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Abstract

This paper is about Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' and what has been made of it since it was published as 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' in 1807. In this paper I take issue with postcolonial writers like Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff who position Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' at the centre of British imperialism. I also take issue with J. Edward Chamberlin who has recently repositioned the poem as marginalized and radical. My position, as my title indicates, is that 'Daffodils' has been deployed in both colonial and postcolonial contexts: that it is neither central nor marginal to British imperialism in itself, but has been found very useful at certain historical moments. My interest in this idea of 'deployment', probably quite reactionary and not all that exciting in itself, is in what is also swept up by implication when 'Daffodils' is deployed and redeployed.

KAREN WELBERRY

Colonial and Postcolonial Deployment of 'Daffodils'

I

This paper is about Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' and what has been made of it since it was published as 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' in 1807. In this paper I take issue with postcolonial writers like Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff who position Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' at the centre of British imperialism. I also take issue with J. Edward Chamberlin who has recently repositioned the poem as marginalized and radical. My position, as my title indicates, is that 'Daffodils' has been deployed in both colonial and postcolonial contexts: that it is neither central nor marginal to British imperialism in itself, but has been found very useful at certain historical moments. My interest in this idea of 'deployment', probably quite reactionary and not all that exciting in itself, is in what is also swept up by implication when 'Daffodils' is deployed and redeployed.

It is the contention of this paper that daffodils have become metonymic of 'Englishness', and that this has happened both through the pedagogical deployment of William Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' in Britain and in the colonies of the British Empire from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards and through the more recent counter-discursive resistance to this pedagogy by postcolonial writers and critics. Symptomatic of this positioning is Shirley Chew and Anna Rutherford's *Unbecoming Daughters of the Empire*,¹ a text which repeatedly uses a drawing of a daffodil as emblem of the way in which (clearly divergent) experiences of Empire were 'constructed in terms of sameness' by the colonial administration of England. Neither Chew, Rutherford nor any of the writers in their volume problematize this identification of daffodils with 'Englishness'. They take it as read that a postcolonial 'campaign against poems about daffodils' is both long-standing, legitimate, and well-known. Typical of *Unbecoming Daughters of the Empire* is the way in which Meenakshi Mukherjee writes of her desire as a schoolgirl in India to be as 'elegant[t] ... and fluent[t] ... in spoken English' as those girls who attended the elite boarding schools and convents.² Mukherjee figures this desire to speak perfectly cadenced English as the longing to be 'daffodilized'. It is signally natural for her to figure this desire in terms of Wordsworth's poetry. Ishrat Lindblad also naturalizes the connection

between Wordsworth and Englishness in her contribution to the volume. When Lindblad makes a pilgrimage to the Lake District soon after her arrival in England from Pakistan she remarks: 'for the first time the world outside corresponded to the world I had been reading about!'.³ Lindblad arrives in London, but it is the Lake District which she perceives as the sacred heart of England.

Along with daffodils, Wordsworth and the English Lake District have been positioned at the imperial centre by texts like *Unbecoming Daughters of the Empire*. This paper attempts to unsettle the apparent inevitability of this positioning. By retracing colonial and postcolonial deployment of 'Daffodils', I hope to resituate both Wordsworth and the Lake District as complex and contradictory sites of possibility, mobilized in reductive ways at certain historical moments for particular reasons.

II

The earliest reference I have found to the long-running 'campaign against poems about daffodils' is made by V.S. Naipaul in 1962 with respect to Trinidad.⁴ Naipaul's understanding of this campaign is that it arose because some Trinidadians found it offensive that William Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' was taught in schools when the daffodil is not a flower known in the West Indies. Naipaul clearly finds this campaign absurd. He fails to see why Trinidadians should reject an aesthetically beautiful poem just because it is grounded in the English countryside. He points out that there was no analogous campaign against American culture in Trinidad – a cultural presence which Naipaul personally feels to be far more damaging to local customs. Naipaul adds that this campaign is rendered even more ludicrous by the fact that Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' is the only poem that most Trinidadians know; the campaign leaders have no way of contextualizing their attack just as they have little hope of appreciating the beauties of the poem. Daffodils are identified with 'Englishness' here in a way that is positive for Naipaul and negative for those Trinidadians he condemns.

Daffodils are also metonymic of 'Englishness' for Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, and Albert Wendt. In contrast to Naipaul, however, these writers find the idea of a campaign against daffodils far from ludicrous. Cliff and Kincaid attest to children in the West Indies being made to learn the poem by rote and recite it in class 'with as little accent as possible'.⁵ Cliff estimates that 'probably there were a million children who could recite "Daffodils", and a million who had never actually seen the flower, only the drawing, and so did not know why the poet had been stunned'.⁶ In Cliff's reconstruction of a Jamaican one-class school, the teaching of 'Daffodils' symbolises the way in which the colonial administration was completely oblivious to the needs and geographic specificity of Jamaica. Kincaid, on the other hand, dramatises the way in

which the sight of a real live daffodil might effect one of the millions of children who were forced to learn a poem about something they had never seen. For Lucy, the protagonist of Kincaid's semi-autobiographical narrative, *Lucy*, daffodils immediately signify 'an old poem I had been made to memorize when I was ten years old'.⁷ As Alison Donnell has noted, Kincaid's source of objection here is the way in which a veneer of 'Englishness' – English elocution, English manners, English subject matter – is forced upon Lucy, stifling what she feels to be her true self and aligning her subjectivity with the 'motherland'.⁸ Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' is positioned as the carrier of this 'Englishness' by Kincaid as it is for Cliff. Wendt objects to the poem for similar reasons. His English education in New Zealand included Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' together with texts such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Coral Island* and *Ivanhoe*.⁹ Wendt believes that the pedagogical use of these texts promoted the idea that there was no Maori culture or literature worth studying; that the 'good native' of the colonies should aim at assimilating a universal English culture. In contrast to Naipaul, Wendt feels that the 'map' of the world offered by texts like 'Daffodils' bears little relation to his experience and is designedly misleading and damaging to the identity of the Maori people.

The anecdotal evidence of Cliff, Kincaid and Wendt suggests that the incongruity of the English subject-matter of 'Daffodils' to its audience, the way it was impressed on their minds through rote-learning, and the superior English culture that it was designed to represent, are the main reasons why a campaign against the poem has emerged and should be sustained. As Edward Chamberlin put it at the Caribbean Studies conference last year, 'Daffodils' has 'come to represent English literary imperialism' for many postcolonial critics.¹⁰ And yet this anecdotal evidence does not really explain why another Wordsworth poem, a poem by another writer, or another kind of text altogether, could not 'come to represent English literary imperialism'. 'Daffodils' was not the only poem taught in schools. It both belongs to the canon of verses recited and sung on Empire Day throughout the colonies and to the smaller sub-set of culturally privileged poems. Any one of these verses or poems might, conceivably, have been singled out as representative of 'the forced adoption of the motherland'.¹¹ Furthermore, seeing as Cliff also refers to Tennyson and Keats being taught alongside Wordsworth in the manuals sent out to Jamaican teachers, I would imagine that 'Daffodils' was not the only poem with a subject unfamiliar and incongruous to a Jamaican audience. At least, I very much doubt that nightingales are any more prevalent in Jamaica than daffodils and suggest that any selection from Keats and Tennyson is as likely to confound a Jamaican reader with classical mythology as is Wordsworth with daffodils. The question therefore arises as to just why is it that Mukherjee writes of the longing to be 'daffodilized' and not of the longing to be 'nightingalized'.¹²

In his paper, 'Dances with Daffodils: Wordsworth and the West Indies', Edward Chamberlin reminded the audience at last year's Caribbean Studies conference of other reasons why they should be surprised at this. 'Daffodils', Chamberlin argued, 'appeared in the midst of a set of arguments about language ... and nationality ... as well as about race and gender ... which have a close analogue in the discussions that have taken place in the West Indies over the past fifty years about language, literature and identity' (p. 2). Wordsworth's choice of a natural and local subject was as deliberate as his use of 'the language really used by men'.¹³ In the *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, he negotiated a path through the topical issues of his day by proposing a poetry of action that creates feeling and meaning rather than simply describing them. This credo, Chamberlin argued, is manifest in a poem like 'Daffodils'. The poem is a description of an experience which has changed the speaker. But, in Chamberlin's words, it also 'enact[s] rather than merely indicate[s] in language' an 'instability of mood and manner that was for Wordsworth a condition of the imagination' (p. 8). This credo is one which many West Indian critics affirm today. Chamberlin connected Wordsworth's argument for the use of dialect and the 'words of life' with similar arguments for the use of dialect in West Indian poetry (pp. 3-4). Both arguments assert that dialect is important because it enacts the presence and subjectivity of the people in their own terms.

Chamberlin also pointed out to his audience that when Wordsworth's 'daffodil poem' was first published in *Poems in Two Volumes* it was not received at all well by Wordsworth's contemporaries. It is easy to forget the radical nature of Wordsworth's enterprise and what Thomas De Quincey terms 'the unutterable contempt avowed for all that he had written' before 1835.¹⁴ Francis Jeffrey's abiding impression of *Poems in Two Volumes* at the time of his review was that it was full of 'low, silly, or uninteresting' subjects,¹⁵ and he later singled out 'dancing daffodils and sister Emmelines' for particular censure.¹⁶ Anna Seward and Robert Southey also found it hard to understand why the poet would want to 'look at pile-worts and daffodowndillies through the same telescope which he applies to stars'.¹⁷ Coleridge, too, had his doubts. After resituating Wordsworth's poetry in this context, Chamberlin concludes that far from inhabiting 'the imperial centre of poetry ... of all the great poets ... Wordsworth is the most marginal in terms of his language, his subjects, his home; and the marginalities of race and gender that he himself did *not* represent, he wrote about ...' (p. 25). Given all this marginality and bad press, 'Daffodils'' status as symbol of 'English literary imperialism' becomes very surprising indeed.

III

In the rest of this paper I want to suggest some answers to this conundrum. For there is more at stake here than the reputation of one poem. By deploying 'Daffodils' as a key site of English literary imperialism, Kincaid, Cliff, Wendt and others construct an idea of Wordsworth which Chamberlin has noted is based on a very selective reading of the archive. It is a negative and reductive conception of Wordsworth – and, through him, Romanticism – which is frequently mobilized by postcolonial critics. On the other hand, by redeploying 'Daffodils' as a site of radicalism and marginality, Chamberlin constructs an 'innocent' Wordsworth who has been strategically misrepresented by writers such as Cliff and Kincaid. Chamberlin reminds us of all Wordsworth's political poems – his laments on the Extinction of the Venetian Republic and the subjugation of Switzerland for example – and even points out that in the very same volume as 'Daffodils' is a sonnet about a silent and rejected Negro woman. He defies his audience to call this poem inappropriate or petty. Chamberlin chastises those who demand poetical subjects that reflect social and political reality, calling this attitude to representation 'as narrowly Augustan as anything one could imagine' (p. 8). Such an ideal overlooks the 'idea of rhetoric' and the underlying importance of poetics which, Chamberlin asserts, West Indian critics have already acknowledged elsewhere (p. 8). In effect, Chamberlin demonstrates that positioning this little poem 'at the imperial centre' has serious ramifications. Of utmost importance to Chamberlin is the way in which 'demonization' of Wordsworth denies West Indian poets a connection with a tradition of resistance, an 'attitude ... towards language *in* literature ... that is much more than a political gesture or a post-colonial style' (p. 4).

Chamberlin's arguments are persuasive. He seems to be putting Wordsworth back where he belongs; back at the cutting edge of early nineteenth-century thought and very much on the fringe of critical fashion. And yet the implication here is that Wordsworth has been positioned at the imperial centre quite wrongly by the deliberately selective readings of postcolonial critics. It strikes me that this construction of Wordsworth fails to take into account the fact that not all nineteenth-century audiences – let alone all twentieth-century audiences – are presented with the entire Wordsworth archive. Most of us encounter Wordsworth selectively. I would go so far as to suggest that, apart from a few students of Wordsworth, everyone who has encountered the poet at all has done so through editions or compilations of his work selected by institutionally sanctioned men and women for particular pedagogical reasons. The anecdotal evidence of people like Cliff, Kincaid and Wendt demonstrates that the Wordsworth they encountered was not the Wordsworth who lamented the subjugation of Switzerland. The Wordsworth sent out to the colonies was a man who

wrote about daffodils rather than politics. Might this historical fact not be enough in itself to explain why it is the Wordsworth of 'Daffodils' who is redeployed?

And yet, the possibility that the prominence of 'Daffodils' in postcolonial accounts mirrors the historical prominence of the poem in colonial education surely only shifts the terms of this enquiry: why was *this* poem selected for colonial dissemination? With due respect to Edward Chamberlin, I suggest that these questions are ultimately the same. The work of Gauri Viswanathan and Alan Richardson is useful in shedding light on this connection. As both writers make clear, the canonisation or management of a poet like Wordsworth is historically linked to the social uses envisaged for their work at home and abroad. Moreover, it is always a particular interpretation of 'their work' which is mobilized.

In *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, Gauri Viswanathan suggests that 'the English literary text ... function[ed] ... as a surrogate Englishman' in nineteenth-century India.¹⁸ The literary text was presented as the sublime product of English knowledge by the colonial administration; it posited the 'true essence' of the Englishman in his 'mental output' rather than in his material presence. Viswanathan believes that in this way the 'sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance' was 'efface[d]'.¹⁹ The ideals and high moral standards of the English literary text became a 'mask' for what Englishmen were actually doing to the people of India. Although Viswanathan barely refers to Wordsworth in her study, I think it is useful to see 'Daffodils' in the light of this thesis. On a very literal level, 'Daffodils' locates the Englishman in English countryside composing poetry in joyful and gentle touch with Nature. It would hardly be possible to convey an Englishman more ideal and less like those involved in 'commercial operation[s], military expansion ... [and] administration of territories' in India.²⁰ This short poem also presents an idyllic, pre-industrial picture of England which a department of propaganda would be hard-pressed to supersede. I suggest that it posits the Lake District against London in the same way that it posits Wordsworth against the Englishman in India. In a colonial context, the Lake District is here presented as a 'mask' for London, the real centre of British imperial power. The Lake District is presented as the imperial centre, the image each Englishman has in his heart; its very brevity serves to conceal the complications and contradictions inherent in any society. On a very literal level, deployment of a word-picture like 'Daffodils' was incalculably useful to the colonial administration.

Viswanathan also points out that, after the institution of English as the official language of education in India in 1835, there were initially several schools of thought as to the proper kind of literary text for Indian people to study. Viswanathan shows that the Romantic curriculum favoured by

missionaries such as Alexander Duff gradually won precedence over the older, classical model. It was felt that the 'highly imagistic poetry of Cowper, Wordsworth, Akenside, and Young'²¹ was better equipped to produce the kind of imagination necessary to *feel* the 'truth of Christianity' than neoclassical verse. In addition to containing a highly emotive image of England, 'Daffodils' was exactly the kind of poem recommended by Duff. As I have already pointed out, it required the reader to imaginatively enter a situation and re-enact the emotion of the poet. For this reason I consider it highly probable that 'Daffodils' would have been one of the Wordsworth selections on Duff's 1852 curriculum.²²

Alan Richardson also charts the rise of the "'Romantic" idea of literature' in the second half of the nineteenth century.²³ Richardson argues that previously derogated forms of literature became highly regarded forms in the mid-nineteenth century. Like the didactic conduct books in vogue earlier in the century, fairy tales and imaginative poetry encouraged adherence to a strict moral code and social hierarchy – but they did so 'through awakening a common, essential human selfhood' rather than by 'prescriptive maxim ...' (p. 262). Imaginative literature was acknowledged to be a better way of teaching people a moral code because it engaged the minds of people deeply; it required participation in the process of gaining consent. The mandate for imaginative literature envisaged by Wordsworth and Coleridge moved from being the idea of an isolated group of radical thinkers to being widely endorsed by influential educators, publishers, and colonial administrators in the mid nineteenth century. Imaginative literature became a socially useful way of dealing with the changing conditions faced by the British Empire – the nascent proletariat, increasingly frustrated by industrialisation, the burgeoning women's movement, the 'well-entrenched learned class' in colonies like India.²⁴ While Viswanathan positions the role played by India in the parallel rise of English Literary Studies and the 'Romantic' idea of literature as central, Richardson prefers to stress the way in which the canonisation of imaginative literature was a response to a number of threatening situations within Britain and the British Empire (p. 261). Both writers agree, however, that a poet like Wordsworth fulfilled the changing needs of those in power and enhanced his reputation accordingly. From his position of 'unutterable contempt' before 1835, Wordsworth rose quickly in critical fashion, becoming poet laureate in 1843 and being firmly canonised by Matthew Arnold in 1879.

The possibility that Wordsworth was a marginal poet before 1835 is, I would argue, therefore fairly irrelevant to a student in the colonies. It was the very ascendancy of Wordsworth and the Wordsworthian idea of literature after 1835 that bespoke his inclusion on Duff's curriculum. And yet it could also be argued that this 'Wordsworthian idea of literature' was as much a construction of Arnold and earlier editors as of Wordsworth himself. In the introduction to his seminal edition of

Wordsworth's poetry in 1879, for example, Arnold argued that 'to be recognized far and wide as a great poet ... Wordsworth needs to be relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage which now encumbers him'.²⁵ Arnold believed that Wordsworth's 'best work [was] ... in his shorter pieces', especially those produced between 1798 and 1808. Appreciation of these pieces was impeded for Arnold by the 'mass of inferior work' surrounding them and by the 'artificial arrangement' of poems within a volume that Wordsworth himself insisted upon (pp. 223-4). Arnold sought to correct these problems in his 1879 edition, thereby producing a version of Wordsworth which Englishmen could glory in unreservedly (p. 235). Later editors have also tended to 'correct' Wordsworth, usually by preferring his earlier versions of poems.²⁶ Wordsworth's constant revisions and retreat from some of his former radicalism are an embarrassment to those who would deploy him to illustrate their own particular theses.

Arnold's redeployment of Wordsworth has been enormously influential.²⁷ And yet one consequence of the important but nonetheless supplementary role of poetry in Arnold's curriculum was that Wordsworth's 'formal philosophy' had to be excised from his poetry (p. 229). Poems like *The Excursion* were no good to Arnold; they usurped the role of the more instructive literary texts on his curriculum and did not exhibit the universal joys and disinterested beauties that he had designated the domain of poetry. Poems like 'Daffodils', on the other hand, fulfilled these criteria most capably. 'Daffodils' was promoted by Arnold because it was acceptable Wordsworth: short, written in the 'great decade', and free from 'elevated but abstract verbiage, alien to the very nature of poetry' (p. 229).

The interest of Arnold and other editors in disseminating an apolitical Wordsworth explains why it is also this apolitical Wordsworth who is resisted by postcolonial critics. It should not, however, be forgotten that Wordsworth was himself very interested in promoting and producing a version of 'Wordsworth' pedagogically. As Richardson points out, Wordsworth was not merely 'done unto' by anthologists and editors with their own agendas to pursue. As early as 1831 he allowed Joseph Hine to publish *Selections from the Poems of William Wordsworth, Esq. Chiefly for the use of Schools and Young Persons*. Richardson suggests that Wordsworth was only too willing to cede editorial control at Hine's promise of circulating his poems among 'every private family, and every school in this and other countries where the English language ... is cultivated'.²⁸ Wordsworth not only recognised the huge potential audience for his poems in the diaspora but, as Richardson puts it, saw 'the poet's role [as] ... help[ing] hold an extended, fragmenting, increasingly far-flung social group together through creating a "common 'human' discourse"' (p. 265). Indeed, Wordsworth's almost obsessive concern with the text and order of his complete works seem to me

symptomatic of the pedagogical vision he had for his poetry and the (ever-changing) moral legacy he wanted to leave. I think it is important to remember Wordsworth's own desire to have his poetry widely read as well as his significance as one of the thinkers whose ideas became strategically useful for others to deploy in the mid to late nineteenth century. By resituating Wordsworth amidst his early hostile contemporaries Chamberlin seems to settle an aura of innocence around Wordsworth. The poet emerges from Chamberlin's account as a potential ally to the postcolonial cause. But Richardson shows that Wordsworth was intimately concerned with educational issues and schemes – and was fully aware of the application of these in the colonies. While Wordsworth might not have sanctioned Arnold's removal of philosophy from his poetry, I think it is likely he would have approved the increased readership consequent to the 1879 edition.

Interestingly, Chamberlin's reclamation of an 'innocent' Wordsworth has parallels with Jonathan Bate's recovery of a 'green' Wordsworth in *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. Both writers reclaim Wordsworth for their marginalized/radical ontologies by emphasizing Wordsworth's focus on the specific geography and native inhabitants of the English Lake District. In this respect they can be seen as participating in the recent bid to reassert the importance of spatial/regional study in critical theory.²⁹ By considering daisies, daffodils, leech gatherers and so on to be part of a highly specific landscape articulated by Wordsworth in ways inflected by Westmorland speech patterns (p. 25), Chamberlin overrides the notion that these are incidents and subjects drawn from 'common life' and aimed at creating a 'common "human" discourse'. As I have noted, the critical reception of Wordsworth's contemporaries to the specifics of his subjects is a crucial factor in the framing of Chamberlin's argument. Chamberlin implies that Wordsworth's contemporaries criticized the poet because to them he was hopelessly provincial. Similarly, Bate redirects our attention to Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* and his philosophy of unalienated labour in *The Excursion*, which, Bate points out, reached more editions and sold more copies than anything else Wordsworth wrote in his own lifetime.³⁰ Bate uses the critical reception of Wordsworth's contemporaries to authenticate his view that Wordsworth has been misrepresented both by Marxist critics and by those who emphasize individualist ontologies. He claims to be excavating the 'real' Wordsworth by basing his own interpretation not in extra-textual politics but in the intuitions of the Victorian reader who knew to 'locate ... Wordsworth firmly in nature' (p. 10). Like Chamberlin, Bate moves Wordsworth's relationship with the Lake District from the periphery to the centre of Wordsworthian study.

Bate's thesis is fascinating. He argues that the true 'Romantic Ideology' is not 'a theory of imagination and symbol embodied in ... self-consciously idealist and elitist texts ... but a theory of ecosystems and

unalienated labour embodied in ... self-consciously pragmatic and populist texts' (p. 10). Bate traces the influence of Wordsworth's popular work in forerunners of the environmental movement such as John Ruskin and William Morris and in the formation of the National Parks movement. His book attempts to valorise the 'common sense' approach to Wordsworth; to remember the grounds of the poet's popularity in the mid-nineteenth century and to recover in Wordsworth a figure of relevance to the political formations of the 1990's. I must admit to feeling quite a bit of sympathy for this position. Bate appeals to those disillusioned with 'modernist' privileging of time over space – with the developmental model of evolutionary progress in time as a way of understanding social formations. By focusing on Wordsworth's relationship to the Lake District, Bate engages with – and profits from – theories of geographically uneven development and synchronicity formulated by people like Edward Soja which posit spatially distinct experience and conditions as the explanatory model. And yet, far from positioning his own thesis as a (perhaps more useful) construction of 'Wordsworth', Bate claims to be recovering the 'writer's purposes' themselves. This is a move which overlooks Wordsworth's own involvement with the pedagogical dissemination of his work as it sidesteps issues of how it has been employed by others. It is thus a move which I believe fundamentally ignores – as it ostensibly examines – the impact literature can have on human geography.

For me, the main problem with Bate's thesis is that it fails to interrogate why so many non-Victorian readers might not 'locate ... Wordsworth ... in nature'. Bate does not consider the possibility that critics bring sociopolitical frameworks to bear on Wordsworth because Wordsworth's poetry was often deployed within sociopolitical frameworks. To insist upon the veracity of one Victorian response to Wordsworth is to deny the poet's ongoing impact in the broader sociopolitical sphere. Another problem that I have with Bate's move is that it also denies the possibility that Victorian readers might 'locate ... Wordsworth ... in nature' for non-environmental reasons. Bate claims that 'most people know two things about Wordsworth, that he wrote about daffodils and that he lived in the Lake District' (p. 4), but he does not consider that this image of Wordsworth was the result of careful selection and dissemination of the poet's work in Britain as well as in the colonies. I argue against Bate that the association of Wordsworth, daffodils and the Lake District in the minds of many readers is not so much the accidental result of a provincial nature poet called Wordsworth being born in the Lake District, as the result of this conjunction of elements being particularly useful to British educators and deliberately deployed.

IV

At this point in my paper I turn, finally, to the third element in the Wordsworth/daffodils/Lake District conjunction cited above. As I have shown, when Wordsworth's delight in Lake District daffodils is presented to a reader in the West Indies, it is not Wordsworth's status as a local nature poet that stands out but the irrelevancy of these images outside the imperial centre. I would even go so far as to suggest that, in a colonial context, the Lake District *becomes* the imperial centre – the source and ideal of Englishness – just as Wordsworth becomes the 'surrogate Englishman'. I have already mentioned that Ishrat Lindblad expresses satisfaction in finding a correspondence between English Literature and English landscape in the Lake District. Lindblad's pilgrimage demonstrates colonial investment in the notion of an idealized Lake District as the sacred heart of England, rather than industrialized London. Similarly, by deconstructing 'Daffodils' as 'the forced adoption of the motherland', postcolonial writers like Jamaica Kincaid and Michelle Cliff reveal the way in which the clean and pristine Lake District functions as a 'mask' for the dirty machinations of London. The point that I have not hitherto considered, however, is that, in doing this, Cliff and Kincaid also participate in perpetuating the myth that the Lake District is 'clean and pristine'.

Cliff and Kincaid are not interested in any analogies that could be drawn between exploitation of the local inhabitants and landscape of the Lake District and the West Indies, but only in the historical assertion of their difference. Alan Richardson points out that some of these analogies are fertile ground for study. In 1811, for example, Wordsworth helped institute a school in Grasmere on the 'Madras plan' – a system 'initially designed to facilitate the socialization of the "half-caste children" of British soldiers in India' (p. 96). George Ford's essay on 'The Cottage Controversy' in the Lake District is also suggestive of parallels with the aestheticisation of poverty in colonial contexts.³¹ But postcolonial writers like Cliff and Kincaid are no more interested in mobilizing these complex ideas about the Lake District than the colonial administration was in disseminating them under the British flag. The reductive postcolonial view of the Lake District neatly inverts the idealistic colonial image. Although contemporary West Indian writers undoubtedly have the resources to position Wordsworth differently, it seems that the formative impact of the 'daffodil' Wordsworth has the overriding significance for many writers. 'Daffodils', because it is taught to children, represents the pedagogical aspect of British colonialism. As I have suggested, it has become metonymic of Englishness in this context. Until 'Daffodils' is disengaged from this meaning I suggest Wordsworth and the Lake District will also continue to be limited in their signification by postcolonial discourse.

Indeed, the reclamation of Wordsworth attempted by both Chamberlin

and Bate attests to the interrelation of geography and literature. Both critics seek to reposition Wordsworth and do so by re-mapping the Lake District. For Chamberlin and Bate, the Lake District is a marginal space either outside the discourse of imperialism or itself 'colonised' by the imperial centre. Chamberlin emphasizes how Wordsworth was born in the northern 'border country' in a time when there were virtually "'two nations" – north and south, poor and rich, rural and urban' (p. 23). Bate does not so much insist upon the marginality of Wordsworth as on the centrality of the Lake District to his thinking and the absence of a colonial sphere. The point that I want to make here is that Bate and Chamberlin require a certain image of the Lake District to requisition Wordsworth on behalf of their cause – just as Cliff and Kincaid require the obverse image. Because of the way it has been deployed historically and continues to be deployed, I consider the representation and construction of Lake District geography to be a highly significant marker of British imperial and post-imperial power.

NOTES

1. Shirley Chew & Anna Rutherford, eds., *Unbecoming Daughters of the Empire* (Hebden Bridge: Dangaroo Press, 1993).
2. Meenakshi Mukherjee, 'Growing up by the Ganga', in Chew & Rutherford op. cit., p. 112.
3. Ishrat Lindblad, 'The Irresistible Anglo-Filiation of Ishrat', in Chew & Rutherford op. cit., p. 126.
4. V.S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage: Impressions of Five Societies—British, French and Dutch—in the West Indies and South America*, 1962 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 70.
5. A teaching manual qtd. at Michelle Cliff, *Abeng* (New York: Crossing Press, 1974), p. 84.
6. *Ibid*, p. 85.
7. Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 17.
8. Alison Donnell, 'Dreaming of Daffodils: Cultural Resistance in the Narratives of Theory', *Kunapipi*, 14, 2 (1992), 45-52, (p. 50).
9. Albert Wendt, 'Pacific Maps and Fiction(s): A Personal Journey', *Meridian*, 14, 2 (1995), 13-44, (p. 28).
10. J. Edward Chamberlin, 'Dances with Daffodils: Wordsworth and the West Indies' (Paper given at the Caribbean Studies Conference, Brisbane, July 1995), p. 2. This paper is scheduled to appear in Roydon Salick, ed., *Festschrift for Kenneth Ramchand* (London: Macmillan, forthcoming). All further references are to this edition and are included in the text.
11. Donnell, op. cit., p. 50.
12. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 23.
13. R.L. Brett & A.R. Jones, eds., *Lyrical Ballads: Wordsworth and Coleridge. The text of the 1798 edition with the additional 1800 poems and the Prefaces edited with introduction, notes and appendices by R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 244n.
14. Thomas De Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 117.

15. Francis Jeffrey, 'Review of *Poems in Two Volumes*, Oct. 1807', in *William Wordsworth: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Graham McMaster (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 96.
16. Jeffrey, 'Article on Robert Burns, Jan. 1809', in McMaster op. cit., p. 102.
17. Robert Southey, 'Letter to Anna Seward, Dec. 1807', in McMaster op. cit., p. 112; Anna Seward, 'Letter to Walter Scott, Aug. 1807', in *Wordsworth: The 1807 Poems. A casebook edited by Alun R. Jones* (Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 31-32.
18. Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989), p. 20.
19. Ibid.
20. Gauri Viswanathan, 'The Beginnings of English Literary Study in India', *Oxford Literary Review*, 9 (1987), 2-26 (p. 23).
21. Viswanathan, *Masks*, p. 55.
22. Unfortunately it seems impossible to verify this. The *Selections from Southey, Montgomery, Campbell and Wordsworth* on Duff's curriculum that Viswanathan cites (from an appendix to the *Parliamentary Papers* of 1852-53) is not listed in the British Museum Catalogue under any one of its key words. It is possible that this was an abbreviated title of another anthology or that individual 'selected works' were implied.
23. Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1789-1832*, Cambridge Studies in Romanticism 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), p. 265. All further references are to this edition and are included in the text.
24. Viswanathan, 'Beginnings', p. 7.
25. Matthew Arnold, 'Introduction to *Poems of Wordsworth, 1879*', in McMaster, op. cit., p. 223. All further references are to this reprint of Arnold and are included in the text.
26. See, for example, Stephen Gill, 'Note on the Text', *William Wordsworth: The Oxford Authors*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984), p. xxxi.
27. The introduction to Wordsworth in the fifth edition of the *Norton Anthology of Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986) still speaks in terms of Wordsworth's 'greatest poetry [having] ... been written by 1807' (p. 143) and offers a selection drawn on very Arnoldian lines. It is also salutary that Arthur Applebee's study of curriculum and instruction in the United States found Wordsworth to be the seventh most anthologised author (after Dickinson, Frost, Shakespeare, Poe, Whitman and Tennyson) and 'I wandered lonely as a cloud', 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge' and 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey' to be his most anthologised poems (*Literature in the Secondary School: Studies of Curriculum and Instruction in the United States* [Urbana: National Council of Teachers, 1993], pp. 105, 113).
28. Joseph Hine, qtd. Richardson, op. cit., p. 263.
29. See, for example, Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989) and Jim Wayne Miller, 'Anytime the Ground is Uneven: The Outlook for Regional Studies and What to Look Out For' in *Geography and Literature: A Meeting of the Disciplines*, ed. William E. Mallory & Paul Simpson-Housley (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1987).
30. Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 41-2. All further references are to this edition and are included in the text.
31. George Ford, 'Felicitous Space: The Cottage Controversy', in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, eds., U.C. Knoepfelmacher & G.B. Tennyson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).