 2015), 7.

vacuum."[493] Even as the actual living standard increased in England, the present felt less bright and the future looked a lot darker. The Webbs' new stress on 'crisis' thus fundamentally ties into a larger cultural current that was related to but did not simply reflect the social conditions of the interwar years. As we will more closely examine in part two, the pessimistic, often fatalistic, idea of 'civilizational decline into barbarity' formed an important current in British interwar thought, one which Richard Overy has detailed in his book *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*. For those who like the Webbs focused on economics, this feeling of crisis was tied to the idea that the capitalist system had become sterile. The Webbs believed that while the pre-war years saw a gradual, progressive development of political and industrial democracy, the immediate post-war years were characterized by a 'counterrevolution' of profit-driven ideas and politics.[494] With their early contribution on this topic, Beatrice and Sidney were in fact highly influentially in spreading this particular theme.[495] Yet even the specific pessimism about capitalism was not at all limited to the left-leaning elite. As Overy writes: "The notion that capitalism was in a state of physical, possibly fatal decay became embedded in popular perception of the economic system."[496]

In search of an alternative to the seemingly doomed capitalist system, the Webbs travelled to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The result of their investigations was the massive, 1,174 pages long *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* (1935). In it, the Webbs gave a highly detailed overview of the Soviet economy and political structure and argued that that the model offered equal opportunities to all, was a participatory system, and was not a dictatorship.[497] For them, Soviet communism seemed to be a new type of civilization; one that combined efficient industry with the spiritual essence of moral universalism and collective obligation.[498] The title of the second edition dropped the question mark, underlining the Webbs' strengthened belief that Soviet communism was indeed the beginning of a new, healthy civilization. They argued that the "distinct unity" of the Soviet Union stood in striking contrast with the "disunity of Western civilisation."[499] Communism would spread, they argued, and it would be a welcome advance to the decaying condition of the West. Europe was after all bound up in a state of disintegrating capitalism, going through a process of "decivilisation" and could be expected to go through a prolonged struggle and decay into barbarism.[500] Modern people, too, now seemed to be stuck in a degenerate state instead of moving forward in individual development. In a 1922 diary entry Beatrice recalls Evelyn Waugh's elitist critiques of the modern mass and its banal life: "At present the mass is dully apathetic, thinking only of the next meal, the next drink, the net smoke, or the next 'odds'."[501] Until their deaths in the

[493] Ibid., 8.
[494] Webb and Webb, *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, 175–76.
[495] Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 55.
[496] Ibid., 53.
[497] Ibid., 292.
[498] Ibid., 294.
[499] Beatrice Webb and Sidney Webb, *Is Soviet Communism A New Civilisation?* (London: The Left Review, 1936), 24.
[500] Ibid., 25–30.
[501] 17 October 1922, Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 405.

1940s, the Webbs, and especially Beatrice, believed that civilization was "on the down grade" and that it would "gradually, and violently disappear."[502]

The fixation with civilizational decay also mirrored Beatrice Webb's own morbid personal thoughts. From an early age, she had struggled with anxiety, neurosis and at intervals she would fall into psychosomatic depressions.[503] Her marriage with Sidney offered a needed stability and conceivable prevented her from eventually committing suicide.[504] Yet during World War One, she once again suffered from a prolonged breakdown. She felt guilty about hear profound fear for her own death "with millions of young men facing death and dying on the battlefields of Europe."[505] Increasingly, she fell prone to the panics and obsessions of what she called "my 'Mr. Hyde'" and she wondered how one can "go on, eating and drinking, walking and sleeping, reading and dictating, apparently unmoved by the world's misery."[506] After the war, Beatrice experienced her sporadic personal depressions as an internal extension of global malaise. Overy argues that in many cases, the fears about a crisis in civilization were "projected backwards to explain an individual's own physical disorder, creating a complete morbid cycle."[507] In the week of the publication of *The Decay of Capitalist Civilization*, Beatrice wrote in her diary: "I become every day more pessimistic: more fearful that present generations of men are agents of destruction, not construction. They are capable of destroying the existing civilisation; they are not capable of building up another social order; through their invincible ignorance and bad will they are heading for a long period of disorder."[508]

At the age of 65, Beatrice was also becoming increasingly self-conscious of her own 'imminent demise'. As she started work on her autobiography, she noted that there was "a certain morbid tendency" in writing it, but she wondered: "how short is the time before Sidney and I will be nothing more than names on the title pages of some thirty books! I suppose all old persons are haunted by the nearness of death?"[509] In March 1923 her older sister Mary's husband passed away and in September Mary herself died from lung cancer. The feelings of death and demise uncannily surrounded Beatrice in these first post-war years. In world politics the situation felt equally devastating: "the march of French into German territory […] the dissolution of social order in Ireland, Egypt and India, and the two million unemployed in Great Britain – the whole civilised world turned into 'devastated areas', devastated not so much by the Great War as by the infamous peace."[510] On 6 March 1923 she recorded in her diary: "I find my life distracted, distressingly distracted […] I am too old and not strong enough for the life I have necessarily to lead! But that

[502] Quoted i:n Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 55–56.
[503] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 3.
[504] Ibid.
[505] Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 260.
[506] Ibid., 262.
[507] Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 366.
[508] 11 January, 1923 Webb, *The Diary of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3*, 411.
[509] 9 February, 1923, Ibid., 412.
[510] 11 January, 1923 Ibid., 411.

may be a mere neurotic delusion."[511] This time, Beatrice herself made the connection between her personal distress and the distress she saw in international politics. "Looking into my consciousness," she wrote "I think I see the source of my *malaise* in the steadily worsening condition of Europe. There is today, owing to the French action in Germany, exactly the same nightmare feeling as there was during the War. The world is again at war, and at war in a peculiarly horrible way."[512] The theory that the interwar years were not years of peace but years of "war turned inward" has recently been put forward by writers like Blom.[513] To some contemporaries, it seems, the interwar years could indeed feel like the mere continuation of conflict.

Around the same time that Beatrice wrote these words, a similar converging sense of moral and civilizational crisis haunted Evelyn Waugh. Unable to adjust to life after Oxford and suffering from unrequited love, Waugh became deeply troubled in mid-1920s.[514] After quitting his job as a schoolmaster in the summer of 1925, Waugh made a half-hearted suicide attempt. In his diary he wrote: "The phrase 'the end of the tether' besets me with unshakable persistence all the time."[515] One night, with his "thoughts full of death", he went to the beach, took off his clothes, left a note ('The sea washes away all the evils of men.'), and swam out slowly into the sea. When he encountered a shoal of jelly-fish that started stinging him, he turned back.[516] Five years later, having become a successful novelist and living a hedonistic fast life in London, those restless feelings of bored dread had not completely left Waugh. During that summer of 1930, seeking a more 'constructive' escape from the life he was living, he started his conversion to Catholicism and planned a trip to Ethiopia. On Thursday July 24th 1930, as Evelyn Waugh was likely recovering from the previous night's "intolerably hot and crowded" party with "numerous rich old whores", Beatrice Webb gave a talk on the BBC about the crisis of democratic capitalism.[517] Had he turned on the radio, he might have heard her speaking of the grim choice between 'catastrophic upheaval' and 'a slow decay' of culture and 'general civilization'.[518] He might have been surprised at how much his own fears resembled that of an elderly socialist.

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[511] 6 March, 1912, consulted via the London School of Economics' Digital Library: http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:vat325giy/read#page/473/mode/1up
[512] 6 March, 1912, consulted via the London School of Economics' Digital Library: http://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:vat325giy/read#page/473/mode/1up
[513] Blom, *Fracture*, 8.
[514] In the winter of 1925 (after his homosexual love affair with Alastair Graham) fell in love with Olivia Plunkett Greene. In April he still writes: "…insistent sorrows of unrequited love which are ever with me in their most conventional form…" (Wednesday 15 April) and "I am still sad and uneasy and awkward whenever I am with Olivia." (Saturday 18 April) Evelyn Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Michael Davie (London: Phoenix, 2009), 218–19.
[515] 1 July, 1925 Ibid., 224.
[516] Ibid.; Humphrey Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation: Evelyn Waugh & His Generation* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), 142.
[517] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 340.
[518] Quoted in: Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 55.

PART 2

EVELYN WAUGH IN COLONIAL AFRICA

Ladies and gentlemen, we must be Modern, we must be refined in our Cruelty to Animals.

- Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief*

The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway.

- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

1

INTRODUCTION: REMOTE PEOPLE

Evelyn Waugh first thought of traveling to Abyssinia, modern day Ethiopia, while visiting some friends in Ireland. The conversation had turned to the upcoming coronation of the new Emperor, Haile Selassie. Waugh's friend and one time lover Alastair Graham told delicious tales of the Abyssinian's supposed canonization of Pontius Pilate, their consumption of raw meat and their consecration of bishops by spitting on the zealous men's heads.[519] For the restless and frustrated Waugh, still not quite recovered from his failed first marriage, this was enough to spark his interest. Two weeks later, he had organized his trip. The Times would pay his travel costs in exchange for journalistic reports on the coronation. Waugh decided to make this an occasion to see more of Africa, a journey which he half-improvised along the way. Arriving at Djibouti in October 1930, Waugh attended the coronation proceedings and traveled on to the British East and Central African colonies on his own expense. Having reached the Belgian Congo, he took a train down to Cape Town, "a hideous city that reminded me of Glasgow", with about forty pounds left in his pockets and desperate to get home.[520] He boarded a ship and arrived in Southampton on March 10, 1931. Back in England, Waugh started work on *Remote People*; a travel book of this journey which was published by Duckworth later that year.

While the divisive author is remembered for his classic novels like *Vile Bodies* or *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh is often forgotten as a travel writer. Yet from 1929 to 1938 Waugh spent a significant amount of time abroad and produced no less than five travel books. Even in England he lived a nomadic life, having no fixed home and limited possessions.[521] Waugh's travel writing belongs to a unique time in British travel literature that Paul Fussell described and idolized in his book *Abroad*.[522] During the interwar years, many young British intellectuals were desperate to escape an apparently ruined England and go anywhere 'abroad'. The 'British Literary Diaspora' saw a generation of British authors leave the Isles to live in places as diverse as California and Peking. Fussell sees this urge to move around as a signal of literary modernism.[523] The American literary community in Paris, which included Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, formed the American counterpart to the self-imposed exile of the English in the 1920s and 30s. Many others, like Waugh and most of his literary friends, quenched their thirst for abroad by frequent and spontaneous traveling. This not only produced a wealth of travel-inspired fiction but also travel writing by talented authors. Fussell calls these last works 'travel books' and

[519] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 230–31.
[520] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People*, [1931] (London: Penguin Classics, 2002), 179.
[521] Waugh, *When the Going Was Good*, 7.
[522] Fussell, *Abroad*.
[523] Ibid., 11.

characterizes them by their prominent autobiographical content and their structure as a narrative that exploits the devices of fiction: "Travel books are a sub-species of memoir in which autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative – unlike that in a novel or a romance – claims literary validity by constant reference to actuality."[524] He further sees them as displaced versions of the quest, picaresque and pastoral romance.[525] *Remote People* is an example of this modern, literary 'travel book', which can be seen as a sub-genre of travel writing. It combines fleeting impressions, character sketches, comic anecdotes, essayistic detours, and autobiographical details all structured in the form of an outer journey through Africa and an inner journey that questions the romantic 'myth of the hero'.

As early as the inventions of early modern discovery texts, the relation between fact and fiction in travel writing has been a problematic issue. As textual artifacts, travel texts are inevitably constructed: even the 'factual' data of the trip have been selected and framed by an author. As was also the case with the Webbs, the travel *experience* becomes the travel *text*.[526] The travel book is never a mere reconstruction of the journey. Instead, it is what Holland and Huggan (after Hayden White) call "fictions of factual representations."[527] This does not mean that everything in the travel book is a purely fictional invention or that it contains no information on the reality of the trip. It calls attention to the fact that travel texts should not be seen as unfiltered windows on the world; they are "inevitably selective and fictive to some degree."[528] Moreover, as Thompson points out, the travel writer must balance the role of the reporter with that of the story-teller.[529] Within the convention of referring to actual localities, Fussell notes that there is ample room for the "'fictionalizing' imagination."[530] Travel books are thus full omissions, subtle distortions, not so subtle fabrications, exaggerations, reconstructed dialogues, turns and arcs in the narrative, atmospheric descriptions, and other fictional devices that problematize the travel book's status as purely factual.[531] In the scope of this study, however, the (deliberate or unintentional) fictive dimension of *Remote People* is not at all problematic, instead it only adds to the interpretative richness. I approach travel writing as "socially symbolic acts," that are (for my interpretative purposes) not radically different from other cultural artifacts like the fictional novel.[532] Both can be conceived of as ideological world-constructions, with the difference that the world of the travel book is supposed (by the author and the reader) to actually exist. The scope of fictionalizing possibilities is limited by the above-mentioned generic 'contract': what Waugh describes in his

[524] Ibid., 203.
[525] It is in the pastoral strain of the literary travel book that we find the elegiac, retrograde, anti-industrial emotion of British interwar literary traveling. This aspect is, as I will argue, prominent in *Remote People*.
[526] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 28.
[527] Hollander, *Political Pilgrims*, 10.
[528] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 30.
[529] Ibid., 27.
[530] Fussell, *Abroad*, 214.
[531] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 28.

[532] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 5.

travel books is supposed to refer to his actual experiences and beliefs. But within these limits the travel writer constructs a certain version of his travel experience that lays bare certain hidden beliefs or convictions. The genre of the travel book, however, also means that it contains unambiguous expressions of opinions and thoughts by the narrating author, something that is less common in fiction. Especially with the sly contrarian Waugh, one should still approach these cautiously. Waugh enjoyed playing with the reader and his or her assumptions. Moreover, given that he based several novels on his trips, Waugh approached his travel experiences as potential content for fiction: he surveyed the foreign world with the eye of a novelist. His ironic or faux-objective tone, embellished anecdotes, and strong attention to narrative requires an interpretative practice that approaches the text as hovering between straightforward non-fiction and fiction based on real events.

"They were still dancing when, just before dawn on October 19th 1930, the *Azay le Rideau* came into harbour at Djibouti."[533] With this description of a silly couple dancing on deck, Waugh begins his African travel book. The first section, 'Ethiopian Empire', recounts Waugh's 'Alice in Wonderland'-like experience of the chaotic proceedings of the Ethiopian coronation. Because I focus on the representation of the colonial world, my analysis starts with Waugh's arrival in Aden at the beginning of the section called 'British Empire'. Chapter two is, then, an exploratory account of Waugh's enjoyment of anomalies in Aden and his ambiguous critique of a corrupting colonialism in Zanzibar. From chapters three to five, I interpret different but connected dimensions of Waugh's perception of Kenya's settler society. Chapter three focusses on the parallels Waugh constructs between colonial Kenya and an idealized England. This closely relates to chapter four's focus on the Kenya myth and Waugh's naked politics on settler colonialism. These dimensions then come together in my overall interpretation of Waugh's spatial experience of Kenya as a heterotopia. In chapter six, I connect Waugh's perception of 'primitive barbarity' with his pessimistic description of his return to London. Finally, I pull together these different but connected threads in my concluding chapter.

[533] Waugh, *Remote People*, 9.

2

THE ANOMALIES OF ADEN AND THE CORRUPTING COLONIALISM OF ZANZIBAR

"Pure mischance had brought me to Aden, and I expected to dislike it."[534] After two days suffering from the "stark horrors of boredom" in Djibouti, Waugh had desperately boarded the first ship in sight.[535] He had planned to visit British Africa after the Abyssinian coronation, but he now happened to arrive in the strange British dependency at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Until it became a crown colony in 1937, Aden was formally a province of British India. It was through this strategic transit port that Waugh entered Britain's colonial world, and his metropolitan prejudices had given him a clear idea of what to expect. He imagined the type of colonial society that the Webbs had hated in India: "a climate notoriously corrosive of all intellect and initiative […] a community, full of placid self-esteem […] conversation full of dreary technical shop among the men, and harsh little snobberies among the women."[536] "How wrong I was," he writes.[537] Though the food at his hotel comes in two flavors ("tomato ketchup and Worcestershire sauce"), Waugh soon realizes he likes the masculine company of colonials, admires the leisurely Arabs chewing *khat* and even becomes interested in the political intricacies of the British' presence in Arabia.[538]

What made Aden so pleasurable for Waugh were its charming irregularities, political tensions and the sense of adventure that it entailed. The company of likable, relatable British men was crucial too. Here in Aden, he could escape the boredom that followed him everywhere: from London's banal urban society to the mind-numbing and lonely hotel in Djibouti. Yet the tiny red circle on the map had at first seemed boring too. He feared Aden would be "a benevolently administered territory" overrun by "clinics, prevention-of-cruelty-to-animals inspectors, German and Japanese commercial travelers, Fabian women collecting statistics…"[539] This last undesirable "concomitant of British imperialism" surely refers to *the* pre-eminent Fabian woman, Beatrice Webb.[540] But to his relief Waugh discovers a more masculine and chaotic version of British colonialism. Colonial rule in Aden is an administrative mess: the larger 'Aden Protectorate' that ties together tribes in the surrounding area are dealt with by the Colonial Office, while the smaller Aden Settlement stands under the Bombay Presidency. The boundaries are "practically meaningless" and

[534] Ibid., 97.
[535] Ibid., 89.
[536] Ibid., 97.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Ibid., 109.
[540] Ibid.

British rule is incredibly loose, relying on shifting alliances with the virtually independent Arabian tribes.[541] To keep order, the British have mostly bribed the tribes not to attack European and Indian settlers. The chiefs are bound to the Aden government "by thirty separate treaties," writes Waugh.[542] While 'residence' is seen as "their primary duty," the British have recently started with a more integrative approach by organizing a tribal council along Arabian lines. This type of colonial rule, completely inefficient, decentralized and ornamentalist, would be a nightmare for the Webbs. For Waugh it creates the kinds of irregularities that he missed in the boring regularity of adult life in the city. Where the Webbs saw the major problem of modern society as being of a socio-economic nature, Waugh conceived of it more in terms of an individual modern condition. To him, modern life meant the dulling and dumbing down of experience, the destruction of eccentricity. Of course, as I will argue later, this more existentialist and aesthetic critique of modern British society was fundamentally tied to Waugh's politics and social visions.

Fussell has pointed out that Waugh's travel writing is filled with the spotting and enjoyment of anomalies.[543] Waugh continuously finds humor and pleasure by finding "the odd in the familiar."[544] Of course, these anomalies only gain their richness by their contrast against a well-known and even treasured norm. For Waugh, after all, home is the norm, and it is a place that "one occupies more richly for the experience of anomaly."[545] But it was also a place of normality, boredom and the even starker horrors of an emerging democratic society of mass consumption. As I will further explore in the following chapters, Waugh has an ambiguous stance towards the familiar and the unfamiliar. The unfamiliar element (the exotic, the 'other') only becomes desirable when it is related with the familiar norm (England). The colonial realm, as an 'extension' of England, is then ideally suited for such a complex relation of familiarity and unfamiliarity. This makes Aden so pleasurable. For example, Waugh can here delight in an Aden Boy Scout examination where the Somali boy knows the English scout laws by heart but has no idea what they mean. The institution of the scouts provides the familiarity; the racist stereotype of an even more childish 'child native', whose dialogue is presented in broken English, makes the anomaly. Another anomaly: every Thursday the British watch a movie on the roof of the Seamen's Institute. The movie is an "abysmal British drama […] about a feminist and an illegitimate child," but Waugh is still fascinated by the event.[546] To his delightful surprise, almost the entire audience, sitting in wicker chairs under a starlight night, is quietly sleeping. "It is one of the odd characteristics of the Aden climate that it is practically impossible to remain both immobile and conscious."[547]

The colonial society of Aden is so agreeable and exciting, Waugh writes, because it mostly consists of bachelors. Indeed, the agreeable, disordered masculine imperialism is maintained by the

[541] Ibid., 110.
[542] Ibid.
[543] Fussell, *Abroad*, 179.
[544] Ibid.
[545] Waugh, *Remote People*, 184.
[546] Ibid., 104.
[547] Ibid.

exclusion of women. He comes to realize that there is "never anything essentially ludicrous about English officials abroad; it is the wives they marry that are so difficult."[548] Here in Aden, Waugh again finds the familiar 'boys club' atmosphere of his boarding school and Oxford days. These masculinized vestiges of traditional England (from which so many public school boys like Waugh found it so hard to detach themselves) contrast with the 'feminized' spaces of interwar Britain. In her book *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*, Alison Light identifies a sense of "wounded masculine pride," among the many male British authors fleeing the Isles.[549] She argues that these mainly upper-class writers not only lamented the rise of a more egalitarian England but also the domestication of national life. Peacetime was felt to be effeminate; Britain in its suburbanizing form was a place where it is "no longer possible to be properly male."[550] This was, I believe, a reaction against the rising importance of the middle-class in British society and the decline of the landed gentry during the interwar years; the increased blurring of social hierarchy and class distinctions.[551] But it was also a response to the ensuing rethinking of the notion of Englishness. Light identifies in the history of ideology and emotion of the interwar years the emergence of a national sentiment of Englishness that was oriented towards the domestic. This formed part of a realignment of sexual identities, a rethinking of national purpose and a departure from the older "aping of the upper classes," a class so dear for Waugh.[552] Light argues that "the 1920s and '30s saw a move away from the formerly heroic and officially masculine public rhetorics of national destiny […] to an Englishness at once less imperial and more inward-looking, more domestic and more private – and in terms of pre-war standards, more 'feminine'."[553] This change brought a new stress on house-building, domestic consumerism, the family and increased the privatization of national life. But this changing culture also brought many new opportunities for women and marked the entry of many women into modernity, "a modernity which was felt and lived in the most interior and private of places."[554] But for certain men, especially for those with misogynistic tendencies like Waugh, this feminization of England was understood as the smothering of domestic life, the conformity of suburban home-making, and the effeminacy of modern consumption. What is crucial to note, is that there exists in the interwar years in England an ideological and emotional link between femininity and modernity. Waugh's anti-modernity is thus fundamentally mixed with his anti-femininity. As a bachelor playground, Aden escapes the horrors of domesticated, modern life. The absence of women, who function as representatives of wretched interwar modernity, makes Aden a 'good place'.

Waugh finds another vestige of masculinity in Mr. Leblanc, an eccentric businessman who, for example, keeps press cuttings of Rebecca West's marriage in his pocket. Attending a dinner at

[548] Ibid., 103.
[549] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 7.
[550] Ibid., 5.
[551] See: Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 330–35, 347–49.
[552] Light, *Forever England*, 9.
[553] Ibid., 8.
[554] Ibid., 10.

Leblanc's house, Waugh encounters another side of his host's character: "Here was Mr. Leblanc the patriarch."[555] His house is the top story of his business, at his table sits his daughter, his secretary, and three of his "'young men'."[556] These men are his clerks who live in an intimate relationship with the family of their patriarch. Waugh writes that these men work incredibly hard and for exercise they take "little walks over the rocks together."[557] Leblanc invites Waugh along on one of these walks. When Waugh arrives in his heavy walking outfit, he discovers all of these men wearing nothing but shorts and shoes. While Waugh nursed "memories of happy scrambles in the Wicklow hills" the 'little walk' turns out to be advanced rock climbing.[558] Mr. Leblanc reaches the first precipice without effort: "He did not climb; he rose. It was as if someone were hoisting him up from above."[559] With trembling knees Waugh finishes the frightful climb ("Every detail of that expedition is kept fresh in my mind by recurrent nightmares"), and reaches the beach.[560] Leblanc's car and servants are waiting for them with rich China tea, banana sandwiches, bathing suits, and towels. They swim in the warm sea ("'We always bathe here not at the club,' said Mr. Leblanc "They have a screen there to keep out the sharks."), and in the expensive car a clean white suit, a bow tie, silk socks, ivory hairbrushes, perfume… have been laid out for Mr. Leblanc.[561] Notwithstanding the scary climb, Waugh obviously relishes this humorous and extravagant episode, at least in hindsight. It captures a masculine world of high-class luxury in sunny surroundings that contrasts so starkly with the rainy lawn of a tranquil mock-Tudor home in Essex. This adventure and excitement, with the familiar comforts of luxury and white men, forms the essence of why Waugh approves of Aden's masculine colonialism. It is amazing to find in a few pages Waugh's account of a Boy Scouts troupe (that symbol of imperial masculinity), his admiration of bachelor society, his contempt for a film about a feminist and his most adventurous, manly activity in the whole African trip. Waugh is here living out a masculine fantasy of anomalies that contrasts sharply with the domestic regularity of what he felt was to be the effeminized England of the interwar years. The bachelor society also means that the men stay at the club longer and that there is plenty of entertainment going on. Waugh sketches a jovial, brotherly atmosphere of drinking, dancing balls, and frequent trips to the club for "beer, oysters, and bridge."[562] Waugh admires the British colonials precisely because of their leisured life. We have come a long way from the Webbs.

Due to his adoration of a kind of traditional privileged life, Waugh also differs significantly from the Webbs in his opinions on Muslim 'aristocrats' and interventionist colonialism. This is best explored when we also consider Waugh's response to Zanzibar, the British island-colony off the

[555] Waugh, *Remote People*, 105.
[556] Ibid., 106.
[557] Ibid.
[558] Ibid., 107.
[559] Ibid.
[560] Ibid., 108.
[561] Ibid., 109.
[562] Ibid., 105.

East African coast where he travels to next. Waugh immediately dislikes the place, mainly because he becomes obsessed by its unescapable heat. Zanzibar is also incredibly dull for Waugh: the men leave the club early to go to their wives at home and the streets of the city are filled with houses of "Indian clerks or flats inhabited by cosy British families."[563] But more than the climate, Waugh believes that "it is the absence of any kind of political issue which makes Zanzibar so depressing." [564] Elaborating on this strange comment, Waugh continues to sketch the Webbian ideal colony: "There are no perceptible tendencies among the people towards nationalization or democracy […] Law and order are better preserved than in many towns in the British Isles. The medical and hygienic services are admirable; miles of excellent roads have been made. The administration is self-supporting. The British government takes nothing out of the island. […] Gay, easily intelligible charts teach the Swahili peasants how best to avoid hook-worm and elephantiasis." [565] For Waugh, who is mostly concerned with subjective effects and responses, this example of well-run colonial development and efficiency at Zanzibar is depressing. It all conforms perfectly with the Webbs' progress-based imperial vision, but Waugh laments that it is happening. This is not only for reasons of personal excitement but also due to his domestic socio-political beliefs and the accompanying colonial vision. Indeed, ending his description of Zanzibar's 'progress', Waugh writes: "Instead of the cultured, rather decadent aristocracy of the Oman Arabs, we have given them [the Swahili] a caste of just, soap loving young men with Public School blazers. And those young men have made the place safe for Indians."[566] As he reads up on the local history in the library and talks with a Turk he befriends, Waugh comes to doubt the legitimacy of British colonialism at Zanzibar.

This somewhat anti-colonial attitude is best understood in the context of Waugh's admiration for what he calls the 'Arab aristocracy'. Just like the Webbs represented the Muslim Indians, Waugh describes them as anti-modern, leisured and unenterprising aristocrats. The simple difference is that the Webbs believe 'leisured' is a negative trait, while Waugh considers this to be positive. To both, privileged leisure is the polar opposite of the meritocratic work of the modern economy. But where the Webbs value modern labor, Waugh opposes its utilitarian and egalitarian character. Waugh cherished the aristocratic upper-class, its culture, and its eccentric individuals. Above all, he admired its leisured lifestyle which was so markedly different from the organized and disciplined regularity of the modern workday. He regretted that this leisured world was disappearing at home, succumbing to the middle-class work ethic, and projected this political vision to the colonial world. What he lamented about colonialism in Zanzibar was that it was destroying the island's aristocratic element. The representatives of this element, the allegorical substitutes of the English aristocrats, were the Oman Arabs who had long dominated the country and its African population before British rule. Already in Aden Waugh had marveled at the Arab's general aristocratic lifestyle. There a "delightful Arab" had guided him around and taken him to a club

[563] Ibid., 129.
[564] Ibid., 126.
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid., 127.

"where at the busy time of the commercial day we found the principal Arab citizens reclining on divans and chewing *khat*."[567] Even at a lower class Arab café Waugh finds the same "decent respect for leisure."[568] In his account of his stay at Zanzibar, he argues that "the Arabs are by nature a hospitable and generous race and are 'gentlemen' in what seems to me the only definable sense, that they set a high value on leisure."[569] Waugh identifies with them and when he finds out they have been disadvantaged by colonial rule, he carefully questions the British presence in Aden.

Colonialism has been the modernizing influence in Zanzibar, it has brought social change. For Waugh this mirrors the destructive, disintegrating forces of modernity in England. He claims that the impetus of British colonialism here was evangelical: under the pressure of public opinion the government occupied Zanzibar to stop the slave trade. "Mohammedans were to be driven out with the Martini rifle and Gatling gun; pagans were to be gently elevated with the hymn book," he writes.[570] But where the destructive aspect of colonialism has been a success, its Christianizing object has failed. Instead, with the traditional society destroyed new "grubby parasites" emerged "eager to take advantage of the new code administered by the amateur law-givers."[571] These parasites are the modern, commercially oriented Hindus of the type that the Webbs would approve of. For Waugh they represent the business-like middle-class; the element that is ruining Britain. Waugh describes how the entire retail trade in Zanzibar is in the hands of these Hindus and how the British bankruptcy law seems to be devised expressly for the manipulation of Hindu retailers. "No Arab or European can compete with them," he writes "because they can subsist on a standard of living as low as the natives."[572] Here Waugh's contempt for the Indians turns to their supposed filthy degeneracy: "But with this difference. What among the natives is a state of decent, primitive simplicity is squalor among the Indian immigrants, because where the natives are bound by tribal loyalties and wedded to their surroundings by a profound system of natural sanctity, the East African Indians are without roots or piety."[573] Waugh here channels a discourse of communitarianism, of the ornamentalist idealization of an age-old, stable social hierarchy. The story of Zanzibar's colonization mirrors the disintegration of British society and the emergence of the materialistic, unspiritual modern man. In the meantime, the cultured Arab aristocrats "deprived by the Pax Britannica of their traditional recreations," have begun to succumb to "extravagance and laziness, as they do in any irresponsible aristocracy."[574] Nostalgically looking back at the time of Burton, Waugh imagines that the city must have been "a city of great beauty and *completeness*. Now there is not a single Arab in any of the great Arab houses."[575] He describes a recurring theme of his novels, the sale of English estates, in the colonial world: "Following the normal European

[567] Ibid., 99.
[568] Ibid.
[569] Ibid., 128.
[570] Ibid., 127.
[571] Ibid.
[572] Ibid., 128.
[573] Ibid.
[574] Ibid.
[575] Ibid., 129., my emphasis.

rake's progress, they run into debt, mortgage their estates."[576] And so, the ordered and decent society lead by the Arabs decays into the unrooted mediocrity dominated by unrefined Hindus and British officers.

Waugh's imperial vision obviously leans towards the ornamentalist vision that structured foreign societies as complex, ranked social-hierarchies whose status privileges were to be preserved. I have already described this vision's conservative ideological evaluations and its politics of non-intervention in part one. In Zanzibar, Waugh takes this view on colonial rule to its logical extreme: if traditional, 'native' society (with its own decent aristocracy) is best left undisturbed, why disturb it in the first place by colonizing? In this way, Waugh comes to criticizes colonization, without even attacking imperial violence or motives, without condemning the legitimacy of alien rule, without resorting to the humanistic concerns for the welfare of the colonized people, and without even nurturing an overly romantic sentiment of primitivism. According to Waugh, it is the Arab's own fault that they have not been able to adjust to a new economy. Waugh, never one to actually lay blame on Britain as a nation, doesn't really strongly condemn the British either. But he suggests that colonialism has in this case been regrettable from the start, *by its very (disintegrating) nature*. His much milder critique actually questions the legitimacy of colonialism on a deeper level than the Webbs' fierce critique of the *current state* of the Raj - a state which can always be reformed. Waugh writes:

> No doubt the process was inevitable; it is the Arabs' fault; they have failed to adapt themselves to the economic revolution caused by the suppression of the slave-trade, and they must consequently be submerged. There was nothing the British could have done about it. All this is true, but the fact remains that if the British had not come to East Africa the change would not have taken place. We came to establish a Christian civilization and we have come very near to establishing a Hindu one. We found an existing culture which, in spite of its narrowness and inflexibility, was essentially decent and valuable; we have destroyed that – or, at least, attended at its destruction – and its place fostered the growth of a mean and dirty culture. Perhaps it is not a matter for censure; but it is a matter for regret.[577]

He finds that a traditional, decent society – and this is the kind of society he finds interesting and aesthetically engaging – has transformed into a monetary, more modern one – which he accordingly finds depressing. Never mind the slave trade, he prefers the lifestyle of the Arabs with "gold-rimmed spectacles and silk turbans" to the British boys in blazers and Hindu traders who form the vanguard of modernity. There is a certain element of exoticism in this (Waugh's above-mentioned love for the anomaly) but it is fundamentally guided by his social vision and the unconscious politics he formed in response to the changing face of British society. For Waugh, the story of the colonization of Zanzibar is a miniature case study of societal disintegration. Waugh's passages almost take on a prophetic tone, warning the reader of what will happen might the modernizing forces in England gain the upper hand.

[576] Ibid., 128.
[577] Ibid.

This brief overview of Waugh's responses to and representations of the colonial spaces of Aden and Zanzibar already illustrates just how different Waugh's ideas are from the Webbs'. Crucially, Waugh does not believe in the inherent worth of progress. Everything that changes for Waugh is suspicious, so that the movement of progress blurs into the movement of decline. I have here touched upon certain elements in *Remote People* that I will explore throughout the following chapters: the ambiguous relationship between familiarity and unfamiliarity, the masculinized leisure of colonial society, the distaste for modern British society, the elitist admiration for the aristocracy and the tension between order and disorder. Zanzibar proved how colonialism stimulated modernization as a global process. Aden suggested that the colonial world could also offer an escape from these domestic forces. In Kenya, Waugh would find that safe haven.

3

COLONIAL KENYA AS TRADITIONAL ENGLAND

Waugh finds a positive resolution to the contradictions of modernity in the lush Highlands of British Kenya. There, surrounded by liquor, aristocrats and horse races, he finds an ideal space that suits his political and social beliefs. As I will argue, Waugh experienced Kenya as a transgressive and compensatory 'heterotopia'; a counter-space that differed from the banality of modern London life and the ghastly uncivilized ways of African life. What enables this heightened experience of space is the broader myth that surrounded white settler society in Kenya, a myth that the settlers themselves cultivated to further their political goals. For Waugh, Kenya represents, in miniature form, a type of English community that no longer exists in England. Deep in East Africa, Waugh encounters not just the past, but a pre-modern, aristocratic England: an idealized version of home that is nonetheless full of contradictions. In doing so, however, he must politically address the exploitative underpinnings of colonial society.

For by the time Waugh arrived in Nairobi, the territory south of Ethiopia and British Somaliland, stretching from Lake Victoria to the Indian Ocean, had fallen under British colonial rule. Following the Congress of Berlin, the British had obtained a 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Africa. Uganda, Tanganyika and British Somaliland were now added to the empire. The crucial connection between Uganda and the Indian Ocean would become known as Kenya and gradually fell under British influence. Its population (primarily sub-groups of the Bantu people, of whom the Kikuyu and the Luo were the largest groups) had been severely weakened by the devastating rinderpest of the 1890s; a disaster that weakened resistance and facilitated conquest.[578] By 1895 the British government formally annexed the territory and named it the East African Protectorate. To make the Protectorate pay for itself (and for the expensive Uganda Railway that was built in the 1890s) white settlement was deemed to be the ideal solution.[579] Soon settlers arrived to colonize the area, at first coming mainly from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa, but led by the highly eccentric and aristocratic Englishman Lord Delamere.[580] By 1908 the white settlers were able to reserve the fertile highlands between Machakos and Fort Ternan for white, European settlement only.[581] The resulting displacement of the Kikuyu resulted in lasting grievances.[582] In 1920 the area was formalized into a British crown colony: the Colony of Kenya.

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[578] Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16.
[579] Basil Davidson, *Africa in Modern History: The Search for a New Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 119; Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 18.
[580] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 18.
[581] Will Jackson, "White Man's Country: Kenya Colony and the Making of a Myth," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 347.
[582] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 17.

As the only remaining colony administered from London that had a significant settler population, Kenya became a singularity in the British empire. The white settlers of Southern Rhodesia had been granted self-government in 1923 and South Africa had begun its controversial autonomous path after becoming a union in 1910.[583] Kenya also became one of the empire's most problematic and troublesome territories. The government in London continually had to balance the wishes of the white settlers (with whom they were racially bound) and their conflicting mission of 'trusteeship'; that of protecting and 'civilizing' the native population. The Colonial Office increasingly found itself at odds with the growing demands of the settlers, who sought self-government and more African taxes, labor and land.[584] Through the intimidation of their governors, they had been able to obtain many concessions. But after WWI, the government reasserted its role as the protectors of the African majority, affirming the 'paramountcy' of native interests and blocking the path to self-government.[585] Ronal Hyam writes that the doctrine of trusteeship was clearly the policy of the metropolitan government between the wars, but that it "constantly had to be adjusted to keep the settlers, or the government of India, happy."[586] The problematic situation in Kenya was complicated by the presence of a significant Indian immigrant community that sought equal franchise and the right to occupy land in the reserved 'White Highlands' (in the central uplands of Kenya).[587] The settlers increasingly felt betrayed by their own government and feared the prospect of political domination by the Indian immigrants.[588] This tension came to a first height during the Indian Crisis of the early 1920s, when the settlers even threatened with rebellion.[589] The economic slump after the Great Depression further hardened the settler's stance towards the indigenous population.[590] By the 1930s, then, the white settlers of Kenya had gathered a certain notoriety. Critics dismissed them as rogues and thieves, while the settlers cultivated a self-image of benevolent, "well-bred" Englishmen, under whose mastery colonial rule and African interests were reconcilable.[591] A further controversial element was added when the missionaries in Kenya fiercened their campaign against the local practice of clitoridectomy in 1929; this proved a huge failure and provoked fierce reactions by the Kikuyu.

When Waugh visited colonial Kenya, the tensions between the settlers and the metropolitan government were bursting once again. The Secretary of State for the Colonies and Dominion Affairs at that time was none other than Sidney Webb. In the summer of 1929, the Labour Party had formed a minority government with Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister. MacDonald had asked

[583] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 346.
[584] John Lonsdale, "East Africa," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith M. Brown and WM. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 534–35.
[585] Lonsdale claims this ideology of "trusteeship" rested on a material allegiance between British economic interests and the African peasant production. The African peasants had entered the export markets faster than the settlers, proving to be more valuable collaborators.
[586] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 45–46.
[587] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 347.
[588] In 1921 the 9,651 Europeans were by far outnumbered by the 22,822 Indians. Ibid., 360 (footnote 22).
[589] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 21.
[590] Davidson, *Africa in Modern History*, 133.
[591] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 348.

the Sidney, by now in his seventies and an active member of the Labour Party, to enter the cabinet as head of the Colonial Office. One of the main issues that faced Sidney during his two-years as Colonial Secretary (after a national crisis, the Labour Government collapsed in the summer of 1931) was the long-standing struggle with the Kenyan settlers.[592] Led by Lord Delamere, the settlers continued to push for a self-governing Kenyan state dominated by the white settlers and for the formation of an East African Federation that would include Tanganyika and Uganda. In line with his earlier colonial vision described in part one, Sidney ultimately wanted to pursue socio-economic policies that would very gradually lead to African self-government. In June 1930, about a half year before Waugh came to Kenya, Sidney published a White Paper that backed the idea of a closer African union but also a Memorandum on Native Policy in East Africa that decidedly supported African rights.[593] As this also emerges from the pages of the *Indian Diary*, Sidney advocated the goal of responsible government, a type of colonial rule "in which every section of the population finds and effective and adequate voice," and the setting up of local native councils.[594] He mistrusted the settlers as responsible guardians of the Africans and laid the authority of trusteeship in the hands of the central British government. Here Sidney seems as antipathetic to colonial British society in Kenya as he was to it in India twenty years earlier. The Memorandum argued that "the interests of the African natives must be paramount and that if, and when, these interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail."[595] This stress on African interests was of course fundamentally guided by the Fabian interpretation of 'benign imperialism'; a practice which was ultimately supposed to benefit those colonized. The settlers dubbed Sidney's papers "The Black Papers' and responded furiously: they organizing protest meetings and called in the support of their allies in British politics and the media.[596]

It was into this politically explosive and controversial Kenya that Waugh arrived in January 1931. The political stances he formed on the colony, one should bear in mind, were thus all positioned against the policy proposals and colonial attitudes formulated by the Colonial Office under Sidney. At first, it seemed as if he would side with his Colonial Secretary. After a tiresome encounter with the bureaucratic mess of immigration procedures at Mombasa, Waugh claims he "entered Kenya fully resolved to add all I could to the already extensive body of abusive literature that has grown up round that much misunderstood dependency."[597] But though he himself recognizes the preconceptions with which he entered the country, his ideologically charged

[592] Radice, *Beatrice And Sidney Webb*, 274.
[593] Ibid., 276.
[594] Quoted in: Ibid.
[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid. In response to this public outcry, Sidney organized a new joint committee to review the policy for East Africa. This committee only published its report after the Labour government had fallen and presented a weaker version of Sidney's insistence on native paramountcy. Radice writes that while Sidney failed to implement any major changes in East Africa, he at least blocked the settler's continued attempts to establish the complete domination of Kenya by white settlers.
[597] Waugh, *Remote People*, 134.

perceptions would soon change his experience of colonial Kenya. Unsurprisingly, he takes a liking to the aristocratic and leisurely style of white settler society.

For Waugh finds its white settlers enjoying an English way of life that he thought had been lost in England itself. This was the gentlemanly, rural, and leisured life he associated with the old aristocracy and its grand country houses. The decline and fall of this traditional way of life would become a major theme in Waugh's work, embodied by the recurring motif of the decay and breaking up of the country house.[598] Waugh's gloomy outlook increasingly lamented the disappearance of an imagined, idealized English past. The main culprit was modernity and all its ill-effects: its ugly factories, its democratic institutions, its egalitarian ideas, its suburbs, its mass-produced toothpaste. In the early 1930s, Waugh was becoming heavily preoccupied with the idea of a corrosive, chaotic modernity of the present and a vanishing, ordered, traditional society. After the breakup of his marriage in 1929, Waugh was driven further in his search for order and answers. His profound engagement with modern life began to turn into a withdrawal to the past and religion. Yet in 1931, Waugh had not, and could not, comfortably resolve his split allegiances. He had only recently converted to Catholicism and was only just recoiling from the hedonistic urban and explicitly modern life he had led with the 'Bright Young People,' a group of notorious bohemian socialites who stumbled through London's nightlife. In chapter five, I will return to these conflicting tendencies and ideological fissures, as they heavily informed his many-sided experience of Kenya.

Here, it suffices to stress that Waugh is not attracted to the colony because of a thoroughly exotic or 'other' dimension. There is hardly a sign of that "radical difference" that would entice what Greenblatt has called a feeling of wonder.[599] Rather than appreciating the country and its colonial settler society as something absolutely foreign, something new, Waugh continually draws parallels with Britain. Here, it becomes increasingly evident that, though traveling abroad, engaged in the supposedly transformative process of mobility, Waugh conceptually hardly leaves England. He describes the white settler society as a "a community of English squires established on the Equator" guided by "the wish to transplant and perpetuate a habit of life traditional to them, which England has ceased to accommodate – the traditional life of the English squirearchy."[600] Waugh claims that this life might have been ridiculed while it was dominant, but that "now that it has become a rare and exotic survival, deprived of the normality which was one of its determining characteristics, we can as a race look back with unaffected esteem and regret."[601] As Bernard Schweizer writes, for Waugh, "English culture at its best seemed to be performed with greater success in Kenya than it was in England itself."[602]

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[598] The 'King's Thursday' mansion in *Decline and Fall*, 'Doubting Hall' in *Vile Bodies*, 'Hetton Abbey' in *A Handful of Dust*, and most famously 'Brideshead Castle' in *Brideshead Revisited*.
[599] Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 14.
[600] Waugh, *Remote People*, 138–40.
[601] Ibid., 140–41.
[602] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 113.

Even the settler's relationship to the native Africans is described in purely domestic terms. The settler's "sense of responsibility" compared "strikingly with the attitude of most European capitalists towards factory hands." Further, he claims that "The relationship of settler to native is primarily that of an employer of labour."[603] But, Waugh doesn't (want to) see the settlers as capitalists, primarily concerned with economics and profit. He adds another British frame of reference, stating that the British in Kenya "abused their native servants in round terms and occasionally cuffed their heads, as they did their English servants up to the end of the eighteenth century." Waugh erases the racial aspect of the colonizer – colonized relations by comparing Kenyan society first to the capitalist mode of production, then to the traditional, hierarchical society of Britain. Instead of approaching the 'natives' as black African people whose colonization was often legitimized by their supposed racial backwardness, he simply describes their relationship with the colonizing British as one of class. As already mentioned in part one, Cannadine has called this last mode of British colonial perception 'ornamentalism'; one where the British projected a domestic social view of a layered, individualistic, traditional hierarchy. Here it is important to note that Cannadine believes this class-based vision often took precedence over a racial vertical hierarchy.[604] Many historians of the British empire have likewise argued that the 'new imperial history' has overemphasized the importance and role of British racial in colonial history. From the Webbs' *Indian Diary*, however, we have seen how social and racial imperial visions were not two 'separate' things but tied into each other and existed in a simultaneous form. In chapter five of part one, we found that perceptions of race and class (and also gender) were fundamentally intertwined in colonial and domestic ideology, as Britain's domestic and colonial social views mutually constituted one another.[605]

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[603] Waugh, *Remote People*, 144.
[604] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 121–23.
[605] Though some postcolonial and new imperial studies have indeed offered too generalized readings of colonial racism, I don't agree with the strong counterwork of some recent scholars. Contentions like Hyam's that "the British empire as a whole can only dubiously called racist, and to the extent that it was, not by deliberate aim" or calls to not "exaggerate the mere shortcomings of the British empire when tested against genuinely evil regimes" rely on a very simple notions of racism (that misguidedly judges 'intention' as its main characteristic) and oppression. Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 39–40. Such denunciations of postcolonial scholarship rely on a reductive reading of its theory, neglecting the deeper implications of Foucauldian notions of power and discourse on which much of it was built. One can't reduce all postcolonial scholarship to simple, sweeping condemnations of the imperial project that argue that it was solely built on and motivated by explicit racist views (the evidence of such views are in any case flagrant). Instead, valuable postcolonial scholarship has hugely extended our understanding of the working of empire. Conflating post-colonial scholarship with 'a focus on race' neglects the ways it has explored themes such as regimes of knowledge, the construction and reality of difference, resistance from below and hybridity, the many-sided character of colonial discourse or the complexities and tensions involved in the ultimately hegemonic practice of colonialism. These issues do involve race, and while the emphasis on race has in some cases led to the obscuring of other categories, this is not inevitably the case. Even an early classic like *Orientalism* does not predominantly stress racism, but the way in which the colonial discourse constructed imaginary geographies, imaginary peoples, and views of difference that supported political domination. Thus even Cannadine's pun on that work's title, arguing that class was as important on race in colonial perceptions, misses Said's point about the production of knowledge; which is completely compatible with the construction and even imposition of social hierarchies in the colonial realm. His book also oversees how the British empire, and its

Though Waugh, like the Webbs, did understand non-Western societies in the same way as he conceptualized traditional class-bound British society (see, for example, his valuation of the Muslim noblemen in Zanzibar), it is important to remember that he was, in the least, as much informed by a view of racial hierarchy and difference. As will become clear, Waugh had strong, explicitly racist opinions and a clear understanding of the racial character of the controversies surrounding colonial Kenya. Certainly in this case, Waugh makes his comparison to English servants not because of an unconscious mode of perception that 'flattens' racial difference in favor of "familiar resemblances and equivalences."[606] This comment is placed in the middle of an explicit argument that there is no rampant racism or racial violence in Kenya. David Spurr writes that Waugh here "appeals to the social order of the past as to an aesthetic and even spiritual ideal" as the basis of colonial rule.[607] In this way he obscures the political power and rule of force and makes "the colonization of Africa essential to the preservation of what is best in the English cultural tradition."[608] Waugh's superficial erasure of race is very much a conscious rhetorical move meant to bolster the settler's cause: he deflects criticism of racism by presenting a 'fair' relationship of labor and class subordination.

So how does Waugh then, underneath his propaganda, *really* perceive the indigenous Kenyans? Rather than limiting British perception of its colonial subjects as primarily 'class-informed' or as primarily 'race-informed,' or seeing (as Cannadine does) these perceptions as two parallel hierarchies, the most valuable postcolonial theory has shown us that these two fluid categories were very much linked through the operation of power. Without conflating the two terms, we must realize that notions of race and class closely informed and associatively interacted with each other: race was often conceptualized in terms of class and class could be seen in racial terms.[609] To make his case, Waugh seamlessly goes from one category of inferiority to another because for him there is an associative link between both forms. This imaginative leap between two types of subordination is made possible because for both Waugh and his intended British reader the unequal power relations of white/black, capitalist/proletarian, upper class/lower class, master/servant were imaginatively linked, often reinforcing, informing but also clashing with one another. Waugh's juxtaposition of the black African employee and the traditional English servant (even as a narrative, propagandistic device) only underlines the conceptual overlap between different forms of domination and further proves how domestic and foreign frameworks cannot be separated in analysis.

What is primarily interesting in the scope of this study, however, is that Waugh emphasizes that the employees are treated in the way that servants *used to be* handled in England "up to the end

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constructions of race and gender, also constituted the domestic ideologies. For an excellent critique, see: Antoinette M. Burton, "Deja Vu All Over Again," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, no. 1 (2002).

[606] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 122.

[607] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*.

[608] Ibid.

[609] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 9.

of the eighteenth century."[610] What he wants to stress, more than the financial relationship, is the archaic way that the Kenyan settlers interact with their inferiors. This 'old school' mode of subordination is, according to Waugh, a much more humane and healthy relationship for "The idea of courtesy to servants, in fact, only came into being when the relationship ceased to be a human one and became a purely financial."[611] This seems to contradict his claim that the natives/settlers relationship is purely one of labor. Waugh's argument starts to falter as he tries to erase race by reference to labor and at the same time stresses the traditional, anti-capitalist bend of the settlers. The employment relations in Kenya must be presented as decidedly pre-modern. In a cruel turn of logic, abuse of African servants is seen as something positive. For it implies a personal interaction, the possibility of emotion and more intimate ties. Behind all this lurks Waugh's contempt for the purely financial, the dehumanization and division of mass labor, and the impersonal human relationships that he believes are ruining England. What the settlers have done is to recreate a mode of living, one that implies a personal way of interacting with inferiors, that used to exist in England but that has crumbled with the advancement of capitalism in the 19th century. For Waugh, this distinguishes the settlers in Kenya from the colonials or reformists like the Webbs concerned with 'progress' and 'upliftment.' This version of colonialism, as I have argued in the previous chapter, is considered by Waugh to spread the destabilizing and chaotic aspects of modernity. But the settler's project of reconstructing old English life allows their colonialism to avoid Waugh's critique of the imperial civilizing mission.

What excuses the settlers, then, is that they are living in the past. They are described as civilized, aristocratic, suitably eccentric, and at the same time "perfectly normal Englishmen, out of sympathy with their own age, and for this reason linked to the artist in an unusual but very real way."[612] The Nietzschean undertone of this passage is striking. Like the German philosopher, Waugh self-consciously considered himself as someone who did not fit in with the dominant modern culture and intellectual thought. One senses a similar detestation of the mass culture of modernity. Against this, the artist is the individual who, due to his unique sensibility, sees through the delusions of modern life and cultivates his 'untimely' ideas. By comparing the settler to the artist, Waugh elevates them to a special status and at the same time compares them with himself, the writer. What attracts Waugh to settlers, then, is that where he sees himself as intellectually isolated in his fight against modern English culture, he encounters them, geographically isolated, creating an alternative to modern city life. What is crucial about this alternative is that it is still explicitly English. Waugh is no strong exoticist or primitivist: he is far too Anglophile and ethnocentric for that. Unlike his friend and fellow Catholic Graham Greene, he doesn't hold an idealized view of the primitive African living in the past. But, strangely enough, he finds and enjoys an English past; a different kind of escape from modern London life. Kenya represents the transplantation of traditional English life outside of England: he calls the colony an "equatorial

[610] Waugh, *Remote People*, 142.
[611] Ibid., 143.
[612] Waugh, *Remote People*.

Barsetshire"[613] and writes that "in Kenya, it is easy to forget that one is in Africa." [614] At first glance, it seems as if it is just this English element that triggers Waugh's utopian experience of foreign space. However, he adds: "Then one is reminded of it [being in Africa] suddenly, and the awakening is agreeable."[615]

It is a lost England that he encounters in Kenya, full of the vanishing things he treasures at home, but equally important is that it is mixed with a 'different' transgressive element. For Waugh was not (yet) a wholehearted admirer of that 'archaic' or picturesque 'Olde England'. Peter Miles has convincingly argued that throughout his travel writings, Waugh consistently believed "mere archaism – whether associated with art, the stances of intellectuals or the frippery of mass culture and suburbia" had nothing to offer and that one finds a sustained modernist temperament in all his travel writing.[616] In his 1930 travel book *Labels* Waugh, playing with his role as a travel writer, completely shatters the 'picturesque' tradition of Victorian travel writing with one devastating word:

> I do not think I shall ever forget the sight of Etna at sunset; the mountain almost invisible in a blur of pastel grey, glowing on the top and then repeating its shape, as though reflected in a wisp of grey smoke, with the whole horizon behind radiant with pink light, fading gently into a grey pastel sky. Nothing I have ever seen in Art or Nature was quite so revolting.[617]

In *Labels*, Waugh goes so far as to claim that every decent Englishman should have a detestation for 'quaintness and 'picturesque bits' because this is a natural self-defense against "the preservation of rural England […] and the transplantation of Tudor cottages, and the collections of pewter and old oak […] and the Ye Olde Inne and the Kynde Dragone and Ye Cheshire Cheese […] free love in a cottage, glee-singing […] local customs, heraldry, madrigals, wassail regional cookery"…the list goes on.[618] So, at first it seems very strange that Waugh would revert to an admiration for a traditional 'Barsetshire'. Yet the very fact that he was away from England, away from those corny traditionalisms at home, allowed him to appreciate them abroad.

In Kenya, with its exotic and curiously hedonistic element, 'the preservation of rural England', or rather its reconstruction, could appeal Waugh. Waugh's love for hybrid contradictions and the overlapping of incongruous elements was already apparent in the opening section of *Remote People* on the 'Ethiopian Empire'. No matter how much he mockingly observed the whole coronation affair from an ironic distance, and how much he believed in the ultimate inferiority of the Abyssinians, one senses Waugh's true delight in the comical and aesthetic effects that the hybrid situation created. He writes that "no catalogue of events can convey any real idea of these

[613] 'Barsetshire' is the fictional, archetypical rural English county created by the Victorian author Anthony Trollope in his 'Chronicles of Barsetshire' novel series.
[614] Waugh, *Remote People*, 147–48.
[615] Ibid.
[616] Peter Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River: Nature, Art, and Modernist Discourse in Evelyn Waugh's Travel Writing," *Studies in Travel Writing* 8, no. 1 (2004): 81.
[617] Quoted in: Ibid., 84.
[618] Quoted in: Ibid., 82.

astounding days, of an atmosphere utterly unique, elusive, unforgettable."[619] What makes Abyssinia unforgettable is that, in sharp contradistinction to the boring sameness that Waugh suffered from in London, "everything was haphazard and incongruous."[620] The juxtaposition of contradictive elements, of people in unfamiliar surroundings gave Addis Ababa an unreal quality: "In this rich African setting were jumbled together, for a few days, people of every race and temper, all involved in one way or another in that complex of hysteria and apathy, majesty and farce."[621] The highpoint of all this is when Waugh returns to his lodgings after a late-night party. Some Abyssinians are holding their own party in a hut behind his room and, surrounded by goats, he stands still, dressed in evening clothes, a tall hat and gloves, to listen the monotonous song they are singing. "The absurdity of the whole week became suddenly typified for me in that situation – my preposterous clothes, the sleeping animals, and the wakeful party on the other side of the stockade."[622] As we will see, in colonial Kenya, this curious mixture and contradiction of home and abroad, of the familiar and the unfamiliar, of the traditional and the novel stimulated in Waugh a similar rare sensation of elation and unreality. In Kenya this crucially rested on a broader associative scheme: the myth of settler society that, as I will argue, formed the basis of a heterotopic, experience of space.

[619] Waugh, *Remote People*, 49.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Waugh, *Remote People*.
[622] Ibid.

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MYTH AND POLITICS IN KENYA

i. The Myth of Colonial Kenya

Before looking at the precise nature of Waugh's experience of Kenya as a 'heterotopia' or 'realized utopia', we must address the question of what conditions triggered Waugh's hard-earned praise. Schweizer has claimed that Waugh idealized Kenya because the reality of the colony stroked with his own political beliefs.[623] But how much was Kenya really like the old, ordered England? How aristocratic was Kenya in reality? While the "gentlemanly stratum" of Kenya was "the *dominant* one", it was not at all representative.[624] In fact, the settler society that Waugh is immersed in formed only a tiny part of colonial Kenya. Before 1940, there were never more than 2,000 white settler farm families, a minority even of the white population in Kenya.[625] Within this amount, there were indeed a disproportionate number of aristocrats and there was a real aim by the authorities to make Kenya a haven for the rich.[626] But, all in all, only a tiny minority of the white settlers, who often came from South Africa, Scotland, Italy and the British middle class, was actually leading the English aristocratic life that Waugh so extolls.[627] To understand Waugh's reaction to Kenya, we must go further than simply supposing that the colony was actually an aristocratic playground and look at the *myth* of colonial Kenya that mediated his understanding and representation of the place.

Will Jackson has argued that the Kenya of aristocratic, leisured settlers was as much a cultural construction as it was a reality. This myth of colonial Kenya, with its exuberant way of living, is crucial to understand Waugh's experience of the colony. In the context of the controversy surrounding the settler's exploitation of African labor and the Indian crisis of the early 1920s, the settlers had needed, more than ever, to propagate images of themselves as the 'benevolent trustees' of the African 'natives'. They fashioned self-images that emphasized their unique ability to 'civilize' the indigenous Kenyan peoples, an ability that the Indians (their main political rivals) supposedly lacked. Casting themselves as a group of prestigious, elite and righteous rulers, they explicitly denied the presence of a poor white class that might jeopardize the advancement of the 'natives'. To safeguard their political position, they embarked on a public relations campaign in the 1920s that "raised to prominence a particular idealised image of European settlement in Kenya" and that "helped establish Kenya Colony in the consciousness of the British public."[628]

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[623] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 118.
[624] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 345.
[625] Lonsdale, "East Africa," 534.
[626] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 344.
[627] Ibid., 345.
[628] Ibid., 349.

While the settler's self-fashioning explains the emergence of Kenya's cultural construction, its content was determined by the transformation of Kenya into a commodity.[629] Jackson argues that from the very beginning, explorers, travelers and the tourist industry molded Kenya into a global brand associated with champagne safaris, "dinner in the bush", picturesque scenes and the freedom of open space.[630] This image catered to the special sensibilities of a certain type of 'gentleman'-loving Englishman and connected to the growing cult of the British countryside in the interwar years. British people of all classes (stimulated by the rise in leisure time, motorcars and bicycles) increasingly took to the country, in search of tranquility. The nature of the countryside formed an escape to the grimmer aspects of industrial scenery and connected to the interwar cult of healthy athleticism.[631] The myth further acquired its function in a direct relation to the dramatic decline of the landed aristocracy in the interwar years. The disappearance of agriculture, country life, and the age old landlord and tenant system in Britain stimulated a nostalgic longing among conservatives like Waugh for a simpler, more 'authentic' type of life. It was against this domestic context that the 'Wide Open Spaces' of the Highlands became so alluring. Through the continuous repetition of a discourse of the primeval, the transcendent and the luxuriant, Kenya transformed into myth. The picturesque "white man's country" was especially intended to attract the upper classes, its appeal being the mixture of an aristocratic environment and a cult of unconventionality: it was a place for "the English better classes in rarefied surroundings."[632] Jackson writes that "For wealthy settlers, wearied by the tedious class-bound conventions, Kenya offered the opportunity for a life free from constraint."[633] The small 'Happy Valley set' of aristocrats became notorious in England for their frequent drug use, 'spouse-swapping', and murderous affairs. This unconventionality, however, was only charming because the social and racial credentials of the settlers were seen as already being secured.[634] The process of colonizing Africa itself, the cultivation of the land and the civilizing of the 'natives', was made exotic and eternal as well. Lonsdale writes that in negotiating their identity, the Kenya settlers made the moral self-mastery of the autonomous homesteader their core value.[635] Through the aestheticization of Kenya, however, the violence and politics of colonialism were effaced. As Ronald Barthes famously argued, the seemingly apolitical nature of the myth, its natural and timeless quality, only functions to naturalize 'history'; in this case the problematic realities of British colonialism.[636] The myth of Kenya, in a powerful and attractive way, erased the contingency of colonial rule and the unequal power relations on which it was built.

Like any strong myth, however, it also subtly worked in on reality. The myth of Kenya and its encoded meanings, its hidden political claims, became a discourse that influenced settlers and

[629] Ibid., 344.
[630] Ibid., 350.
[631] Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 392.
[632] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 351.
[633] Ibid., 350.
[634] Ibid.
[635] Lonsdale, "East Africa," 537.
[636] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 129.

visitors alike. Jackson writes that "colonial knowledge was thus continuously refreshed, just as the enacted performance of Europeans in Kenya was likewise refreshed, as colonials behaved, wrote and imagined themselves in the figurative footsteps of those who had gone before."[637] As settlers acted out the myth that had attracted them and as travelers experienced the evocative sensorial feel that belonged to Kenya, the myth was reinforced and became, in a way, a lived reality. In Kenya, Waugh really did drink sherry in baronial Victorian halls and "swim in the morning, eat huge luncheons and sleep in the afternoon."[638] This can also help explain Hyam's point that while "Aristocrats and upper classes – the Cavendish-Benticks and Finch-Hattons – were not the majority," they still defined the ethos of Kenya: "the fast living and social antics of boisterous public-school types." [639] For the passing impressions of the tourist on holiday, this seemed especially true.

ii. Waugh Meddles in Politics

Waugh's relationship with the myth of colonial Kenya is, however, an ambiguous one. On the one hand, he is critical enough to see through part of the myth and denaturalize its seemingly natural qualities. If, as Barthes argues, "myth is depoliticized speech," Waugh (at least initially) does not present colonialism as a natural, purified essence that "goes without saying."[640] Instead of simply giving himself over to his immediate affective reactions, to evocative descriptions and mythical signifiers, he admits that he must address the deeper political issues that define their significations: "I am concerned in this book with first-hand impressions, and wish to avoid, as far as possible, raising issues which it is not my scope to discuss at length, but personal experiences are dependent on general conditions and I cannot hope to make my emotions about Kenya intelligible unless I devote a few sentences to dissipating some of the humbug which has grown up about it."[641] So Waugh realizes that to make his own glorifying subjective experience of Kenya understandable, rational or ethical, he must address the political controversies that surround the place. To be legitimate, his positive 'emotions' of Kenya require there to be positive 'political conditions' in Kenya. Instead of fully succumbing to myth, Waugh initially faces these political realities and finds a way to rationalize his acceptance of it. On a different level than the deeper-lying 'political unconscious' (that forms the underlying basis his aesthetic experience of Kenya and express politics) he makes an explicit argument about a specific political issue.

[637] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 354.
[638] Waugh, *Remote People*, 148.
[639] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, 17.
[640] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 143.
[641] Waugh, *Remote People*, 137.

Cabañas et al. have called for more attention to this *overt* political dimension of travel writing, what they call the "politics of travel texts in material terms."[642] As evidenced by the study of the *Indian Diary* in part one, Cabañas et al. rightly argue how the travel text "represents actual political conditions," "proposes real-world political interventions," and intersects with "political debates in public spaces."[643] They consider these political attitudes and conceptualizations abroad to be products of modernity and its perspective and production of knowledge.[644] This emphasis on the immediate politics of travel writing, contrasts sharply with Fussell's argument in *Abroad* that early 1930s travel writing is characterized and achieves its literary quality exactly because of a sustained lack of interest in politics.[645] The decline of what he considers to be genuine 'travel' writing (in opposition to political and tourist writings) comes with the increasing politicization towards the end of the 1930s.[646] Indeed, with the continuing legacy of the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of fascism and the growing threat of international conflict, British culture as a whole turned increasingly political in contrast with the more 'frivolous' twenties.[647] Waugh's own turn from frivolous hedonism to increasing politicization captures this larger trend at an individual scale. This trend, like Fussell's argument, relies, of course, on a quite narrow view of what can be called 'politics'. It reduces the political to the level of explicit attitudes and stances on political issues.[648] But even on this level of immediate politics that Cabañas and Fussell refer to, we must, as Schweizer points out and illustrates himself, reconsider the idea that British travel writing of the early 1930s was insolently apolitical.[649] Though British travel writing did indeed become a lot more openly political towards the end of the decade (travel being increasingly motivated by war or polemics), Waugh's *Remote People* clearly intervenes in a controversial political debate.

However, the explicit political arguments it contains on Kenya remain remarkable. For Fussell is correct in identifying an apolitical current in Waugh's generation during the 1920s and early 1930s. While the middle and working class increasingly tended to stable their political allegiance to the Conservative and Labour parties respectively, many of the young upper-class did not much care for politics.[650] An important initial post-war intellectual reaction was the disillusionment with firm politics and an escape into a kind of nihilistic hedonism; the

[642] Miguel A. Cabañas et al., "Introduction," in *Politics, Identity, and Mobility in Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3. A lot of scholarship on travel writing, has focused especially on underlying discourses, modes of representation, and ideologies, indeed often overlooking the ways in which travel texts could address and influence what was felt to be 'political' by the traveler himself.
[643] Ibid.
[644] Ibid.
[645] Fussell, *Abroad*.
[646] Ibid., 215–27.
[647] Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 416.
[648] In the introduction, I have sketched my far broader view of politics. Moreover, even 'travel' itself should be seen as a political act. In the case of 1930s British travel writers, their travels were steeped in the mobility that colonial empire and privilege enabled. The main flaw of *Abroad* is that it fails to connect its biographical accounts, its analysis of British culture in the interwar years, and its brilliant literary criticism of travel texts with the larger power structure of colonialism.
[649] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 4.
[650] Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 346.

contemporary critic Cyril Connolly believed 'the idea of futility' to be the defining sentiment of literature in the twenties.[651] Waugh did become increasingly and more explicitly political throughout the 1930s, though he apparently never once voted in his life.[652] When traveling through Kenya in 1931, Waugh was still some years away from writing the travel books in which his serious conservative and rightist views would reach their peak: *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) and *Robbery under Law* (1939).[653] Identifying clear-cut politics in Waugh's work is, in any case, a notoriously difficult task. Especially in his early literary work but also in his travel writing, no secure system of moral or political values immediately come forward for Waugh, as Malcolm Bradbury writes, "usually seeks his most powerful effects in another dimension."[654] Furthermore, Waugh's most clear statements on politics or society tended to drift to abstract and religious ideas rather than clear political allegiances, party politics, or the kind of explicit arguments on 'actual political conditions' that Cabañas calls attention to. Even as he grew older and bitterer, Waugh's by then notorious conservative stance was often taken up in a half-serious, tongue-in-cheek way. Serious conviction or action was far less important than humorous effect. In his 1946 letters to his close friend (and moderate socialist) Nancy Mitford we find, for example: "I am having a very interesting correspondence with Mrs Betjeman about horses & sex. Half of it gets confiscated by the socialists"[655] or "I must beg you with all earnestness if we are to continue friends [sic], never use the word 'progressive' in writing to me. It upsets me more than 'note paper' upset your fastidious father. It makes me sick and agitated for hours to read it."[656] Even later in life, Waugh above all found an excellent source for contrarianism and humor in scornful conservative attitudes.

This uneasy relationship with well-defined and pronounced politics is not only evident in his work, but also in his personal life. Where his politics never quite formed a sustained or consistent whole in his writing, Waugh's political stance shifted frequently through his younger years. At Lancing he and his friends had posed as a Bolsheviks but at Oxford, he found the competition in left-wing groups to be too heavy to make an impression.[657] His decision to pose as a die-hard conservative at the Oxford Union was primarily motivated by his desire to deliver comically shocking speeches and to join the elegant atmosphere of the Carlton Club.[658] In London,

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[651] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 153.
[652] Ibid., 384.
[653] Dan Kostopulos, "Mexico Imagined: Robbery Under Law and the Lessons of Mexican Travel," in *Waugh Without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies*, ed. Carlos Villar Flor and Robert Murray Davis (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 116. After the war, Waugh would come to distance himself from *Robbery Under Law*, his 1939 polemic travel book about a trip to Mexico that contained a vicious attack of socialism and a strong defense of the Catholic church and capitalist firms.
[654] Malcolm Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), 4.
[655] Evelyn Waugh, *The Letters Of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Mark Amory (New Haven: Ticknor & Fields, 1980), 221.
[656] Ibid., 235.
Another characteristic quote: "I am off to Spain next week so will you please ask Prod & Picasso & Huxley and all your bolshie chums to postpone their invasion until the second week of July when it will all be clear." Ibid., 228.
[657] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 66.
[658] Ibid.

he threw himself into the defiantly apolitical and decadent circles of young hip London society, frequenting their extravagant dress-up parties. His conversion to Catholicism in 1930, at the age of 27, again, marked a new shift in Waugh's attitude – eventually leading to his open self-identification in 1939: "I was a Conservative when I went to Mexico and […] everything I saw there strengthened my opinions."[659] But throughout his twenties, Waugh was less concerned and less comfortable with overt politics, as *Remote People* clearly evidences. His preferred 'mode' of these years was that of an all-encompassing destructive satire and an ironic distance to any serious kind of commitment. Mirroring Fussell's more general argument, Bradbury writes that in his early travel writing, Waugh's "main standard of judgement is aesthetic."[660]

In 1931, then, any explicit meddling in immediate or clear politics, always avoided in his early novels, was uncharacteristic for Waugh. This makes his political meddling on Kenya all the more surprising. In *Remote People*, Waugh himself admits that, once he begins to travel, he can't help but address political issues:

> It is very surprising to discover the importance which politics assume the moment one begins to travel. In England they have become a hobby for specialists [the Webbs would disagree] – at best a technical question in economics [the Webbs would agree], at worst a mere accumulation of gossip about thoroughly boring individuals [...] Outside Europe one cannot help being a politician if one is at all interested in what one sees; political issues are implicit in everything, and I make no apology for the occasional appearance in these pages. I went abroad with no particular views about empire and no intention of forming any. The problems were so insistent that there was no choice but to become concerned.[661]

Waugh was distrustful of claims to stable truths or of explicit political arguments, yet traveling through the British empire, he feels he can't avoid making them. He is almost apologetic about his turn to politics: he writes that he wishes to "avoid, as far as possible, raising issues" and reassures the reader that he will devote only "a few sentences" to it (while his discussion in fact takes up ten pages). Uneager to talk about politics at home, he feels he can't help but acknowledge and discuss them abroad. Even in the writing of a young Waugh one indeed finds the "politics of travel texts in material terms."[662] Though mobility might not always undermine ideological preconceptions, the confrontation with colonial conditions does, then, seem to have stimulated the explicit recognition and thinking about colonial politics and power. Contact with the colonial world was in any case *felt* to be politicizing by the metropolitan traveler.

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[659] Cited in Kostopulos, "Mexico Imagined: Robbery Under Law and the Lessons of Mexican Travel," 117. By then, mobility seems to have ceased to have any transformative effect on Waugh.
[660] Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh*, 11. As will become clear, I consider that Waugh's aesthetics were connected to his political unconscious.
[661] Waugh, *Remote People*, 120.
[662] Cabañas et al., "Introduction," 3.

For the destabilizing potential of mobility here brings Waugh to confront the problem of colonialism and openly formulate a political opinion and vision, one that would otherwise remain hidden - perhaps even to Waugh himself. Waugh awkwardly but thoroughly intervenes in the highly controversial, public political debate about the Kenya colony and the actions of its colonials. Essentially, he defends the white settlers and their claims to colonial rule. One must remember that, as a popular author, Waugh in this way influentially contributed to the myth of Kenya, added to the settler's propaganda campaign, and bolstered the white settler view of colonialism against metropolitan concerns about 'native primacy'. Waugh's feeling that he 'needs' to address Kenyan politics, however, is not simply spontaneously stimulated by his 'being mobile' in itself. It is also the effect of his status as a mobile intellectual: of his intellectual interest, of his self-consciousness, of the fact that he had read a lot about Kenya, including the 'abusive literature' that had made the colony notorious in the twenties. Because of this, Waugh knew Kenya's history, its controversies, and the racial and imperial legitimation on which it was built. He then went on to formulate his own justification of settler society.

iii. Waugh's Defense of the Settlers

The chapter on Waugh's stay in Kenya begins with an impressionistic description of the liquored and luxurious frenzy of Race Week in Nairobi. But soon after, he states that he only began this way because "it made contrast with the churlish officialdom of the coast."[663] Admitting that he's using the mythical appeal of Kenya as a narrative device, he continues to demystify the hedonistic life of Kenya by stating that the party of the Race Week is not representative of "general life in the country" and that "Even in the set I met at Muthaiga [Nairobi's English club], only a small number are quite so jolly all the year round."[664] He states that the settlers are only a tiny minority of Kenya's population and even admits that "one may regard them as Quixotic in their attempt to recreate Barsetshire on the equator."[665] Initially, he questions the idea that the settlers are the dominant group in Kenya and demystifies their common representation as hedonistic adventurers (an image he nonetheless sketches in the beginning of the chapter, and to which he will return later, cf. infra).

More importantly, he addresses the issue of domination, racial prejudice and colonization on which the life of the Kenyan settlers is built. On the issue of the displacement of the Maasai people, he admits that "No one can reasonably pretend that their treatment was just or expedient."[666] He also writes that "It is on the face of it, rather surprising to find a community of English squires established on the Equator."[667] So, at first, he does not simply aesthetically 'naturalize' (that

[663] Waugh, *Remote People*, 138.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid., 141.
[666] Ibid., 142.
[667] Ibid., 138.

essential function of myth) the social reality of colonialism. The depoliticized speech of myth would present the settlers as an essential and natural 'given', it would make "a contingency appear eternal."[668] Instead, Waugh explicitly addresses the historical reality of colonialism and justifies the settler's colonial project. He naturalizes colonialism, but on a larger level and through supposedly rational arguments, by writing that throughout history people have always been mobile. Because of this mobility, they have always conquered, colonized, migrated, penetrated commercially, and spread their religions. This process he claims "will go on, because it is an organic process in human life" and, in line with is conservative logic, this 'organic process' is not something one should try to change.[669] Besides this 'it has always been this way, therefore, it should be this way'- logic, Waugh also legitimizes the Kenya colony by relying on the age-old argument of uncultivated and thus, according to the imperial vision, unowned land.[670] McClintock calls this the "myth of the empty lands," related to a gendered discourse of a "virgin interior" that needs to be penetrated and owned by the masculine colonizer.

Next, Waugh undermines the opposition. During his first days in Kenya, he goes to talk with the leaders of the Indian Association, a circle he knows is "another side of Nairobi life."[671] Though he actively heads out to talk with the political opponents of the settlers and listens to their arguments, he is all too eager to dismiss and forget them. In his travel book, he raises doubts about the grievances of the Indians, claiming that they endure no particular hardships and intend to turn the colony into an "Indian colony governed on the wretched old principle of head counting [common suffrage]."[672] Like the Webbs, he implies an inherent idleness and inefficiency of the Indian race, but in strong contrast to them, he also sees their embrace of modern Western ideas (like democratic elections) as detestable. Where the travel book takes a strategically distanced tone, his diary is much harsher: "Interviewed Indian leads in the morning. Stupid men. Mr Varma particularly disagreeable."[673]

Then follow Waugh's ideas on race, embedded in notions of racial difference and inferiority. Here, Waugh's entanglement with traditional imperial ideology and the "imperial meaning-making" that Smethurst calls 'imperial form' is most strong and persistent.[674] Waugh starts by contending that it is "barely possible to explain to North Europeans the reality of race antagonism."[675] He writes that Europeans in the colony go particularly "mad on the subject" and that "Anglo-Saxons are perhaps worse than any."[676] Calling out the more 'lenient' stance of interwar metropolitans, he claims: "It is easy enough for Anglo-Saxons in London, whose contact with coloured peoples is to hear gramophone records or spirituals, or occasionally share a bus with

[668] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 131.
[669] Waugh, *Remote People*, 139.
[670] Ibid., 140.
[671] Ibid., 136.
[672] Ibid., 145.
[673] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 364.
[674] Smethurst, "Introduction," 2.
[675] Waugh, *Remote People*, 146.
[676] Ibid.

a polite, brown student, to be reasonable about the matter and laugh at the snobbery of their cousins in India […] but the moment they put on a topi, their sanity gently oozes away."[677] So as he ambiguously admits the irrationality of racial fear and prejudice, he primarily wants to underline its 'understandability.' Admitting that the Kenyan settlers can act maniacal about racial issues, he emphasizes: "Gentle reader, you would behave in just the same way yourself after a year in the tropics. It is just a lack of reasoning – I will not call it a failing – to which our race is prone."[678] Here Waugh channels a racialist discourse that identifies an essential 'inclination' in the English race. Like colonialism, this 'natural' thing cannot really be morally judged. Waugh admits that colonial racism has no rational ground to stand on, but rationality is for him far less important than it is for the Webbs. Furthermore, he writes, the Indians are *also* racist: "The reciprocal feeling which people like Mr Varma have about Anglo-Saxons is every bit as unbalanced. It really is not a thing to censure, but it is something to be remembered when considering the temperament of this equatorial Barsetshire."[679] This 'understandability' forms the background for the most openly racist passage in the whole book. Seemingly innocuous he self-consciously and carefully adds: "And one other point – it is just conceivable that they [the Kenyan settlers] might be right."[680] The fact that these "otherwise respectable people" are consistently racist implies that "it is just worth considering the possibility that there may be something valuable behind the indefensible and inexplicable assumption of superiority by the Anglo-Saxon race."[681] Here, Waugh's ideas of a universal racial hierarchy come to the foreground, overriding the ornamentalist aspect of his imperial vision that was so prominent in Zanzibar. Here too, Waugh stops attempting to rationally legitimize the racist attitudes of the Kenyan settlers which he seems to share. Where his logic fails, he knowingly gives himself over to irrationality. And on that note, he ends his uncomfortable diversion into explicit politics.

So while Waugh attacks certain (potentially noxious aspects) of the Kenya myth and addresses the political issues that concern colonialism, he only does this to legitimize and indulge in the remainder of the settler myth. For even in his defense of the colony, he relies on that idealistic view of the settlers as essentially aristocratic, hard-working and 'old-school' decent type men and women. He dismisses claims of structural abuse or labor exploitation and claims that "it may… be remarked that as a matter of fact there has been no example of colonization carried out with so little ill-will between the immigrant and the indigenous races."[682] On racial violence he writes that these are "mere examples of pathological criminality which can be found anywhere without distinction of race."[683] The reason for this is, of course, because the settlers are "respectable Englishmen," who,

[677] Ibid.
[678] Ibid.
[679] Ibid., 147.
[680] Ibid.
[681] Ibid.
[682] Ibid., 141.
[683] Ibid., 143.

due to their uniquely unmodern attitudes and 'natural' English racial superiority, are to be admired. Here we find the myth of well-bred, aristocratic settlers fully intact.

In fact, Waugh's whole defense seems only to be a retrospective attempt to legitimize his own admiration of the settlers, an admiration that is of course informed by the myth. He was so at pains to convince the readers (and himself?) of the righteousness of the Kenyan colony, that the strain actually uncovers the unstable, unethical, and irrational character of his argument. He himself, so devastatingly critical in those years, might even have realized this. But because he simply cared less about immediate politics, the colonial question or humanistic morals than he did about individual experience and grand visions of civilizational decline, his opinions on those last two concerns mainly took precedence over the first ones. This explains how, in different social settings, he so easily jumped from a critique of British colonialism in Zanzibar to a defense of it in Kenya. His visions abroad were, of course, steeped in the legacy of imperial "meaning-making processes," and racialist discourses.[684] Yet even in a colonial setting, his political unconscious (which of course steered the 'aesthetic' standard of judgement Bradbury mentions and which was also embedded in such ideologemes as the myth of empty lands) was predominantly formed in relation to his thinking and feeling about the modernization of culture and society in Britain.[685] Rather than having a well-formed stance on colonialism, his attitudes about Britain steered his judgement. This is why his explicit politics on the British empire in *Remote People* could be mutually incompatible, varying according to how the colony stood in relation to Waugh's idea of modern British society. In Kenya, he was critically minded enough that he felt he had to address the 'problem' of colonialism, but his defense of it was above all a self-justification of his problematic affection to this specific type of colonial society and its way of life. Once he had shoved this political and ethical obstacle out of the way though, Waugh could fully indulge and add to the settler society myth. While the destabilizing effects mobility thus did arouse political considerations, in Waugh's case this resulted in an explicit defense of imperialism. Travel here had the opposite effect of what Smethurst sees as mobility's potential to disorder Western imperial discourses.[686] Indeed for a less "'worldly' intellectual elite,"[687] travel could affirm ideas of racial superiority, rather than deconstruct them.[688] Even where travel had a transformative effect, bringing the traveler to actively realize the importance of and engage in politics, we find that that 'discovery' did not always lead to a progressive questioning of the imperialist or Eurocentric vision.

Instead of attributing Waugh's political stance towards Kenya to the realities Kenyan colonial society itself (as Schweizer and Cannadine do), one must trace them to the Kenya Colony myth that

[684] Smethurst, "Introduction," 2.
[685] Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh*, 11.
[686] Smethurst, "Introduction," 2.
[687] Holland Huggan claim that the 'travel-as-displacement' theories are largely the product "not of the world itself but of a 'worldly' intellectual elite" to which its theoreticians like Smethurst would then belong. Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, ix.
[688] Smethurst, "Introduction," 5.

Waugh in part recognized, yet legitimized, and ultimately accepted. Such mythical constructions of space are especially pronounced in the context of travel, as preconceived desires, fears, and cultural constructions often channel into the traveler's imagination. I here follow Holland and Huggan argument that the spaces of travel should be seen "in ideological and mythical, rather than merely geographical terms."[689] Waugh's perception and defense of the settler society as a transplanted pre-modern England was only possible because his interpretation and experience of Kenya were already mediated through the myth he couldn't or refused to completely demystify. In Kenya, Waugh perceived familiarly decent, yet attractively different aristocratic settlers both because the myth corresponded so well with his deeper-lying ideological sensibilities and because the Kenyan colonials were also self-fashioning themselves according to this myth. Without this mythical construction, Waugh could never have 'found' the untimely settlers and their ideal community in the White Highlands. Its content was also exactly meant to be appropriated by the kind of elitist, unsatisfied Englishman like Waugh.[690] Like so, Waugh's political endorsement of Kenya's settler colonialism was, via the Kenya Colony myth, deeply connected to his dissatisfaction with British domestic society. Waugh believed British society was disintegrating and looked abroad for a coherent, perfect community; one that he imagined had existed in a near past. And as Barthes writes, myth can offer exactly that: a "harmonious display of essences", a vision of coherence and order that seemed especially lacking in the interwar years.[691] This is one way that we can conceive of that interconnectedness which Cabañas calls the "dialectic of mobility and stasis" and which Greenblatt sees as the mutually constituting dynamic between "mobility" and the "sense of rootedness."[692] Just like his *questioning* of colonialism in Zanzibar, Waugh's *defense* of colonialism in Kenya was, strangely enough, very much tied to the same critical reaction against Western modernity.

[689] Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, 68.
[690] Barthes writes: "The fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be *appropriated* […] [to] appeal to such and such group of reader and not another." Barthes, *Mythologies*, 119.
[691] Ibid., 142.
[692] Cabañas et al., "Introduction," 4; Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," 252.

5

A HETEROTOPIA IN COLONIAL KENYA

i. A Modern Man's Search for a Conservative Answer

In the previous section, I argued that Waugh's fear of social disintegration and his admiration of a stable, traditional England underbuilt his political defense of Kenyan settler society and his implicit appropriation of the Kenya myth. This led him to recognize England in Kenya and to blur the binary categories of 'home' and 'abroad', of the 'familiar' and the 'unfamiliar.' Waugh's interpretation of Kenya was not directly necessitated by the space itself but required the mediation through a whole web of associations that constituted the Kenya myth. After his 'political detour,' Waugh goes on to describe the days he spent traveling through Kenya and living with the settlers. Here, I would like to mainly explore the level of unconscious politics. By tracing Waugh's conflicted ideology, we can understand how Waugh experienced the space of colonial Kenya and what attitudes towards Britain were indirectly invested in this experience.

In Radicals on the Road, Bernard Schweizer argues that Waugh's perception of colonial Kenya is guided by straightforward, reactionary worldview. Schweizer terms Waugh's construction of Kenya 'utopian' and contrasts it with the dystopian spaces he believes Waugh finds everywhere else abroad.[693] In his engaging main argument, Schweizer maintains that 1930's travel texts contained political views which were simultaneously brought to the fore and destabilized through the unsettling effects of mobility. He writes that the experience of space was ideologically constructed and that 1930s travelers accordingly formed dystopian and utopian perspectives that reflected their ideological positions and contemporary English concerns.[694] These utopian perspectives "present intimations of society or political systems that could serve as models for England's sociopolitical situation" but were always at danger of being contaminated by the opposite vision of dystopia, in the process undermining dualistic conceptions of society.[695] Starting from the idea that Waugh's "cultural perspective on foreign places was inherently dystopian," Schweizer goes on to argue that Waugh has a utopian vision of Kenya because there he "comes across a state of affairs that corresponds to his penchant for aristocratic and imperial forms of government."[696] Colonial Kenya was for Waugh a utopia because it was built upon authoritarian, imperial, and aristocratic politics and conformed to his aesthetic Gothic nostalgia.[697] It offered the comforts and

[693] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 108–12.
[694] Ibid., 104.
[695] Ibid., 107.
[696] Ibid., 110.
[697] Ibid., 118.

familiarity of home, his beloved England and contrasted sharply with the barbarity of Africa.[698] While these notions might become destabilized through travel, Schweizer argues that Waugh essentially constructed a binary of superior, Western modernity against inferior, non-Western barbarity.

Though I agree with Schweizer that ideological views, informed by domestic conditions, determined the traveler's perception of space, I don't believe Waugh's utopian experience of Kenya can so straightforwardly be attributed to the authoritarian, imperial, and a supposedly completely familiar character of the Kenya Colonial. Nor do I believe that all of Waugh's travel writing can so easily be labeled "conservative travel books."[699] Schweizer's contention that Waugh experienced everything outside of England as "inherently dystopian" inevitably raises the question of why Waugh so often traveled abroad in the 1930s. A long Mediterranean tour with his first wife in 1929 (resulting in his first travel book *Labels*) was followed by his first African trip chronicled in *Remote People*.[700] In the winter of 1932 he embarked on a bleak journey to South America (chronicled in *92 Days*) and in 1936 he returned to Abyssinia. [701] In a 1933 article called "Travel – And Escape From Your Friends", Waugh explained his frequent travelling: "I am deeply interested in the jungle and only casually interested in Mayfair."[702] Carpenter disputes the honesty of this quote, noting Waugh's obvious boredom when he was abroad for long. However, Carpenter rightly argues that Waugh's frequent travels were mostly an escape from his own boredom, misery, and impatience at home. Waugh was likely going into "a more 'primitive' society in the hope that it might display evidence of those permanent values he could not discover in his own world."[703] During his first trip to Africa specifically, Waugh was still fleeing from the failure of his first marriage and Carpenter points out that "it was a geographical gesture comparable to the intellectual gesture of his joining the Catholic Church."[704] His restlessness and desire to travel are best understood as a search for stability in his personal life and, more generally, in the face of a destabilized Britain of the 1930s. The major dystopia in Waugh's work and life was not anyplace abroad but metropolitan London. Waugh didn't always find refuge abroad, and *Remote People* is filled with traces of Waugh's deep-rooted loneliness.[705] But in the early 1930s he still unmistakably hoped he might find a 'good place' outside of England. His travel writing evidences a desire to leave the familiar behind and it is filled with traces of excitement at the possibility of experiencing an existence or perception that is in any way different from home.[706]

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[698] Ibid., 111.
[699] Ibid., 114.
[700] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 223.
[701] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*.
[702] As cited in: Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 248. Originally published in the *Daily Mail* 16 January 1933.
[703] Ibid., 249.
[704] Ibid., 237.
[705] Ibid., 234.
[706] Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 76.

Furthermore, attributing Waugh's fondness for Kenya to a love for imperialism and authoritarianism, as Schweizer does, is a too simple and blunt explanation.[707] We saw how in Zanzibar his admiration for aristocracy merged with his detestation of 'progress' and led to a condemnation of the imperial project. Schweizer underestimates just how important and central Waugh's critical view of contemporary Western society was in his colonial judgements. Indeed, Schweizer even writes that Waugh's description of Abyssinia can be read "as a manifesto *in favor of* industrialization, technocratic functionalism, and centralized government."[708] It was exactly the *absence* of these things that so attracted him to Kenya. While Schweizer rightly identifies a highly Eurocentric and racist ideology, Waugh's attitudes were very different from (if not the complete opposite of) this kind of Webbian faith in modern progress and industrial efficiency.

Rather than starting from Schweizer's strange argument that Waugh privileged modern progress and its spread through imperialism, I argue that he left England exactly because he was dissatisfied with its modern culture and society. Waugh didn't see the signs of decline in London as the "encroachment of "barbarism" from the cultural margins to the center of civilization," but as something fundamentally European to begin with.[709] For Waugh, the social changes of an alleged 'progress' in Europe had gone horribly wrong. The crux of Waugh's ideology was the idea of an all-encompassing decline, of a crisis of modern Western civilization.[710] The accompanying image of a modern wasteland, steadily spreading out over the world, could generate skeptical attitudes towards empire.[711] Waugh's 1930 novel *Vile Bodies* painted the hedonism of the Bright Young People against the background of such a sterile landscape. The following passage is illustrative for how Waugh felt about modern Britain:

> Nina looked down [from the airplane] and saw inclined at an odd angle a horizon of straggling red suburbs; arterial roads dotted with little cars; factories, some of them working, others empty and decaying [...] wireless masts and overhead power cables; men and women were indiscernible except as tiny spots; they were marrying and shopping and making money and having children. The scene lurched and tilted again as the aeroplane struck a current of air.
>
> 'I think I'm going to be sick,' said Nina.[712]

The novel prophetically ends in the barren landscape of "the biggest battlefield in the history of the world."[713] This complete annihilation is the ultimate result of the society Waugh has described throughout the novel. After publishing *Remote People*, Waugh wrote *Black Mischief* in 1932, inspired by his experiences in Abyssinia. The whole novel is a vicious satire on the type of planned

[707] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 110.
[708] Ibid. My italics.
[709] Ibid., 160.
[710] See Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 36–70.
[711] Begam and Moses, "Introduction," 13.
[712] Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, [1930] (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), 168.
[713] Ibid., 186.

modernization of the non-Western world as envisioned by the Webbs. Waugh repeatedly uncovers the futilities and illusions of modern technological 'progress' and its accessories of tanks, birth control, and a Ministry of Modernization.[714] As Alissa Karl writes, the novel satirizes "the idea that metropolitan Britain or Europe can stand as any kind of authentic role model."[715] As I will argue, this kind of ideological scheme surpassed the simple binaries of 'primitive' and 'modern' and envisioned a collective crisis and a global barbarity. The idea of a "sort of savage at home," as Waugh would later call it, was grounded in "a hatred of the values of mid-twentieth century bourgeois life," that Waugh's intellectual circle of friends had cultivated at Oxford and all later expressed in their writings.[716] They believed this depraved bourgeois society was spreading everywhere throughout modern Britain. Waugh found its visible signs in the "the style of the arterial highroads, the cinema studios, the face-cream factories, the tube stations of the farthest suburbs, the radio-ridden villas of the Sussex coast."[717] Fussell has described this contempt as the "I Hate It Here" condition; a consistent leitmotif of elite male interwar writing.[718] WWI was seen to have ruined England, British people suddenly started hating British weather, and "postwar London itself could be seen as a powerful stimulus to movement abroad."[719] Across political lines, there was an impulse in intellectual and imaginative life to flee a Britain that was assumed to be ruined.[720] I have already tied this sentiment to a fear for the perceived domestication and feminization of post-war Britain. And this should all be seen in the even broader context of the interwar preoccupation with a presumed sickness of civilization, as described in the interlude. Waugh's long enumerations of what is 'wrong' with England are exemplary of the interwar diagnostic culture that examined the pathology of civilization, attempting to isolate its various ills.[721] Considered from abroad, the changing and for Waugh alienating society was situated exactly at the heart of the empire.

Waugh's ideological attitudes, even towards modern society, were also lot more ambiguous than Schweizer, and many other critics, present them. *Remote People* was written during an especially contradictory transitory phase in Waugh's life; at a point when he was slowly turning "from a dynamic, rebellious character into a static one."[722] Reading Waugh in hindsight of his later

[714] Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief*, [1932] (London: Penguin Classics, 2000).
[715] Alissa Karl, "A Little Fiction Is Good for You: Currency Crisis, The Nation State, and Waugh's African Texts," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 58, no. 2 (2012): 264.
[716] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1984), 251; Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 298.
[717] Evelyn Waugh, *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Donat Gallagher (London: Methuen, 1983), 216.
[718] Fussell, *Abroad*, 15–16.
[719] Ibid., 18.
[720] The self-identifying democratic socialist George Orwell, for example, made an immensely long list that concluded "*What can one do but hate a place which is*: dingy, leprous, faecal, verminous, lousy, moth-eaten, evil-looking, squalid […] *Where life is*: "moribound, dull, graceless, vile, frightful, dreadful, horrible, sinister, dim-witted…" Ibid., 17.
[721] Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 367.
[722] Christine Berberich, *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 134.

hardened and bitter conservatism or his brief fascist sympathy in 1936, many critics oversee that Waugh's ideology was in fact full of contradictions and shifted throughout his lifetime. Rita Barnard has argued that critics have, for example, too often conflated Waugh with his later ultra-conservative character Gilbert Pinfold.[723] In analyzing Waugh, she believes one should always be conscious of his critical self-consciousness, his deliberate desire to shock, and his complex relationship to the modern. She writes that Waugh was above all an anti-novelist and that in his literature he "likes to set traps for high-minded readers" in a self-conscious strategy to shock superficial morals and "to preempt and manipulate the obvious strategies of critics."[724] Malcolm Bradbury likewise writes that one can't find a firm, secure point of view in Waugh's writing: there is always some ironic uncertainty, moral ambiguity or ideological instability.[725] A lot of this ambiguity arises from the fact that Waugh, especially in his younger years, "mixed Conservative politics with radical literary associations, sharing the general feeling for dandyism and modernism," while at the same time adoring the old country houses of the past.[726]

Against the chaos of modernity, Waugh indeed began to venerate what he believed was the crumbling, authentic 'civilization', represented by an idealized, traditional, and Christian England situated primarily in the past. The later reactionary ultra-conservatism, however, was only beginning to form in Waugh's mind at the time of his African trip and it had not hardened. Knowing Waugh's later novels and his self-cultivated archaic persona after WWII, it is easy to anachronistically project this reactionary character on his pre-war work. Yet as Peter Miles rightly points out, if Waugh had not survived that war, the picture he would have left would have been very different. Miles writes that: "While Waugh's mode may have been conservative satire – much of the time satirising modern society – the literary from that he deployed, in its economy, irony, surrealistic transformations, qualities of montage, and the Art-Deco line drawings and dust-wrapper designs that he variously supplied as visual reading protocols for his and others' books, announced an artist not just indebted to, but fascinated by, immersed in and contributing to, modernist ways of seeing, styling and framing experience."[727] Similarly, George McCarthy finds throughout all of Waugh's life and ambivalent engagement with modernism. He characterizes Waugh as someone divided between "the orthodox and the wayward," who shared modern art's love for provocation.[728] While Waugh might have deplored the metaphysical assumptions of modernist art, he was equally

[723] Rita Barnard, "'A Tangle of Modernism and Barbarity': Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief," in *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939*, ed. Richard Begam and Michael Moses (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 162.
[724] Ibid., 165–66.
[725] Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh*, 4–5.
[726] Ibid., 18.
[727] Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 66.
[728] George McCartney, *Evelyn Waugh and the Modernist Tradition* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 51.

fascinated by its esthetic possibilities.[729] Through such borrowing from film techniques and ironic reworking of Futurist theory, McCarthy argues that Waugh developed an alternative modernism.[730]

Already as a schoolboy Waugh had decorated his walls with Cubist pictures. At the time of writing his first novels he showed and earnest admiration in Hemingway's economy of language, Joyce's "remodifying of the same themes," and Henry Green's experimental *Living*.[731] He found the title for his 1934 *A Handful of Dust* in the cardinal example of modernism; T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. With the success of his own stylish modernist novel, *Vile Bodies*, Waugh had emerged exactly as the representative of the British youth of the future. The young Evelyn Waugh was *the* exemplar of modernism and the modern in Britain.[732] During the period of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, rather than seeing Waugh as a hardened reactionary, we should approach him as a thoroughly modern man and an important representative of what was seen as a new generation of Englishmen. He was very much in touch with and actively part of urban society and the decadent party scene in London. But this immersion in modernity also brought him to be troubled by the banalities and alienation of an increasingly commodified and homogenous culture, the repetition of regulated labor, and the empty forms of modern sociality. As a consequence, he increasingly became disillusioned with and began to slowly retreat from this modern life and mentality – seeking solace in the stability of religion and the past.[733] Waugh was especially sensitive to any kind of larger social changes within British society, which he unequivocally loathed as social disorder and disintegration. While Waugh was clearly attracted to the modern, he also held strong reservations about the possibilities of modernist art, identity, and social change; the result was his personal brand of a 'Janus-faced' modernism.[734] At the time of *Remote People*, Waugh was thus both steeped in and critical of modern life, and he used a modernist aesthetic to convey this.

In my analysis of *Remote People*, then, I approach Waugh as a heavily conflicted modernist writer with traditionalist tendencies. Despite his conservative attitudes, the way he "saw, styled and framed" his experience of travel in the colonies, we will find, was indeed distinctly modern. Like Miles, I see his travel writing as inviting particular attention in the consideration of Waugh as a modernist. This is not only because of their timing but also because of the various connections between modernism, cosmopolitanism, and the (tropes of) travel. I consciously avoid retroactively seeing Waugh through the lens of his later writing, but at the same time I am aware of Waugh's changing ideological position and his strong conservative tendencies. Miles summarizes this as follows: "Waugh's involvement with travelling and travel writing during the '30s thus constitutes a

[729] Ibid., 52.
[730] Ibid., 6.
[731] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 153, 184; Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 71.
[732] Miles writes that Waugh ws a "'modern megalopolitan', driven by his desire to see, as much as by his actual observation of, hard-and-fast generational differences and a true sense of a new 'period' that would define him and which he himself sought to define in his own image." Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 72.
[733] Berberich, *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature*, 102–3.
[734] Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 73.

field where an oscillation between traditional and modernist stances can be strikingly apparent."[735] It is exactly this contradictory split ideology and allegiance in Waugh, both the fully modern man and the fearful, distanced conservative, that makes the contradictions of modern society resonate so well in his earliest satirical novels and in *Remote People*.

When looking at the biographical facts and diary entries leading up to Waugh's African journey, one immediately senses these contradictory impulses. The feeling of modern *ennui* that formed the immediate stimulus for the travel escape is glaring. A major catalytic event for Waugh's increasing pessimism and dissatisfaction was his wife's affair not long after their wedding and the subsequent break-up of his first marriage in the summer of 1929. As Bradbury writes, one would expect him to then abandon "the way of the 'crazy and sterile generation' (as he called it in a 1929 Spectator article)."[736] Instead, in the wake of his success with *Vile Bodies* and around the same time he became interested in Catholicism, Waugh plunged himself into the hedonistic modern life of the Bright Young People as never before.[737] His worldview has hardened though; his youthful curiosity being substituted for a pervasive sense of boredom, increasingly provocative opinions, and a newfound arrogance. In the months before his departure to Africa, Waugh's diary entries recount a fast-lived urban life of fine dining, cocktails parties, sex and little sleep – one that Waugh seems to have simultaneously relished and repudiated. A scattered mosaic of some of his diary entries in the summer of 1930 might illuminate the 'modern conservative' contradiction best: "Small party afterwards. Paul Robeson passed out. Went back and slept with Varda, but both of us too drunk to enjoy ourselves"[738]; "After cocktails, to dinner at Quaglino's with Audrey. She says she is not going to have a baby so all that is bogus"[739]; "I lunched at the Ritz with Noel Coward. We talked about Catholicism."[740]; "Inez has taken to kissing me lately."[741]; "Lunched at Sovrani's with Frank after a morning with D'Arcy [the Reverend who instructed Waugh and received him into Catholicism]. Excellent cold duck *with foie gras*. […] Excellent cocktail party at the Beatons"[742]; "Slept well for the first time for a week. Dined with Gwen and Olivia and talked about religion."[743] Waugh's restlessness, and his growing weariness with the fractured modern life he was living, helps to explain his entry into the Catholic Church on 29 September 1930.[744] Yet at the time, Waugh's religious conversion still meant that he was looking for change rather than historical continuity.[745]

[735] Ibid., 75.
[736] Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh*, 218.
[737] Ibid., 219–20.
[738] 12 June, 1930, Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 330.
[739] 19 June, 1930, Ibid., 332.
[740] 7 July, 1930, Ibid., 336.
[741] 28 June, 1930, Ibid., 334.
[742] 9 July, 1930, Ibid., 337.
[743] 19 July, 1930, Ibid., 339.
[744] Berberich, *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature*, 98; Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 321–22.
[745] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 220.

In *Remote People* and in Waugh's experience of Kenya, we can thus expect to find all Waugh's contradictory ideological inclinations.

ii. The Heterotopia Concept and Travel

Considering Waugh's idealization of settler society, Schweizer argues that Waugh finds a 'utopia' in Kenya. The term seems a bit ill-fitting. Given that Waugh was embedded in the tradition of conservative thought, he was in fact fundamentally against the idea of a utopia; a perfect community that could come into existence through social change. Waugh was highly suspicious of what he believed was the rootless, a-historic, and abstract thinking of utopianism.[746] This is already apparent in his first novel, *Decline and Fall*, where he illustrates the destructiveness of modern 'progress' by recounting the replacement of a beautiful country house with a cold and impersonal Bauhaus-style mansion. But Waugh's anti-utopianism truly comes out in a 1938 essay "A Call to Order" in which he ridicules "the post-War Corbusier plague that has passed over us, leaving the face of England scarred and pitted." [747] Everywhere "the horrible little architects crept about – curly-headed, horn-spectacled, volubly explaining their 'machines for living'. Villas like sewage farms, mansions like half-submerged Channel steamers…" and so on.[748] In this way, Waugh belongs to what Jameson calls a "counterrevolutionary tradition" of anti-utopianism, one that fears the comprehensive changes and the loss that goes with a radical change in social organization.[749]

However, Schweizer is correct in sensing a utopian sentiment in Waugh's representation of the Kenya colony. But this can better be understood in the context of what Bernard Kohlmann sees as a post-war modernist variant of the utopian impulse. This minor utopianism (in contrast to the 'major utopianism' that Waugh so vehemently resented) was more self-critical, stressed the specific and localized function of utopian thinking and was rooted in "the material spaces in which they originated and which they struggled to reimagine."[750] In Waugh, too, we find the contradictory double-faced modernism that seems especially characteristic for the 1930s: on the one hand the disenchantment with absolute systems of belief, and on the other the simultaneous utopian desire to create new aesthetic and political visions of wholeness and social integration.[751] However, the 'minor' social dreaming in modernist literature constructs spaces that are "by necessity 'non-existent'."[752] Mythical Kenya, in contrast, is rooted and is supposed to represents a real place.

[746] Barnard, "'A Tangle of Modernism and Barbarity': Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief," 170.
[747] Waugh, *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, 216.
[748] Ibid.
[749] Fredric Jameson, *The Jameson Reader*, ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 388.
[750] Benjamin Kohlmann, "Introduction," in *Utopian Spaces of Modernism: Literature and Culture, 1885-1945*, ed. Benjamin Kohlmann and Rosalyn Gregory (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4.
[751] Ibid., 6–7.
[752] Ibid., 3.

Schweizer bumps into this very problem when he writes that "Waugh's "non-place" is constructed as a real place."[753]

Rather than a 'utopia', an "effectively enacted utopia" like Kenya is in fact what Foucault calls a 'heterotopia' and I believe colonial Kenya can be fruitfully analyzed through this theoretical lens. The concept of the heterotopia also enables us to understand the way in which the ideological construction of space was closely linked with and influenced by the affective, mythical experience of space. It also allows us to more theoretically connect Waugh's aesthetic tastes with his political unconscious, and the way that unconscious ideology was formed in relation to social change in Britain. Foucault coined the term 'heterotopia' in his short paper "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." He writes that where utopian presentations of perfected society are "fundamentally unreal places," there also exist "real places" that differ from normal, day-to-day places.[754] He calls these 'heterotopias': "real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like *counter-sites*, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted."[755] Foucault gives the examples of the graveyard, the boat, the library, the vacation village and also the colonial settlement. They are places that make a difference; they go beyond the indifferent day-to-day spaces and have a special affective appeal to members of a certain culture and ideology.[756] These heterotopias always have a determined function within a society at a certain point in history. As counter-sites, their experience and function derive from the historically grown associations and meanings of the place. In this way, I believe they are closely tied to the "second order signification" of the myth. Indeed, mythical signification is built upon historically developed analogies between the signifying forms and the hazily signified mythical concepts.[757]

I would like to argue, then, that the heterotopic experience of space, one that combines the ideological and affective, relies strongly on the evocative powers of the myth: the associative, nebulous cultural webs of mythical speech are able to transform a purely real space into a fictionalized real space. It gives the different people, objects and scenery within that space a signification that transcends its ordinary denotations or even connotations. We can't understand heterotopias, then, without understanding the historically attributed meanings and mythical associations that have been invested into these spaces. It is exactly these mythical associations that form around spaces that enable a heightened and fictionalized experience of them. Waugh's construction of colonial Kenya as a heterotopia was in this way closely linked to his indulgence in

[753] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 111.
[754] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 24.
[755] Ibid.
[756] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 170.
[757] Barthes writes that "it is history which supplies its analogies to the form. Then, the analogy between the meaning and the concept is never anything but partial […] Myth is a pure ideographic system, where the forms are still motivated by the concept which they represent while not yet, by a long way, covering the sum of possibilities for its representation." Barthes, *Mythologies*, 127. In Waugh's representation of Kenya, his many signifying descriptions gain their meaning from the Kenya myth which they never fully represent.

its myth and its ideological implications. In his presentation of Kenya as a heterotopia, Waugh continually relies on the associative elements of the colonial Kenya myth: it provides the imaginative investment of the space; the fictional elements that give it a magical aura.

Of course, this also means that because heterotopias are built on myths, these fictionalized spaces are emptied of some of their 'reality', their material and historically fabricated quality. For as Barthes writes, the signification of myth "has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history."[758] Yet this allows heterotopias to function as counter-spaces to normalized spaces, with potentially, but not necessarily, destabilizing and politically liberating effects. Where Barthes in *Mythologies* would still assume the existence of completely 'real' and 'politicized' discourses or day-to-day spaces, Foucault rightly denies the existence of such non-socially constructed, politicized spaces and writes that the fictionalized quality of the heterotopia can function to expose "every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory."[759] But at the same time, one must recognize that the further fictionalization of mythical speech, can also lead to a further depoliticization of space. Just like mythical speech presents reality as "a harmonious display of essences," heterotopia's can create a space that is "as perfect […] as ours is ill constructed."[760] This can, but does not necessarily, function to further obscure the structures of power and domination. Heterotopias in this way can have a special appeal and function in anti-utopian reactionary ideology; they are 'the good spaces' that already exist in the present and need to be preserved. The fictionalization and mythical quality of heterotopias can thus be appropriated and can function in different ways and for different groups inside and outside of the heterotopia, as Foucault's wide-ranging examples (from the brothel to the graveyard) demonstrate. Through this 'relative' quality, the heterotopia is thus a very ambiguous type of space as it can escape but also reinforce hegemonic practices.[761] As I will argue, Waugh's heterotopic construction of Kenya functions as a strong counter-space to the banality of modern life in London. But to fulfill this function, it relies on the fictionalization of the settler society myth and turns colonial rule (even as this colonialism is first also explicitly justified, see chapter four) into an aestheticized and harmless 'given': it purifies it into a fixed essence. The fabricated quality, the History (to use Barthes' terms) behind colonialism disappears into an aesthetic Nature.

In the context of travel and travel writing, the heterotopia abroad has been conceptualized in more specific, but not always satisfactory, ways. In 'Journey With Maps' Andrew Thacker, building on de Certeau, makes a distinction between *space* (related to the discourse of the tour) and *place* (related to the discourse of the map).[762] The mobility of travel confronts one with *space*: a spatial practice that takes into account the disrupting effect of movement. This experience of space,

[758] Ibid., 131.
[759] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 27.
[760] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 142.
[761] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 179.
[762] Andrew Thacker, "Journey With Maps: Travel Theory, Geography and the Syntax of Space," in *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing in the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 21.

Thacker writes, "is based not upon stability but upon direction, movement and velocity."[763] Thacker characterizes this space as heterotopic. The 'mapping' of a discourse of *place*, in contrast, "colonizes space" and sustains a spatial practice that stresses fixity and stability.[764] Thacker does not see these spatial practices as antonyms and stresses that stories "oscillate around these two poles, transforming spaces into places, and places into spaces."[765] Travel writing, then, is the attempt to recapture the experience of space of the journey. Yet through this textual practice one must translate movement into fixity, which threatens to employ a 'mapping discourse' and transform space into place. Thacker then sees 'heterotopic writing' in travel texts as attempts to convey the distinct "otherness of a foreign country" through practices of narrative disruption.[766] This dissociative speech is an attempt to capture the movement or tour-like quality of the journey, the experience of heterotopic *space*: "the actual material spaces of heterotopia are transformed into textual heterotopias that disturb."[767] Thacker, essentially, links the material heterotopia with de Certeau's conception of 'space', and sees the heterotopia as any kind of 'other space,' as the "spatial alterity" that one necessarily encounters when traveling abroad.[768]

One finds a similar broad view of the heterotopia in Paul Smethurst's introduction to *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire*. He writes that the stable and orderly spaces of utopia have no real location and thus can't be found in travel writing. Instead, "travel produces the overlapping of conflicting spaces and temporalities of heterotopias, which are the problematized sites where order and form no longer confer meaning on words and things."[769] Again, the heterotopia is seen as the result of the fundamentally disrupting practice of mobility and "all travel writing is to some extent a heroic exercise to bring textual order to bear on the experience of heterotopia produced by travel."[770] While heterotopias have a political function in postcolonial travel writing, in imperialist travel writing, Smethurst argues, these disorderly 'other spaces' must be erased. This is because imperial thinking's stress on ordered knowledge and space conflicts with this 'disorderly mobility'.[771] Again, mobility is seen as fundamentally disruptive and the experience of foreign space is considered to be necessarily heterotopic. In fact, Thacker and Smethurst both simply equate the heterotopia with the inscrutable, 'unmapped' spaces that traveler encounters abroad and attempts to organize. These liberating 'other spaces' of mobility are seen to be inherently disruptive of hegemonic practices; they are accordingly suppressed in imperial travel discourse.

Yet, following Foucault's theorization, I believe heterotopias are not just confined to spaces encountered in 'mobile' contexts. They can exist *and* be absent both at home and abroad. Waugh's countless diary entries on boredom and numbed-down experience in the disorderly 'other' space of

[763] Ibid.
[764] Ibid., 21, 23.
[765] Ibid., 21.
[766] Ibid., 24.
[767] Ibid.
[768] Ibid., 25.
[769] Smethurst, "Introduction," 7.
[770] Ibid.
[771] Ibid.

colonial Congo ("Hot. Bored."[772]; "[…] travelling through miles of swamp land without feature of interest"[773]; "Uncomfortable and boring day."[774]) alone seems to underline how not all space in travel is experienced as conflicting or disruptive. As I will further argue below, this simultaneous broadening (every 'other space') and reduction (only 'disruptive' space) of the heterotopia-concept differs greatly from Foucault's original formulation.

In her book *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, Debbie Lisle is more attentive to the workings of the heterotopia and the various forms it can take in travel. Lisle emphasizes how heterotopias can be used to "detect alternative orderings of space in travel writing" that are not overrun by the discourse of modern cartography. Yet, dispelling the notion that heterotopias are simply all marginal spaces that one finds abroad, she writes: "Recovering the concept of heterotopia means arguing that heterotopia are not romanticized spaces that exist elsewhere on the margins. Rather, the heterotopia are integral to modernity, crucial to the discourse of modern cartography and at the heart of our prevailing understandings of space."[775] Heterotopic spaces always stand in relation to space outside of the heterotopia: "it is not that these 'other' spaces exist elsewhere, rather, they exist within, through, around and in relation to space that is already mapped."[776] This also means that heterotopias are socially ordered like all spaces, are not free of power and control, and can exist both within situations of total power or of total freedom.[777] The juxtaposition that is possible in the heterotopia, however, allows an alternative 'un-mapped' ordering of space: "When we identify […] territorialisations that do not take hold and vantage points that are unstable – it becomes possible to disrupt the discourse of modern cartography."[778] Lisle sees some of the foreign spaces that travel writers encounter as such sites: these spaces juxtapose the preconceived 'utopian' visions of the travelers with the 'other,' alternative geographical imaginings of the same territory that contest these expectations.[779] Where the dominant travel discourse posits a "stable/mobile vantage point," with the heterotopia "'this' place and 'that' place are no longer distinct – they are juxtaposed upon the same territory."[780] What Lisle stresses is that the heterotopia also rests on the social ordering and mapping of space, but that it can still disrupt the ordering of modern or imperial cartography through the juxtaposition of 'other,' non-modern conceptualization of space. Because of these juxtapositions, the heterotopia is a

[772] 28 January, 1931, Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 367.
[773] 5 February, 1931, Ibid., 370.
[774] 9 February, 1931, Ibid., 371.
[775] Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 190.
[776] Ibid., 189.
[777] Ibid., 190.
[778] Ibid., 191.
[779] Ibid., 189.
[780] Ibid., 191.

territorialisation that does "not take hold."[781] Lisle, in this way, sees heterotopias as a kind of 'in-between' spaces, as types of contact-zones that exist abroad.[782]

Lisle builds her argument on some of the insights in Kevin Hetherington's book *The Badlands of Modernity*. But in her focus on the relationship between heterotopias and the modern ordering *of space*, Lisle overlooks the way the heterotopia mainly fulfills its counter function as an alternative to the modern ordering *of society*. In fact, as Hetherington writes, the heterotopia is best understood as a space where one finds a specifically different *social* ordering: "Heterotopias are spaces in which an alternative social ordering is performed […] These are spaces in which a new way of ordering emerges that stands in contrast to the taken-for-granted mundane idea of social order that exists within society."[783] Heterotopias do not just imply an unstable mental cartography of space (though this may be its effect), it is a space where one finds social interactions and material elements that counter the social life that is to be found in day-to-day spaces. By neglecting the importance of the specific counter function of heterotopias Thacker, Smethurst, and Lisle imply that simply through the disruptive effects of mobility and the difference of abroad, foreign spaces are inherently heterotopic for the Western traveler. For them, travel impinges and confronts the traveler with a spatial disordering that defies and juxtaposes the modern ordering of space; this confrontation leads to the experience of heterotopia – which is often suppressed by the traveler. Yet this negative response to heterotopias by travelers seems strange when we consider again Foucault's definition of the heterotopia as an 'effectively enacted utopia' that functions as a kind of 'counter-site'.

While it is true that foreign spaces (due to their already being 'different' and their many possibilities of juxtaposition) can easily acquire a counter-function, this is not always the case. And while heterotopias indeed juxtapose several incompatible spaces, this mere juxtaposition alone does not constitute a heterotopia. Likewise, confrontation with random difference in itself does not make a heterotopia. In fact, to truly function as a counter-space one must find familiar elements; one must recognize certain real or already imagined social interactions, norms, landscapes, or ways-of-life. In the counter-site of the heterotopia "the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted."[784] Something that is completely foreign might disrupt modern cartographic practices, but it cannot formulate a targeted alternative to home. I argue that, rather than being those in-between and unsettling sites that individuals are confronted with and must negotiate when traveling (spaces that have their own dynamics), heterotopias in travel (even when situated and containing contradictory elements of an 'other' space) are in fact spaces that are fundamentally connected to the social conditions and familiar spaces of home. Where Thacker, Smethurst, and Lisle see heterotopias abroad as 'other,' non-Western conceptualization*s* of space, heterotopias (and their functions and meanings) in fact belong to the

[781] Ibid.
[782] Ibid., 192.
[783] Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London: Routledge, 1997), 40.
[784] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 24.

culture that constructs them.[785] For Foucault writes that heterotopias exist "probably *in* every culture, *in* every civilization […] *in the very founding of society.*" Heterotopias aren't just the result of a confrontation with disordered space and radical difference, rather their difference is constructed in a continuous *dialogue* with everydayness and normality.[786] The 'difference' of the heterotopia, though it might contain exotic elements, acquires its meaning only through its relation to what is 'familiar' to the person entering this counter-site.

This also means that, depending on the way it fulfills its function, the heterotopia *can* but does not always disrupt the imperial or modern construction of space. In contrast to Thacker's idea of the disrupting *space* of mobility, the heterotopia can function as places that exactly bring order and perfection into a world that is perceived to be disordered or in flux.[787] In a way that all the previously described conceptualizations of heterotopia in travel writing can't explain, Foucault himself gives the example of certain colonies as a kind of heterotopia: "[…] marvelous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human perfection was effectively achieved. The Jesuits of Paraguay established colonies in which existence was regulated at every turn. The village was laid out according to a rigorous plan around a rectangular place at the foot of which was the church […]."[788] Rather than undermining or disrupting the discourse of modern cartography, the heterotopia in this case is exactly built on it. Waugh's heterotopic experience of Kenya also underlines the way the heterotopic experience of space can exactly bolster the imperial project.

What binds heterotopias, in my view, are above all their *functions*; their statuses as fictionalized counter-spaces. For a heterotopia to exist abroad, then, it is not sufficient that the traveler finds a 'different' space; it must function in a culturally specific different way. Its construction rests not on a blunt confrontation with radical difference or as a natural effect of mobility, but it relies on cultural constructs, myths, fictionalizations, projections, and recognitions that relate to a domestic social context and imbed the heterotopia with a strong affective quality. What is absolutely crucial in this regard is that the heterotopic space can then contain an *alternative social ordering* that counters the normal practices and relations of modern society. While building on Lisle's insights on the way that heterotopias may disrupt the spatial vision of modern cartography through its juxtapositions, I would like to have special attention for the function that these spaces fulfill. In this way, and in contrast to Lisle, I believe travel writers can often portray heterotopias in their texts because these alternative spaces are the imaginative constructions of traveler's culture themselves. The traveler finds (and in literary practice constructs) a space that is connected to what he or she already knows – and especially to what he or she wishes to escape from.

Having stressed the necessary counter-function of the heterotopia, I would now like to consider again that the mobility of travel is indeed especially conducive to the construction of

[785] Ibid., my emphasis.
[786] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 178.
[787] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 27.
[788] Ibid.

heterotopia. Because modern, voluntary travel is often motivated by a desire to temporarily break away from the normality of life at home (at least in the case of most British writers of the 1930s[789]), it is a practice that is closely linked to the search for 'good spaces'. Heterotopias in travel are utopias that exist, not in the future, but somewhere else. Based on disillusions, imaginations, and myths from the domestic context, travelers seek spaces that, through their difference or exoticism, *can* acquire the specific fictionalization and function of a heterotopia. When confronted with and mediated through the traveler's expectations and constructs, as Lisle rightly notes, foreign spaces can easily become incompatible spaces. These juxtapositions and contradictions then lend themselves to heterotopic experience.[790] Here we can distinguish a more straightforward transformative effect of mobility: it is able to displace individuals (though bound to their domestic ideologies and categories) from their normal day-to-day spaces and identities, stimulating heterotopic experiences of space (with new subjective and social possibilities) that contrast with the domestic context. Mobility, in other words, can especially trigger the construction of heterotopias.[791] It is interesting, in this regard, to note the argument of authors like Fussell and Kowalewksi that travel in the interbellum still allowed for the possibility of such a break from familiarity. They claim that the unsettling, truly 'mobile' aspect of travel has evaporated in the post-war era: the growing mass-consumerism and commercialization of tourism, together with the growing uniformity of the world has brought an end to 'real travel'.[792]

Returning to Foucault's emphasis on the heterotopia as a counter-site, I have grasped the heterotopia in the context of travel as a distinct 'enacted utopia' abroad that contains an alternative social ordering. Crucial in this regard, I believe, is the fictionalization of space (in Waugh's case through myth) that enables the heightened, affectively-charged experience of heterotopic space. Using Foucault's different principles of the heterotopia as a guide, I now explore how Waugh perceived and represented colonial Kenya as such a heterotopic space.

iii. Waugh's Heterotopia

That Waugh is entering a heterotopic space becomes evident the moment his chapter on Kenya opens with his journey from Mombasa to Nairobi. He travels by train and writes that there are three derailments. As he climbs up from the coast to the highlands, he notes: "I awoke during the night to draw up my blanket. It was a novel sensation, after so many weeks, not to be sweating. Next morning I changed from white drill to grey flannel."[793] This seemingly banal observation is crucial in the context of the heterotopia. Foucault's fifth principle of the heterotopia states that there must

[789] Fussell, *Abroad*, 15–23.
[790] Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 189.
[791]
[792] Michael Kowalewski, "The Modern Literature of Travel," *Northwest Review* 28, no. 2 (1990): 113; Fussell, *Abroad*, 37–50.
[793] Waugh, *Remote People*, 135.

be a transformative entry into the space: "Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable."[794] The geographically isolated, mythical colonial society in Kenya is only accessible through the long train ride, an "opening and closing" that is emphasized by recounting the derailments. The train ride functions as this entry point and is followed by a dramatic change in temperature and in clothes. Foucault writes that if an individual voluntarily enters the heterotopia, he must "submit to rites and purifications."[795] The first descriptions of Kenya read like an account of these rites and purifications that Waugh goes through when first entering the heterotopia. The novel sensation of *not* sweating he experiences on the train, is the most obviously physical purification. As his diary witnesses Waugh experiences this change as a great delight: after the "Always sweating." of Ethiopia, he notes in Nairobi the "Great luxury not to sweat."[796] The change of temperature too, emphasizes the novelty and difference of the counter-site Waugh enters. As part of the ritualized entrance into the heterotopia, the change into a grey flannel suit forms part of the necessary change in rules and behavior.

These entry rituals continue during Waugh's first day in Nairobi. When he arrives at the Muthaiga Club he finds out that he has already been made a member. Through this membership to the exclusive and elite English country club, he joins the mythical settler society. Perhaps the most important ritual, one that spoke especially to the liquor-loving Waugh, was that of drinking. In the bar at Muthaiga he observes some men who were "drinking pink gin in impressive qualities."[797] And he adds: "Someone said, "You mustn't think Kenya is always like this."[798] Next, Waugh goes to the horse races. He gets a cardboard disc to wear in his buttonhole (another change in clothing customs) and bets on some horses. None of them win, but when he goes to pay money the bookie refuses any money saying "in rather a sinister way, 'Any friend of Mr de Trafford's is a friend of mine. We'll settle up at the end of the meeting.'"[799] The drinking purifications continue: "Someone took me to a marquee where we drank champagne. When I wanted to pay for my round the barman gave me a little piece of paper to sign and a cigar. We went back to Muthaiga and drank champagne out of a silver cup which someone had just won. Someone said, 'You mustn't think Kenya is always like this.'"[800] At night he goes to a dinner party; "on the way up we stopped in the bar to have a cocktail. A man in an orange shirt asked if we either of us wanted a fight. We both said we did. He said, 'Have a drink instead.'"[801] Again at the dinner party someone tells Waugh "'You mustn't think that Kenya is always like this."'[802] Back drinking at the Muthaiga he meets the American 'Kiki'[803]

[794] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 26.
[795] Ibid.
[796] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 347, 363.
[797] Waugh, *Remote People*, 135.
[798] Ibid.
[799] Ibid.
[800] Ibid.
[801] Ibid., 136.
[802] Ibid.

who tells him "'You'll like Kenya. It's always like this.'"[804] The next morning, Waugh wakes up in "a very comfortable bedroom; the native boy who brought my orange juice said I was at Torr's. I had forgotten all about Mombasa and the immigration office."[805]

With this awakening, Waugh's first passage on Kenya and his purification ritual ends. A large part of this ritual takes on the form of a drinking initiation, ending with the hangover in an unknown room. For Waugh this heavy drinking not only resembles the hedonistic life he pursued with the Bright Young People in London, it also recalled his days in that other heterotopia Waugh idealized: Oxford University. There, with the other members of the boisterous and outrageous Hypocrites Club, he would frequently plunge into long nights of heavy drinking.[806] In Kenya, his admission into the Muthaiga Club and his invitations to dinner and drinking parties, grant Waugh the possibility to enter the heterotopia and the mythical life of the settlers. He must also learn some of the curious gestures and codes of Kenya, like the strange habit of not having to pay bills. The repetition of the phrase "You mustn't think that Kenya is always like this", though confirmed by Waugh later on, only serves to imply the fantastic possibility that there *is* a place where it is always like this. A place full of transgression, limitless fun, and leisure. These rituals and their meanings all depend on the myth of the leisured, decadent and hedonistic colonial society surrounding the elite-world of the Kenyan settlers. The surreal quality of this transformative experience is emphasized by Waugh's clear change in style. Where in the rest of the book, Waugh is very precise in the description of the quirks, characters and looks of the people he meet, in this magical space we get a succession of 'someones'. Where most of the book is written in a cool, distanced, realistic and often ironical tone, the chapter on Kenya is mostly written in an impressionistic, succinct and uncharacteristically sentimental and serious style. A returning stylistic feature is the use of repetitive sentences. Waugh also starts to erase himself as a narrator, breaking from the traditional travel narrative style. We find traces of the discourse that Thacker perceptively associates with heterotopias: the 'tour discourses' that de Certeau describes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. This is an experiential discourse that does not simply list sites but "describes a location through a set of actions."[807] In this way, certain passages feel quite unreal, more fitting for fiction than for a travel account. Like in his representation of the Abyssinian coronation as something straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*, we find here what Miles has described as a characteristic of Waugh's travel writing: "'the flavour of galvanized and translated reality', of 'crazy enchantment' that Waugh's travel books pursue."[808] Perhaps Waugh's disorientating and magical descriptions were his attempt to

[803] Kiki Preston, née Alice Gwynne, was an American socialite who had moved to Kenya in 1926. She was known as "the girl with the silver syringe" due to her heavy heroin and cocaine addiction and was equally notorious for her many affairs.
[804] Waugh, *Remote People*, 136.
[805] Ibid.
[806] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 74–79.
[807] Thacker, "Journey With Maps: Travel Theory, Geography and the Syntax of Space," 23.
[808] Miles, "The Writer at the Takutu River," 78.

convey the fictionalized space that he found in Kenya.[809] All this emphasizes the dream-like quality of Kenyan colonial society, the utopian enhancement of a very real space.

The system of the 'opening' of the heterotopia (the rites, the train ride, the membership at the club…), however, also constitute forms of exclusion. While Waugh is able to enter, many others are unable to access the world of the Kenyan settlers. This ambiguity between accessibility and exclusion forms an important aspect of the heterotopia; its strange status as a space that is both public and private. Only the relatively rich tourist is able to reach the Kenyan Highlands. Even then, one must have the right connections and the financial and cultural capital to enter the colonial spaces of the Club, the Race or the lakeside house. This is only underlined by "the native boy" who brings Waugh orange juice the next morning or the Indian leaders in "another side of Indian life."[810] Though they live in Kenya, they don't really enter Waugh's heterotopic Kenya and its mythical spaces – at the most, they walk around in the background as servants or lurk in the fringes as potential disruptors. As a consequence, once Waugh has dealt with the political controversy surrounding Kenya, the indigenous Bantu people or the Indians barely enter Waugh's narrative. They simply don't belong in the heterotopia that Waugh constructs, building on and reinforcing the Kenya myth.

For Waugh, this exclusiveness is a crucial foundational element that enables Kenya to function as a heterotopia. For not only are others excluded, once inside, the participants of the Kenya myth are themselves excluded from other parts of society. On one level, the geographical isolation of Kenya excludes its inhabitants from Britain. For Waugh this means an escape from the stuffy boredom of London, from factories and arterial roads, from, in short, modernity. But despite this exclusion the heterotopia still provides the comforts and the English elements that suit Waugh's personal and ideological tastes. At the same time, then, Kenya excludes the 'filthy', 'barbarous' primitiveness, the boredom of travel and the unsettling radical difference that he experiences throughout much of the rest of his trip. On another level, the heterotopia of Kenya also excludes the lower-class masses and the indigenous Kenyans. It forms an exclusive and elite location (again resembling Waugh's Oxford days); an isolated bastion against the modern masses, the middle and lower classes and the 'uncivilized natives' Waugh so detests.

However, as Lisle has rightly argued, we shouldn't simply conceive of heterotopias as romanticized spaces on the periphery.[811] She writes that this common misunderstanding separates these spaces from modern visions of space and dissociates them from social ordering and the working of power.[812] Indeed, heterotopias can also be found in the middle of modern society, in the form of the theater or the nightclub, for example. The idea of 'idealized spaces on the margin'

[809] An example: "She came to Kenya for a short Christmas visit. Someone asked her why she did not stay longer. She explained that she had nowhere particular to go. So he gave her two or three miles of lake front for a Christmas present. She has lived there off and on ever since. She has a husband who shoots most sorts of animals, and a billiard room to accommodate their heads. She also has two children and a monkey, which sleeps on her pillow." Waugh, *Remote People*, 148.
[810] Ibid., 136.
[811] Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 190.
[812] Ibid.

reduces the heterotopia to a place of freedom, one that escapes any kind social ordering. Rather, Lisle argues that there is "no place, no margin, no outside where social ordering does not occur."[813] The various forms of exclusion and the colonial underpinnings of colonial Kenya, with its strict hierarchies, distinct social codes, and permeation of imperial power, confirm this. In Waugh's case, these power structures and elitist exclusions even reinforce the sense of closure that is so important for the heterotopia. The geographic isolation of a colonial society itself does not constitute its heterotopic quality, but it does also reinforce this sense of closure. In the Kenya Colony it also makes an alternative social ordering and activity possible, away from the eyes and norms of the general English public.

As the fourth principle of the heterotopia, Foucault writes that "heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time –which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time."[814] This alternative experience of time is a crucial part of the alternative social order and it is central in the construction of a heterotopic space. In Waugh's Kenya the heterochrony functions on two levels. First, there is a difference in the immediate personal experience of time. In the days that follow Waugh's initiation in Nairobi, the experience of time seems to change, starts to move at a slower pace. In a way, there even seems to be a loss of the sense of time. Where Waugh is often quite precise and chronological in moving his narrative forward, in Kenya we get impressionistic jumps from scene to scene, evocative successions of events. All sense of normal time is lost as Waugh seems to drift through the dreamlike landscape. In Waugh's construction of a heterotopia, his indications of time become very vague and he frequently switches from the past tense to the present tense: "Another Nairobi scene"; "At the end of Race Week, Raymond and I left Nairobi"; "We are going to stay with Kiki"; "After a time"; "One day before luncheon". Waugh often introduces scenes with the indeterminate formulation "in the morning/afternoon/evening." A good example of this, and of Waugh's aesthetic 'fictional mode' in writing about Kenya, is the following passage: "In the evening we go down to the lakeside to shoot duck; thousands of flamingo lie on the water; at the first shot they rise in a cloud, like dust from a beaten carpet; they are the colour of pink alabaster; they wheel round and settle further out."[815] While Waugh is mostly characterized by the 1930s rejection of an older strand of exoticism, here we find rare displays of the picturesque and the exotic.[816]

These "in the x" formulations also imply a repetition, as if Waugh did and had been doing these activities for a long time. It introduces a cyclical time that contrasts sharply with the linear time of travel that is dominant in *Remote People* and it evokes leisure, order, calm, a stress-free

[813] Ibid.
[814] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 26.
[815] Waugh, *Remote People*, 150–51.
[816] Charles Forsdick, "Sa(l)vaging Exoticism: New Approaches to 1930s Travel Literature in French," in *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writing in the 1930s*, ed. Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 42.

existence: those constitutive elements of the Kenya myth. In fact, the only type of time that seems to exist in Kenya is the type of 'leisured time' which the Kenya settlers were so associated with. The attractive quality and function of this heterochrony is that it differs sharply from the hectic, organized, and progressive time of the regimented labor and the fast-changing cityscapes of modern England. But it also differs from the banal repetition and the boredom that Waugh so desperately sought to escape. In Kenya, Waugh's leisured activities simultaneously consist of a succession of small adventures. Within the cyclical leisured existence of the settlers, there is also always something new, something delightful right around the corner. One of the reasons Kenya is able to function as a counter-space is because its type of time is so different from what Waugh experiences at home.

This cyclical, premodern experience of time supports the second type of heterochronicity, one that I have already described at length in the first part of this chapter. For when Waugh travels to Kenya, he also travels back in time. Johannes Fabian has theorized the way in which the primitive 'other' was placed (in his book, by the discipline of anthropology) in a different time; that of the past.[817] In part one, we have already seen how Anne McClintock called this 'anachronistic space', where "geographical difference across space is figured as a historical difference across time."[818] The racially and socially inferiors were seen being temporally backward and Africa as a whole was especially "the colonial paradigm of anachronistic space, a land perpetually out of time in modernity, marooned and historically abandoned."[819] According to McClintock, these 'backward' spaces worked in analogy with ideas of racial superiority and the belief in modern progress. Anachronistic spaces were spaces that needed to change, that needed the blessings of progress. As Carl Thompson has argued, these discourses, this "denial of coevalness" pervades a lot of European travel writing: "many Western travelers take it for granted that it is only they and their compatriots who are properly modern. The 'others' that they encounter, meanwhile, are frequently regarded almost as survivals from an earlier epoch."[820]

With Waugh's Kenya we get a similar, but also a radically different situation. Kenya, too, is an 'anachronistic space,' but it's situated in a different past and it has a different meaning for Waugh. As I have shown extensively above, Waugh found a vision of the old, traditional England in Kenya. This experience of heterochronic space and time relied strongly on the myth surrounding the settlers, and to convey this space, Waugh relies on mythical speech. The myth of an 'Equatorial Barsetshire' is stirred up through evocative objects; signifiers that stand for but never cover the whole concept. Sometimes, this even results in a kind of catalog of signifiers whose only function is to try and conjure up a lost aristocratic world: "…an open fire of logs and peat with carved-stone chimney-piece, heads of game, the portraits of prize cattle, guns, golf-clubs, fishing-tackle, and

[817] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 31.
[818] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 40.
[819] Ibid., 41.
[820] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 147.

folded newspapers…"[821] This is a characteristic technique of Waugh, as Greenblatt writes: "By the accumulation of a great many seemingly irrelevant details, Waugh evokes a whole world, a philosophy, and a way of life as well as an architecture and a landscape."[822] This is ideally suited for the description of heterotopia, where material objects can acquire special and mythical meanings, and can be invested with a powerful affective energy.[823] The concrete, historical meanings of these objects are cancelled out by the myth and now only signify another meaning: that of a mythical English past.

So, like the African 'natives', the settlers are 'out of joint' with the time and their community hasn't yet become modern. But because of his ideological position (one that admires the 'civilization' of the West but detests its descent into modern chaos) they are out of time in a 'good' way. In the interbellum, the premodern 'anachronistic spaces' could, more than before, acquire a positive meaning. While the destabilizing energy of modernity accelerated, the destruction of WWI had undermined many people's belief in progress, creating a moral vacuum.[824] As disenchantment with modernity grew, spaces that were seen to be untainted by its effects acquired a new appeal. While the old exoticism, associated with "control and cliché", fell into discredit, Charles Forsdick has shown how travel writers of the 1930s nevertheless looked for a new understanding of the exotic, one that often considered more radical differences between cultures and became dependent on reflexivity and reciprocity.[825] Hence the self-conscious neo-primitivism we find in travel narratives like Greene's *Journey Without Maps*.[826] Waugh finds the healthy stability of an unmodern past in the form of old England, one that is still to be found in Kenya. In this way, the "anachronistic space" becomes, in the context of the heterotopia, a heterochrony. A different order of time seeps through colonial Kenya: a time of the past that stands in a definite counter-relation to modern England.

To fully understand the workings of the counter-space, we must understand, then, how it differs from 'normal', day-to-day spaces. Foucault writes in his sixth principle of the heterotopia: "The last trait of heterotopias is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains."[827] He identifies two types of functions that the heterotopia can have, both standing at extreme poles. First, the illusory or transgressive heterotopia functions by exposing "every real space, all the sites inside

[821] Waugh, *Remote People*, 151.
[822] Stephen Greenblatt, *Three Modern Satirists: Waugh, Orwell and Huxley* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 23.
[823] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 177.
[824] Blom, *Fracture*, 8.
[825] Forsdick, "Sa(l)vaging Exoticism: New Approaches to 1930s Travel Literature in French," 42.
[826] Greene combines his primitivism with Freudianism: his travel 'back in time' through Liberia is paralleled by an inner journey back to his youth. Upon returning to England he finds 'Africa' in a crying child: "[The child], I thought, standing in the cold empty Customs shed […] was as far back as one needed to go, was Africa: the innocence, the virginity, the graves not opened yet for gold, the mine not yet broken with sledges." Graham Greene, *Journey Without Maps*, [1936] (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 242.
[827] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 27.

of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory.'"[828] Foucault gives the example of the brothel. The second type of heterotopia, which Foucault illustrates with the example of the colony cited above, is the heterotopia of compensation whose role is "to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled."[829] No matter how multiform the concept of the heterotopia may be, one must approach it in the context of Foucault's investigation and subtle critique of the modern world and its institutions.[830] It is best understood against the backdrop of an essentially Weberian diagnosis of modern rationalization, Foucault's idea of a horizontal working of power, and his genealogy of modern disciplinary institutions. Against these hegemonic modern spaces, heterotopias enable individual action and subjective experience that escape hegemonic institutionalization – while they simultaneously remain bound to the spatial and cultural limits of previously given social practices.[831] The emphasis of the heterotopia in the modern world is that they are able to counter the disciplined and normalized spaces of ordinary modern life. They stand in a continuous dialogue with the bourgeois normality, the constraining institutions, and the complex social organization of modern society. Its utopian investment lies not in a grand social scheme but in the concrete desire for new social relations, behaviors and norms.[832] For Waugh, Kenya imaginatively formed an escape from this normality and institutional constraint, but also from the increasing individualization and social disorder of modern society (thus effectively 'resolving' these contradictory aspects of high modernity in interwar London). It functioned both as a heterotopia of transgression and of compensation, fulfilling both these functions in connection to his conservative modernist ideological reaction to the spaces of interwar Britain.

In the first place, the transgressive space of settler society seemed to break with the social conformism and normalized life that so bored him in London. Waugh was especially attracted to the excesses and transgressions of hedonistic life. Both in his Oxford and his early London days he had sought refuge in the lifestyle of indulgence that he associated with the upper-class. This decadent streak in Waugh connects him to the legacy of the British decadents of the 1880s, most famously represented by Oscar Wilde.[833] It also formed the most subversive side of his contradictory blend of conservative modernism. His attraction to vice, hedonism and all-encompassing, destructive satire not only clashed with his conservative opinions but also with the values of the Catholic Church.[834] So an important part of Kenya's appeal was that Waugh felt it offered a freedom, abundance, and spontaneity that he found lacking in London.

The aspect of transgressive excess already becomes evident in the heavy drinking of his threshold experience. His diary for Kenya confirms this: "Continual flow champagne", "Got very

[828] Ibid.
[829] Ibid.
[830] Keunen, *Ik en de stad*, 177–78.
[831] Ibid., 179.
[832] Ibid., 178.
[833] Alex Murray, "Decadence Revisited: Evelyn Waugh and the Afterlife of the 1890s," *Modernism/modernity* 22, no. 3 (2015): 593.
[834] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 241.

drunk in the evening" and "Got very drunk most nights and talked about church" (an excerpt that sums up Waugh excellently).[835] Waugh obviously enjoys this excess of alcohol, just like he enjoys the luxurious food he consumes at the dinner parties. The travel book and his diary often randomly mention food and drink, in aimless passages like: "There were small, hot sausages at cocktail time. Often, very late at dinner, we went into the kitchen and cooked eggs."[836] Kenya is presented as the land of Cockaigne, a place full of leisure and abundance. Waugh formulates this vision and experience of Kenya best when he writes of his stay at his American friend Kiki's house: "It was lovely at Naivasha; the grass ran down from the house to the water, where there was a bathing-place with a little jetty to take one clear of the rushes. We used to swim in the morning, eat huge luncheons and sleep in the afternoon."[837] Another scene describes how one morning the company sits on the terrace with cocktails, some discussing an individual who they denied club membership, others playing a card game, while all the time "there was a striped awning over our heads and a gramophone – all very much like the South of France."[838] This reference to the South of France acquires a special meaning when we consider Paul Fussell's claim that for the British traveler of the interbellum, the Mediterranean 'south', with its sunny weather, premodern villages and leisured atmosphere represented the ideal destination to escape the fog and city of London.[839]

Besides luxurious excess, Kenya also represented, for Waugh and for its settlers, a place of complete freedom. 'Open space,' quickly disappearing in England, was one of the major tropes of the Kenya myth. Waugh writes that where "In England we call it a good view if we can see a church spire across six fields; the phrase, made comic by the Frankaus of magazine fiction, 'Wide Open Spaces,' really does mean something here."[840] This idea of freedom, both geographically and socially, formed one of foundations of the Kenya myth. It was a place for the upper-classes on adventure, aristocrats "in rarefied surrounds."[841] Here, they could leave the stuffy social conventions of the home country behind, live strangely and eccentric, yet at the same time their pedigree and social prestige could remain unscathed. For Waugh this unique combination of high-class transgression and heterogeneity was (as it had been in Oxford) ideal. In Kenya too, Waugh admires the spontaneity of settler life, already evidenced in his account of Nairobi Race Week. Of the end of his stay at Kiki's he writes: "After a time Kiki made a sudden appearance before breakfast, wearing jodhpurs and carrying two heavy bore guns. She had decided to go and kill some lions."[842] Later he stays at Raymond de Trafford's house, where to reach the golf club for dinner, they "bounced over miles of cart-track in a motor van which Raymond had just acquired in

[835] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 364.
[836] Waugh, *Remote People*, 148.
[837] Ibid.
[838] Ibid., 149.
[839] See: Fussell, *Abroad*, 130–36; France was the most popular overseas destination for British tourists during the interwar years, see: Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 394.
[840] Waugh, *Remote People*, 148.
[841] Jackson, "White Man's Country," 351.
[842] Waugh, *Remote People*, 149.

exchange for his car; it was full of gadgets designed to capture gorillas in the Eturi forest."[843] While absent in the travel book, his diary also offers a glimpse into the sexual transgression and freedom that Kenyan colonial society offered: "Returned to find Raymond arrived. He got very drunk and brought a sluttish girl back to the house. He woke me up later in the night to tell me he had just rogered her and her mama too."[844] Such examples of transgression were then further glamorized by the many notorious stories and ideas that circulated about the Kenya settlers. In 1927, Raymond de Trafford had made the headlines when his lover the Countess Alice de Janzé, also of the 'Happy Valley set', had shot him and then herself in a Paris station. Both survived the incident and even married not long after Waugh stayed with Raymond. These kinds of episodes all added to the Kenya Colony myth, which strongly enhanced Waugh's perception and appreciation of the people he met.

The mobility of travel also allowed Waugh to reinvent himself. Travel gave him the freedom to escape the critical and misanthropic character he had constructed for himself in London. As Fussell writes: "He traveled to enjoy an activity he did not much permit himself at home, liking people."[845] This also helps to explain the uncharacteristic lightheartedness, sentimentality, and general niceness that we find in Waugh's descriptions of Kenya. In his diary, Waugh himself confesses the transformative effect that the mobility of travel has on his identity: "I become slightly hypocritical a soon as I am away from my own background, adopting an unfamiliar manner of speech and code of judgements."[846] Indeed, as Burdett and Duncan write of leisurely travel in the 1930s: "If the experience of home was one of constraint, the prospect of going abroad intimated freedom and even the possibility of becoming someone else, albeit for a limited time."[847] In the context of the heterotopia the transgressive potential of travel acquires a special meaning. The sum effect of this exciting and transgressive life contrasted sharply, in a close relational way however, with the repetitive boredom and cynical attitude that plagued Waugh in London. For Waugh this different, enchanted, and contrarian way of living probably formed the most important element of the heterotopia.

At the same time, however, Kenya also forms a heterotopia of compensation. Waugh sees a type of ordered, hierarchical society that counters the democratic, egalitarian chaos of sprawling cities he deplored in Britain. Visually, the 'open spaces' of Kenya's beautiful scenery, the "sunlight clearer than daylight," provide a kind of openness where a perfect community can settle.[848] Ideas of cleanliness and clarity pervade Waugh's descriptions: "Amber sunlight in Europe; diamond sunlight in Africa. The air fresh as an advertisement for toothpaste."[849] The heterochrony of a good 'anachronistic space,' also constructs, as I have argued above, a perfect social organization: that of a

[843] Ibid., 150.
[844] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 365.
[845] Fussell, *Abroad*, 186.
[846] Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 347.
[847] Charles Burdett and Derek Duncan, eds., *Cultural Encounters: European Travel Writings in the 1930s: European Travel Writing in the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 6.
[848] Waugh, *Remote People*, 148.
[849] Ibid.

traditional, aristocratic and integrated society, of the kind that used to exist in Britain. People are bound together through organic social ties, through dinner parties, picnics and elite clubs. Everybody here seems to 'know his place.' The servants stay in the background and fulfill their functions dutifully: they bring orange juice in the morning and place motor cushions around the bonfire at night. I have already written on how Waugh believes the social relations between master and servant have not been infiltrated by modern corruption. Kenya is even believed to have a transformative effect on visitors with alternative, progressive societal visions. Waugh writes that at an evening with the Grants he meets "a prominent feminist devoted to the fomentation of birth-control and regional cookery in rural England."[850] But "the atmosphere of Kenya had softened these sever foibles a little; she was anxious not to be eaten by a lion."[851] The colony not only forms an ideal social community, the space even has a healthy effect on those whose views of society don't correspond with Waugh's. As a strange reflection of traditional British society, the Kenya colony compensated the secularization, dehumanization, democratization, commodification and massification of society that Waugh lamented.

At this point, I hope it has become clear how colonial Kenya formed a heterotopia that functioned as a counter-space to two disparate aspects of modern society in Britain. For Waugh, the perfected social organization of settler society formed an ideological resolution to the social disintegration that he believed plagued Britain, but its transgressive lifestyle also countered the conformism that Waugh so devotedly satirized in his early novels. Through myth, the settler colony became a fictionalized space, embedded in webs of association that were able to evoke intense experiences. Kenya's mythical countering of London explains how Waugh, otherwise so satirical and plagued by discontent, so sincerely and emotionally experienced and presented Kenya. Waugh believed he had here found a truly special and enchanted place, and this sentiment worked on a very personal level. In *Remote People*, he writes: "Already, in the few days I had spent at Nairobi, I found myself falling in love with Kenya […] It was not a matter of mere liking, as one likes any place where people are amusing and friendly and the climate is agreeable but a feeling of personal tenderness."[852] Waugh attempts to put his experience of Kenya into words; something deeper than 'liking', something more than the standard transgression of travel or the mere pleasantness of good company. This feeling is best understood as the experience of heterotopic space.

iv. Enchanting Contradictions

[850] Ibid., 151.
[851] Ibid. In his diary, Waugh refers to this 'feminist' as "Lady Denman, who is here on birth control." Gertrude Denman, Baroness Denman (née Pearson), was an active member of the Women's Liberal Federation, fought for women's suffrage, and had lived in Australia as the wife of Governor-General Lord Denman between 1911-1913.
Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 364.

[852] Waugh, *Remote People*, 137.

Due to Waugh's varying sensibilities and the split function of the heterotopia, the portrayal and evaluation of Kenya in *Remote People* doesn't quite form a coherent or systematic whole. Waugh's affective reactions sometimes seem to undermine one another. His attitudes on colonialism, modernity, home, and abroad not only fluctuate, but they are often mutually incompatible as well. Colonial Kenya essentially formed a detour for Waugh's domestic concerns, but these concerns were themselves confused. As we recognized in his contradictory 'conservative modernism', Waugh still struggled to find stable ideological beliefs and values that could answer or even assess the disparate challenges of modernity.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the colonial Kenya of *Remote People* comes over as a fundamentally contradictory space. Yet as Foucault writes in his fifth principle of the heterotopia, this forms exactly one of the features of heterotopic space: "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible."[853] In contrast to the fully realized utopia, the heterotopia is not a 'perfected', uncomplicated space. Instead, it is the *lack* of straightforward logic and political coherence that allows a heterotopic space to fulfill its function in countering contradictory social conditions. The displacement of travel lends itself especially well to the construction of such contradictory spaces. The expectations and preconceived ordering of the traveler is subsequently infused with other spaces, with strange and exotic elements. Debbie Lisle thus writes that in travel "the destination then becomes a site that is over-determined, over-written, and over-coded with 'several sites that are themselves incompatible'."[854] While Lisle sees this disordering as something that is likely to be suppressed, with Waugh we find how these incompatible spaces are emphasized and perceived as enchanting. Nonetheless, the result is similar: this vision disrupts what Lisle sees as the ordered logic of "modern cartography."[855] This contradictory and incompatible quality of Kenya also emerges from the way it is fictionalized through myth. The knowledge of reality that is contained in myth is, as Barthes writes, "confused, made of yielding shapeless associations."[856] Like the space, the mythical concept that underbuilds a heterotopic experience does not form a coherent whole: "it is not at all an abstract, purified essence; it is a formless, unstable, nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence are above all due to its function."[857] The settler society myth is full of incompatible elements (like the idea of 'aristocratic farmers' or the simultaneous hedonism and harsh work ethic of the settlers), but this is exactly why it is so appealing for a certain group of discontented and elite Englishmen. Again, we find that *the function* is central. Despite the many contradictions, the function gives the heterotopia and myth its aesthetic and affective whole. It forms the coherence between seemingly incongruous elements, beliefs, values, and spaces. It is exactly because Kenya is a contradictory site, a composite of several mutually incompatible sites,

[853] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 25.
[854] Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*.
[855] Ibid., 191.
[856] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 105.
[857] Barthes, *Mythologies*.

that it is able to resolve the contradictions in Waugh's ideology and function as an imaginatively invested counter-space to the contradictions of modern society.

Waugh himself senses, describes and indulges in the incompatible spaces of heterotopic Kenya. Staying at a three-building mansion overlooking Lake Nakuru Waugh writes:

> "Again the enchanting contradictions of Kenya life; a baronial hall straight from Queen Victoria's Scottish Highlands [...] sherry is brought in, but, instead of a waist-coated British footman, a barefooted Kikuyu boy in white gown and red jacket. A typical meadow of deep grass; model cow-sheds in the background; a pedigree Ayrshire bull scratching his back on the gatepost; but instead of rabbits, a company of monkeys scutter away at our approach; and, instead of a smocked yokel, a Masai herdsman draped in a blanket, his hair plaited into a dozen dyed pigtails."[858]

Here we find what Hetherington has called the fundamental element of heterotopia: "[it is] the juxtaposition of things not usually found together and the confusion that such representation create, that marks out heterotopia and gives them their significance."[859] The 'enchanting contradiction' is the blurring of home and abroad; the transplantation of British society in an exotic environment. This strange blend allows Kenya to function as a 'different' space while still retaining a degree of familiarity. Kenya is unlike British society (especially in its modern form), but it is still British: "'this' place and 'that' place are no longer distinct – they are juxtaposed upon the same territory."[860] It is situated in the heart of Africa, but it isn't tainted by what Waugh considers to be primitive barbarity. It is simultaneously modern (the Race Week, the modern comforts, the car, the elaborate hunting equipment…) and traditional (the farms, the hunting trips, the wide open nature...). It escapes the restrictive and institutionalized spaces of England, but it still has a profound relation to it.

Waugh does not seek to resolve these contradictions but revels and represents them fully. In this way, he differs from what Lisle's has described as the resistance of contemporary travel writers to recognize heterotopic spaces. She argues: "the stable/mobile vantage point is precisely what allows travel writers to settle territory: it gives them the authority to speak *from* this place and *about* that place."[861] When travelers are confronted by the alternative spatial order of the heterotopia, which juxtaposes 'home' and 'abroad', 'this place' and 'that place', they retreat to comfortable, recognizable spatial categories.[862] Accordingly, Lisle believes that travel writers try to (unsuccessfully) expel these contradictory spaces, succumbing to the "seduction of utopian space" and the dichotomies of modern cartography.[863] Waugh, however, embraces the contradictory, heterotopic nature of Kenya and the alternative spatial order that it implies. He doesn't expel the modern or British elements that he recognizes in an exotic locale; neither does he expel all the

[858] Waugh, *Remote People*, 151.
[859] Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity*, 42.
[860] Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 191.
[861] Ibid.
[862] Ibid., 192.
[863] Ibid.

perceived difference and otherness of Kenya.[864] The contradictory elements and appeal of Kenya also help to understand the many inconsistencies in Waugh's defense of the settlers and of colonialism. It explains how Waugh can deconstruct some aspects of the Kenya myth while leaving many others intact. Finally, the contradictory nature of space allows it to function both as a heterotopia of transgression and of compensation. Waugh sees Kenya as a place of excess, freedom, and alterity that counters the normality and boredom of London life. Yet at the same time he finds an order, calm, and coherence in its settler society that he feels is missing in the fast-changing society of Britain.

In this travel text, Waugh thus formulates a symbolic resolution to a contradiction that he struggled with and that was firmly rooted in interwar British society. His dissatisfied 'modernist conservative' political unconscious found, in its utopian search abroad, an enchanting contradictory blend of strangeness and familiarity, order and disorder, rootedness and unrootedness, at-homeness and exoticism. Waugh's experience of colonial Kenya underlines both the possibilities and limitations of mobility's effect on ideology. Through the juxtaposed counter-space of colonial Kenya, Waugh constructed an incompatible, heterogeneous space that deviated from the binaries of modern cartography and the traditional imperial vision (which posited a stark moral divide between home/abroad; difference/familiarity; modern/primitive). Yet the passages on Kenya also decidedly highlight how Waugh's mobility was driven by domestic matters and how his representation of the colonial realm was above all a "detour to express local concerns."[865] Indeed, this corresponds to Heike Paul's argument that the study of mobility can also "uncover critical moments in which the 'import' and appropriation of culturally mobile images, texts, and ideas can veil precarious investments closer to home."[866] Carl Thompson has also noted the ways in which the modern travel writer appropriates others "for his or her own project of identity formation" and uses foreign spaces as "a setting and backdrop" for their own discursive program.[867]

By using colonial Kenya as a mythical space to counter domestic concerns, Waugh thus also trivialized the structures of domination that underlie these spaces. As Paul argues, traditionalist and pastoral fantasies of abroad can obfuscate brutal realities and even form a rationale and motif for colonial appropriation.[868] In Waugh's case, his idealization of colonial life in Kenya can be directly connected to his political argument in defense of colonialism and the racist and imperialist discourses he channeled in that legitimation. While Waugh blurred traditional categories and broke

[864] To uphold a mythical social order, he does, however, erase the experience of the Kenyan people and the oppressive nature of colonialism.
[865] Paul Heike, "Cultural Mobility between Boston and Berlin: How Germans Have Read and Reread Narratives of American Slavery," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 125.
[866] Ibid. Paul shows, for example, how the German imagination of slavery in the American South was stylized and romanticized as a pastoral alternative to the economic and social instability of developing capitalism and urbanization in 19th century Germany
[867] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 119.
[868] Heike, "Cultural Mobility between Boston and Berlin: How Germans Have Read and Reread Narratives of American Slavery," 138, 143.

down the binaries of modern cartography, this did not lead to the contestation of power structures, imperial discourses, or a full-scale shift in his deep-rooted beliefs. While it is true, then, as Cabañas et al. write, that "travel allows the in-betweenness and informs the idea of global flow that makes us look beyond the nation," this does not necessarily mean that travel writing (when constructing heterotopic space, for example) then becomes free of discursive oppression, imperialist culture, or even nationalism.[869] Theories of travel-as-displacement often fail to address how even 'in-betweenness' of space, depending on the traveler, does not always subvert imperialist thinking. Fundamentally tied to Waugh's 'displaced' experience in Kenya, was his explicit support and implicit affirmation of this specific (and for him very resonating) type of colonialism.

This also highlights how this heterotopic space was very much the product of a specific historical moment, not just an inevitable effect of mobility. The perceived 'rural England in Kenya' could only come into existence because of the process of cultural globalization through colonialism. The case of Kenya shows the strange hybridizing effects of settlement colonialism, not only on indigenous but also on English colonial (and even national) culture. Moreover, as mentioned above, the function of heterotopic, mythical Kenya was fundamentally connected to the specific social and intellectual conditions of interwar Britain: the decline of the landed gentry, the suburbanization and industrialization of Britain, the 'I Hate It Here' culture, the general sentiment of decline, the rigid class-bound restrictions of British society and the growing nostalgia among elites.

However, the representation of a heterotopic Kenya in *Remote People* is also very much the product of Waugh and his conflicted ideology. Continuously restless in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Waugh both disliked home and abroad: he eagerly traveled only to realize how he was appalled by the unfamiliar and the uncomfortable, he came home only to realize how much he was shocked by modern Britain. Colonial Kenya juxtaposed home and abroad, and in this way formed a refuge for what he considered to be the barbarity both at home and abroad. In the end, what other space than a space that accommodated incompatible values, functions, experiences, elements, and places could form an ideal 'solution' for Waugh, a man who himself was full of contradictions in 1931. A recent convert to Catholicism that still clung to the atheistic hedonism of London's smart set, a thoroughly modern man self-fashioning himself into a conservative. Waugh was still heart-broken and confused from his divorce, sleeping around with women as his homosexual desires lingered on, both believing in British superiority and crushing it in his satire, fleeing from the familiar and the unfamiliar, simultaneously restless and chronically bored. A release from these tensions was to be found in the mythical Kenya with its bottles of champagne and gorilla hunts.

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[869] Cabañas et al., "Introduction," 5.
Indeed, Waugh's identification of a more 'English' society existing outside of England also shows, as Greenblatt argues, how ideas of stable cultural identities are in fact themselves often deeply embedded in processes of mobility. Local cultures, he writes, have the characteristic power to "hide the mobility" that enables and drives them. The ideal 'Englishness' that Waugh idealized in his personal life and spread through his popular novels in Africa, he found while travelling abroad. This was because in Kenya, a community of expatriates was recreating a life they (like Waugh) imagined was authentically English. And so, the Barsetshire of Trollope's Victorian novels, the archetype and ideal of British country life, could be found by the equator. Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," 252.

6

LONDON AS AN URBAN JUNGLE

i. Escaping 'Savage' Africa

The longer Waugh is in colonial Africa, and the further he goes inland, the more he starts to rely again on the rigid binaries of imperial discourse to describe his experience. After almost three weeks in Kenya, Waugh crosses the border to Uganda, a British Protectorate since 1894. There, he visits a convent of African women, and extolls its orderly character: "It does not sound very remarkable to a reader in Europe; it is astounding in Central Africa – this little island of order and sweetness in an ocean of rank barbarity; all round it for hundreds of miles lies gross jungle, bush, and forest, haunted by devils and the fear of darkness, where human life merges into the cruel, automatic life of the animals…"[870] Waugh representation of 'dark Africa' here calls to mind Conrad's "impenetrable jungle" where the air is "warm, thick, heavy, sluggish."[871] With his stress on the 'rankness' and 'grossness' of this primitive barbarity, Waugh channels what David Spurr has called the colonial discourse of 'debasement' that often formed a justification for European intervention.[872] Just like Conrad, however, Waugh will come to present this 'African debasement', to which Christianity forms a "little island of order", as not that distant from European society.

Waugh is supportive of the missionary activity in Uganda's 'savage' jungle. However, he recognizes the growing criticism of missionary practices in Africa, both in official, clerical, and public circles. He writes that anti-imperialists see missionaries as the "vanguard of commercial penetration" and that romantics denounce them as "spoil sports who have clothed the naked and displaced fine native carving with plaster statuettes of the Sacred Heart."[873] His conservative sensibilities seem most receptive to the claim of "serious sociologists" that the suppression of tribal initiation ceremonies has undermined "tribal integrity" and its traditional structures.[874] According to him, most of this criticism is rooted in "the general scepticism about Westernization."[875] Like in Aden, Waugh again questions the legitimacy of colonialism in the face of the West's decline into modernity. He claims that "had it been possible to prevent alien influence – European, Arab, or Indian – from ever penetrating into Africa; could the people have lived in invincible ignorance, developing their own faith and institutions from their own roots; then, knowing what a mess we have made of civilization in Europe and the immense compensating ills that attend every good we

[870] Waugh, *Remote People*, 159.
[871] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer*, [1899, 1909] (New York: Signet Classic, 1997), 105.
[872] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 78.
[873] Waugh, *Remote People*, 157.
[874] Ibid.
[875] Ibid., 158.

have accomplished, we may say that it would have been a mischievous thing, as long as there were any pagans left in Europe, to try and convert Africa."[876]

But this primitivist argument, rooted in a contempt for modernization that Waugh shared, is then slightly countered by a sweeping pessimism and a strong belief in the worth of Christianity. This is because Waugh sees the spread of modernity, be it through Europeans, Arabs or Indians, as an unstoppable and inevitable modernizing global process: "Africa would not have been left alone."[877] He argues: "Whether it wanted to or not, it was going to be heaped with all the rubbish of our own continent; mechanized transport, representative government, organized labour, artificially stimulated appetites for variety in clothes, food, and amusement were waiting for the African around the corner."[878] Waugh continues: "All the negative things were coming to him [the African] inevitably. Europe has only one positive thing which it can offer to anyone, and that is what the missionaries brought."[879] What excused the Kenya settlers was their traditional and aristocratic character, what morally excuses the Ugandan missionaries is that they spread the word of Jesus Christ. According to Waugh's logic, if "all the negative things" of the West were to reach Africa anyway, it should at least export its redeeming quality: Christianity. Waugh's skepticism towards modernization stands in stark contrast to the Webbs' belief in the 'good' that European technology, industry, consumption and politics can bring. Where the Webbs ambiguously legitimize British colonialism on the grounds of modern, organized industrial progress, Waugh denounces it exactly for these reasons. Instead, while belonging to a new British generation, Waugh reaches back to an older colonial legitimation that would have seemed outdated to the Webbs: the spread of Christianity.

Waugh gives this old idea a modern and very personal spin: Christianity is the only thing that can save man, the African or himself from the encroaching barbarity of modernization. 'African man' will inevitably become or already has become modern, and modern man's only refuge is religion. As the broader 'civilizing mission' has come into doubt, we get a truly modern re-interpretation of the 'Christianization mission' of European colonialism. The legitimacy of missionary activity is not primarily that it will save Africans from primitive conditions or even hell (Waugh concedes that "theological arguments have little efficacy in modern controversy"), but that it will save them from the destructive and negative forces that are equally and certainly spreading from the Western world. His defense of missionaries in Uganda can be read as a defense of his own conversion in London; his own attempt to find an answer to modern man's plight. Waugh's very recent acceptance into the Catholic Church in September 1930 had surprised the public, stirring scandal, astonishment and debate in the press. Joseph Pearce writes that Waugh was considered to have "an almost passionate adherence to the ultra-modern" and that his taboo-breaking novel *Vile*

[876] Ibid.
[877] Ibid.
[878] Ibid.
[879] Ibid.

Bodies was simply referred to as "the ultra-modern novel."[880] "How could the pillar of all things modern have turned to the pillar of all things ancient?"[881]

It was his affinity with modernity itself that had turned Waugh to religion. In an editorial for the *Daily Express*, Waugh explained his motivation: "It seems to me that in the present phase of European history the essential issue is no longer between Catholicism, on one side, and Protestantism, on the other, but between Christianity and Chaos."[882] He continues: "Today we can see it on all sides as the active negation of all that Western culture has stood for. Civilization – and by this I do not mean talking cinemas and tinned food, nor even surgery and hygienic houses, but the whole moral and artistic organization of Europe – has not itself the power of survival. It came into being through Christianity."[883] The loss of faith had resulted in a "materialistic, mechanized state"; the only way out, the only stability, the only true aspect of 'Civilization', was Christianity.[884] As I will further argue in the next chapter, this global and general dualism between savage 'chaos' and 'Christianity', was extended in *Remote People* to one of 'civilization' and 'barbarity'. It is not surprising that, so shortly after his conversion and the publication of this article, we find Waugh expressing similar views in *Remote People*. He extrapolates his domestic discourse onto a foreign setting. This forms the basis of his seemingly archaic (but modern-faced) defense of the contested missions, those "heroic outposts", in Uganda.[885]

These outposts are all the more heroic because Waugh increasingly perceives inner-Africa as being disturbingly barbaric. After the settler society in Kenya Waugh is becoming tired, bored, and disgusted by Africa and travel. He writes that at Kampala, he "was becoming conscious of an inclination to return to Europe and wanted to get down to Albertville and the Belgian air service as

[880] Waugh, "Converted to Rome: Why It Has Happened to Me", *Daily Express*, 20/10/1930, cited in: Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts: Spiritual Inspiration in an Age of Unbelief* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 166.
[881] Ibid.
[882] Ibid.
[883] Ibid.
[884] Waugh, "Converted to Rome", cited in: Ibid., 167. This idea was not unique to Waugh: it formed one of the many 'solutions' that accompanied the interwar theories of a 'crisis of civilization' discussed in the interlude. Waugh's friend Graham Greene also found a vestige of 'true civilization' in Catholicism, while his other Oxford peer Robert Byron, always the contrarian, denounced the Western tradition as a whole and found inspiration in the Byzantine tradition. In the academic world, the idea of religion as the 'basis' of civilization was most influentially put forward by Arnold Toynbee, some years later than Waugh's own take. In his magnum opus *A Study of History*, of which the first three volumes were published in 1934, Toynbee analyzed world history through the unit of the 'civilization'. At least twenty-six of such civilizations had emerged and sixteen had already declined through a loss of creativity and spiritual certainty and a 'mechanical' response to oncoming challenges. In the pessimistic atmosphere of the interwar years, the implication of Toynbee's study was that the civilization of the modern West was itself too at a moment of internal decay, and was destined to disappear sooner than later. Like Waugh, Toynbee also rediscovered Christianity in the 1930s, and in the fourth to sixth volumes of his magnum opus *A Study of History*, we find him stressing the value of religion for any civilization. He came to believe that only religion transcended time and that religion was the spring from which civilizations emerged and could not survive without.
See: Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars*, 33–46.
[885] Waugh, *Remote People*, 157.

soon as I could."[886] His diary becomes more frustrated and dark. Waugh's main concern is to get home. As he writes in *Remote People*: "From now on, this record becomes literally a 'travel book'; that is to say that it deals less with the observation of places than with the difficulties of getting from one place to another."[887]

Waugh takes a steamer over Lake Victoria ("Bad night nosiest ship conceivable."[888]) to the Tanganyika Colony, from where he takes the train to Kigoma at the edge of Lake Tanganyika. Here the section called "Second Nightmare" starts, which chronicles Waugh's extreme boredom and frustrated attempts to find a way home (be it through an airport or a major port). Waugh paints a descent into the 'Heart of Darkness' of Belgian Congo: the temperature rises, the scenery becomes bleaker and Waugh seems to sink into a state of grim boredom. His discourse becomes more steeped in the traditional binaries and rhetorical tropes of imperial discourse. He writes about the "savages with filed teeth and long hair, very black" the torrential storm aboard the *Duc de Brabant*, his enervation with the Belgian bureaucratic inquiries and the apparently non-existent air service first at Albertville, then at Kabalo – "this beastly place."[889] Nature provides no recourse or excitement: the country is "featureless and dismal," the Congo river is "swollen and brown."[890] Conform to the colonial discourse of 'negation', the landscape becomes empty, filled with horrifying emptiness and death.[891] Waugh reaches the ultimate nadir of his journey at the tiny station of Bukama: "I thought I had touched bottom at Kabalo, but Bukama has it heavily beaten. If ever a place merited the epithet 'God-forsaken' in its literal sense, it is that station."[892]

This dystopian description of Bukama calls to mind an earlier passage in the book called 'First Nightmare'. There, Waugh questions the barbarity of modern life when confronted with grim realities and boredom of abroad. In Djibouti Waugh has to wait for "four exceedingly painful days" until a ship can take him to Aden.[893] The 'First Nightmare' is essentially an essay on boredom and underlines how much Waugh suffered from it both at home and abroad. He claims that not enough has been said about the 'boring' dimension of exotic travel:

> "No one can have any conception of what boredom means until he has been to the tropics. The boredom of civilized life is trivial and terminable, a puny thing to be strangled between finger and thumb. The blackest things in European social life – rich women talking about their poverty [...] week-end parties of Cambridge aesthetes or lecturers from the London School of Economics [once again he expresses his distaste for the Webbian types in Britain] [...] the very terrors, indeed, which drive one to

[886] Ibid.
[887] Ibid.
[888] 25 January 1931. Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 367.
[889] Waugh, *Remote People*, 173.
[890] Ibid.
[891] Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, 92.
[892] Waugh, *Remote People*, 177.
[893] Ibid., 94.

> refuge in the still-remote regions of the earth, are mere pansies and pimpernels to the rank flowers which flame grossly in those dark and steaming sanctuaries."[894]

Waugh claims that though he is "constitutionally a martyr to boredom" he has "never in Europe been so desperately and degradingly bored as I was during the next four days; they were as black and timeless as Damnation."[895] What interests us here, is that Waugh, when confronted by the boredom of travel, starts to stress the 'difference' of abroad and seems to long for a return home. In Djibouti and in Congo, the 'First' and 'Second Nightmares' of *Remote People*, Waugh questions why he ever left England to travel. As the imperial binaries and the notion of 'difference' re-emerge, there is a softening of his critical stance towards modernity and a desire to return to the familiarity and comforts of home.

In a desperate attempt to escape the "heat and damp", the "malarial mosquitoes" and fearful of falling ill at Kabalo, Waugh decides to take a train to Elisabethville. Here, he is rekindled with modern luxuries, and his again his harsh stance towards the materialistic and effeminized character of modern consumption. He writes about it at length in his travel book:

> "How reassuring are these occasional reconciliations with luxury. How often in Europe, after too much good living, I have begun to doubt whether the whole business of civilized taste is not a fraud put upon us by shops and restaurants. Then, after a few weeks of gross, colonial wines, hard beds, gritty bath-water [...] one realizes that the soft things of Europe are not merely rarities which one has been taught to prefer because they are expensive, but thoroughly satisfactory compensations for the rough and tumble of earning one's living – and a far from negligible consolation for some of the assaults and deceptions by which civilization seeks to rectify the balance of good fortune."[896]

Here Waugh's taste for 'good living', for modern amenities and for 'things' comes to the forefront. The main redeeming quality of a deceptive and assaulting civilization is the luxury commodity. This materialistic side of Waugh strongly contradicts with his anti-materialistic religious stance and his latent desire for self-deprivation.[897]

After the disconcerting confrontation with a perceived actual deprivation, we expect a 'happy ending' upon his return to England – via a train ride to Cape Town, and a "pleasant voyage" to Southampton.[898] His confrontation with the agonies of 'uncivilized' Bukama, the deep boredom of his last days in Africa, and his frustration with the practicalities and discomforts of travel should lead to a reconciliation with England and the comforting commodities of home. The experience of a space deemed horrifyingly primitive and barbaric would seem to stimulate a re-evaluation of

[894] Ibid., 89.
[895] Ibid., 90.
[896] Ibid., 179.
[897] Michael Davie finds "a hint of penance" in Waugh's journey to Brazil: he "inflicted discomfort and tedium upon himself." Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 372. Humphrey Carpenter calls Waugh's motivation to travel to South America the "choice of a bored man playing Russian roulette." Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 249.
[898] Waugh, *Remote People*, 180.

London and the value of modern progress. This would all fit perfectly in fixed scheme of the monomyth or 'hero's journey', which most travel books followed: the hero leaves the known, encounters the unfamiliar, overcomes a crisis, and returns to reconcile with the society he left. Following Waugh's line of thought in Elizabethville, the mobility of travel should lead to realization that the spaces of modern life might not be that bad after all. Yet, we find the exact opposite assessment. Instead, Waugh turns to a pessimistic 1930s travel writing topos: the "I-thought-I-had-touched-bottom-at-X attitude," followed by the Englishman's realization that the next place in the trip is even worse.[899] This tendency of consecutively worsening experiences could continue even when the traveler returned to England.[900] As we will see, Waugh's African journey only leads him to an even larger disillusionment with modern city life in London, one that is more sweeping and more globally oriented than before. The final section of Waugh's travel book is called 'Third Nightmare' and Waugh seems to have circled right back to the train platform of Kabala, surrounded by sick-making barbarity.

ii. Waugh's Third Nightmare

In 'Third Nightmare' the dominant, deeper underlying ideological scheme of *Remote People* comes to its full realization. The global vision that frames Waugh's experiences and develops throughout his travel comes to its most pronounced articulation in its last two pages of the book. Because this section pulls together various threads I have already identified and discussed by implication, I believe it is worth citing in its entirety:[901]

> On the night of my return I dined in London. After dinner we were in some doubt where to go. The names I suggested had long ceased to be popular. Eventually we decided, and drove to a recently opened supper-restaurant which, they said, was rather amusing at the moment.

Waugh is back home, yet the fast-paced nature of London has already estranged him from it. A few months abroad has further disconnected him from the urban scene. The 'home' he imagined in Congo and Uganda, the pleasant familiarity he started to long for, turns out to be less familiar than expected. This alienation continues as Waugh enters the venue:

> It was underground. We stepped down into the blare of noise as into a hot swimming-pool, and immersed ourselves; the atmosphere caught our breath like the emanation in a brewery over the tanks where fermentation begins. Cigarette-smoke stung the eyes.
>
> A waiter beckoned us to a small table, tight-packed among other tables, so that our chairs rubbed backs with their neighbours. Waiters elbowed their way in and out, muttering abuse in each others' ears. Some familiar faced leered through the haze: familiar voices shrilled above the din.

[899] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 125.
[900] Ibid.
[901] For all the following passages, see: Waugh, *Remote People*, 183–84.

We chose some wine.
'You'll have to take something to eat with it.'
We ordered seven-and-sixpenny sandwiches.
Nothing came.

Waugh here starts to invert the standard categories of space and their familiar associations. He describes his descent into the underground venue as a descent into a hellish jungle: it is hot, loud, it chokes one's breath and faces vaguely appear through the thick haze. The rhetoric of deterioration, that standard trope of imperial discourse, is used to describe London life. The atmosphere is linked to the process of 'fermentation'; there is decay and disintegration in the air, everything is uncertain and fluid as in a swimming pool. The social interactions in the crowded city are likewise linked to 'primitive' behavior: people are huddled up tight like animals, forcedly intimate. Waugh paints a general decline in reason and manners. People's actions have become uncivilized and animal-like: they 'leer' and 'shrill,' elbowing and insulting each other savagely. This passage on the depersonalization of modernity immediately recalls Waugh's description of the Ugandan jungle "where human life merges into the cruel, automatic life of the animals…"[902] Waugh inverts and blurs the traditional distinctions between the civilized white center and the inferior black periphery.

A Negro in fine evening-clothes was at the piano, singing. Afterwards, when he went away, people fluttered their hands at him and tried to catch his eye. He bestowed a few patronizing nods. Someone yelled, 'He's losing his figure.'

This blurring of categories extends to encompass traditional colonial race relations. Where the black man of the colony is subordinate, in London he becomes the superior race. He is like the white settler of the colony; the untouchable and different ideal who bestows patronizing nods. And in this reversal, the hip, white London socialites have become like the 'silly natives', over-eager to please and be close to the 'superior race'. Waugh sees the London crowd as tragically imitating and fraudulently appropriating black (jazz) culture. This is Waugh's way to mockingly and unfavorably describe the metropolitan exoticism that reached its height in the mid 1930s, and which he himself participated in. Starting in the 1920s and stimulated by the Harlem Renaissance, the more elite cultural circles in both the United States and England became fascinated by black culture. This ambivalent enthusiasm, illustrated by the success of Josephine Baker, was still steeped in racial and colonialist stereotypes.[903] In the literary scene, this produced popular works like *Prancing Nigger* by the British author Ronald Firbank (who was a major influence on Waugh) and *Nigger Heaven* by Carl Van Vechten (with whom Waugh went to luncheon, together with Rebecca West, in June 1930).[904] Waugh's own trip to Africa fits into this cultural trend of a fascination for blackness and Africa (Paul Fussell claims the anomalous attention for the Abyssinian coronation was in part

[902] Ibid., 159.
[903] Blom, *Fracture*, 111.
[904] Fussell, *Abroad*, 187.
25 June 1930: Waugh, *The Diaries Of Evelyn Waugh*, 333.

motivated by the media's desire for "images of Black "color"."[905]) With his next book "Black Mischief" Waugh himself would add to the many interwar novels that included the word 'black' in their titles. This cultural trend and Waugh's 'colonial' imagination of a London cellar scene, of course, connected to social changes in the metropolis. Be it through the black American soldiers during WWI, the popularity of touring jazz bands, the education of elite colonial subjects in England or the increasing immigration, Europe became a less exclusively white space during the interwar years. In the parties that Waugh circled, it was fashionable to invite black musicians and be accompanied by a black lover.[906] Increasingly, the 'colonial' and 'exotic' subjects were entering European spaces. Waugh registered this trend, pessimistically, and positions it as an element that further blurs the traditional boundaries of colonial and metropolitan spaces.

Waugh, then, continues to paint the barbarity in the heart of the city:

> A waiter came and said, 'Any more orders for drinks before closing time?' We said we had had nothing yet. He made a face and pinched another waiter viciously in the arm, pointing at our table and whispering in Italian. That waiter pinched another. Eventually the last-pinched waiter brought a bottle and slopped out some wine into glasses. It frothed up and spilt on the tablecloth. We looked at the label and found that it was not the wine we had ordered.
>
> Someone shrilled in my ear: 'Why, Evelyn, where *have* you been? I haven't seen you in about anywhere for days.'
>
> My friends talked about the rupture of an engagement which I did not know was contracted.
>
> The wine tasted like salt and soda water. Mercifully a waiter whisked it away before we had time to drink it. 'Time, if you please.'

So much for the "reconciliation with luxury." His love for luxury had softened Waugh's critique of the West in Elizabethville. Yet even this is unable to redeem England anymore. Waugh envisions modern British society as an increasingly tasteless world, where commodified and commercialized products are unable to compensate the ills of modernity. The wine at home is no better than the "gross, colonial wines" abroad.[907] Moreover, Waugh is disillusioned with the social life of his peers. He is critical of its superficial and aspirational nature: the socializing acquaintance who hasn't noticed his month-long absence. He comments on its fleeting character: the rupture of an engagement before he even has the time to hear about it. This ruptured engagement painfully connects to his short-lived marriage and his ephemeral love life. Waugh comes to the final realization that the heart of the metropolis is as savage as the heart of darkness:

> I was back in the centre of the Empire, and in the spot where, at the moment, 'everyone' was going. Next day the gossip-writers would chronicle the young M.P.s, peers, and financial magnates who were assembled in that rowdy cellar, hotter than Zanzibar, noisier than the market at Harar, more reckless of the decencies of hospitality than the taverns of Kabalo or Tabora. And a month later the wives of English

[905] Fussell, *Abroad*, 188.
[906] Ibid., 187; Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 166.
[907] Waugh, *Remote People*, 179.

officials would read about it, and stare out across the bush or jungle or desert or forest or golf links, and envy their sisters at home, and wish they had the money to marry rich men.

Why go abroad?

See England first.

Just watch London knock spots off the Dark Continent.

I paid the bill in yellow African gold. It seemed just tribute from the weaker races to their mentors.

The "ocean of rank barbarity" that Waugh described in Uganda does not confine itself to the 'Dark Continent'. In this pessimistic turn, Waugh challenges both the imperial idea of British superiority and the romantic exoticism that was coming into vogue. He claims the ultra-fashionable London cellar is more barbaric than anyplace he encountered abroad. Yet what is interesting is that in this refutation, he relies exactly on the imperial idea of the 'jungle' as barbaric. His critique of the imperial form, associated to the idea of Western progress and modernity, is exactly found on the imperial category of 'barbarity' associated with the 'otherness'. Relying on the ideal of civilization, he disputes the idealization of a civilized Britain by colonials in the periphery. The idea that grounds the imperial project is called into question: Britain is not, at least not anymore, a superior model of civilization. As he so poignantly did in *Vile Bodies*, Waugh indicates how the popular press plays a role in the construction of metropolitan myths and desires for the modern.[908] The realities of colonial official's wives are not grounded in a material reality, but in cultural constructs that reach them through the media. The disturbing realization upon his return is that modern London is in a way even more barbaric than the places he encountered during his journey. The urban jungle of London is in reality more barbaric than the African jungle. This is what he means when he ironically writes that London 'knocks spots off' [to be very much better than] the 'Dark Continent': London 'beats' Africa when it comes to barbarity. Hence, as a tribute from those colonial subjects who must learn the barbaric modern ways of the English through colonialism, Waugh pays in African currency. Barnard writes that "the savage culture is now the metropolitan one, and the pathetic imitator is no longer the African but the nostalgic colonial, yearning to ape the ways of the perfectly uncivilized socialites back home."[909] This is a complete inversion of the 'British mentor/weaker race' binary on which imperial ideology relied. Where in the Webbs' *Indian Diary* there is still a belief in the virtue of modernization through colonialism, Waugh here implies that modern Britain can only be seen as a mentor to the 'weaker races' when it comes to barbarity. Yet this whole logic of barbarity vs civilization also relies on those ideas that the Webbs subscribe to.

Waugh then further questions the common desire of intellectuals (and of himself) to travel abroad, to find something exotic in a foreign destination and escape the sameness of everyday life.

[908] The protagonist of *Vile Bodies*, Adam, becomes a gossip writer who, out of laziness and sport, invents his fashionable people and attempts "in an unobtrusive way to exercise some influence over the clothes of his readers." The London socialites believe in that his characters 'Captain Angus Stuart-Kerr' and 'Imogen Quest' actually exist and start to model themselves after these glamorous people. Adam's 'spotting' of "the ultra-fashionable black suède shoes" starts a fashion trend in Regent Street. Waugh, *Vile Bodies*, 97.

[909] Barnard, "'A Tangle of Modernism and Barbarity': Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief," 169.

He does this by ironically invoking the decadent's idea famously put forward in Joris-Karl Huysmans' *À rebours*, namely that one mustn't leave one's home to 'travel'. In fact, the whole passage in the London cellar (which's complete truthfulness is in any case rather doubtful), could be seen as an ironic play on the eleventh chapter of Huysmans' famous 1884 novel.[910] The dandy Des Esseintes is filled with "visions English existence" after reading Dickens and decides to leave his Paris home and travel to this "land of fog and mud."[911] Yet remembering the disillusionment of his trip to Holland (which did not conform to the paintings he saw of the country in the Louvre), he becomes doubtful. As he waits for his train in a Parisian cellar, he discovers that this cellar (with the rain falling outside, the blue Stilton cheese he is eating and the dark beer he is drinking, the odor of wet dog and coal…) in fact contains the British atmosphere better than Britain itself: "Was he not even now in London, whose aromas and atmosphere […] surrounded him?"[912] After this phantasmagoria, he abandons his travel plans because: "What is the use of moving, when one can travel on a chair so magnificently?"[913] Charles Forsdick has connected this type of decadent journey to the 'fin-de-siècle 'panoramania' that Vanessa Schwartz describes in *Spectacular Realities*.[914] The diorama's and virtual journeys of expositions, which also continued in the interwar years, form the conditions for a "reassessment of the symbolic and actual fields of travel" and a further step in the "erasure of elsewhere" that we find in Huysmans' novel.[915] In the interwar years, the British empire was also 'brought home' through the proliferation of colonial commodities and the colonial exhibitions such as the 'British Empire Exhibition' of 1924.[916]

In *Remote People*, we now find a cynical modernist inversion of this decadent fin-de-siècle theme. At Oxford Waugh's circle had taken over the 'anti-travel' attitude of the dandies: they had always been very Anglo-centric and were very much influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and the aestheticism of the 1880's, cultivating things that were emphatically 'English'.[917] Yet the move out of Oxford and the transition into adult life had, had driven not only Waugh, but also Robert Byron, Graham Greene, Cyril Connolly, Brian Howard and Harold Acton abroad – as part of the 'British

[910] It is highly likely that Waugh is here deliberately referencing *À rebours*. He certainly references the novel in 1945's *Brideshead Revisited* when Julia gets a gilded tortoise as a Christmas present. The similarities between this scene and Des Esseintes gilded tortoise in *À Rebours* are "too striking to be accidental" according to Christopher Chilton. See: Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*, [1945] (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), 159.; Christopher Chilton, "The Gilded Tortoise in Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited and J.-K. Huysmans's À Rebours," *The Explicator* 71, no. 1 (2013): 18.
[911] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against the Grain*, trans. John Howard, [1884], 2004, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12341/12341-h/12341-h.htm.
[912] Ibid.
[913] Ibid.
[914] Forsdick, "Sa(l)vaging Exoticism: New Approaches to 1930s Travel Literature in French," 35.
[915] Ibid.
[916] John Mackenzie, "The Popular Culture of Empire in Britain," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Judith M. Brown and WM. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 212–31.
[917] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 128.

Literary Diaspora' of the interwar years.[918] They had come to abandon the insularity of the decadents, and turned to foreign spaces in search of an alternative to modern British life. Yet, Kenya aside, Waugh, like many of his friends, found no enduring refuge or pleasure in travel, often becoming horribly bored, lonely and weary of the 'barbarity' they encountered on their journeys. This is the paradox of so many British travel books in the 1930s. They seem to reassert John Betjeman's remark that "Isn't abroad *awful*?", while simultaneously being written because of and returning again-and-again to the same "I Hate it Here" condemnation of post-war England. Returning to England, the traveler wonders why he had hated abroad so much – England isn't any better.[919]

In the last chapter of *Remote People*, Waugh thus uses Huysmans' "erasure of space", but it acquires a whole new meaning. Des Esseintes' "What is the use of moving, when one can travel on a chair so magnificently?" becomes "Why travel abroad? See England first."[920] The 'foreign' London to be found in a Parisian cellar becomes the 'foreign' African jungle to be found in a London cellar. Yet through Waugh's irony and modernism, the ramifications are vastly different. The implication is not that the exotic wonders of a phantasmagoric foreign space are to be found at home, but that the actual barbarity of the African jungle is. This mirrors Waugh's phantasmagoric discovery of the traditional English countryside in colonial Kenya. In this last passage, he thus simultaneously and slyly critiques both the old primitivist search for exoticism abroad, the decadent idea that one can find an enchanting exoticism at home (one finds only barbarity in the modern city) *and* the colonial idea of a glorious center of progress. Through his active engagement with modern life and his actual travel to foreign spaces, Waugh thus goes beyond the traditional binaries and spatial mappings. This new type of spatial visions can be better understood if we consider Waugh in the context of modernist cultural practice and its relationship with the colonial world.

iii. Modernism and Imperialism

Frederic Jameson was among the first to relate modernist literary practice and aesthetics with the realities of colonialism. In his well-known essay "Modernism and Imperialism," Jameson argues that the social reality of colonialism left traces on the "inner forms and structures" of the novel literary movement of modernism. Analyzing Forster's *Howards End* and Joyce's *Ulysses*, he isolates and investigates the effect of the "social determinant" of colonialism on the formal innovation and modification of modernist literature. In this way, he traces the effect of colonialism on works that barely mention imperialism or colonialism; he lays bare "the political and the economic" within texts that on the surface might seem to be focused on the subjective and the purely aesthetic.[921] Jameson argues that because of colonialism a large section of the economic

[918] Fussell, *Abroad*, 11.
[919] Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 228–229,323.
[920] Waugh, *Remote People*, 184.
[921] Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 45.

system is located "beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country."[922] This spatial disjunction leads to a loss of meaning and a subsequent crisis in representation. Neither personal experience, self-examination nor scientific knowledge can "ever be enough to include this radical otherness of colonial suffering, and exploitation, let alone the structural connections between that and this, between absent space and daily life in the metropolis."[923] After high-imperialism, literature on the metropolis can thus never be 'complete': there is always something missing, life in the metropolis cannot be "grasped immanently."[924] Essentially, there is an experiential detachment between the subject in the imperial metropolis and the larger colonial system on which that metropolis relies. This enormous detachment forms the social dilemma and contradiction (it informs the 'political unconscious) of modernist artistic practice. The literary result of this is the new and experimental style of modernist literature. Jameson focusses on how the unique types of spatial mappings, descriptions and experiences of modernist literature are the result of this cognitive disconnect through imperialism, such as the new "infinite" "grey placelessness" in *Howards End*.[925]

Recent scholarship on modernism and colonialism has questioned Jameson's hypothesis while upholding his aim to connect the imperial system and the cultural practice in and about the metropolitan center.[926] The illuminating collection 'Modernism and Colonialism' has explored the more direct interactions between individual authors and colonialism. Moreover, the editors stress the complex and varying ways in which the "modernist revolution can be understood as a critical and artistic engagement with the British […] quest for empire", rather than just a epistemological repression or disjunction.[927]

In her contribution, Rita Barnard discusses *Black Mischief*, the novel that was inspired by Waugh's African travel and that contains many of the same unconscious politics. She identifies two contradictions within the novel, one that complicates the notions of authenticity and one that concerns questions of geography and cultural location. Building on Jameson's hypothesis, Barnard suggests that the ideological contradictions and formal features of *Black Mischief* might "both be a product and an expression of a set of cognitive and representational problems generated, in the final analysis, by global imperialism."[928] Unlike the modernists Jameson has in mind, Waugh explicitly attempts to represent the margins of the colonial world. According to Barnard, Waugh nonetheless confronts the same cognitive conditions that Jameson describes. Barnard distinguishes *Black Mischief* from Waugh's travel writing and argues that Waugh here avoids any real consideration of exploitation and domination (something he does address, as we have seen, in *Remote People*). Waugh resorts to all-too stereotypical encounters with colonial subjects and spaces as a "strategy of

[922] Ibid., 50.
[923] Ibid., 51.
[924] Ibid.
[925] Ibid., 57.
[926] Begam and Moses, "Introduction," 1.
[927] Ibid., 5.
[928] Barnard, "'A Tangle of Modernism and Barbarity': Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief," 174.

containment" that excludes any radical otherness.[929] But Barnard argues that Waugh "was more savvy about the metropolitan repression of the colonial world than many of his contemporaries."[930] Though he doesn't come to a politically progressive way of thinking about the relationship between center and periphery, he, unlike many modernist contemporaries, *does* explore a way to connect both. In *Black Mischief* , Waugh tackles the interpretive challenge posited by colonialism; the novel is marked by the desire "for a more encompassing vision than that permitted by the psychological, apolitical, geographically restricted modernist novel."[931] Barnard sees the experimental formal oscillation from London to Azania and the recurrent symbolic parallelisms between metropolitan and marginal conditions as an attempt to resolve the representational problems that Jameson describes. There is a profound awareness "that the everyday life of the metropolis should not be severed from what is occurring on the periphery" and "a surprisingly lucid understanding that modernism is best grasped as the culture of a wildly uneven but nonetheless singular process of global modernity."[932]

This awareness and this more global understanding, I believe, are in large part the result of Waugh's real-life journey to Africa. This travel not only allowed him to understand modernity as a global process but also brought him into first-hand contact with other types of (perceived) 'barbarity'. The "more encompassing" vision and the parallels between home and abroad that Barnard identifies are first formed and found in *Remote People*. Indeed, the cellar scene at the end of his travel book is the first indication and the most explicit representation of this extended 'civilization/barbarity'-scheme that encompasses both the metropolis and the margins (cf. infra). In the fiction of *Black Mischief* this takes the form of parallels and oscillation, as it also does later in Waugh's 1938 novel *A Handful of Dust.* One of the major themes of both novels is that the traditional 'understandings' of the world have fallen into disorder: Waugh collapses the foreign into the familiar, the modern into the barbaric. *A Handful of Dust* was inspired by his grim and disappointing journey to South America; his conclusion of that trip and the main theme of the novel is yet again an exploration of what we find in the last pages of *Remote People*. Waugh himself describes the novel as "a study of other sorts of savage at home and the civilized man's helpless plight among them."[933] We first find this important theme in Waugh's literature in *Remote People*: Waugh as the civilized man surrounded by the barbarity of a hip, modern nightclub. The travel book is further interesting, because, as the genre is supposed to represent reality and the author's opinions on it, we acquire a more straightforward insight into notoriously ambiguous Waugh's thinking.

[929] Ibid., 177.
[930] Ibid.
[931] Ibid.
[932] Ibid., 178.
[933] Cited in: Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation*, 252.

iv. The Urban Jungle

I would like to build on Barnard's argument by more closely exploring what the implications are of this more comprehensive vision for the representation of the metropolis. Where Barnard sees the parallels Waugh makes between metropolis and margin in *Black Mischief* as 'attempts' to represent the connectedness of both, in *Remote People* we find a more pronounced representation of the metropolis that ties into Waugh's broader ideological framework. As I have already show above, Waugh's modernist 'resolution' to the representational dilemma that Jameson outlines, takes the form of what we could call the 'urban jungle'. This term – now turned into a common metaphor – still has a deeper meaning in the interwar years, when 'jungle' could still carry more disturbing associations of barbarity. Waugh resolves the representational dilemma by assigning the modern city into the category of 'barbarity' (versus 'civilization') to which the African jungle also belongs. 'London' can here function as a byword for the 'modern'. While the city had always been the most 'modern' element in England, in the interwar years, London grew in cultural and symbolic importance. The growing uniform mass culture that Waugh was so suspicious of mostly originated and spread from the capital. Where the provincial towns enjoyed prominence in the 19th century, the 20th century marked the undisputable dominance of London. Both in high and mass culture, and social changes London steered the trends. It determined the fashions and fads and it was through London that the Americanization and standardization of British culture spread.[934] London was the heart of empire, but it was also the heart of a changing British society. While Waugh's search for global spatial scheme and his resulting vision of the "urban jungle" can only be understood in the context of modernism, one shouldn't overstress the novelty of the idea of the city-as-jungle.

In his book "Writing the Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot", Joseph McLaughlin discusses a longer tradition of representing the city as an exotic locale. He explores how a range of writers (both late-Victorian and early modernist) used the metaphor of the "urban jungle" in their imaginative formulations of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century London. In the context of the confronting urban reality "ways of describing peoples, places, and experiences on the periphery of empire became an effective rhetorical strategy for imagining the imperial center." [935] According to McLaughlin, these imaginative responses were the result of several material and social changes: the spread of colonialism, the increasing globalization of culture and the heightened contact with others.[936] The result of these transpositions, were the destabilization of "any clear notion of centers and peripheries."[937] Indeed, even the title of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, an important model for travelogues to Africa, simultaneously referred to both Congo and modern London.[938] Perhaps the Conrad-like perception we find in Waugh's

[934] Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 439–40.
[935] Joseph McLaughlin, *Writing the Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 1.
[936] Ibid.
[937] Ibid.
[938] Ibid.

Congo rhetorically serve to deepen the repercussion of the spatial collapse we find at the end of *Remote People*.

In any case, Waugh's cellar scene must be situated in a wider literary tradition that in imagining the city blurs the binaries of home and abroad and the modern and the barbaric. What is perhaps more unique about this scene, is that Waugh does this in a travel book (notoriously associated to the more strict imperial binaries) and that his spatial transposition is the result of an ideological extension (though, as I will argue, not of an ideological destabilization) through material mobility. This also means that his interpretation of London as a jungle acquires a more profound meaning than it does as a representational metaphor of pure fiction; it is not simply an "imaginative response" but more deeply rooted in actually experienced spaces through travel and an real engagement with the colonial world. Waugh's use of the "urban jungle" metaphor does not simply stand for a "place of darkness" or an "imperial cesspool" and certainly not a "playground" or a "heroic place of action."[939] It gains its fundamental and deeper meaning as an indicator of a world that is personally felt to be "increasingly without boundaries".[940] Moreover, it deeply connects to the profound sense of the spatial loss that Jameson describes in his essay: this makes the Waugh's representation of the "urban jungle" a distinctly modernist one.[941]

Of the authors that McLaughlin discusses, T.S. Eliot's vision of an urban London jungle in *The Waste Land*, then, most resembles Waugh's urban jungle at the end of *Remote People*. Both authors cultivated a conservative anti-urbanism, converted to a new religion, and felt a deep revulsion to the faceless masses of an industrial world – and all this found a way in their modernist writings. Nonetheless, we still find a significant generational divide between the two as Waugh, in contrast to Eliot, initially immersed himself into hedonistic modern life and more desperately searched for solace abroad. This deeper engagement with the world in Waugh's younger years also results in a different view of the London jungle. Indeed, for Eliot - who didn't have any experience with the 'primitive' jungle abroad - the "urban jungle" seems to take a more superficial metaphorical quality. The evocations of the jungle in lines like "A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank" and "Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe" reflect associative imagery more than the registration of a global spatial disjunction.[942] The image of the jungle in *The Waste Land* (and its associations of confusion, darkness and animalism) doesn't quite connect to the actual colonial spaces and the jungles on the margin. There is less of a cognitive link between global events and spaces; the implication of Eliot's "modern jungle" is somehow less forceful than Waugh's. This is because Eliot does not register the profound connection between 'the modern' and 'the imperial'. Waugh, through his experience of the colonial world, *does* come to make this link. Waugh registers that, as Jameson writes of Forster in *Howards End*, "it is Empire which leaves London behind it as a new kind of spatial agglomeration or

[939] Ibid., 2–3.
[940] Ibid., 3.
[941] Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 51.
[942] T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol. F: The Twentieth Century and After*, ed. Julia Reidhead, [1922] (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 2535, 2538.

disease."[943] This identification between the global spread of imperialism and the modern jungle gives Waugh's 'Third Nighmare' a strange anti-imperial edge and distinguishes it from being just simple romantic anti-urban nostalgia. As Barnard already indicated, the implication is a more encompassing vision and a more profound collapse of space. This, of course, is also the result of the simple fact that Waugh's urban jungle, his 'Third Nightmare', is discovered after his 'Second Nightmare': the harrowing account of his experience in the primitive jungle of Congo. The jungle metaphor thus takes on a seemingly much more 'real', deep and disturbing quality in *Remote People* that goes beyond a merely associative connection. The different types of jungles are not just similarly chaotic, they are deeply connected because they belong to the same central category of Waugh's version of reality, a category that he has continuously explored throughout *Remote People*: barbarity. Waugh's "urban jungle" is so devastating because it forms part of a wider ideological scheme through which Waugh structures reality both at home and abroad: the 'civilization versus barbarity' framework.

[943] Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," 57.

7

CONCLUSION: CIVILIZATION VS BARBARITY

As we have seen in the previous chapters, Waugh usurps the traditional imperial vision of civilized center/barbaric margin within an extended framework that is built around the antinomy of 'civilization' versus 'barbarity'. His travels in Africa, his personal contact with processes of colonization, globalization and modernization abroad, result in an extension of this domestic scheme that now encompasses a global version of 'civilization' and a global version of 'barbarity'. As I have argued, this scheme is primarily motivated by Waugh's explicit and implicit responses to the processes of increasing reification and individualization of modern British society in the interwar years. Waugh's mapping of a domestic contradiction cuts through, but, as we will see, also depends on the residual imperial categories that Waugh continues to rely on. To conclude, I will now pull together the various threads of the previous chapters and reconstruct Waugh's text in a way that allows us to analyze it as a symbolic act responding to a determinate social contradiction. I see this text and its negotiations on a political level as firmly grounded within the intellectual trends of interbellum Britain and within a larger imperial discourse which Waugh simultaneously contests and reaffirms. Moreover, I will argue that the global extension and the ambiguities of Waugh's ideology merge from the context of Waugh's mobility through travel.

In his African travel book, Waugh comes full circle: he leaves England for its modern depravity, finds traditional England in a heterotopia, finds barbarity abroad, and returns only to find what he wanted to escape from both in England and Africa. The 'revelation' that Waugh presents in his incredibly pessimistic ending is only that London is no less savage than Africa's most derelict places: 'modernity' can be understood not just as 'chaos' but as closely tied to the now global category of 'barbarity'. This is Waugh's logical closure, his attempt to conceptually reduce the ungraspable dilemma of empire and modernity. Likewise, the reverse implication is that Waugh's idea of civilization or Englishness does not necessarily overlap with the West and that it can survive in colonial Africa as it disappears in England. His construction of colonial Kenya is an ideal resolution that takes the form of a heterotopia, an ambiguous 'way out' of the dilemma that confronts him. Waugh's 'reduction' of the subtext, the dilemma of a reified modern British society, through the symbolic act of *Remote People* is grounded in, as my frequent excursions into biographical details have indicated, the specific conditions of his life, character, and aesthetics. But the biographical details could (as Jameson conceives of it) also be seen as "the traces and symptoms" of a fundamental situation, in themselves tied to society at large at a specific moment.[944] This allows us to conceive of Waugh's life and ideas, as in a way representative for a type of 'global vision' arising in the conservative-leaning intellectuals circles of 1930s England. Further

[944] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 166–68.

analysis could trace how other 1930s British travelers, especially those belonging to Waugh's Oxford circle, formed similar 'mappings' of foreign societies. What I have closely explored here in the case of Waugh could then be extended and connected to a broader discursive 'ideologeme' specific to a certain social and generational group.

Waugh's structuring antinomy of a global civilization and barbarity does not always overlap with the standard dichotomy of 'civilized home' vs 'savage abroad' of imperial discourse. In this way Waugh sometimes breaks with the traditional imperial vision and its binaries – but this break relies exactly on the logic inherent to these binaries. The broader imperial discourse forms, just like the discourse of masculinity in Aden, one of the ideological preconditions for the various mappings that Waugh constructs. Indeed, as the passages in Congo and the racist comments throughout *Remote People* reveal, Waugh is still deeply embedded in an imperial discourse and its way of understanding colonial and metropolitan society. His oscillation between an emphasis on difference and on similarity of foreign and familiar spaces is very contradictory, but it also mutually reinforcing. For the concept of 'barbarity' (both in London and in Congo) acquires its very meaning and force from the colonial discourse that traditionally opposed it to a superior form of Western civilization. By labelling London 'barbaric', Waugh simultaneously questions the imperial divide but can only do this through the category of 'barbarity' that is (in early 20th century England) inherently linked to its quality of 'otherness'. Only this can make London 'alienating'. The result is that even as Waugh is blurring the imperial binaries, he only does this through a language that rests on these imperial binaries: implicitly he perpetuates the imperial discourse he is breaking down. We find here, indeed, that ambivalent Althusserian understanding of opposition where individuals striving for a different vision or description of society find themselves relying on its ideological speech and end up merely inverting its structuring elements.

The contradictions within Waugh's ideological system become evident when we place the different ideological terms implicit in *Remote People* in a semiotic square as worked out by Frederic Jameson in *The Political Unconscious*. Jameson appropriates Greimas' semiotic square, seeing it not as a logical structure of reality itself, but as a tool that maps "the limits of a specific ideological consciousness and marks the conceptual points beyond which that consciousness cannot go, and between which it is condemned to oscillate."[945] The semiotic square (with its four terms in relations of contradiction, opposition, and implication) is thus seen as a model of ideological closure, and this system is itself the symptomatic expression of a social contradiction. This social contradiction is something quite different than the projection it acquires through the author of the text: it is the "absent cause" that "cannot be directly or immediately conceptualized by the text" but which the text, as a symbolic act, attempts to address and resolve.[946] As we have seen, in textual form it becomes an antimony, or logical paradox. Jameson sees these social contradictions as ultimately

[945] Ibid., 32.
[946] Ibid., 68.

emerging from the capitalist mode of production.[947] In this study, I have focused on the effects of high modernity, connecting this to the ideological destabilization of the interwar years, the increasing modernization of Britain's economy and institutions (and the perceived disappearance of traditional 'rural' England), the rise of the British middle class and the demise of its aristocracy, the emergence of multiple modernities worldwide (with colonialism as an important vehicle), the interpersonal relations and norms of urban life in London, and the emergence of modernism as a psychological and artistic phenomenon. Waugh particularly struggled with the resulting contradictions between socio-cultural order and disorder, and between the restraining stability and disorienting freedom experienced by the modern subject.

When confronted with this social dilemma, Waugh's political unconscious thus 'maps' the subtext in an ideological scheme that can be structured as a semiotic square (see p. 190). This 'cognitive map'[948] is not a reflection of an 'objective' reality; rather, like Jameson I consider it to be "the vehicle for our experience of the real."[949] When we approach this cognitive mapping as a kind of political fantasy and not as the structure of reality itself, we find that it reveals the "terms or nodal points implicit in the ideological system which have, however, remained unrealized in the surface of the text, which have failed to become manifest in the logic of the narrative."[950] Through its reconstruction we can also trace the conditions of possibility within which a particular ideological system could have been formed. In this way, the analysis of Waugh's cognitive mapping takes into account the circumscribing effects of unconsciously received hegemonic discourses (such as the Foucauldian postcolonial scholarship has called attention to) but also accounts for the ways in which authors, within their individual and historical contexts, can explore several 'logical' possibilities through their symbolic acts of writing.

In the semiotic square, then, Waugh symbolically resolves the dilemma of the subtext as an antinomy. This takes the form of 'civilization' (which in Britain has turned into 'modernity') versus 'barbarity' (which is associated with the 'primitive').[951] But Waugh disjoins from these concepts the notions of 'modernity' and 'primitiveness', which in turn form a second antimony. In this

[947] This mode of production, however, is certainly not theorized in the economic deterministic way of a 'base'. Instead, Jameson follows the Althusserian conception of the mode of production as the entire system of *relations* between semi-autonomous sub-levels. Structural causality is then a form of 'mediation' between different social planes.

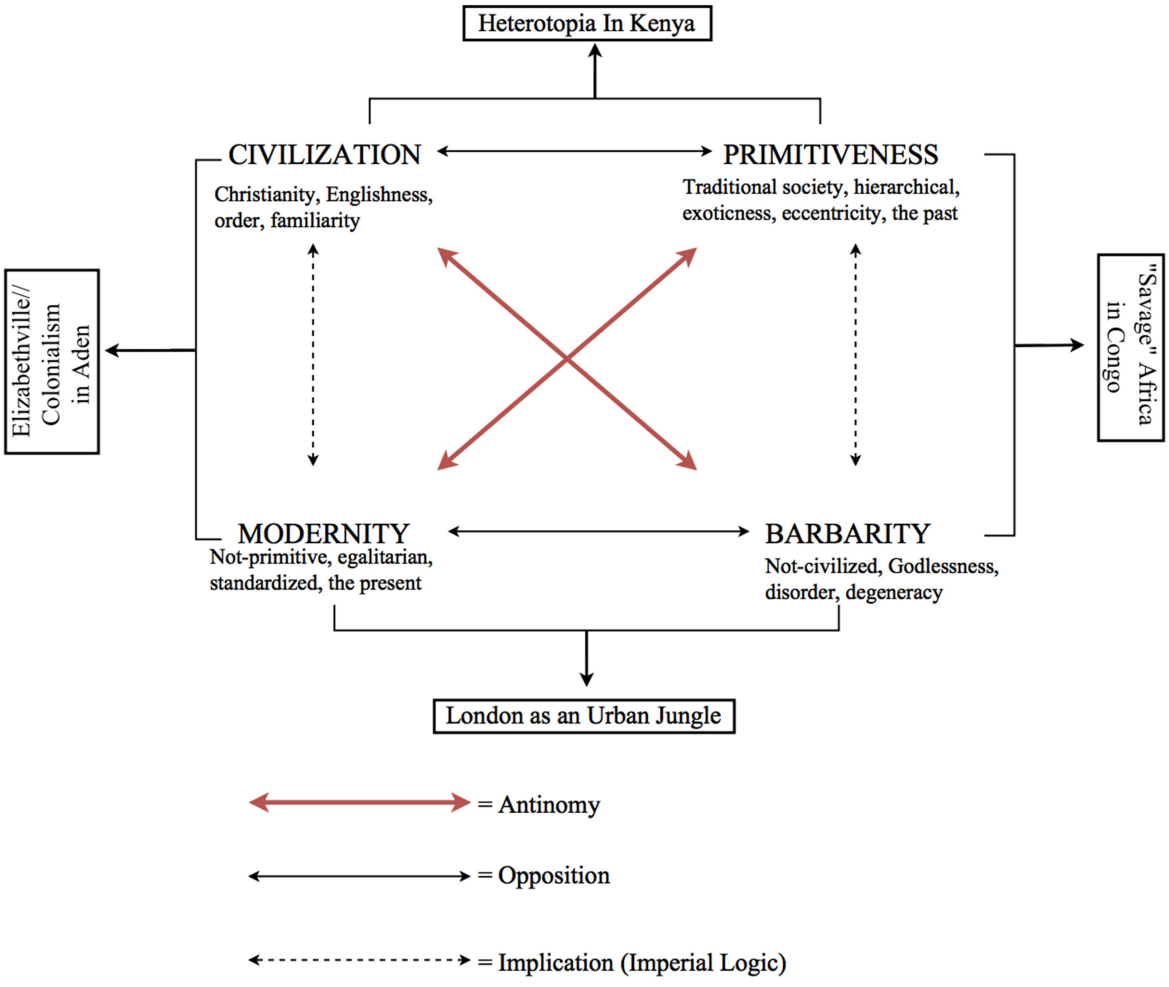
[948] I borrow this concept from Jameson's later work *Postmodernism Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. This 'cognitive mapping' is, however, a reformulation of the kind of ideological meaning-making, or the cultural construction of 'resolutions' for untextualizable social contradictions, that Jameson already theorizes in *The Political Unconscious (*as described in the introduction). Much like the cultural artifact as a 'socially symbolic act', Jameson describes the process of cognitive mapping as "a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole." Here, too, we find a strong resemblance to Althusser's conception of ideology ("Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence"), but combined with a more 'utopian' potential. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 51.

[949] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 33.

[950] Ibid.

[951] Ibid., 153.

complicated scheme, then, his political unconscious can in a utopian way seek "logical permutations and combinations to find a way out of [the social contradiction's] intolerable closure and to produce a "solution"."[952] This is the significance and function of the fictionalized space of heterotopic Kenya. Colonial Kenya forms an 'ideal synthesis': it combines seemingly incompatible elements and allows ideological closure through its contradictory nature. Conversely, the modern London that is envisioned in the closing 'Nightmare' forms a dystopic synthesis that combines the apparently inconsistent terms of barbarity and modernity. In this inversion of the belief in progress, 'modernity' is perceived as a decline into barbarity. Through the double antimony, Waugh's ideology is thus filled with contradictions that complicate his cognitive scheme and result in various, often mutually incompatible, evaluations and attitudes (like his double-faced modernism or his persistent Anglo-centrism in the face of his critique of England). We have seen how Waugh's express politics and views on colonialism are severely conflicted and often oscillate depending on the local context and his 'aesthetic' taste (which we have seen is fundamentally connected to his ideology). Bringing all this together, we can then restructure Waugh's ideological scheme in *Remote People* as follows:



[952] Ibid.

This global cognitive mapping, animated through travel, brings Waugh to blur the traditional dichotomies of the imperial logic and is able to resolve the various contradictory terms that he perceives as a modernist. Thus, Kenya becomes a realized utopia through its imaginative combination of traditional society, 'Englishness' and exotic transgression: it functions to counter both the 'savage' chaos of Africa and the modern boredom that Waugh finds in modern London. Likewise, Waugh is able to imaginatively resolve the contradictions of modernity in Britain and the global spread of it through imperialism, by connecting 'Savage Africa' with an equally savage London. The negative resolution is, then, the disturbing urban jungle of modern London that is both uncivilized and situated in the mechanized, industrialized metropole. But we should note again that Waugh is only able to subvert the 'imperial vision' of Western superiority versus non-Western marginality by relying on the logic of the imperial vision in the first place. The concepts of 'barbarity' and 'civilization' are rooted precisely within the collective discourses of imperialism and Western progress. So it isn't surprising either, that one finds Waugh resorting to, one might even say falling back on, the standard imperial thinking in Congo; that moment when he is furthest removed from modern Britain and its dilemmas. There, he was repulsed by the unmodern barbarity and brought to an ambiguous reconcilement with modernity's comforts in Elisabethville. A similar ambiguous stance is found in Waugh's response to Aden, where he recognizes colonialism's civilizational effect but also the destructiveness of modernity. Waugh's perception of a barbarous 'heart of darkness' in Congo, however, also led to Waugh's modernist subversion of the notions of difference and superiority in the London cellar scene. The ideological system of *Remote People*, which I have here schematically reconstructed, helps to elucidate the contradictory evaluations and perceptions that I traced in the preceding chapters.

The deep parallels that are made between the colonial and the metropolitan realm in this scheme are interesting as they differ from what one normally finds in standard imperialist or exoticist travel writing. In stressing the 'sameness' of colonial Africa and London, Waugh breaks with the stress on 'difference' that characterizes and even motivates most travel books. From a critical perspective on modern Britain, Waugh here attempts to 'relink' the disjoined spatial categories that a discourse of progress and its 'panoptical time' had so strongly separated. Africa ceases to be an 'anachronistic' space as the West itself has reverted 'back' into a barbaric state. This partial retreat from the standard imperial global mapping, I believe, could be seen as a form of interwar *modernist* thinking about the colonial realm. While still relying on such notions of backward 'barbarity' (and in Waugh's case, racist ethnocentrism), it seeks to rethink the relationship between Britain and its empire. The ideological framework that guided Waugh's travel experience should thus be considered within the wider cultural context of modernism and its complicated relationship with colonialism. *Remote People* could be seen as a conservative modernist travel book that differs both from 19th century and from post-World War II perceptions of colonial Africa. Yet the significant gap between the more standard Victorian imperial thinking (that we found more in the *Indian Diary*) and the postcolonial excursions during and after decolonization has not often been

conceptualized on its own terms. In ideological analysis, modernist interwar travel writing is often approached either as a destabilization of an older, more straightforward imperial model or a first step towards a new postcolonial model. The travel book falls on one side or the other according to how much it seems to be pro-empire or against empire.[953] A similar lack of close, contextualized analysis exists within the study of the relationship between modernist literature and colonialism. As Richard Begam and Michael Valdez Moses have argued, we need to consider how "the moderns were significantly more varied in their views of colonialism and substantially more critical of empire than their critics have allowed."[954] The rethinking of the colonial realm was part of wider re-evaluation of traditional British culture, identity, conventions, values and institutions in the early 20th century. [955] These new artistic and political ways of expressing and capturing a rapidly changing British society also stimulated new and varying ways of understanding and representing the British empire. In different forms, modernist writers of the interwar years sought to rethink Britain's role as the center of an empire. Begam and Valdez write that if "the racial views or ethnocentric perspectives of Conrad, Waugh, or Eliot were often deplorable, it is nevertheless worth considering that such attitudes paradoxically and unexpectedly helped to generate skeptical modernist interrogation of empire and of its deleterious effects upon English and European culture."[956] We have seen how, depending on the type of (colonial) space he encountered, Waugh both questioned and wholeheartedly defended colonialism in Africa. I would like to stress how *Remote People* illustrates a more complex, more skeptical type of interwar colonial thinking that was still deeply embedded in notions of racial and cultural superiority.

To conclude, I sum up how Waugh came to this more global scheme and what the effects of personal mobility were on its formulation. As is evident, Waugh's ideas of 'civilization' and 'barbarity' did not simply overlap with what was 'modern' and 'unmodern' or 'home' and 'abroad.' To explain the blurred and contradictory categories apparent in the text, Schweizer argues that Waugh's alleged uncomplicated vision of civilizational English superiority was undermined through the 'spatial displacement' of travel; one that allowed cultural anxieties and ideological

[953] Some recent scholarship has moved towards new and more contextualized approaches of modernist travel writing. Charles Forsdick has very fruitfully formulated a reconceptualization of exoticism in the 1930s that turns away from the "tendency to conflate colonial and post-colonial understandings of the term." Forsdick, "Sa(l)vaging Exoticism: New Approaches to 1930s Travel Literature in French," 29. Kai Mikonnen has likewise explored an understanding of modernist traveler's self-fashioning in Africa that goes beyond the "Saidian type of colonial discourse analysis." He writes that we need to "look at counter-intentions and self-transgressions within the colonial discourse." Kai Mikkonen, "The Modernist Traveller in Africa: Africanism and the European Author's Self-Fashioning," *European Review* 13, no. 1 (2005): 117.
[954] Begam and Moses, "Introduction," 13.
[955] While the First World War might have heightened a critical stance towards pre-war society, John Stevenson rightly argues that the interwar cultural trends should be seen in the context of a broader questioning of the inheritance of nineteenth century Britain. Stevenson, *The Penguin Social History of Britain*, 414.
[956] Begam and Moses, "Introduction," 13.

destabilization to surface.[957] Like Graham Greene, Rebecca Black, and George Orwell, Waugh's travel writing "bears witness to an experiential kind of deconstruction" of the binary distinctions that dominated the thinking of the 1930s.[958] The act of travel was the main cause of this blurring because travel has "an inherently destabilizing, disorienting quality" that "allows the repressed to surface and thereby causes the eruption of anxieties."[959] Yet we have seen that the root of this 'deconstruction' of older binaries, the skeptical attitude towards modern progress, already fills Waugh's first novels and was connected to a much larger interwar discourse of decline. Rather than a "discourse of anxiety" that only arises through the experience of spatial displacement,[960] the questioning of the West's civilizational worth was a significant trend in metropolitan thinking. Moreover, even as Schweizer is attentive to the historical roots of this anxiety, his psychoanalytic ideas about the "almost inevitable" rise of an "uncanny feeling" in travel and the "inherently destabilizing" quality of mobility places the cause in an abstract concept of 'mobility' that lacks any strong theoretical grounding.

Indeed, the 'destabilizing' vision of mobility that we find in recent scholarship on travel writing frequently equates the act of being mobile to a straightforward 'liberating' and 'progressive' process. It too readily presumes that the confrontation with difference and unfamiliar surroundings inevitably leads to a broad-minded break-down of ideology and the traveler's familiar cognitive mappings. In chapter five, I discussed this specifically in relation to the nature of the heterotopia. There, I questioned the theorization of the alternative space of the heterotopia as all inherently destabilizing, 'unmapped space' abroad. In the theories of Thacker of Smethurst, I argued, the concept of 'mobility' becomes an ahistorical essence that in and of itself supposedly has a profound transformative effect. The questions as to what mobility means, what forms it takes, or how it is experienced in different historical and individual contexts are severely overlooked when one simply conceives of travel as "inevitably destabilizing". The effects of mobility, of course, depend on the specific historical context and character of the mobile individual or text; the conditions within which that mobility takes place. Moreover, even a cursory glance at sociological theories of contemporary tourism shows how mobility, even or especially today, is not straightforwardly a 'destabilizing' process but remains bound to larger discourses, myths, and the commodification and familiarization of foreign spaces. John Urry opened his seminal *The Tourist Gaze* with a quote of Foucault on the medical practice, explaining that the gaze of the tourist "is as socially organised and systematised as is the gaze of the medic."[961] Where Urry looks at the visual aspect of tourism, MacCannel stresses the tourist's search for authenticity, writing about 'staged authenticity' and how sightseeing is a social act where the "actual act of communion between tourist and attraction is less

[957] Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road*, 142, 173.
[958] Ibid., 6, 142.
[959] Ibid., 5, 173.
[960] Ibid., 160, 173.
[961] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2002), 1.

important than the *image* or the *idea* of society that the collective act generates."[962] Both of these theories relate the experience and possibilities of the mobile subject to the context of the daily life of modern society from which 'the tourist' emerges. Stephen Greenblatt has, more recently, formulated an approach to mobility that is more sensitive to historical difference, the material dimensions of travel (in our case *actual* travel in contrast to a vaguer notion of ideological mobility), structural constraints, and the 'sensation of rootedness'.[963] This last concept points at the way mobility is always in a relationship of tension with "the glacial weight of what appears bounded and static" – this was certainly the case in *Remote People*.[964]

As we have seen, Waugh's political commentary and heterotopic fictionalization of colonial space in his travel book were firmly 'rooted' in his attitudes towards Britain. Travel did not have a large transformative effect on Waugh. The simple binary categories that Schweizer sees as characteristic of the 1930s had, in Waugh's case, already been undermined before he boarded a ship to Abyssinia. Waugh's ideological framework was destabilized, steeped in contradictory impulses, and doubtful of the modern West, primarily due to his conflicted search for answers in the context of British society and culture, not because of travel. However, I have argued that mobility brought Waugh to *extend* his domestic ideological scheme in a more *global* cognitive mapping. As a result, this could in places indeed lead to the destabilization of the standard 'modern cartography' and the 'imperial binaries'. In *Remote People* Waugh thus adapted and inserted what he encountered in colonial Africa into what he so firmly believed about the metropolitan world. His previous perception of the West's decline, of an antimony between 'civilization' and 'chaos', was thus extended into a more 'global' idea of 'civilization' and 'barbarity' that encompassed both the metropolitan and the colonial world. In this process, Waugh's thinking about Britain incorporated and often clashed with the imperial thinking about the 'other', resulting in the ambiguous and contradictory scheme as illustrated above. Strangely, however, the more and the longer Waugh was isolated from the domestic conditions that stimulated an alternative thinking about the colonial world (as in Congo), the more he turned to the older binaries of imperial discourses. Indeed, the 'un-rooting' dimension of mobility then began to throw Waugh back on the more standard imperial thinking that was otherwise undercut by his critical stance towards the modern. Conversely, the more Waugh was confronted with familiar conditions (on his arrival in Kenya or on his return to London, for example), the more he blurred the imperial binaries.

Through travel, then, Waugh's ideological scheme, while thoroughly informed by the domestic conditions in Britain, engaged with new objects and locations, leading him to conceptualize a more thoroughly global vision that sometimes broke with the traditional imperial discourse and that sets him apart from both the metropolitan-oriented modernists and the old-school imperialist and exoticist travel writers. In *Remote People* we find resonated, for example, the disseminating mechanisms of globalization-through-colonialism that resulted in what Waugh saw as

[962] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 99.
[963] Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," 251–52.
[964] Ibid., 252.

corrupting 'modernity' (Zanzibar) but also mythical Englishness (Kenya) and global Christianity (Uganda). His African journey also changed the way Waugh conceptualized modern life in London: in his next two novels Waugh would further explore the disturbing 'barbarity' connection he made between the primitive jungle and the modern city.[965] While I would want to stress again that this global vision was fundamentally guided by Waugh's experience of modern urban life in Britain, this does support the claim of Cabañas et al. that travel can "transform personal and cultural realities and affect the cultural mapping" of domestic society.[966] Against a turbulent domestic context and guided by Waugh's primary emotion of disillusionment and disappointment, *Remote People* imaginatively connects various global trends and spaces in Waugh's own, ideologically informed way.

[965] See: Barnard, "'A Tangle of Modernism and Barbarity': Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief."
[966] Cabañas et al., "Introduction," 3.

CONCLUSION

Despite their many differences, the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People* both offer unique insights into the way their authors responded to early 20th century Britain and the effect that travel had on their thinking. In part one and two, I have stressed the interconnectedness of British travelers' experience and evaluation of colonial society and their political and ideological responses to modernity. Through the figure of the traveler I hope to have shown how thinking about the colonial world and the metropole were linked both in immediate political and more implicit ideological ways. The express, symbolic, and collective 'resolutions' to the social changes and contradictions of modernity fundamentally informed the travel writer's understanding, evaluation, and representation of colonial people and places. As travelers gave meaning to and represented the British colonial empire in their texts they, consciously and unconsciously, channeled their concerns and utopian 'resolutions' to the social conditions in Britain. These ideologically charged resolutions emerge from their travel writing so that it becomes an interesting source for cultural reactions both to colonial and domestic society. Indeed, I have shown how travel writing can be indirectly read as expressions and negotiations of domestic politics in exotic surroundings. Above all, this reveals how very strongly perceptions and perspectives on the colonial world were connected to perceptions and perspectives of modern British society. In this exchange, I have argued that the traveler's conception of modernity (which was primarily understood as a social condition of Britain but was also recognized in the colony) was a major influence in his or her approach the colony. After all, the domestic society was the primary context in which the traveler had formulated his or her political attitudes, worldview, esthetics, and even sense of self. Yet mobility not only lays bare the traveler's unconscious politics but also has a potentially transformative effect. Both the Webbs and Waugh found modernity not only remarkable absent but also surprisingly echoed and adapted in foreign surroundings. The changes of modernity, they came to see, were spreading globally, not the least through colonialism. As we have seen, the extrapolation of ideological schemes to the unique context of the Indian and African colonies spurred logical adjustments and global extensions.

The Webbs and Waugh attempted to reduce the complexities of the colonial realm in a global interpretative 'mapping' that covered and related both the metropolitan and colonial conditions. These schemes were structured by symptomatic antinomies that were formed, I have argued, as utopian-ideological symbolic resolutions of the contradictions of modernity. Once such a global, interpretative scheme was in place, the 'naked' politics that were formed in the domestic realm became 'relatable' to the colonial context. Accordingly, when the travelers engaged in very concrete political discussions in the colony, they were mainly guided by the political visions and opinions formed in response to the domestic subtext. In very direct ways, the explicit political resolution to the perceived problems of modernity were transposed and adjusted to the perceived problems of the colonial world. While the Webbs' and Evelyn Waugh's colonial experiences and visions were widely different, both were determined by how they individually formed utopian

responses to the dilemmas they felt modern British society imposed on them. Their political unconscious and its explicit expressions were, however, also deeply embedded in collective discourses of the social groups, generations, and historical times to which both belonged.

Despite the enormous differences in their texts, I believe the same broad destabilizing social changes and contradictions of modern society in England confronted both the Webbs and Waugh. These then drew out very different personal and historically-specific representations and perspectives found in the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People*. Yet from both texts emerge the subtextual resonances of Britain's accelerating industrialization and urbanization and of the disorienting individualization and secularization of British society. The Webbs, we found, primarily responded to the social contradiction of the conspicuous domestic and global inequalities in material wealth and living conditions resulting from private capitalism. This led them to formulate a socio-economic, 'positivistic' critique of and 'solution' to modern society's effects that steered their colonial vision in British India. They constructed a socially symbolic resolution around the antinomy of the simultaneous existence of progress and backwardness. This connected to a collective utopian protonarrative of the inevitable gradual progress of humankind (of Britain *and* of India at different levels, along the same lines). This antinomy could then 'map' and ideologically contain both the challenges of modernity in the metropole and the global spread and absence of modernity in the colonial realm. Subsequently, their 'positivistic' solution, their belief that efficiency, rationalization, science, and modernization could pull Britain out of the ills of capitalism could be transposed to British India. We found how the Webbs formulated a colonial vision of government-led, socio-economic development that could educate and guide the backward Indian 'children' into progress, just like the lower-classes at home. The effect of their personal mobility was the realization that their vision clashed with the realities of colonial rule (with the very different 'resolutions' of the Anglo-Indians), and that, through the global spread of modern thought to colonized elites, 'progress' no longer simply overlapped with the category of the Western world. To include India in their logical antinomy of progress versus backwardness they came to disjoin the ancillary binary of 'the West' from progress and 'the non-West' from backwardness.

Waugh, on the other hand, struggled with the contradiction of an increasing social disorder and cultural rootlessness, and the simultaneous emergence of new forms of social order and cultural banalization. His culturalist critique of modernity was responded not to collectives or economic realities but to individual experiences and aesthetic effects. *Remote People* was also written after the post-war collapse in the optimistic belief in progress. Instead, it was embedded in a collective interwar protonarrative of decline, which the Webbs also shared by that time. But this travel book was also written by a very different person than either Beatrice or Sidney. Evelyn Waugh's unstable and contradictory 'modernist conservative' thought came to a more complex scheme that, through different logical permutations, could lead to a variety of evaluations in the colonial realm. When reconstructed as a semiotic rectangle, we found that the guiding antimony of *Remote People* was that of 'civilization' versus 'barbarity'. A second antimony of the 'modern' and the 'traditional' opened

the possibility of the subversion of the traditional imperial binaries that had characterized pre-modernist colonial thinking, and which were still evident in the *Indian Diary*. In Zanzibar, then, Waugh was disconcerted that the developmental type of imperialism (as championed by the Webbs) brought with it not only British 'civilization' but also the disintegrating effects of 'modernity'. In Aden and Kenya, Waugh found (through the working of myth) an 'ideal synthesis' of 'civilization' (in the form of traditional Englishness) and of 'traditionalism'. I especially explored Waugh's experience of Kenya as both a compensatory and a transgressive heterotopia; a fictionalized space that could combine the enchanting contradictory elements of transgression and order, exoticness and Englishness, difference and familiarity. In Congo, the traditional imperial binaries returned with a vengeance as Waugh was repulsed by primitive barbarism and reconciled with modern luxuries. Finally, in the 'negative synthesis' at the end of *Remote People*, Waugh represented London as a disturbing urban jungle that collapsed modern society into barbarity. In this way, Waugh's cognitive mapping blurred the traditional distinctions between colonial and metropolitan spaces. When his critical modernist perception of modern society and his ambiguous longing for an imagined, traditional England were brought to the colonial realm, this both interwove with and ambiguously disrupted the older imperial binaries and the prevailing understandings of space. The main effect of mobility, I argued, was not the destabilization of previously formed antinomies but their extension into a more global scheme. The resulting parallels made between colonial Africa and British society should themselves be considered as an attempt to resolve the social contradiction of the spatial disjuncture of the colony from the metropole. Moreover, these parallels and their subversion of older spatial models makes *Remote People* a more modernist travel book that differs from its Victorian counterparts while still being deeply committed to imperial and racial ideas.

The Webbs' and Waugh's different sensitivities to the socio-cultural changes in Britain in the early 20th century were then channeled through their contrasting socialist and conservative political attitudes. This resulted in two different colonial visions: the Webbs' developmental socialism and Waugh's blend of heterotopic ornamentalism and a Catholic religious mission. The Webbs and Waugh came to question two opposite aspects of the British empire: the first lamented its retrograde traditionalism and social vision; the second lamented its progressive and transformative dimension. Both metropolitan observers perceived British colonial society as backwards-looking and leisured. For the Webbs this meant that they were an impediment to progress, for Waugh this meant that they were noble eccentrics recreating the England he held dear. These different social vision also informed very different evaluations of colonized society. Guided by elitist and racist attitudes, both the Webbs and Waugh were disturbed by what they believed were the inferior lower-class 'primitives' of the non-white world. But where Webbs found their social equals in the educated, modernized Hindu elite, Waugh found his ideals mirrored in the traditional aristocratic elements of colonized African society. While both the Webbs and Waugh can be considered to be, in one limited way or another, critics of the British empire, they never fully dismissed the legitimacy of imperialism or the ultimate superiority of Britain.

In their perception and representation of the British colonial world, both the Webbs and Waugh were very much products of their own, different times. At the time of the Asian trip, the Webbs were still deeply embedded in the 19th century belief in progress, the stable legacies of Enlightenment thought, evolutionary thinking, and Victorian moral attitudes. Escaping Britain and a hedonistic modern life in the confusing interwar years, Waugh's strange modernism was filtered through with restlessness and the contradictory drives that characterized interwar culture.

The Webbs' dedication to the collective protonarrative of progress versus Waugh's dedication to that of decline forms the starkest overarching difference between the two works of travel writing. In the interlude, I sketched this discursive change which cut through political differences. While it addressed the same destabilizing social changes, the modern destruction of the First World War had cast a doubtful shadow on the future. Perhaps this pessimistic change in outlook also refocused the 'utopian impulse' to find resolutions in the present rather than in the future. Soon after Waugh found a heterotopia in Kenya, the Webbs found their own 'already-realized' utopia in the Soviet Union. This new collective cultural mediation of modernity, as we saw in *Remote People*, also prompted changing perceptions of the colonial world. Both the *Indian Diary* and *Remote People* underline that mobility had an effect, albeit a minimal one, of adjusting the Webbs' and Waugh's preconceived attitudes. The Webbs came face to face with alternative paths to progress, while Waugh found himself obliged to meddle in politics. But most of all, their travel stimulated a distillation and an extension of the conscious and unconscious politics that they had formed in and against their home country.

Already on the ship to Abyssinia, Waugh lucidly recorded in his diary that he was "adopting an unfamiliar manner of speech and code of judgements" as soon as he left his familiar surroundings. Beatrice Webb's own realization that "a traveller […] is liable to come back from his travel with his own general ideas confirmed" is equally true. Travel is located at a many-sided tension between ideology and utopia, between intellectual stasis and mobility, between the all-too familiar and the enigmatic alien. As the travel writing of the Webbs and Waugh illustrate, travel offers the possibility of transgression, self-invention, and the expansion of politics - but it is an act that remains firmly rooted in the conditions that one left. In foreign surroundings, the ideas that one formed about home crystallize at the same moment that they begin to loosen.

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

In deze thesis onderzoek ik de verbanden tussen de beeldvorming over de koloniale en de moderne wereld in de reisverslagen van de Webbs en Evelyn Waugh. Steunend op de theorie van Frederic Jameson analyseerde ik de tekstuele 'antwoorden' op de sociale contradicties van moderniteit en kolonialisme. Ik situeerde deze op drie niveaus: die van de uitdrukkelijke politiek, die van de onbewuste politiek, en die van collectieve discours. Op deze manier schonk ik in de interpretatie zowel aandacht aan de ideologische bepaaldheid en de utopische mogelijkheden van het reisverhaal. Hierbij onderzocht ik ook steeds de mogelijk effecten van mobiliteit op ideologie. Door de invloed van de sociale conditie van moderniteit op koloniale reisverhalen te traceren, had ik als doel om de analytische categorieën van de metropool en de kolonie dichter bij elkaar te brengen in de studie van koloniale beeldvorming.

Ik paste deze interpretatiemethode toe op twee reisverhalen: de *Indian Diary* (1911-12) van Sidney en Beatrice Webb en *Remote People* (1931) van Evelyn Waugh. In deel een onderzocht ik hoe de socialistische politiek van Beatrice en Sidney Webb rechtstreeks en impliciet hun perceptie van India stuurde. Hun sterk geloof in de waarde van modernisering en efficiëntie bracht hen ertoe om een koloniale visie en politiek te formuleren die de nadruk legde op socio-economische 'ontwikkeling' gestuurd door de overheid. Ze plaatsten de Indische bevolking op een uniforme tijdslijn van raciale vooruitgang. Maar deze werd ook doorkruist door evaluaties over gender en klasse die hun oorsprong hadden in binnenlandse context. Hun koloniaal droombeeld botste met de praktijk en visie van de Britse kolonialen in India. Door hun mobiliteit kwamen de Webbs tot de vaststelling dat het 'progressieve' element in Brits-Indië de gemoderniseerde Indiërs waren. De categorieën van 'vooruitgang' en 'achteruitgang' overlapten zo niet meer simpelweg met het 'Westen' en het niet 'Westen'.

In deel twee ging ik na hoe Evelyn Waugh zijn kritiek op modern Engeland de reacties op koloniaal Afrika in *Remote People* beïnvloedde. Zijn tegenstrijdig modernistisch conservatisme construeerde twee tegenstellingen: 'beschaving' tegenover 'barbarij' en 'moderniteit' tegenover 'primitiviteit'. Deze termen werden op verschillende manieren gecombineerd in zijn perceptie en evaluatie van de koloniale wereld. De oorsprong van dit ideologisch schema lag echter voornamelijk in zijn desillusie met en vervreemding van de moderne Britse samenleving. Ik had in het bijzonder aandacht voor de manier waarop Waugh tot een ideale 'synthese' van beschaving en primitiviteit kwam in koloniaal Kenya. Hier construeerde hij een gefictionaliseerde ruimte die functioneerde als een transgressieve en compenserende heterotopie. Daarnaast benadrukte ik ook hoe Waughs complex schema de traditionele imperiale tegenstellingen en mentale cartografieën bij momenten in vraag stelde.

Mijn hoofdconclusie is dat de expliciete en impliciete reacties op moderniteit in Groot-Brittannië fundamenteel en vaak zeer rechtstreeks verbonden waren aan de percepties over en politiek in het Britse koloniaal rijk. Reisverhalen en reizen waren op die manier vaak omwegen om bezorgdheden over de veranderende sociale condities in het thuisland te adresseren en te proberen beantwoorden.

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