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Victorians Thinking Globally: Identity and Empire in Middle-Class Reading

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in
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ABSTRACT

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Jessica A. Queener

This dissertation argues that popular literature defined how English readers should reconcile a class-based experience of empire with the broadest categories of national identity meant to unify the subjects of the British Empire. Serial genres—periodicals and novels published in numbers—examined new patterns of travel, new approaches to social problems, and the new opportunities empire created for members of the middle class. Spanning the period from roughly 1840 to 1870, each chapter examines a narrative trope used to engage Victorian readers with the concerns of empire, and thus give them an opportunity to imagine the greater world they were given access to by virtue of being part of the most powerful empire on earth. The tropes featured here sometimes overlap, or contradict one another; they change or reassert themselves over time; they remain fluid without seeming to be. Chapters on the serialized fiction of Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, the visual work of Thomas Hood and William Thackeray, and periodicals like *All the Year Round* and the *Japan Punch*, demonstrate the extent to which literature for middle-class entertainment became a catalyst for different conceptions of Englishness, and challenge the notion that Empire was defined through one overarching identity category. Despite the insistence found in middle-class reading about the stability of the English character, in practice to be a subject of the British Empire meant one had opportunities to think, and re-think what class-based opportunities existed for them on a global scale.

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Introduction

Myriad Voices

In the prose of the Victorian period one can find many a grand pronouncement meant to stir pride in Englishness. The praise is by no means homogenous, but generally includes faith in the superior social and economic progress of Britons. Such faith took the form of a firm belief in the “ordained” nature of the Englishman who will keep busy “inventing, producing, exporting, importing, till it seems as if the whole human race, and every land from the equator to the pole must henceforth bear the indelible impress and sign manual of English science” as he works to “to replenish the earth and subdue it” in the name of Science.¹ Such faith in the national traits of the British contributed to a belief in the “desire of spreading throughout the habitable globe all the characteristics of Englishmen—their energy, their civilization, their religion and their freedom.”² And this faith, with its bonds of shared national identity, is imagined in a popular song by Tennyson as a force for oneness that spans a vast empire:

Shall we not thro' good and ill
 Cleave to one another still?
 Britain's myriad voices call,
 'Sons, be welded each and all,
 Into one imperial whole,
 One with Britain, heart and soul!
 One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!'

¹ Charles Kingsley qtd in Walter Houghton, 44-45.

² Charles Adderly qtd Houghton, 411.

Britons, Hold your own! (ll. 33-40)³

Each stanza of the rest of the song implies invisible others. At times these others are the inhabitants of the lands making up the imperial whole that rings with English voices. At times these others are conquered nations, less stalwart and lacking the scientific prowess of their occupiers. The unintended implication of Tennyson's lines is that the rallying cry of unity would be unnecessary if not for the diversity that already existed among the Anglo citizens of the world. It is because of, and not despite, the disparity among the English people spread across the British Empire that songs, poems or prose are concerned with imagining Englishness as a stable, unifying set of admirable characteristics. Such stability is the basis of cultural consent on which the legitimacy of imperialism rests. But where in that broad designation of "Britons" is there room for the varied experiences brought about by Empire? Was that identity category experienced as a stable, unchanging role? Were dramatic calls to assemble beneath its standard like the one issued by Tennyson enough to help ordinary subjects understand what it meant to be part of a global network of trade, people, and ideas? How did Victorians learn to accept the new set of circumstances and newly commonplace occurrences that resulted from living in a nation of such overwhelming global influence?

Self-identifying as English would involve recognizing the popular consensus about one's nation like the unified version portrayed in Tennyson's song. But it would also require ordinary citizens of a newly expansive empire to reconcile the popular version of national identity with their own lived experience. Class would seem an obvious source of difference; surely a factory worker's experience of what it meant to be

³ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen: Written at the Request of the Prince of Wales," 1886.

part of an “imperial whole” differed from that of a middle-class professional. Part of the strength of the British nationalism that provided consent for England’s imperial project lies in the engagement nineteenth century print had with the cultural changes brought on by empire. Reading materials examined new patterns of travel, new approaches to social problems, and the new opportunities empire created. By reading English life through this new lens, popular literature defined how English readers should reconcile their own, class-based experience of empire—with all its imperfections and inequalities—with the broadest categories of national identity meant to unify the subjects of the British Empire.

The impact of print culture on nationalism has been long established, principally by Benedict Anderson’s landmark *Imagined Communities* (1983). Deftly tracing the creation of secular imagined communities from their origins in the establishment of common languages of authority through the onset of “official nationalism” in the nineteenth century, Anderson’s book is among the most influential examinations of the intersection of print and national identity. But Anderson focuses almost exclusively on newspapers, and—like many other influential accounts of English national identity I refer to below—does not examine how different genres contribute to the discourse about national identity or consider how a broad category like “English” differed based on the status of the individual. I will argue throughout this project that if we examine the genres popular with a certain class of English subject, we will uncover how national identity contained expressions of nationalism predicated on class. In other words, readers were instructed as to how their specific social class was meant to understand their status and their Englishness, as it were, in light of the expansive reach of the empire of which they were a part.

In what follows I will examine how, borrowing a contemporary aphorism, Victorians were taught to “think globally.” In today’s parlance that phrase usually means that one should consider one’s actions, likes or dislikes, or consumer habits relative to their far-reaching impact; it enjoins us to imagine a modern condition in which we are all connected thanks to technology, the global economy, and (hopefully not the least of these concerns) our shared humanity. I do not mean to imply that Victorians shared this same worldview; rather, I wish to investigate how, at one origin point of modern globalization, a section of Victorian society began to imagine what empire meant for their everyday existence, thus considering global connections relative to their own experiences. In particular, I take middle-class reading materials and the middle class as my subject. With leisure time to read, an unprecedented degree of literacy, and membership in a class that stood more than any other to benefit from the opportunities created by empire, this strata of English society is a logical place to begin such an investigation. I propose that the English middle class was given a variety of opportunities through the establishment of new narrative tropes, to begin to imagine the global reach of their lives as subjects of the British Empire.

Anderson has already thoroughly established that newspapers and print literacy contributed to a secular conception of nationalism, but the serial genres that were popular among middle-class readers temporalize the process of imperialism in a way other texts do not—a point I will touch on more in a moment. We might even argue serial genres were more influential than others with middle-class readers. By serial genres or middle-class reading, I mean the literature and prose that either appeared in weekly magazines or was printed in numbers (serial novels). These were the materials Victorian readers turned

to for entertainment, and they constitute the platform on which much of the information about contemporary life was shared. English literature was not deemed worthy enough for scholarly inquiry during the nineteenth century, but it became a repository of ideas written by those who wished to shape public opinion.⁴ Serialized literature was, according to Hughes and Lund, “a central literary form of the era,” while at the same time periodicals became the predominant medium for the dissemination of information and entertainment (1).⁵ Even in Victorian estimations, the reading of periodicals was of the utmost significance.⁶ I have chosen to focus exclusively on reading materials that entered and circulated within the domestic space—materials that were popular with the middle class as light entertainment that was expected to provide some moral instruction.⁷ I take inspiration from Laurel Brake’s cogently made argument that the “spheres” of publications in the nineteenth-century are best characterized as interrelated or overlapping.⁸ Among many arguments in support of this conclusion, Brake notes that

⁴ For a discussion of how universities in the mid-nineteenth century became increasingly invested in their mission as national centers of learning see Christopher Kent’s Introduction (esp. xx) to *British Literary Magazines: The Victorian and Edwardian Age, 1837–1913*.

⁵ Hughes and Lund document the extent of the practice of serialization in its many forms. Further, they point out that “much of what made literature meaningful to the nineteenth century occurred during the reading of a work,” underscoring the depth of contemplative thought required of middle-class readers. Since the time of that publication even more work has been done to document the number and types of texts that were serialized. See, for example, Troy Bassett’s index of periodicals that carried serialized fiction in his online resource *At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837-1901*. For a look at the extent to which periodicals impacted Victorian reading society, J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel’s *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* is still exemplary.

⁶ See in particular an article from 1862 titled “Journalism” from *Cornhill* magazine that claimed such reading was “the greater part of the reading even of the most educated part of the adult members of the busy classes.” Qtd in Fraser, Green and Johnston, 2.

⁷ For more on the circulation of such reading material within the middle-class household see the chapter “The Gendered Reader,” in Fraser, Green and Johnston, 48-76.

⁸ See Laurel Brake’s *Print in Transition, 1850-1910*.

certain periodicals could not exist without the book trade, that authors viewed the “periodical press as an extension of their sphere,” that serialized books in periodicals had a great impact on the price and thus circulation of books for middle-class readers, and that even the “growth and embedding of the newspaper sector” contributed to the growth of reading (3-4). Reading serialized novels and popular weekly periodicals thus provides us with a cross-section of the arguments, opinions, fears and triumphs of the British Empire as it was presented to the Victorian middle class.

It is crucial to note that the serial nature of this section of print culture perpetuated the values of imperialism itself. Weekly magazines of novels published in numbers required readers to pause between installments and to reflect on information that had come before or might lie ahead. The effort, patience, and anticipation created a sense that time and progress were ever moving forward.⁹ When these texts take topics relevant to imperialism as their subject, the demands of reading serially underscore the demands of empire: that one sees it as inevitable, positive progress is emphasized by the sense of continuity offered by serial genres. My aim in examining the strategies middle-class reading materials used to help readers imagine different ways of connecting to the reaches of Empire—of “thinking globally”—is to present a view of middle-class identity that goes beyond the broader, nationalistic register of categories like “Britons,” “British,” or “English.”¹⁰ Those overarching concepts of national identity each encompass multiple

⁹ Hughes and Lund, in *The Victorian Serial*, provide the basis for my assertions here, as the whole of the work thoroughly demonstrates how serial fiction as a genre emphasized a system of values for its readers.

¹⁰ I do use these three terms interchangeably throughout the piece to indicate the characters presented in the works this project studies. These terms are also used to represent the reading audience. I do not wish to contradict that these terms should be used to describe the English populace, but rather wish to point out that there were other complementary and conflicting roles relative to those larger identity markers that

ways of seeing and experiencing empire, whether personally or through the picture painted by a serial novel, a cartoon or sketch, or a short story published in a family magazine. While I do not disagree that a great deal of Victorian culture revolved around creating a sense of national purpose or oneness—with each subject “one with Britain, heart and soul”—such large categories cannot account for the variety of ways empire became part of middle-class Victorians’ self-consciousness.

The scholarly works that have thus far contributed to the analysis of English national identity are, at this point, canonical, although they often occur outside the discipline of literary studies. This has tended to mean that the conversation does not always take thorough notice of specific reading practices or issues of class, even though they may, like the works of Edward Said and Linda Colley, be extremely influential within literary studies. A logical starting place for any discussion that involves England’s empire and identity is, obviously, the work of Edward Said. Over the last several decades Said’s *Orientalism*, more so than any other text of its kind, has served as a major touchstone across disciplines and proved so influential that it has continued to inspire impassioned rejoinders directed toward its author even in the years since his passing in 2003.¹¹ And although the passages and concepts of his book have been quoted and discussed so often as to almost be taken for granted, they do merit repeating here. The principal argument of *Orientalism* in its simplest form is that “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of . . . underground self” and that orientalism “depends for its strategy on [a] flexible

provided a means of considering the varied experience of being “British.” Those tropes provided multiple access points to considering what the global reach of empire meant to English middle-class life.

¹¹ See, for example, Robert Irwin *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (2006). Or Bernard Porter’s *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (2004).

positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand” (7, 3). Identity in this sense for Said is a pervasive cultural construction of a bifurcated self, a construction designed to uphold cultural superiority across multiple relationships through the systematic dispossession of those it subordinates. Chiefly, the notion of a “self” is characterized as a widely held belief evident in Western culture.

Said further develops the relationship between orientalism and identity (in his sense of the word) in *Culture and Imperialism*, a work which continues to explicate the subordination of colonized peoples as it is manifest in the literature and art of the West. Said makes the important observation that in this case identity “does not necessarily imply ontologically given and eternally determined stability, or uniqueness, or irreducible character, or privileged status as something total and complete in and of itself” (*Culture and Imperialism* 315). Neither is identity something that can “exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions” (52). In both cases Western identity is malleable, while “the other” is no one thing in particular but a range of possible encounters with things other than the position held by the dominant subject. Identity, for Said, is not static and does not exist *a priori*. It is also important to note that for Said, in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, the terms “self” and “identity” refer to a discursive trope or a *zeitgeist* of sorts—identity in its broadest sense. Said’s analysis in these works provides the basis for much of the literary and historic criticism on national character and empire that have since been written. It is in this context that the debate over the extent of empire’s influence on ordinary British citizens has occurred, in the last decade in particular.

Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (1992) is another major touchstone in the examination of British national character, and one that is equally relevant in its views on identity although it is written from a very different perspective than either of Said's works. Although *Britons* ceases its analyses at the beginning of Victoria's reign, Colley is clearly invested in discovering the roots of the "invention of Britishness" (1) that carried over into the rest of the nineteenth century. Colley also deploys a self/other binary (without, however, any reference to Said) to explain the coalescence of a sense of national identity; in this case the French become the principle "other" against which the inhabitants of the newly United Kingdom first defined themselves. Gradually the British also "defined themselves in contrast to the colonial peoples they conquered, peoples who were manifestly alien in terms of culture, religion and colour [sic]" (5). *Britons* acknowledges that this was not a totalizing view and was instead, like most paradigmatic shifts, uneven (6). Colley's book makes an important contribution to studies of British identity in its expansion of the self/other binary to "others" who were not subjugated peoples or made to seem as exotic as what came to stand in as the orient. *Britons* treats national character, or patriotism, as something individuals chose to adopt with an eye for earning the "right to participate in British political life, and ultimately a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship" (5). For Colley, aspects of national character are lived and experienced to the extent that they became a conduit through which citizens could attempt to exercise additional agency. While this nascence of a nationalistic idea is temporally fixed in her analysis, Colley is looking at the origin of an identity category that would contribute to the imperialistic attitudes of the rest of the nineteenth century. The British national

identity as conceived of by Colley (as with Said) is meant to be read as a general feeling that pervaded British culture.

Colley engages with Said more specifically and develops her own idea of “imperial consciousness” in her later work, *Captives* (2002). Here Colley explicitly recognizes the influence of Said’s work and takes several occasions to mention that he and others are “entirely right to stress the importance of investigating the minds and myths of empire makers” despite the fact that she sees “material factors” as equally important (132). While far from a complete dismissal of Said’s work, Colley’s critique of him raises a significant point of dissent where *Orientalism* is concerned:

[Orientalism] is a powerful and seductive theory which has the great virtue of drawing attention to the minds and myths of those most obviously responsible for making maritime empire, rather than just their material power or short-term actions. For a small people like the British, learning how to think big and act big on a global stage was indeed vital, and required imaginative and intellectual effort, as well as military and economic force. Yet, by definition, concentrating on a persistent and traditional clutch of denunciations and misrepresentations is not and cannot be an adequate way of exploring and accounting for change over time. (102)

Colley’s purpose is to demonstrate “a more nuanced and more variegated view of relations between the British empire and Islam” because “Islamic powers were never straightforwardly the ‘Other’, but rather vital auxiliaries in the business of British Empire” (103). If we recall the quoted text from *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* above, however, it is clear that Said did not conceive of the “orient” itself

as a monolithic space or Orientalism as a fixed attitude that did not change across multiples spaces and contexts. Quite the opposite, Said argues that Orientalism was a flexible strategy of which the only static aspect is the justification and perpetuation of Western authority. In this way Said has already accounted for “change over time” without explicitly arguing that material factors—manpower, capital, technology—were not deciding factors in the expansion of empire. Yet Colley is not alone in her critique of Said through a reassertion of historically specific details including material concerns. In fact, the differences between Said and Colley’s work illuminates a central conflict within the study of the British Empire and national character.

Numerous texts about all aspects of the British Empire abound, and a significant portion is dedicated to cultural artifacts demonstrating the extent to which empire was omnipresent in nineteenth-century culture. Books about advertisements, children’s literature, periodicals, military paraphernalia, jingoism, popular music, adventure novels, and much more exist with no small amount of thanks to the examples set by Anderson, Said and Colley. With so many investigations about the British Empire and its varied cultural artifacts we are bound to find scholars working at cross-purposes; criticism with the proliferation of such studies is bound to emerge. The most notable as well as the most complete account of anti-self-consciousness about Empire is Bernard Porter’s *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, a prize-winning volume that has also sparked much debate.¹² Porter argues that the role imperialism played in British national

¹² Porter also asserted the claims he makes in *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* in articles with titles like “‘Empire, What Empire?’ Or Why 80% of Early-and Mid-Victorians Were Deliberately Kept in Ignorance of it.” He continues to respond to the critics of his book in the article “Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness.” Whole journal issues were devoted to responses to the book’s publication, but the review by Antoinette Burton (and its strong language, for example: “One cannot help but ask how (and why)

identity has been greatly over-emphasized. Despite the fact that so many other scholars regard “imperial consciousness” as a widespread phenomenon, Porter claims Britons’ awareness of imperialism has been greatly exaggerated. I agree with Porter insofar as I believe that the British relationship to imperialism was “uneven, complex, and changeable” (xv) and that the discussion of empire in British culture did not occur to the exclusion of all other discourses. However, I disagree with his claim that the British Empire required no more than ambivalence or disregard from the majority of its subjects. The central problem with such an analysis is that it locates the full explanation for the development of an empire in the actions of a small minority of elites and ignores the extent to which many people of a given society must be willing to participate in an undertaking such as empire building. This is where Said seems to be most misunderstood, particularly by those who do not subscribe to the belief that cultural hegemony and the ideological consent it requires has little to do with the life of the individual subject. Perhaps this is why the rejoinders Porter has inspired are only likely to be convincing to the portion of scholars receptive to post-modern conceptions of culture and society.

One such retort directed specifically at Porter can be found in the introduction to an excellent collection of essays edited by Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose: *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (2006). Each piece in the collection examines one of the many ways that imperialism became a normalized part of British culture, thus demonstrating that the larger affairs of the empire mattered

readers at Oxford University Press allowed such a plethora of overblown and unsubstantiated statements to pass” [626]) made a great impact. For Burton’s response see “The Absent-Minded Imperialists: What the British Really Thought About Empire.” For another response by a scholar Porter addressed in a response see MacKenzie.

deeply to the shaping of domestic ideals. The implicit purpose of this collection is to provide a serviceable position in the debate about how much empire mattered to citizens living in the United Kingdom. According to this group of essays, the level of consciousness about empire varied across time and contexts. Thus, the final measure of imperialism's significance does not lie in figuring out how often British citizens thought about it or how much importance they assigned to it, but to what extent empire was part of British life. Hall and Rose do not dismiss Porter's position outright (although they do reference him specifically), but it is clear that their counterargument to his claim is that the extent to which the English were conscious of the influence imperialism had over them is not central to understanding how imperialism affected the everyday lives of British citizens. To summarize, one might paraphrase objections like those raised by Hall and Rose with the assertion that "this is just how discourse works." Typically, scholars who are receptive to more theoretical approaches will argue that the cultural artifacts of empire influenced the English; others, like Porter, are unlikely to be swayed by a philosophical construct. The divide here effectively separates literary scholars and historians, making interdisciplinary work on the subject of national identity a complicated task.

Without a doubt all the works of the scholars above are worthwhile examinations of the intersection of identity and empire in nineteenth-century England. Each text contains some validity regardless of consensus among them as to method, and each text works toward a fuller picture of what it meant to be English in the broadest sense during the expansion of the British Empire. When identity is only discussed in its broadest, collective sense it may provide very worthwhile analyses and yet not account

for how individual agency was influenced by, resistant to, or ambivalent about a particular set of ideologies. In doing so, analyses of national character sometimes perpetuate the same problem that was long ago identified in reference to post-modern, post-structural theories of culture and society (i.e. Neo-Marxism). Paul Smith, in *Discerning the Subject*, reminds us that for many theorists—in particular Marxist and post-structuralist theories—the term “subject” is too often used in conflation with the term “individual” as an under-interrogated, theoretical catch-all. This is problematic when “subject” and “individual” imply a contradiction if the subject is understood to be subjugated within some theoretical model while individual is understood as a human, self-determining agent. Smith’s warning is still extremely relevant today. In the case of what we have been reviewing here, “national character” and “identity” have been similarly deployed to create totalizing narratives of English subjects that preclude agency or individual subjectivity. It is not my intention to deny the precepts established by scholars like Said and Colley. It is vitally important that we understand how Western incursions in other nations were aided and abetted by cultural imagination, just as it is important to understand that rhetoric about national character pervaded English life. For every examination of the messages literature and culture provided for readers, we would do well to remember, with Smith, that individual subjects are able to resist ideological pressure. My task in this project is to move away from macrocosmic constructions of identity and to consider a less even, more subjective experience of empire that existed concurrently with these larger formulations. Put another way, it is some of the “myriad voices” rather than “welded...Imperial whole” that this project examines.

What follows is a series of case studies drawn from serialized fiction and periodicals—particularly those that provided reading principally for entertainment—concentrated around segments of time from the years roughly spanning the 1840s until the 1870s. With the exception of the final chapter, I have selected authors based on their popularity with middle-class readers and publications that assumed they would be read in a shared, family setting. All of the authors, except Charles Wirgman (covered in chapter four), share personal connections from writing in the same publications, often with the same associates, for the same audience. Thomas Hood, for example, wrote for *Punch*, where Thackeray also published at the same time; Dickens’s knew Hood and wrote for his publications. Gaskell, of course, published in Dickens’s *Household Words* and the two had a relationship that was both professional and personal. *Punch* was a juggernaut of British culture (its initial run lasting from 1841 until 1996), but its imitators like *Judy* and commercial rivals like *Fun* commanded a significant share of the market for comedic entertainment. Dickens, whose *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* are featured in several of these chapters, shared close association with *Punch* and its writers and for a time had a mutual publisher in Bradbury and Evans. Although Charles Wirgman is a much more obscure Victorian figure, he first entered the periodical sphere as “special artist and correspondent” for the ubiquitous *Illustrated London News*. On arriving in Japan in the 1860s, Wirgman chose to create a version of *Punch* for the benefit of his new community of westerners residing in Yokohama (in addition to his own personal gain). These authors and publications were part of the same network consumed by a middle-class with unprecedented access to printed materials. The chapters here are thus designed to explore a the way particular tropes were used across the middle-class reading

landscape to connect middle-class readers with the new experiences Britain's ever-growing empire offered them.

Each chapter takes a particular role, or trope, and sometimes more than one, as its subject and considers a group of publications that appeared in a cluster at a certain point in time. I do not mean this to suggest that each trope developed chronologically after the previous one, or that a role ceased to exist after a certain amount of time had elapsed. Rather, I examine each role at a moment when it was of importance; it should be recognized that each trope persists across time and relative to new events. For example, while chapter three examines the role of the adjudicator relative to a colonial tragedy, there were many times when the British middle class was called to respond to a horrible occurrence in a British colony. Emigration continued to be a concern up through the 20th century (consider the emigration scheme Richard Dalloway works on in *Mrs. Dalloway*), as did the role of the voyager that sets out from metropole to colony. These roles evolved in concert with one another. In organizing the chapters so, I have endeavored to give some sense of progression, recognizing moments when a certain trope was predominant among the interactions between middle-class subjects and empire that became possible over time.

Although I examine the responses of middle-class Victorian readers to the middle-class reading materials I have discussed, it is important to note that the texts do not exclusively portray middle-class characters. In fact, as the chapters that follow will demonstrate, middle-class readers are often shown the poor, the working classes, or those just on the verge of middle-class status and their interactions with the British Empire. It is as if Victorian members of the middle class were set apart from those who toiled to

achieve prosperity within their strata of proper society. Middle-class reading materials thus were able to present a fantasy of prosperity for all British subjects without incorporating any notions of radical class mobility or awakening fears. Instead, middle-class readers were able to solidify their own sense of identity because it differed from these other classes. Englishness was defined as subject to appropriate, class-based behavior—meaning that one could attain greater prosperity or be more completely integrated into the “imperial whole” so long as one did not defy the obligations of one’s social class.

Chapter one focuses on the role of the voyager: characters (or caricatures) who emigrate or travel to places newly opened by the expansion of the empire. Rarely does one see a warning against emigration schemes, a popular reform initiative, as those found in Thomas Hood’s cautionary satire or warnings that go beyond William Makepeace Thackeray’s grumblings about travel made for comedic effect. More often, as I will demonstrate, members of the middle class or those aspiring to the middle class are urged to venture out into the empire to achieve a respectable, thoroughly class-based but thoroughly English version of prosperity. In the early 1840s, a time when employment was scarce and poverty high, the role of the voyager appears over and over again. It can be found in the Dickens’s novels *Dombey and Son* and *David Copperfield* (serialized within five years of each other). Voyagers in this class of literature assures readers that the Empire exists as a means of safeguarding appropriately class-based prosperity—surely a powerful message for British subjects who would have known, in increasing numbers, those who emigrated or went to serve as part of the civil service or military.

In the second Chapter, I examine the results of the pressure to emigrate by reading Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* and, more briefly, Dickens's *Bleak House* (both serialized in the early 1850s) in light of the significance of the returned citizen. Making use of Hardt and Negri's commentary on the "channels and barriers" that structure the return of foreign influence from colony to metropole, and in light of the Great Exhibition of 1851 that brought with it an influx of foreign visitors and influences, I look at the anxieties that were associated with the return of citizens who have been abroad. Middle-class reading materials worked to normalize empire by erasing the strangeness associated with the role of the returned citizen and tried to negate the fear of foreign contamination by demonstrating how the proper flow of capital and resources throughout the empire benefitted England. In these novels, domestic spaces provide a metaphor for England as a whole, and both authors use their narratives to demonstrate the domestic harmony and prosperity that comes from an injection of wealth and vigor from the colonies. Chapters one and two show how middle-class reading provided powerful opportunities for its audience to consider how the English character writ large could succeed inside and outside its immediate sphere; these roles provided an entrée into imagining English life as a globally connected—if uneven—experience.

In chapter three I survey the responses to the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica, in 1865, and what it meant for middle-class readers to respond to a violent tragedy in the colonies. The response to this particular event, though it has received only moderate critical attention, provides an example of how middle-class readers were encouraged to act not as passionate responders but as careful adjudicators that withheld a verdict until the information had been discovered by the government, and then debated and confirmed

in the press. I look at several pieces from Dickens's *All The Year Round* that resonate with the events in Jamaica, and the "Governor Eyre Controversy" as it was presented in *Punch* and like publications. I read the response in England just as news reached the metropole in November of 1865 and trace the changing interpretation of the event from moral outrage, to dispassionate evaluation, to rejection of anti-slavery rhetoric (despite slavery's demise in England and its colonies some 30 years prior to the rebellion).

Ultimately, I argue that by encouraging middle-class readers to act as the judges of an event rather than as witnesses to tragedy, the conservative elements of these publications worked to eliminate any interest in a radical political platform middle-class readers might have. The rebellion and its aftermath occurred at a time when the second reform bill expanding participatory citizenship was of the utmost importance and demonstrations for the greater inclusion of the working classes became more strident. The response to the "Jamaica Question," was specifically designed to steer middle-class readers to a conservative understanding of what constituted true citizenship in the British Empire.

The final chapter is a departure from the others, and does not focus exclusively on a British imperial holding, but I include it here in order to look at what happened when a British subject was given the opportunity to make a life outside Britain's imperial territory. In order to demonstrate how print culture could serve as the stimulus for the formation of a new, more globally aware identity role, I examine the life of artist and journalist Charles Wirgman. When Wirgman arrived in Yokohama, Japan in 1861, he was given the opportunity to define himself anew as an expatriate. In some ways, the role of the expatriate is the culmination of all the other roles discussed herein, as it allows us to see how western subjectivity developed in an imperial context outside the

boundaries of the British Empire. Using Wirgman and the largely middle-class community of (male) western merchants, civil servants, and diplomats he resided with in Yokohama's foreign settlement, I interrogate to what extent a nascent form of cosmopolitanism—a role, or trope that supposedly transcends a specific national identity—was possible, given the best conditions available. To what extent could “thinking globally” be realized in the form of an identity category that requires a sense of one's global interconnectedness? Chapter four demonstrates the way a signifier of western culture (*Punch*) could be translated into a foreign context and serve as a catalyst for a new, hybrid identity.

I end this project with a conclusion that looks at the extent to which these roles, or tropes, persist and function in our culture today. In contemporary discussions of “thinking globally” the charge of neo-imperialist attitudes is never far—and, typically, rightly so. In many ways, western subjects today, people who are routinely asked to imagine their place in the global network of modern culture, are susceptible to the same narrative roles that were so prevalent in the middle-class reading materials of the Victorian period. By providing an overview of the current debates surrounding “voluntourism,” I contend that “global” subjects (in particular, young adults and college students) are provided with the role of the “voluntourist” as a new expression of those old tropes. Voluntourism is a contemporary mechanism that encourages western subjects to connect their sense of self to an idealized version of the “global.” It functions largely in the interest of providing the subject with the cachet of privilege gained from venturing out, returning home, and considering oneself a global citizen. Contemporary tropes encourage a process of “thinking globally” that has its roots firmly in the nineteenth century.

I began by indicating my interest in moving beyond accepting broad identity categories as the only controlling line of thought that connected British subjects to the empire. In what follows, I provide an analysis—although by no means an exhaustive one—of several roles that were parts contributing to the whole of English national character. For the Victorian middle-class, the activity of reading provided a means of situating themselves and their own experience in dialog with the concerns of empire, and thus gave them an opportunity to imagine the greater world they were given access to by virtue of being part of the most powerful empire on earth. The tropes featured here sometimes overlap, or contradict one another; they change or reassert themselves over time; they remain fluid without seeming to be. Despite the insistence found in middle-class reading about the stability of the English character, in practice to be a subject of the British Empire meant one had opportunities to think, and re-think what class-based opportunities existed on a global scale. The roles that appear in middle-class reading materials were not mutually exclusive, nor were they definitive; they were, instead, expressions of the myriad voices that arose over time to articulate a new way of being relative the world beyond their national borders.

Chapter One

Voyagers: Travelers and Émigrés, 1844-1850

The 15 July 1848, *Punch* published a large engraving titled “Here and There; Or, Emigration a Remedy,” that provided a side-by-side comparison of the same family in dramatically different circumstances.¹³ The picture depicts emigration as a remedy for hunger and lack of work, and was meant to stimulate middle-class sympathy for emigration schemes that would give the “poor” the opportunity to work hard and earn a more prosperous lifestyle. Both halves of the image are laden with narrative detail. On the left, a family stands dressed in tattered clothing, starving, in front of a wall plastered with posters advertising chartist meetings, lectures on socialism, and a caution to vagrants. Their faces are sunken and shadowed, they are thin, and one child holds a hand outstretched to beg. In the background we see row upon row of black factory smokestacks, representing the failure of industry to provide adequate work for all English citizens. The family must presumably rely on charity (apparently scarce), while the posters demonstrate both the lure and the failure of workers’ movements. The urban-industrial environment, with its clouds and dead trees, combined with the family’s appearance, suggests the diseased, unhealthy nature of their surroundings. In short, this half encompasses not one but many of the social problems emigration has the potential to solve.

The right half of the image is the polar opposite of the left. The family is smiling, plump, and prospering. Gathered for a meal, they are well clothed and food is served on the table and hangs in abundance from the rafters. The picture goes so far as to show happy pets playing nearby. Despite the typical English looks of this now healthy and

¹³ *Punch* 15 July 1848.

happy family, and despite the fact that the scene could be right out of the English countryside, the image is located in an exotic, tropical location. Just outside the window, to the left of a grandfather clock, we see palm fronds and the unclothed torso of a smiling, dark-complexioned man holding a spear. His expression is friendly, non-threatening, and the family offers him a hot plate of food—they are now in the position of offering rather than requiring charity. Emigration is responsible for a ripple-like effect beyond its white recipients to the peoples of colonized territories. Readers were to understand that allowing the poor to be self-sufficient would allow them to act on Christian directives and, implicitly, to aid in the civilizing mission of the British Empire.

Émigrés, along with travelers who ventured out into newly accessible territory, were commonplace figures in the middle-class reading of the 1840s. Just like the family in the engraving, serialized narratives sent characters out to attain what I will demonstrate is a class-based version of prosperity. This role of the voyager, as I will call it, appears in the context of many pieces, like the *Punch* cartoon, that shared in a widespread opinion in Victorian culture: emigration had the potential to solve a full slate of social ills. Furthermore, depictions of travel in faraway places added to the growing sense that voyages could be taken with less risk and more certainty. Émigrés or travelers who ventured out of England demonstrated the prosperity that the British Empire could offer its citizens, but that prosperity stays perfectly in keeping with a voyager's prior socio-economic status. Families, like the one in "Here and There" could use a voyage to attain a moderate form of security. The role of the voyager taught middle-class readers to view the empire as a reflection of their own status and to imagine the possibilities of empire as

directly relevant to the expansion of middle-class opportunity—all without threatening the rigidity of class hierarchy.

In what follows I will examine two of Dickens's serialized novels, *Dombey and Son* and *David Copperfield*, alongside contextualizing pieces from *Punch* and Thomas Hood's *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany*. These publications were produced for and delivered to middle-class homes. By interrogating the role of the voyager as it appears in these works, I argue that this trope provided an opportunity for middle-class readers to imagine the British Empire as an empire of the familiar and the friendly: middle-class English citizens, English citizens aspiring to middle-class status, and people who were hospitable to English travelers. The Voyager in middle-class reading invited its audience to consider the sphere of their own influence to have expanded throughout the globe, promising a better, more prosperous version of one's current social standing. Such global imaginings were tied to how one could think about the fate of ordinary English citizens. The view of the empire the voyager presents is one in which Englishness is a stable, moral attribute that, if possessed by a good citizen, is due recognition and success. In fact, serial narratives and comedic items demonstrate that Englishness could be more fully revealed when one ventured out in search of prosperity. These characters were a way for readers to process emigration and travel as a newly routine aspect of life in a nation that had attained global dominance—to connect to the experience of English voyagers as a commonplace occurrence and a natural extension of the British character. In this way, middle-class readers were taught to incorporate the movement of people out beyond national borders into their concept of self and nation.

“Here and There” elucidates the way class-based prosperity was supposed to be the specific outcome for those who voyaged out into the empire or beyond. Interestingly, the family’s working class status is beginning to erode in their new home in the colonies. They do not emigrate and join the middle-class, but in emigrating from England they begin the transition from the “poor” to a more satisfying version of their current class position. Their class status in their new home is suggested by the family serving itself, a shovel propped against a boy’s chair, a rifle against the wall (for providing food, it seems, as the indigenous character is explicitly rendered as non-threatening) and the rough-hewn but orderly and abundant nature of the domicile. The family has quality clothes and possessions in the form of pets, dishes, furniture, and a large formal clock. They are so rosy-cheeked and prosperous in comparison to their former state that they more perfectly resemble ideal English citizens—foreign residence notwithstanding. The engraving implies that they may yet attain more success of a moderate kind, but any threat of more radical class ascension is neutralized.¹⁴ Emigration will facilitate their continued security, just as it has revealed their true Englishness and the innate goodness that character entails now that they have escaped the dehumanizing effects of poverty. They have achieved a new level of personhood by venturing outside of England.

Punch and various other print items charged middle-class readers to consider emigration as part of the further development of a healthy nation and empire. Views like those represented by the *Punch* cartoon enjoyed widespread consensus. The 1840s, known as the “hungry forties,” certainly provided ample impetus to look for such

¹⁴ In contrast, their success is predicted on their labor as an individual family. The bounty they earn provides a counterargument to the need for collective action and reinforces a capitalist view of social class and progress. The contrast between the left and right asserts a conservative reaction to what are read as the empty and unnecessary promises of chartist and socialist organizations.

solutions. By the end of the 1840s, leading economic and political thinkers were largely in agreement that emigration was the best way to improve conditions for workers; the middle-class shared in this opinion, and many trade unions of skilled laborers actively promoted emigration schemes (although they sometimes treated the act of emigrating somewhat casually).¹⁵ Although it was the working classes that were supposed to be the primary beneficiaries of emigration, middle-class consent was crucial for the perpetuation of emigration as a reform-motivated practice. It is well to note that emigration was, however, treated like most reform movements in the 1840s, which were not “coherently ideological or programmatic,” as Richard Altick has pointed out (Altick 186). Nor could reading materials venture too much in the way of radical suggestions. Altick has pointed out of *Punch* that it carefully balanced any “outspoken editorializing” and “graphic satire” with tamer materials to maintain its place as a respectable publication (186). To see any suggestion toward travel or emigration, then, was to see the representation of ideas that were steadily gaining in currency rather than suggestions for dramatic social change.

Emigration initiatives, although popular, relied on a variety of beneficiaries that were not always reliable or able to provide sufficient support. Many ideas for emigration lacked feasibility or financial backing, and the 1840s saw a flood of different schemes

¹⁵ I base this assessment on the excellent research of R.V. Clements, who provides an overview of the economic and political commentary concerning emigration and a detailed analysis of how trade unionists treated or provided for emigration. He includes the assertion that “with few exceptions the great mass of middle-class opinion . . . subscribed heartily to the economists’ doctrine that abstraction by emigration from the labour market was the best method of improving the workers’ conditions” (168). Trade unionists, which provided financial assistance for emigration, sometimes saw that “to emigrate was little more than an extension of the ‘tramping’ idea, with the possibility of greater reward as an attraction” (169). See Clements, 167-180.

and proposals to assist with overpopulation and underemployment.¹⁶ Sponsors for emigration came from railroads, “state officers, steamship lines, colonial governments, philanthropic societies” and other interests (Clements 169). Dickens himself helped to instigate a plan for reforming young women and then paying their passage to Australia.¹⁷ There were no large, systematically implemented programs for emigration, although there were related policies aimed at curbing the growth of the population that involved things like subsidized or involuntary relocation of felons.¹⁸ In fact, public opinion seems to have agreed that while emigration was helpful to British society, it was not something the government needed to be involved in. Any large-scale government program would, in the words of *The Satirist*, “be that of a safety-valve of an over-heated boiler to prevent explosion” and not a large scale solution.¹⁹ *John Bull* editorialized that “The Government . . . has exercised a wise discretion in refusing to identify itself with any systematic plan for promoting emigration; for compulsory emigration would be out of the question, and voluntary emigration proceeds most healthily when left to its own natural devices.”²⁰ The *John Bull* article goes so far as to suggest the sinister acts that would arise from

¹⁶ A useful source on the subject is Marjory Harper’s “British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III The Nineteenth Century*: 75-87.

¹⁷ This refers to his “Urania House” project completed with the support of the philanthropist Angela Burnette-Coutts. The plan did not succeed, as most of young women, as it might be said, failed to rehabilitate as their reformers wished. For more on this philanthropic project, consult Peter Ackroyd, particularly 533 and 575.

¹⁸ Certainly transportation also proved a useful plot device in Victorian novels (of course, memorably, *Great Expectations*, or in George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*) for more on population control policies during the “fertility transition” see Robinson, 153-173.

¹⁹ *The Satirist; or The True Censure of the Times* 24 June 1848, p. 245. Remarkably, the article’s solution, if there is to be government assistance for emigration plans, is to send girls of the ages 11 through 13 to homes where they would be apprenticed for work—at which point they would repay the government by garnishing their wages. In the view of this publication, then, government sponsored indentured servitude seemed reasonable.

²⁰ *John Bull* 6 March 1847, p. 148.

government intervention: “one of the first things we should hear of would be pathetic tales of kidnapping and otherwise coercing parties, for the sake of getting them out of the way for all sorts of reasons” (148). The nefarious ramifications of a government-run emigration plan aside, there seems to have been a tentative understanding that emigration would proceed “naturally” without systematic intervention as its benefits came to be known. The consent of the middle-class, therefore, provided ongoing support for the existing means of emigration; the more people understood its appeal the more “naturally” it would proceed.

It was rare for middle-class reading to complicate support for emigration, and what criticism there was sometimes came from marginalized voices. Such is the case of the work of Thomas Hood, a poet, illustrator, and periodical author from the early-Victorian period. Seeking to capitalize on his reputation as a humorist, Hood began a magazine for family entertainment not long before his untimely death. Today, Thomas Hood’s approach to the structure of a magazine for entertainment purposes is significant because he was one of the pioneers of the genre. His work was well respected, and influenced the development of the periodical and periodical writers alike:

Hood’s comic poetry tickled Coleridge Goethe recommended it. Alfred Tennyson, according to his son, recited Hood’s verse for the benefit of friends, ‘laughing till the tears came’. Thackeray, traveling as a student in Germany, wrote letters home requesting copies of the *Comic Annual*. Indeed, the *Comic Annual* found a place in the bookcases of admirers from Ruskin to Poe, from Dickens to the Duke of Devonshire. (Lodge 1)²¹

²¹ Note also that from his two decades of work in literary periodicals, Hood became rather well connected, numbering among his acquaintance some of the most notable

His publication, although short lived, received significant attention. Hood not only built this reputation through literary periodicals; in the 1830s he contributed significantly to the form of the comedic magazine. It was his *Comic Annual*'s combination of engravings, decidedly witty pieces, and the variety of short works that would inspire countless others in the decades that followed the cessation of the *Annual* in 1839.²²

Hood's work as an illustrator and producer of comic annuals provided one template of the comic periodical *Punch* (to which he was a contributor) would later come to dominate.

After the *Comic Annual* closed down, Hood brought his talents to the *New Monthly Magazine* and contributed regularly to *Punch*, both which capitalized on the particular blend of visual and written humor he was able to supply. Hood considered himself a proponent of the laboring classes and his satire was always done to instruct. The back matter of the April 1845 issue of *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* notes that for Hood there was an "under-current of humor that often tintured his gravest production," and further indicates that this was part of how Hood conceived of the imparting of any worthwhile knowledge.²³

Hood's publication has its origins in providing a voice for the underrepresented. In the 1843 Christmas issue of *Punch*, Hood found his greatest success of all with "The Song of the Shirt." The poem, a condemnation of the thankless drudgery and scant pay

writers of the Victorian period. Drawing on the strength of these relationships, *Hood's* published quite a few notables of the time, including Dickens, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Samuel Lover, G.H. Lewes, W.S. Landor, Leigh Hunt, Robert Browning and others (Graham 365-366).

²² For more on the *Comic Annual* as foundation for future entertaining publications see Graham, 361.

²³ "Thomas Hood." *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* 3.4 (April 1845): 415-416.

of those working in London's sweatshops, establish Hood as a voice for the rights of the working classes among *Punch*'s middle-class readers.²⁴ The poem was a sensation:

‘The Song of the Shirt’ ... was instantly popular, set to music, hawked by ballad-mongers, sewn into handkerchiefs by campaigners against sweated labour in the textile industry. By May 1844 it was the climactic number in *The Sempstress: A Drama*, by Mark Lemon [editor of *Punch*]. (Lodge 91)

The poem turned Hood into a literary celebrity household name; it was on the wave of this popularity that he announced the first issue of *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* would begin its run in January of 1844. *Hood's* had poetry—quite a few that echoed the form and content of “Song of the Shirt”—and short stories for entertainment. A few sample works include “Dallada the Negress: Incident in the West Indies,” and “Rambles at Rio: with a Tale of the Corcovado.”²⁵ Each of these pieces speaks quite seriously to many types of danger and inhumanity to be found outside the borders of

²⁴ The poem, or song, did not mince words about the lot of workers:
Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!

Oh, men with Mothers and Wives!

It is not linen you're wearing out,

But human creatures' lives!

Stitch -- stitch -- stitch,

in poverty, hunger and dirt,

Sewing at once, with a double thread,

A Shroud as well as a Shirt. (11. 25-32)

²⁵ “Dallada the Negress: An Incident in the West Indies.” *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* 2.9 (September 1844): 230-238. Peregrine. “Rambles at Rio: With a Tale of the Corcovado” *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* 2.10 (October 1844): 357-371.

England. These and other items provide insight into Hood's anxiety about the well-being of English who voyaged far away.

Hood was often given to expressing general distrust of anything billed as miraculous progress, using his magazine to promote skepticism as a method of understanding English life. The magazine as a whole seems to have been dedicated to encourage this line of thought among his middle class audience. For example, we find some interesting lines in a stanza from one of his songs protesting various absurdities in British culture:

We may farm at a very high rent,
And with guano manure inches deep,
We may sow, whether broadcast or drill,
And have only the whirlwind to reap. (ll. 63-66)²⁶

The pertinent item here is, of all things, guano. As it so happens, more than a few Britons were thinking about guano during the 1840s because guano manure was a new farming innovation. In 1846 we have the following report from *The London Journal*:

*One hundred and thirty-seven thousand and three hundred tons of Guano were consumed in this country between the 1st of July 1844, and the 1st of July 1845. Of this quantity, Africa supplied us with about 100,000 tons, and South American with the remainder [That a] million and a quarter of money spent by British farmers in a fertiliser which was unknown in English practice five years ago, is an astounding fact, and one which is pregnant with interesting considerations.*²⁷

²⁶ "A Song for the Million: On Wilhelm's Method" in *Hood's Magazine and Comic Miscellany* 1.1 (January 1844): 80-83.

²⁷ "Guano." *The London Journal* 2.49 (January 1846): 324.

We might easily pass the reference to guano by if it was not picked up again in a later issue. Guano becomes a metaphor through which Hood wishes his readers to understand the practice of voyaging out into the Empire in search of prosperity. All this becomes clear in a highly satiric piece called “A Letter from the Cape.”²⁸

“A Letter from the Cape” is a mock letter to England from (what is now) South Africa. It is written by the son of an English farmer who voyages to a colony seeking his fortune, only to find that they have purchased 5,000 acres of un-farmable desert (“A Letter” 64). An agent, who egregiously misrepresents the property (by which means, the son confesses, they also hope to dispose of the land) with the following assurances:

As I said before the soil is not superlatively rich in quality, but amply compensated by a feature of commanding advantage, namely, the proximity to the African Islands, with an unlimited supply of guano, that miraculous manure that has provided the salvation of the British Farmer; and which, if spread thick enough, must, by analogy, produce the most abundant of harvests. (59)

Here, *Hood’s Magazine* satirizes not only the incredible frenzy over guano as a “miraculous manure,” but also presents a critique of the huckstering of the would-be colonists and the naïveté of the same. By extension, the commentary is a warning of exactly what is getting “spread thick” in order to induce British settlement of rough colonial lands. One of Hood’s main issues with emigration seems to be that it is a difficult, even impractical undertaking that is being foisted on the British public as an easy solution to their economic troubles. And if that were not enough, the article adds a helpful illustration by Hood. The bird from which the product is derived is seated on a

²⁸ “A Letter from the Cape.” *Hood’s Magazine and Comic Miscellany* 3.1 (January 1845) pp. 58-64.

box labeled “Guano” with the subtitle, “A Prodigious Crop,” seeming to indicate what the promises of the product and the land agent in the story are full of.²⁹ In addition, part of the humor of the image lies in the puffed up chest of the bird, an exaggeration of what he is full of but also an easily recognizable symbol of pride. This image and tale is as much about the hubris of would-be colonists as the anxieties and dangers of settlement abroad. The passage and the illustration make clear that Hood hoped to encourage skepticism in public opinion solutions that might be too good to be true, farming technique and emigration offers alike. The use of Guano as a cautionary metaphor casts the emigrant as just as vulnerable as the overworked seamstress of the “Song of the Shirt.” Doing all he could to warn the hard-working Briton away from promoters of empire, Hood’s satire of would-be voyagers has the health of the British public in mind. While most items from popular Victorian literature were in support of the benefits of emigration as a solution to social problems (as represented by the *Punch* engraving) and did not favor any systemic oversight (as in the news items above), there a minority of more reform-minded writers like Hood providing a warning did exist.

Thomas Hood satirizes the ideal of the hopeful émigré somewhat mercilessly, but his portrayal is still very much rooted in a specific notion of English identity. Hood is telling his audience that Englishness does not guarantee and may even preclude the ability to adapt that “Here and There” implies is the right of all British. The engraving from “Letter from the Cape” that best captures the conflict between Englishness and foreign contexts depicts the father and son fleeing a resident lion of their newly acquired territory. The father could not look anymore like the traditional English squire he so longs to become, his caricature completed by an English bulldog—as they both flee a

²⁹ Ibid.

lion. Hood emphasizes how extremely out of place these marks of Englishness are in the colonial context, making his cautionary tale about swindling also a warning about what awaits the intrepid British citizen outside of his own country. The English character is, in Hood's estimation, un-adaptable. It remains fixed, inadequate in strange climes.

Abandoning one's Englishness and emigration schemes were just as feasible as guano-laden fields sprouting fertile crops in sub-Saharan Africa. Although Hood's satiric case against seeking one's betterment in the colonies is lively and evocative, his voice was not of the majority. Soon after penning "Letter from the Cape" he would fall ill and die; *Hood's Magazine* continued but without Thomas Hood's critical edge. Perhaps, had he lived, the periodicals of the 1840s might have admitted to the difficulties emigration schemes and the rhetoric of imperialism posed to English readers. Instead, many pieces that shared Hood's conception of Englishness as a stable characteristic used that immutability to make the opposite case. If the English could not adapt to new circumstances, many works would have their readers believe, the world at large would have to adapt to the English.

In William Makepeace Thackeray's reoccurring series of letters titled "Punch in the East," we see the same unfitness of the Englishman abroad depicted by Thomas Hood. However, in the end, Thackeray uses his humorous account in the "East" to reassure the Victorian middle class readers of *Punch* that their status entitles them to voyage out where they please. As English citizens, they are given license to image themselves as participants with greater global access than ever before. "Punch in the East," begun by Thackeray in January of 1845, follows the "Fat Contributor" (as Thackeray styled himself) as he travels through "the East"—broadly defined although,

principally, meaning Egypt in this series. “Punch in the East” becomes as much about *Punch*’s presence in eastern realms as it is about Thackeray’s role as the publication’s representative. Although not about emigration, Thackeray, like Hood, illustrates his own travels in a manner that highlights the incongruence—and at times perils—of the Englishman abroad.

The letters are full of Thackeray’s trademark wit and self-deprecating sketches, but they maintain an air of superiority throughout the observations of the places and indigenous peoples he encounters. Self-portrait sketches of Thackeray, in nightgown and cap with swollen eye, accompany the opening observations of the first letter. Beneath this we read that he desires wishing himself in “the worst bed in the most frequented old, mouldy, musty, wooden-galleried couch inn” rather than his present location.”³⁰ Another sketch depicts Thackeray, swarmed by insects, picking his tiny guests from his bedding over the caption “Arabian Nights’ Entertainments.”³¹ Although his preference for the worst English accommodations above Egyptian ones is clear, an element of the descriptions and drawings acknowledge that it is Thackeray’s own unfitness for the locale as part of the problem. There is his name, “The Fat Contributor,” indicating his physical limitations, although his weight-loss seems somewhat undesirable. While he congratulates himself on no longer being strangled by his ornate dress-coat, the literal loss of himself is equated with his estrangement from his “dear, dear Pall Mall” and, presumably, the luxuries he is used to.³² On the other hand, the inability to shed the physical manifestations of comfort when traveling in the east appears equally undesirable. Thackeray introduces his traveling acquaintance, Waddilove, as

³⁰ *Punch* 11 January, 1845, p. 31.

³¹ *Punch* 18 January, 1845, p. 35.

³² *Punch* 11 January, 1845, p. 31.

representative of the even worse-off manifestation of the Englishman abroad, noting that rather than losing weight Waddilove “has bulged out in the sun like a pumpkin” and that “at dinner you see his coat and waistcoat buttons spit violently off his garments—no longer able to bear the confinement there.”³³ Neither the Fat contributor nor his friend can shed their Englishness; they cannot adapt either by losing or maintaining signs of their difference. These descriptions are not to point out the failings of Englishness, but rather to homogenize the experience of English identity as something stable or innate. The English traveller can only be an English traveller; taken another way, the stability of English character as Thackeray presents it normalizes the experience of foreign travel for his audience and makes it seem more commonplace and more attainable.

The annoyances faced by Waddilove and the Fat Contributor do not exactly make travels to exotic places attractive. However, de-exoticizing his experiences and presenting them in the light-hearted *Punch* bridges the gap between his travels and his readers’ conception of the mundane. The perils Thackeray’s readers may imagine about the danger of foreign parts are reduced to his inability to sleep and hectoring by mosquitoes. Thackeray’s letters diminish the strangeness of foreign places to annoyance (bugs, sleeplessness, weight loss or gain) or, ironically, to familiarity. *Punch* itself comes to represent the reach of British influence in Thackeray’s many descriptions of finding the magazine ready to greet him and other English travelers or bridging the cultural gap between himself and his (well-to-do) eastern acquaintances. Thackeray writes: “I wish to point out especially to your notice...the astonishing progress of *Punch* in the East.... it has been a source of wonder and delight to me to hear how often the name of the noble

³³ Ibid.

Miscellany was in the mouths of British men.”³⁴ The reach of *Punch* goes beyond the celebration of English travelers finding a familiar publication. Thackeray describes *Punch*’s proliferation in such a way that it seems to be doing a great deal of cultural work on behalf of the British Empire:

I made cautious inquiries . . . regarding the influence of *Punch* in our vast Indian territories. They say that from Cape Comorin to the Sutlege, and from the Sutlege to the borders of Tibet, nothing is talked of but *Punch*. DOST MAHOMMED never misses a single number; and the Tharawaddie knows the figure of LORD BROUGHAM and his Scotch trowsers, as well as that of his favorite vizier. *Punch* . . . has rendered his Lordship so popular throughout our Eastern possessions, that were he to be sent out to India as Governor, the whole army and people would shout with joyful recognition. I throw out this for the consideration of Government at home.³⁵

For Thackeray, *Punch* has taken up the standard of Thomas Babington Macaulay (whom he references elsewhere in the series of letters)—a move that, ironically, both mocks and celebrates *Punch* as a standard-bearer of English culture. For middle-class readers this observation would provide both amusement at the idea of Lord Brougham’s “Scotch trowsers” being exiled to India (where Thackeray would clearly love to send him) but also reassurance of the benign acceptance of British culture and British rule. (On the other hand, part of the joke for an informed reader might be the knowledge that the state of things in India were far from benign, allowing *Punch* to mask a more serious critique within an inoffensive address of empire.) Overall, as voyagers, Thackeray and now

³⁴ *Punch* 18 January 1845, p. 35.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Punch itself, provide middle-class readers with a comforting assurance about travel outside of England—there are English and appreciators of the British Empire to be found abroad. Though telling the travails of time abroad is meant to entertain, middle-class readers were painted a picture that, despite aggravations, made travel seem that much more feasible, even at times commonplace. The voyager trope thus becomes an easier role with which to identify, and thus the belief that English subjects could move freely across national borders for their own benefit becomes more solidified.

These letters Thackeray crafts about his (supposed) experiences while traveling manage to walk the line between maintaining the superiority of the British traveler and satirizing the ridiculous figure he cuts. For example, as he describes the need to be carried over a stream by Egyptians he belittlingly calls them “abominable Arabs,” “brutes,” “savages,” and “half-naked ruffians”—and that is only to start.³⁶ Thackeray laments the practice whereby those carrying tourists over water on their shoulders will attempt to extort money from their passengers at their most vulnerable moments, often threatening to slip (so Thackeray feels). Yet the accompanying sketch depicts Thackeray looking so ridiculous and so terrified, one cannot ignore the unfitness of the Englishman made vulnerable by his inability to carry himself. Although surely one response to this image is to blame the uncivilized circumstances, a caution against going where one does not belong is also embedded in its narrative. Thackeray closes this penultimate letter in his series by noting “you may shut your eyes and fancy yourself there. It is the pleasantest way.”³⁷ While the humor here is derived from the disjunction between Thackeray’s travelling persona and his surroundings, and his advice is to stay away, these

³⁶ *Punch* 1 February 1845, p. 61.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

letters treat an excursion to the east not as one of mortal peril, but with the same disdain that riding a crowded London bus might elicit. As part of a body of periodical literature that offered readers many opportunities to consider travel and emigration as something that would effect dramatic social change, Thackeray's "Fat Contributor" pieces are quite in keeping with the message that travel to foreign places was quite feasible.

Thackeray's series of letters concludes with his climatic ascent up a pyramid, upon which he claims to have pasted a placard depicting the weekly's standard (which, from his drawing, appears to be the masthead with one of *Punch*'s trademark detailed borders). The large, striking image that accompanies the letter ("V. Punch at the Pyramids—[Concluded]) shows the Fat Contributor's portly figure, again looking terrified, surrounded by several guides and descending the large stone steps with what appears to be a great effort. It takes three men supporting him, as one slipper-shod foot dangles out of reach of the next step, and it appears that will not be sufficient to see him safely down. Thackeray's drawing accompanies a letter detailing in quite hyperbolic terms his climb and ceremonious pasting of the *Punch* placard, broken down by the minute. The overwrought style suggests Thackeray's attempts to de-romanticize his ascent of the ancient monument, but together text and image create a complex narrative of what it means to be English and abroad in the East. As with the image of crossing the stream, Thackeray's self-portrait sketch emphasizes his unfitness for the scenario he finds himself in. His needlessly fussy dress and rotund physiognomy are in stark contrast to his extremely fit, lightly clothed and shoeless guides. Partly the implication is that Thackeray, the only member of the tableau given voice in the narrative, is the traveler from "dear, dear Pall Mall" experiencing the absurdity of this rough, far-flung locale.

There are strong indications that he believes this is far from a situation the English should attempt adapting to. However, there are colonizing implications of (the imagined) pasting the *Punch* emblem on a piece of antiquity—a Macauly-esque use of English culture.

Indeed, as Thackeray hides one copy of the *Punch* placard under a rock and throws one copy up in the air it can hardly be said the mark of English culture is left indelibly.

Despite the fact that Thackeray includes his admonitions for British people to stay away, and despite the joking nature of the *Punch* placard, the satire here is not a warning.

Thackeray's admonitions have more to do with the demystification of adventurous travel.

Punch deflates any sense that the voyager is an elite or unattainable role, and instead allows readers to think about foreign places—where one finds English friends and publications—as part of a global network that can be accessed by a traveller of even moderate ability.

The role of the voyager, despite the cautions from Hood and the playfulness offered by Thackeray, is, by and large one that encouraged middle-class readers to carefully consider the prosperity the British Empire could afford those who wished to obtain a proper, class-based brand of respectability. In *Dombey and Son* (serialized from 1846-1848), Dickens uses a character venturing away from England out of duty and an honest desire for self-betterment to dispel the idea that empire was the provenance of the elite. The end of the novel, as it shifts its focus from the downfall of Mr. Dombey's enterprises to his rehabilitation as a father, contains a surprising paradox. Throughout the novel Dickens has juxtaposed two versions of commerce: the little shop of the Midshipmen owned by Sol Gills dramatizes the English economy as “a nation of small shopkeepers,” whereas Dombey's firm represents the sprawling network of trade and

commercial interests—the expression of imperial holdings and influence—that support Britain’s wealth and drives its further expansion.³⁸ The incorruptibility and goodness of the characters thriving at the novel’s end finds refuge in the domestic haven of *The Midshipmen*, and so one might expect that Dickens’s final say would indict the unscrupulous trading and over-expansion of Dombey’s firm. After all, in his other novels Dickens seems to abhor speculation (as in *Little Dorrit*) and prefers that charity begin at home rather than far-flung regions of the globe (as in *Bleak House*). It appears, though, that for Dickens it is not the size or extent of a business or the nature of capitalism that determines how ethical a given venture is; it is all to do with the morality of the individual in charge that justifies a commercial enterprise.

Surprisingly, Dickens does not condemn Dombey’s globally-scaled business but rather allows it to succeed once the virtuous Walter, now Dombey’s son-in-law, assumes the helm of the firm after completing a successfully mission of international trade. Additionally, he bases Sol Gills’s financial gain not on a sudden boom in trade for *The Midshipmen* but in Gills’s successful manipulation of investments. This is put quite clearly to readers toward the very end of the novel:

³⁸ The shopkeepers phrase, perhaps apocryphally, is said to have been Napoleon’s insult. Using his knowledge of Adam Smith’s work, Napoleon is purported to have called England “a nation of small shopkeepers” to indicate its lack of preparedness for war. Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* does reflect on the role of shopkeepers in an economy: “to found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, may at first sight, appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers, but extremely fit for a nation whose government is influenced by shopkeepers” (Smith 362). Dickens’s use of the midshipman may well represent an ideal of a Smith-inspired economy wherein the middle-class provided a moral basis for the government’s pursuit of wealth. Dickens may very well have thought in-depth about economic policy during *Dombey and Son*’s composition, as he was, for a while, travelling in Switzerland in the company of a group that included Jane Marcet, author of an extremely successful economic textbook that introduced Smith to Victorian readers. For more on Marcet, see Shackelton, 283-297.

Not another stroke of business does the Midshipman achieve beyond his usual easy trade. But they do say...that some of Mr. Gills's old investments are coming out wonderfully well; and that instead of being behind the time in those respects, as he supposed, he was, in truth, a little before it, and had to wait the fullness of the time and the design. The whisper is that Mr. Gills's money has begun to turn itself, and that it is turning itself over and over pretty briskly. (921)

Gills prospers and becomes wealthy, presumably, because he has made good predictions and invested wisely; yet despite any indisposition toward a speculative economy we might see elsewhere in Dickens, Gills's and Walter's success reveals that Dickens is not against the expansion of trade or the expansion of the British Empire that drives England's economy. He does not advocate for an end to or curtailment of imperialism, but rather demands that virtuous individuals conduct imperialism. For Dickens, the virtuous subject is an idealized version of the British subject: a Christian, though non-dogmatic; one who values work, and whose energies find appropriate outlets; one who retains a sense of Englishness, but one who sees Englishness as able to thrive in even exotic locations. In short, Dickens envisions the ideal British citizen—in this case Walter Gay—as the embodiment of Victorian middle-class values. These values provide the justification for the middle class to support the exodus of English fortune seekers across the globe and normalize the status of English citizens as world travelers.

Walter has been virtuous throughout the novel, but also absent on his mission on behalf of Mr. Dombey's firm to the West Indies. Although Walter survives a shipwreck that calls up the danger of such travel for Dickens's readers, voyaging out in search of success is ultimately what lifts Walter up economically and finally deems him worthy of

marrying Florence. Despite this earlier catastrophe, Walter sets out again, this time with Florence. If a reader had any misgivings one might have about a second voyage, Sol Gills makes the following case to the contrary: “‘My boy has been preserved and thrives,’ says old Sol Gills rubbing his hands. ‘What right have I to be otherwise thank thankful and happy!’” (855). Surely his remarks here indicate a resignation to what those who must work for money must be willing to undergo; it seems another voyage is the natural progression for Walter, despite his improbable rescue from perishing at sea.

Furthermore, we are given the quaintest description of what life on a ship will be like for Walter and Florence:

[Sol and Captain Cuttle] have been on board the ship, and have established Di [Diogenes, the dog] there, and have seen the chests put aboard. They have much to tell about the popularity of Walter, and the comforts he will have about him, and the quiet way in which it seems he has been working early and late, to make his cabin what the Captain calls “a pictre,” to surprise his little wife. (854)

It seems Walter and Florence’s life at sea will be no more arduous than staying at home in the parlor of the Midshipman. We are assured of the quality of the conditions on board, and thus of the appropriateness for the married couple who will rise to middle-class prosperity in due time. At any rate, the need for Walter to remain at sea does not last long, he is “released from sea-going, after that first long voyage with his young bride” and given a “post of great confidence at home” (923). Walter Gay succeeds rapidly “mounting up the ladder with the greatest expedition; beloved by everybody” (923). Walter, by his willingness to complete a voyage, and by his innate goodness is allowed to succeed thoroughly in the very business in which Mr. Dombey has failed. The

difference, then, lies in their character, and perhaps by the fact that Walter is willing to first be an active participant in the service of empire before he ascends to further success as a result of empire.

An attachment to the moral goodness of a virtuous English household further connects middle-class ideals to the contemporary state of the British Empire. In *Dombey and Son*, in order for Mr. Dombey to be forgiven, he must not so much atone for his lack of oversight of his business as his failure as a father; the far greater sin is not the overindulgent speculation, trade, and greed of his business firm but his inability to love his daughter. Of Dombey despairing in the study after the collapse of his marriage and his business Dickens writes

For this night of his worldly ruin there was no to-morrow's sun; for the stain of his domestic shame there was no purification; nothing, thank Heaven, could bring his dead child back to life. But that which he might have made so different in all the Past...that which was his own work, that which he could so easily have wrought into a blessing, and had set himself so steadily for years to form into a curse, that was the sharp grief of his soul. (882)

Dombey has failed in his role as patriarch, and we are given to understand that this matters far more than his inability to oversee his mercantile interests. That his “own work” might have been “a blessing” could be about his business just as well as his relationship with his daughter Florence.³⁹ Had Dombey succeeded as a patriarch, he might also have been able to succeed as a leader economically. Because it is principally

³⁹ Dombey's failure as patriarch and businessman is not mitigated by the fact that it has been Mr. Carker who has extended the company beyond its ability to survive; the neglect of his business that allowed Carker to operate so is equal to Dombey's neglect of his daughter.

as a family member that Mr Dombey fails and that Walter Gay succeeds, *Dombey and Son*, rather than reading as a critique of the capitalist drive toward imperial expansion, situates the British Empire as deeply tied English domestic life. It should also be noted that although Dombey falls far from his high social standing, Walter and Gills do not rise to the same heights Dombey once attained. The role of the voyager, here and elsewhere in Dickens, thus can be used to demonstrate a pervasive faith in the moral superiority and virtue of the Victorian middle-class to overcome any complications or penalties the colonization of the globe might incur. *Dombey and Son* achieves this without going so far as to suggest a radical, anti-capitalism ideology by setting limits on any expectations of class mobility.

Readers of the monthly serial *David Copperfield* (published from 1849 to 1850) would have yet another opportunity to consider the efficacy of emigrating to a colony in order to improve their lot, particularly when it came to rewarding favored characters at the novel's conclusion. Dickens's most optimistic portrayal of the moral fortitude of the English character abroad lies with such a voyager, in the form of the ever-charming if ill-fated Mr. Micawber. Dickens, like Thackeray and Hood, continues to play on the absurdity of the English subject contrasted with exotic locales, but argues that this unshakable Englishness is no inhibitor of English success. The British voyager, as in the case of Walter Gay, retains his essential character but is now given reign to improve his social standing (within certain limits). Hood and Thackeray find that a voyage may reveal English character as irrevocably out of place or may reveal its absurd aspect in trying circumstances, respectively. Dickens, however, celebrates any humor to be found in an Englishman abroad as part of the entertainment of his narrative rather than as an

obstacle. As the ever insolvent, bill-writing Micawber prospers in Australia he gains no further modicum of self-awareness. Rather, as with Walter in *Dombey and Son*, it is Mr. Micawber's innate goodness that—along with the change in location—provides the only explanation for the new success the former debtor could not achieve within the limited boundaries of England. Micawber only succeeds because he has moved to a new location where his goodness can take root and thrive, a fact that emphasizes good faith in English moral character.

When the Micawber's emigrate, their voyage is characterized as a chance at redemption rather than as a corrective measure—that is, they are not punished but, rather, are given the chance to thrive because location was the only thing inhibiting their success. In the esteem of his wife, and throughout *David Copperfield*, we are given to understand that Mr. Micawber's constant financial woes result not from inadequacy or a superficial character flaw. By sending the Micawber's to Australia, the novel suggests that it is lack of opportunity rather than a propensity to indebtedness that prevents the success of the virtuous debtor. We are constantly told that Mr. Micawber is talented, and his emigration brings this to bear. All too sensible that her family continues to avoid acquaintance with her dear husband, Mrs. Micawber pronounces her satisfaction that Mr. Micawber finds himself on the brink ““of commencing a new career in a country where there is sufficient range for his abilities—which, in my opinion, is exceedingly important; Mr. Micawber's abilities peculiarly [require] space”” (754). If anything, his inability to thrive is a result of limited opportunity for someone otherwise able to work tirelessly, and as we are told of Micawber “although he would appear not to have worked to any good account for himself, he is a most untiring man when he works for other people” (755). If

emigration is to correct anything for the family, it is to place them in the context they already deserve; it is as if the new world is the place Micawber should have been all along. This great comic character of the novel meets his happy end in such a way that underscores the potential of British colonies to alleviate social ills, rather than emphasizing the potential hazards or hucksters facing English subjects abroad. In keeping with the image of the voyager presented in *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, too, treats emigration as an accessible way to expand one's opportunities without looking to radically remake English society.

Upon their departure, the Micawber's over-preparedness for Australia serves a dual purpose. The narrative is able to deemphasize the dangers of such a voyage while demonstrating the good work ethic of the family—thus marking them as deserving of prosperity through the efforts they will make on their own behalf. Although Micawber is soon dressed in the trappings of an explorer about to set sail, these new eccentricities do not indicate an alteration in personality or ability so much as the emergence of a latent self. In his description of Micawber, Dickens's preserves all of Micawber's charms while slyly undermining the hyper-readiness of the new émigré to the "fair land of promise" (764):

Mr. Micawber, I must observe, in his adaptation of himself to a new state of society, had acquired a bold buccaneering air, not absolutely lawless, but defensive and prompt. One might have supposed him a child of the wilderness, long accustomed to live out the confines of civilization, and about to return to his native wilds. He had provided himself, among other things, with a complete suit of oil-skin, and a straw-hat with a very low crown, pitched or caulked on the

outside. In this rough clothing, with a common mariner's telescope under his arm, and a shrewd trick of casting up his eye at the sky as looking out for dirty weather, he was far more nautical, after his manner, than Mr. Peggotty. (782)

Although Micawber might be described as a reformed "child of the wilderness," and while such a description does emphasize his fitness for emigration, it is clear that the change amounts to an air newly acquired. The comparison to Mr. Peggotty curtails what might otherwise be read as the sudden acquisition of a new personality, by reminding us that he is not, unlike his friend, truly versed in nautical life. The absurdity of Micawber's accouterment is further emphasized by his nonchalant attitude toward sea travel: "the ocean, in these times, is a perfect fleet of ships; and we can hardly fail to encounter many, in running over. It is merely a crossing," said Mr. Micawber, trifling with his eye-glass, 'merely crossing. The distance is quite imaginary'" (787). David is quick to remark upon the irony of a man who once treated a trip to Canterbury as a lifelong trek and yet insists a voyage to Australia is a small matter. These descriptions, while amusing, do have the effect of increasing readers' confidence in Mr. Micawber. If his zeal for the "crossing" assures us one can prepare to excess for a voyage, it also reassures us a voyage could be undertaken with relative ease.

Readers are further assured that despite the seafaring figure Mr. Micawber would like to cut, he and his family, free from their financial burdens, are able to remain essentially the same. It seems as if Mr. Micawber's departure from the customs of England are both unmerited, and his supplies include the charming baubles that please his good-hearted soul. David remarks:

I could not but observe that he had been peeling the lemons with his own clasp-knife, which, as became the knife of a practical settler, was about a foot long; and which he wiped, not wholly without ostentation, on the sleeve of his coat. Mrs. Micawber and the two elder children I now found to be provided with similar formidable instruments, while every child had its own wooden spoon attached to its body by a strong line. In a similar anticipation of life afloat, and in the Bush, Mr. Micawber, instead of [using] wine-glasses, which he might easily have done, for there was a shelf-full in the room, served it out to them in a series of villanous [sic] little tin pots; and I never saw him enjoy anything so much as drinking out of his own particular pint pot, and putting it in his pocket at the close of the evening.

(784)

Micawber, here still lovable and funny, bears close resemblance to the squire of “Letter from the Cape”; both cut the strange figure of the Englishman equipped improperly, the squire with his insufficient walking stick and Micawber and family with their exaggerated knives. Again, the narrative insists that although prepared for life “in the Bush,” the sea voyage and what lies ahead do not necessitate giving up the tokens of modest comfort. But there is pleasure in seeing the family more than ready for their travels, perhaps of the same kind that finds the shovel and hunting rifle of the family in “Here and There” satisfying. In both cases the work it will take to make a living in the colonies are pleasantly reduced to the totems of cup, knife, and spade; readers are able to reduce the unimaginable undertaking of emigration to the security those physical objects supply for the voyagers. Even picturing the over-preparation of the Micawber’s renders a less hyperbolic version of the journey more tangibly; readers are placed in the interesting

position of understanding what it will take to emigrate even better than the characters who will undertake that journey.

Although the Micawber's voyage is giving full expression to their excellent character, *David Copperfield* also maintains support for emigration as the suitable remedy for the kind of moral transgression to which one can be sympathetic. The boisterous portrayal of the Micawber's concludes the novel alongside the excising of Little Emily (newly found)—providing a sobering look at another freeing motive for emigration. Emily, too, bears the same mark of indelible English character that will assure her voyage's success; although her moral stain remains she now qualifies for mercy. Her voyage, undertaken in the company of her father, will be successful because of her repentance—and perhaps her innocence in being led astray in the first place. Mr. Peggotty relates Emily's relinquishment of any self-importance that may have allowed her to be led astray by Steerforth, describing for David how humble she has become:

I never heerd her saying her prayers at night . . . when we was settled in the Bush, but what I heerd your [Agnes's] name Theer was some poor folks aboard as had illness among 'em, and she took care of *them*; and theer was the children in our company, and she took care of *them*; and so she got to be busy, and to be doing good, and that helped her. (846)

Emily, who was never shown to be truly wicked, begins to redeem herself on her voyage to Australia. Her actions are Christian and an appropriate display of feminine, domestic helpfulness, thus showing her to be of essentially good moral character. Her hard work continues in “the Bush,” where she and Mr. Peggotty set up a homestead. Together, Mr. Peggotty and Emily live “in a solitary place, but among the beautifulest trees, and with

the roses a covering our Beein to the roof” (847). Here Emily continues her hard work in “solitoode” where tending to “poultry and the like” she lives a peaceful existence, teaching children and tending the sick, even turning down marriage proposals (847). That she remains unattached is significant, for it is as if by doing so Emily recaptures some of the maiden innocence she let slip away. The manner in which the novel deals with Emily demonstrates much that explains the contrast of Dickens’s social compassion with his support for imperial expansion and, at times, repression. The novel’s conclusion occurs in a way that those familiar with his work would understand; the comic elements of the narrative resolve alongside the tragic.

Through the humor of the émigrés departure, Dickens advances views about colonialism that are anything but trivial. One last preoccupation of the novel is that the voyagers do not give anything up or transmute into anything other than exemplary English subjects despite how faraway their new home may be. Even in innocuous comments placed in the mouth of Mrs. Micawber one can see anxieties about identity beginning to be worked through. Mrs. Micawber asserts a paradoxical view of what it means to be a British subject abroad:

I cannot forget the parent-tree; and when our race attains to eminence and fortune, I own I should wish that fortune to flow into the coffers of Britannia....You are going out, Micawber, to this distant clime, to strengthen, not to weaken, the connexion between yourself and Albion....You do not know your power, Micawber. It is that which will strengthen, even in this step you are about to take, the connexion between yourself and Albion. (787-788)

Although he resists his wife's estimation of their affairs at first, it is clear Mr. Micawber acknowledges a kind of wisdom in what she says, as he sits "in his elbow-chair, with his eyebrows raised; half receiving and half repudiating Mrs. Micawber's views as they were stated, but very sensible of their foresight" (788). The notion that one can become more English by leaving England, despite the character giving it voice, will not be easily dismissed. Mrs. Micawber expands on her position even further, claiming that not only will her husband become more English, he will become of greater service and receive greater recognition as a British subject:

"am I not right in saying that Mr. Micawber will strengthen, and not weaken, his connexion [sic] with Britain? An important public character arising in that hemisphere, shall I be told that its influence will not be felt at home? Can I be so weak as to imagine that Mr. Micawber, wielding the rod of talent and power in Australia, will be nothing in England? (789)

Although rendered through humor, the consideration of identity here is striking; and although it seems contradictory, everything that Mrs. Micawber asserts about British identity will come to pass by the novel's conclusion. Mr. Micawber does, in fact, repay his debts—sending money to the coffers of those still residing in England—and as he works to raise his position above that of indebted speculator his status as a respectable middle-class subject raises him in the eyes of the English class system.

For Dickens, one's circumstances may change but one's moral character is of a fixed nature. People may fall from grace, such as Martha and little Emily, or become victims of their own weaknesses, such as Micawber, but provided they work hard they may be rewarded. In a new colonial context, the actors are allowed to thrive not because

they have escaped their moral obligations but because they have been allowed to save themselves through their good works. When Mr. Peggotty returns to give accounts to David and Agnes of how the emigrants have progressed we are explicitly told that sweat equity more than anything has resulted in the success of the poor and fallen. Of Micawber's progress from the "Bush," Peggotty exclaims "[Micabwer] turned to it with a will....I've seen that their bald head of his a perspiring in the sun....And now he's a magistrate" (848). Micawber has been good all along, and his hard, physical work, enabling the payment of all his debts (848), is enough to compensate for the speculation and debtor's arrests. Redemption through agriculture seems strange and idealistic, but it is an extension of Dickens's anti-dogmatic Christian beliefs—which here manifest in keeping with Christian reform movements of the 1840s that stressed personal salvation through good works. The colonies, offering the promise of agrarian prosperity, are imagined by Dickens as spaces ready for development and thus spaces where the innately good can work their way into solid middle-class footing. England, by contrast, lacks such wholesome opportunities for economic advancement and salvation.⁴⁰

Significantly, monetary wealth is carefully modified to fit the expectations of a rigid class system. It is important to note that although Micawber, Emily and Martha, and others are living in peace and prosperity, they do not advance beyond their proper social stations.⁴¹ For although Dickens's approves of modest achievements—the very town of

⁴⁰ Certainly David's experiences in Murdstone's warehouse are sufficient argument from Dickens's on this point, a fact that allows for very little faith in any schemes to alleviate working conditions for the poor within the boundaries of England. Voyaging out is idyllic in comparison.

⁴¹ Martha is also redeemed through hard work and goes on to remarry (847-848). Interestingly, all of the female émigrés receive marriage proposals in Australia—perhaps this is a subtle argument for the alleviation of "surplus women," that was also a nineteenth century social concern.

Port *Middlebay* echoes this in its name—he does not approve of wealth where there is no higher standard of goodness. To the end Miss Julia Mills makes an odd return at the end of *David Copperfield*, when we learn from David that she has returned from India made wealthy by a marriage. Although Miss Mills was never aligned with the wicked forces at work in the novel, Dickens makes his dislike for wealth earned without real merit clear:

Julia is steeped in money to the throat, and talks of nothing else. I liked her better in the Desert of Sahara. Or perhaps this *is* the Desert of Sahara! For, though Julia has a stately house, and mighty company, and sumptuous dinners every day, I see no green growth near her; nothing can ever come to fruit or flower when society consists of such hollow gentlemen and ladies, Julia, and when its breeding is professed indifference to everything that can advance or retard mankind, I think we must have lost ourselves in that same Desert of Sahara, and had better find the way out. (854)

The choice of the botanic metaphors here is telling. Mr. Micawber, through his toils in rural Australia, succeeds because he is literally able to grow things. He is rewarded with the ability to draw more and more people around him, to integrate successfully into happy middle-class life and to earn the esteem of the residents of Port Middlebay. Julia, on the other hand, is not only Dickens's critique of the shallowness of wealth, but a critique of the hollowness of the wealthy who integrate back into English society. Rather than earn a new station through hard work in Australia, Julia Mills benefits from appropriating wealth through her marriage in India. This does not constitute the same success in the eyes of the novel as the successes of a more moderate kind, because it exacerbates a character's negative attributes rather than amplifying the good.

By the end of the 1850s, the role of the voyager was pervasive in literature even as the ordinariness of emigration and travel had become more widespread. That middle-class reading was given to advocating for the success of such voyages—here acknowledging their peril but here claiming them as a great social remedy—demonstrates the extent to which the middle-class was given the opportunity to consider their connection to empire through the lens of their own status. These narratives, each in their own way, advocate for class-defined success, and a middle-class audience could have pictured their own place in the global scheme of their nation’s empire. Thinking about voyaging, whether one intended to leave England or not, would have been facilitated by the constant written recognition of the empire as a place for the English to thrive, albeit in ways that provided a vision of success for each social class. At times, even the reading material itself encouraged reading material as a proper channel for ideas connecting English identity to the reaches of empire.

Middle-class reading in its material form could also act as a voyager or, more appropriately, an envoy from England. That Dickens was invested in the instruction offered by the cases of his emigrated characters at the end of *David Copperfield* is made obvious through a kind of writer’s fantasy. David, now celebrated author, receives word of his popularity in this far-flung port of the British Empire. Mr. Micawber, in the published letter Mr. Peggotty brings, thanks David for the contribution his writings have made in the lives of the colonists of Port Middlebay, expressing his appreciation “for the gratification of which you are the ministering agent” (851). And vowing that the “inhabitants of Port Middlebay may at least aspire to watch it, with delight, with entertainment, with instruction” (851). What Dickens’s writes here represents the epitome

of hope for Victorian middle-class readings materials: that they should provide a wholesome source of entertainment while promoting a properly moral, didactic message, strengthening the ties between readers near and far. Through Mr. Micabwer's acknowledgement of David's writing we see the fulfillment of his wife's prophecy that their English ties would be strengthened even as they have been transferred from metropole to colony. Literature, on its own voyage to the colonies, lessened the distance anyone would have to travel.

Chapter Two

The Returned Citizens of the Empire, 1851-1853

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the exportation of characters out into the colonies of the British Empire and beyond tested and reaffirmed the morality of English middle-class identity. These outward narrative thrusts parallel and encourage forays by the English out into an empire in search of new opportunities for prosperity. As the status of the middle class in the empire solidified, writers did more than utilize emigration as a convenient plot device. Bringing a character back from abroad could just as well create a needed plot resolution, although to do so raises questions about the stability of English identity. The role of the returned English subject, after time away, became a new and easily recognizable trope for middle-class readers—a new character that linked the English imagination with the global range of the British Empire. As such, the role of the returned citizen was an essential signifier of a nation-state pushing for cultural and economic global dominance. These inward movements of Imperialism, however, contain the most potential to disrupt the narrative of the British Empire's expansion as a natural one, as moral as it was inevitable.

The Victorian middle class, when faced with its new status at the heart of England's colonial project, needed to learn to resolve the threat of foreign influence and its potential to alter what it meant to be a subject of England. Did time spent in the colonies alter one's Englishness or one's claim to being English? If so, could these subjects be rehabilitated back into the middle-class domestic life that relied on the ingress of colonial wealth? To what extent would the incorporation of foreign elements into the domestic realm render English traditions unrecognizable? When bodies, ideas, or wealth

are drawn from colony back to metropole, there is always a potential for the disruption of what being English means and, perhaps, a forced recognition of the more unsavory aspects of maintaining an Empire that drove the success of the middle class. Serialized novels—works of fiction that entered the domestic sphere of the home just as returned citizens entered the domestic sphere of the nation—explored the use of returning subjects in potent ways. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* and Dickens's *Bleak House* employ various strategies through which returned citizens could be successfully reincorporated into domestic spaces, spaces that serve as metaphoric placeholders for the English Nation. As I will argue in this chapter, it was by appealing to the values of their middle-class readerships that these novels attempt to sanitize the characters that return from abroad without disrupting the cultural idyll of a self-sustaining England free from foreign contamination. The final result, although counter-intuitively perhaps, is that the domestication of these characters becomes an effective means of normalizing Empire, winning cultural consent for the aspects of Imperialism it would otherwise erase.

The significance of the role of the returned citizen goes beyond understanding the surface of the “there and back again” narrative serial fiction deployed. Yet another identity category established as a means of helping the middle-class imagine its connection to England's furthest Imperial reaches, the returned subject cannot be understood without examining what the crossing of national borders means for Empire on a fundamental level. Movement is at the heart of the British Empire, the expansion of which cannot be imagined without recalling early forays into new territories, new travel routes, and the expansion of trade. By the Victorian period, the movement of emigrants, ships, goods, military and civil service personnel, as well as narratives of missionaries and

explorers had begun and would continue to define England as the center of a vast global network. The export of British citizens out into the world—which, as we have seen, was alternately humorous, risky, or figured as the inevitable rise of the morally just English people—is relatively uncomplicated in the sense that by general consensus England’s colonies existed *de facto* and were thus available for the benefit of England’s people. However, movement outward from the center of an empire demands that new influences enter or return from the periphery; this demand is the very thing Imperialism seeks to erase in order to maintain the myth of a stable national identity.

Hardt and Negri’s theorization of the post-modern rise of Empire in the wake 19th century Imperialism’s collapse provides a useful explanation of why the return of elements from the periphery to the center of Empire is both inevitable and risky to the project of Imperialism. “Empire” in Hardt and Negri’s sense is meant to convey a current socio-political phenomenon, a “new global form of sovereignty” (xii). “Imperialism,” as they define it, is a pre- post-modern acquisition of additional territories by “European nation-states beyond their own boundaries” (xii).⁴¹ Both the boundaries of the nation-state and the movement of the things able to traverse those boundaries define 19th century Imperialism; these boundaries “delimited the center of power from which rule was exerted . . . through a system of channels and barriers that alternately facilitated and obstructed the flows of production and circulation.” As such, “Imperialism was really an extension of the sovereignty of the European nation-states beyond their own boundaries” (xii). Here, Hardt and Negri implicitly draw on the classic colony/metropole dynamic of post-colonial theory. Traditionally that pair has been understood as a rigid binary, and

⁴¹ Hardt and Negri define Empire and Imperialism to distinguish post-modern and modern processes of colonization, respectively.

not—as criticism now accepts it—as a mutually developing relationship. I would like to call particular attention to the “system of channels and barriers,” because it indicates the permeability inherent in Imperialism. As much as the fantasy of colonialism is one in which the center of colonial power remains uninfluenced by its foreign territories, the need to regulate the “flows of production and circulation” and the “extension of sovereignty” immediately opens an inroad from margin to center. Something—people, goods, or ideas—is bound to return to the locus of Empire.

Whatever returns, or crosses from colony to metropole, is linked to the way in which identity becomes bound up in the process of Imperialism. The attempt to move sovereignty beyond the boundaries of the nation-state must facilitate or obstruct the movement across borders in order “to police the purity of its own identity and to exclude all that was other” (xii). Without boundaries, and without the ability to define the identity of the colonial power, no nation-state can exist. Imperialism necessarily entails the simultaneous recognition and denial of the fluidity of the boundaries it requires. As much as the nation-state requires a firm sense of its own identity in contrast to an “other,” so does it require a citizenry with a firm sense of national identity to invest the ruling interests with its sovereignty. There may not be a pervasive sense that the domestic space of England can be contaminated by foreign influences, because to do so would expose the fluidity of identity within the metropole. It is no small wonder, then, that the Victorian middle class would appear anxious about what influences were allowed back into the center of power or that middle-class reading material acknowledges and denies the ways returned characters interrupt the fantasy of a homogenous “little England.” Instead, these narratives will take great care to assign returned citizens to a benign, domestic fate.

Fiction that explores the lives and consequences of returned citizens works toward two opposing goals: it must help its readers recognize the great social purpose of those soldiers, civil servants, and spouses that make lives in the colonies accepted as a noble undertaking. Imagining the journey out inspired a sense of adventure and, as we have seen, encouraged the middle class to turn itself into the vanguard of prosperity. The new challenge, as time passed, was to turn the global imagination of Victorian readers inward. This meant using returned characters to normalize the ingress of influences that Hardt and Negri demonstrate was so deeply rooted in the Imperial process. This was no easy task at a time when the national imagination was preoccupied with the danger of all foreign influences.

In the early 1850s, the trope of the returned English subject coincides with another type of importation of foreign influence: the exhibition of 1851. An international showcase of industry and manufactured products, the Great Exhibition in 1851 was a celebration of England's industrial and imperial progress. While providing some space to other nations, based on their relative commercial importance, the main purpose seems to have been to impress upon visitors Britain's superior innovation and imperial holdings.⁴² The exhibition itself, by focusing on Western innovations and Eastern raw materials (any credit for their products going to the colonizing nation), denies the existence of the peoples of its colonized spaces in order to erase the subjugation and violence necessary to maintain the strength of the British Empire. The spectacle of colonial commodities and foreign influences, admitted as if through an open channel from metropole to colony, also raises a threat to English identity as a stable, knowable concept.

⁴² For a contemporary explanation of which nations received space and by what logic, see R Beasland "London Companion During the Great Exhibition" (London, 1851).

When a serialized novel drew returned subjects back into England, it did so for a reading public that, in the wake of the Great Exhibition, was accustomed to considering how English identity could be influenced by foreign entities. *Punch* ran item after item during and after 1851 examining the influx of foreign travellers, or even in some cases the exhibits themselves, and the effect these strangers had on the English cultural landscape. Periodicals that ranged from the satiric (like *Punch*, or *Train*) to the familial (*Household Words*) to daily newspapers were quite preoccupied with the spectacle of foreign influence. Humorous commentary surrounding the event became a repository for the repressed fears of contamination resulting from the close relationship between colony and metropole. Much of these fears manifest in stereotypical, xenophobic depictions directed at foreigners in general; however, upon closer inspection these caricatures more often than not relate to foreign influence from England's colonial holdings in particular. For example, in John Leech's series "Memorials from the Great Exhibition," which ran in *Punch* in 1851, several images depict the havoc wreaked by foreigners in British domestic settings. "No. XVI—The North-American Lodgers in 1851" shows indigenous men and one woman disrupting a boarding house, overturning furniture, drinking, and terrifying the cook or possible proprietress all with inhuman, leering expressions of delight. Yet the relationships between all of the characters in the frame are remarkably complex. It is unclear if the English woman on the right of the image is being hugged or strangled by the indigenous interloper, and thus her alarm is both comedic and disconcerting. Leech has divided the image into thirds with the inclusion of upraised brooms, staffs, spears or Tomahawks, and unidentifiable implements of either destruction or housework. This is where the trouble starts.

Within each third, the ambiguity of what could be threatening chaos or misappropriated domesticity persists. To the left a young woman turns, her broom upraised in the same manner of the foreign man with a club of some sort. Her expression shows a lack of concern, even a pleasant smile, despite the man drinking in the foreground and the leg of a fallen reveler almost entirely out of frame. The leg of the unknown guest could be dressed in spats or the gators of a North American Indian. Solely one large individual in native dress in motion occupies the center of the image, but just over his right shoulder one of his cohorts appears wearing a tattered dress coat facing the rear. The picture is potentially warlike, destructive, or potentially a harmless if disruptive party with cargo-cult elements. These two segments create a complex relationship between the figures that watch and the figures that perform, the figures that are frightened or are bemused. If anything in the picture poses a threat, it lies more in these collapses of identity.

In the final third of the frame, echoed on the very left and right periphery of the whole picture, the threat of a visual type of miscegenation implied in the whole image become even more explicit. In the bottom right hand corner sits one of the foreign visitors, presumably but not necessarily a woman, smiling with a small pestle and a pot—for what purpose is unknown, but the mimicking of Englishness is clear. Donning a feathered ladies bonnet, this striking figure is a manifestation of the blending of genders, nationality, and domestic customs. The figure's counterpart is again the unconcerned young woman with the broom in the upper-left corner who could be presumed to be donning eye-paint similar to that of the foreign interlopers. The figure in the right corner, mimicking or appropriating English culture, and the other moments where the distinction

between English and foreigner are not wholly distinct, demonstrate what risks are inherent in Imperialism's channels and barriers. This ambiguous figure represents the fears inherent in the relationship between the (in this case former) colony and the metropole, wherein the influences that travel from periphery to center can call national identity into question or portend its changing, fluid nature. The American Indian and English figures alike are thus reduced to bodies on which the anxieties of Imperialism are etched. Taken as a whole, the cartoon encompasses the anxieties middle-class readers were given an opportunity to examine over and over again, particularly during the run of the exhibition.

Victorian literature is preoccupied with figures of British citizens returned from the colonies and the uneasy fit these subjects now make in English society for the same reasons the collision of English and American Indian figures are posited as a source of anxiety when they interact in the domestic space. The bodies, ideas, and economic gain brought back from the colonies—a necessary part of Imperialism, as established above—are the very influences with the potential to expand what it “English” means in terms of the imagined geographic space of the country and in terms of the identity of its citizens. Although profitable and the source of much official celebration, a constant uneasiness and even the threat of violence or contamination is never wholly severed from the identity of the citizen of the British Empire. The returned subject appears in middle-class reading with the task of normalizing the movement of foreign things back toward the center of the empire, while masking the fact that new influences cause reactions. The narratives in which these characters appear rely heavily on tropes of domesticity to reincorporate those who return from abroad while strengthening middle-class values and

disavowing anything that might lead to doubt in the steadfastness and morality of English character. I have chosen two such novels, both published serially during or shortly after the 1851 exhibition and both published with a middle-class audience in mind. By examining these novels' use of returning citizens we can see how Victorian popular literature works to reconcile the necessity of empire with uneasiness about foreign influence. The trope of the returned citizen, ultimately, provided readers with a way to think about the global reaches of the British Empire in new, less intimidating ways.

In both *Bleak House* and *Cranford*, an idyllic portrayal of a domestic space represents the cultural myth of a “little England,” an insular, quaint island that exists despite the rest of the world and not because of it. *Cranford's* depiction of English village life dramatizes—even satirizes—the tension between little England and massive empire by characterizing the village as wholly alien and divorced from the Imperial spaces its characters have contact with. *Bleak House*, a novel so entirely critical of the causes outside of England that steal attention from the poor at home, relies on the domestic spaces of the Jellyby and Bagnet families to demonstrate the proper arrangement of domestic cares and, by extension, the nation. The household settings are at odds with the travellers they welcome back, because those travellers represent the threatening influences and darker aspects of empire that undermine consent for Imperialism. In this way, both serials duplicate the tension between colony and metropole. This construct is most likely easier to accept in terms of *Bleak House*, which sets most of its action in London, the metropole personified, but the typical description of the “metropole” as industrial center does not at first seem to suit *Cranford*. After all, it is difficult to find a space more insulated from outside influences than Gaskell's imagined village ruled over

by gentle, aged women. Yet this insularity perfectly expresses the paradox of England as a nation: it is imagined as quaint and yet it cannot deny its connection to global influences. The imagined England is both limited and expansive. Just as Cranford proves permeable by the concerns of Empire, so, too, is England an idea that embodies the myth of an isolated past as well as the reality of its globe-domineering present.

Nowhere, real or imagined, could one find an environment more wholesome than Gaskell's village of Cranford, or a better representation of the idyllic picture of life in an English village. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* was published irregularly between the 13th of December 1851 and the 21st of May in 1853, appearing under separate titles in Dickens's *Household Words*. Shortly thereafter, on the 18th of June, 1853, a single volume of *Cranford* was published by Dickens's and Gaskell's shared publisher Chapman and Hall. The origin in *Household Words* is significant as Dickens (as Lorna Huett argues) attempted to run his periodical as a respectable, middle ground publication between the cheap press and the more prestigious reviews.⁴³ As such *Household Words* (and its successor *All the Year Round*) was explicitly composed and edited with a Victorian middle-class audience in mind. Without taking away from the originality of Elizabeth Gaskell's novella, it is important to note that its publication in *Household Words* particularly aligns *Cranford* with an ongoing conversation in Victorian middle-class reading materials about the British Empire and English subjectivity. Dickens, as we have seen, was very much in favor of the opportunities British Imperialism could afford to the English middle-class. As always, hoping to entertain whilst instructing, Dickens's editorial choices leaned toward stories that would provide wholesome amusement.

⁴³ For an excellent overview of the literary market place, price and readership relevant to middle-class reading materials see Huett, 69-71.

Cranford implements a narrative strategy that provides light entertainment through its depiction of the ladies of the village, but the whimsical stories belie a serious consideration of the role Imperialism plays in support of peaceful, middle-class existence in England.

Among the types of returned citizens—civil servants, spouses, even criminals—one of the most common is the returning colonial soldier. This example of the returned subject embodies the myth of an isolated past as well as the reality of its globe-domineering present. When the colonial soldier returns to the domestic space—the parlor, the village, the nation, as they all stand for one another—his association with strange foreign climes, war, and brutality generates a type of masculinity that reveals the violent underpinnings of Imperialism. The potential disruption to the idea of a domestic, “little” England threatens the stability of the practice of Imperialism, and so the figure of the soldier must somehow be divorced from the negative claims of empire. In *Cranford*, the first such instance occurs in the personage of Captain Brown, the genteelly poor half-pay (retired) military man. Captain Brown’s presence in Cranford, despite the possible entrée his two daughters might have provided, is jarring, not only because of his gender but also because of the air of military brusqueness he retains. From his “voice too large for the room,” (168) his “louder than the Clerk” responses in church (169), to his inability to register the (odd) nuances of Cranford society, Captain Brown, as the ladies of Cranford’s “tame man” (168), fits uneasily within the wholly domestic village. The nature of Captain Brown’s military career comes as quite a shock to village society when they learn of his service in the Cape of Good Hope as he receives an aristocratic visitor. Although no one knows the “exact peril” Brown and Lord Mauleverer (whom Brown

saves) were involved in, the timeframe of the novella and the Captain's age of 65 suggests Gaskell means the British conflicts with the Dutch and Afrikaner settlers during and just after the Napoleonic Wars. In the end, when the Captain dies saving a young girl, the women of Cranford are given an opportunity to know of his goodness firsthand. Knowledge of his heroism, it seems, can only be registered with an act that saves a family—tellingly, a female child, the future keeper of the domestic sphere in according to Victorian middle-class standards. Absent are the detailed stories of Brown's exploits abroad. There is something daunting about the Captain's militarism, however mildly it registers with him long after his service has ended, that destabilizes Cranford's sense of itself and what it means to live in England. Imperialism must succeed in becoming the norm, something it cannot do if its representatives—such as the colonial soldiers returning from their martial duty—expose the essentially anti-domestic activities of the British Empire.

The return of the military figure from the colonies forces a consideration of the sometimes-violent means that underpin the success of the British Empire and thus the myth of England as a wholesome, morally sound domestic space typified by Cranford. Like the return of the repressed, Captain Brown's presence threatens to destabilize the moral superiority of the British character because it serves as a reminder of the aggression (behavior clearly outside the code of Victorian middle-class ideals) necessary to expand colonial holdings and maintain Britain's status as the dominant world power. Captain Brown must be reincorporated into the fabric of domestic life through his self-sacrifice in a manner that elides the undercurrents of Imperialism that support Cranford's

existence because his presence threatens to destabilize the myth of England as a stable concept, a spatial embodiment of Victorian middle-class values.

Captain Brown is not the only character that threatens to disrupt the myth of a domestic England that *Cranford* would otherwise perpetuate. Even characters who appear for a short while in the narrative remind readers of the strangeness of those who have travelled abroad when they return. The arrival Miss Matty's cousin, although a minor incident in the text, is a momentous occasion for the main characters, one that "greatly excited Cranford" (188). Mary (the narrator) describes the couple, a Major and his spouse, as "quiet, unpretending people" but "languid, as all East Indians are, I suppose" (188). Casting the tale as a rare moment of excitement for Cranford is predictable, yet it includes a telling moment of confusion. Martha (Miss Matty's servant), we are told, "never ended her staring at the East Indian's white turban, and brown complexion . . . Indeed, she asked me, when they were gone, if he did not remind me of Blue Beard" (188). "East Indian," in this case, does not refer to the Major, Miss Matty's cousin, as before. Instead, Martha refers to "a Hindoo body-servant" (188) attending the returned Anglo-Indians. Here the narrative practices an odd conflation (which Martha compounds by comparing the servant to Blue Beard) of characters' race. Major Jenkyns has attained some measure of success and status (evidenced by the two servants) but this is quickly deflated by relegating him to "East Indian," which, in this case, is not distinct from the identity assigned to his servant. As a result the major's military associations and the evidence of his wealth and status gained in the colonies are incorporated into Cranford society in a manner that obscures their origin. In this case, the narrative attempts to erase the vague aura of a threat; it negates Major Jenkyns's status by effecting his deracination.

The gain of wealth beyond one's station, accrued in exotic climes, is thus disassociated from the potential violation of middle-class recognitions of proper class status and behavior.

The society at Cranford, extremely attuned to matters of hierarchy and social standing, cannot accommodate the foreign couple in its domestic lifestyle. On some level the Jenkyns's inclusion in the narrative might seem to provide nothing more than an interesting episode, and it is passed over immediately after it occurs never to be referenced again. It is a strange thing for Gaskell to incorporate, and no doubt at least partly a result of the fact that *Cranford* was published serially over a long period in time. With each number, readers required entertainment and the reiteration of the type of fictional world Cranford supplies, namely one that is distinct from modern, urban life and domestic isolation. The visit of the East Indians does this, but also, by characterizing the Jenkyns's "East Indian" status as devoid of white privilege and secondary to "true" English identity, *Cranford* attempts to deny the imperialist practices that drive England's economy and thus the village's existence. In Victorian middle-class reading materials, such as the serial genres covered in chapter one, exporting English citizens to British colonies are meant to shore up Victorian middle-class values and English identity by depicting their character as unyielding, unchangeable. Their movement out of England is part of a fantasy that all the English need only the room and resources to thrive. However, once like characters move back into the domestic space of England they pose a threat to the myth of the metropole's distinctness from its colonies. Furthermore, because the characters are maligned—ostracized or de-classed—their return destabilizes not only the

national myth of England, but also the myth of the English character as something that remains constant across multiple contexts.

Each new reference to a returned citizen in the text indicates the extent that even the quaintest part of England has ties to and depends upon the greater British Empire.⁴⁴ Gaskell's serial novel consistently tries to repress evidence of the military and economic aspects of Imperialism and the ways they encroach on English life that could otherwise deny its involvement in Empire. However, *Cranford* also deconstructs the metropole/colony divide with the return of Peter Jenkyns at the end of its serialization. As the tale of Peter Jenkyns' initial exile from Cranford unwinds, it is clear that in the minds of Cranford's aging denizens the idea of Empire is still connected to the Napoleonic wars. In fact, Miss Matty still holds that Cranford's one-time panicked preparations for an invasion by Napoleon "were not at all trivial or trifling at the time. I know I used to wake up in the night many a time, and think I heard the tramp of the French entering Cranford" (206). Although these struggles are located in the past they are the pervasive sense of Empire that the residents of Cranford hold on to in memory, and it seems for them Imperialism still remains a means of protecting domestic life in England. The military struggles—including those referenced earlier in connection with Captain Brown—a re-imagined as immediate threats to domestic harmony, especially as Peter leaving to fight the French and his future service of the British Empire completely disrupts the Jenkyns family (214). During the time of *Cranford*'s composition England is,

⁴⁴ It is a well-established practice to examine the return of the empire into the fabric English life, and *Cranford* is typical of the finds of such studies to an extent. The now classic example of such an analysis is found in Edward Said's look at *Mansfield Park* in *Culture and Imperialism*, followed in kind by many studies that take his analysis of Austen as a starting point. See for example Bartine and Macquire, 32-56. For an example that predates Said, see Tony Tanner's *Jane Austen*.

of course, no longer locked in a struggle with France for global dominance, and so it would be easy to read Gaskell's references to fears of French invasion as mere context. But by demonstrating the persistence of these beliefs among the residents of Cranford, Gaskell indicates such conceptions of the British Empire are as quaintly old-fashioned as the persistence of outdated dress styles in the imagined village. The effects of this are twofold. While the ability of her village to withstand outside influence seems to be at the root of the charm of Cranford, Gaskell suggests that it is no longer practicable to deny the broadness of England's reach. However, the elements she is willing to import back into Cranford, a microcosm of England and English life, indicate that Gaskell is prepared to envision the middle class ready to accept the incorporation of very specific aspects of the colonies. Based on the narrative, it appears the only things liable to warrant such inclusion are things that can shore up middle-class values by repairing the domestic space.

It is not only returned soldiers, but their spouses, too, that raise questions about the extent to which English identity can remain stable when one has been far away for a long time. Among the *Deus ex machina* narrative strategies Gaskell employs in *Cranford*, perhaps none is stranger than that of the travelling magician, Signore Brunoni. That the magician who confounds the ladies of Cranford should have a twin brother whom he abandons, that the brother should have served in India, and that his wife should have met the long-lost Cranford resident Peter Jenkyns's are of course fabulous coincidences. But as narrative strategies they deepen the connections between Cranford's domestic idyll and the imperialistic forces that provide economic opportunities supporting its existence. The wife's narrative of the difficult life she faced accompanying her husband as he was

stationed with a regiment near Calcutta and her fantastic story of her deliverance in a jungle in India, are cast in sentimental, religious terms in an attempt to render any foreign contamination of English identity impossible. The narrative of this returned woman very nearly succeeds in upsetting the fiction that characters can return unaltered or at least subdued. To begin with, the woman, Mrs. Brown, indisputably demonstrates her commitment to her domestic role through her ability to travel with her husband and preserve her family unit in strange climes. Tragically, the Browns lose six of their children like “little buds nipped untimely, in that cruel India” (259). This is clearly a dangerous admission, for though Mrs. Brown acknowledges India’s imagined differences from England in this way, her quest to bring her one remaining baby back to England positions her as one who has been in contaminated lands and must now pose a risk as she seeks to re-assimilate. This is the point in all narratives for middle-class readers where an intervention must be made; the character about to return must demonstrate the proper middle-class values that will act as a true passport back home. For Mrs. Brown, these values are expressed through a purifying journey.

Taking her readers along on Mrs. Brown’s difficult, exotic travels proves a complicated narrative strategy for Gaskell; she is clearly invested in this exciting tale, but must continually work back against the foreign elements that would demand an acknowledgement of the contaminating possibilities of imperialism. Gaskell tries to contain the potential contamination by reasserting the values of the marriage bond, motherhood and Christian piety. Because of the sickness she references in her lament about the children who died in India, and because she travels through wild, unchristian lands, Mrs. Brown presents both a physical and ideological risk upon her return to

England. These concerns intertwine psychologically, as she claims to experience a sort of madness. Mrs. Brown breaks her domestic bond to her husband (but only with his blessing) in a long march intended to drive the “sickness” of India from her system: “. . . if this baby dies too, I shall go mad; the madness is in me now; but if you let me go down to Calcutta, carrying my baby step by step, it will may-be work itself off” (259). Mrs. Brown must show herself to be an ideal woman, a heroine through her maternal protection of her child. Through this extreme version of motherhood she is able to prove her commitment to saving her baby’s life while making an arduous trek through “thick forests . . . –along by the rivers’ side—from station to station, from Indian village to village” (259).

Just as the devotion to her child makes Mrs. Brown an ideal mother, so do Gaskell’s descriptions given through Mrs. Brown try to erase the foreignness of the land where she has been. Mrs. Brown relates, “I had been brought up near the Avon in Warwickshire, so that flowing noise sounded like home” (259). Interestingly, readers are given an opportunity to imagine an England in India; while this does not change the fears associated with foreign contamination, it does go some way to making the unfamiliar less strange. While Gaskell wants to grant her readers the imaginative access to this visions of “India,” her commitment to familiarizing the Imperial space points to her need to sanitize the threatening proximity to danger her narrative creates.

Through Mrs. Brown, Gaskell makes an argument that characterizes motherhood as a universal claim on sympathy. Mrs. Brown states “the natives were very kind. We could not understand one another; but they saw my baby on my breast, and they came out to me, and brought me rice and milk, and sometimes flowers” (260). Interestingly,

Gaskell's incorporation of the kind "natives" at this point seems to be an attempt to deconstruct the binary between the English citizen and the "other." This is not a case of defining identity against otherness, but rather an attempt to collapse those distinctions through middle-class values that are posited as ideals that transcend cultural difference. What prevents an egalitarian reading of this universal vision of motherhood is that the natives are still subservient to the white woman in their midst, still figured as primitive through their religious-like offerings of flowers, and still silent. What the attempt to deconstruct cultural difference yields, then, is a narrative that wants to purge the threat of foreign influences through an erasure of difference—one that does not succeed, although it does yield a more complex understanding of how Englishness is being defined for Victorian middle-class readers.

Cranford presents Mrs. Brown as an instance of a returned subject meant to unify the empire, to make it seem less like a collection of foreign spaces and more like a cohesive (if geographically different) extension of England. But the narrative erasures of difference and the efforts to use middle-class values as a panacea against the threat of foreign contamination continue to fall short of success in Mrs. Brown's story. In addition to the credibility with the middle class Mrs. Brown gains through her commitment to her marriage and her maternal sensibility, Gaskell paints her character as a devout Christian. Mrs. Brown carries with her an image of Mary and Jesus that she is gifted on her trip, which she gazes at in times of trouble (259-260). She places her faith in God: "I thought how God had cared for mothers ever since the world was made, and would care for me" (260), and prays frequently during the journey. Yet as in the case of appealing to a universal motherhood, Gaskell makes the further step of taking a culturally relative

stance toward religion. The icon of the Virgin Mary is specifically “done by a Catholic foreigner” (259)—an odd comment for an English person in India, presumably equally foreign in her current context. And, more surprisingly, Mrs. Brown relates

Oh! when I knew I had only two days’ journey more before me, I could not help it, ma’am—it might be idolatry, I cannot tell—but I was near one of the native temples, and I went in it with my baby to thank God for his great mercy; for it seemed to me that where others had prayed before to their God, in their joy or in their agony, was of itself a sacred place. (260)

As with her appeal to maternal values, Gaskell’s narrative makes a case for destabilizing the binary between Christianity and Eastern religions because the space of the temple is inherently a “sacred place.” Because of the dismissal of Catholicism (in which access to God is heavily mediated) as equally foreign and because of the direct spiritual access Mrs. Brown feels to her God, despite the foreign locale, Gaskell also can be seen as making an appeal to the strong current of Evangelical Christianity popular with the Victorian middle class.⁴⁵ Mrs. Brown’s story, in drawing three religious strains together (Catholic, Protestant, and an undefined Eastern belief system), is an attempt to erase the identity-altering potential of exposure to different theological tenets. That is to say, if the experience of other religions deepens connections to the “appropriate” line of religious thought, the risk of ideological contamination ceases to exist. As a resident of a land under British control, far from England’s domestic realm, and as a subject returned from deep entrenchment in a foreign place (so dangerous to women and children), it is paramount that Mrs. Brown demonstrates uncorrupted Christian piety. By arguing for a

⁴⁵ For an examination of the popularity of evangelical periodical texts—and values by extension—see Altick.

personal access to God despite location and echoing Evangelical theology, Gaskell's narrative wants to use middle-class values to shore up English identity. However, in doing so, this passage acknowledges the fluidity between religions and ideas that cannot be repressed. If Imperialism relies on fixed ideas of national identity to sustain a rigid idea of the nation-state, it will always lose control of the boundaries between colony and metropole, because attempts to accommodate different aspects of colonization can never erase the trepidation, violence, or fears behind the experiences of the returned British subject.

The last facet of Mrs. Brown's story, and the last undoing of Gaskell's attempts to find middle-class values in the lands of colonized peoples is the discovery of Peter Jenkyns, now known as the "Aga Jenkyns of Chunderabaddad" (261). It is Miss Matty's long lost brother, Peter, who takes in Mrs. Brown and her ailing child, Phoebe, saving the little girl's life just as he will later become the financial savior of his sister and, by extension, life at Cranford. Peter (who, it was rumored had either died or been "elected great Lama of Thibet" [261]) was at last knowledge placed in India, a fact that is immediately connected to Miss Pole's purchase of an "India muslin gown, long since worn out" (262) and proceeds after that same woman's small talk about bonds, the Share Market, and Miss Pole's "poor opinion of joint-stock banks in general" (262). The confluence of references to a far-off traveler and economic concerns foreshadows the collapse of Miss Matty's fortune and the ideological problems proposed by Peter Jenkyn's wealth, which he brings back from the colonies—though not in excess—as a means of preserving his sister's domestic happiness and restoring severed family ties.

Despite the welcome financial relief Peter's colonial wealth brings, it is still another incidence of a foreign element being drawn into the domestic idyll of Cranford.

Ultimately, despite the ways they call the stability of English identity into question and despite the trouble that must be gone through to negate the foreign influences that inevitable return along with a world traveller, the returned character served as a way to reconcile the demands of the English nation with the desire to remain unchanged. The collapse of Miss Matty's finances is emblematic of the fate of domestic prosperity that is not linked to concrete forms of wealth, such as the goods and trade offered by Britain's colonies. Arguably, the threat of her impoverishment due to the downfall of a speculating bank and the subsequent replacement of financial support from her brother's colonial wealth reveals a preference for economic gain derived from exchanges of goods and labor over that won through means often understood by nineteenth-century contemporaries as little better than gambling. But in order for Peter's wealth to be safely incorporated into Cranford without threatening the illusion of domestic self-sufficiency, the narrative must work out a strategy that allows Miss Matty's financial rescue without acknowledging the fluidity of what must remain a rigid conception of Nation-state and national identity. Gaskell's narrative begins to accomplish this incorporation by demonstrating that Miss Matty already has the potential means to support herself monetarily before Peter arrives back from India. This arrangement makes a subtle argument for recognition of colonial-derived wealth as a stable economic system, one likely to benefit the middle class.

It is paramount to narrator Mary Smith that Miss Matty's financial independence fixes her in a middle position, a detail that suits the needs of Gaskell's story but also

appeals to middle-class values of thrift, diligence, and class-appropriate behavior. Miss Matty cannot remain in the lower reaches of the upper class and cannot fall to the level of laboring for income, and so the narrative distances her from commerce as much as possible, letting her arrive at a more middle-class like station. In addition to living with her former servant Martha and her husband Jem (280), Mary, suggests Miss Matty “be an agent to the East India Tea Company, which then existed” (279). The teashop receives the support of the ladies of Cranford, and so the economic enterprise is licensed by class and society approval. Trading tea would preserve Miss Matty’s gentility, allowing her to earn money while eschewing the involvement in “the degradation of condescending to anything like trade” (279). Mary distances the sale of tea from any connection to physical labor, noting that “tea [is] neither greasy nor sticky” and the sordid practice of advertising alike: “A small genteel notification of her being liscenced to sell tea . . . could be laced where no one could sea it” (279). Miss Matty’s “small dining-parlous was . . . converted into a shop, without any of its degrading characteristics” (286). These details successfully place Miss Matty as one who neither lives independently nor undertakes labor to earn money, allowing her to earn money without the degradation the characters seems concerned about, as she essentially does nothing vastly different from participating in domestic life. Her measuring of teas and sweets differs only in the small profit she derives, and even that profit is not enough to involve her deeply in commerce, as we find out Miss Matty is not rigorous in charging for her goods especially in the case of children. Furthermore, Gaskell has the other women of Cranford secretly aid in Miss Matty’s support (282-283). Between her manner of income and the secret present of money from friends, Miss Matty is shown to be capable of surviving without the aid that

Peter eventually provides and to be capable of doing so in a modest way that fits perfectly with Victorian middle-class ideals.

And yet behind the modest façade of Miss Matty's new situation is further commentary on the importance of Imperialism and how foreign influences can be mediated in such a way that makes them acceptable in middle-class life without disrupting the domestic myth of a little England. The sale of tea accomplishes this not just by distancing Miss Matty from labor, but because tea is a commodity that has already to an extent divorced itself from its Imperial origins through its more-or-less complete conversion to English domestic life. Tea has the benefit of representing both the necessity of Empire to domesticity in Britain and its preference as a traded commodity rather than a speculative practice. A routine part of British life, tea is a foreign element that has been successfully normalized. It is this degree of normalization that middle-class reading works to create for returning subjects of the empire. Gaskell's novel attempts to incorporate its returned characters back into the domestic sphere, at a time when there was still great need to normalize the movement of people, ideas, and (some) goods back through the channels and barriers of empire.

When Peter finally returns home, *Cranford* repeats the earlier narrative strategies it employed in the case of Captain Brown, the Signora Brunoni (Mrs. Brown), and other returned English subjects. Peter must be incorporated back into the village in a way that erases the connection to the military violence that sustains the British Empire, the vast capitalist enterprise of Imperialism, and the threat of foreignness. In order to accommodate him back into domestic life, the narrative must accommodate Peter's colonial wealth, his status as a military male, and the potentially altered state of this

Englishness. In economic terms, it is important for the conclusion of the serial that Peter's wealth is enough to finalize Miss Matty's distance from commerce providing her with a modest type of gentility. The fact that Peter's money comes from foreign endeavors has been somewhat resolved by the fact that Miss Matty has found means of supporting her self that are appropriately middle-class (as described above). But the origins of Peter's money must also be tempered by the fact that he has not earned *excessive* wealth, which would weaken the acceptability of his colonial enterprises. For one, greater wealth would hint at social striving or an unappealing reach at a gauche status position beyond the modest gentility that typifies the main characters of *Cranford*. Peter Jenkyns's wealth is de-emphasized, despite his having lived successfully in India for so many years. The crucial aspect is that Miss Matty closes her shop and redistributes what would have gone to create profit as gifts among her friends, while gifts of Peter's and Miss Matty's own purchase, like a new book for Mary Smith, are given out as well (296). The economic means of the Jenkynses shifts from commerce and trade (Miss Matty's shop and the plantation in India Peter sells) back to living off of an income and acting once more as patrons of the community rather than generators of profit. The ending of the commercial enterprise and giving of gifts occasions Mary's comment that Peter did not return "rich as a Nabob," and indeed considers himself "poor" (296). This has everything to do with keeping their characters squarely within the rubric of modest class position, appealing to a middle-class audience, perhaps, because the Jenkynses become stable and successful without the disadvantage of being class strivers.⁴⁶ The eschewing of Peter's wealth demonstrates the narrative's need, even Imperialism's need,

⁴⁶ That Peter is not a "Nabob" in particular also speaks to his middle-class respectability and distances him from the trope of the brash, status-hungry but gentility-lacking nabob figure.

to moderate the expectations of personal wealth and erase the presence of the vast capitalist enterprise the empire truly represents. Any enticement toward the colonies that promised riches instead of modified, appropriately middle-class aspirations shared too much with the roguery texts like Hood's "Letter from the Cape" had long been wary of.

Cranford must avoid disrupting the stable sense of English identity and English life the portrait of a self-sufficient village provides, and so integrating Peter's wealth without exposing the vast capitalist network of the British Empire must also be accompanied by reassurances that Peter's long time abroad has not changed his English identity. He must still be able to pass, as it were, as a true member of Cranford society. Peter Jenkyns first appears as curious as Major Jenkyns did many installments ago, following the established trope of the changed subject from the colonies: "his clothes had an out-of-the-way foreign cut about them; and his face was deep brown as if tanned and re-tanned by the sun" (293). The cut of the suit's foreignness suggests that Peter is now, like his clothes, a changed representation or approximation of the English citizen, a step removed from authenticity. Temporality has intervened as well, as both Miss Matty and Peter were still imagining each other as their younger selves, Miss Matty remarking "I suppose hot climates age people very quickly" (294) while Peter has brought her back gifts that would have been prized by a young lady during their youth. The narrative attempts to resolve his embodied differences in character by insisting that the product of his experiences abroad are now largely invented. This occurs through Gaskell's version of meta-commentary on the reliability of Peter's narration of life in India and elsewhere in service of the British Empire. Peter's years abroad are never fully explicated for Gaskell's readers. Mary Smith acknowledges she "never quite understood the whole

story,” believing Peter might be exaggerating to tease her, and, more importantly, his stories are not only far-fetched (if still plausible) but are variable based on who his intended audience happens to be. The extent of his history is as follows:

He had been a volunteer at the siege of Rangoon; had been taken prisoner by the Burmese; had somehow obtained favour and eventual freedom from knowing how to bleed the chief of the small tribe in some case of dangerous illness; that on his release from years of captivity he had had his letters returned from England with the ominous word ‘Dead’ marked upon them; and believing himself to be the last of his race, he had settled down as an indigo planter; and had proposed to spend the remainder of his life in the country to whose inhabitants and modes of life he had become habituated. (295)

Were this narration to be taken seriously by the residents of Cranford, and by extension Gaskell’s audience, it would create a series of problems. For one, it calls up the threatened existence of English citizens abroad, much as Signora Brunoni’s (the magician’s wife, Mrs. Brown) earlier trek through unknown jungles nearly succeeded in doing. The danger and violence of his military involvement invites the same issues of militaristic masculinity that Captain Brown (no relation to the Brunoni/Brown husband and wife) once threatened the drawing rooms of Cranford with, and, the mistake in correspondence that convinced him his family was dead both disrupt the illusion that familial bonds and other middle-class virtues can sustain or enhance one’s Englishness when one is abroad. As a result, Gaskell begins to discredit the very narration that accounts for Peter’s absence all these years in a manner that tempers his exoticism and discredits any unwanted foreignness.

That Peter tells “more wonderful stories than Sinbad the sailor; and . . . was quite as good as an Arabian night any evening” introduces the element of fantasy, while Mary Smith’s insistence that his stories are mostly products of exaggeration further questions his reliability as a narrator:

I thought it was quite possible that all Mr. Peter’s stories might be true although wonderful; but . . . I found, that if we swallowed an anecdote of tolerable magnitude one week, we had the dose considerably increased the next . . . especially as I noticed that when his sister was present the account of Indian life were comparatively tame . . . when the Rector came to call, Mr. Peter talked in a different way about the countries he had been in. But I don’t think the ladies in Cranford would have considered him such a wonderful traveler if they had only heard him talk in the quiet way he did to him. They liked him the better, indeed, for being what they called ‘so very Oriental.’ (297)

Peter’s stories are geared toward the entertainment or surprise of his female companions. In response to religious authority in the form of the rector, Peter is shown to adopt what we can imagine is a more serious, reflective tone less given to exaggeration. Thus Gaskell’s narrative reincorporates Peter into the quiet domestic realm of Cranford by suggesting he is little more than a good conversationalist while granting him masculine dignity as a serious observer of the other cultures he has inhabited. That he is “so very Oriental” does not complicate his standing as an Englishman, because his stories are little more mysterious or threatening than the parlor magic of the very English Signor Brunoni.

Peter’s masculinity, established by his work as a soldier and hard-scrabble survivor of his days held captive in Burma, is tempered by his immediate acceptance into

Cranford's purely feminine society (297) and by his new role as an asexual, patriarchal figure. Peter must fulfill the missing male familial roles of the serial, and so his masculinity must disavow its militant associations. He must be a strong but unthreatening presence to Cranford's social organization; he can be fatherly, but not marriageable. In addition to deflating the veracity of his daring stories, then, Peter will act with his sister as surrogate grandparent to Martha and Jem's child in their new, blended household. And despite the opportunity, Peter will not marry (310). The novel has now done the work of repairing the once broken domestic space, and has now drawn all the tendrils it has sent out into the Empire back into the Jenkyns's home. The narrative's reincorporation of the lost Peter works again and again to keep a stable concept of Englishness intact, so that the myth of an insular island Nation can function irrespective of the ways we can see the machinations of Imperialism at work.

In the chapter Gaskell titles "Peace at Cranford," Peter creates a literal manifestation of the *Pax Britannica* in the village through the ideological and economic stability his return provides.⁴⁷ But that slogan, and its metonymic connection to Cranford, encompasses the very contradictions at the core of the Victorian middle-class's relationship with Imperialism. The *Pax* is, of course, not really so peaceful when just below the surface one finds evidence of the martial past of even the most commonplace of English citizens, and Cranford continually glimpses the global military and economic domination that made this idea of "peace" possible. For all the attempts *Cranford* makes to fetishize this insularity of its village, celebrating its quaintness, its purity of English life, it still cannot fully repress evidence of Cranford's dependence on the

⁴⁷ The chapter heading derives from the 1853 edition, as the serialization in *Household Words* would not have included numbered or titled chapters.

metropole/colony dynamic. Although Gaskell continually tries to deconstruct that binary, and although the novel seeks to universalize Victorian middle-class values, the novel cannot successfully deny that Imperialism has forced an evolution of what it means to be an English citizen. Peter's changeable narration must remain shrouded in difference and doubts just as Gaskell's can only attempt to contain the influence the British Empire has had on the meaning of Englishness that *Cranford* (through exaggeration) typifies. Like the auditors of Peter's stories, English audiences of writing designed to cheerfully entertain could only just imagine what the prosperity of an Empire meant for domestic life. But such audiences did know that while family, acquaintances, or those in need of prosperity could potentially find success abroad, Empire meant that the bodies, ideas, and material gains that came back changed things irrevocably.

Bleak House does not have as many characters who return from abroad as *Cranford*, nor does its narrative rely so heavily on returning British subjects to England to aid its plot. But it is preoccupied with exploring the health of England in contrast to its colonies. For Dickens, believer in the opportunities the British Empire provided to alleviate social ills and give full range to the potential of the ever-rising English middle class, the symbiotic connection between colony and metropole creates a different kind of crisis for the English domestic space. In *Bleak House* (serialized from 1852 to 1853) the health of the English nation (and the middle-class by extension) is criticized through Dickens's depictions of poverty and orphaned or neglected children. The novel links the majority of these depictions with philanthropists and organizations that are focused on charity in the far-reaches of the globe rather than at home in England—most famously, in the case of Mrs. Jellyby. Critics have approached Dickens's commentary in these cases

through the lenses of gender, race, and class, and these analyses convincingly connect his critique of “Telescopic Philanthropy” to his disappointment with England’s ability to care for its poor.⁴⁸ But *Bleak House* is equally concerned with maintaining proper control over the exchanges between colony and metropole dictated by the needs of an Imperialistic Nation-State.

Whereas Gaskell’s *Cranford* attempts to deconstruct the colony/metropole binary and deploy middle-class values as a means of erasing any contradictions, Dickens’s *Bleak House* is invested in maintaining the balance of power in favor of England, the metropole, despite acknowledging that the symbiotic relationship allows the ingress and egress of capital, bodies, and ideologies. Dickens’s description of failed domestic life and neglected, impoverished children does argue, as the homily states, for charity that begins at home. Charity that begins at home, however, does more than redirect wealth away from the reaches of the British Empire. Charity should reinstate the economic disparity that figures the colony as the source of raw materials for the sole benefit of the metropole, barring others from participation in the now global marketplace. Charity should ensure the proper flow of sympathy, as well as capital, in order to emphasize the rigid boundaries of the nation state. Dickens links his depictions of poverty, of broken domestic spaces, and of the squalor and ignorance of the poor to his critique of philanthropy abroad in order to make an argument against envisioning the colonies as a site of missionary charity and to re-envision them as part of a capitalist enterprise that raises the status of English citizens—namely those citizens of the middle class.

⁴⁸ For two recent examples of such criticism, see Stuchebrukhov’s “*Bleak House* as an Allegory of a Middle-Class Nation.” and Emily Heady’s “The Polis’s Different Voices: Narrating England’s Progress in Dickens’s *Bleak House*.”

The locus of that discussion is not necessarily exclusive to the character of Mrs. Jellyby. To get his middle-class audience to alter their notion of the empire as a space for charity flowing outward from the nation-state, to get them to see the Empire as a place for middle-class expansion, Dickens uses the humble street-sweeper, Jo, to argue for the proper direction of sympathy. Aside from his association with Tom-all-Alone's, Jo is place-less, his literal dislocation emphasized by the constant orders for him to "move on" despite his protest that there is no where for him to move to (238). Jo is pushed so far to the margins of England's domestic social order that he exists only in a type of limbo, and this marginal state is explicitly tied to the failure of missions abroad to do good at home. Dickens has Jo sit "on the door-step of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" while making it clear here and at his death that he has been doomed to heathenism because Christianity is directed outside the English domestic sphere (198). Jo "has no idea, poor wretch, of the spiritual destitution of the coral reef in the Pacific, or what it costs to look up the precious souls among the cocoa-nuts and bread-fruit" (199). The emphasis on exotic fruit hints at the natural abundance of spaces abroad,⁴⁹ whereas Jo sits and eats a dirty piece of bread (198), making the "spiritual destitution" of these unknown inhabitants ring hollow. The use of "costs" and "precious" indicates the misuse of capital that would be better directed to the unfortunate residents of places like Tom-all-Alone's, a name that, like Jo's placeless-ness, directs attention to the abandoned poor in England itself. Jo and those like him are contrasted with the native populations of foreign places in a way that makes the former embodied, vividly present, and the latter ever so

⁴⁹ Recall the picture of tropical abundance in the *Punch* cartoon "Here and There: or, Emigration a Remedy" discussed in the first chapter. By this logic, Jo would receive more Christian attention if he resided in the colonies—either as a colonist or a colonized person.

ephemeral. Surely this critique privileges the white poor of England over the ethnic poor of the globe, but it also argues that the age of missionary charity and exploration should be abandoned in favor of Imperialism predicated on capitalist exploitation.

Although Dickens's narrative wishes to use Jo to direct the flow of sympathy in toward the English, it has the unintended consequence of allowing the figure to draw foreign influence into the domestic space by association. The difference between Jo and foreign recipients of charity is further dwelled upon by Dickens later in the novel. When the dying Jo is brought to Mr. George's shooting gallery the narrator remarks:

[Jo] is not one of Mrs. Pardiggle's Tockahopo Indians, he is not one of Mrs. Jellyby's lambs, being wholly unconnected with Borrioboola-Gha; he is not softened by distance and unfamiliarity; he is not a genuine foreign-grown savage; he is the ordinary home-made article . . . native ignorance, the growth of English soil and climate, sinks his immortal nature lower than the beasts that perish. (564)

This passage reiterates what the novel has already established, namely the irony of finding a "savage" (presumably better) of English variety within the metropole. The reference to "climate" harkens back to the earlier comment about the fruits of foreign places, establishing a binary between the fetid, urban English climate (if we consider the descriptions of the disease ridden Tom-all-Alone's) and the more abundant foreign one. Likewise, the narrative constructs a binary between Jo and the Tockahopo and Borrioboola-Gha inhabitants as a means of showing the English "savage" to be more deserving of charity and national attention. Yet in establishing the binary in order to create an ironic critique of the flow of sympathy outward from metropole to colony, Dickens cannot establish Jo as the privileged recipient of charity without admitting

slippage between the two. By designating Jo the English savage, albeit the one he prefers sympathy be directed at, Dickens must rely on the ideological construction of the foreign one. Just as new regulations in the colonies provided the basis for laws governing London citizens,⁵⁰ so does Dickens's reliance on the trope of the "savage" define poverty on domestic soil. Thus the binary reinforces the connectedness of social life and the strong interdependence of colony and metropole as it seeks to direct the flow of capital to the nation-state inward.

By presenting the pitiable Jo to his readers, it would seem that Dickens is positioning himself as an advocate of an England that remains more insular. Like *Cranford's* village, *Bleak House's* urban setting calls attention to the sanctity of British soil as a space to be privileged, even in its unconsecrated slums. Playing with the most well-known descriptions of the vast British Empire, the narrator describes morning in Tom-all-Alone's: "The day begins to break now; and in truth it might be better for the national glory even that the sun should sometimes set upon the British dominions, than that it should ever rise upon so vile a wonder as Tom" (553). The message here is quite clear: take care of England even at the expense of shrouding part of the Empire in darkness. We might go so far as to take "darkness" to be of a spiritual kind, as Dickens dwells on Jo's lack of Christianity in reference to a mission in particular. Like the comparison of Jo to foreign "savages," the attempt to divide England from its Empire and to privilege the domestic space fails to isolate the British nation; the one cannot be wholly defined without the other. Unlike Gaskell, who emphasizes the difference

⁵⁰ See the work of Philippa Levine. For example, her commentary on laws governing age of consent and laws allowing for the arrest and examination of lone women at night originated in British military outposts of the colonies in *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*, New York: Routledge, 2003.

between metropole and colony to deny their symbiosis, Dickens in this moment emphasizes their similarity. Hoping to develop a sense of national obligation, to create a vision of an England that values even the lowliest of its subjects, Dickens locates the darkness of a foreign land in an English slum. Of course, the end result is the same. Like Gaskell, Dickens cannot argue for privileging England without demonstrating how fluid the barrier between England and its protectorates truly is.

For Dickens, the domestic crisis created by the “channels and barriers” of Imperialism has less to do with erasing the violence, disease, and foreignness of empire through middle-class values than it does using middle-class values to reinvent the colonies as spaces one capitalizes on rather than spaces for which one provides capital. *Bleak House* would seem to be making an anti-imperialist, “little England” argument in its efforts to direct the resources of missions and other charities to domestic causes instead of foreign ones. Indeed this is the exact argument embodied by the phrase “telescopic philanthropy” and by Mrs. Jellyby’s domestic failures. However, Dickens, proponent of the economic possibilities offered by the empire (specifically as it relates to the English middle-class), criticizes the Boorioboolan scheme in a manner meant to advocate for the continued predominance of English sovereignty abroad even as he deplores the flow of charity outward from metropole to colony. In other words, he objects to allowing the indigenous inhabitants of British dominions to participate equally in the capital gains of Empire when he views them as inherently unqualified for equal treatment.

The language surrounding Mrs. Jellyby’s charitable scheme often positions philanthropy as an insatiable drain on national resources. One of Mrs. Jellyby’s admirers

and coconspirators, the sycophant Mr. Quale, appears to “brush his hair farther and farther back, until the very roots were almost ready to fly out of his head in inappeasable philanthropy” (182), clearly pointing out that there will never be an end to the capital drain of these projects. Elsewhere Dickens uses the phrase “rapacious benevolence” (93) to describe charity workers and their practices. One imagines it is this same “inappeasable” and “rapacious” charity practiced by the never satisfied, perpetually at work Mrs. Jellyby, who strives to aid the Boriobooligans while her own family suffers. Interestingly, Mrs. Jellyby’s family is described with the same terms as foreign others. Much like Jo, Mr. Jellyby, who “never spoke a word . . . might have been a native, but for his complexion” (41). Indeed, the fact that Caddy identifies with “man and a brother” and Peepy with the “Wild Beasts” specifically suggests a link between the foundering English family and the reaches of the Empire as sites equally worthy of attendance (166). For Dickens, an inappeasable scheme like Mrs. Jellyby’s becomes a never-ending form of neglect of everything except her “favourite child,” her “public duties” (297). Not only will Mrs. Jellyby go on to need more money, support, and unceasing effort for her next project at the expense of her domestic duties, but what she asks is for the continual deployment of capital to the empire with no proper return on the investment. This is not how capitalism, wherein investments yield returns, is meant to function. The failure of Mrs. Jellyby’s domestic space represents more than her failure as a wife and mother, and even more than the failure of foreign aid at the expense of aid to the needy within England; her offense is chiefly the violation of the basic economics of Imperialism. Mrs. Jellyby is guilty of disrupting a hierarchy of sympathy, where the English in England

deserve sympathy first. She is also at fault for disrupting the proper movement of capital beyond the borders of the nation-state with the end goal of profit as the result.

If, as with Gaskell's *Cranford*, we take the domestic space run by Mrs. Jellyby as a metaphor for England the nation-state, then it might seem that privileging charity abroad were the sum of her transgressions. But an Imperial nation state both requires movement across the barriers of its borders and a policing of the things that cross them. Although Mrs. Jellyby's scheme does not directly invite foreign elements back in, it threatens to complicate who can be included under the rubric of British citizen and improperly redirects the flow of capitalist gains. The Borrioboola-Gha scheme involves exporting working class families that will inhabit an area in which the natives are both treated as raw material and as partners in production. Dickens creates constant slippage between the coffee to be cultivated and the natives to be cultivated. For example, he writes of "the cultivation of the coffee, conjointly with the natives" (165) and of the "Native and Coffee cultivation question" (298). In each case, grammatically, the natives are equally an agricultural product and humans to be improved. And yet this language also seems to suggest that in the settlement the Borribooligans will be working with the white settlers to raise the coffee. The linguistic slippage here invites several interpretations: if the people of Borrioboola-Gha are a raw material like the coffee beans, how could they be processed in a way that is beneficial to the metropole? If they share in the work of the settlers, will they be compensated as equals? If they are also to be cultivated, is the end goal not to raise them to a more equal standing as other (perhaps even white) inhabitants of the British Empire? These options fail at two different extremes: to literally "process" the Borribooligans like a raw material would violate the

taboos against slavery now inviolate in England, but to treat them equal to the British seems unthinkable. Neither of these options represents the proper flow of sympathy as the English must, at this point in time, maintain an anti-slavery stance as well as privileging the needs of the English poor above those of unknown others.

Dickens is left with no other recourse beyond retreating to the natives supposed (natural) inferiority as Mrs. Jellyby's scheme fails "in consequence of the King of Borriboola-Gha wanting to sell everybody—who survived the climate—for Rum" (768). Here also, the economic order of Imperialism is violated in that profit is being generated on the "incorrect" side of the metropole/colony divide. In order to avoid violating a hierarchy of sympathy, and in order to avoid advocating for undue influence of native populations on English philanthropic schemes, the privilege of even the poorest of the true English, and the economic health of English, Dickens must portray the Borribooligans as unworthy of philanthropic aid or of economic participation across Imperial borders. The problem with *Bleak House*, as a result, is that its critiques of Mrs. Jellyby, her scheme, and the natives themselves make an argument that is anti-imperialist, anti-free trade, and anti-sympathy. This seems at odds with the rest of Dickens's work and even his private exertions in the service of the British Empire.⁵¹

At times Dickens the author of *Bleak House* bears more of a resemblance to his skeptical colleague Thomas Hood, who viewed the Empire as unlikely to benefit any of the working or middle-classes in England. But a consideration of class resolves the paradox of policy that Dickens embroils himself in through his critique of Mrs. Jellyby. It seems, that in trying to enforce the cultural and economic boundaries of Imperialism

⁵¹ Dickens himself was no stranger with exporting people, thanks to his involvement in Urania cottage, his scheme with Lady Burdett-Coutts to reform women before paying their passage to Australia. See Chapter 1 n. 8 (6).

Dickens must momentarily sacrifice positions he otherwise holds steadfast to. An interesting detail of the Borriboola-Gha settlement is that it is designed specifically to resettle and aid working class families. As Mrs. Jellyby points out, her project received a large response of “one hundred and seventy families . . . averaging five persons in each, either gone or going to the left bank of the Niger” (295) closely followed by “fifty-eight new letters from manufacturing families anxious to understand the details of the Native and Coffee Cultivation question” (298). The large families and those specifically identified as “manufacturing,” indicate that Mrs. Jellyby’s scheme is one targeted at relocating members of the working class. When we consider the position Dickens takes on the British Empire elsewhere in his works, as well as his reputation as a reform-minded writer in general, it would seem Borriboola-Gha would be something the author would be far less critical of.

It is likely that Dickens takes advantage of the time frame of *Bleak House* (most likely set during the 1830s) to emphasize an evolving view of emigration in Victorian society through the lens of class. The realistic framework of Mrs. Jellyby’s scheme, however exaggerated in the text, should be noted. Most schemes for emigration at the time *Bleak House* was set were handled by private philanthropic organizations with little or no governmental oversight or intervention. According to Historian Marjory Harper, prior to a shift in the 1830s a Malthusian view of emigration—alleviating surplus population—was the predominant impetus for such schemes, as seems to be the case with Mrs. Jellyby’s Borriboola-Gha settlement. This approach would later be criticized as a

scheme for merely “shoveling out the paupers” (76).⁵² During the 1830s, led by reformer Edward Gibbon Wakefield, those interested in promoting emigration tended to advocate for “systematic colonization” by “eligible settlers” (76). Mrs. Jellyby’s scheme is not portrayed negatively only on the grounds that she ignores her family and ignores the poor of England. Rather, she creates an opportunity that complicates the grounds of British identity, thwarts the proper flow of capital and sympathy back across English borders, and, lastly, does not conform to a rationalistic view of emigration and settlement that privileges English citizens that, while deserving of charity and mercy, are not representative of the type of colonists England should export.

It is within this context that the trope of the returned citizen appears in *Bleak House* and clarifies what Dickens’s envisions as the end game of emigration. The type of English citizen England should export, finally, is the one that can be safely reincorporated into the domestic space of the nation should those individuals choose to return. Like Peter Jenkyns, Major Brown, or the Brunoni’s in *Cranford*, these individuals must be able to satisfy the values of middle-class Victorian culture. Dickens dramatizes the proper type of re-entry in *Bleak House* through his depiction of the Bagnet family, minor characters whose presence in the novel as returned citizens from the empire assist in the novel’s climax and conclusion. The Bagnets are Dickens’s antithesis to the Jellyby family, an exemplary domestic unit whose children literally bear the names of military posts that protect the interests of the empire—Quebec, Malta, and Woolwich (342). Likewise, Mr. Bagnet’s nickname, Lignum Vitae, is derived from a “dense hardwood from the West Indies used for making . . . durable articles” (419 n.3). These names draw

⁵² For more on schemes for emigration see Marjory Harper’s “British Migration and the Peopling of the Empire” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III The Nineteenth Century*.

attention to the family's experience in foreign places, but specifically in ways that call attention to the strength of the British Empire through its military and the use it makes of the raw materials presumably placed throughout the globe for the benefit of the English. While the Bagnets themselves do not quite attain the social or economic standing as the middle class, they provide middle-class readers with the assurance that as citizens of the same empire they all benefit from work in the name of imperialism. As a perfectly ordered unit, the Bagnets conform so well to the Victorian ideals of domestic harmony, thrift, and moral goodness that their movement across national borders only signifies how a middle-class invigorated by the benefits of Imperialism can invigorate the British citizenry.

Through the Bagnets, Dickens provides a corrective, a suggestion of the proper relationship between colony and metropole. Mrs. Bagnet is extremely capable, especially in contrast to Mrs. Jellyby's disastrous household and tireless efforts toward what the novel argues is an unworthy cause. Each aspect of her household runs by an "exact system" (342), and when Mrs. Bagnet takes action she does so efficiently and admirably. In fact, her goodness is described in reference to her experiences as a traveler of the British-dominated globe: "Mrs. Bagnet, quite fresh and collected—as she would be, if her next point, with no new equipage and outfit, were the Cape of Good Hope, the Island of Ascension, Hong Kong, or any other military station" (656). The Bagnet household provides a parallel between nation and domestic space that reads the colony/metropole relationship far more positively than that of the Jellyby's. In addition, Mrs. Bagnet's steadfastness represents, again, the immutability of English identity from the points of the globe back to the realm of England. Taking the Bagnets, the Jellybys, and the

Borriboola-Gha scheme into consideration together reveals how Dickens is able to use *Bleak House* to satisfy the claims of reform both at home and abroad; the novels facilitates the co-existence of the anti-poverty, “Little England” arguments alongside the promotion of British Imperialism. Class becomes the deciding factor, and thus Dickens’s position toward the British Empire emerges. It is not that he would prefer not to send people out to foreign places, but rather that the empire should be populated with those fit to benefit from it properly. Fit, in this case, is not defined by those who can radically ascend the social ladder; fit is defined as anyone who embodies the moral virtues of being English and is deemed worthy of attaining an appropriate level of financial security determined by their existing status.

The popular fiction of the middle class needed to do more than help its readers imagine foreign places and normalize the movement of its fellow citizens out across the globe. While imagining foreign places—threatening or otherwise—and dealing with separation or loss necessitated by distance was difficult, in some ways it is not the most unfathomable part of a nation that expands across the globe. What happens when those once known to us return unrecognizable? Did life in a foreign place have the power to break down the markers of an identity that was supposed to be stable? While *Cranford* and *Bleak House* succeed at allaying these fears to varying degrees, they both, finally, imagine that English values can be applied to even the most foreign location—as if England’s values dressed up as domesticity could exist anywhere. While literary depictions of returned British subjects attempt to erase the process through which Imperialism presents threats to the ideological construction of English identity, these middle-class reading materials were ultimately working toward the perpetuation of

British values and tradition through the return of imaginary citizens. Middle-class values sanitized foreign elements, but they did even more than that. When the Empire and the domestic space of the nation continue to bear closer and closer resemblance, the interests of Imperialism are that much more justifiable. Rather than settle for a nation that mirrored domestic ideals, the empire could try to create an English parlor the size of an entire globe.

Chapter Three

Judges or Witnesses? Responding to the Morant Bay Rebellion and the Governor Eyre Controversy, 1865–1868

News of the rebellion in Morant Bay, Jamaica, and its subsequent repression by British soldiers following orders issued under martial law by the Jamaican Governor, Edward John Eyre, came to England in November of 1865. Jamaican newspapers and returning colonists brought tales of bloody revolt, but soon the issue became the cruelty with which the Jamaican inhabitants of the British colony had been treated.⁵³ For the next three years, Parliament, public sentiment, and the popular literature for English middle-class readers would work to define the “Jamaica Question” and to reach a national consensus that would continue to endorse the British Empire as a moral force for good and a necessary condition of English life. At the root of the debates surrounding the Jamaica Question, and those of the liberals and conservatives in Parliament, it appears that middle-class consent for the status quo was very much at stake.

Three months after news of the rebellion, *Punch* included a poem about the controversy to encourage its predominantly middle-class audience to adopt a patriotic stance toward the issue. In “The Bold Governor Eyre and the Bulls of Exeter Hall, (A Song for the Streets),” the author directs readers’ attention to Exeter Hall, a building on the Strand famous for hosting the meetings of antislavery societies and dissenting

⁵³ Bernard Semmel’s *Jamaican Blood and Victorian Conscience: The Governor Eyre Controversy* pinpoints the rate at which news trickled in and defines the initial exaggerations of atrocities committed by Jamaicans that were followed by the governor’s own reports to the colonial office. See Semmel 15–18.

religious groups.⁵⁴ The poem is worth examining at length because it weaves together the many concerns that became embroiled in the Eyre controversy and it attempts to align patriotism with sympathy for the governor. According to the verse, at Exeter Hall:

There people resort to hear spouters abuse
 Mahommedans, Catholics, Pagans and Jews,
 Ex-drunkards talk cant, Irish clergymen brawl,
 And fanatics howl nonsense in Exeter Hall. (lines 5–8)

This second stanza of the poem means to characterize the “fanatics” as those who would defend the Sepoy rebels, “Fenians,” and others, as well as temperance, and groups these interests as part of a radical agenda, if not outright “nonsense.” The poem continues:

The victim, just now, of its blather and blare,
 Is a brave British Gentleman, Governor Eyre,
 Who, for saving Jamaica with powder and ball,
 Has roused all the malice of Exeter Hall.

The Hall has its Pets, whom you must not attack,
 And chiefly it pets QUASHI-BUNGO the black:
 And if QUASHI-BUNGO quotes words from St. Paul,
 It’s ready to kiss him in Exeter Hall.

At times QUASHI-BUNGO from scripture refrains,
 And chops up white people, and scoops out their brains:

⁵⁴ “The Bold Governor and the Bulls of Exeter Hall, (A Song for the Streets).” *Punch* 10 Feb. 1866: 62.

Uprises at once the philanthropist squall,

“Of course you provoked him,” says Exeter Hall. (9–20)

It is telling that it is “Jamaica” that Eyre saves, and not Jamaicans, because Eyre was widely seen to have prevented the loss of the colony to the crown. The song treats Eyre as the hero and savior of the white minority, ignoring the Jamaicans who were brutally targeted in the wake of the rebellion; it does so by aligning the racial caricature of “Quashi-Bungo” with dissenting religious organizations like the Baptists and Wesleyans—hence the inclusion of the caricatures quoting scripture.⁵⁵ In one swift move, the author criticizes charity for Jamaicans and dissenting Christianity by attacking a people he sees as inferior and the naïveté of those who would defend them. The principles of reform, the Evangelical idea that one can be saved, and the equality of other races are bound together as false and unpatriotic, because they would align the middle class against a hero of the Empire. The poem concludes with a strong assertion of national feeling, embodied in the personification of England, John Bull, and an invocation of the Queen:

Now John stops his ears to fanatical spite,
 And suspects QUASHI-BUNGO was served very right,
 But he’ll hear the whole story, not told in the drawl,
 And spasmodic bewailings of Exeter Hall.

But if, when the tale of Jamaica is told,

⁵⁵ Semmel points out that of the 440,000 people living in Jamaica (according to an 1861 census) almost 30% were reported churchgoers. The majority identified with the Wesleyans and there were 26,000 Baptists; the Jamaican Baptists were “the heart of doctrinal and political dissent” (34).

The QUEEN gives her thanks to the Governor bold,
 What a bellow will burst from the favourite stall
 Of the big bulls of Bashan in Exeter Hall! (29–36)⁵⁶

The author seems to have little doubt that Eyre's name will be cleared and, in anticipation of the inquiry that would take place, seems to object in the main to the manner of "bemoaning" more so than scrutinizing the governor's actions. John Bull, being fair, agrees to hear the case but will not resort to being "fanatical" or "spasmodic." It is the register of the debate that "John Bull" treats as the chief problem. "John Bull" positions himself as a fair judge who listens to evidence presented properly. A similar critique can be found embedded in much of the literature that responds to the Jamaica Question; the manner of the reaction to the event was as significant as discovering the nature of the rebellion and its repression. It was precisely, as I will argue in this chapter, the nature of the middle class's response to the Eyre controversy that Victorian middle-class reading wanted to regulate.

The *Punch* song demonstrates just how much the conservative elements of English society had at stake in the outcome of the Eyre affair—the continuation of British imperialism and the security of the cultural consent that made the system of empire possible, yes, but it also needed to steer that same audience away from the political platform of parliamentary radicals. In 1865, even before news of the rebellion in Jamaica reached England, Exeter Hall's dissenting religious groups had favored abolition and the

⁵⁶ "bulls of Bashan" is a reference to Psalm 22: "Many bulls surround me; / fierce bulls of Bashan encircle me. / They open their mouths against me, / lions that rend and roar." The psalm, which speaks of a devout follower being unjustly persecuted and calling on the Lord, affirms and praises the work the lord does on behalf of the faithful. The rhetoric here is an early instance of the way Governor Eyre was positioned by conservatives as a hero being unjustly vilified.

better treatment of the Jamaican people—something that cut into the profitability of that colony. Radical politics and liberal politicians, notably John Stuart Mill and John Bright, needed to persuade the middle class of the rightness of universal suffrage in order to extend the vote to the English working classes. The same political group, with its emphasis on *laissez-faire* economics favored by the growing class of businessmen, threatened the hold of the landed and ruling classes on an outsized portion of England's wealth. All of these interest groups favored a more peaceful England, one that spent less on its military and its colonies. By grouping the dissent against Eyre under the heading of “Exeter Hall” and criticizing its response to international events, the conservative elements of English society sought to discredit *any* movement that directed middle-class sympathy toward the expansion of democracy.⁵⁷ By linking the response to Jamaica with an appeal to patriotism and Englishness, middle-class literature taught its readers to consider the global implications of empire and the implications of tragedy without destabilizing the illusion that imperialism existed for the benefit of the middle classes. While a debate about the treatment of Governor Eyre was of importance, the Jamaica Question was far more about eliminating radicalism from the middle class than it was about the governor's actions.

The principle mechanism used to accomplish this ideological work was the positioning of the reader as judge, as in the “Bulls of Exeter Hall.” Rather than participate as witnesses to a clearly defined event, readers were given to believe that the Jamaica Affair was complex, that it was difficult to assign blame, and that they must withhold judgment—or assign judgment to those who knew better—as an impartial evaluator of evidence. Doing so created distance between middle-class readers and the shocking

⁵⁷ For a brief overview of the political changes in 1865, see Semmel 56–62.

aspects of a colonial tragedy. The need to respond to such tragedies was not new. I would suggest, though, that the principal difference in the case of the Morant Bay Rebellion—also known as the Jamaican Affair, Jamaican Controversy, Jamaican Question, or Governor Eyre Controversy—is in the way it posits the act of judging as a way to maintain critical distance while strengthening the ties of the middle class to an empire they are now more than ever responsible for interpreting.

The rebellion itself was short lived, but its repercussions had long-lasting effects. Over the course of three years, nearly every print medium contained regular mention of developments in the Jamaican Controversy and the fate of the governor who oversaw a period of martial law. The principle events are these: a group of armed Jamaicans marched into Morant Bay on October 11, 1865, to confront a meeting of the administration of the parish in which Morant Bay was located (St. Thomas in the East) (Heuman 3). Similar gatherings in protest had been held in the past, but this time it soon became apparent that the crowd had a prearranged, militaristic purpose (3-7). It would later be suspected that Paul Bogle, a preacher and political agitator, and his followers had been drilling in preparation for an uprising against the oppression of Jamaicans (Kostal 12). A magistrate, Baron von Ketelholdt, had earlier apprised Governor Eyre that some demonstration might be made and had already sought the arrest of Bogle and others (12). Despite von Ketelholdt's reading of the riot act, the crowd would not disperse; gunfire was exchanged between the militia and members of the rebellion (12). The militia, the vestrymen (governing white residents of the parish), and others were "mobbed and killed" while several dozen others managed an escape; over the next few days, separate groups engaged in acts of violence or retribution against white planters (12-13). The

rebels would go on to liberate prisoners at the Morant Bay jail, and from there, rebellion spread throughout St. Thomas in the East as “various groups of blacks attacked property, took prisoners, and, in two cases, killed whites associated with the plantations.”⁵⁸

However, the rebellion ended within the space of two weeks. In the end, it was not the events of the rebellion that caused such a stir for so long in England but their aftermath.

Governor Eyre declared a period of martial law and, believing that rebellion would spread throughout all of Jamaica and that the future of the colony was at stake, facilitated a period of summary executions, beatings, sham tribunals—in short, a “protracted and calculated reign of terror” (Kostal 17). Most infamously, Eyre requested the arrest of George William Gordon, a land-owning, part-white Jamaican politician who was Eyre’s principal critic. Though he turned himself in, Gordon was deliberately relocated so that he would face a military tribunal outside of civilian jurisdiction. After being denied access to a lawyer, Gordon was executed on the charges of treason and sedition, even though he had no direct connection to the rebellion (14). Gordon’s death was widely suspected to have been the result of political motivation on Eyre’s part. Later, it would be on the charge that Gordon’s death constituted murder that Eyre would be tried; Gordon’s death would be protested and romanticized or Gordon himself vilified over and over again in the years to come. Opposition to Eyre’s actions arose quickly in England, particularly as news of the period of martial law arrived, but so did a conservative response that would later take the form of the Eyre Defense Fund. Eventually, Eyre would lose his post and return to England where, over the course of

⁵⁸ Heuman 17. For a much more intricate account of the causes, events, and aftermath of Morant Bay, Heuman’s work is to be highly recommended.

several years, the Jamaica Committee—a reform minded group of anti-slavery activists and politicians—would seek his prosecution on several occasions.

The point in time at which the Morant Bay Rebellion occurred and the evolution of its reportage in the British press are essential to understanding how English readers were encouraged to situate themselves as careful judges. For one, the reading public had experience learning of and responding to rebellion in the colonies, perhaps most significantly during the Indian Mutiny (1857–59).⁵⁹ During the unfolding of those events, news came slowly, with a “maddening remoteness” when the public yearned for immediate details (Herbert 23). Although they were quite different events, and although the initial response to them differed immensely, both called on the public to respond to a major, violent occurrence in a British colony at the rate with which information became available. By the time of the rebellion in Jamaica, not quite a decade after the mutiny, middle-class readers had been through the long process of trying to sort between rumor and fact in between arrivals of new, more reliable information (23). When the initial arguments to wait and become patient judges of the Jamaican Affair began circulating, perhaps the memory of tangled and contradictory narratives making their way to England from India came to mind.

The swifter arrival of new information coming from the Caribbean may have made the request for forbearance more appealing. News of a brutally repressed rebellion

⁵⁹ In fact, the British public would continue to be enthralled by narratives about the event for “a generation or two afterward” (Herbert 19). Christopher Herbert’s assertion (simplified) is that the Indian Mutiny proved fascinating to the Victorian public not because it represented “an exhilarating episode of national affirmation” (7) but a “crucial episode in the history of racial ideology and feeling, of nineteenth-century religion, of imperialism, and of the formation of modern British national identity” (18). Referring to the intermingling of those concerns creates, in Herbert’s view, a “British national pathological complex” that’s scale and complexity held Victorian’s imagination for so long (18).

arrived on the West-Indian mail packet from colonists who had fled and from copies of the biased Kingston-printed papers during the start of November.⁶⁰ The dispatch from Governor Eyre arrived at the colonial office on November 16th and was published shortly thereafter to counter the reaction of the very vocal dissent that had arisen.⁶¹ When Eyre's report arrived, it became clear that the rebellion had ended quickly, as had a period of martial law lasting thirty days (Heuman 137). Furthermore, the Royal Commission to investigate the period of martial law and the military repression of Jamaican people was established by Eyre as of the 19th of December—a swift response to pressure an investigation of potential wrongdoing (Kostal 15). The quick rate at which new information arrived may have helped deflate the initial outrage at the acts of the British military.

The response to the events of the Morant Bay Rebellion, particularly in regard to the violent aftermath, revised itself as more news arrived and as public action on either side grew. The first popular slogan of those who protested the rebellion's repression was “eight miles of dead bodies,” referring to a purported two thousand massacred Jamaicans left dead alongside a road (14). Placards appeared around London with that simple phrase and nothing more, but the reference would have been quickly understood.⁶² The existence of eight miles of dead was later disproven, but it had already attained a mythic-like stature. Reports of arbitrary executions at the hands of British soldiers became known (Semmel 16–17). All told, the first reports in England and even elsewhere throughout

⁶⁰ See Semmel 15; Kostal 14. Dates when news first arrived vary from November 3rd, 1865, (Kostal) to the second week of November (Semmel). While Semmel's is the classic account of the response to the rebellion in England, Kostal's more recent and extensively researched book (which cites Semmel a good deal) presents a more detailed chronology.

⁶¹ For this and detailed responses in Jamaica and England, see Heuman 164.

⁶² Semmel 22–23. The actual death toll is still high, however, nearing five hundred total.

Europe were, in the majority, of a consensus that the response to the events at the courthouse had been a moral outrage. The Jamaica Committee was formed to seek retribution for the injustices in Jamaica and was comprised of “Exeter Hall” dissenting churches, antislavery societies, missionaries, and parliamentary radicals (Heuman 165). Yet the outcry against Eyre and the British soldiers would not go unchallenged for long. As early as December of 1865, Carlyle and Ruskin published letters of support for Eyre (Kostal 15). The conversation about the rebellion and repression expanded to include appeals by those who felt Eyre was being treated unjustly, and there were those who would celebrate him as a hero who had saved the white population of Jamaica from certain destruction (26-27). For the most part, the response in popular middle-class reading would embrace the conservative interpretation of Eyre as the hero of the white colonists in Jamaica.

There is one more significant shift in how the Jamaica Affair was treated, and that lies with the changing nature of the Jamaica Committee’s goals. Bernard Semmel points out that the Morant Bay Rebellion occurred at such a point in time as to magnify the interest in the event. For one, Prime Minister Palmerston had died within two weeks of news from Jamaica reaching England, and his death occasioned a new interest in electoral reform (Semmel 56–57). Throughout England, there were those interested in the concept of expanding the rights of workers. A group of radical Parliament members—including John Stuart Mill, elected in July of 1865—were, as noted previously, committed to peace and the further extension of suffrage (58). There were also active antislavery and missionary societies that had been newly galvanized by the American Civil War. The repression of the rebellion united the interests of all these groups, and the Jamaica

Committee—which assembled quickly enough to begin monetarily supported and well-organized action as early as December—was the result of their unification. However, over time, what initially started as a group most strongly identified with the “Exeter Hall” contingent would be replaced by leadership more dedicated to examining the legal ramifications of Governor Eyre’s actions and to pressing for constitutional reforms as a result—no longer on the grounds of the disenfranchisement of Jamaicans. R. W. Kostal presents a remarkably detailed, extensively researched argument that the Jamaica Question became one of the most hotly and publicly contested legal issues in British history.⁶³ In the course of his analysis, he describes the shift of leadership in the Jamaica Committee from dissenters to parliamentarians.

In July of 1866, the statement of the Jamaica Committee indicates they were prepared to pursue Eyre’s prosecution and, notably, makes this argument in purely legal terms (Kostal 157-158). Any moralizing about what Jamaicans may have suffered is notably absent, replaced by a constitutional debate the Jamaican Committee intended to have out in court. Mill would assume the chairmanship, replacing a religious leader, and the Jamaica Committee would maintain that its principal goal was to “‘defend public liberty’ from incursions of the state” (159). Remarkably, when Mill took over this position, his speech made clear they intended to hold the British Empire legally accountable but nowhere mentions the Jamaican people (159). For Mill, the events in

⁶³ Kostal’s *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law* examines, among other things, a wide range of legal journals, daily newspapers, and parliamentary proceedings that reveal the issue was predominantly a legal one, but he does not account for the continuation of equating the anti-Eyre portions of society with “Exeter Hall” that persisted in middle-class entertainment literature. However, it will be noted that even in setting up “Exeter Hall” as a straw man, middle-class publications retain some of the notions of legal discourse in urging the role of a judge be taken up by their readers as I will demonstrate.

Jamaica became an opportunity for him to work toward the expansion of political rights within England, and this is perhaps the most significant reason that the conservative opposition kept pace of the Jamaica Committee's efforts. There is no denying that this shift took place, and yet the Jamaica Committee's opposition either remained ignorant of the changing priorities or, what is almost certainly the case, willfully continued to level its attack at "Exeter Hall" to vilify those interested in racial equality and to have a persuasive method of attack. If the discourse had shifted to the legal realm in the daily papers, legal journals, and parliamentary speeches, conservative efforts in middle-class publications continued to do battle with its straw man in an effort to convince readers to act as impartial judges.

Punch, for instance, was a persistent advocate of the idea that the reading public needed to practice forbearance, a view that became foundational to all protests against dissenters and radicals. Short editorial pieces, like the following, asked readers to place themselves above the crude discourse of politicians and to act as careful adjudicators. In an article tellingly titled "WAIT—AND HEAR," the editorial voice reports the view of the magazine's mascot, Mr. Punch:

Mr. Punch, in the interest of the respectable portion of the community, protests against the way in which Mr. Bright's [a radical MP's] organ and Mr. Bright's parasites are treating the Jamaica business. That in such quarters the question should be prejudged in the vulgarest [*sic*] manner, and that a torrent of mingled sanctimonious and slangy abuse should be let loose upon the white population of

Jamaica was so much in accordance with the antecedents of the accusers that it could excite little surprise.⁶⁴

There is much in this passage that makes clear Mr. Bright and his “parasites” do not know how to converse with the respectable middle-class portion of English society. That it takes issue with prejudgment offers proof that encouraging a measured approach to the issue was advocated and deployed against radical factions. It is interesting that vulgarity is at stake and that “slang” should be so criticized, but in doing so, *Punch* aligns itself with a readership that would not permit such materials into a proper middle-class home—namely, the *Morning Star* that the article goes on to attack. The criticism is very conscious of class, telling readers that paper “is not representative of the English gentleman.” Because the *Morning Star* prints morbid satire of a low variety, *Punch* protests “English instinct revolt at merriment over such subjects, and a protest against such buffoonery is due to Christians and Gentlemen” (238). By attacking the *Morning Star* as unsuitable middle-class reading, *Punch* attacks Bright’s class position and his fitness to speak on the subject of Jamaica. It is better, then, for the proper middle-class readers of *Punch* to wait and suspend judgment, for “the fullest inquiry into the *whole* subject is required by the country. . . . It is impossible to predict the result” (238). Thus, it is the patriotic duty of the English to wait until all the evidence is before them, and to avoid committing themselves to the most egregious sin of developing a bias before that time.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ “Wait—And Hear.” *Punch* 16 Dec. 1865: 238.

⁶⁵ *Punch* would continue to police what it saw as satire that was too morbid. For example, the author of “Great Literary Sale,” published on February 24th, 1866, jokingly writes that there have been “Five hundred and ninety-seven bad jokes upon the name of Governor Eyre, recommending Jamaica to try ‘change of Eyre,’ ‘cutting the Gordon knot,’ &c &c.”

Various items that encouraged withholding judgment proliferated in not just *Punch* but also its competitors, presenting a surprisingly unified approach across publications that purportedly targeted different audiences. For example, the magazine *Fun* takes a turn characterizing “Exeter Hall” as a group unable to practice the correct, English values of forbearance.⁶⁶ A short verse titled “The Jamaica Question: *Dedicated to Exeter Hall*” reads:

By all means, investigation!

But Bigots, is it fair

Not to wait for ventilation,

But to lay the blame on Eyre?⁶⁷

As in *Punch*, the brief *Fun* item condemns (puns notwithstanding) assigning guilt before the whole case is known. In another competing publication, *Judy*, we find a brief notice asking, “What can Mr. Mill think of that spirit of the English law which holds every man to be innocent until he shall have been proved to be guilty.”⁶⁸ These examples and more can be found across all three publications, which is significant for more than just a shared register of humor. *Fun* was, in part, produced to be a more liberal alternative to *Punch*, while *Judy* set out to be even more conservative.⁶⁹ Despite their claims to different political ideals, all of these magazines—published with the middle class specifically in mind—are in agreement. The opposition to the methods and aims of the Jamaica

⁶⁶ Interestingly, *Fun* was edited for a time by Tom Hood, the son of Thomas Hood, one of the subjects of chapter 1.

⁶⁷ “The Jamaica Question” *Fun* 3 Mar. 1866: 247.

⁶⁸ “Ex-Governor Eyre and Mr. Mill.” *Judy* 24 June 1868: 88.

⁶⁹ See Maidment, Chez, and Taunton 327–328. In addition, *Judy* was slightly cheaper and geared more toward a female audience.

Committee, then, was united in its efforts to keep the middle class from investing itself too deeply in the rights of Jamaicans over those of English citizens.

In order to make its case against Exeter Hall, *Punch* adopts an interesting tactic (although not an unusual one) of using a popular figure from serial fiction to speak for current events. Playing on a character from Dickens's enormously popular *Pickwick Papers*, a *Punch* cartoon borrows antislavery rhetoric and trades on racial stereotypes to reassert the position of the white residents of Jamaica amid all the controversy surrounding Governor Eyre. The engraving, published on the 23rd of December 1865, depicts a "White Planter" and a dour looking "Mr. Stiggins," who holds the arm of a black man while he turns his head from the planter's pleas.⁷⁰ Below the title, "The Jamaica Question," a caption reads: "White Planter: 'Am I not a man and brother, too, Mr. Stiggins?'" The utterance would have instantly been connected to the slogan used by antislavery societies everywhere, while readers would likely have recognized Mr. Stiggins as the drunken, hypocritical dissenting clergyman from Dickens's first novel. The reference is clearly meant as a jab at Exeter Hall, and the association with Mr. Stiggins is an insulting one. There is also the appearance of the two residents of Jamaica, both dressed in white and separated by Mr. Stiggins who appears dressed all in black, that invites their comparison visually. The Jamaican, on the right, has an obstinate scowl, wears some sort of slip-on shoes, and inexplicably, has his pants rolled above the knee. Particularly in comparison to the fully and more neatly dressed planter, he appears disheveled, but the condition of his clothes is too fine to indicate poverty. His appearance and the manner in which he is led by Mr. Stiggins produces an infantilizing effect—the picture thus plays on the stereotype that the unruly Jamaicans required the paternal care

⁷⁰ "The Jamaica Question." *Punch* 23 Dec. 1865: 248.

offered by their colonial overseers. To align oneself with Exeter Hall, the image suggests, is to align oneself with the baser classes of people.

That *Punch* would choose to borrow from a thirty-year-old Dickens novel speaks, of course, to the cultural currency Dickens had with a middle-class audience. Yet Dickens, whose fiction participated in the construction of the roles this project has heretofore discussed, weighs in on the Jamaican Affair only to some extent. His magazine's involvement is generally limited to fiction about Jamaica, but these were published when the events in Morant Bay would have been a constant presence for his readers. Dickens's relationship to the Governor Eyre controversy is complicated, and of his true opinions, one can only be partially sure. Critics have differed in their analyses of his reaction with claims running the gamut from apologist, to seeing his views as a step toward his increasingly conservative and racist development, to finding a middle ground from which to argue that his relationship was complex and his involvement in the Eyre controversy difficult to pin down.⁷¹ Grace Moore, in particular, suggests that Dickens was less involved with politics overall and thus more disengaged from the event itself, and she makes a convincing case that Dickens signed a petition in support for the sake of his friendship with Carlyle rather than any real desire to defend the governor of Jamaica (Moore 165). As part of the evidence for this claim, Moore offers up the lack of any sustained commentary on Dickens's part because his magazine at the time, *All the Year*

⁷¹ Ackroyd's biography claims Dickens's was part of the "vociferous support" for Eyre, and claims Dickens's views about blacks stem from his skepticism of missionary societies (Ackroyd 971). Patrick Brantlinger aligns Dickens with others who supported the Eyre Defense Committee and found Eyre himself a "hero rather than villain" (Brantlinger 28). Grace Moore views Dickens's response and involvement as somewhat more "complex," (164) and "moderate" (165) than his response to racial issues elsewhere. For Moore's interesting analysis on the "decline" in Dickens's racial rhetoric see her book *Dickens and Empire*, 157–77.

Round (ATYR), only published one piece relevant to the Morant Bay Rebellion (“Swarmery” 84). It is true that very little relating to Jamaica was published in *ATYR* between the rebellion in 1865 and Eyre’s trial in 1868. However, I would argue that there are as many as four relevant pieces in Dickens’s magazine. While not contradicting the uneven nature of his response, this does indicate that enough was taking place in the pages of *ATYR* to keep it conversant with other popular publications that dwelt on the horrific event and its aftermath. Because of the pointed nature of the comments in the pieces, *ATYR*, if not exactly Dickens himself, was taking an active role in shaping middle-class readers’ perceptions of the rebellion and its repression.

After the Morant Bay Rebellion and its brutal put down and until the trial of Governor Eyre, *All the Year Round* gave its audience a few significant reminders of the proper way a middle-class citizen should weigh the evidence of events in the Empire. Moore points to a piece called “Black Is not *Quite* White” from the March 3rd, 1866, *ATYR*, but it was followed by “The Queen’s Shilling” on April 7th, 1866, and “An Incident in the Tropics,” on January 5th, 1867. In addition, “Black Is not *Quite* White” is immediately followed with an item called “A New Humane Society.” That piece does not refer to Jamaica directly, but its language in describing a social problem in England work to redirect readers’ sympathies away from places like Jamaica specifically. Read in continuation from “Black Is not *Quite* White,” it would have been able to partake in the same discussion relevant to how *ATYR*’s audience was meant to interpret events in Jamaica. While this is not a great deal of coverage, it does constitute more than “a paucity” (Moore 184). More importantly, the articles that did run in Dickens’s magazine are not significant because they constantly kept an event already receiving ubiquitous

coverage elsewhere in the forefront of its readers minds; the pieces matter because they provide instruction for how the middle-class reader is meant to integrate what they know of the rebellion into their broader understanding of empire and their place in it.

The first piece published in *All the Year Round* that references the events in Jamaica, composed primarily of anecdotal musings on the “hereditary cunning” of the formerly enslaved population there, is primarily meant to be amusing.⁷² This is very much in keeping with the editorial mission of *ATYR* to provide light instruction with its entertainment. Today, the piece reads as extremely racist, but I call attention to it nonetheless because the story provides direct statements on how readers are supposed to act as judges, carefully weighing all sides of the Jamaica Affair. The piece is also tied to the role of the middle-class subject in the Empire. It is written from the perspective of a white woman living in Jamaica. She is well-to-do enough, being able to afford a white servant, a cook, a nurse, and some other Jamaican staff, but we might also surmise she is not of the wealthiest of white colonists or “plantocracy.” There is no reference to a plantation or further trappings of wealth, and the speaker acknowledges her inability to raise the pay of a good staff member.⁷³ Thus, the woman is meant to represent the interests of the white residents of Jamaica without appearing unrelatable to the magazine’s audience. Moore rightly notes that, in the story, “morality is reduced to a Manichean allegory whereby skin color becomes a marker of right or wrong, an inevitable result of the fact that they are black, not *quite* white” (Moore 22). Her point here is to conclude that Dickens approved of the ideological framework of the piece, and that his negligence in publishing similar works is due to his disinterest in world affairs at

⁷² “Black Is not *Quite* White.” *All the Year Round* 3 Mar. 1866: 173–80.

⁷³ “Black” 175. Moore misidentifies the speaker of the piece as male (“Swarmery” 184) but within the story the speaker refers to herself as “missus” (“Black” 174).

this stage of his life (“Black” 174). Dickens’s level of interest, however, is not a measure of the success with which this and the other pieces shaped the middle-class response to the Eyre controversy. Despite its failings, the story still provides perspective about how the brutality exercised at Morant Bay was supposed to be assimilated into the virtuous middle-class reader’s understanding of the British colonies.

The story begins by arguing that the proper perspective is a disengaged one that considers the many facets of recent events. By pretending to present a sort of equanimity, “Black Is not *Quite* White” takes issue with what it terms *extreme opinions*. In its estimation:

The late melancholy events in Jamaica have naturally called forth a burst of feeling; on one side, of sympathy and commiseration for our “poor oppressed brethren” (whose only crime is their colour); on the other, of wrath and indignation against a race for which so much as been done, and which has so ungratefully turned on its benefactors and attempted to destroy them.

Without pretending to prejudge the merits of the late rebellion, or of the means which were adopted to suppress it—questions which will, no doubt, be fully and fairly investigated—it may be suggested that both these extreme expressions of feeling are unreasonable and exaggerated. (173)

On the one hand, the passage announces that some feeling and sympathy with Jamaicans is natural. On the other, it does little to counter the following statement that Jamaicans are ungrateful. Significantly, the aversion to “prejudging” directs readers’ attention to the merits of withholding judgment; faith can be placed in the government to conduct a more thorough and fair investigation than the speculations of journalists and print media. There

is a clear distaste for succumbing to taking a side that is extreme in its unreasonableness. The story goes one step further, arguing that the first stance is due to “the total want of knowledge of the real character of the negro” and that the second stance “arises from the absence of reflection in a moment of excitement as to the causes which have produced that character” (173). The piece goes on to describe in the most unfortunate terms what it believes that character to be: that it consists of all the “lower instincts of nature” (173) and “hereditary cunning” (174). But this narrative framework—soon departed for a series of anecdotes about Jamaicans by the aforementioned narrator—is distinctly about the attitude it wishes readers to take toward the rebellion and repression. Under the guise of urging readers to adopt a moderate tone, the piece works to discredit the rights of Jamaicans; it asks readers to suspend judgment with the true aim of guiding their sympathy toward white colonists and colonial leadership.

Readers are presented with example upon example of this character, the very character they are told will provide a fuller body of evidence in the case they must judge. Purporting to be the specific recollections of one person and deploying a satiric humor are meant to lend a fuller type of verisimilitude to the Jamaican character under examination. Even the best of the Jamaicans the narrator references are shown to be sorely lacking. There is John, a “faithful servant . . . honest and industrious . . . he regarded his master as his fader, and missus as his moder” (175). But John is guilty of occasionally getting drunk, which the narrator explains she and her husband “found it best to wink at” (175). John, like others in the tale, not only demonstrates the lacking character of the Jamaican population but also makes his white employers appear that much better for the contrast. His language characterizes them as benevolently

paternalistic, even as his caretakers. They wink at him as if he were a child. While these and other portrayals of Jamaicans seem mild compared to accusing them of bloody rebellion, the racial politics provide an interesting stance in regard to violence. Taken in this light, one might assume the lack of competence and child-like attitudes would exclude Jamaicans from rebellion in earnest. But as an anecdotal exploration of a variety of stereotypes, “Black Is not *Quite* White” encourages readers to conduct a forensic examination of character and invites them to assign motive to such a populace. One could almost guarantee the outcome would not be to assign such people the capability of radical action in the name of human rights. In this way, the piece treats its readers as judges only to censor the evidence.

The narrative does its part to further discredit the evangelicals, antislavery societies, and missionaries who decried the violence against Jamaicans and who were popularly viewed as the basis of the Jamaica Committee. Certain details in the story promote the idea that Jamaicans have no pure or honest connection to religion, and that they understand it incorrectly or use it to conceal their true purpose. For example, a child thief listens attentively to his mother’s reading of Psalms to project innocence (175). John rejoices to the lord when misfortune befalls his enemy (175). The narrator then inquires pointedly, “[A]fter the butchery at Morant Bay, is it not recorded that the assassins met together in a Baptist chapel and sang songs of praise for their victory?” (175). Incidentally, that was not recorded. However, there was a large population of Christian Jamaicans and, more significantly, congregations of “Native Baptists” he developed around the colony. Jamaican religious communities were treated with suspicion and were

believed to be a network through which rebellion was fomented.⁷⁴ It is significant, then, that the pretense to religion is introduced; it is yet another way to characterize rebels—as the title reminds us, they are “not *Quite*” equal to white colonists. More striking still is that the perspective the piece imparts is meant to be a moderate position between the two extremes identified at the very start of the story. Nevertheless, the narrator introduces these and subsequent incidents in a way that maintains the fiction of evidence submitted before those who will judge. For middle-class readers, the anecdotal minutiae taken as a whole urged a worldview wherein the white citizens of the British Empire could be assured of their superiority.

The end of the narrative reads as a summative statement after a trial. The evidence is reviewed, and the fiction of considering all sides like an impartial judge is reintroduced to the audience.

These few specimens of character, taken from the most honest, respectable, and civilized amongst the class (and who, unlike the lower grades, do not steal, murder, or habitually commit acts of savage brutality), are a pretty fair evidence of the nature, or second nature, or both combined, of the liberated negro in our colonies at present day. Let us remember that the white man is far more responsible for his actions than the black man; but let us also remember that his position is a trying one, in having to hold his own, far away, against an overwhelming force of numbers. (177)

⁷⁴ In fact, this suspicion was common. Baptist leaders were accused of organizing rebellion in the 1840s, although there is nothing to substantiate they did (Heuman 40). A Baptist missionary, Edward Underhill, toured Jamaica in the late 1850s and wrote a letter protesting the condition of the Jamaican people and suggesting reforms. Later, “Underhill meetings” sprang up around the parishes in an attempt to organize for measures against poverty and discrimination. See Heuman 44–62; 83–87.

The choice of *specimens* and *evidence* align this passage with the socially and legally sanctioned taxonomic views that were so prevalent in the racial discourse of the nineteenth century. The “liberated negro” is thus reduced to a problem of the colonies that readers are encouraged to decode with investigative skill (never mind that the evidence has been so carefully edited). The last line refers to where the story started, by asking that Morant Bay be understood and judged on the basis of the full range of evidence—or to at least trust the government to do so. The passage ends with a false sense of responsibility, admitting to some wrongdoing but only as a parent might ask to be held responsible for a child’s actions. The success of this gambit, though, is less important than the fact that the comments position the reader as arbiter. After all, a reader could resist the ideological pressure to characterize race in the same way the story does. However, to do so is still to relate to events in the colonies as a judge, a stance that encourages distance and discourages political action.

Although principally an article about the establishment of the Association for the Improvement of the Infirmaries of the London Workhouses, the brief “A New Human Society” immediately follows “Black Is not *Quite* White” and begins with strongly related language.⁷⁵ If a reader were to review the items in order, it would create another moment of reflection on the very recent events in Jamaica. The opening of the piece wastes no time in painting a grim description of the present moment:

To preserve human life; to put an end to tortures and cruelties now systematically inflicted on our poor countrymen and countrywomen at home, and many of which are as horrid as revolting, as any of the barbaric rites we read of as practised among savages; to substitute trained skill for brutal ignorance and conscientious

⁷⁵ “A New Human Society.” *All The Year Round* 3 Mar. 1866: 177–80.

carefulness for wicked and inhuman neglect; to make wanton and aggravated homicide less common, and at least to ensure such tending and remedies for our sick and suffering poor, as human men provide for their sick and suffering brutes; to free the national character from a deep stain, and to relieve the national conscience of a the burden of a crying sin; such are the objects of the new Humane Society. (177)

What follows is a scathing review of the failures of public agencies to provide adequately for the poor and destitute in England and a proposition that private enterprises would do a far better job seeing to the needs of those in the workhouse. The passage once again treats the relief of English poor, as in *Bleak House*, as a matter of national (dis)honor; positioned between a comedic piece and an eerie tale called “At Home with the Spirits,” it is as if all the major hallmarks of Dickens’s writing have been condensed into ten pages. Yet if one were to replace the object of charity in the passage with the Jamaican victims of sham court martials and military repression, this section of the piece could easily have been read at an early meeting of the Jamaica Committee. Placed so in this *ATYR* issue, published just several months after news from Morant Bay reached England, the passage goes further than replacing Jamaicans as an object of sympathy—it replaces Britons as the subjects of the same brutality the Jamaicans had recently endured. Jamaicans, presumably, would fall under the category of “savages,” here the perpetrators rather than recipients of injustice.⁷⁶ *ATYR*’s audience, immediately after a story about the underdeveloped character of Jamaicans, was thus given the opportunity to abdicate their role as witnesses to tragedy.

⁷⁶ The “strange rites” may have also called to mind the role of native Baptists in organizing the Jamaican revolt.

The Jamaican Affair is referred to once more in a month's time. Though not an item of great substance, "The Queen's Shilling" makes reference to the Eyre controversy and, in the process, demonstrates the disagreeableness of being too passionate a supporter on either side of the subject.⁷⁷ The tale starts with a narrative introducing the reminiscences of a soldier set down himself, "the substantial accuracy of which I am ready to vouch for, and which I know give to the reader in the recruit's own words" (306). Starting with a narrative device that introduces what follows as evidence, of a kind, reinforces that text's encouragement of moderate response and measured reflection to a host of current events. From start to finish, the piece provides a survey of the mundane life of an enlisted man, its narrator's dispassionate telling providing a lightly amusing if quite critical portrait of regiment life.

"The Queen's Shilling" is not long underway before it presents a political argument. Although the verbal altercation is provided without additional commentary, it is clear that the exchange is not one respectable readers should emulate. The narrator's supervisor, Sergeant Merry, has an "animated argument with the coffee-house keeper about the Jamaica affair" (307). Believing Governor Eyre to be "an angel," the sergeant's remarks center on connection between Englishness and dissent (307). He begins by forcefully expressing an opinion similar to ones that were highly critical of "Exeter Hall":

"I tell you what," continued the sergeant, "there are a lot of people who are never so happy as when crying down the English and applauding everything un-English . . ." The coffee-house-keeper as stoutly defended the other side, and praised John Bright, and cursed everybody who disagreed with the honourable member

⁷⁷ "The Queen's Shilling." *All the Year Round* 7 Apr. 1866: 306–12.

for Birmingham. Sergeant Merry got quite excited, and entered so fully into the argument as to get up from his coffee and nearly approach his antagonist, putting an extra stress upon every word by a loud thump on the table. (307)

This argument, which begins over the question of whether “Gordon was murdered” (307) mirrors the conflict in broader culture and the one that would continue to drag on in Parliament.⁷⁸ Some clearly saw the Jamaica Affair is interpreted as a nationalistic matter of the protection of the white citizens of the Empire; for others, the legality of George William Gordon’s execution and the words of a radical parliamentarian were better characterized as a debate about the constitutionality of Eyre’s period of martial law. To some extent, the coffee house exchange reflects the popular interpretation of the event as a legal question, particularly because the question of Gordon’s death is the only reference of the loss of Jamaican lives. Part of the effect of the debate, then, is to encourage the reframing of the Morant Bay Rebellion as an issue of constitutionality and not unlicensed slaughter—even the dissenting opinion of the coffee house keeper does so.

There is also the vehemence of the exchange between Merry and the coffee house keeper to contend with. It is presented without comment, and as such takes on the shade of a mundane disagreement, albeit one that is handled poorly. The thumping of a fist for emphasis and cursing is hardly something to be emulated in a middle-class household. The behavior of the two men is associated with the status of regimental members, all of whom, although they be “from all classes, all trades, and from every part of England, Ireland, and Scotland” are enlisting from “in every case destitution” (307). The economic

⁷⁸ At the time of this story’s publication in *All the Year Round*, only two more days would elapse before the Royal Commission would conclude its three months of hearings in Jamaica (Heuman 170). “The Queen’s Shilling” does appear at a time, then, when it could have had some influence on reader’s approach to the impending news.

standing of the sergeant and the attendant taken with the crude behavior forms a criticism of the mode the debate takes. Because the debate divides so closely along the lines of opposition in the popular press—the sergeant accuses a paper of being the mouthpiece of the “Un-English” (307)—the indictment of their behavior is also an indictment of polarizing rhetoric in certain sectors of the news. To refrain from careful adjudication of the Jamaica Affair and to succumb to one of the harsh opinions available is here equated with crude public behavior, and crude reporting. Readers are encouraged to temper their own opinions, taking the position of impartial judge—or at least more refined debater—until the evidence can be thoroughly and fairly weighed.

If we consider the scene of the argument in the context of the rest of “The Queen’s Shilling,” it is possible to read the exchange as part of a subtle encouragement toward moderation in the face of any radical thought. It is true the sergeant’s verbal fight erases, in its presentation of the opposition, the people still concerned with Jamaican lives. In addition, the perils of all repressed classes who might gravitate toward any radical, even violent action in order to protest for their rights are removed from consideration. In the course of the narrator’s tale, we also encounter a fellow soldier when the two are in hospital together. The man is Irish and “a rabid ‘Fenian’” (311). The narrator remarks, “I used to try to convince this man that Fenianism [*sic*] would collapse shortly, but he argued stoutly that he would live to see the day when the Fenians would bombard London, and be a free an independent people, with The O’Donoghue as their president” (311). The narrator moves on without comment, but the soldier’s confusion would have been readily apparent: MP Daniel O’Donoghue, nicknamed “The O’Donoghue,” although in favor of Irish independence was not a Fenian and by 1866 had

allied himself with Gladstone and other liberals, never committing to any scheme for home rule. He certainly did not share this “rabid” Fenian’s views.⁷⁹ The brief mention of the Irish soldier is presented with as much attention as the earlier argument; neither warrant much commentary and are treated as examples of incongruous or ill-informed behavior (why, after all, should a Fenian enlist?). Read together, the descriptions encourage a depoliticized perspective and treat any radical line of thought as vacuous.

While most of “The Queen’s Shilling” advocates a temperate, judicious perspective for its respectable readers, it does make a subtle argument against placing one’s entire trust in regular enlisted men. By continually reiterating the need for discipline, the narrator of the story affirms that soldiers must act according to their orders, lest chaos that seems barely kept in check ensue. The officers appear to be the most admirable, like a colonel who “will not tolerate lax movements in the service” (309) and a gentlemanly color sergeant (310). But the last words the narrator has about the regular enlisted men are decidedly harsh:

I must say it, that there are few soldiers here that I could trust; they all will lie, and to put it mildly, appropriate whatever they can. I doubt not it is the same in all barracks. The English army, so long as it is constituted as it is, will always remain an army of thieves and blackguards—the scum of the land—only kept under control by strict discipline. (312)

In addition to those listed, the narrator gives us to believe that “so few educated men are in the army” because of the lack of decent pay and respectable company (313). This harsh criticism at the end of the piece is an abrupt climax to somewhat milder complaints, but it encourages its middle-class audience to disassociate themselves from the mentality of

⁷⁹ See Comerford’s entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

these rough soldiers. It is made perfectly clear that discipline is the only way to keep such soldiers in line, lest they devolve into complete drunken disorderliness—as if they were unruly children.

Taken as a whole, the effects of “The Queen’s Shilling” are twofold. First, readers are given to understand that polarizing arguments are related to the conduct of socially graceless individuals; radical thought is erased and the character of those who hold such opinions are maligned. Second, the contrast between officers and soldiers provides an interesting intervention in the Jamaican Question; it presents a view wherein the blame for wrongdoing would likely reside with enlisted men—like those whose indiscriminate violence in the wake of the Morant Bay uprising created shock among the British public. If one were to read the perspective of “The Queen’s Shilling” back onto the Jamaica Question, the leading commanders—namely Eyre himself—might be considered to have given commands to a class of people who lacked the ability to exercise self-discipline. Such a reading would allow the middle class to occupy a liminal stance on the Jamaica Question, one where Eyre can be excused *and* violence condemned; it erases the need for sympathy toward Jamaicans or for the continued protestations of Eyre’s guilt.

If “Black Is not *Quite* White,” does away with sympathy toward Jamaicans, “The Queen’s Shilling” encourages sympathy for officers and wariness of either radical or too-polemical discourse, and “The New Humane Society” redirects sympathy, yet again, to the poor in England, then “An Incident in the Tropics” is the final assertion by *All the Year Round* that looks back on the rebellion as a logical source of terror for the English. The story, published January 5th, 1867, is a reversal of the general optimism for emigration reviewed earlier, no doubt because of renewed attempts to bring Eyre to

trial.⁸⁰ The now former governor had arrived in Southampton the previous August, and the Eyre Defense Fund had been raising money and gaining support ever since (Heuman 170-172). By January, it was growing plain that Eyre would inevitably face prosecution, and this may account for the exaggerated horror story and the timing of its publication in *ATYR*.⁸¹ It is because of this context that I specifically do not suggest we read “An Incident in the Tropics” as a departure from earlier pre-emigration readings; rather, the story demonstrates how eager some middle-class publications were to promote a given ideological outcome for their readers, despite the risk of contradicting other dearly held beliefs.⁸²

A chilling story, “An Incident in the Tropics” uses the tale of a victimized white woman and a supernatural twist to indict the Jamaican character; the brutal criminality of some Jamaicans is painted as the downfall of what should be the unqualified success of the middle class in that colony. The narrative is at pains to demonstrate that despite some inconveniences, Jamaica would be a perfectly hospitable place for middle-class émigrés to succeed were it not for the island’s original inhabitants. At first, other than the repressive heat, life for a married English couple—as narrated by the young wife—seems quite promising. In her telling, her husband has “a good appointment there, and, as we had sore struggle ever since our marriage to live in England, we found but little inconvenience” (“An Incident” 31). Visitors assuage her loneliness, and eventually, there is a much-hoped-for pregnancy (31). Like the Micawbers, the narrator and her husband

⁸⁰ “An Incident in the Tropics.” *All the Year Round* 5 Jan. 1867: 31–34.

⁸¹ In fact, in March of 1867, just three months later, the Jamaica Committee would pursue the arrest of Eyre for the murder of George William Gordon (Heuman 172).

⁸² Emigration was still being praised at this point in time, perhaps even more so as there were those who now pointed to it as the source of any current economic successes (Clements 167–70).

were able to attain middle-class stability by using the opportunity to emigrate to their advantage. But there are elements that foreshadow the inhospitableness of Jamaica besides the heat:

I had indulged my passion for flowers . . . chiefly rich orchids and climbers, brought from the beautiful treacherous swamps and giant forests of South America, where vegetable life revels in unspeakable luxuriousness, and where man is stifled by the foul vapours on which they flourish. Here, too . . . we used to sit in the heavy heat that rendered it next to impossible to remain within. (31)

Linking the climate in the “treacherous” wilderness with that she now inhabits, the narrator associates danger and sickness with the very place she has found “little inconvenience.” Despite the dangers the public now associated with Jamaica, the story still demonstrates a tension that allows the desire to use the Empire to the middle class’s advantage to seep through. However, it does not take long for the “treacherous” elements of the West Indies to manifest in the narrative.

The initial scene of suspense in the story echoes some of the caricature of “Black Is not *Quite* White” but adds a more sinister option for what a Jamaican might show himself to be. A thief arrives while the woman is home, alone but for Jim who is alternately described as “stupid” and “sleepy” much as his counterparts in the earlier *ATYR* story (32). Jim is slaughtered, and the narrator manages to hide with a pistol. The thief threatens to murder her as he has Jim, and sets to searching for “de little missis,” as he calls her (32). When he does seize her, the narrator fires “within three inches of his face” (32). The description that follows is rendered as if taken from a penny dreadful, noting that the woman was “deluged and blinded by a hot, thick, crimson rain” (32).

After a period of illness, and giving birth, the woman learns her child has survived. She is kept from seeing him except for in near total darkness, because—as she is told—the child suffers from a “slight inflammation of the eyes” (33). When, after a week, her curiosity prevents her from waiting any longer to see the baby, the truth is revealed:

I drew aside the veil. . . . What was that? Nurse’s red handkerchief, she had spread over the child’s face, to keep out the light, doubtless. . . . I stooped to draw it aside, but something withheld my hand. I bent closer; my God! it was the child’s face itself, stained red, blood-red, as the hot thick rain that had poured on my own, that night of horror! (33–34)

The baby visually replicates the death of his mother’s attacker. The child, marked as he is by his mother’s experience, dies shortly after she sees his red-stained face for the first and only time (34). The couple leaves directly for England, believing the death of the child cruel but for the best: “think what life must have been to it” (34). With the briefest mention that they went on to have two children, the story swiftly concludes.

There is the potential for an anti-imperialist reading of the story, and one that would encourage would-be colonists from leaving England at that. After all, the story contains the aggressive suggestion that the woman was violated by a Jamaican man’s blood, to the extent that her pregnancy was tainted. This is strongly suggestive of fears of colonial miscegenation and contamination of white settlers. However, in keeping with the reincorporation of citizens from abroad, the baby dies before it can be taken from Jamaica. The wife and husband no longer struggle financially, and they successfully bear two other children as they think back with only a small sigh on the deceased baby as if it were a very distant memory (34). The story, therefore, is not anti-imperialist so much as

it presents the inevitability of emigration with a hoped-for return to England. White residents of Jamaica have here, as in the colony, endured real horror, but there suffering is seen as undeserved as it is noble. “An Incident in the Tropics” was published just as Eyre’s reputation as a hero, rather than murderer, was at stake. To empathize with white victims from Jamaica at this time was to acknowledge Eyre’s role as one that saved innocent whites from a naturally bloodthirsty population, even if his reaction was as extreme as firing a pistol three inches from a man’s face. The story encourages readers to withhold their judgment of Eyre’s extreme actions and to first consider all the “facts” that influenced his response to the revolt. Again, the narrative redirects readers’ sympathy to the tragic experience of whites in the colonies rather than endorse the idea that repression merits a radical response.

But the suppression that followed the courthouse riot in Morant Bay was tragic, with many innocents shot, hanged, or tortured and many more left with even less political representation than before the revolt. Although Eyre was dismissed from his post, paranoia of further insurrection severely curtailed the rights of Jamaicans. In the years that were to come, nonwhites were taxed more, excluded from leadership roles in the military, and the “government was able to destroy the opposition and to frustrate black political activism” (Heuman 160).⁸³ Lastly, there was the matter of “the constitutional change from a representative system to a Crown Colony government,” which “blocked the development of black and brown politics in Jamaica,” creating “political and constitutional consequences of the rebellion . . . well into the twentieth century” (160). Although there would be more rebellions in Jamaica in the future, any serious attempt at

⁸³ Also see 177-178 in Heuman.

radical demonstration were effectively destroyed. Middle-class reading, too, effectively used the event to direct attention away from a radical political platform.

The events that transpired in Jamaica in 1865 were one tragedy in a series of violent struggles that defined the country over its hundreds of years as a colony. Even in its present state as a postcolonial nation still dealing with the legacy of repression culturally and economically, Jamaica's history of rebellion against Britain comprises a significant part of its national identity.⁸⁴ But for the colonizing nation, it was important not to allow dissenting voices narrate Morant Bay as a tragedy and to keep that narrative from becoming the dominant one. Tragedy had to be reserved for the fall of Governor Eyre as a hero and the persecuted colonists forced to hide or to flee in the face of vengeful mobs. By disavowing the tragic nature of the bloody means used to stop a revolutionary uprising, however, Victorian middle-class reading points to an irresolvable tension within the narrative of proper British identity. English subjects were, in the words of "Rule Britannia," never to be slaves. But if one cannot be the slave nor admit to being the tyrant, the difficulty becomes finding a middle stance in a dialectic that offers no reasonable synthesis. In alienating the sympathies of the British middle class from the Morant Bay rebels and the wrongly repressed Jamaicans, items in *Punch*, *All the Year Round*, *Fun*, *Judy*, and elsewhere replace a sense of tragedy with a sense of the absurd. Otherwise, they redirect a sense of tragedy to white citizens. This stance is, at its core, a cold, bureaucratic one that de-radicalizes the events and their interpretation in the British press. Without doing so, middle-class readers may have been forced to confront the truly

⁸⁴ On the history of rebellion in Jamaica see, for example, Sharpe; Tanna; and Thomas. Jamaica gained its independence in 1962, after a history of colonization stretching back to the arrival of the Spanish at the end of the fifteenth century.

ambivalent nature of their role as subjects in an unjust system of repression rather than a civilizing empire that brought peace and prosperity.

To narrate the Morant Bay Rebellion as a tragedy would be to introduce the radicalism always already embedded in that genre and to create a range of interpretations that would disrupt the cultural consent for British Imperialism. Following Bertrand Russell, who celebrated tragedy as “the highest instantiation of human freedom,” Edith Hall writes that the genre is part of “the conscious, imaginative representation of the plight of humanity in the inhumane universe” (Hall 773). More than that, “by transforming the human condition into tragic art, humans create their own world of resistance” (773). Hall makes clear that tragedy probes and lays bare the cause of human suffering, a practice linked to class by virtue of its exploration of tyranny—whether of fate or wrought by humans—and its unjust consequences (774). Narrating Morant Bay as a tragedy would jeopardize the cultural consent for imperialism because it would create a common bond between Britons and Jamaicans by introducing a sense of their common fate and clearly defining the British government as a tyrannical force. A tragic narrative is a form of resistance, as Hall writes, because it explores the systems of power responsible for the success of Empire: class and racial oppression and violence. John Stuart Mill, John Bright, and others sensed this, and in their many attempts to hold Eyre and other military commanders responsible, they hoped to use sympathy to radicalize the middle class. But texts that positioned middle-class readers as all-considering judges rather than emotional witnesses created a worldview in which the tragedies of empire could be, eventually, viewed with detachment.

Chapter Four

Expatriates and Cosmopolitans: Charles Wirgman's *Japan Punch* and the Foreign

Settlement of Yokohama

In 1862, less than a decade after the West forcibly affected the opening of Japan to Western trade, Charles Wirgman began publishing cartoons in Yokohama. These were not his first caricatures of his neighbors; Wirgman had been heavily criticized for doodling on public notices posted around the foreign settlement. He answered his critics by taking those drawings and publishing them in earnest, producing a slim volume filled with cartoons. He poked fun at the English, French, German, and other foreign representatives and merchants. He lampooned, with great enthusiasm, the local newspaper editors, teased Englishmen awkwardly negotiating chaotic dusty streets, and mocked the social clubs designed to keep the expatriate from boredom. As one can imagine, many of his subjects did not like this very much. After irregular appearances during its first few years, Wirgman's *Japan Punch* would continue to be published on monthly basis until 1887—close to two hundred issues in total. And so, like its English namesake, the *Japan Punch* became a regular part of the foreign settlement lifestyle. More than that, though, the *Japan Punch* used its satiric lens to define the foreign settlement resident to its audience. Originating from the singular context of treaty port life, the humor, satire, and scathing criticism Wirgman leveled at his compatriots showed their triumphs, trials, and (most prevalently) their folly as only they could experience them.

Up to this point I have examined how popular literature of the Victorian era used different tropes to define the many ways its audience could relate to the British Empire

on nationalistic and moral grounds. While this literature was particularly concerned with inculcating a sense of the possibilities the Empire could provide for the expanding English middle class, I now want to ask whether the push to voyage out into the Empire also encouraged more cross-cultural forms of identity. If the English were to set sail for their fortune, become the moral force behind international networks of trade, or return with the prosperity of empire to reinvigorate home and nation, were they not also given the opportunity to expand the limits of culture itself? Were the English abroad to remain English, or were new, hybrid, even cosmopolitan versions of identity possible? The Victorian period was, after all, a period of self-making and the expansion of England's influence created new ways for the middle class to define itself as a participant in a nation of whose worth other nations must be certain. With newly expanded opportunities for travel and trade, did the borders of national identity also expand?

Charles Wirgman settled in a context ideal for understanding the potential for cosmopolitan identity in the nineteenth century. The best chance of uncovering the existence of such hybrid forms of national identity would likely be found just outside the realm of England's imperial dominance, and the Japan in transition from the Tokugawa shogunate to the Meiji government was just such a place. After the Americans coercively succeeded in creating trade agreements with Japan in the 1850s, treaty ports became centers of commerce for westerners and locations where they vied for influence with the Japanese. While England had an imperialistic stance toward Japan, it certainly was one among many Western nations that sought to influence the direction of the Japanese government.⁸⁵ From the 1860s through the turn of the century, as Japan underwent a

⁸⁵ The English did have the fortune of supporting the winning side of the civil wars that lead to the Meiji Restoration. The French earned the enmity of the new government for

period of rapid modernization, Western citizens—especially middle-class merchants, government officials, and a variety of other expatriates—resided in foreign settlements. Not only were these expatriates in close contact with Japanese culture; they were tossed together in geographically isolated communities made up of English, German, French, American, and Russian citizens and more.⁸⁶

This chapter argues that Wirgman's unique magazine became a catalyst for the solidification of the emerging, hybrid identity of Yokohama's expatriate community. Examining his depiction of westerners in Yokohama in part of the magazine's run (1862–76) will reveal the ways Western and Eastern signifiers were used to shape the identities of the *Japan Punch*'s audience. Wirgman's satiric and, at times, brutal criticism of his fellow treaty port residents showed the Western expatriates to themselves for what they truly were: servants and subjects of an Empire who were striving for some of the normalcy, prosperity, and usual pleasures of the well off middle class. By examining the depiction of this community throughout the *Japan Punch*, I will also interrogate to what extent the amalgamation of cultures in Yokohama gave rise to any nascent forms of cosmopolitanism.

The expatriate is a separate category from the cosmopolitan or the colonist, but it is the latter we first need to distinguish the identity role of expatriate from. Whether the expatriates of the foreign settlement in Yokohama prove to satisfy the requirements of the

having been slow to change their allegiance. Japan, of course, determined its own imperial course after the turn of the century. For more on Japan's exceptional trajectory from feudalism to imperial power see Mills.

⁸⁶ The foreign settlement was geographically isolated—bordered on one side by the water of a bay and cut off from the rest of Yokohama by a small river and checkpoints. Residents needed to obtain permits to come and go. Wirgman, who accompanied diplomatic missions, associated with Japanese artists, accompanied the British military, and at times, worked as interpreter, seems to have spent more time outside the settlement than his colleagues.

cosmopolitan figure will be considered toward the end of the chapter. There are obvious differences between colonists and expatriates; however, it would be more accurate to describe each role as occupying opposite ends of the same continuum than to disassociate them from one another completely. While the designation *colonist* might imply more permanence, this is not necessarily a requirement. Colonists and settlers did return home, in life and in popular fiction; fiction in particular, as other chapters have indicated, depicts colonists and settlers returning after some modicum of wealth and standing have been gained. Many expatriates, on the other hand, including Charles Wirgman himself, resided for decades and died without leaving their host nation (Wirgman took two trips abroad during his stay in Japan, but otherwise remained in Yokohama for the rest of his life). Thus, duration of residence does not necessarily distinguish the expatriate from the colonist. To the modern reader, certainly, the term *colonist* now has negative connotations of dominance and exploitation that *expatriate* lacks. Yet expatriates were not only present in Japan to vie for trade and profit; they represented governments, like the British, that would participate in violent confrontations as they saw fit. During Wirgman's time in Yokohama, British naval ships and military expeditions (which he sometimes accompanied) were on semi permanent standby. While the English did not rule Japan as they did in India or Australia, they were clearly prepared to enforce diplomacy by violent means if they deemed it necessary. Like the Yokohama foreign settlement, colonists may have been geographically confined within communities that incorporated other westerners. The two identity categories are more alike than we might initially suppose; but, ideologically speaking, *colonist* implies a more invested brand of settlement while *expatriate* retains an air of impermanence and detachment. The identity

category of *expatriate* neatly encapsulates the inhabitants' collective status as long-term residents invested in their new, ad-hoc community in a manner distinct from that of the colonist or settler. It was just such a group of citizens abroad that Wirgman joined on his arrival in Yokohama in 1861.

The degree of Wirgman's impact on the Yokohama community has not yet been fully assessed. The body of work on Charles Wirgman and the *Japan Punch* is slight, and conducted exclusively by historians and scholars of art history. John Clarke, an art historian, has published several studies that include Charles Wirgman's work and has conducted the most in-depth research on his life available in English. Clarke has identified most of Wirgman's work in the *Illustrated London News* and the publication dates of the *Japan Punch*, and he has examined Wirgman's relationships with Japanese artists he either taught or worked with in some capacity. Todd S. Munson includes Wirgman and the *Japan Punch* in *The Periodical Press in Treaty-Port Japan* to round out his depiction of the foreign press as it functioned more broadly in nineteenth-century treaty ports. Aside from these and a few other small items, Wirgman is most likely to appear in the work of scholars that study the history of cartooning in Asia and contemporary forms of Japanese visual culture like *manga*. One typically finds the *Japan Punch* referenced as an origin point that, when combined with *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and the work of Japanese cartoonists who had spent time in the West, yielded the start of cartooning in Japan. Wirgman's work is typically regarded as the first occurrence of Western cartoons in Japan. These sources take Wirgman's degree of influence as a major argumentative point and all emphasize that the *Japan Punch* is an important record of Yokohama. Yet sources remain few, and Wirgman typically serves as a footnote in

studies of Asian or Japanese cartoons. This is understandable, as decoding the context that informs Wirgman's caricatures can only be done painstakingly, and the *Japan Punch*, despite its influence, thus remains an obscure text. Despite all this, the *Japan Punch* provides an important dimension to our understanding of the different ways the English middle class could define themselves in relation to the British Empire.

Wirgman's representations of hybridity make a significant contribution to our understanding of a form of multiculturalism, however limited, embedded in some of England's imperialist projects.

Wirgman himself may have had the most flexible relationship to national identity possible for a middle-class Englishman on the Victorian period. Born in London, Wirgman lived in France for some of his childhood and again as a young adult, perhaps to study painting (although most evaluations of his artwork note his lack of technique) (Clarke 6-7). It also appears that Wirgman had an extensive knowledge of languages, and this facility is readily evident in the pages of the *Japan Punch*.⁸⁷ Some sources claim that Wirgman was an army captain, but this is not likely the case. Rather, it appears he was sent east by the *Illustrated London News* and had an uncle with ties to both the military and that magazine that may have resulted in his appointment. Based on some sort of reputation as a competent sketch artist, family connections with the British military, and perhaps a negligibly sized inheritance from his recently deceased father, Wirgman left England. The most concrete records of Charles Wirgman's life begin in 1857, when he traveled to Malta as a correspondent for the *Illustrated London News*. (His contributions

⁸⁷ Clarke writes: "it is clear [Wirgman] was fluent, and probably nearly bi-lingual in French and German, knew Latin and Greek, could write in Spanish, Portuguese, and quote tags in Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Arabic, and other Middle Eastern languages. He had besides this an interpreter-level competence in spoken Japanese, and some knowledge of Chinese" (7).

are easy to identify, as they are labeled as the work of their “special artist and correspondent.” Letters are included with his sketches.) He was then assigned to cover the Second Opium Wars (Arrow Wars) in China, although he continued making other trips to places like Taiwan and the Philippines. Most of Wirgman’s work for the *ILN* is ethnographic, a “part of the contemporary ideological apparatus for handling interesting but over-powered peoples” both as a chronicler of individuals and the battles he witnessed (Clark 11-12). His military reporting tended to continue the practice of representing “types” from different cultures and focusing on more mundane occurrences, despite the significant amount of conflict he witnessed. Yet he did submit images of troop landings and battlefields. His work is very much in keeping with the *ILN*’s style, which offered readers pictures with a sense of having been taken immediately from the scene. Indeed, sketches like those created by Wirgman, when transferred to woodblock for mass printing, were meant to provide *ILN* readers with the most up-to-date renderings of news possible. The woodcut was understood to be the most reliable way to communicate images, as photography was still in its early stages and not seen as comparably reliable. Wirgman was thus on the cutting edge of journalism in the East, providing images for *ILN* readers that felt as though they were taken from real life in an instant; he provided a look at a place that had become newly visible.

In one sense, Wirgman is part of a Western discourse that portrayed the foreignness of Asian countries and people as “other” and thus in need of the civilizing influence of a Western imperial power. However, while certainly imperfect in his depictions of other races, the vision and voice that Wirgman would develop by producing content for the *ILN* makes clear his view of different cultures was often at odds with the

demands of his editors. For example, one of the most dramatic firsthand accounts of violent conflict Wirgman wrote concerns an attack on the British legation in Edo in July of 1861, not long after the *Illustrated London News* sent him on to Japan.⁸⁸ Wirgman relayed the events from a nighttime ambush wherein attackers stormed through the temple occupied by the legation in search of the English minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock.⁸⁹ According to the *ILN*, the members of the legation, staying in a temple that the editorial takes great care to point out was poorly guarded, had dined for the evening. Most lingered before bed and some were not asleep. Loud noises alerted some of them, and the attack and retaliation began. Reportedly, Wirgman and a Mr. Russell arrived as “the Japanese fell back into the darkness, cutting and slashing at posts and screens” (376). The *ILN* maintains that the intruders were seeking Alcock, but mistaking their way, they left enough time for the legation’s guards to arrive:

The yacunins, or Japanese guard, arrived, and, falling upon the assassins, killed five and drove the others away. There was a brief combat in the garden, and then all was still. . . . The inmates of the house . . . watched all night with the Japanese soldiers, and only discovered in the grey of the morning how many of their assailants had been destroyed. . . . The assault upon this unprotected abode of the representatives of the Queen in Jeddo seems to have been well planned, and the whole of the occupants had a narrow escape. (376)

The *ILN* next directs attention to the sketches in that number’s “Impression” section provided by its “Special Artist and Correspondent” and “his version of the outrage”

⁸⁸ Edo refers to the city now called Tokyo, although the accounts of the attack in the *Illustrated London News* use the name “Jeddo” to refer to the site of the British Legation. Another spelling includes “Yedo,” such as the one given in a *New York Times* article from October 12, 1861.

⁸⁹ Clarke 13, 31; *ILN* 12 Oct. 1861: 367–70, 376.

(376). Although the editorial credits the guards, its depiction emphasizes the heroics of the British men caught unawares. The *Illustrated London News* offers standard reportage here, not quite reaching a level of vehement outrage but certainly taking what is a clearly Western-centric view of the occurrence.

Wirgman begins his half of the column by emphasizing that the attack preempted his plans to provide “sketches from the interior of Japan,” pointing out that his interest is more directed toward representations of Japan’s topography. However, the “serious events” have made him “hasten to send . . . a slight account of what took place.” His choice of language is more measured, his duty to report the attack tempered by his sense of his purpose as an artist and correspondent kept abroad to provide views and stories of the new places he encounters. Wirgman does not adopt the more jingoist tone of the editorial portion of the column, choosing to acknowledge the “serious” nature of events, but avoids evoking the event as an atrocity against crown and country. Prominently featured in the October 12th issue of the *ILN* (1861), an image with the subtitle “The outrage on the British Embassy at Jeddo, Japan” shows a barefoot Englishman single-handedly warding off attackers as they emerge from the shadows as his unarmed countryman awakens behind the temple’s traditional paper screen door. The image is full of action. Each figure is clearly in motion, and readers are meant to understand the treachery of a surprise attack at night by shadowy figures. Left alone, this and other images of the attack would have enforced the enraged tones of the *ILN* editorial unequivocally. But Wirgman balances this picture with an impressive woodcut of the guards keeping watch in the garden by the light of paper lanterns and writes with a much more moderate tone.

There is a divide between the two voices in the column; the *ILN* editorial describes the event as a “murderous” attack on innocent representatives of the Queen, while Wirgman presents a version much more focused on the experience, on being a witness. And while the editorial voice maintains the focus on the members of the British legation, Wirgman uses his account, paired with a sketch, to memorialize the *yacuin* who came to their rescue and continued to fight and stand guard throughout the night:

Lanterns appeared in all directions, and bonfires were made. The garden and park looked like a scene in a plan. The fine, soldierlike [*sic*] Japanese guard being seen in dim outline grouped in different directions, before us a sheet of water reflecting fires, lanterns, and men, as a scene never to be forgotten, and even at the moment filled me with admiration. (376)

Wirgman’s reporting and garden scene resist sensationalizing the event. Instead, they draw focus away from the violence that one senses was to suit his editors’ expectations and toward the magic of the lanterns lighting guards and garden. The Japan of these images is a Japan ready for *ILN* readers to discover and to marvel at—a beautiful artifact of place. Wirgman insists in his commentary that the attack was committed by a handful of disgruntled assailants and seems not to prefer using the event to leverage British military interference in matters of state. His tactic here is echoed throughout items in the *Japan Punch* that ask foreign settlement readers to treat Western and Japanese culture with equal consideration.

Of course, when Wirgman first created the *Japan Punch* in 1862, his primary concern seems to have been to antagonize the local newspaper editors who found fault

with his rampant vandalism of public notices.⁹⁰ The first issues of the *Japan Punch* prominently feature caricatures of Albert W. Hansard and his business partner O. R. Keele drawn in all manner of insulting ways. Hansard, the editor of the *Japan Herald*, and Keele appear as devils, donkey and pig, roosters, and more, sometimes under the names “Spankard” and “Veale.”⁹¹ Dissatisfied with both their attitude toward himself and, likely, the attitude Hansard and his paper adopted when reporting current events, Wirgman set about to provide an alternative reading outlet for the foreign settlement. More than that, he seems to have meant to provide an alternative way to view the community itself. The first issue begins as follows:

How are you? Short speeches make long friends. Life in East dreary one. Want of amusement. Pursuit of cash principal occupation. Grey shirtings sap vital energy. Parties insinuate not happy here . . . generally express'd [*sic*] desire to go home. Would toast after dinner. Absent friends! Imitate customs of native land. . . . Local press—“remarkable for amount of news, only item we could discover in 6 months being that . . . columns are open to correspondents etc. “highly interesting to the world.”⁹²

It is unlikely the *Japan Herald* or *Japan Times* would take quite the same approach to describing the Yokohama foreign community. From the comments about the exaggeration of newsworthy items in those papers and their inability to captivate a group of bored expatriates, let alone a global audience, it is clear Wirgman is against the

⁹⁰ Wirgman’s early relationship with the local editors was not cordial, but later newspapers like the *Japan Times* reviews his work favorably. See Munson 112–13.

⁹¹ Munson identifies the subjects of Wirgman’s mockery (97–98) and notes that Wirgman had no shortage of matter for satire in the “Yokohama press, whose high-handed opinions and flowery (yet often misspelled and/or ungrammatical) language proved ample subject matter for the *Punch*’s pages” (96).

⁹² Quote marks and first ellipses in original. *Japan Punch* 1.1 (1862): 2.

illusion of the suitability of life for a westerner in Japan. As he tells it, his fellow residents are apathetic, homesick, and working to make money with little hope for entertainment. Wirgman has no interest in disguising the boredom everyone seems to acknowledge. Of interest, too, is the note that residents try to “imitate customs of native land,” observing that the expatriate community members who attempted to keep a sense of normalcy seemed unable to affect more than a shadow of the habits and traditions of Western life. To this dull existence, Wirgman offers *Punch* as an antidote:

Punch required, relaxation from business. Risible muscles set in motion beneficial to health. Let us smile sublime sublunar sentiment. Snows of Fusiyama melting before genial rays of rising sun. Crabs and oysters rejoice. Nature clothed in spring of verdure Fellow Townsmen! Respected and respectable mercantile community! High government officials and their friends we introduce you to Punch. (4)

With this promise of spring and a proposed cure for boredom, Wirgman begins his publication almost as if this were the first occurrence of *Punch* ever seen rather than an appropriation of someone else’s longtime publication (the original *Punch* had, by 1861, been published for twenty years). Life in Yokohama may not have been quite as dismal as Wirgman makes out; his exaggeration is a corrective to the faults he identifies in the local papers, as noted in the first excerpt. By identifying the futility of replicating Western life and offering respite from a capitalist-driven existence, Wirgman argues for a different type of community. A passive existence will be replaced by one in which satire entertains those who are willing to stomach the self-critique that the genre typically requires. This targeting of readers as a unified collective and the invitation to participate

in the like-minded pastime of mockery is one of the ways the *Japan Punch* brought a new perspective of the unique situation westerners in Yokohama shared. In these passages, Wirgman begins to define their collective identity without the gloss provided by the local papers.⁹³

The opening of the *Japan Punch* and its early illustrations in comparison with Wirgman's continued work for the *Illustrated London News* demonstrates the very different purpose with which he approached each audience. If Wirgman's work representing Japan to an audience back home exerted calm in the face of danger, his work representing Japan to the Yokohama foreign settlement seems to reassert the value of acknowledging the chaos inherent in the expatriate's existence. The sketches Wirgman sent the *ILN* continued to depict types, places, and scenes meant to reveal Japan to a Western audience paying for novelty as much as news. Often, Wirgman rendered the same or similar places in a completely different way to his different audiences. For example, an *ILN* woodcut from August of 1864 shows marines landing on docks at Yokohama in the most peaceful, orderly manner possible. The background of neat, traditional Japanese buildings gives way to views of cliffs and a far-off mountain range overlooking the sea. Subsequent drawings of the same perspective in the *Japan Punch* represent the complete breakdown of order as expatriates attempt to enjoy an evening near the water. One particular image, taken from a January 1865 cartoon, reads "The Bund as it was during the summer 5 o'clock P.M." The cartoon shows horses rearing,

⁹³ The local press with means, like the *Japan Times*, had an "overland edition" that was sent to England and enjoyed an overseas readership there and in Europe. In an 1866 review of the *Japan Punch*, the *Times* praises Wirgman's work good naturedly and hopes the paper will find success among the "prosaic" Yokohama community (Munson 113). One suspects the overland edition was not for the benefit of Yokohama readers. Again, the *Japan Punch* did not receive praise during its first few years of irregular publication.

bucking, or lying dead as women's hoop skirts fly up and gentlemen run and fall in every direction. The nature of caricature is to flatten—for example, the landscape is reduced to the most basic of its elements—but in comparison to the *ILN* image, the cartoon for the expatriate audience is much more lively and reproduces the feeling of being out of place in one's surroundings. The *ILN* audience would never be granted such firsthand knowledge of the disarray of the Western experience in Japan. They are instead provided a perspective that would never betray how difficult the westerner's, and thus by extension the West's, position in Japan could be.

One crucial difference between Wirgman's work for the *Illustrated London News* and the *Japan Punch* is the field of vision. In each example, the *ILN* pictures take in the scene as a whole, allowing the faraway reader the illusion of being able to comprehend, at a glance, what Japan really is. The local reader of the *Japan Punch* is not being told about the grandeur of Japan but rather is placed in the thick of experience, and Japan is rendered in such a way that encourages recognition of the daily sights and incidents that typify expatriate life. Readers in England would not have been treated to any criticism of their Empire's position in Japan. Although created four years apart, two like images in the *Illustrated London News* and the *Japan Punch* of a similar scene demonstrate Wirgman's persistent efforts to emphasize the lack of orderliness in the foreign settlement residents' experience of Japan. In "Japanese Officer Travelling on the Tokaido" in the August 6th, 1864, issue of the *ILN*, a woodcut by Wirgman illustrates an orderly procession of Japanese carrying palanquins and making their way past thatched

houses on the tree-lined road connecting Edo (Tokyo) and Kyoto.⁹⁴ Western readers could investigate the many details of the image: the dress of the soldiers, the strange architecture, and, thanks to Wirgman's shading and striated marks denoting clouds and wind, the foreboding natural surroundings of the packed dirt road. The reader is not invited to participate in this scene, rather he is meant to study it; the fact that he can view this evidence of a far-off place at all is a marvel. Perhaps readers would reflect on this visibility of Japan as a credit to the English nation, but they are not invited into the essential experience of life in Japan—the life on display is distinctly other. Another image of what is likely also the Tokaido creates a distinct twist on notions of order and identity when Englishmen are introduced into the scene. An 1869 cartoon from the *Japan Punch* depicts the destruction effected by two Englishmen riding pell-mell over a group of Japanese beneath a caption that reads “Confound these Japanese odd rot ‘em Were the last words of Tom” (ellipses in original). The same thatched houses and same twisted trees provide the background, while in the foreground, the two Englishmen ride spooked-looking mounts as miniscule Japanese are thrown to the ground or try to dodge the horses' hooves. In the center of the image, obscured by the horses—positively gigantic in comparison to the fleeing Japanese people—are soldiers carrying a palanquin that recalls Wirgman's earlier woodcut for the *Illustrated London News*. While they are drawn at the same angle, the *Punch* cartoon positions the reader much closer by emphasizing the difference in size between English and Japanese. Gone is the artifice of objectivity. The foreign settlement audience is instead asked to participate in the havoc wreaked by the careless horsemen. As the later cartoon was done in 1869 after the

⁹⁴ This route was photographed by Wirgman's business partner in Japan, Felice (sometimes written Felix) Beato. Beato and Wirgman owned a studio for a time that sold sketches and photographs to tourists visiting Yokohama.

conclusion of the civil war that marked the end of Japan's days of feudalism, it calls to mind the complete breakdown of the hierarchy so neatly presented in the *ILN* woodcut. Wirgman asks his *Japan Punch* readers to consider the chaotic state of the place they now find themselves in while providing some commentary about how much the traditional Japanese military structure had been disassembled (as well as an admonishment against this behavior on the part of westerners). Unlike his earlier work, Wirgman's caricature involves readers much more deeply in the action and offers a space for critique. This space, in turn becomes a way for the community to define itself.

The *Japan Punch* caricatures asked for a communal response but not a homogenous one. A criticism Wirgman often leveled at the Western newspaper editors in Yokohama was that they manufactured differences in opinion where none existed, posing as combatants when they were stakeholders in the same outcome. Perhaps this is why the turn toward cartoons was attractive after the uniform, orderly depictions of Japan he created for the *Illustrated London News*. Just as his caricatures of the chaos of everyday life in the foreign settlement create a particular vision of the community, so too does the practice of satirical critique in Wirgman's cartoons, which encourage a self-reflexive reading of the expatriate identity. Wirgman takes many opportunities in his *Punch* to provide an amused look at the difficult time westerners had fitting in with their surroundings and the stubborn lengths some went to in order to try and reproduce some of the life they had known at home. A brief series of woodcuts in 1863 depict an Englishman desperately trying to reproduce an English hunt with little success. "Sporting in Japan," captioned "Spurs the 'old sportsman' out shooting. Painful paucity of birds of the Pheasant denomination," depicts a gangly Englishman and hunting dog tramping

through some distinctly Japanese foliage. In a follow-up image, “‘The Old Sportsman’ his new style of sport,” the same character, “Spurs,” forlornly holds his rifle up to shoot birds tied to strings held by Japanese porters.⁹⁵ A dragonfly as large as a bird makes an appearance, as do more birds held in cages waiting to be deployed for the Englishman’s shooting pleasure. These and other images showed *Japan Punch* readers the ridiculousness of these sporting pursuits, but they are only ridiculous insofar as they point out the impossibility of living the same life one enjoyed in the West in Japan. Similarly, a drawing in an 1871 *Japan Punch* shows a tall and exaggeratedly lanky English dignitary crammed in the most undignified manner possible into a rickshaw making his way through town with difficulty. Wirgman also consistently mocks his colleagues as they try organized competition to alleviate boredom. For example, a split image showing “Athletic sports as they are” and “Athletic sports as they ought to be” depict infirm westerners racing each other versus Greek athletes from the classic age.⁹⁶ The cartoon points out that these would-be athletes cannot deny their status as middle-aged, middle-class merchants and bureaucrats anymore than they can deny their foreignness. The images are humorous because they are ludicrous, but in asking his readers to identify just how ludicrous foreigners could look and act in their current surroundings, Wirgman creates a common vocabulary of expatriate experience within his community.

At times, Wirgman made attempts to argue for a surprisingly fluid view of culture. He encouraged the readers of the *Japan Punch* to engage with Japanese culture

⁹⁵ Spurs must represent a particular Yokohama resident, perhaps someone with a military connection in the past as he is represented as an older gentleman. He is always drawn with spurs—which seem quite out of place—and seems to be someone given to the social striving that Wirgman took issue with. A cartoon of all Yokohama’s foreign settlement “dignitaries” depicts Spurs sobbing because he has not received his invitation to join. *Japan Punch* 11 (1866).

⁹⁶ *Japan Punch* 12 (1873).

open-mindedly and not just through images that made the westerner look foolish in comparison to the Japanese. In a move often made in nineteenth-century cartoons—found in the original *Punch and Fun*, for example—the caricature comments on the absurdity of a style or trend with a comparison that makes a pointed observation. One such instance occurs in an early *Punch* where a Botecudo man appears in native dress and then in Western evening wear, the message being that each cultural tradition was equally ridiculous.⁹⁷ Wirgman used this tactic of Western cartooning to encourage the reading of culture as a construction. An 1867 cartoon compares two women, one Western and one Japanese. On the left, one triangle surrounds a woman in traditional Western full skirts and bonnet in with emphasis on the volume this adds to her lower portion. On the right, another triangle frames a Japanese woman in *kimono* and *geta* (wooden patten shoes held on by thongs) with emphasis on the volume this style of dress adds to her upper half.⁹⁸ The inscription reads, “Similar triangles are to one another in the duplicate ration of their homoglous [*sic*] sides. Q.E.D. which is absurd?” While this is not the subtlest form of argument (caricature not being a subtle genre) it makes an interesting case against privileging Western culture. Two years later, another image with triangular framing—this time with the figures each occupying the plates of a scale—compares a gentleman in Western dress with gun and sword with a Japanese warrior facing away from readers, his sword visible. Text beneath the Japanese figure reads “the enemy of progress,” but the audience is clearly meant to see the Western figure is equally deserving of this charge.⁹⁹ The cultural critique that Wirgman urges his expatriate readers to make is not radical

⁹⁷ The cartoon, captioned “CIVILISATION,” culminates with an image reading “the head of a botecundo disfigured by civilization.” *Punch* 31 Jul. 1841.

⁹⁸ *Japan Punch* 1867.

⁹⁹ *Japan Punch* 1869.

even for his contemporary audience; this strategy was used with regularity in comedic publications. Furthermore, Japan is not an imperial space in the same sense a British colony is and anti-Japanese propaganda seems not to have been part of the Yokohama foreign press strategy. The images are noteworthy because they ask expatriates to define themselves relative to Japanese culture rather than in opposition to it. Unlike the exaggerated caricatures of reckless riders or hopeless sportsmen, these straightforward drawings are much more serious with their didactic purpose, and this would become a signature of Wirgman's magazine. In both cases, the *Japan Punch* encouraged its readers to be critical in their understanding of their relationship to the culture of their host nation.

Likewise, Wirgman gave little opportunity for his readers to understand themselves as wholly beneficial to their Japanese hosts. With discourse that recalls Dickens's wish in *Dombey and Son* that the virtuous directed the capitalist ventures of empire (thus excusing capitalism itself), the *Japan Punch* consistently directed its ire at practices meant to further gain where none was merited. While such criticism was not limited to the English, one such example occurred in Wirgman's magazine on the occasion of an indemnity being paid by Japan to Britain as punishment for firing on English ships in the straight of Shimonoseki. In Wirgman's cartoon commenting on the event, "Britannia bleedeth [*sic*] the Tycoon," Britannia cuts the arm of Japan to bleed out currency into a bowl where customs representatives dive to grasp at the coins. Below the image, one reads "N.B. The Lion is so ashamed that he [prefers not to attend]." ¹⁰⁰ On more than one occasion, particularly in the 1860s, the anti-foreign groups in Japan that were well on their way to being displaced by a new, Western-welcoming system of government would threaten Western ships. Of course the military presence of fleets of

¹⁰⁰ *Japan Punch* 3 (1866).

English marines and other Western powers were more than enough to retaliate, but payment was often demanded after any resistance had been quickly quelled. Britannia bleeding the “tycoon,” does not paint any nation in a favorable light, and Wirgman seems to have been skeptical that this was not a hypocritical arrangement. After all, the principal occupation of those in the treaty ports was, as his *Japan Punch* introduction makes clear, the pursuit of profit.

While capital gains were the basis of the relationship between the West and Japan, Wirgman’s satire argues that this was far from an ideal model of cultural exchange. At times, he appeared to believe the contact between nations did more harm than good, although in a lesser charge, he also seemed to think Western contact had done little to promote real change in Japanese society. A tableau called “results of our intercourse with Japan” shows a Western dressed pair of Japanese soldiers as “officer and private 1865” on the left of the page and an over-ceremoniously dressed version of the same men as “Ditto 1859.”¹⁰¹ Wirgman makes the suggestion that the trappings of power have changed while the fundamental culture has not. Furthermore, this image involves westerners in its commentary, as the Western dress is a derivation of an equally warlike country. These and other images represent one way in which Wirgman’s work created a visual record of expatriate identity for his readers; it encouraged a form of self-critique that made space to redefine their sense of citizenship in the context of a foreign space.

Wirgman’s cartoons establish that a tenuous relationship to Japanese culture was a defining characteristic of Yokohama expatriates. Specific community members that Wirgman wished to caricature (antagonistically so) were at times drawn as samurai, geisha, or Japanese-robed scholars. The purpose of these cartoons is usually to highlight

¹⁰¹ *Japan Punch* 2 (1866).

some failing of the person in question. In one such instance labeled, “The Head Betto or the Right Man [in] the Right Place” (*Japan Punch* 1867), the man in question, “Spurs,” is drawn as a loincloth clad with full-body tattoos in the Japanese style. The tattoos associate him with what was an outlawed practice (tattooing was banned during the Meiji period), while the use of *Betto* is perhaps a pun. *Betto* could mean the head of an organization, but *Bettoes* were grooms, as in the instance of this picture. Wirgman uses this Japanese iconography to deflate the self-importance and social striving of its target. This is yet another way Wirgman demonstrates the out-of-place-ness of the expatriate community but also heavily criticizes those who would try to assert themselves too seriously within the community. Looking past the use of a Western interpretation of the signs and symbols of Japan for Wirgman’s purposes, we also see a relationship to authentic Japanese culture is lacking.

The *Japan Punch* often demonstrates Western separation from Japanese culture not only by demonstrating the out-of-place figure the westerner cuts in his Japanese surroundings but also by mocking expatriates’ attempts at assimilation. In an image that comes at the end of a series of pictures about a group of Yokohama foreign settlement residents taking an excursion in the countryside, Wirgman takes a more positive approach to the Western understanding of Japanese culture. In this cartoon, his colleagues strut and cavort around, performing high kicks and admiring themselves in *kimonos*. The inscription reads, “The explorers having got wet and the baggage not having arrived are compelled to put on the costume of the country. Pleasing result.”¹⁰² Despite the hilarious picture a group of aging, bearded, monocle-wearing Englishmen provides, the cartoon gets at the true nature of the expatriate’s relationship with his host culture. Wirgman

¹⁰² *Japan Punch* (1867).

illuminates the various ways his colleagues struggle to adapt, unable to fully integrate into their host country. Their status as tolerated guests and being relegated to the foreign settlement contributed to this—the settlement was isolated from the rest of Yokohama as it was on a peninsula, and one had to enter or exit through a checkpoint. As the citizens of the foreign settlement worked to form their own community, their connection to Japan itself might have remained tenuous, but Wirgman's satire here points out that this other culture would often be "tried on," figuratively and, in this case, literally. It is cultural experimentation and not assimilation that is defined through the pages of the *Japan Punch* as the common experience of expatriate life in Japan.

Shared experience certainly forges communities where they are least likely, and an isolated mercantile community of Western and Eurasian men surrounded by a culture that could easily baffle is not the likeliest place for common ground to be found. No experience like that of a common threat, however, will encourage cohesion among the most unusual groups. The continual threat of violence that the expatriates in Japan had to deal with—particularly during the first few decades Western visitors were allowed to settle—was a reminder that distinctions among foreigners meant little to those who resented the presence of any and all outsiders. Wirgman's audience would have regularly read in papers like the *Japan Times* or the *Japan Herald*, or experienced firsthand, the threat of property destruction, beatings, and even murder, while militaries were quick to get involved. Wirgman's publication usually *ignores* this violent context, relegating it to the background or presenting it irreverently, but the dangers were very real. We have already seen that Wirgman experienced a serious attack firsthand while with the British legation in Tokyo (1861), after a stint as a battle reporter, and he continued to experience

violence as part of the texture of life in the East, providing him with many opportunities to assimilate these events into his chronicles of life in Yokohama. At the end of the nineteenth century, Yokohama would serve as a major trading port with a higher volume of exchange than any other port in Asia, but when Wirgman arrived, the area was significantly less developed (Rogala Appendix 1). Many descriptions liken its condition to the frontier towns of the American West, although in the span of two decades, it would evolve from a small village to a modern city (Appendix 1). Businesses in the foreign settlement frequently dealt with theft and vandalism, to the point that stores attempted to fortify their establishments and the foreign community attempted to establish its own police force (Appendix 1). It was dangerous for foreign settlers to walk alone, as to do so could result in a beating or worse (Cortazzi 54). In 1864, the murder of Major George Walter Baldwin and Lieutenant Robert Nichols Bird, two English officers, resulted in two public hangings and a beheading.¹⁰³ In 1862, the murder of Edward St. John Neale (a British lieutenant colonel and the *chargé d'affaires* of Britain in Japan) resulted in British naval action in Kagoshima (Totman 87; Cortazzi xv). Violence was a persistent part of life in Japan as the country experienced conflict over the total social and political modernization the Meiji government wished to foster. In 1868, a civil war followed a coup d'état, and military assistance from the West, despite their declared neutrality,

¹⁰³ See MIT's Visualizing Cultures project online collection, "Felice Beato's Japan: Places An Album by the Pioneer Foreign Photographer in Yokohama" and accompanying text for more information about Beato's business as a photographer and his response, along with his partner Charles Wirgman, to the violent attacks against foreigners (Hockley). According to Allen Hockley's essay for the online album, Felice (sometimes spelled Felix) Beato and Wirgman met in China in 1860 as the British attacked what is now Beijing; Wirgman was there at the behest of the *Illustrated London News*, and Beato was commissioned by the British Army to take photographs. Later, Beato would move to Yokohama (1863) at Wirgman's urging and the two had a shop selling photographs, sketches, and painted scenes to travellers and Yokohama residents. Both Wirgman and Beato were responsible for images from Japan that appeared in the *ILLN*.

added to the chaos and spurred further attacks on westerners (Rogala Appendix 1). According to John Clarke, Wirgman, for his part, often accompanied British naval ships, as he had done during the wars in China, keeping a record of various conflicts. One could read much of the *Japan Punch* without this context and perhaps not entirely sense the depth of violence behind it. Indeed, many of the examples covered so far involve the dangers of expatriate life only obliquely. However, violence manifests itself in the pages of the magazine in significant ways nonetheless.

The *Japan Punch* provided its readers with humorous sketches of the community's attempts to protect itself as a way to ease anxiety and give voice to their common experience. As a guarded area and the home of those merchants responsible for increasing Japan's wealth, the foreign settlement was likely the safest place to be, but the threat of violence must have been felt more keenly because of the lack of better roads, police, and even streetlights. Gaslights were not installed until the 1870s and "thievery was rampant, especially in the evening hours" (Appendix 1). Even the replacement of gaslights with electric ones in 1890 did not wholly prevent burglary, as "it wasn't unusual . . . for the lighting system to fail, sometimes for days" (Appendix 1). Complaints in the foreign press even resulted in retribution:

Thieves apparently could read English[. F]or when the *Japan Herald* complained in strong terms about the inadequate police force, its office, and the house of its editor were broken into several nights later, burglarized, the furniture wrecked and [strewn] about the house. (Appendix 1)

All of this, among the expatriate community, would have contrasted most unhappily with a faraway homeland. With a more darkly humorous touch than his more typical content,

Wirgman took up the theme of burglary and anti-foreign-press attacks quite frequently. A group of the press makes an appearance, the reporters all in a line and armed with spiked clubs on their way to work.¹⁰⁴ In another example, Wirgman uses Mr. Punch as his own avatar, providing a cartoon samurai Punch with spike-collared “watch Tobys” who guards his door in full armor, weapons drawn, tacks on the floor, and bells attached to the door, bed, and dresser drawers—a hyper-alert Mr. Punch “waiting to give burglars a warm reception[,] a nightly scene on the Bluff.”¹⁰⁵ The text around the image offers some oddly calm advice on dealing with intruders:

On account of the numerous burglaries Mr. Punch has caused a lot of pits to be dug in his garden[.] Every time he catches a burglar he buries him up to the next in the pit and as it freezes every night the ground round the burglars neck becomes hard and almost strangles the thief who does not like it at all. Mr. Punch finds that at the end of a month that the thief thus buried and kept on very [bad?] diet is in no mood to commit further depredations. . . . [He] finds that this is the only way to treat burglars as it saves a good deal of trouble. This method is strongly recommended.¹⁰⁶

With as much compunction as offering up a recipe, Wirgman explains that Mr. Punch has developed a nonchalant attitude where burglars are concerned. The almost paranoid precautions taken by Mr. Punch in the cartoon and its textual reverse—the hyperbolic coolness when suggesting one simply plant the burglar in the ground of one’s garden—create an interesting mixture. It represents, on the one hand, the fears of the expatriate community and, on the other, the seeming ridiculousness of it all. Of all the foreign

¹⁰⁴ *Japan Punch* 8 (1865).

¹⁰⁵ *Japan Punch* 12 (1875).

¹⁰⁶ *Japan Punch* 12 (1875).

elements an expatriate was faced with in the Yokohama settlement, it seems the violence, whether petty or destructive, was the most confounding of all.

For a brief time, the Yokohama foreign community attempted to organize its own police force to protect the people and businesses within their settlement: the Yokohama Mounted Volunteers (Appendix 1; Munson 619). The local militia, unceremoniously nicknamed the “Yokohama Plungers” by Wirgman, was made up of nonprofessional soldiers. The organization does not seem to have lasted long or to have been particularly active in any real defense work. If Wirgman’s chronicles are to be believed, it seems the group devolved into a social outlet for those more civically minded than soldierly.¹⁰⁷ The majority of the Plunger cartoons occurred in 1866, and the first appearance foreshadows the incompetence to come. In “The ‘Yokohama Plungers’ take their first drill. Painful result,” Wirgman draws half the volunteers being bucked off their mounts and the other half careening in the wrong direction as a lone volunteer sits upon a catatonic mount and smokes.¹⁰⁸ In the next, the volunteers square off against each other because, as the caption reads, “The Plungers all want to Command!”¹⁰⁹ In a cartoon titled “First charge of the Y. Plunger,” a frightened looking volunteer and startled mount rear up above their fellow foreign settlement resident, whom they have no doubt just charged straight into the water he now flails in up to his neck.¹¹⁰ Wirgman also satirizes his earlier work for the *Illustrated London News*, replacing serious full views of battlefield maneuvers or gatherings of military notables with the ineptitude and petty squabbling of his Yokohama

¹⁰⁷ Perhaps another reason for Wirgman taking aim at the plungers—although certainly the lazy, club type atmosphere was a large one—was the involvement of the *Japan Times* editor, Charles Rickerby. For this and more on the plungers and Yokohama, see Munson 106.

¹⁰⁸ *Japan Punch* 1 (1866).

¹⁰⁹ *Japan Punch* 1 (1866).

¹¹⁰ *Japan Punch* 1 (1866).

neighbors. The contrast argues for the unfitness of men living in Japan for business purposes in defending themselves. The expatriate as a role, then, should be seen by *Japan Punch* readers as one better given to commerce and thus one firmly rooted in the duties of the middle class. Wirgman associates his community's unique context as in the prior examples, but with the added dimension that the work of defense against violence is outside the character of the foreign settlement resident.¹¹¹ The identity of his readers was to be kept distinct from the British or French marines who intervened when they were given orders.

Despite the very real dangers faced by his community, Wirgman continued to mock the Plungers for their ineffectiveness. Doing so contributed not only to the evolving visual vocabulary of expatriate life he developed in his magazine but also gave readers of the *Japan Punch* a new way to respond to violence. Despite the already considerable level of failure demonstrated in the previous examples, Wirgman's accusations continue to mount with an image of the Plungers attempting to "charge and rout the enemy"—the enemy being a small collection of farmyard animals.¹¹² And, lastly, beneath the caption "The Plungers Mutiny," a group of imbibing mounted volunteers lounge beneath a tree among broken bottles. This image features a delightful retort to a request that the group

¹¹¹ There is a notable contrast between the expatriates in the Yokohama community and the members of the British Legation attacked at Edo. Despite his satire here, Wirgman was also purportedly hiding from the action during the event he reported for the *ILN* while others fought (Munson even asserts Wirgman hid under floorboards, although he provides no citation for that anecdote. See Munson 94). And for all his depiction of gallant self-defense on the part of the English, Wirgman never stressed the heroism of his companions over that of the Japanese guard. Thus the *Japan Punch*'s creator may have identified more closely with the military ineptness of his neighbors than his jokes might indicate.

¹¹² *Japan Punch* 3 (1866).

come to drill: “Tell him we can’t come till we’ve finished our Breakfast.”¹¹³ The breakfast appears to be solely a liquid one.

In the *Japan Punch*, violence is used hyperbolically for humorous effect, glimpsed in the visual representations of daily life, and used to call attention to a violent lifestyle as antithetical to the Yokohama foreign settlement’s character. The Plungers most of all throw into sharp relief just how unsuited for dealing with conflict the members of the foreign settlement were, to the point that they become bored and disillusioned with the task of attempting to defend themselves or learn drills and military exercises to that effect. Strong, measured responses to violence were simply not part of who they were, and it seems the community came to the consensus that military affairs were best left to the military. Their collective identity, as portrayed by Wirgman’s view of the proceedings, seems to point to an acceptance of the state of affairs for the foreigner in Japan. Like the traditional dress of the country, this militancy was tried on and laid aside.

The *Japan Punch* returns over and over again to the dressing up of the expatriate. Hapless expatriates don their *kimonos* or their uniforms, dress as Japanese or as businessmen in their shirtsleeves. The magazine borrows the signs and symbols of Japan—or at least the signs and symbols of Japan to the Western eye—to try to parse the identity of the new foreign settlement community. The expatriates of Yokohama had, in Wirgman’s magazine, an opportunity to use the recognition of their foibles to reflect on their position as a new type of citizen: one no longer solely defined by their home country but not fully defined by their host country either. The *Japan Punch* was popular enough to run for roughly twenty-five years, and it caused enough of a stir to upset the

¹¹³ *Japan Punch* 3 (1866).

individuals it lampooned and receive chiding in the local press. But beyond that, it offered the only circulating visual construction of life and identity in the foreign settlement to those who made a home in Yokohama—those who were now something other than English, something wholly different from its host culture, something occupying a truly liminal space. To see their community in print and to identify with the presentation of the chaos, their moments of feeling at a loss or out of place, and an articulation of their relationship with Japanese culture was to acknowledge the unique experience of life in the foreign settlement.

There was one way the *Japan Punch* provided an aspirational version of the expatriate role. The potential for a more seamless blending of European and Japanese culture is embodied in the mascot of the Wirgman's magazine: Mr. Punch himself. The connection between the rendering of place and expatriate identity in the magazine is best represented by that famous puppet's transposition into Japanese culture. Like his Western counterpart, Punch is part mascot and part reminder of the joyful mien with which one can approach experience—recall the words in the original *Punch*, “we are a marvel,” and the self-contentment that statement was meant to convey. At times, the *Japan Punch* Punch looks like Charles Wirgman, and at times Wirgman draws his own caricature to make himself resemble Punch. While Punch gets into his share of scrapes in the pages of the *Japan Punch*, overall he moves through his new surroundings with ease, a perfect blend of awed newcomer and knowledgeable insider. He appears on each frontispiece in samurai attire beneath the magazine's banner, a sun rising over mount Fuji and flanked by two cranes and boughs of bamboo and Japanese white pine. His arms are stretched in welcome, or perhaps a gesture of presentation. Each issue of the magazine thus presents

him as a guide and symbolically integrates him into the symbolic lexicon of the West's concept of "Japan."

Like the robes of Wirgman's satirized neighbors, Punch also wears the traditional dress of Japan, but he does so quite effortlessly. Completely at home, he enacts the role of the expatriate whose good fortune is not to be believed. In a series of cartoons that depicts the "Visit of Mr. Punch on Board the Colorado-Claro," (an American ship on which he meets a correspondent for the *New York Herald*), Punch wonders at the ship and its cattle and horses after a warm greeting with champagne ("Mr. Punch is invited to smile. Does.").¹¹⁴ In "The Advantages of Being an Official," Punch rides away on the only suitable mount available, with a Japanese groom preceding him. As good horses were notoriously difficult to find and the source of much grumbling, Punch is able to embody those who are perceived to have the easiest time living far from home because of their status.¹¹⁵ These pictures are meant to provoke a sense of fun, but they imagine in Punch a representative of the foreign settlement community with the potential to benefit from his expatriate status.

Wirgman uses the device of telling tales of Mr. Punch's exploits with the utmost optimism. He creates a space in the magazine for good humor in the face of difficulty. Ironically, this attitude is one we might associate closely with that clichéd British injunction to keep a stiff upper lip, despite the fact that it is here dressed up in Japanese robes. One such narrative features "Punch *Sama*" and "*O. Judi-Sang*" huddled over a Hibachi in a room that features a tansu chest, paper screens, tatami mats, and a portrait of

¹¹⁴ *Japan Punch* (1867).

¹¹⁵ *Japan Punch* (1866). Horses were difficult to obtain in part because they were outlawed to all but Japan's upper classes until after Japan's trade agreements with the West were established.

what looks to be an ancestor of the Punches in Japanese clothing. In what follows, Wirgman uses the voice of Punch *Sama* the “great philosopher” and “true [sage]” to review the previous year of Yokohama’s fortunes:

Half of Yokohama had been burnt down, but what of that? Punch Sama would by his Counsels and Experience so guide the foreign Representatives & Japanese Governt [*sic*] that the town should leap like the fabled bird from her ashes, and become the glory of the Islands of the Rising Sun. Besides out of the flames themselves consolation born of misfortune had sprung up The back numbers of Punch had been saved.¹¹⁶

In the aftermath of the fire, Wirgman’s tableau focuses on the domestic, albeit one in Japanese trappings. Punch here represents a neat combination of British demeanor and expertise in simultaneously conforming to the stereotypes of authentic Japanese. In this cartoon and its narrative counterpart, Wirgman provides his readers with an example of a form of expatriate identity that few, if any, would be likely to attain.

Often, Wirgman presents Mr. Punch in an even more lofty position of authority. He is Punch *Sama* the warlord, receiving foreign dignitaries on a ceremonial dais (as Toby acts as his courtier).¹¹⁷ Another time, Punch is “The Daijo Daijin” who “welcomes the Mikado to Yedo,” kneeling and bowing over a copy of the *Japan Punch* to present the young emperor, whose imperial crest can just be glimpsed behind the screens that conceal him.¹¹⁸ Punch, although also awed by his new experiences, is always more at ease than

¹¹⁶ *Japan Punch* 11 (1866). The text refers to a fire that destroyed most of Yokohama, resulting in a near total rebuilding of the community. The rebuilding had the advantage of contributing to the rapid modernization that occurred in the Treaty port city over just two decades.

¹¹⁷ *Japan Punch* 11 (1866).

¹¹⁸ *Japan Punch* (1868).

his foreign settlement readers, to the point that he becomes a fantasy of Englishness successfully transposed into Japanese culture. He is comfortable as both foreign dignitary and inhabitant of Japan. He can adopt a warlike stance that is unavailable to foreign settlement residents when they feel under threat. He, and even his Toby, can seamlessly inhabit the authority of the Japanese to a degree that neither the British nor any other Western nation could manage. Although a cheerful mascot of a publication whose introduction promised entertainment and good spirit in opposition to the mindless acquisition of capital and boredom of expatriate life, Punch also is the embodiment of the dream of middle-class success in the foreign settlement. He is not confined to a neighborhood with checkpoints or at the mercy of burglars; he is the successful, respected *Punch Sama*.

Mr. Punch, on the frontispiece of *Japan Punch* issues, with his sword and his pen, surrounded by the symbols of Japan as interpreted by the English gaze, represents a gleeful exploration of what the Japanese context came to mean for the expatriate's vision of itself. In the end, though, Mr. Punch reveals the fantasy of representing Yokohama as a site for the harmonious blending of cultures. In this fantasy, one wears the sword and robes of another culture with ease, ready to inhabit and understand a new location cheerfully. Behind this optimism and behind this frontispiece in the pages of the *Japan Punch*, that fantasy came unraveled—and yet in that unraveling we are able to glimpse what community the English in Yokohama managed to forge.

I began this chapter by questioning if within the plethora of cultures brought together in Yokohama, we could discover a nascent form of cosmopolitanism. The expatriates of Yokohama, bound by notions of class and unable to make meaningful

connections with Japanese culture, do represent a new collective identity defined by circumstance. Yet, as we have seen, the westerners rarely were able to integrate into broader Japanese society; their newfound sense of community and self is derived from their knowledge of themselves as Europeans abroad who explore other cultures but tend to keep them at arm's length. Individual cases, on the other hand, may demonstrate otherwise. If nothing else, there are surely two aspects of Yokohama at the start of the Meiji period that embody the potential of multiculturalism in the nineteenth century: the material form of the *Japan Punch* and the person of Charles Wirgman. Regarding the magazine, its production speaks to the potential for collaboration and its resulting hybridity. Unlike the other news and magazine editors in Yokohama, Wirgman did not have access to a printing press. All of his *Japan Punch* issues are the result of woodblock printing, and their production involved collaboration with Japanese woodblock artists. In order to make copies of his illustrations for publication, Wirgman would take his sketches to Japanese woodblock printers. In practice, according to Thomas Crossland, this means his sketches would likely have been done on thin paper that would then be glued face down to the surface of a wood block, later to be carved away, leaving the lines of his images in relief. The text of each *Japan Punch* was likewise part of this printing process, meaning that Wirgman's handwriting had to be carved in relief backward with the accompanying images.¹¹⁹ Later, the block would be inked, and each ten-page issue of the *Japan Punch* would be printed on *washi*, or thin Japanese paper, and then sewn together

¹¹⁹ The printing process of the *Japan Punch* thus absolutely explains the brevity of each issue and its appearance as a monthly. For further explanation of Japanese woodblock printing technique, particularly information about how Wirgman's text was transferred via carving, I am indebted to a conversation with Dr. Casey Smith, assistant professor of Arts and Humanities at the Corcoran College of Art and Design.

with a Japanese technique.¹²⁰ It is evident that the artists responsible for transferring the sketches, in practicing their craft, had an impact on the end result of Wirgman's images (though his sketches are very crude and were not replicated with as much intricacy as traditional woodblock art—the nature of caricature rather than the skill of the carvers is to be held responsible). Close inspection of the cartoons and caricatures reveal etching that the carving tools would have been responsible for.¹²¹ It is even possible that some of these markings were embellishments of the wood block artist's own making, but at the very least they represent Wirgman's design as interpreted through the artist's craft. Wirgman's *Japan Punch* thus melds Western-style caricatures and the *Illustrated London News*'s use of woodblock images with a centuries-old Japanese printing technique. The magazine in its physical form provides a neat metaphor for the identity of Yokohama expatriates, as both were a hybrid product created by intersecting cultures.

Then there is the curious case of Charles Wirgman himself. What is known of Wirgman has been gleaned from a few recollections of English bureaucrats, his work in the *Illustrated London News* and the *Japan Punch*, some paintings, and a scant few public records. He has no living descendants today and kept no papers. Records of what initially compelled him to travel east are lost (the *ILN*'s records pertaining to him were destroyed during World War II). His whereabouts in the East can be traced, and the madcap items in *Punch* and a few business records from the studio he kept with the photographer Felice Beatto give an almost-complete picture of his skills, values, and personality. What is missing is some commentary on his own life outside of the mockery and satire of his

¹²⁰ Okamoto 205. One source notes that the paper the *Japan Punch* was printed on is thin enough that the images on the next page are visible to readers. The material is also, purportedly, a "high quality Japanese mulberry" which explains the practice of printing on only one side of the paper. www.baxleystamps.com.

¹²¹ See a high-resolution demonstration at www.baxleystamps.com

magazine—an identity beyond the Mr. Punch avatar. Even so, it is clear that Charles Wirgman lived as someone who valued no one culture¹²² more than another; all were equally ripe for satire and worthy of appreciation. And while lack of specific national allegiance is not necessarily a hallmark of cosmopolitanism, national allegiance is not a sentiment Wirgman ever betrayed.

Wirgman's biographers have noted that he came from a family with strong ties to France and that he lived there for some time as a young man before he traveled to Asia. As noted previously and as readily evident in the pages of the *Japan Punch*, Wirgman spoke and wrote in many languages. He traveled extensively while in Japan, and despite two trips back to England after his arrival in Yokohama, he chose to live there permanently. There are also his personal connections. Wirgman married and had a son with a Japanese woman whom he attempted to officially register as his wife. While it was common for English men to have long-term liaisons with Japanese women (relationships arranged with local brothels and defined by contractual agreement) it was uncommon for there to be a true interracial marriage. While a relationship with a local female does not define one as cosmopolitan, Wirgman's relationship and his anger when the British government refused to recognize it indicate another way he differed from the other expatriates.

Wirgman's connections to Japanese artists are perhaps the greatest indication that he took more than a superficial interest in Japan's culture and people. During his time in Japan, Wirgman took lessons in art from or gave lessons to a number of Japanese artists, many of whom made a contribution to the growth of Western-style painting in Japan. Wirgman's own artwork has never been seen as stylistically significant, but his brokering

¹²² *Japan Punch* (1867).

of relationships between Western and Japanese artists and his presence in a remote, newly accessible country is a unique origin point in the history of Japanese culture.¹²³

Ultimately, it is this treatment of the people he met from cultures not his own that separates Wirgman's own identity from that of the expatriate community whose sense of self his magazine helped shape.

The cosmopolitan is not someone who forsakes national allegiance, nor is he someone who thinks only of the locality in which he finds himself. Following the work of Kwame Anthony Appiah, I echo the sentiment that the cosmopolitan citizen—at present and throughout time—should be defined as someone who “take[s] seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance” (Appiah xv). The global cannot wholly supersede the particular and vice versa. Appiah reads cosmopolitanism as a “challenge” rooted in ethics whose “two ideals—universal concern and respect for legitimate difference—clash” (xv). It would be crucial, then, to define *cosmopolitan identity* as that which retains a particular notion of self while holding universal concern and a sense of responsibility in high regard. Cosmopolitanism, in this sense, bears little resemblance to the intellectual movement of the early twentieth century or the “impartialist version” as Appiah calls it, based on both the idyllic notion of transcending the constraints of dogma and the questionable claim that “the boundaries of nations are morally irrelevant” (xvi). The Yokohama community of expatriates, in the pages of the *Japan Punch* at least, may have conceived of their image of self and their collective identity differently after experiencing life in Japan. They did, in that sense, retain a particular sense of their own

¹²³ For more information about Wirgman's impact as an artist and his relationships with Japanese artists, see Clark 18–23.

culture while acknowledging themselves as citizens in a global context. But Yokohama foreign residents became mostly concerned with the particulars of their own new community. Because they were cut off geographically from the rest of Yokohama and were part of an imperial and capitalist network that sought to profit from Japan, their situation introduces an element of partition and a power differential between themselves and the culture of their host country. To be a foreign resident meant to identify with a new label for all westerners in Yokohama. But the ethical dimension of responsibility is something Charles Wirgman tried to inculcate rather than something that was expressed by his whole community; his cartoons show the lack of those qualities in his audience even as they encourage further cultural reflection.

Charles Wirgman is not the perfect cosmopolitan citizen either but, for his part, rose to the challenge of resolving “universal concern and respect for legitimate difference” (xv) in the pages of his magazine. There is no denying that his work for the *Illustrated London News* and his exaggerated depictions of race in some of the *Japan Punch* are part of a larger discourse of Orientalism or that his presence in the East is the direct result of the conquering impulse of British imperialism. Wirgman seems to have sat apart from the fray. This has led his biographers and those who have commented on his work to pronounce he was a peripheral figure who was not influential in art or politics. His parsing of cultural difference and the long afterlife of his publication do not prove he was a major figure in history. Rather, they demonstrate that a more reasoned, respectful discourse of cultural relativism could puncture the densest apparatus of cultural domination. Today, a documentary about *manga* cites Wirgman’s cartoons as the first of their kind in Japan. The Japanese word *ponchi*, derived from the word *Punch*, means a

joke or cartoon and has been punned with the word for Japan, *Nippon*, to create the hybrid *Nipponchi* (also the title of what is often credited as the first *manga* to appear in Japan). Punch entered Japan visually and linguistically, and it bridged the Western community with the Eastern in a way diplomacy could not. Charles Wirgman, and others who doubtless existed in the contact zone between cultures, demonstrated not the perfect cosmopolitan citizen but the origin point of a discourse of cosmopolitanism that embraces the tension between the global and the local and between cultures.

Conclusion

The Voluntourist: Globalism in the 21st Century

On February 18, 2014 a young woman named Pippa Biddle posted a brief essay to her personal blog. That post, “The Problem with Little White Girls (and Boys): Why I Stopped Being a Voluntourist,” went viral, garnering so much attention that it received over two million views in the space of just one week.¹²⁴ The original post was shared across numerous online platforms (such as the Huffington Post), received international attention, and inspired a great deal of debate about the nature of a brand of study abroad trips typically known as service learning opportunities. The neologism “voluntourist” is sometimes used to refer to participants on these trips. The term can be used both positively and negatively. For some, to be a “voluntourist” means to use travel as a privileged, (typically) white westerner, as an excuse to try on the role of savior among the underprivileged, ethnic people of the world—usually in locations where whites are in the minority. Vacation packages to popular resort destinations sometimes use “voluntourist” as a positive marketing technique. Similar to service learning opportunities for college credit, these vacation packages are designed to let tourists complete a form of community service or at the very least gain exposure to more local culture than one could typically anticipate at a gated resort hotel. Primarily, though, the typical voluntourist is a college student or recent graduate. As a recent report claims, “more than 1.6 million volunteer tourists are spending about \$2 billion each year.”¹²⁵ Some of the organizations offering these experiences abroad boast of board members with seats in congress and the

¹²⁴ Pippa Biddle, “2+ Million View Later – That Time the Internet Broke Me.” February 25, 2014. Pippabiddle.com. Web. N.p.

¹²⁵ Carrie Kahn, “As ‘Voluntourism’ Explodes in Popularity, Who’s it Helping Most?” NPR July 31, 2014.

senate.¹²⁶ The flurry of responses and open letters that engaged with Biddle's initial post, the introduction of for-profit service learning companies, and the large amounts of capital invested in this burgeoning industry do not just indicate the popularity of service-focused study abroad trips; they demonstrate how deeply the concerns of appropriate class-based citizenship in the era of (continuing) globalization have permeated our culture. While the contours of the debate are shaped by the contemporary state of higher education, class, gender, and social media, it is, centrally, an exercise in rethinking the nature of citizenship and identity in an expanding global context that began with the Victorians. Just as periodicals and serials encouraged an appropriate, class-based response to imperialism, so does the proliferation of voluntourism and its surrounding discourse encourage appropriate class-based behavior in the globalized world of the 21st century.

Victorian popular literature encouraged its middle-class readers and those who wished to attain middle-class standing to rethink their identity in terms of what the British Empire could mean for their prosperity, even as dramatic class mobility remained out of reach. The previous chapters demonstrate how middle-class reading materials consistently argued for the expansion of Englishness to encompass roles that redefined how one could relate to Britain's ever-expanding territory. Today, explicit references to class are erased even as class remains a central issue for students venturing abroad; the debates surrounding global service learning encourage a contemporary audience to rethink its relationship to class and citizenship by deploying the rhetoric of privilege. While the history of mission trips is centuries old, it is not until the reformers, military members, civil servants, and middle or would-be middle-class British citizens began the

¹²⁶ See Tristan Biehn, "Voluntourism as Neoliberal Humanitarianism." Sept 3, 2014. www.zeroanthropology.net. Web. N.p.

move from metropole to colony that middle-class travel became the secular issue it has remained up to the present. In its current incarnation, predominantly white students with the means to travel are told to picture themselves as fortunate global citizens and to understand this as the basis for good acts. Here, as in our nineteenth century examples, class is the impetus for reflexivity where one's identity is concerned.

The Victorians had to re-conceptualize their national allegiance relative to their class aspirations; today one's class and relative privilege makes one responsible to "give back" in exchange for what are billed as authentic cultural experiences. Students of experiential learning trips learn to transmogrify the privileges of race and class into service that affirms their morality. The same experience is marketed as a desirable, hireable qualification that will secure their economic future. Victorians were encouraged to use the British Empire to their moral and commercial advantage, and to see the global arena as a stage for their prosperity. As the image of Thackeray pasting a *Punch* placard on the great pyramid suggests, travel can be taken as an opportunity to display one's fitness for prosperity for all to see. Today, social media gives each individual the chance to make similarly bold pronouncements of their intercultural acumen. The rhetoric of global citizenship today, I will argue, asks the same of the voluntourist with slight variation from its nineteenth century precursors—a class appropriate response to expanded global access.

At times, Pippa Biddle's challenge to the monolithic narrative voluntourist organizations provide about the cultural enrichment can read as analogous to Thomas Hood's caution to the would-be South African colonists in "Letter from the Cape." Her blogpost, especially as it was understood by her detractors, accuses "non-profits,

documentaries, and service programs” of instilling would be volunteers with the hope of creating long-lasting and meaningful change on their service trips to the developing world.¹²⁷ For Biddle, this is a naïve and irresponsible practice—so much *guano*, to recall Hood’s objections to emigration schemes. She begins by relating the story of a high school trip she took with her classmates to Tanzania, where “\$3000 bought us a week at an orphanage, a half built library, and a few pickup soccer games, followed by a week long safari.”¹²⁸ The students, unskilled at construction work, participated in a “cycle” where “each night the men had to take down the structurally unsound bricks we had laid and rebuild the structure” creating a ruse to which all were party.¹²⁹ Biddle points out that hiring local labor would have been more beneficial to the local economy, and would have completed the needed work rather than leaving it half done by the time their trip concluded. As she writes, “it wasn’t the work that was bad. It was me being there.”¹³⁰ Calling attention to the white privilege that facilitated her experience in Tanzania and, later, in the Dominican Republic, Biddle argues for a model of service wherein the privileged provide money, training, and support for locally run operations in developing countries, but not their presence. Her sense of class-based responsibility, then, means disengaging from falsely inserting oneself abroad in favor of continued financial and moral support to satisfy the ethical claims of global citizenship.

And yet, just as Hood’s objection against emigration schemes that promised prosperity where only hardship existed, the predominant line of argument in the

¹²⁷ Pippa Biddle “The Problem with Little White Girls (and Boys): Why I Stopped Being a Voluntourist.” February, 18 2014. Web. N.p.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

voluntourism industry echoes the rosy promises made to the voyageurs and émigrés depicted in the first chapter. Many of the volunteer service trips do deploy the rhetoric Biddle takes exception to, and some organizations use a decontextualized notion of service to attract predominantly young, western and at least relatively well off participants.¹³¹ It is also the case that some organizations do not require any prior training, although some may offer to facilitate a more in-depth experience should that be desired. Opportunities from teaching kindergarten in Bali, to surfing and volunteering in Peru, to providing childcare in Kathmandu abound, and most programs place a special emphasis on one's ability to teach English with little or no prior experience.¹³² Often, trips last as little as a week. This is hardly a time frame where a volunteer could expect to make a sustainable impact, and yet these experiences are marketed to emphasize the extreme need of the communities they serve. These communities very well may benefit from volunteers, but it is often the case that they profit more from the fees received for hosting volunteers than the actual labor voluntourists undertake.¹³³ A cursory survey of volunteer abroad organizations reveals that the trips themselves can be highly seductive, to the point where volunteering becomes a method that facilitates travel to an

¹³¹ While one cannot assume students from a working-class background are wholly excluded from such opportunities, they are likely to be in the minority of participants. While grants and scholarships may be available, they are competitive, and a student must have freedom from other responsibilities, such as the need to earn money during school holidays.

¹³² See for example programs offered by Give and Surf (www.giveandsurf.org) and International Volunteers HQ (www.volunteerhq.org).

¹³³ A recent article in *The Guardian* warns would be voluntourists about selecting an appropriate organization. The date of the article, 2007, makes clear the current discussion of voluntourism has been going on some time and this is likely because of the practice of taking a "gap year" between secondary school and starting at a university. For more see Lucy Ward "You're Better off Backpacking--VSO Warns about Perils of "Voluntourism." *The Guardian* 13 Aug 2007. Web.

adventurous location because there are organizations in place to set the parameters of one's travel. The framework of voluntourism makes it possible for a would be volunteer to travel to exotic places with some infrastructure in place, rather than having to rely on one's daring as a backpacker in unfamiliar territory. The impetus to volunteer may be a genuine one, but it is bound up in the desire to increase one's own cultural capital and it is fraught with the complications Biddle and others have pointed out.

Biddle's post also hints at the same drive for success represented by the subject of the second chapter of this project: the ability to return from one's travels with the means to add to the economic prosperity or prestige of one's family and, by extension, nation. Different from older narratives of exploration, which emphasized the transformative nature of long, arduous journeys, Victorian popular literature reincorporated wandering English citizens back into the national fold as if they had become more English, more worthy of success than before. When Peter Jenkyns returns, he is older, and more prosperous, and differs only in having assumed the role of head of the family. Like its 19th century precursors, voluntourism promises to create a better version of the self, one that is more adept at navigating a global society; somehow, a voluntourist's already charitable nature will be amplified, more visible, just as Jenkyns becomes a better version of the loving brother he always was. Acquiring such acumen, current volunteer opportunities promise (without explicitly stating so), will help create personal economic prosperity. Ideally, intercultural ability also translates into a workforce prepared for the global dimensions of a competitive national economy. One does not return with money, but with evidence of a cultural experience demonstrative of an awareness and maturity that, it is hoped, will impress would-be employers, granters of academic awards, or

admissions committees. To become a voluntourist promises change and growth, but, as in the nineteenth century narratives of returning citizens, one runs the risk of partaking in the one-way exchange of enrichment Biddle's critique argues against.

As much as Pippa Biddle's account drew an enormous amount of attention and inspired numerous responses, her argument has well-known twentieth century precursors (in addition to its resonance with the tropes of Victorian popular literature). In a now famous and oft-quoted and reprinted speech, the Monsignor Ivan Illich made a similar case before the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1968. In a much more brutal assessment of student volunteers, Illich decries the "hypocrisy" of volunteers that criticize past volunteer trips into Latin America for turning out to be "'Mission-Vacations' among poor Mexicans" while being "unwilling to go far enough in [their] reappraisal of [their] program" because of the desire to continue participating in service trips.¹³⁴ Illich argues that CIASP and other volunteer organizations are "offensive to Mexico" and asks his listeners to avoid "pretentiously imposing [themselves] on Mexicans."¹³⁵ Forty-six years before Biddle's post, Illich claims

next to money and guns, the third largest North American export is the U.S.

idealist, who turns up in every theater of the world: the teacher, the volunteer, the missionary, the community organizer, the economic developer, and the vacationing do-gooders. Ideally, these people define their roles as service.

Actually, they frequently wind up alleviating the damage done by money and

¹³⁴ Ivan Illich, "To Hell with Good Intentions." April 20, 1968. Web. N.p.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

weapons, or ‘seducing’ the ‘underdeveloped’ to the benefits of the world of affluence and achievement.¹³⁶

Like Biddle, who does not want to see young girls of non-western cultures idolizing white girls, Illich points out the harm done by witless volunteers who meddle in the culture and traditions of the communities they wish to serve.¹³⁷ In both speech and blogpost the introduction of western standards and values is criticized as a harmful influence on those communities. These arguments, essentially, define the risk of a cultural neo-imperialism created by volunteer abroad programs. Illich points out that the only Latin Americans likely to spend any time with well-intentioned but naïve middle-class Americans are more middle-class citizens.¹³⁸ And so, for Illich, the westerner fulfills its obligation to use privilege for good by reproducing western class-based values in a global venue—to the detriment of the working class and impoverished populations they are there to serve.

At the heart of the critique against voluntourism shared by Biddle, Illich, and others, is the charge that espousing the rhetoric of charity encourages western students to think of themselves as proper, benevolent global citizens without requiring them to contribute to meaningful change or examine the roots of their desires. Tristan Beihn, in his criticism of one of the largest volunteer abroad organizations, International Student Volunteers, Inc. (ISV), contends that the messages the organization sends its young

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Biddle, specifically, writes “I don’t want a little girl in Ghana, or Sri Lanka, or Indonesia to think of me when she wakes up each morning. I don’t want her to thank me....I want her to have a hero she can relate to –who looks like her, is part of her culture, speaks her language, and who she might bump into on her way to school one morning.”

¹³⁸ Illich, n.p.

participants more about creating an ideal subject.¹³⁹ As Beihn points out, students pour energy into fundraising for their volunteer trip, pay costs that exist only because volunteers are being sent out on their experience abroad, and are placed with NGOs who cannot recruit or support international volunteers without ISV's help.¹⁴⁰ However, “[ISV does] not attempt to explain why international volunteering is a good way to address global inequalities.”¹⁴¹ Organizations like ISV manufacture the need for volunteers:

In a section explaining the difficulties of volunteering independently, ISV unintentionally highlights the problematic nature of this assumption [that volunteering abroad is worthwhile], asserting that, “the difficult part is finding an organization you want to work for that meets your needs as a volunteer...” They note that local organizations may be seeking volunteers with specific skills sets, this making many potential volunteers unwanted. However, if a volunteer joins an organization such as ISV, suddenly there is a plethora of need and want for their service. How then do such organizations respond to charges that they themselves create this need?¹⁴²

The simple answer to Beihn's rhetorical question is, of course, that they do not. Organizations like ISV are interested in teaching students that service is inherently worthwhile, but do not ask them to interrogate systemic issues of inequality. The organization exists to assure the voluntourist that serving abroad is inherently good for the world and good for the volunteer. ISV and like organizations seek to create good western subjects who, like their Victorian forerunners, are taught to think of global

¹³⁹ Beihn, n.p.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

spaces as the stage for their betterment. However, telling a volunteer they have privilege and should give back does not negate that privilege nor mitigate its potential ill-effects

Here, again, the current conversation about global travel and social justice is closely linked with its Victorian precursors. Neither Illich's warning nor Biddle's viral post—or similar commentary over the years—has slowed the growth of the voluntourist industry. Nor are these counter-opinions widely accepted or popular. Recalling the vehemence with which “Exeter Hall” was denounced for protesting the unjust treatment of Jamaicans may demonstrate just how entrenched the aversion to privileging the needs of developing nations or other races can be—particularly when the offending part feels it exists, as British leaders of Jamaica onetime felt, for the benefit of all those in question. Biddle's detractors tend to emphasize the good will of volunteers and their admirable desire to help; however, if a responsible version of intercultural exchange is ever to be achieved through voluntourism, it is important to question just how similar the drive toward volunteering abroad resembles the imposition of western will on colonized nations. While certainly these programs do not encourage attitudes of dominance, the thoughtless approach of an organization like ISV clearly demonstrates the potential of creating a class of volunteers that do not recognize their own privilege and cannot accurately assess the value of their presence in their host communities.

Of course, not all service-learning organizations operate the same way as International Student Volunteers. Some organizations do prioritize the host communities they work with, ensuring job training and economic benefits as well as profit

participation in what is essentially a niche part of the tourist industry.¹⁴³ Many embrace the dialog started in the late 1960s with Illich that continues today with commenters like Biddle and others. In an interesting turn of events, Illich's speech is sometimes required or suggested reading for students who would partake of service learning opportunities (at least those that also offer college credit). Likewise, as Biddle's post was circulated across the internet, popular service learning providers responded by circulating counterarguments to Biddle's encouragement—like Illich's encouragement before her—to stay home. One such organization, Amizade, which bills itself as a "Fair Trade Learning" facilitator, responded to Biddle's post by recommending the article "From Savior to Solidarity: an Alternative for 'White Girls'—and anyone else—considering international service."¹⁴⁴ The author Stacy Williams agrees with "Biddle's attention to the positionality of international volunteers," that has the potential to reproduce western dominance of other cultures.¹⁴⁵ Williams adds that Biddle's critique must extend beyond race: "international volunteer and education organizations have a lot of work to do to improve access and inclusion—particularly for people from lower socioeconomic

¹⁴³ The view that partnering with an organization that places international volunteers should be seen as an extension of or compliment to the tourism industry is one that some service learning organizations are more forthright about. In the interest of full disclosure, I will note that I worked with one such organization during a spring break service-learning course to Jamaica. The community organizer there has helped his community benefit immensely through hosting volunteers, opening up economic possibilities for participating families and partners and providing an alternative to the corporatized resorts whose profits largely go overseas. A similar, Jamaican-owned enterprise exists nearby; a Jamaican business hires its staff from the local community, facilitates volunteer opportunities, and thus retains more profit for the local economy than what can be eked out by Jamaicans working for corporate owned resorts.

¹⁴⁴ For more information about Amizade see www.amizade.org. For the article see "From Savior to Solidarity: An Alternative for 'White Girls'--and Anyone Else--Considering International Service" by Stacy Williams, posted on March 5, 2014 at www.everydayambassador.org. Web. N.p.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

backgrounds, people of color, and the LGBTQ community.”¹⁴⁶ Where Williams and Biddle differ, however, is in regard to the best option for would-be volunteers. Williams claims that by shifting the discourse from helping causes to a model where volunteers listen, interrogate western bias, and “[affirm] local efforts and voice” students can acknowledge their global interconnectedness, learn about other cultures, and use this awareness to promote “the change the world so desperately needs.”¹⁴⁷ Williams’ alternative to Biddle’s model of staying home and providing support for international efforts from afar affirms the contemporary desire to do international service while attempting to address the systemic inequality between western and host countries. However, despite their differences these commenters are engaged in the same conversation that has been attempting to define relations between the privileged classes and their global context since the nineteenth century and earlier.

Like Victorian popular literature, opinion pieces—widely available, easy to comment on, and easy to share among one’s peers on social media—shape our conception of the proper class-based response to global citizenship. The contemporary debate about voluntourism, and Biddle’s encouragement for western volunteers to stay home in particular, is a distant relative to the conversation Dickens meant to start with his portrayal of Mrs. Jellyby. (Oddly, Biddle argues in favor of something like “telescopic philanthropy,” with the exception that the local population is allowed to best meet the needs of its community and is not forced to cultivate coffee like the Borioboola-gha inhabitants.) And yet, it is less common in the articles debating voluntourism—albeit a few brief mentions to organizations like Teach for America or a response in an online

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

comments section—for anyone to argue, like Dickens, that foreign aid is best directed toward the service of one’s own home and country.¹⁴⁸ This conversation certainly exists elsewhere, and students are no doubt inundated with opportunities to volunteer in their own communities and their country. But the college experience today, in greater numbers than ever before, includes a push to think about global opportunities for study. This is not limited to encouraging American students to study abroad. The concept of “comprehensive internationalization” exists among educational organizations to describe a process that can “leverage the collective assets of the higher education sector to create a new generation of global citizens capable of advancing social, and economic development for all.”¹⁴⁹ Although the mission of comprehensive internationalization extends to students who travel from abroad to study in America, the “new generation of global citizens” is essentially identical to the ideal middle- to upper-class student who emerges fully formed after his or her service-learning trip. But since all of these efforts to create global citizens rests on the acknowledgement of a student’s position as a person using their privilege for good, there is not room to acknowledge any issues of class, race, or anything else that would complicate the basis on which the project of global citizenship rests. Prosperous countries create prosperous volunteers who go out and demonstrate the benevolence of western systems while affirming their own prosperity and essential goodness. The discourse of global citizenship must direct the would-be-

¹⁴⁸ This is not to suggest that such arguments of domestic over international aid/volunteer work do not exist; they are common enough. However, in the responses to Biddle’s 2014 post, the majority of opinions and counterarguments focus on circumventing her critiques to reaffirm global service or to agree with her model of volunteerism.

¹⁴⁹ John K. Hudzik, “Executive Summary: Comprehensive Internationalization from Concept to Action.” www.nafsa.org. web. N.p.

volunteers' efforts outward because to do otherwise would shatter the illusion of stability and safety in western culture.

Biddle and Williams, though seemingly in opposition to one another, are part of the same apparatus that holds up global citizenship—in which internationally minded philanthropy is requisite—as the most desirable form of middle- to upper-class behavior. Neither wants to “perpetuat[e] the ‘white savior’ complex” because that complex is in fact a way to feel good about oneself without doing any good.¹⁵⁰ Williams attempts to circumvent white privilege by shifting the paradigm of service to one where volunteers do not view host communities as causes and recognize that the westerner will benefit far, far more from learning about another culture than their hosts will benefit from any volunteer work taking place.¹⁵¹ In addition to recommending staying home and using one's privilege to facilitate local success, Biddle also allows that highly skilled volunteers, when matched to an appropriate community, potentially can do some good.¹⁵² Both of these proposals certainly do mitigate the disastrous consequences objected to by Biddle, Illich, Williams and other critics. Yet they do not argue against global citizenship itself, and thus do nothing to upend its inherent rightness and thus its ability to produce successful citizens possessed of class-based privilege.

The preceding chapters provide ample evidence that thoughtful global engagement often succeeds most where satiric criticism is found, as is the case in the work of Thomas Hood and Charles Wirgman. Likewise, today broader culture does demonstrate some awareness of the problems inherent in the ideological role of the

¹⁵⁰ Biddle, n.p.

¹⁵¹ Williams, n.p.

¹⁵² Biddle, n.p.

voluntourist. Current popular culture has taken up the task of satirizing service learning and study abroad, mocking what is seen to be the faux-altruistic, self-aggrandizing posture adopted by young college or post-secondary students who venture out into the “third world.” The online satiric news website *The Onion* published one such send up several weeks before the appearance of Biddle’s blogpost. In “6-Day Visit to Rural African Village Completely Changes Woman’s Facebook Profile Picture,” a fictional twenty-two year old espouses the benefits of travel in Africa for the most superficial reasons possible:

“As soon as I walked into that dusty, remote town and the smiling children started coming up to me, I just knew my Facebook profile photo would change forever,” said Fisher, noting that she realized early in her nearly weeklong visit just how narrow and unworldly her previous Facebook profile photos had been. “I don’t think my profile photo will ever be the same, not after the experience of taking such incredible pictures with my arms around those small African children’s shoulders. Honestly, I can’t even imagine going back to my old Facebook photo of my roommate and I at an outdoor concert.”¹⁵³

The young woman further promises that should her friends avail themselves of a similar visit it will “change their Facebook profile photo as well.”¹⁵⁴ While not explicitly stated, the description of a “6-Day” trip aligns closely with service learning trips designed to fit the length of a college spring break. The *Onion* article satirizes the trend among white, middle- to upper-class travelers of changing the “profile picture” to demonstrate their

¹⁵³ “Six-Day Visit to Rural African Village Complete Changes Woman’s Facebook Profile Picture” *The Onion*, January 28, 2014. Web.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

new status as a world traveler. As the fictional Fisher ironically remarks of her picture, the idea is to demonstrate one's increased worldly knowledge as a global citizen. Key to this satiric picture of the culturally aware westerner is the presence of two African children. The photo accompanying the *Onion*'s article echoes the satire of the text. A young, blond white woman in front of a deteriorating façade embraces one young African boy while another looks at the scene askance. The inclusion of this particular image is quite brilliant, as the child in the leftmost part of the frame suggests a healthy skepticism of the young white woman's presence. *The Onion* points out the way self-presentation rather than altruism can motivate the creation of a public version of oneself, and demonstrates the length to which experience has become an extremely important marker of success because it can be shared on social media platforms. Social media exacerbates the issues inherent in voluntourism, but in a way it is a continuation of 19th century forays out across the globe.

The materials of the previous chapters and the contemporary narratives of the voluntourist are part of the same discursive web, and this network also includes nineteenth narratives of the global adventurer, that more singular, exceptional traveller. The exploration of self, relative to class and what we would now call global citizenship, is ever-present in the narratives of Victorian explorers. The case of Sir Richard Francis Burton, the multi-lingual world traveler perhaps best known for introducing the Kama Sutra to British readers, connects the Victorian explorers' presentation of global citizenship with that of the voluntourists'. While social media platforms and the relative ease and availability of photography today have increased the number of people who can take pictures and use them to display the ideal version of themselves to their circle of

friends and acquaintances, it served a similar purpose in the Victorian period when it came to using an image of oneself to define one's relationship to culture, race, and class. One photo of Burton in particular demonstrates the extent to which he was willing to go to erase markers of status—all the while affirming his position as an exceptional representative of his country. In fact, Burton's many engagements in "passing" as a member of other races—in his 1853 journey to Mecca, for example—and the rhetorical gymnastics he deployed in order to obfuscate his own origins were mostly performed to distinguish himself from his peers. He sought to be a cosmopolitan of the sort Appiah would take issue with on ethical grounds; Burton was absolutely a product of the leading imperial nation of his day, despite his desire to stand apart as a unique citizen of the world.

The photo in question of Richard Burton provides one of his recent biographers, the historian Dane Kennedy, with a controlling metaphor that explains Burton's status as a man both unique for and yet utterly of his time. Burton was as invested in standing out among his peers as he was invested in contributing to Victorian discussions about race, class, sexuality and empire. Burton inscribed his personal copy of the picture as "The Highly Civilized Man"; the photograph provided him with an opportunity to experiment with his image even as he comments on contemporary notions of identity. Kennedy identifies the blanket that covers Burton from head to foot as a garment "that evokes Near Eastern or Northern Indian custom," although, significantly, the photo still betrays no specific marker of a particular ethnicity (Kennedy 10). Kennedy's analysis of the portrait points to the satiric bent of its composition:

The highly self-conscious manner in which Burton has posed against convention in the photograph points to the main target of his irony--what most Britons took to be the distinguishing features of civilization itself. By portraying himself as free from the familiar markers of Western cultural identity, he seems to be commenting on how such identities and the values they advance serve to define and delimit what we understand as civilization, which is itself inextricably enmeshed within these arbitrary codes. (12)¹⁵⁵

By “convention” Kennedy refers to traditional portraiture where the arrangement of the subject with props could convey the wealth and interests of the subject. Burton’s status as a world traveller also begs comparison to photographs taken to commemorate a significant discovery or hunting triumph.¹⁵⁶ Burton’s desire to position himself so ambiguously satirizes any who would falsely claim the same mastery of world travel or cultural knowledge as himself.¹⁵⁷

The role of the voluntourist today as the epitome of the contemporary global citizen derives its social cache from the same things that made Sir Richard Francis Burton exciting reading material for the Victorians. The voluntourist lacks the high degree of

¹⁵⁵ Burton certainly did pose in other more conventional photographs, but also posed as members of other races. See for example the lithograph provided in Kennedy, p. 66. Burton enjoys his own fansite today (www.burtoniana.org).

¹⁵⁶ Although from a slightly different time period but of a contiguous practice, Burton’s photograph is the complete antithesis of the photographs composed after the turn of the 20th century. For more information see Donna Haraway’s seminal “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936.”

¹⁵⁷ In his biography Kennedy also includes a *Punch* cartoon from 1882 that favorably caricatures Burton as “Captain Burton: our Un-Commercial Traveller,” positioning him in Arabic costume proudly standing in front of two sheepish looking commercial travel guides who remark “A bit ahead of us my boy.” Kennedy, 129-130. This cartoon displays some overlap between Burton and today’s voluntourist, as the modern global citizen selects a volunteer opportunities rather over a commercial holiday in a resort.

exceptionalism or racial masquerading to achieve transcendence over national identity Burton wanted to affect in his personal life. However, social media plays a role in allowing the middle-class voluntourist to affect some of the spirit of Victorian adventurers—19th century explorers whose exploits were well documented in the popular press. Like Sir Richard Francis Burton, the voluntourist can take on the exciting persona of an explorer and perhaps appear, at least temporarily, as exceptional. The fact that voluntourism is now a widespread practice does little to diminish the idea that one is doing something very remarkable in venturing out into the more exotic places of the world. Ironically, the exceptionalism of the voluntourist lies in the ability to shed the aura of being defined by one's class even as the process underscores how one undertakes the perfect form of class-based citizenship in a globalized world. Ultimately, viewed in this light, the Victorian popular literature of previous chapters, Burton, and the voluntourist all find their own way to obfuscate the relationship between class and imperialist attitudes. In the 19th century, pictures of prosperity painted a picture where class existed but its hardships could be transcended through emigration; today, the rhetoric of voluntourism would have us believe class and other boundaries were transcended long ago. Does the nineteenth century contain any model for a more responsible form of intercultural exchange?

The fourth chapter of this project concluded by questioning the extent to which cosmopolitanism was achievable for Charles Wirgman and his fellow expatriates. If cosmopolitanism existed in Meiji-era Yokohama at all, it did not find much purchase among the westerners dabbling in the wearing of kimonos, and may have been limited to the very exceptional Charles Wirgman and the very imaginary *Punch-sama*. If that is the

case, then interrogating the conditions that allowed even for the potential of a nascent, 19th century cosmopolitanism should come to bear on our conception of the 21st century world of globalization. We might claim that what makes Wirgman exceptional is his resistance to assume his nation had a right to impose its will on another self-determined nation. Surely the pages of the *Japan Punch* demonstrate his feeling that Britain acted unjustly in its dealings with Japan. Wirgman also seems not to have assumed the west owed a place in Japanese society, as demonstrated by his relentless satire of awkward Europeans floundering through daily life in the foreign settlement. Yet we lack enough evidence to claim these views would extend to other nations that lacked Japan's ability to retain and recover its self-determination. If anything, what sets Wirgman apart as a proto-cosmopolitan rather than an expatriate is his ability to critique. The satire he put down in the pages of the *Japan Punch* approaches the level of self-criticism that will be necessary if cross-cultural exchanges that are egalitarian in spirit are to take place. Can voluntourism evolve to meet the promises of cosmopolitanism? Or is it too mired in the narratives and attitudes of the nineteenth century to progress farther than its current existence?

The problem of the voluntourist is very much the problem of the nineteenth century middle-class subjects who learned from popular fiction to reconsider their identity relative to the expanses of the British Empire. To venture out and earn one's fortune, to return as a success with one's Englishness intact, and to learn to respond to tragedy in a way that reaffirmed one's investment in empire, were all part of the ideological project of popular fiction in the winning of cultural consent for British Imperialism. Like the rhetoric of global citizenship today, this production of ideal

middle-class citizens deepest problem lies in its denial of the larger structures of power that create the global disparity between “the west and the rest.”

I will close with a final nineteenth-century text that is intimately related to our current ideology on the relationship between self and global context. Nowhere is this nineteenth century version of denial of structural inequality more relevant, perhaps, than in the Dickens novel most readily associated with the perils of imperialism, *Great Expectations*. Many a critic has pointed out that Pip’s wealth when derived from the convict Magwitch is a considerably ill-gotten gain not just because it came from an immoral source but also because it represents a subconscious ambivalence toward the source of Britain’s wealth and power. As my analysis has shown elsewhere in this project, there is no objection to the middle-class benefitting from the empire so long as it does so by the goodness of its moral, English ways (whether that proves to be a fantasy is, of course, a separate issue). After all, by the end of the novel Magwitch dies having proven himself to have been redeemed; it was not the source of Pip’s wealth but its excesses that raised him too high, too quickly that constitutes a sin against honest, middle-class prosperity. Once Pip learns to work hard and support himself he can also be redeemed by *Great Expectations*’ end. Significantly, Pip does this by doing as so many middle-class citizens and characters before him had done: he works hard as a Clerk and then partner in a firm abroad, using the Imperial spaces of the British Empire to his moral and commercial benefit. All of the ideological roles provided to readers of Victorian popular literature, with few exceptions, position the Empire as the palliative of the middle-classes.

Considered in light of what the voluntourist discloses about global citizenship today, *Great Expectations* becomes an example of the erasures of Victorian popular fiction attempted in the service of its empire. The problem with voluntourism today is not so much the desire to do good in the world as it is a problem that, like Pip, we may replace the negative aspects of Imperialism with a less innocuous but more troublesome form of benefitting from global spaces. If Pip is not guilty of taking money from the colonies, only of attempting to cheat a more tempered form of class mobility, then neither is the empire guilty of supplying bad things. By this logic, Imperialism is neutralized with the responsibility of goodness and badness kept firmly in the hands of individuals. Revering Pip's industriousness is tantamount to our contemporary reduction of global citizenship to the decontextualized notion of "doing good," and "service." Like Pip, the voluntourist who goes out into the world to affirm their privilege runs the risk of identifying as a global citizen without interrogating the systems of power that create and maintain structural inequality across the globe.

Despite my agreement with the criticisms by Biddle and others—and despite my worry of, like those Illich criticized in 1968 of being willing to be critical without being willing to stop the volunteer missions set in motion—I do not think that voluntourism is unilaterally a bad thing. Like so many, many things it provides us with a great opportunity to make the invisible visible. If a young westerner, perhaps a student, travels to a country and expects that his or her volunteer work is vitally necessary to the host community, then surely the trip does no more than perpetuate nineteenth century versions of global citizenship. And yet the challenge is not to either stay home or to debate the value of volunteering, and it is not just a matter of finding better, more responsible

service learning organizations and going in the spirit of cross-cultural learning rather than with the spirit of a savior (although that absolutely is a vital starting point). The real challenge is to step away from the clerk's desk and to ask why am I here? What structures created the poverty, lack of resources, and lack of infrastructure I wish to do my part in alleviating? What allows me to travel to such a place? What is the chain of events that reaches back through time to create this present moment? If this sort of questioning can be built in to the role of the voluntourist then will we have an opportunity to step outside the narratives provided for us, readymade. The seduction of being a voyageur, of returning home better than we left, of learning to respond to the world, and even of forging a new community still runs deep in our narratives and our discussion of culture. If the global citizen is to be a new type of identity, then it is truly more of a challenge to strive for than a condition that has been met.

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