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Marjorie Morgan. *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain.* New York and Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. x + 271 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-333-71999-2.

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Marjorie Morgan, an Associate Professor of History at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, has also published *Manners, Morals and Class in England, 1774-1858* (1994). The present book is the product of many years of reflection and research, beginning with a year in Britain gathering material for her dissertation and filling personal journals with daily impressions. After completing her dissertation she turned to the question that had been intriguing her since leaving Britain: "to use travel writing (published and non-published) about trips to the Continent *and* around Britain to explore components of national identity imagined by middle- and upper-middle-class men and women from England, Scotland and Wales during Victoria's reign (1837-1901)" (p. 3). Her goal, she writes, is to "reveal what travelers from each of the main regions of Britain had in mind when they used such items as 'British', 'English', 'Scotch', and 'Welsh' to imagine and describe themselves collectively" (p. 4).

Morgan limits her study of "how the 'us', or national group imagined, depended on the 'them', or the Other, encountered by travelers at any given time," in space and time to Europe and Britain and especially to the Victorian era, because it was during the mid- and late-nineteenth century that large numbers of middle-class Britons began traveling to Europe and other lands (p. 4). In departing from the current practice of studying the relationship between travel and identity by focusing on the imperial experience in non-European areas, Morgan rightly points out that there was an English empire before a British one, anti-Catholicism predated Orientalism, and "much of what we are now terming 'colonial' existed within Europe itself before there were any overseas colonies" (pp. 6-7).

Morgan argues three main points in her book. First, people found their national identity more often in everyday images and material goods, such as landscape, manners, and religious rituals, than they did in less frequently experienced state-sponsored pageantry and propaganda. Second, rather than claiming a single national identity as "British subjects," people often embraced multiple and varying national identities depending on context: "British" while on the continent, English, Scotch, or Welsh when traveling in Britain itself. Morgan suggests that there were at least four different identities in Great Britain in the Victorian era, and five if Ireland is included. Here she departs from the work of Linda Colley, Eric Evans, and Gerald Newman.[1] Third, Morgan moderates recent scholarship that stresses "how nations and national identity are inventions constructed at particular moments in time, rather than givens existing since time immemorial." She argues instead that national identities are a blending of "age old stereotypes continually

invested with new meanings" (pp. 4-5).

Chapter 1 begins with a thoughtful discussion of the *meaning* of travel and of "travel as doing four things, particularly to travelers, but sometimes to those they encounter as well: estranging, transforming, liberating and unsettling" (pp. 10-3). Morgan then turns to the *mechanics* of travel as she discusses everything from Thomas Cook's first cheap excursion in 1841 to handbooks for "travelers" who sought "authentic" experiences as opposed to "tourists" who trod the well-worn paths. British travelers' penchant for quantifying their journeys, by time (nine cities in a fortnight) and detail (208 staircases in St. Peter's) is discussed, as are their passports, their drawing boxes (they were "passionate sketchers"), and their powders, chemicals, and spirits for "doing battle with the unnerving European entomological world and for dealing with medical matters" (pp. 18-9). This chapter contains a wealth of fascinating anecdotes, well-placed quotes, and revealing depictions of the modes and rigors of travel a century and more ago.

Chapter 2 focuses on "landscape and climate." In this chapter Morgan makes a strong case for her argument that there were at least four different identities people of Great Britain could choose depending on context. She elaborates on four key themes that inform the chapter. First, "landscape is an integral part of national identity," although Morgan found that generally "Victorian travellers also identified with a localized English, Scottish or Welsh landscape as opposed to a more overarching British or Celtic one." Second, and quite interestingly, Morgan argues that the physical position a people choose to adopt "when viewing and appreciating landscape" is as important as the landscape itself. People from all parts of Britain preferred "looking down rather than out across or up at landscape." Third, that there is a "close relationship, or mutual influence, between a nation's landscape and its people, such that they come to exhibit similar qualities, at least in people's minds." This was perhaps most true of the English, and to a lesser extent the Scots. Fourth, while the Scots and Welsh preferred majestic settings, the English, following their perception of themselves and their own landscape, sought "restraint and moderateness," and were adverse to the dramatic, majestic, and extreme" (pp. 46-7).

In chapter 3 Morgan looks at religion, beginning with a discussion of the link between Protestantism and national identity, and between Protestant patriotism and anti-Catholic sentiments. The first few pages of the chapter place Protestantism and anti-Catholicism in their historical context. Morgan also delineates the different forms of Protestantism found in England, Scotland and Wales, and how these affected local identities. Quite frequently, however, "Protestantism" referred to secular qualities, such as education, rational inquiry, open-mindedness, and enlightenment. These qualities contrasted sharply with Victorian travelers' perceptions of "Catholicism," which they viewed as lacking a spirit of inquiry and toleration. Domestic morality, cleanliness, an enterprising spirit, and prosperity were also attributes attributed to Protestants that were found wanting in Catholics. Morgan ranges widely in her analysis of Protestant travelers' perceptions of Catholicism on the Continent, including their lack of respect for Catholic priests and nuns, services, and worshippers. Morgan concludes this chapter by looking at British traveler's observations about religion when traveling within Britain, and then English Catholics' views while traveling on the continent.

Morgan begins chapter 4 on "Customs, Comfort and Class" with a personal anecdote about her own travels to England and the continent, and it is in this chapter that the reader could most likely relate their own similar experiences and insights while traveling. Here the "minutiae of daily life that Victorian travellers identified as English, Scottish, Welsh or British," is explored including food and drink, manners, and recreation (p. 121). Through travelers' journals, Morgan concludes for example that meat, milk, and butter were considered indispensable by both the English and Scots, but that the "English even more than the Scots identified passionately with tea" (p. 122). English reserve is evident in their negative reaction to the "warmth and exuberance [of] social exchanges on the Continent," as is the English desire for privacy revealed by the differences in names for country homes in Holland ("Our Contentment") and England ("Towers") (pp. 129-30). In discussing leisure activities, Morgan includes an interesting and extensive analysis of the different views the Scots, English, and Welsh had, and that they believed their neighbors on the Continent had, toward education, singing, poetry, formal exercise and sport, the home, and social rankings.

In her fifth chapter Morgan questions the recent works of scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Linda Colley, and David Cannadine,[2] which argue that cultural traditions and nations are "inventions constructed at a particular moment in time, rather thanÃage-old phenomena existing since time immemorial" (p. 155). Morgan contends that while imagination and invention have played an impor-

tant role in creating modern manifestations of national identity and tradition, there are some continuities, such as the concept of liberty, that "the English in particular had imagined themselves to possess for centuries," and that was and is a central ingredient of their Britishness (p. 156). She believes that "national identity formation is not simply a matter of inventing and artificially constructing something new. National identity often rests on age-old outlooks and traditions which are continually invested with new meanings depending on circumstances" (p. 157). Here Morgan shows how the meaning of "liberty" evolved over the centuries, comprising at times Protestantism, various elements of the landscape (trees, wind, free-ranging cattle, the surrounding water, and accessible countryside and mountains), national prosperity (John Bull's robustness), and a specific system of government. Morgan points out, however, that while "liberty" was an important indicator of national identity, Victorian travelers on the continent, particularly women, found many aspects of life in Europe very liberating, and came to associate British "moral and social conventions with nothing short of tyranny" (p. 169). Such conventions included the social hierarchy in England, the "pressures of pretentious living," ostentatious lifestyles, constraints on personal grooming and dress, and a perceived lack of mental and moral individuality. Morgan spends several pages discussing the entries in women travelers' journals to show how they came to recognize how English conventions and laws limited their freedom and denied them opportunities. The chapter concludes by describing the ways language and history both united and differentiated Victorian travelers.

The discourse of national identity is the subject of chapter 6. Here Morgan is concerned with the various terms and patterns of terminology by which the different peoples of the British Isles, the British government, and Europeans labeled Victorian travelers. Thus, they could be "British, Britons, English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, Northerners, Southerners, Celts, Gaels and Anglo-Saxons." But "how could it have been otherwise in a state that was technically known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but commonly referred to as Great Britain, Britain and Ireland, the three Kingdoms (England, Scotland and Ireland) or England, with the latter term meaning the whole UK, the island of Britain, England and Wales, England, or even only the southern part of England, depending on context" (p. 196). The author systematically dissects each of these various terms and explains why and how they were used and what each meant in the various contexts in which they were used.

In her conclusion, Morgan muses on her own study and what contributions she believes it has made to the current debate about national identity. She argues that "this book certainly casts doubt on the high politics/government model. It suggests that national identity should be understood in terms of everyday images and rituals to do with landscape, religion, food and drink, recreation, manners, liberty, language and history" (p. 219). I would agree. Morgan's extensive study of more than 160 travel journals, diaries, accounts, and guidebooks representing travelers from all corners of Britain (she includes biographical information on eighty of them in an appendix), presents a convincing argument that a high politics model is not sufficient to explain the constitutive elements of national identity. Nor is it possible any longer, as Morgan demonstrates, to speak of a single British identity, or to argue that national identities are a purely modern invention. *National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain* must be added to the list of significant contributions to the field of nation studies.

Notes

[1]. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation: 1702-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Eric Evans, "Englishness and Britishness: National Identities, c. 1790-c.1870, in *Uniting the Kingdom?: The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London: Routledge, 1995); and, Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism, 1740-1830* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1987).

[2]. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Colley; and David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the Invention of Tradition, c. 1820-1977," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, chapter 1.

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