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**Changing visitor perceptions of Malaga (Spain) and its development as a  
winter health resort in the nineteenth century.**

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## **Notes on Contributors**

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Michael Barke is a Reader in Human Geography at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne. He has published extensively on tourism development in modern Spain and his more recent research has been concerned with the historical geography of Andalucia and the city of Malaga in particular.

## **Changing visitor perceptions of Malaga (Spain) and its development as a winter health resort in the nineteenth century.**

### **Abstract**

During the early nineteenth century Spain became an increasingly popular destination for a growing number of northern European and American ‘romantic’ tourists. Malaga was initially a popular tourist gateway for those exploring southern Spain but also parts of North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean and by the end of the nineteenth century it had established itself as a winter health resort of some repute. This study explores the changing visitor perceptions of the city during this period of development. The published accounts of over forty men and women travellers who visited Malaga in the nineteenth century have been examined using discourse analysis. Our analysis reveals not only the changing nature of Malaga as an emerging tourist destination but moreover we demonstrate the plural and contested nature of visitor perceptions of this tourist place and what these potentially reveal about the predilections and attitudes of the visitors themselves and how they reflect broader northern European social discourses towards southern Spain and its people at this time.

**Key words:** Romantic tourism, travel writing, gender, Malaga, Spain.

### **Introduction**

“Nothing stranger and more picturesque can be imagined than the surroundings of Malaga. One feels as if one has been transported to Africa: the dazzling whiteness of the houses, the deep indigo tones of the sea, the glaring intensity of the light all add to the illusion.”  
(Theophile Gautier, 2001: 222) Visit to Malaga 1840.

“A horrible place! ... All sun, dirt, traffic, merchant-ships, bad smells, mule-bells, rattling wheels, screams, shouts, ugliness and dust!...A more detestable place than Malaga I never

visited. The Alameda, so-called — meaning a leafy avenue — is dry gravel, with sticks planted in it the size of fingers.” (Frances Elliot, 1893: 37-39). Visit to Malaga c. March 1882.

These descriptions of Malaga, produced nearly half a century apart, reflect very different impressions of the same city. But how useful are these travel accounts, and others like them, in tracing the changing fortunes of tourist destinations like Malaga during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Furthermore, do they reveal more about the writers themselves than they do about the nature of the place?

Eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writing has attracted growing academic attention with feminist and post-colonial theories, in particular, being employed to deconstruct this considerable body of material (Mills, 1991; Pratt, 1992; Duncan and Gregory, 1999; Gilroy, 2000; Morgan, 2001; Foster and Mills, 2002; Clark, 1999; McEwan, 2000; Guelke and Morin, 2001; Hulme and Youngs, 2002). Despite this now significant volume of work few studies have chosen to focus on specific tourist resorts or destinations and how they have been represented by different travel writers over time. Instead, most work has focused either on quite generalised geographical areas such as ‘the Orient’, Africa, and North America or on specific writers or groups of writers during a particular historical period e.g. Victorian women (Morin, 1998; 1999) In contrast, this study also builds on a growing body of critical work on nineteenth century Spanish travel writing (Gifra-Adroher, 2000; Colmeiro, 2002; Lopez-Burgos del Barrio, 2006; Fernández-Cifuentes, 2007) and analyses visitor attitudes and perceptions with reference to a particular resort and its development and changing fortunes during the nineteenth century. The content of over forty, (see Fig 1) mainly English language, travel journals, letters and guides featuring Malaga, and published during the nineteenth century, has been analysed. Critical discourse analysis is employed to examine the plural and often contested nature of these visitor accounts and an attempt is made to relate

them to the social and historical contexts in which they were constructed and the power relations they convey (Fairclough, 1995; 2003). In the Spanish historiography of foreign travel writing to that country, it is the romantic representations that dominate (Majada Neila, J., 1986; Lopez-Burgos del Barrio, 2006) but, as will be demonstrated, other representations, albeit less flamboyant, much less complimentary and certainly less recognised, also exist.

### **Development of romantic travel in Spain and the search for the Spanish ‘Oriental’ other**

“Oh. lovely Spain! Renown’d, romantic land!” (Byron, 1854:34)

Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain had not really featured as a significant tourist destination for the ‘elite leisured classes of Europe’ (Barke and Towner, 1996:5) despite its classical remains and cultural resources. Poor roads, lack of suitable accommodation, the threat of local bandits and even perceived hostilities towards Protestant visitors have all been cited as maintaining the relative marginalisation of the Iberian Peninsula as a Grand Tour destination (Towner, 1985; Barke and Towner, 1996). Malaga in particular did have a significant number of foreign visitors prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century but these tended to be mainly motivated by commercial interests (Rodríguez Alemán, 2007), although a few, despite their primary interest being in antiquarianism (Carter, 1777; Swinburne, 1779; Townsend, 1792) could be regarded as the spiritual precursors of the much more substantial number that was to follow. But with the beginning of the romantic era in Western Europe and its impact on travel (Urry, 1990; Andrews, 1989; Towner, 1996), a growing taste for wilder and romantic scenery and exotic cultures developed (Barke and Towner, 1996:6; Colmeiro, 2002; Fernández-Cifuentes, 2007), and Spain began to grow in popularity as a destination for wealthy northern European travellers. In Spain, it has been argued, romantic travellers could satisfy their desire to escape

from the ravages of northern European industrialism in their search for “idealised pre-industrial societies and a desire to return to a pre-modern past” (Colmeiro, 2002:128):

“In nineteenth-century European discourses Spain was exotically oriental in nature. But because it was closer to home and the unfamiliar was spoken in a familiar language, it was perceived as a more sheltered space onto which the fears and anxieties caused by modernity could be safely projected.” (Colmeiro, 2002:130).

This objectification of the Spanish (oriental) other can be seen as part of a much broader power asymmetry that emerged in eighteenth century western Europe in which Northern Europe increasingly “asserted itself as the centre of civilisation” (Pratt, 1992: 10) whilst the Mediterranean was increasingly fashioned as its possession and as being culturally distinct. At the same time, Britain’s military support of Spain in the Peninsula war with France (1808-14) has also been cited as a major influence on the growth of Hispanic romanticism in Britain (Sánchez, 2009), inspiring several notable poets such as Sir Walter Scott and Byron, not just to romanticise about the Spanish and their noble, chivalric fight for independence but also to cast Britain as their saviour and protector against the French oppressor. This growing romantic fascination with Spain therefore had geo-political as well as artistic connotations and was not just restricted to Britain either. In deconstructing the work of nineteenth century Finnish artists and their representations of Spain, Marie-Sofie Lundström (2008:31) also argues that “nineteenth century travels to Spain were an expression of Romantic nostalgia and a fear of modernity”. She describes how these Finnish traveller-painters, such as Albert Edelfelt (1854-1905), were influenced by the French *espagnolisme* art movement through studying in Paris with leading exponents of the genre such as Gérôme (1824-1904) and Fortuny (1838-1874) and were driven, she argues, by “Romantic nostalgia” and a search for an elusive “*reality and authenticity*” believed to exist elsewhere in other, southern, cultures (Lundström, 2008).

This search for difference and ‘otherness’ also implies a search for the antithesis of modernity and nineteenth century Spain with its Moorish heritage and Medieval style monarchy provided a perceptually and geographically convenient destination for such a quest. Conversely though, this romantic fascination with Spain helped to define the identity of northern European countries as *modern* and *developed* when set in contrast to it. As others have argued (e.g. Said, 1978; Kabbani, 1986; Colmeiro, 2002; Fernández-Cifuentes, 2007) nineteenth century romantic tourism and its associated works of art and literature was thus a key instrument in *Orientalist* discourse and in the construction of the Orient as a distinct imaginative geographical entity. For some travellers Spain was a relatively convenient and familiar cultural and geographical gateway to this imagined space.

Nineteenth century Spain, and in particular Andalucia, was therefore cast as ‘Oriental’ not just because of its geographical position and Moorish heritage but also its increasingly inferior geo-political status and relative economic backwardness (Colmeiro, 2002; Fernández-Cifuentes, 2007). Partly as a consequence of this re-imagining of romantic Spain as a cultural other, Malaga and other Andalucían cities such as Seville and Granada became increasingly popular tourist destinations during the nineteenth century particularly for upper middle class northern European visitors (Fernández-Cifuentes, 2007; Krauel, 1988; Majada-Neila, 1986; Pellejero Martínez, 2005; Lopez-Burgos del Barrio, 2006; Barke et al, 2010). Some of these visitors, such as Hans Christian-Anderson, Theophile Gautier and Richard Ford, could be described as ‘Romantic tourists’ (Majada Neila, 1986) and their influential accounts were published quite widely at the time, popularising destinations like Malaga but also arguably helping to ‘script’ the behaviour and attitudes of fellow travellers.

### **Malaga: a gateway to Spain and the East.**

Malaga’s geographical position as Spain’s most southern city together with its long established status as a significant port with international trading links made it an obvious



gateway for travellers in search of Moorish Spain and a suitably cosmopolitan hub for those en route to the Orient ‘proper’, as enthusiastically experienced by Benjamin Disraeli for example in the summer of 1830 (Gunn, et. al., 1982). Malaga was also relatively accessible by sea compared to other parts of Spain’s interior which remained difficult for travellers to access until the extension of the railway network in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, Malaga was the obvious point of arrival or departure for those in search of Andalucía’s more celebrated Moorish treasures, thought to be found in Cordoba, Seville and Granada (Lopez-Burgos del Barrio, 2006). Several early nineteenth century visitor accounts attest to this ‘gateway’ role for the city with some staying only as long as was necessary to make onward travel arrangements (Inglis, 1830; Capell-Brooke 1831; Grosvenor, 1842;). Even those visitors who were just passing through couldn’t help but be impressed with the picturesque physical setting of the city when approaching from the sea, with its horse-shoe bay encircled by mountains and guarded by a Moorish fortress:

“The approach to the ancient city of Malaga from the sea has something noble and striking, which at once rivets the eye and the imagination of the traveller. Rising from the bosom of its spacious bay, flanked by lofty mountains stretching far beyond, with its time-worn bulwarks and antique castle, the ruins of which spread far along its eastern hill, it bears the aspect of a fallen capital, and of a dominion passed away.” (Roscoe, 1836: 274).

“We found ourselves early off Malaga, a town beautifully placed on the sea-shore, surrounded by superb mountains.” (Marchioness of Westminster 1842: 83)

“From the sea, Malaga is peculiarly picturesque.” (Kenyon, 1853: 95)

Despite its picturesque setting some visitors, such as the American, Caroline Elizabeth Wilde Cushing in February 1830, found “the objects of curiosity to a stranger...few...and the city itself although charmingly situated...anything but handsome” (Wilde-Cushing, 1832: 283).

Similarly, in Hoskins' 1852 guide, boldly entitled "Spain, as it is", he claims the sights of Malaga can be "seen in an hour or two" that there is not a single gallery worth seeing" and that "the interior of the cathedral is as bad as the exterior" (Hoskins, 1852: 80-81).

Other visitors though were clearly more impressed with the city's charms and spent much longer immersing themselves in the place. Some Romantic descriptions of Malaga from the 19<sup>th</sup> century not only confirm a preoccupation with the 'delightful climate' and spectacular 'picturesque' geographical setting but also reflect the Romantic fascination with 'local colour'. Feifer (1985) has suggested that many Romantic tourists were motivated by the desire to escape from the relatively rigid constraints of their own social milieus, partly in search of real or imagined sexual adventure driven by a strong romantic fascination with the "dark dangers of the road" (Feifer, 1985:157) and with those on the margins of society such as bandits, pirates, and gypsies. Malaga became renowned for "offering a rich gallery" of these "marginal characters" (Mellado and Granados, 1997: 14) which had been immortalised in the works of romantic poets like Byron and Gautier (Mellado and Granados, 1997: 14; Sanchez, 2009):

"Tourists who sojourn at Malaga for any length of time have an opportunity of studying two of the most curious phases of humanity in the charran and the baratero – that is if they do not dread the bloodthirsty nature of these people." (Davillier , 1876: 217)

"Spain in losing its robbers, is losing its romance. In any other country you can be fleeced by landlords and unconscionable tradespeople. But in Spain you have always looked forward to a rencontre on the highway." (Charles W. March, 1856:339)

Several Romantic visitors wax lyrical about the local population but particularly their more picaresque aspects. Enticing images of a pre-modern country peopled by noble bandits, brave but barbaric bullfighters, and mystical *Carmen-like* Gypsy women, dominate nineteenth century Romantic travelogues of Spain generally but of Andalucía in particular (Majada

Neila, 1986; Mellado and Granados, 1997; Colmeiro, 2002; Lundström, 2008; Tofiño-Quesada, 2003; Fernandez-Cifuentes, 2007). But in the context of southern Spain these romantic preoccupations with local colour could take on a somewhat oriental hue as evidenced in these two accounts:

“Spain has remained Arab in this respect, the bandits easily pass for heroes, an association of ideas which is less strange than it appears at first sight, especially in southern lands, where the imagination is so impressionable; a contempt for death, audacity, coolness, prompt and bold decision, skill and strength, the sort of dignity which attaches to a man in revolt against society, all these qualities, which have such a powerful action on minds as yet but partly civilised – are they not such as make up a great character?” (Gautier, 2001 [1860]: 244)

“One of the charms of Malaga is its oriental look. Here, in this Western corner of Europe, the unchangeable East is still a living and breathing reality. The look, the colour, the dress, the very speech and songs of the people, retain distinct traces of the long centuries during which the Moors possessed the land. The street cries, ending in something like a prolonged wail, during which the voice descends half an octave, and the peculiar wailing character of the popular songs — one of which I hear on the stairs at this moment — send me back, as in a faintly remembered dream, over eighteen years, to the Arabian desert and to the songs of the Bedouin... There is the same stately bearing, the same dignified reserve, the same simple kindness, about a Spanish, which there is about an Arab, peasant.” (MacGregor, 1879 in Balfour 1912: 344-5)

Théophile Gautier was a leading figure in the French Romantic movement and his impressions of Spain during 1840, recorded in *Voyage en Espagne* (1845), influenced many other romantic travellers to follow in his footsteps. In nineteenth century Malaga romantic

visitors like Gautier could taste and experience the ‘Orient’ without the discomfort and insecurity of actually being there. Tofiño-Quesada (2003:143) refers to these imaginary geographies of nineteenth century Spain as a kind of “Orient a la carte: exotic enough to be interesting but not so different as to be considered alien.”

The referencing of Malaga’s ‘oriental’ cultural attributes or Moorish heritage is relatively common in nineteenth century visitor accounts:

“We stayed here several days nevertheless; and though we never liked Malaga, could not fail to be enchanted with the oriental look of the place.” (Betham-Edwards, 1868: 140)

“One never walks about in the gleaming sunshine without seeing sights which would drive a painter crazy. The narrow streets are crowded with a population which still bears a large admixture of the Moorish element, well-formed, dark-skinned, with glittering black eyes.” (MacGregor, 1879 in Balfour 1912: 344)

These accounts present an imaginative geography of a timeless, unchanging, pre-modern land peopled by dark and mysterious characters and echo some of the dominant cultural stereotypes associated with the East and Orientalist discourses more broadly. Visitors were therefore able to project their broader fantasies and fears of the oriental other onto the city and its population as Malaga, despite being *in* the West, was considered to be a living representation of the “unchangeable East” (MacGregor, 1879 in Balfour 1912:344).

### **Feminised constructions of Malaga**

A particularly noticeable feature of these romantic tourist accounts of Malaga is their focus on local women as one of the primary objects of the male fascination (Pritchard and Morgan, 2000) constructing a distinctly feminised discourse (Yeğenoğlu, 1998; Kabbani, 1986) of the dark, exotic, sensuous Malagueñan other. At least a quarter of the forty-three accounts we analysed made specific reference to the reputed beauty of the local women or Malagueñas,

with several, like the selection below, giving quite detailed, almost anatomical descriptions of their features:

“At this mellowing hour, the fair Malagueña may be seen...Her mantilla falls in light flowing folds over the glossy clusters of her raven locks, and seems so attracted by the charms which it half conceals, that it scarcely needs even the delicate confinement of the jewelled hand that now and then adjusts its condition.” (Rev Walter Colton, 1860: 183) Visit in 1832.

“The Malagueña is distinguished by the golden pallor of her uniform complexion – for the cheeks have no more colour in them than the brow – her face of an elongated oval, her bright pink lips, her finely cut nose and the brilliance of Arab eyes, which one might imagine are stained with henna, so finely marked are the eyelids, prolonged by a line drawn towards the temples. I do not know whether the effect is to be attributed to the severe folds of red drapery surrounding their faces, but they have a grave, passionate expression which gives them an Eastern touch.” (Gautier, 2001 [1840]:225)

“the petite, thorough-bred looking Malagueñas, " tan Halaguerias," the most bewitching, perhaps, of all the beauties, even of Andalucia.” (William Tyrone Power, 1853:58)

“how often have I sat on a marble seat of the Alameda, and watched these graceful figures as they floated past, their faces damasked with the glowing bloom, their lips tremulous with unconscious smiles, and their eyes kindling with suppressed desire, while the hour, the climate and languishing atmosphere, gave a dangerous coloring to one’s thoughts.” (Charles W. March, 1856:346)

“ I had to go down on to the Alameda and join the throng, to admire the beautiful women with their dark flashing eyes, who so gracefully fluttered their black bespangled fans.” (Hans-Christian Anderson, 1862: 70-72)

The similarity of these accounts not only re-emphasises the heavily eroticised nature of the male romantic gaze but also reveals the importance of what has been referred to as the ‘scripting’ (Duncan and Gregory, 1999) of traveller accounts. These travellers were undoubtedly influenced by the works of the fellow romantic writers and painters who had preceded them. Duncan and Gregory (1999:117), for example, describe a palimpsest process by which “each trip in its turn contributes to the layering and sedimentation of powerful imaginative geographies that shape the expectations and experiences of subsequent travellers.” Furthermore, Romantic travel was not (and is not) just about the experience *in situ* but also about the *a priori* fantasies and expectations about the journey and how these are imbued and embellished by immersing oneself in the accounts of others (Barke, 2002). Byron was a key figure in romanticism’s growing fascination with the Iberian Peninsula during the early nineteenth century with particular import attached to his works *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan* (Sánchez, 2009). In these Spanish poems, Byron not only romanticises about the picturesque landscape, its pastoral simplicity and its chivalrous inhabitants, he also reveals his fascination with the beauty of Spanish women (Sanchez, 2009). Although Byron did not visit Malaga during his Spanish tour of 1809 his accounts of Spanish women and in particular those from *Cadiz* were echoed in many subsequent accounts extolling the beauty of the *Malagueñas*, like in those detailed above. In a letter home written in August 1809 Byron commented on “the dark languishing eyes, clear olive complexions, and forms more graceful in motion than can be conceived by an Englishman used to the drowsy listless air of his own countrywomen.” (MacCarthy, 2002: 96). It is quite possible that none of these other romantic travellers ever read a word of Byron and made their own totally independent ‘assessments’ of Spanish women. This however is questionable, given the importance attached to the self-conscious display of cultural capital in romantic travel writing, with the frequent citation of other travel writers, and the obvious continuity of

particular adjectives within these narratives. Byron, for example, describes the women of Cadiz as “the finest women in Spain, the Cadiz belles being the Lancashire witches of their land” (Byron, 1809 in Moore, 1830: 86). He also describes Spanish women as “form’d for all the witching arts of love” (Byron, 1854: 45). The use of the adjective *bewitching* to describe the nature of Spanish women also appears in several nineteenth century visitor accounts of Malaga. Richard Ford in his influential *Handbook for travellers in Spain* drew the visitor’s attention to the “delicious” Alameda where one would find “Las Malagueñas”, who are “muy haligueñas,” very bewitching’ (Ford, 1845: 286).

Later visitors, paid homage to Ford’s work by using the “bewitching” leitmotiv. The Reverend John Overton Choules, during his visit in July 1853, describes how the “pretty women” on the Alameda were “using their fans most bewitchingly” (Overton-Choules, 1854: 210) and in the same year William Tyrone Power claimed that the “thorough-bred” Malagueñas were “the most bewitching, perhaps, of all the beauties, even of Andaluca” (Power, 1853: 58). Whilst Charles W. March visiting in 1852 although admittedly impressed with the women of Malaga was careful to point out that this did not mean to say that “Las Malagueñas, though muy halagueñas, very bewitching as they are, will compare with the señoritas of Seville.” (March, 1856: 346).

The local women of Malaga clearly became a major object of attention for the male romantic tourist satisfying their preconceived erotic fantasies of the exotic feminine eastern other - fashioned by other travel writers and, increasingly in the late nineteenth century, by artists, such as Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874) and Julio Romero de Torres (1874-1930) (Thornton, 1983; 1985). In this sense, nineteenth century Malaga could be described as a ‘gendered tourism landscape’ ((Pritchard and Morgan, 2000) in which women were “represented as exoticized commodities which are there to be experienced” (Pritchard and Morgan, 2000: 891)

It would be false however to represent romantic tourist perceptions of Malaga as a purely male construct. Accounts of women travellers have rarely attracted the same academic attention as those of their more celebrated male counterparts, despite many of their travel journals being published and relatively widely distributed at the time (Robinson, 1990; Mills, 1991; Foster and Mills, 2002). But not only did nineteenth century Malaga, and southern Spain in general, attract a significant number of women travellers and writers, but their accounts of the city and its population also display similar tendencies, including sometimes the objectification of local women. Sarah Haight for example, whilst describing “the delightful city” of Malaga in March 1846, remarked that:

“in no other country have we found so many lovely women as in Spain. The black eyes of the Italian signoras and the Turkish dames, are far excelled by the softer ones of Andalusia. And in no other country have we seen the national characteristics or local peculiarities so marked and distinct as here.” (Haight, 1846).

Lady Louisa Tension (staying in Malaga in October 1850) although confessing to be “disappointed” with “the almost total absence of beauty amongst the Spanish women” still felt it necessary to discuss at length the relative merits of the “Malaguenians” including their “very pretty faces”, “very dark” complexions, “rich black hair” and even their “peculiar projecting brow which gives the face quite a character of its own” (Tenison, 1853:8) . Clearly, from her use of almost anatomical language Lady Tenison perceived the “Malaguenians” to be a “race” distinct and apart from her own. Women travel writers were also not averse to the use of the “bewitching” epithet when discussing the local women as the journal of Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley illustrates:

“There trips by a Senorita de Malaga, despite the rain, only looking fresher and sweeter, gay as a fairy, and as airy, and very pretty, with the soft, slightly golden-tinged complexion ...and a delicate, oval face, very small, stag-like head, gazelle like eyes,



and lips of scarlet to match the little rose in the hair...She is a Malagueña muy halaguena y hechicera." (Stuart-Wortley, 1856:344).

Feminist and post-colonialist research on women's travel writing (Foster and Mills, 2002), has emphasised the need to recognise the role of women travellers and writers in the construction of Orientalist and colonialist discourses, but also argues that we need to avoid "essentialist assumptions" when deconstructing the work of women travel writers stating that it is "difficult to generalise about women's travel writing...because it is clear that openly racist statements occur alongside seemingly sympathetic statements – such statements serve different purposes according to different socio-political environments in which they are produced, reviewed and read" (Foster and Mills, 2002:4). The extracts taken from women travellers seem to have a lot in common with their male contemporaries and perhaps reflect their social class and nationality more than their gender. However to fully appreciate the more subtle influences of the latter on visitor perceptions a more thorough and nuanced analysis of individual writers, and the particular contexts in which they travelled and wrote, would be required. There are however some important quantitative and qualitative differences between the accounts of men and women visitors when it comes to the portrayal of local women. We detected clear differences in terms of the volume of material actually dedicated to extolling "the virtues of the Malagueñas" with over half the accounts we studied produced by men (18 out of 32) referring to the "beauty of the Malagueñas" in some way whereas only a third (4 out of 12) of the accounts produced by women travellers used in this study did so. Also the tone used to describe local women is also subtly different with the women writers generally appearing to adopt a more detached, almost analytical voice when describing the dress and physical form of the Malagueñas compared with the generally more salacious language used by male writers. Clearly the very fact that it was considered acceptable for male travel writers to produce these sexualised descriptions of local women

says a lot about the gendered nature of the travel in the context of northern Europe at this time (Pritchard and Morgan 2000).

In the same social context, it would almost certainly have been considered inappropriate for women traveller writers to wax lyrical about the relative virtues of local men. Nevertheless, Lady Dunbar (of Northfield) (1862:54) appeared to challenge such social convention in remarking that “the men are good-looking, and gaily dressed” and even commenting on the ‘becoming’ nature of their costume including their “tight fitting knee breeches”! Her account though is very atypical and far less overtly sexualised than those of her contemporary male travellers.

However, not all nineteenth century visitors were *delighted* by the picturesque setting of the city or enchanted by the beauty of the local inhabitants. The middle of the nineteenth century seemed to herald a change in the nature and scale of tourism development in Malaga (Mellado and Granados, 1997; Castellanos, 1998; Barke et al, 2010) and with it one can detect a notable shift in the tone of the majority of visitor accounts of the place.

### **Malaga’s development as a winter health resort**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the introduction of early package tours such as Thomas Cook’s from 1851 onwards, led to the extension of overseas travel to the British petty bourgeoisie and even some members of the working class (Towner, 1996). Duncan and Gregory (1999) have referred to this period as the “second stage of romantic travel”, arguing that these new visitors also “sought a romantic experience, but one that was well ordered and regimented – a sort of ‘industrialized’ romanticism” (Duncan and Gregory 1999:7). In addition, some of the physical barriers to travel, which for some romantic tourists were very much part of the appeal, were also removed in the late nineteenth century with the improvement and extension of the rail network. By the 1850s Malaga had acquired a

significant international reputation as a winter health resort (Fernandez-Cifuentes, 2007; Krauel, 1988; Majada-Neila, 1986; Pellejero Martinez, 2005; Barke et al, 2010;) and was reputedly attracting several hundred British visitors each year for this purpose (Stuart-Wortley, 1856). These important changes in the mode, ease and popularity of travel seems to also correlate with a changing set of visitor expectations of, and reactions to, Malaga and its inhabitants (see Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1 .** Nineteenth century visitor impressions of Malaga.

The romantic emotional fascination with the picturesque, pre-modern city and its picaresque characters seems to give way to a rational and somewhat puritanical assessment of the city and its inhabitants with greater emphasis given to the environmental and climatic characteristics of place. Many late nineteenth century travel accounts project visitor concerns about the hygienic condition of the city as a suitable health resort with several commenting on the dirt, disease, poverty and disorder of an increasingly industrial, yet still essentially pre-modern city. A more negative set of puritanical discourses around disgust and fear of the cultural other therefore emerged and gradually became more prevalent than the earlier Romantic discourses. Given the changes in the nature of the city and the type of tourists it began to attract this transition was probably to be expected. Although apparently in stark contrast, it could be argued that these ostensibly different sets of visitor accounts are in fact two sides of the same coin in that both portray the city and its inhabitants as 'other', albeit from rather different emotional and class perspectives.

During the nineteenth century the medical profession produced numerous accounts assessing the relative suitability of competing Mediterranean resorts as potential winter retreats for the convalescence of their wealthy northern European patients (Pemble, 1988; Ruiz Mas, 2008). The treatment of respiratory diseases was of particular concern due to their prevalence in the

industrialised countries of north-western Europe. A long period of convalescence in warm, dry climates was a widely accepted treatment, for those who could afford it, and Malaga's warm and relatively dry winter climate (only 40 days of rain per annum and an average winter temperature of 54.41°F according to Dr Francis, 1853 cited in Lee, 1855) began to attract the attention of several physicians leading to a number of publications extolling the virtues of its climate (e.g. Martinez and Montes, 1852; Francis, 1853; Lee, 1855; Rochester, 1851). Visitor accounts at the time also testify to the city's growing significance as a winter health resort with reports of "consumptive patients from England, enjoying the balmy air" whilst taking an evening *paseo* on the Alameda (Baxter, 1852: 138) and twenty years later the Gateshead M.P. Sir William Hutt commented on the "melancholy cases of invalids, come here to struggle with death" (Hutt, 1872).

Opinion about Malaga's suitability as a winter health resort was however significantly divided. Even those physicians who were reportedly enthusiastic admirers of Malaga's climate, such as Dr Charles Madden (1864) of Dublin, questioned the city's suitability as health resort on the grounds of its poor standards of sanitation and hygiene:

"The hygienic condition of Malaga is as defective as it can well be. In a great many of the houses there is no provision for sewerage of any kind; and even in the more civilised part of the city, in the hotels on the Alameda, the drainage is very bad indeed."

(Madden, 1864)

And James Henry Bennet writing in the British Medical Journal went even further in his damning criticism of the city and its unhealthy environment.

"Malaga would, thus, be one of our most valuable resorts were it not for its filthy, unhygienic state, which renders it unfit for the residence of a healthy, and still more of an unhealthy person...May I not ask, in cool, sober, common sense, whether it is not sheer insanity to send miserable invalids, young and old, already stricken with disease

implying decay of vitality, lowered organic power, to a town where the defective hygiene of the cities of the middle ages reigns supreme; where filth-engendered pestilence stalks abroad day and night, as in former days; where the Oriental plague is succeeded by yellow fever, and yellow fever by Asiatic cholera?"(Bennet, 1871: 347)

Unfortunately, the growth in the city's popularity as a winter health resort occurred at the same time as a fairly rapid increase in the city's resident population (Lacomba, 1972) which wasn't matched with adequate provision of public health infrastructure or improvements in housing, leading to periodic outbreaks in communicable diseases (Morales Folguera, 1982). The 1860s and 1870s were also a period of political instability in Spain generally with a number of violent insurrections and strikes taking place in major cities including Malaga (Barton, 2009). Given these changes in the nature of the city and in the type of visitors attracted, it is perhaps not surprising then that we find an increasing number of quite pejorative visitor accounts around this time (see Fig 1). Lady Dunbar (of Northfield), for example, was unfortunate enough to visit the city during the Cholera outbreak in the winter of 1860-61 and eventually had to cut short her visit for fear of infection. She claims in her journal that *the Alameda* (Malaga's most reputable hotel at the time - See Barke et al, 2010) was, due to "defective drainage or some such cause...the seat of a large proportion of the cases of cholera and fever" that winter (Lady Dunbar, 1862:51). Her assessment of the resort's accommodation though is generally scathing, as she claims "The hotels generally are bad, and few in number" and that "In fact, there is very little accommodation here for delicate or respectable people" (Lady Dunbar, 1862:51).

A few years later Matilda Betham-Edwards (1868) travelling "through Spain to the Sahara" was also most unimpressed with the hygienic condition of the city but also, more interestingly, took issue with the physical appearance of its inhabitants:

“We found Malaga, in spite of its delicious climate, its bright sea, its gorgeous hills, and its Eastern gardens, a disagreeable place. The streets always smelt of fish, raw fish, cooked fish, fresh fish, dried fish, stale fish. The common people are dirty and unpleasant, a mongrel race, half-gipsy, half-bandit, with an evil look. The pavements are filthy, and all the time of our stay a sirocco was blowing, so that we were choked with dust wherever we went.” (1868: 140)

These negative views of the people and place were clearly not universal though as only two years after Lady Dunbar’s visit and some six years before Ms Betham-Edwards “disagreeable” experience both Hans Christian Andersen and Jean-Charles Davillier were both enchanted by the city and its inhabitants. In terms of the physical fabric of the city, not a great deal could have changed during that time to explain such markedly different visitor reactions. Clearly, the unfortunate coincidence of poor weather with one’s stay could potentially impact negatively on a visitor’s overall perceptions of a place but this could not explain, or excuse, such a vitriolic and somewhat racist reaction to the local population. Do these different visitor perceptions of the place reflect a material change in the nature of the resort or a change in the type of visitor and their predilections? As Fig 1. shows though Matilda Betham-Edwards was clearly not the only visitor to react strongly against the city and its inhabitants in the period between the late 1860s and 1880s.

Lady Herbert (1867: 48) generally found it “dull and uninteresting” whilst Henry Blackburn (1869:191-5) found the weather in winter “damp and unnerving” and was even disappointed with the local women who were “not ...nearly as attractive as those at Cadiz”! In seeking to explore beyond the Alameda Sir William Hutt and his wife (1872) “soon were forced to give up the attempt by narrow streets, bad pavements, beggars and unwholesome smells”, and Mrs Ramsay (1874:375-376) was so fed-up with the “bitterly cold wind”, the “excessively dirty” hotel, the “fourth-rate” shops, the “dirty and evil-smelling” streets, the “filthy” port,

“careless” boatmen and “insolent” porters that she even “longed for the civilization of Morocco!”

Moreover, Frances Elliot, a relatively well-renowned British female travel writer of the time, who visited Malaga in March 1882 (Majada-Neila, 1986) was even more forthright in her condemnation of the city, describing it as “A horrible place! ... All sun, dirt, traffic, merchant-ships, bad smells, mule-bells, rattling wheels, screams, shouts, ugliness and dust!” (Elliot, 1893:37). She went on to implore her readers - “ye thousands of travelling British” , to simply “Avoid it” (almost like the plague presumably!) describing it as “A place without shadow or a bench to sit upon, a morsel of green, a picturesque wall, a monument, or any vestige of antiquity or beauty — not so much as a weed, much less a flower on which the eye can rest” (Elliot, 1893:37). Even the Alameda, the inspiration for so much exotic praise by several romantic visitors twenty years earlier, did not impress Mrs Elliot: “A more detestable place than Malaga I never visited. The Alameda, so-called — meaning a leafy avenue — is dry gravel, with sticks planted in it the size of fingers.” (Elliot, 1893: 39).

Despite these condemnations of Malaga’s suitability as a winter health resort, by the end of the nineteenth century and certainly into the early twentieth century, other more positive views had begun to re-emerge challenging those of its harshest critics. In part these were driven by local initiatives to more actively promote the city as the ideal winter health resort on the basis of its climate and location and to lobby for municipal improvement with the establishment of *La Sociedad Propagandista del Clima y Embellecimiento de Malaga* in 1897 (Arcos Cubero and García Sánchez, 1980; Castellanos, 1998; Heredia-Flores, 2000; Barke et al, 2010). O’Shea’s 1892 guide to Spain and Portugal for example presented a much more positive image of the city as did also, to a lesser extent, Reynolds-Ball in his review of *Mediterranean Winter Resorts* published in 1899:

“The city, one of the most cosmopolitan in the Peninsula....constitutes one of the most important medical stations in the world, and must necessarily become better appreciated as it is better known.”(Lomas, 1892: 307-8)

“There are not during the whole year more than ten days on which rain would prevent an invalid from taking exercise. It is the extreme dryness of the air that seems to be the most remarked feature in the climate of Malaga; and it is this which renders it for many invalids much superior to Madeira.” (Lomas, 1892; 309).

“Malaga, with its delicious climate, its beautiful surroundings, and its facilities for reaching what are, in many respects, the most interesting cities in Europe, seems as desirable a winter residence as any resort in the South. As a health resort for invalids, however, there are several objections to Malaga...The most suitable quarters for visitors of this class are certainly not any of the hotels in the town, but in a villa in the new suburb of Caleta. Here an English controlled hotel or pension might have fair chance of success.” (Reynolds-Ball, 1899; 246)

“The town has not of late years...been very popular with medical men as a health resort for consumptive patients. It is considered that its great climatic advantages are neutralised by the unsatisfactory local conditions of the town. It is densely populated, and it has no hotel in the suburbs to which invalids can resort. The sanitary conditions are also defective.” (Reynolds-Ball, 1899; 248)

The negative discourses surrounding the city, discussed above, which seemed to stem from concerns primarily about public health and associated fears of dirt, disease and even potentially “contaminating others” (Corbin, 1986; Kristeva, 1982) such as beggars, gypsies and the urban poor, arguably helped to fuel the desire on the part of city entrepreneurs to ‘improve’ the city in a kind of Haussmann-esc purification of space (Sibley, 1988; 1995).



However, these negative discourses persist after a period of city improvement and are particularly apparent in Baedeker's assessment of the city in 1901:

“A vigorous effort has been made of recent years to ‘boom’ Malaga as a WINTER RESORT, but its success is seriously hindered by the dirt of the streets and by the inefficiency of the drainage system... The lack of dust free promenades is also much felt. Such patients as are willing to brave these evils should take up their abode in the villa quarters of Caleta and Limonar.” (Baedeker, 1901:369)

“Those who do not shrink from dirty streets and swarms of begging children may ascend from the Plaza de Riego (Merced) to the S.E., through the miserable Calle del Mundo Nuevo, to the Coracha or saddle between the Gibralfaro and its S.W. spur, the Alcazaba.” (Baedeker, 1901:372)

Although there were significant attempts made to improve the image, sanitation and infrastructure of the city from the 1890s onwards, first with the construction of the Calle Larios ‘boulevard’ in the centre and then with the creation of Caleta to the east, a high-class suburb with modern international hotels (Barke, et al, 2010; Heredia-Flores, 2000) these developments don't fully account for the plurality of experiences and reactions to the city which continued through into the early decades of the twentieth century and beyond. These accounts, we argue, tell us as much about the attitudes and preconceptions of the visitors as they do about the changing nature of Malaga as a place. What most nineteenth century visitor accounts seem to have in common though is their treatment of the local population as ‘other’. Whether it is the attraction of the exotic, oriental female for the predominantly male, romantic tourist or the abject potentially contaminating threat posed by the “dirty...half-gypsie, half-bandit...mongrel race” to the late-Victorian, health-conscious tourist the construction of the local population as ‘other’ is always apparent. The reverence and fear of ‘otherness’ are often paradoxical forces in tourist motivations for travel and in their

experiences of place and we can clearly see these discourses illustrated in nineteenth century visitor accounts of Malaga. These seemingly contradictory attitudes were also sometimes displayed in the accounts of the same individual visitors. The letters and journals of the Reverent MacGregor from 1879 (Balfour 1912) are interesting in this respect as they reveal quite complex and seemingly contradictory reactions to the city and its inhabitants over the course of his stay.

“If there is much in Malaga to pain, there is much also to delight. Even dirt can be picturesque. One never walks about in the gleaming sunshine without seeing sights which would drive a painter crazy. The narrow streets are crowded with a population which still bears a large admixture of the Moorish element, well-formed, dark-skinned, with glittering black eyes.” (MacGregor, 1879 in Balfour 1912: 344)

Similarly, and despite her vitriolic and somewhat racist comments on the inhabitants, Matilda Betham-Edwards couldn't help being “enchanted with the oriental look of the place” (Betham-Edwards, 1868:140)

## **Conclusion**

This paper has demonstrated that visitor accounts reflect not just the changing realities of place but also the changing nature of the visitors themselves, from the aesthetically inspired, early nineteenth century romantic tourists to the more rational health conscious tourists of the late nineteenth century. This change in tourists brought with it a change in visitor perceptions; the exotification of people and place was arguably replaced by a fear of otherness linked to public health discourses that inevitably accompanied the emergence of Malaga as a winter health resort.

We can also trace the development of a distinctly Spanish form of orientalist discourse in many of these accounts and it is clear that these perceptions were strongly gendered in that they often focused on local women as the exotic object of male attention. However, women

travellers were by no means innocent bystanders in this process of 'othering' and orientalisising Malaga and its inhabitants. The area attracted relatively large numbers of women travellers and analysis of their published accounts reveals some similar attitudes and representations.

On balance therefore, these contrasting descriptions of Malaga perhaps say more about the visitors themselves than they do about the changing nature of Malaga as a resort. During the late nineteenth century Malaga not only developed as a resort but became more accessible and, as a consequence, attracted less adventurous visitors with quite different motivations for travel. In these visitors the Romantic pursuit of otherness was replaced, in some cases, by the fear of otherness occasionally taking on the form of what Julia Kristeva (1982) refers to as *abjection* – the strong rejection of otherness and difference. What is clear is that these ostensibly conflicting tourist perceptions were often experienced side by side and in the same place.

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