

Beautiful Deceiver: The Absolutely Divine Lola Montez

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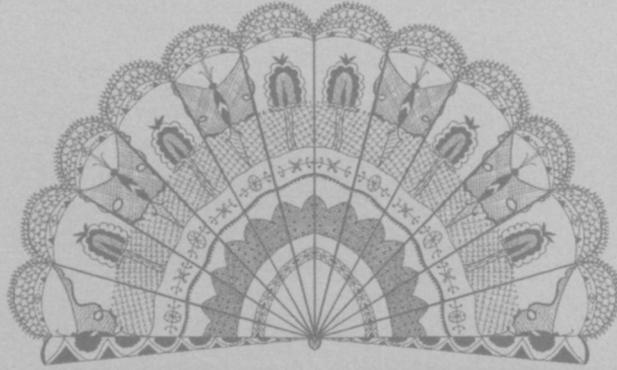
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BEAUTIFUL DECEIVER

THE ABSOLUTELY DIVINE LOLA MONTEZ

by Janet R. Fireman

*And, after all, what is a lie?
'Tis but the truth in masquerade.*

—Lord Byron, *Don Juan*

A great traveler all her life, Lola Montez arrived in the West, in San Francisco, with a lot of baggage. She had trunks, valises, wardrobes, and assorted other luggage, all filled to the brim with controversies and ambiguities, all packed personally by Lola Montez, and all padded with notoriety that had been disseminated by an intercontinental press following her story for two decades.

In 1853, California was still very much a work in progress and, as such, was an ideal setting for the contradictions Montez embodied. Her principal attraction was that she was a beautiful and wicked woman. She had been stereotyped by the press, and her image simultaneously appealed to Californians' prurient interests and allayed self-reproach they felt for their own wickedness. After a string of theatrical performances in San Francisco, Sacramento, and mining towns of the Sierra foothills, Montez rested for a time among the pines close to a quartz mill in Grass Valley, where a countrified existence seemed to counterbalance her erstwhile profligate and way-

ward life-style. Although the tranquility she assumed there did not stick, her time spent in the West engendered a legend of her as a western woman.

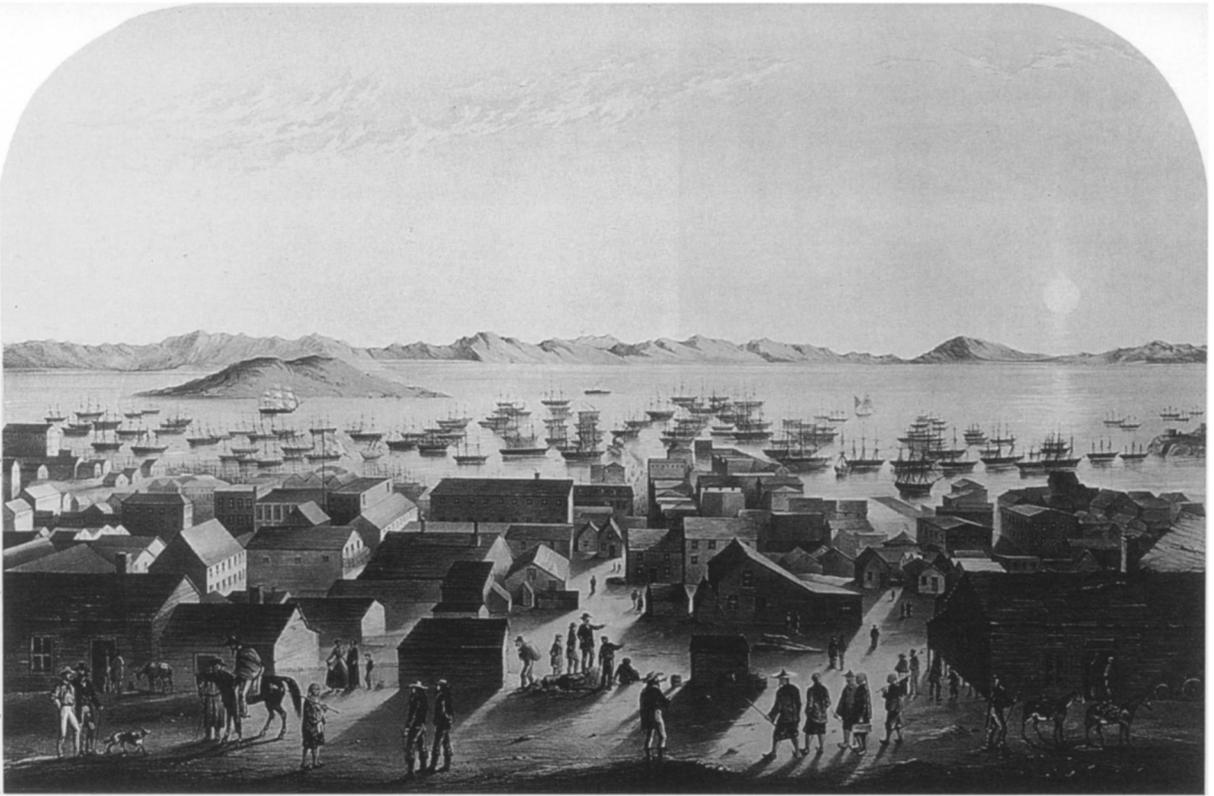
By the time Lola Montez arrived in San Francisco, she was well established as a celebrity of the highest rank: she was famous for being famous. In fact, she may have been the second-most famous woman in the world, after Queen Victoria, who surely would have been horrified by the comparison. The elements of Montez's fame were based in notoriety, which she had achieved in the meteoric speed of five years from her dancing debut on the London stage in 1843 to her expulsion from Bavaria in 1848.

Five years later, when she alighted from the *Northerner* and arranged to appear at the American Theater, San Franciscans knew they were in for a treat the likes of which they had not seen before. The city was a place of new arrivals, but Lola Montez's reputation promised that her presence in San Francisco would be spectacular.



Lola Montez, from a miniature copy of a portrait commissioned by Ludwig of Bavaria in 1847. Her striking beauty combined with an uproarious reputation to make her phenomenally popular in California.

California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento



When Lola Montez arrived in San Francisco in 1853, depicted above in 1851 in an S. F. Marryat hand-colored lithograph, she was already famous. Her performances there commanded ticket prices five times greater than those charged in New York.

From the early days of the gold rush, as far back as August 1849, San Franciscans had read about the exploits of La Montez. She had been called many names. Some of these were out of admiration (*The Divine Lola, the great female republican*); some out of derision (*La Pompadour, Cyprian intruder*); and some were purely descriptive (*the eccentric Lola*). Some recorded the many proper names she employed through the years: Eliza James, Maria Dolores de Porris y Montez, the Countess of Landsfeld, Maria de los Dolores Landsfeld, Marie de Landsfeld Heald, and Mrs. Patrick Purdy Hull. She was born Eliza Gilbert, although most sources say her birth name was Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert. This was but one of her most pervasive and successful inventions because it served as foundation for the name she and other people used most frequently: Lola Montez.

Californians knew she was *someone*, but they weren't certain who. Montez was said to have been born in Spain, Cuba, or Turkey. She was the daughter of a Spanish nobleman or a Spanish gypsy, or a raja, or of the Sultan of Turkey, or perhaps of Lord Byron. In fact, Eliza Rosanna Gilbert was the daughter of Edward Gilbert, ensign in the Twenty-fifth Regiment of Foot, the King's Own Borderers, and the illegitimately born and ambitious Elizabeth Oliver, whom Gilbert married shortly after Eliza's birth in Limerick, Ireland.

From her teenage years, Eliza-Lola was a self-starter and undoubtedly the architect of her own fate, but she was also the architect of her own past. Much of the

confusion about her—whether her parentage and place of birth or any other biographical fact—is due to Montez herself. She was an enormous liar. Over the years, she gave varying versions of her youth, but was steadfast almost to the end in claiming to be of Spanish heritage, or of mixed Spanish and Irish extraction. Born in 1820, she took ship for India with her parents when her father was transferred there in 1823. Shortly he died of cholera, and shortly her mother married Lieutenant Patrick Craigie. When Eliza-Lola was approaching her seventh birthday, she was sent to the home of Craigie's parents in Montrose, Scotland, for her education. After five years, the unruly girl was transferred to the care of Sir Jasper Nicholls, recently returned to London from India, where he was Craigie's commanding officer. Sir Jasper put Eliza-Lola in school at the Aldridge Academy in Bath, where she received an excellent education for a girl of her middle-class rank. The emphasis was on languages, and Eliza-Lola also was exposed to dancing, sewing, and drawing. In school—and everywhere else—she was restless and a bit of a prankster. One of her false claims created later comes from this period in the real Eliza-Lola's life: that the cunning and calculating Becky Sharp in William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* was modeled after her.

In 1837, at the age of seventeen, Eliza-Lola took the reins. Her mother had traveled to England in the company of Lieutenant Thomas James of the Twenty-first Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry. Although Lieutenant James was apparently infatuated with the attrac-

tive Mrs. Craigie, Eliza-Lola seems to have persuaded the thirty-year-old to elope with her when she learned of her mother's plan for her to marry a sixty-four-year-old widower in India. The Protestant wedding ceremony near Dublin marked day one of Eliza-Lola's estrangement from her mother.

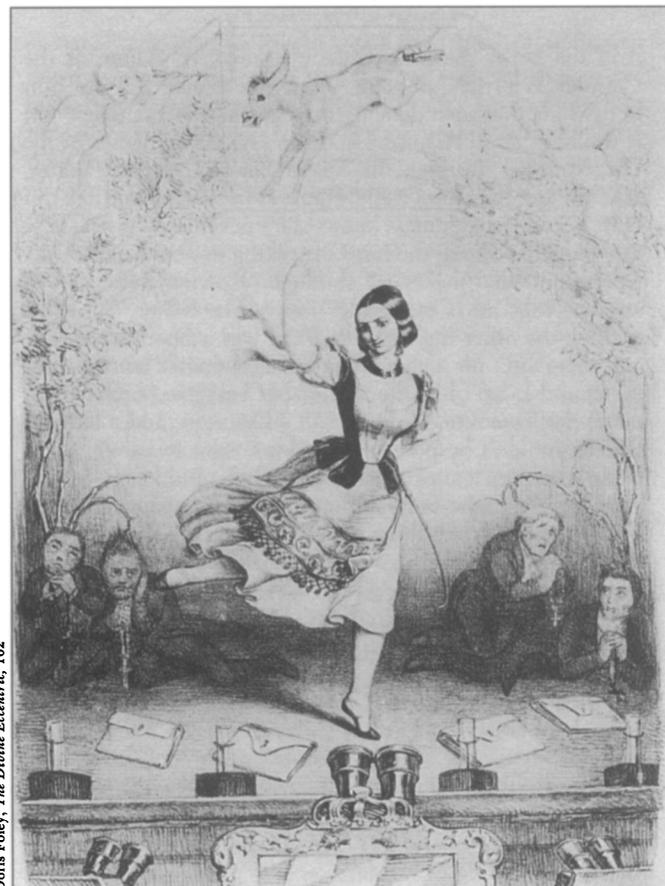
The couple traveled to India when Lieutenant James was required to return to duty. Following a "she said/he said" dispute about infidelity, Eliza-Lola took the unpleasant step of moving in with her mother and stepfather in Calcutta, where her mother was unsympathetic to her daughter having left her husband, unpromising though he was. In the fall of 1840, Eliza-Lola sailed for England, possibly having contracted chronic malaria. During the five-month trip, a shameless shipboard romance with Lieutenant Charles Lennox was followed by shocking behavior of a cohabitation kind in London. The relationship with Lennox did not last, but Lieutenant James had had enough and won a judicial separation from his wife. Unknown to Eliza-Lola, this was not a divorce and did not permit remarriage.

At twenty, the reputation of Eliza Gilbert James was already stained by multiple scandals: elopement with an older man, a failed marriage, and adultery. The young woman was left with no means of support except for her wits. Another might have become a governess, or a lady's companion, but the soon-to-be Lola chose dance as a career. This wildly irrational choice—

considering her lack of training and the difficulties to overcome for success on the stage—can only be seen as characteristic Montez boldness. Later she claimed to have studied with a Spanish dancing master in London; surely she went to Spain, perhaps motivated by the then current fashion for things Spanish and by having seen the fabulously popular Fanny Elssler perform Latin dances.

If San Franciscans had read a lot about Lola Montez in one or more of at least ten dailies in the city, most of what they read was hearsay or for other reasons not to be believed. The reading public consumed fabulous accounts of her Munich palace where she bathed in lavender and dried herself with rose leaves; of her bigamous second marriage to a callow army officer eight years her junior; of Parisian gentlemen paying her ten thousand dollars for a single evening's entertainment; and of the retorts she proffered from the footlights to a man who had thumbed his nose at her during a performance in Washington, D.C. They had also read that she was glamorous and strikingly beautiful, which was absolutely true.

Lola Montez was one of the great beauties of her time, which is ground zero for her celebrity. Her "Spanish" beauty was also the bait for King Ludwig I of Bavaria, who shortly after laying eyes on her, insisted that her portrait be painted for the *Schonheitsgalerie*, his showpiece Gallery of Beauties. The contact made, one thing led to another, and her liaison with Ludwig became her greatest *succès de scandale*. That striking splendor was composed of an oval face with lush, very dark hair, a perfect white complexion, and the deepest blue eyes under Ava Gardner egotist-eyebrows. The components may sound conventional, but the effect was spectacular. Like Elizabeth Taylor in the late 1940s and early 1950s when in her late teens and early twenties, Montez's features were dominated by dazzling eyes and quickly changing, sensuous facial expressions. She was not lovely; she was loveliness incarnate. She was an enchantress.



Doris Foley, *The Divine Eccentric*, 162

Newspaper treatments of Lola Montez ranged from the flattering to the burlesque, as illustrated by the cartoon to left that portrays King Ludwig with binoculars ludicrously glued to the dancing Lola as Jesuit priests cower in the background.

Besides being renowned for her looks, Montez was famous for other traits that showed in relief in California's female-challenged society. She was known for her vanity, for the treasure chest of jewels she had acquired from admirers, and for her profligate ways with the vast amounts of money she acquired from uncertain sources. Further, she was said to be the most charming, the most generous, the most impulsive, the most conniving, the most perfidious, the most sinister, and the kindest of women. Perhaps because so much was known about her—and so much of that was contradictory—she was unreasonably, irresistibly tantalizing. As the most bohemian woman of her time, as an eccentric, and beyond all, as an enigma, it is not hard to understand why Lola Montez was so very famous by the time she set foot on California soil.

Aside from being famous for being famous, Montez was recognized as a dancer and as an actor. The fact is, Montez was not a very good dancer and her skill level was never considered high, though most of the time she was deemed captivating and drew large audiences. Montez's dance was eccentric, erotic, and novel. This—not skill—was her appeal, along with her beauty and notoriety.

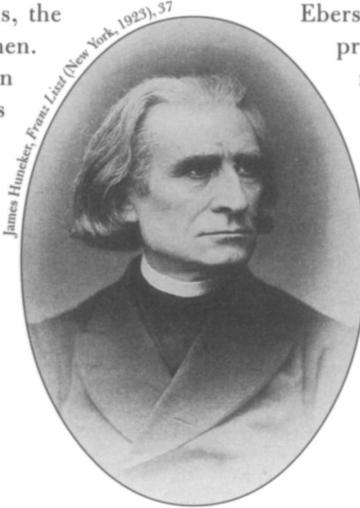
Eliza Gilbert James had reinvented herself; a brand new person disembarked at Southampton in spring 1843. She was the recent widow of a Spanish officer who had been killed in the Carlist civil war, and her name was Maria Dolores de Porris y Montez. Almost immediately, she acquired the patronage of the Earl of Malmesbury, who within months arranged for her dancing debut at Her Majesty's Theatre, where her widowhood was cast aside and she was billed as the daughter of a Spanish patriot. Astonishingly, Montez's London debut on June 3, 1843, was an artistic—if not complete—success. Most of the audience liked her, and the newspaper critics found her gorgeous and very appealing, if not a very good dancer. But she was also denounced in the *Times* as a fraud by theater patrons who recognized her as Betty James, who had abandoned her husband and was an adulteress. Montez lashed out in a letter to the editor, insisting that the accusation was false and includ-

ing a pack of lies about herself. But such a stir had been aroused that the theater suspended her engagement and the Spanish dancer departed for the Continent.

This scarcely initiated performer set out with an uncertain itinerary. She had met the unlikely numbered Prince Heinrich LXXII in London, who ruled the tiny principality of Reuss in southeastern Germany. Montez wrote to him, announcing her imminent arrival in Ebersdorf, Reuss's capital. In short order, she probably had an affair with the prince, definitely caused a stir, and was sent packing.

But Montez secured a continental debut in Berlin, and there wangled her way into the presence of King Frederick William, who was hosting Czar Nicholas I. She performed for both, and she finagled an invitation from the czar to perform in St. Petersburg. On her way to Russia, armed with letters of introduction, she danced in Warsaw, where she probably delivered her first footlight chat, made friends with several literary men and journalists, and got her name in print for a row with the police in which she drew a dagger from her garter. That she was always armed added another fillip to her reputation. Ejected from Poland by its Russian overlords, but not deterred from her goal to dance in St. Petersburg, she took with her an abiding fondness for Poles, many of whom she was to consort with in later years. In St. Petersburg, after engagements in Königsberg and Riga, Montez danced only once, apparently because Nicholas disallowed further performances.

Having read that Franz Liszt—then at the height of his popularity—was on tour, La Montez contrived a meeting and engaged him in a torrid affair. Armed with letters of introduction from Liszt, Montez entered Paris and voilà! debuted at the Opera. There she was, performing at the theater of theaters in the European capital of culture, after no more than twenty-five performances to her credit. This achievement was emblematic of Montez's career, forged with luck, charm, and contrivance. Still, she was not a success at the Opera, where her dancing was reviewed as being too risqué. But Montez stayed in Paris, and feathered her cap with the friendship of a bohemian group of distinguished literati, including Alexandre Dumas, *père*, with whom she had a brief sexual fling. In the fall of 1844, already trailing a thread of affection



James Huneker, *Franz Liszt* (New York, 1923), 37

Lola Montez parlayed sexual encounters with such notables as Franz Liszt (above, 1850) and Alexander Dumas, *père* (below, circa 1867), into stage opportunities.



The Works of Alexander Dumas (New York, 1900), vol. 1, frontispiece

for journalists, Montez began one of only two great romances of her life, with Alexandre Henri Dujarier, editor of *La Presse*. Montez was happy as Dujarier's mistress and companion and looked to the prospect of marriage and a honeymoon in Spain. But tragedy struck when Dujarier was killed in a duel with a rival, the journalist Jean-Baptiste Rosemond de Beauvallon.

But the show had to go on, or more accurately, Montez needed money. She began to perform again after a year of cohabitational retirement and took to the road on tour to Spa, Bonn, Baden-Baden (from whence she was expelled), and back to Paris, where Montez had to appear at Beauvallon's murder trial. A sensation in elegant black lacy mourning clothes, Montez testified that she should have been the dualist against Beauvallon. Longing for new adventure in the summer of 1846, Montez took a new lover and traveled with him to Brussels, Ostend, and the German resorts. Once that love affair ended, she continued on the road, with engagements in Heidelberg, Homburg, and Stuttgart, but was anticipating new conquests during the fall season.

Montez traveled to Munich, where the biggest prey—whom perhaps she stalked deliberately—was sitting on the gilded throne of Bavaria. Ludwig was the greatest amorous and financial trophy of her career. She was twenty-six and in her prime; he was sixty and was not handsome, stuttered, and was hard of hearing. The husband of an understanding woman whom he loved, Ludwig had carried on a number of liaisons with stage women. He was in fact devoted to the beauty of women, and to the beauty of Munich, which he had transformed into an architectural and artistic showplace. He wrote poetry and thought of himself as a poet.

When Montez arrived on the scene in October 1846, she was unable to arrange a performance in the Munich court theater, but she did arrange a meeting with the king. He was swept away. She danced a *cachucha* and a *fandango* and transmitted love rays from her gorgeous eyes to the king as she swooped and swayed. Montez's affair with Ludwig has been put through the wringer of interpretation, but what became a graphic and ac-

tive—though intermittent—sexual relationship was not realized at first. Montez's arrival in Munich coincided with a moment when conservative, ultramontane forces had gained political ascendance under Karl von Abel, the minister of the interior and principal advisor to Ludwig. Montez marked Abel as her chief enemy early on and carried the thought with her for years to come.

Abel and his cohorts were dismantling the liberal provisions of a constitution that had been in place since 1819. Imbued with Parisian liberal ideas, Montez tried to convince Ludwig of the necessity for political freedom. She claimed to have turned around the king, who was Catholic, a confirmed autocrat, and tended toward the conservative, but who had been moving toward the religious center and was wary of the ultramontane push. Ludwig was also a Hispanophile and defenseless to Montez's "Spanish" charms.

Abel ran a check and uncovered Montez's checkered past and false identity. He implemented plans to discredit Montez because of the influence she was wielding with the king and because of the scandalous liaison and the enormous amounts of money that Ludwig lavished upon her. The king gave her a house, which was enhanced by a six-figure redecoration, a carriage, jewels, and gobs of walking-around money.

Meanwhile, Montez showed increasing arrogance as the king's mistress and, in making her likes and dislikes known to Ludwig, swayed him on hirings and firings. Antics like carrying on a love affair with a Lieutenant Nussbaumer and

allowing her big dog to attack a horse pulling a brewer's cart, then bopping the poor man over the head with her umbrella, made her extremely unpopular. Within months, the public hated Montez.

Determined to get respect, Montez badgered Ludwig to elevate her to the nobility. Her lack of Bavarian citizenship presented a problem so great that the government was dismissed over their objections to granting it. In Bavaria, and in the London press, Montez was credited with getting rid of the right-wing Abel, whom the people disliked. Ludwig appointed a new ministry, Protestant and more liberal, and devised a way to provide Montez with citizenship, but he delayed a title for fear of the nobility's reaction. Meanwhile, London



Lola Montez was for years the love of his life for King Ludwig I of Bavaria (above, 1816), and King Ludwig was Lola's greatest amorous and financial trophy. She brought the king only heartbreak, however, politically and personally.

Portrait by J. K. Stieler in Count Corsi, *Ludwig I of Bavaria* (London, 1843), frontispiece

and French newspapers, carrying the breaking news of rioting mobs and other trouble in Bavaria, disclosed Montez's past. She responded with letters, including a reinvention of her mother having been born in Cuba of Irish extraction, but still alleged herself to have been born in Spain to a Spanish father.

At the same time there was growing public outrage against Montez, her intimacy with the king was also growing, and the lie was given to all her claims that the relationship was purely platonic. Ludwig was sexually obsessed by Montez, which surely clouded his judgment in the political arena. He was particularly fond of her feet—maybe part of his susceptibility to dancers—and to commemorate that passion, Montez made a gift to the king of an alabaster sculpture of one of her feet. Campaigning for his affections, Montez won a long-fought battle when Ludwig created her Countess of Landsfeld on his birthday, August 25, 1847. From that moment, Montez had achieved success beyond her earliest ambitions, and beyond those of many other women classified with her as adventuresses and courtesans.

With her elevation to the nobility, however, Montez's behavior in Munich only grew worse. She defied standards of moral conduct, she exercised her willfulness to the fullest, and she was intolerably arrogant. The irony is that her ego-driven demeanor mocked and shocked the very society she strived to join. She took up with Fritz Peissner, one of the leaders of a liberal student group that had rallied around her, only one of a series of infidelities to Ludwig. Still, he adored her—and he paid the consequences. Montez's indiscretions and the king's continued protectiveness of her gradually led to his losing public support, though he had always been especially beloved by Bavarians. Closing the university, which was a hotbed of the political struggle between conservative ultramontane forces and those of a more republican, liberal streak, led to renewed riots, and to Lola Montez's exile to Switzerland.

Montez enjoyed sixteen months of glory in Munich—on which she was able to dine out for years to come. But for Ludwig, they were disastrous. Befuddled by his passion, he made

Although she split with Ludwig in 1848, Montez, at right in a portrait engraved by Auguste Hussner about the time she turned 30, pursued a socialite's life in London, largely on Ludwig's nickel. She rode horseback in Hyde Park and met and married within a year her second husband, George Trafford Heald.

plans to join Montez in Switzerland, even when he was hailed by Bavarians for having acceded to constitutional concessions that made his position on the throne as strong as ever. Foolishly, he abdicated in favor of his son, thinking that no one could possibly care what he did with his personal life if he were no longer king. But they never did live together happily ever after; Montez betrayed Ludwig, and she continued to manipulate him for years.

In geopolitics, 1848 was a watershed year. In the United States, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo simultaneously enlarged the United States and diminished Mexico, transferring California and much more of the West to United States sovereignty. Among the momentous political revolutions on the Continent in 1848, Lola Montez played a small part, which she both simplified and exaggerated after her exile. Because of the 1848 uprisings, the way people thought about politics, economics, and society changed. Talk of political liberalism and expanded capitalism was in the air, and when the press ascribed a leadership role to Montez in Bavaria, and when she herself invoked concepts of popular sovereignty and civil equality in the next phase of her career, the public gobbled it up, part and parcel. Besides portraying herself as a republican leader of the youth faction from the university and alleging that she



Saver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California

served as an adviser to the king on policy matters, she claimed to have convinced Ludwig to abdicate in favor of his son as a gesture toward establishing a constitutional monarchy.

In truth, this was so much nonsense. Montez was undoubtedly interested in progressive ideas, but she was no political activist. In fact, during the days leading up to the revolution, her most fervent political cause was convincing Ludwig to make her a countess. The ambiguity of elevation to the nobility with an attendant yearly stipend while espousing liberal ideals did not seem to occur to La Montez, although it did to Ludwig, who was diligent and intelligent. His thinking during what were terribly difficult times for a monarch who had micromanaged Bavaria for twenty-three years, and who considered himself among the most enlightened and sensitive of autocrats, was not influenced by Lola Montez, except on personal grounds. The role Montez played in Bavaria in 1848 was to complicate matters for Ludwig. Poor Ludwig: he loved Montez, whom he called his little “Lolitta.” Like many heads of state, he wanted to have his cake and eat it too.

Lola Montez was no feminist, though the compliment has been bestowed on her. As a child, she had learned the value of self-assertion; from the beginning of her stage career, she had asserted herself, and she was proud of what she viewed as independence. She showed that she was a master of wielding a whip; and also of lashing out with her tongue. The offenses that instigated these whiplashings were never physical assaults; they were what she perceived as insults. It was as if with whip in hand, Montez was asserting her rights, guarding her reputation, and responding to questions of her self-reliance.

But even if Montez was involved with her own political action committee of Munich’s university students just before women gathered in Seneca Falls for the first women’s rights convention in 1848, Montez made clear that her sentiments were not with Lucy Stone and other feminists. She was after her own betterment in the old mold, not those of all women, not in the form of anything that can properly be called feminism.

If Lola Montez played any significant role as a politician, it was as an astute personal political thinker, an opportunist. Demonstrations of this aptitude were her ability to cajole, convince, and generally manipulate an audience in her footlight chats, and in her eloquent, self-serving letters to many editors. She also wrote to Ludwig from Switzerland, where she mounted up debts and caused enough mischief to be asked to leave what she considered to be a dull place anyway.

In London living a lush life on Ludwig’s nickel in late 1848, Montez entered society. Within a year, she met and married twenty-one-year-old George Trafford

Lola Montez, in a sketch by Wilhelm von Kaulbach. Ludwig called Montez his little “Lolitta.”



James F. Varley, *Lola Montez*, frontispiece

Heald, coronet in the fashionable Second Light Guards. Not much about Heald except his good income and regularization of her national status would recommend him to Montez as her consort. Heald was born in London, educated at Eton and Cambridge, and was a member of the gentry. They celebrated two wedding ceremonies: first Catholic, and then Church of England, but despite seeming to have covered all bases, the weddings were the cause of considerable trouble. Montez, who had called herself a widow in the marriage registers, was arrested for bigamy, since Lieutenant James was still very much alive in India. The Healds traveled on the Continent in two separate trips, both of which coincided with legal proceedings and Montez’s effort to stay out of jail. During their visits to France, Italy, and Spain, the Healds squabbled a lot, and by spring 1850 they were separated for good.

La Montez was alone again in Paris, living in comparably modest rooms, having acquired only a small settlement from Heald and because her cash cow in Bavaria was drying up. Trying to spin gold herself, Montez began to write a fantastic autobiography that was serialized in the newspapers. Meanwhile, Ludwig had finally grown out of his love for little Lolitta; the many lies she had told him and her venality left him devastated, but wiser. Montez returned all his letters, letters that contained astonishingly intimate details of his sexual obsession with her. Their correspondence ended in 1851, and he sent her the last of many bank drafts. Finally, the six-year episode with Ludwig was finished, but Montez spoke of him as her friend and always referred to him as a great and kind man.

After an absence from the stage of almost five years, Montez prepared again to dance. The circumstances were a repetition of those that put her on the London stage in the first place: severed spousal ties and virtually no means of support. In Paris, amidst an active social life—during which she may have become infected



Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, California

In the third photograph ever taken of her and likely the first ever made of a woman holding a cigarette, Lola Montez poses unsmiling and a little sour-looking for the long exposure. With this image, a daguerreotype made in Boston in 1852, Montez deliberately drew attention to her fierce smoking habit.

quent enough to be attention-grabbing. There were several minor run-ins with the police, and squabbles with staff and theater personnel continued. Publicity through notoriety had become a defining fact of life for Montez. Despite the years, her charm and beauty abided, and by 1853 Lola Montez was a real and true living legend.

And as a living legend, La Montez headed west for a theatrical tour of California. She embarked on the *Philadelphia* at

in simulated horrific spider movements. Hard as it is to believe, the Spider Dance was thought to be racy, thrilling, and outright salacious by some.

In New York, the reviewers said Montez was a better actor than dancer, and she continued her tour of the United States southward, with a return to Philadelphia, and then again on to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, making a thousand dollars a week. Throughout her tours in the United States, Montez was a star attraction, with elevated ticket prices and nearly full houses for every debut. Devotion to work had its rewards: the reviews were favorable, and she made a great deal of money. Furthermore, perhaps because of an expanded repertoire in which she acted more than she danced, for the first time in her career more than just a few women went to see Montez. During her first stay in New Orleans, Montez heard a false report of Heald's death, but even so, continued to consider Marie de Landsfeld Heald as much her legal name as Lola Montez. And why not? They were both equally illegal. Two years after coming to America, her misrepresentations and her eccentricities were numerous and fre-

New Orleans on April 22, 1853, headed for the coast of Panama. Making the best of crossing the isthmus by befriending influential gentlemen, she boarded the *Northerner* in Panama. On that voyage, she met Patrick Purdy Hull, a former Cleveland lawyer who had first gone to California with an appointment to work on the 1850 census and who had stayed on as a journalist. Within weeks, she married him.

California provided a good audience for Montez. Even as she arrived in May 1853, after the first few frantic years of the gold rush, California suffered from a leisure-life deficit. In both San Francisco and Sacramento, and especially in the mining towns where Montez performed, men—demographics alone assured that her audiences would be mostly male—had only a limited menu of leisure activities. Diversions in the mines and in the towns are well known: drinking and gambling to excess; singing, dancing, and fiddling or banjo-playing; engaging in commodity sex; and letter and journal writing. Or they could pray.

Although it was not prohibited, for most Christians, dance was entirely separate from the practice of religion.



Worship, or even broad observance, excluded dance; it was profane. And though Montez used Catholicism as an indicator of identity for the Spanish background she had invented, there was nothing Catholic—or religious in any way—associated with her acting or her dancing. Exotic and profane, Montez was an outstanding object of attention for leisure. Indeed, audiences spent a good deal of money to see her performances. Ticket prices were elevated for her appearances, as they were for other star attractions in California and in the East, but in California the cost of seeing Montez was especially dear. In San Francisco, the best seats cost five dollars, which was five times more than in New York, and ten times the price of admission in other eastern cities. Furthermore, by the time Montez arrived in the mines, the daily yields of placer miners had diminished enormously, and many were employed as quartz mining wage earners while extraction became increasingly industrialized.

One of the earmarks of Montez's performances and public behavior was lack of restraint. Daring, exuberance, and devil-may-care abandon marked her Spider Dance especially, and all this must have appealed wildly to the miners' hungers for a change of pace, release, and salacious fulfillment. Indeed, audiences in Europe, Canada, and the United States virtually slurped up Montez's display. To the majority of mid-nineteenth-century men, who at least publicly sought to portray self-restraint, Lola's walk on the wild side offered its own mother lode of vicarious pleasures.

In their pursuit of leisure activities, miners frequently brought the rivalries and tensions of their labor to the fun. Because the work of so many was directed towards

Montez could juxtapose the sacred and the profane, as illustrated by the innocence depicted in this 1847 portrait (left), which emphasized the accoutrements of Catholicism and her assumed Spanish identity, and by the portrayal of her performance of the exotic, some said salacious, Spider Dance (below).



the same end, gold extraction, the separation between earning a livelihood and leisure pursuit was drawn by the thinnest of lines. Montez's California performances were punctuated by vocal audience interjections and scuffles, and more than once audiences took their reactions to the street. La Montez encouraged feedback in what became her expected and practically regular footlight chats. She transformed hisses and boos into interactive entertainment—stopping her performance, approaching on the stage apron, and remonstrating the disrespectful in the house. The result was usually increased adulation.

From the beginning of her career and fame, which coincided with public criticism, Montez professed to have enemies—people with entrenched power and others who fulminated against her. The most commonly

named of these were the Jesuits. Montez's enemies list was one of the most imaginative and clever devices of her self-invention. Furthermore, she said horrible things: that Jesuits had tried to poison her with arsenic, that they had shot at her twice, and that they had attempted to kidnap her from Munich and carry her off to an Austrian prison. By referring to the Society of Jesus, she deflected attention to a preidentified dark force. When criticized in California, she suggested that it could not be Americans finding fault with her, since she had been so well received at every American venue at which she had appeared. She played upon the ethnocentrism, racism, and jingoism she knew her audiences to harbor.

That Lola Montez was Spanish—or posed as Spanish—does not seem to have been a factor in public disapproval, even though from colonial times Americans had inherited the Black Legend from England. The idea that by nature Spaniards—and all Hispanics by extension—were evil, greedy, bigoted, distrustful, and ignorant was attached by Anglo Americans to Mexicans in California, but often they referred to Mexican women as “Spanish” to indicate their higher regard for women.

Amidst this negative American attitude toward Hispanics, in the mid-nineteenth century—in Montez's time—there was a reversal of Hispanophobia. Things Spanish became popular, and American writers like Washington Irving and William H. Prescott boosted an appreciation of *lo español* among the reading public. Spanish romanticism and issues involved in political upheavals in Spain appealed to American sensibilities. By the last two decades of the century, interest in Spanish culture became mainstream, and in fact became fashionable. This Hispanophile feeling centered in California, which was reinventing its past, largely through sentimentalism. Idealizing Spanish California gave impetus to Montez's legacy and stimulated a host of biographies. The fact is, in her own time and after she left California, Lola Montez benefited from an uneven but growing interest in and appreciation for Spanish things that had previously been absent from Anglo culture on both sides of the Atlantic.

Six weeks after her arrival in San Francisco, and with her performances completed, Lola Montez performed another little piece of drama. In a morning ceremony at Mission Dolores, she entered into wedlock with San Francisco newspaperman Patrick Purdy Hull. This was Montez's third marriage, her second of a bigamous sort, and was held in a Catholic chapel founded by Span-

iards. What could be better to tie the knot for a Spanish and Catholic *poseuse*!

The honeymoon trip included Montez's debut in Sacramento. On opening night, with John Sutter in the audience, some people laughed when she danced. She stopped, stepped forward to the footlights, curtsied daintily, and spoke sweetly that if people did not like what she was doing then all right, she wouldn't do it. And she walked off the stage. According to other reports, her speech was not pretty, but rather was a tirade of the first order in which she accused the men in the audience of not being worthy of being men and that they should therefore exchange their trousers for her skirts. Projectiles from the audience, Montez's exit, and a musical interlude provided by the Hungarian violinist Miska Hauser preceded resumption of the dance. Still, the audience refused to appreciate her skills, and after another exit and entrance, finally the evening ended. Or it seemed to end, because Montez and her new husband were shivareed at their hotel, and authorities had to disburse the crowd.

The next evening at the theater, everything was different. Montez made a little speech of apology for the recent unpleasantness, in which she explained that she had danced the Spider Dance all over Europe, but that nowhere had audiences been more appreciative and nowhere had people been kinder to her than in America—and therefore, why should she not dance the Spider Dance in California? Montez was heartily applauded and began a smash performance. She chalked up the whole nasty Sacramento night to experience and adventure and said that it was worth more than a thousand dollars.

Two or three months later, the papers carried the story that the happy couple was no more; Mrs. Hull had ejected her husband. She toured the Sierra foothills, performing in Marysville, Grass Valley, Nevada City, and then returned to Grass Valley. And there her travels came to a halt and there began a bucolic interlude in Lola Montez's career. She bought a cottage, and invested in the Empire Mine.

Montez nested in Grass Valley—an unlikely spot for a red-hot cosmopolitan—and settled in with astounding élan. She took in a grizzly bear cub as one of many pets at her Grass Valley cottage, where she indulged in *Sunset Magazine* indoor-outdoor living. She had the bear chained to the fence surrounding her yard, which is depicted in a much-reproduced engraving published in 1854. Although it is a precious image—the petite and lovely Montez providing comfort and loving care for the symbolic call of the Sierra wilds and of California's independence; and although it was not common practice to keep a bear like a dog, it was not so remarkable as it has been portrayed. For one thing, Montez was an



San Francisco *Wide West*, July 1, 1854, in James F. Varley, *Lola Montez*

The rustic Montez emerged in part from a celebrated drawing appearing in a San Francisco periodical in 1854. The illustration (left) depicted a modest Grass Valley, California, cottage where Montez indulged in small-town life and kept a variety of pets, including a bear, pictured to the right of the house and yard. In reality, Grass Valley was but a brief interlude between tours and lovers.

inveterate lover of “dumb things.” Writers have often placed this trait as a counterpoint to La Montez’s frequently flaring temper. She seems always to have had at least one dog, and in Grass Valley she looked after a number of dogs and cats, as well as songbirds, a turkey, a pig, a pony, and some goats and sheep.

But the bear—because it literally bit the petite Montez hand that fed it—became the most notorious member of the Montez menagerie. The bear was, of course, only doing what came naturally, and what was to be expected in a society in which bull-and-bear fights were an entertainment alternative to the performances of faux-Spanish dancers. Bull-and-bear fights were probably the most spectacular of the blood sports introduced by Mexican miners, all of which crossed nationality lines in their popularity. Although bullfighting and cockfighting were there for Montez to see, and although their Hispanic roots might have appealed to her own self-devised biography, the grandiosity—as well as the fuzziness and outrageousness—of a pet bear must have exerted special appeal.

The kinder and gentler Montez was demonstrated not only in her love of animals but in her special affection for children, for whom she organized parties and games in Grass Valley. There, the danseuse befriended Mary Ann Crabtree and entertained the six-year-old Lotta Crabtree, who was already taking dancing lessons from a local teacher. An element of the legend (to which she did not contribute) has it that Montez taught Lotta to dance and wanted to take the child with her on tour. In fact, Mrs. Crabtree was an ambitious stage mother and the child became a star, prefiguring a Mary Pickford/Shirley Temple combination, but with red, rather than brunette or blonde, curls. She tried, as Pickford and Temple tried later, to stay forever young, even though she burlesqued Montez as an adult in the 1860s.

In Grass Valley, a town of more than three thousand people that was booming with the promise of big returns from quartz mining when she arrived, Montez did not seem as eccentric as she had elsewhere. She was well liked by her fellow townspeople and appreciated for her many acts of kindness and generosity to the poor and the infirm. Montez was remembered fondly and imaginatively when she departed.

By early 1855, Montez probably needed money, so she left Grass Valley. She may have intended to return, because neither did she sell her California real estate, nor did she take her belongings with her. In San Francisco she assembled a troupe and on June 6 took ship for Australia, which was to be the first leg of a round-the-world journey and tour.

In Montez’s company was thirty-two-year-old Augustus Noel Follin, who had come to California in 1850, leaving a wife and children in New York. Follin fell hard for Montez when he met her, and, apparently under her influence, he became an actor, using the stage name Frank Folland. He became her lover and was also her agent by the time they left San Francisco for Sydney via Honolulu, Tahiti, and Samoa. For the most part, Montez was happy with Follin; he was only the second true love of her life. But like Dujarier, who had died young and tragically, so was Follin to die before his time, and with great affect on Montez. The Australian tour was a box-office and critical success, but it was turbulent as all Montez’s engagements were. She fired the whole troupe and was slapped with a lawsuit by them as she and Follin sailed out of Sydney harbor for points south. Montez performed in Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide, Ballarat, and the Bendigo goldfield towns and then went back to Sydney, where she rested and tried to recuperate from recurring illness. The usual squabbles and tantrums and sensational publicity had assured a good run, but had been hard on the aging

star. Although Montez was only thirty-five, she had been living rough for a long time. Chain-smoking, the possibility of one or more chronic diseases, and having been beaten by a whip-wielding woman during the seven-month tour had taken their toll. Follin and Montez canceled the tour and departed for San Francisco in May 1855.

Homeward bound, things got worse. One day out of Honolulu, Follin was lost at sea, apparently due to accident. Montez was grief-stricken and entered a period of depression and increasing involvement in spiritualism, which she had first experienced in New England in 1851. Back in San Francisco, with a white talking cockatoo perched on her shoulder, she was becoming a different person. She read of George Heald's death in the papers, and she performed for a couple of weeks but danced little.

Within months, Montez sold her San Francisco house and four lots, consigned all her jewelry for sale at public auction, and directed the proceeds to be sent to Follin's stepmother for the education of his children. She specified that the children were to study whatever suited them, but they were also to be instructed in a knowledge of God and of spiritualism. Montez cut short a Sacramento engagement, settled her affairs in a last trip to Grass Valley, made a farewell stage run in the city, and sailed out of the Golden Gate on November 20, 1856. Follin's death was obviously a turning point in her life.

In New York, Montez was still proud and impetuous, she still lied, and she still loved the limelight, but the edge had worn off her anger, arrogance, and egotism. In the five years remaining to her, she was still recognizable in body and spirit as the Lola Montez she had created, but the appearance and reality of both had withered. Close friendships were now the anchors of her existence in place of the self-interest that had propelled her in the past.

Realizing that she was getting too old to play the roles in her repertoire, and that dancing was much too strenuous for her uneasy health, Montez effected a mid-life career change. She had always been a great talker and a riveting conversationalist. Packaging these skills with her life experiences, strongly held opinions, formidable stage presence, and fame, she launched an inordinately successful career as a lecturer. Elevating the art of conversation to a profession, Montez began in Hamilton, Ontario, in July 1857, with a talk called "Beautiful Women," containing true and false autobiographical stories and commonsense beauty tips. Montez's maiden lecture tour continued to Buffalo, where she premiered with an anti-Catholic argument called "The Origin and Power of Rome," in which her own claimed Catholicism faded from the picture.

With rave reviews piling up, she moved on to Montreal where she spoke on "Wits and Women of Paris" and then to Boston, New Haven, and Hartford. In Philadelphia, she introduced "Gallantry," in which she used Ludwig as a principal example. More lectures followed in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, where she delivered "Heroines of History and Strong-Minded Women," in which she made fun of the women's rights movement and championed traditional roles for women, excluding only those few individuals who might be truly exceptional. The critics thought she was redeeming herself through her lectures. Her manner, elocution, and expressiveness were applauded more than her message. And were it not ever so? But now, instead of fiery dancing or impassioned delivery of her lines, Montez spoke with beautiful elocution in a modulated voice absent of the exotic accent she had affected in the past. As a lecturer, she dressed simply but elegantly, frequently choosing to wear a black dress

On her last big tour, advertised in the playbill at left, Montez performed in Ballarat, a gold-mining town in southeast Australia. Overtaken shortly thereafter by illness and grief, she made an abrupt career change and became a lecturer on topics ranging from women in history and beauty tips to gallantry and Catholicism.

**VICTORIA THEATRE,
BALLARAT.**

This New and Elegant Theatre WILL OPEN
On SATURDAY, Feb. 16,
1856, under the Management of
MR. JAMES CROSBY,
Late Manager of the Victoria Theatre, Sydney,
On which occasion the world renowned Artist, M^{rs} L^{ola} M^{ontez}.

**LOLA
MONTES**

And Troupe, will have the honor of making their first appearance, supported by the
Best Company ever assembled on Ballarat!
Aided by New Scenery, Dresses, and Appointments.

IN ADDITION TO
MR. F. FOLLAND,
The Popular American Comedian, the company will include the following distinguished Artists:—
MR. JOSEPH RAYNER,
The Popular Tragedian, from the Great National Standard Theatre, London.
MR. ALFRED NELSON,
and
MISS CARRY NELSON,

MR. CHARLES WALSH,
From the Theatre Royal, Melbourne.
MR. E. RAMSEY,
The Eccelestic Comedian, from the Theatre Royal.
MR. FRANK VARLEY,
From the Victoria Theatre, Sydney.
MR. DOUGLAS,
Of the Principal Colonial Theatres.

James F. Varley, *Lola Montez*, 209



Newfound spirituality transformed the glamorous Lola Montez in the last years of her life, and she was buried in 1861 as the humble Eliza Gilbert—the name she was born with some forty-one years earlier. The photograph at left is probably from the mid-1850s, early in Lola's lecturing years (daguerreotype by Frederick DeBourg Richards, engraved by H. Davidson). Below she is pictured in her London riding habit in an 1848 painting by C. Sohon (lithography by Leon Noel, 1853) and reproduced in James F. Varley, *Lola Montez*, 47.

set off by a white collar, as Coco Chanel would prescribe later as always correct.

In 1858, she abandoned the stage for good and turned to writing. In just one year, she published three books. The first was the text of her lectures, which appeared in two American editions, and three pirated editions in London. This was followed by *The Arts of Beauty*, which sold 60,000 copies in multiple editions, as well as British and Canadian editions of 45,000. Her final book was the inferior *Anecdotes of Love*, a compilation of snippets from many sources about historical love affairs of the rich and famous.

Financially secure from the proceeds of lectures and books; comfortable in an uptown Yorkville house with a little animal menagerie and garden; modernized with an avant-garde short haircut; safe in the warm friendship of Maria and Isaac Buchanan; and surrounded—as ever—by a cloud of cigarette smoke, Montez hosted soirees and enjoyed life. Perhaps trust in this new sanctuary as well as a continuing search for the spotlight, impelled her to sail to Galway for yet another lecture tour. In Ireland for the first time since she had eloped twenty years before, she was welcomed as an honored



native daughter. After visiting relatives in Cork and lecturing there, she spoke in Dublin. From Ireland, the most demanding tour in a lifetime of tours continued in Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, York, and other cities, terminating in London in April 1859. Although tickets for her lectures were much less costly than for stage performances, she took in a great deal of money.

Montez bought a house near Hyde Park and briefly planned to retire in London, but financial trouble and grave illness put an end to that idea. Her life had become like a novel or a movie that appears to be drawing to a close just when a new plot twist emerges. While recuperating at the country home of friends, Montez's new development materialized in the form of a spiritual diary, in which she showed that not only was she aware of her old self, but that she was trying to change: she was trying to learn to be humble and to be pious.

With health restored, she returned to New York, which was the final sea voyage for perhaps the most well-traveled woman of her time. Montez was accused of having expressed anti-American opinions during her British lectures. Proud to be an American, which she had achieved through her brief marriage to Pat Hull, she defended herself and soon was on the lecture platform again speaking to a standing-room-only audience about "John Bull at Home."

But the bright lights of the dramatic life she had lived were not to flicker out without still more drama. On

June 30, 1860, she suffered a stroke that left her speechless and paralyzed on her left side. She convalesced with the Buchanans and made a will. By fall she had recovered sufficiently to move to her own rooms in a boardinghouse. Montez regained speech and could walk haltingly when she received an unwelcome visit from her mother. Eliza Craigie, by this time a widow, had traveled from England in hopes of cashing in on her daughter's fortune. The visit was short and cold, but resolved Montez to make a legal transfer of anything she might still own in Bavaria to Isaac Buchanan, husband of her childhood friend. The document was signed, "Lola Montez, Countess of Landsfeld."

In the fall her health improved, and she counseled recovering prostitutes at the New York Magdalen Society's shelter and altered her will to benefit that institution as well as Maria Buchanan. By December, when Montez was nearly recovered, she caught pneumonia, which was her last illness. Her minister of the moment, the Reverend Francis Hawks of Calvary Episcopal Church, visited her many times, and later remembered Montez's inspiring eloquence in speaking about redemption—words uttered from a ravaged face but from a truly penitent soul. A month before her forty-second birthday, on January 17, 1861, the woman called Lola Montez—and many other things—died with her hand touching the Bible as a friend read to her from it. Close friends attended Montez's Episcopal burial service at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where the marble headstone, now worn and scarcely legible, reads "Mrs. Eliza Gilbert."

Lola Montez achieved a lasting, if odd and fuzzy fame: her name is broadly recognized, but rarely do people know much about her. If Americans are not very clear on her now, neither were they clear about La Montez in the past, largely due to her self-serving obfuscation of the truth—and downright lying. Further, while Montez's existence was chronicled minutely by the press while she was still breathing, and though her notoriety still provided copy long after her death, newspapers and magazines were subject to entrapment in the web of untruths she wove, to romanticization, and perhaps to the temptation of tangling the tale further. Nor has Montez always been well served by her biographers until very recently. Too often, they accepted at face value what they read. Writers of novels, plays, poems, and movies have recognized a prime subject—and all have taken full measures of poetic license with Montez.

Montez exerts a pull from the grave that might have piqued her own later-life interest in spiritualism. Even

in death, she takes people in, she charms them, she beguiles and deceives. Lola Montez was a reckless rebel against convention whose remarkable combination of charms and contradictions created a singular and imaginative life. Those traits also laid down the legacy of legend. She carried her worldliness to the West, and although the time she spent there was not very significant to her career, nor was it close to being the most interesting segment of a multiphased lifework, she left a deep imprint.

Montez's influence on the West was greater than its effect on her. Her original California plan was to just do it: perform and make money. That accomplished, she could have returned to New York right away. But because the region appealed to her or because she was weary, she paused in Grass Valley. Although most California authors and other Montez groupies insist that she planned to stay forever in the West, there is little evidence of such. By nature, Montez was restless, gregarious, and cosmopolitan. After enjoying the beautiful Sierras for a while—as she had enjoyed the Alps, the continental spas and resorts, and even the Catskills—she moved on to pursue further fame and fortune in her natural urban environment. Montez's milieu was the metropolis; the West of the 1850s was far distant from the urbane and sophisticated cutting edge that beckoned Montez.

Especially in California—but in other parts of the West as well—Montez has been awarded a disproportionately significant place in the pantheon of pioneers. Westerners are strangely proud that the beautiful and wicked Lola Montez—who may have been an opera diva, a ballet dancer, or perhaps a Latin movie star—stopped in the region to glamorize even further an already golden land. 

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The published literature on Lola Montez is more voluminous than her petticoats, and much of it is just as florid and frilly. Most of what has been written speaks directly to the perpetuation and dissemination of Montez legend and lore, rather than to the facts.

The reverse is true of *Lola Montez: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996) by Bruce Seymour, the best single volume on Montez.

Seymour coedited recently located voluminous correspondence between Ludwig and Montez, and relied on it and other archival sources in Bavarian repositories never previously employed. Not only has Seymour disclosed positively shocking details about the sexual relationship between the king and his little Lolitta, he has illuminated Montez's character through Ludwig's perspicacious understanding—and broken heart. He also has calculated the amount of money—about three million dollars in current market value—that Ludwig lavished on Montez during two years, as well as her yearly allowance thereafter, which was about \$400,000. Additionally, Seymour has convincingly corrected Eliza Gilbert's birth date and circumstances. Overall, he has documented and interpreted a difficult subject in a sensitive and revealing manner. Seymour deposited his research materials at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, where several Montez documents are in the manuscripts collection. The



Lithographed from a Daguerreotype by Meade Brothers 233 Broadway New-York.

Engraved according to order of the artist in the year 1851 by Meade Brothers on the basis of the original daguerreotype of 1851

Lola Montez,
Countess of Landsfeld

Harvard Theatre Collection,
The Houghton Library,
Cambridge, Massachusetts

"I consider this Lithograph the best likeness I have yet had taken of myself," Lola wrote of the above picture, taken from a daguerreotype by Meade Brothers of New York in 1851.

Harvard Theatre Collection in Cambridge and the Museum of the City of New York also contain Montez holdings.

For the reader concerned with Montez's sojourn in the West, Doris Foley's *The Divine Eccentric: Lola Montez and the Newspapers* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1969) assembles a welcome if breathless summary of Montez as portrayed in California newspapers from 1853 through 1861. If the press accounts Foley relates were not always entirely accurate and objective, neither was Lola Montez in her self-serving autobiography, written in the third person, which is an appendix to *The Divine Eccentric*.

James F. Varley's splendid new biography, *Lola Montez: The California Adventures of Europe's Notorious Courtesan* (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1996), has also made extensive use of California and other United States newspapers but with greater discernment and analysis than Foley. Varley's book is a great read, full of colorful vocabulary, and is particularly insightful concerning what made Montez tick. Further, Varley includes new material on the possibility that Montez suffered from syphilis. He recognizes her faults and takes pains to separate truth from fiction, but like other biographers Varley seems bewitched.

Because the press followed Montez's career so closely—or so loosely but persistently—the periodical literature alone constitutes thousands of pages, and many news stories and stage reviews about Montez were reprinted numerous times in this country and abroad. Besides newspapers, *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, *Harper's*, *The London Illustrated News*, *Fraser's*, and other magazines featured Lola Montez frequently.

The essential reading about Montez includes some of her own work: *Lectures of Lola Montez including her Autobiography* (New York: Rudd & Carlton, 1858); and *The Arts of Beauty or Secrets of a Lady's Toilet with Hints to Gentlemen on the Art of Fascinating* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1858). *The Arts of Beauty* contains sound advice on eating right and exercising, and is combined with tongue-in-cheek advice to men on how to behave better toward women. Montez's cosmetic and skin care rituals are remarkably consistent with current practices, and the beauty tips should be taken seriously from one who knew whereof she spoke.

General book-length biographies of Montez, which number at least twenty, deal with the western years in shorter form than the rest of her life. The first biography published in English was writ-

ten by Edmund B. D'Auvergne, as he put it, "in the key of love." *Lola Montez: An Adventuress of the Forties* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1909) took as its starting point George Clement Boase, "Gilbert, Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna," an article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: South, Elder, & Co., 1890). Boase's *Dictionary of National Biography* entry is said to be the first "complete" study of Montez in English, but alas, it is no longer reliable. D'Auvergne fashioned a life story hinged on Montez as courtesan par excellence, and many biographers since have taken their pitch note from D'Auvergne's "key of love." Among the best until recently is Horace Wyndham's *The Magnificent Montez: From Courtesan to Convert* (New York: Hilman-Curl, 1936), in which the "honeycomb of fable and fascination" surrounding Montez is identified, and a valiant effort made to uncover the truth. In *Queen of Hearts: The Passionate Pilgrimage of Lola Montez* (New York: John Day, 1936), Isaac Goldberg observes that Montez lived as if she were the heroine in a novel, and he wrestles inconclusively with the difficulty of finding the truth about her life.

Many other treatments have been published in compound biographical volumes on courtesans, theatrical figures, and wicked women. Outstanding among these is an odd but well-written sketch of Montez by William Bolitho in *Twelve Against the Gods: The Story of Adventure* (1929; Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1933). Here Montez is placed alongside Mohammed, Casanova, Columbus, Napoleon, and Woodrow Wilson (!), among others—and the message is about greatness.

Almost every book on Lola Montez includes illustrations of her: paintings, engravings, lithographs, or photographs. Diane L. Day, "Lola Montez and her American Image," in *History of Photography*, 5 (October 1981), 339-47, has assembled a superb collection of images made of La Montez once she arrived in America. The camera shows a woman aging before her time, and without the benefit of airbrushing and retouching, Montez appears considerably less glamorous than the viewer might expect. The cinematic camera has also portrayed Montez. Max Ophuls's *Lola Montes* (France/Germany: Gamma-Film, 1955) is considered a landmark film for its use of montage, but a film has yet to be made that captures the whole Montez—whether in legend or reality. Hollywood awaits: Lola Montez—as the saying goes—is ready for her close-up.