The Diary of an Ennuyée (1826) by Anna Jameson: A Dual Vision of the Italian Cities by a Governess Disguised as a Lady

Elisabetta Marino[1]

Abstract: *This essay aims at analyzing* The Diary of an Ennuyée*, the debut travel account of Anna Jameson, an Irish-born writer who would become a prominent art critic and a strenuous defender of women's rights. Composed when she was working as a governess, narrated from the point of view of a fictional, heartbroken young lady, the travelogue strikingly offers two clashing views of the Italian cities Jameson actually visited in 1821-22.*

Key words: *Anna Jameson, travel literature, Italy, femininity, picturesque*

1. Introduction

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, all forms of communication between Britain and the Continent were resumed, after more than two decades of forced interruption: as a result, a sudden flood of British travellers poured into the South, especially into Italy. In the late 1810s and throughout the 1820s, therefore, travelogues, diaries, and other kinds of accounts depicting exquisite locations, astonishing archaeological sites, and extraordinary experiences in the Peninsula rapidly multiplied (Brand 16), as a response to the demands of an eager reading public.

As Amanda Gilroy (29) has elucidated, Italy was widely perceived as "the home of emotion, whose luscious vegetation, crumbling ruins, and Catholic exoticism marked its femininity".

[1] University of Rome Tor Vergata

Hence, travelogues penned by women writers were regarded as particularly perceptive and insightful, thus opening a highly lucrative opportunity for professional female authors, whose daring violation of the doctrine of the separate spheres (performed through the acts of travelling and entering the male-dominated literary arena) was indulgently overlooked.

The Diary of an Ennuyée (first entitled *The Diary of a Lady*) was published anonymously in 1826 by Henry Colburn. Supposedly, it was written by a young lady in distress who, passing through France and Switzerland, had undertaken the customary tour of the major Italian cities to heal her broken heart. Her pangs of love, however, had proved fatal: the young lady had breathed her last in France, on her way back to England, leaving behind her cherished diary (the only companion of her endless sorrows and disappointments) and a booklet of poems, that the unnamed editor of the publication had inserted in the volume, according to their date and subject. *The Diary of an Ennuyée* was highly commended by reviewers[2], and went through several editions in a short time. Nonetheless, when Anna Jameson (1794-1860) was found out to be the real author of the *Diary*, criticism was quick to follow: in fact, even though she had truly travelled across the country writing notes based on her observations, she had shrewdly cheated her sympathetic readers, since she was perfectly alive, and in the prime of health. Enraged and appalled, Mary Shelley (339) described the text as "a very well written and interesting imposture. Well written and interesting, but still an imposture"[3]: her respected opinion was outstandingly valuable, given her prolonged stay in Italy, and her profound knowledge of the Italian landscape, customs, and manners. Henry Crabb Robinson deemed "the affected sentimentality of a pretended invalid very disgusting" (Morley 407); when he eventually met the writer, he depicted her as a clever and agreeable woman, but never worthy of his trust. Even Fanny Kemble

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2 The reviewer of *The New Montly Magazine* compared the *Diary* to Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. He (141) considered "the fair Journalist" as "exceedingly amusing in her sketches of the manners of the people, of the public picture galleries of Paris, Florence, Rome, &c. (of which, indeed she seem[ed] to speak with the knowledge of an artist), and of the absurd and comic superstitions of the Papal church".

3 As Shelley (339) continued, "having discovered that the sensitive, heart-broken, dying, dead diarist is a fictitious personage, we are angry at the trick of art that excited our real sympathy".

(127), the famous actress who would become one of Jameson's most intimate friends, recorded her first encounter with the *revived ennuyée*, in 1828, with ill-concealed embarrassment: "it was a little vexatious to behold her sitting on a sofa, in a very becoming state of blooming *plumptitude*". To restore her faltering reputation as a writer, therefore, Anna Jameson decided to insert a heartfelt disclaimer at the end of the Preface to her second literary endeavor (*Memoirs of the Loves of the Poets: Women Celebrated in Ancient and Modern Poetry*), first published in 1829. She (1894, x) claimed she had been "betrayed into authorship" (for which thing, at that point, there was no remedy), and that her "little book [... had not been] written for publication, nor would ever have been printed but for accidental circumstances" (ix); moreover, its title had been chosen by the publisher, who was not aware of the real identity of the author.

The perplexing and complex nature of Anna Jameson's volume, peculiarly joining fact and fiction, has been pointed out by several scholars. To name a few, Amanda Gilroy (30) has noticed that the work "eludes generic fixity, being a guidebook, a diary and a novel rolled into one"; Maurizio Ascari (35) has called it a "hybrid and multifaceted text", an "eccentric travel account"; Judith Johnston (11) has underlined the fragmented, "schizoid tendency" of the narrative, featuring a "wearied, bored traveller" (17), a melancholic and "disempowered figure" (17) who, all of a sudden, inconsistently turns into "an indefatigable and energetic tourist visiting countless churches, galleries, ruins and artists' studios, and taking lessons in Italian in the evening"[4] (17). After highlighting the numerous *fractures* in *The Diary of an Ennuyée*, Johnston concludes her critique by asserting that, in all her future travel writing[5], Jameson "never ma[de] the same mistake again" (22).

On the contrary, far from viewing Anna Jameson's debut volume as a relatively defective and immature work, it could be argued that *The Diary of an Ennuyée* was craftily planned *as such* in order to attract a wider readership (armchair travellers as well as sentimental novel readers), thus securing substantial profits to a young and self-supporting woman who, at the time when the

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[4]The outstanding vitality of the dying *ennuyée* has also been observed by Maddalena Pennacchia (103), while Kathryn Walchester (174) has noticed the "generic instability of Jameson's travel book".

[5]*Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad* (1834), and *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838).

travelogue was composed, worked as a governess, and had no immediate prospects of marriage. The choice of a lady of rank as her literary persona possibly reflected both her aspiration to a comfortable life, and her ambition to gain an authoritative voice, more difficult to attain (also given her gender) had she revealed her real social status. Later on in life, Anna Jameson would become a prominent and groundbreaking art critic (as esteemed and respected as John Ruskin) and, despite the traditional and conservative stance she always adopted, an outspoken advocate of women's rights. As this essay sets out to demonstrate, the account of her Italian journey, and the choice of the items deserving to be inserted in her narrative, reflect and combine the clashing views of both the *proper Lady* she wished to be identified with (and she would eventually turn into), and the spirited, resourceful, pioneering governess who yearned for self-improvement and for a leading part to play on the stage of life. After a brief biographical sketch (necessary to understand the reasons that prompted Jameson to try her hand at writing), this essay will first of all delve into the construction of Jameson's literary persona, as well as showing how the Lady coexists with the lively governess in her travelogue. Then, four areas will be explored in which Jameson's dual vision of Italy is remarkably evident, namely the feminization of the peninsula and its cities, the description of urban and rural spaces, the portrayal of the Italian citizens, and the Italian museums and art galleries.

2. Anna Jameson: the Beginning of her Literary Career

Born in Dublin, Anna Brownell Murphy was the eldest of the five daughters of Denis Brownell Murphy, an Irish miniaturist, and his wife, an Englishwoman. Due to the political turmoil in Ireland, rumoured to be a rebel, in 1798, Denis was forced to move to England with his family, settling first in Newcastle and then in London. Since her family was experiencing severe financial difficulties, Anna began to work as a governess, a career she started when she was sixteen, in 1810, and ended fifteen years later, when she got married. In 1820 she became betrothed to Robert Jameson, a promising lawyer, but they broke off their engagement the following year, because their characters were rather incompatible. She immediately accepted another post as a governess: between the Spring of 1821 and the Summer of 1822, she roamed the Continent (France, Switzerland and, most of all, Italy) with the Rowles family,

whose refinement and wealth allowed her to travel in style. In the Peninsula, she closely followed the beaten track, visiting the most renowned Italian cities, like every other Grand Tourist: Milan, Padua, Venice, Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, Rome, Naples, Lucca, Pisa, Leghorn, Genoa, and Turin. Nevertheless, she also passed through a few unusual places, such as Covigliajo and Radicofani. From her correspondence, one gathers that she kept a notebook (where she wrote down all her activities and movements), and a journal, the treasured repository[6] of her observations, reflections, anecdotes, and detailed descriptions of works of art, just like the *ennuyée*'s diary[7]. A letter to her sister Camilla reveals that, while abroad, Anna had all the intentions to capitalize on her experience by publishing a travelogue:

> I have filled one note book and half another and have quite filled two thick journals, securely locked up, and have just bought a third, so I am not idle. I have collected material which, If I live and Heaven grants me health and that peace to which I have long been a stranger, I will turn to good account. (Erskine 65)[8]

Once returned to England, however, her plans changed: she was employed by Mr. Littleton to care for his children. Meanwhile, she resumed her acquaintance with Mr. Jameson and, in 1825, she eventually agreed to tie the knot with him, in spite of their growing incompatibility bordering on repulsion (at least on her part). As Ruth Brandon (217) has elucidated, "Anna thought women 'not born in servile classes' should not have to work, their 'proper sphere' being the home": the prospect of a dull and tiring life as a governess "must have seemed less attractive than a passionless marriage" (Brandon 217). Even though their union was ill-fated and quite miserable, Robert Jameson has to be credited with starting Anna's

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[6]The journal was jealously "secured by lock and key" (Erskine 43).
[7]Given the circumstances, according to Stephanie Russo (204) the languishing and forlorn heroine of Jameson's *Diary* may be interpreted as "an affectionate piece of self-parody; an exaggeration of her own plight during her travels". Furthermore, in Russo's opinion (200), *The Diary of an Ennuyeé* can be read as a "parodic exploration of both the growing interest in health tourism and the burgeoning subgenre of invalid travel literature".
[8]In the words of Caroline Franklin (33), "like her mentor, Staël, Jameson made her travel notes with publication in mind".

literary career[9]: he mentioned the existence of the diary of her Grand Tour to his friend Thomas who, after listening to a selection of entertaining passages, volunteered to find a publisher. Finally, Thomas sold the manuscript to Colburn, giving Anna £10 out of the £50 he had earned (Franklin 33). In 1829 Robert Jameson accepted a position in the West Indies and, since then, the couple mostly lived happily separated in two different continents. From that moment onward, Anne was free to pursue an independent life and an artistic career (in the same year she published the above-quoted *Memoirs of the Loves of the Poets*), while still benefiting from "the freedoms [and the status, one may be tempted to add] available to a married woman" (Brandon 219). Anna Jameson later specialized in the iconography of Christian art, and wrote several distinguished essays and notable handbooks for English art collections. She also embraced the anti-slavery cause, took an active interest in supporting working-class and single (or *redundant*[10]) women, and fought against the inequalities of property laws in Victorian England. Yet, she never failed to voice her conservative views on the social mission assigned to her gender, inextricably connected with the ideal of domesticity. As she (12-13) explained in her lecture entitled "Sisters of Charity",

> domestic life, the acknowledged foundation of all social life, has settled by a natural law the work of the man and the work of the woman. The man governs, sustains, and defends the family; the woman cherishes, regulates, and purifies it [...]. The man becomes on a larger scale, father and brother, sustainer and defender; the woman becomes on a larger scale, mother and sister, nurse and help.

3. The *Ennuyée* and the Governess

The two facets of Anna Jameson's personality – the would-be lady and the governess, with her entrepreneurial qualities – are clearly evident in *The Diary of an Ennuyée*. To avoid any form of blame, the writer crafted her text as a secret diary – "the confidante of [her]

[9] He also introduced her to his literate friends: Charles Lamb and Hartley Coleridge.

[10] The ratio between men and women, as highlighted in the 1851 census, revealed that the overabundance of single women at a marriageable age was a growing social problem.

feelings, and the sole witness of [her] tears" (Jameson 128-29) – not intended for publication. Thus distancing herself from other women travel writers such as Madame de Genlis, who "composed and recomposed" (Jameson 181) the entries in her journal to please her future audience of readers, she expresses the utmost horror at the very thought that the intimacy of her "blotted" pages could be violated by "the eye of any indifferent person" (Jameson 182): "now, if my poor little Diary should ever be seen! I tremble but to think of it! (Jameson 181). The *ennuyée* acts with utter propriety, within the boundaries of the domestic sphere, disdaining commerce and public exposure. Furthermore, the author is at pains to clarify that her ailing, suffering, lovesick persona has undertaken her journey with the exclusive intention to forget[11] – albeit momentarily – her inconsolable grief: she is not remotely motivated by curiosity nor is she stirred by a passion for adventure, which would make the character less appealing to her sympathetic readership. At times, as when she arrives in Padua, the *ennuyée* is even "unable to see or to wish to see anything" (Jameson 67), so engrossed she is in her melancholy thoughts. She describes herself as a "*blue devil*" (Jameson 2), a clear reference to her despondent and gloomy condition, after elucidating that she is definitely "not *blue*" (Jameson 2), "a forcible disavowal of her being associated with 'bluestockings'" (Walchester 177), as Kathryn Walchester has emphasized. What is more, the fictional male editor of the publication adds authority to the text, besides validating its value, as "a real picture of natural and feminine feelings" (Jameson i). The occasional, condescending remarks placed at the bottom of some pages, however, confirm that he actually held the literary worth of the *Diary* in low esteem, given the lack of intellectual consistency and the excessive emotionality it displayed. For example, the editor informs readers that he had been obliged to erase one sentence because it was "so blotted as to be illegible" (Jameson 45); moreover, he reproachfully observes that twenty pages of the Neapolitan journal had been torn out and the rest had "suffered mutilation or [had] been purposely effaced" (Jameson 231). Despite the flaunted modesty of her genteel and ladylike persona, Anna Jameson, the governess who wished to carve for herself a career as a writer, makes her bold appearance in the text when she engages

[11] "The only blessing I hope from time is *forgetfulness*; my only prayer to Heaven is–*rest, rest, rest!*" (Jameson 170).

with other celebrated travel authors, mentioned numerous times in her narrative. She treats the likes of Lady Morgan, Forsyth[12] and Rogers (whom she recurrently meets, both in Florence and in Rome) on equal terms, while she takes pleasure in spotting mistakes in popular travel books[13]. She even dares to scorn the illustrious John Chetwode Eustace, and his ludicrous portrayal of Terni:

> When we returned to the inn at Terni, and while the horses were putting to, I took up a volume of Eustace's tour, which some traveller had accidentally left on the table; and turning to the description of Terni, read part of it, but quickly threw down the book with indignation, deeming all his verbiage the merest nonsense I have ever met with. (Jameson 137)

Even her more or less explicit, self-flattering association with well-known writers should not pass unnoticed: before her, another heartbroken[14] lady traveller had written an account of her experience in distant lands: Mary Wollstonecraft, with her *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796). Besides, Anna Jameson frequently quotes Lord Byron (Jameson 35, 40, 74, 76-79, 136, 195), and the female *Childe Harold*, *Corinne*[15] (Jameson 115, 219, 310), "a fashionable vade mecum *[sic]* for sentimental travellers in Italy" (Jameson 115) which, however, proves to be too painful to read, given the startling analogies between the two heroines: both abandoned and dejected, they also share the same age (twenty-six).

4. The Feminization of Italy

As Kathryn Walchester (172) has underlined, the author presents

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[12] Anna Jameson audaciously questions his authority when, writing about the character of the Florentines, she observes: "I have not mingled in society; therefore cannot judge of the manners of the people. I trust they are not exactly what Forsyth describes: with all his taste, he sometimes writes like a caustic old bachelor; and on the Florentines he is particularly severe" (Jameson 122).
[13] "In some books of travels I have met with, Boccaccio, Aretino, and Guicciardini, are mentioned among the illustrious dead of the Santa Croce" (Jameson 1826, 121); conversely, as the writer painstakingly points out, they are all buried in other locations.
[14] Her relationship with Gilbert Imlay was often troublesome and distressing; he eventually deserted her (Marino 23-30).
[15] Madame de Staël is also repeatedly mentioned, on pages 37, 40, 215.

Italy "as a 'friend', in whom the narrator seeks help unsuccessfully, to recover from the betrayal of her lover". The aforementioned trope of the feminization of the peninsula is extensively employed by Jameson. In one of the poems featured in the narrative, she depicts Italy as a prostrated woman who, notwithstanding her "laurel crown/ torn and defaced, and soiled with blood and tears" (Jameson 223), still wears "with a queen-like grace [...]/ her garland of bright names" (Jameson 223). The cities of Italy are also regularly compared to female figures: "one leaves Naples as a man parts with an enchanting mistress, and Rome as we would bid adieu to an old and dear-loved friend" (Jameson 324). At the end of her travelogue, she dwells on the highlights of her itinerary as if she was gazing at a gathering of women of various ages and ranks:

> Genoa, though fallen, is still "Genoa the proud". She is like a noble matron, blooming in years, and dignified in decay; while her rival Venice always used to remind me of a beautiful courteszan *[sic]* repenting in sack-cloth and ashes, and mingling the ragged remnants of her former splendor, with the emblems of present misery, degradation, and mourning. Pursue the train of similitude, Florence may be likened to a blooming bride dressed out to meet her lover; Naples to Tasso's Armida, with all the allurements of the Syren *[sic]*, and all the terrors of the Sorceress; Rome sits crowned upon the grave of her power, widowed indeed, and desolate, but still, like the queenly Constance, she maintains the majesty of sorrow— (Jameson 376)

What appears to be an innocent, almost subconscious projection of herself and her womanly world onto the foreign territory, actually allows the writer to discuss political matters, positively forbidden to her sex. Quoting Kathryn Walchester (194), "the sympathy which she evokes between the narrator and female Italy enables Jameson to comment on Italian politics and avoid the censure of critics". Closely adhering to social conventions, the prim and proper *ennuyée* abhors the subject: "how I detest politics and discord! How I hate the discussions of politics in Italy! And, above all, the discussion of Italian politics, which offer no point upon which the

mind can dwell with pleasure"[16] (Jameson 308). Conversely, the perspective of the sharp and intuitive governess is quite different: she seems to suggest that an excess of femininity (i.e. a submissive, accommodating, self-pitying, and indolent attitude towards life) is to be held responsible for the slavish condition the fragmented country languishes in. Hence, the writer regretfully records the presence of "the Austrian forces in the North of Italy" (Jameson 54) and, in Verona, she contemptuously glances at several battalions exercising in the *Piazza d'arme*: "As I have now been long enough in Italy to sympathize in *[sic]* the national hatred of the Austrians, I turned from the sight, resolved not to be pleased" (Jameson 65). In Venice, she tosses the following caustic remark: "nothing can be more arbitrary than the Austrian government at Venice" (Jameson 83), while the massive presence of tyrannical Austrian troops and their obnoxious behaviour are also noticed – with clear irritation – in Rome (Jameson 144) and in Naples (Jameson 226, 243). Surprisingly enough, the working-class author also expresses a controversial and challenging view of Napoleon with which, just ten years after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, most Englishmen could hardly agree[17]: as well as praising "the magnificence and vastness of his public works" (Jameson 46-47), she admires the "rational policy" (Jameson 47) he followed: "depressing the nobles, and providing occupation and amusement for the lower classes" (Jameson 47).

5. Urban and Rural Spaces in Italy

The *ennuyée* presents a somewhat vague and stereotypical depiction of the Italian cities and landscape, tailored to the taste of a wide readership who longed to be entertained with glowing pictures of an earthly paradise. Venice is nothing but "the vision of a dream" (Jameson 68) and "the proper region of the fantastic" (Jameson 69). The "enchanting *south*" ("a land of Faery *[sic]*") delights her with its "soft, balmy air [...] myrtles, orange groves, palm trees; [...] cloudless skies, [...] bright blue sea, and sunny hills" (Jameson 218). Some remote and obscure towns are seemingly included in the narrative to gratify the lovers of gothic stories: as she

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[16] Elsewhere in the travel book she states: "I meddle not with politics, and with all my heart abhor them" (Jameson 227).

[17] Her Irish origins probably constituted an important factor in moulding her political opinions.

informs, the most gruesome assassinations are committed in the inn at Covigliajo, where the invalid lady spends a sleepless night (Jameson 89-92); in Radicofani, "at the top of a dreary black mountain, in a rambling old inn" (Jameson 325), she cannot but think of all the travellers who have been murdered by the local *banditti*, whilst a tempest rages outside. Rome turns into a postcard to be admired by cultivated British readers who, without doubt, will not miss the copious references to Wordsworth's "Upon Westminster Bridge" embedded in the description:

> The city lay at our feet, silent, and clothed with the day-light as with a garment—no smoke, no vapour, no sound, no motion, no sign of life: it looked like a city whose inhabitants had been suddenly petrified, or smitten by a destroying angel; and such was the effect of its strange and solemn beauty, that before I was aware, I felt my eyes fill with tears as I looked upon it. (Jameson 299)

"Picturesque" is the most frequently used adjective to describe the scenery. During Carnival, in Naples, "it is scarce possible to conceive a more fantastic, a more picturesque, a more laughable scene than the Strada di Toledo" (Jameson 227). The Pamphili gardens in Rome are endowed with a "fantastic elegance, and [a] picturesque gaiety" (Jameson 286). As the writer affirms,

> in Italy the picturesque is every where *[sic]*, in every variety of form; it meets us at every turn, in town and in country, at all times and seasons; the commonest object of every-day life here become *[sic]* picturesque and assumes from a thousand causes a certain character of poetical interest it cannot have elsewhere. (Jameson 357)

"Had I never visited Italy", she concludes, "I think I should never have understood the word *picturesque*" (357). According to James Buzard (33), "by the 1820s [the word picturesque] had worked its way beyond the landscape studies of its eighteenth-century origins" to include urban spaces and their inhabitants. The latter are regarded by the *ennuyée* as if they were pleasing picture cards or waxwork figures in dazzling dioramas, almost intentionally devised for both her enjoyment and the pleasure of her readers. All along the Arno, in Florence, men stand "in various picturesque attitudes,

fishing, after the Italian fashion" (Jameson 95). In Naples, her "lazzaroni attendants with their shrill shouts and strange dresses" form a scene "so new, so extraordinary, so like romance" (Jameson 240). At the Circus Maximus, in Rome, she observes a superbly costumed woman on an ass, accompanied by a man, leading the animal "with lover-like watchfulness" (Jameson 191); they are followed by two men, singing, dancing, and playing the guitar; a girl with a bouquet of flowers kneels down and prays in front of the nearby chapel: "all this sounds, while I soberly write it down, very sentimental, and picturesque, and poetical. It was exactly what I saw—what I often see: such is the place, the scenery, the people. Every group is a picture" (Jameson 191-92). The British lady cannot refrain from turning the Italian scenes she contemplates into precious commodities, into paintings fit to adorn the most refined English mansions. Watching the peasantry of the Campagna, "with their wild ruffian-like figure and picturesque costumes [...] seated at the bases of pillars, or praying before the altars" (Jameson 158), she exclaims: "how I wished to paint some of the groups I saw! but only Rembrandt could have done them justice" (Jameson 158). Later on, after gazing at the Roman countryside about her, she comments: "I wish I could have painted what I saw to-day as I saw it. Yet no—the reality was perhaps too much like a picture to please in a picture"[18] (Jameson 300). Even Catholicism is perceived as a mere source of entertainment for the tourist. The holy procession she witnesses at St. Peter's, in Rome, is "so arranged as to produce the most striking theatrical effect" (Jameson 198); the Pope, with his "mild and venerable air" (Jameson 199), performs his part with dexterity: "it was the most admirable acting I ever saw" (Jameson 199). In her brief and shallow sketch, far from being the apostolic successor of Saint Peter, the sacred pontiff is dismissed as a skilled and well-trained actor. The *ennuyée* even wishes to become a Roman Catholic but, as she immediately clarifies, "for one half hour only" (Jameson 198), as a playful form of *ethnomasquerade*[19] which, given its transient nature, does not affect her identity, while

[18] Even nature is considered a valuable property: "how I wish I could transport those skies to England!" (Jameson 274).

[19] In the words of Kader Konuk (393), the *ethnomasquerade* is "the performance of an ethnic identity through the mimicking of clothes, gestures, appearance, language, cultural codes, or other components of identity formation".

it may grant her the chance to gain a better view of the show.

The solidly Anglo-centric vision that has been exhibited so far is meaningfully disrupted by a few revealing (albeit cursory) comments. First of all, in spite of her protestations of love for her country, for "its fire-side enjoyments, and home felt delights" (Jameson 250), the sickly lady needs the Italian "pure elastic air [...], reviving sunshine and [...] blue skies" (Jameson 250-51) to recover. Health and wellbeing are associated with the foreign land, not with her mother-country. Secondly, the private residences and locations where British expatriates usually gather are stifling and oppressive spaces. The English ambassador's chapel in Florence is a "hot close crowded room" where Anna Jameson feels "suffocated, feverish, and [her] head ache[s]" (Jameson 98). Likewise, the chapel at the English Ambassador's in Naples is another "hot room" (Jameson 237), where "a crowd of fine and superfine ladies and gentlemen [are] crushed together" (Jameson 237) with the only purpose of showing off their extravagant dresses to one another. Quite the opposite, the governess seems to be positively struck by the singular freedom enjoyed by the Italians. Women are not confined indoors, they do not live secluded from the world; furthermore, there are no invisible borders that divide males from females, the rich from the poor:

> The whole population seems poured into the streets and squares; all business and amusement is carried on in the open air: all those minute details of domestic life, which, in England, are confined within the sacred precincts of *home*, are here displayed to public view. (Jameson 273)

6. The Italians and the British

Towards the end of her travelogue, the *ennuyée* provides her readers with a concise illustration of the national character of the Italians, as well as emphasizing the considerable inferiority of the inhabitants of the peninsula if compared to her compatriots: "the modern Italians [are ...] a dirty, demoralized, degraded, unprincipled race,—centuries behind our thrice blessed, prosperous, and comfort-loving nation in civilization and morals" (Jameson 309). Being a mere "bird of passage" (Jameson 309), however, she does not feel particularly threatened by them; besides, as she snobbishly highlights, she has "no dealings with the lower classes, little intercourse with the higher" (Jameson 300). When

they are not an essential and *picturesque* part of the scene[20] (as in the case of pastoral or rural settings), the Italians are ignored, ridiculed, despised, and deliberately kept at a safe distance. Their presence is annoying, as in Venice ("The scene would have been as perfectly delightful, as it was new and beautiful, but for the squalid looks of the peasantry; more especially of the women" [Jameson 86]), or inside San Luigi dei Francesi, in Rome. In fact, the charming atmosphere of the church on Christmas Eve is tainted by the intolerable and repulsive Italian crowd: "the people [were] dirty, and there was such an effluence of strong perfumes, in which garlick *[sic]* predominated, that our physical sensations overcame our curiosity: and we were glad to make our escape" (Jameson 157). The Italians are often degraded to the rank of brutes, assimilated to primates or monkeys. At Pompeii, a "young savage" (Jameson 255) shows her a hidden fresco, scratching away the dirt "much after the manner of an ape" (Jameson 255); hoping for a recompense, he then holds "both his paws" (Jameson 255) out, with a large grin. In Lerici, she encounters a "little spare old man, with a face and form which resembled the anatomy of a baboon" (Jameson 365).

While Jameson's aristocratic persona travels magnificently, "*à la milor Anglais*" (Jameson 132), organizes picnic parties "*à l'Anglaise*" (Jameson 252), enjoys dinners cooked "*à l'Anglaise*" (Jameson 139) and, during her stay in Naples, eagerly reads the last numbers of the "Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews [as] a great treat so far from home" (Jameson 271), the governess is quite critical towards her country-fellows. Above all, she disapproves of their rude and deplorable behaviour when they are abroad, stemming from the inborn sense of superiority wealthy people often have. She is disgusted with their disregard for holy places ("I found the church as usual crowded with English, who every Sunday convert St. Peter's into a kind of Hyde Park, where they promenade arm in arm, shew *[sic]* off their finery, laugh and talk aloud" [Jameson 155]), and their disrespect for the Italian

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[20] Even in this case, they are observed from afar, for fear of spoiling the spectacle. At St. Peter's, she meets a pilgrim "with a very singular and expressive countenance, whose cape, and looped hat were entirely covered with scallop shells and reliques *[sic]*, and his long staff surmounted by a death's head" (Jameson 321). She decides not to speak to him, "lest by conversing with him, I should diminish the effect his romantic and picturesque figure had made on my imagination" (Jameson 321). According to Tricia Lootens (185), the *ennuyée* "shrinks from full international intimacy".

artistic heritage, as when she prevents one of her party from breaking off a piece of a statue to take home as a souvenir ("I could not help thinking it a profanation to the place, and stopped his hand calling him a barbarous *Vandyke*" [Jameson 196]). Moreover, she offers a series of humorous caricatures of ignorant and obtuse British tourists, who have the means but not intelligence to travel. In Brescia, she runs into what she calls "a specimen of a new genus of fools" (Jameson 61), an affluent collector of "strange odds and ends of foreign follies" (Jameson 61), who boasted he had covered "sixteen thousand miles in sixteen months" (Jameson 60). In Venice, in the public gardens, she finds "a solitary gentleman who was sauntering up and down with his hands in his pockets, and a look at once stupid and disconsolate" (Jameson 79). As she relates, he had spent the past four days exactly in the same manner: he had never interacted with the Italians since he could not speak their language[21], he had not bothered to admire the attractions of the city (he was not in the least interested), and he was completely insensitive to the enthralling works of art that, as the narrator enthusiastically announced, he would have the incredible opportunity to appreciate in Florence, Rome, and Naples. As Anna Jameson ironically remarks, "after this specimen, sketched from life, who will say there are such things as caricatures?" (Jameson 81).

7. The Italian Art Galleries and Museums

Propriety and decorum are the lenses through which the *ennuyée* judges the value of the paintings exhibited in the Italian museums and art galleries she visits. At the Manfrini Palace, in Venice, she is captivated by two canvases featuring Lucretia, "one by Guido and one by Giordano" (Jameson 74). Despite their beauty, she finds "an impropriety of conception in both pictures: the figure was too voluptuous—too exposed" (Jameson 74). Among the paintings in the Capitoline Museum, in Rome, "the one most highly valued" (Jameson 149), namely *Europa* by Paul Veronese, pleases her the least, because of "his sins against good taste and propriety" (Jameson 149). As she adds, "one wishes that he had allayed the heat of his fancy with some cooling drops of discretion. Even his colouring, so admired in general, has something florid and

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[21] Conversely, Anna Jameson took Italian classes with "*Signior B*" (Jameson 260), while in Italy .

meretricious to my eye and taste" (Jameson 149). In the chapel of San Lorenzo, in Florence, one of Michelangelo's renowned canvases is disdainfully rejected as "a hateful picture" (Jameson 107): in her ladylike opinion, the blessed Virgin, an icon of purity and finesse, looks like a coarse washerwoman, due to her "harsh unfeminine features, and muscular, masculine arms" (Jameson 108). Finally, the *Judith and Holophernes* in Palazzo Pitti strikes her attention as "an abomination" (Jameson 335): the very thought that such a violent and hideous subject had been selected by a female artist (probably Artemisia Gentileschi) is an inconceivable aberration to her.

As Caroline Palmer (250) has argued, until the end of the eighteenth century, female art viewers were broadly considered as a "subspecies of unacceptable connoisseur[s]", and their responses to art and archaeological sites "often associated with those of children, the working classes and even 'primitive' people". On the other hand, from her initial publication, Anna Jameson, "the first professional English art historian" (borrowing the title of Adele Holcomb's essay on the writer), displays not just an unrestrained passion for art, but also the intention to educate her readers, primarily women. By so acting, the ingenious governess and would-be feminist manages to undermine the male authority in the realm of art and culture, as well as bringing "the world of Italian art to the female home in England" (Krisuk 2015), in the words of Jennifer Krisuk. Even though she claims her diary should never develop into "a mere catalogue of objects, which are to be found in any pocket guide" (Jameson 266), she lingers on the meticulous and repeated descriptions of paintings and statues, while tracing a number of possible itineraries to be followed. What is more, Jameson also demonstrates that a close and reiterated contact with works of art can enhance one's ability to understand them; hence, she illustrates the development of her own artistic taste. At first, as when she is in Venice, she feels overwhelmed: "I am fatigued, and my head aches; —my imagination is yet dazzled:—my eyes are tired of admiring, my mind is tired of thinking, and my heart with feeling" (Jameson 73). A few weeks later, in Rome, after visiting for the fourth time the Palazzo Borghese, she notices with a tinge of satisfaction that her taste is "becom[ing] more and more fastidious every day" (Jameson 152). During her sojourn in Italy she gains such an expertise that she is able to pass remarks even on the state and the arrangement of paintings: "the Doria Palace contains the largest collection of

pictures in Rome: but they are in a dirty and neglected condition, and many of the best are hung in the worst possible light" (Jameson 160).

8. Conclusions

As this essay has tried to demonstrate, *The Diary of an Ennuyée* offers a dual and contrasting vision of the Italian cities Jameson visited, juxtaposing her own perceptions (the perceptions of a governess with literary ambitions and original views), and the sensitivity of her literary persona, crafted to please her readership (she wished her volume to be financially successful and free from social blame). Far from being an immature, feeble, and unconvincing work, therefore, *The Diary of an Ennuyée* compellingly shows that travel literature can turn into an alternative space for education, communal enhancement, and self-development.

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