Michael Meyer

William Beckford's Real and Imaginary Travels

Real and imaginary journeys complement each other in Beckford's life, his Gothic novel Vathek (1786), and his epistolary travelogue Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents (1783). He was wont to indulge in escapist dreams at his parents' home in Fonthill, transplanting himself into the oriental realms induced by his reading. Beckford's departure for his grand tour to Italy was precipitated by his love affair with his cousin's wife Louisa Beckford, who was supposed to distract him from his passion for the eleven-year-old William Courtenay (Chapman 1972: xx-xxiii). The tour in 1780 did not achieve its immediate moral goal but resulted in a very imaginative travelogue. Under the influence of his intense oriental reading in the summer of 1781, he rewrote his travel notes into fictionalised letters (Chapman 1972: xxiv; Gemmett 1977: 67). His oriental Christmas party in the Egyptian hall of Fonthill in the same year triggered the writing of his imaginary oriental journey Vathek, if we may give credit to Beckford's own report: 'T composed Vathek immediately upon my return to town thoroughly embued with all that passed at Fonthill during that voluptuous festival" (qtd in Chapman 1972: xxvi-xxvii). His predilection for dreams inspired both his travelogue and his Gothic novel with a distinctive visionary quality. In May 1782, he wrote in a letter, "J'ai fait le rêve de la vie de Vathek - quel rêve - Bon Dieu! D'un Bout a l'autre ce n'est que Beckfordism - but seriously 'tis very fine horribly fine" (qtd in Chapman 1972: xxviii). He continued "working up Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents and finishing Vathek (Chapman 1972: xxxi) in the winter of 1782 after a second journey to Italy.[1]

Parallels of escapist orientalism between Beckford's life and texts have been noted before (Gemmett 1977: 75). It is my concern here to analyse the transformations in forms and functions of Beckford's Orient. Beckford expressed his oriental fantasy by his decadent party within the boundaries of real time and space, by reveries that temporarily suspend space and time in his travel letters, and by his grotesque Gothic fiction which transcends any constraints of empirical

1 His family decided that the travel letters were not fit to be published since they might harm Beckford's reputation, future marriage, and political career. He destroyed almost all of the 500 printed copies in 1783 and revised the material for publication under the title of Italy: with Sketches of Spain and Portugal in 1834 (Gemmett 1977: 72-4).

space and time. Beckford's description of his journey to Italy delineates the double landscape of his observations and his daydreams. The Gothic novel expands the traveller's oriental associations in Italy into an imaginary world of its own. Vathek's nocturnal journey to hell represents the Italian traveller's subconscious desires and fears, and adds oriental nightmares to the traveller's oriental reveries. The journey to the East is an incremental repetition of the journey to the South, because Beckford's East increases the horizontal and vertical spaces and movement, and surpasses the ambitions, transgressions, and disillusionments of the South.

1. Beckford's Travelogue *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* (1783)

Beckford radicalises the subjective turn in travel-writing that, according to Christoph Bode, records the exploration of the interior triggered by an external movement (1994: 80). Gertrud Kalb argues that Beckford reverses the tenets of the grand tour because he replaces objective experience by subjective visions and travels in order to dream (1981: 119, 135; cf. Korte 1996: 78-9). The first letter of Beckford's "visionary pilgrimage" (Gemmett 1977: 67) begins with the remark:

> Shall I tell you my dreams? - To give an account of my time, is doing, I assure you, but little better. Never did there exist a more ideal being. A frequent mist hovers before my eyes, and, through its medium, I see objects so faint and hazy, that both their colours and forms are apt to delude me. This is a rare confession, say the wise, for a traveller to make: pretty accounts will such a one give of outlandish countries. (*Dreams*: 1)

The narrator admits to his "visionary way of gazing" (*Dreams*: 1) but also displays an ironic awareness of his own delusions. In the course of the narrative, however, Beckford is less ironic about his own visions than the peculiarities of others. The letters are marked by an alternation between frequently ironic observations of people and manners and his indulgence in sensual pleasures and flights of imagination.

The first entry in his journal establishes the pattern of the subsequent parts and foreshadows the more sinister quality of Vathek's travels. Beckford's perceptions of external reality are not interrupted by dreams; rather, his visions are punctuated by reality (Kalb 1981: 120). His visionary flights, Gertrud Kalb asserts, suspend space and time for a limited period (1981: 125). Beckford falls asleep at the very beginning of his journey and reverses his real departure by an imaginary return home, preferring illusion to reality:

> All through Kent did I doze as usual; now and then I opened my eyes to take in an idea or two of the green, woody country through which I was passing; then closed them again, transported myself back to my native hills, thought I led a choir of those I loved best through their shades, and was happy in the arms of illusion [...]. How often did I try to wish away the reality of my separation from those I love, and attempt to persuade myself it was but a dream. (*Dreams*: 1-3)

Here, the dream of the other inside literally impedes his perception of the other outside. The traveller appreciates the twilight, that period of transition between daylight and darkness, which obstructs perception and gives rise to visions that reflect his imagination (cf. Kalb 1981: 122). Thus, on his first visit to the cathedral of Canterbury at dusk, he seems to hear a voice in the dark that enjoins him not to change his itinerary, which is likened to a skeleton, with its toes in Ghent and with its skull in Rome. The voice engenders a nightmare of horrors, which is omitted from the travelogue but foreshadows the Gothic journey in the Orient. Time and again, Beckford's internal other, the Orient, is superimposed upon, or displaces, the perceptions of the external other in the South (cf. Serghini 1998: 49).

Beckford considers the journey through Europe as a means to an end and the Alps as an impediment to his arrival in the classical Italy of his mind: "I was quite vexed [...] to think that I had still so many tramontane regions to pass before I could in effect reach that classic country, where my spirit had so long taken up its abode" (*Dreams*: 15). For Beckford, Italy is characterised by the juxtaposition of the sublime and the picturesque in landscape and in architecture. He has to traverse a rocky pass that is guarded by a terrifying fortress before he descends into the picturesque country near the rampart of Bassano, "whose classic appearance recalled the memory of former times, and answered exactly the ideas I had pictured to myself of Italian edifices" (75). Beckford also mentions that the northern provinces of Italy touch "the whiskers of the Turkish empire" (75). In the course of his journey, he perceives a discrepancy between the classical Western heritage and the Eastern influence in contemporary Italy. He conceives that both cultures are past their prime and merely visible in decline and ruins in Italy (cf. 123, 183-4, 224-5).

The Orient meets the Occident in Italian architecture. Beckford looks at "the great mosque, I ought to say the church of St Mark," through oriental spectacles, inspired by "its cupolas, slender pinnacles, and semicircular arches" (87). He is fascinated by "uninterrupted series of arcades and marble columns" (88), "grotesque wreaths of foliage," "the noble irregularity of [these] stately piles" (89), "an endless flight of steps" (151), the arcade of a "cloister, which is carved with innumerable stars and roses, partly Gothic and partly Saracenical" (155). In Venice, he walks the "labyrinths of streets, canals, and alleys, in search of amber and oriental curiosities" and imagines himself to be "in the bazaars of

Constantinople" next to mosques and a palace with "some vast seraglio, full of arabesque saloons, embroidered sofas, and voluptuous Circassians" (269). He considers the dome in Pisa with its "confusion of ornaments" an oriental dream come true: "The dome gives the mass an oriental appearance, which helped to bewilder me; in short, I have dreamed of such buildings, but little thought they existed" (154). Italian architecture embodies Beckford's English vision of an enticing and bewildering Orient.

The residential chambers of the doge's palace in Venice located above the water level are built on top of the prison caverns below the canals. Beckford is scandalised by imagining how that palace is the site of luxurious festivities above the heads of the incarcerated victims of arbitrary power. Beckford tones down terror by irony:

> Sometimes, by way of clemency, it [the Doge's tribunal, M.M.] condemns its victims to perpetual imprisonment, in close, stifling cells, between the leads and beams of the palace; or, unwilling to spill the blood of a fellow-citizen, generously sinks them into dungeons deep under the canals which wash its foundations; so that, above and below, its majesty is contaminated by the abodes of punishment. (Dreams: 96-7)

Beckford's horror makes him want to invoke Neptune's wrath and earthquakes to destroy the edifice. He is haunted by his own imagination of the scenes and feels compelled to draw the dungeons: "I drew chasms and subterraneous hollows, the domain of fear and torture, with chains, racks, wheels, and dreadful engines in the style of Piranesi" (98). His sketch of the ducal residence as a site of luxury and torture is fleshed out by scenes of pleasure and cruelty in Vathek's oriental palace. His disgust with the doge and his enlarged version, Vathek, is transformed into Vathek's punishment in the subterranean palace, which promises short-lived pleasure, but also eternal pain. The underground palace in Istakhar allows Beckford to legitimise his fascination with torture because the infliction of horror and pain turns from an instrument of the doge's perversion of justice into that of Eblis' ethics of revenge.

The divisions between day and night as well as order and dissolution are added to those between the spheres above and below the ground. The Venetians go oriental at night. Respectable worthies indulge in transgressive pleasures that are not permitted to see the light of day. For example, a magistrate discards his professional diurnal solemnity and enjoys the nocturnal pleasures of "the reigning sultana" (90). Beckford is fascinated by the real orientals in the nightly crowds on the Babylonian square of St Mark's but less so by the orientalised Venetians in the casino. The lazy and languid society of dissolute ladies and gentlemen who spend the night gossiping and gambling is only temporarily animated by the magic beverage from the East, coffee (cf. 90-3). Upon hearing

that the Venetians hardly ever sleep in their pursuit of amusement, Beckford criticises their languor and listlessness: "I can scarcely regard their Eastern neighbours in a more lazy light; and am apt to imagine, that instead of slumbering less than any other people, they pass away their lives in one perpetual doze" (93-4). Unwittingly, Beckford comes close to describing himself in this statement, since our champion of reveries never seems to grow tired of his virtual marathon of slumbers. In Italy, he also revels at night and dozes during daytime (cf. 77). On his grand tour of naps, the traveller often reveals disinterest in the ordinary tourist sights. He is bored with watching sculptures of dancers or archers, but fascinated by sleeping figures, especially a marble Morpheus whom he could watch for hours: "I contemplated the God with infinite satisfaction, till I felt an agreeable sleepiness steal over my senses, and should have liked very well to doze away a few hours by his side" (143). His own inactivity, however, pretends to more than mere idleness, because it generates reveries and dreams that inspire his writing.

In a daydream that repeats his oriental Christmas party at Fonthill on a much larger scale, Beckford transcends space and time as he transforms St Peter's in Rome into his private oriental pleasure dome (cf. 187-9). In a provocative move, he establishes the oriental in the Christian cathedral as a literal site of pleasure:[2] he would redecorate the church and turn it into a retreat for himself and those he loves. He would shade the windows with transparent yellow silk to give the illusion of perpetual summer, and create artificial firmaments with numerous tapers in lanterns as the Chinese emperor Ki did. "I should like of all things to immure myself, after his example, with those I love; forget the divisions of time, have a moon at command, and a theatrical sun to rise and set, at pleasure" (188). His indulgence in this decadent vision of suspended time and blasphemous pleasure undermines his criticism of the degenerate Venetians and prefigures Vathek's oriental retreats. But at the end of his sojourn in Italy, Beckford yearns for a refuge in England that seems to be more classical than those he found in Italy: "I cannot help sighing after my native hills and copses: which look (I know not how it happens) more like the haunts of Pan, than any I have seen in Italy" (231).

It comes as a kind of retraction when Beckford, who indulges in the oriental in Italy, reasserts his Englishness in his last letter of the first excursion (cf. 234). He resumes the difference between ancient classical and modem orientalised Italy. Beckford's contemporary Italians are the Orientals of the Occident. The Occident at its best is now represented by the English, who preserve the classical tradition through their reading of Greek and Roman literature. The moralising patriotic conclusion reveals the limits of propriety to the orientalised persona that

2 Beckford's Protestant English readers might not have taken offence at the orientalising of the dome but appreciated the implied comparison between Catholicism and paganism.

Beckford presents in the travelogue. The retraction may have served as a concession to the political career his family intended him to pursue.

2 Beckford's Gothic Novel *Vathek* (1786)

In his Gothic novel, Beckford gives free reign to his oriental imagination, which was curbed in the travelogue in order to protect his reputation. Beckford's contemporary Venice represents a degenerate stage of the present Orient, whereas *Vathek* puts forth a vital stage of the past Orient. The travelogue reveals moderate transgressions of the boundaries of propriety and possibility. The novel expresses the unmentionable of the Italian traveller's dreams. The fictional reality transcends the limitations of the travelogue because of its use of the grotesque to represent oriental excesses of sensuality, irrationality, and amorality (cf. Graham 1978: 62).

The omniscient narrator's irony towards, and identification with, the Gothic hero recalls the first-person narrator's "English" distance towards his orientalised past self in the reflections that frame the Italian tour. Robert J. Gemmett notes that in the Gothic novel the intrusive humour diminishes the intensity of the fantasy but that "the comedy cannot hide the moral anarchy that the author finds so powerfully attractive" (1977: 97). The protagonist Vathek is a Westernised oriental (Garrett 1992: 28), who inverts the orientalised Westerner Beckford of the grand tour to Italy. John Garrett stresses Vathek's Faustian desire to know everything and his attempt to put Western bounds around Eastern boundlessness (1992: 26), an attitude which seems to oppose the Italian traveller's escapist reveries. But the oriental traveller Vathek is a complementary rather than an opposite version of the Italian traveller Beckford.

Beckford neglects the European countries on his way to the country of his dreams, as Vathek ignores the lands he has to traverse in order to reach the site of the pre-Admit treasures that were promised him.

The Protestant traveller that he is would like to avoid any experience that offends his ideological predilections and aesthetic sensibility but time and again wakes up to witness unpleasant people or scenes abroad. Vathek is less interested in knowledge *per se* than in knowledge that asserts his own position and his self-esteem: he taunts and silences the sages who contradict his arguments or reveal unpleasant truths. On his journey to Istakhar, Vathek's sweet dreams of the promised treasures are suddenly interrupted by wild animals attacking his caravan. He is compelled to step out into a world of chaos and destruction: Vathek, "the commander of the faithful [...], who vented on the occasion a thousand blasphemies, was compelled to touch, with his sacred feet, the naked earth" (*Vathek*: 190-1). The hedonist is all of a sudden confronted with revolting stench, ugliness, and horror, which offend his refined taste and sensibilities.

The Gothic locations intensify the function of architecture and landscape in Italy as sites of pleasure and terror, which are often contiguous. The subjective vision of picturesque and sublime sites in the travelogue gives way to objectified expressions of desires and fears in Gothic architecture and landscape. The absolute oriental ruler can indulge in pleasures which the Italian traveller could only dream of, because he wields the power to shape the world according to his desires. Architecture, Alan Liu maintains, serves as an "organism, an incarnation of the hero" (1984: 188). For example, Vathek's palace of pleasures promises the unending gratification of his insatiable desires (without the surfeit that seems to mar the nightly circles of Venice). Subterranean passages link the palace with "mysterious recesses" (Vathek: 177) beneath Vathek's observation tower. The vaults contain the paraphernalia of horror that Vathek's Greek mother Carathis uses for her black magic in order to propitiate the powers of darkness. Whereas the palace is an expression of Vathek's excessive desire for sensual experience, the huge tower symbolises his inordinate desire for supernatural knowledge of the future, transgressing human limits of space and time (cf. Fothergill 1990: 41-2; Frank 1990: 164). An ironic twist of fate turns his high ambition into deepest frustration, which is aptly mirrored in the ascent to the tower and the descent into hell. The sublime forms of architecture and landscape are "dynamic" (Baridon 1990: 80) due to often ironic interventions of supernatural forces, which play with Vathek's desires and anxieties. Thus, supernatural powers help to raise the tower to unprecedented heights but frustrate Vathek's expectations of superior insight. Looking down onto the world, Vathek feels aggrandised, but looking up at the stars, he feels minute and discovers his own limitations rather than supernatural secrets. Upon Vathek's disavowal of Mohammed in an Edenic valley, a terrible Giaour opens a chasm at the bottom of which the protagonist perceives the locked ebony portal that leads to the treasures and powerful talismans in the subterranean palace. The Giaour makes Vathek sacrifice the fifty most beautiful sons of his nobility as a prerequisite to opening the gates to the treasures, only to close the chasm after the carnage.

The Indian Giaour taunts Vathek and lures him to a journey from Samarah in Iraq to Istakhar in Persia, where he will gain access to the subterranean palace in order to complete his quest for ultimate pleasure and power. His journey, Peter Hyland writes, "is a steady descent from the mountain and the tower of intellectual curiosity into the abyss of the unconscious" (1990: 148), the hell of nightmares. The journey to the East and into the earth turns out to be a circular journey back home and inwards, doubling and continuing Beckford's journey to the South. Similar to the injunction given to Beckford not to leave his Italian itinerary, the Giaour warns Vathek not to deviate from his way to the East by entering any dwelling on the way. Just as the Italian traveller is lured to nightly dissipations in Venice on his way to Rome, Vathek enters Fakreddin's vast

palace, where he relishes delicious food and falls in love with his host's daughter, with whom he escapes to an idyllic valley that he encloses for the enjoyment of their private pleasure.

Critics point out that the transgression of liminal spaces characterises both the Italian and the Eastern journey, but they rarely analyse the functional differences between the locations in the two different genres.[3] Italy serves as a threshold to the Orient. Beckford is able to take part in, and leave, nocturnal parties, whose orientalised participants are almost paralysed in a sort of death-in-life trance. The catacombs in Rome, the 'skull' of Beckford's itinerary, seem to offer communication with the lower world. But Beckford returns to England and postpones his exploration of "what passes in the dark regions beyond the tomb" (*Dreams*: 190), until he writes his Gothic novel. Vathek's voyage of no return to the East of the Orient passes the portals of ebony as the final threshold to a vividly experienced life in death. In the end, Beckford's Orient is a nightmarish inversion of his decadent Italy, and *Vathek*'s ending represents the Italian traveller's potential fate, had he not been able to disentangle himself from his Italian temptations.

At the end of the Gothic journey, landscape and architecture have lost any picturesque qualities in favour of an overpowering sublime effect. Vathek's entry into the valley of Istakhar recalls Beckford's passage into Italy: the protagonist has to cross high mountains and to pass "two towering rocks that form a kind of portal to the valley, at the extremity of which rose the vast ruins of Istakhar" (*Vathek*: 242). In opposition to the pastoral valley of Bassano, which promises a comfortable life in the South, the depopulated nocturnal world of ruins foreshadows suffering and death in the East. However, Vathek, with his propensity to ignore unpleasant information, does not know that the vast, immense ruins of the awe-inspiring palace symbolise the futility of the great Soliman Ben Daoud's aspirations. That presumptuous powerful ruler "commanded the Genii to rear the stupendous palace of Istakhar, and the terrace of the watch-towers" (249) to be able to observe the stars. He prefigures Vathek's fate since his doubts of God's existence and ignorance of heaven's vengeance led to his fall and the destruction of his palace (cf. 248-9). Vathek and his beloved Nouronihar are too eager to heed the evil forebodings. They proceed even as the mountain adjacent to the palace trembles, the rock yawns and discloses an endless stair-case that is so steep that "they felt their steps accelerate to such a degree, that they seemed not walking but falling from a precipice"

3 Shaffer points out that the metaphor of liminal space, which characterises Beckford's Venice, its "geography, borders, frontiers, modes of transition and passage of the impassable" (1999: 77) and which gives the opportunity for transgressions into the erotic and exotic, recurs in *Vathek*. Liu states that *Vathek*'s "plot is all preliminary, all a threshold ritual" (1984: 193), like his coming-of-age ceremony at Fonthill. I would like to stress that Beckford endorses both limits and transgressions, highlighting provocation and punishment in *Vathek*.

(244). At the end of the staircase Vathek recognises the familiar portal of ebony. In opposition to the metaphorical gate of ebony that Beckford enters and leaves at will for his reveries during the Italian journey {*Dreams*: 15), the real portal of ebony closes behind Vathek forever.

Beckford himself suggested that the huge hall and numerous passages of old Fonthill inspired the conception of the subterranean palace (Fothergill 1990: 44). Several critics claim that Beckford's hell is a nightmare in architecture based on Piranesi's *Carceri d'invenzione* (Borges 1979: 144; Praz 1986: 18-19; Massara 1978: 91-2). Either way, the design of Beckford's architecture at Fonthill, in Italy, and in the Orient forms an incremental repetition that increasingly expands the limits of the finite and the possible. The most extravagant subterranean palace is like a world within the world, so vast that "though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, [it] was so spacious and lofty, that at first they took it for an immeasurable plain" (*Vathek*: 245).

Life in hell inverts previous versions of the motif of the immured lovers: Beckford relished memories of having been locked up with his beloved and his young friends at Fonthill at Christmas for three days, indulging in a stunning oriental party of luxury and decadence (Gemmett 1977: 84-5). The traveller redesigns St Peter's in his imagination into an oriental pleasure dome where he would be immured with his beloved and his friends until the end of their days. The Gothic palace of Eblis combines the features of the oriental pleasure dome and the subterranean torture chambers of the Doge's palace: the immured lovers are entitled to enjoy its treasures for a short period of time before they will be condemned to eternal punishment, a verdict that immediately extinguishes their desire for pleasure. The impending punishment deters the lovers from their pursuit of the ultimate goal, which motivated them to enter the subterranean palace. The ironic moral turn at the ending of *Vathek* questions the viability of his previous versions of escape from reality and ethics.

Even if the final moral turn fails to convince the reader of its seriousness, considering the relish with which Vathek's erotic and moral transgressions are portrayed (Liu 1984: 201), its effect is powerful and lasting. Vathek's and Nouronihar's hearts are ignited, their love turns to loathing, and they are condemned to wander forever in circles, isolated in the whirl of multitudes. The ending abounds with irony. The protagonists aspire to obtain everything and are left with nothing. They are condemned to live in "a world of futility, alienation, and meaninglessness" (Graham 1978: 70) at the dark, evil centre of the earth within a moral universe that is ruled by a god who is hardly visible. Jürgen Klein argues that eternity is subjected to time and space in the subterranean palace, because Vathek's eternal circles mock his attempts to transgress human limits and to strive for the infinite, because his range of movements is confined to hell (1990: 195). The absurd circular movement with a burning heart symbolises the

frustration of Vathek's ardent desire for the knowledge of treasures and pleasures and can be read as a satire on occidental Enlightenment's futile attempt to grasp an oriental "darkness" it constructed in the first place. The progressive, if interrupted journey towards a desired end terminates in a circular repetitive movement without rest and end.

Robert J. Gemmett correctly argues that "it is difficult to avoid reading the caliph's journey as simultaneously a journey into the self' (1977: 98; Serghini 1998: 47), but his explanation of the story as "a wish-fulfilment for a troubled and repressed young man" (Gemmett 1977: 98) fails to provide a convincing interpretation of the ending of *Vathek*. At the end of Vathek's oriental journey into night, Beckford has reached his own heart of darkness, and the imaginary voyage out is a voyage in and back into the past. As a boy, he complied with the rules but continued to rebel as he burnt his oriental drawings at his tutor's orders (Chapman 1972: xvii) without extinguishing his ardent desire for oriental knowledge. If Vathek is punished for his inordinate Western desire to know everything by the burning of his heart, Beckford's own early punishing of the oriental in his self is redirected to the self in the Gothic protagonist, but only after he has vicariously indulged in oriental excesses. Beckford had a deep insight into the interdependence of rules and transgressions and seems to have had a need for both of them. His return to England from Italy corresponds to his retraction in the travelogue and to Vathek's confinement in the Gothic novel. Beckford shrank back from his own immersion in the orientalised decadence of his Italy and dutifully returned to England only to pursue his imaginary journey further to the East, which exceeded his visit and vision of the South. The general dissolution of cultural boundaries between East and West in the permissive South offered pleasures hitherto unknown to the Romantic rebel without a cause but in comparison with the more restrictive Protestant England gave him less opportunity for individual prominence by violating cultural norms.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Beckford, William (1972). *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents: The Travel- Diaries of William Bedford of Fonthill*. Ed. Guy Chapman. New York: Kraus, I: 1-313.

Beckford, William (1986). *Vathek*. *Three Gothic Novels*. Ed. Peter Fairclough. London: Penguin, 149-255.

Secondary Sources

Baridon, Michel (1990). "Vathek - Megalomaniac Caliph or Pundit of the Avant-Garde?" Vathek and the Escape from Time: Bicentenary Revaluations. Ed. Kenneth W. Graham. New York: AMS, 73-95.

Bode, Christoph (1994). "Beyond/around/into one's own: Reiseliteratur als Paradigma von Welt-Erfahrung." Poetica 26.1-2: 70-87.

Borges, Jorge Luis (1979). "Über den Vathek von William Beckford." Gesammelte Werke. Vol. V.2: Essays, 1952-1979. Transi. Karl August Horst, Curt Meyer-Clason, and Gisbert Haefs. München: Hanser, 140-5.

Chapman, Guy (1972). "Memoir of William Beckford." Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents: The Travel-Diaries of William Beckford of Fonthill. Ed. Guy Chapman. New York: Kraus, I: xiii-lxii.

Fothergill, Brian (1990). "The Influence of Landscape and Architecture on the Composition of Vathek." Vathek and the Escape from Time: Bicentenary Revaluations. Ed. Kenneth W. Graham. New York: AMS, 33-47.

Frank, Frederick S. (1990). "The Gothic Vathek: The Problem of Genre Resolved." Vathek and the Escape from Time: Bicentenary Revaluations. Ed. Kenneth W. Graham. New York: AMS, 157-72.

Garrett, John (1992). "Ending in Infinity: William Beckford's Arabian Tale." Eighteenth-Century Fiction 5.1: 15-34.

Gemmett, Robert J. (1977). William Beckford. Boston: Twayne.

Graham, Kenneth W. (1978) "Implications of the Grotesque: Beckford's Vathek and the Boundaries of Fictional Reality." Tennessee Studies in Literature 23: 61-74.

Hyland, Peter (1990). "Vathek, Heaven and Hell." Vathek and the Escape from Time: Bicentenary Revaluations. Ed. Kenneth W. Graham. New York: AMS, 145-56.

Kalb, Gertrud (1981). Bildungsreise und literarischer Reisebericht: Studien zur englischen Reiseliteratur (1700-1850). Nürnberg: Hans Carl.

Klein, Jürgen (1990). "Vathek and Decadence." Vathek and the Escape from Time: Bicentenary Revaluations. Ed. Kenneth W. Graham. New York: AMS, 173-200.

Korte, Barbara (1996). Der englische Reisebericht: Von der Pilgerfahrt bis zur Postmoderne. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Liu, Alan (1984). "Toward a Theory of Common Sense: Beckford's Vathek and Johnson's Rasselas" Texas Studies in Literature and Language 26.2: 183- 217.

Massara, Giuseppe (1978). "G.B. Piranesi and the Novel." Studi inglesi 5: 77-92. Praz, Mario (1986). "Introductory Essay." Three Gothic Novels. Ed. Peter Fairclough. London: Penguin, 7-34.

Serghini, El Habib Benrahhal (1998). "William Beckford's Symbolic Appropriation of the Oriental Context." *Oriental Prospects: Western Literature and the Lure of the East*. Ed. C.C. Barfoot and Theo D'haen. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 43-64.

Shaffer, Elinor (1999). "William Beckford in Venice, Liminal City: The Pavilion and the Interminable Staircase." *Venetian Views, Venetian Blinds: English Fantasies of Venice*. Ed. Manfred Pfister and Barbara Schaff. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 73-88.