5. The French in London during the 1830s: multidimensional occupancy

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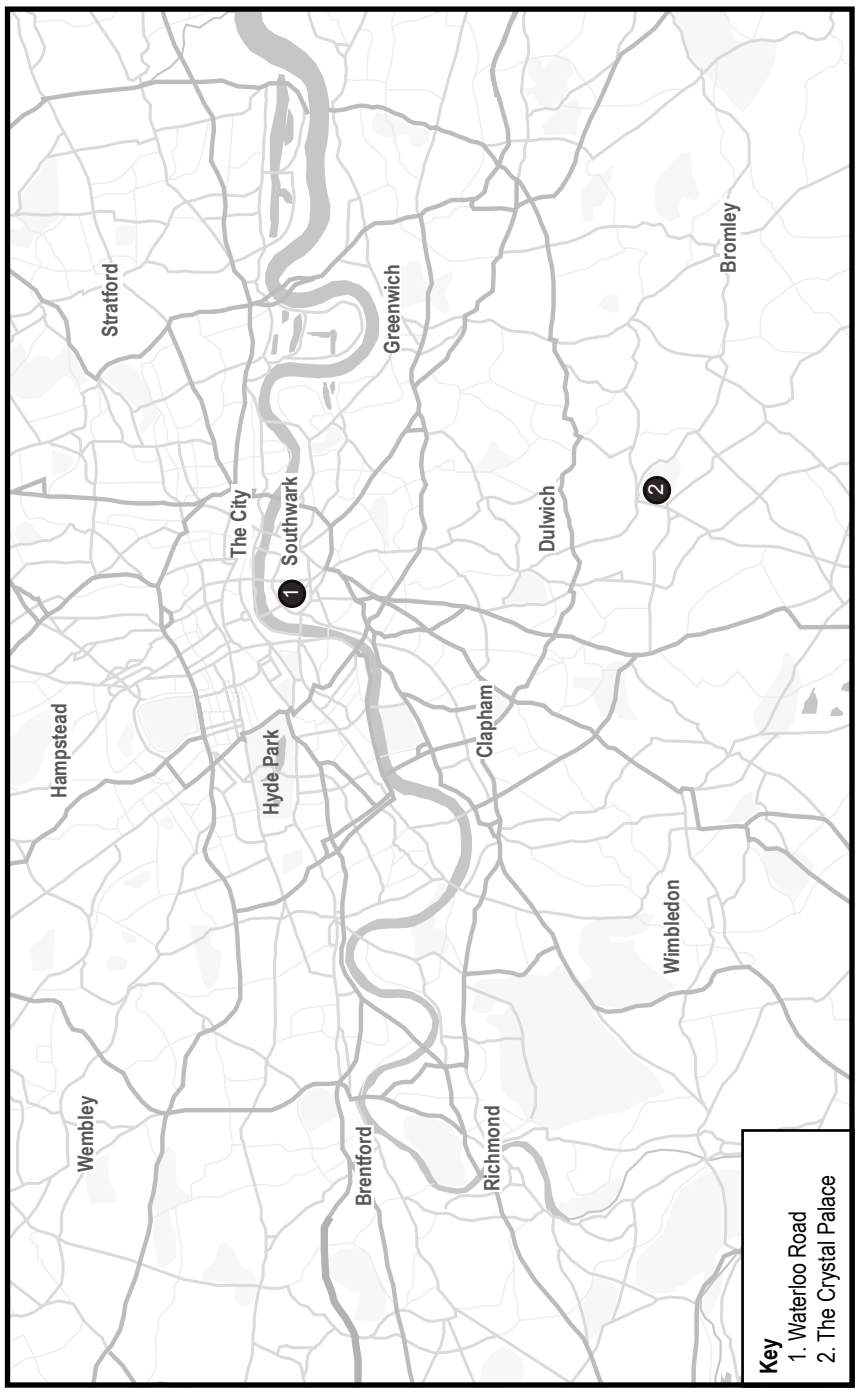
Introduction

There is a long tradition of French political writers who, having visited London, then published their impressions of either the political system or the climate, or of both, Montesquieu and Voltaire being notable examples from the eighteenth century. Their remarks depended on a range of factors – personal tastes, experience as a visitor, knowledge gleaned from encounters in London, and strength of feeling about political, economic and social developments in France as well as in Britain. Much less attention has been paid to the French attitudes to encounters with their compatriots: much more common is the French interpretation of the British. As many previous studies have demonstrated, cross-national writers used their specific knowledge of their own home nation as a point of reference to offer a critique of the host country, with varying differences of opinion – Anglophile, Francophile, Anglophobic and Francophobic.[1] This chapter will address for the first time the question of how the subject of the French in London occurred in writers' accounts during the July Monarchy, a rather neglected era in comparative studies of Britain and France, but no less significant for our understanding of the French presence in London at that time. We shall see that the writers selected each reflect developments in France as well as events in London according to their individual standpoint. Yet they also reflect a multiple occupancy of London, simultaneously extending the boundaries of their knowledge as travellers beyond their real and imagined 'natural' home – in this case outside the French national space – but all the while interacting with what they find in London, including with other French citizens. Their residence in London reinforced their French identity as individuals while contributing generally to spreading knowledge of the city. Using the examples of Jules Michelet (1798–1874),

[1] For the French socialists' critique (including that of Flora Tristan) of England, 'the mother country of modern industrialism and capitalism where "unfettered individualism" found its fullest expression, and not in France', see K. W. Swart, '"Individualism" in the mid-19th century (1826–60)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, xxiii (1962), 77–90, at p. 81. See also *La France et l'Angleterre au XIXe siècle*, ed. S. Aprile and F. Bensimon (Paris, 2006).



Map 5.1. Places mentioned in the text (Base map: 2013)

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–59) and Flora Tristan (1803–44), I will suggest that their inclusion of their impressions of other French citizens is part of their physical and intellectual occupancy of London.

French writers visiting London have been analysed in many other genres of scholarship, of which three are of relevance to this investigation: urban studies, comparative studies of Britain and France, and the literature of travel writing. In the first instance, in a study of how cities were interpreted in the nineteenth century, a distinction is made between the approaches of ideologues towards London:

> Evaluations of urban society in Britain both reflected and helped to define foreign ideological orientations. Liberals tended to look on British cities favourably … The rising strength of socialism on the European continent added a noticeably more radical flavor to the discussion of British towns by Frenchmen and Germans than was to be found in the writings of their British contemporaries.[2]

According to Lees, the July Monarchy was a particularly intense moment of scrutiny of London and Britain from the continent:

> After the 1840s, continental writers showed diminished interest in British society … Frenchmen and Germans had flocked to Britain for over two decades in large part because they saw there not only promise but also problems, and as the difficulties stemming from the early phases of the industrial revolution abated so too did the desire among foreigners to make sense of the British experience … As France and Germany started to compete with Britain in the race to industrialize, writers in these countries became increasingly concerned with their own urban societies.[3]

Since of the three French writers under consideration here – Michelet, Tocqueville and Tristan – the last-named is the one who wrote extensively about the phenomenal urban change in London, it is not surprising to find her included by Lees, who offers a useful outline of what London constituted as a geographical entity for her:

> At the very start ... she indicated her critical intentions by emphasizing the enormous contrasts presented by the major geographical subdivisions of the metropolis: the commercial 'City', the aristocratic West End, and the vast territories to the northeast and the south inhabited by often impoverished workers … The rest of the work offered a series of impressions of London life, ranging from the slums of St. Giles to the race tracks at Ascot.[4]

[2] A. Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban and American Thought, 1820–1940* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 58–60.

[3] Lees, *Cities Perceived*, pp. 68–9.

[4] Lees, *Cities Perceived*, pp. 61–2.

This brief analysis is found wanting, however, from a gender perspective. In spite of his continual reference to any French writer as 'Frenchman' throughout his study, Lees cites Tristan without referring once to the gender insight of her writing. His brief inclusion of Tristan concluded (without substantiating his claim) that her book had had some considerable success. The fact is, as Bédarida asserted, evidence of its impact has yet to come to light on the London side of the Channel, although it was published simultaneously in both countries in 1840.[5] Reactions to Tristan as a French visitor in Britain are equally difficult to detect, although there had been references to her as the author of *Peregrinations of a Pariah* in the London and regional press at the time of the trial of her husband, André Chazal, for the attempted murder of his wife in September 1838, most of the accounts taken second hand from the *Gazette des tribunaux*.[6] Under the heading, 'Life in London', one provincial newspaper quoted an extract from *Promenades dans Londres*, obliquely reporting at second hand the extract by Flora Tristan on 'Splashing Houses' in London from her sketch on 'les Puffs anglais', finishing with her comment: '"We give," says the writer, "the example above cited to show that in England, that classic land of hypocrisy, there is nothing neglected to give effect to their pretensions to importance, and to usurp confidence"'.[7]

In the second genre, comparative studies of Britain and France, the July Monarchy seems to be almost passed over; the strong moments of Franco-British relations being the Revolution of 1789 and the 1914–18 war. In one study, the nineteenth century is quite overlooked, with a jump from Waterloo to the crises over colonial expansion around Fashoda.[8] In addition, considering that the capital city was (and still is) often the only place visited or mentioned in accounts by excursionists in the early nineteenth century, it is surprising how eclipsed London becomes in accounts of the functioning of 'English' society.[9] Yet as we shall see, the 1830s saw an increase in traffic to and from the continent, with important developments

[5] For a more detailed account of the circumstances of its publication, see M. Cross, 'Cross-Channel reflections on Flora Tristan's *Promenades dans Londres*', in *Regards croisés sur la Grande-Bretagne: textes rassemblés à la mémoire de François Poirier*, ed. M. Parsons and F. Bensimon (*Revue française de civilisation britannique*, hors série, forthcoming).

[6] See *The Examiner*, 10 Apr. 1838; *Freeman's Journal*, 17, 22 Sept. 1838; *Champion and Weekly Herald*, 23 Sept. 1838; *Morning Post*, 4, 10 Feb. 1839; *Essex Standard*, 12 Sept. 1839.

[7] *Essex Standard*, 9 Dec. 1842; *West Kent Guardian*, 10 Dec. 1842.

[8] Aprile and Bensimon, *La France et l'Angleterre*, p. 6.

[9] 'England' and 'London' are highly ambiguous geographical terms, used interchangeably, as are the 'French revolutions' of 1789, 1830 and 1848. For a discussion of the imprecision and persistence of the French use of *Angleterre*/'England' as a political and geographical term, see Aprile and Bensimon's introduction to *La France et l'Angleterre*, p. 8.

of mass tourism, added to which visits from France to England in the nineteenth century are punctuated by political crises in France (1830, 1848–52, 1870–1) and stimulated, as our examples are, by curiosity about the 'English phenomenon' of industrialization. We shall see that the London of the period of the July Monarchy, as a capital city, was a space where the transmission of cultural differences was facilitated, and where stereotypes of the French endured and were retransmitted. Taking examples of individual French visitors' opinions of other French people in London we can enrich and nuance our understanding of the transmission and use of stereotypes. I suggest that this evidence expresses a doubly important national presence of the French in London: 'There can be a more nuanced study of utilization and representation of the other which sees beyond stereotypes of rejection or commemoration'.[10]

Of course, we are using individual trajectories, the momentary appearance of which in London is described even more briefly, and the impressions of which are largely anecdotal. Yet, as Aprile and Bensimon state:

> the accounts of writers or diplomats, men and women, told as individual trajectories, also reveal group mobility … these [examples] as such are only some of the many threads woven between the two countries … but their impact and meaning often go beyond the case of the individual concerned.[11]

Within the third genre, of the travelogue in literature, Flora Tristan's *Promenades dans Londres* is very much in the shadow of her better-known work on Peru, *Pérégrinations d'une paria*.[12] One author considers Flora Tristan as a woman who moves back into the past, in contrast to Tocqueville, whom he sees as a man who moves towards the future.[13] We shall see that Tristan was fully aware of the implications for the future after being in London.

[10] 'Hormis cette déclinaison des stéréotypes, il est de regard plus nuancés, des usages et de représentations de l'autre qui échappent au rejet ou même à la célébration' (Aprile and Bensimon, *La France et l'Angleterre*, p. 15). All translations are by Máire Cross unless otherwise stated.

[11] 'ce sont les trajectoires individuelles qui disent aussi la mobilité des hommes et des représentations à travers la vie d'écrivains ou de diplomates, d'hommes et de femmes … ces [exemples] ne sont, par nature, que quelques-uns des innombrables fils tissés entre les deux pays … Mais leur portée et leur signification dépassent souvent les cas individuels dont il est question' (Aprile and Bensimon, *La France et l'Angleterre*, pp. 16–17).

[12] For a literature-based study of Flora Tristan as female traveller in Peru, see C. Nesci, *Le Flâneur et les flâneuses: les femmes et la ville romantique* (Grenoble, 2007). In contrast, the absence of any women in a recent study of travel in 19th-century French literature is baffling, if not unacceptable (*Le Voyage et la mémoire au XIXe siècle*, ed. S. Moussa and S. Venayre (Paris, 2007)).

[13] O. Ette, *Literature on the Move*, trans. K. Vester (Amsterdam and New York, 2003), pp. 23, 58.

Figure 5.1. Flora Tristan.

This chapter also examines the cross-political attitudes of French visitors to London: Michelet, Tocqueville and Tristan did not move in the same political circles, but the sum of their presence enshrines French politics across political boundaries: 'The intention is for matters and people who never would nor could be associated otherwise, to be considered together'.[14]

Ideologies are not the only focus for the French in London; they were interested in their physical surroundings. To situate this study of being French in the London of the 1830s within current research on the link

[14] 'Il s'agit … de mettre sous la même bannière des objets et des sujets qui n'auraient jamais pu ou dû se côtoyer' (Aprile and Bensimon, *La France et l'Angleterre*, p. 15).

between places and ideas, I refer to Ralph Kingston's recent assessment of the work of historians in the past ten years who have 'celebrated history's rediscovery of space and place'.[15] He asks whether bricks and mortar matter, or if space is just another 'language game'.[16] The spatial turn was necessary, he suggests, because of the missing element in the analysis of 'cultural historians [who] have been less interested in the uses of physical artefacts'.[17] I argue that cultural history alone is not sufficient to contain the experience of the French in London in the mid nineteenth century. The opinions of French visitors were informed as much by bricks and mortar as they were by people and ideas: they occupied London as writers with a specific social, economic, cultural and political background, commenting on their experiences according to their gender and circumstances of travel. Their expression of their French identity is clear, as they constantly referred as individual writers to a larger group through their adherence to a French singularity. Finally, and not least, the French writing on, and presence in, London also affirm the city's identity as a space where things happen. As such, an analysis of the historical identity of the city of London is an important dimension. What kind of a place was the London of the 1830s?

London in the 1830s

The July Monarchy was noteworthy for several developments relevant to the French in London. On one side of the Channel, the industrial might of Britain and urban improvement had put London in the lead as a cosmopolitan city; it attracted commercial activity and had an open-door policy to visitors seeking to discover the essence of the London success. Added to the interest in industrial Britain, the political upheavals that began and ended the July Monarchy, and political turmoil elsewhere on the continent, had resulted in the growth of traffic to London, where political exiles proliferated.[18] The 1830s saw the dawn of the new railway age, but it was also the time of the fastest stagecoach travel to and from the continent. If Britain was in the lead for industrial growth, the July Monarchy is known as an era of advances in political ideology in France, with the development of liberalism, socialism and feminism; London was by extension an important venue for these thinkers to try out their ideas. A microcosm of France's political life made up this French presence.

[15] R. Kingston, 'Mind over matter? History and the spatial turn', *Cultural and Social History*, vii (2010), 111–21, at p. 111.

[16] Kingston, 'Mind over matter?', p. 112.

[17] Kingston, 'Mind over matter?', p. 112.

[18] See *Exiles from European Revolutions: Refugees in Mid-Victorian England*, ed. S Freitag (Oxford, 2003).

While recent scholarship in cultural history has concentrated on literary and artistic expressions of the nature of London as a city (in particular the works of the canonical Dickens, Balzac and Flaubert), the voices of political commentators are of equal interest. As with the range of literary and cultural production, London inspired a wide number of French political and professional opinions: liberals, socialists, academics, diplomats, journalists and exiles. Furthermore, comparisons were constantly being made with Paris.[19] By the mid nineteenth century, if London's reputation as a world city had spread, it was because French visitors had played no small part in the construction of its identity.

There is no doubting the significance of London and its capacity for absorbing large numbers of visitors and for enabling them to stay and work, the trend accelerating to a peak in mid century when 'nearly forty per cent of all Londoners had been born elsewhere'.[20] Yet there were ways in which northern cities were of greater novelty interest, as they were the scene of railway expansion.[21] Politically London in the 1830s was eclipsed, as major events in radical politics and industrial expansion had shifted the focus from the city. Unlike Paris, the new phenomena of mass meetings and mass demonstrations, of which both French and British governments were so fearful, were also outside the capital.[22]

Jules Michelet

Michelet did not limit his stay to London or to England. The extracts from his journal during his trip of 1834 have been published only recently as *Voyages en Angleterre*, but include descriptions of northern France on his journey via Calais, Dover and Kent to London, where he stayed from 9 to 13 August, going on from there to Warwick, Newport, Bangor, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, York, Manchester and Liverpool, and back to London before returning to Paris, all within a month from 5 August to 6 September. His account is dominated by his impressions of stagecoach travel, fellow passengers, bad weather, the beauty of the countryside, the historic contents of cathedrals and castles, and the dirt and poverty of the

[19] See, for instance, 'Paris and London, capitals of the 19th century', ed. D. Arnold, T. Rem and H. Waahlberg, special issue of *Synergies, Royaume-Uni et Irlande* (2010).

[20] F. Sheppard, 'London and the nation in the 19th century: the Prothero lecture', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxv (1985), 51–74.

[21] See Sheppard, 'London and the nation', p. 55.

[22] For a discussion on the role of Daniel O'Connell, admired and cited by Flora Tristan for holding 'monster' meetings, in the emergence of the crowd in Irish politics, see L. Colantonio, 'Mobilisation nationale, souveraineté populaire et normalisations en Irlande (années 1820–40)', *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, xli (2011), 53–69.

crowds in Dublin. While in London, Michelet encountered prominent Frenchmen, including the elder statesman and diplomat Talleyrand, and reported their conversations. The portrayal of political and economic differences between the two countries was of paramount interest for Michelet but the conversations reveal a further dimension to the French multiple occupancy of political space in London, one of different political experience and perspectives between generations, between a man who had had a long career in politics and an aspiring historian whose equally long career was ahead of him:

> At Mr de Talleyrand's for dinner at seven … After dinner Mr de Van de Veyer spoke of the important Lords' debate of the previous evening on the question of motherhood and poverty. The bishop of London, forceful and harsh, in favour of toughness; the bishop of Exeter mild and insinuating, spoke of weakness and human nature. In reality, English women fare badly from inheritance laws and are devoid of business resources, giving them more than one excuse for their moral weaknesses when they find themselves destitute and abandoned. This country is the most ideal in the whole world for Mr de Talleyrand. He is so English he makes those of us who are attached to France tremble.[23]

Michelet gave no indication about how he succeeded in gaining an invitation to dinner, but related with alarm Talleyrand's opinion that the likelihood of social unrest in Britain was remote, and that France could be spared industrialization, which was bad for national morale, and concentrate instead on developing its agricultural economy:

> There is nothing stirring. Inequality does not shock here; it is inherent in the customs. The younger son wants the eldest to inherit everything. The only poverty-stricken are the Irish; their destitution is caused solely by their addiction to gin … The big worker processions, the associations etc., are of no significance … The effect of industry is to weaken national morals. France should be agricultural.[24]

[23] 'Chez M. de Talleyrand, dîner à sept heures … Après le dîner, M. de Van de Veyer parle de l'importante discussion qui a eu lieu la veille à la Chambre des Lords, sur la question de la maternité dans le paupérisme. L'évêque de Londres fort et rude, pour la sévérité; l'évêque d'Exeter, doux et insinuant, en faveur de la faiblesse et de la nature. Dans la réalité, la femme anglaise, maltraitée par la loi de succession, étrangère aux ressources du commerce, a souvent quelque excuse de ses faiblesses dans une position malheureuse et délaissée. Ce pays-ci est l'idéal du monde pour M. de Talleyrand. Il est Anglais, à nous faire frémir, nous autres qui tenons encore à la France' (J. Michelet, *Voyages en Angleterre*, introduction by J.-F. Durand (Arles, 2005), pp. 35–6).

[24] 'Rien ne remue. L'inégalité ne choque pas ici; elle est dans les mœurs. Le cadet veut que l'aîné ait tout. Il n'y a ici, d'autre misérable que des Irlandais; leur abattement tient uniquement à l'usage du genièvre … Les grandes processions des ouvriers, les associations,

Michelet claims that Talleyrand listened more carefully to him after his objections:

> We left it there. He showed me much more consideration after this conversation. Doubtless he felt inwardly that my counter-argument was serious. If Britain becomes increasingly industrial, other countries which become increasingly specialized in agricultural production would become more and more confined, restricted in their output, dependent.[25]

Like so many visiting Britain, Michelet's awareness of the power of the industrialization process there led him to reflect on the future for France and its possible failure to industrialize. He shared his opinions on worker conditions and on class relations with a senior diplomat from Belgium: 'His opinion about this country is exactly the same as mine. Even despite the mix that the strength of trade has brought, England is synonymous with exclusion'.[26] If Michelet was anxious about exclusion he was also concerned about the increasing disparity between rich and poor, which he believed was exacerbated by the growth of cities. After his tour of Britain and Ireland he continued to write on the subject, comparing England unfavourably to France.[27]

Alexis de Tocqueville

In contrast to Michelet, the liberal Tocqueville displayed an admiration for the ability of the English aristocracy to adjust better than their counterparts

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etc., n'ont rien de sérieux … L'industrie ne fait qu'affaiblir la moralité nationale. Il faut que la France soit agricole' (Michelet, *Voyages en Angleterre*, pp. 36–7).

[25] 'Nous en sommes restés là. Il m'a témoigné beaucoup plus d'égards après cette conversation. Sans doute, il sentait intérieurement que les objections étaient sérieuses. L'Angleterre deviendrait de plus en plus industrieuse, les autres pays de plus en plus agricoles dans la spécialité de leur principale production naturelle, c'est-à-dire de plus en plus bornés, limités, dépendants' (Michelet, *Voyages en Angleterre*, pp. 36–7).

[26] 'Son avis est exactement le mien sur ce pays-ci. Le synonyme de l'Angleterre, malgré le mélange même qu'amène par force le commerce, c'est: exclusion' (Michelet, *Voyages en Angleterre*, p. 38).

[27] For a discussion of Michelet's perspective on the 'English model' of industrialization compared to that of Buret, see F. Vatin, 'Modèle et contre-modèle anglais de Jean-Baptiste Say à Eugène Buret: révolution industrielle et question sociale (1815–40)', in Aprile and Bensimon, *La France et l'Angleterre*, pp. 69–88. The conclusion ends: 'Obnubilés par la question du paupérisme industriel, qui traduisait leur défense d'un mode productif ancien contre le spectre de la fabrique, les observateurs français de l'Angleterre semblent ainsi avoir été incapables de percevoir dans les années 1830–1840, les prémices d'une transformation en profondeur du statut économique, social et politique de la classe ouvrière britannique qui s'affirmera dans la seconde moitié du siècle' (Vatin, 'Modèle', p. 88). Tristan's analysis of the workers in London was different again, as she recognized the growth of the new class. Vatin does not include her in his discussion.

in France, and for the reasonable nature of English radicals compared to the French. Arriving in England first in 1833 on a family visit as the husband of Mary Mottley, by the time of his second visit in the summer of 1835 he was a famous author: his *Democracy in America* had been published and translated. Like Michelet he expressed great misgivings about civil unrest. Interestingly, both authors were prompted to write about the treatment of women, revealing their views of gender relations of their time. Tocqueville linked his opinion of French social matters to a parliamentary enquiry in London. He was dubious about the proposed freedom to bring a paternity suit: he considered that the lack of it in France could be a suitable brake on woman's moral behaviour:

> Illegitimate children. 3 September 1833. Enquiry of paternity. For a long time I held the view that the French law forbidding this favoured bad morals. Now I am of a diametrically opposite opinion. Good morals in a people depend almost always on the women and not on the men. One can never stop men attacking. The point is therefore to make things so that they will be resisted … All the laws which make the position of a woman who falls more comfortable are therefore eminently immoral; for example laws such as ours relating to foundlings. Further, the law which permits enquiry of paternity, might well serve to restrain the men, but it greatly diminishes the strength of resistance among the women, which must be avoided at all costs. Any people which permits the enquiry of paternity is forced to believe the woman on oath, for how else can a fact of this nature be proved? The woman thus has an infallible way of diminishing the consequences of her error and even has a way of making it profitable. Thus in England a girl of the people who has illegitimate children generally marries more easily than a chaste girl.[28]

Tocqueville showed some more awareness of grass-roots movements than Talleyrand but admired the English radicals as they were in favour of consensual non-violent means, they respected property and religious beliefs and they were well read. On the other hand:

> The most characteristic trait of the French Radical is a wish to use the power of some to secure the happiness of the greatest number, and his most important means of government is material force and contempt for the law … The French Radical has the greatest mistrust for property; and, ready to violate it in practice, he attacks it in theory … One of the principal characteristics of the French Radical Party is the flaunting not only of anti-Christian opinions, but also of the most anti-social philosophical ideas … The French Radical is almost always very poor, often boorish, and still more presumptuous, and profoundly

[28] A. de Tocqueville, 'Illegitimate children', 3 Sept. 1833 (*Journeys to England & Ireland (1833 & 1835)*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. G. Lawrence and K. P. Mayer (1958), pp. 62–3).

> ignorant of political science, who understands nothing but the use of force, and deals in empty words and superficial generalisations. In brief, at present I think that an enlightened man, of good sense and good will, would be a Radical in England. I have never met those three qualities together in a French Radical.[29]

Comparison of the political conversations of French observers from very different political perspectives brings out the diversity of opinions and the opportunities that London afforded. In the first case Michelet is entertained in the home of France's most senior diplomat: in the second, Tocqueville is consulted in Westminster about parliamentary reform. Michelet and Tocqueville both referred briefly in passing to the French context of women, poverty and public morality; in neither case was women's emancipation their priority, although the effect of poverty on women was highly visible to these visitors.

Flora Tristan

Women's emancipation and London's slums were of particular interest to our third example, one of London's most singular visitors of the July Monarchy, Flora Tristan. Unlike Michelet and Tocqueville, who left brief traces of their impressions of London within other works that were published posthumously, Tristan made London the central theme of what was to be one of her major and most innovative works: *Promenades dans Londres*. While her knowledge of London was not always accurate, she wrote it specifically as a visitor and as a writer, desirous of confirming her position as a Frenchwoman who had already gained literary success and, as we have seen earlier, notoriety. Her London study subsequently secured her recognition as an original thinker among socialists. In her previous travel account as an unhappily married woman seeking her inheritance from her father's Spanish-Peruvian family and entering the literary profession, she had stressed her position as an outcast.[30] Others who have examined her originality as a female writer have emphasized equally that she overcame her lack of status by vaunting her identity as a pariah in a patriarchal society.[31] Her study of London reveals quite a different side to her self-portrayal: this time because her different national perspective equipped her with an intellectual authority which she shared with her contemporary compatriots, such as knowledge of the history of relations between Britain and France, the legacy

[29] Tocqueville, 'Radical', 29 May 1835 (*Journeys to England*, pp. 86–7).

[30] D. Nord, 'The female pariah: Flora Tristan and the paradox of homelessness', in *Home and its Dislocations in 19th-Century France*, ed. S. Nash (New York, 1993), pp. 215–30.

[31] C. Nesci, 'Flora Tristan's urban odyssey: notes on the missing flâneuse and her city', *Journal of Urban History*, xxvii (2001), 709–22.

of the French Revolution and potential for further political upheaval, and the body of literature that had already been published by French authors on social conditions in Britain. For this reason a brief comparison with impressions left by Michelet and Tocqueville is of use for us to contextualize her interest in London as part of a body of French thinking.

Promenades dans Londres contains specific references to the French in London as well as indirect references, revealing many dimensions to their occupancy of the 'monster city' as Flora Tristan called it. We shall see how she achieved this by using the 'bricks and mortar' of London, thereby creating her own space in French politics. She expresses her national identity within her political reaction to the layout of the city of London, but in spite of her close scrutiny her observations are fragmented; she strategically distances herself from French viewpoints as well as British ones, yet she also aligns herself with other French writers in her study of London. In other words, her multiple occupancy manifests both union with and fragmentation from the other foreigners present within London. As a result it is difficult to categorize her study of London, as can be seen in the limited extent to which her work on the city has been read, as a survey of urban change, a feminist political tract and as a travelogue. Tristan creates ambiguity and opacity around the spaces she occupies by shifting viewpoints and turning ideas on their heads.

Expanding the French presence in social surveys of London

One set of French people that Tristan made visible in her study was that of writers – Eugène Buret, Gustave de Beaumont and Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet being notable examples – who, like the legislators discussed by Michelet and Tocqueville, were troubled by the corruption of public morals.[32] She too was perturbed: 'In London every class of society is rotten to the core. In the child, vice precedes experience; in the old man it outlives potency. Not one family has escaped the taint of the diseases associated with debauchery'.[33] But she claimed to be even more outraged by the indifference with which London treated some of its inhabitants, and identified certain

[32] F. Tristan, *Promenades dans Londres, ou l'aristocratie et les prolétaires anglais*, ed. F. Bédarida (Paris, 1978), p. 135. Bédarida's 1978 edition provides very useful historical details from studies of poverty by Tristan's contemporaries – works by doctors as well as political economists – to which she would have had access. Of the two translations, *Flora Tristan's London Journal 1840* (trans. D. Palmer and G. Pincetl, 1980) and *The London Journal of Flora Tristan, 1842* (trans. J. Hawkes, 1982), Hawkes's 1842 version is mainly used here, as it is the 1842 edition that Bédarida annotated.

[33] 'A Londres, toutes les classes sont profondément corrompues: dans l'enfance, le vice devance l'âge; dans la vieillesse il survit à des sens éteints, et les maladies de la débauche ont pénétré dans toutes les familles' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 134 (Hawkes translation, p. 88)).

categories particularly worthy of pity: 'In the monster city there is no compassion for the victims of vice: the fate of the prostitute inspires no more pity than that of the Irishman, the Jew, the worker or the beggar'.[34]

She was not simply concerned with condemning moral decadence. By drawing attention to the outcast who had no place in London she was creating ample occupancy for herself, going beyond her role as a visitor and in doing so defining her remit of a writer who was taking on an impossible task: 'My pen refuses to describe the depths of depravity and perversion to which men sink when they are surfeited with material pleasures, when they live only through their senses and their souls are dead, their hearts withered, their minds a desert'.[35]

If Tristan saw herself as included among French authors who had already contributed to the growing trend for sociological surveys, she was also conscious of her status as a temporary occupant of London; she had to negotiate her way past national prejudice to claim a position of authority as a foreign resident to speak out on what was considered to be a rather delicate and inappropriate matter for a foreigner and a woman, prostitution:

> National vanity makes us want the country where Providence ordained our birth to reign supreme. This malevolent disposition towards other nations, the bitter fruit of past conflicts, constitutes the greatest obstacle to progress and often prevents us from acknowledging the causes of the evils which the foreign visitor calls to our attention. Then the old hatred revives, and we challenge him to furnish proof for phenomena as obvious as a Thames fog! All nations have a common interest, but as yet only a few enlightened individuals understand this, so the foreigner who dares to criticise is taken for an enemy who slanders us.[36]

Anticipating the possible suspicion and antagonism that her study would produce, Tristan used her knowledge of French and English writers,

[34] 'Dans la ville monstre, on est sans commisération pour les victimes du vice; le sort de la fille publique n'inspire pas plus de pitié que celui de l'Irlandais, du Juif, du prolétaire et du mendiant' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 134 (Hawkes translation, p. 89)).

[35] 'La plume se refuse à tracer les égarements, les turpitudes dans lesquelles se laissent entraîner les hommes blasés, qui n'ont que des sens et dont l'âme est inerte, le cœur flétri, l'esprit sans culture' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 134 (Hawkes translation, p. 88)).

[36] 'L'amour-propre national, qui nous porte à désirer que le pays où la Providence nous a fait naître prime toute la terre, cette disposition malveillante envers les autres nations, fruit amer des luttes passées et qui forme le plus grand obstacle au progrès, nous empêche souvent de reconnaître les causes des maux que l'étranger nous signale; l'esprit de haine se réveille alors, et nous le sommons de fournir des preuves pour des faits aussi manifestes que les brouillards de la Tamise; car l'unité de l'intérêt des nations n'étant encore conçue que par un petit nombre de personnes avancées, l'étranger qui ne nous approuve pas est pris pour un ennemi qui nous injurie' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 135 (Hawkes translation, p. 89)).

acquired in London, to back up her study of what she considered to be the worst form of exploitation, particularly exacerbated in the capital: 'Prostitution is found everywhere, but in London it is so widespread that it seems like an omnivorous monster'.[37] In this manner, there is a French dimension added even when discussing those who are London's social outcasts, but who are the object of French interest: 'In London a prostitute has no right to anything but the hospital, and then only of there is an *empty* bed for her' (Tristan's emphasis).[38] The location of the social outcasts that Tristan describes here was as distant as could be from French diplomats' conversations in Talleyrand's dining-room, but her cross-referencing of French fellow writers anchors her firmly among the French intelligentsia in London.

Approaches to London

Promenades dans Londres was not the only publication by Tristan resulting from her knowledge of London. Already in 1837 she had succeeded in getting into print two short articles on her observations of the city in the *Revue de Paris*. Describing the inauspicious approach to London, in 1837 Tristan conveyed a sense of disorientation at the openness, and disappointment in London's architecture:

> I had arrived almost before I noticed: I had thought that wide avenues and great monuments appropriately scaled for a capital would announce our proximity to London ages before arriving. I was really astonished to get there by bare narrow lanes and to find myself in the city when I thought I was still going through one of the villages along the way. The indistinct boundaries of a city bereft of ramparts are a disappointment. I knew that I was going to visit an open city, but who would have guessed the extent to which the outskirts of London are indistinguishable from the most humble of villages?[39]

[37] 'La prostitution existe partout, mais à Londres elle est un fait si immense qu'on la voit comme un monstre qui doit tout engloutir' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 135 (Hawkes translation, p. 89)).

[38] 'A Londres, la prostituée n'a droit qu'à l'hôpital, et encore quand il s'y trouve une place *non occupée*' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 135 (Hawkes translation, p. 89)).

[39] 'Je suis arrivée presque sans m'en douter: je me figurais que Londres me serait annoncé de loin par des avenues, des monumens [*sic*] en rapport avec ses proportions colossales et la hauteur de sa fortune. J'ai été très étonnée d'y arriver par des chemins nus, étroits, et de me trouver dans la ville lorsque je croyais traverser encore un des villages de la route. Les limites indécises des villes privées d'enceinte préparent au voyageur de pareilles déceptions. Je savais que je me rendais dans une ville ouverte; mais qui eût pensé que les approches de Londres ne se distingueraient pas de celles du plus humble des villages?' ('Lettres à un architecte anglais', *Revue de Paris* (1837), i. 37, 134–9; ii. 38, 280–95, 135).

Here she was writing for fellow French visitors, curious to see the new phenomenon of the fastest growing urban powerhouse sprawl.[40] A city of opportunity, the scale of the city and its consequences is the first striking feature, but its boundaries are unclear and distances are enormous:

> London, the centre of capital and business for the British Empire, constantly attracts new inhabitants; but the resulting advantages for industry are offset by the disadvantages caused by vast distances: the city is several cities in one and it has grown too large for people to keep in touch or to get to know one another. How can one maintain close relations with one's father, daughter, sister, friends when, in order to pay an hour's call, one must spend three hours and eight or ten francs in cab fares to make the trip?[41]

At first sight it is a city of darkness:

> the docks, the huge wharves and warehouses which cover twenty-eight acres of land; the domes, towers and buildings looming out of the fog in fantastic shapes; the monumental chimneys belching their black smoke to the heavens to proclaim the existence of a host of mighty industries; these confused images and vague sensations press almost unendurably upon the troubled soul.[42]

And of dazzling light:

> But it is especially at night that London should be seen; then, in the magic light of millions of gas-lamps, London is superb! Its broad streets stretch to infinity; its shops are resplendent with every masterpiece that human ingenuity can devise; its multitudes of men pass ceaselessly to and fro. To see all this for the first time is an intoxicating experience.[43]

[40] In the 19th century London became the home of political refugees and the 'barometer for the whole of Europe', and 'in the spring of 1829 there was an abrupt increase in the numbers of French in London' (P. Ackroyd, *London: the Biography* (2000), p. 705).

[41] 'Londres, centre des capitaux et des affaires de l'Empire britannique, attire incessamment de nouveaux habitants; mais les avantages que, sous ce rapport, il offre à l'industrie sont balancés par les inconvénients qui résultent de l'énormité des distances: cette ville est la réunion de plusieurs villes; son étendue est devenue trop grande pour qu'on puisse se fréquenter ou se connaître. Comment entretenir des relations suivies avec son père, sa fille, sa sœur, ses amis, quand, pour aller leur faire une visite d'une heure, il faut en employer trois pour le trajet et dépenser huit ou dix francs de voiture?' (Tristan, *Promenades*, pp. 67–8 (Palmer translation, p. 3)).

[42] 'les docks, immenses entrepôts ou magasins qui occupent vingt-huit acres de terrain; ces dômes, ces clochers, ces édifices auxquels les vapeurs donnent des formes bizarres; ces cheminées monumentales qui lancent au ciel leur noire fumée et annoncent l'existence des grandes usines; l'apparence indécise des objets qui vous entourent: toute cette confusion d'images et de sensations trouble l'âme – elle en est comme anéantie' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 66 (Hawkes translation, p. 17)).

[43] 'Mais c'est le soir surtout qu'il faut voir Londres! Londres, aux magiques clartés de millions de lampes qu'alimente le gaz, est resplendissant! Ses rues larges, qui se prolongent

Recognizing it as the most beautiful city in the world Tristan, as a foreigner, was nevertheless intent on uncovering what lay behind appearances of grandeur:

> no foreigner can fail to be entranced when he first enters the British capital. But I must warn you that the spell fades like a fantastic vision, a dream in the night; the foreigner soon recovers his senses and opens his eyes to the arid egotism and gross materialism which lurk behind that ideal world.[44]

Generalizations and stereotypes

Flora Tristan saw London as a very separate spatial entity, governed principally but not uniquely by a climate that created types of people: 'There is so great a difference between the climate of England, of London particularly, and that of countries on the continent in the same latitudes, that before I could talk about Londoners and their characteristics, I had to work out which aspects they owed to their climate'.[45] Her negative opinions about London and Londoners, conveyed throughout her short chapters, are well known and often commented upon.[46] Just as she was influenced by her overall opinion of London as an enormous physical space, a monster city, Tristan's basis of comparison was another city and another people – Paris and its citizens, by far superior in her eyes:

> Now it is not my intention to analyse the many and diverse factors which modify human individuality, or to examine the part played by climate, education, diet, customs, religion, government, profession, wealth, poverty, history in making one nation serious, arrogant and heroic, and another convivial, cultured and fond of pleasure; in making Parisians lively, gregarious, frank and brave, and

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à l'infini; ses boutiques, où des flots de lumière font briller de mille couleurs la multitude des chefs-d'œuvre que l'industrie humaine enfante; ce monde d'hommes et de femmes qui passent et repassent autour de vous: tout cela produit, la première fois, un effet enivrant!' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 66 (Hawkes translation, p. 17)).

[44] 'il n'est point d'étranger qui ne soit fasciné en entrant dans la métropole britannique; mais, je me hâte de le dire, cette fascination s'évanouit comme la vision fantastique, comme le songe de la nuit; l'étranger revient bientôt de son enchantement: du monde idéal il tombe dans tout ce que l'égoïsme a de plus aride et l'existence de plus matériel' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 67 (Hawkes translation, p. 17)).

[45] 'Il existe une si grande différence entre le climat de l'Angleterre, de Londres particulièrement, et celui des pays du continent situés sous les mêmes parallèles que, désirant parler du caractère des Londoniens, j'ai dû remarquer les effets qui sont propres à leur climat' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 74 (Hawkes translation, p. 24)).

[46] See, for instance, Jeremy Jennings's summary of the observations of Flora Tristan in his *Revolution and the Republic: a History of Political Thought in France since the 18th Century* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 151, 194.

> Londoners grave, unsociable, suspicious and timid, fleeing like rabbits before policemen armed with truncheons.[47]

Tristan did convey to her readers her awareness of the limitations of her study, caused by the enormity of the city of London but equally by the extent of her investigation: 'For such a study the life of not just one but several German philosophers would be too short'.[48] She admitted the danger of generalizations: in her chapter on the character of Londoners, immediately preceding that of foreigners in London, she wrote: 'I shall therefore confine myself to a rough sketch of the general character of the Londoner, and I make no claim that it holds good for everybody'.[49] Even so, she wrote about the French in categories, as we shall see. Her inclusion of prostitution, giving a feminist dimension, has also been examined by scholars, but her comments on the French in London reveal another aspect to her feminism and to her bias. She is equally severe about the French scoundrels and rogues, of whom Napoleon was the greatest.

Her authority as a writer derived from her claim to convey her 'first' impressions of London as an unbiased 'outsider'. Her ability to convey to readers a unique account relied on that stance of novelty, an artificial one since she had already been to London on more than one occasion and in more than one role, details of which are obscured by her silence, like the swirling fog of London to which she compared the murkiness of prostitution. She dated her visits and increasing familiarity with her subject by indicating a progressive change for the worse in the city:

> I have made four visits to England in recent years to study the manners and morals of its people. In 1826 I found the country very rich. In 1831 it was considerably less so, and I saw marked signs of unrest. In 1835 the middle classes were feeling the strain as well as the workers. In 1839 I returned to find the

[47] 'Je n'ai point l'intention d'analyser les nombreuses et les diverses influences qui modifient l'individualité humaine, d'examiner le degré d'action que peuvent avoir le climat, l'éducation, la nourriture, les mœurs, la religion, le gouvernement, les professions, la richesse, la misère, les événements de la vie qui font que tel peuple est grave, enflé d'héroïsme et d'orgueil, et tel autre bouffon, passionné pour les arts et les jouissances de la vie; qui rendent les Parisiens gais, communicatifs, francs et braves, et les Londoniens sérieux, insociables, défiants et craintifs, fuyants comme des lièvres devant des *policemen* armés d'un petit bâton' (Tristan, *Promenades*, pp. 74–5 (Hawkes translation, p. 24–5)).

[48] 'Ce serait là une longue étude à laquelle la vie de plusieurs philosophes allemands ne suffirait pas' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 75 (Hawkes translation, p. 25)).

[49] 'Je me bornerai donc à esquisser à grands traits le caractère général des habitants de Londres, sans prétendre à l'universalité du type' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 75 (Hawkes translation, p. 25)).

> people of London sunk in deepest poverty; disaffection and discontent were rife at every level of society.[50]

She indicated her awareness of the manner in which the French formed a dominant presence among the crowds of foreigners arriving:

> I am told that more than fifteen thousand Frenchmen live in London, to say nothing of all the Germans and Italians. Recent events have brought an influx of Spaniards and Poles as well, though I cannot be sure how many there are … it is worthy of remark that the English call all foreigners *Frenchmen* no matter what their country of origin [Tristan's emphasis].[51]

Tristan's categories of the French in London

If her figures were imprecise, Tristan knew what attracted incomers: exile, work or tourism. She categorized them by their moral worth, distinguishing above all between the honest and dishonest. On the one hand, foreigners of all classes engaged in business transactions, confident of their role in contributing to the bustling activity of the metropolis, and earned their living by the sweat of their brow:

> With the exception of refugees, all these foreigners are here *on business*; among them are numerous craftsmen in various trades, honest folk working hard to maintain their families; then there are wholesale and retail merchants, teachers dedicated to their profession, theatrical performers, doctors, members of the diplomatic corps, and lastly a floating population of travellers who stay in the country no more than a month or two. As for those who *settle down* … even the most touchy Englishman could never question their *respectability*, so they enjoy the esteem which is their due; the same is true of tourists, whose reason for being in England is plain for all to see.[52]

[50] 'Quatre fois j'ai visité l'Angleterre, toujours dans le but d'étudier ses mœurs et son esprit. En 1826 je la trouvai très-riche. En 1831, elle était beaucoup moins, et de plus je la vis très-inquiète. En 1835, la gêne commençait à se faire sentir dans la classe moyenne aussi bien que parmi les ouvriers. En 1839, je rencontrai à Londres une misère profonde dans le peuple; l'irritation était extrême, le mécontentement général' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 61 (Hawkes translation, p. 12)).

[51] 'On m'a assuré que plus de quinze mille Français habitent Londres; les Allemands et les Italiens y sont aussi en grand nombre; depuis les derniers événements, les Espagnols et les Polonais y affluent: il me serait impossible de préciser le chiffre de chacune de ces émigrations … il est à remarquer que jamais, en Angleterre, le people n'a désigné l'étranger, de quelque partie du continent qu'il fût, que par l'épithète de *Français (Frenchman)* [Tristan's emphasis]' (Tristan, *Promenades*, pp. 78–9 (Hawkes translation, p. 29)). Bédarida adds that, according to the only available census figures which date from 1851, the number of foreigners indicated by Tristan was much lower than the reality.

[52] 'A l'exception des réfugiés, tous ces étrangers sont venus *pour affaires*: parmi eux se trouvent un grand nombre d'ouvriers de divers métiers, honnêtes gens qui travaillent

While there is no specific mention of the French among the honest foreigners, Tristan is amused to uncover how the less honest took liberties with being French in London and tricked the English:

> It is droll to see a commercial traveller, a hairdresser, or some other totally uneducated person sign one of the noblest names of France with such ease and aplomb that one would think he had been *born* the Chevalier de Choiseul or the Vicomte de Montmorency … The mania for titles has now reached such a pitch in London that *kept women* and even *prostitutes* use them *as a ladder to fortune*; these ladies insist on being addressed as Madame la marquise de —, Madame la baronne de —, Madame la comtesse de —, and so on; they do not scruple to use the coat-of-arms of their adopted family … Naturally in a country where *appearance is everything*, a prostitute got up in all the trappings of the nobility is bound to make her mark – and sometimes makes her fortune into the bargain … Nobody but the English could be taken in by such *humbug*![53]

Tristan reported that courtesans were among those with false French titles from among whom the French police recruited spies to report on French activities in London, another form of French occupancy of the city associated with exiles and the subject of other chapters in this volume. Tristan's national prejudices were what Bédarida terms her 'patriotisme de gauche', and contrasted with her universalist aspirations, in the name of which she claimed that she wished to enlighten John Bull about foreigners in London:

> I wanted the English to know us better, not to be taken in by appearances, but to learn how to distinguish the well-informed man from the charlatan,

laborieusement pour nourrir leur famille; puis ce sont des négociants faisant le commerce en gros ou en détail, des artistes attachés aux théâtres, des professeurs voués à l'enseignement, des médecins, le corps diplomatique, et enfin une masse flottante de voyageurs qui ne séjournent dans le pays qu'un mois ou deux. Quant à ceux qui sont *établis* … l'Anglais le plus ombrageux ne saurait élever aucun doute sur leur *respectabilité*, ils jouissent donc de l'estime qui leur est due; il en est de même des voyageurs dont le séjour en Angleterre est motivé aux yeux de tous' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 79 (Hawkes translation, p. 30)).

[53] 'Il est plaisant de voir un commis voyageur, un garçon coiffeur, ou tout autre individu sans la moindre éducation, signer les plus beaux noms de France avec un aplomb et une aisance qui peuvent faire croire qu'il s'est toujours appelé le *chevalier de Choiseul* ou le *vicomte de Montmorency* … Enfin à Londres, la manie des titres est poussée si loin que les *femmes entretenues*, et mêmes les *filles publiques* s'en servent comme *moyens de succès*: ces dames se font appeler Madame la marquise de ***, Madame la baronne de ***, Madame la comtesse de ***; elles font usage, sans façon, des armes de la famille dont elles ont pris le nom et le titre … On conçoit que dans un pays ou l'*apparence est tout* une prostituée, ainsi affublée de l'enveloppe aristocratique, doit jouer un certain rôle … et parfois faire fortune … Il n'y a qu'un Anglais au monde pour croire à de pareilles *blagues*! [Tristan's emphasis]' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 80 (Hawkes translation, pp. 30–1)).

> the nobleman from the impostor, the duke from his valet and the duchess from her maid. I would like *John Bull* to give up his absurd recriminations and stop venting his wrath on an entire nation when he has nobody to blame but *himself!*[54]

Tristan had reserved her most caustic remarks for a particular set of French rogues in her 1840 edition, but in that of 1842 reduced the passage to a footnote referring to the abortive coup by Louis-Napoléon when he tried to land in Boulogne and invade France:

> In the first edition of my book this chapter was much longer; in it I mentioned Prince Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and his retinue. My readers will recall that in 1840, M Louis Bonaparte was in London posing as the *Pretender*; he had himself addressed as '*Your Highness*' and had a *court*; in a word, he set up as a celebrity and made himself ridiculous … The farcical episode which took place at Boulogne three weeks after the publication of my book, proved that I was right in my judgement of this aspirant to royalty and the crowd of sycophants who encouraged his folly because they were making a living from it.[55]

Travel and French history in bricks and mortar

A London place name served as an important reference point for Tristan's interpretation of another Napoleon. Ironically, Waterloo Road was the area that Tristan visited where prostitutes plied their trade, but it was in the context of the 1815 battle that defeated France's despot that Tristan linked the London place name Waterloo, and all that it evoked, to the French:

> The word *Waterloo* appears all over London: bridges, streets, public squares and monuments bear its name; it is given to ships of the Royal Navy and the merchant fleet, the big shops adopt it as their sign, and manufacturers name their latest fabrics after it, so that this one word has become, so to speak, the *coat of arms* of England, its heraldic device, the symbol of its renown. Everybody understands that Waterloo is the greatest feat of arms that England has ever

[54] 'J'ai désiré apprendre aux Anglais à nous connaître; à ne pas être *dupes* de grossières apparences; à distinguer le savant du charlatan, l'homme véritablement noble de l'intriguant, le duc de son valet, la duchesse de sa soubrette. Je voudrais que *John Bull* n'exhalât jamais de ces plaintes absurdes, et que, dans son irritation, il n'injuriât pas toute la nation, lorsqu'il ne doit s'en prendre qu'à *lui-même*' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 83 (Hawkes translation, p. 34)).

[55] 'Dans la première édition ce chapitre avait beaucoup plus d'étendue. J'y parlais du prince Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte et de son entourage. On se rappelle que M. Louis Bonaparte, en 1840, se posait à Londres comme un *prétendant*; il se faisait appeler *Altesse*, avait une *cour*; en un mot, il tranchait du personnage et jouait un rôle ridicule … La burlesque équipée de Boulogne, qui eut lieu vingt jours après la publication de mon ouvrage, prouva que j'avais bien jugé cet aspirant à la royauté et cette foule de gens qui flattaient sa folie parce qu'ils en vivaient' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 83 (Hawkes translation, p. 35)).

> been called upon to accomplish, and that it alone represents her past power and sums up her entire glory.[56]

In a curious digression into French history Flora Tristan poses a counter-argument to the interpretation of Waterloo, suggesting that it was a blow for freedom as important as the taking of the Bastille or the July Revolution of 1830. The battle was a forbidden subject, associated in its immediate aftermath with the enemies of the 1814 Restoration monarchy, but somehow, as the memory of military defeat had waned as peace became the norm between France and Britain, it was less feared by the July Monarchy when it began to appear as a symbol of a glorious defeat, one associated with the republican notion of the nation at war to defend liberty: 'The essential question about the Battle of Waterloo is this: why and how did its historical meaning become inverted from the 1830s through depiction in literary works, engravings and paintings? How did a decisive defeat become transformed into a quasi-victory?'[57]

The railways

In her French-inspired explanation, as a French visitor, of the social problems and poverty that caused prostitution in London; in her description of the miserable nondescript outskirts that greeted the French visitor in the approach to magnificent modern London; in her mockery of French *poseurs* using titles; and in her interpretation of French history insisting that Wellington was a hero for France, Flora Tristan turned ideas on their heads and assumed a unique and somewhat quirky position hovering between contempt and admiration for the capital. By way of conclusion I shall briefly refer to her most insightful reflections, which occur in a chapter entitled 'Les tribulations de Londres'. Almost as an aside Tristan introduces a spatial dimension that would affect the future of the cultural aspect of French occupancy of London: the increasing ease of cross-Channel links.

[56] 'Le mot *Waterloo* paraît à Londres en tous lieux; les ponts, les rues, les places publiques et les monuments portent ce nom; il est donné aux vaisseaux de l'Etat, aux paquebots du commerce; les grands magasins le prennent pour enseigne, les fabricants l'appliquent à leurs étoffes nouvelles, enfin ce mot est devenu, pour ainsi dire, l'*écu* de l'Angleterre, son signe héraldique, le symbole de sa renommée. Tous comprennent que Waterloo est le plus grand fait auquel l'Angleterre a été appelée à concourir, que ce fait à lui seul représente sa puissance passée et résume sa gloire!' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 217 (Hawkes translation, p. 188)).

[57] 'La question que l'on peut se poser à propos de la bataille de Waterloo est plutôt celle-ci: pourquoi et comment assiste-t-on à partir des années 1830, à travers les représentations (écrites, gravées, peintes) de la bataille, à une inversion du sens de l'histoire? ... Pourquoi la défaite éclatante de Waterloo se transforme-t-elle peu à peu en une quasi-victoire?' (E. de Waresquiel, *L'Histoire à rebrousse-poil: les élites, la Restauration, la Révolution* (Paris, 2005), p. 173).

She identified the dawn of the railway age as a momentous moment for civilization:

> The railways from Paris to Calais and from Dover to London could enhance the well-being of our two peoples in moral as well as material respects. Oh! the railways, the railways! In them I see the means whereby every base attempt to prevent the growth of union and brotherhood will be utterly confounded. Let people unite and share their thoughts: let them exchange their various talents as they now exchange material goods, and quarrels between nations will become impossible.[58]

With this theme Tristan returns to the attraction of London for the French. She was back on track in her recognition of London as a city of progress: railways were the future for European peace and harmony; the railway becomes a vehicle of commonality, a space of sharing and dialogue that would reinforce the power of the people.

Promenades dans Londres ran to three editions, with the author adding a new preface to each one. By 1842 her preface was directed away from those interested in the description of London, to French workers. Her experience of London had confirmed her aspirations to turn to activism. *Promenades dans Londres* had become a political treatise. However, although there has been very little written on its impact on the subsequent presence of the French in London, one reference I have uncovered indicates that after her death her text became a reference book for those intending to travel from France for reasons other than political. Circulation traces of Flora Tristan's London publication in the French press show that it became classified as a travel book, since during the period under consideration in this chapter the increased opportunity for travel had brought with it the spread of publications about journeying to London. She saw the growth of two trends that attracted the French to London. An example of the difference of attitudes among the French to the city is to be found in the following review, which refers to other reading material from Anglophobic French authors by way of contrast to the more Anglophile one under consideration here, *Promenades sentimentales dans Londres et le Palais de Cristal*.

Promenades dans Londres is mentioned as biased reading material for those interested in visiting London as excursionists:

[58] 'Les chemins de fer de Paris à Calais et de Douvres à Londres seraient féconds en résultats avantageux au bien-être des deux peuples, à leur avancement moral autant que matériel. Des chemins de fer! des chemins de fer! Voilà les moyens d'union, de confraternité, contre lesquels viendront expirer de honteux efforts! Que les peuples se mêlent, se communiquent leurs pensées; qu'ils fassent échange de talents comme de choses, et les querelles entre nations deviendront impossibles' (Tristan, *Promenades*, p. 290 (Hawkes translation, p. 274)).

> The Crystal Palace has attracted a good number of journalists to England to report on the marvels of the Universal Exhibition, providing a whole new series of travel accounts. Our tourists have discovered Great Britain just as Alexandre Dumas had previously discovered the Mediterranean. Some took advantage of this ideal opportunity to yet again set upon perfidious Albion 'our everlasting enemy'. Before leaving Paris they had already taken the precaution of rereading the blistering diatribe of M. Capo de Feuillide on Ireland, Flora Tristan's *London Journal* … then had set off full of indignation … In vain did our neighbours give them the best welcome possible; in vain did they overwhelm them with thoughtfulness and kindness: it was a waste of effort![59]

In Tristan's case, her visit to London was a formative moment in her development; she arrived as a writer and she left as an activist, determined to take up the cause of a workers' union. London was a place of opportunity to explore notions of equality and liberty. A woman found a political space for herself and at the same time contributed to the profile of the French in London. *Promenades dans Londres* has never been studied alongside the work of other French political writers as a testimony of the presence of the French in London. Her study of London gave her an opportunity to speak of French affairs beyond the city limits; she reserved her strongest critique for Louis-Napoléon and his uncle, and turned Waterloo into a victory against despotism, one made possible by the British troops at Waterloo. Yet her opinion of Londoners betrays her view of the superiority of the French political system, and the ability of the French to resist oppression in spite of defeat as a legacy of the French Revolution. Her highly politicized feminist, socialist and national views add a fragmented but multiple dimension to being French in London.

Conclusion

Comments of French writers in London offer insights into the strength of their identity as French out of France, in addition to their assessment

[59] 'Le Palais de Cristal, en attirant en Angleterre un bon nombre de journalistes chargés de rendre compte des merveilles de l'Exposition universelle, nous a valu toute une série de nouvelles impressions de voyage. Nos touristes improvisés ont découvert la Grande-Bretagne comme M. Alexandre Dumas découvrit naguère la Méditerranée. Quelques-uns ont profité de cette bonne occasion pour tomber une fois de plus à bras raccourcis sur la perfide Albion « notre éternelle ennemie. » Avant de quitter Paris, ils avaient pris la précaution de relire les tirades fulgurantes de M. Capo de Feuillide sur l'Irlande, les *Promenades dans Londres* de Mme Flora Tristan … puis ils étaient partis le cœur plein d'indignation … Vainement nos voisins leur faisaient-ils le meilleur accueil possible; vainement les accablaient-ils d'attentions et de prévenances: c'était peine perdue!' (G. de Molinari, book review in *Revue mensuelle d'économie politique et des questions agricoles, manufacturées et commerciales*, xxx, 10e année (Sept.–Dec. 1851), 286).

of London from the outside. The texts studied reveal more than multiple attitudes in political ideologies. London during the July Monarchy offered a space for a generation of aspiring writers and activists who were intent on making a career from their writing, through occupying a position as French citizens in London, with their own notions of liberty and equality, but using the experience to push their career further in France. Michelet, Tocqueville and Tristan knew they were part of the French presence in London, which was in turn part of the phenomenon of greater movement of populations across the Channel, itself an inevitable part of progress and unity among nations. The writers were the conduit for transmitting ideas, but bricks and mortar were used in the construction of the railway line that is now so crucial to linking London to the French. Flora Tristan could well say: 'Des chemins de fer! Des chemins de fer!' ('Railways! Railways!')