

## Space, language, and the limits of knowledge: a Kantian view on William T. Beckford's *Vathek*

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### *Abstract*

William Thomas Beckford's *Vathek* chronicles the eponymous Caliph's struggle and ultimate fall into hell as a divine punishment for his unrestrained desire for knowledge. Around the time Beckford wrote *Vathek*, Immanuel Kant released the *Critique of Pure Reason*, whose central implication is that human knowledge is restricted to appearances. Drawing on textual evidence from *Vathek*'s first three editions and from Kant's *Critique*, I explore ways in which knowledge is negotiated and mediated by the limits of human intellect and sensory perception as they intersect with the protean boundary between reality and appearance, and suggest that Beckford's *Vathek* may be viewed as a literary instantiation of Kant's transcendental idealism, as they both - albeit in different ways - impose severe limits on man's epistemic ability.

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I

London, 7 June 1786. An anonymous little volume is released by publisher J. Johnson, of St Paul's Churchyard: the title reads *An Arabian Tale, from an unpublished manuscript: with notes critical and explanatory*.<sup>1</sup> No author appears on the frontispiece.<sup>2</sup> The preface claims that 'the Original' of the story has been 'collected in the East by a Man of letters', and 'communicated to the Editor [...] three years ago'. This unnamed 'editor' was so pleased by 'the perusal of it', that he took upon himself to 'transcribe, and [...] translate it', despite 'the difficulty of accommodating our English idioms to the Arabick'.<sup>3</sup>

Lausanne, 2 December 1786. The first issue of the *Journal de Lausanne*, edited by Jean Lanteires<sup>4</sup> and published by Hignou & Comp.,<sup>5</sup> reviews

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on its front page<sup>6</sup> a new book released in November 1786 (although the frontispiece is post-dated 1787)<sup>7</sup> by the same publishing house: its title is *Vathek*;<sup>8</sup> its author is identified in the prefatory note as 'M. Beckford'.<sup>9</sup> The preface, which reads more like a warning - *avis* - goes on to inform the reader that the volume presents the original work as it was 'written in French by M. Beckford', and to denounce the 'indiscretion' of an unnamed 'man of letters' to whom the manuscript had been entrusted three years ago' for causing the English translation to be 'made known before the [French] original' and falsely represented as a translation from the Arabic.<sup>10</sup>

Paris, 26 January 1787. Louis XVI's Royal censor authorises the publication of a 'small booklet written according to the taste of the Arabian Tales', by the title of *Vathek, a Novel*.<sup>11</sup> The book is eventually released in early August 1787<sup>12</sup> by publisher Poinçot, of rue de la Harpe, under the title *Vathek, conte arabe*.<sup>13</sup> It gives no information about the author, and contains no preface.

These three anonymous volumes - one written in English, two in French - are the first three incarnations of a single literary creature, born of the imagination of writer and art collector William Thomas Beckford (1760-1844). The story, which eventually came to be known by the abbreviated title *Vathek*, is a tongue-in-cheek chronicle of the latest period of the reign of the eponymous 'ninth Caliph of the Abbassides', who, lured by a mysterious stranger's - the Giaour's - promise of infinite riches and supernatural power, renounces Islam, and engages in a spiral of abominable activities which eventually lead him to Eblis (hell), and secure his eternal damnation.

Articulated in elegant prose, laced with irony, and loosely hovering around themes of faith, morality, sin, and punishment, the narrative is dominated by frequent depictions of unrestrained pursuits of gratification of sensual and intellectual appetites and excesses of all kinds, spliced together into a grand, unified portrayal of man's struggle to satisfy a single, unsatisfiable desire: knowledge.

Around the time Beckford wrote *Vathek*, the problem of charting the nature, sources, and limits of human knowledge had been the major occupation and preoccupation of German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) for at least a decade.<sup>14</sup> The foundations of Kant's theory of knowledge are laid out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* - the first element of what would eventually develop into a Critical trilogy<sup>15</sup> - first published in

1781,<sup>16</sup> then, in revised form, in 1787.<sup>17</sup> At the time Kant set out to work on his *Critique*, Europe's philosophical landscape was largely split into two seemingly incompatible camps, whose key object of contention lay in the attribution of the epistemic primacy.<sup>18</sup> Rationalism, dominating the Continental tradition in the wake of René Descartes and Gottfried W. Leibniz, tended to view knowledge as the result of intellectual, *a priori* operations, based on innate ideas and deductive reasoning involving the inner workings of the mind, and largely independent from the encounter with external reality.<sup>19</sup> Empiricism, led by the British tradition established by the thought of John Locke and based upon the observations of Isaac Newton, had instead rejected the notion of innate ideas, and ascribed knowledge chiefly to sensory, *a posteriori* operations, based on inductive reasoning applied to the empirical encounter with the outside world.<sup>20</sup> In his first *Critique*, Kant took a novel approach to the problem of knowledge by combining elements of rationalism and empiricism into a hybrid system - the 'transcendental philosophy'<sup>21</sup> - in which the intellectual and the sensory share the epistemic responsibility, and both knowing subject and known object contribute to the epistemic act. Kant's syncretic system carries profound implications in terms of the understanding of the nature and limits of human knowledge. Probably the profoundest, which Kant derives from the analysis of human relation to space and time, is that man can only know appearances, not things in themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Hence, the timeframe and themes of Beckford's *Vathek* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* partly overlap: both were written in the early 1780s and released in 1787; both, albeit in different ways, explore the nature and extent of human knowledge through the dichotomous juxtaposition of a knowing-self and a to-be-known-other.

Here I will use the problem of knowledge as an interdisciplinary window of observation that brings into dialogue Beckford's fiction and Kant's thought. Drawing on textual evidence from *Vathek*'s first three editions - London, Lausanne, and Paris - and from Kant's first *Critique*, I will explore the ways in which knowledge is negotiated in terms of encounter with otherness, and mediated by the limits of human intellect and sensory perception as they intersect with the protean boundary between reality and appearance. Based on this analysis, I will suggest that Beckford's *Vathek* may be viewed as a literary instantiation of Kant's transcendental idealism, as they both deal a blow on the understanding of man's epistemic ability, which, be it by supernatural decree (as in *Vathek*) or by the intrinsic nature of man's own subjective condition (as in the *Critique*) is ultimately denied access to truth.

## II

Born on 1 October 1760,<sup>23</sup> and baptised at Fonthill, Wiltshire, on 6 January 1761,<sup>24</sup> William Thomas Beckford was the only legitimate son of William Beckford - alderman, MP, and twice Lord Mayor of London, as well as owner of extensive plantations in Jamaica and the West Indies - and his wife Maria Hamilton, daughter of the Hon. George Hamilton and granddaughter of the sixth earl of Abercorn.<sup>25</sup> His mother, a pietist of 'stern and uncompromising temper',<sup>26</sup> secured for him the best private education the country could provide - including the study of architecture under Sir William Chambers,<sup>27</sup> painting under Alexander Cozens,<sup>28</sup> and piano under Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart<sup>29</sup> - topped off with a Swiss finish on the shores of Lake Geneva, where the seventeen-year-old William became personally acquainted with Voltaire,<sup>30</sup> Charles Bonnet,<sup>31</sup> Horace-Bénédict de Saussure,<sup>32</sup> Germaine Necker,<sup>33</sup> and Jean Huber.<sup>34</sup> In 1781, Beckford came of age and into his vast inheritance,<sup>35</sup> marking the occasion with three-day-long festivities on 'aldermanic scale', attended by 'seven or eight thousand people' treated to 'Gargantuan hospitality',<sup>36</sup> fireworks displays, and a performance by Italian castrati Gaspare Pacchierotti, Giusto Tenducci, and Venanzio Rauzzini.<sup>37</sup> The revelries resumed at Christmas of the same year with a three-day saturnalia, for which Beckford hired painter and scenographer Philippe de Loutherbourg,<sup>38</sup> that he might turn Fonthill Splendens - Beckford's grand Palladian country house in Wiltshire - into the setting of an unprecedented phantasmagoria.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, Loutherbourg delivered on his promise: his stage, sound, and light effects transformed Fonthill into an extravagant orientalisised and eroticised universe that engaged all senses<sup>40</sup> into 'something [...] that eye ha[d] not seen or heart of man conceived'.<sup>41</sup> It is from this hedonistic and exotic extravaganza - some would call it an orgy<sup>42</sup> - held at Fonthill at Christmas 1781, as well as from the resulting interplay between perception and imagination - what the eye sees and what the mind conceives - that the germ of *Vathek* began to form.<sup>43</sup>

If it is safe to assume that Beckford began writing *Vathek* immediately after that infamous 'voluptuous festival' of Christmas 1781,<sup>44</sup> and that, despite his reported assertion that it took him 'three days and two nights'<sup>45</sup> - or even 'two days and a night'<sup>46</sup> -, he did not complete the manuscript until at least May 1782,<sup>47</sup> much controversy surrounds the circumstances of its publication. The records indicate that Beckford wrote *Vathek* in French, and eventually entrusted the manuscript to the Rev. Samuel Henley, a scholar of Arabian and Persian literature whom Beckford had met in 1781 (when Henley was assistant master at Harrow and tutor of Beck-

ford's cousins),<sup>48</sup> in order that he could translate it into English.<sup>49</sup> Beckford's letters to Henley chronicle the genesis of *Vathek* from its inception, in January 1782,<sup>50</sup> through the early developments,<sup>51</sup> to the later stages, when, having completed the main story, Beckford was working on the *Episodes*.<sup>52</sup> After two years of smooth exchange, during which Beckford, mostly from Switzerland, regularly enquired - and Henley, from England, provided regular updates - about the state of advancement of the translation,<sup>53</sup> the tone of the correspondence began to turn brisk, with Henley progressively claiming broader editorial authority on the manuscript (for example, he insisted on complementing the translation with a 'preliminary dissertation' and explanatory notes),<sup>54</sup> and Beckford responding to Henley's initiatives with firmer requests,<sup>55</sup> culminating with the crucial injunction that the English translation of *Vathek* should not be made public until the *Episodes* were finished, and the entire work could first be published in its original French version.<sup>56</sup> The situation, however, quickly degenerated: instructions were ignored, letters remained unanswered,<sup>57</sup> and, in the autumn 1786, as he was already in a state of despondency following his wife's death,<sup>58</sup> Beckford discovered with horror that Henley's English translation of *Vathek* had been surreptitiously released through the London publisher J. Johnson in early June.<sup>59</sup> To make matters worse, Henley had included a prefatory note presenting the work as deriving from an anonymous Arabian manuscript, which he (alone) had translated from the Arabic.<sup>60</sup> No mention was made of Beckford's name or authorship. Outraged by Henley's betrayal, Beckford hastened to vindicate authorship and originality: in November, he rushed out an edition of the (original) French text through the Lausanne publisher Isaac Hignou (who released it post-dated 1787),<sup>61</sup> and, in December, on his way back to London, left another version of the French text with the Paris publisher Poinçot (who eventually released it in August 1787).<sup>62</sup> Hence, by August 1787, Beckford's *Vathek* existed in three editions: an English translation purportedly from an anonymous Arabian text, with Henley's notes added and Beckford's authorship *de facto* suppressed; a first 'original' French version (without notes) with Beckford's preface denouncing Henley's fraud and reclaiming authorship; and a second 'original' French version, unprefaced, and accompanied by a French translation of a selection of Henley's notes.

### III

If it enraged Beckford, Henley's preface did not fool the critics. Early reviews (appeared before Henley's deceit was exposed by the Lausanne edi-

tion) show that the purported Arabian origin of the *Tale* was immediately perceived as problematic, suspicious, or outright fraudulent. *The European Magazine* was among the earliest to voice concerns: ‘The editor in the Preface to this work informs us, that it is translated from an unpublished Arabian Manuscript [...] How far the above assertion is founded in truth, it may not be easy [...] to determine’.<sup>63</sup> ‘We are told from the preface of this romance, that it is translated from a manuscript [...] collected in the East by a man of letters’, noted the *English Review*, but ‘in an age that has abounded so much with literary impostures, [...] we cannot see the propriety of such a palpable fiction. The general strain of the work, and the many allusions to modern authors, indicate the author to be an [*sic*] European’.<sup>64</sup> On a similar vein, the *Critical Review* called into question the authenticity of the work: ‘The present editor speaks of an unpublished manuscript, from which this story is translated; but the disguise of a translator of an invisible original, is now suspected’.<sup>65</sup> ‘There are in this work too many ideas and sentiments of European growth’, observed the *Monthly Review* ‘to admit of its passing for a translation of an Eastern manuscript’.<sup>66</sup> Importantly, since the work’s first appearance, critics seem to have scented in it not only a generally European origin, but also some distinctly French quality. ‘[W]e perceive, in many parts, the acute turns of modern composition, so easily learned in the school of Voltaire’,<sup>67</sup> and, again, ‘the author [...] has introduced a sufficient quantity of the marvellous [...] to enable the work to pass muster as an Arabian Tale [...] whether it be the produce of Arabia, or of the fertile banks of the Seine, (which a variety of circumstances induces us to believe it is)’.<sup>68</sup> It is therefore clear that reviewers suspected that, despite its Arabic claim and appearance, *Vathek*’s origin was actually French. But what are the ‘variety of circumstances’ that might have induced the reviewers to trace *Vathek*’s origins to the ‘fertile banks of the Seine’, as opposed to, for example, the banks of the Thames?

One potential cue is the presence of *faux amis* in Henley’s translation. Beckford’s ‘tourterelle’<sup>69</sup> is rendered by Henley as ‘turtle’<sup>70</sup> (as opposed to the correct English equivalent ‘dove’). Similarly, Beckford’s ‘enfermer à double tour’<sup>71</sup> becomes ‘shut [...] in the double tower’<sup>72</sup> (a far cry from the correct English equivalent of ‘shut [...] by double-locking the door’). Early commentators (e.g. Marcel May)<sup>73</sup> claimed that the Lausanne edition suffers from Anglicisms, and used this argument to advance the theory that the Lausanne text is Beckford’s (French) retranslation of Henley’s (English) translation. However, the ‘turtle’ and ‘double tower’ examples - both Gallicisms - suggest that a similar argument could be made in the opposite direction. A second and stronger cue may have

to do with the cultural connotations embedded in the French language itself, which articulate the encounter with otherness and the unknown through linguistically-inscribed cultural markers.

In the Europe of Beckford's time, marked by increasing circulation of people, goods, and ideas,<sup>74</sup> the French language had already secured a solid standing as the language of commercial and cultural exchange and diplomacy with the East. The European editions of the Koran were often translations from the French translation.<sup>75</sup> European readers had been introduced to the composite collection of oriental tales which would later become collectively known as the *Arabian Nights* through Antoine Galland's French edition - *Les Mille et une nuit[s]*, released in twelve volumes between 1704 and 1717 -, upon which virtually all the other European translations are based.<sup>76</sup> Much of the oriental lore that had reached the European public had done so through Barthélemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale* of 1697.<sup>77</sup> In Paris, the Collège de France and Collège Royal, where Galland himself had been a student and later professor of Arabic, had long offered instruction in Greek, Persian, Turkish, and other oriental languages.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, the *École des jeunes de langues*,<sup>79</sup> founded by Colbert in 1669 on the model of Venice's *Scuola dei giovani di lingua*,<sup>80</sup> had established a tradition of training for professional interpreters of Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, which, under a different name, still operates today.<sup>81</sup> In England, a timid initiative of this kind, the Greek College at Oxford, had lasted only six years.<sup>82</sup> The institutionalisation and professionalization of the function of interpreter (particularly of oriental languages) in seventeenth-century France had both reflected and created the conditions for increasing fascination, contact, and peaceful exchange - a sort of cultural alliance - with the East.<sup>83</sup> As a result, from the early modern period throughout the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire was France's most active commercial and diplomatic partner, and France was by far the first destination for oriental diplomatic missions to Europe,<sup>84</sup> which included Moroccan,<sup>85</sup> Tunisian,<sup>86</sup> Tripolitan,<sup>87</sup> Ottoman,<sup>88</sup> and Persian envoys,<sup>89</sup> often met in Toulon by professional interpreters despatched by France's Ministry of the Navy with instructions to accompany and provide linguistic brokerage for the ambassadors throughout their journey to Paris.<sup>90</sup>

Based on this tradition of contact, exchange, and mediation, it seems reasonable to presume that, in eighteenth-century Europe, France and the French language had come to acquire a privileged status as a linguistic and cultural conduit between Europe and the East. Compared to other European entities and identities, France and the French had achieved a

position of greater proximity - and therefore benefited from a privileged access - to the non-European, Oriental other. Crucially, this privileged access to the non-European other was negotiated within the boundaries of France's firmly European identity. Hence, the French language reached across Europe's geographic and cultural border to initiate the exciting but potentially perilous encounter with the non-European other without ever relinquishing the safety of its European self. Therefore, it is conceivable that, from an English perspective - e.g. from Beckford's - France and the French language connoted an intermediate geographic, linguistic, and cultural space between the reassuring familiarity of England and the fascinating but threatening unknown Orient. Through Beckford's use of the French language, *Vathek* is allowed to inhabit this intermediate space, across which the familiar-observer-English-self confronts the foreign-observed-Oriental-other from an intimate but non-threatening standpoint.

In *Vathek*, the Oriental connotation of the French language is amplified by a narrative that calls upon all the senses.<sup>91</sup> Its eponymous protagonist devotes himself solely to their gratification,<sup>92</sup> for which he orders five palaces to be built.<sup>93</sup> He plunges from excess to excess, being 'much addicted to women, and the pleasures of the table',<sup>94</sup> which he orders to be 'continually covered' with 'exquisite dainties', 'delicious wines' and 'the choicest cordials',<sup>95</sup> whilst 'perfumes [...are] kept perpetually burning',<sup>96</sup> and 'troops of young females'<sup>97</sup> are kept at hand. His voracious mouth is 'like a funnel',<sup>98</sup> whose 'avidity exceeds [the] zeal'<sup>99</sup> of his mother, wives, and many servants devoted to satisfying his desires. His fastidious capriciousness, endless gluttony<sup>100</sup> and extreme thirst make him 'bellow like a calf',<sup>101</sup> land on food like a vulture,<sup>102</sup> and 'lap up the water'<sup>103</sup> from the ground like a dog.<sup>104</sup> Whilst *Vathek* is orientalised, primitive, and excessive, the *Giaour* is even more so. Unlike *Vathek*, who is 'majestick',<sup>105</sup> the stranger is 'short and plump',<sup>106</sup> He comes from a 'wholly unknown',<sup>107</sup> place of 'penetrating odour[s]',<sup>108</sup> where even rarities are 'horrible'.<sup>109</sup> In fact, he himself is horrible, a 'horrible stranger',<sup>110</sup> with a 'horrible visage',<sup>111</sup> almost unwatchable.<sup>112</sup> His 'horrid mouth',<sup>113</sup> waters<sup>114</sup> with a parching thirst that, unlike *Vathek's*, which can be quenched with cold water,<sup>115</sup> can only be appeased with human blood.<sup>116</sup> He emits 'loud shouts of laughter',<sup>117</sup> exhibits 'horrid grimaces',<sup>118</sup> and his loquacity equals that of 'a hundred astrologers'.<sup>119</sup>

A crucial distinguishing trait between the excesses of the *Giaour* and those of *Vathek* is that, in the former, they are almost invariably of a sensorial nature - i.e. as impulses to satisfy corporeal needs -, whereas in the latter they also manifest themselves as intellectual desires, and particu-

larly as an urge to satisfy intellectual curiosity, create meaning, and seek knowledge. Vathek 'wishes to know every thing; even, sciences that do not exist'.<sup>120</sup> Driven by 'insatiable curiosity'<sup>121</sup> he builds an observation tower on which he spends entire days scrutinising the stars, but, despite having studied and acquired 'a great deal of knowledge', this is never sufficient to satisfy himself,<sup>122</sup> as he is 'of all men, the most curious'.<sup>123</sup> Vathek's inability to satisfy his own intellectual curiosity echoes his inability to satisfy his thirst, and creates a condition of hopelessness in which excess and abstinence are tied together and equally lethal.<sup>124</sup>

The contrast between Vathek's quest for combined sensual and intellectual satisfaction, and the Giaour's exclusively sensual demands is accentuated by the latter's being portrayed as dark skinned, with his forehead and body 'blacker than ebony'.<sup>125</sup> The notion of blackness,<sup>126</sup> which, from a Eurocentric perspective denotes ethnical otherness, at an epistemic level also connotes ignorance (i.e. darkness, lack of knowledge), and therefore casts the encounter with the other in terms of a confrontation with the unknown, emphasised by the Giaour's carrying 'such rarities as [Vathek] had never before seen; and of which he had no conception'.<sup>127</sup> Hence, the characterisation of the Giaour as the object of a narrative grammar in which Vathek is the temporary subject, couples the hideousness and primitiveness of the observed-other with the opening up of new possibilities for the observer-self, and the promise of knowledge of known unknowns ('rarities never before seen') and unknown unknowns ('of which he had no conception').

Thus, the vicious quality implied in Vathek's sensual excesses is tempered by virtuous traits, which include generosity<sup>128</sup> capacity for refined taste,<sup>129</sup> and, most importantly, an irrepressible urge to pursue knowledge.<sup>130</sup> The direct juxtaposition of the Giaour's thirst and Vathek's curiosity - 'neither my thirst, nor thy curiosity be satisfied'<sup>131</sup> - serves to stress the contrast between the former's primitive, animal, sense-centred need with the latter's civilised, intellectually oriented desire, resulting in two distinct degrees of otherness: the sensual full otherness of the Giaour and the more intellectualised intermediate otherness of Vathek. Whilst Vathek is initially cast as object-other, the arrival of the Giaour - more oriental, mysterious, primitive, and sensually excessive, hence, more other, than Vathek - causes him to appear under a less exotic light. This change in perspective, whereby the presence of a more extreme form of otherness - the other's other - turns the previous otherness into a more moderate and intermediate entity, reflects the reversal of perception experienced by Vathek, when, after the emboldening feeling - 'he was almost ready,

to adore himself<sup>132</sup> - of looking down upon Samarah from the top of his eleven-thousand-step-high tower, he turns his gaze to the sky only to realise the relative insignificance of his elevation.<sup>133</sup> Just as the European gaze others Vathek, Vathek's gaze others the Giaour, thus causing the European gaze to revise its judgement of distance: compared to the Giaour, Vathek is not so other after all.

Hence, the arbitration between fictionalised and historicised elements of the Orient in *Vathek's* content, coupled with the negotiation of authenticity in *Vathek's* various editions, whose titles and prefaces vacillate between conceding fictionality and claiming historical accuracy,<sup>134</sup> results in an emergent intermediate quality of westernised East and fictionalised truth, in which the original constituents are no longer discretely identifiable. Beckford's ambiguous characterisation of Vathek as indolent, impulsive, and sensual, but also as supremely committed to knowledge and truth seeking - at the cost of defying god's will - creates an intermediate identity integrating elements of Oriental-sensual-otherness and European-rational-selfness. The irreducibility of this emergent identity to its original constituents is epitomised by Vathek's irrepressible 'thirst for knowledge', in which the implicit distance that separates the observer-self from the observed-other collapses into a moment of identification of the sensory-empirical (thirst) with the intellectual-rational (knowledge).

The synthesis of the empirical and the rational is key to Kant's theory of knowledge as well, and part of my argument here is that the ways in which Beckford negotiates the tension between the European-self and the Oriental-other through the creation of intermediate and mediating geographic, linguistic, and cultural spaces resonates with the ways in which Kant reconciles the conflict between rationalism and empiricism by integrating human reason and experience into an intermediate, hybrid account of human cognition.

#### IV

Born on 22 April 1724 in Königsberg (modern-day Kaliningrad) into a Pietist family of modest means, Kant was educated and spent nearly his entire academic life at the local university, known as the Albertina, where he was exposed to a broad spectrum of thinkers, including Gottfried W. Leibniz and Christian Wolff - whose work was then very influential in German universities -, but also, under the influence of Martin Knutzen, to Isaac Newton and John Locke - whose work was relatively unpopular

in Germany, albeit prominent in Britain.<sup>135</sup> The philosophical landscape of eighteenth-century Europe was in effect split into two conflicting accounts of human knowledge:<sup>136</sup> rationalism conceived of knowledge as the result of deductive reasoning based on innate ideas, and largely independent from the encounter with external reality;<sup>137</sup> empiricism, conversely, rejected the notion of innate ideas, and conceived of knowledge as resulting from inductive reasoning applied to empirical observations and the sensory encounter with the external world.<sup>138</sup> Both accounts were partly unsatisfactory: the rationalist outlook delivered certainty at the cost of dogmatism; the empirical traded dogmatism for scepticism.<sup>139</sup> A further crucial difficulty was that of admitting of religion and morality in a world that Newton had shown to be governed by natural laws, i.e. entirely deterministic. Kant set himself the goal of reconciling rationalism and empiricism<sup>140</sup> whilst avoiding dogmatism and scepticism, and of showing that reason is in itself a secure basis to account for both morality and determinism.

Kant's work revolves around the examination of the 'possibility of metaphysics, as well as its sources, [...] extent and boundaries',<sup>141</sup> in order to assure human reason 'its lawful claims, and deliver it of all groundless assumptions'.<sup>142</sup> Within this framework, the *Critique* is divided into two main sections: the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Elements'<sup>143</sup> and the 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method',<sup>144</sup> the former being further divided into the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'<sup>145</sup> and the 'Transcendental Logic'.<sup>146</sup> Here I will focus my discussion on the Transcendental Aesthetic, as it is in this section that Kant lays out the fundamental principles with which aspects of Beckford's work resonate.

Any attempt to discuss Kant's transcendental theory is bound to start with three key distinctions: between intuition and concept, between *a priori* and *a posteriori* (or empirical), and between analytic and synthetic. Intuition (*Anschauung*) and concept (*Begriff*) are two forms of objective perception (*Bewußtseyn*) (i.e. they represent objects), and, along with sensation (*Empfindung*) - which is subjective (i.e. it does not represent any object) - are the fundamental components of knowledge.<sup>147</sup> Intuitions are sensory,<sup>148</sup> singular, and immediate representations of particular objects;<sup>149</sup> concepts, instead, are intellectual;<sup>150</sup> collective, and mediated representations of categories of objects,<sup>151</sup> i.e. they represent objects as belonging to a certain class (e.g. a table as a member of the class 'tables'). Both intuitions and concepts can be either empirical or *a priori*.<sup>152</sup> Kant holds that, although all knowledge 'undoubtedly begins with experience'<sup>153</sup> - to which he refers as the 'first product' of the understanding<sup>154</sup> -, it does not

necessarily arise from<sup>155</sup> nor is it limited to it.<sup>156</sup> Experience ‘tells us what is, but not that it must necessarily be so, and not otherwise’.<sup>157</sup> hence, experience gives ‘no true universality’.<sup>158</sup> Knowledge of universality and necessity must therefore originate independently of - hence logically prior to - experience.<sup>159</sup> Kant calls this experience-independent mode of knowledge ‘*a priori*’, and contrasts it with the empirically grounded mode termed ‘*a posteriori*’.<sup>160</sup> Thus *a posteriori* cognition derives from empirical sources and (sense-based) experience, which cannot generate judgements of universality and necessity;<sup>161</sup> conversely, *a priori* cognition, which instead is characterised by universality and necessity,<sup>162</sup> originates in reason and is ‘absolutely independent’<sup>163</sup> of (sense-based) experience. Importantly, Kant argues that, whilst *a priori* knowledge is independent of experience,<sup>164</sup> *a posteriori* knowledge is never only empirical, as experience is always infused with some degree of *a priori* cognition.<sup>165</sup> *A priori* cognition comes in two varieties: analytic and synthetic.<sup>166</sup> In analytic judgements, the predicate ‘does not add anything to the subject’<sup>167</sup> because it is already contained in it: for example, in the statement ‘all bodies are extended’,<sup>168</sup> the predicate ‘extended’ is already implied in - and therefore adds nothing to - the subject ‘bodies’. Conversely, in synthetic judgements the predicate is ‘ampliative’<sup>169</sup> in that it adds information that ‘no analysis could possibly extract from the subject’.<sup>170</sup> for example, in the statement ‘all bodies are heavy’,<sup>171</sup> the predicate ‘heavy’ is not contained in, it could never be extracted from - and therefore adds to - the subject ‘bodies’.<sup>172</sup>

The main question in Kant’s *Critique* is: ‘How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?’<sup>173</sup> The question is important because synthetic *a priori* knowledge is universal and necessary (as per its being *a priori*) yet ampliative, i.e. informative, and not merely definitional (as per its being synthetic). Kant tackles the problem by devising a system of concepts - which he calls ‘transcendental philosophy’ - through which he examines the possibility of *a priori* knowledge: ‘I call transcendental all cognition that is occupied not so much with objects, but rather with our concepts *a priori* of objects [i.e. concepts which exist logically prior to objects]. A system of such concepts would be called transcendental philosophy’.<sup>174</sup> He clarifies this notion in the corresponding passage of the *Critique*’s second edition, in which ‘concepts *a priori* of objects’ is replaced by ‘mode of cognition of objects, insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*’,<sup>175</sup> thereby stressing Kant’s aim to explore and establish the conditions of the possibility of cognition. Within this overall agenda, the aim of the Transcendental Aesthetic is to present a ‘science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility’,<sup>176</sup> and its main conclusion is that there are ‘two pure forms of sensible intuition, as

principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely, space and time'.<sup>177</sup>

## V

Space and time are key to critical philosophy, because Kant's argument about the nature of space and time suggests a conclusion about the nature of all knowledge, namely that it is impossible to know things in themselves. Kant asks: 'What are space and time? Are they real entities? Are they only determinations or relations of things, yet such that they would belong to things even if they were not intuited? Or are they such that they belong only to the form of intuition, thus to the subjective state of our mind?'<sup>178</sup> Kant tackles the question through a series of logical steps. As per scholarly tradition,<sup>179</sup> I will focus the discussion on space,<sup>180</sup> with the understanding that the conclusions apply to time as well.

Kant's first observation is that the representation of space is neither empirical nor conceptual, but rather intuitive. Kant contends that space cannot be an empirical concept (*empirischer Begriff*)<sup>181</sup> originating from outer experience, because for sensations to be referred to something outside oneself (i.e. in a different place) one has to have already a representation of space.<sup>182</sup> Hence spatial experiences are not the causes, but rather the consequences of an inner representation of space: they do not supply it: they presuppose and are made possible by it.<sup>183</sup> His second consideration is that, although it is possible to imagine space in the absence of objects (i.e. empty space), it is impossible to imagine the absence of space.<sup>184</sup> This indicates that space is a 'necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions'.<sup>185</sup> Based on this necessity and apriority - whereby space is 'an *a priori* representation, which necessarily underlies outer appearances'<sup>186</sup> - space must be regarded as a pure intuition (*reine Anschauung*)<sup>187</sup> (in the sense that it is represented as a one, unique and all-encompassing space that is logically prior to any discrete sub-regions one may imagine within it),<sup>188</sup> as well as 'the condition of the possibility of appearances'.<sup>189</sup> Kant elaborates these two points - i.e. the necessity and apriority of space - by invoking the so-called argument from geometry.

Geometrical knowledge is synthetic and *a priori* because it is necessary and universal (hence *a priori*) yet ampliative (hence synthetic), as the knowledge that two sides of a triangle together are greater than the third side can never be derived from the concepts of side or of triangle,<sup>190</sup> in the same way as no amount of analysis of the concepts '5', '+', and '7' will yield the concept of '12'.<sup>191</sup> Because it is necessary and universal - certain

beyond doubt (apodictically)<sup>192</sup> - this knowledge cannot derive from experience, because experience cannot deliver universality and necessity.<sup>193</sup> Geometrical knowledge is therefore an intuition: a synthetic *a priori* intuition. Since geometry is the mathematics of space, if knowledge of geometry is a synthetic *a priori* intuition, knowledge of space is too. Transcendental idealism argues that the *a priori* knowledge of the structure of space, and of the necessity of space for experience (i.e. as a condition of the possibility of experience) can be explained only by the supposition that space does not represent any property of - or relations between - things in themselves, i.e. as existing independently of the subjective conditions of intuition.<sup>194</sup> Rather, space is 'the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e. the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible'.<sup>195</sup> The representation of space is therefore relative to the human standpoint, and specifically to the subjective condition of human intuition.<sup>196</sup> Consequently, it can be ascribed to things only as they appear to the human subject, i.e. as they are 'objects of [human] sensibility',<sup>197</sup> as 'if we remove our own subject or even only the subjective state of the senses all the states and relations of the objects in space and time, and even space and time themselves, would disappear, and as appearances they cannot exist in themselves, but only in us. [...] We know nothing except our way of perceiving'.<sup>198</sup> This means that space is empirically real (in that it is objectively valid with respect to objects of sensibility, i.e. appearances) but transcendently ideal (in that it is a form of intuition, belonging to the subjective condition of human sensibility, and being meaningless with respect to things in themselves).<sup>199</sup> Kant's argument culminates in the assertion that 'nothing intuited in space is a thing in itself [*Sache an sich*], nor is space a form of things in themselves' rather 'objects in themselves are unknown to us, and [...] what we call outer objects are nothing but mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, and whose true correlate, i.e. the thing in itself [*Ding an sich selbst*], is not known, nor can be known, through these representations'.<sup>200</sup> Hence, all human intuition is 'nothing but the representation of appearance'.<sup>201</sup>

Summarising: humans represent the world as being in space. However, space is not a mind-independent thing<sup>202</sup> - or a property of or relation between things<sup>203</sup> - existing in a mind-independent world that would exist independently of one's knowledge of it. Rather, space is a form of intuition - along with time, the only pure form of intuition<sup>204</sup> - i.e. a structure that the knowing mind itself imposes upon the representation of the world, and through which the world is intuited. It follows that, when humans represent the world in space and time, they do not represent it as

it is in itself (since space and time are not things - or properties of things - in themselves), but rather as it appears, given the spatial and temporal structure imposed upon it by the knowing mind. Hence, space and time enable human knowledge but also set drastic boundaries to it, because the conditions that make it possible to represent the world as being in space and time also make it impossible to represent it otherwise (i.e. independently of - or as not being in - space and time). Specifically, they make it impossible to represent the world as it is in itself.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, the grand verdict of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic is that the world as it is in itself is out of bounds: all human knowledge is restricted to appearance, i.e. to the way in which things appear to, through, and given the limitations of - the human mind.

## VI

Kant's strategy to reconcile the conflict between rationalism and empiricism by embracing reason and the senses into a integrated account of human cognition resonates with Beckford's casting of the tension between subject-self and object-other through the creation of intermediate and mediating geographic, linguistic, and cultural spaces characterised by a hybrid form of otherness (e.g. Vathek, France and its language) - greater than the subject's (e.g. the English), lesser than the object's (e.g. the Giaour, the Orient and its language). The duplicitous nature of these mediating cultural and linguistic spaces both enables and restricts the possibilities of knowing the other, because the conditions that make the encounter possible on intermediate terms (e.g. a shared *lingua franca*), also dictate and impose those terms to the encounter. Beckford's use of the French language, with its connotation of diplomatic intermediation between the East and the West, encourages the encounter with otherness by drawing the English reader into a middle ground that affords - but also shapes and limits - the interaction with the unknown Oriental other. This dual enabling-limiting quality of Beckford's mediating instances echoes the enabling-limiting quality of Kant's *a priori* forms of intuition, namely space and time, which make it possible to experience the world spatially and temporally, and impossible to experience it in itself.

Kant's transcendental aesthetic's struggle with knowledge of things in themselves is Vathek's own struggle with knowledge of the elusive other, epitomised by the stranger-Giaour. Vathek attempts to master the Giaour by gathering all the information he can extract about and from him. He seeks out anyone who can provide 'intelligence of the stranger'.<sup>206</sup> When

the stranger speaks, Vathek is unsatisfied with hearing his voice, and wants him to manifest himself visibly: 'Where art thou? be present to my eyes',<sup>207</sup> conversely, when faced with his physical presence, he 'want[s] him to speak'.<sup>208</sup> But the Giaour won't comply, and instead withstands the gaze of the Caliph's 'terrible eye' silently and without the 'slightest emotion'.<sup>209</sup> By withholding his speech and withstanding Vathek's gaze, the Giaour resists being read as a text.<sup>210</sup> This resistance is reiterated in the cryptic messages on his sabres, whose meaning Vathek attempts - both personally<sup>211</sup> and through the enlistment of interpreters<sup>212</sup> - but repeatedly fails to extract because the characters of the script keep changing after every decoding attempt.<sup>213</sup> By constantly changing, the language of the sabres refuses to perform its role as a vehicle for communication. On the contrary, here language stands in the way of meaning. The constantly changing characters, whose meaning, even when deciphered, cannot be fixed, but rather is 'effaced with the act of reading',<sup>214</sup> embody the tension between creation and destruction inherent in Kant's notion of a knowing mind that half-observes, half-creates the object of knowledge by imposing upon it its own *a priori* structure: what creates the sensible world (i.e. what makes knowledge of the sensible world possible) destroys the world in itself (i.e. makes its knowledge by man impossible - although the world in itself may continue its existence in inscrutable ways). Hence, Vathek's attempts to know (i.e. to understand and master) the other - by making him speak, manifest himself, and surrender the code of his language - fail on all fronts. By returning the gaze and withholding his speech, the object-other resists both being destroyed and being created by the subject's epistemic effort, and refuses to yield and be reduced to meaning. It is noteworthy that, although Vathek is unable to 'decypher [*sic*] the characters',<sup>215</sup> he is nevertheless able to perceive 'that they, every day, changed'.<sup>216</sup> The juxtaposition of deciphering and perceiving - the former connoting an intellectually oriented high-level cognitive activity, the latter a low-level sense-based perception -, and Vathek's ability to handle the latter but not the former, illustrates the central tenet of Kant's transcendental idealism, namely that man's knowledge cannot reach beyond the sensible realm of appearances.

Hence, both Beckford's *Vathek* and Kant's first *Critique* address the problem of knowledge and reach the castigating conclusion that man cannot access truth. Both develop their case by casting knowledge in terms of encounter with otherness - be it by juxtaposing the European self with the Oriental-other (as in *Vathek*), or the knowing subject with the represented object (as in the *Critique*) -, as it is mediated by the human faculties, and intersected by the boundary between reality and appearance. Beckford's

intermediate and mediating geographic, linguistic, and cultural spaces (e.g. France and the French language combine oriental connotations and squarely European identity, which places them not only geographically but also culturally and conceptually mid-way between England and the Orient; Vathek's character traits combine sensual excesses and intellectual yearnings, which place him on an intermediate degree of otherness, mid-way between the European self and the Giaour's greater otherness) enable the encounter with the unknown other, but also dictate its modalities and limitations: the other is therefore experienced not as it is in itself but rather as seen through the filter of these mediating instances, through which the encounter is at all possible. This coupling of and tension between enabling and limiting qualities also undergirds Kant's transcendental idealism, as the hybrid integration of reason and sense-based experience delivers certainty about the possibilities of human knowledge, but also spells out its modalities and its inherent and unavoidable limitations. Beckford's mediating spaces, whereby the subject-European-self experiences the object-Oriental-other not as it is in itself, but rather as it manifests itself as its identity interacts with, is filtered through, and is partly constructed by the subject-European-self, echo the main tenet of Kant's transcendental idealism: man experiences the world not as it is in itself, but rather as it appears to the knowing mind. Despite Beckford's and Kant's moral exhortations seem, on the surface, opposite to each other - the former condemning,<sup>217</sup> the latter preconising (*sapere aude!*)<sup>218</sup> knowledge seeking - they ultimately converge in the shared conclusion that the possibilities of human knowledge are severely restricted, and that, whether it be by divine proscription (as per Beckford's account) or by human limitations (as per Kant's account) man cannot access truth.

## VII

*Vathek* saw the light at the peak of the Enlightenment, an age dominated by a conception of reality as governed by natural laws, and of man as capable of knowing those laws. In this conception, subject and object of knowledge are clearly distinct entities - the former being a rational observer endowed with cognitive faculties, the latter an external reality whose existence is independent from (and, in principle, fully knowable by) the observer -, and the epistemic act is key to human progress. In this context, it is unsurprising that contemporary critics should condemn Beckford's choice to encase *Vathek's* narrative within a moral framework that rewards ignorance and punishes curiosity: 'The chief defect of the work arises from the moral [...] Indolence and childishness are represent-

ed as the source of happiness; while ambition and the desire of knowledge, so laudable and meritorious when properly directed, are painted in odious colours, and punished as crimes'.<sup>219</sup> It is also understandable that similar concerns be raised *vis-à-vis* the appointment of a supernatural and omnipotent legislator to impose limits on human intellectual quests, thus shattering the idea of the self as an agent through the enforcement of a 'supreme and malignant "otherness" which cannot be escaped or transcended'.<sup>220</sup> Held up to the light of the Age of Reason, *Vathek's* moral and fatalistic frame, coupled with its orientalist setting, invokes notions of backwardness and vice.

If, however, Beckford's tale is observed through the prism of Kant's transcendental system, itself a product of the Age of Reason, an alternative interpretation emerges.

Kant's integration of rational and empirical elements - by which reason and the senses are both epistemically required for knowledge to obtain - challenges the notion of a clear boundary between the subject-observer-self and the object-observed-other, as the ways in which the observed object manifests itself sensorily to the knowing subject includes contributions from the knowing subject itself. Kant's theory also introduces severe limits to the possibilities of human understanding of the outside world. These limits, by which man's epistemic reach upon reality is restricted to its appearance, are inherent to man's own nature, as they result from the imposition of the structure and limitation of the human cognitive apparatus upon the reality which it seeks to apprehend.

Read from a Kantian perspective, *Vathek's* intermediate identities, mediating linguistic and cultural spaces, and hybridised historical and imaginary material, become literary expressions of the *Critique's* defiance of the border between the knowing subject and its object of knowledge, and between reality - i.e. the world as it is in itself - and appearance - i.e. the world as it appears to the human observer. Crucially, *Vathek's* representation of the limits of human knowledge as dictated by an external, supernatural deity becomes a fictionalised transposition of the *Critique's* notion of the limits of human knowledge as imposed by man's own physiology. What in *Vathek* is forbidden by god, in the *Critique* is forbidden by the human condition. Hence, seen through a Kantian lens, Beckford's seemingly fatalistic verdict on man's quest for knowledge turns into a sophisticated allegory of the Enlightenment, as the appeal to the supernatural (e.g. the will of god) as an attempt to justify, explain, and escape from the limitations of human nature, ultimately leads straight back to it.

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### Notes

- 1 See: 'Caliph Vathek | This day is Published, in Small 8vo. Price 4s. | The History of the Caliph Vathek: | An Arabian Tale from an unpublished Manuscript | with Notes Critical and Explanatory. | Printed [f]or J. Johnson, No 72, St. Pauls Church-Yard. | A few copies, on large paper, price 7s. 6d. in boards'. *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (London, England), Wednesday, 7 June 1786, Issue 5323.
- 2 *An Arabian Tale from an unpublished manuscript: with notes critical and explanatory* (London: J. Johnson, 1786). Hereafter: [Lo].
- 3 [Loiii].
- 4 *Catalogue de la bibliothèque cantonale vaudoise, Volume I: Généralités* (Lausanne: J.S. Blanchard aîné, 1853), p. 80, n. 1569.
- 5 *Dictionnaire des journaux: 1600-1789, sous la direction de Jean Sgard* (Paris: Universitas, 1991), Vol. 2, No. 661.
- 6 The review was first brought to scholarly attention by Beckford collector Rowland Burden-Muller. See: John Carter, 'The Lausanne Edition of Beckford's *Vathek*', *The Library*, Fourth Series, Vol. XVII, No. 4 (1937), pp. 369-394, (p. 392).
- 7 Kenneth W. Graham, 'Introduction', in William Beckford, *Vathek; with, The episodes of Vathek*, ed. by Kenneth W. Graham (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), pp. 17-41, (p. 22).
- 8 *Vathek* (Lausanne: Isaac Hignou & Co., 1787). Hereafter: [L].
- 9 'L'Ouvrage que nous présentons au public a été composé en François, par M. Beckford' [Liii].
- 10 'L'indiscrétion d'un homme de Lettres à qui le manuscrit avoit été confié, il y a trois ans, en a fait connoître la traduction angloise avant la publication de l'original. Le Traducteur a même pris sur lui d'avancer, dans sa préface, que Vathek étoit traduit de l'Arabe'. [Liii].
- 11 'J'ai lu, par ordre de Monseigneur le Garde-des-Sceaux, un manuscrit qui a pour titre: Vathek, Roman. C'est une petite brochure écrite dans le goût des Contes Arabes'. Blin de Sainmore, 'Approbation du Censeur Royal', reprinted in *The History of the Caliph Vathek, with an introduction and notes by E. Denison Ross, with a portrait*

from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds (London: Methuen & Co., 1901), p. xxii.

12 The precise date of publication is unclear, but it is believed to fall between the end of July ('it is clear that this edition did not appear till the end of July', Carter, 'The Lausanne Edition of Beckford's *Vathek*', p. 392) and 6 August ('I have received a letter from Mrs Hervey and read to my great joy that [...] my *Vathek* is at length published in Paris', Beckford's letter dated 6 August 1787, reprinted in Guy Chapman, 'Introduction', in *Vathek, with the Episodes of Vathek: by William Beckford of Fonthill. Edited with a Historical Introduction and Notes by Guy Chapman. In Two Volumes with Illustrations*. Volume I (Cambridge: Constable and Co. & Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), p. xxii). Further indication for an early August date is that the book received the *Privilège du Roi* on 22 August, and was registered with the Chambre Royale & Syndicale des Libraires & Imprimeurs de Paris on 4 September (for the full text of the *Privilège* and of the Registration see *Le Vathek de Beckford, Réimprimé sur l'Édition française originale avec préface par Stéphane Mallarmé* (Paris: Adolphe Labitte, 1876), unnumbered pages following Mallarmé's preface).

13 *Vathek, Conte Arabe* (Paris: Poinçot, 1787). Hereafter [P].

14 Kant's philosophical labour during the so-called 'silent decade' (1770-1780) is chronicled by his correspondence with medical student Marcus Herz. See Paul Guyer, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-18.

15 The other two elements are the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Here I will focus on the *Critique of Pure Reason* on the ground of its chronological and thematic relevance to *Vathek*.

16 Immanuel Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft* (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781). Hereafter [A].

17 Immanuel Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft*, 2nd ed. (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1787). Hereafter [B].

18 For an overview of the dispute, see Peter Markie, 'Rationalism vs. Empiricism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta. [<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>], accessed on 22 August 2015].

19 See, for example, René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (Leiden: Ian Maire, 1637).

20 See, for example, John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: T. Basset, 1690).

21 [A] *passim*.

22 [A], part I.

23 The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* gives Beckford's birth date as 29 September 1760 (Anita McConnell, 'Beckford, William Thomas (1760–1844)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1905>] [accessed 20 Aug 2015]), whilst Beckford's biographer Cyrus Redding gives Beckford's birth date

as ‘September 29th, 1759’ (Cyrus Redding, *Memoirs of William Beckford of Fonthill, Author of “Vathek”, in two volumes*. Vol. I (London: Charles J. Skeet: 1859), p. 71). Both appear to be incorrect, as notices in the public records indicate that the birth took place on 1 October 1760 (see, for example, entry ‘Oct. 1. Lady of Alderman Beckford [was delivered] of a son’, under the list of births in the *London Magazine, or, Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer*, Vol. 29 (October 1760), p. 556).

24 See previous footnote.

25 McConnell, ‘Beckford’.

26 Chapman, ‘Memoir’, p. xvi.

27 Anglo-Swedish architect whose renown is linked to London’s Somerset House. John Harris, ‘Chambers, Sir William (1722–1796)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, May 2009, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5083> [accessed 30 Aug 2015]. He is erroneously referred to as ‘Sir John Chambers’ by Chapman, ‘Memoir’, p. xv.

28 Drawing master at Eton from 1763 to 1768. Chapman, ‘Memoir’, p. xv.

29 Matthew O. Grenby, ‘Beckford, William Thomas’, in *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760-1850*, ed. by Christopher John Murray. Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis, 2004), pp. 63-64, (p. 64).

30 See ‘Voltaire has asked me to spend two or three Days at Ferney [...]’, Beckford’s letter to his sister Elizabeth Hervey dated 19 January 1778, reprinted in Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill (Author of “Vathek”)* (London: William Heinemann, 1910), pp. 47-51, (p. 49).

31 Naturalist and philosopher, developer of the ‘catastrophe theory of evolution’. ‘Charles Bonnet’, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015), <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Bonnet>> [accessed 30 August 2015]. References to Beckford’s acquaintance with Bonnet are found in Redding, *Memoirs*, pp. 130-131.

32 Philosopher, physicist, and geologist, author of *Voyages dans les Alpes* (Neuchâtel: Samuel Fauche, 1779-1796), and inventor of the hygrometer. ‘Horace Bénédict de Saussure’, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015), <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Horace-Benedict-de-Saussure>> [accessed 30 August 2015]. Beckford’s acquaintance with Saussure is mentioned in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 26.

33 Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baronne de Staël-Holstein, later known as Madame de Staël. ‘Germaine de Staël’, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015), <<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Germaine-de-Stael>> [accessed 30 August 2015]. Beckford is said to have recalled: ‘I knew Mdlle. Neckar [*sic*] at Coppet, a lovely place near Geneva [...]’. Undated statement, quoted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 26.

34 Painter and polymath, for whom Beckford displayed intense admiration: ‘The way of living at Geneva [...] is very improving. The Societies are composed of so many clever people [...] In the first rank of these, shines my friend Huber [...] You must live

with Huber, to be able to discern his real perfection'. Beckford's letter to his sister Elizabeth Hervey dated 19 January 1778, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 47-51, (pp. 49 and 51). References to Huber recur throughout Beckford's later correspondence as well, and are extensively discussed in André Parreaux, 'Les "peintres extraordinaires" de Beckford sont-ils une satire des écoles flamande et hollandaise?', *Revue du Nord*, Vol. 43 (January-March 1961), n. 169, pp. 15-42. For further analysis of Huber's connections with Beckford and other members of the British expatriate community in Switzerland, see Garry Apgar, 'An Anglo-Swiss Connection in the Age of Voltaire: Jean Huber's British Friends and Relations', in *British-French Exchanges in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Kathleen Hardesty Doig and Dorothy Medlin (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 274-287, *passim*.

35 Beckford's father died in 1770, when William was ten years old (Richard B. Sheridan, 'Beckford, William (bap. 1709, d. 1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1903>> [accessed 31 Aug 2015]). The inheritance included sugar plantations and thousands of slaves in Jamaica (the exact figures are reported in 'William Thomas Beckford', in *Legacies of British Slave-ownership database*, 2015 <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/22232>> [accessed on multiple dates in July 2015]), properties in London and Wiltshire, as well as the rich collections housed in them (McConnell, 'Beckford'). The magnitude of Beckford's inheritance is reflected in Byron's reference to Vathek as 'England's wealthiest son' (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt*. Second edn (London: John Murray, 1812), canto I, stanza XXII, p. 19).

36 Chapman, 'Memoir', p. xxiv.

37 'Pacchierotti, Tenducci, and Rauzzini, sang like superior beings'. Beckford's letter to Lady Hamilton dated 14 October 1781, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 121-123, (p. 121). The episode is also referred to in Helen Berry, *The Castrato and His Wife* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 69.

38 De Louthembourg, chief scenographer at London's Drury Lane theatre, was renowned for his invention of the Eidophusikon, hailed by contemporary commentators as a 'new species of painting [...] one of the most remarkable inventions in the arts, and one of the most valuable, that ever was made' (see 'A View of the Eidophusikon', *The European Magazine, and London Review*, Vol. 1 (Mar 1782), pp. 180-182, (p. 180)). For a detailed description of the Eidophusikon, see Richard D. Altick, 'The Eidophusikon', in *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 117-127.

39 'Every preparation is going forwards that our much admired and admiring Louthembourg [...] in all the wildness of his fervid imagination can suggest or contrive – to give our favourite apartments the strangeness and novelty of a fairy world'. Beckford's letter to Louisa Beckford dated December 1781, reprinted in Guy Chapman, *Beckford* (London: Cape, 1937), p. 99.

40 In his correspondence, Beckford reminisced about 'the delightful days of F[onthill]'

when 'we used to recline, like voluptuous Orientals on silken beds in the glow of transparent curtains', whilst 'soft perfume of roses [...] seemed to float in the air', and the 'affecting sound of the musick' filled the hall. Letter to Louisa Beckford dated Rome, 30 June 1782, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 158-159, (p. 158).

41 Beckford's letter to Louisa Beckford dated December 1781, reprinted in Chapman, *Beckford*, p. 99.

42 André Parreaux, *William Beckford, auteur de "Vathek" (1760-1844), Etude de la création littéraire* (Paris: A.G. Nizet, 1960), pp. 211-212.

43 'I composed *Vathek* [...] thoroughly imbued with all that passed at Fonthill'. Quoted in Roger H. Lonsdale, 'Introduction', in William Beckford, *Vathek* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. vii-xxxi, (p. xii).

44 'I composed *Vathek* immediately upon my return [from that] voluptuous festival'. Quoted in Lonsdale, 'Introduction', p. xii.

45 'I wrote *Vathek* [...] at one sitting, and in French. It cost me three days and two nights of hard labour'. Redding, *Memoirs*, p. 243.

46 'The fit I laboured under when I wrote *Vathek* lasted two days and a night'. Beckford's statement quoted in Lonsdale, 'Introduction', p. xiii.

47 Melville suggests that it took Beckford twelve months to finish the manuscript (Lewis Melville, 'Introduction', in William Beckford, *The Episodes of Vathek*, translated by Sir Frank T. Marzials with an Introduction by Lewis Melville (London: Stephen Swift & Co., 1912), pp. vii-xxxi, (p. x)); Chapman argues that it took him until November (Chapman, 'Introduction', p. xvi). Beckford's correspondence to Samuel Henley - e.g. 'My Arabian tales go on prodigiously' (letter dated 25 April 1782), and 'My Caliph advances on his journey to Persepolis' (letter dated 1 May 1782) (both letters reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 126 and 127, respectively) - suggests that *Vathek* was still in the making at least until late spring.

48 Melville, 'Introduction', p. viii.

49 'You proposed [...] to translate *Vathek* [...]'. Beckford's letter to Samuel Henley dated Cologne (Geneva), 18 November 1783, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 126.

50 'The spirit has moved me this Eve, and [...] I have given way to fancies and inspirations. What will be the consequence of this mood I am not bold enough to determine'. Beckford's letter to the Rev. Samuel Henley, dated 21 January 1782, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 126.

51 'My Arabian tales go on prodigiously' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated 25 April 1782), and 'My Caliph advances on his journey to Persepolis' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated 1 May 1782). Both letters reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 126 and 127, respectively.

52 'I go on bravely with the episodes of *Vathek* [*sic*], and hope in a few weeks to wind up his adventures'. Beckford's letter to Henley dated 13 January 1783, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 127.

53 E.g. 'I rejoice very much at the progress you have made in the translation' (Beck-

ford's letter to Henley dated Geneva, 29 December 1783), and 'Have you finished Vathek?' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated Portman Sq., 6 May 1784) (both letters reprinted in Melville, 'Introduction', p. xi), as well as 'I long eagerly to read your translation' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated 19 May 1784), 'Have you got a fair copy of your translation?' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated 14 October 1784), and 'Your translation has all the spirit of the Caliphes [*sic*] and their Daemons. - I long for the continuation' (Beckford's letter to Henley dated 26 February 1785) (latter three excerpts reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 128).

54 'I think, to exhibit Vathek *properly* in English - there should be some account given of the original and translation in a preface - then should follow a preliminary dissertation on the Fable and Machinery - and to the Story itself, should be subjoined notes to illustrate the costume: otherwise a very considerable part of its merit must be lost to 999 readers of a thousand'. Henley's letter to Beckford, dated Rendlesham, 26 April 1785, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 130.

55 'As I have several things of importance to say to you, I must beg the favour of seeing you here *immediately* [...]'. Beckford's letter to Henley dated 11 June 1785, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 131.

56 'The publication of Vathek must be suspended at least another year. I would not have him on any account precede the French edition. [...] You must be sensible that, notwithstanding my eagerness to see Vathek in print, I cannot sacrifice the French edition to my impatience. [...] I must repeat, therefore, my desire that you will not give your translation to the world till the original has made its appearance'. Beckford's letter to Henley dated Château de la Tour (Vevey), 9 February 1786, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, pp. 134-135.

57 '[...] it appears you had sent the MSS. for my inspection. If you have, Heaven knows its fate; certainly it has not reached my hands any more than a letter to which you allude as immediately preceding your last. I beg you will clear up these doubts [...]'. Beckford's letter to Henley dated 1 August 1786, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 136.

58 'My spirits and rest are broken [...] The slow fever [...] has been preying upon me [...] the dejection of mind into which I am plunged [...]'. Beckford's letter to Henley dated 1 August 1786, reprinted in Melville, *Life and Letters*, p. 136.

59 [Lo].

60 [Loiii].

61 [L].

62 [P].

63 *The European Magazine, and London Review*, Vol. 10 (August 1786), pp. 102-104, (p. 102).

64 *English Review*, Vol. 8 (September 1786), Art. IV, pp. 180-184, (p. 181).

65 *The Critical Review*, Vol. 62 (July 1786), pp. 37-42, (p. 38).

66 *Monthly Review*, Vol. 76 (May 1787), Art. 41, p. 450.

67 *The Critical Review*, Vol. 62 (July 1786), pp. 37-42, (p. 38).

- 68 *The European Magazine, and London Review*, Vol. 10 (August 1786), pp. 102-104. The similarity between the style in *Vathek* and in Voltaire's work has continued to be invoked by reviewers ever since. See, for example, George Saintsbury's description of *Vathek* as 'an Arabian tale [...] into which Anthony Hamilton and Voltaire had infused western sarcasm'. George Saintsbury, 'The Growth of the Later Novel', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, Vol. XI: The Period of the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914, reprinted in 1970), pp. 285-310, (p. 290).
- 69 [L23/P20].
- 70 [Lo24].
- 71 [L123/P99].
- 72 [Lo128].
- 73 May, *La jeunesse de William Beckford*.
- 74 See, for example, Urs Bitterli, 'Types of Cultural Encounter: Contacts, Collisions and Relationships', in *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 20-51.
- 75 E.g. the German Koran of 1688 claimed to be a translation from the Dutch translation of the French translation. Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in *Cultural Translation in early Modern Europe*, ed. by Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7-38, (p. 27).
- 76 Although note that a manuscript of a direct English translation was discovered in the Beckford Papers. See Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud, 'A Manuscript Translation of the "Arabian Nights" in the Beckford Papers', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, Vol. 7 (1976), pp. 7-23.
- 77 D'Herbelot died in 1695. The *Bibliothèque* was completed by Galland.
- 78 Mary Hossain, 'The Employment and Training of Interpreters in Arabic and Turkish under Louis XIV: France', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* Vol. 14, No. 1 (1 January 1992), pp. 235-246, (p. 240).
- 79 Marie de Testa and Antoine Gautier, 'De l'établissement des Pères capucins à Constantinople à la fondation de l'École des jeunes de langues (1626-1669)', in *Drogmans et diplomates européens auprès de la Porte ottomane* (Istanbul: ISIS, 2003), pp. 43-46.
- 80 Francesca Lucchetta, 'La scuola dei "giovani di lingua" veneti nei secoli XVI e XVII', *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* Vol. 7 (1989), pp. 19-40.
- 81 The École was subsequently annexed to the Collège de Clermont (modern-day Lycée Louis-le-Grand) and eventually absorbed by the École spéciale des Langues orientales vivantes (modern-day Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales). Gustave Dupont-Ferrier, *Du Collège de Clermont au Lycée Louis-le-Grand (1563-1920): la vie quotidienne d'un collège parisien pendant plus de trois cent cinquante ans, Volume 3* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1925), pp. 391 and ff..
- 82 ED Tappe, 'The Greek College at Oxford, 1699-1705', *Oxoniensia* Vol. 19 (1954), pp. 92-111.

83 See on this topic Géraud Poumarède, 'Les envoyés ottomans à la cour de France: d'une présence controversée à l'exaltation d'une alliance (xv<sup>e</sup>-xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles)', in *Turcs et turqueries, XVI-XVIIIe siècles*, ed. by Lucien Bély (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009), pp. 63-95; Christine Isom-Verhaaren, *Allies with the Infidel: The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

84 Mathieu Grenet, 'Muslim Missions to Early Modern France, c.1610-c.1780: Notes for a Social History of Cross-Cultural Diplomacy', *Journal of Early Modern History* Vol. 19, No. 2-3 (2015), pp. 223-244, (p. 230). For an comparative overview of the different diplomatic ceremonials across Europe see Jean Rousset de Missy, *Le cérémonial diplomatique des cours de l'Europe, ou Collection des actes, mémoires et relations [...]. Recueilli en partie par Mr Du Mont. Mis en ordre et considérablement augmenté par Mr. Rousset*. Second Volume (Amsterdam: Janssons, Wetstein & Smith, & Z. Chatelain; and The Hague: P. de Hondt & J. Neaulme, 1739).

85 E.g. Ahmad ibn Qasim al-Hajari's mission to Paris in 1611 (see Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain, 1500-1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 210-211), and Abdallah bin Aisha's embassy to Paris in 1699 (see Nabil I. Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians: Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century*. First English Translations. Edited and translated by Nabil Matar (New York, NY, and London: Routledge, 2003), pp. xviii and 197).

86 E.g. the Tunisian envoys to Toulon in 1743. See Jean-Baptiste Hélin de Fiennes, *Une mission tunisienne à Paris en 1743, racontée par De Fiennes Fils, secrétaire-interprète du Roi: Relation inédite publiée par Pierre Grandchamp*, ed. by Pierre Grandchamp (Tunis: J. Aloccio, 1931), and Christian Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'autre: consuls français au Maghreb (1700-1840)* (Geneva: Droz, 2002), p. 536.

87 E.g. the 1788 envoy mentioned in *Voyage de F. Hornemann, dans l'Afrique septentrionale*. [...] *Traduit de l'anglais et augmenté de notes par L. Langlès*. Second Part (Paris: Dentu, 1803), footnote on p. 451.

88 E.g. Müteferrika Süleyman Ağa's embassy to Versailles in 1669. See William Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped The World* (London: Grove Atlantic, 2008), p. 247.

89 E.g. Mohammad Reza Beg's controversial (for not being properly attired) ambassadorial visit to Versailles in 1715. See Susan Mokheri, 'Finding Common Ground Between Europe and Asia: Understanding and Conflict During the Persian Embassy to France in 1715', *Journal of Early Modern History* Vol. 16, No. 1 (2012), pp. 53-80.

90 Grenet, 'Muslim Missions', p. 240.

91 E.g. 'the delight of the eye' [Lo3/L3/P5], 'the nightingale sang' [Lo24/L23/P19], 'the murmurs of the Four Fountains' [Lo44/L42/P33], 'the subtle and potent odour, which the torches exhaled' [Lo125/L120/P97], the scent of 'harebells, and pansies [...] jonquils, hyacinths, and carnations; with every other perfume that impregnates the air' [Lo24/L20/P19], 'the most exquisite dainties [...] the most delicious wines, and the

- choicest cordials' [Lo2-3/L3/P4].  
 92 [Lo69/L65/P52].  
 93 [Lo2/L2/P4].  
 94 [Lo2/L2/P3-4].  
 95 [Lo2-3/L3/P4].  
 96 [Lo4/L4/P5].  
 97 [Lo5/L4/P5-6].  
 98 [Lo22/L21/P18].  
 99 [Lo25/L23-24/P20].  
 100 'Put an end to your gluttony' [Lo63/L60/P49], is his mother's reproach.  
 101 [Lo89/L84].  
 102 'Le Calife foudit sur tout cela [i.e. food] comme un vautour' [P47].  
 103 [Lo25/L23-24/P20].  
 104 'Why assumest thou the function of a dog?' [Lo25/L24/P20].  
 105 [Lo1/L1/P1].  
 106 [Lo32/L30/P25].  
 107 [Lo26/L25/P21].  
 108 'subtle and penetrating odour' [Lo55] / 'odeur subtile & pénétrante' [L52] / 'odeur suffocante' [P41].  
 109 'horrible rarities' [Lo55].  
 110 [Lo23/L22/P19].  
 111 [Lo9/L9/P9].  
 112 'so hideous, that the very guards who arrested him, were forced to shut their eyes' [Lo9/L9/P9].  
 113 [Lo26/L25/P21].  
 114 'perceivest thou not how my mouth waters?' [Lo46] / 'Ne vois-tu pas que l'eau m'en vient à la bouche?' [L43].  
 115 'cold water, which calmed him more than every other' [Lo22/L21].  
 116 'Know that I am parched with thirst [...] I require the blood of fifty of the most beautiful sons' [Lo41/L38/P31].  
 117 [Lo32/L30/P25].  
 118 [Lo32/L30/P25].  
 119 [Lo28-29/L27/P23].  
 120 [Lo5/L5/P6].  
 121 [Lo40/L37].  
 122 [Lo5/L5/P6].  
 123 [Lo4].  
 124 'Perceivest thou not, that I may perish by drinking to excess, no less than by a total abstinence?' [Lo25-26/L24/P21].  
 125 [Lo10/L10/P10].  
 126 'Vathek beheld a vast black chasm, [...] before which stood the Indian, still blacker' [Lo40] / 'ouverture noire [...] l'Indien, plus noir encore' [L38]. Also: 'his body, was

blacker than ebony' [Lo10] / 'plus noir que l'ébène' [L10/P10].

127 [Lo9/L9/P9].

128 'his generosity was unbounded; and his indulgences, unrestrained' [Lo2/L2/P4].

129 He delights in the performance of 'the most skilful musicians, and admired poets' [Lo3/L3/P4], and at the sight of 'rarities collected from every corner of the earth' [Lo3/L3/P5].

130 'He wished to know every thing' [Lo5/L5/P6].

131 [Lo41/L38/P31].

132 [Lo7/L7/P7].

133 'The idea, which such an elevation inspired, of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him [...] till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars, as high above him as they appeared, when he stood on the surface of the earth' [Lo7-8/L7/P7-8].

134 The Lausanne edition's minimalistic title and half-title - both simply 'Vathek' - contrast with the clearly fictional quality of the Paris counterparts - both 'Conte Arabe' - and with the ambiguous wording of the London edition, which announces a 'Tale' in the title, but a 'History' in the half-title. The tension between tale-conte and history is played out in the preface as well, where Henley's cryptic statement in the London edition refers to the text as a 'Story' (hence, no longer 'History', as in its half-title), whose anonymous 'Original' has been written in 'Arabick' and 'collected in the East' by an unnamed 'Man of Letters', to which Beckford's Lausanne edition rebuts by reclaiming the text's original authorship and French language.

135 For biographical information see Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

136 For an overview of the dispute, see Markie, 'Rationalism vs. Empiricism'.

137 See, for example, René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (Leiden: Ian Maire, 1637).

138 See, for example, John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: T. Basset, 1690).

139 See, 'those who observe a scientific method have the choice to proceed either dogmatically or sceptically' ('entweder dogmatisch oder sceptisch' [A856/B884]).

140 It was Kant himself who, in 'The History of Pure Reason' ('Die Geschichte der reinen Vernunft' [A852-855/B880-883]) categorised his predecessors into 'sensual-' and 'intellectual philosophers' ('Sensual- [...] Intellectualphilosophen' [A853/B881]), calling the former 'empiricists' ('Empiristen' [A854/B882]), represented by Locke; the latter 'noologists' ('Noologisten' [A854/B882]) (i.e. rationalists), represented by Leibniz.

141 'die Entscheidung der Möglichkeit oder Unmöglichkeit einer Metaphysik überhaupt und die Bestimmung so wol der Quellen, als des Umfanges und der Gränzen' [Axi].

142 'gerechten Ansprüchen sichere, dagegen aber alle grundlose Anmassungen [...] abfertigen könne' [Axi-xii].

143 'Transscendentale Elementarlehre' [A17/B31].

- 144 'Transscendentale Methodenlehre' [A705/B733].
- 145 'Transscendentale Aesthetik' [A19/B33].
- 146 'Transscendentale Logik' [A50/B74].
- 147 [A320/B376-377].
- 148 'Vermittelst der Sinnlichkeit also werden uns Gegenstände gegeben, und sie allein liefert uns Anschauungen' [A19/B33].
- 149 'unmittelbar', 'einzeln' [A320/B377].
- 150 'von ihm [i.e. dem Verstand] entspringen Begriffe' [A19/B33].
- 151 'mittelbar', 'Mehrinals' [A320/B377].
- 152 [A20/B34].
- 153 'Daß alle unsere Erkenntniß mit der Erfahrung anfangt, daran ist gar kein Zweifel' [B1].
- 154 'Erfahrung ist [...] das erste Product, welches unser Verstand hervorbringt' [A1].
- 155 '[...] alle unsere Erkenntniß [...] entspringt [...] nicht eben alle aus der Erfahrung' [B1].
- 156 'Erfahrung [...] ist [...] nicht das einzige Feld, darinn sich unser Verstand einschränken läßt' [A1].
- 157 '[Erfahrung] sagt uns zwar, was da sey, aber nicht, daß es nothwendiger Weise, so und nicht anders, seyn müsse' [A1]. See also [B3] (in slightly different wording).
- 158 'keine wahre Allgemeinheit' [A1].
- 159 'Solche allgemeine Erkenntnisse nun, die zugleich den Character der innern Nothwendigkeit haben, müssen, von der Erfahrung unabhängig, vor sich selbst klar und gewis seyn' [A2].
- 160 'man nennt sie daher Erkenntnisse *a priori*: da im Gegentheile das, was lediglich von der Erfahrung erborgt ist, wie man sich ausdrückt, nur *a posteriori*, oder empirisch erkannt wird.' [A2]. See also [B2-3].
- 161 '[...] Behauptungen wahre Allgemeinheit und strenge Nothwendigkeit [...] dergleichen die bloß empirische Erkenntniß nicht liefern kan' [A2].
- 162 'Nothwendigkeit und strenge Allgemeinheit sind [...] sichere Kennzeichen einer Erkenntniß *a priori*' [B4].
- 163 'schlechterdings [...] unabhängig' [B3].
- 164 'wenn man aus den ersteren auch alles wegschaft, was den Sinnen angehört, so bleiben dennoch gewisse ursprüngliche Begriffe und aus ihnen erzeugte Urtheile übrig' [A2].
- 165 'selbst unter unsere Erfahrungen sich Erkenntnisse mengen, die ihren Ursprung *a priori* haben müssen' [A2].
- 166 See [A6 ff. /B10 ff.].
- 167 'durch das Prädicat nichts zum Begriff des Subjects hinzuthun' [A7/B11].
- 168 'alle Körper sind ausgedehnt' [A7/B11].
- 169 'Erweiterungs-Urtheile' [A7/B11].
- 170 'durch keine Zergliederung desselben hätte können herausgezogen werden' [A7/B11].

171 ‘alle Körper sind schwer’ [A7/B11].

172 I personally find Kant’s example ambiguous, as the concept of body seems to imply both extension and weight. However, the validity of Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic (ampliative) propositions remains.

173 ‘Wie sind synthetisch Urtheile *a priori* möglich?’ [B19].

174 ‘Ich nenne alle Erkenntniß transcendentale, die sich nicht so wohl mit Gegenständen, sondern mit unsern Begriffen *a priori* von Gegenständen überhaupt beschäftigt. Ein System solcher Begriffe würde Transscendentale Philosophie heißen’ [A11-12].

175 ‘Erkenntnißart von Gegenständen, so fern diese *a priori* möglich seyn soll’ [B25].

176 ‘Eine Wissenschaft von allen Principien der Sinnlichkeit *a priori*’ [A21/B35].

For an analysis of the Transcendental Aesthetic see Lisa Shabel, ‘The Transcendental Aesthetic’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. by Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 93-117.

177 ‘es zwey reine Formen sinnlicher Anschauung, als Principien der Erkenntniß *a priori* gebe, nemlich, Raum und Zeit’ [A22/B36].

178 ‘Was sind nun Raum und Zeit? Sind es wirkliche Wesen? Sind es zwar nur Bestimmungen, oder auch Verhältnisse der Dinge, aber doch solche, welche ihnen auch an sich zukommen würden, wenn sie auch nicht angeschaut würden, oder sind sie solche, die nur an der Form der Anschauung allein haften, und mithin an der subjectiven Beschaffenheit unseres Gemüths?’ [A23/B37-38].

179 See for example Andrew Janiak, ‘Kant’s Views on Space and Time’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/kant-spacetime/>> [accessed on multiple dates June-September 2015]. Although Kant was not ‘any less committed to the transcendental ideality of time than to that of space’, in the Transcendental Aesthetic the theory of time is ‘derivative’ on the theory of space (Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 345.

180 ‘Von dem Raume’ [A22ff./B37ff.].

181 [A23/B38].

182 See ‘der Raum ist kein empirischer Begriff, der von äusseren Erfahrungen abgezogen worden. Denn damit gewisse Empfindungen auf etwas ausser mich bezogen werden, (d. i. auf etwas in einem andern Orte des Raumes, als darinnen ich mich befinde,) imgleichen damit ich sie als ausser einander, mithin nicht blos verschieden, sondern als in verschiedenen Orten vorstellen könne, dazu muß die Vorstellung des Raumes schon zum Grunde liegen’ [A23/B38].

183 ‘Demnach kan die Vorstellung des Raumes nicht aus den Verhältnissen der äussern Erscheinung durch Erfahrung erborgt seyn, sondern diese äussere Erfahrung ist selbst nur durch gedachte Vorstellung allererst möglich’ [A23/B38].

184 ‘Man kan sich niemals eine Vorstellung davon machen, daß kein Raum sey, ob man sich gleich ganz wohl denken kan, daß keine Gegenstände darin angetroffen werden’ [A24/B38].

185 ‘Der Raum ist eine nothwendige Vorstellung, *a priori*, die allen äusseren Anschau-

ungen zum Grunde liegt' [A23-24/B38].

186 'eine Vorstellung *a priori*, die nothwendiger Weise äusseren Erscheinungen zum Grunde liegt' [A24/B39].

187 [A25/B39].

188 'erstlich kan man sich nur einen einigen Raum vorstellen, und wenn man von vielen Räumen redet, so verstehet man darunter nur Theile eines und desselben alleinigen Raumes. Diese Theile können auch nicht vor dem einigen allbefassenden Raume gleichsam als dessen Bestandtheile, (daraus seine Zusammensetzung möglich sey) vorhergehen, sondern nur in ihm gedacht werden' [A25/B39].

189 'die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Erscheinungen' [A24/B39].

190 'daß in einem Triangel zwey Seiten zusammen größer seyn, als die dritte, niemals aus allgemeinen Begriffen von Linie und Triangel [...]' [A25/B39].

191 See [A164-5/B15, 205].

192 '[...] sondern aus der Anschauung und zwar *a priori* mit apodictischer Gewißheit abgeleitet' [A25/B39].

193 '[...] Behauptungen wahre Allgemeinheit und strenge Nothwendigkeit [...] dergleichen die bloß empirische Erkenntniß nicht liefern kan' [A2].

194 'Der Raum stellet gar keine Eigenschaft irgend einiger Dinge an sich, oder sie in ihrem Verhältniß auf einander vor, d. i. keine Bestimmung derselben, die an Gegenständen selbst haftete, und welche bliebe, wenn man auch von allen subiectiven Bedingungen der Anschauung abstrahirte. Denn weder absolute, noch relative Bestimmungen können vor dem Daseyn der Dinge, welchen sie zukommen, mithin nicht *a priori* angeschaut werden' [A26/B42].

195 'die Form aller Erscheinungen äusserer Sinne, d. i. die subiective Bedingung der Sinnlichkeit, unter der allein uns äussere Anschauung möglich ist' [A26/B42].

196 See [A26/B42].

197 'Gegenstände der Sinnlichkeit' [A27/B43].

198 'wenn wir unser Subiect oder auch nur die subiective Beschaffenheit der Sinne überhaupt aufheben, alle die Beschaffenheit, alle Verhältnisse der Objecte im Raum und Zeit, ia selbst Raum und Zeit verschwinden würden, und als Erscheinungen nicht an sich selbst, sondern nur in uns existiren können. Was es vor eine Bewandniß mit den Gegenständen an sich und abgesondert von aller dieser Receptivität unserer Sinnlichkeit haben möge, bleibt uns gänzlich unbekant. Wir kennen nichts, als unsere Art, sie wahrzunehmen' [A42/B59-60].

199 See [A28/B44].

200 'nichts, was im Raume angeschaut wird, eine Sache an sich, noch daß der Raum eine Form der Dinge sey, die ihnen etwa an sich selbst eigen wäre, sondern [...] uns die Gegenstände an sich gar nicht bekant seyn, und, was wir äussere Gegenstände nennen, nichts anders als blosser Vorstellungen unserer Sinnlichkeit seyn, deren Form der Raum ist, deren wahres Correlatum aber, d. i. das Ding an sich selbst, dadurch gar nicht erkant wird, noch erkant werden kan' [A30/B45].

201 'alle unsre Anschauung nichts als die Vorstellung von Erscheinung sey' [A42/B59].

202 As the ‘mathematical researcher’ (i.e. the Newtonians) would have it. See [A39-40/B56-57], and Andrew Janiak, ‘Kant’s Views on Space and Time’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/kant-spacetime/>> [accessed on multiple dates June-September 2015].

203 As the ‘metaphysicians of nature’ (i.e. the Leibnizians) would have it. See [A39-40/B56-57].

204 [A41/B58].

205 A key consequence is that it is impossible to know that the physical laws known to govern things in space and time also apply to things in themselves, as these, including God, cannot be known. Hence, by assuming ignorance of things in themselves, Kant manages to reconcile Newtonian determinism with morality. In his words: ‘I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith’ (‘Ich mußte also das Wissen aufheben, um zum Glauben Platz zu bekommen’ [Bxxx]). On this point see also Desmond Hogan, ‘How to Know Unknowable Things in Themselves’, *Noûs* Vol. 43, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 49-63.

206 [Lo17/L16/P15].

207 [Lo40/L37/P30].

208 [Lo12/L12/P11]. This point is reiterated when Vathek, ‘not satisfied with seeing, wished also to hear Nouronihar’ [Lo113/L108/P87].

209 [Lo11/L11/P11].

210 On this point see also Eric Meyer, “‘I Know Thee not, I Loathe Thy Race’”: Romantic Orientalism in the Eye of the Other’, *ELH*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 657-699, especially p. 666.

211 ‘Vathek [...] could not decypher [*sic*] the characters himself’ [Lo21/L20/P18].

212 ‘Read again to me what you have read already’ [Lo19/L18/P17].

213 ‘these sabres hold another language to-day, from that they yesterday held’ [Lo20/L19/P17].

214 Meyer, “‘I Know Thee not’”, p. 667.

215 [Lo21/L20/P18].

216 [Lo21/L20/P18].

217 ‘Woe to the rash mortal who seeks to know that, of which he should remain ignorant; and to undertake that, which surpasseth his power!’ [Lo20/L19/P17], and ‘Such was, and should be, the punishment of unrestrained passions, and atrocious deeds! Such is, and such should be, the chastisement of blind ambition, that would transgress those bounds which the Creator hath prescribed to human knowledge; and by aiming at discoveries reserved for pure Intelligence, acquire that infatuated pride, which perceives not the condition appointed to man, is, to be ignorant and humble’ [Lo210/L203/P165].

218 Immanuel Kant, ‘Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?’ *Berlinische Monatschrift*, Vol. 12 (December 1784), pp. 481-494, (p. 481).

219 *English Review*, Vol. 8 (September 1786), Art. IV, pp. 180-184, (p. 181).

220 Frederick S. Frank, 'The Gothic *Vathek*: The Problem of Genre Resolved', in *Vathek and the Escape from Time. Bicentenary Revaluations*, ed. by Kenneth Wayne Graham (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1990), pp. 157-172, (p. 169).