The Servant as Narrative Vehicle in Nineteenth-Century Travel Texts about Norway and Iceland

Kathryn Walchester, Liverpool John Moores University

K.A.Walchester@ljmu.ac.uk

By focusing on the representation of the travelling servant, on whom as Clifford (1997) acknowledges there is a paucity of evidence, this essay presents a contrapuntal reading of two nineteenth-century British travelogues, *Letters from High Latitudes* by Lord Dufferin (1857) and *A Summer and Winter in Norway* by Lady Diana Beauclerk (1868). Drawing from Edward Said's reformulation of the musical term, the essay argues that servants contributed to the textual production of the journey in these nineteenth-century travelogues. In the two texts considered here, the representation of the servant and his or her actions renders the travel more interesting and offers a counterpoint to the narratorial voice of the author-traveller**.**

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"The pleasures of the voyage would have been incomplete without the enlivenment in every emergency by this Job's comforter," commented *The Literary Examiner* about Wilson, Lord Dufferin's manservant in a review article about Dufferin's 1857 travelogue (18th July 1857). Focussing on Dufferin's "dramatic use" of his "peculiar man" Wilson in *Letters from High Latitudes* alongside Teresina, Lady Diana Beauclerk's lady's maid in *A Summer and Winter*, this essay considers the representation of servants in travel texts and outlines their central role as textual 'vehicles'. Although both travelogues are about northern travels from the mid-

century by aristocrats, the genres and style of the texts are contrasting; whilst Beauclerk's text is typical of nineteenth-century travelogues by women describing Scandinavian tours, Dufferin's is more flamboyant, containing humorous vignettes and vivid characterisation. The focus on two such different texts about northern travels draws attention to the features common to the representation of servants in nineteenth-century northern travelogues, while indicating the numerous nuances of their representation which merit further investigation and comparison with travelogues depicting the more 'beaten track' of the southern tour.

By drawing attention to the representation of servants in these texts, the article contributes to the debate around the textual presence and absence of servants in nineteenth-century culture, including architecture, art and fiction (Chamberlain 2007; Lethbridge 2013; Trodd 1989). Studies by Bruce Robbins and others since the 1990s have questioned the extent to which servants were erased from view in nineteenth-century literary texts. Certainly evidence from both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels indicates the considerable contribution of servant characters, especially those who travelled. Thus in eighteenth-century novels, the eponymous hero of Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1771) is a man-servant, albeit the long-lost son of Matthew Bramble. Likewise in Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) , Yorick's long-suffering French servant La Fleur forms a major part in the anecdotes related by the narrator. Earlier in the century there are protagonists such as Moll Flanders (Defoe, 1722), Richardson's Pamela (1740), and Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742). Nineteenth-century novels also contained strong servant characters such as Nellie Dean in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Gabriel Betteredge in Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868) and the great traveller, Passepartout in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873). Servants take a much smaller part in the travelogues of the nineteenth century than their counterparts in fiction of the previous century, however, and scholars in cultural history and literary studies generally maintain that in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries servants were "expected to be socially invisible" (Nash, 2007,11).[1] In a concurrent focus on the material and the textual production of travel, this article addresses social historian Carolyn Steedman's appeal and challenge to Robbins, that the consideration of the roles of workers such as these should necessarily acknowledge that, "Servants were not [merely] signposts left at random in the no-man's land between what could and could not be represented" (2009, 356). By focussing on the points in which servants do appear in the texts, the present discussion begins a consideration of how servants' and fellow workers' various contributions facilitated the journeys of their employers.

James Clifford's polemical chapter, "Travelling Cultures" drew attention to the cultural and scholarly denial of servants amongst others from the category of travellers:

> A host of servants, helpers, companions, guides, and bearers have been excluded from the role of proper travellers because of their race and class, and because theirs seemed to be a dependent status in relation to the supposed independence of the individualist, bourgeois voyager. (1997, 33)

Recognition and calls for the travels of servants and others who participated in non-elite, non-leisured travel to be acknowledged has been repeated in the work of Tim Youngs (2002), John Hutnyk (1999) and more recently in relation specifically to working women travellers, by Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman (2007). My approach towards my chosen texts, drawing from Said's reformulation of the musical term, is a contrapuntal reading; one with an emphasis on the sub-dominant voice, here that of the servant. Such an approach involves, as Said notes, "extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded" so that the silences and omissions in the representation of servants in travel texts become at least as significant as their presence (1994, 79). By focussing on the representation of a specific group of working travellers, servants, this essay begins to address the paucity of

academic discussion about their significant contribution to travel and to the production of travel writing.

My focus on the structures and patterns evident in descriptions of servants in these travelogues by Beauclerk and Dufferin highlights the proximity of the troublesome boundary between travel writing and fiction, necessitating an acknowledgement of the literariness of travel writing and foregrounding the artifice and constructedness of these texts (Borm 2004, 13-27; Thompson 2012, 29). In his analysis of the representation of servants in nineteenth-century fiction, Robbins scrutinises George Orwell's appraisal of absence of the "ordinary town proletariat" in nineteenth-century fiction and concludes that the representation of the lower-classes and its inescapable 'literariness' "becomes a medium or an arena of political skirmishing, alive with the turbulent significance of moves and countermoves" (1993, 8). In nineteenth-century travelogues, including those by Beauclerk and Dufferin, the representation of working people generally does conform to Orwell's appraisal, being "objects of pity or comic relief"; however like Robbins, I suggest that an analysis of the "shamelessly non-representational artifice" of their depiction indicates some of the ways in which aristocrats relied on their servants textually as well as practically (Orwell qtd. in Robbins 1993, 4; 6).

Servants encountered many more vicissitudes than their employers when travelling as they attempted to work in unfamiliar environments and often with a lack of facilities for them to fulfil their duties effectively. In his account of servants accompanying Grand Tourists, Christopher Hibbert notes that "the choice of these [servants] was also important, since much was required of them" (1987, 23). Servants had little control over the choice of destination or modes of transport. Their employers decided where the party would travel, and in both the cases of Beauclerk and Dufferin, the employers were relatively young and inexperienced travellers, especially in comparison with Wilson, who had worked on a steam-packet before coming into Dufferin's employment (26). Dufferin was thirty and had made a lengthy sea-

journey to the Baltic before but Beauclerk had not visited Norway and makes much of the fact that she and her mother are 'unchaperoned' by male relatives. There was an expectation that servants would have to work harder than at home in order to maintain domestic standards, especially on camping expeditions such as Dufferin's or when residing in rural farmhouses as on Beauclerk's trip. On the return to Christiania from their excursion into the Telemark region, Beauclerk notes that, "Teresina, with extra aid called in, set to work to repair the injuries that travels by land and sea had inflicted on our wardrobes" (1868, 104). Some indication of the scope of Wilson's tasks is evident in the section that describes his setting up of the camp whilst "Sigurdr and [Dufferin] were deep in a game of chess" (1857, 92):

> Wilson's Kaffir experience came into play, and under his solemn but effective superintendence, in less than twenty minutes the horn-headed tent rose, dry and taut, upon the sward. Having carpeted the floor with oil-skin rugs, and arranged our beds with their clean crisp sheets, blankets, and coverlets complete, at the back, he proceeded to lay out the dinner table at the tent door, with as much decorum as if we were expecting the Archbishop of Canterbury. (91)

Dufferin's description indicates Wilson's hard work and his expertise in arranging the tent in such difficult conditions. The hyperbole draws attention to the lengths to which Wilson has gone in order to sustain domestic standards for his employer and the rest of the party.

The principal emphasis of this essay however is on the textual representation of servants and although the servants' presence in Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes* and Beauclerk's *A Summer and Winter in Norway* was central to the practical aspect of the journeys as these examples illustrate, I will argue that it was also pivotal to the working of the travelogues, with accounts of servants influencing narrative shape and the constitution of narratorial identity. This is not to suggest that the servants in these texts take on the central

subjectivity of the narrative voice; rather they are rendered visible through comic descriptions of their appearance and actions by their aristocratic employers, Lord Dufferin and Lady Diana Beauclerk. Focussing on their textual, rather than practical role, I suggest that in these contrasting texts servants are 'narrative vehicles'; that is, representations of them facilitated the textual articulation of the journey. They are 'vehicles' via two principal functions; firstly their representation forms a significant aspect of the construction of the narratorial identity. Largely depicted in contrasting terms to the traveller-narrator, the servant often becomes their textual foil, bolstering the credentials of the narrator as competent traveller. Secondly, in a more literal sense the servants are 'vehicles' where anecdotes featuring them often serve to move the narrative forwards, particularly during sections where the foreign journey is dull or monotonous. Thus this article initiates a consideration of the narrative role of travelling servants and explores how representations of them facilitated a textual articulation of the journey.

Both Norway and Iceland had become popular destinations and the subject of many travelogues by the middle of the nineteenth century. Rhoades notes how "the second half of the nineteenth century certainly was the heyday of Icelandic travel literature, primarily British, but also American and European" (qtd in Speake, 2011, 583). Similarly, in her travelogue, published in the same year as Beauclerk's, Mary Spence states that, "One can hardly take up a journal without finding one article in it, either concerning, or mentioning Norway" (1868, 80). Dufferin's and Beauclerk's approaches to publishing a travel account in a competitive market differ markedly. *Letters from High Latitudes* gives the account of Lord Dufferin's 1856 journey to Jan Mayen, Spitsbergen and Iceland. Dufferin, following in the footsteps of many scientific and literary travellers to Iceland, set apart his travelogue with a comedic flourish. It is closer to the fictional genres of comedy and melodrama than Beauclerk's; employing vivid character description, hyperbole and sections of script. The

epistolary text, ostensibly addressed to his mother, proved popular, with more than ten editions published throughout the remainder of the century. Frederick Temple Hamilton-Temple Blackwood, born in 1826, had become the fifth Baron Dufferin and Claneboye in 1841 on the death of his father (Davenport-Hynes 2004). He and his party travelled on the yacht *Foam*, after a successful voyage to the Baltic two years earlier. The main object of the voyage was a trek across the interior of Iceland to the geysers at Thingvellir. Dufferin travelled with a hired crew including: Mr. Ebenezer Wyse, the ship's Master; Fitzgerald, ship's doctor; and Wilson, Dufferin's long-suffering manservant. The text articulates an intricate hierarchy between the crew, which is rendered more complex by the presence of Sigurdr, an Icelander who is to provide local knowledge on their arrival in Arctic waters and whom Dufferin presents as both a repository of expertise and a ready audience for his own stories and ideas. *Letters from High Latitudes* was received positively. The reviewer in *The Quarterly Review* noted that, thanks to the advice of Sigurdr, the "letters [have] that air of familiar intercourse with persons and scenes, which is so sadly wanting in […] many books of travels" (October 1857, 443). The reviewer notes, "a general expression of satisfaction at this his [Dufferin's] first appearance as an author" (442).

Beauclerk's text is very different from Dufferin's, and despite being light-hearted in tone, is not as overtly humorous as *Letters from High Latitudes*. *A Summer and Winter in Norway* is largely representative of many contemporary travel texts by women about Norway in its detailing low-key, day-to-day occurrences and observations during the journey and stays in Aak and Christiania. Beauclerk's claims to novelty centre on the party staying in Norway during the winter and travelling into the rural interior of the region. Her text was, like Dufferin's, popular with critics. It seemed to capture a mood of the late 1860s in Britain and its apparent embrace of the 'simple' life in Norway. The review in *The Pall Mall Gazette* offers significant praise for "the pleasant little volume", with the proviso, "It is not a guide

book for travellers in Norway, nor are its simple pages eked out – as the custom too often is – with plagiarisms from guide books"(25 June 1868, 10). Lady Di, as she fashioned herself, was the daughter of the ninth Duke of St. Albans and went on to marry Sir John Walter Huddleston in 1871 (Rigg, 2004). She was twenty-six when she travelled to Norway with her mother and with Teresina, her maid. Beauclerk and her party's mode of travel to Norway contrasted with Dufferin's and was more in keeping with that of British middle-class tourists (Fjågesund and Symes 2003, 33-92; Mains 1989, 21-22). The women travelled from London to Christiania by the "North Star" steamer and explored only a small portion of the environs of the capital. Setting off on 25th July 1867, the three travelled from Christiania to the rural interior of Norway by *cariole* – a Norwegian two-wheeled carriage – and then returned to the capital to spend the winter (Beauclerk, 1868, 5). At the beginning of her travelogue, Beauclerk elides the presence of her maid. In the first instance she asserts that she and her mother are "two unprotected females, my mother and myself," in an attempt perhaps to capitalise on the success and notoriety of Emily Lowe's 1858 text, *Unprotected Females in Norway* (Beauclerk, 1868, 6).

A Summer and Winter in Norway begins with what came to be the typical apology offered by the Victorian woman traveller for the deficiencies of her text. She describes how,

> In publishing this little narrative of our doings in Norway, I am fully conscious of its numerous imperfections and shortcomings. With that impression I feel that my friends will not criticise too severely my attempt to give them an account of our daily movements. I do not for a moment imagine that my book will interest the general public. But there may be a few of my many acquaintances who might be tempted by these extracts from our journal to make a similar excursion. (Preface)

As with other apologies by women writers of this period, it is difficult to ascertain how much of the apology is a genuine disavowal of interest in the success of the text and how far the

author was conforming to the expectations of the day (McAllister 1988; Foster 1990).[2] The apology sets the text within Beauclerk's social milieu; proposing the journey to Norway as a trip for her upper-class friends and acquaintances. Although Beauclerk seems to have established a limited audience for her text, the book was generally well received and went into a second edition within three months of publication. The reviewer in *The Literary Examiner* wrote that the text "was not without merit as a journal of travel" and asserted that "we feel sure that it contains much that will interest our readers, and more especially the ladies" (August 22nd 1868, 534).

Thus Beauclerk's *A Summer and Winter in Norway* and Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes* are very different examples of nineteenth-century travelogues with considerable contrasts in genre, tone and content; some aspects of which result from the respective gender of their authors and the associated gender conventions of writing and publishing travel texts in the mid-century. These differences extend to the manner and extent of the descriptions of their servants, with Wilson featuring in Dufferin's text far more than Teresina in Beauclerk's. There are however, despite these contrasts, remarkable similarities in the effect of these depictions in terms of the structuring of the text and in the construction of the narratorial identity. Indicative of Dufferin's flamboyant style, is the prominence of his servant character, Wilson, which is highly unusual in travelogues of this period, where servants appear infrequently. Many reviews, in addition to that in the *Literary Examiner* cited at the beginning of this essay, highlight Wilson's textual significance. The reviewer in *The Athenaeum* notes that of all the crew, "our favourite is Wilson" who "would take the sun out of August, the scarlet from a geranium, the warmth out of port" (July 18th 1857, 901). *The Glasgow Herald* was similarly amused by the character of Wilson and approved Dufferin's treatment of him:

> If the government of the little company had been aught but autocratic, there is no telling what amount of discomfort such a companion might have caused his fellows. […] As it was the captain has all the story to himself, and a more exhilarating, health-bestowing narrative we have never read. (December 9th 1857, 2)

The representation of the servant is central to the "autocratic" government of both text and ship. Dufferin delays Wilson's introduction until after that of the other crew and he presents a fairly substantial pen-portrait of his manservant in a section which describes the main sea-journey:

> This person's name is Wilson, and of all the men I ever met he is the most desponding. Whatever is to be done, he is sure to see a lion in the path. Life in his eyes is a perpetual filling of leaky buckets, and a rolling of stones up hill. He is amazed when the bucket holds water, or the stone perches on the summit. He professes but a limited belief in his star, – and success with him is almost a disappointment. His countenance corresponds with the prevailing character of his thoughts; always hopelessly chapfallen, his voice is as of the tomb. He brushes my clothes, lays the cloth, opens the champagne with the air of one advancing to his execution. I have never seen him smile but once, when he came to report to me that the sea had nearly swept his colleague, the steward, overboard. (1857, 25)

The intimacy between the men is indicated through the account of the tasks that Wilson performs and also through Dufferin's apparent knowledge of Wilson's personality. The opening of Dufferin's lengthy account dwells on Wilson's melancholy character, a central source of the text's comedy.

In contrast, the character and physical appearance of the French lady's maid to Lady Diana de Vere Beauclerk, Teresina, is not described in Beauclerk's 1868 travelogue. In *A Summer and Winter in Norway* Beauclerk includes a number of accounts of Teresina's

actions but little of her personality or appearance compared with Dufferin's extensive detail about Wilson. The first reference to Teresina comes during the account of the sea-crossing: "The cabin was a comfortable one; but for a brief period there were grave doubts whether another lady, of somewhat stout proportions, was not to share it with my mother, myself, and our maid Teresina" (1868, 9). In the remainder of the text, reference to Teresina's presence is much less frequent than in Dufferin's discussion of Wilson, but nonetheless strategic. Where the narrator emphasises her own solitary state, to make her journey seem more adventurous, Teresina is omitted. On the other hand, as here, when it is necessary to draw attention to the size of the cabin and the number of women who were to sleep in it, Teresina is added into the narrative.

As in Dufferin's text, Beauclerk constructs her servant character as a foil to that of the narrator. In Beauclerk's travelogue this is most often achieved through accounts of the servant's lack of ability to cope with hardships of transportation or accommodation. On their voyage across the North Sea for example, of the three women, Teresina is shown to be the most affected by sea-sickness:

> The atmosphere was, however, so close that we were glad to go on deck. Not so Teresina, who had already begun to show signs that sea voyaging was not one of the many occupations for which Nature had qualified her. Long before we came to the Nore, poor Teresina was in a helpless state, and at last the stewardess carried her down to her own berth; and she was seen no more till we landed at Christiansand. (1868, 11)

Beauclerk shows some sympathy here but the implication is that Teresina was not able to maintain a social presence and has to be carried back to her cabin. There is a moment of concord however, between the employer and her servant, as Beauclerk also admits a few pages later to being sea-sick herself. She writes, "An unpleasant ground-swell began to be

felt; and, if the truth must be told, I followed in the footsteps of Teresina, retired to my cabin, and remained there for the rest of the voyage" (12).

In Chapter Three, Beauclerk details how their experience of sea sickness, especially Teresina's, prompts a change in their travel plans.

> It had been our intention originally to disembark at Christiansand, and take the coasting steamer to Bergen, Molde, and Veblungsnaes; but Teresina's proceedings on the voyage, to say nothing of my own, and the unsettled state of the weather, made my mother determine to change our plans, and make our tour entirely by land. (1868, 19)

Teresina's illness is foregrounded. The narrator shifts the locus of control to her mother and places Teresina as the prime motivating factor. Teresina's vulnerability is a useful displacement, which allows the narrator to detail the party's change of plan without the narrator losing face.

In both *A Summer and Winter in Norway* and *Letters from High Latitudes* the actions of servants are interspersed to add dramatic tension to an otherwise dull section of text. The relationship between the realistic representation of travel and the entertainment and engagement of the reader is frequently a tense one. As Steve Clark notes: "travel itself also has its oddly passive aspects; after all, it is often boring, and requires tolerance of repetition as much as surmounting of ordeals" (1999, 16). Unavoidable in nineteenth-century travel, long overland and long sea journeys between important sites presented travel writers with the problem of how to depict travels realistically whilst not losing the interest of the reader. Writers of travelogues employed a number of textual strategies to deal with this, often introducing an account of a roadside robbery or accident to provide narrative shape to an otherwise dull description.[3] In these cases the servants become central to the plotting of the travelogue.

Dufferin's organisation of information about his servant develops narrative tension and increases readers' engagement. In her essay focussing on Dufferin's contribution to arctic tourism Heidi Hansson highlights the literary qualities of *Letters from High Lattitudes*, noting that, "like [Alexander William] Kinglake and [Robert] Curzon, Dufferin is a story-teller, not primarily a fact purveyor" (Hansson 2009, 64). Indeed, Dufferin sets up the characterisation of his travelogue in much the same way that a novelist might. His first lengthy description of his lugubrious servant establishes the basis for much of the text's later comedy: "The son of a gardener at Chiswick, he first took horticulture; then emigrated as a settler to the Cape, where he acquired his present complexion, which is of a grass-green and finally served as a steward on board an Australian steam-packet" (1857, 25). Wilson's experience in gardening and later his travels to South Africa have had a detrimental effect on his appearance and whilst his sea-faring experience might be seen to have offered him considerable advantages in his present situation, these are not mentioned. Instead Dufferin uses Wilson's experience as the basis for a scene, occurring as the party cross the North Sea, which once more indicates the central role of the servant in Dufferin's anecdotes. Fitzgerald, Dufferin's favoured companion – his merits, including his "smile that might charm all malice from the elements" (1857, 9) are described in detail in Letter IV – is suffering badly from sea sickness and seeks reassurance from the more experienced Wilson:

> Thinking to draw consolation from his professional experiences, I heard Fitz's voice, now very weak, say in a tone of coaxing cheerfulness, –
>
> "Well, Wilson, I suppose this kind of thing does not last long?"
>
> *The Voice, as of the tomb.* – "I don't know, Sir."
>
> *Fitz.* – "But you must have often seen passengers sick."
>
> *The Voice.* – "Often, Sir; *very* sick."
>
> *Fitz.* – "Well, and on an average, how soon did they recover?"

The Voice. – "Some of them didn't recover, Sir."

Fitz. – "Well, but those that did?"

The Voice. – "I know'd a clergyman and his wife as were ill all the voyage; five months, Sir."

Fitz. – (Quite silent.)

The Voice; now become sepulchral. – "They sometimes dies, Sir."

Fitz. –"Ugh!"

Before the end of the voyage, however, this Job's comforter himself fell ill, and the Doctor amply revenged himself by prescribing for him. (1857, 25-27)

The depiction of Wilson as "the Voice" and the comedy of his melodramatic responses as a play script draw attention to Dufferin's deployment of a range of genres within his travelogue and the centrality of Wilson in these moments. The tone of the conversation is farcical and does not contain any interpolating presence by the narrator although the narrator frames it at the beginning and the end.. The text reverts to script at several other points in the text, such as at the end of Chapter VII, when Wilson, expressing his fears at travelling through "hicy regions" in a relatively slightly-built yacht, emphasises through humour Wilson's lugubrious tone again and his own assertive and practical responses (1857, 94). Dufferin highlights Wilson's cockney attempts to elevate his accent. The comic exchanges in these passages of script indicate the dislocation between Wilson's fear and the carefree voice of Dufferin's adventurous narrator. In sections such as these, in addition to providing narrative interest to the potentially dull account of sea travel, Dufferin exploits the juxtaposition so as to provide a foil for both his own responses to the hardships of travel and those of other servants, who are of a higher status, such as Fitzgerald.

In *A Summer and Winter in Norway* Beauclerk invigorates the otherwise featureless account of her party's journey into the interior of Norway with descriptions of carriage-

driving. The women each have to drive a *cariole*, a traditional Norwegian small carriage. Beauclerk's account of Teresina's driving positions the narrator and her mother both in opposition to the servant and as potentially in danger from her recklessness. Beauclerk describes the chaos which occurs after the women have collected their *carioles*:

> In fact, Teresina had never driven before, and evidently her notion of driving had more of progress than of prudence, with limited notions of the perils of obstruction. The result was, that, applying her whip and neglecting the reins, she ran into my mother's cariole, and a serious smash was nearly the consequence. However, all was soon righted; and the accident taught Teresina a lesson not easily forgotten; and, I am bound to add, she soon became a most experienced Jehu. (1868, 28)

The servant is the focus of the humour and interest in this section; Beauclerk concedes Teresina's inexperience and acknowledges her prowess after practice. However, the narrator and her mother are figured in contrast to Teresina as careful drivers. Leaving Aak, Beauclerk's description of Teresina's behaviour is less forgiving. She notes that, "we trotted off in due form. I led the way; Teresina was requested to keep an even distance, as occasionally she showed a Jehu-like tendency, which was, to say the least, trying to our nerves" (56). The description of Teresina's control of the carriage as "Jehu-like", referring to the furious driving of Jehu, King of Israel, positions the maid as skilful but worrying to Beauclerk and her mother. In turn this description adds a humorous motif in the repeated accidents which occur on Teresina's journey north, so that as they embark on the return another accident is anticipated, likewise adding some interest to the long carriage journey to Christiania.

Dufferin's travelogue includes two long journey sections, one at sea which, as I have discussed, is given narrative interest by Dufferin's scripted account of the interaction between Fitzgerald and Wilson. The other journey was a long overland trip to the geysers at

Thingvellir. According to Rhoades, Dufferin was not alone in describing it as "a difficult but exciting trip", in spite of it being "clear that the track from Reykjavik to Thingvellir and the geysers [was] well-beaten" (Rhoades in Speake 2013, 583). The source of the comedy surrounding Wilson in this section is both his miserable demeanour and the presumably related fact that he had an aching neck. In this instance, Dufferin constructs the comedy from a visual perspective. Wilson is no longer "the Voice". In fact, here he is rendered silent:

> Never shall I forget his appearance. During the night his neck had come partially straight, but by way of precaution, I suppose, he had conceived the idea of burying it down to the chin in a huge seal-skin helmet I had given him against the inclemencies of the Polar Sea. As on this occasion the thermometer was at 81º, and a *coup-de-soleil* was the chief thing to be feared, a ton of fur around his skull was scarcely necessary. Seaman's trousers, a bright scarlet jersey, and jack-boots fringed with cat-skin, completed his costume; and as he proceeded along in his usual state of chronic consternation, with my rifle slung at his back and a couple of telescopes over his shoulder, he looked the image of Robinson Crusoe, fresh from having seen the foot-print. (1857, 79-81)

Dufferin's description of his servant is again laden with theatricality and melodrama. Wilson's appearance is incongruous with the conditions; his clothing belies his lack of knowledge of the climate. In the reference to Robinson Crusoe, Dufferin ironically conflates Crusoe's loss of Western civility and his deep desolation with the feelings of his servant. Where the other men form a cavalcade with Sigurdr as "our chief", Wilson is described as separate from this group. "Finally", writes Dufferin, "at a little distance, plunged in profound melancholy, rode Wilson" (1857, 79). Dufferin's strategic use of Wilson in the text was not lost on contemporary reviewers, such as the one in *The Literary Examiner*, who wrote how,

"Lord Dufferin makes a dramatic use of him whenever the ice thickens or the sea looks ugly" (July 18th, 1857).

The embodiment of Wilson is a significant factor in the text. His substantial textual presence is supplemented and confirmed by his visual presence. Among the twenty-one illustrations in the book, Dufferin includes on of Wilson, a head and shoulders portrait [figure 1.]. It is testament to Wilson's significance in the narrative that the only other image of one of the party, apart from Dufferin himself [figure 2.], is that of Sigurdr (1857, 209). In his portrait Wilson stares blankly. Dufferin's shift to a physical description of his servant as a basis for the humour is extended on account of Wilson's aching neck. Dufferin places the blame for Wilson's discomfort on his servant's decision to sleep outside. The humour continues as Wilson's neck is treated by "the ship's company", who are not "able to twist it back" (75). Dufferin finishes the account for July 6th, by noting:

> The jovial Wilson rides with us to-morrow. Unless we get his head round during the night, he will have to sit facing the horse's tail, in order to see before him. (1857, 75)

After the sarcastic reference to him being "jovial", the imagined scene is farcical. In both *A Summer and Winter in Norway* and *Letters from High Latitudes* the representation of the servant is employed for a variety of purposes. Of the two texts Dufferin's uses the wider range of modes of representation of the servant and these sections form the larger proportion of the text; including comedic accounts of the servant's actions, descriptions of his voice and reference to his or her appearance in order to lighten dull sections and build tension. Beauclerk's text, in contrast, is perhaps more typical of the nineteenth-century travelogue in its scant reference to servants.

Despite their differences both travelogues foreground an oppositional relationship between the narrator-traveller and their employee in which a negative depiction of the servant corresponds to or implies the superior abilities or character of the employer. The negative

construction of the servant in relation to that of the narrator indicates a central narrative function of servants in these texts; that is as a means of shoring up and confirming the identity of the narrator. In their renowned account of cultural hierarchies, Stallybrass and White draw attention to the social representation of the 'low' and their disproportionate symbolic significance. They note that:

> A recurrent pattern emerges: the 'top' attempts to reject and eliminate the 'bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently dependent on that low-Other (in the classic way that Hegel describes in the master-slave section of the *Phenomenology*), but also that the top is its own fantasy life. […] It is for this reason that what is *socially* peripheral is so frequently *symbolically* central. (1986, 5)

Such a pattern is borne out in the travelogues. Whilst the narrators repeatedly emphasise their difference from the servants, the accounts bind employer and servant together. The employer-narrator becomes what the servant is not. In *Letters from High Latitudes*, the narrator stresses that Wilson is frequently melancholy when Dufferin is cheerful; he is fearful in situations where his employer is stoic or brave. Likewise, Teresina is shown as disliking travel and to be less adept in testing situations than Beauclerk. As Catharine Mee describes in her discussion of the representation of travelling companions in contemporary travel texts, "their relative presence, or absence, contributes to shaping the concept of travel, both in the sense of demarcating the boundaries of the genre and in defining the identity of travellers as travellers" (2014, 129).

The main contrast between the servant and the employer in the travelogues is their attitude to the experience of travel; whilst the employer relishes the prospect of the novelty of the journey, the servant is depicted as disliking foreign travel. Clearly, in the construction of the narrative voice of the author-traveller during this period, both the aptitude for, and

enjoyment of, travel is central.[4] Author-travellers are established as, in the words of Mary Wollstonecraft, an earlier traveller to the region, "the little hero of each tale" (1796, 'Advertisement'). The contrasting attitudes to travel depicted in the texts often act as a class-marker in which the upper-class narrator defines a model for the appropriate appreciation of foreign travel.[5] Although both servants are shown as not relishing travel as much as their employers, Dufferin's account of Wilson and his persistently melancholy demeanour is particularly emphatic. Several writers have noted the function of Dufferin's construction of his servant in relation to the identity of the narrator. In his biography of Dufferin, Sir Alfred Lyall asserts that Wilson, "stands out as a foil to the skipper's cheerfulness" (1905, 97). Likewise, Heidi Hansson notes the effect of Dufferin's account of his servant:

> The steward Wilson is really the only member of the party who is shown to find the journey arduous, but since he is described primarily in comedic terms, his negativity mainly functions as a contrast to Dufferin's positive outlook. (Hansson, 2005, 64-65)

Dufferin also notes the inverse relationship between his servant's mood and that of himself and the rest of the group as the party travel on foot into the interior of Iceland to the geysers at Thingvellir. Here Wilson is once more set up as melancholic stooge and Dufferin notes that his servant's "dolefulness, like a bit of minor in a sparkling melody, only made our jollity more radiant" (1857, 82-83).

Wilson's dislike of travel is outlined most particularly on their return to Spitsbergen, after a long and stormy sea journey. When their yacht had set sail from Bear Island, Wilson had reported that the forecasts were worrying but Dufferin and the rest of the crew had discounted the advice. Dufferin notes that,

> When Wilson came in with my hot water, I could not help triumphantly remarking to him, – , "Wilson, you see we've got to Spitzbergen after all!" But Wilson was not a man to be driven from his convictions by facts; he only smiled grimly, with a look

> which meant – "Would that we were safe back again!" Poor Wilson! He would have gone only half way with Bacon in his famous Apothegm; he would willingly "commit the Beginnings of all actions to the Argus, with his hundred eyes, and the Ends" to Centipede, with his hundred legs. "First to watch, then to speed" – *away! Would have been his pithy emendation.* (1857, 307)

Citing Francis Bacon, Dufferin ventriloquises his servant, giving voice to Wilson's fears (Bacon qtd in Dufferin 1857, 74). The quotation by Bacon acts as both trope and hyperbole and presents Wilson as cowardly, wanting to rush home, underlined by Dufferin's insincere "Poor Wilson!"

Whilst Beauclerk's account of Teresina in contrast is largely positive, the maid's subordinate social position is reinforced in the account of her reaction on the party's return to the capital. Beauclerk notes that:

> Teresina was delighted to return. That she recounted her adventures to an admiring audience, I have no doubt; but in sober truth, very few ladies'- maids would have been so good-tempered, made themselves so useful, or fallen so readily into the changes and chances of our travels as did Teresina. (1868, 100)

Alongside the praise of her servant, Beauclerk indicates the difference in their reactions when returning to Christiania. This is made more obvious when considered in contrast with Beauclerk's description of their final day driving the *carioles.*

> Doing anything for the last time, knowing it is to be so, is always sad, and I cannot agree in thinking a pleasure well over is a victory gained – at least we did not think so when we tucked ourselves into our respective carrioles [sic] to make our last day's journey to Christiania, and give up that delightful Bohemian existence, the hardships of which exist only in the minds of those who have never travelled to Norway. (1868, 96)

Beauclerk's appraisal of the "delightful Bohemian existence" was evidently one not shared by her maid.

In addition to contrasts in mood or attitude towards travelling, the main narrative voice of the text is also constituted through the actions of the narrator set alongside those of the servant, often in their reaction to situations involving danger or adventure. In her essay on Naomi Mitchison's *Vienna Diary,* Rebecca Harwood challenges the idea of the stable authorial persona in the travel text and points to the "performative element of both the journey and the narratorial voice" (2014, 132). Both *A Summer and Winter in Norway* and *Letters from High Latitudes* feature scenes of drama, which enable the narrator to perform the role of competent traveller, highlighted by a contrast with the foolish or negligent actions of their servant. In Beauclerk's text Teresina's carriage driving offers Beauclerk several opportunities to spell out the difference in their aptitudes. The party stay for several days at Nystuen despite the advice of their local guide, Carlsen. She describes how,

> Here, in spite of our courier, we remained several days, sledging and walking over the frozen river, possibly to show our courage, which, however, one day received a shock which I, for one, did not easily get over. When half across, one morning, the ice suddenly cracked with an alarming noise. The guide called to me to run for my life, which I did, leaving my French maid, who had fallen down from fright, a helpless looking bundle on the ice. In due time, the danger, which, I believe, had more of noise that peril, disappeared; the guide returned, picked up Teresina, and we got safely back. (1868, 91-92)

Teresina's reaction contrasts to that of the narrator. Becoming helpless and inanimate, a "helpless-looking bundle", Teresina requires assistance from the guide to cross the ice, where Beauclerk does not. This scene is reminiscent of the representation of the maid suffering from sea-sickness and being carried to a cabin. In both cases Beauclerk depicts herself as self-

reliant. The employer is active, running across the frozen river successfully, albeit having been frightened herself. In contrast to Dufferin, Beauclerk's concern and pity for her servant seems genuine. The "shock" noted by the narrator draws attention away from the difficult situation of the travelling servant and the fact that she must follow her employer even if the situation is dangerous.

In *Letters from High Latitudes* Dufferin sets up numerous dramatic and comic situations in which Wilson is depicted as behaving inappropriately or demonstrating a lack of ability. Such scenes, similarly to the example from Beauclerk's text, facilitate a contrast between the actions of the servant and the behaviour of the narrator-traveller or other members of the crew. The most dramatic anecdote occurs near the end of the party's walking expedition across Iceland and includes an extended account of their encounter with a bear. In this anecdote, Wilson takes a central role, but as in other episodes Dufferin depicts him as stooge. The scene begins when Wilson is left behind with the camp whilst the rest of the group go off to hunt and explore nearby. Wilson comes up the hill towards them "in a state of the greatest agitation" (1857, 321). Dufferin, having set up his character-portrait of Wilson in the earlier part of the text, can present him with minimal description and the reference to his agitated state prompts amused anticipation about its cause. The narrator's subsequent reporting of Wilson's explanation is melodramatic:

> As soon as he thought himself within earshot, he stopped dead short, and making a speaking-trumpet with his hands, shrieked – rather than shouted, "If you please, my Lord!" – (as I have already said, Wilson never forgot *les convenances*) – "If you please, my Lord, there's a b-e-a-a-a-a-r!" prolonging the last word into a polysyllable of fearful import. (1857, 322)

In this vignette Dufferin uses Wilson's adherence to social conventions as a source for the humour. The anecdote describing the encounter with the bear is a lengthy one; it lasts almost

five pages. In the description Dufferin compounds his depiction of Wilson as a comic character, contrasting it with a portrayal of the narrator-traveller. Dufferin writes of how Wilson hid in a barrel to escape the bear and again ventriloquises the servant's thoughts:

> He [Wilson] pictured the scene to himself; he – lying fermenting in a barrel – like a curious vintage; the bear sniffing querulously round it, perhaps cracking it like a cocoa-nut, or extracting him like a periwickle! Of these chances he had been deprived by the interference of the crew. Friends are often injudiciously meddling. (1857, 325)

Again depicting his servant in a comic situation, Dufferin mocks Wilson's overly-serious attitude. As prevalent in other literature depicting servants or the lower classes, Wilson is compared in this extract to a range of inanimate objects and a primitive animal.[6] The servant is not even straightforwardly compared to wine but must be a "curious" vintage. Furthermore, this incident gives Dufferin space to outline his own prowess and that of his other travelling companions in dealing with danger: for example, when the party think that the bear is close by and Dufferin notes that he cocks his rifle and "prepared to roll him over the moment he should appear in sight" (1857, 322). Later he notes that, "The honour of having given him his death wound rests between the steward and Mr. Wyse; both contend for it" (323). Wilson, the central character of the scene and perhaps of the text, is saved by the rest of the crew.

In a preface to the Canadian edition of the text, published in 1873, Dufferin writes that he is "tempted to seize the opportunity of answering a question that has frequently been put to me — 'What has become of Wilson?'". The prompt to write about Wilson, dedicating over half of the four-page preface to an account of him, has come therefore from readers, recognising the significance of the servant, responding to his humorous portrayal in the travelogue. Dufferin informs his readers that, "Some time after our return to England Wilson's health became affected by an obscure disease, […] and he died in the Hospital for

incurables at Wimbledon" (1873, xiii). In this preface however, Dufferin also reflects on Wilson's textual and practical role in their travels,

> If every now and then I have endeavoured to enliven my story with the glimpses of the share my poor servant took in our daily life, the reader will feel that a loving hand has guided the pencil. To this day I never prepare for a journey without a sigh of regret for my lost travelling companion. (1873, xiii)

Dufferin's comments in this postscript to his travels indicate his appreciation of the role his servant played in the journey in both textual and practical terms, as well as professing his affection for his travelling companion.

Conclusions

In its contrapuntal reading this essay has drawn attention to the representation of servants in two contrasting nineteenth-century travelogues featuring northern travels. Despite the contrasts between these texts in content and their use of genre, both *Letters from High Latitudes* and *A Summer and Winter in Norway* indicate the textual reliance on the servants by their employer-narrators in the nature and frequency of accounts of these working companions. Dufferin goes to significant lengths to depict his servant. Master and servant seem incompatible, uncomfortable travelling companions and yet Wilson's presence in the text is important; he features in many anecdotes and is featured in more of the images than any of the other servants, indeed more than anyone else. In Beauclerk's case, the text indicates the narrator's regard for her French maid, and the extent to which her presence was essential to the performance of the journey and the text. Their actions shape the narrative. The depictions of their appearance, behaviour and attitude are employed to construct, in opposition, a sense of the narratorial identity of the travelling employer. Far from being invisible, Teresina and Wilson are highly significant textual presences in the texts.

Whilst a contrapuntal reading has begun to elucidate the significance of the representation of servants to the textual production of these different journeys, this of course does not offer much insight into the actual experiences of travelling as a servant. As the examples have shown, references to servants form a considerable part of the travelogues by Beauclerk and Dufferin; and yet there is still silence in these texts on the part of the travelling servant. Their voices in these texts are paraphrased or ventriloquised. Whilst there are some clues, supposition dominates any discussion of the experience of travel for servants and how they might represent their travels, not least because of the lack of evidence. Clearly the paucity of sources due to their perceived lack of value is a major obstacle. Those accounts of travel by servants, and others for whom travel is not a leisure activity which have been published are, in Clifford's words, "the tips of lost icebergs" (1990, 34). This process has begun, in the work of Steadman (2007) and Kilcup (2002) and in criticism on the representation of sherpas in travel writing by Peter Matthiessen (1978) and Jamaica Kincaid (2005) (Bishop, 1985; Youngs, 2013, 96-7; Culbert, 2014, 151). Culbert, for example notes how the men are "oddly objectified" in Kincaid's *Among Flowers; A Walk in the Himalaya* (2014, 151). Further studies are however necessary to document the journeys of servants, analyse their representation, and to extend the typology of 'travellers' to accommodate them and their experiences.

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[1] For discussion about the role of servants in Victorian texts see: Bruce Robbins, *The Servant's Hand; English Fiction from Below* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993; Julie Nash, *Servants and Paternalism in the Works of Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Jean Fernandez, *Victorian Servants, Class and the Politics of Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2010); Stuart Burrows, 'The Place of the Servant in the Scale' in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (June 2008), pp. 73-103.

[2] For accounts of rhetorical techniques used in women's travel writing see Mary McAllister, 'Women on the Journey: Eighteenth-Century British Women's Travel in Fact and Fiction (Diss. Princeton University, 1988) and Shirley Foster, *Across New Worlds: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers and their Writings* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990)

[3] See discussion of Charlotte Eaton's use of the Gothic in *Rome in the Nineteenth Century* (1820) in Kathryn Walchester, *'Our Own Fair Italy'; Nineteenth-Century Women's Travel Writing and Italy 1800-1844* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007)

[4] These texts contain a self-belief from the narrative-voice which was to be supplanted in the following century by 'belated', 'faux naïf' stance of the 'gentleman traveller' as articulated in Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan's *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 5-6

[5] See for example Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: a new Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976)

[6] See for example Hélène Joffe's work on Arthur de Gobineau's typology, in *Risk and 'The Other'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 20