



History Research

Volume 2, Number 5, May 2012

David Publishing Company

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ISSN 2159-550X (Print)

ISSN 2159-5518 (Online)

From Knowledge to Wisdom

HISTORY RESEARCH

Volume 2, Number 5, May 2012

ISSN 2159-550X



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History Research

Volume 2, Number 5, May 2012 (Serial Number 5)

David Publishing Company
www.davidpublishing.com

Magical, Ambiguous and Salacious: Naples in the English Travel Memoirs (1816-1841)

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Through an analysis of the accounts of English travellers in Naples between 1816 and 1841, the objective of this paper is to attempt to identify an image of the city and its inhabitants without following the direction of the usual negative stereotypes common to much of the literature associated with the "Grand Tourist", a literature to which scholars and readers from the 16th to the 19th century were used. The research also aims to demonstrate through previously unknown and unheeded sources that there were not only those English travellers on their *Grand Tour* of the post-Restoration Bourbon Mezzogiorno (southern Italy) looking for an opportunity of comparing their own civilization (which was considered far superior) to a more fragile reality. There were also other British people who had identified, with a critical eye and spirit of observation, the existence of a Naples and a south Italy which did not merely represent the sum of stereotypes and fallacies handed down through the centuries, and thus refusing the obvious, predictable and false approach given by their own countrymen.

Key words: Naples, Mezzogiorno, *Grand Tour*, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, British travellers, stereotypes

Introduction

Between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 19th century there were few European intellectuals who had not tried to relive the "Myth of Ulysses" on the roads of Italy. The "continental trip" was taken by entire generations of English aristocrats and the Bourgeois, and considered a kind of rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. It was also a fundamental experience and indispensable to the perfecting of a man of culture (Graf, 1911; Mead, 1914; Parks, 1954; Sells, 1964; Trease, 1967; Hibbert, 1969; Chaney, 1998; Watson, 2000; Roberts, 2011). What the *Grand Tour* represented to the northern Europeans who came to southern Italy and to the inhabitants of the southern areas of the peninsula, on the basis of which prospects and expectations were the English travellers driven beyond those distinct, established and clichéd boundaries, what were the changes in this field over the century and why did they happen: These are all questions that have found ample answers in the historiography debate, which developed as a result of the many studies that have been carried out up to now; as a consequence these same questions will not be posed in this analysis (De Seta, 1982, 2006; Pemble, 1998; Brilli, 2004, 2006; Brilli & Federici, 2009; Viola, 1987). What is needed here is a new and further reflection on the theme of travel in the Mezzogiorno during the Risorgimento, when travelling also meant coming into contact with the many problems of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and not only the picturesque and evocative landscapes (Mozzillo, 1985, 1992, 1993; Bancale, 1998; Capuano, 1999; Corrado, 2009).

The numerous critical studies concerning the creation, evolution and anchoring of reciprocal stereotypes in the interaction between the English culture and that of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies between the 18th and 19th centuries have, in general, followed two paths. The first, today criticized and proved wrong, led one to believe that Naples and the south Italy were as truly degraded and degrading as described by the British travellers. The second, also the most followed, saw the area of the “lazy south” as a resultant of stereotypes and fallacies that originated from the encounter of this culture with the English “Grand Tourists” who did no more than reproduce the standardized and clichéd recollections of their readings. Even in late medieval times, the Italians, although appreciated for their culture and envied for their economic strength, had been frequently portrayed in an ambivalent or negative manner by, in particular, the English and French (Venturi, 1973; Colella, 1989; Richter, 1992; Heller, 2003). Later, as Patriarca suggested (2010), entire generations of north European travellers and Enlightenment thinkers had added extra negative components to this representation by describing the Italians as “lazy southerners” (p. 13).

In such a context, this study represents a reflection towards identifying a different, non-stereotypical image of Naples built on the hypothesis that there has been lots of space and expression given so far to only one voice of English travel literature, given the plentiful sources, the difficulties of finding them and not least those tied to the language. This has resulted in the obliteration of those accounts that could have changed this pre-set vision of negative clichés. This might even have been done on purpose by some Southern *élites*, given the particular historical period, in order to provide a particular image of the Mezzogiorno. The objective of the study was to demonstrate that southern Italy was not only the degraded and degrading kingdom or resultant of the stereotypes and fallacies that appeared in the many pages of travel reports and in the British thinking from 1816 to 1841. These dates represent a timeframe which covers the period from the restoration to the founding of the first cheap, package holiday travel agency created in London by Thomas Cook which completely changed both the way of travelling and the travellers (Dawes, 2003; Berrino, 2011). A third Mezzogiorno started to appear fairly clearly which, during this historical period, was observed from a different point of view and seemed to be no longer of a purely comparative and competitive nature.

The Image of Naples at the Beginning of the 19th Century

After the Vienna congress of 1815 and the end of Napoleon’s Continental Blockade (Knaplund, 1942; Kissinger, 1957; Acton, 1985; Mascilli Migliorini, 2001; Galasso, 2007; Canale Cama, Casanova, & Delli Quadri, 2009), on the wake of the *Grand Tour*, a multitude of Englishmen started to travel again through an Italy that still represented a country of art and ancient populations. The focus finally shifted towards the south, an underprivileged Mediterranean area compared to the wealth of the central-north (Monk, 1953; Comparato, 1979; Black, 1985; Brilli, 1989, 1997). In a setting where foreigners searched primarily for order and then for classical beauty and the picturesque, Rome no longer represented an extreme limit. This extremity was extended to Naples, “noble” for her superb processions and festivities, for the outfitting and opulence of the court, for her sacred artefacts, villas, music and the antiquity of Vesuvius in an image that shimmered between myth and reality. Naples of the English travel memoirs was considered as not only a place capable of re-echoing the history and legends of ancient times thanks to her archaeological testimonies and those of Herculaneum and Pompeii, but also a spectacular capital positioned in an enchanted and magical setting, and shaped by excesses and strong contrasts. Naples was an extremely frenetic and dissolute place compared to ancient Rome, an erudite centre of learning and of ruins, relics and works of art. Naples was a city of a

thousand lights and a thousand voices, populated by a teeming swarm. It was a “feudal monster” which had assumed the proportions of a “metropolitan monster” over the course of time. As Richter (1992) observed, Naples was the place “of eternal metamorphoses where nothing seems to vanish forever” (p. 7), where it seemed possible to fashion that which was not possible to create elsewhere, placed in a magical and bewitching setting where, as if under a spell, nature could remove history and undermine reason with her charm of eternal happiness. Reaching Naples, however, was not simple for these travellers. Lack of roads, dangers and isolation had rendered the kingdom sadly notorious and, at least until the 1830s, generated refusal in those who might have travelled here. One was led to believe that a circumnavigation of the world was less troublesome than the journey from Rome to Naples (Vasi, 1826; Ostuni, 1991; D’Elia, 1994).

The Pontine Marshes separating the Papal State from the Bourbon dominions were considered as the most dangerous tract to undertake. Travel memoirs were full of descriptions of encounters with bandits, corpses littering the roads, guards more corrupt than the bandits themselves, and of remarks made about the troops stationed at brief intervals from one another to guarantee the safety of the travellers passing through, the rough roads, the thefts on territorial borders, the carriages and horsemen accompanied by paid soldiers, and about the attacks and robberies. In many cases, the firsthand English testimonies of events in some way or another highlighted the fact that these episodes were not always bait for the collective imagination, a picturesque threat, a simple cliché build-up or necessarily absolutely truthful incidents but something that always happened to others. Despite the often-lamented dangers, which certainly existed, many British travellers had covered that piece of road, cultivating only congenial associations and all the fears of bandits, robbery and murder could not take away these delights as these pleasurable sensations represented their safeguard and comfort. In those times the travellers were alone and caroused in total ease: The world was nothing (Frye, 1908; Mayne, 1909; Sass, 1818; William, 1820; Hanson, 1820; Duppa, 1828; Wood, 1828; Hall, 1841; Kingston, 1862). That adventurous part of the journey, as observed by Leed (1992), would have contributed to the forging of parts of the character and identity of the traveller—as in any other distance covered on a trip. For the British men, this stretch of road represented the passage from a previously imagined place to a real space, the space of a city whose history runs between myth, stereotype and reality, where the latter was not always and only crushed under the weight of the first two. During the 1800s, the city started to be perceived in a way that, as Richter (1994) suggested, “is changing again” (p. 11). And it is on that very tract of road, where the ideas, perceptions and impressions gained and felt during the trip would have forged the spirit of the travellers, that their previous expectations were renewed and increased.

Once arrived in the capital of the Bourbon kingdom, irrespective of the difficulty or not of the journey and their heavy baggage of expectations, many romantic English travellers observed only two sides of Naples. One was composed of the green hills and clear waters of the Bay, of the imposing ruins of antiquity and the warm, luminous atmosphere enveloping everything. The other was represented by the customs and habits of the Neapolitans of that time. The first was the most sublime and pleasurable contemplation that human imagination could conceive. The second was the most degraded, repellent and disgusting (Luard, 1925; Cooke, 1833; Lee, 1835; White, 1841; Brown, 1843; Arnold, 1852; Kingston, 1862; Maclaren, 1869; Cope, 1891; Ruskin, 1992). Together with the charm of a history that had become nature, of a static and motionless beauty that embodied the landscapes, the ruins and the produce that the travel memoirs in question still shared, there was still a varying level of disgust shown towards the men that lived in this contemplated corner of the world. The few men present that were allowed to be part of the picture appeared on a second level (Croce, 1942; Colletta, 1957;

Mastriani, 1976; Mozzillo, 1975, 1995; Scafoglio, 1999; Brilli, 2003; Moe, 2004; Izzo, 2004; Gurgo, 2005; Benigno, 2005; Croce, 2006).

In that part of the 1800s, Naples was still and remained a place of degradation, which contrasted with the glory of the very same nature and art, where satisfactions alternated with dissatisfactions. However these feelings did not originate from their own impressions during a simple observation of the area, but were stirred by those very hidden expectations that, as previously mentioned, the English put in their bags before even leaving and ended up being further nourished after departure (Blackie, 1909; Parry, 1935; White, 1841). The perceptions of the city had always been divided in two: On the one hand as a horde composed of unfortunate wretched people, lemonade sellers, shrieking *Pulcinellas* and idlers living on the streets alongside cows, goats and dogs. On the other hand, there was an equally numerous aristocratic class in carriages and on horseback, but of limited wealth who led a money-pinching private life so as to be able to show all the sumptuous trappings in public, decking themselves with splendid frills to appear stylish yet needing those very same idlers in order to survive. At the head of all this was the Bourbon royal family, surrounded by the fancy livery of its noble court, who travelled in carriages with nothing but gold and who were indifferent to the tears and suffering of the beggars from the streets and piazzas (Kingston, 1862). In the middle of all this, the travellers found themselves pushed from one side of the street to the other, swerving around the mountains of baskets and stalls of the various professions, hounded by pestering beggars or *Lazzaroni* (scoundrels) that offered their services in continuation. One would offer to clean their shoes; another tugged on their jackets as a third dropped an object for sale into their hands.

On the streets of Naples in 1817, Henry Sass (1818) remembered that thousands of people pursued a thousand different activities, the shrieking human voice came ever closer “and the noise and confusion are so great, that we are inclined to say ‘Chaos is come again’”(p. 161). In 1819, Sarah Spencer (1912) found Neapolitan society very different to how she had imagined and could have conceived: the poverty, the filth, the hardship, the total absence of interest, the inconceivable monotony, the lack of all personal items, the ever-present nonsense of formality, the petty arguments between members of a small, useless, cantankerous diplomatic corps and their various compatriots, which all together constituted in her eyes the most unsatisfactory ingredients with which to form a society. Alongside all this, the image of a south paralyzed under the weight of its own past re-echoed heavily. The population seemed incapable of laying the foundations for the construction of their own future as a nation, despite the magnificence of their past or the important figures of the traditional culture. “See Naples and die” was, according to Thomas Brown (1843), an old Neapolitan saying that was “old hackneyed” in 1833 (p. 89), that needed to be talked over with the Neapolitans themselves, and going beyond that enthusiasm which constituted their happiness and made them forget the poverty and hardships in which they lived.

Six years later, Charles Maclaren (1869) described the city as very noisy, but of a noise different to that of London or Paris: The streets were dirty and excessively cramped and the good people seemed to consider the light of day as an occasional thing, something that could be useful on rare occasions and with which one could do equally well. In the eyes of this traveller, hundreds of activities which in other places were carried out in silence, were conducted here by yelling; on every street containing carts one could hear the most deafening conversations, here and there women were arguing, screaming at the top of their voices while the fury flooded over their distorted demeanour. Maclaren preferred the quiet of the dead of Pompeii and Paestum to the noise of men like the kings of Naples who, for several generations had been “mere animals or children”. They had

spent public money on royal frippery and on a half dozen sumptuous palaces when only one would have been deemed sufficient in England. While entire sums of money were wasted in this way “the government was always without money, the balance sheets of the king’s accountants were in arrears by three years, the shipyards were forgotten and the navy of the kingdom was so cut-throat that, before France conquered Algeria, the coasts of the kingdom were ‘offended’ by pirate raids” (p. 288).

In the summer of 1840, Thomas Arnold (1852), while looking out of a *trattoria* as he was waiting for lunch, noted in his diary several impressions of the images that the city was offering him, impressions that with a little fantasy could become, to his eyes, a fearful drama of pleasure, sin and death. Pleasure was everywhere; in no other place was the nature more attractive and the men, to all appearances, more pleasure seeking. Sin was to be found in the pigsty of Capri, in the debauchery of Baia and Pompeii, in the general absence of all concepts of piety, virtue and wisdom. And death instead, showed all of its majesty in Vesuvius, all its evident hatred in the abominable *Campo Santo* (Neapolitan graveyard): “far be it from me, or from my friends, to live or to sojourn long in such a place” (p. 97). Leaving the city in 1832, William Henry Giles Kingston (1862) said his goodbyes to the “beautiful, enchanting, but deceptive Naples”, with her smoking furnaces and bubbling cauldrons, her “brutal tyrant king” Ferdinand II, her enslaved army, noise, delightful climate, picturesque streets, marble palaces and churches, unequalled coach drivers, reckless bandits and expert pick-pockets. He did not however list the other classes of the population because he was “anxious to be off for Rome” (p. 147).

In the eyes of these English travellers, Naples was also the most magical, ambiguous and salacious capital of Europe, “the place of voluptuous pleasure” (Robinson, 1869, Vol. 2, p. 92), where a sort of intoxication opened every pore to new and indescribable sensations. For the young wandering spirit John Hanson (1820), any possible incoherence in his tale is due to the fact that in 1819 he found himself in a “moving metropolis” (p. 217), in one of the most cheerful and fascinating cities of the world, where every object around him seemed to emanate an aura of enchantment and where nature and art rivalled one another. However, it was always Sass (1818) to suggest that it was impossible to revel in those “desires” that the place offered so generously because the streets and the entrances to the bars were besieged by a swarms of miserable beings, men, women and children whose laments were cries of pitiful exposure to the ears of those that were listening. For an Englishman, to feed on excess whilst surrounded by so much poverty became impossible and, at the same time, the exquisite beauty and grace of the scenery around the city clashed with the recklessness, filth and bad taste of the inhabitants. Naples was also the ambiguous city of a sovereign, at that time Francis I, who was robbed of 70% or 80% of the revenues whilst he was putting on feasts, going to the theatre and hunting. It was a country in desperate conditions, in crisis due to an “absolutely erroneous” system where the king was in the hands of a *Carbonaro* (liberal Neapolitan revolutionary) manservant and, thanks to his influence, the *Carbonari* were secretly making inroads into the authority of the sovereign himself. It was a place where many processions, functions and superstitions served to release the tensions of the population and keep them well-behaved. The Carnival parades served to occupy and amuse the noble Neapolitans who were lazy, indolent and indifferent. Where, as Lord Richard Grenville noted in 1828, the truth of the miracle of *San Gennaro* was that the less susceptible Catholics knew that it was a deception and were ashamed: “even the priesthood know, but they construct this farce to keep the people quiet; to suspend or delay the miracle by an hour might have devastating effects on the Neapolitan population. In fact, here the greatest abuses exist in the rites performed in the Catholic religion” (Grenville, 1862, Vol. II, p. 47).

In the capital of indolence, thanks to the nature of the government, to the submissiveness of the people

under the control of the priests and to their complete belief in the infallibility of this miracle and those of a thousand other saints, according to Brown (1843), one should not be surprised at the incapacity of the those very same people concerning all that was commendable and favourable in daily living, given their indulgence in the most shocking vices and their ability to commit enormous crimes without remorse. James Paul Cobbet (1830) said that in the Naples of 1829 one could not stay long without becoming aware of the fact that in such a lovely climate the people could never have had half the will to be operative as they were in England. They were happy to live on little and did not worry about the future “and *Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quaerere*, to be free of all thought of the *morrow*, is a piece of advice that they put in practice; and they enjoy all they have” (p. 213). The analysis of this English traveller, like that of many others, concerned a population with a character of little inclination towards work that was in accordance with the proverbial historical theory of *otiosa Neapolis*, meaning idle Naples. The image of Naples and the Mezzogiorno at the end of the 1830s appeared to be one of mannequins for priests, poor, wild, ragged people, an impoverished government due to squandering child-kings, a kingdom preyed on by outlaws, misery and absolute poverty especially in the provinces, an ignorant and miserable population in an idle capital without character. After the study and intertwining of these travel sources, a strong sense of an antithetic relationship appeared between a city of enchantment and one of trickery, a city of pleasure and continual overlapping pain, a place where everything seemed possible but came at a high price, where innocence and sin merged into one and the British accounts on the back of the fatal siren of Parthenope seemed to have become fairly unanimous at that time.

A Third Dimension: Naples in a New Perspective

Yet in the first half of the 19th century the city was not only this, it was not only the capital of the south, a land of soul, with her “threshold” position compared to Africa and the Orient, and as Moe (2004) observed, with her “reservoir of feudal remnants, idleness and squalor on one side and picturesque peasants, folklore traditions and exoticism on the other” (p. 17). Naples was not only the shadow of a nation or land of old where everything slept and where, except for the ruins, there was nothing left but backwardness when compared to the more modern and advanced societies of Europe and the picturesque as two faces of the same coin. There were also other Englishmen who saw a third Naples, considered to be the most beautiful region of Europe no longer only for the aspect of beauty but also for the vivacity of every corner, for the incredible activity of her immense population for which no other place could offer an equal, for the noise of passing carriages and of human voices in every possible combination of tone and expression that filled the air (Beste, 1826; Cobbet, 1830, 1846; Collins, 1848; Grenville, 1862; Boyle, 1901). It was the babble of the living slowly starting to stand out against all the power of the silence of the rocks, the ruins and the dead.

It was clear that the attention of the English travellers shifted from nature to man, from the scenery to the people, from the sayings to the facts, and from sensations to the perception of reality. All this was without that descriptive emphasis that had distinguished the memoirs of the 18th century travels. While interest in the monuments and ruins remained, there was an increase in the number of new elements that had gathered strength in these original sources. It was from this angle that the travel memoirs of Charles Mac Farlane began to offer the reader a different point of view. He was present in Naples in 1816 and again in 1827 before moving on to Constantinople and offered a perspective from which the subjects of his writings were no longer all that was part of the myth: the landscapes, the various stops along the way, the famous places, the half columns, the pieces of tombs or the remains of ancient ruins. He told of the men, the people he met and their customs, in

other words the living reality. They were impressions translated into a note form that accompanied the reader with his itineraries highlighting the relationship between scenery and inhabitants, underlining lifestyles, habits and customs. Above all, this English traveller gave voice to the interaction of the inhabitants with the *outsider*, in line with that *travel literature* who in the course of the 1800s recorded the most significant changes, thus developing a more vivid sensitivity for the anthropological roots of the Italian population beyond that taste for the unusual and wild scenery alongside that of the classical beauty of the ancient ruins.

The breaking of the mould came about alongside those judgements on the *Lazzaroni* and the Neapolitans and changed the usual negative cliché. Without doubt, the entrance of English travellers redesigned the ready-made picture, no longer seeing only a static and frozen population or considering the people to be composed of simple bit-players or believing them to be responsible for their misfortune and incapable of any sort of initiative. Their travel memoirs gave added strength and value to the construction of this third dimension. This was John Beste's direction when, in 1825, he asked himself who the *Lazzaroni* really were and what role they played in the story of the kingdom of Naples. He blamed the Neapolitan government for having kept them in that barbaric and savage condition without which so many atrocities would never have been committed. These people possessed a seemingly enormous amount of energy, which might well have only been passing and transitory but it existed and needed only to be set in the right direction.

Lord Richard Grenville (1862) seconded Beste when he recognised in the *Lazzaroni* of 1828 the social group that were the driving force of the idle Neapolitan aristocracy who would have died of hunger without them. As objects of observation, they were first a category and then folklore but then they disappeared at a certain point. For this Englishman, who was attentive to the political situation of the kingdom after the revolts of 1820-1821, the *Lazzaroni* represented a social class that shouldered the worst jobs without caring too much about those that commanded them. The important thing was to ensure survival in a country that considered them scum and gave them no possibility of moral and social resurgence:

No London mob would be bear one tenth part of the privations and misery, the *lazzaroni* do without breaking my Lord Mayor's windows, and helping themselves to everything which violence in London could give them, at least once in every night in the year. In the street of Naples, after nightfall, you see *no one*; but the *lazzaroni* are not then asleep, whatever *il principe* may be. (Grenville, 1862, Vol. I, p. 249)

In 1839, the poet, historian and politician Thomas Macaulay arrived in Naples from India and, in a few lines in his travel notebook, he led the reader into an enchanted city, turning around a whole series of strongly rooted fallacies and sustaining that the descriptions he had previously heard were most imprecise, because it was evident that daily life was the most important thing and religion merely an accessory. For the poet, Naples was "the only city in Italy where it was possible to find the same type of vitality as in all the important cities of England. Rome and Pisa are dead: Florence is not dead but sleeps: Naples instead overflows with life" (Acton, 1997, p. 176). This passage from the observation of nature in general to that of human nature can be easily picked out in the accounts of Mary Boyle (1901), in which the author herself underlined and explained that in her chronicles she tried to overcome the boredom, the arrogance, the presumptuousness and vanity so typical and so fashionable in those who had written before her. From them, she also learnt the lesson of refraining from saying bad things about people who could not reproach her for having done so, thus showing that feminine sensitivity characteristic of female travellers. Boyle described the people she met between 1832 and 1834 and not the stones, the feelings of the people and not the feelings experienced in front of the ruins, yet without

leaving out the local customs, the traditions and fascination for the rituals. Once she became aware of all the magic of Naples, as it reminded her of a special man and not only for the Bay or Vesuvius, she then progressed towards a more intimate and domestic world, encouraged by the naturalness of the people.

Conclusions

In the past, the eyes of the readers had been falsely opened with pages and pages of reports, guides and correspondence and the inhabitants of Naples and the south along with the scenery appeared not to change with time. For at least three centuries, the impression was that of passing through a country enfolded in a drowsy spell, in an unreal stillness of men and things that, as Attilio Brilli (2003) clearly explained, was seductive and at times insidious, at times carnivalesque and then threatening. It remained, however, a cultural falsehood, an ideological act, a projection of desire generated by the traveller himself while he passed along the roads of the peninsula between the end of the 16th century and the first half of the 19th century because the image of that urban landscape, and above all the people that lived there, was for the most part created prior to departure. Whereas the mostly unknown and unheeded memoirs of those English travellers who visited the Mezzogiorno between 1816 and 1841 began to provide us with a different point of view compared to that offered by the many accounts of Naples and the south that had appeared extremely celebratory or were written as picturesque and stereotyped literary transcriptions.

It was these very sources, as already mentioned, that offered the opportunity to identify a new interpretive conduit that was neither one of the decadence and backwardness of southern Italian society in all the different shapes and layers of its structure, nor a statement of an absolute modernity based on, if anything, the improbable primacy of Bourbon times. In this manner, Naples and the whole kingdom were cultured and appreciated in this new vision for their complex universal nature and of being on the front line. It was here that one started to glimpse a third perspective. This view was outlined by those British who wrote their memoirs with the specific intention of dismantling the clichés that had been planted and conveyed by their own compatriots, who for centuries had nourished the negative stereotypes of the south, and as we know, were the most noted, handed down, translated and read. Within its own limits, our study up to this point has demonstrated that this picture started to offer the first singular attempts relative not only to a change of perspective on the part of the English travellers weighed against the trip itself, but also to the meeting between man and man, and no longer just with the ruins and monuments.

The results of this confrontation have not obviously always been joyous, in fact there has been an often-present brutal criticism regarding all the men, from the Bourbons right down to the last miserable wretches of the capital and the kingdom. Along the way, it was clear that the English travelers' perspectives and points of view changed, above all for those who arrived in the Mezzogiorno after 1820 and afterwards during the reign of Francis I, in a time in which one started to understand that the foolish ambition for independence could not go hand in hand with southern particularism. A solution had to be found for the "Neapolitan troubles", if indeed there existed a solution, and only in relation to the European political events of the time (Romeo, 1963; Spagnoletti, 1997; Galasso & Migliorini, 1998; Galasso, 2007; Smith, 2011). Therefore we find ourselves in front of travellers who also presented themselves as chroniclers and historians in some way attentive towards the facts of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. They managed to go beyond simple descriptions of places, monuments, roads, eateries and ruins without returning to those stereotypes already tirelessly revisited (Hoare, 1819; Craven, 1821, 1837; Lear, 1852, 1992; Puccio, 1970). It appeared evident that

there were not only English people who made a sort of European mission out of speaking badly of Naples and the Neapolitans, almost as if they wanted to justify their military and colonial successes with the arrogance of their national character. There were also those British people who dismantled the false notions and erroneous definitions purposely put into circulation by their own compatriots through journals, newspapers, accounts and tales.

With these voices, Naples came across as diversified, magical, ambiguous and salacious yes, but also with her own cultural autonomy and an ability to plan in accordance with the political events that followed one another over the course of these 25 years. As these sources demonstrated (too numerous for all to be presented here), on the part of the Englishmen, there was an indignation towards the lack of liberty in a country in which existed an enslaved and poverty-stricken population unable to understand the implications. This could only happen to the upper classes, those that produced. However, in Naples and southern Italy, the upper classes were lazy, indolent, unproductive and ignorant to such an extent that they needed the lower classes in order to survive. As a result, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies started to be recognized as a kingdom inhabited by men who realized the burden of their lack of liberty each time they recognised their own intellectual potential. In a lively cultural climate nourished by those illuminated souls, this forceful energy needed only to be set in the right direction and this way of thinking had scared those who governed and those who wanted to govern. Many written narratives taken into consideration during this study have represented a useful tool capable of providing the answers relative to the representation of that southern Italy, that body of which Naples represented the head, that remains today a field of fundamental investigation because, as Petruszewicz (2009) observed, "It is there that the most significant changes occur" (p. 9).

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