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Edward Terry and the Calvinist Geography of India

This article examines the distinctly Calvinist understanding of India underlying Edward Terry's 1655 *Voyage to East-India*. It argues that Calvinism provided Terry with a set of assumptions that helped translate the raw data of his own experiences in India into culturally useful geographical knowledge accessible to his non-travelling readers. For Calvin, creation is an expression of the creator, one that is precisely ordered and uniquely accommodated to human cognition; as such, it is a finely crafted rhetorical statement, full of tropes and figures intended to be read and glossed. Terry builds upon this conception of the world to construct a portrait of India that construes it as part of a divinely authored argument *a contrariis* writ large across the breadth of creation, a figure juxtaposed against England in order to amplify—according to good rhetorical practice—its respective virtues and vices.

Cet article analyse l'approche calviniste de l'Inde sous-jacente au livre d'Edward Terry A Voyage to East-India (1655). Il montre que le calvinisme a fourni à Terry un ensemble d'hypothèses qui ont contribué à transformer les données brutes de son expérience de l'Inde en connaissance géographique, culturellement utile, accessible à ses lecteurs non-voyageurs. Pour Calvin, la création est l'expression du Créateur, précisément ordonnée et appropriée de manière singulière à la cognition humaine ; en tant que telle, c'est une déclaration rhétorique finement élaborée, constituée de tropes et de figures destinés à être lus et glosés. Terry s'appuie sur cette conception du monde pour construire un portrait de l'Inde conçue comme partie intégrante d'un raisonnement divin a contrariis qui traverse la création, une figure lue face à l'Angleterre pour amplifier, en bonne rhétorique, ses vertus et ses vices.

In the dedicatory epistle to his 1577 *History of Travayle*, the English poet and editor of travelogues Richard Willes painted an enthusiastic portrait of the new vogue for geography. "I dare be bold to say," he wrote, "that generally all Christians, Jewes, Turkes, Moores, Infidels, & Barbares be this day in love with Geographie" (Willes sig. (.).2^r.(.).3^v).¹ Certainly, he continued, the skilful traveller furnishes spatial intelligence

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University in the University of Toronto. In quoting

that affords the careful geographer the means to help merchants find more efficient, less perilous routes to the world's most valuable markets (Willes sig. (.)4^r). But Willes did not dedicate his work to a merchant—he dedicated it to a woman: the Countess of Bedford. It is true that the countess's husband had invested £100 in Martin Frobisher's second voyage which had sailed two months earlier (Sainsbury n^o. 33). But Willes did not think that she would read his book to learn about the rare and valuable Chinese exotica with which the admiral would doubtless soon be returning. Rather, as he wrote, he hoped she might find the variety and novelty of the things he related to be a pleasant diversion (Willes sig. 2^v). Indeed, he suggested, the countess should have her page read selections to her and her husband on their long trips to the West Country (Willes sig. 2^v).

This matters because while merchants, mariners and mathematicians were working through a mutually correcting dynamic to refine and organise observations about the world and its inhabitants, Willes's dedication implies that the meaning and significance of this data and its representation were not straightforward issues outside this narrow community of practice. The empiricism at the heart of this process made travel—and travel literature—an important component in the broader reform of natural philosophy in the period. But through the first half of the seventeenth century, at least, like the Countess of Bedford, most English people who read geographies or travelogues—or who decorated their public spaces with maps—never aspired to travel to Asia or the New World. Samuel Purchas—Richard Hakluyt's continuator—is perhaps an extreme example. Although he compiled, translated, edited and epitomised hundreds of geographical texts and other ephemera over the course of his career, he proudly boasted that “I which have writte[n] so much of travellers & travels, never travelled 200 miles from *Thaxted* in *Essex*, where I was borne” (Purchas 1625, 1:74). What interested Purchas and, he thought, his fellow book-travellers—as he termed them—was not the relative location of places. Rather, it was the ends to which information about the organisation of space might be deployed: natural philosophers might observe the effects of various climates on the human constitution; those interested in statecraft might learn from the laws and customs of other kingdoms; divines might contemplate more fully the works of God (Purchas 1613, sig. ¶ 3^v-4^r). The accounts he proffered, Purchas stated in his *Hakluytus Posthumus*, were intended as “individual and sensible materials (as it were Stones, Bricks and Mortar) to those universall Speculators for their Theoreticall structures” (Purchas 1625, 1: sig. ¶ 4^r-4^v). Far from the confused, unfocused and pedantic compiler his later critics would accuse him of being, Purchas understood that different communi-

early modern texts, I have silently changed “u”s to “v”s and “i”s to “j”s to conform to modern usage.

ties of practice sought different types of geographical data and deployed them to markedly different ends. Not everyone who read geographies and travelogues did so with the eye of a navigator or a merchant.

What this means, of course, is that when it comes to writing about the earth and its inhabitants, the landscape of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries was overrun by a veritable Babel of intellectual sects. Each observed and construed the world under a different set of premises, organising the resultant data according to their own distinctive cultural, social and intellectual priorities, and to their own particular ends. Thus, what was deemed “useful” geographical knowledge, the way to winnow and weigh it from the testimony of travellers, and the form deemed most appropriate for its presentation were contested issues (Schleck 55). In this sense, as Joan-Pau Rubiés has argued so compellingly, travelogues ought to be treated as a species of intellectual history, their structure, mode of representation and inherent tensions a function of the broader politics of knowledge production and the epistemological debates of the day (Rubiés x-xvii).

Edward Terry’s 1655 *Voyage to East-India* is a case in point. To the extent that Terry’s work has piqued the interest of modern scholars, it has generally done so only insofar as it is antecedent to the formation of the orientalist and colonialist discourses that come to characterise European constructions of the East in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Jyotsna Singh, keen—in her words—to find the “originary moment of colonialism,” Terry’s empirical witnessing is part of the grand European “desire to *know*, *possess*, and *master* the other” signalling colonial intent (Singh 203). Likewise, Pramod Nayar sees Terry as constructing a “proto-colonial imaginary” which helped him “encode the desire for empire” in India, even if this may not have been wholly apparent to him when he wrote (Nayar 2-5). Such critiques are ahistorical, ignore the realities of the balance of power between the English and the Mughal Empire, and imply that Terry is groping imperfectly towards some Platonic form of colonialism that would only come to be realised more than a century later.² Instead, as I will argue, Terry’s work stands at an important juncture in the history of travel writing, for it is deeply engaged in the wider debate over the methodological appropriateness of systematic empirical observation for the construction of disengaged and verifiable truth. Acutely aware not just of the limits of unbridled empiricism as a tool for constructing reliable knowledge but of its profound danger, Terry chose instead to ground his account upon a decidedly Calvinist understanding of the world. In Terry’s hands, India becomes not a proto-colonialist fantasy, but a figure within the rhetoric of creation, part of an

2. The historiography around travel literature has progressed significantly since Singh and Nayar wrote. However, that concerning Terry has not. Corinne Lefèvre (2008) stands out as a marked and important exception to this Saidian reading of Terry.

argument *a contrariis* constructed to amplify the virtues and blessings of the Christian West in general and England in particular.

Edward Terry and India

Terry travelled to India in 1616 as one of two chaplains hired by the East India Company to minister to the crew of that year's fleet. 26-years old, Terry was a bright and intellectually curious man. He had completed his studies at Christ Church College, Oxford, just eighteen months earlier, where he distinguished himself through his "incredible industry" in philosophy and logic, graduating Master of Arts (Wood 3: 505-507). At this early stage of his career, he had already developed a reputation as a sober, serious and polite fellow, often to be seen dressed simply in a long, black cassock (Terry 218).³

The voyage to the Company's factory at Surat in the Gulf of Cambay took six-and-a-half months. Upon arrival in late September, the fleet's admiral received word from Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to Jahangir, the Mughal emperor, that his chaplain had died. Roe, unwilling to "abide in this place destitute of the comfort of Gods word and heavenly sacraments," or to "live the life of an atheist," needed a replacement. "[V]erry desirous to staye in the countrye," Terry volunteered (Foster 216).

Terry set off to join the ambassador in January and for the next eighteen months he and Roe followed the progression of the Mughal's *leskar* (i.e. the royal court) through parts of what are the modern Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, as the ambassador tried fruitlessly to negotiate some sort of commercial treaty that might shore up English interests in the region. Roe's efforts ultimately came to nought and, after an horrendous, disease-stricken summer in Ahmadabad in 1618, Terry and the ambassador travelled back to Surat for the voyage home.

Once back in England, Terry returned to Christ Church where he began to write an account of his experiences, the first redaction of which he presented in manuscript to Charles, the Prince of Wales, in 1622. What the prince thought of the text is not recorded but at some point over the next three years, the prince's copy of Terry's account came into Purchas's possession, who included it under the title, "A Relation of a Voyage to the Eastern India," in *Hakluytus Posthumus*. In this form, the text runs to eighteen folio pages, divided into four sections. The first is a simple narrative of remarkable things Terry observed during his outward voyage. The second, entitled "Description of the Mogols Empire" is a narrative description of a map drawn by William Baffin in 1619 of northern India (Baldwin 1767-68)—which is neither reproduced nor acknowledged in the text—with cursory observations about the whole of Jahangir's demesne, including places west of the Indus and east of Agra

3. All references to Terry are to his *A Voyage to East-India* unless otherwise indicated.

of which Terry had no direct experience. The third and fourth sections deal with the people of India, their natural complexion and culture, and with their religion, respectively.

There Terry's contribution to English knowledge of India might have ended had not the original presentation copy of the manuscript somehow come into the possession of two London printers in the early 1650s. Keen to capitalise on the public's taste for foreign exotica, the two men pressed Terry to be allowed to reprint it. Terry claimed to have had no desire to set forth his work at this late stage, some 36 years after his return. As he was acutely aware, his observations were out of date, making any edition now appear "brought forth as *an untimely birth*, or as a thing *born out of due time*" (Terry sig. A3^r). But he acquiesced on condition that he be allowed to revise and expand the original. Running to some 547 octavo pages, the result was the far weightier, more considered, more philosophical *Voyage to East-India*.

In this ultimate guise, the work was divided into three unequal portions, each of which was premised upon different explanatory criteria and organised towards a different final cause. The first and shortest of these is a greatly expanded account of Terry's outward voyage, intended, he said, to allow his book-travelling readers to experience vicariously all that he endured while avoiding the attendant bodily and spiritual risks of actual travel (Terry 1-78, esp. 57). The section is strictly historical in that it is arranged chronologically according to Terry's movement across space, and falls squarely into the *peregrinatio* tradition.

By contrast, the second section is an attempt to represent something of the essential nature of Indian space and its relationship to its occupants (Terry 79-451). Borrowing from the *ars apodemica* tradition and the early seventeenth-century literature about what and how to observe, here Terry stripped much of the temporally contingent trivia from his reminiscences about the region, re-organising the resultant data synchronously according to various *loci communes*. Thus, along with a reordered version of the written map from his earlier version of his travels, he added 30 subsections describing such things as: the nature of Indian soil and climate; the area's commodities and discommodities; Indian military might; the buildings, villages, towns and cities of the region; the morality, martial and funeral customs of the inhabitants, and the ingenuity of its artisans. The effect is to give his temporally specific, subjective experience the appearance of generalised, objective conclusions, implying that the data, divorced from context, communicates something of the essence of India along with the people, animals, plants and minerals proper to it (Stagl 203). The section concludes with an assessment of the Mughal himself, his style of governance and his application of power.

The third and final part of the work is quite different. Entitled, "The Corollarie and Conclusion" and running to nearly 100 pages, it reflects upon the *significance* of India through the lens of faith, understanding Indians as things to be examined and read not in their own right, but

as signifiers of higher truths (Terry 452-545). For Terry, this is the meat of the whole text. As he pointed out in the preface, travel is not about indulging idle curiosity. It is not about amassing random points of spatial trivia to no end, for knowledge without direction leads nowhere. Rather, it is about contemplating the wonder and majesty of God as it is expressed in his creation. He sums up this notion on the title page of the work through a popular adage: “*Qui Nescit orare, discat navigare*”—he who does not know how to pray ought to learn to sail.⁴ His friend Robert Creswell put matters slightly differently in one of the book’s fairly tortuous dedicatory poems: “*wisdom’s the noblest ware that Travel brings*” (Terry A8^v).

Given the tenor of the times, travel writing seemed to Terry to be a form of literary production particularly suited to presenting lessons of divinity. The English laity, he complained, had become a spiritually lazy bunch, more interested in reading romances and frivolous stories than in studying scripture (Terry sig. A4^r-A4^v and 462-64). During sermons, they showed little interest in solid, substantial truths, gravitating instead to that “which is delightfull, and pleasant to feed the phancie, with Oylie passages [...] [that go] through the head, and stay not” (Terry 462-63).

In this respect, travelogues seem a tailor-made antidote, for as the great first-century rhetorical theorist Quintilian stressed in his *Institutio oratoria*, a well-constructed text should not just persuade its audience of an argument, but should do so in an engaging fashion. To do this, it should be embellished with colourful examples that add vividness and interest to the work (Quintilian VIII.iii.66-70). According to the sixteenth-century English rhetorician Thomas Wilson, an author should even consider adding accounts of strange things or terrible wonders to a text, for such ornamentation calls up the spirits of the audience or “cheare[s] their heavie looks” when their attention wanes (Wilson fol. 58^r).

Terry was certainly well-versed in rhetorical theory and practice. He would have received a thorough training in rhetoric as a young boy at Rochester School, where he would have learned various oratorical figures and compositional skills by reading and analysing a diverse assortment of classical texts. He would have continued honing these skills at Oxford by studying classical rhetorical manuals such as Cicero’s *De oratore*, the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintilian—indeed, he was still consulting Quintilian when he wrote his *Voyage*, for he cites him favourably at one point (Terry 471, recte 523). And as a cleric, he would have made good use of these rhetorical skills regularly, writing and delivering sermons (Mack 32-46, 51-55, 253-78).

4. This is a common adage in the seventeenth century. It was used by Purchas as a gloss to Psalm 107.23-24 in his marginal comments introducing Terry’s original account (Purchas 1625, 1464 recte 1463). Terry himself used the adage on the title page of his 1649 sermon (Terry, 1649, sig. A1^r).

It is hardly surprising that he would also have drawn upon this training in crafting his *Voyage*. Indeed, he implied as much in the work's preface, making clear that he intended to use the wonders and exotica he described as textual ornaments to move his readers to the contemplation of creation and its creator. The work, he says,

may, (if it reach my aim) contain matter for instruction and use, as well as for relation and novelty. So that they, who fly from a Sermon, and will not touch sound, and wholesom, and excellent treatises in Divinity, may happily (if God so please) be taken before they are aware, and overcome by some Divine truths that lie scattered up and down in manie places of this Narrative (Terry sig. A3^v-A4^r).

According to his "ancient friend" Henry Ashwood, as a wise traveller and historian, Terry was "groping after God with natures light" (Terry sig. A8^r).

Terry's *Voyage*, then, is not a straightforward travelogue. It has a point and a purpose, and had been consciously constructed to meet the spiritual needs of its readers, interspersed with enough novelty and exotica to keep them engaged. It is a conscious product of the rhetorician's art, with evidence selected and inferences drawn to advance its overall argument.

The Instruction and Use

Certainly, Terry's time in India had given him ample evidence to advance his argument. The problem was, this evidence was ambiguous and its significance far from clear. Terry was well aware of the premium some of his putative readers placed upon knowledge garnered through direct observation. As he pointed out, one of the main values of his text was that he had actually seen for himself the things he described (Terry sig. A2^v).⁵ But by 1655, the utility of his observations was not obvious. Many of the specific things he had seen would now be quite different. All the specific people, plants and animals he had seen would have changed unrecognisably—all would have aged; many would have perished—leaving him to extrapolate general conclusions about the nature of the place from particular and partial sense data that was itself 36 years out of date, and so no longer a reflection of contemporary Indian reality. As philosophers dating back to Aristotle had argued, an intellectual edifice built upon such an insecure foundation could have no pretence to

5. This was not entirely true. As noted above, he accepted uncritically the written map that introduces the second section. He also reproduces some information gleaned from the English traveller Thomas Coryate whom he met and with whom he lodged in Mandu, and he seems to have silently borrowed from Henry Lord's 1630 *Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies* for some of his material on Hinduism.

being knowledge; in no sense could such conclusions be deemed *useful* (Aristotle 1027a20-21).

But even were Terry to treat his observations of Indian things as temporally contingent manifestations of the essential nature of the place—historical instances of the operation of general causal principles—it was still difficult to see how they ought to be construed, for India appeared to be the most blessed part of the world: it was full of all manner of strange and valuable flora and fauna; its people were intrinsically healthy with the majority living as long as the most long-lived English person; its cities were vast, full of merchants trading goods from across the East; and it was a source for enormous quantities of gold and precious stones. Thus, Terry ventured, the Great Mughal—with his vast empire and enormous resources—was likely not only the greatest and richest king of the East, but of the whole world (Terry 91), a fact that caused some to wonder whether the region was actually the location of the terrestrial paradise (Terry 120). Yet India's inhabitants were Muslims and rank idolaters. God, it seemed, had bestowed tremendous benefits upon people who were not his own (Terry sig. A6^r).

But for Terry, this apparent tension between land and people showed precisely how unreliable the testimony of the eye could be. It underscored the fact that external form ought never to be construed as diagnostic of reality. We should not wonder at this, he argued, for John 7.24 cautions that “there is very much deceit [*sic*] in appearance” (Terry 287). After all, even the devil can spout scripture (Terry 263; cf. Matt. 4.6). “Poysoned Pills,” Terry wrote, “can finde *Gold* to cover them; because the *worse* that any thing is, the better *shew* it desires to make” (Terry 264). But it is not just that appearances are sometimes manipulated to make what is inherently bad seem better. There was also the problem of 2 Cor. 11.14, which conceded, in Terry's words, that “*Satan can transform himselfe into an Angel of light*, and seeme holy to doe mischief” (Terry 264). In a single swipe, the status of all data garnered from sensory observation is hopelessly compromised, for, as Terry understood, it can never be clear whether an observation of a thing is what it appears, or whether its appearance is a devilish delusion. Terry made this point in greater detail in a sermon he delivered in August 1646:

Take this for granted before hand, that there is very much deceit in appearance, if not, our blessed Saviour had spared that precept in the seventh Chapter of John v.24 *not to judge of things according to appearance, but to Judge righteous Judgement*. Because Satan that he may the more certainly deceive, *can transforme himselfe into an Angel of light*. (Terry 1646, sig. A4^r)

The human eye, then, is no guide to secure knowledge, for one can never know if its testimony is reliable.

For Terry, India is a case in point. In basing their understanding of the world—and by extension, their society, beliefs and culture—upon inferences drawn from uncertain observations of unstable natural things,

Indians confuse appearance with reality, and so have led themselves into error. That this is the case can be seen from an examination of Indian morality. Even though they have never had access to the letter of scripture, it was clear to Terry that most Indians have some sense of justice and morality, recognising, albeit imperfectly, aspects of the fundamental laws of God. Both Muslims and Hindus are temperate people, he noted, preferring to “choose to dye, like the *Mother* and her *seven Sons* mentioned in the second of *Machabees* and seventh Chapter, then eat or drink any thing their Law forbids them” (Terry 248). They take only meat and drink as the law of nature—not appetite—allows, thereby fulfilling Solomon’s rule in Proverbs 23.2, “*in keeping a knife to their throats*, that they may not transgress in taking too much of the Creature”; in so doing, they demonstrate that they hate gluttony, and esteem drunkenness a form of madness (Terry 248-49). Perhaps most commendable amongst their many virtues, though, is the fact that no matter how poor they may be, they show their parents great esteem, sometimes imparting to them at least half their paltry wages should they suffer need. In this, Terry remarked, they seem to follow the Decalogue’s command to “honour thy father and mother” repeated by Paul in Ephesians 6.2 and various other places in scripture (Terry 249-52).

These precepts, however, have been deduced by Indians from nature, and while they contain the spark of truth, relying upon such insecure premises often causes Indians to lapse into absurdity—or worse. Hindus, for instance, do everything they can to avoid taking the life of another creature, even, he noted, to the extent of preserving those creatures that are useless, offensive or dangerous. But while this might look like an expression of the commandment against killing refracted through time and culture, in fact, Terry reasoned, it shows the extent to which Indians actually dwell in the dark (Terry 327-29). As Genesis makes clear, God granted humanity sovereignty over all of the creatures of the world, creating their bodies to serve people either in toil or as food. But in not killing animals—in not treating them as their creator would have them used—Indians allow them to “make havock,” unnaturally indulging them through behaviour that equates them with human beings (Terry 329-30). While this might be socially wrongheaded policy in that it prevents Indians from protecting their communities against animals that might kill them, more profoundly it underscores their complete ignorance of the divinely orchestrated hierarchy of creation. Far from being an index of their compassion and empathy for other species, this disordered conception of the relationship between humanity and the animal kingdom causes Indians to mis-configure the entire order of terrestrial reality.

In the final analysis, Terry concluded, Indians are “meer *natural men*” (Terry 255). Although Terry does not acknowledge his source, the phrase comes from 1 Cor. 2.14: “But the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishnes unto him: neither can he knowe *them*, because they are Spiritually discerned,” glossed in the Geneva text as

people “whose knowledge & judgement is not cleared by Gods Spirit.”⁶ By Terry’s day, the idea of natural men had been the subject of a fair amount of commentary. According to the clergyman Anthony Burgess, writing in 1652, natural men were like bats or owls in that they are only able to see at night; thus, they are quick to grasp “the things of darkness, matters of sin, and the world; but in the things of God, they are stark blinde” (Burgess 201-11). Shortly afterwards, the Cambridge theologian John Arrowsmith added that while they “may have a deep reach in the things of the world,” they see only in darkness, although they are not sensible of the fact (Arrowsmith 88–89). Their problem, in part, clergyman and author William Attersoll argued, is that seeing only with the fleshly eye their judgement is corrupt, unable to understand how God can work through contraries to produce effects for which human reason cannot account (Attersoll 1612, 296 and 362; cf. Attersoll 1632, 51). The preacher David Bramley’s 1647 sermon *Christs Result of his Fathers Pleasure* offered perhaps the fullest treatment of the condition of natural men. For Bramley, the folly of natural men rested in the fact that they rely on human reason which, since the fall, is hopelessly corrupt. Groping around in the darkness, their “fleshly wisdom and prudence” makes them arrogant and proud, lifting “them up above, and against the crosse of Christ,” and the saviour’s humility and poverty. All of this causes natural men to miss the truth, for God hides things not in darkness but in light. Natural men, then, have closed themselves off from even the ability to believe and so must suffer the fate reserved for them (Bramley 10 and *passim*). Terry sums up their condition this way:

These Heathens in *East-India* [...] see as far with the eye of Nature as it can possibly reach, and nature it self teacheth them, and teacheth all the world beside, that there is a God, but who this God is, and how this God is to be worshipped, must elsewhere be learn’d. (Terry 537)

For Terry, then, Indians are “meer *natural* men” because they exercise truth and fidelity, moral honesty, charity and mercifulness in accordance only with the precepts of the law of nature. Without scripture to guide and focus their empiricism, they stray into error and false opinion. Blinded by the sheer wonder of creation and driven by an innate but unfocused sense of divinity, it is hardly surprising that they have strayed into idolatry, worshipping created things rather than understanding them as products of their creator. After all, as Ezekiel 20.8 suggests, idolatry is a sin rooted in vision.

To avoid making the same mistakes as the inhabitants of India, Terry argued, it is necessary to view the world and its constituent parts not through the “*eye of sense*,” but through what he calls the “clear eye of Faith” (Terry 378 and 374 respectively). This is a notion that Terry

6. Although he wrote in 1655, his scriptural quotations and unacknowledged references to its gloss suggest that Terry was working with a Geneva bible.

developed from his understanding of Calvin, a man he described as “good and reverend” (Terry 470).

Calvinist Geography

What is often lost in the portrait of Calvin as a stern moralist is that he had been trained as a humanist. Indeed, his first published work was a commentary on Seneca’s *De clementia* (1532) in which he set out to show his abilities as a rhetorician (Battles and Hugo 1969b, 78). Seneca’s work is a series of reflections on the nature of power, addressed to Nero, an emperor not renowned for his keen intellect. One of the things that impressed the young Calvin, though, was the way that Seneca accommodated his text to his audience. *Accommodation* was a basic technique of the premodern rhetorician. Calvin would have encountered it at every stage of his education, and found it used in all manner of classical texts, particularly in the works of Cicero, an author whom he continued to read throughout his life (Jones 11-36). According to the Roman in his *De oratore*, in order to move members of an audience to action—the goal of rhetoric—an oration ought to be adapted (*accommodanda*) to the ears of the crowd; that is to say, it must be attuned to their values, expectations and understanding in order to be convincing and effective (Cicero 1949b, II.38.159; cf. I.12.54 and Cicero 1949a, I.15.20). For Calvin, this seemed to be precisely what Seneca had done in crafting *De clementia*, for its two sections were clearly accommodated to different audiences—the first popular, the second learned (Battles and Hugo, 1969b, 78 and Battles and Hugo, 1969a, 336).

However slow-witted Seneca may have found Nero, this gulf in capacity was nothing compared to that between God and fallen humanity. As Calvin argued in his *Institutes* and in many other places, fallen humanity is utterly incapable of fathoming anything of the nature of God. Consequently, scripture is full of instances of accommodation. God, for instance, is described as being “in heaven,” and at various points depicted as having ears, eyes, hands and feet, despite the fact that he is infinite, incorporeal and cannot be circumscribed to place. Such modes of expression, Calvin argued, are accommodations to our feeble capacity to understand. “God,” he says, “doth so with us speake as it were childishly, as nurses do with their babies” (Calvin I.13.1; cf. I.11.1).

But it is not just scripture that is accommodated to humanity’s limited abilities; so too is the structure of history. This is clear, Calvin argued, from the difference between the law, rites and ceremonies laid down in the Old and New Testaments. Obviously, God is wholly consistent with himself and does not now forbid practices that he had once commanded. After all, true religion does not change. Yet the external form and manner in which he is to be worshipped have changed in response to human capacity (Calvin II.11.13). God knows what is “expedie[n]t for every one” and accommodates himself accordingly (Calvin II.11.13).

But in the same way that the structure of sacred history has been accommodated to the development of humanity, so too is the nature, purpose and order of the universe—and, by extension, the structure and temporal state of the world. The universe, Calvin argued, was made by God in order to articulate his incomprehensible benevolence, justice, power and wisdom (Calvin I.14.22). In this sense, at least, creation in all of its majesty is an act of communication, making God, in the words of Serene Jones, “the Grand Orator” (Jones 28). As with any text, its author could have fashioned it in an infinite number of different ways. But given that God does nothing in vain, that he chose to structure his creation text the way that he did cannot be accidental (Balserak 152-54). Thus, like the figures and tropes in any humanly authored text, every region, every waterway, every creature must have been created the way that it was because it was most perfectly accommodated to the puny capacity of his dumb-witted audience: “in every particular woorke of God [...] the power[s] of God are sette forth as it were in painted tables” (Calvin I.5.9). Creation, then, is a wonderful condescension whereby the creator makes himself known to humanity.

Drawing once more upon rhetorical theory to interpret God’s visual oration, Calvin saw the universe—like any well-constructed text—as intended to move and transform its audience. Glossing Hebrews 11.3 in *Institutes*, he argued that the things that can be seen on earth are like mirrors through which we may perceive something of higher realities (Calvin I.5.1). But while created things may be as “many lampes lightned” shining their beams upon us, by themselves they are an insufficient source of enlightenment—they “raise up certain sparkles, but such as be choked up before that they can sprede abrode any full brightnesse” (Calvin I.5.13). Creation may illuminate the invisible God, but, he said, “we have no eyes to se the same throughly, unles they be enlightned by the revelation of God through faith” (Calvin I.5.13). What is needed to make sense of such observations, of course, is scripture. For Calvin scripture is the key to understanding the world and its inhabitants. It is what gives order to the raw data gathered from the senses; it is what translates this resource into useful information. Scripture, he famously remarked, is akin to a pair of spectacles given to an old man whose sight is failing—they “remove the mist, and plainly shew us the true God” in what would otherwise be an undifferentiated mass of signs and figures (Calvin I.6.1; cf. I.14.1).

While some medieval theologians had implied that an understanding of nature—as God’s tool for the ordinary operation of creation—might be sufficient to merit salvation (Raiswell 207-34), Calvin parted ways with his predecessors in completely denying a meaningful role to any causative principle below God. For him, the order of the universe stemmed not from the action of regulating nature, but from sustaining providence (Schreiner 22-28). This is implicit in his conception of omnipotence and God’s absolute sovereignty. He is “called almightie,” Calvin wrote, not

because he created nature and then gave it a free hand to regulate creation, “but because he governing both heaven and earth, by his Providence so ordreth all things that nothing chaunceth but by his advised purpose” (Calvin I.16.3). Indeed, it is only through the constant, direct intervention of God that the oceans do not engulf the lands, and that the earth maintains its position at the centre of the universe (Schreiner 22-28). Without God’s continuous intervention, the entire cosmos would immediately degenerate into undifferentiated chaos. The world as it exists at any instant of time is—quite literally—a miracle.

The wider implications of this notion of sustaining providence are quite profound for thinking about the world, for it means that the disposition of any region cannot properly be said to be the result of some sort of natural or historical development of its societies. It can only be the result of the action of sustaining providence. Calvin made precisely this point when considering the reasons for different types of government across the world, urging his readers to

bende not thine eies only to one city, but looke about or behold the whole world together, or at least spread abroade thy sight into farther distances of contrees, without dout thou shalt finde that this is not unprofitably appointed by the providence of God, that diverse contrees should be ruled by diverse kindes of government. (Calvin IV.20.8)

By extension, if providence has appointed different types of government for different places, each must also be an accommodation. Thus, it is not just the basic structure of the universe that needs to be read as a text mediated by scripture; so too can the state of any of its constituent parts at any instant within the schema of sacred history (Calvin, I.5.10).

The Profit in the Pith

As Corinne Lefèvre has pointed out, Terry left no definitive statement as to his religious identity (Lefèvre 135).⁷ Nevertheless, he clearly had a Calvinist sense of an omnipotent God sustaining creation in all its diversity. “God,” he wrote, “is not a careless, an improvident God [...] he is a God in lesser, as well as in greater matters: Who beholds at one view all places, and all persons, and all things” (Terry 352). Ever since creation,

he *sustaineth, and beareth up all things by the power of that word*, Heb. 1[.2]. His *Creation* was the *Mother* to bring things *forth*; his *Providence* the *Nurse* to bring them *up*. His *Creation* a short *Providence*, his *Providence* a perpetual *Creation*. The first setting up the *frame* of the house, the second looking to the standing and *reparations* thereof. (Terry 351)

7. Terry did manage to hold his position as rector at Holy Cross Church in Greenford through the turbulent years of the Civil War and Interregnum. His son succeeded him in the position but resigned shortly afterwards, unwilling to accept the new Book of Common Prayer (Hounsell and Hounsell 31).

For Terry reflecting upon his experiences abroad, what this means is that India must have been so disposed by God in order to serve as a statement about Himself. Far from being a place subsistent in its own right, India is a text intended to be read and glossed—a figure within the vast rhetoric of creation.

At its most superficial, Terry's reading found India rife with instances intended by the creator to clarify or supplement scriptural anecdotes or passages. Most of these are trivial. The preponderance of flies that troubled him and his party during the heat of the day brought to mind the swarms of flies that Moses threatened to bring upon Pharaoh and his servants in Exodus 8.21 (Terry 123). The nose rings along with the bracelets worn by Muslim women were "very probably such Ornaments as the Jewish women were threatned for *Esaiah* 3 [i.e. Isaiah 3.18-21] where Almighty God tells them, *that he would take away their tinkling Ornaments about their feet, the Bracelets, and the Ornaments of their legs, their Rings, and Nose-Jewels*" (Terry 217-18). The enormous noise made by the friends and parents of a sati to hide her screams as she burns is "Not much unlike the custom of the *Ammonites*, who, when *they made their Children passe through the fire to Molech*, caused certain *Tabrets*, or *Drums* to sound, that their cries might not be heard [2 Kings 23.10]" (Terry 325). To be sure, Terry's readings of these instances of the temporal disposition of providence within very circumscribed parts of Indian space may seem trite and nugatory, but, he urged, in matters of divinity, the rule should be to give such interpretations the benefit of the doubt, "that when any thing delivered may bear two interpretations, to take the fairest" (Terry sig. A5^v). Besides, he added later, "we are commanded to use all arguments we can possibly invent [i.e. *find*], to perswade men to take Christ and Salvation" (Terry 493).

The real question for Terry—one that required him to polish his Calvinist spectacles—did not arise from the apparently favourable disposition of Indian space. Obviously, this could not be considered a sign of divine approval, but rather was intended simply as a prompt to stir the mind to contemplate higher realities more generally. The appropriate reaction to the great temporal wealth and splendour of the Mughal's court, for instance, should cause Christians to raise up their minds to the enormous spiritual riches awaiting them in their true home, for "*if Almighty God hath given such sweet places of abode here on earth to very many whom he owns not; how transcendently glorious is that place which he hath prepared for them that love him*" (Terry sig. A6^r). Rather, the issue for Terry was why providence sustained Indians in their ignorance, never affording them the opportunity to have access to the truth. That Indians were "meer *natural* men" was no accident of historical development; God had deliberately placed them in that state and maintained them accordingly. In this case, Indian error must be integral to God's plan—so integral, in fact, that Terry argued that God would never allow them to be converted to Christianity (Terry 460).

The idolatry of Indians, then, must also be an accommodation for his chosen people to gloss.

For Terry, it was not surprising that God uses peoples to advance his cause. Drawing upon an image from Isaiah 1.3, he noted that:

As God instructs man by the Oxe, and Ass, and Stork, and Turtle, and Crane, and Swallow, and by the little Ant, or Pismire Creatures which are onely sensible, so much more they may be minded of and learn the practice of some duties from men, people (though strange and remote) yet endued with reason. (Terry 453)

Foreign and distant peoples, as much as animals, are part of God's rhetorical toolbox, and are intended to communicate something of his goodness.

At a most basic level, it was clear to Terry that providence had disposed Indians in their idolatry to serve as a foil for the English and as an opportunity for pious contemplation and introspection. To be sure, the region's inhabitants live in the best part of the world and are "as comely as the earth bears"; many are wise, provident, ingenious and learned (Terry 536). Yet without revelation, they are condemned to subsist as natural men, living in perpetual darkness. In "enjoying every thing, [they] want every thing," for they are without Christ (Terry 536). By contrast, the English have been bestowed with every spiritual advantage but have squandered them in sin. Puffed up with pride, they show no self-restraint. Their perverse love of disputing has resulted in religious division—in heresy and schism. Their contempt for natural order and good government has even led to regicide (Terry 493). Thus, Terry exclaimed, "That *heathens* (I say) should walk in many things so exactly, and being but *heathens* do so, as it marvellously condemnes, so it may deeply humble many of us, who bear the names of Christians" (Terry 479, recte 509; cf. 460). English sin is condemned through heathen virtue.

In structuring providence in such a way that the material and spiritual benefits of Indians and the English are juxtaposed, God—the Grand Orator—seems to be communicating by means of the rhetorical figure of amplification. As Quintilian argued, setting contraries against each other draws an auditor's attention to the gulf between the two positions, making both seem more extreme (Quintilian 5.10.87-93 and 8.4.9-10). Wilson provided an example: "sette a faire woman against a foule, and she shal seeme muche fairer, and the other much the fouler" (Wilson fol. 99^r recte 69^r).

But God's use of amplification is more sophisticated than mere juxtaposition, for these contraries are mutually reliant, and so knowledge of one implies knowledge of the other (Goodman 161). Calvin argued precisely this at the start of the *Institutes*, pointing out that the "infinite plenty and good things that abideth in God" are more apparent from "our owne needinesse" (Calvin, I.1.1). That is to say, an examination of our own wretched poverty necessarily implies the wealth and glory of its antithesis. This technique finds perhaps its most blunt exposition

in James VI of Scotland's 1597 *Daemonologie*, where he argued that "since the Devill is the verie contrarie opposite to God, there can be no better way to know God, then by the contrarie." The one's lies point to the other's truth; the one's injustice points to the other's justice; the one's cruelty to the other's mercy (James VI 55; also Clark 53-61). Terry adopted precisely this mode of reasoning. If the proper object of knowledge is always God, as he asserted, then in order to know the power and truth of religion, it is important to know what it is not (Terry 539). And India is very definitely what it is not.

It was quite obvious to Terry that India's Hindus are amongst those whom God has decreed to be damned. Though they cannot be blamed for their errors in that providence will not allow them revelation, Hindus are manifest idolaters. They are what he calls "will-worshippers"; many of their rites and rituals may have a façade of holiness about them, but they are solely the product of the human imagination and opinion, and so have no grounding in truth. For Terry, the situation in India is directly analogous to that described in Judges 17-19 where the Israelites lapsed into idolatry and superstition once they entered the land of Canaan. This was the worst of all periods in the history of Israel, he asserts, for without any centralised authority everyone did simply what he thought was right in his own eyes (Terry 464; cf. 86-87). In India, this situation has resulted in a truly wretched state of affairs with idolatry on a fantastic scale, and Indians zealously offering service to their false gods in the manner due to the true one.

In worshipping things of their own creation, Hindus are in breach of the commandment against the making of graven images. It is not just that they are depriving God of the honour rightly due to him. To be sure, such passive *de facto* opposition to God would be heinous in itself. But Indian *cultus* is also an active expression of opposition to the creator, for, in adoring images, Indians are actually worshipping something that is not true. No matter how skilled or subtle the craftsman, no matter how rich the medium he employs, no image can ever encapsulate the infinite majesty of God (Isaiah 40.18-31; cf. [Anon] 90). But this does not mean that an idol is just a sign to which there is no corresponding referent, for an object that purports to be something that it is not is a lie. Building upon Paul's discussion of lying actions at 2 Thess. 2: 9-11, the Elizabethan homily on the perils of idolatry argued that "an image of god, is not onely a lye, but a double lye also. But the devil is a lyar, and the father of lyes, wherefore the lyinge ymages of God, to hys great dishonour, and horrible daunger of hys people, came from the Devyll" ([Anon] 91). For Terry, this explained much. With an eye for great detail, he noted:

[Although] Hindus have no learning, yet they want not opinions, for their divided hearts are there distracted into *four-score*, and *four* several *Sects*, each differing from others, very much in opinion about their irreligion, which might fill a man, even full of wonder, that doth not consider, how that *Satan*, who is the author of division, is the seducer of them all. (Terry 344-45)

There may be significant variation in the external rites practised by Indians. However, such differences exist only at the level of accident; they cannot be construed as signs pointing to any qualitative difference between sects. They are mere window-dressing, disguising what are ultimately just slightly different particular manifestations of the devil's rage. The devil, after all, has an infinite number of ruses.

Of course, it is hardly surprising to find the presence of the devil underlying the practices of extra-European cultures, for demonism is a highly flexible ontological category for dealing with difference and assimilating the exotic (Ryan 525). But for Terry, demonism was no mere taxonomic convenience. Viewing India and its inhabitants through the eye of faith, it was clear that in every real sense, India was the land of the devil.

A case in point is the governance of the Great Mughal. Without any written law to guide or moderate his conduct, the Mughal rules by means of fiat underscored by the threat of violence (Terry 370-71 and 435). It is no rational system of governance—it is nothing but the whim and fancy of a single man supported by intimidation. Certainly, Terry argued following Calvin, people are obliged to submit themselves to the ordinances of human law for the sake of the Lord (Terry 1646, frontispiece; cf. 1 Peter 2: 13-14), but a ruler's primary obligation is to assert order so as to hold humanity's propensity for sin in check (Terry 485). But if the eye of the ruler is dim and his sword is kept sheathed then it is small wonder that society degenerates into anarchy (Terry 489). Terry is convinced that this is precisely what has happened in India under the Mughals. For all the visual display of the imperial court with its pomp and elaborate ceremonies, for all the cruelty of the public executions and the apparent relish with which such spectacles are observed, the Mughals do not actually *rule* in any proper sense of the term. Indeed, so rotten is the core of the Mughal's tyranny that the emperor allows anyone to practice any religion he wishes without fear of correction in order to make his authority palatable to his subjects (Terry 271 and 440).

To Terry, the idea of religious toleration was not just perverse, it was an abomination: God is one; his will is one; his church cannot be other than one (Terry 469). Diversity and disunity, then, must be hallmarks of the devil (Terry 473). In this sense, then, it is clear not just that the Mughal's rule is enabled by the devil, but that the Mughal grants the devil licence. The relationship is reciprocal. For Terry, the presence of the devil at this constitutive level helps to account for why nothing in the region is as it seems: it is a land where appearance is illusion, where tyranny is anarchy, where mercy is disobedience, where wealth is poverty, where knowledge is ignorance. It is a society constructed upon a substratum of lies, with the collusion of the father of lies himself.

The devil, though, is a creature of God, and God's omnipotence means that the devil has no power in his own right. As Calvin stressed, for all "the discord and strife that we say is betwene God and Satan, we must so take it [...] that he can do nothing but by the will and sufferance of

God” (Calvin I.14.17). This is why he is described as presenting himself before God to receive the lord’s commandments in the opening verses of Job. Certainly, the devil rages, but God turns this fury and redirects it according to his own desires (Calvin I.17.11). The devil may incline towards evil; however, he can only do those things that God wishes. This means that the demonism inherent to India must be part of God’s will. Like the state of the rest of creation, it is part of God’s rhetoric.

For Terry, the state of India is intended to admonish the English. The English, he says, are clearly God’s new chosen people, for he has bestowed upon them many favours, intending them to serve as an exemplum to the other nations of the world (Terry 463, recte 519). However, in recent years, liberty has reared its ugly head, with the result that many ancient heresies have “been raked up out of their corruption, revived, and with new faces and glosses put upon them, presented to this Nation in Printed books” (Terry 470). The variety of new heretics—like the will-worshippers of India—ground their belief in the “ignorance and darkness of their minds” (Terry 472 and 345). As a result, “Division and subdivision [...] Termes that have their use in *Arithmetick*, but [...] are dangerous to be heard of in Religion” have crept in (Terry 469). The gospels by which Satan might be beaten down are neglected, their ministers are defrauded, and the “spiritual seed of the word they sow [is] [...] continually miscarrying, upon the thorny, hard, rocky, barren hearts of their hearers” (Terry 471, recte 523).

For the health of the nation, these heretics and dangerous schismatics need to be compelled to right practice if they refuse to be led back to the truth by allurements, Terry argued. “He that hath strengthened himself in Heresie or Schism, must violently be puld from it” (Terry 483–84). Yet, as in India, there is no real authority. Liberty has led to civil war and regicide. And now, the new government tolerates religious diversity in order to keep a grip on the reins of power—in precisely the same way as Jahangir had done.

Within Terry’s Calvinist understanding of the world, the *purpose* of India is twofold. It is an occasion for introspection, and a spur to moral reformation within England. But it is also intended as a warning about the dangers of sectarianism particularly in the context of poorly constituted authority. In both senses, though, the region is intended by God to communicate something of his munificence to his chosen people. In meditating on the significance of part of the creator’s world-text in this way, Terry’s *Voyage to East-India* is more akin to a sermon than to a piece of travel reportage. To be sure, it contains lots of spatial intelligence, but the frame into which this is arranged is decidedly otherworldly.

While Terry’s text reflects a Calvinist approach to spatial exposition that stands in stark contrast to that championed by the mercantile community and its propagandists—one that he defined according to its *usefulness* to non-travellers—the effect is to trap Indians in an insipid frame. Devoid of all agency and all meaning in and of themselves, they

are reduced to figures and tropes within a hideous cosmic grammar, damned through no fault of their own so that others at the opposite ends of the world may live.

This is not proto-orientalism. This is Calvinism.

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