INTRODUCTION

On 28 February 1909, the American modernist poet Wallace Stevens wrote to Elsie Moll that 'for a change' he was 'loafing' at home rather than taking his customary Sunday afternoon walk. He prefaced this mundane piece of information with a quotation – 'The distant sounds of music that catch new sweetness as they vibrate through the long drawn valley, are not more pleasing to the ear than the tidings of a far distant friend' – and by adding 'so said the Chinese philosopher' he prompted his fiancée to recognize these lines as deriving from Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*.[1] Stevens's letter appears to assume that its addressee is aware of Goldsmith's work, and his quotation from the text – though it comes from a letter written by Lien Chi Altangi's friend Fum Hoam rather than the 'Chinese philosopher' himself – nicely captures the availability of *The Citizen of the World*, published nearly 150 years earlier, as a cultural reference point. Stevens wrote from his apartment in New York, and his letter to his fiancée exemplifies not only the long afterlife of Goldsmith's work but also its transatlantic circulation.

On the appearance of *The Citizen of the World* in two volumes in May 1762, the *British Magazine* nonetheless described it only as 'Light, agreeable summer reading, partly original, partly borrowed'.[2] At least until the publication in 1966 of Arthur Friedman's *Collected Works*, which helped to open new pathways for Goldsmith scholarship, the terms of this review retained critical currency. Early in 1760 the bookseller John Newbery contracted Goldsmith, for £100 per annum, 'to

1 *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 132.

2 Cited in A. Lytton Sells, *Oliver Goldsmith: His Life and Works* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), 250.

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furnish papers of an amusing character twice a week'[3] for the *Public Ledger, or, Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence*, and from the outset commentary on *The Citizen of the World* pointed to the origin of its constituent 'Chinese Letters' in a commercialized print culture in which novelty was at a premium. As the *Critical Review* noted in May 1762, 'These letters … made their first appearance in a daily news-paper, and were necessarily calculated to the meridian of the multitude', and although they were lacking by any 'standard of originality', they were the product of a 'fruitful' authorial imagination able to 'supply … a variety of tastes', and to 'sustain the fatigue' of doing this over a period of more than eighteen months.[4] The short letter introducing the Chinese traveller Lien Chi Altangi and his letter describing his arrival in London were printed in the *Public Ledger* on 24 January 1760, and two further letters appeared in January before subsequent letters were numbered to signal that they were part of a larger series. The last of the 119 letters to appear in the *Public Ledger* was published on 14 August 1761, and four more, together with an 'Editor's Preface', were added to make up the single work titled *The Citizen of the World*.[5]

In contrast to the much-revised poem with which he made his literary reputation, *The Traveller, or A Prospect of Society* (1764), Goldsmith's 'Chinese Letters' were hastily produced to a publisher's deadline, and they have often been regarded as comparatively slight for that reason. 'Lien Chi Altangi became real, and lived', however, as biographer John Forster observed in 1848, whereas other fictional correspondents who made their debut in the *Public Ledger* at the same time did not: 'Sir Simon Swift and his "Ranger", Mr Philanthropy Candid and his "Visitor", struggled and departed as newspaper shadows are wont to do.'[6] The contemporary profile of the letters of Altangi

3 James Prior, *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith, M. B. From a Variety of Original Sources*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1837), 1:356.

4 *Critical Review*, 13 (May 1762), 398.

5 See Arthur Friedman, 'Introduction', *The Citizen of the World* in *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Friedman, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 2:ix–xii.

6 John Forster, *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith* (London, 1848), 222.

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VOL. I. The Public Ledger. Number II.

Or, DAILY REGISTER of *Commerce* and *Intelligence*.

London, THURSDAY, January 24, 1760. [Price Two-pence Halfpenny.]

1. *The Public Ledger, or, Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence*, 24 January 1760. Front page. Microform, *Early English Newspapers*. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

and his network is indicated by the fact that with only a few exceptions, they assume the position of the opening article on the first page of the newspaper. The different materials of various kinds that sit adjacent to the letters squarely situate them in important larger contexts too. As Richard C. Taylor states, the *Public Ledger* was a 'serious and topical newspaper, which was concerned with foreign intelligence dominated by accounts of military operations, port and domestic news, and

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advertisements'.[7] It was embedded in networks of global commerce, most overtly via the central role of shipping notices in its pages, and it also supplied the latest information regarding the progress of the ongoing Seven Years' War (1756–63), at a time when – after the French invasion threat of early summer 1759 had passed – opinion as to the continuation of the conflict was increasingly divided.

While the immediate context of their publication gave Goldsmith's ostensibly ephemeral Chinese letters wider cultural importance, their subsequent packaging under the title of *The Citizen of the World* further helped to frame them in significant ways too. It is not clear as to whether Goldsmith was aware of it, but just over a decade earlier Louis-Charles Fougeret de Monbron published a 'fictional satire' titled *Le Cosmopolite ou Le Citoyen du Monde* (1750), which had gone through four editions by the time that Goldsmith's work appeared.[8] Mary Helen McMurran writes that 'Fougeret de Monbron's eponymous hero bears out Diogenes' example of deracinating himself by leaving his homeland, but fails in his attempt to be a stranger nowhere. In his discovery that other nations are equally distasteful, he is alienated everywhere and returns home in misanthropic resignation.'[9] Goldsmith's work can be seen at once to 'cast doubt on world citizenship' (as McMurran argues) and to take this ideal seriously, as in Letter 23 when Altangi presents 'citizen of the world' as the self-description of an English contributor to a subscription fund to provide support for French prisoners of war.[10] The title adopted by Goldsmith in 1762 conveys 'the broadness of vision and liberality needed to evaluate English society fairly and accurately', as Taylor suggests, and in the context of the Seven Years' War it also more specifically appears to signal Goldsmith's adoption of a critical distance on the conflict of a

7 Richard C. Taylor, *Goldsmith as Journalist* (London: Associated University Presses, 1993), 119.

8 Mary Helen McMurran, 'The new cosmopolitanism and the eighteenth century', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 47/1 (2013), 19–38 (at 31). According to A. Lytton Sells, 'Si Goldsmith n'a pas lu le *Cosmopolite*, cette coïncidence est curieuse', *Les Sources françaises de Goldsmith* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion, 1924), 97.

9 McMurran, 'New cosmopolitanism', 31.

10 Ibid., 30.

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kind evident in his journalism of the period.[11] Michael J. Griffin notes that Goldsmith's later poem *The Deserted Village* (1770) continues to be seized upon by commentators for the way in which it so vividly encapsulates the history of capitalist modernization, and during a war that had transformative consequences in Europe and beyond some of the letters that feature in *The Citizen of the World* demonstrate a comparable effort to reckon with the origins of present discontents.[12]

The Citizen of the World can therefore be seen as insubstantial ('calculated to the meridian of the multitude', in the words of the *Critical Review*) and unoriginal (at least 'partly borrowed', according to the *British Magazine*), and yet also as a work which, while it developed out of Goldsmith's need for fresh content to fulfil a contractual agreement, ultimately provided what Taylor refers to as a 'broadness of vision' too.[13] One of the challenges for readers of the work is to acknowledge and do justice to the way in which it thus conjoins intellectual ambition and derivativeness, as well as – notably where ideas of 'world citizenship' are concerned – political idealism and scepticism. Through its critical apparatus this volume aims not only to assist readers in negotiating the challenges that *The Citizen of the World* presents but also to enhance the many pleasures that Goldsmith's deceptively sophisticated writing affords. What follows will first offer a brief account of Goldsmith's early career and the process by which he came to write his 'Chinese letters', and then move on to discuss Goldsmith's adoption of the persona of a Chinese philosopher, and the reasons for, and implications of, his doing so. It will subsequently consider the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reception of *The Citizen of the World*, the still valuable research of source-hunting critics – North American contemporaries of Wallace Stevens – in the early twentieth century, and finally the range of new approaches which, in the wake of Friedman's *Collected Works*, have illuminated the text, and broadened

11 Taylor, *Goldsmith as Journalist*, 99. In *The Martial Review; or, A General History of the Late Wars* (London, 1763), Goldsmith offered what he presented as an impartial account of the Seven Years' War, its origins, conduct, and likely consequences.

12 Michael J. Griffin, *Enlightenment in Ruins: The Geographies of Oliver Goldsmith* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 147–51.

13 Taylor, *Goldsmith as Journalist*, 99.

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interpretive possibility, by situating it more fully in the richness of its historical moment.

The Genesis of Goldsmith's Chinese Letters

By the time that he started to work on his Chinese letters Goldsmith already had substantial experience of the London literary scene as a journalist and miscellaneous writer. He arrived in London in February 1756, having spent two years travelling on the continent, and in early 1757 he engaged with the entrepreneurial bookseller Ralph Griffiths, for an annual salary of £100, to write for the *Monthly Review*, where he worked alongside contributors such as Theophilus Cibber, James Grainger, Andrew Kippis, and James Ralph.[14] Goldsmith broke off his agreement with Griffiths in September of that year, and from January 1759 he went on to perform a similar role, producing book reviews and notices, for Tobias Smollett's rival periodical the *Critical Review*, for which authors such as fellow Irishman Samuel Derrick and Smollett himself provided copy.[15] During this period, he also contributed to other periodicals, including the *Busy Body* and the *Royal Magazine*, as well as, for John Wilkie, editing and writing *The Bee*, a weekly publication which ran for eight issues from October 1759. From early 1758 Goldsmith began work on a book-length critical survey of the literary sphere in which he was such a prolific participant, and in March 1759 he published with James and Robert Dodsley *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, declaring at the outset his aim to 'mark out … the corruptions that have found way into the republick of letters'.[16]

Goldsmith was to some extent complicit in the decay that he anatomized since he was a professional journalist in a commercialized literary marketplace, and since so much of what he wrote in the late 1750s

14 Ibid., 32.

15 Derek Roper, 'Smollett's "Four Gentlemen": the contributors to the *Critical Review*', *Review of English Studies*, 10/37 (1959), 38–44.

16 Goldsmith, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 4.

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perpetuated the culture of 'criticism', which he presented as a product of an expanding domain of polite letters that in turn 'shackled' authorial genius.[17] He often reflected on the difficult predicament of those 'writing for bread', for example by acknowledging (in *The Bee*) the tension between on the one hand addressing 'popular topicks', such as recent military victories, and on the other maintaining 'connexions with taste'.[18] Across his work of the late 1750s, however, Goldsmith also explored the potential freedoms available to the footloose author whose lack of dependence on a patron made them able, like the persona of *The Bee*, to 'rove from flower to flower, [and] with seeming inattention, but concealed choice, expatiate over all the beauties of the season, and make my industry my amusement'; in doing so he followed the example of Samuel Johnson, who adopted the mobile persona of the 'rambler'.[19] The biographer James Prior claimed that during his own continental tour, Goldsmith had been inspired by the Danish Baron Lewis Holberg, who, according to the *Enquiry*, 'Without money, recommendations, or friends … undertook to set out upon his travels, and make the tour of Europe on foot'.[20] Goldsmith's *Enquiry* later returns to the idea that an ostensibly inferior mode of transport might afford superior critical purchase ('A man who is whirled through Europe in a post chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the grand tour on foot, will form very different conclusions'), and here and elsewhere he can be seen implicitly to contest the cultural authority associated with the gentlemanly ideal of the detached and Olympian 'prospect view'.[21] With reference to his later poetry, Ingrid Horrocks writes that Goldsmith imagines his wandering personae as 'moving through the world, assembling a view of society from multiple fragmentary sights and interactions'; 'Eclipsing the metaphor of the prospect viewer', she adds, 'the wanderer is a vitally different figure, approaching vision not

17 Ibid., 4
18 Ibid., 139; Goldsmith, *The Bee: Being Essays on the Most Interesting Subjects* (London: J. Wilkie, 1759), 101.
19 Goldsmith, *The Bee*, 3; John Barrell, *English Literature in History 1730–1780: An Equal, Wide Survey* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), 41–2.
20 Prior, *Life*, 1:172; Goldsmith, *Enquiry*, 68.
21 Goldsmith, *Enquiry*, 181.

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through stability but through mobility, not through detachment but through sympathy'.[22]

One of the reviews that Goldsmith produced for the *Monthly* was of *Letters of an Armenian in Ireland, to his Friends at Trebisond* (1757), now attributed to the Irish politician and lawyer Viscount Edmund Sexton Pery.[23] Goldsmith's review begins by stating that 'The Writer who would inform, or improve, his countrymen, under the assumed character of an Eastern Traveller, should be careful to let nothing escape him which might betray the imposture', and his comments are often taken as indicating that, three years before the first of his Chinese letters appeared, he was already thinking about the possibility of using the persona of the Oriental correspondent himself.[24] Goldsmith was critical of the anonymous author's cursory attempts to 'preserve the fictitious character' of his nominally Armenian narrator but nonetheless stated that in its account of the impoverished condition of contemporary Ireland, and the 'properest means of increasing our own power, by increasing that of a country which contributes to our wealth', the work 'contains many things interesting to a native of Britain'.[25] The figure of the Oriental correspondent facilitated the kind of wide-ranging survey referred to above, and additionally – albeit that this is not really the case in *Letters of an Armenian* – made it possible for writers employing the device to exploit the estranging effects of misrecognition, as well as to make productive use of the gap between first impressions and later, usually better informed, reflections. Goldsmith stated in his *Enquiry* that 'new fashions, follies, and vices, make new monitors necessary in every age', and it seems fair to suggest that he understood the 'character of an Eastern traveller'

22 Ingrid Horrocks, '"Circling eye" and "houseless stranger": the new eighteenth-century wanderer (Thomson to Goldsmith)', *ELH*, 77/3 (2010), 665–87 (at 666).

23 Michael J. Griffin and David O'Shaughnessy, 'Introduction', *The Letters of Oliver Goldsmith* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), xxxiii.

24 *Monthly Review*, 17 (August 1757), 150.

25 Ibid., 151.

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as a means of, as Horrocks puts it, 'assembling a view of society from multiple fragmentary sights and interactions'.[26]

Altangi (as in Letter 75, for example) often repeats the point that Goldsmith made in his *Enquiry* that books are more effective than laws as an 'antidote' to the 'vices of the polite' (pp. 434–5). While Goldsmith conceived of his Chinese philosopher Lien Chi Altangi as a 'new monitor' for new times, however, in producing his Chinese letters he also relied quite heavily on previous imaginary travelogues. When in Letter 2, for example, Altangi refers to the 'heavy laden machines with wheels of unweildy thickness [which] crowd up every passage' (p. 23), his account of the congestion of the streets of London draws upon the first impressions of Paris offered by the Chinese traveller Sioeu-Tcheou in Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens's *Chinese Letters* (translated into English in abridged form in 1741). If Altangi might appear to be providing an estranged perspective here, in other words, he is in fact part of a recognizable if not already rather clichéd scenario, as the naïve outsider who marvels at the bustle of the big city. Many episodes in *The Citizen of the World* similarly follow those depicted in prior texts: the widely cited Letter 14, for example, in which Altangi describes his first visit to a 'lady of distinction', fascinated by his Chineseness, follows George Lyttelton's *Letters from a Persian in England* (1735), where the narrator describes being invited to visit 'a Lady who most passionately desir'd the Pleasure of my Acquaintance' because she 'had long had a Curiosity to be acquainted with a Mahometan'.[27] Lyttelton followed the example of Montesquieu by incorporating a 'continuation' of the 'parable of the Troglodytes' from the latter's *Persian Letters* (1721), and Letter 25 of *The Citizen of the World*, which includes the story of the rise and fall of the kingdom of Lao, in turn presents a comparable allegory warning about the precariousness of political virtue. In various other ways too, Goldsmith's work displays its indebtedness to literary precursors, perhaps most overtly through its choice of proper names. Where the name Lien

26 Goldsmith, *Enquiry*, 141; Horrocks, 'New eighteenth-century wanderer', 666.

27 George Lyttelton, *Letters from a Persian in England, to his Friend at Ispahan*, 2nd edn (London, 1735), 215–16.

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Chi Altangi derives from Horace Walpole's *A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his Friend Lien Chi at Peking* (1757), that of his correspondent Fum Hoam is probably taken from Thomas Simon Gueullette's *Chinese Tales: or, The Wonderful Adventures of the Mandarine Fum Hoam* (1725).[28]

The frequently creative nature of Goldsmith's engagement with his forerunners also helps us to think about the distinctiveness of his work, however. Although *The Citizen of the World* follows Montesquieu and d'Argens in incorporating a network of letters from different correspondents, this is – comparatively speaking – rather perfunctorily done, and the seemingly formulaic plot of sorts concerning Altangi's son and the man in black's niece only draws attention to the fact that Altangi's letters provide the main focal point. Goldsmith knew Giovanni Marana's *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1687–94) (he described himself in a 1753 letter from Edinburgh as being 'as recluse as the Turkish Spy'), but in contrast to Marana's Mahmut, who keeps a low profile in Paris, Altangi often presents himself as a sociable figure who relishes the rich variety of London.[29] Albeit that, as Friedman points out, d'Argens's *Chinese Letters* 'describes a conversation in a Paris bookshop between a Chinese and "un homme habillé de noir"', the 'gentleman dressed in black' whom Altangi meets in Letter 13 is a much more prominent figure in Goldsmith's work.[30] In providing its main narrator with a native guide, *The Citizen of the World* may additionally allude to the example of Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698–1700). Where Ward gives his naïve provincial observer a savvy companion who is experienced in the ways of the city, however, Goldsmith emphasizes the mutual affinity between Altangi and the man in black, presenting the latter as a 'humourist' (p. 144), or eccentric, and therefore as another outsider figure. Both Altangi and the man in black have widely been read as authorial personae, and much more so than the texts on which it draws, Goldsmith's work is threaded through with content that has an autobiographical reso-

28 Goldsmith probably took the name of Zelis from Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*.

29 Goldsmith to the Reverend Thomas Contarine, 8 May 1753 (*Letters*, 5).

30 Friedman, 2:57n.

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nance, whether concerning his experience of leaving Ireland, his travels on the continent, or his move to London.

The Citizen of the World's serial form further differentiates it from these precursors, because if its plot involving Hingpo and Zelis appears derivative (and the resolution of it something of an afterthought), as is often acknowledged, in other respects its sequencing of letters produces some significant effects, especially where Altangi's adaptation to his new environment is concerned. Altangi is at first 'an ironic observer of [the] newspaper public sphere' but goes on himself to become an 'avid … reader of the English news', as Eun Kyung Min argues, and as he describes his pleasure at stories about military success overseas, as in Letter 85 for example, he allows Goldsmith critically to reflect on, in Min's words, 'the power of the newspaper press to construct powerful forms of anonymous political identification'.[31] The sense of Olympian detachment seemingly indicated by the designation of Altangi as a 'citizen of the world' is thus complicated by the work, not simply because Altangi's letters alternate with letters from others, to which he responds, but because his own perspective is liable to shift.

Min cautions that 'Any account of Goldsmith's work that ignores the newspaper format in which it first appeared risks misjudging its original conditions of meaning', and she pays particular attention to how Goldsmith's 'serial Chinaman' is another version of 'the periodical eidolon, the main character in the periodical essay series'.[32] As much as Altangi must be situated in an eighteenth-century lineage of imaginary Eastern and other travellers, therefore, his letters also need to be discussed with reference to an earlier periodical such as Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator* (1711–14), which uses a familiar speaking persona, 'Mr Spectator', as a means of presenting content that is both miscellaneous and contemporary. Altangi describes himself early on as 'a newly created Being introduced into a new world', where 'every object strikes with wonder and surprise'

31 Eun Kyung Min, *China and the Writing of English Literary Modernity, 1690–1770* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 149.

32 Ibid., 131, 134.

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(p. 26), and while this is the point of departure for many prior texts, the serial structure of Goldsmith's Chinese letters means that they afford an apprehension of novelty and a sustained engagement with the present of a kind not evident (or feasible) in previous such epistolary narratives. 'In Goldsmith's spin on Addisonian aesthetics', as Min writes, 'England is self-renewing news to the Chinaman.'[33]

Goldsmith's *Chinese* Letters

Goldsmith therefore adapted the familiar form of the Oriental correspondent narrative in several different ways. His most obvious – and arguably most important – innovation, nonetheless, was to make his main narrator Chinese. Prior's biography claims that Goldsmith's

> first design according to accounts of his friends was to make his hero a native of Morocco or Fez; but, reflecting on the rude nature of the people of Barbary, this idea was dropped. A Chinese was then chosen as offering more novelty of character than a Turk or Persian; and being equally advanced in the scale of civilization, could pass an opinion on all he saw better than the native of a more barbarous country.[34]

There were English-language precedents for 'Chinese' imposture of various kinds, for example in George Psalmanazar's *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (1704), described by Chiming Yang as a 'comprehensive and fabricated first-hand account of native customs and culture', as well as in Walpole's *Letter from Xo Ho*, a brief topical satire.[35] Among the more immediate influences that helped Goldsmith to think about the novelty afforded by a Chinese correspondent, however, were his engagement with Arthur Murphy's tragedy *The Orphan of China* (1756), a version of a thirteenth-century Chinese play (also adapted by Voltaire) which he reviewed for the

33 Ibid., 138.

34 Prior, *Life*, 1:360.

35 Chi-ming Yang, *Performing China: Virtue, Commerce, and Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1660–1760* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 76.

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Critical in May 1759, and his introduction earlier that year to the scholar-cleric Thomas Percy, who produced pioneering works of British Sinology, including an annotated translation of the Chinese novel *Hau Kiou Choaan, or The Pleasing History* (1761). In *The Bee* in November 1759, Goldsmith recycled an anecdote from Voltaire about a Chinese traveller in Amsterdam who asked a bookseller for 'the works of the immortal Ilixofou', only to be told by his interlocutor that he had 'never heard the book mentioned before'.[36] He may also have encountered the actual traveller Loum Kiqua, 'the *Chinese* merchant lately arrived in this city from *Canton*' (as 'A.B.' in the *Gentleman's Magazine* described him), who, like Goldsmith, came to London in 1756.[37] David Clarke notes that '"Lien Chi" is remarkably close in sound to Loum Kiqua's name when pronounced in Mandarin', and although Walpole, who seems to have coined the name 'Lien Chi', was probably the first to recognize this linguistic proximity, Goldsmith's own awareness of Loum Kiqua may have further inspired him to attempt to ventriloquize the observations and opinions of a Chinese philosopher.[38]

As well as thus responding to Chinese or Chinese-style texts and – perhaps – Chinese visitors, Goldsmith conceived of China in other more speculative ways too. At a time when he was planning to leave London for the Coromandel Coast, to work as a surgeon in an East India Company trading factory, he wrote in an August 1758 letter to his school and university friend Robert Bryanton about how he liked to imagine his posthumous authorial reputation:

> If ever my works find their way to Tartary or China I know the consequence. Suppose one of your Chinese Owanowitzers instructing one of your Tartarian Chianobacchi you see I use Chinese names to show my own erudition, as I shall soon make our Chinese talk

36 *The Bee*, 187.

37 *Gentleman's Magazine*, 27 (January 1757), 33.

38 David Clarke, 'An encounter with Chinese music in mid-eighteenth-century London', *Early Music*, 38/4 (2010), 543–57 (at 549). Clarke notes here that 'the "Qi" of "Lin Qi" [is] broadly similar in pronunciation to the first syllable of the English word "cheese"'.

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> like an Englishman to [show his] This may be the subject of the lecture. "Oliver [Goldsmith flou]rish'd in the eighteenth and nineteenth c[enturies. He lived] to be an hundred and three years old[, and in that] age may justly be stiled the sun of [literature] and the Confucius of Europe".[39]

Goldsmith's statement that 'I shall soon make our Chinese talk like an Englishman' appears to indicate that at this point he was 'already contemplating the design of his Chinese letters', as Michael J. Griffin and David O'Shaughnessy note, and his presentation of himself, through another, as 'the Confucius of Europe' constitutes a 'self-orientalizing gesture' (in Min's phrase) that in turn anticipates how he would reflect on his own experience through his Chinese traveller.[40] Any suggestion of self-aggrandizement on Goldsmith's part is undercut by the fantastical hyperbole of this passage, however, and the preceding sentences emphasize that the extravagance of the scenario that Goldsmith evokes is a product of his current lack of recognition. In contrast to his friend, 'plac'd at the centre of fortune's wheel and let it revolve never so fast … almost insensible of the [mo]tion', Goldsmith sees himself as 'tied to the circumference, and [turned] disagreeably round like an whore in a whirlgigg', describing a disorientating condition of flux that is the obverse of the roving mobility of personae such as the Bee.[41]

Given the way in which Goldsmith here invokes the metaphorical wheel of fortune and associated ideas of the vagaries or hardships of Fate, it is especially notable that he should go on in this letter to appeal, however archly, to a seemingly reliable and permanent 'Chinese' standard by which value will be recognized and his own genius acknowledged; although its purpose is not specified, the 'ceremonial academy at Pekin' of which Fum Hoam is 'first president' appears to represent such a tribunal of judgement. In *The Citizen of the World* as in this letter, the name of 'Confucius' is a byword for enduring authority, and even as it often invents examples of his proverbial

39 Goldsmith to Robert Bryanton, 14 August 1758 (*Letters*, 30).
40 *Letters*, 31n; Min, *China and English Literary Modernity*, 139.
41 *Letters*, 29.

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wisdom, Goldsmith's work draws upon a long history of European idealization of the Chinese moralist, and in fact gives him the last word at the end of Altangi's final letter: '*They must often change, says* Confucius, *who would be constant in happiness or wisdom*' (p. 682). The Latinized name Confucius derives from that of the historical figure Kongzi (551–479 BCE), and it was a coinage of late sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries who saw in what they identified – or, according to some, invented – as 'Confucianism' a basis for the introduction of Christianity to China on Chinese terms.[42] One of Goldsmith's main sources of information about Chinese culture was Louis Le Comte's *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* (1696), which includes a series of 'maxims of Confucius', and (as noted above) Goldsmith was also strongly influenced by the *philosophe* Voltaire, for whom Confucianism stood for ideas of good government, moral reason, and social harmony that threw into relief the violent history of religious factionalism in Europe; the antiquity of China for Voltaire and others also provided a means of challenging the authority of the Bible.[43] Goldsmith's version of Confucius is distinctly Voltairean, as is evident in Letter 20 where his Chinese traveller invokes the Chinese sage in the name of an expansive cosmopolitan credo: 'Confucius observes that it is the duty of the learned to unite society more closely, and to persuade men to become citizens of the world' (p. 112). Here and elsewhere, Altangi clearly juxtaposes the essential human commonality which is recognized by the 'truly great' with the narrow patriotism of those seeking to foster national antagonism during Britain's ongoing conflict with France.

Before aligning himself with Confucius, Goldsmith in his letter to Bryanton makes another specific, if again rather flippant, cultural reference, namely to 'Chinese' and 'Tartars'. The conjunction of Chinese

42 On the Jesuit 'invention' of Confucius and Confucianism, see Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

43 Graham Gargett, 'Cosmopolitanism in action: Voltaire's influence on Goldsmith in *The Citizen of the World*', in Phyllis Gaffney, Michael Brophy, and Mary Gallagher (eds.), *Reverberations: Staging Relations in French since 1500* (University College Dublin Press, 2008), 365–78.

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and Tartars underpins the received idea of Chinese stability, in the sense that while the mid-seventeenth-century replacement of the Han Chinese Ming with the Manchu Qing dynasty might ostensibly appear as a revolutionary moment of regime change, historical accounts of the process often present it as a transition by which 'Tartar' invaders were over time incorporated into the deep Confucian structures and norms of Chinese society.[44] Most notably in the correspondence of Fum Hoam (who in Letter 42 describes China as 'an antient extended empire, established by laws which nature and reason seem to have dictated', p. 242), Goldsmith's work generally upholds this idea of an exceptional continuity that defies the otherwise universal logic of imperial decline and fall and provides the foundation on which Chinese wisdom is built. Sometimes, though, it accentuates the notion of a broadly 'Asiatic' savagery against which Chinese civilization is defined. In Letter 10, for example, Altangi describes crossing the symbolic frontier of the Great Wall of China (much extended during the period of the Ming dynasty) at the outset of his overland journey to Europe, and he invokes the stereotypically savage figure of 'the brown Tartar [who] wanders for a precarious subsistence … himself more hideous than the wilderness he makes' (p. 58) as typifying the nomadic barbarians whom he encountered as he traversed Central Asia.

In Letter 32, by contrast, Altangi describes a particular 'Tartar' society in such a way as to complicate any such straightforward association of Tartars and barbarism. Drawing on the work of the geographer Philip von Strahlenberg, this letter details how among the 'Tartars of Koreki' in the Russian Far East, the 'poorer sort' are secondary participants in the consumption of hallucinogenic mushrooms by 'rich Tartars' (p. 187), through their collecting and drinking of the latter's urine. Not only does Altangi here acknowledge social stratification – a marker of progress – among the Tartars in question, but he also offers his comic account of this customary practice by way of complementary response to the man in black's explanation of habits of

44 J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 4: *Barbarians, Savages and Empires* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 101–2.

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deference to nobility in England. Such a relativization of these rituals suggests that for Goldsmith the imprecise label 'Tartar' potentially supplies something to think with rather than simply standing as a signifier of Asiatic savagery. Elsewhere, Altangi implicitly questions the claims to civilized status of some of the people 'of distinction' whom he encounters in England. Having already appealed to a universal standard of politeness ('true politeness is every where the same', he declares in Letter 39, p. 223), Altangi in Letter 86 offers a quizzical perspective on the 'polite and fashionable amusement' (p. 490) of horseracing – the 'sport of kings' – at Newmarket, which he equates with the spectacle of a race between trades-peoples' carts at Brentford. He levels the 'quality' and their plebeian counterparts (the latter are, he says, 'as remarkable for politeness and delicacy, as the breeders of Newmarket', p. 495), and from his 'Chinese' vantage point he thereby offers another reflection on the factitious, rather than in any sense legitimate, basis of social standing in England. This is a recurrent topic across the work as a whole and while Goldsmith largely remains at arm's length from religious or confessional debates, he often presents as a kind of 'priestcraft' the efforts made by different groups or 'societies' of men who, as the Editor complains, 'club to raise each others reputation' (p. 8), whether as critics, connoisseurs, or other figures of cultural authority.

'China' therefore provided Goldsmith with valuable creative and intellectual resources, notably through ideas of a timeless Confucian wisdom, of the venerable and harmonious Chinese civilization that was symbolized by Confucius, of the empire that was extended during the Qing dynasty, and of the 'savagery' (in Europe as well as Asia) that could be seen as the obverse of Chinese moral and cultural standards. In his letter to Bryanton, however, it is also striking that Goldsmith cites manifestly fabricated 'Chinese names', 'Owanowitzers' and 'Chianobacchi', as evidence of what he facetiously terms 'my erudition'. On numerous occasions Goldsmith uses his main narrator to play Chinese history for laughs, as for example in Letter 4 when Altangi refers to 'the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon' (p. 32), a hyperbolical rendering of what David Porter terms the 'fantasy of genealogical legitimacy' by which many European intellectuals

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continued to celebrate Chinese antiquity.[45] The 'Editor's Preface' that Goldsmith added to *The Citizen of the World* outlines especially clearly the plurality, even contradictoriness, of 'Chinese' ideas and associations that are invoked across Altangi's letters. Here, in an echo of Goldsmith's review of Murphy's *Orphan of China*, Goldsmith's persona acknowledges the ubiquity of 'chinoiserie' – Chinese or Chinese-style goods and artefacts of uncertain provenance – and suggests that in mid-eighteenth-century Britain this commodity culture served as the dominant popular means of knowing China. He then imagines how his own 'small cargoe of Chinese morality' might compete with the 'furniture, frippery and fireworks of China [which] have long been fashionably bought up' and thereby provide a stable and authoritative position from which to assess this advanced consumer society: 'If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste', he writes, 'I'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding' (p. 8).

At the outset of *The Citizen of the World*, then, readers are invited to associate 'the Chinese' both with corrupting luxury and with remedial wisdom. In an early indication of the slipperiness of Goldsmith's work, however, the Editor undercuts his own opposition between ephemeral fashions and permanent truths, because – alluding to the initial appearance of the 'Chinese letters' in Newbery's *Public Ledger* – he presents 'Chinese morality' as another commodity, albeit one for which there does not appear to be much of a market: in the Editor's dream the ice breaks beneath the 'small cargoe' that he brings to sell at the Frost Fair on the frozen River Thames. At various times Goldsmith similarly complicates the status of Altangi as a detached observer and critic of English society, as for example in Letters 45 and 46 where he is the bearer of 'the looking-glass of Lao', which he presents as a 'faithful … monitor' (p. 266) of female character, but is itself, whether he likes it or not, part of the culture of spectacle that he describes, such that the first woman who looks in the mirror addresses him as 'Mr. Showman' (p. 268).

45 David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.

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While the detached rationality of Altangi is sometimes undercut in such a way, the extent to which he is depicted as 'Chinese' in the first place is also open to question. His purported Chineseness is rendered only minimally, with reference to detail regarding his native city (Nangfew in the province of Honan), social position ('mandarine'), appearance (a 'broad face and flat nose' he says in Letter 8, p. 52), and criteria of beauty (in particular, his preference for bound feet). Altangi in Letter 17 imagines what 'an Asiatic politician' would make of 'treaties of peace and friendship' (p. 93) conducted by European nations that continually fight wars with each other, and he has often been understood as a similarly generic outsider, whose purpose is primarily to expose Britons' ignorance about the wider world, where this may include Ireland as much as China. When in the much-cited Letter 33, for example, Altangi complains about 'the presumption of those islanders, [who] … pretend to instruct me in the ceremonies of China!' (p. 189), the episode which he goes on to describe serves to illustrate (in the words of David Porter) 'the stubborn illiteracy of the English when it comes to cross-cultural encounters' rather than to offer any corrective to others' misrepresentation of Chinese culture.[46] Altangi at the same time demonstrates in this letter that he is himself liable to Orientalist generalization, as when he protests that his interlocutors 'make no distinction between our elegant manners, and the voluptuous barbarities of our eastern neighbours' (p. 189).

Goldsmith's Asian geographical reference is sometimes precise too, however, as when Fum Hoam in Letter 6 rather elaborately names 'the black deserts of Kobi' and 'the flowery banks of the river Irtis' (p. 44). In Letter 10 Altangi describes his passage through 'Xaixigar' – probably Kashgar, formerly a major station on the Silk Road, the ancient network of trade routes that connected China and Europe. Although Altangi earlier in this epistle invokes the typified figure of the 'brown Tartar' as a wanderer in a vast Central Asian wilderness, the letters that he writes and receives are intermittently at least alert to specific frontier contests over territory and influence. Where a precursor such as the unnamed 'Indian' in Tom Brown's *Amusements Serious and*

46 Porter, *Ideographia*, 138.

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Comical (1700) is 'dropt … from the Clouds' into London, Goldsmith to some extent maintains the fiction of Altangi's overland journey to Europe, as is evident from the way in which for Altangi and others the condition of an expansionist Russia during and after the era of Peter the Great (1672–1725; reigned from 1682) is a recurrent point of reference.[47] Altangi's letters back to Fum Hoam travel by way of Moscow and then the 'Russian caravan' from there to Peking, and they thus gesture beyond the purely literary device of the spy by hinting at actual practices of (in Mark Gamsa's phrase) 'military and industrial espionage in the Qing empire' for which such caravans could provide cover.[48]

When Fum Hoam in Letter 87 comments on the folly of European nations' military alliances with the Russian empire, he alludes to the recent history of Qing–Russian tensions by stating that the Russians are 'their neighbours and ours' (p. 496), while when Hingpo in Letter 94 recounts his journey from Persia to Moscow, he describes crossing the Ural Mountains in the disputed border area between the Russian empire and Safavid Iran. Though brief, these references demonstrate Goldsmith's awareness – probably gained via the work of the merchant-traveller Jonas Hanway – of the significance to western Europeans of Russia and contiguous lands: Britain was 'entangled' with Russia as much as it was with France or Spain, as Matthew P. Romaniello shows, and British merchants in this period regarded engagement with Russia as in turn providing potential access to China, Iran, and the khanates of Central Asia.[49] It is notable that Goldsmith's work refers several times to Russia but only indirectly (in the narrative of the 'disabled soldier' in Letter 119, p. 661) alludes to the ongoing revolution in Bengal which from a later perspective would be recognized as a pivotal moment in the establishment of

47 Thomas Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical, Calculated for the Meridian of London*, 2nd edn (London, 1702), 23.

48 Mark Gamsa, review of Gregory Afinogenov, *Spies and Scholars: Chinese Secrets and Imperial Russia's Quest for World Power*, *Archiv Orientální*, 89/1 (2021), 209–11 (at 210).

49 Matthew P. Romaniello, *Enterprising Empires: Russia and Britain in Eighteenth-Century Eurasia* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2.

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British rule in India. Even as Fum Hoam's Letter 118 invites readers to laugh at the grovelling conduct of a Dutch embassy to Japan, this letter acknowledges the supplicant position assumed by representatives of a European state in relation to an Asian power, anticipating the difficulties that would later face British embassies to the Qing Imperial Court. The cumulative impact of the global range of reference in Goldsmith's work is further to decentre the British imperial metropolis, and a comparable effect is produced by the attention that is paid throughout to non-Abrahamic systems of belief such as Zoroastrianism as well as to Chinese religious and philosophical traditions.

Goldsmith's range of reference may appear rather random as well as diverse, and some of it certainly derives directly from the numerous different sources on which he relied, as the editorial notes in this volume attempt to demonstrate. As well as Le Comte, d'Argens, and Voltaire, Goldsmith also made substantial use of the French Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's *A Description of the Empire of China* (published in English in 1738 and 1741), itself the work of a 'compiler' reliant on Le Comte, and Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux's *Le Spectateur Français* (1722): 'In almost every one of the [letters]', Chen Shouyi states, 'we can trace Goldsmith back to definite pages in Du Halde; whether the reference be one on the Chinese attachment to the present life, or the Chinese Feast of Lanterns, the resemblance of the Chinese state to the family, the idolatrous sects of China, the ancient Chinese emperor Yau, the Chinese customs in mourning.'[50] Seamus Deane claims that *The Citizen of the World* displays an 'almost parasitic dependence on the writings of others', and it is tempting to see the heterogeneous allusiveness of the text as a function of the circumstances in which it was produced, whereby, as Joseph E. Brown puts it, 'the demand for "copy" twice a week' pressured Goldsmith into taking

50 Chen Shouyi, 'Oliver Goldsmith and his *Chinese Letters*', in Adrian Hsia (ed.), *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998), 288, 287.

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'short cuts'.[51] As critics such as Ricardo Quintana have insisted, however, Goldsmith 'transmuted' his materials, as for example in the story of Choang and Hansi ('the Chinese matron'), which he took from Du Halde, in Letter 18.[52] Even where it may appear most unoriginal, for example in the subplot thread describing the captive Hingpo's infatuation with the harem slave Zelis, Goldsmith's work moreover maintains its engagement with larger issues, as when in Letter 35 Hingpo declares that Persia, 'A nation once famous for setting the world an example of freedom, is now become a land of tyrants and a den of slaves' (pp. 204–5): Hingpo here presents the condition of Persia as another example of political decline and also, as Min notes, 'ends up dragging Chinese political modernity … into question since Hingpo's travails were set in motion by the Chinese emperor's "displeasure" at Lien Chi's departure, so "contrary to the rules of our government, and the immemorial custom of our empire"'.[53] Important larger questions are similarly raised when, in Letter 87, Fum Hoam moves from anxiously acknowledging the populousness of China's Russian neighbour to reflecting on the significance of 'migrations of men' as a driving force in world history:

> how have we seen whole armies starting wild at once from their forests and their dens; Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, myriads of men, animals in human form, without country, without name, without laws, out-powering by numbers all opposition, ravaging cities, overturning empires, and, after having destroyed whole nations, and spread extensive desolation, how have we seen them sink oppressed by some new enemy, more barbarous and even more unknown than they! (p. 499–500)

51 Seamus Deane, 'Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*', in Andrew Swarbrick (ed.), *The Art of Oliver Goldsmith* (London: Vision Press, 1984), 33–50 (at 33); Joseph E. Brown, 'Goldsmith's indebtedness to Voltaire and Justus Van Effen', *Modern Philology*, 23/3 (1926), 273–84 (at 277–8).

52 Ricardo Quintana, *Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), 67.

53 Min, *China and English Literary Modernity*, 155.

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Friedman notes that 'This paragraph … is a rather free translation from the chapter "Le Lièvre" in Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*', but such attention to mobility is nonetheless a defining feature of Goldsmith's writing, and Fum Hoam's integration of the histories of Europe and Central Asia – which emphasizes that the former has, for well over a millennium, been impacted by developments in the latter – can be seen to offer a kind of anticipatory précis of Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–88).[54] This letter therefore combines seeming casualness (and probably what we would today identify as plagiarism) on Goldsmith's part with an intellectually ambitious conception of global history, and such a conjunction of apparent opposites is characteristic of *The Citizen of the World* more broadly. Goldsmith's work undercuts any simple binary of seriousness and frivolity, as is evident from the fact that it invokes 'Chinese morality' at the outset yet goes on to present Altangi as just another 'showman' in an urban culture of commercialized spectacle. As also noted above, this kind of conjunction reflects the constantly shifting perspectives that the work provides, themselves a product of the formal genesis of *The Citizen of the World*, which is loosely held together by a plot and sometimes nods to the 'life as journey' trope but at the same time readily discloses its origins in a newspaper culture catering to (in the *Critical Review*'s phrase) 'the meridian of the multitude'. Tonally and generically, as well as in terms of subject-matter, then, *The Citizen of the World* poses significant problems of classification, albeit that these are problems which its first readers did not often seem to register.

Reception before Friedman's *Collected Works*

William Rider, in *An Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Living Authors of Great-Britain* (1762), was probably the most effusive of early critics, declaring Goldsmith's work 'little

54 Friedman, 2:355n; on efforts to integrate Chinese and European histories before Gibbon, see Pocock, *Barbarism*, 110–53.

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inferior to the *Persian Letters* of the celebrated *Montesquieu*'.[55] Others however generally presented Goldsmith as offering a familiar if entertaining kind of social survey in which, in the words of the *Critical Review* again, 'observations are marked with good sense … and humour is sometimes successfully employed to enforce the dictates of reason'.[56] The briefer review in the *Monthly* was fainter than this in its praise, as is apparent from the self-consciously formulaic nature of its statement that *The Citizen of the World* 'has some excellent remarks upon men, manners, and things—as the phrase goes'. It pointed to the obvious artifice of Goldsmith's primary persona ('this Chinese philosopher has nothing Asiatic about him'), but at the same time showed no sign of interest in the novelty of a nominally Chinese informant narrator or in the effects that this identity generated.[57]

The Citizen of the World was reprinted in Dublin in 1762 and translated into French and German in 1763, and it was then reprinted numerous times in the final decades of the eighteenth century, initially in the aftermath of Goldsmith's death in 1774 and the resulting obituaries and memoirs that paid tribute to him.[58] As Friedman notes, 'The second London edition, called on the title-page "The Third Edition", was published on 7 July 1774, three months after his death', and 'It was in the remaining years of the century that the work had its great vogue', with ten further London editions issued before 1800.[59] Before this, slightly revised versions of ten of its constituent letters appeared as discrete pieces in Goldsmith's *Essays* (1765; reprinted in 1766), a compilation of previously published writings through which he sought, as he put it, 'to vindicate my claims … [and] live a little upon myself', reasserting his ownership of works which had been adopted

55 [William Rider], *Historical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Living Authors of Great Britain* (London, 1762), 13–14.

56 *Critical Review*, 13 (May 1762), 398.

57 *Monthly Review*, 26 (June 1762), 477.

58 Ros Ballaster notes that 'Argens and Goldsmith … influenced a six-volume collection called *L'Espion Chinois* of 1763 by Ange Goudar, a disciple of Montesquieu, which was translated into English in 1765', *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 245–6.

59 Friedman, 2:xiv.

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'by different parents as their own'.[60] The practice of reading and responding to individual letters from *The Citizen of the World* would become well established over subsequent decades, as is evident from an article in the *European Magazine* in February 1792 which hails the 'ingenious writer' Goldsmith for anticipating the French Revolution, because Fum Hoam in Letter 56 cites the role of regional 'parlements' as proof that the French are 'imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom'.[61] A year later, an anonymous anti-revolutionary pamphlet simply titled 'The English Constitution' reproduced Letter 50, which features Altangi's rehearsal of Goldsmith's Tory monarchist politics, together with a short preface to indicate the relevance of its reflections in the present:

> The following Letter written by Dr. GOLDSMITH, in his admirable Work, "The Citizen of the World," gives so true a picture of the pre-eminently happy situation of Englishmen, and seems so applicable to the present times, that we think it worthy the particular attention of the Public.
>
> The People of this Country are sufficiently acquainted with the Opinions of THOMAS PAINE, one of the worst of Mankind – we wish them to be as well acquainted with those of Dr. GOLDSMITH, who both, as a Writer, and a Man, did honor to his Country.[62]

This reference to Goldsmith 'as a Writer, and a Man' underlines that engagement with his work in the late eighteenth century and beyond was often closely connected with an appraisal of his 'character', as it was disclosed in the memorials that were produced after his death. Although the accompanying reference to Goldsmith's 'country' appears to assume that that country was Britain (or England) rather than Ireland, ideas about Goldsmith's nationality

60 Oliver Goldsmith, *Essays. By Mr. Goldsmith. Collecta Revirescunt* (London: W. Griffin, 1765), iii and ii.

61 Cited in *Goldsmith: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. S. Rousseau (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 210.

62 *The English Constitution* (London, 1793). The number of editions of *The Citizen of the World* published in the 1790s is suggestive of the work's resonance during and after the French Revolution.

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often affected perceptions of his character, and in turn helped to determine approaches to his writing. In his preface to *Poems and Plays by Goldsmith* (1777), the Irish Shakespearean scholar Edmond Malone sympathetically described the predicament of Goldsmith as he arrived in London in 1756, almost penniless and (like Altangi) an 'entire stranger': 'He applied to several apothecaries in hopes of being received in the capacity of a journeyman, but his broad Irish accent, and the uncouthness of his appearance, occasioned him to meet with insult from most of the medicinal tribe.'[63] More commonly, however, Goldsmith's Irishness was only implicit in such biographical notes, albeit that some of the recurrent claims about his character were coded in obvious ways. In the 'sketch' that he produced of his friend in 1776, the artist Sir Joshua Reynolds, for example, presented Goldsmith as one of an inherently 'sociable disposition' who 'wrote … from his feelings', and whose (unspecified) provincial origins – 'The Doctor came late into the great world', Reynolds stated – made him garrulous, 'impatient of being overlooked', and ridiculously envious of others.[64]

Reynolds regarded poetry and drama as his friend's true areas of accomplishment, and his tellingly vague reference to '*Chinese tales*', in the context of a long list of Goldsmith's prose works, is indicative of a wider contemporary marginalization of *The Citizen of the World*.[65] Sir John Hawkins claimed that Goldsmith's failure to respond to overtures of support from the Earl of Northumberland in 1764 showed him to be an 'idiot in the affairs of the world', and prevailing views of Goldsmith's naïvety may have helped to ensure that readers were especially drawn to those works which could be seen to display either 'good nature' or nostalgic yearning on his part.[66] Such assumptions about Goldsmith's character may have also provided an obstacle to readers' engagement with the generic and tonal unevenness of *The*

63 Cited in *Critical Heritage*, 184. Malone's biography is based on Richard Glover's *Anecdotes*, which appeared in the *Universal Magazine* in May 1774.

64 Cited in *Critical Heritage*, 173, 178, 174.

65 Ibid., 179.

66 Cited in *Critical Heritage*, 208; Norma Clarke, *Brothers of the Quill: Oliver Goldsmith in Grub Street* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 5–6.

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Citizen of the World, and it is notable that positive assessments of the work tended to eschew these claims, treating Goldsmith not (as many did) as a satellite of his friend Samuel Johnson but as an author who displayed a sharp critical intelligence in his own right. William Mudford, for example, wrote in 1804 that *The Citizen of the World* 'has no equal in our language' ('It is one of the most delicate, the most refined, and the most correct satires, upon the English nation and its manners'), and he attributed this status to the fact that Goldsmith 'viewed the conduct of man with the eye of a philosopher'. Echoing Goldsmith's own claims about the greater purchase afforded by actual or rhetorical mobility, as discussed above, Mudford stated that 'Goldsmith had probably learnt to form a juster estimate of men and things from his pedestrian tour, in which he mingled with various classes of society, and noted, at his leisure, their foibles and peculiarities.'[67] William Hazlitt later described Goldsmith as 'more observing' than Johnson, and in his brief remarks in *Lectures on the Comic Writers* (1819), he acknowledged the complexity of *The Citizen of the World*, while also suggesting that it was 'too ambiguous and full of intricacy to be amusing to my plain understanding'; where the *British Magazine*, cited at the outset, referred to Goldsmith's work as 'Light, agreeable summer reading', Hazlitt stated that 'For light summer reading, it is like walking in a garden full of traps and pitfalls.'[68]

The different perspectives of Mudford and Hazlitt contrast markedly with the condescension that is much more common in nineteenth-century commentary on Goldsmith and his work, as exemplified by T. B. Macaulay's claim in his 1856 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* life of Goldsmith that 'perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable'. Like Reynolds, Macaulay misnamed *The Citizen of the World*, calling it 'Sketches of London Society', and given Mudford's reference to Goldsmith's 'philosophical' eye and the 'juster estimate of men and things' that his travels provided, it is revealing that Macaulay should insist upon the opposite: 'He knew nothing accurately: his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had

67 Cited in *Critical Heritage*, 246–7.

68 William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (London, 1819), 205.

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read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy.'[69] Macaulay presented Goldsmith as 'one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century', and his choosing thus to identify Goldsmith as 'English' demonstrates at once the importance of the earlier work of the Irish biographer James Prior, who explored Goldsmith's Irishness in detail, and the way in which Prior's groundbreaking scholarship was itself disregarded.

Norma Clarke argues that in his two-volume *Life of Goldsmith* (1837), the first substantial biography of Goldsmith to be published, Prior sought to recover materials relating to his subject's early life and enduring Irish connections because he 'had a point to make about [the] contribution … of the many Irish, like himself, who left Ireland and made their careers in England'.[70] Prior also produced the four-volume *Miscellaneous Works of Oliver Goldsmith* in the same year, an annotated edition – hitherto the most definitive – of Goldsmith's writings which includes *The Citizen of the World* in full. Prior's explanatory notes here focus especially on detail relating to Chinese customs and manners, with reference to authorities such as the nineteenth-century British Sinologist John Francis Davis, and they constitute a pioneering, and still very useful, contribution to Goldsmith scholarship. As Clarke shows, however, responses to Prior's work helped to entrench a kind of critical status quo according to which both Goldsmith's Irishness and his intellectual ambition were largely bypassed. John Forster's *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith* (1848) and Washington Irving's *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1849) made use of Prior's biographical research, to the extent that Prior accused them both of plagiarism, but in a Famine-era climate of metropolitan weariness with Irish affairs, Clarke argues, they 'buried the emphasis Prior had

69 Cited in *Critical Heritage*, 348.

70 Norma Clarke, '"More national (to Ireland) than personal": James Prior's *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1837)', *Biography*, 41/1 (2018), 48–70 (at 50).

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laid on the importance of Ireland' and privileged instead the 'lovable' author of *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *She Stoops to Conquer*.[71]

Forster in fact celebrated *The Citizen of the World*, declaring that it transcended its newspaper origins ('From the ephemeral sprang the immortal'), and praising it for its 'fresh original perception, … delicate delineation of life and manners, … wit and humour, … playful and diverting satire, … exhilarating gaiety, and … clear and lively style'.[72] He claimed that Goldsmith's 'life may be read in these Letters to the Public Ledger', and drawing on the now established idea of the 'good-natured' Goldsmith he sometimes presented the author as a compassionate figure who, among other demonstrations of his humanitarian sensibility, 'raised his voice against the penal laws which … disgraced the statute book'.[73] If Forster sometimes thus referred to Goldsmith's generous social awareness, however, he saw only the ludicrous aspect of his treatment of Chinese subject-matter, an engagement apparently stimulated by Percy's *Pleasing History*, through which, Forster stated, Goldsmith's 'old interest in the flowery people … received new strength'; although the phrase 'the flowery people' derives from a Chinese self-description, it was widely used in the mid nineteenth century (including by Charles Dickens, to whom Forster dedicated his biography) as a derisive caricature.[74] Elsewhere, as in the following tableau of life in London in 1760, Forster accentuated the rich and colourful variety to which he saw *The Citizen of the World* as providing access:

> As we read the Chinese letters … those actual days come vividly back to us. Earl Ferrers glides through them again, with his horrible passion and yet more ghastly composure. The theatres again contend with their Pollys and Macheaths, and tire the town with

71 Ibid., 68; owing to the influence of Forster and Irving, Clarke argues here, 'Goldsmith's afterlife was to be molded along English and American lines.'

72 Forster, *Life*, 222, 224.

73 Ibid., 234, 225–6.

74 Ibid., 222; Dickens refers to China as a 'flowery Empire' in 'The Great Exhibition and the little one' (cowritten with Richard Horne), published in *Household Words* in July 1851. 'Floweriness' here suggests the idea of weakness and insubstantiality behind a superficial charm.

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> perpetual *Beggars' Operas*. Merry and fashionable crowds repeople White Conduit and Vauxhall. We get occasional glimpses of even the stately commoner and his unstately ducal associate. Old George the Second dies, and young George the Third ascends the throne. Churchill makes his hit with the *Rosciad*; and Sterne, having startled the town with the humour and extravagance of his *Tristram Shandy*, comes up from country quiet to enjoy popularity.[75]

Forster acknowledged Goldsmith's criticism of Sterne in Letter 53 of *The Citizen of the World* but claimed that there was an underlying affinity between the two authors: 'if the wisdom and charity of an uncle Toby, a Mr. Shandy, or a Corporal Trim, might anywhere have claimed frank and immediate recognition, it should have been in that series of essays which Beau Tibbs and the Gentleman in Black have helped to make immortal'.[76] Further selectively annotated editions of *The Citizen of the World* appeared in the collected *Works* published by David Cunningham in 1854 and J. W. M. Gibbs in 1884–5, and Gibbs's edition is prefaced by an account of how 'China and its manners and customs figured in the eyes of Europe' in the mid eighteenth century, as if in implicit recognition of how discourse on China had become increasingly Sinophobic during and after the Opium Wars of 1839–42 and 1856–60.[77] (Mark Twain addressed the prevalence of this Sinophobia in the United States in his short story 'Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again' (1870–1), which juxtaposes the Chinese immigrant Ah Song Hi's wishful imaginings of American freedom with the racism that he experiences at the hands of Irish-American policemen and others in San Francisco.) In his standalone edition of *The Citizen of the World*, published in 1891, the poet and essayist Austin Dobson maintained the trend towards explanatory annotation, with footnotes that would be included in later Everyman editions. He also however endorsed Forster's assessment of the work, declaring that 'What in

75 Forster, *Life*, 228. The 'stately commoner' and his 'ducal associate' are William Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle.

76 Ibid., 229–30.

77 *The Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs, 5 vols. (London: George Bell, 1885), 3:1.

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the Chinese letters is even more remarkable than their clever raillery of social incongruities and abuses, is their occasional indication of the author's innate but hitherto undisclosed gift in the delineation of humorous character.'[78] Dobson, like Forster, named the man in black and Mr. Tibbs as Goldsmith's most memorable comic creations, and more overtly than Forster he read Goldsmith through the lens of Dickens's novels, stating that there is little in the latter's work 'more perennially humorous' than the 'inimitable sparring' between Mrs. Tibbs and the pawnbroker's widow at Vauxhall Gardens in Letter 71.[79]

Such a London-centric reading of *The Citizen of the World* would (indirectly at least) be challenged, however, and another phase of criticism began to develop in the early twentieth century, owing to the 'rise of English' and the growth of literary studies as an academic discipline, in North America especially. Exemplifying the ambition of this new kind of scholarship, Martha Pike Conant's monograph *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (1908), published by Columbia University Press, situates Goldsmith's work in the context of a literary history that systematically distinguishes between 'imaginative', 'moralistic', 'philosophic', and 'satiric' narratives; by this schema *The Citizen of the World* belongs, together with *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* and *Persian Letters*, in the latter category.[80] Others after Conant similarly eschewed the critical impressionism of commentators such as Dobson and emphasized the objectivity of their research. *The Citizen of the World* was a congenial text that provided rich pickings for such scholars seeking to produce knowledge through the enumeration of authorial influences and textual sources. After essays by A. J. Barnouw ('Goldsmith's indebtedness to Justus Van Effen', 1913) and Levette Jay Davidson ('Forerunners of Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*', 1921), still more detailed work was done by Ronald S. Crane, who, together with Hamilton Jewett Smith, in 1921 identified 'A French influence

78 Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, ed. Austin Dobson, 2 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, 1891), 1:xvii.

79 Ibid., 1:xx.

80 Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), xxvi.

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on Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World"' – d'Argens's *Chinese Letters* – and gave both a list of Goldsmith's 'borrowings' from d'Argens and a longer list of 'resemblances between [their] works which do not involve direct textual borrowing'.[81] Crane and James H. Warner subsequently collaborated on 'Goldsmith and Voltaire's *Essai sur les moeurs*' (1923), one of several articles in the 1920s to explore the formative influence upon Goldsmith of Voltaire's writings, including his *Dictionnaire philosophique* and contributions to the *Encyclopédie* as well as his *Essai sur les moeurs* or *Histoire universelle*.[82] Amid this flurry of critical interest in Goldsmith's reading, A. Lytton Sells wrote (in French) *Les Sources françaises de Goldsmith* (1924), a work which gives centre-stage to Marivaux (and his *Spectateur Français*) rather than Voltaire. Smith then produced a monograph based upon his Yale PhD thesis, *Oliver Goldsmith's* The Citizen of the World: *A Study* (1926). Smith's book summarizes the research of the previous decade or so, for example in chapters listing the 'pseudo-letter' narratives and 'reference-books' that Goldsmith drew upon, and it also provides other valuable information about the circumstances of *The Citizen of the World*'s production, emphasizing at once the breadth of Goldsmith's reading and the generally unsystematic way in which he made use of it.[83]

Reception after Friedman's *Collected Works*

For all the expansiveness of Smith's title, it would nonetheless be several decades before works of literary scholarship began to produce the kind of close analysis of Goldsmith's writing that this title might appear to promise. There are short sections on *The Citizen of the World* in biographies of Goldsmith by Stephen Gwynn (1935) and Ralph Wardle (1957), but the next phase in its critical treatment – again a largely North American phenomenon – began in the late

81 Ronald S. Crane and Hamilton Jewett Smith, 'A French influence on Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World"', *Modern Philology*, 19/1 (1921), 83–92 (at 89).

82 See also Brown, 'Goldsmith's indebtedness to Voltaire'.

83 Hamilton Jewett Smith, *Oliver Goldsmith's* The Citizen of the World*: A Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), 114 and 87.

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1960s and was partly at least driven by the publication of Friedman's five-volume *Collected Works* in 1966. Friedman had been a commentator on Goldsmith since the early 1930s, and in his edition of *The Citizen of the World*, volume 2 of the series, he made substantial use of the research done in the 1920s by Crane, Sells, Smith, and others, stating that his footnotes sought to explain Goldsmith 'by going to the works from which he drew his information about China … Le Comte, Du Halde, and the Marquis d'Argens', rather than, as Prior had done, appealing to sources from his own time.[84] Friedman's notes also cross-refer to writings by Goldsmith published in other volumes, and as well as establishing a reliable canon, the *Collected Works* additionally thus helped to present a more integrated account of Goldsmith's authorship which made it harder to dismiss *The Citizen of the World* as marginal to any seemingly more significant texts in his oeuvre.

One defining feature of Goldsmith scholarship from the late 1960s onwards is that, in the words of Richard Helgerson in an essay of 1973, it 'no longer regarded [him] as a muddling sentimentalist'.[85] Helgerson here points to the impact of two books which both in turn acknowledge the stimulus provided by Friedman's *Collected Works* – Ricardo Quintana's *Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study* (1967) and Robert H. Hopkins's *The True Genius of Oliver Goldsmith* (1969). Quintana's study rehearses some long-standing themes in criticism of *The Citizen of the World*, for example by praising Goldsmith's evocation of 'character' and his 'imaginative resourcefulness in finding themes and supporting material', but it also uses a new kind of language which may demonstrate the residual influence of the New Criticism, with its emphasis on the integrity of the aesthetic object: for Quintana, the work is 'skilfully unified' and 'much more of a structured whole than has usually been assumed', and – as in the diverse perspectives that it offers on a topic such as 'luxury' – it sponsors 'the doctrine of the middle way'.[86] Hopkins's book supplies what was at the time proba-

84 Friedman, 1:xx.

85 Richard Helgerson, 'The two worlds of Oliver Goldsmith', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 13/3 (1973), 516–34 (at 516).

86 Quintana, *Goldsmith*, 71, 73, 68, 72, 77.

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bly the most extended critical treatment of *The Citizen of the World* hitherto published, and it more overtly rejects the idea of the 'good-natured' Goldsmith by focusing in particular on the unreliability of the narrative voice across the letters – in other words by posing as an insoluble problem the question of where 'Goldsmith' is to be found in the work. 'We can never be certain when truisms uttered by Altangi are intended to be ridiculous or to be equated with Goldsmith's point of view', Hopkins states, and this uncertainty, he argues, reflects both Goldsmith's sense of himself as a 'post-Augustan' writing in a more compromised critical climate than Pope or Swift, and his broader sense of the tension between ethical or other ideals and 'the complexity of experience'.[87]

Hopkins notes that the phrase 'unreliable narrator' derives from the work of Wayne C. Booth, and Booth (who regarded *The Citizen of the World* as Goldsmith's 'most important' achievement) would in turn address the claims of both Hopkins and Quintana in his essay, '"The self-portraiture of genius": *The Citizen of the World* and critical method' (1976).[88] Booth here identifies interest in the 'unity' of the work as relatively recent in origin ('It would never have occurred to John Forster … to worry about whether the collected letters made a unified, or coherent, or organic whole'), and he moreover emphasizes that any attempt to delineate a satirical agenda on Goldsmith's part is inevitably partial, privileging some letters while ignoring others.[89] Booth at once questions the idea of *The Citizen of the World*'s textual integrity and the critical value of the concept of 'irony', a term which, he states, 'can obscure more than it illuminates'.[90] He seeks to discriminate between different modes of irony that are evident across the work, depending on the nature of the relationship in any letter between the reader, Goldsmith, Altangi, and other narrative voices, and his sophisticated approach would be endorsed by Charles A.

87 Robert H. Hopkins, *The True Genius of Oliver Goldsmith* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 108, 95.

88 Ibid., 18; Wayne C. Booth, '"The self-portraiture of genius": *The Citizen of the World* and critical method', *Modern Philology*, 73/4 (1976), 85–96 (at 96).

89 Booth, 'Self-portraiture of genius', 85.

90 Ibid., 93.

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Knight in his essay 'Ironic loneliness: the case of Goldsmith's chinaman' (1983). Knight emphasizes the generically hybrid status of *The Citizen of the World*, in part a product of its formal affiliation to both the 'foreign-observer satire' and the periodical essay, and like Booth he is attentive to ironies in the plural, since, he argues, Altangi is by turns a naïve observer and a detached commentator, and his Chineseness is itself a 'hoax'.[91] Unlike Booth, however, Knight finds a way through the textual 'intricacy' referred to by Hazlitt, because he sees figures such as the man in black and Beau Tibbs as 'extensions not only of [Altangi's] character but that of his creator', and he therefore reads the work as 'an elaborate self-projection, within which [Goldsmith] could be both the ironic observer and the character observed': for Knight, rather than it being difficult to locate Goldsmith in the text, he is actually everywhere.[92]

Even as a critic such as Knight still held onto the idea of textual unity which Booth sought to contest, the 'ironic turn' evident in approaches to *The Citizen of the World* from the late 1960s onwards at once generated a closer engagement with Goldsmith's writing and a heightened appreciation of it: 'In its way it is superb', Quintana declares.[93] Quintana also laments that 'we have lost something of that sheer delight in the play of intellect which the age of reason possessed', and one parallel development in criticism of this period is that the movement between voices and perspectives that structures the work came to be seen by some at least as typifying principles of dialogism or reflexivity associated with the Enlightenment – a label notably absent from earlier scholarship that traces Goldsmith's debts to European writers.[94] Donna Isaacs Dalnekoff's essay 'A familiar stranger: the outsider of eighteenth-century satire' (1973) considers *The Citizen of the World* alongside other texts, including Voltaire's 'philosophical tales'

91 Charles A. Knight, 'Ironic loneliness: the case of Goldsmith's chinaman', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 82/3 (1983), 347–64 (at 351); compare Oliver Ferguson's account of Altangi as 'both … naif and … conscious ironist', in 'Goldsmith as ironist', *Studies in Philology*, 81/2 (1984), 212–28 (at 213).

92 Knight, 'Ironic loneliness', 352, 354–5.

93 Quintana, *Goldsmith*, 63.

94 Ibid., 81.

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(especially *Micromégas*, 1752, *Candide*, 1759, and *L'Ingénu*, 1767), and focusing on Altangi's letters from London it presents Goldsmith's primary narrator as affording an estranged view of customary practices that renders them absurd: 'The princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well', Altangi begins Letter 64, 'by presenting them with about two yards of blue ribbon' (p. 361). The intellectual map of the Enlightenment available to Dalnekoff and others, via the work of historians such as Peter Gay, was still dominated by the French *philosophes* connected to the *Encyclopédie*, and Dalnekoff reads *The Citizen of the World* as exemplifying a larger, primarily continental model of eighteenth-century satire which 'Through the outsider … [makes] manifest that all is relative to point of view, perspective, or angle of vision'.[95]

This kind of framing of *The Citizen of the World* emphasized its significance, then, but also sometimes occluded the rhetorical complexity addressed by Booth and others, not least by appearing to align the work with a conspicuously rationalist Altangi, 'the wise Chinaman … who anatomized the British scene in a series of letters home'.[96] Relative to such contextualization, critical engagement with *The Citizen of the World* via Edward Said's much contested but still important *Orientalism* (1978) has done considerably more to stimulate close analysis of the text. Although both China and the eighteenth century are largely beyond Said's purview, his terminology has provided a valuable resource for critics focusing on episodes such as Altangi's visits to the 'ladies of distinction' and their friends in the now widely discussed Letters 14 and 33. Tao Zhijian's essay 'Citizen of whose world? Goldsmith's orientalism' (1996) sees an 'Orientalist discourse' running throughout Goldsmith's work, criticizing it as an appropriative text in which China serves as a vehicle for satire rather than being 'appreciated … for what it was': even though Altangi dis-

95 Donna Isaacs Dalnekoff, 'A familiar stranger: the outsider of eighteenth-century satire', *Neophilologus*, 57/2 (1973), 121–34 (at 132). See also J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997), 37–53.

96 Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 357–8.

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putes others' misperception of him, Tao argues, Goldsmith shows no interest in representing China accurately and indeed makes Altangi himself responsible for 'outlandish second-level distortion'.[97] Christopher Brooks, in 'Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*: knowledge and the imposture of "Orientalism"' (1993), by contrast claims that Goldsmith interrogates the rhetorical dynamics of 'othering' that Said's work addresses. Brooks refers to Altangi as the 'original victim' of Orientalism because his encounters with those who treat him as an exotic curiosity serve to expose the dehumanizing logic of their assumptions, and he argues too that Goldsmith's work draws attention to the act of literary 'imposture' that it perpetrates in creating an imaginary Chinese philosopher.[98]

Srinivas Aravamudan extends this point about the self-consciousness of Goldsmith's imposture in *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (2012). Aravamudan identifies in *The Citizen of the World* 'a deliberately cultivated irresponsibility towards the cultural referent', and such a stance on Goldsmith's part is also apparent in the 1758 letter to Bryanton cited above in which he calls up the idea of 'Chinese Owanowitzers instructing … Tartarian Chianobacchi'.[99] Sidestepping Tao's distinction between accurate and distorting representation, Aravamudan locates Goldsmith's work in the context of an 'imaginative Orientalism, circulating images of the East that were nine parts invented and one part referential', in the period before 'Imperial conquest turned Orientalism malefic'.[100] This recognition of the fantastical (or, in Tao's terms, 'outlandish') dimension of *The Citizen of the World*, as evident in episodes such as the story of Prince Bonbenin and Princess Nanhoa told across Letters 48 and 49, serves to complicate perceptions of the work as straightforwardly

97 Tao Zhijian, 'Citizen of whose world? Goldsmith's orientalism', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 33/1 (1996), 15–34 (at 21, 26).

98 Christopher Brooks, 'Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*: knowledge and the imposture of "Orientalism"', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 35/1 (1993), 124–44 (at 127).

99 Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 100.

100 Ibid., 4, 11.

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'satirical'. Ros Ballaster's *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662–1785* (2005) similarly accentuates the hybrid status of Goldsmith's work by discussing it in the context of a wide-ranging literary history according to which – contra Conant's classificatory schema – all broadly 'Orientalist' narratives, even if they have reformist designs, to varying degrees absorb their readers in the pleasures of story, with potentially unpredictable effects.

Both Aravamudan and Ballaster thus help to recover the interpolated tales that feature throughout the work, from the story of the Chinese matron in Letter 18 through to the 'eastern Apologue' which purportedly serves as a fable 'against the marriage act' in Letter 114; even as Altangi insists that the author whom he encounters among the 'club of connoisseurs' (p. 191) in Letter 33 travesties 'the true eastern idiom' (p. 194), this letter includes an entertainingly extravagant snippet of the author's composition ('you shall hear how I generally begin. "Eben-ben-bolo, who was the son of Ban, was born on the foggy summits of Benderabassi"', p. 193). As well as emphasizing the diversity of literary Orientalisms which *The Citizen of the World* incorporates, Ballaster's study is valuable here because of the way in which it positions Goldsmith's work in a long lineage of texts in English as well as French that, in the facetious words of William Whitehead's preface to Murphy's *The Orphan of China*, '[bear] / Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears'.[101] Survey essays by Fan Cunzhong, Chen Shouyi, and Qian Zhongshu in Adrian Hsia's collection *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1998) offer a thorough treatment of this literary landscape.

The point of departure for Chi-ming Yang's *Performing China: Virtue, Commerce, and Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1660–1760* (2011) is that in the century leading up to the publication of Goldsmith's work, China functioned as an economic and moral exemplar, both positive and negative, to which Britons were often drawn when they assessed their own modernity. Eun Kyung Min's *China and the Writing of Literary Modernity* (2018) emphasizes the centrality of

101 Ballaster, *Fabulous Orients*, 193–253; Arthur Murphy, *The Orphan of China, a Tragedy* (London, 1759), n.p.

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diverse kinds of Chinese subject-matter in works by Defoe, Addison, and Percy as well as Goldsmith that seek to define a modern sense of English literary identity through China's historical antiquity and cultural difference. Addressing the same period as Yang's book, Min recontextualizes the 'English quarrel between the ancients and the moderns' as 'the symptom of a general cultural impasse brought on by the challenge of radically different chronologies and epistemologies'.[102] Although this dispute would later generate a narrower historicism according to which Europe came to be elevated as the fount of modernity, in the mid eighteenth century still, as Min argues, the quarrel between the ancients and moderns involved the search for 'a vocabulary and a conceptual framework that would make it possible to compare ancient and modern, eastern and western civilizations', as intellectuals came to terms with new information about the world and 'remapp[ed] their knowledge' of it.[103]

Twenty-first-century Goldsmith criticism has used the work of historians addressing 'The Great Encounter of China and the West', in D. E. Mungello's phrase, to illuminate the diverse meanings of 'China', as considered above, across *The Citizen of the World*.[104] In *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (1998) Jonathan Spence distinguishes between expeditions to China during the 'Catholic' sixteenth century and subsequent 'realist voyages', and this distinction corresponds to that set up by Goldsmith's Editor between 'Chinese morality', as mediated by Jesuit missionaries, and Chinese commodities, the pursuit of traders from Protestant nations seeking commercial relationships with China.[105] As David Porter writes in *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe* (2001), the 'popularization of the Western awareness of China through the medium of fashionable commodities that began in the late seventeenth century necessarily diverted attention from the arcane speculations of missionaries …

102 Min, *China and English Literary Modernity*, 4.

103 Ibid., 6.

104 D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800*, 4th edn (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

105 Jonathan Spence, *The Chan's Great Continent: China in Western Minds* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), 19–61.

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and encouraged more readily accessible modes of response'.[106] Porter's analysis of *The Citizen of the World* explores how Goldsmith reckons with this shift in understanding as figures such as the ladies of distinction in Letters 14 and 33 eschew an older paradigm of Chinese 'legitimacy' (associated with related ideas of antiquity and stability) and embrace instead an 'aesthetic of illegitimacy' by which 'China' constitutes 'a luxuriously empty slate for … exotic fantasies and musings'.[107]

In contrast to many older accounts of an inclusive 'China fad' in mid-eighteenth-century Britain, Porter focuses closely on both the variety and the cultural contestation of what he calls, in the title of another book, 'the Chinese taste'.[108] He discusses chinoiserie as the object of an 'alternative' taste, and he presents this aesthetic preference as affording both liberatory potential for female consumers and – for that reason – a ready target for misogynistic satire; Altangi ridicules the chinoiserie habit of the lady of distinction in Letter 14 yet celebrates the Chinese art of gardening in Letter 31.[109] Detailed work by historians and literary critics on the range of (and overlap between) different European encounters with China – diplomatic, commercial, cultural, and intellectual – has in turn produced greater alertness to the nuances of Goldsmith's engagement with Chinese material in *The Citizen of the World*. If, to adopt Raymond Williams's terms, the work rehearses a residual and perhaps still culturally dominant idealization of Confucian virtue, it also stages an emergent – sceptical and sometimes overtly hostile – perspective on Chinese civilization of a kind already demonstrated by texts such as Daniel Defoe's *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Commodore Anson's *A Voyage Round the World in the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV* (1748).[110]

106 Porter, *Ideographia*, 142.

107 Ibid., 138.

108 Quintana, for example, states that 'the 1750s and 1760s were witnessing the culmination of the Chinese fad' (*Goldsmith*, 66); David Porter, *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

109 See Porter, 'Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy', *Ideographia*, 133–92.

110 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), 121–7. On Defoe's *Farther Adventures*, see Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600–1730* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 177–209; the main author of Anson's narrative was probably his chaplain Richard Walter.

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Letter 6 from Fum Hoam to Altangi, for example, ventriloquizes the blinkered self-regard which would go on to be lampooned by British writers convinced of the obviousness of their nation's technological superiority over China, and in outlining the punishment faced by Altangi for leaving home – his family have been 'seized by [the emperor], and appropriated to his use' (p. 46) – it recasts the authority of the emperor as despotic rather than paternal. Letter 104 (from Altangi to Fum Hoam) refers to a 'good Emperor' who was open to the scientific knowledge of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), but it describes the hostility of 'court astronomers' to the latter's display of a modern instrument for calculating the duration of a lunar eclipse, and it attributes this response to how a 'most profound veneration for forms' (p. 575) predisposes the Chinese to discredit the claims of 'barbarians' from outside the empire.

Thomas Percy's edition of *Hau Kiou Choaan, or The Pleasing History*, contemporary with *The Citizen of the World*, also conjoins quite different versions of China since it accompanies its novelistic main narrative with detached and often negative footnote commentary regarding Chinese customs and manners. With reference to Percy, Peter J. Kitson in *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange 1760–1840* (2013) identifies the development from the early 1760s of a 'Romantic Sinology' which 'sought to substitute … chinoiserie fantasy with another "real" China that was both knowable and substantial, but increasingly the locus of illegitimacy and stagnation, capable of being understood and controlled'.[111] Percy himself was 'ambivalent' towards China, as both Kitson and Porter argue, however, and for Kitson Romantic Sinology is rooted in 'mutual encounter and negotiation' rather than the kind of casual derision apparent in John Forster's later jibe about 'the flowery people'.[112] Laurence Williams emphasizes the centrality of 'discourses of civility and friendship' in *The Citizen of the World*, and he explores the way in which the work poses a Leibnizian '"commerce of light" between Europe and China'

111 Peter J. Kitson, *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange 1760–1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 15.

112 Porter, *Chinese Taste*, 159; Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 239.

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against more narrowly transactional – or in Spence's terms 'realist' – ideas of cross-cultural contact.[113]

Although many readers have, like the *Monthly*'s reviewer, noted that there is 'nothing Asiatic' about Goldsmith's Chinese philosopher, Altangi does tellingly refer to his nominal status when he observes, in Letter 81, that the popularity in Britain of luxury commodities such as silk is economically beneficial to his own country. Along with historical research on Europe's encounter with China, the development of an interdisciplinary eighteenth-century studies has further enhanced critical awareness of the complexity of Goldsmith's work, perhaps especially where its representation of commercial society, beyond the immediate business of authorship and publishing, is concerned. On the ubiquitous topic of 'luxury', for example, rather than referring to attitudes for or against the idea – a binary implicit in Quintana's claim about Goldsmith's 'middle way' – critics are now more likely to address its discursive construction: Altangi invokes the concept of luxury in the context of a discourse of civic humanism (according to which it corrupts the polis) as well as a discourse of 'economic amoralism' (according to which it creates wealth), and the work as a whole does not attempt to synthesize these contrasting perspectives.[114] *The Citizen of the World* stages mid-century understandings of the vexed relationship between wealth and virtue, as influentially expounded by the historian of political thought J. G. A. Pocock, and this sense of a trade-off between commercial prosperity and national well-being is particularly apparent in Altangi's commentary on colonial expansion, for example in Letter 17, on the origins of the war in America, and Letter 25, on 'The Rise and Declension of the Kingdom of Lao'.[115] Whereas Altangi in Letter 108 refers with seeming approval

113 Laurence Williams, 'Anglo-Chinese caresses: civility, friendship and trade in English representations of China, 1760–1800', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38/2 (2015), 277–96 (at 283).

114 On 'economic amoralism', see John Barrell and Harriet Guest, 'The uses of contradiction: Pope's "Epistle to Bathurst"', in Barrell, *Poetry, Language and Politics* (Manchester University Press, 1988), 82–3.

115 See, for example, Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

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to how Francis Bacon challenged humankind to bring nature under its control, Letter 17 presents the competition for natural resources between European powers as a major cause of current global conflict. While it says very little about either enslaved Africans or Indigenous Americans, *The Citizen of the World* also recognizes the cheapness of human life in the modern era of capitalist accumulation, most vividly in Letter 119 where Altangi introduces the history of the 'disabled soldier' by stating that 'The miseries of the poor are … entirely disregarded' (p. 656).

Thinking about the ambivalent representation of commercial wealth in *The Citizen of the World* makes it easier to apprehend the unresolved tensions and power struggles that are captured in other letters too, especially those which describe what Altangi refers to in Letter 68 as the 'mighty metropolis' or – less grandly – 'vast munificent dunghill' (p. 392) of London. In Letter 77, for example, Altangi initially praises the 'civility' of a mercer who sells him a quantity of silk but then goes on to marvel at how such a 'man with … a confined education and capacity' (p. 447) had got the better of him and persuaded him to buy what he did not need. At Vauxhall Gardens in Letter 71 Altangi reports Mrs. Tibbs's wonder at 'people … pretend[ing] to know the polite world who had received all their rudiments of breeding behind a compter', followed by the response of the pawnbroker's widow that those who 'sat behind compters … could sit at the head of their own tables' (p. 413), and then Mrs. Tibbs's subsequent ridicule of her antagonist for having praised the 'paltry' paintings on the walls of their supper-box (p. 415). Studies such as David Solkin's *Painting for Money* (1993) and Miles Ogborn's *Spaces of Modernity* (1998) help to illuminate the richness, and inconclusiveness, of this exchange through their discussion of the contemporary 'commercialization of leisure', and of how popular entertainments could potentially offer a refined experience that produced a 'polite subjectivity'.[116] Altangi goes

116 Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680–1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 123; David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 138.

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on to state that the widow was finally 'conquered in point of politeness' (p. 414) by Mrs. Tibbs, but this letter clearly satirizes Mrs. Tibbs at least as much as her adversary, and it leaves the meaning of 'politeness' undefined while at the same time emphasizing that competing ideas of what might (or might not) constitute polite conduct were embedded in relations of social antagonism.[117]

Interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of eighteenth-century studies thus provides a critical resource for recovering the rhetorical complexity of *The Citizen of the World*, and it has also significantly broadened approaches to 'the Enlightenment', which in an earlier phase of the reception of Goldsmith's work provided a key intellectual context: recent studies have questioned the customary designation of the historical period of the Enlightenment as an 'age of reason' as well as contesting the Eurocentric assumptions underpinning Enlightenment universalism.[118] In Goldsmith criticism the concept or sensibility of 'cosmopolitanism' is now more likely to be invoked than the 'Enlightenment' with which it has often been associated, and the language of 'world citizenship' is indeed central to Goldsmith's work, because Altangi considers himself as 'a Cosmopolite' (Letter 110, p. 608) with a 'regard to mankind' (Letter 85, p. 483) who imagines 'the world [as] being but one city' (Letter 123, p. 681). Although Mary Helen McMurran traces what she calls 'the new cosmopolitanism' back to Martha Nussbaum's essay 'Patriotism and cosmopolitanism' (1994), she notes that 9/11 and its aftermath provided a powerful impetus for the embrace of cosmopolitanism, as a way 'to counteract new malignant strains of patriotism eroding rights and tolerance on the world-political stage'.[119] In 'The new cosmopolitanism and the eighteenth century' (2013) McMurran distinguishes between *Spectator* 69's commercial-imperial vision of 'the multicultural … space of the Royal Exchange' and other more 'philosophical' appeals to the ideal

117 Letters 26 and 27, on the story of the man in black, offer a comparable interrogation of the meaning of 'benevolence'.

118 See, for example, Daniel J. Carey and Lynn Festa (eds.), *Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

119 McMurran, 'New cosmopolitanism', 19.

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of world citizenship.[120] As noted above, however, she argues that *The Citizen of the World* undercuts this ideal even as Altangi (as in Letter 20) cites Confucius in celebration of it. Goldsmith's writing more generally differentiates the 'vernacular' cosmopolitanism of a mobile figure such as Lewis Holberg from the comfortable habitus of a privileged European elite, but in *The Citizen of the World* Goldsmith presents Altangi – his instinct for society notwithstanding – as an isolated figure whose only alliance prior to the conclusion is with the equally eccentric man in black.[121] Goldsmith also juxtaposes the expansive ideal of transnational intellectual community with small-scale examples of the 'republic of letters', such as the club of authors in Letters 29 and 30 and the company of philosophers in Letter 58, that appear calculated to emphasize the gulf between theory and 'actually existing' practice.

Goldsmith's sceptical treatment of elite cosmopolitanism brings this introduction to a final critical context, which has – for the most part indirectly – informed much of the preceding discussion, namely that of Goldsmith's Irishness. Alongside critical endeavours to 'globalize' the Enlightenment, an important related scholarly development since the late twentieth century has been the identification of distinct national intellectual traditions of enlightened thinking. In the case of Ireland such work has been undertaken by studies such as Michael Brown's *The Irish Enlightenment* (2016), which examines a cultural formation that was 'engaged in an extended debate about which faith or faiths were sufficiently civil as to be permitted to publicly engage in religious, social, and political discourse'.[122] While Brown situates Ireland in the context of what he refers to as 'a broader Atlantic Enlightenment', emphasizing especially the connection between Ireland and North America, others have considered the transnational

120 Ibid., 29.

121 Min notes that 'he walks around London in the company of friends' (*China and English Literary Modernity*, 154); compare Megan Kitching, 'The solitary animal: professional authorship and persona in Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 25/1 (2012), 175–98.

122 Michael Brown, *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 11.

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exchange between Ireland and France which provided access to works translated from French and often bypassed Britain in the process.[123] In one of several related essays on the latter topic, Graham Gargett, for example, focuses on the dissemination in Ireland of Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* (*Letters on England*), written in 1733–4, and he suggests that the dynamism of the Irish book trade was such that, rather than having to travel to broaden his intellectual horizons, Goldsmith may have encountered Voltaire's work before he left Ireland.[124]

The question of Goldsmith's national identity has been a concern of commentators since the time of his death, and as noted above prominent nineteenth-century writers such as Macaulay appear to have regarded Goldsmith as an 'English' figure. While Seamus Deane in an editorial headnote of 1991 presents Goldsmith as, of all eighteenth-century Irish authors, 'perhaps the least affected by any specifically national sentiment', more recent work has sought to complicate such an assessment of his position – which is based on the paucity of direct reference to Ireland in his published writings – by attending instead to Goldsmith's consciousness of his status as an Irish exotic following his departure from his native land.[125] Terry Eagleton points to the recurrence of the figure of the 'insider/outsider' in Goldsmith's work and argues that outside of Ireland Goldsmith found himself 'marooned between two worlds, in exile both at home and abroad.'[126] Goldsmith complained of how he was treated in Edinburgh (his first stop after he left Ireland), telling his uncle the Rev. Thomas Contarine in December 1753 that he was received by the Duke of Hamilton, at whose residence he was a regular guest, 'more as a Jester than as a

123 Ibid., 5.

124 Graham Gargett, 'Voltaire's "Lettres philosophiques" in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, 14 (1999), 77–98 (at 97); see also Maire Kennedy, 'Reading the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 45/3 (2012), 355–78.

125 Seamus Deane, 'Oliver Goldsmith: miscellaneous writings 1759–74', in Deane (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. 1, ed. Deane (Derry: Field Day, 1991), 658–81 (at 660).

126 Terry Eagleton, *Crazy John and the Bishop and other Essays on Irish Culture* (Cork University Press, 1998), 111, 107.

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companion'.[127] Griffin and O'Shaughnessy suggest that Goldsmith's role in the Duke's company was 'akin to that of entertainer or flatterer', and that he later drew on this humiliating experience in describing (in Letter 27) the man in black's account of his time as 'flatterer to a great man' (p. 154).[128] Focusing more directly on Altangi as an authorial surrogate, Joseph Lennon, in *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (2004), claims that in *The Citizen of the World* Goldsmith explored his 'position … as [an] … Irishman in England', and was drawn to the idea of ventriloquizing a Chinese traveller because it enabled him 'to "write back" to England while avoiding the uncomfortable persona of the barbarous Irishman'.[129]

In her introduction to *Irish Literature in Transition, 1700–1780* (2020), Moyra Haslett states that 'Ireland was almost as present to [Goldsmith] in London as it would have been in Dublin.'[130] This was the case because, as Norma Clarke shows in *Brothers of the Quill: Oliver Goldsmith in Grub Street* (2016), when he arrived in London Goldsmith gravitated towards the 'London Irish' – fellow countrymen and hack writers such as Samuel Derrick, Paul Hiffernan, John (or Jack) Pilkington, and Edward Purdon.[131] Clarke argues that Goldsmith's 'need to separate himself' from these peers was a 'defining aspect' of his eventual rise to the status of 'Dr. Goldsmith', but she also suggests that throughout his career Goldsmith's political thinking, especially about liberty and empire, continued to be inflected by his Irish background: Goldsmith's detached position as an Irish outsider underpins, for example, Altangi's observation in Letter 4 that in England while 'Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies, and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, … perhaps

127 Goldsmith to the Rev. Thomas Contarine, c. December 1753 (*Letters*, 14).

128 *Letters*, 14–15n4.

129 Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse University Press, 2004), 129, 130.

130 Moyra Haslett, 'Introduction', in Haslett (ed.), *Irish Literature in Transition, 1700–1780* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1–28 (at 10).

131 Clarke, *Brothers of the Quill*, 11–12. See also Craig Bailey, *Irish London: Middle-Class Migration in the Global Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool University Press, 2013).

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not one of all the number understands its meaning' (pp. 31–2).[132] Griffin writes of the representation of Auburn in *The Deserted Village* that 'Though England is the constituency to whom Goldsmith is necessarily appealing, it is not the constituency from which his convictions emerge', and Clarke makes a comparable point about the enduringly formative nature of Goldsmith's Irish experience and its impact on his writing.[133]

There are numerous instances across *The Citizen of the World* where Goldsmith's background can be seen to shape claims made by Altangi that ostensibly have nothing to do with Ireland, as for example in Letter 82 where he considers 'refined' and 'barbarous' states of society and cautions against seeking to impose 'improvement' on those in the latter condition without attention to their 'wishes, … pleasures, or … necessities' (p. 469); this letter takes on additional significance when understood in relation to the long history of English denigration of the 'savage' Irish. Letter 68 playfully undercuts the distinction between civilization and barbarism when Altangi likens the 'mighty metropolis' to 'one vast munificent dunghill' (p. 392), and this idiosyncratic reference to a heap of waste provides what Clíona Ó Gallchoir in a different context presents as 'a highly localised version of the primitive' familiar in contemporary accounts of the Irish peasantry.[134] An even more incongruous allusion to rural Ireland is evident in Letter 122, where at the end of his remarks on London done '*in the manner of modern voyagers*', Altangi notes that at Kentish Town (which he inaccurately presents as in 'vicinity to the county of Kent'), he 'made a hasty repast on roasted mutton, and a certain dried fruit called potatoes' (p. 677). This quizzical, defamiliarizing description of 'a certain dried fruit' recalls the misapprehensions of the gentlemanly English narrator of Goldsmith's 'A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Native *Irish*' (1759), and it at once disrupts any straightforward identification of Altangi as an authorial surrogate and –

132 Clarke, *Brothers of the Quill*, 12.

133 Griffin, *Enlightenment in Ruins*, 120; Clarke, 'More national than personal', 54–5.

134 Clíona Ó Gallchoir, 'Constructing the child in early Irish fiction', in Haslett (ed.), *Irish Literature in Transition*, 343–64 (at 355).

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through its reference to the ubiquitous potato – records a trace of the Irish social life that is otherwise beyond the purview of the text.

Another example of how Goldsmith's Irishness indirectly informs *The Citizen of the World*, despite the lack of any overt reference, appears in Letter 87 (briefly discussed above) when Fum Hoam reflects on the role of 'migrations of men' (p. 499) as an engine of world history, inviting readers to think about the interconnection of the histories of Europe and Central Asia. Although the paragraph in which this quotation appears is derivative of Buffon, as Friedman notes, the phrase 'migrations of men' seems carefully chosen by Goldsmith to contrast with his teasing description of his friend Robert Bryanton's movement 'from the fire-side to the easy chair' (a phrase which he recycled in Letter 74 of *The Citizen of the World*, p. 431), as well as with the 'philosophic cobler' and his tale of 'migrations' (p. 368) within the parish of his birth in Letter 65.[135] Goldsmith invokes such ideas of settled calm, or limited movement within narrowly defined boundaries, as a foil to a kind of perpetual mobility, whether his own (which he juxtaposes with the quiet enjoyed by Bryanton) or Altangi's (who begins by describing himself in Letter 2 as 'a poor philosophic wanderer' who has 'traversed the immeasurable wilds of … Tartary', p. 20). One might speculate that it was Goldsmith's early departure from Ireland and subsequent experience of travel which made him especially attentive to the significance of movement as a factor in longue durée history, and albeit that it is the Peking-rooted Fum Hoam who demonstrates it, such global awareness could additionally be seen to instantiate that superiority of insight which at various times in his work Goldsmith claimed for the pedestrian. In this letter as elsewhere, then, the content of *The Citizen of the World* is 'partly borrowed', as the *British Magazine* put it, but it nonetheless exemplifies too the intellectual reach that is a defining feature of the work, and which it is one of the objectives of this volume to recover.

135 Goldsmith to Robert Bryanton, 14 August 1758 (*Letters*, 29).

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