British Voices of Empire: Poetry and Imperial Patriotism in the Long Nineteenth Century

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Introduction

Imperial Voices and Echoes in Verse: Space, Time, Peace, War

In *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (1987), historian Eric Hobsbawm declares Rudyard Kipling to be 'the greatest – perhaps the only – poet of imperialism' (Hobsbawm 1987, 82). This proclamation is neither original nor, by Hobsbawm's own design, intended to be. On the contrary, it merely reiterates a longstanding critical consensus that stretches back to Kipling's own lifetime. The poet's contemporaries were quick to label him the 'Laureate of Empire' (Stead 1896, 553) or, in a more geographically expansive turn of phrase, 'the Laureate of the Larger England' (Pocock 1903, 14). Kipling's association with British imperialism has become so entrenched in both scholarly and popular memory that literary critic Simon Dentith, writing in 2006, could plausibly observe that 'the notion of Kipling as the "bard of empire" is now such a cliché as scarcely to invite commentary' (Dentith 2006, 150). And yet, the very endurance of this cliché and its deployment across disciplines invite interrogation.

This dissertation begins not with a contestation of Kipling's poetic relevance to the study of British imperialism but, rather, with a critical reflection on what his perceived singularity reveals, and obscures, about the broader relationship between poetry and the Empire in the long nineteenth century. Brief though it may be, Hobsbawm's comment serves as a synecdoche for a wider issue, the enduring marginalisation of a heterogeneous field of poets who engaged with imperial themes, often in complex, contradictory or unexpected ways. While Hobsbawm's invocation of Kipling is strategically ironic, drawing attention to the uneasy dissonance in Kipling's 'Recessional' (1897), a poem that undercuts the jingoistic fervour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee with anxious meditations on imperial decay, it simultaneously reinscribes the assumption that Kipling was a lone poetic voice in the imperial wilderness.

Kipling, of course, was not alone. Nor was his work universally jingoistic, despite its celebratory reputation. As Chris Brooks and Peter Faulkner remind us, Kipling's poetic corpus is marked by significant contradictions and tonal shifts: 'here', they write, 'rather than in any allegiance to an imperialist mythology, lies Kipling's claim to being the Empire's definitive poet' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 39). Particularly in the last three decades, literary scholarship has moved well beyond identifying Kipling as a simple mouthpiece for imperial ideology and continues to provide more nuanced interpretations of his connections to Britain's imperial project and its supporting ideology as evidenced by his writings (Sullivan 1993; Keating 1994; Montefiore 2007; Paffard 2023). Two of my journal articles have recently attempted to contribute precisely to this kind of investigation (D'Indinosante 2023; D'Indinosante 2025). Yet, outside literary studies, in history, sociology and cultural theory, the idea of Kipling as 'peraphs the only' imperial poet persists, often unchallenged.

This persistent assumption reflects a deeper lacuna, the absence of a robust, historically and textually grounded understanding of the wider field of nineteenth-century British imperial poetry. In this dissertation, I seek to work towards producing an account that improves our understanding of the matter. I do so by charting a more capacious and inclusive poetic landscape in which imperialism was not the exclusive concern of a few canonical voices but was rather negotiated by a wide range of poets writing across different registers and from diverse ideological and positional standpoints. Indeed, one of the central arguments of this study is that no monolithic 'imperial poet' can be said to exist. Rather, the long nineteenth century was populated by numerous poets whose

work responded to the Empire in ways that were shaped by the historical and geopolitical contexts in which they wrote.

Among these figures is Eliza Cook (1818–1889), a working-class poet whose patriotic and empire-inflected verse has often been overlooked or relegated to footnotes in discussions of Victorian poetry. While Cook's domestic and labour poems, such as 'The Old Arm-Chair' and 'A Song for the Workers', have received some renewed scholarly attention, her more overtly patriotic writing, especially the striking poem 'The Englishman' (1837; 1838), remains critically neglected (Cook 1837; Cook 1838, 87–88). Yet this poem, with its anaphoric structure, rhetorical confidence and clear endorsement of English moral superiority as a rationale for imperial expansion, offers a compelling example of how Victorian women poets could and did participate in the ideological production of the Empire. Cook's 'The Englishman' demonstrates that imperial enthusiasm was not solely the province of elite, male or establishment poets. Indeed, it shows how patriotic fervour, when filtered through a popular and often feminised form, could function as a potent cultural tool for articulating and legitimating British power at home and abroad.

Moreover, the gendered reception of Cook's poem underscores the ideological tensions it straddles. The poem was widely read, frequently reprinted and even adapted into song by John Blockley. It was also parodied in *Punch* as 'The Jingo-Englishman' (1878), a satirical rewriting that both recognises and critiques the ideological work of Cook's original (reprinted in Brooks and Faulkner 1996a, 225–26). Yet, despite, or because of, its popularity, 'The Englishman' was deemed by some of Cook's contemporaries to be 'too bold' for a woman poet. In her 1845 'Preface', Cook herself notes that she was told a

'feminine pen should never have traced such songs' (Cook 1845, vii), an admission that invites reflection on the gendered expectations governing poetic expression and political engagement in the period.

This introduction, then, sets the stage for a dissertation that neither seeks to supplant Kipling with Cook nor to identify a single poetic successor to the title 'imperial bard'. Rather, it argues for a plural field of imperial voices, a field that can only be understood by attending to the multiplicity of poetic responses to the Empire, whether celebratory, melancholic, resistant or ambivalent. Through historically informed close readings supported by archival and bibliographic research, this dissertation analyses imperial verse not as a unified genre but as a diffuse and often contradictory discourse.

Throughout, the dissertation remains attuned to the ways in which poetic responses to the Empire were shaped by shifting experiences of space and time, from the celebration of 'island homes' and far-flung dominions to the contemplation of historical decline and imperial fatigue. In doing so, it engages not only with literary history, but also with the broader cultural history of British imperialism, seeking to place poetry, too often overlooked in favour of prose, at the heart of our understanding of the British imperial imaginary. To study British imperial poetry is to study a chorus of voices, some loud and confident, others marginal or faint, but all echoing through the imperial spaces and historical moments that defined the long nineteenth century. These are the voices this dissertation seeks to recover, interpret and understand.

This dissertation is organised into four chapters. Together, they examine how poetic responses to the Empire were shaped not only by events and individuals, but also by broader cultural practices and ideological currents.

Chapter One provides the theoretical and methodological framework for the study. Starting with the dispute between Beranrd Porter and John M. MacKenzie, it offers a critical overview of major scholarly debates concerning literature and empire. The chapter outlines key terms and chronological parameters, while also interrogating what qualifies as 'imperial' in poetic terms. Rather than limiting the imperial to explicit themes, it argues for a broader reading that attends to tone, occasion, audience and circulation. It also situates the dissertation within wider debates about the ideological interplay of space, time, peace and war, which are central to the poetic engagements discussed in the chapters that follow.

Chapters Two and Three pursue a historically grounded approach, following Linda K. Hughes's model of focussing on specific events to access the poetic imagination of the Empire (Hughes 2010, 191–213). Chapter Two examines poetry written to commemorate the Jubilee of George III in 1809, revealing how patriotic verse served to consolidate national identity during wartime and to celebrate imperial expansion in explicitly moral and spiritual terms. It explores how poets working within traditional genres such as the ode and the hymn framed the monarch as a symbol of imperial continuity and divine sanction. Chapter Three shifts to 1887 and the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, a moment saturated with imperial imagery and nationalist spectacle. While earlier scholarship tends to read 1887 and 1897 in tandem, this chapter isolates the earlier jubilee in order to explore its distinctive cultural and ideological resonances. The poetry of this period, produced for official ceremonies, periodicals and school recitations, reveals a diverse field of imperial voices – some confident and triumphalist, others more anxious or self-questioning. By

reading across poets rather than tracking a single author (say, Kipling) across multiple jubilees, the chapter seeks to map the broader poetic discourse that framed the Empire at its zenith.

Chapter Four turns from poetic production to poetic mediation, focussing on the anthology as a powerful site for the construction and dissemination of imperial meaning. Building on the work of the Historical Poetics group and scholars such as Christopher M. Kuipers (Kuipers 2008), the chapter explores the curatorial agency of the (poet-)anthologist. Such figures, including those that reprinted their own poetry in the anthologies that they edited, shaped the reception of earlier patriotic verse through deliberate acts of selection, framing and republication. In doing so, they also created imperialised echoes of not necessarily voices – a layered, often distorted, repetition that amplified dominant sentiments while sometimes anachronistically recasting non-imperial texts in imperial light. These echoed voices are central to the ideological function of the anthology: they allow the anthologist's voice to resonate, if not as loudly as the poet's, then no less deliberately. The chapter argues that anthologisation, far from being a passive archival exercise, was a key mechanism for reproducing and reinforcing the imperial poetic imaginary. Through these echoes, the Empire spoke not only through the poet, but also through the anthologist.

Together, these four chapters offer a view of imperial poetry as a dynamic and contested field of cultural production, shaped by the interplay of voice, occasion and form. Whether performed at jubilees or preserved in anthologies, the poetry examined here demonstrates that the imperial imagination was never monolithic but always plural, historically situated and ideologically fraught.

Chapter One

The Place of Poetry in British Imperial Culture, c. 1789–1914

1.1. The 'Porter-MacKenzie Debate'

The first decade of the twenty-first century saw the beginning of the so-called 'Porter-MacKenzie debate', which proved to be particularly influential in reorienting subsequent research on the history of the British Empire in the long nineteenth century. Centred on the impact of imperialism on nineteenth-century British domestic culture, this major historiographical dispute was sparked off by the publication of Porter's monograph *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* in 2004 and 'played out across a range of periodicals and conference round tables to become a standard feature of many a graduate school syllabus around the world' (Ward 2019, 19)[1]. As Stuart Ward aptly puts it:

> Although the debate itself eventually reached something of a stalemate, with neither party giving any quarter amid seemingly endless exemplification of their respective positions, the dispute nevertheless wrought subtle changes to wider research agendas, forcing historians to think harder and more broadly about the questions they posed. (Ward 2019, 19–20)

Far from being settled, the dispute now appears to have abated, but its impact on the field of British imperial history remains profound.

Given the continuing relevance of the Porter-MacKenzie debate to the historian of the British Empire, I find it pivotal to reopen it at the outset of my own study. Evidently, other imperial historians, such as Antoinette Burton, Ronald Hyam or Andrew Thompson, to name but a few, importantly contributed to the discussion in the same years and often sided with MacKenzie or Porter

1 See esp. MacKenzie 1984; Porter 2004; MacKenzie 2005; Porter 2008, which is also reprinted in Porter 2016, 145–58; MacKenzie, 2008; Porter 2011.

more or less explicitly[2]. Here, however, I mainly confine my attention to MacKenzie's and Porter's viewpoints because they are normally (but nonetheless simplistically) seen as the archetypes of (respectively) the 'maximalist' and the 'minimalist' positions on the vexed question of the presence of the Empire in British domestic culture (Griffiths 2022, 18).

Since my perspective is ultimately the perspective of the historian of literature and, even more specifically, poetry, I revisit their frequently divergent positions with a view to pondering their specific implications for the field of literary history. A similar approach has been used in an insightful essay by Justin D. Livingstone, who has usefully adopted the point of view of the 'literary critic' to assess the significance of MacKenzie's work for literary studies (Livingstone 2019). It is worth noticing that poetry itself – that is, the type of textual evidence with which my dissertation is specifically concerned – hardly ever receives a mention (let alone serious attention) in the Porter-MacKenzie debate or in the scholarship produced by other imperial historians. Even so, I would argue that it may be productive to draw out the stakes of this major historiographical dispute for our understanding of British imperial literary culture in the long nineteenth century before zooming in on poetic texts in the rest of my dissertation. In this section, therefore, I largely focus on, and extensively quote from, the general and specific sections of MacKenzie's and Porter's respective work which I deem particularly relevant to the historian of literature (in general) and poetry (more in particular).

2 For a recent overview which helpfully historicises MacKenzie's and Porter's contributions to the field of British imperial history, see Griffiths 2022–23, 1:1–24.

As Porter himself recognised, his minimalist views on 'Empire, Society, and Culture' were intended to exert an impact on literary studies. In his 'debate' article, for instance, he is absolutely confident of the repercussions of his thesis for the community of literary scholars:

> Before *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* came out the 'cultural-imperial' orthodoxy was, I believe, so entrenched that many ordinary 'Eng. Lit.' scholars were clearly *simply unaware* that there could be any doubt about the ubiquity of the imperial discourse in Victorian society. […]. I cannot imagine many 'Eng. Lit.' doctoral theses in five years' time being predicated on the *assumption* that British culture was 'steeped' in imperialism. At the very least, they will have to make out a case. (Porter 2008, 109)

Though slightly later (that is, over twenty years after the publication of *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*), I accept Porter's challenge as an '"Eng. Lit." scholar' and try to build the case for regarding the Empire as significant for British domestic poetry across the long nineteenth century.

I devote some space here to reconsidering the Porter-MacKenzie dispute instead of exclusively relying on other retrospective attempts to reassess it with hindsight because some significant nuances are necessarily lost in the available summaries of their two different viewpoints. According to Stephanie Barczewski, for instance, MacKenzie and Porter ultimately express 'two diametrically opposed and monolithic points of view', with very 'little room for compromise', as 'the British Empire either was of vast importance in *Victorian* British culture or none' (Barczewski 2019, 10, emphasis mine). In her view, after all, 'Porter launched a direct attack on MacKenzie's claim that the presence of the Empire in *Victorian* culture was both *multifaceted* and deep' (10, emphases mine). Such

drastic simplifications of MacKenzie's and Porter's stances blatantly disregard not only the important points of convergence which do exist between the two, but also the crucial issue of chronology which underpins their foundational debate (and to which I return later on in this chapter).

Published twenty years apart, MacKenzie's and Porter's books do express contrasting viewpoints on the significance of the Empire and its ideology within British society, but, as MacKenzie himself acknowledges, 'there is a considerable area of agreement with Porter' (MacKenzie 2008, 662). This is in spite of the notable difference in the chronological scope of their respective studies. Whereas MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* builds the case for regarding 'imperialism […] as a core ideology […] between the 1880s and the 1950s' (MacKenzie 1984, 11), Porter's *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* openly challenges the opinion that 'the empire was […] a widespread preoccupation in Britain […] before around 1880' (Porter 2004, 138)[3]. However, Porter never takes issue with MacKenzie's (and many others') view that British culture displays particularly visible imperial signs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – a view that, in fact, he endorses himself (MacKenzie 1984, 9; Porter 2004, 164; Porter 2007, 230; Porter 2008, 102, 109 and 115n45)[4]. Likewise, though certainly 'concerned with […] the *breadth* and *depth* of the imperial impact in Britain from *circa* 1800 to 1940', Porter does not seem to dispute the multifacetedness of the responses to imperial ideology at home (when present): 'the ordinary Briton's relationship to the

3 Important studies on the significance of the imperial presence within British society in the decades earlier than the 1880s include Bayly 1989 and Hall 2002.

4 Interestingly enough, even when firmly rejecting Porter's claim on the dearth of 'evidence of any imperial culture for much of the 19th century' in his 2005 review of *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, MacKenzie first draws attention to 'evidence of some kind of popular understanding of Britain's growing imperial role in the later 18th century' but then mostly cites examples from the second half of the nineteenth century (MacKenzie 2005, 282). Likewise, when citing examples of imperial drama in his 2008 'debate' article, he only names post-1850 plays (MacKenzie 2008, 662–63).

Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was complex and ambivalent, less soaked in or affected by imperialism than these other scholars claimed […] for most of the nineteenth century'; 'it was uneven, variegated, took different forms' (Porter 2008, 102–3)[5]. As I revisit the Porter-MacKenzie debate in the following pages to use it as a productive starting point for my study, I attend to similar fundamental points of convergence between the two alongside the most obvious points of divergence.

Before reflecting upon its particular implications for literary history, I briefly review the dispute between Porter and MacKenzie, starting with Porter's reaction to the scholarship inspired by the work of MacKenzie and other academics. First, I reconsider their general points, whose validity is originally meant to extend beyond the field of literature. Then, I zoom in on those sections where they bring up literature to illustrate their respective arguments. In so doing, I aim to lay the groundwork for a review of the existing scholarship on the topic in the field of literary (and especially poetry) studies and for an outline of the scope and theoretical framework of my dissertation.

As revealed by Porter's own 'Preface', *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* was intended as an attempt to break the growing scholarly consensus on the central importance of the Empire to British society and culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This general consensus began to emerge in the mid-1980s with the appearance of influential studies such as MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* (1984), gaining momentum in the 1990s with major contributions like Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) (Porter 2004, vii–ix; cf. MacKenzie

5 In *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, he similarly writes: 'English people, and classes, related to the empire and imperialism in widely different ways' (Porter 2004, xv).

1984; Said 1993). Said, who had died a year before the appearance of *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* and could not possibly join the debate, often comes under attack in Porter's polemic, but MacKenzie himself, arguably 'the chief architect of "empire and metropolitan culture" as a sub-specialisation within British and imperial history' (Ward 2013, 30), is not among the primary targets of Porter, 'this king of the sceptics' (Hall and Rose 2006, 16). If anything, MacKenzie was a colleague whose work Porter aimed 'to build on and refine' (Porter 2008, 103) and, in point of fact, an ally against Said (MacKenzie 1994; MacKenzie 1995a; MacKenzie 1995b)[6].

Porter's scepticism is, more often than not, addressed to 'the "schools" of followers' who expanded upon MacKenzie's and Said's scholarship (Porter 2004, viii). In fact, Porter initially acknowledges the value of the endeavour made by at least some of their disciples, such as those who convincingly identified imperial signs in British imperial culture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. 'Many of the contributions of the MacKenzie-ites and the Saidists', he concedes early on in his prefatory remarks, 'have hugely enriched our understanding, both of the nature of British imperialism and, on the other side of the equation, of Britain's culture and society' (ix). And yet, Porter maintains, despite their diligent effort to detect signs of imperial presence in the various domains of British domestic culture, they have not 'evaluated' the evidence as thoroughly as they have 'discovered and described' it, which occasionally resulted in an

6 In his review of Porter's volume, MacKenzie distances the scholarship produced by his followers and himself from the work of Said's disciples: 'Whereas the principal argument pursued by many colleagues and myself was that imperialism was a great and unwritten aspect of British culture, one that ought to be noticed for good or ill, the post-colonialists who followed, developed and often distorted the ideas of the late Edward Said, went much further. Now imperialism provided an explanation for almost everything' (MacKenzie 2005, 281). See also MacKenzie 2008, 659 and 661–62.

exaggeration of its importance (ix). Hence the need felt by Porter to reassess the historical significance of the available evidence by reconsidering it as 'a historian' rather than 'a cultural theorist' (xii)[7].

Porter's 'main point' in *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* is that British society's attitude towards the Empire was less 'monolithic' than 'uneven, complex, and changeable' (xv). While 'nearly everyone' in Britain was, at least indirectly, impacted 'materially' by the Empire in the long nineteenth century, he writes, not every Briton was directly affected ideologically by imperial expansionism:

> Direct effects – the impact of the empire or imperialism, that is, on the way people thought and behaved, and the latter['s] effect in turn on the empire, which are the main focus of this work – are more problematical. My argument here will be that they were in fact neither as ubiquitous nor as straightforward as is often assumed. (xv)[8]

If Britain was certainly an *imperial* nation, he writes later on, the whole British society was not necessarily *imperialist* prior to the last three decades of the nineteenth century:

> The signs of Britain's empire are there, in her literature, culture, and so on. That shows – if we needed to be told it – that she was an imperial power. What it does not show, however, is that the empire was an important part of their identity for most Britons. (164)

7 Porter insistingly distinguishes those whom he calls 'traditional', 'older-fashioned', 'specialist' and, ultimately, 'true' historians (including himself) from 'cultural' and (more explicitly) 'postcolonial theorists'. See, for example, Porter 2007 and Porter 2008.

8 As he repeats in his review of several scholars' work: 'You could be affected by the Empire in the 19th century without having any views about it, or even being aware of it' (Porter 2007, 228).

In other words, Porter's main contention is that, although imperial signs are far from ubiquitous (i.e., everywhere) in British culture, they are present (i.e., somewhere), but, even when truly present, they are not always clear expressions of support for, or even interest in, the imperial project. According to him, then, in their accounts, scholars of the British Empire, its history and culture who undertake the task of registering and evaluating the pervasiveness of imperialism as an ideology in the first half of the nineteenth century should more safely have recourse to terms such as 'ambivalence' (for the layers and quarters most concerned), if not 'absence' (for most societal strata), than 'predominance' and 'prevalence'.

Porter's 'Preface' also explains the chief methodological principles and limits underlying his reassessment of the existing evidence, on which his whole argument is largely based. As already implied, Porter repeatedly insists on his being a 'historian' and not a 'cultural theorist' or a 'cultural scholar'. Unsurprisingly, then, his is presented as a '"historical" method' predicated on 'four approaches, all of them historical' (xii–xiii). These are semantic precision, empirical scepticism, socio-cultural contextualisation and sociological discernment:

> First, I shall be as semantically precise as I can be. […]. Secondly, I shall be examining the evidence for domestic imperialism *empirically* and *sceptically*, to see if it necessarily stands up if we do not *assume* that Britain was imperially 'steeped'. […]. Thirdly, I shall be examining the broader British social and cultural context, to see how the imperial factor appears when it is placed against that. […]. My fourth and final approach […] will be to stand back and consider how the various sections of British society – for Britain did not have a single or even a dominant 'culture' at this time, but several entirely different and even contradictory ones […] – were *likely* to have

responded to their empire, in view of their material situations and patterns of life, and the nature and requirements of the empire itself. (xii–xiii)

In spite of his firm belief in the soundness and thoroughness of the historical method adopted, however, Porter readily identifies some 'flaws in the argument' that he advances (xiii). He is unapologetically aware of the patchiness of his evidence:

I make no apology […] for this. There was no avoiding it. There is simply too much relevant material to cover all of it, especially if one wishes to take in the context and the barren patches too. Take newspapers, for example, a prime source for this kind of subject: I once idly calculated that just the London daily newspapers for a single year in the 1850s, say, must contain more than 20 million words. That figure may be wide of the mark; but with all the other sources I was presented with – Sunday and provincial newspapers, working-class prints, periodicals, comics, novels, autobiography, other non-fiction, poetry, plays, school textbooks, and so on, to mention only written materials – I was not going to waste valuable research time trying to get it right. So there are huge lacunae. (xii–xiii)

The partiality of his evidence, he admits, also derives from his preference for '*English* sources, though in relation to "British" imperialism', and from the restriction of his focus on '*class* to the virtual exclusion of other divides' (xiv).

These methodological limitations notwithstanding, Porter sees his as 'an alternative viewpoint that needs to be properly weighed […] before it is found wanting' (xvi). The principles guiding Porter's selection and discussion of evidence, as well as the conclusions that he draws by following them, are among the points which have been debated by other historians critiquing his work. If some scholars of literature might, at least at first, feel inclined to accept Porter's

'alternative viewpoint' as it concerns literary texts of the first half of the nineteenth century, the most unsatisfied among the historians of British literature could easily begin to question his conclusions by disputing the methodology used to arrive at them and by testing his hypothesis against overlooked evidence. Indeed, his reluctance to 'waste valuable research time' and examine poetry closely and carefully may well raise legitimate doubts about the validity of his argument on widespread absent-mindedness at least insofar as it regards British poets[9]. After all, shouldn't his admitted failure to engage with book and periodical poetry (among other 'written materials') in his discussion compromise the cogency of his viewpoint on British poetic responses to the Empire? The next three chapters of this dissertation precisely result from my use of 'valuable research time trying to get it right', at least as far as British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century is concerned. Before adopting the perspective of the not entirely persuaded poetry historian to address the problematic application of Porter's methodological principles in his chapter on 'Culture and Imperialism', I briefly turn to how, even without citing poetry in their critique of Porter's work, historians such as MacKenzie have 'weighed' Porter's 'alternative viewpoint' as well as his methodology and 'found [both] wanting'.

Irrespective of Porter's own admission of failure to consider large heaps of evidence, even some of the fiercest attacks unleashed on *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* contain brief appreciations for the quantity of sources consulted. In her notoriously negative review, for instance, Burton congratulates Porter on the wealth of 'evidence' accumulated in the book at the same time as she takes issue

9 For a rebuttal of Porter's argument concerning nineteenth-century theatre that is grounded in a similar rejection of his 'methodological errors and […] misreading of the archival evidence', see Gould 2011, 6–7.

with its author's 'interpretative power' (Burton 2005, 627). At one point, she writes:

> His tack throughout the text is to select a subtheme – representations of empire in school books, for example – and rehearse all the ways in which references to imperialism were statistically minimal, ideologically marginal, and therefore historically insignificant. Inevitably, the examples he uses produce evidence for the very case he wants to deny, and time and time again he is forced to explain them away as exceptions that prove the rule. (627)

Busy as he is evaluating the significance of examples presented by others, Porter himself produces very little evidence to build his own case. Whereas Porter describes his approach as 'empirical', then, his 'sceptical' book ends up being unempirical.

When describing Porter's monograph as 'superbly sourced' (MacKenzie 2005, 281), MacKenzie, too, initially seems to recognise the purported richness of Porter's documentary proofs, but the latter is eventually impugned in MacKenzie's review. As MacKenzie's direct responses to Porter reveal, the former's critique of the latter's general argument rests on a critical evaluation of his selection and treatment of sources: 'If anyone is absent-minded, it is surely Porter, who forgets the manner in which cultural phenomena have to be understood and evidenced' (283). Interestingly enough, MacKenzie regards Porter's self-positioning among 'traditional' historians as a source of scholarly short-sightedness rather than academic pride: 'As a traditional historian, brought up in the English grammar school and Oxbridge tradition, he is not interested in any of those key aspects of empire which actually did have significant reciprocal responses within Britain' (282). Unlike Porter, MacKenzie remarks elsewhere, the

other contributors to the book series 'Studies in Imperialism' inaugurated by *Propaganda and Empire* have turned to 'other forms of historical documents, no less valid as sources', in an effort to produce what is still 'evidence-based history' (MacKenzie 2008, 661). Much as Porter tries to excuse it as inevitable, MacKenzie ultimately identifies the partiality of the evidence discussed in *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* as a serious flaw which undermines his interpretations.

When rightly exposing the superficiality of Porter's treatment of printed sources, MacKenzie points to empire-related dramatic, fictional or school texts. While Hyam sides with Porter because he 'has examined hundreds of magazines, memoirs, and school textbooks' (Hyam 2006, 2n4), MacKenzie observes that this is 'not actually true' (MacKenzie 2008, 665)[10]. Porter's unfair dismissal of the staging of imperial themes in nineteenth-century British theatre certainly reveals this:

> Porter concentrates on traditional archival and literary sources. Although he claims to have examined the press, his survey seems to be selective and partial. He writes that he has looked at lists of play titles and has come up with very few on imperial subjects. If he had actually taken the trouble to read any plays, as I did, he might have come to a different conclusion, since many titles give absolutely no clue as to content. (MacKenzie 2005, 281)[11]

In sharp contrast to Porter's avowed unwillingness to 'waste valuable research time', MacKenzie 'spent many long hours in the manuscripts room of the old

10 Regardless of MacKenzie's powerful attack, Hyam repeated his allegiance almost verbatim in a subsequent study (Hyam 2010, 57n55).

11 Cf. Porter 2004, 140 and 370n35–36.

British Museum library poring over the Lord Chamberlain's plays collection' and 'soon recognised that titles were no guide at all to the contents of plays':

> [Porter] never mentions any of my examples, or analyses them to demonstrate their supposed lack of imperial ideology, but simply announces that the theatre had little or no imperial content, apparently basing his view on examining lists of names. But would he have guessed that *Youth* (1881) was about the Zulu War of 1879 and included scenes of Rorke's Drift or that *Human Nature* (1885) dealt with the Sudan Campaign or again that *Cheer, Boys, Cheer!* (1895) dealt with the Matabele (Anglo-Ndebele) War? (MacKenzie 2008, 662–65)

In the same 'debate' article, MacKenzie addresses several of Porter's 'unsubstantiated statements' concerning the imperial presence in such venues as the school and the novel, as well as the theatre (665).

MacKenzie and his followers could have challenged Porter's sweeping but ultimately uncorroborated statements on poetry, too. Unfortunately, however, British imperial poetry remains a significant absence among the materials covered seriously and systematically by the volumes in the Manchester University Press 'Studies in Imperialism' series. While devoting a chapter to 'juvenile literature' (MacKenzie 1984, 198–226), the rest of MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* only comments in passing on texts in verse[12]. The other studies published in the same book series show a strong inclination towards literary forms other than poetry. A few multi-authored volumes edited by MacKenzie between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s contain at least one chapter on 'juvenile' literary texts (Bratton 1986; Richards 1992). So does Robert G. David's slightly more recent *The Arctic in the British imagination, 1818–1914*

12 For examples of MacKenzie's cursory remarks on poetry, see 30, 41–42 and 187.

(David 2000). Literature also forms the central – or, at least, a significant – focus of the edited essay collection by Jeffrey Richards and by Kathryn Castle and of the monographs by Robert H. MacDonald and by Tim Youngs, all of which appeared as part of the 'Studies in Imperialism' series during those years (Richards 1989; MacDonald 1994; Youngs 1994; Castle 1996). These literary-oriented contributions have been more recently joined by Norman Etherington's book, entitled *Imperium of Soul: The Political and Aesthetic Imagination of Edwardian Imperialists* (2017) (Etherington 2017). As already noted by Justin D. Livingstone, however, while similar studies bear witness to 'MacKenzie's interest in literary representation and tendency to range widely across textual sources', they are vastly outnumbered by the 'more traditional historical works' (Livingstone 2019, 91)[13]. In the still ongoing book series, MacDonald's 1994 monograph, which dedicates a few pages to William McGonagall (1825–1902) and a whole chapter to the poetry of Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) and his imitators, remains a conspicuous exception (MacDonald 1994, 104–8 and 144–73). Even within the more literary-oriented among the volumes or sections in multifocal studies published as part of 'Studies in Imperialism', then, poetic texts seldom serve as the focus of analysis.

In fact, Porter does not spend much time analysing poems, either. Despite the scant attention which he pays to poetry, he all too readily dismisses the versification of imperial themes prior to the last three decades of the nineteenth century. As has already been suggested, his general approach in *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* is not without flaws. These shortcomings are quite obvious in

13 Moreover, as correctly observed by John Griffiths: 'Fascination with the domestic impact was particularly noted in the first half-decade of the series. Since then the series has become far more diverse, extending to other European nations' experience and even in recent years the empires accumulated by nations who were within the British Empire themselves' (Griffiths 2022–23, 1:12).

his chapter on 'Culture and Imperialism', which contains his main discussion of literary texts (Porter 2004, 134–63). Thus, in the rest of this first section, I review Porter's problematic chapter and show why literary historians cannot and should not blindly ratify his sweeping statements on poetry.

Titled after Said's seminal *Culture and Imperialism*, the seventh chapter in Porter's *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* is charged with the onerous task of supporting the overarching argument – that is to say, that 'most Britons were hardly aware of their empire […], while those who did know about it responded in widely different and […] even contradictory ways' (162–63) – in the light of the evidence surviving in 'the cultural record' (162), 'among the cultural remains of nineteenth-century Britain, both "high" and "low"' (138). Porter begins by conceding that scattered 'traces' of the Empire may be found within highbrow literature and culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at least in the form of such 'imperial allusions' as fleeting references 'to a colony, or a colonial people, or emigration, or someone who has worked in or for the empire in some way' (134), but he is all too quick to minimise their significance. The majority of these, he claims, would be 'marginal' at best until the late nineteenth century:

> There are almost no 'good' books, poems, paintings, sculptures, musical compositions, or great buildings from the early and middle years of the nineteenth century that have a significant imperial component to them. (134)

Importantly, he is perfectly aware of the danger of entrusting one's judgement on culture to an inspection of a limited selection of texts, no matter how valued these selected texts continue to be nowadays:

Most of the Victorian literature that has survived, for example – the 'canon' – has done so not because it was the most popular at the time, or necessarily the most typical, but because it is judged to possess a 'quality' of some sort that transcends its time. That might even make it atypical. This is why it is fundamentally unsound to generalize about British culture in the broader sense, on the basis of these works of culture in its narrower sense. (134–35)

And yet, after providing a short overview of the occasional imperial presence in the mainstream British novel for most of the nineteenth century, he precipitously concludes that British poetry and drama are equally untouched by the Empire in the same period: 'Fiction was not the only non-imperial form of literature. Poets cold-shouldered the topic too. So did the "serious" theatre' (140).

Porter's chapter on 'Culture and Imperialism' displays his bias against the complexity of literary history and particularly against poetry. Because he is rightly suspicious about the value of now-canonical literary texts as sufficient grounds for commenting on culture at large, Porter moves further in his review of imperial traces in cultural products. His neglect of poetry remains unchanged, however. When downplaying the treatment of imperial themes in low-brow literature, he ignores popular poems altogether and only has recourse to fiction in order to support his claims:

'Lower' forms of literature, too, seem superficially bereft of imperial content […]. A survey of titles of popular (but 'respectable') novels published in the first threequarters of the nineteenth century throws up almost no obviously imperial subjects, and only a few quasi- ('orientalist', for example) ones. (153)

Later on, while acknowledging James Thomson as one the 'favourite poets' of the working class in the nineteenth century (157), Porter conveniently fails to mention his authorship of such an imperially patriotic poem as 'Rule, Britannia!' (1740) (Kaul 2000). In Porter's assessment of the imperial impact on British domestic culture, then, poetry is deliberately left at the margins.

Whereas it would be perhaps unfair to expect sophisticated interpretations of literary texts from a historian whose focus is more broadly on 'Society' and 'Culture', Porter's cursory handling of nineteenth-century literature, especially poetry, yields superficial insights at best, which are of little or no use to the literary historian. As remarked by MacKenzie, Porter frequently pontificates on the significance of the imperial component in one or more literary works on the basis of their titles rather than his own close reading (Porter 2004, 370n36, 153, 375n109, 159–60 and 379n155). When he does interpret some texts, his approach can only sound somewhat naïve for many a literary scholar. At times, he tries to minimise the importance of the imperial presence in a literary text by imagining a version of that text wherein the imperial component has been either replaced with a non-imperial counterpart or removed altogether (139, 368n21 and 161). MacKenzie convincingly rebukes this interpretative move referring to Porter's comments on *Great Expectations* (1861) by Charles Dickens (1812–1870):

> Porter announces that 'Magwitch could have been locked up in Wormwood Scrubs rather than sent to Botany Bay'. So Dickens gets up one morning and says 'Ah, Magwitch – what will it be, Wormwood Scrubs or Botany Bay? Let's toss for it. Tails, Botany Bay it is'. Dickens had significant reasons for choosing first a prison hulk and then Australian transportation and Magwitch's experience is indeed structurally significant to the novel. His escape from the prison hulk offers the opportunity for Pip's kindness. Later transported, he comes back to Britain without a ticket of leave (an executable offence), but most significant of all he comes back with a fortune from

sheep. He pays for Pip's education, thereby transforming the lead character into the middle-class man that he becomes. New South Wales is, at one and the same time, a punishment station and a place of opportunity. Thus Magwitch's circumstances would have produced a frisson in his reading public. The audience knew very well all this was important. Wormwood Scrubs would not have filled the bill at all. Dickens indeed was very interested in the empire of settlement. (MacKenzie 2008, 664–65)

At other times, Porter provides counterexamples of novels wherein the same problem (e.g., having to 'banish their ne'er-do-wells') has received a different solution which fails to mobilise the Empire (e.g., dispatching a character not so much as to one of 'the colonies' as to 'somewhere else' in the world) (Porter 2004, 139). However, even this strategy backfires, as it ends up producing the unwanted effect of underscoring the importance of all the other cases in which the Empire, and not 'somewhere else', was chosen by the author. Faced with the more explicitly imperial content of much popular fiction, Porter's only way out of accepting this consists in shifting the focus away from the production side of literary communication, as he acknowledges the possibility that working-class readers may not have noticed the ideological subtext of the literary texts which they enjoyed (160–61).

On the whole, however, Porter seems to prefer to rely on cherry-picked second-hand research. The pure arbitrariness of his choice of secondary sources and the general inconclusiveness of his discussion thereof display his weak command of literary research. After making such a sweeping generalisation about the imperial presence in nineteenth-century poetry as 'Poets cold-shouldered the topic', for example, he merely substantiates it in a footnote by

referring to poems by Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892) as viewed in a 1982 essay by Victor Kiernan:

> Victor Kiernan makes a case for considering Tennyson an imperial poet, […] but even 'his verses dealing directly with episodes of this [imperial] kind were not to be very numerous, for so prolific a writer, and not very good' […]. The most overtly imperial (and the least good) were those he produced for various public imperial events in the 1880s […]. In his public life he was a dedicated imperial federationist. Otherwise most of what Kiernan takes to be his imperial allusions in his major poems were 'disguised' and 'mythic'. (369–70n33; cf. Kiernan 1982)

Here, in addition to Kiernan's broad quantitative assessments ('not […] very numerous', 'prolific'), Porter borrows and amplifies his qualitative judgements ('not very good', 'the least good') to interpret the significance of imperial themes within a poet's output, but he never explains what 'good' means for Kiernan or himself: is it used, for example, as a synonym for 'timeless', 'successful' (at the time) or 'canonical' (as valued by subsequent readers)? This is somewhat surprising given his call for and promise of semantic precision in the 'Preface'. Yet, the same problem occurs elsewhere in the chapter, such as when Porter confidently quotes Jonah Raskin's claim in *The Mythology of Imperialism*: 'No Victorian wrote a good colonial novel' (Porter 2004, 138). In point of fact, in the paragraph following the one containing the sentence quoted by Porter, Ruskin unashamedly argues against Porter's main thesis: 'The Victorians were conscious of their empire: their Queen was Empress of India, their sons served in the army in Egypt and Singapore, men invested in overseas companies, ladies wore silks from the East, workers drank tea from China and India. In daily life the fact of empire was difficult to forget' (Raskin 1971, 17). Such interpretations of primary

texts through a secondary source also beg the question of the relevance of similar good/bad distinctions to a historiographical account of British literary culture.

These second-hand analyses further betray Porter's unfamiliarity both with nineteenth-century criticism and with subsequent scholarship more readily available to him, including those useful sources which he explicitly acknowledges elsewhere in his volume. Almost a century prior to the appearance of Kiernan's essay on Tennyson's imperial poetry, for example, an anonymous reviewer proclaimed him 'the true poet of imperialism' on the pages of *Macmillan's Magazine* (Anonymous 1899)[14]. Patrick Brantlinger, too, often touches upon Tennyson's poetry and counteracts the trend according to which 'neither the orientalism nor the patriotism expressed in many of his early poems' is 'seen as connected with imperial issues', but Porter, who refers to Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (1988) in the same chapter (Porter 2004, 136–37, 162, 368n19 and 384n56), prefers to avoid a direct confrontation on this matter (cf. Brantlinger 1988, 8–10; Brantlinger 2009, 114–20). Chris Brooks and Peter Faulkner's *The White Man's Burdens: An Anthology of British Poetry of the Empire* (1996), which Porter does cite later on in his book to back up his statement on post-1880s 'explicitly imperial' poetry (Porter 2004, 176), actually reprints early and mid-nineteenth-century poems, including Tennyson's, as well as texts by 'Kipling […], Sir Henry Newbolt, Alfred Austin, and Alfred Noyes' (383–84n56; cf. Brooks and Faulkner 1996a). While Porter might be excused for his unawareness of the *Macmillan's Magazine* article on the grounds of his self-confessed reluctance to mine the periodical press, his

14 In the first volume of *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824–1900*, the author has been identified as Martin I. J. Griffin (1842–1911) (Houghton 1966, 658).

deliberate decision not to engage with, or at least refer to, Brantlinger's book and Brooks and Faulkner's anthology while dismissing pre-1880s imperial poetry is not as easily justifiable.

Although poems rarely feature in the Porter-MacKenzie foundational debate, I have revisited it here because MacKenzie's and Porter's different positions highlight chronological, terminological and methodological issues which are crucial to produce a literary-historical account of British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century. As previously suggested, their dispute provides a more fruitful starting point for my study if the similarities existing between their views are borne in mind besides the most substantial differences. As Ward rightly notes:

> It is doubtless the case that we can no longer reduce public perceptions of empire to a balance sheet of indifference versus wholesale endorsement, or indeed arrive at any generalised verdict on popular imperialism that can be applied confidently to any given time frame. (Ward 2019, 22)

While oversimplified summaries of MacKenzie's and Porter's differing positions might overlook this point, MacKenzie, in fact, reaffirmed his agreement with Porter on the complexity of the imperial impact on British domestic culture: 'I cheerfully subscribe to the notion that responses to imperialism were complex, often contradictory, and offer evidence pointing in various directions' (MacKenzie 2008, 666). On the other hand, after reading Thompson's *The Empire Strikes Back?* (2005), Porter expressed the need to reconsider his viewpoint on such 'areas' as 'middle-brow literature', particularly '"middling" fiction (i.e. neither Great Books nor popular trash)' and 'women's and children's literature' (Porter 2008, 107; Porter 2007, 230; cf. Thompson 2005):

> There must indeed be seams of evidence which, if they had been mined more diligently – I could not cover everything – would have altered my picture; and indeed at several points in the book there are expressions both of nervousness about this, and of hope that others might look these deposits out. (Porter 2008, 107)

As this dissertation reveals, another area in which his highly unpolished views may be refined is poetry, which also testifies to what MacKenzie calls 'the nature of the hugely diverse imperial experience' (MacKenzie 2008, 666). Before moving on to clarify the chronological, terminological and methodological decisions which determine the scope and theoretical framework of my dissertation, I devote the next section of this chapter to a review of more specialist scholarship on British imperial literature, particularly poetry, in the long nineteenth century.

1.2. Literature Review

In existing studies on the impact of the Empire and its dynamics on British literary culture in the long nineteenth century, the main emphasis has been laid on fictional prose, to the neglect of other literary forms. Many a literary scholar before and after Said appears to have endorsed his view that 'the novel' is '*the* aesthetic object whose connection to the expanding societies of Britain and France is particularly interesting to study' for its substantial contribution to 'the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences' (Said 1993, xii). For example, Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness*, which was published several years before Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, similarly suggests that it is especially in such 'narrative forms' as 'adventure tales, travelogues, histories' that 'imperialist

ideology was expressed, often with great energy and clarity' (Brantlinger 1988, x). Much work has been done on the relationship of the British novel to the Empire in the years 1789 to 1914, with whole monographs being devoted not only to the colonial fiction of authors such as Kipling and Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) – 'the obvious post-1880 literary canon' (Porter 2004, viii) – even prior to the appearance of Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (McClure 1981), but also to Romantic novels (Trumpener 1997) and to major early and mid-Victorian 'domestic' novelists such as Dickens or George Eliot (1819–1880), to name but two (Henry 2002; Moore 2004; Daly 2011). As Tim Watson aptly puts it in his 2015 essay on 'The Colonial Novel':

> The ever-expanding corpus of scholarship illuminating the colonial facets of what appears on the surface to be the most resolutely English fictions can be taken as evidence of the truth of Said's claim. We would be hard pressed to find a significant eighteenth- or nineteenth-century novel in English that has not at this point been subjected to a postcolonial reading and thereby transformed into a colonial novel. (Watson 2015, 15)

This would hardly hold true for poetry appearing in the same period. In another 2015 essay, Mary Ellis Gibson and Jason R. Rudy have cause to complain that, 'in the literature of empire, poetry remains understudied, though many writers considered it the most prestigious of genres at the time' (Gibson and Rudy 2015, 189).

Whereas both British imperial fiction and, to a lesser extent, drama of the long nineteenth century have been systematically scrutinised in a wide variety of studies, poetry written and published in the same period seems to have always

lagged behind as the subject of equally rigorous and multi-layered scrutiny[15]. Although many studies purportedly have a scope so broad as to include imperial 'literature' or 'writing', they rarely contain more than passing remarks on verse. Commenting on this critical imbalance in the mid-1990s, even Brooks and Faulkner, the editors of an already cited innovative anthology of 1596–1993 British imperial poetry, find scholars' preference for 'novels' or 'plays' over poems 'quite understandable as it is in these forms that the most obvious works of the literature of imperialism exist' and consist of 'complete works focusing on the idea and experience of empire', as opposed to the plethora of texts and voices reprinted in their book (Brooks and Faulkner 1996, 2–3).

The imbalance persists to this day, even though a scholarly tool such as Brooks and Faulkner's own *The White Man's Burdens* should actually make it difficult to explain, or accept, and even though subsequent studies have further tried to redress it. In the rest of this section, I review those that I deem the major scholarly explorations of British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century, identify a serious gap in the available scholarship and begin envisaging an approach to fill it. Far from being exhaustive, the following literature review cannot transcend space or linguistic limitations and thus only considers selected scholarly works, primarily (but not exclusively) book-length studies published in English and, albeit more rarely, in Italian. What is more, because this is intended as a broad overview of the existing research, I hardly ever dwell on any

15 On fiction, see, among others, Sandison 1967; Greenberger 1969; Street 1975; Green 1979; Bivona 1990; Bristow 1991; Giddings 1991; Richards 1993; Sharpe 1993; Deirdre 1995; Meyer 1996; Bivona 1998; Krebs 1999; Chrisman 2000; Kitzan 2001; Attridge 2003; Chakravarty 2004; Watson 2008; Smith 2011; Zulli 2011; McLaughlan 2012; Forman 2013; Kuehn 2014; Wisnicki 2017; Neti 2021. See also Brantlinger's influential 'trilogy', which is largely devoted to fiction: Brantlinger 1988; Brantlinger 2003; Brantlinger 2011. On drama, see, for example, Bratton et al. 1991; Ziter 2003; Gould 2011; Hultgren 2014; Morosetti 2016. See also MacKenzie 1984, 38–66; Booth 1996; Davis 1996; Richards 2016; Morosetti 2017; Gould 2018; MacKenzie 2022, 262–91.

of these studies here. Rather, I tentatively group them according to their various emphases on single or very few authors, forms, themes and/or periods. In spite of several important exceptions, I underscore the clear tendency on the part of literary scholars towards the analysis of a relatively limited set of poetic texts. In the following literature review, I draw attention to the notable absence of studies with a more holistic approach to the subject under examination here. To contrast the critical tendency that has left too many pertinent primary sources underexplored, I call for more wide-ranging literary-historical accounts of British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century which are grounded in more extensive archival research (the kind of work which Porter eludes, that is). My dissertation precisely aims to develop this comprehensive archive-based approach.

Scholarship on the crossroads between British poetry and the Empire in the long nineteenth century has typically delved into specific authors, forms or themes. Key poets such as Robert Southey (1774–1843) and Henry Newbolt (1862–1938), as well as Tennyson and Kipling, have received undivided attention in a handful of volumes (Winterbottom 1986; Parry 1992; Jackson 1994; Keating 1994; Bolton 2007; Sherwood 2013). The diverse poetries produced by William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Robert Browning (1812–1889), Edward Lear (1812–1888), Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855), Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) and Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), among others, have been examined in a number of journal articles and book chapters (MacDonald 1987–88; Frankel 1997; Phelan 2003; Plasa 2004, 29–54; Simpson 2005; Sifaki 2009; Chapman 2012; Bownas 2012, esp. 2–3, 9–11, 15–16, 33–35 and 43–62; Dubois 2018). The interconnections between imperial themes and major poetic genres such as the epic, the ballad and the sonnet have

been explored in books and in shorter sections (Bratton 1975, 137–54; Graham 1998; Phelan 2005, esp. 74–75 and 153–54; Dentith 2006). A few monographs have specifically focussed on the literary and often poetic responses to major mid- and late nineteenth-century conflicts, such as the Crimean War (1853–1856) (Markovits 2009; Ho 2021) or the South African War (1899–1902) (Van Wyk Smith 1978; cf. also Rawlinson-Mills 2021), or on the literary and poetic representations of specific areas, such as British India (Boehmer 2015; Fhlathúin 2015; Agnew 2017). And yet, no sustained scholarly effort appears to have combined the analysis of multiple authors, forms and themes in poetry spanning the long nineteenth century.

More systematic overviews can only be found in book-length studies whose chronological scope does not exhaust the years 1789 to 1914. For example, such important volumes as Suvir Kaul's and Dustin Griffin's, which largely focus on the eighteenth century, also contain some discussions of empire-related texts from the first decades of the nineteenth century (Kaul 2000; Griffin 2002). Other investigations have kept within the chronological boundaries still in use in traditional literary history, particularly the Romantic/Victorian divide.

I start with relevant scholarly contributions to Romantic literary studies. While this field has always accorded great importance to poetry, research on Romantic literature appears to have witnessed a sort of postcolonial turn since the mid-1990s, when books, essay collections and journal issues have begun to examine the highly ambivalent imperial writing produced in the Romantic age (Richardson and Hofkosh 1996; Fulford and Kitson 1998; Makdisi 1998; Bewell 1999; Kitson 2007; Baiesi 2008; Baker 2010; Bohls 2013; Makdisi 2014). Some of these have contributed to this collective endeavour by zooming in on British

India or on other empire-related topics, such as enslavement and orientalism (Drew 1987; Leask 1992; Baum 1994; Lee 2002; Saglia 2002; Carey 2005; Franklin 2006; Spandri 2010; Cohen-Vrignaud 2015; Watt 2019). Others, such as Emily A. Haddad's and Nicholas Meihuizen's, have adopted a comparative approach either to map the territory of orientalist poetry in French and English throughout the nineteenth century (Haddad 2002) or to study poets straddling the Romantic and Victorian eras like Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) and Thomas Pringle (1789–1834) in relation to the Portuguese Luís Vaz de Camões (c. 1524–1580) (Meihuizen 2007)[16]. All in all, then, Romanticists appeared to have been eager to engage with the imperial presence within the poetic output of at least those authors who typically fall under the remit of Romantic studies, but their lesser-known contemporaries excluded from the Romantic canon and their empire-related poetry deserve more attention. In the second chapter, therefore, I interpret the imperial component in a selection of neglected poems from the period.

Whereas a number of attempts have been made to explore expansionist themes and dynamics in the work of poets normally associated with Romanticism, the imperial poetry written in the decades roughly corresponding to the Victorian and Edwardian/modernist periods remains a highly uncharted area. As of the twenty-first century, a number of excellent (but comparatively shorter) essays have shed light on Victorian imperial verse, studying a broader range of authors, forms and related themes (Lootens 2000; Linley 2002; Hughes 2010, 191–213; Phelan 2013; Gibson and Rudy 2015; Simmons 2024). Applying the label of 'jingo poem' both to 'the more strident imperialist work of Rudyard

16 Jessie Reeder's insightful volume, which compares and contrasts writings in English and Spanish spanning the nineteenth century and analyses the poetry of Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743–1825), does not pay full attention to verse, however (Reeder 2020). Though it has an even broader chronological, geographical and linguistic scope, see also Aberbach 2015.

Kipling and W. E. Henley, among other canonical names', and to 'the rabid jingoist verse with which their work existed in dialogue' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Boehmer largely focusses on 'the operation and reception of two iconic jingo poems of high imperialism' penned by usual suspects such as Kipling and Newbolt (Boehmer 2011, 25n5, 20, 12 and 22–23). Her article is particularly interesting because it presents itself as a response to Frederic Jameson's controversial essay 'Modernism and Imperialism' (1988) (cf. Jameson 1988). In spite of the proliferation of books and edited collections of essays exploring the crossroads between modernism and Empire and sometimes openly challenging Jameson's views since the turn of the century, none of these have concentrated their attention on poetry (Booth and Rigby 2000; Peppis 2000; Begam and Moses 2007; Childs 2007; Esty 2012; Stasi 2012; cf. also Winkiel 2014). Analyses of Edwardian verse in general have remained extremely rare, even after Kenneth Millard's valiant revisionist attempt (Millard 1990) or even after collaborative efforts to bridge the gap between Edwardian and modernist literature (Kaplan and Simpson 1996)[17]. Consequently, the relationship between the poetic text-type and the Empire in the Victorian and Edwardian decades deserve greater study. The third and fourth chapter of my dissertation explore this relationship.

At least two other clusters of studies which have often productively crossed the Romantic/Victorian boundary are worth reviewing briefly here. The first group is concerned with emigration and settlement literature (Blythe 2014; Wagner 2016; Shaikh 2018; Steer 2020; Atkin 2021; Comyn and Fermanis 2021). A

17 In this context, exceptions for their focus on Victorian, Edwardian and modernist literature include Gikandi 1997 and Baucom 1999. Neither of these devotes much space to poetry, however.

number of scholars working on this area have specifically examined poetry (O'Leary 2011; Gibson 2011; Mulholland 2013; Chander 2017; Rudy 2017; Hessell 2018). As recently observed by Lars Atkin in one of these contributions:

> Poetry's ability to traverse borders – both physically, as the portable property of emigrants or through the 'cut and scissors' reprint culture of nineteenth-century journalism, and imaginatively, through memorisation, reproduction and imitation – has led to a spate of recent studies that highlight the importance of poetry for the development of colonial literary cultures across the Anglo-world. (Atkin 2023, 166)

Studies such as those referenced by Atkin here importantly assess the cultural significance of verse in colonial contexts, examining the written output of authors like the Irish-born Australian émigré Eliza Hamilton Dunlop (1796–1880), to name but one (Johnston and Webby 2021). Evidently enough, my own research does not align itself with these remarkable developments because my dissertation shifts the focus back to the metropole in order to illuminate the overlooked significance of imperial verse within Britain, but it is key to recognise the importance of both colonial and metropolitan perspectives.

My own work resembles more closely the second cluster to which I want to draw attention here, the emphasis in this group being similarly placed on the poetic output written in the domestic (rather than colonial) context. The studies in this cluster have explored how nineteenth-century literature gripples with the question of Englishness. In this regard, a classic example is John Lucas's monograph discussing the poetries of a variety of canonical writers, including earlier authors such as John Dryden (1631–1700), Alexander Pope (1688–1744) and Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), as well as late eighteenth- and nineteenth-

century voices like those of William Blake (1757–1827), Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), John Clare (1793–1864), Tennyson and Browning (Lucas 1990). Another good example is Matthew Reynolds's study on the poetries of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861) and Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861), alongside Robert Browning and Tennyson, 'in a time of nation-building' (Reynolds 2001). Though not exclusively concerned with poetry, other useful overviews on the topic containing excellent remarks on poems and variously foregrounding the Empire include Peter Brooker and Peter Widdowson's essay, which crosses the Romantic, Victorian and Edwardian decades (Brooker and Widdowson 1986), David Higgins book on Romantic writing (Higgins 2014) and Roger Ebbatson's work on Victorian and Edwardian literature (Ebbatson 2005; Ebbatson 2006). While I equally concentrate on Britain rather than its colonies, my research markedly differs from these accounts as it both focusses the importance of the Empire to the construction of national identities and pays sustained attention to texts authored or compiled by largely forgotten figures.

This literature review has confirmed what my reopening of the Porter-MacKenzie debate in the previous section suggested. British poetry is often relegated to the margins in many remarkable discussions of imperial literature, where 'literature' is often used as a more generic synonym for '(literary) prose', if not 'fiction'. This might explain the tacit approval of Porter's claim that 'Poets cold-shouldered the topic' (quoted in the previous section). Evidently, not all of the abovementioned studies which deal with imperial poetry more or less extensively were available to Porter. I have already observed his failure to engage with Brantlinger's monograph and Brooks and Faulkner's poetry anthology when it would have been appropriate. A few of those which had been published

prior to 2004, such as Fulford and Kitson's *Romanticism and Colonialism* or Leask's *British Romantic Writers and the East*, are listed in Porter's 'Select Bibliography' but never cited or commented upon in the book (Porter 2004, 447 and 451). In fact, Porter could easily critique at least some of the existing studies for their focus on texts that are not 'explicitly imperial, in the sense of either portraying the empire or lauding it' (176), while also discovering that others seem to confirm his views on the complexity of the attitudes towards the Empire as they are expressed in much nineteenth-century British literature. Even two decades after the publication of *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, then, the available research produced by literary scholars appears unable or unintended to challenge his sweeping generalisation about British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century.

Although I recognise the important contribution of the aforementioned scholarly work to a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the relationship between British poetry and the Empire in the long nineteenth century, I attempt to adopt a more holistic approach to the topic in the following chapters of my dissertation. Studies on single or very few authors and texts clearly serve as a commendable starting point in that they provide valuable insights into the relation between the British Empire and the poetry of the writers studied, but they also risk creating the false impression of isolated and exceptional imperial voices. Both a larger number of close, comparative and contrasting readings of imperial poets/poetic texts and a greater number of wide-ranging overviews on the versification of imperial themes are necessary. Crucially, if these readings and overviews are to give a more nuanced account of British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century and debunk the myth of its sporadic nature, especially

in the first half of the century, they need to rely on more extensive archival research and pay heed to non-canonical figures and texts alongside the major voices of the time. It is my contention that such a comprehensive account could improve our understanding of the topic under scrutiny here by demonstrating that, while possibly not the core of the poetic output of many British authors (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 2–3), 'imperial' (if not 'imperialistic' or jingoistic) poetry was both more common and more significant in the period than is usually acknowledged.

In the last section of this first chapter, I delve into the chronological, terminological and methodological questions which have helped me define the scope and theoretical framework of my dissertation. Taken together, the following chapters will showcase the kind of holistic approach which I have urged here.

1.3. Chronology, Terminology, Methodology

Whereas the first two parts of this last section deal with entangled chronological and terminological issues to delimit my object of study, the third part lays out the method followed to research this subject for my dissertation. In the first part, I explain why I confine my attention to the timespan ranging approximately from 1789 to 1914. In the second part, I turn to the ambiguous and much disputed term 'imperialism' – 'itself a source of contention not only for historians and literary critics but for those politicians, journalists, colonists, social critics, and ordinary citizens who […] helped build the modern British Empire' (Brantlinger 1988, x) – and motivate my preference for the adjective 'imperial' (over 'imperialistic'),

which recurs in phrases such as 'imperial voice', 'imperial echo' and 'imperial poetry' throughout my dissertation. My preliminary remarks on chronology and terminology result in a sufficiently broad working definition of the poetic texts which will serve as the focus of the rest of my dissertation. Admittedly, some overlapping exists between my object of study here and the poetry studied in the secondary sources which I have reviewed in section 1.2., but, more often than not, previous scholarship has only shed light on very few scattered fragments which fall into my time- and content-based category of texts. Hence the need for the more systematic investigation which my dissertation seeks to offer. If the first two parts define 'what' is studied here, the third and last part describe 'how' this is studied. In other words, the last part of this section explicates the methodological approach which I use to examine my poetic texts in the following chapters. This method, which combines extensive bibliographic and archival research with meticulous historicisation and detailed analysis, is in tune with some of the latest and most promising developments of scholarship on anglophone poetry in the nineteenth century and seems adequate to start calling into question Porter's claims.

Since my terminological choices are decisively influenced by the established chronological boundaries, I start with chronology and motivate my choice of the years 1789 and 1914 as loose temporal demarcations of the period under examination in this dissertation. In an essay attempting to demonstrate the cogency of the notion of 'Victorian', Martin Hewitt agrees with K. Theodore Hoppen's view of periodisation as both 'a methodological necessity' and 'a mischievous conception' (Hoppen 1998, 2). Despite their 'only partial validity', Hewitt considers periods as methodologically essential insofar as 'they structure

our attempts to understand the past' (Hewitt 2006, 395). While I also believe that 'historical boundaries are permeable' and that 'questioning the nature and positioning of chronological markers helps to avoid closing off fruitful lines of inquiry' (395), it is precisely in an effort 'to understand the past' that I follow the methodologically necessary practice of drawing boundaries, which serve a useful function as a selection criterion of the poetic texts which I will consider. By no means, however, should these boundaries be taken as watertight or unquestionable. Though only sporadically, in fact, I also push them in the following chapters.

Evidently, other options were viable. For example, I could have taken a well-trodden path opened up by historians of the British Empire. Hyam, Simon C. Smith and Timothy Parsons, among others, have all referred to the one-hundred years between 1815 and 1914 as *the* imperial century in British history (Hyam 2002 [1976]; Smith 1998; Parsons 1999). Alternatively, I could have well confined my attention to the years 1875 to 1914, which Eric Hobsbawm famously identifies as 'the Age of Empire' (Hobsbawm 1987). Although his volume, which is part of a series that assigns a similar title to each of the periods under consideration, is more broadly concerned with Western imperialism, Hobsbawm's definition of 'the Age of Empire' may be applied, with some adaptation, to the specificity of the British Empire and its ideology, as it approximately corresponds, in Boehmer's words, to 'the phase of British high empire', a period 'embracing the years 1870 to 1918' and 'widely recognized as marked by the rise of a more urgent, assertive, and officially directed attitude to empire in Britain' (Boehmer 1998, xv and xxxvii). Due to my literary focus, I could have also opted for such labels as 'Romantic', 'Victorian' (with its early, mid- or

late phases), 'Edwardian' and 'modernist', or for a combination thereof. However, neither of these options appear to allow for an appropriate response to Porter's sweeping statements on imperial poetry.

The main reason underpinning my preference for the long nineteenth century as the chronological framework for my literary-historiographical enquiry is its capaciousness, which enables meaningful diachronic comparisons. Conveniently longer than the few decades normally associated with the historical stage of 'new' (or 'high') imperialism, this period seems capacious enough to challenge Porter's claims, as it is more conducive to an appreciation of the real continuities and changes from the different phases of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The period thus demarcated usefully bridges the boundaries traditionally drawn in histories of British literature as well. Both the continuities and the changes in the literary become visible if a more encompassing period is preferred over more rigid forms of periodisation that firmly separate Romantic, Victorian and modernist literature from each other. In this regard, Tom Mole's *What the Victorians Made of Romanticism* persuasively demonstrates the importance of crossing the Romantic/Victorian divide and, more generally, of seeking alternatives to the tendency towards 'punctual historicism' in literary criticism (Mole 2017). Another problem with the practice of labelling recurring in literary histories potentially arises from the fact that labels typically attached to single decades may obscure the ideological complexity and plurality of literary texts within that decade. Writing about the 1890s to highlight the imbrication of aestheticism with conservatism and patriotism, Alex Murray problematises the preference of literary scholars for 'clear – if illusory – demarcations': 'The danger is that we partition literary production in such a way that deracinates it from the

social, cultural, and political context that gives it meaning' (Murray 2023, 247). Unlike other forms of periodisation conventionally used in literary history, the long nineteenth century allows for a productive study of the *long durée* of the British Empire and its poetic texts.

On occasion, I cross both the earliest and the latest limits of the period on which I largely concentrate in the following pages. I do concur with Boehmer's explanation for her choice of 1918 as the 'cut-off point' in her *Anthology of Colonial Literature* that 'it surely was the case that it took the duration of the war for the contradictions of empire as signifying progress and civilization to be fully exposed' (Boehmer 1998, xxxvii). This is why, for example, in chapter four, I occasionally mention or briefly discuss volumes published until 1918 as well as pre-1915 poetry anthologies.

Choosing the decades that are embraced by the long nineteenth century' as my temporal framework also facilitates further fruitful connections with the poetry analysed by Kaul in *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire*. In fact, while its temporal scope (the long eighteenth century, c. 1688–1815) only partially overlaps with mine, I regard Kaul's monograph as an inspiring example of how to study British imperial poetry, in that it deals with both 'formal features and thematic concerns', highlights 'the interrelations between poetics and ideology' and, albeit more occasionally, considers the 'material role' of the publishing format, too (Kaul 2000, 1 and 34–35). Kaul himself acknowledges the possibility for his 'method' to be adopted to address 'questions developed by those interested in the intersection of poetics and ideology in different historical periods' (34). In this respect, no other period is possibly so suitable a testbed as the long nineteenth century. Once again, it is Kaul who recognises this when he

describes the texts which he analyses as earlier poetic manifestations of ideological positions typically associated with British expansionism in the following century:

> For readers today, these poems can also offer evidence from the eighteenth century for so many of the rhetorical and psychological features that came to define nineteenth-century British imperialism, and indeed imperialism itself: the development of codes of hypermasculinity; of the images of modern man as the servant of the expanding nation, working at the behest of the state; the insistence on racial, cultural, and religious hierarchy; the development of philosophical and historical justifications for inhumanity. (42)

Not only does this short quote establish an important chronological connection which highlights the common ground between the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it also hints at the definition of British imperialism, which is the terminological issue that I wish to address next.

This terminological territory is hotly contested for historians and literary scholars alike. As observed by C. C. Eldridge: 'The definition of "imperialism" has bedevilled historical and literary studies. Contemporaries were equally confused' (Eldridge 1996, 16). In the introduction to *Imperialism* (1902), J. A. Hobson poses the problem in these terms: 'Amid the welter of vague political abstractions to lay one's finger accurately upon any "ism" so as to pin it down and mark it out by definition seems impossible' (Hobson 1902, 1). Then he goes on to recognise that, just as 'nationalism', 'internationalism' and 'colonialism', the term 'imperialism' is 'elusive' and 'shifty' (1). Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt confirms this view in their classic 'biography' of the term, 'a political word' which, they point out, 'changed its meaning no less than twelve

times' between 1840 and 1960 (Koebner and Dan Schmidt 1964, xiii)[18]. After all, as MacKenzie puts it: 'The Empire's diverse character ensured that imperialism meant different things to different people at different times' (MacKenzie 1984, 1). This well-established point is rehearsed and expanded upon in later studies, both historiographical (e.g., Johnson 2003, 3) and literary-historical (e.g., Linley 2002, 423–24). It is also very neatly summarised by Catherine Hall, who writes:

> Different colonial projects give access to different meanings of empire. The empire changed across time: there was the First Empire, the Second Empire, the 'informal empire', 'the empire of free trade', the 'scramble for Africa', the moment of high imperialism and the struggles over decolonisation, each with the different preoccupations of those specific temporalities, places and spaces. (Hall 2002, 15)

Because of the multiple synchronic and diachronic semantic shifts in the meaning of the word 'imperialism' as of the nineteenth century, then, it was of paramount importance to determine the chronological scope of this dissertation before providing any explanation of the term and its cognates.

A major tendency in cultural and literary histories of British imperialism is to understand the concept as an ideology. This is certainly the case with seminal studies such as MacKenzie's and Brantlinger's, which, albeit with different temporal emphases, have valuably traced its presence in British culture and literature across the nineteenth century. In *Propaganda and Empire*, MacKenzie sees the term as 'open to many different definitions', but he openly rejects its strict definition as a synonym for 'jingoism': 'aggressive, offensive, and xenophobic' (MacKenzie 1984, 10). Instead, he prefers to describe the popular

18 For a more recent comprehensive overview, see Cain and Harrison 2001.

imperialism emerging towards the end of the nineteenth century as an 'ideological cluster' which combines expansionism with militarism, monarchism, hero-worshippism and pseudo-scientific racism (2 and 7). This 'late nineteenth-century ideological conjunction', he argues, came to form 'a new type of patriotism, which derived a special significance from Britain's unique imperial mission' (12 and 2)[19].

In *Rule of Darkness*, Brantlinger also describes the word 'imperialism' as ambiguous and controversial before offering a more nuanced view of its meaning. After acknowledging 'the ambiguity of the term', he highlights two of its possible senses in the form of a question:

> Does imperialism refer only to formal acts of territorial aggrandizement by the state, or does it refer also to an ideology or range of ideological positions, from militant jingoism shading off into vaguer sentiments of patriotism and racial superiority? (Brantlinger 1988, ix–x)[20]

As Brantlinger soon makes clear, *Rule of Darkness* is less concerned with 'the narrowest definition of imperialism as the explicit advocacy of the acquisition of new territory' (Brantlinger 1988, 4) than with its broader 'ideological sense' (x)[21]. His book explores 'the many forms that imperialist ideology took even without

19 In a 1981 article, Hughes Cunningham similarly observed that the 'patriotism' that 'became a key component of the ideological apparatus of the imperialist state' was 'firmly identified with Conservatism, militarism, royalism and racialism' (Cunningham 1981, 23–24).

20 Patriotism, nationalism and imperialism have also been conceived of as points on a continuum: 'There is for some an ascending scale of evil in which patriotism connotes a relatively harmless love of country, but may become transmuted into nationalism which implies dislike of another country, or worst of all, suggesting aggressive designs on or conquests of other parts of the world' (Cunningham 1981, 28n1). Pointing out that 'empire and nation' may be seen 'as twin expressions of the same phenomenon of power', Krishan Kumar similarly concludes: 'Nineteenth-century imperialism can then appear as an extension, perhaps a hypertrophy, of nationalism' (Kumar 2015, 33).

21 Said agrees with Brantlinger when he writes: 'Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations' (Said 1993, 8).

being highly self-conscious or militant', particularly between the 1830s and the 1880s, and charts 'the development of that ideology' (x), especially in the decades preceding the emergence of what MacKenzie terms 'a new type of patriotism'. Elsewhere, Brantlinger argues: 'Taking pride in the British Empire was a major aspect of Victorian patriotism and was often indistinguishable from racial chauvinism – the belief in the absolute superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and its providential mission to rule the supposedly inferior races of the world' (Brantlinger 2009, 2).

If such comprehensive descriptions of a set of ideas, beliefs and values that sustained the imperial project throughout the nineteenth century respond to the need to counter what MacDonald calls 'the instability of ideology' (MacDonald 1994, 235), Porter complains that they are so comprehensive that they run the risk of becoming virtually impractical. As remarked above, the 'Preface' to *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* accords considerable importance to semantic clarity: 'to a great extent, whether we want to regard a particular attitude or phenomenon as "imperialistic" or not depends on the meanings we wish to assign to that word, some of which can legitimately be used to embrace almost anything' (Porter 2004, xii–xiii). Porter's definition of 'imperialism', which essentially equates it with 'expansionism' and wholeheartedly outspoken support for 'physical conquest or control' (138), is surely narrower than Brantlinger's. Later on, in the chapter on 'Culture and Imperialism', Porter protests against the utilisation of the MacKenziean 'ideological cluster' as an easy validation of any occurrence of 'militarism, monarchism, hero-worship, the cult of personality, and scientific racism' in terms of 'sure indications of an imperial mentality, wherever and whenever they may be found' (137). Such an approach,

he writes, is extremely problematic because 'MacKenzie's cluster is by no means complete' (as it excludes 'what later came to be called "liberal" imperialism', for example) and 'each of its elements could exist independently' (137). Thus, he concludes: 'MacKenzie's list is by no means an infallible guide to the presence of imperialism in any cultural production. That presence can never be taken for granted, but needs to be demonstrated in every case' (138).

Not all literary scholars have fallen into the traps feared by Porter, however. Some specialists whose work predates the appearance of *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* have actually proved to be fully alert to these potential pitfalls. Early on in his *Rule of Darkness*, for example, Brantlinger comments:

> The ideology was adaptable, shifting; its constituent parts, even though they are usually associated with various brands of conservatism, could just as easily consort with liberal and even radical political attitudes toward domestic issues. (Brantlinger 1988, 8)

Paula M. Krebs (to quote from another secondary source cited elsewhere in *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*) anticipates Porter's second preoccupation when she points out that 'discourses of militarism, morality, gender roles, patriotism, and racial categories […] are in use in imperial ideology but […] also exist beyond its borders' (Krebs 1999, 157)[22]. Porter, then, was certainly not the first to issue a

22 For a more recent intelligent response to Porter's point, see Gould 2011, 5: 'I highlight Porter's objection to recent trends in studies of imperial history and culture because I wish to use his complaint to constructively differentiate between the *equation* and the *association* of these practices and concepts with imperialism. We need not claim that zoo-keeping and overseas travel are defining features of imperialism in order to see how they extend, display, and articulate imperial connections. These practices, in other words, may not *define* empire but they do *animate* it. And while Porter is right to argue that patriotism, masculinism, militarism – and a host of other 'isms' – exist independently from imperialism and are, consequently, not inherently imperialistic, they are often sites for the expression of imperial ideologies and practices. They are, moreover, tools used in the construction of the culture of empire: the cultural articulations that realize the existence of empire for those metropolitan observers who are the supposed masters of an otherwise intangible domain. It is the cultural institutions of empire – those zoos, adventure tales, exhibitions,

warning against precipitous identifications of imperial signs merely based on the detection of the presence of any component of 'MacKenzie's cluster, plus travel, exploration, mapping, an interest in non-European cultures, and a host of other features which imply […] a wish to imperialize the world *conceptually*' (Porter 2004, 138).

Porter's (and others') caveat remains worth heeding here. Much like Brantlinger, I do not confine my attention uniquely to texts which staunchly advocate for continued imperial expansion as of the 1880s, but I seek to map the development of British cognisant attitudes with regards to the Empire starting from the first half of the nineteenth century. Even so, whenever I recur to the MacKenziean cluster in the following chapters, I always demonstrate the relation of a given ideological component such as militarism or monarchism to the imperial project. Only by doing so, I believe, can I provide a sufficiently nuanced literary-historical picture of the production of British imperial poetic texts in the period under study here.

Though usually excluded or subordinated to other literary forms in most discussions of British imperial ideology and culture, the wide variety of British imperial poetry also indicates that 'British imperial rule' may be understood not only 'as an economic and political system', but also 'as a shifting body of ideas' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 1). As Brooks and Faulkner point out, 'the imperial theme […] engaged many lively minds', but this does not mean that their 'engagement' was 'in any sense monolithic' (3). On the contrary, it changed diachronically and synchronically: 'over a historical period of some four

and spectacles – that motivated and expressed imperialism at the empire's cultural, political, and economic center'.

centuries, the view that British people took of the Empire varied widely. But attitudes could also diverge sharply at almost any given moment during that time, and do so within the work of a single writer' (3). After all, 'few texts, and few beliefs, are without their significant inner tensions' (3). Likewise, Linda K. Hughes points out that Victorian authors of poetry 'did not speak with one voice' and that 'single poems […] often registered ambivalence and contending views about Britain's imperial mission' (Hughes 2010, 193–94). In other words, the same author and even the same poetic text may express a variety of attitudes towards the Empire, let alone different authors and texts. It is such a plurality of imperial voices that will be submitted to critical scrutiny in this dissertation.

My use of the adjective 'imperial' in lieu of 'imperialistic' reflects my ambition to concentrate less on post-1870s jingoist verse than on the continuities and changes in the attitudes of poets towards the Empire across the long nineteenth century. All the poetic texts discussed in the following chapters deal with Britain's imperial power. Not all of these texts, however, give voice to ideological positions instantly recognisable as expressions of the loudmouthed jingoism that became increasingly popular after the 1870s or of what Boehmer defines as 'a more urgent, assertive, and officially directed attitude'. There is also scope for disagreement on the same imperial theme between texts from roughly the same years, as their authors propose competing notions of and beliefs in what the Empire was, could be or should be. While contributing to the representation of the British Empire through 'an oscillation between positive and negative images' (Claeys 2010, 7), however, never do these poetic texts make the case for putting an end to the British imperial nation. Rather, they are usually concerned with its continuation. If not 'pro-expansion' at all costs, they are essentially 'pro-

empire'. As such, they fit Eldridge's definition of 'imperialism' as 'the disposition […] to establish and maintain rule or control over another nation or people, whether in a political, economic or cultural sense' (Eldridge 1996, 18). My object of study here, then, is better described as 'imperial' than as 'imperialistic'.

Having reflected upon the time- and content-based selection criteria of the poetry under scrutiny here, I now move on to outline the methodology adopted to locate, retrieve and analyse the poetic texts in the rest of my dissertation. I summarise the process of bibliographic and archival research which led me to the identification and perusal of a considerable number of relevant primary texts. Then I explain the theoretical principles underpinning the selection and discussion of such texts in the following chapters.

Starting from the basic assumption that British imperial poetry did exist in the long nineteenth century but had been critically neglected, I was first faced with the daunting and time-consuming task of locating and retrieving instances of empire-related poetic texts published approximately from 1789 to 1914. Brooks and Faulkner's *The White Man's Burdens* served as a unique starting point for developing a better understanding of both the extent and the variety of British poetic responses to the Empire from the late sixteenth to the late twentieth centuries. In spite of a few factual inaccuracies[23], Brooks and Faulkner's compilation remains unmatched to this day. Unlike literary prose, poetry appears to be generally underrepresented if not omitted altogether not only in

23 For example, Eliza Cook's 'The Englishman', which is approximately dated to '*c.* 1845' by Brooks and Faulkner (Brooks and Faulkner 1996a, 170–71), should be significantly antedated at least to October 1837, when it first appeared in *Weekly Dispatch* (Cook 1837), or to 1838, when the poem was collected in *Melaia and Other Poems* (Cook 1838, 87–88). Another inaccuracy that would need correction concerns Wilde's 'Ave Imperatrix', which was not 'written for the 1887 Jubilee' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996a, 265). Given its first publication in *The World* on 25th August 1880 and the appearance of a revised version of the poem in Wilde's collection *Poems*, this text should also be antedated (Wilde 1880; Wilde 1881, 4–10; Mason 1914, 228–32; Frankel 1997, 123–24).

literary criticism, but also in important repositories of empire-related primary source materials, such as Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter's *Archives of Empire* (Harlow and Carter 2003; Harlow and Carter 2004)[24]. The collections that do include poems alongside other primary texts in prose, such as Boehmer's *Empire Writing* and Griffiths's four-volume *Empire and Popular Culture*, tend to focus largely or exclusively on the decades following 1870 (Boehmer 1998; Griffiths 2022–23)[25]. As a result, the sources included therein were only partially useful. Further research was necessary to build a corpus of British imperial poetry in the long nineteenth century.

In order to trace and recover the vast majority of poetic texts mentioned and discussed in my dissertation, I devoted much time to bibliographic and archival research. The first method that I used to expand my initial corpus involved identifying poets who penned at least one imperial poem and digging for more in their production, however extensive the latter was. Once again, Brooks and Faulkner's anthology was an indispensable research tool. Some of the books and shorter essays upon which I commented in section 1.2. were also helpful in detecting other imperial voices. Brooks and Faulkner actually note that the imperial 'poems' that they selected were written by 'numerous authors' addressing 'various cultural audiences' but 'do not constitute their author's main commitment' in most cases (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 2–3). Yet, sifting through

24 As Carter and Harlow disclose in the 'General Introduction', their 'collection of original documents and primary source materials relating to the varied processes and various procedures of the colonial project' was originally supposed to be 'a four-volume' publication (Carter and Harlow 2003, xxi), but only two out of four volumes were published. Given the focus of my third chapter, I would have been particularly interested in consulting their planned fourth volume, *Jubilee*, as this would have 'examine[d] the beginnings, means, and ends of empire as these conjunctures were staged "at home", in Queen Victoria's England, by schoolboys and scouts, by suffragettes, in the streets, and in the reviews and popular periodicals as well as in parliamentary debates' (xxii).

25 Devoted to *The Media, Literature, Art, Design, Architecture and Collectables*, the fourth volume in Griffiths's document collection proved to be the most relevant to my research.

the poetry collections of relevant writers anthologised in Brooks and Faulkner's volume or analysed in the secondary sources reviewed above proved rewarding on occasion, as it offered some interesting pieces in addition to those reprinted in *The White Man's Burdens* or discussed in the available literary criticism.

To undertake my bibliographic and archival research, I tapped both digital and physical sources. I heavily relied on *C19: The Nineteenth Century Index*, *The British Newspaper Archive* and the two biobibliographies of mid- and late Victorian poetry completed by the late Catherine W. Reilly (Reilly 1994; Reilly 2000)[26]. I also extensively used more general online resources, such as the index *The Online Books Page* and the digital libraries *Google Books*, *The HathiTrust Digital Library* and *Internet Archive*. A series of research trips to the UK were fundamental to expand and refine the preliminary findings emerging from desk research and to access texts which had not yet been digitised. Over the last three and a half years, I repeatedly visited the reading rooms of the British Library in London (even after the disruption of services following the cyber attack in October 2023), the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Lit & Phil Library in Newcastle upon Tyne and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. The primary source materials thus gathered form the backbone of this dissertation.

My discussion, as well as my selection, of these poetic texts in the following chapters is essentially informed by the theoretical insights provided by the Historical Poetics group since the 2000s in the shape of scholarly work that foregrounds the importance of historicising both poetry and poetry analysis. James Mulholland's 'The Past and Future of Historical Poetics: Poetry and

26 Unfortunately, due to Reilly's death in 2005, her planned third (but chronologically first) volume on *Early Victorian Poetry* never reached completion. This would have been extremely helpful in identifying relevant instances of British imperial poetry before 1860.

Empire' is enormously helpful here. Not only does his essay trace the history of the 'set of social collectives, methodologies, and debates (especially about literary analysis)' that go under the name of 'historical poetics' (Mulholland 2020, 2), but it also pinpoints the basic assumptions widely shared by its practitioners and posits productive ways in which their work may begin or continue to interact with the fields of imperial history and postcolonial studies. As Mulholland writes, 'historical poetics seeks to ground literary readings in history': 'Poetry, like every other art form, responds to social and historical forces that alter not only how poetry was written but how readers understood what it was' (5). Both 'poetry' and the 'analytical concepts for understanding poetry', then, need historicisation (7).

I find this renewed emphasis on 'reading poetry historically' particularly inspiring because it aims both to reduce the friction between 'literary scholarship' and 'historical scholarship' (6) and to reenergise literary history by destabilising 'the academy's focus on the prestige of literature's exclusive canon' (3)[27]. As Michael Cohen observes:

> Much of nineteenth-century poetry remains obscure to contemporary literary history because the terms and assumptions by and through which we understand and evaluate 'poetry' (the protocols of lyric reading, the author function, canons of national literature) are not applicable to most nineteenth-century poetic cultures. (Cohen 2008, 13)

27 Previous valiant attempts to ground specifically British imperial poetry in history include Eldridge 1996, which often cites poems as evidence, and Brooks and Faulkner 1996a, which contains an insightful 'introductory essay' and an informative 'headnote' for each anthologised poem, as well as Thomson 1946, a now largely obsolete master's thesis which occasionally offers interesting remarks.

To counter the fixation of much literary scholarship on 'formal or linguistic complexity', Cohen proposes to pay more attention to 'the social functions of poems in one time and place' (13; cf. Cohen 2015). Offering alternative ways to complement the conventional focus on 'aesthet[ic] pleasure, linguistic complexity, and literary innovation' (Mulholland 2020, 4), historical poetics attempts to illuminate 'a historical process of thinking *through* (simultaneously *about* and *in*) verse' (Prins 2016, 18) by attending both to 'unusual, forgotten, disregarded authors, poems, poetic styles, and tastes' (Mulholland 2020, 7), and to 'poetic practices' which, despite some notable exceptions, have traditionally been side-lined in literary scholarship, such as 'memorization, recitation, visual illustration, anthologization' and 'recirculation […] by prosodists or parodists' (Prins 2016, 18). In other words, the practitioners of historical poetics study not only the single-handed composition of poems or the response to poems resulting from silent reading, but also the reproduction and circulation of poetic texts in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes in a given sociohistorical context. As exemplified by the work of the various contributors to *Victorian Verse: The Poetics of Everyday Life* (2023), the scholarly project of the newly coalesced 'verse studies' similarly seeks to overcome the still 'ongoing critical reluctance to engage with the vast proportion of poetic output in the nineteenth century' by paying heed to poetic texts that are 'not restrictively lyrical and canonical' but 'topical, occasional, referential, and otherwise locked into the present' (Behlman and Moy 2023, 6–7 and 12). Particularly through a discussion of imperially conscious anthologisation in chapter four, my dissertation joins these commendable efforts to historicise the social life of poetry in the nineteenth

century, which have already begun to produce more sophisticated and penetrating literary-historical accounts.

Whereas both MacKenzie and Porter have often explicitly distanced themselves from postcolonial scholars, Mulholland envisages a fruitful enduring collaboration between historical poetics and the two fields of imperial history and postcolonial studies. He writes:

> When crossed with the techniques that have arisen from postcolonial studies and histories of empire, historical poetics asks us to pay attention to those interesting things that too few of us have had time, energy, or dispensation to pay attention to, while at the same time asking why we have not paid attention and what happens when we finally do. (Mulholland 2020, 12–13)

For Mulholland, one of 'those interesting things that too few of us have had time, energy, or dispensation to pay attention to' is periodical poetry:

> Historical poetics offers a broad range of dispositions that could be utilized more fully by scholars of empire, turning them toward formats, like newspaper verse, that provide new understandings of the link between imperial politics, art-making, and aesthetics. (11–12)[28]

His essay suggests that more thorough examinations of this and other similar underused sources, especially from 'the regions, climates, and socio-politics of imperial ventures beyond the British Isles', would help redress the imbalance in the critical study of the interplay between poetry and the Empire (8–9)[29]. As I

28 Cf. Porter's categorical refusal to scrutinise 'written materials' such as 'Sunday and provincial newspapers' and 'periodicals'.

29 Rudy's *Imagined Homelands* (to name but one book that does precisely that) certainly illustrates this point very well (Rudy 2017).

demonstrate in the following chapters, wherein my focus is fully on 'British perspectives on the Empire' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 3), consulting Britain's archives to unearth 'unusual, forgotten, disregarded' poetic texts can still be highly rewarding in this regard.

In what follows, I use both traditional techniques such as close reading and the kind of sociohistorical contextualisation urged and performed by historical poetics and verse studies to survey an array of understudied poetic texts which satisfy the time- and content-based selection criteria described above. These texts, most of which are probably unfamiliar, if not utterly unknown, even to the specialist, range from periodical poems and individual items in poetry collections to whole book-length poems and poetry anthologies. To study these primary source materials, then, I combine in-depth textual analysis with careful historicisation.

In addressing what my literature review has identified as a curious blind spot in the existing research, I primarily intend to make a contribution to the scholarship on British poetry in the long nineteenth century and British imperial literature of the same period. 'The silence is deafening': this is the 'generalised verdict' that Porter gives on much pre-1880s British imperial poetry (as well as fiction and theatre) after perfunctorily considering very limited textual evidence (Porter 2004, 140). One possible response to the apparent poetic silence is just to accept it. This is precisely Porter's response, but it is also the tacit reply of all those scholars who have failed to appeal against such an unfair ruling with regards to poetry. Another possible reaction to the ostensible silence of British poets on the Empire is to start probing it. What if, we could and should ask ourselves, the various poetic voices of Britain's imperial century have actually

been silenced by time and critical neglect? Taken together, the following chapters protest against such hurried verdicts as Porter's (and the tacit approval thereof) and ultimately seek to overturn them by recuperating at least some of these voices and echoes and by listening to the ideological nuances that they express.

Chapter Two

British Royal Jubilee Poetry I: 1809

2.1. Nineteenth-Century British Royal Jubilee Poetry and the Empire

Throughout the long nineteenth century, the British royal family often provided poets with the inspiration for patriotic writing. A considerable number of poems expressly dealing with the subject were composed on the occasion of public events primarily taking place in the metropole. This chapter and the next lay great emphasis on royal jubilees. The nineteenth century saw three instances of formal celebrations marking specific anniversaries of a British imperial monarch's accession to the throne. The precedent for the two Victorian jubilees (celebrated on 20th and 21st June 1887 and on 22nd June 1897, respectively) was set by King George III, whose entering into the fiftieth year of his reign was celebrated on 25th October 1809. The poetry inspired by the three nineteenth-century royal jubilees, particularly George III's and Victoria's 'Golden' ones, forms the main textual focus of the present and the following chapters[1].

Nineteenth-century royal jubilee poetry is part of the huge outpouring of poetic texts prompted by pacific monarchy-related events. Jennifer Laing and Warwick Frost use the phrase 'royal events' to describe 'ephemeral performances that are planned and enacted' in order 'to reinforce the role of royalty within social and political structures' (Laing and Frost 2018, 4). Some of these, like coronations and, of course, jubilees, specifically centre on the sitting monarch himself/herself. Five coronations took place in Britain between 1815 and 1914: George IV's (19th July 1821), William IV's (8th September 1831), Victoria's (28th

1 At the time of their respective celebrations, George III's and the first of Victoria's two royal jubilees used to be called simply 'the Jubilee'. For an example of a poet referring to the 1887 royal jubilee as 'the Victorian Jubilee', see Saeger 1887. In the poetic output occasioned by Victoria's first royal jubilee, diverse authors such as Tupper and Buchanan do refer to 1887 as 'the golden year' (Tupper 1886a, p. 12, l. 25; Buchanan 1887), but the epithet 'Golden' was not frequently used until around 1897, when it became necessary to differentiate Victoria's previously celebrated anniversary from her upcoming one. In my work, I also follow the later and more practical convention of referring to the 1887 anniversary as 'Golden'.

June 1838), Edward VII's (9th August 1902) and George V's (22nd June 1911). Other events, such as funerals, revolve around the ruler and/or a member of the royal family. Five British monarchs died and were buried after a funeral service in Britain's imperial century: George III's (29th January and 16th February 1820), George IV's (26th June and 15th July 1830), William IV's (20th June and 8th July 1837), Victoria's (22nd January and 2nd February 1901) and Edward VII's (6th and 20th May 1910).

Along with the death and funeral (on 14th and 23rd December 1861, respectively) of Victoria's husband, Prince Albert (1819–1861), in the second half of the century, the premature demise of Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales (1796–1817), on 6th November 1817 and her funeral on 19th November 1817 may well add up to these grief-inducing occasions (Schor 1994; Wolffe 2000; Range 2016). The figure of Princess Charlotte has been the subject of many a book over the past two centuries, ranging from the biographies published in the aftermath of her precocious demise to more recent biographical volumes, such as Anna Stott's *The Lost Queen* (2020)[2]. The direct heir to the throne at the time of her death after a stillbirth, Princess Charlotte predeceased both her grandfather George III and her father George, Prince of Wales and later George IV. Perceived as a national disaster, her untimely death inspired an extraordinary surge of reactions in print all over Great Britain, Ireland and beyond. These comprise not only diverse poetic texts by the likes of Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743–1825), George Gordon Byron (1788–1824) and Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793–1835) and by many long forgotten voices, but even an elegiac piece of prose written by an

2 See, among others, Hamilton 1817; *The Life of the Late Princess Charlotte* 1818; Green 1818; Huish 1818; Weigall 1874; Jones 1885; Pearce 1911; Creston 1932; Renier 1932; Stuart 1951; Holme 1976; Plowden 1989; Chambers 2007; Williams 2008; Stott 2020.

Italian preceptor in Corfu and dedicated to Charlotte's mother Caroline of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, 'the everlasting pride and desire / of the British Empire' ('orgoglio e desiderio perenne / del Britanno Impero') (Leone 1818)[3].

During the period under scrutiny in my dissertation, the production of a profusion of patriotic poetry was further stimulated by other events involving at least a royal family member. In addition to royal births, weddings and their anniversaries, these events include royal visits to the various territories under the control of the British Crown. In order to be saluted with an imperially minded patriotic poem, British royals did not have to go as far as the dominions and colonies overseas. 'Ode on His Majesty's Arrival at Weymouth', a 1791 poem by William Holloway (c. 1761–1854), is a case in point (Holloway 1791)[4]. Occasioned by George III's visit to Weymouth, Dorset, Holloway's ode begins by illustrating the geographical reach of the 'fame' of a 'Sov'reign' 'by the World admir'd' – which, 'with undiminish'd rays, / From utmost *Indus* to the frozen Pole / Conspicuous shines, and claims the meed of praise / Where'er the wild winds blow, or waters roll' – only to point out that his visit is able to bring great joy to his subjects in other English regions: 'E'en on the confines of this sea-girt Isle, / From all the splendors of a Court retir'd' (ll. 1–4 and 7–10). What is more, it seems worth noting here that Holloway's poem deploys other arguments and images that, far from being completely original, are also typical of the later texts that I

3 Unless otherwise specified, all English translations from Italian are mine. The most complete study of 'the outpouring of literary and extra-literary response to the princess's life and death' remains Stephen C. Behrendt's *Royal Mourning and Regency Culture* (1997), focussing as it does on both 'verbal, print materials' and 'extra-literary artifacts', such as 'caricatures and commemorative prints, public monuments and a broad variety of commemorative decorative objects like textiles, ceramics and metalwork' (Behrendt 1997, 26 and 32). But see also Pinch 1996, 177–92, Behrendt 2005 and more recent studies such as Cohen-Vrignaud 2020 and Doerksen 2022.

4 As stated by an authorial footnote, this poem was not the first instance of a 'little effusion of loyalty' in verse by Holloway himself to have been published in the same newspaper 'on a similar occasion'.

analyse more in depth below: for example, the verbal picture of the British monarch as 'the mighty Ruler' of the waves in lines such as 'Haste, all ye sportive Neriades, once again, / To hail the mighty Ruler of your wide Domain!' (ll. 17–18); or the contrast established between, on the one hand, Britain and its monarch – 'the KING of KINGS', whose realm is characterised by 'Peace celestial' (ll. 36 and 25) – and, on the other, France and the pathetic French royals – '*Gallia*'s PRINCE on Discord's billows tost, / Crush'd by the chain of Anarchy, […] / His Throne insulted, and his Empire lost', and 'A *fallen Monarch captive*' (ll. 19–21 and 24)[5].

One might even add attempted assassinations to the list of relevant poetic prompts[6]. Penned by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), 'Ave Imperatrix!' (1882) is a prime example of poetic reaction to the many unsuccessful attempts on Victoria's life (Kipling 2013, 2:1209–10; cf. Beresford 1936, 241–45; Rutherford 1986, 9; Seymour-Smith 1989, 46; Ricketts 2003, 28). Interestingly enough, it was inspired by a poem of the same title but written on a different subject by Oscar Wilde (Wilde 2000, 136–39; cf. Frankel 1997; Bristow 2013, 79 and 81).

Although all these types of events were used by nineteenth-century poets as a pretext to write poems imbued with patriotic feelings, the present and following chapters alone cannot do justice to the ideological work performed by this sheer quantity of poetry composed on such diverse occasions and devoted to such diverse figures. In terms of nineteenth-century poetic responses to the

5 On the occasion of the 1809 royal jubilee, Holloway contributed a poem wherein the speaker voices both the conviction that British past, present and future victories all derive from a divine blessing and the hope that the grandeur of his rule will be preserved and remembered in time: 'Hail, patriot Monarch! bless'd below, / Thus may'st thou vanquish ev'ry foe! / And may the splendours of thy reign / The utmost verge of time attain' (Holloway 1809–10, p. 20, ll. 35–38).

6 On attempted assassinations of nineteenth-century European monarchs like the British ones, see Hoffman 2015. For a study of the reactions to attempts on the lives of the British royal family in the nineteenth century, see Pentland 2023. For accounts of the eight attempts on Victoria's life between 1840 and 1882, see Charles 2012; Murphy 2012; Charles 2014.

British royals and the events in which they were involved, there were virtually as many varieties as there were respondents. Not only did the same figure and/or event serve as the starting point for diverse poetic representations[7], but texts were published that contained poetic responses to more than figure or event[8]. To be sure, a whole dissertation would hardly suffice to appreciate the complexity of the subject. Even more space would be required if other relevant figures like the representatives of the monarch were to be factored into the picture. To name but one, the poetic representation of Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826–1902), and his wife Hariot Georgina Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava (1843–1926), would serve as a potentially interesting case study[9]. Significant texts to be examined in this regard were authored not only by usual suspects like Tennyson or Kipling[10], but also by (much or slightly) less familiar poetic voices, such as Nora Pembroke (1828–1899)[11], Edwin Arnold (1832–1904)[12], Emily

7 The 'Prelude' which Daniel Karlin describes as 'a kind of textual frontispiece' appended to his 1997 anthology of Victorian poetry may be taken as broadly indicative of the range of poetic subjects and political stances inspired by British royals (Karlin 1997, xxix and 1–9). Karlin's relatively small selection of poetic responses to the Queen herself consists of seven items (five short pieces and two extracts from longer poems) by just as many authors. Taken together, these poetic texts mark a series of key moments in Victoria's reign, from her coronation through her wedding to her first royal jubilee and eventually her death, and, at the same time, reveal a range of views on the Queen.

8 To name but one excellent example, see Gibbons 1887, which collects poetic pieces composed for a good range of royal events that took place between 1841 and 1887 (namely, births, weddings, visits, deaths, burials and, of course, jubilees).

9 Lord Dufferin was the Governor General of Canada from 25th June 1872 to 25th November 1878 and the Viceroy and Governor-General of India from 13th December 1884 to 10th December 1888. Lady Dufferin is best remembered for establishing the Countess of Dufferin's Fund in 1885 with the objective of improving healthcare for women in British India. For recent historiographic accounts of Lord Dufferin, see Gailey 2015 and Tindley 2021. On Lady Dufferin's medical work in India, see Lal 1994 and Roberts 2006.

10 See Tennyson's 'To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava' (1889) and Kipling's 'One Viceroy Resigns' (1888) and 'The Song of the Women' (1888; 1890), which are reproduced in authoritative critical editions of the respective writers' works (Tennyson 1969, 1406–8; Kipling 2013, 1:145–52 and 1:101–3).

11 See Pembroke 1880, 85–87.

12 See Arnold 1888b, esp. the dedication to Lord Dufferin and the tribute to Lady Dufferin (46–48). See also Arnold 1888a, which is a selection of old and 'new pieces' that, as he explains in the

Pfeiffer (1827–1890)[13] and others[14]. In an attempt to do justice to at least a thematically consistent group of poems, however, I confine the scope of this chapter and the next to the figure of the sitting monarch in 1809 (King George III) and in 1887 (Queen Victoria), respectively.

In the present and following chapters, I suggest that nineteenth-century British royal jubilee poetry functions as a hitherto overlooked site wherein imperial voices resounded in various ways. Admittedly, not every surviving poetic text devoted to the ruler of the British imperial nation and the historical events in which the King/Queen and/or his/her relatives were involved also deals with, or even simply touches on, the Empire. Yet, this does not deny the fact that a considerable number of the available nineteenth-century monarchy-related poems are directly concerned with the British colonial empire. While some of these carry imperial overtones, others reveal the significance of the dominions and colonies overseas for the British at home more clearly. In this chapter and the next, I demonstrate that these various degrees of interest in the British Empire is well exemplified by royal jubilee literature, which not only brings different attitudes towards the monarchy to the fore, but also evinces the

'Preface', Arnold published to reject the false accusation of being 'exclusively devoted to oriental subjects of verse'. Among the 'non-oriental poems' are also texts that speak to the themes explored in my dissertation.

13 Pfeiffer's sonnet 'To the Marchioness of Dufferin on Her Departure from India' appears in Pfeiffer 1889, 102, where she refers her readers to 'the farewell address of Indian ladies to the Marchioness of Dufferin, as published in the *Times* of last December'. See also Dufferin and Ava 1890, 2:344–46. Though not addressing Pfeiffer's sonnet to Lady Dufferin, for examples of scholarly treatments of Pfeiffer's poetry, see Hickok 1995; Hickok 1999; Brennan 2003, 143–69; Brand 2015; Dieleman 2016.

14 See, for example, *The Book of Helen's Tower*, 'a volume of slight dimensions, comprising some twenty pieces of poetry, all dedicated to or bearing on some of the achievements of [Lord Dufferin's] family', that was printed for private circulation (Drummond Black 1903, 375–77). Some of the selected poems are engraved on bronze plates displayed in the upper room of Helen's Tower, which was built by Lord Dufferin in Conlig in honour of his mother and which was inaugurated in 1861 (Nicolson 1937, 138–41; Howley 1993, 54–56).

importance of British expansionism to the construction of different forms of patriotism and, in so doing, qualifies as thoughtful writing about the Empire.

The role played by poetry written and published to mark such significant milestones in the reign of Britain's imperial monarchs as the royal jubilees has seldom been investigated. In point of fact, the centenary of Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1987 sparked renewed interest in the event. As far as poetry is concerned, this is well exemplified by a thematic issue of the scholarly journal *Victorian Poetry* edited by William E. Fredeman and by a collection of jubilee poetry edited by Brian Louis Pearce, both appearing in 1987 (Fredeman 1987c; Pearce 1987; cf. Fabb 1987; Pearce et al. 1987). Moreover, just like the first of the Victorian jubilees rekindled curiosity about its immediate Georgian precursor, as testified by Thomas Preston's *Jubilee Jottings* (1887), which, on occasion, partially or entirely reproduces specimens of jubilee songs and poems (Preston 1887 xxiv–xxviii, xli, 5–8 and 73–75), the Silver, Diamond and Platinum Jubilees of Queen Elizabeth II (in 1977, in 2012 and in 2022, respectively) have all encouraged a retrospective look at similar celebrations in the past, including the three taking place in the nineteenth century (Chapman and Raben 1977; Allan 2012; Lambert 2012; Millidge 2012; Woolerton 2022). Yet, the place of poetry in the discursive construction of such momentous events in the reign of long-lived rulers remains underexplored, to say the least.

The critical neglect of nineteenth-century British royal jubilee poems arguably reflects the more general neglect of poetry in the existing scholarship on George III and Victoria. Such fundamental works as Richard Williams's *The Contentious Crown* (1997) have helped us to recognise how varied public opinion on, and public discussion of, the British monarchy and the royal family was in

the nineteenth century (Williams 1997). The diverse perceptions and representations of British royals across printed media (literature, the periodical press and caricatures, among others) and all over the Empire at the time have received sustained attention in a vast abundance of studies of different lengths and with different trajectories. Narrowly focussed or more wide-ranging discussions of these subjects may be found across journal articles and issues, single essays in edited volumes and whole essay collections, book sections, chapters and even doctoral dissertations and monographs[15]. While helpfully contributing to the historicisation of the public image of the British monarchy and the royal family in the nineteenth century, this ever-growing body of scholarship seems quite uncurious about poets' views. This is less surprisingly the case with the largely historiographic essays, which tend to rely on poetry only in a secondary fashion, than with the more literary-oriented contributions, which similarly fail to engage with poetic texts more seriously. Only rarely does poetry undergo extended analysis in so wide a range of available scholarly works devoted to British monarchs in power in the nineteenth century and/or their close relations.

By contrast, this chapter and the next give firm priority to a particular kind of monarchy-related poetic output, which has not yet been the subject of a systematic study, but which, as I show, may serve as a useful entry point into the underresearched interplay between British verse and various forms of imperial

15 See, for instance, Kingsley 1962; Lant 1979; Cannadine 1983; Colley 1984; Savory and Marks 1985, 21–44; Lucas 1987–88; Richards 1990, 73–118; Stanworth 1994; Altick 1997, 432–49; Homans and Munich 1997; Homans 1998; Houston 1999; Aronofsky Weltman 1999, esp. 103–23; Taylor 1999; Tyrrell and Ward 2000; Henry 2001; Hunt 2003; Plunkett 2003; Strong 2005, 353–419; Allen 2007; Baker 2007; Semmel 2007; Allen 2015; Carter and Nugent 2016; Mitcham 2016, 97–128; Taylor 2016; Bueltmann and MacRaild 2017, 300–23; Laing and Frost 2018, 92–109 and 126–62; Taylor 2018; Heywood 2020, 233–75; Holton 2020; Michelucci, Duncan and Villa 2020; Dixon 2021a; Dixon 2021b; Garrett 2022; Ledger-Lomas 2022; Marschner and Hatt 2022; Emerick 2023; Heywood 2023; Müller 2023, esp. 176–238; the essays in Norrie et al. 2023, 1–153.

patriotism across the nineteenth century. My discussion of a selection of poems occasioned by Victoria's Golden Jubilee of 1887 in chapter four fundamentally differs from the comparatively few appraisals preceding mine in that I interpret these texts primarily in relation to those penned for George III's royal jubilee eighty years earlier, analysed in this chapter. Taken together, then, chapters three and four highlight important but generally overlooked similarities and differences, both between occasional poems responding to the same event and between early and late nineteenth-century poems. As I chart continuities and discontinuities in their different attitudes towards the British monarchy and Empire across these chapters, I ultimately document how the poetic responses to momentous events in the reign of long-lived rulers such as the royal jubilees function as an overlooked site where the expression of competing forms of patriotism – some more explicitly imperially minded than others – may be studied.

In what follows, I perform close readings of a selection of poetic responses to royal events, particularly George III's only royal jubilee and Victoria's first royal jubilee. As well as examining various poets' attitudes towards the monarchy, my textual analysis identifies and investigates the more explicitly imperial dimensions of the diverse poems under scrutiny. To this end, I seek systematically to zoom in and shed light on the following politically charged aspects of the selected texts: the representation of geographical space; the contrast with other historical empires; the relation established between war and peace. Noting that poetry composed for the first Victorian jubilee offers 'much to interest the patriot and the historian as well as the reader of poetry', Brian Louis Pearce draws attention to existing patterns such as 'a name-dropping which,

superficial as it can be, betokens a strong emotional response to the associations of place' and a general 'preoccupation' with military 'successes' and 'defeats' alike (Pearce et al. 1987, 573). By foregrounding the empire-connected assumptions of these and other often interlocking aspects in both early and late nineteenth-century monarchy-related poems, I demonstrate that these diverse poetic texts from roughly the opposite ends of the period justify and celebrate the British imperial nation on similar ideological grounds.

Having clarified the monarchy-related events which provide my thematic focus and having specified the textual aspects to which my analytical efforts are largely devoted here and in the next chapter, I wish to qualify the diversity of poetic voices studied. The range of authors discussed below is deliberately broad enough to include poets who are unfamiliar even to the specialist alongside better-known writers, such as several of the various poets laureate that succeeded one another in the period under examination in this dissertation[16]. If the poet laureate in office at the time of a given royal event usually wrote (or was expected to write) at least one poem about it, he was always joined by many other unofficial voices. When contributing to the production of an enormous wealth of occasional patriotic pieces, at least some of these poets hoped (to no avail) to be appointed as the next laureate. This was the certainly the case of Lewis Morris, whose poetry occupies me in the last section of chapter four. It was also the case of others before Morris, like John Gwilliam (c. 1787–1857). In his 'Sonnet,

16 Henry James Pye (1745–1813) was appointed on 28th July 1790, Robert Southey (1774–1843) on 4th November 1813, William Wordsworth (1770–1850) on 6th April 1843, Tennyson on 19th November 1850, Alfred Austin (1835–1913) on 1st January 1896, after a three-and-a-half-year vacancy following Tennyson's death on 6th October 1892, and Robert Bridges (1844–1930) on 25th July 1913. For a recent overview of the origins of laureateship between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Shipp 2022. Useful discussions of the appointment of a new poet laureate in the period under study here include Lucas 2000; Shipp 2021; Morton 2022. On the Poets Laureate of Britain appointed in the years considered in this dissertation, see, among others, West 1895; Gray 1915; Broadus 1921; Hopkins 1973; Russell 1981; Savory and Marks 1985, 65–98; Panecka 2014.

Respectfully Addressed to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria' (1838), Gwilliam begs Victoria to let him succeed 'Master Southey' in 'wear[ing] the coronet' of 'The Poet Laureate of this might land' (Gwilliam 1838, p. [2], ll. 3–5)[17]. Even though I occasionally refer to the poetic responses of laurel-wreathed or still remembered authors, such as Pye, Tennyson or Kipling, and discuss them to a greater or lesser extent, I prioritise the less familiar voices, which are hardly ever considered in modern scholarship, excluded as they typically are even from the critical discussions of the historical events with which I am concerned in the present and following chapters.

At the same time, it is worth remarking here that the diversity of poetic voices under scrutiny could have been even richer. Linguistically richer, for instance. Ayesha Mukherjee has very recently reminded us that 'the latter half of the nineteenth century saw a proliferation of laudatory literature in a variety of genres and vernacular Indian languages' (Mukherjee 2024, 15). In her insightful article, she examines poetry in praise of Victoria by Dastur Behramji Sanjana (1828–1898), Dosabhai Bahmanji (fl. 1873–1886) and Sohrabji Kuvarji Jivaji Taskar (fl. 1881) to show how their 'Persianate laudatory poems […] attempted a subtle reorientation of empire by representing political possibilities that might arise from a strategic alliance with their community and its heritage' (31)[18]. Even

17 This sonnet was appended by Gwilliam to his *Royal Revels; or, The Queen's Jubilee: A Poem, in Commemoration of Her Majesty's Visit to the City Banquet, on Lord Mayor's Day, 9th of November, 1837*, printed in the second half of the two-part *Primrose Hill: A Poem, to Which Are Added The Queen's Jubilee, and Other Metrical Effusions*. A regular contributor to the pages of the short-lived *The Poetical Magazine* (May 1809 – April 1811), Gwilliam responded to historical events like the Napoleonic Wars, the assassination of Spencer Perceval, the British Prime Minister (1762–1812), and the deaths of Princess Charlotte and William IV (Gwilliam 1811a; Gwilliam 1811b; Gwilliam 1813; Gwilliam [1814]; Gwilliam 1817a; Gwilliam 1813; Gwilliam 1817b; Gwilliam 1830). Scholars appear to have glanced dismissively at Gwilliam's work, with Herbert F. Tucker deeming *The Imperial Captive* to be unreadable, for instance (Tucker 2013, 156; but see also Tucker 2008, 193). For a brief discussion of Gwilliam's apprenticeship as a published poet in *The Poetical Magazine*, see Ellis 1983, 349–51.

18 For another relevant example, see [Thomson] 1876 and Tadakamalla 2024, 91–94.

within the metropolitan borders, monarchy-related poetry circulated that was not necessarily written in any of Britain's regional languages. Italian diplomat Francesco Sastres (fl. 1775–1822), for example, penned his jubilee tribute to George III in his own native language (Sastres 1809)[19], while Cambridge-educated Charles De La Pryme (1815–1899) resorted to Latin when composing his poem for the first of the Victorian jubilees (Delapryme 1887). Literary-historical accounts that are sensitive to this substantial degree of multilingualism within Britain and across the British Empire have the potential to add more-than-welcome nuances to the broader depiction of British royals as registered in long-nineteenth-century poetry. However, the interpretation of non-English poems would obviously demand a mastery of languages other than English that I could not always boast. This is why my discussion of selected empire-connected and monarchy-related patriotic poetry focusses almost exclusively on English-language literary evidence.

With no pretence to exhaust the sheer abundance of royal jubilee poetic texts produced during Britain's imperial century, I now turn to my exploration of a highly uncharted area of nineteenth-century British imperial literary culture. In this chapter, I start with a discussion of instances of poetry written in response to George III's royal jubilee and especially focus on *The Jubilee: A Poem on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne* (1810) by William Jerdan (1782–1869). I pay sustained attention to the imperial significance of recurring spatial descriptions, temporal comparisons and war/peace tensions. Underlining the ideological importance of these moments when the texts

19 The poem also appears in *The Poetical Magazine* (Sastres 1809–10). On Sastres, see Piccioni 1924; Boswell 1934–64, 4:403; Bate 1975, 599; Suwabe 2021. On the circulation of Italian texts printed in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century London like Sastres's, see Cavagna 2010.

forcefully strike imperial notes enables me to challenge Bernard Porter's claims on the virtual absence of imperial signs in nineteenth-century poetry (Porter 2004, 140). I suggest that, when prompted to muse on the continuation of a long-lived reign, nineteenth-century British poets – far from being absent-minded imperialists – also directed their thoughts to the British Empire.

2.2. British Poetry and the Jubilee of George III

Celebrated in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), the Jubilee of George III inspired many a meditation on the importance of domestic peace. As Judith Millidge usefully reminds us:

> There was a great sense of national pride that Britain actually had a monarch, unlike the French who had lost theirs to the Revolutionaries, and who, by 1809, were ruled by the much-vilified Napoleon Bonaparte. The war with France and the fact that Britain alone held out against the all-conquering French was a source of immense patriotism, which was focussed on the king himself. The British (or at least the chattering classes) were very conscious of the fact that, unlike the rest of Europe, they were free of "the yoke of foreign tyranny" (in the words of the author of *An Account of the Celebration of the Jubilee*) and in 1809 they were determined to celebrate this. (Millidge 2012, 14)[20]

These points are perfectly illustrated by an anonymous poem entitled 'On the Jubilee' (1809?) and available at the British Library[21]. The poem begins by congratulating George III, the 'happy Sovereign' who, 'O'er Britain […], mistress

20 On the importance of Napoleon to the British and their culture in the nineteenth century, including after Napoleon's own death, see, at least, Semmel 2004 and the very recent Gregory 2025.

21 Shelfmark L.23.c.1.(50.). Line references in text.

of the main', ruled 'For half a cent'ry by thy people lov'd, / Amid the wreck of neighbouring thrones unmov'd' (ll. 1 and 3–5). Then, the speaker directly addresses 'the fierce Napoleon' (l. 9), calling him 'a ruthless tyrant' (l. 8), and mimics his arrogance by ventriloquising his boastful speech:

Between the Pyrenees and rapid Rhine,
And wide Atlantic's waters, all is mine.
Rome, Brussells, Paris, own my Sovereign sway,
Vienna, Berlin, my commands obey:
To me dependant Emperors submit,
And diadems I trample 'neath my feet. (ll. 11–16)

Napoleon, the 'proud upstart' (l. 17), is directly contrasted with George, whose subjects are spontaneously fêting him in during his jubilee year:

And who thy end untimely shall deplore,
Who, who, shall weep when Bonapartes' no more!
Amongst the subjects thy iron rod,
The nations whom thou rulest with a nod,
One solitary mortal canst thou find
Who thinks of thee good, beneficent, and kind:
Who, out of pure affection would for thee
With cheerful heart, keep a glad Jubilee?
No, tyrant, no? of all the slaves that bow
None love thee – what! not one? no, tyrant, no?
But Britons on this day, with one consent
To their lov'd Monarch, thankful praise present (ll. 19–30)

If, as their respective subjects' responses are said to reveal, George III and Napoleon could not be more different from each other, the text keeps peace at home and war abroad far apart: 'In peace and plenty's bosom, we from far / Hear with contempt, thy menaces of war: / Fair Liberty's best gifts, we joyous prove' (ll. 31–33). As this poem exemplifies, at the time of celebrating the commencement of the fiftieth year of George III's reign, the notion of domestic peace was highly loaded with ideological values. Strongly interconnected with the cognate concepts of 'freedom' and 'liberty', the notion of an exceptionally localised peacefulness at wartime was central to arguments about Britain's superiority over all the other nations. As such, this notion was also crucial to the literary construction and expression of British patriotism, its more imperially minded forms included. Quite importantly, in fact, the image of an extraordinary state of peace enjoyed on British soil, with all its ideological connections to 'freedom' and 'liberty', was often marshalled to justify Britons' military efforts abroad. The exaltation of domestic peace usually went hand in hand with the eulogy of martial successes, which included not only historical exploits from the past and the present, but also imagined future victories. This flaunting of the exceptional state of peace at home that is often rehearsed in the poems analysed below assumes the idealisation of geographically or historically displaced warmaking as 'just'. As I interpret royal jubilee poetry prompted by the Georgian jubilee in this section, then, what particularly attracts my interest is the ideological work performed by the spatial and temporal juxtaposition of peace with war within the poems and their rhetorical efforts to resolve possible tensions resulting from it.

The contrast between peace at home and warfare abroad resurfaces time and time again in the patriotic poetry of the period, beginning with the poems of the Poet Laureate of the time that abounds with 'pacifist imprecations' (Shipp 2022 230)[22]. Pye's laureate odes in the years 1809 and 1810 render this contrast figuratively in climatological terms. Both 'Ode for the New Year 1809' and 'Ode for His Majesty's Birth-Day' (1809), for example, point to the privileged situation in which Britain finds itself vis-à-vis the other tempest-stricken European countries:

So o'er Europe's ravaged plain
We saw the torrent wild of war
Resistless spread its iron reign,
And scatter ruin wide and far;
The embattled wall, the warlike band,
Vainly the Tyrant's course withstand;
Before the impious sons of Gaul
The legions fly, the bulwark's fall;
Yet Britain's floating castles sweep
Invasion from her subject deep. (Pye 1809a, ll. 27–36)

22 Referring to Pye's earlier output, Simon Bainbridge has suggested that his laureate odes composed amidst the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802) provided 'an important poetic mediation of the war, presenting to the king, the court, and other influential members of the political hierarchy a familiar yet still powerful vision of Britain and its role in war', and that 'his non-laureate verse' of the same years also attempted 'to use poetry to urge the war's continuation and to inspire his readers' participation, publishing translations of the elegies of the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus in 1795, for example', but, Shipp remarks, the idea of 'conceiving poetry's chief, unique function to be its ability to mediate war to the public […] had already been present for several decades in the laureate odes'. 'While presenting Albion as peace-loving and fighting only defensive wars, though particularly fierce when provoked into action', Bainbridge observes, 'Pye makes Britain essentially a warrior nation defined by conflict against France: "Albion many an ancient scar / Still bears on her indented breast, / In every age by Gallic war / Or Gallic perfidy impress'd". He frequently invokes a familiar roll-call of British triumphs – Cressy, Agincourt, the Armada – as proof of Albion's warlike genius and as a demand for the nation to reassert its essential identity as a "warrior race"'. For Shipp, however, 'Bainbridge's suggestion that there was something cursory, or insincere, about [Pye's] wishes [for peace] seems unfair'. See Bainbridge 2003, 49–50; Shipp 2022, 222 and 230.

Ah! happier, Britain, o'er thy plain
Still smiling Peace and Freedom reign;
And while thy sons with pitying eye
Behold the fields of ruin round them lie;
The storms that shake each neighbour-realm with fear,
Like distant thunder die upon the ear. (Pye 1809b, ll. 13–18)

This kind of metaphorical language is echoed by 'Ode for the New Year 1810' (1810), which expresses the speaker's wish that this favourable set of circumstances may last. Pye's New Year ode may also qualify as a jubilee ode, composed as it was to celebrate 'the British Monarch's lengthen'd reign' and, more precisely, 'the tenth lustre of his lenient sway' (Pye 1810, ll. 12 and 16)[23]. In the third stanza, the poem explicitly refers to the jubilee festivities:

From Thule's hyperborian reign,
To where upon the southern main
Bellerus frowns – to where the Atlantic roars,
O verdant Erin, 'gainst thy western shores,
The peans loud of exultation rise. (ll. 21–25)

After delimiting the geographical scope of the celebrations to the British Isles through this series of interlocking classical, legendary and literary references, the

23 This poem appeared in at least two other London newspapers on the same day (*The General Evening Post*, 18th January 1810, p. 4; *The St. James' Chronicle*, 18th January 1810, p. 4), then it was reproduced in the pages of several other British periodicals in the following weeks. See, for example, *Evening Mail* (19th January 1810, p. 2), *Jackson's Oxford Journal* (20th January 1810, p. 2), *Caledonian Mercury* (22nd January 1810, p. 3), *The Coventry Standard* (22nd January 1810, p. 4), *The Bury and Norwich Post* (24th January 1810, p. 4), *Leicester Journal* (26th January 1810, p. 2) and *Drakard's Stamford News* (26th January 1810, p. 4).

fourth and final stanza portrays 'Britannia' as 'seated on her rocky throne, / Girt by her navy's adamantine zone', but surrounded by 'the storms of war', before the ode ends on quite a hopeful note: 'May every baleful vapour fly / That hangs malignant now o'er Europe's sky, / Internal Discord's iron tempest cease, / And GEORGE's sun decline in Glory and in Peace!' (ll. 43–46 and 49–52). While the last line contains a sombre premonition of the King's death, the speaker's hope here is for war to cease and for peace to reign. In order for this to happen, however, Britain's engagement in the ongoing armed conflicts is a necessary step, the poem implies.

Peace is invoked with a similar ideological agenda by the anonymous author of *An Heroic Poem to Britannia: In Remembrance of the Jubilee Year of George the Third, King of the United Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1809). While predicting that 'Peace, fair Peace, on Britain's Isle shall smile', the poem accepts war as an immediate necessity, for 'fair Peace is not the Tyrant's Thought' (Anonymous 1809, p. 6, ll. 56–57). *An Heroic Poem to Britannia* begins by deploying the usual climatological imagery, comparing as it does 'Th' unnatural Host' – that is, the enemy army – to 'the gathering Clouds' that 'Are thickening deep around our fair Abodes' (p. 3, ll. 5–6). Additionally, the effects of the enemy's despotic influence on 'whole Kingdoms' (p. 7, l. 61) are compared to the consequences produced by a shipwreck:

Hope's Anchor lost, the State has lost its Rudder,
Down like a Ship, drove on by the rude Storm,
Her Pilot lost, and rolling on forlorn,
She sinks! amidst the Waves and the small Space,
Fill'd up by Ocean's Waters, till the Place

Where lost is all forgot, while with Dismay

The Shipwreck'd Sailor mourns his Fate till Day. (p. 70, ll. 64–70)

Later in the text, nonetheless, the British military effort is depicted using similar figurative language, in such lines as 'the British Thunder, / from Pole to Pole, shall make the nations wonder' (p. 5, ll. 33–34)[24]. Even though *An Heroic Poem to Britannia* expresses great pride in Britain's involvement in military interventions, the final stanzas celebrate disengagement from warfare outside its borders in at least two ways. Firstly, the text invites the readers to gaze at a laudatory portrait of a distant George III, 'In sweet Retirement, free from all Alarm', apparently indifferent to the ongoing armed conflicts: 'Amidst War's clarion Shouts behold our King, / The Dread of Tyrants, while his Fame will ring; / No Vengeance lurks, no pale insidious Guile, / Amidst those various Years of War-worn Toil' (p. 8, ll. 81–85). Secondly, but, perhaps, more importantly, the poem attaches great value to peace through the wish, voiced in the last four lines, for a prosperous continuation of Britain's commercial empire, whose supremacy the other countries can only uphold: 'Britain's Boast, fair Freedom's lovely Flower, / Shall add new Beauties to the rising Hour; / While Commerce glides o'er Ocean's wide Domain, And envying Nations own her sovereign Reign' (p. 9, ll. 95–98).

24 A footnote elucidates that these lines allude to 'Victories over the French Fleets in Egypt and Trafalgar by Lord Nelson' (p. 4), but the allusion was probably transparent enough for most contemporary readers of the poem. A similar image is used, for instance, at the end of Sastres's sonnet occasioned by Nelson's death: 'ma la sua Gloria rifulgendo / Rimbombi ognor, qual tuon, da polo a polo', which, in Pye's version of Sastres's poem, is translated as 'His fame shall rise, / And shake from pole to pole the echoing skies' (Sastres 1805, ll. 13–14). It also resurfaces in poetic discourse around Victoria's Golden Jubilee: 'From Pole to Pole, across the zones, conjoining the Line, – / An Empire whereupon the sun looks with perpetual shine' (White 1887, ll. 15–16). For another example of climatological imagery positively associated to Britain and Britons in *An Heroic Poem to Britannia*, see p. 4, ll. 7–10: 'Hail, Genius of this Isle, where Freedom's Sons, / With manly Hearts, with generous Passions burn, / Whose Spirits high, and fearless in the Fight, / Rises [*sic*] terrific as the Storms at Night'. See also Britannicus 1809–10, p. 26, l. 9: 'Albion's thunders'.

In championing domestic peace and, simultaneously, extolling martial prowess (already and/or soon to be) demonstrated in armed conflicts fought by Britons far from Britain, both Pye and the anonymous poet that penned *An Heroic Poem to Britannia* try to have their cake and eat it, too. The vast majority of the jubilee tributes collected in a section of *The Poetical Magazine* specifically devoted to 'The Jubilee' operate along similar lines ('The Jubilee' 1809–10)[25]. Intriguingly enough, the unsigned 'Ode, for the Jubilee', which inaugurates a procession of poems winding their way for the next twenty or so pages of the periodical, narrates the arrival of a series of ceremonial figures at Windsor who will take turn to parade in honour of George III: 'lo! towards the royal gate / Advanc'd a train in solemn state; / Chiefs, the glory of their ages, / Holy Priests and rev'rend Sages, / Approach, to bid the best of Kings all hail!' (Anonymous 1809–10, p. 12, ll. 22–25). These eminent figures, we learn very soon, are partly allegorical and partly historical, ready to advance in four files. Led by 'hoary Time' (p. 13, l. 26), the first file is made up by 'the winged Hours' (p. 13, l. 30), 'the Months' (p. 13, l. 32), 'the Seasons' (p. 13, l. 33) and finally 'A train of Years' that 'bear the honours of thy reign' (ll. 35 and 53), among them being 'Some, with conquest crown'd', that 'March to trumpets' sound' (ll. 54–55). The leader of the second file, 'the Genius of War' (p. 14, l. 81), presents his company as 'Heroes and Chieftains' (p. 14, l. 80), 'Warriors who have shed their blood, / And perish'd for their Country's good' (p. 14, ll. 87–88), enumerating names and toponyms in order to memorialise British martial accomplishments from the eighteenth century

25 On *The Poetical Magazine*, see Ellis 1983. For scholarly treatments of its publisher, Rudolph Ackermann (1764–1834), see the two-part article Burke 1934a and Burke 1934b; Ford 1983; Jervis 1992; Ford 2018; Duff 2020, esp. 234–38. For a compelling discussion of the importance of short-lived periodicals to our understanding of nineteenth-century print culture and a critique of the problematic imbalance in modern scholarship on the periodical press that tends to prioritise longstanding titles, see Stephens 2024.

onwards: 'Wolfe' (p. 14, l. 90; p. 15, l. 103); 'Abercrombie' (p. 14, l. 92); 'Nelson' (p. 14, l. 94); 'Moore' (p. 14, l. 97); 'Rodney' (p. 15, l. 105); 'Howe' (p. 15, l. 106); 'St. Vincent' and 'Camperdown' (p. 15, l. 108); 'Egypt' (p. 15, 112); 'Alexandria' (p. 15, l. 113); 'Acre' (p. 15, l. 115); 'Denmark' (p. 15, l. 120); 'Trafalgar' (p. 15, l. 122); 'Iberia' (p. 15, l. 123). The hyperbolic prediction made by the leader of the second procession after such a poetic dive into Britain's (relatively recent) military past is highly remarkable:

It were as well to count the sand
As number all the deeds of might
That Albion's sons perform in fight; –
And shall perform; for future years will bring
Fresh wreaths of laurel to Britannia's King! (p. 15, ll. 125–29)

I take the future projection as to Britons' engagement in victorious warfare to be all the more noteworthy when this is examined in relation to the rest of the text. Headed by 'heav'nly Wisdom' (p. 15, l. 130), a 'goddess' (p. 16, l. 140), and described as 'A host of Sages' (p. 15, l. 132), the third file also features historical figures – namely, King 'Alfred' (p. 15, l. 133), Queen Elizabeth ('Eliza', l. 15, p. 134) and more contemporary politicians, like 'Temple' (p. 15, l. 136) and 'Chatham' (p. 16, l. 138) – but it is the fourth and final pageant that warrants interpretation here. Comprising a 'tuneful choir' (p. 16, l. 148) and 'rev'rend Priests' (p. 16, l. 151), the last group is led by 'Religion' (p. 16, l. 147), who is gendered as female and depicted as a 'maid' with 'Bright rays of glory round her head' (p. 16, ll. 152 and 154). In her speech, Religion mobilises the usual climatological and nautical tropes in such lines as 'Thro' Life's rough sea his

course shall onward steer, / No storms shall hurt him, and no rocks appear' (p. 16, ll. 168–69). More significantly, she refers to peace, depicting it as a divine gift ('Hail! lov'd of Heav'n, / To whom 'tis given / […] to rule in peace this happy land', p. 16, ll. 161–63).

The 'notes of praise' that are 'pour[ed] harmoniously' (p. 17, l. 205) after the passing of the procession (p. 17, l. 198) mainly repeat the previous commendations of George III. In trying to conflate the images and arguments deployed by the different pageants and their leaders, these final notes eventually expose some of the contradictions originating from the accumulation and aggregation of discourses celebrating war and peace. Elaborating upon Religion's depiction of domestic peace as a heavenly present, the final notes wish for its preservation and further propagation during George III's reign: 'May joy and peace / His future years adorn' (p. 18, ll. 220–21); 'And [may] the spark that illumines each breast / Descend from the mansions of Peace and Love, / And glow with the fervour it burns with above / In the souls of the blest!' (p. 19, ll. 243–46). Yet, the expression of the wish for war to stop ('May war and tumult cease', p. 18, l. 225) more directly conflicts with the hope that 'May blooming laurels bind our Monarch's brow, / And at his footstool prostrate Nations bow' (p. 18, ll. 236–37), which rehearses both the image of the crown of past 'conquest' worn by the marching 'Years', presented by Time, who is conventionally gendered as male and armed with a 'scythe' (p. 13, l. 27), and the prophecy of more military triumphs to come that is convincedly made by the other masculine voice, that of the Genius of War. But, while the poem concludes on a pacifist note, it is important to recognise that war-related language and imagery infiltrates other parts of this final peace-oriented speech: for example, when God is called

'The King of Battles, and the Lord of Victory' (p. 18, l. 207). Pacifism, this poem implies, is inextricably interlocked with belligerency in the celebration of George III's royal jubilee.

Signed 'A. B.' and also entitled 'Ode for the Jubilee', the third poem in the *Poetical Magazine* jubilee series centres Britons' contribution to warmaking even more. In this poem, Britain plays the role of 'th' avenger of the world' (B. 1809–10, p. 21, l. 35). If the second stanza announces that 'still shall Britain's vengeful voice be heard' and 'Still shall her pow'r be felt', restoring order wherever chaos reigns (p. 20, ll. 11–12), the third underlines the readiness of the British to wage war, undertaking and accomplishing their military missions: '"While the shrill clarion, echoing from afar / Urges the crimson fury of the war", / Britannia dares – resolv'd the foe to fame' (p. 21, ll. 15–17). The major focus on warfare by land and sea is further evinced, first, by the recurring references to bloodshed: 'the savage force, / That wastes whole regions in its blood-stain'd course' (p. 21, ll. 27–28); 'the carnage of the field' (p. 21, l. 34); 'the sanguin'd plain' (p. 21, l. 38); and, then, by the application of climatological language to the British Navy: 'waft her thund'ring fleets thro' all the realms of Space' (p. 21, l. 42).

In spite of this emphasis on war, 'Ode for the Jubilee' ends with the arrival of 'smiling Peace' (p. 22, l. 51) and the suggestion that 'In Mem'ry's breast great GEORGE's deeds enrol, / And spread his high renown to earth's remotest pole' (p. 22, ll. 53–54)[26]. The interweaving of the King's reputation with peace and war is worthy of analysis. Although the final lines of the ode portray a personified version of peace rejoicing for 'the prospects of succeeding time' (p. 22, l. 51), a

26 Cf. S. 1809–10, p. 23, ll. 33–34: 'Let earth's remotest bounds the tidings hear, / "The British Monarch reigns the fiftieth year!"', and Kerr 1809–10, p. 330, ll. 85–86: 'At home rever'd, abroad diffus'd by Fame, / Thro' every clime resounds the British name'.

previous stanza tightly connects the ever-expanding admiration and respect for George III to warmaking. After highlighting Britons' eagerness to engage in (supposedly) just warfare, the third stanza affirms that greater public esteem results from military success, which enables Britannia to 'crown with laureate wreath the annals of her fame' (p. 21, l. 18)[27]. The following stanza explicates the current geographical reach of the glorification of George III's fame: 'Her praise, unceasing, distant climes resound, / From Afric's coast to India's utmost bound' (p. 21, ll. 19–20). In fact, the latter is then hyperbolically described as virtually uncontainable, for 'Scarce can the barriers of this globe confine / The dazzling splendour of her rule divine' (p. 21, ll. 21–22). In light of these lines as well as the motivation behind the composition of this and other similar poems (the jubilee festivities, that is), the comparison of the 'vain' and 'proud' enemy army to 'the pageant of a day' that 'Fades into empty air' (p. 21, ll. 29–30) appears to be all the more significant. By contrast, the ode suggests that George III's glorious reputation will be not only preserved, but incessantly enlarging its extent in space and time alike.

Besides the seven poems collected in the 'Jubilee' section, *The Poetical Magazine* printed several other jubilee tributes, starting with Sastres's Italian sonnet 'Il Tamigi' in the same volume (Sastres 1809–10; Kerr 1809–10; Azeli 1810; Elsdale 1810). Royal jubilee poetry appearing in subsequent issues of the periodical includes 'The Jubilee', by W. N. Hart, and 'Britain's Jubilee: An Ode, in Honour of Our Venerable and Beloved Sovereign Completing the Fiftieth Year of a Reign Consecrated to Piety and Virtue', by someone using the pseudonym

27 Cf. Lilly 1809–10, p. 29, ll. 25–26: 'So shall increasing splendour throw / Fresh laurels round our Monarch's brow'. In this poem, however, the connection between the King's glories celebrated at home (and symbolised by the laurel wreaths) and belligerence abroad seems more tenuous.

of 'Trafalgarius'. While the latter refers to the King as 'imperial George' (Trafalgarius 1810, p. 333, l. 19), the former alludes to the Slave Trade Act of 1807, passed under George III's reign and prohibiting the slave trade throughout the British Empire – 'Lo! Afric's sons, a sable band, / Torn now no more from native land, / This blessing owe to thee!' (Hart 1810, p. 296, ll. 13–15).

Penned by an author going by the pseudonym of 'Britannicus' and orchestrating the voices of mortal and immortal beings alike, the poem entitled 'Ode for the 25th October, 1809' differs from most of the royal jubilee poetry equally appearing in the pages of *The Poetical Magazine* in that this poem emphasises peace much more strongly than war. Towards the middle of the text, Neptune reassures Jove of his pacific intentions on the day of George III's royal jubilee, announcing that 'no deeds of death employ / My sons to-day, this is a day of joy' (Britannicus 1809–10, p. 27, ll. 43–44). The only allusion to the ongoing armed conflicts is confined to the reference, within the 'anthem' performed by 'Britain's sons' in the concluding lines of the poem, to the 'enemies' that the King will 'subdue' (pp. 27–28, ll. 59, 85 and 95). Other than this, the ode is rather keen to place the emphasis on the jubilee festivities, foregrounding Britain's control over its pacific overseas empire.

'Ode for the 25th October, 1809' opens with the image of Britannia depicted as a female monarch overseeing her possessions across the globe from up above her stone royal seat in Cornwall:

HIGH on Cornubia's utmost mound
    Of adamantine cloud-capp'd rocks,
The vast Atlantic's rugged bound,
    That braves old Ocean's rudest shocks,

Britannia, sat;
And from her throne sublime
Survey'd each varying clime,
From Indus to the pole
(Far as Albion's thunders roll),
With joy elate. (p. 26, ll. 1–10)

The second stanza presents her as 'the Queen of Isles' (p. 26, l. 12) and the benevolent daughter of 'Great Neptune' (p. 26, l. 14), who offers his and all the marine creatures' help to accomplish her geopolitical mission:

'And, Daughter, say', the god began,
'What boon hast thou to ask?
Be't mine to execute the task;
Glad to fulfil thy gracious plan,
Thy great design – to succour man;
To thee a suff'ring world aspires,
The wretched look to thee;
Thy mercy ev'ry bosom fires,
Make us (for these are our desires),
Like Britons, happy, loyal, free'. (p. 26, ll. 15–24)

In the third stanza, Britannia accepts Neptune's offer on behalf of 'Great GEORGE', her 'well-beloved son, / Approv'd of Heaven', asking her father to 'convey / To ev'ry shore, to ev'ry land, / The tidings of our glad command, / To keep this joyful day' (pp. 26–27, ll. 27–30 and 31–32). Thus, Neptune, first, and the divine inhabitants of the 'high Olympus' (p. 27, l. 62), then, invite the whole world to celebrate the royal jubilee of the land- and sea-ruling George III: 'Let all the earth

rejoice again; / For, lo! in ev'ry sea, his flag, unfurl'd, / Bids joy and freedom bless a weeping world' (p. 27, ll. 52–54); 'Let all the earth to-day keep Jubilee!' (p. 27, l. 66). The state of peace across the British Empire under George III is further underlined by the speaker's claim that, 'thro' this mighty empire round, / Extended to earth's utmost bound, / No note of discord intervenes, / No murmur lags behind' (p. 28, ll. 77–80).

As I have remarked, the focus on peace in 'Ode for the 25th October, 1809' makes it different from many other poetic tributes to George III's Jubilee that, instead, more clearly register the extratextual influence of the ongoing warfare in which Britain was engaging at the time of the royal event. As I am about to show, the war/peace juxtaposition and resulting tensions are deeply significant within Jerdan's *The Jubilee: A Poem on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne* (1810), the royal jubilee poem to which I turn now. In what follows, I highlight the importance of the spatial and temporal dimensions to the expression and justification of imperial ideology in a text wherein both war and peace are mobilised to assess Britain's place in global geopolitics and underscore British exceptionalism particularly vis-à-vis other European countries.

2.3. The Imperial Voice of Lewis Morris: 'A Song of Empire' (1887)

Both Jerdan and his poetry are likely to be little known even to the specialist. Once 'a vital facilitator and promoter of aspirants to literature and many other cultural endeavours', but now 'a somewhat forgotten figure', Jerdan was a Scottish journalist who, in 1806, moved to London, where he would later serve as the editor of *The Literary Gazette*, 'the first British weekly review of literature

and arts', between 1817 and 1850 (Matoff 2011, ix). A poet as well as a critic, an editor and a literary agent (Ransom 1948; Matoff 2011), he authored patriotic pieces such as the five-hundred-eighty-eight-line poem that he penned on the occasion of fiftieth anniversary of the reign of George III.

In 'War and Jubilees', the sixteenth chapter of his four-volume *Autobiography* (1852–53), Jerdan mentions his 'Complimentary Poem' while recounting his 'visit to Windsor to participate in the Jubilee rejoicings' together with the Irish sculptor Peter Turnerelli (1774–1839), 'to whom his Majesty sat for his bust' (Jerdan 1852, 1:118)[28]. After specifying that both he and Turnerelli were 'well received and well treated' at Windsor, Jerdan describes his occasional piece in these terms: 'It was as loyal and patriotic as if John Reeves himself, who was the Magnus Apollo in this line, had composed it' (Jerdan 1852, 1:118). Here, Jerdan's self-comparison to a typical anti-Jacobin activist such as John Reeves (1752–1829) emphasises the vocal conservative monarchism expressed in his own verse. In her biography of Jerdan, Susan Matoff does not dwell much on this poem, even though she does recognise the poet's 'genuine deep regard and affection for his King' (Matoff 2011, 22–23). Matoff's brief commentary of Jerdan's text only quotes one stanza, which supposedly 'gives a flavour of the entire tribute'. As she ultimately prefers to call the piece an example of 'fairly pedestrian verse' and to insist on its rushed composition and its resulting 'poor quality' (22), then, Matoff does little more than follow Jerdan's lead when, in his apologetic 'Preface', he points to 'the necessary shortness of the time in his power […] as some apology for the imperfections with which his performance abounds'

28 For references to Turnerelli and the immortalising value of sculpture in Jerdan's jubilee poem, see Jerdan 1810, p. 24.

(Jerdan 1810, viii). By contrast, I want to attend to the interrelated aesthetic and ideological dimensions of Jerdan's poem and unpick the empire-related implications of the strategic juxtaposition of peace and war in his jubilee tribute, which, I argue, structures Jerdan's poetic reflection on the exceptional position of the British Empire in the global geopolitical scenario of the early nineteenth-century.

Although it has received no extensive scholarly attention as yet, Jerdan's *The Jubilee* is an illuminating example of a poetic response to George III's royal jubilee that reflects upon Britain as an imperial power. Clearly, *The Jubilee* is primarily intended both as a panegyric on the King's fifty-year-long rule, which is defined as 'the most full and pleasing theme / That e'er dispell'd poetic dream, / And challeng'd truth's impartial voice / To sing of virtue, and rejoice' (p. 15, ll. 111–14), and as a plea that 'o'er the empire general joy / Shall be diffus'd' (p. 42, ll. 585–86). Yet, the poem often extends its own scope to muse on Britain's role in the contemporary geopolitical context. In fact, on a few occasions, the text implies that it may ostensibly fall short of general expectations about its contents, either because it appears to stray from its anticipated central focus of attention – that is, the public celebration of 'the *just rule* of GEORGE THE THIRD' (p. 41, l. 568) – or because it does not sufficiently cover aspects that are deemed worthy of praise. For instance, in one of his footnotes, Jerdan tries to excuse himself for his hasty treatment of 'GEORGE's *private* virtues' (p. 39, l. 532) to the advantage of his public behaviour:

> The author may be reproached with passing over in too cursory a manner the virtues which adorn, and have ever adorned, His Majesty in the intercourse of private life. To do them right, he confesses, would require an Epic; but as they are well known to, and deservedly appreciated by,

every human being throughout the British empire, he conceived that more justice would be done to them in the records of their hearts than in his humble verse. (p. 39)

Conversely, as I highlight in what follows, much space in the poem is devoted to taking stock of the health condition of the British nation in 1809–10 while also attempting to vindicate its right to imperial expansion on the basis of its commended martial and moral superiority.

For the purposes of my research, the portions where the speaker somewhat deviates from its prime source of inspiration to cogitate on Britain's imperial power are deeply significant. Imperial overtones are carried by the direct references to the classical past, particularly imperial Rome, and by the eulogy of military heroes involved in colonial conflicts, such as the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–5). The empire-related concerns of the poem are brought into sharper focus by the justification of British territorial conquest and hegemony on the grounds of the martial and moral values insistingly praised throughout the text. The following textual analysis aims to shed light on these imperially minded moments while also examining the ideologically charged juxtaposition of war and peace in the poem.

The Jubilee repeatedly points to Britain's distinctive distance from contemporary military conflicts as an unmistakable sign of the righteousness of its global supremacy. The Latin epigraph in the frontispiece ('Deus nobis hæc otia fecit'), a quotation from Virgil's *Eclogues* 1.6 that depicts the then-current state of 'otia' ('peace') as a divine gift ('it is a god who gave us this peace', Virgil 1999, 25)[29], sets the tone for the positive evaluation of the absence of warfare often

29 The same argument is advanced in verse not only by the author of the unsigned 'Ode, for the Jubilee' (Anonymous 1809–10; see above), but also, for example, in D. 1810, p. 9, ll. 118–19: 'Nor

rehearsed throughout the poem, starting from its very opening lines. As the 'Argument' section puts it, lines 1–20 focus on Britain's 'happiness' owing to 'her exemption from the horrors of war, and elevation above the fatal causes which desolate other countries' (Jerdan 1810, p. v). The beginning of *The Jubilee* highlights the exceptional position of Britain, 'the sea-girt Isle', with regards to other countries, 'the wasted nations round', since the heavenly blessed British Isles are not directly affected by war:

ON you the Heavens benignant smile,
Blest natives of the sea-girt Isle:
and while war's all-terrific sound
Appals the wasted nations round,
'Tis thine alone to hear it roar,
In distant echoes, to thy shore;
To sit secure – nor dread to hear
The rushing tempest come more near. (p. 9, ll. 1–8)

The 'favour'd land' (p. 10, l. 13) is exempt from the effects of 'war's desolating force' (p. 9, l. 9), which is here imagined as a ferocious thunderstorm.

This climatological metaphor is extended in lines 21–46, wherein Britain is depicted as an elevated fortress miraculously spared from raging tempests, 'an impregnable castle on a lofty mountain, where all is bliss and security, while storms and hurricanes rage below' (p. v):

war nor bloodshed in our land are known, / The glory be ascrib'd to God alone'. While the speaker in this poem does occasionally direct the gaze outside the borders of the British Isles, such as when 'the Afric slave as poor as Job' is mentioned (p. 13, l. 194), the geographical emphasis of this text remains on Great Britain and Ireland, which are said to testify George III's magnanimity beyond England: 'Our king belov'd lo from his throne he bends, / And to the poor his libr'al bounty sends; / Nor is his bounty to one land confin'd, / The Scotch and Irish prove the monarch's kind' (p. 15, ll. 239–42).

As on some mighty mountain's brow,
Which mocks at puny Alps below,
And shoots its summit to the skies,
A castle's circled towers arise;
Impregnable to hostile bands,
In awful majesty it stands,
Firm and concentred. In its bound
Peace and security are found;
And thence as Fate's fell shafts are hurl'd,
It frowns defiance on the world.
Here, too, eternal summer beams,
And light and fine the ether streams,
Raising the buoyant spirits high,
As is the bright empyreal sky:
Alike elastic, jocund, pure,
Nor storms deface, nor clouds obscure.
Midway below, the vapours form,
And rolls on clouds the angry storm;
And pestilential fogs o'ercast,
And howls the wild destructive blast.
With sulphur, nitre, mingled, there
Phlogiston taints the lurid air.
The thunder peals, dire crash on crash,
Fearful the forked lightning's flash:
Tempestuous region! fraught with woe,
No joys thy trembling inmates know. (pp. 10–11, ll. 21–46)

These lines further elaborate upon a point made in the previous section, namely, Britain's exceptional altitude vis-à-vis other nations, which is to be understood

as simultaneously physical and moral, and reinforce the idea that the convenient location occupied by Britain – 'Impregnable to hostile bands', 'Firm and concentred' – depends on its distinctive vertical aloofness[30]. To drive the point home, the quoted lines also compare the unique state of 'Peace and security' that Britain enjoys to the 'eternal summer' gladdening 'the bright empyreal sky'. This state of affairs starkly contrasts with that of the 'Tempestuous region' towered over by Britain, which, unlike the latter, is stricken by a combination of atmospheric disturbances and air pollutants: 'storms', 'clouds', 'the vapours', 'the angry storm', 'pestilential fogs', 'sulphur', 'nitre', 'Phlogiston', 'The thunder' and 'the forked lightning's flash'[31]. The 'trembling inmates' inhabiting the areas underneath could not be more different from the 'Blest natives of the sea-girt Isle', enjoying stability and tranquillity.

Having presented Britain's favourable condition as diametrically opposed to that of many other nations worldwide, the speaker promises to shift the focus of attention from abroad to home, from outside to inside. Thus far, the poem has repeatedly insisted on the remarkable difference of the British Isles from the rest of the world: 'Exalted high in dignity, / In honour, splendour, safety, worth, /Above the nations of the earth' (p. 11, ll. 48–50). The text continues to supply details on what makes the British imperial nation stand out globally. The others, the speaker reminds us,

> the sanguine conflict urge,
>
> Or writhe beneath the tyrant's scourge;

30 Cf. p. 10, ll. 13–20: ''T is only thine, […], / In elevated rank to stand / High, high unprais'd in fearless state, / Above malignant envy's hate; / Above ambition's maddening power; / The chance of battle's dubious hour – External causes – or the frown / Of fickle Fortune adverse grown'.

31 Cf. p. 32, ll. 395–96: 'Unburied yet they taint the air, / And pestilence completes despair'.

Or, all-indignant, strive in vain
To burst oppression's galling chain;
Or bleed beneath the murderer's steel;
Or the fierce pangs of slavery feel;
Or BE – of every hope forlorn,
Of all men prize or live for, shorn.
How shall my faltering numbers dare
Thy bliss with misery to compare?
Oh Britain! as the cadence flows,
Contrast thy joys with other's woes;
Thy prosperous state with their decay;
Thy King's mild reign with tyrants' sway;
Thy equal laws, just and defin'd,
With lawless rule and force combin'd;
Thy constitution's sacred rights,
With despotism's furious flights;
Thine independence, with theirs lost;
Thy freedom, with an empty boast. (pp. 11–13, ll. 51–70)

After additionally underscoring the opposition, the following lines contend that the latter is ultimately 'unnecessary to heighten the value of' the British (p. v): 'Vain were the task wert thou so low / As need the contrast's heightening glow' (p. 13, ll. 71–72). It is not until line 81, however, that the focus is shifted inwards and narrowed down to home because 'my country does not claim / On other's ills to build her fame: / Within, she every good combines, / And from internal lustre shines' (p. 13, ll. 75–78).

Even so, the glorification of George III and the 'full fifty years / Of mix'd events, of smiles and tears' (p. 15, 101–2), under his rule receives the promised

undivided attention only temporarily. After all, the superlatives deployed to describe the King as 'the most admir'd, / The best belov'd' (p. 15, ll. 110–11), presume the existence of at least one term of comparison. Lines 123–38 more explicitly contrast him with other European sovereigns:

Europe has witness'd wondrous times
Through all her bounds and various climes:
Her legal Sovereigns have decay'd,
By FOLLY or by VICE betray'd,
And Usurpation high has rear'd
Her form whence these have disappear'd:
Her ancient dynasties given place
To an unheard of, upstart race,
Who on their ruins have grown great,
Exalted from the dust to state;
Unlike our Sovereign's stable throne,
To *folly* and to *vice* unknown,
Which all the tedious storm has brav'd,
The storm that furious round it rav'd
In vain. Still firmer every shock
Has fix'd it on its native rock. (pp. 16–17, ll. 123–38)

Here and in the rest of the poem, the exaltation of George III ultimately hinges upon his perceived difference from other rulers. Not only do these lines insist on the opposition, but they do so by recourse to a climatological imagery ('the tedious storm', 'The storm') which recalls that already mobilised in the previous sections of the poem and is expanded upon in the lines that immediately follow: 'Even as the OAK by tempests tost, / Our island's emblem and its boast, / The

more the elements assail, / And blustering winds strive to prevail, / The more its giant limbs it shoots, / The deeper strikes its vigorous roots' (p. 17, ll. 139–44).

Elsewhere in the text, the speaker's gaze turns abroad to applaud Britain's present state, travelling in time as well as space. If lines 159–74 extol artistic, technological, naval and commercial progress, for 'British tars the ocean rule' (p. 20, l. 172), lines 175–96 congratulate Georgian Britain on scientific improvements that retrospectively put it in relation to 'ancient Greece', 'Rome' and 'modern Europe':

> Beneath our King's auspicious care,
> Equal with ARTS, his smile to share,
> Her sacred head hath SCIENCE rais'd;
> And LEARNING, in full splendour blaz'd,
> Exalting British genius, claims
> To emulate the proudest names
> That ancient Greece boasts as divine,
> Or in Rome's glorious annals shine,
> Or modern Europe can enrol
> The first on Fame's emblazon'd scroll. (p. 20, ll. 175–84)

Imperial Rome remains the preferred standard of comparison for the British Empire in the text. Viewed as an admirable ruler and patron of arts, George III is said to embody a unique combination of emperor Augusts and his political advisor Maecenas: 'In Him alone does Britain find / Mecenas and Augustus join'd' (p. 22, ll. 195–96). And, at present, owing to the commendable efforts of painters and sculptors, '*Thames* outrivals *Tiber*'s tide, / And boasts his shores more richly crown'd / With splendid works than Rome renown'd' (p. 23, 234–

36). These comparisons suggest that the British Empire is the spiritual successor to the Roman Empire[32].

Another part where the speaker's gaze moves across time and space – in fact, more across the latter than the former – while the poem digresses is the rather lengthy 'enumeration of British heroes, and their splendid achievements' (Jerdan 1810, p. vi), in lines 197–332 and 366, which reintroduce the military theme. This section is preceded by the overt recognition of the 'utility' of the visual arts ('the divine arts, painting and sculpture') 'in immortalizing our victories and great men, thereby handing them down for the imitation' (p. vi):

Now from a touch the canvas glows,
And, as the wondrous fabric grows,
Britannia marks, with look elate,
Her glorious deeds rescu'd from fate:
Her *Vimiera* fought again;
The battle rage on Maida's plain;
Red *Talavera*'s splendours rise;
Trafalgar's blaze illume the skies;
Corunna many wrongs requite;
Assaye's dark field with glory bright – (p. 23, ll. 237–45)

Despite the speaker's initial insistence on the value of peace, what is praised here is triumphant warfare on the Continent and in the colonies in the late eighteenth

32 Sastres's acknowledgement of the superiority of the British Empire, too, rests on a double comparison of George III, 'the father of the unconquered people' ('PADRE D'INVITTO POPOL', Sastres 1809, l. 9), and the River Thames in the title with Roman emperors like Titus, Marcus Aurelius and Trajan and the Tiber in the final tercet: 'Vanta, misero Tebro, solo il suono / Di Tito, Aurelio, di Trajan lodato, / Del MAGNANIMO GIORGIO altero io sono' (Boast, wretched Tiber, only the sound / Of Titus, Aurelius, of praised Trajan, / Of the GREATHEARTED GEORGE I am proud) (ll. 12–14).

and early nineteenth centuries. Whereas the vast majority of battles commemorated in the quoted lines – namely, Vimeiro (1808), Maida (1806), Talavera (1809), Trafalgar (1805) and Corunna (1809) – took place in Portugal, Italy or Spain during the Napoleonic Wars, the Battle of Assaye (23rd September 1803) was fought in western India during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. Other conflicts, such as the Siege of Acre (1799) (p. 26, l. 294) and the Battle of Copenhagen (1807) (p. 27, l. 315), are recalled later on in the text, when the names of British army and naval officers are enumerated[33]. In so doing, speaker gives pride of place to military valour.

Importantly for my thesis, this section of *The Jubilee* not only contributes to shifting the focus away from home, but it also attempts to build the case for considering British expansionism as utterly rightful in light of their martial superiority. Irrespective of the chosen battlefield, the speaker indicates, 'British warriors' (p. 29, l. 344) will continue to showcase 'gallantry' (p. 29, l. 339) and remain invincible: 'Indifferent where – by sea or land / No foe our prowess can withstand. / Our gallant army in the field / Shall cause outnumbering squadrons yield: / Our tars shall o'er the ocean sweep, / And drive them from the boundless deep' (p. 29, ll. 347–51). What is more, the text goes on to claim, they will contribute to enlarging Britain's dominions. Indeed, the unmatched strength of the British, this age-old undisputable certainty, is presented as forming the logical basis to vindicate British territorial conquest: 'This truth should sceptic

33 John Pitt, John Moore and Horatio Nelson (p. 24, l. 260); James Abercrombie (p. 25, ll. 261–62); Adam Duncan (p. 25, ll. 263–64); Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (p. 25, ll. 273–78); Charles Stuart (p. 26, ll. 279–84); David Baird (p. 26, ll. 285–88); John Hope (p. 26, ll. 289–90); Sidney Smith (p. 26, ll. 291–96); Cuthbert Collingwood (p. 27, ll. 307–8); Richard Strachan (p. 27, ll. 309–12); Richard Godwin Keats (p. 27, ll. 313–16); James Gambier and Thomas Cochrane (p. 28, ll. 317–22); John Duckworth (p. 28, ll. 323–24); Home Riggs Popham, John Harvey, Alexander Hood and Edward Pellew (p. 28, ll. 325–26); Samuel Auchmuty (p. 30, l. 366).

foes deny, / Ages of glory prove they lie, / Shew that it is our doubtless right / To conquer often as we fight' (p. 29, ll. 353–56). Therefore, Britain's imperial presence across the globe is made to follow directly from its invincibility in battle.

Given the stress on belligerence in this part, it is crucial to elucidate how *The Jubilee* rhetorically reconciles military activity abroad with the value of peace at home. As *The Jubilee* continues to consider the relationship of Georgian Britain to what lies beyond its boundaries, war in foreign territories is regarded as necessary for philanthropic reasons[34]. In fact, lines 357–70 position the King and the metropole as the source from which British military effort radiates out of benevolence:

When GEORGE the sword of justice draws,
To advocate th' oppressed's cause,
These lead our warlike bands afar,
And glisten in the front of war:
Or upon *Egypt*'s burning sand;
Or on *Iberia*'s blood -stain'd strand;
Or pent where *Northern* billows roar;
Or on *Italia*'s myrtled shore;
Where *Indus* laves his banks of gold;
Broad *Plata* to the sea is roll'd;
Or where o'er *Western Ind* the breeze
Scuds big with fate and fell disease –
Whate'er the odds, whate'er the spot,
Is vict'ry still Britannia's lot. (p. 30, ll. 357–70)

34 See also Anonymous 1809, p. 4, ll. 19–24 and 36: 'a better Cause / Must now unite us, to defend our Laws; / For Liberty and Justice we contend, / To aid th' Oppress'd, and be their only Friend; / To root out Vice, to clean th' Augean Stable, / And fell Corruption lash while we are able'; ''Tis her's to give, not ask!'. The poem was sold at the price of 1 shilling, the titlepage stating that 'a Quarter of the Profits will be distributed to the Poor'.

No matter where the battle will be fought, Britain's victory is presented as both assured and confirmative of British martial and moral (or, actually, moral and martial) primacy. While the British may prove their heroism by fighting far from their home, the state of bliss of 'favour'd Britain' (p. 31, l. 389) ultimately hinges on its physical detachment from war: 'at a distance far remote / From us War's bloody banners float' (p. 30, ll. 371–72); 'No wars thy happy bounds molest' (p. 31, l. 376). It also rests on its unassailability, which has long prevented conflicts from taking place within its boundaries ('How long since war has bluster'd there', p. 34, l. 442):

> no foe thy blissful shades
> With ruthless purpose e'er invades;
> No trenches wound thy wood-cloth'd hills,
> No camp thy peaceful vallies fills;
> No invasive squadrons' vaunting scorn
> Tramples thy ripening fields of corn:
> No lawless ruffians hither roam,
> To sack a Briton's sacred home;
> To bid the youth defensive stand,
> And die to guard their native land;
> To violate the virgin's bed,
> Insult old age's hoary head,
> To butcher babes before their eyes,
> And mock the frantic mothers' cries. (pp. 32–33, ll. 411–24)

> And while war ravages the rest
> Of the known globe, from east to west,

Peace flies the strife with swift retreat,

To fix with us her lasting seat. (p. 34, ll. 433–36)

Safe from foreign invasions, Britain is viewed as being in a better position to act as a hegemonic power.

This is further clarified by the last section of the poem that will be taken into account in my analysis, as it arguably corroborates the interpretation according to which *The Jubilee* may qualify as an instance of imperial propaganda. The panoramic view, 'from east to west', offered by the last four lines quoted is complemented by the bird's-eye description of the area where the value of the British is acknowledged: 'Earth with the fame of Britain rings, / And every clime her name that hears / Her upright character reveres: / From *Iceland* to remote *Ceylon* / The valour of her sons is known' (p. 35, ll. 450–54). Britain's supremacy is recognised worldwide: 'All nations to acknowledg'd virtue bow' (p. 35, ll. 459–60) and its 'power […] keeps the world in awe' (p. 35, l. 464). Lastly, if Britain remains invincible, the speaker argues, it is because it is naturally better equipped to expand itself and dominate the other: 'And though, compar'd with many powers, / Extent and numbers are not ours, / 'Tis this condemns their scale to fall, / And raises us above them all, / Mistress of Europe doubtless crown'd, / And arbitress of empires round' (pp. 35–36, ll. 467–72). In *The Jubilee*, then, the British nation is depicted as imperial nation, which may confidently tower over Europe and the rest of the globe.

Chapter Three

British Royal Jubilee Poetry II: 1887

3.1. British Poetry and the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria

In terms of geographical reach, Queen Victoria's first royal jubilee more fully qualifies as an 'imperial' event than its immediate predecessor. Expressions of jubilation and pageantry in 1809 were not confined to the British Isles, either. As Walter L. Arnstein usefully reminds us: 'Events marking the jubilee of 1809 took place all over the kingdom and even in the West Indies and in Bombay' (Arnstein 1997, 592)[1]. By the late 1880s, however, the British Empire had famously reached a far larger territorial extent under Victoria's rule and could thus provide a larger geographical backdrop for performing public displays of imperial monarchism[2]. With London situated both physically and symbolically at the heart of the British Empire, the peaceful royal occasion exerted both centrifugal and centripetal forces, projecting influence outwards to the overseas territories and drawing colonial presence inwards to the metropole. As William E. Fredeman aptly notes: 'In every part of the world embraced by the tentacles of Empire, the Queen was feted in absentia' (Fredeman 1987a, 4). At the same time, a host of colonial representatives were invited to the imperial capital to fête her *in praesentia*: 'Both the 1887 and 1897 celebrations brought to London colonial Premiers and Indian princes, together with troops and retainers as exotic in their race, colour, and creed as they were colourful in their uniforms' (MacKenzie 1984, 4).

As well as geographical reach, Victoria's Golden Jubilee was possibly greater than its 1809 precursor in symbolic significance, its celebration carrying

1 In his essay, Arnstein goes on to remark: 'A suggestion was indeed made that King George III be granted a new title, "Emperor of the British and Sovereign of the Ocean", but the war against Napoleon was not at that time going well enough to justify the adoption of such a proposal' (Arnstein 1997, 592). See also Woolerton 2022, 9 and 17.

2 This is true in spite of the territorial acquisitions made by Britain in the period intervening between the loss of the Thirteen Colonies on the Atlantic coast of North America in 1781 and the celebration of George III's royal jubilee in 1809 (Millidge 2012, 14).

more markedly imperialist overtones and implications. Fredeman helpfully summarises this when writing:

> For the Queen, the Jubilee celebration, which she had financed, confirmed her literal and symbolic role as Empress-Queen; for her subjects, the Jubilee was a long-overdue patriotic spectacle that catered to their sense of destiny and national pride – an appropriate tribute to a monarch who ruled over an empire on which the sun never set. […]. In the United States, with its large population of displaced English and Irish, the Jubilee revived the ties that bound America to Great Britain. […]. For the colonies under the umbrella of the British Empire, it reinforced their sense of identity and unity. (Fredeman 1987a, 2 and 5–6)

For June Woolerton, Victoria was able to 'turn the Royal Jubilee into a global event marking not just her personal rule but the success of a global dominion that had led to her being named Empress' (Woolerton 2022, 19).

Nevertheless, this royal event catalysed the expression of both positive and negative views on the Queen and her remarkably large Empire. While 'Jubilee enthusiasm' in 1887 may be described as 'a spontaneous response to a beloved figure of international stature, who was a living and reigning symbol of domestic and political stability' (Fredeman 1987a, 6), it is important to note that 'the grandeur of the celebration also prompted considerable criticism of conditions at home and abroad, even of the Queen herself' (3). As G. Robert Stange would have it, 'opponents of empire as well as boosters saw the Jubilee Year as a critical moment, one that demanded retrospection' (Stange 1987, 151)[3].

3 This seems to have been true on the occasion of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee as well. As Elizabeth Hammerton and David Cannadine write: 'In the Empire, […] responses to the Diamond Jubilee ranged from enthusiastic support and participation via studied indifference and cold, inarticulate hostility, to the full flowering of anti-ritual', even though 'it seems the response was less varied' in the metropole (Hammerton and Cannadine 1981, 113–14). MacKenzie, who suggests that anti-monarchism had significantly decreased by the Diamond Jubilee year, partly relies on Hammerton

Whether celebrated with patriotic enthusiasm or treated with more sceptical distance, then, the fiftieth anniversary of Victoria's accession to the throne stimulated poignant reflections upon the British Empire around the globe.

The potential for divergent interpretations of these anniversaries was also amplified by the fundamental ambiguity of the word 'jubilee' at the time. Theoretically, people with various ideological agendas could attach different connotations to the term when deploying it. Conflating notions of 'emancipation' and 'celebration', the word 'jubilee' is 'a curious linguistic hybrid, an amalgam of Hebrew and Latin', whose 'historical association […] with the papacy is far older than its historical association with the British monarchy', for papal jubilees date back to as early as 1300 (Arnstein 1997, 591–92)[4]. Malcolm Chase has usefully traced the history of the semantic changes of the term, from its biblical and religious attestations to its secularised uses, and suggested that its meaning remained contested territory at least until the 1840s, when previous, more radical understandings and usages of the word continued to compete with its appropriation on the part of loyalist patriots (Chase 1990). The latter interpretation had been gaining ground since the celebration of the first royal jubilee in 1809. While it was possibly the meaning preferred by many when referring to Victoria's Golden Jubilee, it is not impossible that other meanings could still be alternatively or concurrently activated for different purposes. For

and Cannadine's article: 'If there were still some rumblings of anti-monarchical feeling in the Jubilee celebrations of 1887, they had largely disappeared by 1897. *Lloyd's Weekly* (with a million sales) was critical of the 1887 jubilee, but had become unswervingly loyal by 1897. By the latter date there was much press comment on the role of the monarchy in uniting the classes, and on the beneficial propagandist effects of the jubilees on schoolchildren. A local study of the 1897 jubilee in Cambridge has revealed that if there were class disputes about the actual organisation of the jubilee there were none on the principle of the jubilee itself' (MacKenzie 1984, 4). For similar suggestions of the broad consensus on 'the principle of the jubilee' (though not necessarily on 'the actual organisation of the jubilee') in 1809, see Millidge 2012, 12; Woolerton, 18.

4 See also Millidge 2012, 5–6; Woolerton 2022, 1–5.

example, the biblical associations of the word were occasionally evoked and exploited in Victorian jubilee poetry. Lewis Morris's 'A Song of Empire' (1887), to which the last section of this chapter is devoted, clearly illustrates this: 'As in the old Judæn history, / Fling wide the doors and set the prisoners free!' (Morris 1887b, p. 181, ll. 304–5; see also Warne 1887, 1).

The poetry of the time bears witness to the existence of ideological tensions and clashes across the British Empire. In what follows, I attend to the nuances of poets' sentiments and attitudes towards Britain and its colonial power as expressed in poems written for Victoria's Golden Jubilee. To this end, I do not limit my attention to the jubilee tribute offered by Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892), the then Poet Laureate[5]. On the contrary, while necessarily prioritising a selection of texts in my analysis, I outline the larger outpouring of late nineteenth-century jubilee contributions composed by authors with very different agendas. In so doing, I seek to underscore that poetry was viewed as a suitable medium for the articulation of a variety of ideological positions.

Coupled by the previous chapter on British poetry written for George III's royal jubilee, this chapter attempts to trace continuities between jubilee verse from the opposite ends of the century. Evidently enough, there exist important differences. First of all, the later poems could refer to an Empire that had reached a greater geographical extent. They could also use late George III as an additional term of comparison from the past. Finally, the later texts could reference new military conflicts that had seen Britain involved after 1809. Even so, the similarity in the imagery and rhetoric deployed in poems discussed in the previous chapter and the work of some poets analysed below is remarkable.

5 On Tennyson as a Poet Laureate, see Tennyson 1973, 203–225; Ledbetter 2007, 143–68.

To draw attention to this similarity, the present chapter continues to highlight the importance of spatial descriptions, temporal comparisons and war/peace tensions in poetry from the late 1880s. The first section offers an outline of the various poetic responses to Victoria's Golden Jubilee, considering the many unofficial imperial voices responding to the event alongside that of Tennyson, the then Poet Laureate. After a brief introductory discussion of the place of Lewis Morris in the field of Victorian studies, the second and final section interprets his 'A Song of Empire' and demonstrates that this relatively early jubilee tribute displays significant tropes and rhetorical strategies deployed in other imperially minded poetic contributions.

3.2. Official and Unofficial Imperial Voices

The 'official' Golden Jubilee Ode was written by Tennyson and set to music by Charles Stanford[6]. 'As usual, portions of the Ode were quoted in the London papers almost before the magazine [i.e., *Macmillan's Magazine*] was published, and *The Daily News* went so far as to reprint the whole of the Ode, an infringement of Messrs. Macmillan's rights, for which an apology had to be made' (Hamilton 1887, 142; cf. 'A Jubilee Ode' 1887). In Tennyson's poem, Victoria is celebrated as the head of an imperial nation. She is first called 'our Queen' who 'assumed the globe, the sceptre', fifty years earlier, then 'Queen, and Empress of India' (p. 1370, ll. 3 and 6). Her reign is presented as 'Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce', 'ever-brightening Science' and 'ever-widening Empire' (p. 1371, ll. 52–54). The

6 See Tennyson 1887. The poem is also reproduced as 'On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria' in Tennyson 1969, 1369–72. Subsequent page and line references from this edition.

speaker 'exhorts all classes and nations to unite in celebratory song, from the lords of land and industry to the "Patient children of Albion"' (Sherwood 2013, 100):

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,
Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!' (pp. 1371–72, ll. 55–65)

Tennyson's jubilee piece has been described as 'optimistic and positive in an appropriately grand and vague way' (Stange 1987, 151). If 'Tennyson's laureate poem ends on a vaguely hopeful note' (Faulkner 2009, 39), commentators have not failed to point to the apparent 'paradox' expressed in the final stanza, where the speaker wonders: 'Are there thunders moaning in the distance?' (p. 1372, l. 66)[7]. In an essay that makes a strong case for regarding 'distance' – 'the word and the concept, in its various connotations, whether of space or time, fact or metaphor' – as 'a necessary component of Tennyson's thought and language', Jerome H. Buckley comments on the ominous image of the thunders in line 66, defining 'the sentiment and the image' alike as 'odd intrusions on the jubilation'

7 See, for example, Hamilton 1887, 143; Pearsall 2021, 196.

(Buckley 1992, 61). However, my analysis of other nineteenth-century jubilee contributions both in the previous and in this chapter indicates that this type of climatological imagery is far more conventional in this kind of literary output, usually serving the purpose of trying to reinforce the notion of Britain and its Empire as exceptional, precisely for their ability to overcome various hardships that are imagined as storms and tempests.

If the then Poet Laureate's was 'the poetic statement of the official celebratory view of the Jubilee' (Stange 1987, 151), many unofficial imperial voices additionally resounded in print. In point of fact, at least some of the congratulatory verse penned for Victoria's Golden Jubilee by 'a host of singing birds' (Fredeman 1987a, 5) appeared before Tennyson's ode. Just like 'Jubilate!' by Martin F. Tupper (1810–1889), who depicts himself as leading the way (Tupper 1886a, 11–16), *Fact and Fancy: An Ode, for the Jubilee of the Queen's Reign* by John Wilson Ross (1818–1887) was published in 1886 (Ross 1886, 3–20).

By the time Tennyson started penning his jubilee ode in December 1886, the pamphlet wherein Tupper's tribute was collected had already been published[8]. On 7th December 1886, a front-page unsigned article in *The Globe* could proclaim that 'The Queen's jubilee has found its poet' and salute Tupper as 'The Jubilee Poet'. Calling him 'the first in the field', the article underlines Tupper's credentials for beating every other poet to the draw on this occasion by referencing his previous patriotic pieces, such as the ode that he penned for Victoria's coronation in 1838 or an 1860 sonnet where he prophesised her

8 Commenting on the title of the poem in a 'Note', Tupper builds up the expectations for Tennyson's jubilee contribution: 'This lyric is especially styled a "Jubilee Offering", and not an Ode, as any more ambitious performance will more suitably be the province of the Poet-Laureate' (Tupper 1886a, 'Note'). As I show below, however, Tennyson's ode repeats many images and arguments used by Tupper.

assumption of the title of Empress of India ('The Jubilee Poet' 1886, 1)[9]. It is on similar grounds that, in his 1949 biography of Tupper, Derek Hudson claims that no other poet 'had acquired a better prescriptive right than Tupper to give praise in song on the great occasion' (Hudson 1949, 319)[10]. With their comments, however, both the author of the 1886 article and Hudson do little more than echo the first stanza of Tupper's jubilee ode, wherein the poet himself attempts to establish his credentials as a privileged jubilee versifier:

HE, that fifty years ago
    From the central arch look'd down
On that wondrous scene below,
    Where Victoria took her crown,
When the Abbey, glittering bright
    With all gems of wealth and worth,
Shed its consecrated light
    On the fairest flower of earth, –
He, that thus beheld his Queen
    On the birthday of her power,
Throned in majesty serene
    In young beauty's graceful hour, –

9 Both poems are reprinted in Tupper's jubilee 'offering' (Tupper 1886a, 19–33 and 39–40), along with 'the words for music' entitled 'Victoria's Jubilee' (17–18), three 'Coronation Sonnets' (35–37) and three 'stanzas on Imperial Federation' (38–39). In his own 'Note on the Companion Poems', Tupper writes: 'As somewhat of a literary curiosity, and suitable to this Jubilee publication, I have appended hereto in its integrity the Coronation Ode written by me on the 18th of July 1838, just a year after the Queen's Accession; it was (partly at least) pencilled at the time in the Abbey where I sat – in the upper choir gallery, northside, No. 85 – so I find it stated on my original green ticket from the Earl Marshal's office, now before me – a curious and well-nigh unique survival as a personal archive. How it escaped collection I cannot now remember; but at all events here it is, pasted in my tenth volume of scraps and cuttings, and I question if such another half century relic is readily producible. The Ode itself had considerable popularity at the time, and is still extant in my "Miscellaneous Poems", Gall & Inglis edition. I hope it will be acceptable here as an appropriate pendant to my Jubilee Offering: as also the companion sonnets, the words for music, and my stanzas on Imperial Federation' (8–9).

10 According to Hudson: 'Of all the jubilee tributes', Tupper's may well be regarded as 'the most truly Victorian in its loyalty and piety' (Hudson 1949, 320).

He, that then with heart on fire
    Pour'd his prophecy sublime
From the patriot's thrilling lyre
    Mingled with the Abbey's chime, –
He, unchanged from youth to age
    This half century of time,
Lives to fling the champion gage
    In this tournament of rhyme. (pp. 11–12, ll. 1–20)

While many poets would soon begin to follow Tupper's lead, he was particularly eager for others to view him as an early and well-qualified jubilee celebrant.

Although it is almost exclusively for his influence on Walt Whitman (1819–1892) that Tupper is usually accorded some attention in modern scholarship, he lived long enough to both meet George III in person and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Victoria's accession to the throne[11]. One of the few happy childhood memories that Tupper recollects in his autobiography is the moment when he was tenderly patted on the head by the King himself:

Another infantile recollection is memorable, as thus. My father's annual holiday happened one year to be at Bognor, where a patron patient of his, Lord Arran, rented a pleasant villa, and he bad for a visitor at the time no less a personage than George the Third […]. My father took his little boy with him to call upon the Earl, not thinking to see the King; but when we came in there was his kind-hearted Majesty, who patted my curls and gave me his blessing! (Tupper 1886b, 8–9)

11 For a modern biography of Tupper, see Thompson 2002. On Tupper's importance to Whitman, see Coulombe 1996; Cohen 1998; Miller 2010, 25–26; Phelan 2012, 157–60.

Even so, the prefatory 'Note on Jubilee Reigns' in Tupper's *Jubilate!* does not spare George III from criticism because he, 'with all his virtues, obstinately lost to us half of the Western hemisphere' (Tupper 1886a, 6–7). By contrast, in the same preface, Victoria, 'the present Imperial ruler of Britain and her dependencies – the true Anglo-Israel of God' (6), is deemed as responsible for the recent 'material and spiritual' expansion of the British Empire:

> Under her sceptre all the peoples of our vast Empire have progressed every way – in numbers, civilization, the arts of life, – in science, morality, religion, – in victories by sea and land, discoveries, exploits, and general improvement: – for material and spiritual amelioration of the race, England and her children have advanced. (5)

In the fifth stanza of Tupper's poem, the exceptionality of Victoria's reign vis-à-vis those of previous long-lived rulers such as George III is presented in these terms:

> O, Thou hast specially been blest
> Above the greatest and the blest
> Who have won life's noblest gain,
> The golden wedding of a reign!
> For, though England proudly brings
> A leash of her heroic kings, –
> Henry, Magna Charta's rock,
> Edward, of the Crécy stock,
> With good King George, the true till death,
> And lion-like Elizabeth, –
> And these in company with thee
> Precede thy royal Jubilee,

Yet is Victoria first and best,
Above them all supremely blest. (pp. 13–14, ll. 50–63)

Similar comparisons recur in much Victorian jubilee poetry, starting with Tennyson's own official ode: 'Henry's fifty years are all in shadow, / Gray with distance Edward's fifty summers, / Even her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten' (p. 1371, ll. 39–41).

Besides this type of temporally comparative assessments, Tupper's occasional piece contains a series of remarkable imperially minded moments and lines that precede comparable ones in the jubilee verses authored by Tennyson and many others. One of these often-repeated textual features is the formulaic direct address to Victoria as both 'Queen and Empress' (pp. 15–16, ll. 88, 98, 106 and 110–11). Another is the usual poetic representation of Victoria's global influence, which, in Tupper's poem, is testified by the enthusiastic endorsement that she receives from her subjects across the Empire in such lines as:

All round the world the morning gun
Salutes thee each rising sun;
All around the world in every scene
Rises thy hymn, "God save the Queen";
And thy broad standard floats unfurl'd
On every shore all round the world. (p. 16, ll. 100–5)

These lines reinforce a similar point made earlier in the text, when the very common family trope is rehearsed: 'Mother England stands / Girt with children in all lands, / And her tenfold Tribes are seen / Bringing homage to their Queen' (p. 13, ll. 42–45). In Tupper's poem, the origins of this geographically widespread

patriotic sentiment are explained through a description of Victoria's reign as 'Fifty years of happy times / Spread and spreading through all climes' (p. 14, ll. 68–69), which are said to have resulted (and continue to result) in all sorts of progress (that is, economic, military, infrastructural, philosophical, technological, scientific, religious):

Fifty years of gains untold,
Mines of gems and reefs of gold,
Victories won by sea and land,[12]
Generous efforts nobly plann'd,
Wondrous works of toil and thought,
Deeds with grandest daring fraught,
Strange inventions – time and space
Vanquish'd for the human race,
Nature's secrets all display'd,
And Science shown Religion's aid! (pp. 14–15, ll. 74–83)

As exemplified by Tennyson's ode (p. 1371, ll. 52–54), the progressivist rhetoric presented by Tupper here is fairly frequent in Victorian jubilee poetry.

Robert Francis St Clair-Erskine, 4th Earl of Rosslyn (1833–1890), was another relatively early jubilee poet. 'Published by command of Her Majesty', Rosslyn's 'Love That Lasts for Ever: A Jubilee Lyric' (1887) found its way to print earlier than Tennyson's contribution to jubilee literature[13]. As its title indicates,

12 Tupper was also the author of imperially minded war poetry. On this, see Hudson 1949, 183–199 (esp. 185ff on the Indian Rebellion).

13 See Rosslyn 1887a. Subsequent page and line references from this edition. The poem was also published separately (Rosslyn 1887b) and then collected in a volume entitled *Sonnets and Poems* (Rosslyn 1889, 303–14). The collection opens with a sonnet 'To Victoria, Regina et Imperatrix', where she is compared to the sun: 'So must I sing; as rivalling the Sun / In wide-extended Empire, and in good / That reaches all, and comforts all, / Thy Fame Who rulest half the Globe' (ll. 9–12).

the poem is predicated on the display of patriotic devotion to Victoria in her triple capacity as 'Mother, Wife, and Queen' (p. 325, l. 15). While arguing that 'true Love is the fairest Gem / Of Thy Imperial Diadem' (p. 331, ll. 109–10), the speaker does not shy away from congratulating Victoria on her authority over an unruly empire and on the economic profit that the wide-ranging imperial networks are able to secure:

XXIII.

Queen of the Sea!
What prouder title dignifies
A Monarchy?
The Orient owns it, and it lies
Amidst Thy countless Colonies;

XXIV.

A wayward realm,
Yet ruled in Love for the world's gain;
Thou guid'st the Helm
That brings our commerce o'er the main,
And makes us rich without a stain. (pp. 331–32, ll. 111–20)

At first, the speaker ostensibly suggests that all 'the world' benefits from Victoria's imperial rule, but the rest of the twenty-fourth stanza is quick to specify that that real economic beneficiary are the British ('our commerce'; 'makes us rich'). Moreover, with its allusion to colonial rebellions, the term 'wayward', which denotes the unruliness of the Empire that Victoria manages to govern nonetheless, paves the way for the mention of victorious military conflicts in a later stanza:

XXVIII.

No tongue can tell
Thy peaceful triumphs; mighty War
Has his as well,
But Peace has greater, nobler far
Than the chained victims of his Car. (p. 333, ll. 136–40)

Here, in a typical war/peace juxtaposition, Victoria's innumerable 'peaceful triumphs' are said to surpass, in both greatness and nobility, those of 'mighty War', which are disparagingly depicted as 'chained victims'.

Over the course of 1887, the Poet Laureate and his precursors were joined by many other versifiers in the collective effort of penning jubilee tributes to Victoria. In addition to Tennyson's ode, Pearce's *Hail to the Queen! Verses Written on the Occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee 1887* (1987) collects poetic contributions by William McGonagall (1825–1902), 'the favorite "anti-laureate" among scholars of the late-Victorian age' (MacDonald 1987–88, 481)[14], and by various others, such as Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–1897), Henry Halloran (1811–1893), R. Sivasankara Pandiah (1853–1899), Thomas Edwin Moore (1839–1898?), Humphrey William Freeland (1814–1892) and Joseph Bennett (1831–1911) (Pearce 1987, 9–24). The poetic choir that could be 'heard' in print in the jubilee year also comprised the British imperial voices of Thomas Bratt (1852–1929), Joseph Crawhall (1821–1896), Sarah Ann Gibbons (?), William Jones Hunt (?), Gideon Henry Mackenzie Read (?), Robert Saeger (?), George Francis Savage-

14 On McGonagall, see also Watson 2010 and Blair 2019, 17–18, 29, 42–43 and 176–79.

Armstrong (1845–1906), Lena Scheyer (?), Walter White (1811–1893)[15]. Latecomers such as George William Swanston (?) add up to the already long list[16].

The choir of imperially minded poets additionally included William Longstaff (b. 1849), a remarkable representative of a social group that Bernard Porter tends to exclude/excuse in his work: the working class (Porter 2004). Very little is known about Longstaff nowadays. The bio-bibliographical entry for this author in Catherine W. Reilly's excellent annotated bibliography of late Victorian poetry reads:

> b. Soulby, Westmorland, son of a farm labourer who died early, leaving his young family in poverty. He attended school from five to twelve years of age, then became successively a railway 'nipper lad', gardener's boy, farm servant, navvy on the Settle & Carlisle railway. Eventually he was a signalman for the North Eastern Railway Co. (Reilly 1994, 287)[17]

In Reilly's bibliography, a thirty-one-page jubilee collection of verses, entitled *Her Majesty's Royal Jubilee, 1887: Ode and Song, the Tribute of a Working Man* (1887) and bearing Longstaff's last name on the title page, is attributed to him[18].

Victoria's Golden Jubilee is mentioned or celebrated in several poems appearing in this collection. Among these are certainly 'A Noble Gentle Queen: A Thanksgiving Ode' (pp. 4–10) and 'Our Queen: A Jubilee Song' (pp. 29–31), as

15 See Bratt 1887; Crawhall 1887; Gibbons 1887; Hunt 1887; Read 1887; Saeger 1887; Savage-Armstrong 1887; Scheyer 1887; White 1887.

16 In the 'Preface', which is dated 1st March 1888, Swanston seeks to excuse the 'ominous' belatedness of his contribution by revealing that a previous version of the newly published text had circulated locally: 'The following poem of which an abridgement has gone through a local circulation is now presented to the Public in a more complete form' (Swanston 1888, 'Preface').

17 The even briefer entry for Longstaff in *A Database of British and Irish Labouring-Class Poets and Poetry, 1700–1900* (2017), edited by John Goodridge, is based on Reilly's entry.

18 See Longstaff 1887. Page and line references in text.

well as 'A Brief Jubilee Ode' (p. 3), the opening poem of the collection. In this text, Victoria's life is rapidly summarised through an anaphoric climax of nouns chronologically progressively referring to the various phases of her life: 'A babe' (l. 1), 'A child' (l. 2), 'A girl' (l. 3), 'A Maiden' (l. 5) and 'A wife' (l. 7). Longstaff was far from alone in retracing the stages of Victoria's life within a poetic offering. Among the poets who provided an even less compressed biographical account in their tributes is certainly Ross, whose *Fact and Fancy* is divided into titled sections such as 'The Infant Princess', 'The Maiden Queen', 'The Wife and Mother' and 'The Widow' (Ross 1886, 3–20). The temporal progression inherent in the parallelistic structure devised by Longstaff to recount Victoria's biography in verse intriguingly culminates in a spatial description of her reign, as she is represented as 'regnant in England here, / North, East, and West, afar and near; / The sunny South, the Northern pole, / Knew her as Freedom's head and whole' (ll. 7–10). Both the life of the Queen and Empress, whose longevity is being fêted, and the geographical scope of her Empire are brought into focus in Longstaff's ode.

Operating at varying geographical scales, Longstaff's volume features poetic instances of national as well as more markedly imperial patriotic fervour. While 'British' patriotism is extolled in 'The Oak' (pp. 18–19), more narrowly localised versions of patriotic devotion (i.e., Scottish, Welsh and Irish, as well as English) are vocally expressed in a group of four consecutive texts, all subtitled 'A Patriot(ic) Song': 'Dear Old England: A Patriotic Song' (pp. 19–21), 'Scotland Leal: A Patriotic Song' (pp. 22–24), 'Ancient Wales: A Patriotic Song' (pp. 24–26) and 'Unhappy Ireland: A Patriot Song' (pp. 26–28). However, the geographical focus of Longstaff's collection is certainly provided by England, whose position

as the geopolitical heart of the Empire is patriotically underlined in a number of poems. The conflation of national and supranational dimensions is at the centre of the poetic diptych of 'Songs of Home': 'Lesser England' (pp. 10–12) and 'Greater England' (pp. 13–14). Britain's expansionist drive is captured in poems like 'Our Homes' (pp. 14–16) and 'Looking Back: Be Loyal' (pp. 16–18).

Another remarkable instance of imperially minded poet is Emoline Ann Warne (b. 1850). '[B]orn blind' like her 'five brothers and sisters' (Allen 1907, 12), she was the author of *A Brief Narrative of the Lives of Ephraim Angell and Emoline Ann Warne, the Blind Brother and Sister, of Redruth, in the County of Cornwall* (Warne 1884), as well as an intriguing jubilee poem. Warne's *Lines on the Occasion of Her Majesty's Jubilee, June, 1887* is divided into three chronologically progressive sections: the 'Past', the 'Present' and the 'Future'. In the second and longest of these, the speaker refrains from recounting the 'many victories' that 'have been won, / Since the last fifty years begun' for lack of 'skill' (Warne 1887, p. 2, ll. 41–43). Instead, the text salutes the widespread diffusion of Christianism across the world:

Think of the nations of the earth,
Thousands have witnessed the new birth,
The Bible – who can tell its worth?
God's Word has spread from shore to shore,
Still we look on and hope for more,
Till it shall reach the wide world o'er. (ll. 46–51)

Inextricably intertwined with colonial evangelism, British territorial expansionism is celebrated as the vehicle for the religious conversion of other

peoples. This type of colonialist efforts, the speaker hopes, will persist until the entire world has been conquered.

The profusion of verse produced on the occasion was the subject of paratextual or textual commentary. The impressive quantity of jubilee poems appearing from every direction of Britain and its Empire was remarked upon hyperbolically by the newcomers. In the preface to *The Queen's Jubilee and Other Poems* (1887), for instance, Read explains: 'I felt it my duty and pleasure to add my humble tribute of esteem and affection for our most gracious Queen and Empress, and join with the many thousands of her rejoicing subjects on this and the Jubilee of her long, loving, peaceful, and prosperous reign' (Read 1887, 'Preface'). Likewise, Hunt describes his own *Jubilee Poems* (1887) as 'the author's quota to the almost innumerable offerings placed at the feet of the Empress Queen on this Her Majesty's Jubilee' and as 'the outcome of a loyal and patriotic desire to commemorate a period of great interest to the entire empire, the like of which none of us have ever seen before and which none will see again' (Hunt 1887, 'Preface'). As well as their quantity, the quality of these poetic texts received comments, but these were not always positive. This is certainly the case in the 'Dedication' of J. W. Williams's satirical volume, *Jubilee on the Brain* (1887), which opens as follows:

GRACIOUS Sovereign! Empress! Lady! Queen!
    Hail! to this auspicious, wondrous year,
Poets and pressmen have at last a theme,
    And for the task ten thousand scribes appear.
They'll rack their brains by day, at night they'll dream,
    Produce their twaddle, quaint, green, or queer,
Invoke the muse, and all the powers that be

To praise your Majesty and your Jubilee. (Williams 1887, p. 3, ll. 1–8)

In these opening lines, the high number ('ten thousand') of poets involved in the collective endeavour of paying homage to Victoria in verse starkly contrasts with the supposedly low literary value of their poetic contributions, which are described as the 'twaddle, quaint, green, or queer', of amateur poets ('scribes').

Admittedly, not every poetic contribution to jubilee literature vocally supports the Empire. Counterintuitive though it may seem in consideration of the fame as 'The Laureate of the Larger England' that he would earn for himself (Howells 1897), a prime example of this is the occasional piece authored by a twenty-seven-year-old Kipling, who represents the celebrations through the eyes and voice of a rather unimpressed Punjabi ploughman[19]. The Indian peasant, who states that 'the wheat and the cattle are all my care' (Kipling 1888, p. 70, l. 47), is certainly uninterested in the fireworks illuminating the night sky ('Great serpents, blazing, of red and blue, / That rose and faded, and rose anew', ll. 25–26) and 'indifferent to the coming of all Empires' (Howarth 2013, 610): 'Mogul, Mahratta, and *Mlech* from the North, / And White Queen over the Seas, / God raiseth them up and driveth them forth / As the dust of the ploughshare flies in the breeze' (Kipling 1888, p. 70, ll. 43–46). In *Kipling Sahib: India and the Making of Rudyard Kipling* (2007), Charles Allen cites the text as an example of Kipling's numerous poetic 'attacks on the Government of India for its failure to fulfil its duty as protector of the Indian poor', highlighting that the poem 'suggests that the Queen-Empress and her Empire mean nothing to the vast bulk of the Indian populace' because 'India's peasants are concerned only with their crops and the

19 See Kipling 1887. First titled 'A Jubilee Ode', the poem was later collected as 'What the People Said' in the 'Other Verses' section of *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses* (Kipling 1888, pp. 69–70).

harvest' (Allen 2007, 241)[20]. Yet, the speaker in this his forty-eight-line poem never openly criticises the behaviour of the past and present rulers of India, whose authority remains uncontested in spite of the reminder of their mortality. Although the Punjabi ploughman views them as subject to 'the will of God' just like himself (Kipling 1888, p. 70, l. 48), it should be stressed that this is not tantamount to expressing disapproval of the imperial sovereigns and their conduct on Indian soil. On the contrary, it ultimately accepts the status quo and even affirms a strong faith in the value of hard work. Kipling's 1887 jubilee poem, I would argue, voices less imperial scepticism than a sort of religious detachment from the workings of politics on earth.

Two other poets that do not appear to have perfectly aligned with the host of congratulatory jubilee versifiers discussed above are Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) and A. E. Housman (1859–1936). Swinburne's fifty-stanza ode for the occasion is entitled 'The Jubilee: 1887' (Swinburne 1887a)[21]. While this poem has been cited as textual evidence of Swinburne's 'new Toryism' (Thomas 1979, 206; see also Rooksby 1997, 259), Fredeman considers him as 'alone of the poets tendering Jubilee tributes' in 'dar[ing] to write lines verging on an anti-ode', even though his 'lines' appear to be only 'subtly critical: the hope forecast in the "sundawn" of Victoria's reign had not been realized, but there was always the future' (Fredeman 1987a, 5–6).

Collected in *A Shropshire Lad* (1896), Housman's '1887' is another interesting jubilee piece (Housman 1896, pp. 1–3). Since Housman's lifetime, the

20 'These verses', Allen goes on to write in the same paragraph, 'anticipate and rehearse Kipling's more famous meditation on Empire set down in "Recessional" a decade later, marking the Queen's Diamond Jubilee of 1897' (Allen 2007, 242).

21 Swinburne's poem, which first appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*, was also published separately (Swinburne 1887b) and then collected as 'The Commonweal' in the third edition of *Poems and Ballads* (Swinburne 1889, 7–23).

text 'has aroused a degree of controversy regarding the tone it takes towards Queen Victoria's jubilee' (Jebb 2000, 45). As Keith Jebb summarises: 'When Frank Harris met Housman he praised the poem for its unpatriotic attitude and was quickly rebuffed. The problem hinges on the use of "God Save the Queen" at the conclusion of the poem, and how ironic this is seen to be' (45). Norman Page is among the more recent supporters of the view that '1887' 'subverts Victoria's Golden Jubilee of 1887 while appearing to celebrate it' (Page 2000, 94). Despite Housman's rebuttal of Harris's 'attempt to flatter him by assuming he held the same views on royalty, patriotism and the British army as they did' (Bayley 2000, 157), Page argues for 'trusting the poem rather than the poet' in order to appreciate 'its finely controlled refusal to toe the patriotic line' (Page 2000, 95). In his view, Housman's '1887' is 'an important exception' within his poetic output in that it touches upon the theme of war, as it 'commemorates those who had paid the price of Empire in their suffering and death' (94).

For Tupper, '[p]olitics of every kind' should be 'excluded' from people's reactions to the upcoming royal event, 'seeing the occasion is one of joyous celebration, rather than cares and troubles' (Tupper 1886a, 'Note'), but not everybody agreed. One of the less conformist voices that did not restrain from expressing criticisms of Victoria and her Empire more or less subtly was that of the Scottish poet Robert Buchanan (1841–1901) resounding in his 'Annus Aureolus: An Ode on the Jubilee of the Empress Victoria', which raises crucial issues concerning Britain's rule in nineteenth-century Ireland[22]. Early on in the text, Buchanan depicts a long procession of a selection of personified territories

22 See Buchanan 1887. First printed in *The Contemporary Review* in the jubilee year, Swinburne's poem was later collected as 'The Golden Year: An Ode on the Jubilee of the Empress Victoria' in *The Buchanan Ballads Old and New* (Buchanan 1892, pp. 65–72). Subsequent page and line references from this edition.

ruled by the 'Empress and Queen' (p. 65, l. 13) – India, Australia, Tasmania, Canada, England and Scotland – as they gratefully pays tribute to the ruler:

Thy subject Spirits come and wait attendant:
Tawny and proud, a queenly sibyl-maiden,
Comes INDIA, clad in woofs of strange device,
With fruitage from the fabled Eastern Aiden,
And gifts of precious gems and gold and spice;
On a white elephant she rides, while round her
Like baying hounds her spotted tigers run—
Black-brow'd as night, to her who tamed and crown'd her
She comes, with fiery eyes that front the sun.
AUSTRALIA follows, in a chariot golden
Drawn by black heifers; on the chariot's side
An ocean eagle sits with white wings folden,
And o'er her head float egrets purple-dyed.
Tatoo'd TASMANIA, with wild ringlets flowing,
Followed by savage herds and hinds, strides near.
CANADA comes mocassin'd, clearly blowing
Her forest horn, and brandishing her spear.
ALBION in martial mail, with trident gleaming,
Leads an old lion, and a lamb snow-white;
Blonde CALEDONIA, with glad tartan streaming
Back from her shoulder, leaves her lonely height,
And with her mountain Sister, to the strumming
Of harp and pipe, joins the rejoicing throng. (pp. 65–66, ll. 18–40)

Such congratulatory pageant is disrupted by the arrival of the allegorical character for Ireland, begging the 'Crownèd Queen and Mother' to 'redress my

[i.e., Ireland's] children's wrong' (p. 66, ll. 56–57): 'Yet … who is this that rises up before her, / Ragged and hungry, blood upon her hands? / Smileless beneath the heavens now smiling o'er her, / Wild grey-hair'd ERIN on her island stands!' (ll. 52–55).

A brief look at contemporary periodicals reveals that public opinion on Buchanan's piece was mixed. On 8th June 1887, *The Guardian* favourably reviewed it as 'an addition to the ever-lengthening list of Jubilee odes which has more purpose than most'. Other reviewers were less taken in by Buchanan's poetical and political effort. On 4th June 1887, *The Illustrated London News* commented that 'neither the thoughts nor the language have any value as poetry'. Some readers particularly regretted Buchanan's departure from the norm vis-à-vis the exclusion of 'cares and troubles' from public expressions of jubilation, which had been clearly stated by Tupper. While conceding that 'it has "literary merit"', for example, a contemporary reviewer in *The Globe* (31st May 1887) precisely lamented that Buchanan's contribution was 'rather depressing than joyous, showing overmuch of the shadows of the past'.

Though not necessarily empire-related, dissonant notes were also stricken in the many parodies of Tennyson's official jubilee ode. The fourth volume of Walter Hamilton's *Parodies of the Works of English and American Authors* (1887) reprints a good selection of contemporary responses to the poem (Hamilton 1887, 142–47, but see also 279–80). These include a series of mock excerpts from Tennyson's own journal that were originally published under the title of 'Very Hard Lines: How They Were Written to Order (Leaf from a Laureate's Diary)' in the *Punch* issue for 9th April 1887 (143–44). Fictionally reconstructing Tennyson's composition process from 9:30 A.M. to midnight, these fake entries imagine his

various reactions to the expectation placed on the Poet Laureate and function as a paratextual commentary on his ode. What comes under attack is Tennyson's supposed lack of inspiration and the mechanical nature of his composition, the underlying assumption being that he composed his poem as though merely following a formula or using a checklist: 'Get in "fifty" somehow' (143); 'Must get in a "since"' (144); 'Have got in something about illuminations, sanitary improvements, subscribing to a Hospital and Penny dinners, and given a kind of back-hander to George the Third' (144). At one point, the imposed subject matter seems so incompatible with verse as its form of expression that Tennyson is imagined as seriously considering the idea to 'write it all in prose, and then cut it up into poetry afterwards' (144). The image of Tennyson resulting from this parodic attempt at fictional metapoetic autobiography is ultimately that of an uninspired poet who greatly dislikes his having to produce an occasional piece on demand, for he regards Victoria's jubilee as 'a rubbishing subject' (143) and his own poem on the subject as 'quite the toughest piece of work I've ever had to turn out' (144)[23].

The perceived poor quality of Tennyson's jubilee tribute (supposedly 'writ poorly', 145) is targeted in many of the parodic, periodic poems reproduced in Hamilton's volume. The selected parodic pieces are taken from the following periodicals: *The Globe* (29th March 1887), *Moonshine* (6th April 1887), *The St. James's Gazette* (14th April 1887), *Scraps* (16th April 1887) and *The Weekly Dispatch* (17th

23 Despite 'Mr. Punch's parodic account of the composition of "Carmen Sæculare"', however, 'Punch himself fell an early victim to JUBILEE FEVER' and 'promoted [the spirit of the Golden Jubilee] with the characteristic loyalty he had always shown to the "Royal Lady", even in his most critical moods' (Fredeman 1987b, 55–56). For example, 'The "Almanack" for 1887, published on December 6, 1886, included four collages surveying, decade by decade, the history of the Queen's reign and the political, social, military, scientific, and technological accomplishments of the Victorian Era' (55). In addition to this: 'Virtually every issue of *Punch* from December 1886 through July 1887 is dominated by Jubilee cartoon' (55).

April 1887), which even 'awarded the prize of two guineas for the best Parody of a part of Tennyson's Jubilee Ode' (146). Tennyson's metre is often remarked upon and his choice of unrhymed verse is constantly ridiculed. For example, the first three lines of 'Owed to Lord Tennyson (Carmen Sequel-airy)' read: 'Fifty times our nose has twirled and tilted, / Fifty times our silvern laughter fallen, / Since, my Lord, we read your Ode – your metre' (144). The pages of *The Globe*, which lamented the 'very prosaic rhythms' of Tennyson's ode, describing it not only as 'trite and even common in ideas' but as lacking even 'occasional felicities of expression', proposed 'Another Ode' beginning as follows: 'Fifty times the Laureate sharpened his pencil: / Fifty times he turned over the Rhyming Dictionary: / Then he decided to give up rhymes altogether' (143). In this and at least another poetic parody, Whitman is evoked as the champion of free verse and thus as a bad influence on Tennyson (143 and 147).

Not all of the selected parodies foreground metrical issues. In fact, some versifiers appear to have been as concerned with politics as with poetics and, at times, even more with the former than the latter. 'Another Jubilee Ode', for instance, refers to 'Fifty years of ever-growing taxes' and 'of ever muddling Ireland', as well as on Tennyson's 'numbers unmusical' (144). Heavy taxation and Irish home rule are political matters commented upon in other similar texts. Another good example of this is the anonymous 'Carmen Expostulatory', with its references to 'Fifty years of ever-growing Taxation' and to 'Ireland's cry not silenced' as one of the 'wrongs not righted' (147). Still wearing 'the symbol badge / Of Saxon oppression, / Which she has worn for centuries', the speaker wonders, 'How will fair Erin / Hail this golden year of Jubilee?' (147).

As a controversial subject matter in the 1880s, home rule for Ireland is more directly tackled in the Tennysonian rewrite entitled 'The Home Rule Jubilation Ode' and published in *The St. James's Gazette* on 14th April 1887. Voicing unionist positions, the poem alludes to William Gladstone (1809–1898), 'the King of Obstructionists' (145), whose Government of Ireland Bill 1886 had been recently defeated in the House of Commons, and to Irish nationalists like Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891), 'chief of Irish despots' (145). It also alludes to the Clerkenwell explosion (1867) and the Fenian dynamite campaign (1881–85):

> You, the Paddy-American,
> Shape a missile of Dynamite;
> Make it really dangerous,
> Some explosive material
> Like the missile of Clerkenwell,
> Which may frighten the Unionists,
> All the Unionists terrify,
> Frighten them into anarchy.
> Fifty times repeat the loud explosion,
> Fifty times the midnight crime and outrage,
> Till at length you rend the mighty empire. (145)

Reproving Irish nationalists for advocating 'Disunion', 'Misrule' and 'Anarchy' as well as terrorism, the text concludes with the gloomy prediction that 'the League is victor, and the darkness / Falls upon the Anarchy of Ireland' (145). 'The Home Rule Jubilation Ode', then, reminds us that parody could be pro-empire as well as politically subversive, expressing conservative views on the

contemporary issues raised and protested by other parodic versifiers and by dissenting poetic voices like Buchanan's.

It is also interesting to note that imperialism beyond the British Isles seems much more neglected in all these parodic responses to Tennyson's poem. 'Another Jubilee Ode' contains a reference to 'Fifty years of world-mending' (144), but the latter does not read as particularly sceptical towards the imperial project. The imperial dimension of the original text appears to have been somewhat lost in most of these parodic rewrites.

Having surveyed a representative selection of royal jubilee texts composed for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, I conclude this chapter with a lengthier textual analysis of Lewis Morris's 'A Song of Empire', which will be preceded by a few introductory remarks on his place within the field of Victorian studies. Morris's ode is long enough to exemplify most of the tropes and rhetorical strategies recurring throughout many other shorter jubilee poems, which have not found a place in my discussion. More importantly, 'A Song of Empire' also elaborates upon some of the points made by Jerdan and other jubilee versifiers around 1809. This is why Morris's poem provides the focus for the final section of this chapter.

3.3. The Imperial Voice of Lewis Morris: 'A Song of Empire' (1887)

Lewis Morris (1833–1907) and his works are probably obscure to many a Victorianist. Douglas Phillips's 1981 book-length account of his life and work aptly opens by contrasting the writer's early success with his later obscurity: 'Few poets can have enjoyed such success during their lifetimes; few can have sunk to such depths of oblivion after their deaths' (Phillips 1981, 1). But Phillips's own attempt to rescue him from the 'depths of oblivion' cannot be said to have been truly successful. While providing a helpful survey, Phillips's *Sir William Morris* does not seem to have directly inspired further scholarly work on the author receiving undivided attention in the volume.

Today, when encountering his last name in isolation, scholars of Victorian Britain will be prone to confuse him with William Morris (1834–1896), a far better-known and very different Victorian man who does not appear to have been closely related to Lewis. Yet, this was not necessarily the case for Victorians themselves, who may have more easily distinguished the now largely forgotten Welsh politician, lawyer and poet from the still remembered and studied English socialist, designer and writer. The differences in their backgrounds are reflected in their different attitudes towards Tennyson's laureate poetry. Whereas Lewis greatly admired and sought to emulate Tennyson's patriotic verse (Phillips 1981, 59), in a letter to his daughter Jenny dated 30th March 1887, William commented on the Poet Laureate's jubilee ode in these terms: 'I am sorry poor old Tennyson thought himself bound to write an ode on our fat Vic's Jubilee: have you seen it? It is like Martin Tupper for all the world' (Morris 1987, 633)[24]. This section is

24 On the relationship between William Morris and Tennyson, see Faulkner 2009. According to Faulkner, who draws on the endnote in Kelvin's edition of Morris's correspondence when commenting on this letter (Morris 1987, 634n6), the reference to Tupper here alludes not so much

concerned with Lewis, 'a patriotic poet in the fulsome Victorian style' (Thomas 2003, 2) that, in Phillips's words, 'was second only to Tennyson in public acclaim' during the 1880s and 1890s (Phillips 1981, 1).

A comprehensive assessment of Morris's literary output, which is inevitably beyond the scope of my own research, remains overdue. Albeit 'a prolific best-seller and a distinguished academic' in his own time (Ballin 2013, 18), if he receives a mention at all in twenty-first-century scholarship, this is typically in passing, his poetry hardly ever serving as the primary focus of attention[25]. Writing in 1910, the co-authors of a biography of King Edward VII noted that Morris 'ranked higher with the general reader than with the literary critic' (Sanderson and Melville 1910, 6:100). Whereas his popularity among the lay audience has now waned, professional critics still entertain a poor opinion on the quality of his poetry. On occasion, the conspicuous success that he enjoyed with contemporary readers is underlined alongside the perceived lack of merit in his poetic efforts (Thomas 2010, 81), which have been brushed off as 'far too much over-ambitious, temporarily impressive, but ultimately ephemeral' (Phillips 1981, 59), dismissed as 'grandiose and vapid in both style and content and almost totally lacking in inspiration' ('Morris, Lewis (1833–1907)' 1998, 514) or spurned as 'largely unmemorable, often not even metrically acceptable, gliding like cut-up prose' (Humfrey 2003, 38). Rarely do similar takedowns of his talent exonerate his imperially minded, patriotic pieces. According to Phillips, for instance, 'Morris is at his most effective when he is not motivated by his

to his 'Jubilee Offering' (which had first appeared several months earlier) as to his 'popular books of maxims called *Proverbial Philosophy*, published between 1838 and 1867' (Faulkner 2009, 39).

25 See, for instance, Morgan 2001, 51–52, 124 and 148; Matthews 2002, 255; Ballin 2013, 27, 41, 46–47 and 50–51; Davies 2013, 34; Quinault 2014, 282; Bohata 2014, 1737–38; Thomas 2016, 14-15, 115, 131, 187 and 197–98; Hornsby 2021, 53 and 159.

concept of the poet as the nation's conscience and spokesman', a concept that he inherited from Tennyson (Phillips 1981, 59)[26]. Conversely, this is precisely where his writing becomes more relevant to my own work.

In Morris's public figure and literary works, Welsh patriotism coexists and coalesces with a full endorsement for British expansionism. This is usefully summarised by Jeffrey Richards when, in his book on British imperialist music produced approximately from the mid-1870s to the mid-1950s, he briefly introduces Morris, whose texts were occasionally set to music by English composers like Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) and Frederic Cowen (1852–1935). 'Morris was a radical Welsh lawyer, a Liberal who favoured Welsh home rule, disestablishment of the Church in Wales and social reform. […]. For all his political radicalism, he was a fervent imperialist; and, although not Poet Laureate, composed odes to mark royal and imperial occasions', including 'odes on the marriage of the Duke of York, the death of the Duke of Clarence and the death of Canadian Premier Sir John Thompson' (on 6th July 1893, 14th January 1892 and 12th December 1894, respectively), as well as his Golden Jubilee ode (Richards 2001, 28). Much space of this last section will be dedicated to an in-depth analysis of 'A Song of Empire', but it seems worth observing that all the other instances of poetic tributes to royal family members and imperial statesmen cited by Richards similarly bear traces of Morris's enthusiastic support for the British Empire, as evinced by the quoted lines that follow: 'Life's gracious year / […] / […] a people's voice / Makes ready to rejoice / Through all our boundless

26 For Stange, Morris was Tennyson's 'down-market disciple' to whom those who 'found the Laureate's lines too subtle could turn' in the year of Victoria's Golden Jubilee (Stange 1987, 151).

Empire, far and wide' (Morris 1893, ll. 2 and 6–8)[27]; 'Our England stands to-day / As Rome stood once, the Empire of the Race' (Morris 1892, ll. 17–18)[28]; 'Great Empire, heart and mind, / Let Britain's sons closer and closer draw' (Morris 1895, ll. 13–14)[29].

In Phillips's view, Morris's 'Laureate-like verse' is motivated by his Welsh origins and by 'his early ambition at Jesus College, to show the Establishment that someone from an obscure corner of the kingdom – and from Wales at that – could become the official voice of the Queen and of the Empire on which at that time the sun never set' (Phillips 1981, 68–9). Flaunting an 'impeccable bardic ancestry' (for 'his great-grand-father was Lewis Morris of Anglesey, Llewelyn Ddu o Fôn, the celebrated Welsh poet and antiquary', as well as an 'anglicised upbringing' (9–10 and 7), Morris penned occasional poetry that exudes a firm belief in the British imperial project while also celebrating Welsh patriotism. 'An Ode Recited at the National Eisteddfod, July 11, 1894' is a prime example of what Phillips calls the 'unique synthesis' of Welsh pride and British imperial patriotism achieved by Morris's poetic voice (94). The poem, which was declaimed by Morris himself in front of 'the Royal Party'[30], opens with a reference to the English conquest of Wales – 'Six centuries ago Llywelyn fell, / And with him Wales' (Morris 1903, p. 653, ll. 1–2) – only to link the death of Llywelyn ap

27 Morris's *Ode on the Marriage of H. R. H. the Duke of York and H. S. H. Princess Victoria Mary of Teck: July 6th, 1893* was also collected as 'Ode on the Marriage of the Duke of York and Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, July 6, 1893' in a volume entitled *Songs without Notes* (Morris 1894, 160–9).

28 Originally published in the pages of *The Observer*, the poem 'January 14, 1892' was reproduced in other newspapers, such as *Evening Express* (18th January 1892, p. 5), *The Irish Times* (18th January 1892, p. 6) and *The Cork Constitution* (19th January 1892, p. 3).

29 When the poem 'An Elegy, January 3, 1895' was republished in book format, these lines were slightly changed to 'Great Empire, heart and mind / Closer Let Britain's sons together draw!'. See Morris 1896, 139; Morris 1897, 363.

30 Several newspapers reported on this in the aftermath of the event. These include *Echo* (12th July 1894, p. 2), *The Morning Post* (12th July 1894, p. 5), *The Lichfield Mercury* (13th July 1894, p. 8). See also the illustration appearing in *The Graphic*, 21st July 1894, p. 60.

Gruffudd in 1282 with the Prince of Wales and future Edward VII's visit to Caernarfon for the National Eisteddfod, which is saluted in these terms: 'Great Empire of our Britain, that hast been / Longer than Greece, and wider art than Rome, / After six hundred years the Prince of Wales comes home!' (p. 654, ll. 66–68).

Morris was also the author of two very imperially minded jubilee odes, 'A Song of Empire: June 20, 1887' (1887) and 'The Diamond Jubilee: An Ode (June 20, 1897)'. Both of these were first published in periodical forms and then reprinted in poetry collections. As anticipated by at least a handful newspapers, 'A Song of Empire' first appeared in the April 1887 issue of *Murray's Magazine: A Home and Colonial Periodical* (Morris 1887a)[31]. Later that year, the poem was collected in Morris's *Songs of Britain* (Morris 1887b, 163–82)[32]. The first appearance of 'The Diamond Jubilee: An Ode (June 20, 1897)' was in *The Times* (Morris 1897a). The ode was also reprinted separately and, a few years later, collected in Morris's *Harvest-Time* (1901)[33].

Neither Morris's Golden Jubilee ode nor his Diamond Jubilee tribute have been spared from the commonly cursory treatment of his writing in modern scholarship which I have outlined above. Only rarely have the contents of these texts been commented upon. Brian Gasser, for instance, briefly cites lines 97–106 from 'A Song of Empire' as an example of 'imperialistic pastoral' (Gasser 1979,

31 For some examples of newspapers anticipating the appearance of the poem in *Murray's Magazine*, see *The Globe* (23rd March 1887, p. 6); *The Morning Post* (23rd March 1887, p. 5); *Pall Mall Gazette* (26th March 1887, p. 3); *East Anglian Daily Times* (28th March 1887, p. 6); *Swansea and Glamorgan Herald* (30th March 1887, p. 2); *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal* (30th March 1887, p. 3).

32 Subsequent page and line references from this edition.

33 See Morris 1897b and Morris 1901, 87–93.

53–54)[34]. Ansgar Nünning and Jan Rupp only quote lines 22–25 from the Diamond Jubilee ode to illustrate the not-so-original deployment of 'the ideologically charged metaphor of the Empire as a family' (Nünning and Rupp 2008, 262)[35]. The same lines are quoted by Max Beloff to emphasise the contrast between Kipling's 'Recessional' (1897) – 'the main literary monument of the Jubilee' – and the tribute offered by Morris, 'a less memorable poet' (Beloff 1970, 21n2). Owing to the reproduction of line 316 ('We hold a vaster Empire than has been') on the bottom of a Canadian two-cent postage stamp specially issued to celebrate Christmas 1898, 'A Song of Britain' has attracted some additional scholarly attention[36]. Yet, the poem is yet to receive sustained attention.

It is precisely to 'A Song of Empire' that I turn now, spotlighting the ideological import of temporal comparisons, spatial descriptions and war/peace tensions. In *The White Man's Burdens*, Chris Brooks and Faulkner highlight the 'panoramic' quality of 'the mythology of empire' as this is registered by jubilee literature and regard Morris's poetic tribute as 'both one of the most ambitious and one of the most instructive' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996, 28). Following them, I try to offer the extended analysis that the anthology format hardly enables.

34 The lines quoted by Gasser are these that follow: 'Nor shall thy Western Isles / Be wanting, where the high green breakers fall / Upon the torrid shore, and nature smiles; / And yet sometimes broods over all. / Thick woods and hot lagunes with steaming breath, / A nameless presence with a face of death. / Fair balmy Isles, where never wintry air / Ruffles the scentless tropic blossoms fair, / Upon whose sun-warmed fruitful soil / Our father's dusky freedmen toil'.

35 The quoted lines are the following: 'Mother of freemen! over all the earth / Thy Empire-children come to birth. / Vast continents are thine, or sprung from thee, / Brave island-fortress of the storm-vext sea!'.

36 For example, the first Canadian commemorative stamp is mentioned in an article by Barrie Davies, which used the line taken from Morris's poem as the title of his own piece (Davies 1989, 18). Keith Jeffery and, more recently, Richard R. John also discuss this stamp (Jeffery 2006, 52; John 2018, 51). Although Jeffery correctly identifies the source of the quotation as Morris's 'A Song of Empire', however, he erroneously refers to it as the '1897 Diamond Jubilee Ode', not the 1887 Golden Jubilee ode (Jeffery 2006, 52).

Morris's 'A Song of Empire' consists of three hundred and twenty-two lines, grouped into twenty-one stanzas of different length. The poem opens with a direct address to Queen and Empress Victoria, who is viewed as the 'First Lady of [the] English race' and thus lavishly praised:

FIRST Lady of our English race,
In Royal dignity and grace
Higher than all in old ancestral blood,
But higher still in love of good,
And care for ordered Freedom, grown
To a great tree where'er
In either hemisphere,
Its vital seeds are blown;
Where'er with every day begun
Thy English bugles greet the coming sun! (p. 163, ll. 1–10)

These opening lines are particularly interesting from a spatial point of view. The (alleged) merits of Victoria and her rule are extolled following a trajectory that is both vertical and horizontal. The speaker first concentrates on the metaphorical height of 'Her Highness' and claims that her figurative loftiness rests not only on her lineage, but also on her personal qualities. Her superiority is manifested in her 'Royal dignity and grace', which elevate her above her noble ancestors and all others, but it is even more distinctly revealed in her 'love of good' and her 'care for ordered Freedom'. The speaker's gaze proceeds horizontally, embracing the globe to provide a broad overview of the geographical reach of Victoria's Empire ('where'er'; 'Where'er') and depicting the imposition of British rule (first somewhat paradoxically rendered as 'ordered Freedom', then compared to 'a

great tree') as a form of botanical exportation resulting from the scattering of 'vital seeds' across the world.

The second stanza expands on Victoria's moral superiority. The poem strengthens the emotional (but still politically motivated) ties between the ruler and the ruled by emphasising Victoria's unfailing concern and compassion for her subjects throughout her fifty-year-long reign. From her 'lonely Queenly place' (p. 164, l. 12), she is said to have not only followed the changing fortunes of her realm – 'the clouds and sunshine on her [England's] face', 'her changing hopes and fears' (ll. 13–14) – but to have made them her own: 'Her joys and sorrows have always been thine' (l. 15). Despite her physical distance from her subjects, she is portrayed as emotionally close to them, her 'quick and Royal sympathy' (l. 16) hastily reaching (in a top-down movement) 'Wherever grief and pain and suffering come' (l. 18).

The third stanza continues to praise Victoria ('head and symbol of our name', l. 20) in order to justify the celebration of the royal jubilee explicitly. The necessity of jubilation and pageantry is said to derive from the permanence of Victoria's virtues: 'For fifty years of reign thou wert the same, / Therefore to-day we make our jubilee' (ll. 21–22). Such permanence is stressed in the following lines, where she is depicted as a sort of unmoved mover, whose prerogative to rule over Britain and its overseas territories is firmly grounded in the law and in her subjects' admiration: 'Firm set on ancient right, as on thy people's love, / Unchecked thy wheels of empire onward move' (ll. 23–24). Her immobility and her immutably good behaviour as she sits on so stable a throne are emphasised by the unstoppable historical progression of her Empire. Her unwavering sympathy, which served as the focus of attention in the previous stanza, is then

contrasted with the deplored attitude of those monarchs 'Who, though their hapless subjects groan, / Sit selfish, caring not at all, / Until the fierce mob surges and they fall, / Or the assassin sets the down-trod free' (pp. 164–65, ll. 25–29). Much unlike these, therefore, Victoria is seen as the worthy recipient of 'love and reverence' (p. 165, l. 31).

The comparisons between Victoria and other sovereigns do not stop here, however. Further in the text, stanzas sixteen to twenty deploy a familiar trope as they adopt a diachronic perspective to compare her to previous English monarchs, starting with Henry III (1207–1272), Edward III (1312–1377) and George III, the three kings, 'each of his name the third', who lived and reigned approximately as long as Victoria:

> Three sovereigns of our English line
> Have reached thy length of rule, each of his name the third,
> But never England's heart was stirred
> By those as 'tis by thine.
> Our Henry died lonely and girt with foes;
> Our greater Edward fell in dotage ere life's close;
> And he thy grandsire knew a troublous time,
> A dim pathetic figure! full of pain
> And care too great for mortal to sustain,
> And in his rayless sorrow grown sublime! (p. 177, ll. 233–42)

Despite the similarity in the length of their reigns, Victoria stands out from this group of long-lived and long-serving English rulers for the great patriotic fervour that she alone is said to arouse.

If it is longevity that provides the starting point for comparison between English sovereigns in the sixteenth stanza, the next series of historical parallels is drawn along gender (as well as national) lines. In stanzas seventeen to nineteen, Victoria is viewed as the final component of a triad of English female monarchs ('each of her name the first', it could have been added) who are all represented as responsible for accelerating imperial progress: 'Three Queens have swayed / Our England's fortunes' (ll. 243–44). In comparison to their male counterparts, all grouped in one stanza, much more space is devoted to the praise of the merits of the 'three Queens', each applauded in a dedicated stanza (though, understandably, Victoria's is slightly longer). The first queen to be eulogised is Elizabeth I (1533–1603):

> great Elizabeth,
> In whose brave times the blast of war
> Blew loud and fierce and far.
> Her dauntless sailors dared the unbounded West,
> And fought the Armada's might, and did prevail,
> And wheresoe'er was seen an English sail
> Her Empire was confest;
> And round her gracious throne immortal flowers of song
> Bloomed beautiful, bloomed long,
> And left our English tongue as sweet as it was strong. (pp. 177–78, ll. 244–53)

As well as promoting geographical exploration and expansion, Elizabeth's reign is depicted as marked by martial success and artistic splendour. The second member of the glorified queenly trio is Anne I (1665–1714), under whom Britain

similarly witnessed both remarkable literary achievements and military accomplishments by land and sea:

> And when a century and more had passed
> In blood and turmoil, came a Queen at last.
> Her soldiers and her sailors once again
> Conquered on tented field and on the main,
> And once more rose the choir of song;
> Not as the Elizabethan, deep and strong,
> But, tripping lightly on its jewelled feet,
> Issued politely sweet,
> And Shakespeare's tongue and Milton's learned to dance
> The minuet of France. (p. 178, ll. 254–63)

Armed conquest and literary quality are the yardsticks used to equate Victoria's reign with Elizabeth's and Anne's in the nineteenth stanza of the poem:

> And now again once more
> A Queen reigns o'er us as before;
> Again by land and sea
> We cast the chequered sum of victory.
> Once more our English tongue
> Wakes to unnumbered bursts of song.
> A great choir lifts again its accents fair,
> And to those greater singers, if we find
> To-day no answering mind,
> 'Tis that too large the Present fills the view,
> Yet has its great names too.
> Part of the glorious fellowship are we

The great Victorian company,
Which, since old Caëdmon's deep voice carolled strong,
Through England's chequered story bore along
The high pure fire of the world's sweetest song. (p. 179, ll. 264–79)

Clearly enough, the speaker's glorification of Victorian literature is also a form of self-aggrandizement, as Morris sees and represents himself as belonging to 'The great Victorian company'. Unlike Victoria, whose perceived superiority is not only widely recognised by her contemporaries but also being sung in this very poem, the grandeur of Victorian literature ('A great choir'; 'those great singers'; 'great names') might not be acknowledged at present ('we find / To-day no answering mind'). Yet, the text seems to imply, the situation will inevitably improve in the future. The optimistic tone in this self-reflexive part of the ode hinges on the belief that a long and highly esteemed genealogy of English poets beginning with Cædmon and including Shakespeare and Milton has bequeathed the task of singing 'the world's sweetest song' to Victorian voices like Morris's[37].

Following these historical comparisons, the twenty-first stanza further underpins Victoria's exceptionality, thus paving the way for the final exultation in stanza twenty-two. As the family trope is deployed to describe Victoria's unique relationship to her subjects, the public reverence that was said to distinguish her from other sovereigns in the third stanza and from the three long-lived English kings in the sixteenth stanza is emphasised once again:

Never before

37 Cf. White 1887, ll. 9–10: 'A land of language ripe and rich alike for heart and tongue; / Where Wycliffe preached, where Shakespeare wrote, where Milton mused and sung'.

In all our England was a royal home
Whereto the loving thoughts of humble hearts might come.
Thy children's children stand around thy knees,
Their children come in turn as fair as these;
Thy people and thy children turn to thee,
Knit all in one by bonds of sympathy
With thee, our Queen, are we;
Therefore we make our solemn jubilee! (p. 180, ll. 289–97)

Here, Victoria's fêting subjects across the Empire are represented as they reciprocate her distinctive 'sympathy', which was particularly commended in the second stanza. In the following stanza, the 'bonds of sympathy' becomes 'bonds of temperate liberty' (p 182, l. 321), thus reminding the audience about the double nature – political as well as emotional – of the ties that unite Britain's imperial ruler to her people.

The twenty-second and final stanza reads as a rapid series of patriotic exclamations, which I quote in full below:

Flash, festal fires, high on the joyous air!
Clash, joy-bells! joy-guns, roar! and, jubilant trumpets, blare!
Let the great noise of our rejoicing rise!
Gleam, long-illumined cities, to the skies
Round all the earth, in every clime,
So far your distance half confuses time!
As in the old Judæan history,
Fling wide the doors and set the prisoners free!
Wherever England is o'er all the world,
Fly, banner of Royal England, stream unfurled!
The proudest Empire that has been, to-day

Rejoices and makes solemn jubilee.
For England! England! we our voices raise!
Our England! England! England! in our Queen we praise!
We love not war, but only peace,
Yet never shall our England's power decrease!
Whoever guides our helm of State,
Let all men know it, England shall be great!
We hold a vaster Empire than has been!
Nigh half the race of man is subject to our Queen!
Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours in fee!
And where her rule comes, all are free.
And therefore 'tis, oh Queen, that we,
Knit fast in bonds of temperate liberty,
Rejoice to-day, and make our solemn jubilee!! (pp. 181–82, ll. 298–322)

This exultant section centres the interplay of visual and aural elements in the jubilee celebrations, as fireworks, illuminations, waving banners, hymns, music and all kinds of 'noise' are mentioned. The speaker also harks back to the biblical precedent for jubilation through a reference to the episode in 'the old Judæn history'. At the same time, this stanza recapitulates and reinforces some of the salient points illustrated in this and, in fact, in many other jubilee poems. Among these is certainly the geographical magnitude of the Empire, which is now emphasised in lines like the following: 'Gleam, long-illuminated cities, to the skies / Round all the earth, in every clime'; 'Wherever England is o'er all the world'; 'Nigh half the race of man is subject to our Queen! / Nigh half the wide, wide earth is ours in fee!'.

My selection of stanzas commented upon thus far might have created the impression that Morris is not particularly concerned with the size and space of

the British Empire in the year 1887, but it is worth clarifying that this is actually one of the key aspects to stimulate the poet's imagination. While I have highlighted the spatial poetics at work in the adulating representation of Victoria and commented upon ideologically charged images such as the dispersal of the imperial 'seeds' across the globe in the first stanza, I have largely focussed on the historical comparisons that the speaker draws between her and other rulers. Elsewhere in the text, nonetheless, the speaker capitalises on the imbrication of the spatial and temporal dimensions in order to applaud Victoria even more loudly. This is apparent in lines that I have already quoted, such as 'We hold a vaster Empire than has been!' and, perhaps even more clearly, 'So far your distance half confuses time', which operates a remarkable conflation of space and time to render the vastness of the Empire on which the sun never set and, accordingly, the worldwide reach of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Victoria's accession to the throne.

Morris's strategic use of the vast geography of the Empire to construct his commendation and justification of Victoria's imperial rule early on in the text deserves to be scrutinised more closely. By means of rhetorical questions, the fourth stanza suggests that the width of the British Empire is not only greater than that of 'the Empires of the past', but also unmatched in the present:

> Oh England! Empire wide and great
> As ever from the shaping hand of fate
> Did issue on the earth, august, large grown!
> What were the Empires of the past to thine,
> The old old Empires ruled by kings divine —
> Egypt, Assyria, Rome? What rule was like thine own,
> Who over all the round world bearest sway? (p. 165, ll. 32–38)

After admiring the historically unsurpassed size of Victoria's Empire, the speaker rejoices in observing that even the North American territories that no longer belong to Britain join the celebration of the Queen in her jubilee year, as this is taken as an unmistakable sign of her pervasive influence:

Not those alone who thy commands obey
Thy subjects are; but in the boundless West
Our grandsires lost, still is thy reign confest.
'The Queen' they call thee, the young People strong,
Who, being Britons, might not suffer wrong,
But are reknit with us in reverence for thee;
Therefore it is we make our jubilee. (p. 165, ll. 39–45)

When referring to the citizens of the United States of America as 'the young People strong' that, 'being Britons', 'are reknit with [the British] in reverence for [Victoria]', the text deploys the first of a series of topographical periphrases or circumlocutions whereby the relation of the past and present dominions abroad to the imperial centre in Britain is emphasised.

Starting from the fifth stanza, the speaker endeavours to offer a panoramic view of the British Empire, which translates into a periphrastic map of its territories. In this verbal rendition of the geographical vastness of the Empire, Australia and New Zealand are deprived of their names and referred to as 'Greater England of the Southern Sea' (p. 166, l. 50) and 'our Southern Britain' (p. 167, l. 68). Likewise, Canada is called 'the great Dominion' in the 'far and wintry North' (ll. 76–77). Moreover, the onomastic link of New Westminster to the Old World is strengthened when the city is referred to as 'Another Westminster on

the Pacific Sea' (p. 168, l. 96). The seventh stanza centres on the West Indies ('thy Western Isles', p. 169, l. 97). The eighth stanza describes India as 'the ancient land / Scorching beneath the strong unfailing sun' (ll. 111–12), while the ninth more arrogantly refers to Africa as 'the unhappy Continent / Which breeds the savage and the slave' (p. 170, ll. 125–26). Interestingly enough, although the tenth stanza hierarchically positions Great Britain and Ireland at the centre of the imperial nation, the speaker refers to them using the same rhetorical device used for the rest of the Empire, past and present. The 'little Norther Isles', we are told, are where 'The brain and heart of Empire' are to be found (p. 171, ll. 140 and 147) and London is depicted as England's 'wondrous mother-town / Upon our broad Thames sitting like a crown, / Who, 'mid her healthful labour-laden air, / Grows every day more fair' (p. 172, ll. 152–55).

After verbally surveying and periphrastically charting the territories of Britain's Empire, the text proceeds to assess the role played by their considerable extent in the commendation of Victoria. If the Queen and Empress was recognised as morally superior to other monarchs, her Empire has now been described as materially wider than previous ones. The eleventh stanza mobilises both literal horizontality and figurative verticality to prioritise the latter over the former in the ongoing praise of the long-lived and serving ruler on the part of her imperial subjects. 'What is it that their voices tell? / What is it that in naming thee they praise?', the speaker rhetorically asks, promptly answering these questions immediately afterwards:

Not wider empire only; that is well.
But there are worthier triumphs, peaceful days,
Just laws, a people happier than before,

And rolling on untroubled evermore,
With larger stream, and fuller and more free
The tide of ordered liberty.
These things than empire higher are,
Higher and nobler far. (pp. 172–73, ll. 160–69)

In spite of the speaker's zeal to provide a verbal picture of Britain's huge empire at present in previous parts of the text, the poem strategically downplays the importance of territorial expansion in its panegyric of Victoria. 'The tide of ordered liberty' is the image used here to represent Britain's benevolent rule across the globe[38]. The apparent paradox underlying the idea of an imposed rule that is none the less considered as liberating is condensed in other similar phrases like 'ordered Freedom' and 'temperate liberty' and illustrated in lines such as 'where her rule comes, all are free'. If the success of British imperial rule is proved by 'peaceful days' and 'a people happier than before', its undisturbed progress is regarded as more important ('Higher and nobler') than the mere geographical size of the Empire.

Though less important, the increase in the scope of the governed territories is still regarded as important ('that is well'). In the fifteenth stanza, Victoria is enthusiastically thanked for the benefits deriving from the considerable width that her imperial rule has come to measure: 'If all the wide Earth brings our millions food, / And if our navies whiten every sea, / If we have rest and wider brotherhood, / All these began with thee' (p. 176, ll. 220–3). But, later on in the text, the speaker further specifies that 'not in the increase / Of Empire, or the

38 Cf. p. 175, ll. 206–9: 'What law for us has done, / For all our greater England 'neath the sun, / Let us do now, building on high a State / Of half the World confederate!'.

victories of peace, / Chiefly we seek thy praise' (p. 180, ll. 280–82). This remark serves to accentuate the subsequent praise of Victoria's impeccable rule, 'free from thought of blame' and 'shadow of envy' (ll. 286–87) even after the death of her equally irreprehensible husband ('him, whose stainless manhood bore / Thy love's unfading flower', ll. 288–89).

Having probed into the empire-related ideological implications of the interplay between time and space in 'A Song of Empire', I want to conclude my discussion of this poem by considering one last aspect: the poet's attitude toward war and its relation to peace as revealed by the text. The speaker's exaltation of internal peace as the absence of armed conflicts and the presence of stability and prosperity has already been remarked upon. The high value placed on peace is further illustrated by the use of noun phrases such as 'worthier triumphs' (which comprise 'peaceful days') or 'the victories of peace', where terms typically deployed to refer to military success are mobilised to refer to peace.

Even so, just like much nineteenth-century royal jubilee poems, Morris's does not shy away from reminding the audience of Britain's martial prowess in the past, far and (very) near, which contributed to its imperial expansion. The historical parallels drawn between the three queens in stanzas seventeen to nineteen are also to be found in military victories, starting with the defeat of the Spanish Armada under Elizabeth I: 'In [her] brave times the blast of war / Blew loud and fierce and far. / Her dauntless sailors dared the unbounded West, / And fought the Armada's might, and did prevail'. Queen Anne's reign is similarly represented as marked by dominance in warfare: 'Her soldiers and her sailors once again / Conquered on tented field and on the main'. And so is Victoria's: 'Again by land and sea / We cast the chequered sum of victory'.

Carrying the implication that Britain's (imperial) history is rooted in violence, this kind of poetic acclaim of British invincibility temporarily shifts the emphasis away from the veneration of peace.

The latter is disrupted not only by the memory of past warfare (even that of the recent past), but also by the anticipation of future armed conflicts. This demonstrated by the fifteenth stanza. Here, the speaker traces the origins of a series of economic, geopolitical and social developments – represented by 'the wide Earth' that 'brings our millions food', by 'our navies' that 'whiten every sea' and by 'rest and wider brotherhood' – to the commencement of Victoria's rule. However, such enthusiastic assessment of the progress achieved under Victoria is momentarily interrupted by the anxious thought 'Of half a world in arms' that intimidates 'blessèd Peace' at present. Britain's growth, the speaker hopes,

> […] shall, if Heaven so will, still more increase
> With thy remaining years, till blessèd Peace,
> Half frighted from us now by grave alarms
> Of half a world in arms,
> Shall brood, a white-winged Angel, o'er the Earth. (p. 176, ll. 224–28)

The threat of impending wars abroad, the passage implies, might shatter the blissful state of peace at home, but the image proves to be yet another occasion for the speaker to voice an optimistic view of the future: 'Then may the rule of Wrong be done! / Then may a new and Glorious Sun / Gild the illumined World! and then / Come Righteousness to men!' (ll. 229–32).

Towards the end of the poem, the speaker further elaborates on the relation of war and peace, strategically accepting the necessity of the former. One

of the closed couplets in the final exultation that I have already quoted in full reads: 'We love not war, but only peace, / Yet never shall our England's power decrease!'. Notwithstanding the Britons' natural penchant for peace, the speaker indicates, it is sometimes essential to engage in warfare, lest British hegemony worldwide weakens. It is worth reiterating that the latter is also predicated on the bloodshed proudly commemorated as the undisputable manifestation of British military heroism in the eulogy of the queenly trio between stanzas seventeen and nineteen. These two lines in stanza twenty-two, however, further explicate that, though not particularly concerned with the future increase of the geographical size of the Empire, Morris is much more worried about the defence of Britain's global leadership. As I have suggested earlier, 'A Song of Empire' does not advocate for never-ending territorial expansion at all costs. Other jingoistic poems from those years appear to do so much more strongly. The geography and history of the British Empire still play a fundamental role in the paean to Victoria that Morris wrote for the fiftieth anniversary of her accession to the throne.

Chapter Four

British Patriotic Poetry Anthologies, c. 1880s–1910s

4.1. Anthologising the Empire in Verse: Before and After W. E. Henley

Chris Brooks and Peter Faulkner's *The White Man's Burdens: An Anthology of British Poetry of the Empire* (1996), to which I have occasionally referred in the previous chapters, blazed a trail in the study of the ideological complexity of British imperial poetry. While scholarly interest in this topic was gaining momentum after a few decades of postcolonial studies, Brooks and Faulkner's anthology was the first to collect a wide range of British imperial poetic texts previously published elsewhere and republish them for scholarly purposes. The editors' 'Introduction' almost immediately reveals that their selection of 'narrative poetry, heroic verse, patriotic ballads, music-hall monologues, poems from *Punch*' intended to offer 'a poetic summary of the changing attitudes of an imperialist nation to its own imperialism' between 1596 and 1993 (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 1–2). Besides enhancing the availability of the empire-related literary sources included in their chronological selection for modern readers, Brooks and Faulkner helpfully 'historicize' these primary texts by means of paratextual material, including a fifty-page 'introductory essay' and an informative 'headnote' for each poem or poetic excerpt (1). In so doing, their volume arguably made an invaluable contribution to the scholarship on the multifaceted interplay between English/British poetry and expansionism from the late sixteenth century onwards.

The title of Brooks and Faulkner's pioneering anthology and that of their insightful introduction, 'The White Man's Burdens: Britain, Poetry and Empire', further indicate that the desired outcome of the two compilers was to bear witness to the ideological nuances expressed by a vast array of poems concerned with various forms of expansionism across the centuries. Both of these titles clearly refer to the notorious 1898 poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) wherein

he 'urged the imperialist nations to "Take up the White Man's Burden"' (1). However, they also allude to a few lines from a lesser-known poetic text authored by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840–1922), entitled *Satan Absolved: A Victorian Mystery* (1899) and published the following year. At one point in Blunt's dramatic poem, which reads as an 'angry' riposte to Kipling's exhortation (1), Satan directly addresses God and rhetorically asks: 'Has Thou not heard their chanting?', only to reply: 'Nay, Thou dost not hear / […] / Their poets who write big of the "White Burden". Trash! / The White Man's Burden, Lord, is the burden of his cash' (Blunt 1899, pp. 42–43). What the plural form in Brooks and Faulkner's title(s) seeks to suggest is precisely the coexistence of 'confliction positions' such as those expressed by Kipling and Blunt at the end of the nineteenth century and 'a whole range of intermediate stances' which appear to have been adopted 'in much of the poetry British writers produced about the British Empire over the four centuries of its rise and fall' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 1).

Unprecedented as a scholarly tool – and, to the best of my knowledge, still unique as such to this day – *The White Man's Burdens* obliquely rethinks a number of British patriotic anthologies of poetry which appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, one of these anthologies, compiled by William Ernest Henley (1849–1903) and entitled *Lyra Heroica: A Book of Verse for Boys* (1891; 1892), even receives attention within Brooks and Faulkner's introductory essay. 'Beginning with Shakespeare and Agincourt, moving through the naval poetry of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', Henley's *Lyra Heroica* 'concluded with celebrations of the army, often in an imperial context' (Richards, 1992, 82). Brooks and Faulkner remarks intriguingly suggest a few points of similarity as well as obvious differences between

Henley's selection and their own, published over a century apart from one another (35–36). Both *Lyra Heroica* and *The White Man's Burdens* present lowbrow and highbrow poetry chronologically and culminate in 'contemporary pieces' (36), even though the adjective 'contemporary' evidently refers to a different period in each case, the two anthologies ending with Kipling's 'The Flag of England' (1891) and Fred D'Aguiar's 'At the Grave of the Unknown African' (1993), respectively. What is more, Brooks and Faulkner's relatively recent volume reprints the works of writers who are also anthologised in Henley's much older one, but it normally offers a different selection of texts by such shared authors as Michael Drayton (1563–1631), Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), William Cowper (1731–1800), William Blake (1757–1827), William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793–1835), Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892), Francis Hastings Doyle (1810–1888), Charles Kingsley (1819–1875), Alfred Austin (1835–1913), Alfred Comyn Lyall (1835–1911), Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), Andrew Lang (1844–1912) and Kipling. After all, the two books clearly differ in their avowed aims and intended audiences:

> My purpose has been to choose and sheave a certain number of those achievements in verse which […] might fitly be addressed to such boys – and men, for that matter – as are privileged to use our noble English tongue.
>
> To set forth as only art can, the beauty and the joy of living, the beauty and the blessedness of death, the glory of battle and adventure, the nobility of devotion – to a cause, an ideal, a passion even – the dignity of resistance, the sacred quality of patriotism, that is my ambition here. (Henley 1891, vii)

> In seeking to anthologize the Empire, we have been prompted by a desire to encourage interest in the whole field of study and debate suggested by the title of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 2)

Whereas Henley's 'ambition' was to promote a form of masculine patriotism to a male English-speaking readership, Brooks and Faulkner aspired to foster scholarship on British imperial literary culture.

Sharing Brooks and Faulkner's aspiration, this final chapter of my dissertation attempts to advance our understanding of the intersections of British poetry and imperial patriotism by examining patriotic anthologies of poetry such as Henley's. In the preface to the first edition of *Lyra Heroica*, Henley presents his own 'book of verse for boys' as 'the first of its kind in English' (Henley 1891, vii), but this is not strictly true (Bratton 1975, 50). Overlooking Henley's volume, Sabine Haass identifies an earlier selection made by Arthur Compton Auchmuty (1843–1917) and entitled *Poems of English Heroism: From Brunanburh to Lucknow, from Athelstan to Albert* (1882) as the first of 'numerous anthologies of patriotic verse' which flooded the market since the 1880s (Hass 1985, 52). Whereas 'nearly all the 1,475 copies of its original edition' were purchased 'within six months', its 'second, revised edition' that appeared in 1895 had to face tougher 'competition', which 'cut down sales to only 450 copies sold out of 2,250 by December 1909' (52). These numerous 'rival anthologies', Haass adds, were sold '[a]t an average price of 3s', as 'actual prices varied from 1s to 5s' (52). Rather than the first specimen of a new kind of anthology, Henley's qualifies as one of these competing collections.

Unlike the gendered readership targeted by Henley's later volume, both 'boys and girls' – that is, the editor's own 'children' and 'all other English boys

and girls' – are the dedicatees and intended readers of *Poems of English Heroism* (Auchmuty 1882). The six 'Extracts from Press Notices' reprinted in the 1895 edition of Auchmuty's book seem to confirm this (Auchmuty 1895). In point of fact, the reviewer for *Pall Mall Gazette* (25th August 1882) viewed the book as particularly 'fitting […] to an English boy'. However, the book was almost invariably saluted as a most welcome addition to the market which is addressed at a young readership of unspecified gender ('children'; 'youthful readers'), with the commentator for *Morning Post* (21st August 1882) explicitly describing it as suitable to 'the young of either sex'.

Henley's *Lyra Heroica* was not even the first patriotic anthology of poetry to address a young readership that was specifically gendered as 'boys'. Compiled by Frederick Langbridge (1849–1922) and 'mainly and primarily' meant for 'a public of boys', *Ballads of the Brave: Poems of Chivalry, Enterprise, Courage and Constancy, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* appeared one year earlier. As the 'Preface' reveals, Langbridge saw the product of his editorial endeavour as 'temporarily occup[ying]' an 'empty place' in the market, but not as 'fill[ing]' it (Langbridge 1890, viii). Complied by Alfred H. Miles (1848–1929), a volume collecting 'ballads of brave women' followed in 1909 (Miles 1909).

The volumes published in Great Britain between the 1890s and 1914 that followed the lead of Auchmuty's, Langbridge's and Henley's patriotic miscellanies of verse include *Poems of England: A Selection of English Patriotic Poetry* (1896), *Poems of the Love and Pride of England* (1897), *Patriotic Song: A Book of English Verse* (1901) and *Poetry of Empire: Nineteen Centuries of British History* (1910). This outpouring of publications tried to cater for a need created by recent legislation on education. 'Since the provisions of Britain's Education Act of 1870

required schoolchildren to memorize and recite verse', Anita Hemphill McCormick writes, 'publishers responded by marketing several new children's poetry books, and these books were ofteen explicitly patriotic, designed to give the new reader an exciting sense of Britain's history and dignity' (McCormick 1989, 211). While not all of these exclusively or explicitly addressed a young audience, some certainly did. In the 'Preface' to *Poems of England*, Hereford Brooke George (1838–1910) and Arthur Sidgwick (1840–1920) are very quick to acknowledge that theirs was 'another text-book of English poetry for schools', 'compiled for the use of the young' (George and Sidgwick 1896, v and viii). On occasion, they also comment on the suitability of certain texts to the target users of their 'little volume' (v). 'For some junior classes', for instance, they viewed the works of William Shakespeare (1564–1616) as 'unsuitable' (v)[1]. By contrast, when advocating the memorisation as well as the perusal of the verse in their anthology on the part of young learners, George and Sidgwick draw attention to the supposedly greater suitability of poems written by Campbell, Cowper and especially Tennyson: 'Children should not only read great poems, but should be encouraged to learn them by heart; and, with the exception, perhaps, of Campbell's songs, and *Boadicea*, there are no patriotic pieces so touching and inspiring to the learner as Tennyson's' (viii). Other patriotic miscellaneous books of poetry aimed at a larger audience. The anthology edited by Frederick (1844–1921) and Millicent Wedmore (1879–1941), for example, purportedly attempted to remind both 'old and young' readers of their national 'inheritance' (Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, x). Neither the compiler of *Patriotic Song* nor those of *Poetry*

1 Notwithstanding this remark, Shakespeare does feature in George and Sidgwick's anthology, which reproduces three excerpts from as many of his history plays, namely *Henry V*, *Richard II* and *Henry VIII* (George and Sidgwick 1896, 5–10).

of Empire, to which I will pay more sustained attention below, specify the intended readership of their editorial efforts anywhere in their respective books (Stanley 1901; Lang and Lang 1910).

Long-forgotten patriotic miscellanies like *Poems of English Heroism*, *Ballads of the Brave*, *Poems of England*, *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, *Patriotic Song* and *Poetry of Empire* serve as the textual focus for this final chapter. Although books such as these have hardly ever been examined closely in existing studies, specialists of late nineteenth-century British literary culture have long noted the surge of patriotic anthologies of poetry in the period. In a 1985, for instance, Haass writes: 'The rise of the British Empire, the acquisition of more and more colonies, and an atmosphere of nationalism, patriotism, and imperialism that increased from the 1880s onwards found their way into numerous anthologies of patriotic verse' (Haass 1985, 52). If Simon Dentith devotes a few pages of his *Epic and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2006) precisely to 'the […] collections of heroic poetry assembled at the end of the [nineteenth] century with the specific purpose of forming and bolstering national and imperial sentiments' (Dentith 2006, 147–49), a more extensive discussion of these anthologies may be found in Brian Gasser's doctoral dissertation on the English poetic responses to the Second Boer War (1899–1902) (Gasser 1979, 23–45). Highly successful with readers at the time of its publication (McCormick 1989, 211; Richards 1992, 82), Henley's *Lyra Heroica*, to which McCormick's journal article is devoted (McCormick 1989), appears to have been particularly popular with researchers as well. While most scholars have tended to content themselves with either a mere acknowledgement of the existence of this type of anthology or an all too brief commentary on one or a few titles (Thomson 1946, 134; Bratton 1975, 49–52; Wyk Smith 1978, 158–59;

Haass 1985, 52–53; Richards 1992, 82; MacDonald 1994, 60; Pividori 2012, 22–23n14), *Lyra Heroica* and, to a lesser extent, Langbridge's slightly earlier *Ballads of the Brave* almost invariably receive a mention in such acknowledgements and some attention in such commentaries.

The second and third sections of this chapter proceed to offer a lengthier and more detailed discussion of the expression of imperial patriotism in these volumes than has been attempted thus far. Prior to this, however, I outline and engage with previous research on anthologies of literature, particularly poetry. While doing so, I clarify the theoretical and methodological context of my own research, which specifically centres late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century British patriotic anthologies of poetry.

In addition to the notable exceptions listed above that have at least cited turn-of-the-century patriotic miscellanies of verse, this chapter is profoundly indebted to a variety of critical discussions of the poetry anthology in broader terms. In *A Pamphlet against Anthologies* (1928), poets Laura Riding (1901–1991) and Robert Graves (1895–1985) provokingly distinguish supposedly 'true anthologies' – which 'confine themselves to literary rescue-work or have some excuse as works of criticism, or as private albums, and are not numerous' – from 'the all too numerous trade-anthologies that turn poetry into an industrial packet-commodity' (Riding and Graves 1928, 17–18). Many a Victorianist is probably familiar with the example of *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language* (1861), which was compiled by Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–1897) and which, for Riding and Graves, was 'probably

the first popular anthology in the modern sense' (43)[2]. The patriotic volumes with which this chapter is concerned also fall into the second – and, according to Riding and Graves, less 'legitimate' (11) – category. Even so, I would argue that these books deserve to be analysed more carefully than has been done thus far if we are to expand our comprehension of British imperial literary culture in the long nineteenth century.

Other scholars before me have drawn attention to the importance of the poetry anthology – including the 'popular trade anthology' (25) – to literary and cultural historians. Lucia Re, for example, regards it as 'a literary genre in and of itself, for it constitutes a kind of creative writing, or rewriting, of the literary tradition', even when it is 'compiled with purely didactic, scientific, or documentary intentions' (Re 1992, 586). In her discussion of nineteenth-century sonnet anthologies, Natalie M. Houston also considers the poetry anthology to be 'an important resource for understanding how cultural value was assigned to different texts, writers, and genres in the nineteenth century' (Houston 1999, 243). While also 'reveal[ing] interactions among authors, editors, and publishers', Houston notes, anthologies 'necessarily participate in the field of cultural production by mediating and shaping readers' access to and understanding of literary works' (243). Barbara Korte similarly defines the poetry anthology as 'a form of publication with distinctive features of text and paratext, which exemplarily involves almost all participants in the system of literary mediation

2 Widely regarded as 'the most significant anthology of the nineteenth century' (Sullivan 2016, 431), if not, perhaps, 'the Dean of Anthologies' (Riding and Graves 1928, 44), Palgrave's original selection continues to be expanded and republished to this day. It also continues to receive attention in modern scholarship. In this regard, it is worth mentioning at least the thematic journal issue of *Victorian Poetry* on 'Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and Victorian Anthologies' edited by David E. Latané, Jr. (Latané 1999) and Marion Thain's more recent essay entitled 'Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*: "Modern" Poetry and a New Lyric Canon' (Thain 2024).

as it has evolved since the early modern period' and 'which invites study not only from the point of view of poetology and literary history, reading and book history, but also literary sociology and cultural studies in their widest sense' (Korte 2000, 32).

My critical discussion of publications like Henley's and others' in the following sections builds upon the excellent work done by those scholars who have productively studied the ideological implications of the craft of the (poetry) anthologist's craft. If the latter essentially consists in the compilation of a book which is etymologically imagined as 'a gathering of flowers' (Brogan, Gutzwiller and Greene 2012, 52), a number of useful studies have concentrated on the ideological repercussions inherent to the process of 'transplanting' which underlies such 'bouquet-creation' (Hopkins 2008, 288). Important critical examinations of the anthology and the anthologist's work include whole essay collections and monographs (Benedict 1996; Korte, Schneider and Lethbridge 2000; Ferry 2001; Di Leo 2004)[3], as well as specific journal articles and book chapters (McDowell 1990; Hadas 1998; Hopkins 2008; Kuipers 2008; Wilson 2023, 59–86).

To a certain extent, my literary-historical account of British patriotic poetry anthologies published between the 1880s and the mid-1910s complements Rebecca Bucknell's very recent monograph *The Treasuries: Poetry Anthologies and the Making of British Culture* (2023). Bucknell herself clarifies that her book is not intended as 'a complete history of the anthology form, or a survey of the

3 Unfortunately, I cannot read German well enough to peruse Stefanie Lethbridge's monograph *Lyrik in Gebrauch: Gedichtanthologien in der englischen Druckkultur 1557–2007* (2014), which, I assume, makes a significant contribution to the study of the poetry anthology in English across the centuries (Lethbridge 2014). In spite of this linguistic limitation, my chapter still can (and does) rely on Lethbridge's shorter English-language essays on the topic (Lethbridge 2012; Lethbridge 2022).

thousands of collections produced between the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the twenty-first' (Bucknell 2023, 16). Even so, her volume helpfully dwells on the second half of the nineteenth century, when Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* achieved 'the status of a kind of national symbol' (116), and on 'the early days of the First World War', when 'patriotic civilians compiled anthologies which transformed poetry into British propaganda, enlisting verse by Shakespeare, Tennyson and Kipling for the war effort' (9). My own chapter shows that the way for the latter's endeavour was paved by a host of equally patriotic anthologists in the gap years between the publication of *The Golden Treasury* and the beginning of World War One.

Theoretically and methodologically, my analysis in the following sections borrows from Korte's shrewd remarks on three interconnected features of the (poetry) anthology: 'selectiveness', 'typology' and 'structure' (Korte 2000). In her essay, she points to 'selectiveness' (that is, 'the picking of flowers from available sources') as the distinctive feature of anthologies, 'which links this form of publication with […] the question of value and evaluation, which every act of selection presupposes' (Korte 2000, 3). She also elaborates on other important features of the poetry anthology, such as typology and structure. Among the typological criteria are 'the mere scope of the respective selection' (that is, 'its temporal, generic and thematic reach, its possible limitation to specific movements, or a national or regional focus') and 'the intended functions of an anthology' (14–15). As for structure, Korte refers to the five 'main principles of organization' identified by Dietger Pforte: '"alphabetical" according to name of author; "chronological" (usually according to the author's date of birth);

"structural" according to chapters, cycles or stages; "poetological" according to forms and subgenre; and "thematic"' (18).

In the following sections, the emphasis is more strongly placed on selectiveness and structure than typology. However, this feature has played a major role in my choice of primary texts warranting extensive treatment in this chapter. The anthologies that I discuss below are typologically similar insofar as the spatial, temporal and generic scopes of their selection (that is, British modern poetry) and at least one of their primary intended functions (that is, patriotism promotion) are essentially the same. After all, when, just like an anthologist, I selected my primary sources from the ones available, I adopted precisely this typological similarity as my selection criterion.

The adoption of this selection criterion inevitably meant that this chapter is not concerned with other potentially interesting nineteenth-century British anthologies that attempt to foster patriotism more or less explicitly. Given the focus on the anthologisation of 'British' poetry, I excluded intriguing volumes such as E. A. Helps's *Songs and Ballads of Greater Britain* (1913), which offers 'a selection of poetry from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, India, and the Crown Colonies descriptive of nature, life, and incident in these parts of the empire' (Helps 1913, v). The emphasis placed on 'modern' poetry, on its part, led to the exclusion of volumes such as the collections of political poems compiled by the antiquarian Thomas Wright (1810–1877), including *Political Ballads Published in England during the Commonwealth* (Wright 1841) and *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III* (Wright 1859–61). Even though these books of poetry seek to perform the very 'literary rescue-work' the Riding and Graves

view as the aim of the 'true anthology', I consider their chronological scope to be too limited and their tone and purpose to be too scholarly for the miscellanies to warrant close examination in this chapter. Another intriguing miscellaneous volume that was excluded on account of my typology-based selection criterion is the anonymous *Deeds of Glory: Stories of Our Empire* (1901), which does not qualify as a full-fledged anthology of verse because it intersperses poems with prose narratives (Anonymous 1901).

There exists at least another group of attention-worthy anthologies that I eventually omitted from the literary-historical account offered in this dissertation chapter. Just like in chapters two and three, only poetic texts first appearing in Britain and primarily aiming at a metropolitan audience are treated as primary texts here. In what follows, then, I do not discuss volumes that were initially published outside Britain and directed at a colonial readership. For now, I do not examine miscellaneous texts such as David Lester Richardson's massive *Selections from the British Poets from the Time of Chaucer to the Present Day* (1840), first published in Calcutta and clearly addressed at English-speaking readers in British India (Richardson 1840). Nor can I devote space to books such as John Bradshaw's *An English Anthology from Chaucer to the Present Time*, whose fourth edition, published with a minor title change in London in 1894, was actually a reprint of the third edition, which, just like the first and second editions of the anthology, was published in Madras (Bradshaw 1889; Bradshaw 1894).

Having clarified the role played by typological similarity in my selection of primary texts to analyse in greater detail below, I want to stress that my discussion largely focusses on the other two important features identified by Korte and seeks to illustrate how 'the picking of flowers from available sources'

(Korte 2000, 3) and the arrangement of such 'flowers' carry meaning in typologically similar anthologies. In what follows, I scrutinise the various ways in which six British patriotic anthologies of verse – that is, *Poems of English Heroism*, *Ballads of the Brave*, *Poems of England*, *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, *Patriotic Song* and *Poetry of Empire*, which were all first published in London – select, organise and present poetry to offer 'an exciting sense of Britain's history and dignity' (McCormick 1989, 211), 'reordering and reconstituting the national poetic corpus into a coherent national story' (Dentith 2006, 148). After a brief presentation of the main features of each selected volume in the next section, I conclude with a discussion of how the selection of certain poetic texts and the use of certain paratextual elements organising and presenting such texts enable the anthologies to function as a patriotic multi-layered rewriting of the historical and literary pasts and presents of the British imperial nation.

While paying sustained attention to the choice, organisation and presentation of previous poetry in selected patriotic anthologies, I take my exploration of the empire-related interconnections of space, time, war and peace in British imperial poetic texts a step further. If the previous analytical chapters teased out the ideological import of spatial descriptions, temporal comparisons and war/peace tensions in royal jubilee poems from across the nineteenth century, the rest of this chapter continues to reflect on the interrelation of the same aspects, albeit in relation to a different kind of texts. Despite the typological similarity of the volumes under scrutiny, the present chapter demonstrates that their different selections and arrangements ultimately voice different conceptions of imperial patriotism.

4.2. British Patriotic Poetry Anthologies: A Chronological Overview

Starting from the assumption that the seven volumes discussed in what follows are likely to be unfamiliar even to the specialist, this section presents the following anthologies of poetry in chronological order, from the oldest to the newest, according to the date of their first publication: *Poems of English Heroism*, *Ballads of the Brave*, *Poems of England*, *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, *Patriotic Song* and *Poetry of Empire*. In this preliminary overview, I comment upon the main authors and texts anthologised, the organisation and presentation of these authors and texts in the volume and the presence of ideologically significant paratextual materials, such as dedications, prefaces, introductions and notes. These are the aspects that I will examine carefully in the following section. While other anthologies will be occasionally referred to, the seven volumes presented are those that will provide the textual focus in the next and final section of this chapter.

Though devoid of a preface or an introduction, Auchmuty's *Poems of English Heroism* does not lack a dedication. Indeed, the book is offered to the anthologist's own 'children' – who are, together 'with all other English boys and girls, "heirs of all the ages"' – as 'a posy of flowers from the field of their national heritage' (Auchmuty 1882). The anthology is also equipped with an unascribed epigraph which comes from Tennyson's 'Love Thou Thy Land, with Love Far-Brought' (1833). With ten items actually ascribed to him, Tennyson is also the second most represented writer in the volume after Shakespeare, with fourteen items, all of which are taken from the histories, mostly from *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V*. Among the other named authors are Wordsworth, Cowper, Milton and Campbell as well as Auchmuty himself. Chronologically arranged according to their subject matter, the forty-nine numbered pieces of verse centre on battles,

wars or characters in English history, spanning almost a millennium, from the Battle of Brunanburh (937) to the siege of Lucknow (1857), as is indicated by the subtitle of the book. Twenty pages of explanatory notes provide historical and biographical information and thus help the reader contextualise each item or group of items (133–52).

Langbridge's *Ballads of the Brave* is dedicated to W. C. Bennett, 'whose historical ballads have done so much to interpret to English men and women the life and thought of their country during the various characteristic stages of her development'. As he was writing this, Langbridge must have had in mind such books as *Our Glory-Roll and Other National Poems* (1866) and *Proposals and Contributions to a Ballad History of England and the States Sprung from Her* (1868) (Bratton 1975, 51). Bennett's collections contain some of the poems by Bennett that also appear in *Ballads of the Brave* along with Langbridge's own and those of dozens of other writers (Bennett 1866; Bennett 1868).

In his attempt to select 'poems which [boys] do like' (as opposed to 'poems we should like boys to like') and do 'something which had not been done and which needed doing in the interests of general literature', Langbridge chose 'the spirit of courage or adventure, or else a happy narrative style', as his inclusion criteria (Langbridge 1890, vii–viii). By the term 'courage', Langbridge clarifies in the preface, he means 'the courage which bears as well as that which dares; the courage which knows how to be beaten as well as that which does not know when it is beaten; the courage of the Quaker as well as that of the Crusader', even though 'the mail-clad daring of the knight rings louder down these pages than the daring of the missionary, the martyr, or the hospital nurse' (vii). Langbridge deemed the manifestation of courage more important than the language in which

a text was originally composed. As a result of this preference, he selected pieces of verse from both 'English poetry' and 'poetry other than English which has acquired naturalization with us' (vii). Numerous translations from a variety of languages (Greek, Latin, Gaelic, French and Spanish, to name some of them) into English are accordingly included in the anthology, but the work of English-speaking poets predominates. The most represented writer in *Ballads of the Brave* is Hemans, with thirteen items, followed by Bennett, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) and Walter Scott (1771–1832). Other authors whose verse appear more than once are George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), Campbell, Langbridge himself, Gerald Massey (1828–1907), Palgrave, Charles Mackay (1814–1889), Martin F. Tupper (1810–1889), Doyle as well as Shakespeare (again, the Shakespeare of the histories, namely, *Henry V* and *King Henry VIII*[4]).

As Langbridge clearly states in the preface, *Ballads of the Brave* was meant to fulfil a didactic purpose. He hoped that his 'record of noble doing […] in every age, in every country, in every field, in every phase', would be used not only 'as a play-book' and 'as a class-book' but also 'as a companion to, and a commentary on, an ordinary book of history' (vii–viii). The approximately two hundred items are numbered and ordered chronologically, based on the historical events which are dealt with and which occurred in a period going 'from the Earliest Times to the Present Day' (as is put in the subtitle), that is to say, from 'The Burial of Moses' and 'A Battle before Troy' (1–4) to the death of Gordon and the burial of

4 Though indicated as 'Act III, Scene III' (Langbridge 1890, 169), the excerpt from *King Henry VIII* corresponds to the second scene of the third act in modern editions (Fletcher and Shakespeare 2016, 3241–42). Interestingly enough, by the time that Langbridge's anthology was published, the hypothesis according to which John Fletcher co-authored the play and wrote, among others, that very anthologised part had already been put forward (Vickers 2002; Plecháč 2021), but the passage which appears in *Ballads of the Brave* is ascribed only to Shakespeare (Langbridge 1890, 168–69).

William I, the first German Emperor (432–35). Given 'the large compass of the volume', however, Langbridge only provided 'dates' that 'are generally accepted' (though some of them would no longer be so today) and occasional, short headnotes, with the two-fold aim of contextualising the various pieces of verse while also avoiding burdening the reader with too much historical information: 'In the way of elucidation, […] I have attempted little or nothing beyond the furnishing of a few very brief and very simple historical introductions' (viii).

In *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, Frederick and Millicent Wedmore focus on patriotic poetry very explicitly. As stated in the preface, their intention is 'to cull from the poetic achievements of the Past and Present that which should be fairly representative of all the various moods and methods of patriotic verse' (Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, vi) and which 'may remind us, old and young, what an inheritance is ours – and what an obligation!' (x). In the preface, moreover, Frederick Wedmore explains how jobs were divided between him and his daughter Millicent. He, who chose the title of the anthology, 'urged, and in a measure assisted in, its execution', while she is the author of 'the Notes, explanatory and historical', and largely responsible for the 'selection' of the texts (v).

Frederick and Millicent Wedmore's collection contains mostly nineteenth-century poems. 'To-day a voice of patriotism not to be mistaken', which has 'scarcely to be increased in volume' or 'heightened in intensity', Frederic Wedmore observes, 'comes to use from every place, from men of every class in England' and 'comes too from "the vast distances of the remote Imperial tracts"' (ix). Writing in the period of high imperialism, he stresses the fact that, 'strange

as it may appear in light of those celebrations of loyalty and thanksgiving which have been witnessed in the summer that has just passed [i.e., the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria]' (vi), the expression of British patriotism in verse was still something of a novelty in comparison to religious poetry and love poetry: 'while the worship of Heaven and the admiration of the opposite sex have been from all recorded time, a passion love of England […] and a pride in her performances, is an affair of but a few generations: of at most two or three centuries' (vii). That is why, when compiling the anthology, Millicent Wedmore heavily relied 'on modern production' and, above all, on 'contemporary work' (vii–viii).

As is often the case, the preface is informative about the process of choice-making. Frederick Wedmore writes, for example, that 'many attractive Cavalier songs' were left out because they were judged to be the expression not so much of true patriotism as of some 'party spirit', while 'Milton's majestic Sonnet on Cromwell' was added to the collection only once Millicent Wedmore and his father 'had been able to persuade [them]selves that Cromwell at that time might in fairness be addressed, not as the head of a party, but as the representative of the great land of which he was the energetic son' (viii). What is more, they decided to anthologise 'only such Scottish and such Irish verse […] as […] had some bearing on the pride or the delight in the "ever-broadening England" of to-day' (viii).

Poems of the Love and Pride of England comprises one hundred items that are numbered and ordered chronologically. The chronological criterion adopted to order the items seems to be the author's date of birth, but, if so, there are several exceptions to the rule: the poems by Cowper (b. 1731), for instance, precede those written by William Collins (b. 1721), while the poems by Theodore Watts-Dunton

(b. 1832), which should appear between the verse by Massey (b. 1828) and the verse by William Morris (b. 1834), follow those composed by Swinburne (b. 1837). Four anonymous ballads are followed by the works of forty-nine named authors, starting with John Skelton and ending with Watson. The latter is also one of the most represented writers, who include Shakespeare (once again, with the histories), Cowper, Scott, Charles Dibdin (1745–1814), Robert Browning (1812–1889), Robert Bridges (1844–1930), Massey, Campbell, Sidney Thompson Dobell (1824–1874), Palgrave, Austin and Wordsworth. As already noted, poets active in the nineteenth century predominate in this book.

John and Jean Lang offer *Poetry of Empire* as 'a Chronological History of the British Nation' written 'in verse form' (Lang and Lang 1910, v). In their introduction, the editors emphasise the importance of war poetry within this history and, thus, within their anthology, too (v). The considerable number of anthologised war poems is clearly a feature that characterises not only *Poetry of Empire* but also other anthologies presented here. However, John and Jean Lang's wider selection of texts from premodern and early modern literature distinguishes *Poetry of Empire* from such other books as *Poems of English Heroism*, *Lyra Heroica* and *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, but not *Ballads of the Brave*. Although some 'find fault with the idea of an Imperial Anthology including poems descriptive of incidents which took place before the people of Great Britain were welded into one', John and Jean Lang deliberately 'include as many of those poems as possible', as, they explain, 'the process of welding – each stone laid in far back days – has helped to make the British nation' (v–vi). Indeed, *Poetry of Empire* comprises poetry composed by a host of diverse authors, including, among others, the six-century 'Welsh bard' Taliesin as well as 'Australian,

Canadian, and South African writers' (vi). The one hundred and eighty-one items are numbered and put in chronological order, based on the events and historical characters referred to in the poems, but the anthology also includes 'poems which are purely patriotic' and 'merely put in words the spirit of the people' without 'deal[ing] with any special historical event' (vi).

The inclusion of older poems justifies the presence of the explanatory footnotes that occasionally add to the more frequent headnotes. The royal anthem 'God Save the King' (xx), which precedes the first item in the anthology, and the score printed at the bottom of Henley's 'Last Post' (382) are other peculiar features of John and Jean Lang's collection. Sixteen plates in *Poetry of Empire*, moreover, show that poetry anthologies could be 'dressed up' (Cheshire 2016, 14) by means of illustrations[5].

Both the overview of these seven anthologies presented here and the following broader discussion support Dentith's contention that, in similar volumes, 'heroic poetry was co-opted (or indeed was already predisposed) to serve in the acculturation of boys in the service of a heroic national and imperial ideal' (Dentith 2006, 147). Dentith actually concedes that patriotic anthologies such as Langbridge's or Henley's (and, I would add, the other presented here) 'are not ultimately coherent; that boys could take from them meanings quite outside the boundaries suggested by the anthologies themselves; and that their effectiveness as official ideology is hard to calculate' (149). And yet, as he aptly puts it, 'there is no denying their attempted reconstitution of the national poetic inheritance in an effort to inculcate the heroic virtues among boys' (149). The next

5 By 'dressing up', Jim Cheshire means 'any attempt to embellish a publication beyond altering the textual content', which 'often involved illustrations, decorative covers, fine paper, vignettes, "red line" editions, gildings and portraits of the author' (Cheshire 2016, 14).

and final section further elaborates on this point, paying particular attention to the points of intersection of the selection, organisation and presentation of poetry within the various volumes with the notions of space, time, war and peace.

4.3. British Patriotic Poetry Anthologies: Imperial Voices and Echoes

According to the author of 'The Teaching of Patriotism', an article published in *The Spectator* on 7th July 1906, children are likely to learn about history and literature more easily when these are imbued with patriotism:

> History will cease to be a dry catalogue of dates and persons if the child is once inspired with the magnificence of the past, and is made to feel himself a sharer in the heritage. So, too, with literature. English literature is the finest manual of patriotism in the world, and many a boy who is insensible to literary beauty is not insensible to the practical lessons at the heart of it. (Anonymous 1906, 10).

Shaped as a national 'heritage' in which young readers are 'sharer[s]', the historical and literary pasts assume an ideological significance which, it is implied here, ensures their relevance and facilitates its learning. As 'backward-looking collections' (Lethbridge 2012, 127), the anthologies with which I am concerned in this chapter clearly embody this idea. As I have already remarked, when offering his volume to the English youth, Auchmuty presented *Poems of English Heroism* precisely as 'a posy of flowers from the field of their national heritage' (Auchmuty 1882).

Although not exclusively intended for a young audience, but entirely or partially reprinted in at least some patriotic anthologies of poetry (Wedmore and

Wedmore 1897, 242–48; Knight 1901, 125–26), Swinburne's 'England: An Ode' (1893; 1894) versifies this very patriotic conflation of past and future, history and literature (Swinburne 1894, 102–9). Starting from the assumption that 'future and past are one' (p. 102, l. 3), the speaker in the poem moves on to interpret the nation's glorious past as a sign of its equally bright future: 'All the past acclaims our future' (p. 106, l. 34). Here, 'all the past' means the historical and literary pasts alike, as both 'Nelson's hand' and 'Shakespeare's voice', along with 'Milton's faith' and Wordsworth's trust', prove that 'England' – the 'chosen and chainless land' – 'shall stand' (ll. 34–36).

Echoing poetic voices such as Shakespeare's, Milton's and Wordsworth's, the patriotic anthologies under scrutiny here reinvent (military) history ('Nelson's hand') as well as literature. Langbridge demonstrates his awareness of the potential of anthologies like his for remaking history when he expresses his hope that *Ballads of the Brave* will serve not only 'as a class-book, of poetry', but 'as a companion to, and a commentary on, an ordinary book of history' (Langbridge 1890, viii). Literary texts which represent (military) historical events and figures rewrite those events and figures – be it the Battle of Brunanburh (937) or the siege of Lucknow (1857), Æthelstan (d. 939) or Prince Albert (d. 1861), to paraphrase the subtitle of *Poems of English Heroism* (Auchmuty 1882) – and thus vivify an otherwise 'dry catalogue of dates and persons' (Anonymous 1906, 10). Anthologies which *re*-present literary texts that are historically grounded like extracts from Shakespeare's history plays and Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington' (1852), then, simultaneously reshape (military) history and rewrite the literary tradition which deals with it. Operating a double 'rewriting' (Lefevere 1992), these miscellanies also contribute to the canonisation

of national and imperial icons such as Shakespeare and Tennyson (Brantlinger 2010, 265–266). As 'a value-charged volume' (Gasser 1979, 29), the anthology may simultaneously instil patriotic values into the historical and literary pasts that it rewrites.

At the same time, the patriotic anthology also engages with the historical and literary presents. As remarked by Gasser, one way in which it does so is through the inclusion of contemporary pieces which update the patriotic account of British history and literature as 'the latest experience [is] assimilated into the story' (36). Poet anthologists such as Auchmuty, Langbridge and William Angus Knight (1836–1916) were not ashamed of including their own verse (Auchmuty 1882, 7–15; Langbridge 1890, 260–63, 411, 419–20 and 422; Knight 1901, xi–xiv). Others, however, seemed more self-conscious of their own poetic achievements. If, as Haas notes, 'a large number of minor versifiers took the chance to make themselves known to the public by "smuggling" selections from their own work into the anthologies they edited', just as both Auchmuty and Langbridge did, this was not the case with Henley, who was, in fact, among those that 'represented to many publishers authorities whose knowledge and taste they trusted, and whose reputation presumably enhanced the success of the books' (Haass 1985, 58). Henley's *Lyra Heroica* was frequently reprinted and 'had sold 52,000 copies by 1908' (Richards 1992, 82), but only in later posthumous editions were three of Henley's own poems added to the anthology. Richards writes that *Lyra Heroica* contains poems authored by Henley (82), but the Charles Scribner's Sons 1911 reprint still ends with Kipling's 'The Flag of England'. Apparently, it is only in later editions, such as the Macmillan 1921 edition, that Henley's 'Out of the Night' (1888; also known by the title of 'Invictus'), 'Pro Rege Nostro' (1892; also

known as 'England, My England') and 'Last Post' (1900) are also printed (Henley 1921, 340–43).

Besides containing pieces by the anthologists themselves or their contemporaries, another way in which these anthologies engage with the present is through their very appearance, which often coincides with, and obliquely marks, momentous events in British national and imperial lived history, such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 or her death a few years later. In the preface to *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*, for example, the editors directly refer to the 'celebrations of loyalty and thanksgiving' held in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in the summer of 1897 (Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, vi). The anticipations of the volume that were printed in the Australian *Warwick Examiner and Times* on 19th January 1898 and in the New Zealand *Otago Daily Times* on 24th January of the same year judge 'its appearance' as 'specially appropriate' for the occasion. The long subtitle of *Patriotic Song*, on its part, designates Victoria's demise as the second chronological marker of the timeframe of the collection: '*Being an Anthology of the Patriotic Poetry of the British Empire from the Defeat of the Spanish Armada till the Death of Queen Victoria*'. Writing in September 1901, Knight comments that 'the death of her Gracious Majesty […] made the original title' of his patriotic collection 'altogether unsuitable' (Knight 1901, viii). Following 'the sad and world-wide loss', he explains, the title was changed from 'For Queen and Country' to 'Pro Patria et Regina' (viii).

Published ten years after Victoria's death, which is defined as the chronological endpoint of the collection, C. H. Firth's educational *English History in English Poetry* (1911) was intended as a corrective to the perceived 'neglect of nineteenth-century history in English schools' (Firth 1911, xi). Insisting on the

importance of teaching young students the recent history of Britain and its Empire, Firth's introduction posits:

> If we are to rear boys to be good citizens, it is needful to teach them the history of their own country, and not only the story of its remoter but that of its most recent past. It is not sufficient to acquaint them with the England of the Middle Ages or the England of the Stuarts: they must be interested in the England of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so that they may come to understand the political society in which it will be their lot to live and act. (ix)

In spite of this mention of the eighteenth century as a historical period worthy of attention, Firth's selection only covers the last few decades of the century, which roughly correspond to a period that saw 'the foundation of colonies beyond the seas, and the building up of new states under the British flag' (lii–liii). If the range of historical events represented spans the years 1789 to 1901 ('*From the French Revolution to the Death of Queen Victoria*', as the subtitle has it), the anthologised poems comprise pieces commemorating 'the stirring incidents which marked the rise of our Eastern Empire' (li), such as Doyle's 'The Private of the Buffs' (1860; 1866), a poetic representation of British involvement in the Second Opium War (1859–60). According to Firth, however, not all imperial events deserved to be remembered. The Indian Rebellion is a case in point. For Firth, 'Much that happened during the Mutiny, the feelings it inspired, and nearly all the contemporary verse it evoked are things best forgotten' (lii). After dismissing the vast majority of the poetry immediately inspired by the Indian Uprising, he still recalls Tennyson's later response: 'The event in 1857 which one would most willingly remember was the defence of Lucknow, commemorated by Tennyson

in 1879' (lii). And yet, Tennyson's 'The Defence of Lucknow' (1880) does not appear in Firth's volume.

While anthologists like Firth zoomed in on the long nineteenth century, others such as Lang and Lang tried to embrace the long durée of English and British history in their anthologies. The definition of the chronological scope of the events to be represented in an anthology is bound to have an impact on the final product, but it is only one of the matters requiring a decision on the part of the compiler. The selection, organisation and presentation of different voices also result from the anthologist's decision-making and are, therefore, important questions to address in the study of an anthology.

When the selection of authors and texts in an anthology is considered, the possible contextual limitations imposed on the anthologist's project, such as copyright regulations, should be factored in. As a result of the Copyright Act of 1842, 'published literary property' was protected for forty-two years, 'after which anyone was free to reprint and sell a given work' if its author had been dead for more than seven years; otherwise, 'an author's copyright remained valid throughout his or her life plus seven years' (Barnes and Barnes 1988, 192). 'Excerpting material for […] inclusion in an […] anthology', however, 'remained ambiguous until 1911 when the doctrine of fair usage was instituted' (192). This usually causes '[l]ong lists of acknowledgements to authors and publishers, or remarks regretting the absence of certain poets', to be 'found in the prefaces and notes to numerous collections' (Haass 1985, 159). For example, in the 'Preface' to *Poems of Patriotism*, which appeared in 1907 as part of Routledge's 'The Golden Anthologies' series, G. K. A. Bell expresses his gratitude to a number of copyright owners 'for their kind help in permitting the use of copyright poems' (Bell 1907,

vii), but he also deeply regrets being unable to include certain pieces by Tennyson and as many by Kipling as he would have liked. 'The omission of some poems such as the Ballads of Lord Tennyson and the failure to include more than one poem by Rudyard Kipling', he acknowledges, 'is due to copyright restrictions, and has been a matter for the editor's keenest regret' (v).

With this caveat in mind, it is still interesting to look at the most represented authors and texts in the anthologies under examination while also taking account of the anthologists' relevant paratextual remarks on their own selections. For this purpose, I understand author and text representation as a matter of occurrences rather than textual length. This means that an author whose texts, no matter how long, is featured in only one anthology will be regarded as less represented than another whose texts appear in more than one anthology.

Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, Campbell, Macaulay and Doyle are certainly among the favourites of patriotic anthologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tennyson is certainly another. One of the most represented authors in *Poems of English Heroism*, *Poems of England*, *Patriotic Song* and *Poetry of Empire*, he is actually absent from *Poems of the Love and Pride of England*. Quite significantly, however, in Frederick Wedmore's preface to the volume, Tennyson's absence 'amongst great poets' due to copyright reasons is lamented (Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, ix). Other writers that are often represented in the patriotic anthology of poetry include Marvell, Scott, Southey and Hemans, an 'ardently patriotic' poet whose works were also reprinted in single-authored collections for educational purposes (Hemans 1887).

As for texts, Macaulay's 'The Armada' (1842) and Campbell's 'The Battle of the Baltic' (1801) and 'Ye Mariners of England' (1837) appear in many a patriotic verse anthology. Collected in nearly all volume under examination here, the concluding lines from *King John* (V.vii), Henry V's famous address to his soldiers in the eponymous play (III.i), John of Gaunt's 'this sceptred isle' speech in *Richard II* (II.i), Milton's 'To the Lord General Cromwell' (1652), Cowper's 'On the Loss of the *Royal George*' (1803), Hemans's 'England's Dead' (1822) and Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' (1854) also qualify as staples in this kind of publication. So does Doyle's 'The Private of the Buffs' (George and Sidgwick 1896, 80–81; Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, 134–36; Stanley 1901, 90–91; Bell 1907, 123–24; Lang and Lang 1910, 342–44; Firth 1911, 206–7), to which I would like to devote some special attention before proceeding to examine the organisation and presentation of anthologised texts in the volumes under scrutiny.

The frequent reprinting of 'The Private of the Buffs' in patriotic miscellanies is hardly surprising since Doyle's ballad may be regarded as an excellent specimen of poetry 'mythologizing plucky Englishness and racial superiority' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996a, 204). A poetic response to the military events of the Second Opium War, Doyle's poem was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* for December 1860 and later collected in Doyle's collection *The Return of the Guards and Other Poems* (1866) (Doyle 1860; Doyle 1866, 105–7). J. S. Bratton, who views the text as reinforcing the 'belief in the superiority of British men and institutions to all others', identifies the source for the episode that constitutes the 'rather tenuous narrative thread' in the ballad: 'Doyle's verses are based upon an incident which was reported in *The Times* in 1860, in which a

private, left behind by his fellows drinking with some natives, was surprised by the Chinese and killed because he, unlike his companions, refused to kowtow' (Bratton 1975, 40). Then she adds: 'The extract was usually printed with the verses, to make clear what is happening in the poem' (40). Bratton also points out that Doyle's use of 'the eight-line, doubled ballad stanza' with alternate rhyming is conventional and that the same kind of stanza was also used in the late nineteenth century by Newbolt, who, in 'Vitaï Lampada' (1897), 'turned it […] into the creed of the Victorian ballad hero, culminating in the exhortation "Play up! play up! and play up the game!" which rings for ever in his ears' (58).

For Brooks and Faulkner, Doyle's 'The Private of the Buffs' exemplifies how 'the mythology of empire could promote – partly it functioned in order to promote – the otherwise anonymous into exemplary types' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 28). As Bratton correctly observes, in order to be presented as a model, the man on whom Doyle's ballad centres undergoes idealisation, 'the idealised common man' being 'an important figure in the Victorian ballad' (Bratton 1975, 40). Bratton goes on to note that 'in recitation pieces like "The Private of the Buffs" there is often an added dimension of class awareness', which 'tak[es] here the typical form of pointing out the weaknesses or dangerous qualities of the model before reassuringly affirming his goodness and loyalty: if a drunken private is also a strong-hearted son of England, all is well' (40).

Indeed, the first stanza can easily be divided into two parts. The internal division is emphasised by the italicised adverb of time placed at the beginning of each four-line part: '*Last night*' (Doyle 1866, p. 105, l. 1); '*To-day*' (l. 5). Yesterday's 'drunken private of the Buffs' (l. 3) has now become 'Ambassador from Britain's crown, / And type of all her race' (ll. 7–8). Similarly, the list of negative adjectives

in the first two lines of the second stanza – 'Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught, / Bewildered, and alone' (p. 106, ll. 9–10) – only makes the contrast with his valour sharper, given that:

A heart, with English instinct fraught,
    He yet can call his own.
Ay, tear his body limb from limb,
    Bring cord, or axe, or flame:
He only knows, that not through *him*
    Shall England come to shame. (ll. 11–16)

The third stanza of the ballad is mostly devoted to the private's remembrance of fond memories of his homeland and regiment ('The Buffs, or East Kent Regiment'):

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seem'd,
    Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleam'd,
    One sheet of living snow;
The smoke, above his father's door,
    In grey soft eddyings hung:
Must he then watch it rise no more,
    Doom'd by himself, so young?

Yes, honour calls! (ll. 17–25)

The question in the last two lines of the third stanza and the answer to that question, which is immediately provided at the beginning of the fourth stanza,

reveal that the preceding colourful elements are also meant to contribute to the representation of the soldier's resistance as utterly heroic. Because the images listed in the third stanza show what the private risks losing along with his life, they appear to be instrumental in conveying the idea of a heavy sacrifice and of an undaunted man who is willing to make it notwithstanding: 'Unfaltering on its dreadful brink, / To his red grave he went' (p. 107, ll. 31–32). Here the word 'red' seemingly connects the euphemistic rendering of the soldier's death with the cluster of colourful images in the third stanza. Moreover, quoting lines 27–28 ('Let dusky Indians whine and kneel; / An English lad must die'), Brooks and Faulkner correctly point to the dramatization of the private 'as a model of English stubbornness – always thought of as a good thing – by means of derogatory racial contrast' (Brooks and Faulkner 1996b, 34).

Once again, the conclusion of the ballad opposes the private's low status to his exemplary behaviour in order to underscore and praise the latter. 'So, let his name through Europe ring' (Doyle 1866, p. 107, l. 33): the speaker wants the private's name to be known all over Europe because he is 'A man of mean estate, / Who died, as firm as Sparta's king, / Because his soul was great' (ll. 34–36). The final comparison of the soldier with the king of Sparta starkly contrasts with his 'mean estate'. In spite of (or, perhaps, precisely because of) the latter, the poem suggests, he deserves to be glorified for his valour. Ironically, however, his personal name is never disclosed in the text that eulogises him as an imperial hero.

The significance of a poem such as Doyle's may be best appreciated when the ballad is considered alongside the ideological work performed by the miscellanies in which the text was often reprinted. According to McCormick,

Henley's *Lyra Heroica*, which does anthologise 'The Prive of the Buffs' (Henley 1891, 242–43), ultimately supports British imperialism in spite of apparently 'trac[ing] a decline in English manhood from Agincourt to contemporary times' (McCormick 1989, 222). Not only are the 'historical, legendary, or literary' protagonists of the poems 'often ordinary soldiers or sailors placed in situations which require courage' instead of 'extraordinary in class or background', but an increasing number of 'failure poems' (that is to say, poems 'in which the protagonist fails in his quest') are anthologised in the second half of the book (213–14). Although many of 'these heroes fail martially', nevertheless, 'they succeed morally, because the book encourages readers to admire self-sacrifice':

> In *Lyra Heroica*, Henley helped popularize the motif of patriotic self-sacrifice, a common motif in the Roman literature upper class boys read in school, without distinguishing between those who must die to protect their country, and those whose deaths serve no tactical purpose, but symbolize solidarity with idealized notions of heroism and patriotism, and with the manliness which is defined by the male's willingness to suffer pain stoically and, if necessary, give his life to his cause. (215–16)

Henley's and other similar volumes, which 'offered a discouraged generation an honorable, if fatal, means of signaling their solidarity with traditional British values', McCormick concludes, 'made it easier for generals to recruit wave after wave of fresh troops, and encouraged their readers to sacrifice themselves – an option they often exercised in the outposts of empire, and in the trenches of World War I' (224). Patriotic pieces like Doyle's served this kind of agenda very well.

The miscellaneous volumes under scrutiny tend to number and arrange the anthologised texts chronologically. Whereas *Poems of English Heroism* and *Poetry of Empire* order them according to subject (that is, the historical event and/or the figure dealt with), *Poems of England*, *Poems of the Love and Pride of England* and *Patriotic Song* adopt the author's birthdate as their organising principle. In their preface to *Poems of England*, George and Sidgwick regard this as 'the simplest and clearest arrangement', for a subject-based grouping would produce 'chaotic and confusing contrasts of periods and styles' (George and Sidgwick 1896, vii–viii). Yet, John and Jean Lang do not seem to worry much about this in their 'Nineteen Centuries of British History', where they anachronistically yet proudly include 'poems descriptive of incidents which took place before the peoples of Great Britain were welded into one' (Lang and Lang 1910, v) with the aim of achieving 'a living expression not of national growth only, but of the essential spirit of the Race' (vi).

Patriotic Song is rather atypical in terms of arrangement of the anthologised items. Not only does it order texts according to author, but it also groups them in nine topographical sections: England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. In so doing, this volume epitomises how '[t]he list of contents […] furnishes a map which readers can use in order to go to a place of their own choosing, selecting from the various places on offer' (Lethbridge 2022, 155). While this is technically true for the list of contents in every anthology that contains one, Stanley's exceptional interweaving of time and space literally results in a unique patriotic historical-literary map of Britain and its Empire.

The ideological implications of this peculiar spatial repartition, which crucially rests both on the geopolitical conflation of England, Britain and the Empire and on the subjugation of various national identities to the imperial project, are worthy of additional commentary. Six authors feature both in the England section and in an additional one. These are Hemans (Wales), Scott (Scotland), Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) (Scotland), John Kells Ingram (1823–1907) (Ireland), Kipling (India) and Henley (South Africa). The subject-based double representation of these six poets may well be taken as an indication of 'the problems of attempting to anthologize a poetry at once "English" and "imperial"' (Lootens 2005, 287)[6]. This duplication also speaks to the fabrication of an imperial identity predicated on the subordination of different national identities to a hegemonic supranational order. Pointing out that some writers could be put to the service of British imperialist ideology 'even if they were Irish, or Scottish, or colonial, and even if they sometimes criticized British politics and society', Patrick Brantlinger calls these writers 'Empire's authors' and cites Scott (one of the patriotic voices echoed in two different sections of Stanley's anthology) as an example, this author being 'immensely popular' even though 'his dual nationalities made his status equivocal' (Brantlinger 2010, 265–66).

It is worth adding, however, that not everyone was willing to accept the product of such an ideological manipulation. In an article entitled 'What Is Patriotism?', for instance, English author G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936) did protest the inclusion of 'the Jacobite Songs of Scotland and the national songs of

6 Commenting on *A Victorian Anthology, 1837–1895* (1895), compiled by Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833–1908), Tricia Lootens uses the expression 'category crisis' to capture these problems. A sign of this crisis in Steadman's anthology is the fact that, while the poems penned by Toru Dutt (1856–1877) and by Kipling appear in the section devoted to 'Recent Poets of the Great Britain', the reader is also referred back to them in the next section, which is dedicated to 'Colonial Poets' (Stedman 1895, xxxv, xxxvii–xxxviii, 545–46, 595–601 and 615; Lootens 2005, 286–87).

Ireland' in *Patriotic Song* (Chesterton 1901). Reactions like Chesterton's publicly expose the ideological moves made by the anthologist to construct their version of a supranational, imperial patriotism.

I want to explore this issue further, in a few final remarks upon the ideological functions of paratexts. As Lethbridge usefully reminds us, 'anthologies communicate cohesion and coherence through paratexts', as 'the title, address to the reader, editor's introduction, and, centrally, the list of contents' all 'provide the ribbon that holds the bouquet of (poetic) flowers together' (Lethbridge 2022, 153). Since this paratextual 'ribbon' is far from ideologically neutral, I focus on paratextual elements other than footnotes and headnotes which also do interpretative work and I conclude this chapter by exploring how the paratext comes to express empire-related meanings in the anthologised under examination.

The combination of different paratextual materials can contribute to strategically blending nation (England or Britain) into empire. The titles and, when present, the subtitles of the various patriotic anthologies might look informative enough to offer 'a general idea of the principles governing the selection' (153), thus revealing whether its scope is national or imperial. However, even without considering the diversity of the anthologised texts, which, as already implied, would immediately complicate the notion of 'English', it is possible to understand that the boundaries between England, Britain and Empire turn out to be less clear-cut when other paratextual elements are factored in. Whereas the title of *Poems of the Love and Pride of England* makes it ostensibly England-centred, the editors' preface clarifies that the volume is actually concerned with 'the pride or the delight in the "ever-broadening England"'

(Wedmore and Wedmore 1897, viii) and that 'England' simply serves as a way 'to best express under one name the Empire's unity' (vii). The availability of the volume in Manitoba, Melbourne, Dunedin and Wellington, as well as London, confirms the editors' imperial focus.

Patriotic Song is even more ambiguous in this respect. While the terms 'English' and 'England' appear in the first half of the subtitle and in the dedication, respectively, the other half of the subtitle expands the outreach of the book as far as that of 'the British Empire'. Both the 'Editor's Preface' and the 'Introduction' confirm the impression that the geographical scope of the collection is larger than England. The preface signed by the editor (Stanley) opens with the statement that *Patriotic Song* 'is intended to be a representative collection of the patriotic poetry of the British Empire' (Stanley 1901, ix), a statement that is corroborated by a similar assertion in the 'Introduction' by James Edward Cowell Welldon (1854–1937) (signed as 'J. E. C. Calcutta' because he was Bishop of Calcutta at the time), where he writes: 'The present collection of patriotic songs will, I think, accord with the imperial spirit of the day; for they are representative of the whole British Empire' (xi). Besides expressing Stanley's gratitude for the 'encouragement, assistance, or advice' received from people both 'at home' and 'in the Colonies' (ix), the 'Editor s Preface' contributes to demarcate the geographical extent of the book by briefly disclosing details about the evolution of the anthologist's original 'scheme' (x). The planned 'section representing the patriotism of America', we learn, was eventually excluded in order 'not to go beyond the limits of the British Empire' (x). Further confirmation of the imperial scope of the anthology is provided by the topographically organised list of

contents in which 'England' is only one – albeit, quite significantly, the first – of nine sections.

Patriotic Song and *Poetry of Empire* do not differ only in the geographical or historical organisation of the respectively chosen material. A closer inspection of the paratexts of each volume reveals that Stanley's and Lang and Lang's understandings of what patriotism is are also starkly different, if not almost antithetical. In the 'Editor's Preface', Stanley's compilation is presented as 'something more than a book of war-songs':

> Many of my numbers breathe the spirit of war; for the national instinct is most deeply stirred in times of great national emotion. But I have aimed at making this volume something more than a book of war-songs, holding that a man may prove his patriotism as well at home in the pursuit of his daily business as on the battlefield in the presence of his country's enemies. Love of country is the root of the matter; and, after all, it is harder to live for one's country than to die for it. (Stanley 1901, ix)

For Stanley, domestic and ordinary displays of patriotic fervour deserve as serious attention as violent demonstrations of the same feeling. In fact, he suggests, these forms of peaceful, nonviolent patriotism are possibly worthier of applause because, counterintuitive though it might seem, they are ultimately more demanding and, thus, heroic than self-sacrifice during warfare. The position articulated here by Stanley recalls that of at least another patriotic anthologist. As shown by the 'Preface' to *Ballads of the Brave*, Langbridge similarly conceived his miscellaneous volume as something more than 'a mere accumulation of fighting pieces':

I did not want my book to be a mere accumulation of fighting pieces – I did not want 'heads to be broke' all over every page – and I have included in my definition of courage, the courage which bears as well as that which dares; the courage which knows how to be beaten as well as that which does not know when it is beaten; the courage of the Quaker as well as that of the Crusader. (Langbridge 1890, vii)

Both Stanley and Langbridge, then, downplay the importance of war in arousing 'true' patriotism, their respective selections reflecting this ideological positioning even when neither of them excludes martial pieces from their compilations altogether.

The view on this matter expressed by the editors of *Poetry of Empire* could not be more different. After citing Homer's *Iliad*, John and Jean Lang's introduction stresses the importance of warfare as a source of 'sublime' and as a necessity in the process of nation- and empire-building:

'And the cry of the two hosts went up through the higher air to the splendour of Zeus'. So wrote Homer of the glorious warfare by the Scamander; and it is often the curse of war more than the blessing of peace that lifts the commonplace to the atmosphere of the sublime.

Warfare between Roman and Briton, between Celt and Saxon, Englishman and Scot, Irishman and Englishman, bitter civil warfare – all these have helped to make our nation what it is. The story of a nation is always a story of bloodshed; many a time and oft of blood that has been wrongfully and wastefully shed. In times of peace national growth continues – as grows a coral reef – quietly, persistently; but it is the God of Battles who moulds peoples, and they are not days of prosperous commercialism, but days of storm and stress, that bring out what is best in the children of men. The Poetry of the British Empire has many a gallant tale to tell of fights by land and by sea, for without much fighting, fighting not only with men, but with the elements, with the very forces of Nature, there can be no Empire making. (Lang and Lang 1910, v)

In contrast with Stanley's (and Langbridge's) vision, John and Jean Lang argue for the centrality of 'fighting, fighting not only with men, but with the elements, with the very forces of Nature', to 'Empire making'. While the ability of conflicts to stimulate patriotic feelings is not completely lost on anthologists such as Stanley, who do not refrain from including war pieces in their patriotic anthologies, this ability is not only exploited but rather forcefully claimed by others like Lang and Lang.

Often voiced in prefatory remarks and other paratextual materials, the compilers' own different conceptions of patriotism add up to those expressed by the numerous historically grounded literary texts from diverse authors that they anthologise and echo, not without some degree of distortion. If anthologies speak with multiple voices, both 'old' and 'new', the paratexts contribute to the orchestration of what a reviewer of *Poems of the Love and Pride of England* appropriately called 'many-voiced patriotism' (Anonymous 1898). As multivocal volumes by definition, anthologies were compiled by patriotic British men and women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to endorse the view, versified by contemporary poets like William Watson (1858–1935), that, even though England's (or Britain's) 'veins are million', 'her heart is' ultimately 'one' (Watson 1890, p. 38, l. 14); to inspire forms of imperial patriotism, convincing, or reminding, their readers, both young and old, that, as one journalist put it, 'all the British lands and all their dependencies constitute one nation' and that 'the British nation is not only the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but it includes the Dominions beyond seas' ([Matson] 1911, 4).

Conclusion

This Britain, That Empire: British Imperial Voices Beyond Kipling

My dissertation has traced how poetry served as a vital instrument for expressing and shaping the ideology of British imperialism approximately between 1789 and 1914. Through a series of case studies that combine attention to occasion, voice and form, I have explored the many ways in which British poets contributed to the cultural logic of the Empire. Rather than presenting imperial verse as a monolith, I have aimed to show how varied poetic responses were and how different voices worked within and through a wide array of formal and publishing practices.

This has meant attending closely to commemorative poetry written for the jubilees of George III and Queen Victoria, as well as to the imperial echoes embedded in the anthologising work of figures like Arthur Compton Auchmuty and William Ernest Henley. These echoes, at times amplifying voices already marked by imperial conviction, at others imposing anachronistic patriotism upon earlier or more ambiguous texts, are not incidental. They are among the most telling signs of how poetry was used to consolidate, transmit and naturalise imperial ideology.

Although this dissertation has focussed on selected moments and forms, much remains to be done. The relation between poetic formats, such as periodical verse, and imperial content remains a rich field of inquiry. Events not treated in detail here – the Indian Rebellion of 1857–58, for instance – deserve further study. So too does the relation between nineteenth and early twentieth-century imperialist verse and its antecedents from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this regard, Suvir Kaul's *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire* remains a touchstone (Kaul 2000). Kaul's approach, which combines historical alertness with a strong sense of poetry *qua* poetry, has offered an important model. His

work invites us to think of poetic forms and ideological functions not as stable or isolated features, but as interrelated and evolving across time.

Future research might well take up the questions raised here in broader or deeper ways. Before such work can proceed, however, the persistent assumption that Kipling was the only poet of British imperialism must be set aside. His prominence is undeniable and his influence substantial, but he was never alone. Anthologies like those mentioned and discussed throughout this dissertation already demonstrate the presence of many others who wrote in support of the Empire, who echoed one another's voices and who helped create the poetic infrastructure of imperial patriotism.

To speak of the greatness of such poetry is to ask what greatness means. Is it a matter of formal skill, ideological clarity or historical influence? Kipling may stand out because he fulfilled all three criteria, but this dissertation has argued that his work should be read alongside that of the many lesser-known poets with whom he shared themes, techniques and occasions and in the publishing context of the time. The idea of the singular voice of the Empire gives way, in this light, to a chorus, not always harmonious, of British voices of Empire.

In her review of Kaul's book, Bridget Keegan congratulates him on 'a major revision to our understanding of the history of poetry in the long eighteenth century' and concludes: 'We may never like these poems, but we can no longer easily dismiss them' (Keegan 2004, 278). What matters is not whether their patriotism now persuades us, but how their poetic strategies worked to persuade others at the time. Although it remains necessary for further research to explore this, my hope is that this dissertation has helped to show that the poetry of British imperialism was not marginal or incidental, but central to the

cultural production of the Empire in the long nineteenth century. Its voices, whether insistent or subtle, original or echoed, deserve to be heard again, if not for what they affirm, then for what they reveal.

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