

THE USES OF EXILE: UGO FOSCOLO AND THOMAS MOORE

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*This essay examines the ways in which two Romantic-period contemporaries, the Irishman, Thomas Moore, and the Italian, Ugo Foscolo, wrote about their respective countries so as to command general political sympathy from readers. They were both exiles. Moore left Ireland, and then England, compelled to live for a while in France because of financial embarrassment. Foscolo, born in Zakynthos, fled the post-Napoleonic Austrian administration of Lombardy, settling in London. Both were welcomed to Holland House, chief salon of the Whigs, sharing their liberal ideology and political aspirations. The texts principally examined are Moore's Irish Melodies, significantly interchangeable with his National Airs, and Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, with occasional reference to some of his poetic projects. In their different ways, both literary efforts strategically represent nationalist sentiments un-specifically. Moore employs an apparently vague sentimentalism and Foscolo an unreliable narrator to make Irish and Italian patriotism transferrable. They write as well as live a purposeful exile. Apparently culpable narrative incoherence in the *Lettere* or lack of emotional specificity in the *Melodies* are actually designed to let usefully powerful allies appropriate such writings to voice, as their own nationalist sentiments, causes originally Irish and Italian. Native estrangement enables international solidarity. This essay examines the uses of literature to express the common ground exile can reveal.*

In September 1816, Ugo Foscolo arrived in London. In 1819 Thomas Moore left London for Paris. Both were double exiles, at least double. This essay examines the way both authors wrote about their respective countries so as to command general political sympathy from native and English audiences. They shared a popularity with the Whig frequenters of Holland House, but they also wrote in a particular fashion so as to articulate their specific national concerns in an infectious manner, one which could be happily appropriated by others to represent and become the favoured articulation of their own. What might conventionally

appear as literary vagueness can, in context, be transvalued as a successful rhetorical strategy for enlisting political sympathies. The eponymous hero of Foscolo's novel *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis) is incoherent in a manner signifying not the author's literary incompetence but the unviability of an individual who is not the individual of some larger whole.¹ In sympathizing with the distraught hero, the reader imagines the Italy that would restore his integrity. Moore's *Irish Melodies* and *National Airs* seem transferrable and interchangeable, not because they are vapid but because in a calculated fashion they champion Ireland's claim to voice a patriotism shared by all nation states. Their English popularity, the English delight in them as icons of national expression, inadvertently made their English audiences support the cause of Irish emancipation. The writings of these two authors used exile to heighten their sense of national entitlement.

Foscolo, born in 1778 in the Greek island of Zakynthos, had spent his early life there with a brief interlude in Spalato (now Split) where his father was a doctor. On the death of his father, the family went to Venice. Zakynthos then belonged to Venice and Venice notionally to the *patria*, which he and his youthful, aspirational hero, Jacopo Ortis, the central character in his eponymous novel, longed to be restored as a unified Italy. This would require, as a preliminary, the overthrowing of the Venetian Republic, grown corrupt and oligarchical, and the establishment of a Cisalpine Republic. By the terms of Campo Formio, the 1797

¹ Ugo Foscolo began publishing *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* in Bologna in 1798. This incomplete first edition was finished by Angelo Sassoli (of whom nothing seems to be known other than that he was hired to do this by the publisher, Marsigli), and subsequently repudiated by Foscolo. Foscolo published an authoritative edition in Milan in 1802. In 1816, a third, approved edition appeared in Zurich (falsely dated London 1814), just before Foscolo arrived in London. It differed slightly from 1802, featuring an addition to the text of the 17 March 1797 letter and the exclusion of the one of 9 February, but also appended the important *Notizia Bibliografica* (Bibliographical Note), a long, unsigned disquisition by Foscolo on how he thought the *Lettere* should be read, comparing it with works by Rousseau and Goethe. The *Lettere*, and not his untranslated poetry, became the basis for English knowledge of him as a writer. A version of the *Lettere* had been translated into English by "F.B." in 1814. I have used the comprehensive Italian edition of Foscolo's writings, *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Ugo Foscolo*, 23 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1933-94) but also *Opere di Ugo Foscolo*, ed. Franco Gavazzoni, 5 vols. (Milan: Ricciardi, 1974-81) as well as Donatella Martinelli's edition of *Sepolcri Odi Sonetti* (Milan: Mondadori, 1987) and Walter Binni's edition of *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (Milan: Garzanti, 2000), with their helpful notes and commentaries. I consulted the English translation by J.G. Nichols, *Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis and Of Tombs* (London: Hesperus Press, 2002).

treaty with Austria concluded by Napoleon after he invaded Italy, Zakynthos belonged to France, but Venice had been handed over to Austria. Foscolo was disgusted with this outcome, and in his disillusion lie the origins of his novel, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, a calculated Italian successor to Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774). Foscolo enjoyed a fraught relationship with Napoleonic hegemony, which he understood as an apparent liberation followed by an oppression he sometimes appeared to believe he could extricate Italy from by a direct appeal to the Emperor. Napoleon, after returning from Egypt, had crossed the Alps and inflicted a crucial defeat on the Austrians at the battle of Marengo. There appeared to be another opportunity for the revival of the original republican principles for which Venice had long been celebrated (in England most famously in James Harrington's *Oceana* [1656]) and Napoleon, as Foscolo later told him in his "Orazione" of 1802, was just the man for this job.²

By then, Foscolo was serving in Napoleon's army and performing with some distinction. But the northern Italy brought into being by Napoleon's treaty was finally replaced by a post-Napoleonic settlement which gave patriots like him hardly any room for manoeuvre. Foscolo left the army in 1807, having written *Dei sepolcri* (Of the Sepulchres), which helped his election to a Chair at the university of Pavia. After that he was in Florence and Milan, before escaping from Austrian rule to Switzerland, and then leaving Continental Europe once and for all to settle in London. In 1815 the Ionian Islands became a British Protectorate, thus frustrating any emergent Greek sovereignty: they were not ceded to Greece until 1864. Strikingly, it is on his way to absolute exile that Foscolo returns to the text of *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, revising the novel to insist on a pure, uncompromising presentation of his youthful nationalism. When the Risorgimento philosopher and activist Carlo Cattaneo credited Foscolo with giving to Italy "a new institution: exile," he meant by exile a political act – Foscolo's refusal to work with the Austrians after 1815 when they offered him employment – rather than a flight from persecution.³ The novelty Cattaneo identifies here comes from the depth and variety of exile Foscolo created for himself – a political exile, but one enlisting stylistic, temperamental, personal

² Ugo Foscolo, "Orazione a Bonaparte" (1802), *Opere di Ugo Foscolo* 2: 1102-105, lists Napoleon's accomplishments and qualifications for the title of "Liberatore di popoli, e fondatore di repubblica" (liberator of peoples and founder of the republic); see also 1120: "And now I see reborn in the Cisalpine state those laws for which Venice for a time was reputed immortal." All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

³ Carlo Cattaneo, *Ugo Foscolo e l'Italia* (Milan: Editori del politecnico, 1861) 34.

and social variations with a virtuosity which eventually made geographical estrangement from Italy just a detail. Jacopo's exile, lacking political feasibility, leads to the disintegration of his personality: like Hegel, he believes that individuality presupposes a larger entity of which the individual is a part, and that, deprived of citizenship, one becomes a deracinated, constitutionally unhappy consciousness whose self-sufficiency might prefigure an ultimately authoritative reason, but in fact exhibits a pitiable indigence.⁴ Foscolo the writer, by contrast, tries to make of *his* exile an effective political antagonism. Critics predictably look back to Ovid for the source of Foscolo's transformations, and his continued immersion in his own language and literature as both the palliative for and the cultural authority achieved by his exile. But they also see the timeliness of Foscolo's performance of the exile, giving to Italy the "new institution" of which Cattaneo speaks.⁵

The "sacred shores" of Zakynthos, ("le sacre sponde" of sonnet 9), sacred to Aphrodite, are treated by Foscolo as his credentials of classical authenticity.⁶ Certainly, given his time in Dalmatia, there were many languages in Foscolo's childhood linguistic mix, but he prioritised Greek. He used his birthplace to trope his native Greek(-speaking) provenance as his possession of the original, classical Greek credentials on which Latin culture (Aphrodite is "Venere" in the sonnet, and is still *latinate* when celebrated in his long poem about Italian adaptations of these Greek sources, *Le Grazie* [*The Graces*]) rested and then developed into new idioms. Vincenzo Cuoco's *Platone in Italia* (Plato in Italy) would be published in 1806, another version of Italian appropriation of the Greek foundations of Western culture, and Foscolo's redeployment of his Greek origins looks comparable. It is a bid simultaneously for personal and national accreditation. Most of the sonnet "A Zakinto" is about Homer, and the proximity to Zakynthos of Ithaca. Foscolo's classicism, unlike Leopardi's, was not the anticipation of a modernism to succeed the fashionable Romanticism of the Milanese intellectuals of the day, led by *l'abate* Ludovico di Breme and others. Foscolo certainly had his own way of turning his sensibility into that reflective suspicion of itself we so quickly recognize. But his classicism was not the main vehicle of this. Conceived a generation before Leopardi's dispute with the *soi-disant* Romantics of Milan, Foscolo's antique has about it a self-sufficiency, a Parnassian

⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), Part B "Self-Consciousness," IV B.

⁵ See, for example, Carlo Dionisotti, "Foscolo esule," *Appunti sui moderni: Foscolo, Leopardi, Manzoni e altri* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988) 58-59.

⁶ Foscolo, *Sepolcri Odi Sonetti* 108.

intricacy convinced of its felicity and not at all anxious about its distance from the demotic. Perhaps the distinction between *katharevousia* and *dimotiki*, so long-lasting in modern Greek, was the matrix of Foscolo's sureness of poetic diction. But in this difference from Leopardi, one can still detect a common purpose of imagining a *ricorso* which, in Foscolo's sonnet, has the mythic resources of ancient Greece caught in the boyhood experience of a poet-to-be who, like Virgil, seeks to redeploy Greek authority to Italian effect. Much of the poetry of Leopardi's *Canti* comparably reworks classical stoicism in an exemplary way although it is the new simplicity of his language in which that authenticity is coded, not a new Parnassian. Foscolo even imagined returning to Zakynthos towards the end of his life, casting it as a sort of kind nursery, if an academic one, where he might live out his days freed of the disastrous *imbroglios* of his debtor's life in England.⁷

Foscolo's *Ortis* was translated into English in 1814 by "F.B.," who I follow Gary Kelly and Diego Saglia in thinking to be the young Felicia Hemans, née Browne.⁸ *Ortis* would therefore have been the work Foscolo was largely known by when he arrived in London two years later and the doors of Holland House, the premier Whig salon, were opened to him. There he made the acquaintance of great Whig grandees with many of whom Thomas Moore was friendly and sometimes an intimate. *Ortis* helps us understand why Foscolo could speedily become a useful political icon for the Whigs, despite his often rebarbative character and willingness to take umbrage at patronage.

The eponymous hero of Foscolo's novel, Jacopo Ortis, is an impracticable idealist. However, this also means that his enthusiasm is unspecific enough to be open to reinterpretation or application to other cases of political oppression, just as Moore's *Irish Melodies* (the first of which date from 1808) were. Indeed, by 1818 Irish melodies were becoming interchangeable with Moore's new collections of *National Airs*. Nowadays, criticism of Moore's work concentrates on the political embarrassment or changed consciousness he raised in his polite English audiences by getting them to sing lustily in their drawing-rooms about an Ireland to whose current claims to be a nation they were traditionally deaf. Consistently the first item on the Whig agenda for reform was Irish emancipation, not achieved until 1829 and the Roman Catholic Relief Act, when the Catholic Daniel O'Connell was elected to Parliament. To exclude him seemed

⁷ For details, see Carlo Maria Franzero, *A Life in Exile: Ugo Foscolo in London, 1816-1827* (London: W.H. Allen, 1977) 121-23.

⁸ See Diego Saglia, *European Literatures in Britain, 1815-1832: Romantic Translations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 146, n. 86.

outrageous, even to the Duke of Wellington's Tory administration, and emancipation or rather participation sufficient to let O'Connell take his seat was at last granted to Irish Catholics under English law. Foscolo's popularity with Whigs, like Byron's friend, John Cam Hobhouse, came from the easy translatability of his championing of an historic Italian cultural tradition crying out for a national establishment into the libertarian Whig rhetoric recalling "the good old cause."

Such compatibility came from a vagueness which detaches the *Ortis* sensibility from political specifics, but by emphasizing the dysfunctional sensibility fostered by the current state of Italy, abused by Napoleon and exploited by a foreign power. Later, in his *Letters to England*, Foscolo describes the dissembling required of his novel:

Sixteen years ago I published another booklet [*Ortis*], and not being able to reveal/explain the opinions which seemed true to me then – and to a great extent still do now – I inflamed them with the mournful passions that smouldered in me.⁹

This confession is matched by the extraordinary revelation in the Preface to the 1814 English translation of *Ortis*, republished in 1818, that it was begun "without a previous perusal of the work itself" because of the enthusiasm of "a judicious friend" for "the beauties of the diction."¹⁰ It was thus a poetic enjoyment of individual moments at the expense of a sense of the whole work which the translation aimed to produce. The whole, anyway, in Foscolo's text is precisely what is problematic; and in this character it is crucial to the exposition of a sensibility itself characterised by the lack of the general conceptual and national bearings within which it could be recognizable as belonging to an individual and a citizen. The translation's conclusion emphasizes the liminal, un-dead quality of Jacopo's final state of mind. He prays to "the Supreme Being," surely a French concoction, beseeching it "in this tremendous hour of death, to leave me, only in a state of annihilation. But I die uncontaminated, and master of myself."¹¹

To interpret, like Jacopo, a willingness in oneself to invite annihilation as showing self-mastery is surely a desperate recourse. Jacopo tells us he does this

⁹ Ugo Foscolo, *Lettere scritte dall'Inghilterra (Gazzettino del bel mondo)*, ed. Edoardo Sanguineti (Milan: Mursia, 1978) 21: "Pubblicai sono oggimai sedici anni cert'altro volumetto, e non potendo per anche esporre le opinioni che allora – ed ora in gran parte – mi parevano vere, le ho rinfiammate delle lugubri passioni che allora m'ardevano."

¹⁰ *The Letters of Ortis to Lorenzo: Taken from the Original Manuscripts, Pub. at Milan in 1802, Tr. from the Italian... by F.B.*, 2nd edn. (London: H. Colburn, 1818) i-iv ("Preface").

¹¹ *The Letters of Ortis to Lorenzo* 229.

not through a religiously empowering relinquishment of self, but rather through a conviction of love, "replete with your idea," as he tells the woman he loves and is denied for political reasons, Teresa. Jacopo's self-annihilating heroics are expressive of the impotence of exile, and the sublime coruscations of his language are parasitic upon such exile remaining irredeemable. An authorial stance critical of Jacopo, though, disappears when he becomes a usefully transferrable symbol just because he is not tied to a viable Italian solution.

Foscolo collaborated with Hobhouse in 1818 on the latter's "Historical Illustrations of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*," supplying historical and literary references and writing a typically controversial "Essay on the Present Literature of Italy." Carlyle's comparable *Edinburgh Review* essay on "The State of German Literature" seemed to be following in its footsteps in 1827. Hobhouse reported that he eventually "implored" him "not to say anything about his Jacopo Ortis in [his] puff – he does not wish his reputation to stand upon that."¹² Foscolo's anxiety here can be read as pinpointing the contradictions of his exile. His *Ortis* was a diagnosis of an intemperate patriotism which allowed the youthful Foscolo to enjoy writing in a self-advertising, virtuoso manner; not *lo bello stile* but a literary manner examining extremes of sensibility, from the nihilistic and suicidal to the potentially libertine, very much in the tradition of Rousseau and Goethe. He could do as well as they, but only through the medium of an historically symptomatic but unreliable narrator. To be a young patriot living in the Veneto after Campo Formio was to be like Jacopo, and one of his historical characteristics was to be an untrustworthy judge of himself and his situation. His exile eventually becomes an exile from life itself.

Significantly, Foscolo wrote a critically forensic "Notizia Bibliografica" (Bibliographical Note) for the 1816 Zurich edition of *Ortis*. This launched the *Lettere* into the reflexive free-for-all manner typical of Romantic literary and theoretical hybridity.¹³ Criticism and its original are merged and extend each other. The novel's heroic discourse had in any case been sharply self-differing, so as to humble ("mortificare"), as Giuseppe Nicoletti puts it, the assumptions of

¹² E.R. Vincent, *Byron, Hobhouse and Foscolo: New Documents in the History of a Collaboration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949) 14 and n. 8.

¹³ Ugo Foscolo, "Notizia Bibliografica Intorno Alle Ultime Lettere Di Jacopo Ortis, per l'edizione di Londra MDCCCXIV," *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Ugo Foscolo* 4:478. We are warned at the start: "From the repetitions, as indeed from the incoherence of some ideas and stylistic differences, many will realize how the following articles, although put together out of the same materials were not the compilation of a single hand, nor in the same language."

consistency and transparency built into the novel's inherited epistolary mode.¹⁴ We encounter not the forensic disclosures of a Samuel Richardson, or even a Rousseau, but an unreliable narrator perpetually excused by being made to represent political dysfunction. In his "Notizia," Foscolo does raise the question of the plausibility of this equation, no doubt sensing that its fragility and its mixing of political and erotic genres were confusing to the reader.¹⁵ He cites Montaigne as precedent, but then has to invoke, poetically, a third force to explain Ortis's demise: "la nera fiamma che lo distrugge" (the black flame which destroys him).¹⁶ This is now the pathology of a suicide. Jacopo is, after all, genuinely disreputable, a hit-and-run rider, a natural libertine. Here Foscolo looks initially different from Leopardi, the formal perfection of whose poems makes the pessimism of their content anticipate, for his Marxist critics at any rate, a kind of disabused starting-point undeceived by any ideological illusions of consolation or acceptance.¹⁷ It all depends, though, on whether or not one can attribute to Foscolo the Machiavellian position claimed in the "Notizia": one of subtly undermining a Romantic hero villain with great narrative virtuosity in order finally to foreground the independent value of the republican political ends which his Romantic allure helped to popularize. He did the opposite with his praise of Napoleon, but for the same end.

For even the original composition of the novel was surrounded by a different kind of political writing altogether, such as Foscolo's "Orazione a Bonaparte," which encourages Napoleon's self-regard to affect a republican charisma; or his critical analyses of Petrarch and Dante, which, far from being purely enthusiastic, analyse the politics of their literary careers, and the role of exile in them, in detail and coolly. Foscolo had also pseudonymously (appropriately) translated Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, where excesses of self-expression are effortlessly retrieved by sentimental comedy unthinkable in the *Lettere*. Foscolo's "Essay" for Hobhouse, too, is precisely provocative in a manner contrasting with Jacopo's uncritical enthusiasms for Parini and Alfieri. But it was just this unchecked enthusiasm his creator needed in order to play the unconditional Italian patriot, the role needed to make his exile a success as he figured a liberty to which other nationals could unreservedly subscribe.

¹⁴ Giuseppe Nicoletti, "Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis di Ugo Foscolo," *Letteratura Italiana: le Opere*, vol. 3: "Dall'Ottocento al Novocento" (Turin: Einaudi, 1995) 48, 60-61.

¹⁵ Foscolo, "Notizia Bibliografica" 4:489.

¹⁶ Foscolo, "Notizia Bibliografica" 4:501.

¹⁷ Most famous among those were Walter Binni, Sebastiano Timpanaro and Cesare Luporini.

Arriving on one wave of enthusiasm, Foscolo then set about constructing another kind of exemplariness as an Italian patriot, one that required respect as a historical and cultural commentator, rather than identification with a charismatic but implausible hero. Where the *Lettere* are concerned, the “Notizia Bibliografica” of 1816 is the bridge between the two. But his major poems such as *Dei sepolchri* and *Le Grazie* are his dominant projects of historical recovery. In *Dei sepolchri* we have the famous image of Homer groping blindly among the ruins of Troy to recover its voice, exemplary for the modern Italian contemplating the tombs of his own past heroes. Moore sympathetically quoted as if from memory several lines from *Dei sepolchri* in a journal entry of October 1829. *Le Grazie*, written in 1812 as Napoleon began to fail, conflates Foscolo’s childhood in Zakynthos, Homer’s heritage and a necessarily poetic conjuration of divinities: the pattern of the sonnet “A Zakinto” writ large. Exiles, geographical and historical, are compounded and they intensify the poetry, “for he who forgets his *patria* / cannot speak respectfully to these Goddesses” (“chè piamente a queste / Dee non favela chi la patria obblia”). Both poems develop the Ciceronian-sounding theme of his inaugural lecture at the University of Pavia, *Dell’origine e dell’ufficio della letteratura*. Overall, Foscolo took up Byron’s “prophecy of an Italian *risorgimento*,” as Byron’s editor, Jerome McGann calls it.¹⁸ In the Preface to Canto Four of *Childe Harold*, Byron discusses the case of Italy explicitly, encouraging a cultural politics which translates literary immortality into the consistency of a nationhood not authored by others – in his words, “the immortality of independence.”¹⁹

The rest of Foscolo’s exile in London is a troubled tale of his attempts to secure appropriate contracts for the publication of his commentaries and essays and thus vindicate the Italian literary credentials Byron thought so politically prescient, and, more generally, to live up to the idea of a literary *magnifico*, one worthy of respect by the English literary establishment, irrespective of huge debts incurred in the process. So from one kind of figure of exile, he changes into another. What follows are publications in the *Edinburgh Review* on Dante and in the *Quarterly* on Petrarch, as well as numerous other plans for the dissemination of Italian literature. But these articles – and Foscolo only wrote critical prose after coming to England – are in a way unintelligible without some appreciation of Foscolo’s earlier literary play on the ways of polemicizing exile, most famously through a shareable hero and the poetry of an historical archaeology of interests underpinning all Western letters.

¹⁸ Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-93) 2:317.

¹⁹ Byron 2:123.

Thomas Moore was obliged to go into voluntary exile when held accountable for a debt he could not pay. Moore had been gifted the sinecure of Registrar to the Vice-Admiralty Court at Bermuda. This sinecure was not profitable to Moore, and he was personally in post for a little more than three months before returning to England. He was, though, allowed to appoint deputies and one he appointed in 1810, John William Goodrich, turned out to be a rogue who embezzled the prize money raised by three captured ships and made Moore liable for a debt of £6000 in 1819. Moore claimed to have forgotten “both him and the office” altogether.²⁰ Despite the generosity of friends, Moore’s only recourse was to flee the country, and he did so in the company of the youthful Lord John Russell, a future Whig Prime Minister. He stayed in Paris for about a fortnight, then set off on his enforced Grand Tour, writing “Rhymes on the Road” along the way. “Rhymes” records his visits to Geneva, Milan, Lombardy, the Veneto and eventually (though for his account here he reverted to his Journal) his visit to Byron in Venice. He then went on to Rome before travelling back to Paris and reuniting with his family who now joined him in exile. After two years he made a short visit to Ireland and London, relatively incognito, before returning to Paris, for a while living at 17 Rue d’Anjou (in the 8th arrondissement) in a house shared with Benjamin Constant, then at a number of other addresses.

Moore was born and educated in Dublin. He went to London as a young man to study for the Bar in March 1799, his first exile, but was distracted by almost instant literary success with his free imitation, *Odes of Anacreon*, published in 1800 and strategically dedicated to the Prince Regent. “Anacreon Moore” then consolidated his popularity a year later with his risqué *Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little* before, in 1807, embarking on the enduring project of his *Irish Melodies*. The *Irish Melodies*, interspersed with *National Airs*, were the on-going project to which his major efforts were directed while in Paris. While there, he also received Byron’s proposal that he and Byron collaborate in editing a newspaper, a prototype for what evolved into *The Liberal*. So the political charge many have seen strategically enfolded in the prettiness, nostalgia and slight lyric grace of his poetry may have been backed by a tough reasonableness. Moore turned Byron down. He also worked with the Whigs and, while supporting Daniel O’Connell, suspected all talk of breaking up the Union because of the Protestant violence he imagined would happen as a result of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.²¹ Moore’s exile was from a land where he had been friends with Robert

²⁰ Ronan Kelly, *Bard of Erin: The Life of Thomas Moore* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2008) 308.

²¹ See Moore’s journal entry of 30 September 1832: *The Journal of Thomas Moore*, ed. Wilfred S. Dowden, 6 vols. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983-91) 4:1489.

Emmet and others who died after the failed United Irishmen movement of 1798. His elegy to Emmet, hanged and beheaded in 1803, is at first typically coy – “O, breathe not his name” – and then full of a Byronic enthusiasm, *avant la lettre*, immediately recognizable as partisan.

Moore’s work in Paris on *Irish Melodies* and *National Airs* is framed by writings explicitly about Paris and others explicitly about politics, in particular the Congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance which emerged from it. *The Fudge Family in Paris* appeared in 1818, a year before he was obliged to leave Britain, and was greeted with delighted approval by liberals of all shades of radical opinion, from the quasi-Jacobin Hazlitt to the Whigs, and provoked replies and squibs from the Tory literary establishment. As his latest biographer, Ronan Kelly, points out, Moore consorted mostly with émigrés in Paris, and many of them were Irish.²² But he was comfortable speaking French in French company, especially when he did not have to switch to English, and it is tiring just to follow the hectic course of his Parisian social life. On 13 December 1819 he records in his journal: “all dined at Véry’s – the Romanée Conti excellent.”²³ When he writes in Extract IX of *Rhymes on the Road*: “Go where we may – rest where we will / Eternal London haunts us still,” he is bewailing the way the English remain unchangeably English abroad, in habit and concerns – “taking tea / and toast upon the Wall of China.”²⁴ To repeat, Moore was not a Tory but a Whig, for whom the point of nationalism is that it should be usable by any citizenry. His orientalist poem *Lalla Rookh* (1817) was as European a work as any of Byron’s. In his journal entry of 6 November 1820, he especially delighted that *Lalla Rookh* had reportedly been translated into Persian, its songs “sung about every where,” and “the whole work [believed to have] been taken originally from some Persian Manuscript.”²⁵ In later Prefaces he quotes Henry Luttrell’s lines: “I’m told, dear Moore, your lays are sung / (Can it be true, you lucky man?) / By moonlight, in the Persian Tongue, / Along the streets of Ispahan.”²⁶ Stendhal had written to him in March to tell him he was reading it for the fifth time.²⁷ In Paris, Moore was inspired to begin a failed repeat of *Lalla*’s success, *The Epicurean*, a tale versified as *Alciphron*.

²² Kelly 356-59.

²³ Moore, *Journal* 1:297.

²⁴ Thomas Moore, “Rhymes on the Road,” *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*, ed. A.D. Godley (London: Oxford University Press, 1910) 526.

²⁵ Moore, *Journal* 1:359.

²⁶ See Linda Kelly, *Ireland’s Minstrel: A Life of Tom Moore, Poet, Patriot and Byron’s Friend* (London: Tauris, 2006) 136.

²⁷ Moore, *Journal* 1:309-10.

In *Rhymes on the Road*, visiting Geneva, he berates those who undermined the besieged Republic's resistance of 1782 against "the forces of Berne, Sardinia, and France."²⁸ And in Paris in 1821 he comparably excoriates the Neapolitans who after their rebellion of 1820 surrendered to the Austrians. There is not the straightforwardly bad "Celtic wolves" and good "Ausonian Shepherds" of Shelley's "Ode to Naples" in Moore's "Lines on the entry of the Austrians into Naples, 1821." These are remarkably uncompromising attacks. The first concludes, though, with the uncannily self-referential concession that Moore can think of no worse punishment than simply not to be free. And the Neapolitan betrayal is also generalised to become "Liberty's war," implicating post-Vienna Europe and one of the main participants in the decisive Congress, Castlereagh, who did nothing.²⁹ Whig liberty then typically combines with a Byronic sense that the Italian literary heritage was waiting in the wings, Vincenzo da Filicaja (a seventeenth-century poet of rebellion) and Petrarch, ready themselves to take up arms. The point is that, if led by literary awareness, Europe might have reconceived itself in republican terms, instead of which it subsided back into the monarchical settlements of Metternich and Alexander. Genevan republican resistance fell finally like a "broken talisman," a fiction that had lost its power.³⁰

Exile is there to be used. For the writer it becomes an ambiguous trope. Stephen Dedalus's "silence, exile and cunning" sounds quintessentially modernist, a courting of the "shock experience" which takes us out of a native historical continuum, an estrangement that makes possible the disenchanting views of the modern critic.³¹ But already in Romanticism, we encounter a parallel: the power to make what one is exiled from into an experience which cannot of course be *of* what is present, being in exile from it, but by being an *experience* nevertheless *is* present. This can take either take the form of the nationalism of Foscolo's Jacopo, impossible and un-thought-out in Italian terms, and marvellously infectious just because of this lack of specificity or silence about details. Foscolo in this way contrives an invitation to sympathy, which he nevertheless makes a matter of principle by cunningly keeping Jacopo's character questionable. Or Moore's immensely popular *Irish Melodies* can become

²⁸ Moore, *Poetical Works* 508-509.

²⁹ Moore, *Poetical Works* 535.

³⁰ Moore *Poetical Works* 535-36.

³¹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 247; see Walter Benjamin on Baudelaire in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1992) 154: "He indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock."

a cultural benchmark for the polite society prohibiting Irish emancipation. Unlike the stage Irishman, there to be laughed at from a distance, the Irishness of the *Melodies* is characterised again by its infectiousness – they activate a sentimental life we all recognize spontaneously. Generalizing his nationalist appeal still further, Moore's *National Airs* support his Whig desire to do politics in a European context, opposed by Tories from Peel to Salisbury.

At work is a kind of abject sublime – one in which the audience is made to realise that the space cleared for our sense of elevation above conceptual understanding or the symbolic order is the same space as the one into which we cast down those we deem beneath discursive or symbolic consideration, those deprived of the category of the human. But in that exile, outlaws become embarrassingly symmetrical with those above the law, both enjoy the freedom or space needed for the individual, and so the state defined by its citizenry, to be reconceptualised. They become the citizens of an unacknowledged state in which we all might do better. Friedrich Schlegel, Hegel, and Percy Shelley all think in this way.

The geographical exile of London and Paris shared by the writings of both Foscolo and Moore is, then, cunningly silent about particular policies of the Italian and Irish nationalisms from which they are also exiled, and so wins unproblematic sympathy. Moore quotes from *Dei sepolcri* in a journal entry of October 1829, falling naturally into its idiom of classical recollection.³² Patriotic sympathies are clearly exchangeable, and their authenticity is tied up with the way they become a natural recourse for other nationalities, each a talisman for the other. But Foscolo and Moore were also pragmatists, hard-headed, clever in the arts of cultural seduction, writers whose writings adjacent to their poetry anticipate, in Foscolo's case, the Risorgimento, and in Moore's, effective Whig positions which eventually triumphed in 1829, although there were to be many years of struggle before then. The exchangeability was calculated, making individual patriotisms usable by others, a nationalism which could enlist material support from others. And exile, however forced or circumstantial, could become a component of the same political tactics.

³² Moore, *Journal* 3:1253.