Naming, Identity and Tourism

Edited by

Luisa Caiazzo, Richard Coates and Maoz Azaryahu

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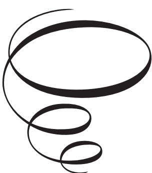

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CHAPTER EIGHT

NAMING THE EXOTIC BETWEEN CULTURAL BELONGING, TEXT BUILDING AND RAILWAY HERITAGE TOURISM

ESTERINO ADAMI

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss a range of thematic aspects concerning naming, identity and tourism with regard to a particular Indian attraction called the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR), a narrow-gauge line from Siliguri/New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling, in West Bengal. The starting point for my analysis here is the railway not as a mere transport technology, but rather as an important site of human culture, spanning both material and immaterial aspects and making up a rich area of meanings, negotiations and symbols, which I identify as railway discourse (Adami 2018). In my view, this notion spells out the cultural, linguistic and textual manifestations of the train in literary and non-literary domains and integrates different perspectives such as mobility development, sense of place and community and tourism promotion. At the same time, it maps areas as diverse as the complex inheritance of the past, the issue of machinery culture and the perceptual sphere of the travelling subject. Trains do symbolise different forms of tourism, from the ritzy journeys aboard the Simplon Orient Express across Europe to the Blue Train in South Africa and the Ghan in Australia. In addition, they express the identity of a community through their names or as symbols of progress, modernity and development, as it is the case with railways in India (Aguiar 2011). As a result of their double nature of being simultaneously examples of tangible and intangible culture, trains contribute to the formation of the canon of heritage and bring to light issues of preservation, restoration, advertising but also aspects of recreation and education by advocating a full experience and self-awareness. Obviously railway

discourse, in its heritage version too, can be ideologically manipulated in order to project certain meanings, affirm beliefs and reinforce cultural stances.

The case of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway interweaves a range of different issues, from its colonial origin to its current tourist potential, and its textual renditions have to mediate these various perspectives. Here my purpose is twofold. First, I aim to offer a preliminary exploration of the etymological overlapping of some of the places through which the DHR runs, whose historical lore is rooted in and bespeaks of ancient traditions. Second, I argue that the cultural dimension of the DHR is actually much broader and symbolic, which, to a certain extent, is also mirrored in naming strategies, ideological projections and discursive practices. I shall focus on the language and style used to describe and conceptualise this railway structure and its world by looking at a selection of different genres and materials, in particular: a) the travelogue entitled *Following the Equator* (1897) by Mark Twain b) the travelogue titled *Around India in 80 trains* (2012) by Monisha Rajesh c) a semi-specialised guide to the DHR by Bob Cable (2011) d), a BBC documentary (2010). To scrutinise these textual renditions, my methodology will be interdisciplinary and will benefit from the contribution of different fields such as cognitive poetics, cultural studies and postcolonial discourse (Conlin and Bird 2014; Gibbons and Whiteley 2018; Jeffries 2010; Revill 2012).

2. Some historical background of the DHR

In this section I provide a brief outline of the historical, geographical and technical context of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, a narrow gauge line (2 ft. / 610 mm) built between 1879 and 1881 that connects Darjeeling and New Jalpaiguri. Stretching along a route of about 55 miles (88 km), the line presents a series of technical peculiarities, such as its 6 zigzags and 5 loops, or the extraordinary variation in gradient, rising from 328 ft. (100 m) at New Jalpaiguri to 7,218 ft. (2,200 m) at Darjeeling. Initially, the name was the Darjeeling Steam Tramway Co., but it became the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in 1881. The line capacity went through different phases, and among its known travellers we can find the Viceroy of India, Lord Lytton, in 1880, and the American author Mark Twain in 1895. Thanks to its scenic setting, the luxuriant surrounding landscape and its special engineering solutions, the DHL was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1999, along with two other Indian heritage railways (2018). Currently, the rolling stock in operation includes a fleet of both diesel and steam engines. Because of its small size, the

nickname "toy train" is affectionately applied to the DHR by both local people and foreign visitors.

Firstly tied to the birth and expansion of the tea industry, in reality the line soon acquired a plurality of meanings: a mode of transportation for the colonial passengers and the local community, but also a new human-made landmark that transformed the mobility in the area thanks to tourist and promotional discourse based on the orientalist idea of exploring and controlling natural landscapes. Like other hill stations, Darjeeling was considered as a sort of natural sanatorium, an ideal destination for the colonial community that wanted to escape from the humid, malaria-infested and hardly tolerable plains. As Baker states (2014, 133), "the DHR spanned a crucial biological, climatic and discursive frontier: that between the tropics and the temperate zone." The train infrastructure thus became part of a wider cultural and discursive strategy of appropriation, mobility and development, which is witnessed by the production of different of a vast amount of different materials such as guidebooks, posters, and travelogues that record and construct narratives of the exotic travel experience. For Bennike (2017, 267), "this material was central to the disciplining of the gaze through which Darjeeling was approached," and implicitly subjected to a process of commodification, taming and transforming the notion of the frontier into a picturesque source of attraction.

In this way, the geographical space of the area, actually a tiny portion of the British Empire, is culturally and textually reconstructed so as to embrace "issues of representation, power and subjectivity in Western scientific, artistic and popular depictions of those areas broadly referred to as 'the tropics'" (Baker 2014, 136). Still today, the railway line actively plays a significant role in the cultural and social scenario of the region, affecting the identity of the local community, the promotion of heritage tourism, and the onomastic inheritance of the past, so that for Roy and Hannam (2013, 586) it "negotiates between place and people, not by being simply a stage of performance but by being itself an actor and taking initiative into this process." It is worth underlying that, in this framework, an institution or even a body might be given the role of actor as they do contribute to cultural and social forces at play in this type of context. Of course, the way in which institutions and bodies operate as actors can differ in agency from the human actors who make up its personnel. As I have previously argued, texts belonging to the domain of railway discourse have the capacity to construct worlds and metaphors and the narrative representations of the DHR too give contours to the representation of the identity of the place. As Revill (2012, 160) notes:

> the railway journey enables us to build stories about our origins and destinies that balance the frailties and tragedies of individual fallibility with the purposive and redemptive possibilities of human progress.

To uncover the many facets of the DHR, I will thus investigate a selection of texts seen as its representational and cultural resources and will look at the language used in these specific narratives.

3. Journeying across names and adventures on the DHR

Before tackling the narrative materials of the DHR, I will provide some etymological notes about the places of the region since the sphere of meaning of the DHL is strongly tied to naming practices and traditions. According to the information provided in the Government of Darjeeling website (2018), the name of the city of Darjeeling derives from the Tibetan lexemes *dorje* denoting "thunderbolt" and *ling* indicating a place or land, and hence "the land of the thunderbolt." The image of the thunderbolt originally designated the sceptre of Indra, the Vedic God of lightning, thunders and rivers (Piano 2001, 85). The toponyms of the other towns at the end of the line too are interesting as they easily lend themselves to be rhetorically packaged into tourist attractors. For the Eastern Himalaya Travels and Tours' Association (2018), for example, the possible etymology for Siliguri refers to the vernacular word *shil*, i.e. the small stones that make up the broken boulders in the Mahanand river, although there is also an alternative hypothesis connected with the Sal tree (*Sorea robusta*), typical of the area. However, given the numerous cultural and historical stratifications of this multilingual region, it is not easy to trace back the origins of the place name.

The overtones generated by the etymological references of the place names mentioned above can be seen as further enriched by a variety of suggestions and echoes that reverberate across the DHR textscape and its dimensions. The way local people and foreign travellers perceive the railway is indicative of specific attitudes and perspectives, and sheds light on the fertile interconnection between naming, identity and tourism. In the case of foreign travellers, in particular, the stylistic embroidering of the railway sheds light on a certain tendency to embellish the DHL and its world through an orientalising lens, thus reinforcing stereotypical images of colonial otherness and commodified exoticism (Bennike 2017).

A possible exception, however, may be represented by the pages that Mark Twain dedicates to this area, during his lecture tour given across the Indian territory, after he lost all his money due to some disastrous investments in 1894. In his travelogue entitled *Following the Equator*,

originally published in 1897, the American author recounts his visits to Darjeeling and its region in 1895, and tries to explore some aspects of the British Empire by observing the different realities that make it up, focusing on the subjugated conditions of the indigenous populations and the exploitation of the land. Twain's account is mainly a social critique, but readers at the end of the nineteenth century could also see it as a tourist text, corroborating the exotic imagining of the East, as shown for example in the following extract that I quote at length:

> Some time during the forenoon, approaching the mountains, we changed from the regular train to one composed of little canvas-sheltered cars that skimmed along within a foot of the ground and seemed to be going fifty miles an hour when they were really making about twenty. Each car had seating capacity for half-a-dozen persons, and when the curtains were up one was substantially out of doors, and could see everywhere, and get all the breeze, and be luxuriously comfortable. It was not a pleasure excursion in name only, but in fact. After a while we stopped at a little wooden coop of a station just within the curtain of the sombre jungle, a place with a deep and dense forest of great trees and scrub and vines all about it. The royal Bengal tiger is in great force there and is very bold and unconventional. From this lonely little station a message once went to the railway manager in Calcutta: 'Tiger eating station-master on front porch; telegraph instructions'. […] The railway journey up the mountain is forty miles, and it takes eight hours to make it. It is so wild and interesting and exciting and enchanting that it ought to take a week. As for the vegetation, it is a museum. The jungle seems to contain samples of every rare and curious tree and bush that we had ever seen or heard of. It is from that museum, I think, that the globe must have been supplied with the trees and vines and shrubs it holds precious. […] At an elevation of 6,000 feet we entered a thick cloud, and it shut out the world and kept it shut up. We climbed 1,000 feet higher, then began to descend, and presently got down to Darjeeling, which is 6,000 feet above the level of the Plains (Twain 2010 [1897]: 767-769).

To textually build up the identity of the place, the author adopts and manipulates a range of different tones and styles. First of all, the descriptive quality of the passage foregrounds the natural, uncontaminated beauty of the landscape, described through the Victorian positivist symbol of the "museum" (i.e. a mental tool utilised to collect, categorise and display the manifestations of nature) via bewitching details, but also viewed as a sort of primordial heaven. Twain's linguistic verve also takes the form of parody to comment on the episode of the tigers in the region, so that the threat of such dangerous animals is rendered in nearly comical terms. Moreover, the scene is made dynamic thanks to movement and

action verbs (“approaching,” “skimmed along”, “to be going”, “stopped”, “climbed”, “got down”, “we entered a thick cloud”) as well as by other lexical choices (the reference to the speed of the train, the elevated position of the hamlets, but also the idea of feeling the breeze, enjoying a spectacular view out of the coach and penetrating a cloud). For the writer, the idea of motion as the constitutive paradigm of the travel experience is balanced by the slowness of the train journey, which allows the visitor to fully appreciate the surrounding milieu, and an alternative text-world or vision is here proposed by virtue of a deontic modal verb phrase, “it ought to take a week,” so that the identity of the region is encapsulated in an aesthetically rich frame.

The question of admiring the mesmerising tropical environment from the moving position of the rail carriage brings to the fore not only the power of the traveller’s gaze in the construction of the landscape, but also its ambiguous polarities of mobility and fixity for the voyager, within and outside the train. Such fault lines for De Certeau suggest the “spectator’s distance: you shall not touch; the more you see, the less you hold” (1988, 112). However, the railway-based perception of the site can also be influenced by the textual genre and function. This position is critically developed by today’s scholars, in particular Baker, who puts forward the notion of the DHR train as a form of “landscape machine” and argues that the rhetorical patterns of the toy train travel guides regulated the sensorial experience of the visitor of the landscape because they

> suggested an itemised list of landmarks, directing passengers’ eyes to a sequence of pre-established features for each section of the journey. Thus for many informed passengers, observing the passing prospects was not so much an open, spontaneous sight within dynamic space-time segments (2014, 142).

Hence, the growing apparatus of specific tools such as tourist texts, travelogues, but also metaphors and narratives that arose to persuade potential visitors and provide them with a set of images and expectations.

Yet, what is perhaps most striking in the Twain’s excerpt above lies in the absence of clear onomastic references: a few locative items place such as the city of the Darjeeling and the Plains of Bengal are mentioned, but otherwise a general lack of details governs the way in which the text projects its meaning. As a consequence, the reader here has to face a sort of “lacuna effect” (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018, 236-246), by which it is the absence of textual details that draws and orientates attention: in other words, not only what is linguistically present is salient, but also what is not and what one would expect to find. Notably, here we do not encounter the

name Darjeeling Himalayan Railway that, as previously pointed out, in 1881 had replaced the original appellative Darjeeling Himalayan Tramway Co, known to Victorian visitors. However, Twain eschews the intricacies of the local naming and in this manner passively encourages the readers to speculate on, and mentally construct the DHR, on their own. An indicator of the author's intention is represented by the lexically under-specific "one," in the second line of the quotation above, in which the indefinite pronoun anaphorically refers to the lexical item "train" but is better denoted by means of postmodification ("composed by"). If superficially the lack of names appears to be an irrelevant factor, in reality it does function as a cognitive tool of foregrounding and meaning construction because readers need to process both the onomastic vagueness and the accumulation of the technical terms to conceptualise the content of the scene.

In Twain's writing, the infrastructure of the railway is vividly portrayed by a series of picturesque tableaux, as, for instance, when the author speaks about carriages that sometimes substitute the actual engine and rolling stock. The text illuminates not only the fantastic experience of travelling across exotic nature but also the embodied and sensory perception of a perilous journey, considering the general condition of the tracks and the coaches, and in this way exotic and romantic colours fit the narrative format of the colonial travelogue:

> We travelled up hill by the regular train five miles to the summit, then changed to a little canvas-canopied hand-car for the 35-mile descent. It was the size of a sleigh, it had six seats and was so low that it seemed to rest on the ground. It had no engine or other propelling power, and needed none to help it fly down those steep inclines. It only needed a strong brake, to modify its flight, and it had that. There was a story of a disastrous trip made down the mountain once in the little car by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, when the car jumped the truck and threw its passengers over a precipice. It was not true, but the story had value for me, for it made me nervous, and nervousness wakes a person up and makes him alive and alert, and heightens the thrill of a new and doubtful experience. The car could really jump the track, of course; a pebble on the track, placed there by either accident or malice, at a sharp curve where one might strike it before the eye could discover it, could derail the car and fling it down into India; and the fact the lieutenant-governor had escaped was no proof that I would have the same luck. And standing there, looking down upon the Indian Empire from the airy altitude of 7,000 feet, it seemed unpleasantly far, dangerously far, to be flung from a hand-car (Twain 2010 [1897], 771).

In recording his experience, the author actually here develops a metanarrative propensity that turns the descriptive passage into a sort of children's fairy tale ("there was a story"), which—although clearly according with the principles of fiction ("it was not true")—impinges on the visitor's mental worldview, as signalled by lexical items such as "nervous" and "nervousness." In this respect, the representation of the feelings of the journey is an important aspect because it stems from a bodily sensation, that of speed and slowness. For Roy and Hannam (2012, 590),

> conventional train journeys, due to their high velocity, reduce and intervene in the traveller's imagination: but the very nature of the slow movement that the DHR has nourishes the traveller's imagination in a different way.

For the passenger, the rail travel experience thus takes on an embodied and mental perspective and shifts between motion and emotion: it triggers a sense of (self-)reflection of the moving subject because "the intense and almost overpowering materiality of train and stations shapes both modes of motion and moods of feelings" (Lőfgren 2008, 333).

To some extent, the Twain extract above also anticipates the tourist promise of an amusing attraction, almost a kind of natural funfair due not only to its natural arduous location, but also to the technical difficulties of the line, its zigzagging route and the precariousness of the hand-cars. But a closer reading reveals that the real danger is mitigated so as to attract visitors rather than to scare them, also thanks to touches of irony and humour ("unpleasantly far, dangerously far, to be flung from a hand-car"). Presently, however the question of safety for vintage train lines, which may also be regarded as examples of industrial archaeology and heritage, is of paramount importance and raises a series of problems that professionals, stakeholders and public authorities try to address in different ways (Pryce 2014).

4. Imaginative and embodied spaces of the DHR

Still today the playful characterisation of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway remains a significant aspect and, in symbolic terms, its name triggers more levels of meaning. It revives memories of childhood by transforming a journey into a blissful outdoor recreational activity and in this fashion it emotionally persuades visitors to ride its mini trains along the slender tracks, thus forming and enriching the nucleus of local railway heritage tourism. I previously mentioned that the DHR is often nicknamed the "toy train," and of course this appellative is justified by the small size

of the engines, coaches and tracks, which provides a sort of captivating Lilliputian aspect because “some likened the train to Swift’s Gulliver miniature society” (Baker 2014, 137). As a contemporary illustration of such a perspective, I will now turn to Monisha Rajesh’s (2012) travelogue, a peculiar journal of her railway journeys across India with a friend jokingly called Passepartout. The DHR is described in the following humorous passage:

> It looked like one of Thomas the Tank Engine’s little blue friends, trundling into the forecourt. Steaming from its chimney, as though exhausted by the children tumbling out of its doors, all it lacked was a pouty face. Eight children, eight adults and two babies shared our carriage, clapping and singing their way through as many Bollywood songs as they could remember while Passepartout and I leant over the back of rainbow-striped seats, watching the engineers shovelling molten coals. Train 73 travelled along the main road, passing cars and sliding so close to the edges that passengers could reach the eggs and bananas on roadside stalls (2012, 216).

As the quotation shows, the portrayal of the railway intertextually elaborates the nickname of the train to retain particular effects since it is compared to a very well-known fictional steam engine of the British tradition and, thanks to this parallelism, it undergoes a process of personification, a rhetorical treatment very common in many cultural domains for trains and other means of transport (Adami 2018). Evidence of such a strategy lies in the combination of lexical items denoting human entities (“friends”, “children” “pouty face”) and movement verbs referring to mechanical features (“steaming, tumbling”) or material objects (“chimney, doors”) with the final result being that some human features are attributed to inanimate objects: the train is anthropomorphised and in this way it is closer to or even part of the human world. The image that the writer makes up, moreover, is coloured by a veil of romanticism, almost evoking the awe-inspiring puffing trains of the Victorian era. We should note how this aspect is often imported from the context of children’s literature to that of tourism and leisure time to generate interest and promote travels, in particular as far as railway heritage is concerned. Indeed, as Frost and Laing (2014) hold, steam trains encode a world of adventures, stir feelings of nostalgia, so much so that tourists engage in a flight of fancy and a magical journey. In this respect, the Anglophone world is especially replete with literary examples, from Nesbit’s *The Railway Children* to Harry Potter’s Hogwarts Express (Adami 2018). Consequently, the expression “toy train” is foregrounded in all the texts

dealing with the DHR, from guidebooks to advertisements and websites, but even on the public signs displayed at stations along the line, in order to attract the reader, and the potential visitor, and simultaneously engender a plethora of connotations.

However, the phrase “toy train” is also worth exploring from other perspectives because it reveals the construction and overturning of psychological and cultural attitudes. Typically, both adults and children have a fascination for railways, but they follow different schemes: children like trains because they seem to represent the world of the grown-ups whilst adults are interested in trains because they remind them of their early years (Bradley 2015, 550). The extract from the work of Monisha Rajesh goes in this direction and juxtaposes the adult’s and the child’s point of view within a wider gaze aimed at understanding the surrounding reality, but also at conducting an inner self exploration. In this light, the DHR becomes a site of identity construction and negotiation, even for local users of the railway, who infuse the mundane practice of commuting with a positive sense of enjoyment and happiness. Of course this effect is achieved not only by the cheerful association of the train’s nickname, but also by some infrastructural aspects—as I have previously noted—such as the very slow speed of the rolling stock (15-20 km per hour, on average), the snaking movement of the rolling stock, the position of the tracks crosscutting the main road, the luxuriant blooming vegetation, the sharp bends in the routes, and the very closeness of the line to houses and settlements so that travelling on the DHR almost appears like riding on a roller coaster, thus emphasising and enhancing the whole perception of the journey itself.

Roy and Hannam (2013) too consider this material and sensorial perspective and, basing their analysis on fieldwork interviews with different kinds of passengers and other data, expand the theme of the human body during the train journey. In accounting for the bodily perception of passengers as a significant component of the entire experience to evaluate, they affirm that

> the body becomes enabled to experience the places through which the DHR is passing as well as becoming corporeally alive by coping with the freely chosen difficulties of running alongside the train (587).

As people jump on and off the train, whose track-bed is not distinctly separated from the rest of the environment but often runs parallel to or cuts across the Hill Cart Road, the sphere of identity is mirrored in the mental and bodily processes of passengers as the DHR becomes an integral part of the ecological system in which it is immersed and to which it belongs.

I will now delve into the concatenations of naming, identity and tourism by approaching another type of text, a reference handbook authored by Bob Cable (2011) and dedicated to the DHR, which is an example of semi-specialised railway discourse, although it lacks some editorial care (pages are not numbered). Addressed to train amateurs and experts alike, the volume adopts a specialised register (Jayaraman 2011) and provides an accurate description of the rail technology, at the same time it takes into account the broader cultural dimension of the DHL and its narratives. Naming strategies are seen at work for trains, with special names for the engines used along the line. Although trains are typically identified with numerical codes, they are also named after persons, geographical or environmental features, as in the case of the following DHR locomotives: Queen of the Hills, Ajax, Victor, Himalayan Bird, Mountaineer, Hawkeye, Tusker, Green Hills, Everest. It is evident that these names convey a variety of ideological messages since they subtly disclose traces of the colonial past (perhaps even recalling Queen Victoria), refer to classical mythology (with the name of the Greek hero who rescued the body of Achilles), echo with rhetoric or refer to military issues (the idea of victory and the military service of mountaineers and rangers). However, they also pay homage to the tropical environment with the inclusion of natural elements and animals. Such names can function as a magnet for visitors as they activate different meanings and lend themselves to be interpreted in a range of ways.

But this is also achieved through the toponyms connected with the DHR, which sometimes highlight an emotional facet, such as “the land of the Mad Torrent,” (locally called *Pagla Jhora*), whose “entire ridge is extraordinarily unstable” (Cable 2011), or “agony point”, a particularly difficult trait of the rail line where, in Cable’s words (2011) the route “is again seemingly right on the edge of the abyss.” At times, the text contains examples of an idiosyncratic and suggestive lexicon, imbued with exotic flavour, for instance with the term “terai” (in the caption accompanying photo 2.2 in Cable’s book), which according to the OED (2018) indicates a type of marshy lowland typical of the areas in the foothills of the Himalayas and which originates from the Hindi term *tarāī* (‘moist land’) given the semantic spectrum of the word *tar* (‘moist, damp’). To depict the DHR, therefore, the contribution of a diatopic variety of English, i.e. Indian English (Bathia and Baumgardner 2008; Sailaja 2009), with its flowery and creative vocabulary, can be conspicuous because for the western reader it may somehow convey and reinforce an orientalist notion of otherness by stylistically creating faraway, namely exotic, and exoticised, worlds to be discovered, today through the tourist experience.

But what is particularly remarkable in Cable's book regards the abundance of photos that visually supports the descriptive text. The colourful images that accompany the reader in their virtual journey along the DHR operate as tools for spatial deixis, i.e. they define the geographical context of the train line. They also provide a broader representation of the cultural dimension of the railway and its size by showing scenes of everyday life, bustling bazaars and groups of travellers boarding and alighting from the trains, or waiting at stations. As Baker (2014, 140) observes, such a peculiar railway has always been exploited for tourist purposes and in the past "the DHR Co. explicitly marketed the railway's topography, scenery and edge-of-the-world setting to attract customers." Clearly, the volume by Cable does not have an overt persuasive or promotional purpose, it rather deals with the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway within the genre of (semi)specialised literature. Nonetheless, the collection of pictures in the book has distant ideological resonances, for example with the photos of uniformed schoolchildren attending the "Blue Diamond English School" or the one showing Siliguri station, whose caption patronisingly specifies that "some smiling ladies in splendid saris add grace and colour to our study of the ancient overall roof of this historic station" (Cable 2011). Thus, the overall impression is that this multimodal text, in spite of its neutral descriptive function, evokes memories of the imperial past with its picturesque vision of the world that reflects a British point of view on identity, power and travelling.

Finally, I will examine a BBC TV documentary as part of a larger project devoted to the Indian Hill Railways, directed by Tarun Bhartiya, produced by Gerry Troyna and narrated by Bernard Hill (2010). The style of this representation of the DHR, like the material previously analysed, mixes descriptive and evaluative forms. The first episode is about the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, whereas the second and the third are about the Nilgiri Mountain Railway and Kalka-Shimla Railway respectively. Being a multimodal text, the documentary foregrounds the composite nature of the DHR and its milieu via the use of images and sounds, and is accompanied by lengthy voiceover descriptions that allude to the different cultural forces, social factors and human enterprise that lie behind such a unique mode of transportation. From the very beginning, the film asserts that "like tea and the Gurkhas, the train has become an indelible part of the identity of these hills." The quotation testifies to the essence and pervasiveness of railway discourse as a cultural site, both material and immaterial, that symbolically condenses a plurality of values and meanings. The DHR in this way is endorsed and viewed as the product of a stratification of various historical, social and cultural layers. Initially built during the

colonial period as a mobility technology for the colonial community, it has since then served the wider community—Bengalis, Nepali, Buddhists, and other travellers— but simultaneously it has generated a tourist potential. To define the complex identity of Darjeeling, the documentary juxtaposes the DHR with two other significant symbols, i.e. tea and the Gurkhas. We have already seen how the textual representation of the "toy train" is not always immune from a certain orientalist attitude that pigeonholes and fantasises about difference and otherness; to a certain extent, the same type of effect is realised by these emblems picked up by the filmmaker to construct the general image of Darjeeling and its region. To follow a cognitive stylistic perspective, we can bring in the notion of schema, i.e. "a cognitive structure which supplies information about your generic understanding of a particular phenomenon" (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018, 174), and see how the documentary translates the identity of the place into a specific schema by recurring to linguistic triggers called headers. As a matter of fact, under their superficial lexical and semantic levels, the words "tea" and "Gurkhas" serve to point to a set of references about this area and its history. Although typically schemas are flexible elements that may undergo processes of adjustment, here they tend to be crystallised so that their implications contribute to an ideological discourse construction (Jeffries 2010).

Darjeeling is famous for its tea plantations (locally called tea gardens), often photographed with women picking leaves from the tea bushes, and in a certain measure these are still images of the colonial past. Also, for many readers citing the Gurkhas brings to mind the rhetoric of the British empire and its colonial armies. Mark Twain in his travelogue notes the military and virile pride of the Gurkhas and he states that "there are no better soldiers among them" (Twain 2010, 769). Significantly various sections of the BBC documentary are dedicated to the Gurkha regiments and their strong connections with the British army, in both colonial and postcolonial times. For example, when they mention (and show the coat of arms of) the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles. This type of bond between the region and Britain still seems to evoke a pseudo-colonial approach, when the voiceover affirms that "in the brisk climate of the Himalayas the British built a home away from home where the stress of colonial rule could be filed away during the summer." The presence of the terms "built" and "home here," which have a strong connection with the sense of identity, is ideologically dense because they somehow conjure up the notion of an unforgotten colonial past. The semantic value of building implies willingness, and the possibility to operate and modify the environment, in other words the force of a human agent taming nature.

The notion of home acquires new connotative layers, in the sense that, by paradoxically being "a home away from home," it suggests that the coloniser is entitled to conquer, control, and reshape the region.

Railways were complicit in the colonial project, functioning not only as a means of transport for travellers, goods and the military but also as a symbol of power, modernity and expansion (Davies and Wilburn 1991). The idea of the Indian colonial train network can be interpreted from this viewpoint since the British "considered the train a modernising force and munificent endowment to the Indian people, and evidence of the colonial right to govern" (Baker 2014, 140). Today, in independent India railways are a vital infrastructure that provides mobility and many other opportunities to the country and has a significant impact on society; nonetheless, it is not rare to find comments about the positive imperial legacy of the railways, which somehow may offer a justification for the so-called "improvements" brought about by colonialism, such as transport, sanitation and services in general. As a matter of fact, some of the interviews with foreign passengers on the DHR (Roy and Hannam 2013) are devoid of a critical awareness of the historical and sociocultural context of the area. The BBC documentary too, in spite of the neutral narrative tone adopted, appears to indulge in the rhetoric of the colonial pacification as it hints at the "good and the bad times," without analysing the radical impact on society and local communities brought about by the Raj.

In a certain measure, the very end of the documentary script is constructed likewise since it tends to emphasise positive qualities and stereotypical images of the area and its identity but also its tourist potential, especially for Brits:

> the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is the story of a railway so close to the people that it flows like a river through their lives. It's a century old partnership, mutual respect, tolerance and survival, together on a journey that still has not reached its end.

Obviously this portion of text strives to coalesce the complex (his)stories, traditions and symbols of Darjeeling and its toy train by overlapping the human experience and the natural and material dimension of the site. The cultural and social value of the railway embraces a range of issues and features, and often it exhibits a rather celebratory, attention-grabbing overtone of the wording, which seems to ignore the controversial burden of colonialism and exploitation to favour and promote tourism as the only possible source of sustainment for the local community. Such discursive strategy may be linguistically organised via the use of a cognitive metaphor LIFE IS A RAILWAY JOURNEY (Adami 2018). It is not

rare for trains and railways to be conceptualised as biological allegories of networks, such as the cardiovascular system, the nervous system or the lymphatic system of the body, thus endorsing an embodied perspective linking individuals and trains. Here the conceptual mapping governing the BBC representation of the DHR draws parallelisms and correspondences between the lives of the local inhabitants and the trajectory of the rail line: the idea of movement through time and space, the notion of living as a destination, and the natural force of the river viewed as a mass of people.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have tried to come to grips with the textual representation of the DHR as a scenario of negotiation between naming practices, sense of belonging and travel industry. I have focused upon a series of different texts and discourses that depict and foreground the material and symbolic essence of the railway by means of various stylistic shadings. As Revill (2012, 12) convincingly notes,

> it is clear that the cultural imprint of the railway on popular and elite cultures has far transcended the realms of art, however this is defined, and etched itself on the ways we think and behave. Railways continue to play a role in the popular imagination.

The DHR represents an important and time-honoured mode of transportation in the region, but its gist certainly covers a wider spectrum of values and references, either suggesting memories of a colonial past still to be fully understood and mediated or projecting a tourist perspective to be exploited and developed (Aguiar 2010; Bennike 2017; Roy and Hannam 2013).

What thus emerges from the linguistic representations of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is a complex network of ideologies realised via discursive strategies (Jeffries 2010). Its portrait includes and combines various historical, cultural and social stratifications, namely the clash between colonial past and modernity, the juxtaposition and mobility of travellers and residents, as well as the collective identity of the region stemming from the Bengali and Nepali inhabitants as well as from the foreign tourists. In this light, the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway blends discourses of naming, identity and tourism to produce an interplay of languages, texts and meanings.

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