

Op. Cit.



II Série. N.º 3: 2014

Associação Portuguesa de Estudos Anglo-Americanos

Op. Cit.

REVISTA DE ESTUDOS ANGLO-AMERICANOS
A JOURNAL OF ANGLO-AMERICAN STUDIES

II Série, N.º 3: 2014
2nd Series, No. 3: 2014

Citation: Simões-Ferreira, Isabel. "Travelling to India: Eliza Fay's Narrative Account of her Voyages." *Op. Cit.: A JOURNAL OF ANGLO-AMERICAN STUDIES*. [Online] 2nd Series, No. 3 (2014). Document 7. Online since November 30, 2014.
URL: <https://sites.google.com/site/apeaadirecao/journal>

ISSN 2182-9446
© APEAA and the author

Creative Commons License



This text is under a Creative Commons license: [Attribution-Noncommercial 2.5 Generic](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/)

TRAVELLING TO INDIA: ELIZA FAY'S NARRATIVE ACCOUNT OF HER VOYAGES

Isabel Simões-Ferreira

Escola Superior de Comunicação Social-Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa

ABSTRACT: Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India* (1817), initially sold to the *Calcutta Gazette* to pay off her debts, aroused the curiosity and interest of Edward M. Forster, while he was doing research for his best-selling novel, *A Passage to India*. In his own words, "Eliza Fay is a work of art." (*apud* Fay 7) The value of E. Fay's travelogue, comprising not one, but three voyages to India (in 1779, 1784, 1796) can be easily explained if we take into account the scope of its geographical coverage, the hardships of its historical context (the political chaos brought about by the fall of the Mughal empire and the consolidation of the British rule in the Indian subcontinent) and the heroism of the first person-narrator that emerges behind the descriptive sketches and the scenes of adversity and imminent danger. Thus the current analysis will focus on the E. Fay's adventurous mode of narrating, e.g., the discursive situatedness of the traveller vis-à-vis the Other(s) (European and non-European peoples and loci) and the constraints imposed by the patriarchal idealization of the domestic Woman and their alleged feebleness.

Keywords: adventure narrative; empire; Orient; orientalism; female travelling.

Eliza Fay's *Original Letters from India*,¹ published posthumously in 1817, bring the dangers and excitements of a somewhat forgotten age to contemporary times. Edward Morgan Forster, while living in India (1921-22) came across her *Letters*, initially sold to the *Calcutta Gazette* to pay off her debts. He became so interested in them, while he was doing research for his novel, *A Passage to*

¹ Henceforth, this title will appear in its abbreviated form under the name of *Letters*.