

the Sage had recently obliterated (155). By reading these structures against the grain, Thompson finds many of these contradictions, reveling in the capacity of such ironies to disrupt the officially sanctioned stories that are told about regeneration projects. At their best, her notes on these skeptical wanderings past fish tanks, chrome-cladded rest rooms, and bloated gift shops resemble the literary psycho-geography of Ian Sinclair (whom she frequently cites).

Given how tactile and vivid these descriptions are, then, it seems surprising that Thompson is so relentlessly dependent on the abstract and esoteric writings of two critical theorists from starkly different twentieth-century contexts. Indeed, those who lack a deep knowledge of Benjamin and Baudrillard's writings may not find much of use in this book. For the nonexpert, it is never entirely clear how the fish tanks in the Deep relate to Benjamin's analysis of cinema, or why the premature closure of a community arts hub in West Bromwich should prompt a digression on Baudrillard and the impossibility of a messianic cessation of history. There is something qualitatively new about the explosion of art making in warehouses and curricula schools across the developed West in the last thirty years that this book doesn't fully account for. Whether in giant set-piece galleries, dank hipster lofts, or the breezy lobbies of technology start-ups, "culture" and "creativity" are playing an increasingly central role in the everyday world of the postindustrial West. This new culture industry is bigger, of course, than the handful of galleries built in northern cities in the first decade of the twenty-first century. When writing about these projects Thompson at times conveys a totalizing sense of awe, similar to that used by Benjamin to describe the Parisian arcades. However, it is more than likely that, starved of state funding under the present Conservative government, these fragile buildings will be swept away by the next bout of failed regeneration strategies.

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ASHLEY COHEN, ed. *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 402. \$125.00 (cloth).
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In 1811, Maria Nugent accompanied her husband, General George Nugent, on his posting to India as commander-in-chief. As was the norm at the time, the couple left behind in England four small children. Indeed, previous experiences in the West Indies had confirmed for them that the colonial outposts were not suitable places in which to raise young children. The Nugents had lived in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805 while General Nugent was the governor. During that time, Lady Nugent wrote a journal; and when she traveled to India she took up her pen once again. Ashley Cohen and Oxford University Press have now brought this fascinating material to light in a new scholarly edition.

Cohen's introduction informs us that Maria Nugent (née Skinner) was born in 1771 in colonial New Jersey (xiv). Her grandfather had fled to North America from Scotland in the wake of the Jacobite uprising in 1715. In 1783, her father's loyalist activities during the American Revolution caused the family to move again; they returned to Britain, eventually settling in Ireland. Thus, by the time Maria Skinner married General Nugent, she was well acquainted with the difficulties of life throughout the empire. Indeed, Cohen's supplementary material is particularly useful in terms of locating Lady Nugent in the wider transnational contexts of British colonial history. The original text and Cohen's additional material demonstrate the crossings and connections of a particular class of people who moved around the empire, congregating in certain places, and creating powerful colonial communities.

In her introduction, Cohen emphasizes that the empire offered opportunities for financial security and upward mobility (xv); this was important for General Nugent, who was

without sufficient income because of family disputes. As Cohen explains, for many middle-class men, the colonies were a means of securing future domestic stability. Nonetheless, their wives frequently lamented the disruption to the family unit. From the opening page of Lady Nugent's narrative, she invokes her feelings for her "beloved children" (1). Indeed, her maternal preoccupation is apparently so great that she must make a conscious decision not to write about her offspring: "I have promised myself, I will not indulge in talking about my children, in this Journal, for I should fill all my paper with them, and my heart would be too much occupied to think or write of anything else" (44). Undoubtedly, the separation from her children was incredibly difficult, but we must be careful not to lapse into uncritical pronouncements about the sacrifices made by British women who gave up their lives for the sake of the empire. For many women, a colonial marriage also gave them access to the source of imperial power. But the complex nexus of nineteenth-century gender and colonial discourses, as explained by Sara Mills in *Discourses of Difference* (1991), ensured that women travel writers carefully negotiated their narrative selves. Therefore, as Cohen's introduction reminds us, we must remain attendant to the textual negotiations and discursive constraints of women's travel writing: "Lady Nugent's journal was not a diary where she recorded her most intimate reflections. Rather, it belongs to the genre of travel writing. Lady Nugent largely follows the conventions of this genre in choosing what information to include ... Unlike a private diary, Lady Nugent's journal was written with an explicit audience in mind: her four small children whom she had left behind in England." (xxv)

Indeed, I would suggest that Nugent's intended audience exceeded her immediate family. Contemporary women travel writers, such as Fanny Parks, frequently cited family members as motivating forces for their writing, but these claims were often a way of gaining a public voice without contravening nineteenth-century gender boundaries.

Nugent clearly intends for the text to contribute to Britain's knowledge and understanding of India. She offers a fascinating picture of life in the subcontinent in the early nineteenth century: she includes information about the various places she visits; she records details about the different customs of Hindus and Muslims; she describes her daily routines as well as writing about numerous unusual experiences; and she depicts her visits to various zenanas. Indeed, while there is a strong sense of a coherent colonial community in Nugent's India, there is also evidence of interracial relations and transcultural exchanges. In this sense, as Cohen notes, the journal truly "opens a window onto the transitional period between EIC [East India Company] rule and the British Raj" (xxx1).

The lives of British women are particularly interesting at this interstitial moment in colonial history. Nugent's journal depicts a time when colonial wives were beginning to play a more central role in colonial life. While she predominantly acts as a helpmeet, supporting the official work of her husband, she also carves out a degree of autonomy by visiting important Indian women, such as Munni Begum, who were inaccessible to colonial officials due to the constraints of *purdah*. Yet, despite women's increased contribution to colonial relations and imperial discourses in the early nineteenth century, their writing has been consistently trivialized alongside the more explicitly political narratives of their male counterparts and the more dramatic writing of their later counterparts, such as those involved in the First Indian War of Independence. As a result, much of this early nineteenth-century writing remains out of print and awaits the kind of academic attention Cohen bestows on Lady Nugent. Editions like this one enable and enrich our understanding of the ways in which British women engaged with the empire throughout the various stages of colonial history and are vital to a fuller understanding of British imperialism.

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